


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | WEDNESDAY | 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 32.0°C
Min: 24°C
RH: 32%
Rainfall: 3mm
Forecast: Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
32/24 °C

COVID-19

COUNT

CASES

DEATHS

(+81,272)

(+1,174)

62,19,224

97,450

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,072)

(+9)

TS: 1,89,283

1,116

(+6,190)

(+35)

AP: 6,87,351

5,780

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

3,36,81,525

DEATHS

10,08,501

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari:

Dakshinayana

Tithi:

Adhika Ashtvayuja Shuddha Chaturdasi till 12.27 am

Star:

Purvabhadra till 3.14 am (Thursday)

Varjyam:

7.51 am to 9.37 am

Durmuhurtam:

11.42 am to 12.29 pm

Rahukalam:

12 noon to 1.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Safar ul Muzaffar 12, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar:

5.30 am

Zohar:

1.30 pm

Asar:

4.45 pm

Maghrib:

6.12 pm

Isha:

8.15 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.57 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.57 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 5.18 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 5.22 AM

COUNTER POINT



I promise to get you the first dose of vaccine!

IN BRIEF

Venkaiah tests Covid positive

New Delhi: Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday tested positive for Covid-19 but is in good health, the Vice President Secretariat said. Naidu, 71, who is asymptomatic, has been advised home quarantine. “The Vice President of India who underwent a routine COVID-19 test today morning has been tested positive. He is however, asymptomatic and in good health,” the Secretariat tweeted. His wife Usha Naidu has been tested negative and is in self-isolation, the tweet said. Some Union ministers have tested positive for Covid in the recent past.

You can’t detain one forever: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Jammu and Kashmir administration to respond to Ilitija Mufti’s amended plea challenging the detention of her mother, former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, under the J-K Public Safety Act, saying it cannot go on forever and “some via media” should be explored. A bench of Justices S.K. Kaul and Hrishikesh Roy granted 15 days to the UT to file response and asked as to what was the maximum period for which a person can be detained under the specific law and whether the officials proposed to continue with the detention of Mufti.



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Trump, Biden get ready for debate



BUSINESS | 7
Walmart may invest \$25b in Tata Group’s super app

SPORTS | 8
Schumacher's son a step closer to F-1



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Only AP has Covid care in Aarogyasri: CM

Tells officials to be alert on Coronavirus cases in state

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

Andhra Pradesh is the only state that was treating coronavirus patients for free under the Aarogyasri scheme, said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, asking officials to be careful to further contain Covid-19, despite the reduction in the coronavirus positivity rate from 12 to 8.3 per cent, while conducting his Spandana video conference with district collectors and SPs on the Covid-19 situation in the CM’s camp office at Tadepalli on Tuesday.

The number of tests has increased while the number of cases has decreased, said the CM, reiterating that the people have to live with Covid-19 by taking precautionary measures. He instructed authorities to be vigilant and to make best use of the 104 call centre in creating awareness among the public and to provide information related to the availability of beds, test results and hospitals. He directed officials to ensure that the helpline is working without any interruption and asked district collectors to monitor calls handled by the helpline and conduct mock calls.

Ordering authorities to display the list of Covid-19 hospitals including those empanelled hospitals in the village and ward secretariats, Jagan further directed them to ensure standards in all 240 Covid-19 hospitals and check that sanitation, staff and infrastructure are in place, proper food is being provided to patients and inspection drives being conducted periodically.

“The state government had recruited 30,000 medical staff and equipped 37,000 beds in hospitals across the state. Home isolation kits should be given to every patient in home isolation and Asha workers, ANM and PHC

DGP DENIES TD CHIEF’S CLAIMS ON ATTACK ON RAMAKRISHNA

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

The flurry of letters exchanged between Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu and AP DGP Gautam Sawang continued on Tuesday, with the police official replying to the Opposition leader on the attack on S. Ramachandra, brother of suspended judge S. Ramakrishna.

The Telugu Desam had alleged the YSRC activists were behind the attack and appointed a fact-finding committee into the incident, comprising former MLAs Pasam Sunil Kumar and Nelavala Subramanyam and party leaders Pantagani Narasimha Prasad, J. D. Rajasekhara and A. Peter.

Sawang wrote that Naidu’s allegations were far from the truth and informed that the victim had suffered minor injuries due to his drunken state as much as the physical scuffle.

■ Page 2: DGP says accused is TD supporter

doctors must be in contact with them and follow up their treatment,” Jagan said.

On YSR health clinics, Reddy instructed collectors to speed up the work for setting up the clinics and accelerate the tender process.

He told authorities not to delay the work and start the construction work at the earliest.

Officials were told to expedite the land identification process for medical colleges at Amalapuram, Madanapalle, Piduguralla, Adoni, Eluru and Pulivendula.

Rumours rife on Ganta’s entry into YSRC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 27

Fresh rumours are doing the rounds about Telugu Desam MLA from Vizag North and former minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao joining the YSRC Congress towards the end of this month. This is in the backdrop of TD announcing parliamentary committee chairpersons for all the 25 Lok Sabha constituencies

around the same time.

Srinivasa Rao was not present either at the preparatory meeting held for the creation of parliamentary committees or at the party’s senior leaders meeting on the exit of Visakhapatnam South MLA Vasupalle Ganesh Kumar.

Several dates were talked about Srinivasa Rao joining the ruling party since the beginning of the year

and one came very close when Rajya Sabha member and in charge of north Andhra affairs Vijaysai Reddy was undergoing treatment for Covid in Hyderabad.

Vijaysai Reddy has been opposing Ganta’s entry and made public announcements in this regard for his alleged part in the series of land scams. That rocked the TD government, which also compelled

● **Vijaysai Reddy and Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao are opposing Ganta Srinivas Rao’s entry into the YSR Congress**

its leader Chandrababu Naidu to form SIT to probe land grabbing.

Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao (Avanti), who was initiated into politics by Ganta after the launch of

Praja Rajyam Party is another leader opposing his mentor’s entry into YSRC.

Sources said before the elections, Avanti put a precondition to Jagan that he would not join the party if YSRC door was opened to Ganta. He knew if Ganta got into the party he would be rendered powerless in north coastal Andhra.

Many local leaders wondered who could be the

force behind Ganta’s joining YSRCP when two powerful leaders were opposing his entry.

“Since Visakhapatnam is going to be capital, the party bosses want a strong leader to take the lead in the urban sector. They see no other leader who could fill the gap. Hence the choice is zeroing in on Ganta Srinivasa Rao,” said a local ruling party leader.

Protest against atrocities



Police detain a Congress activist during a protest over the death of Dalit woman from Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, who was gang-raped on September 14, near Vijay Chowk in New Delhi on Tuesday.

— PTI

HYDROCHLORIC ACID LEAKS FROM TANKER ON HIGHWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

The leakage of hydrochloric acid from a tanker created panic at Kaza tollgate in Guntur on the Vijayawada-Chennai national highway-16 on Tuesday but alerted officials immediately shifted the tanker to a safer place.

The driver of the tanker observed hydrochloric acid was leaking when the lorry stopped at Kaza toll gate and he and the tollgate staff informed officials who immediately shifted the vehicle with the help of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to an open place, the Bible Mission Grounds, opposite Acharya Nagarjuna University.

Mangalagiri rural circle inspector P. Seshagiri Rao said that the NDRF and fire department officials, with the support of a mechanic, controlled the leakage by fixing a cap and informed the filling station authorities in Rajahmundry.

The vehicle had started from Rajahmundry on Monday night after filling the hydrochloric acid into the tanker was moving towards Chennai.

District fire officer, Y. Venkateswara Reddy, said the tanker was immediately shifted to an open place and the leakage temporarily stopped. “Technicians came along with an empty tanker, fixed the pipes of the tanker.”

DRUG | TRAIL

Ganja grown in Visakha Agency area is 3rd most popular and is supplied across country

Cannabis found with actors traces origin to Vizag Agency

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 29

The origin point of ganja, smoked by film stars and staff of Bollywood, Tollywood or others, lies in the Agency tracts of Visakhapatnam and border villages of Odisha. The psychoactive drug of this area is rich in quality and coveted throughout the country. Sources said Shilavathi, a variety of weed grown in the area, is highly popular among users.

Cannabis and other varieties of psychotropic drugs caught national attention after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput and subsequent arrest of his co-stars and female friends from Bollywood.

Inside sources disclose that after MD, the most popular drug used by Bollywood actors is ganja, sold under code name Dubies. While cocaine, LSD and MD are imported or sourced from Goa and Bengaluru, ganja is mostly

● **Sources said Shilavathi, a variety of weed grown in the Vishaka agency area, is highly popular among users across the country.**

● **The crop is purchased for ₹2,000 a kilogram at the harvest point but gets sold between ₹40,000 and ₹60,000 in these cities.**

procured by agents from the Visakhaka agency area.

While ganja grown in Kulu and Manali in Uttarakhand is mostly converted into hashish or charas, the crop grown in Madhaya Pradesh and

Jharkhand is largely consumed locally and hardly crosses borders of these two states.

Under trial prisoners under remand in Visakhapatnam Central Jail hail from different parts of the

country.

They have disclosed during investigations over the years that the Vizag agency-grown ganja has been reaching every corner of the country, particularly top cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru.

The crop is purchased for ₹2,000 a kilogram at the harvest point but gets sold between ₹40,000 and ₹60,000 in these cities. “We have booked cases against people from

Mumbai and other cities. But it is difficult to conclusively say that the weed seized in Bollywood has originated from Vizag agency,” says Special Enforcement Bureau A. S. P. Ajitha. Sources say ganja grown in north-eastern states is also sold in Bollywood.

Junior artists and technicians from Hyderabad say it is ganja from Visakhapatnam agency that is mostly sold in Hyderabad.

Weed is grown over an extent of 10,000 acres in Vizag and East Godavari agency areas, particularly along the AOB (Andhra-Orissa Border), from which police and excise personnel largely keep away due to presence of outlawed Maoists there.

Vizag Rural police had seized 31,648 kg of ganja worth Rs. 6 crore in 2017, around 16,000 kg worth ₹3.2 crore in 2018, and 21,970 kg worth ₹4.19 crore in 2019, according to reports.

OTHER STORIES

DGP SAYS
ACCUSED IS TD
SUPPORTER

From Page 1

Naidu had written an open letter to Sawang on Saturday alleging that the YSRC government was responsible for the attack on Ramachandra. TD leaders accused YSRC leaders including minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy for the attack.

Sawang stated that ironically, while the TD chief tried to accuse the YSRC of orchestrating the attack in order to "silence the dissenting voice of judge Ramakrishna", the investigation revealed that the accused (Prathap Reddy) was a "staunch TD supporter."

He called out Naidu for trying to mislead the people by posting the letter, which contained "unverified information," on social media and asked him to refrain from doing so in the future. Sawang stated, "It is unfortunate that such allegations are levelled without verifying the facts and further going on to generalise and attribute the same to 'deteriorating law and order situation' in the state."

Sawang asked Naidu to write to him in a sealed cover from hereon as his letters may contain "unverified information" which could raise "unnecessary" suspicion in the minds of citizens. Asking the TD chief to present the evidence proving YSRC involvement, if he holds any, Sawang wrote, "Should you hold any evidence or reason for suspicion about the involvement of any individual, you may write to me in a sealed cover and help the police."

TD leaders criticised Sawang saying that instead of taking action against the culprits, he was making counter-allegations against Naidu and sought an explanation for the absence of action against YSRC leaders responsible for the attack on Ramachandra.

APGEA DEMANDS
RELEASE OF
PENDING WAGESDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

AP Government Employees Association (APGEA) has demanded that the state government release 50 per cent of their salaries it had withheld due to financial crisis arising out of Covid-19 pandemic.

APGEA president K.R. Suryanarayana said majority of the IAS officials was avoiding Secretariat because of Coronavirus.

Their union had tried to meet Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney but she has not come to the state secretariat since past six months.

Suryanarayana demanded that the state government immediately pay 50 per cent of the pending salaries for March and April, 2020. He also demanded that the government also pay the five pending Dearness Allowance arrears from July 2018.

The APGEA president said state government employees have been facing many hardships as they had got only half of their salaries.

He pointed out that government employees have been attending to duties in spite of the Covid pandemic for implementing various schemes of the state government and helping the needy during their time of crisis.

Suryanarayana urged the state government to take measures and ensure that all retirement benefits are paid to the staff on their day of retirement as per rules.

Officers and gentlemen



Civil Services-2020 selected candidates from Andhra Pradesh meet Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at his camp office on Tuesday. Principal secretary Praveen Prakash is also seen.

Rains kill 8 in state, Jagan announces ₹5L ex gratia

Jagan says MSP of crops should be announced on Oct. 1

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, said that the minimum support price (MSP) of crops should be announced on October 1 and the list should be displayed at all Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBK) by October 5.

During the Spandana review meeting here on Tuesday, Jagan reviewed the damage done during the recent heavy rains and floods with the collectors of affected districts of Krishna, Guntur and Nellore. The estimates on the quantum of loss should be assessed and sent at the earliest. The enumeration should be displayed at RBKs.

Announcing an ex gratia payment of ₹5 lakh to the families of each of the eight persons were killed in heavy rains over the past week, Jagan said that the farmers should be informed in advance about procurement at RBKs and asked the officials to distribute coupons in advance.

Reviewing the procurement of agricultural produce and discussing the preparation and planning of the cultivation of rabi crops, Jagan said crop procurement and purchase through RBKs should be done effectively.

Directing authorities to expedite the registrations of farmers on e-cropping platforms without missing any single farmer, Jagan told officials to complete e-cropping listings for every crop. E-cropping will make it easier to pay the insurance premium for the crops and to provide them with a minimum remunerative price and compensation in case of crop loss, said Jagan, asserting that farmers should be given the highest priority to make sure that no farmer faces any losses. "Multi-purpose facility centres (MPFC) would be set up next to the RBKs by the next year, at an estimated cost of ₹6,300 crore. Facilities such as warehouses, drying platforms, collection centres, cold storages, janta bazaars, cattle sheds, and aqua infra will be provided to the farmers. The collectors should identify the lands next to RBKs in the coming 15 days," said Jagan.

In addition to the agriculture sector, Jagan also



Ministers Ch. Sriranganadharaju and M. Sucharitha interact with flood affected farmers during their visit to flood-hit ares under Krishna Basin in Amaravati mandal of Guntur district on Tuesday.

— Tejo Roy Eleti

Ministers visit flood-hit areas

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

Minister for housing and Guntur district in-charge minister, Ch. Sri Ranganatha Raju, and home minister, Mekathoti Sucharitha, assured flood victims of aid from the government after the submission of a detailed report of damages caused by the rain-induced floods.

The ministers, with officials, visited the flood-affected areas of the Guntur district on Tuesday. The transportation between old Amaravati and capital Amaravati-Mangalagiri-Vijayawada remained cut on the consecutive fourth day on Tuesday due to the overflowing of the Kondaveeti vagu on a low-lying bridge at Peda Maddur. The officials stated that at various crops were damaged in 2400 hectares in Amaravati mandal due to floods.

Low-lying areas in Peda Maddur, Narukullapadu and other villages in Amaravati mandal of Guntur

reviewed the workings of village secretariats, and NREGA works across the state. Directing district collectors to visit village/ward secretariats twice a week, Jagan asked joint collectors to visit them four times in a week. District collectors and JCs should own the village secretariat system as it

districts were marooned due to floods hence the ministers visited the areas and interacted with the locals.

Saying that a detailed report would be submitted to Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, on damage of crops due to floods, Raju directed officials to shift people to safer places in view of the overflowing Kondaveeti vagu, Narukulla vagu, Kottella vagu and other local streams.

Commercial crops like cotton, red chillies and other crops were damaged due to floods, so he came here along with minister Sucharitha and officials to assess the situation and report it, said Raju. He said that the crops were damaged due to overflowing of local streams hence they will also submit a report seeking measures to streamline local streams to avoid such incidents in the future. He said that the farmers put huge investments to get the produce but sadly majority of the fields were

directly connects to the people, Jagan said, adding that the performance of district collectors and JCs will be measured based on their active role in the village secretariats.

On NREGA, Jagan directed the officials to work keeping a target to utilise ₹10 crore material component in a week in

marooned in Guntur district but reassured them of help from the state.

Responding to the difficulties of the cutting of connectivity between old Amaravathi and capital Amaravati-Mangalagiri-Vijayawada due to overflowing of Kondaveeti vagu at Peda Maddur, Sucharitha assured the people that the frequent marooning would be resolved through the streamlining of local streams.

Their report will ask for the widening of, and removal of silt from, local streams to stop the inundation of fields and villages., said Sucharitha, adding that they will make a plan to supply seeds for cultivation of crops in the fields to overcome the losses faced by the farmers. She said that the officials of the agriculture department will help farmers by giving them suggestions on cropping patterns through soil tests. The officials of the agriculture department submitted a report to Raju.

every assembly constituency. He instructed authorities to take up the construction of village and ward secretariats, RBKs, YSR health clinics, milk cooling units, and anganwadi centres. Upon successful completion of the work, an additional ₹5 crore worth work will be provided.

Cong demands cancellation of three farmers related laws

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

AP Congress committee president, Sake Sailajana, on Tuesday submitted a memorandum addressing the President, Ram Nath Kovind, and AP Governor, Biswabhusan Harichandan, stating that the Modi government has unleashed a diabolical conspiracy to defeat the green revolution by bringing in the captioned anti-farmer bills.

Alleging that the bill was a well-designed conspiracy to destroy the annadata farmer and agriculture at the altar of a handful of crony capitalists, Sailajana demanded the withdrawal of the farmers produce trade and commerce bill, 2020, agreement of price assurance farm service bill, 2020, and the essential commodities amendment bill, 2020.

Earlier, the Congress conducted a rally from the AP Congress office, Andhra Ratna Bhavan to Raj Bhavan demanding the cancellation of the three laws.

62 crores farmers and farm labourers are agitating across India, Sailajana said and adding that over 250 farmer organisations are taking part in dharnas, are on hunger strikes and are demonstrating across the length and breadth of the country against the three anti-farmer bills.

Lamenting that Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, continues to be blind to the agony of the farmers and was suppressing every voice of protest, Sailajana alleged that the Modi government is dictatorially subverting the voices of farmer representatives inside the parliament and has unleashed a draconian lathi-danda regime on the protesting farmer communities.

Deploing the Modi government for subverting India's federal structure, subjugating the constitutional mandate, suppressing the established parliamentary procedure by using its draconian majority to pass 'the three black laws' without any discussion or prior consultation, Sailajana said that the laws were illegally and unconstitutionally passed in the Rajya Sabha, without even permitting a division of votes and by using force deploying marshals and evacuating members of parliament. He demanded the cancellation of the three laws.

Anti-farm bill movement to be taken to villages

VADREVVU SRINIVAS | DC
RAJAHMUNDRY, SEPT. 29

An all-party meet of farmers associations led by Rythu Sangham has decided to take the anti-farm bill movement to the village level as they believe that the agri-bills will become a noose to the farmers in the future.

The meet, held in Rajahmundry on Tuesday, was presided over by the Rythu Sangham state treasurer, Chelluboyina Kesava Shetty. Participating as a chief guest in the meet, the Sangham national vice president, Ravula Venkaiah, said that the NDA government passed farm bills in an undemocratic manner and these bills should be abolished fin the interests of farming community.

The NDA government was campaigning on the

farm bills claiming that the farmers can sell their produce with profitable prices without any restrictions but such a situation would not prevail as corporate forces will not give even minimum support price (MSP). He cited the example of Gujarat and said that the farmers in Gujarat were facing difficulty to get the MSP for their produce.

Congress party Rajahmundry parliamentary district president, S.V. Srinivas Rao, said that already the party expedited the movement against the farm bills and they would take the movement until the abolishing the bills.

CPM district secretary, T. Arun, said the left parties would take relay fasts in Kakinada on September 30 and Rajahmundry on October 1 in protest against the farm bills.

LEFT PARTIES STAGE DHARNA IN VIZAG

KMP PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 29

CPI's national secretary, K. Narayana, attacked the NDA government led by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, calling it the puppet of corporate entities. Narayana was addressing a small gathering of Left parties which staged a dharna protesting against the three farm bills.

The senior CPI leader alleged that 36 business tycoons swindled public

money and left the country but the Modi government made no effort to bring them back and initiate action against them. Incidentally, most of them hail from Modi's home state of Gujarat.

The three bills were widely being opposed across the country. Farmers from seven states under the banner of 107 farmers unions laid siege to New Delhi in protest against the bills, said Narayana.

LEFT CRITICISES CENTRE ON FARM BILLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 29

CPM and CPI leaders also staged a protest at Atmakur bus stand in Nellore, demanding that the centre withdraw the anti-farmer policies.

CPM district secretary, Ch. Rajagopal, and CPI district secretary, Prabhakar, led the protesters who alleged that the central government has been passing their anti-farmer and anti-public policies

without any opposition only because of their strength in Parliament.

They denounced the negligent attitude of the centre towards farmers and the passing bills that destroy farmers' lives. As there was a huge protest against the anti-farmer bills, the centre has to consider this and revoke the bills, they demanded. CPI and CPM leaders, P. Sriramulu, K. Venkateswarlu and others were present.

Reopening of schools put off from Oct. 5 to Nov. 2

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

The reopening of schools was put off to November 2 in the state while the Jagananna Vidya Kankana (JVK) kits would be distributed to children on October 5 to enable them to get their uniforms stitched in time.

During the Spandana video conference held here on Tuesday, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stated that the reopening was postponed keeping in view the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier, it was decided that all the schools would reopen from October 5 and JVK kits would be distributed the same day. Each kit consists of cloth for three sets of uniforms, textbooks, notebooks, a pair of shoes, two pairs of socks, belt and a school bag.

● **EARLIER, IT** was decided that all the schools would reopen from October 5 and JVK kits would be distributed the same day. Each kit consists of cloth for three sets of uniforms, textbooks, notebooks, a pair of shoes, two pairs of socks, belt and a school bag.

forms, textbooks, notebooks, a pair of shoes, two pairs of socks, belt and a school bag.

Directing officials to focus on completing the first phase of Nadu Nedu work as early as possible, Reddy also told joint collectors to monitor the work on a daily basis.

In the first phase, 15,715 schools were identified, where 10 facilities are to be provided. So far, work is in progress in 15,562 schools.

Officials informed the CM that slab work has to be done in 701 toilets.

Besides the distribution of JVK kits on October 5, Reddy said that the distribution of RoFR pattas to adivasis in 35 Scheduled Area zones would take place on October 2, commemorating Gandhi Jayanti.

Given that 27,564 anganwadi centres are being operated in rental spaces, officials were told to shift them to permanent buildings. So far land identification was done in 14,738 places. For 12,826 centres, suitable lands are yet to be identified.

Deputy Chief Minister Alla Nani, ministers, Botsa Satyanarayana, Kannababu, Adimulapu Suresh and other officials were among those at the Spandana programme.

OFFICIAL | APATHY

Delay in release of money hampers project completion

Cost-sharing hits Tirupati RuB work

AVINASH P.
SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, SEPT. 29

Works on Road under Bridge (RuB) at Rayala Cheruvu in Tirupati, which would connect northern and southern sides of the temple city, have come to a halt with confusion over sharing of its cost between the Municipal Corporation of Tirupati (MCT) and the Indian Railways.

Thanks to Lord Venkateswara's shrine on Tirumala, Tirupati has expanded rapidly. Its southern has grown at a much faster rate with many commercial and residential establishments, while key institutions of the government, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD),

apart from certain private offices, are located on the northern side that has reached a saturation point with regard to development. An estimated 2.5 lakh vehicles pass daily through the railway gate that separates the northern and southern sides of temple city. The gate closes about 80-100 times a day owing to movement of passenger, goods, and shunting trains.

Each time the gate gets closed, the entire stretch on both sides of the gate gets packed with vehicles, leaving citizens stranded on the road for a long time.

Considering the hardships, Railways came forward to construct an RuB along the Rayala Cheruvu road about three years

● **Works on the Road under Bridge** have been temporarily halted over lack of coordination between Railways and MCT.

ago. The expenditure was to be jointly borne by the state government and Railways on a 50-50 cost sharing basis. Initially, the state government did not follow up on RuB with Railways. But after the new government took over, the Municipal Corporation of Tirupati has been ordered to coordinate and carry out RuB works as early as possible. Since then, MCT has taken up various works including diversion of power and water supply lines, apart from construction of box culverts and RCC drains at

the said railway gate.

The civic body has since then completed 90 per cent of its works. The balance works have been temporarily halted due to reported non-payment of instalments by Railways, an MCT official disclosed.

When contacted, municipal commissioner P. S. Girisha admitted that they have to receive an instalment of ₹69.80 lakh towards 50 per cent share of Railways for the works already executed. The commissioner has written a letter to railways divisional engineer (DRE), Guntakal, on September 24 requesting for release 50 per cent share for the current set of works being executed and future works contemplated.

In his letter, the civic chief enclosed the utilisation certificate for ₹69.80 lakh and sought ₹131.05 lakh for next instalment of works taken up by MCT on 600-mm diameter water supply pumping main, approach roads and so on, which would cost ₹262.10 lakh.

When this newspaper contacted Guntakal divisional engineer Alok Tiwari, he maintained that there has been no delay by Railways in releasing monies for the RuB. Works have almost been completed.

The agency to which the contract has been given will ground the remaining works in a couple of days. He assured that the RuB works will be completed by the next monsoon.

SHORT TAKES

AP Ed.GET-2020
on Oct 1.

Visakhapatnam: All the arrangements have been made for the Andhra Pradesh Education Common Entrance Test, being conducted by Andhra University on October 1 from 10 am to 12 noon at total 50 centres across the state. The convener of the test Prof. R. Siva Prasad on Tuesday said that as many as 15,658 candidates registered for the test. A majority of the aspirants are female with 9,988 registrations. Though the management has invited applications for Urdu subject with 97 seats, no candidate applied. There were no applicants for scribes yet. The scribes would be allotted by the concerned centre superintendents. Candidates with a qualification of up to intermediate only would be considered for scribes, the convener said.

EXTRAMARITAL
RELATION: AUTO
DRIVER BURNT

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

A person angry over extramarital relationship burned an auto-rickshaw driver alive after pouring petrol on the latter in Agathavarappadu in Guntur district in the early hours on Tuesday.

The Pedakakani police station circle inspector U. Shoban Babu said that 25-year-old auto-rickshaw driver Tammisetty Ramakrishna, died while undergoing treatment in GGH at Guntur on Tuesday. He said that Ramakrishna and M. Vamsi were friends, but Ramakrishna had developed an extramarital relationship with Vamsi's sister. Vamsi and Ramakrishna went to the fields in Agathavarappadu village in the early hours on Tuesday. After a heated argument between the two over the extramarital relations, an angry Vamsi lit the fire after pouring petrol on Ramakrishna and managed to escape from the spot. Ramakrishna, screaming for help, ran from the farmlands. The locals passed the information to the police and tried to rescue Ramakrishna by controlling the flames.

The police rushed to the spot and shifted severely burned Ramakrishna to GGH in Guntur for treatment, but he died while undergoing treatment due to severe burn injuries. The police registered a case based on Ramakrishna's statement before he died and started searches to arrest the culprit.

LIONESS DIES IN
ANIMAL RESCUE
CENTRE IN VIZAG

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 29

Asiatic lioness Bimla died at the animal rescue centre in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. She had lived her full life and died at 20 years of age. The cause of death was due to myocardial infarction, as per the post-mortem submitted by the veterinary assistant surgeon of Indira Gandhi Zoological Park. Bimla was rescued from a circus at the age of three and brought to the animal rescue centre in 2003.

APEMC HELD AN
ONLINE SESSION
ON WASTE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

Andhra Pradesh Environment Management Corporation conducted an online training programme on 'Online Waste Exchange Platform' involving nearly 500 stakeholders from the state recently.

The stakeholders learnt about 100 per cent tracking of waste generation and disposal, monitoring of movement of waste through GPS, scrutiny and audit of waste, safe disposal of toxic wastes, encouragement towards utilisation of wastes such as pre-processing and co-processing and also promotion of the six Rs including Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refurbish, Redesign and Remanufacture.

AP Pollution Control Board chairman B.S.S. Prasad, member secretary Vivek Yadav and representatives from industries, FICCI, waste processing facilities, recycling units, waste generating industries, waste disposal facilities and others participated.

State records 6,190
new Covid-19 cases

EG accounts for the highest number of total 96,191

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN |
DC
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

Andhra Pradesh has registered 6,190 new Covid-19 cases during the last 24 hours, raising the overall tally to 6,87,351, apart from 35 deaths, taking the death toll to 5,780.

The Covid-19 bulletin issued by the state health authorities on Tuesday disclosed that out of 68,429 samples tested during the past 24 hours, 6,190 individuals have tested virus positive. Out of total 57,34,752 samples tested so far in the state, 6,22,136 patients have been discharged after recovery, while 59,435 of the virus-affected patients are undergoing treatment.

Among the newly confirmed Coronavirus infections, East Godavari registered the highest number of 991 cases, followed by 907 in West Godavari, 784 in Chittoor, 569 in Prakasam, 432 in Nellore, 410 in Guntur, 398 in Krishna, 377 in Srikakulam, 312 in Vizianagaram, 299 in Kadapa, 291 in Visakhapatnam, 276 in Anantapur and 144 in Kurnool.

East Godavari also accounts for the highest number of total 96,191 Covid-19 positive cases, followed by 66,243 in West Godavari, 60,933 in Chittoor, 56,795 in Anantapur, 55,942 in Kurnool, 54,192 in Guntur, 51,920 in Nellore, 49,793 in Visakhapatnam, 47,925 in Prakasam, 43,431 in Kadapa, 39,256 in Srikakulam, 34,853 in Vizianagaram, 26,982 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

The rate of recovery



Medical Staff collect the swab from the people for Covid-19 testing at Sanjeevini Bus which was set up at Government ENT Hospital in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

among the Coronavirus-infected patients has been good in East Godavari with 85,701 recoveries, followed by 59,833 in West Godavari, 54,617 in Chittoor, 54,446 in Anantapur, 53,791 in Kurnool, 49,237 in Nellore, 47,964 in Guntur, 45,451 in Visakhapatnam, 39,828 in Kadapa, 38,087 in Prakasam, 35,163 in Srikakulam, 31,149 in Vizianagaram, 23,974 in Krishna, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

With regard to daily cases of death due to Covid-19, Prakasam has registered eight patients, followed by six in Chittoor, four each in Anantapur, East Godavari and Guntur, three in Visakhapatnam and two each in Nellore, West Godavari and Srikakulam. Among cumulative cases of

deaths, Chittoor has registered the highest number of 647 deaths, followed by 527 in Guntur, 519 in East Godavari, 483 in Anantapur, 478 in Prakasam, 462 in Kurnool, 449 in West Godavari, 445 in Nellore, 435 in Krishna, 427 in Visakhapatnam, 371 in Kadapa, 320 in Srikakulam and 217 in Vizianagaram.

State health authorities have discharged 9,836 Covid-19 patients after recovery from various hospitals in the last 24 hours in the state. AP has carried out Covid-19 tests on 1,07,392 samples per one million population, registering a positive rate of 11.99, while Maharashtra tested 53,021 samples with a positive rate of 20.40 and Telangana tested 73,444 samples with a positive rate of 6.49.

ASSISTANT
SUB-INSPECTOR
IN ACB NET

KMP PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 29

An Assistant Sub-Inspector of Gajuwaka police station in Vizag city was caught red-handed, on Tuesday, for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹5,000 from a complainant for an official favour.

DSP of ACB (Visakha Urban) K. Ranga Raju said that the Assistant Sub-Inspector Suryanarayana demanded the complainant Naresh Kumar Patnaik for ₹5,000 bribe in exchange of providing a post-mortem report of his father and issue a Section 41 (A) notice to grant station bail.

The ACB officials said that Naresh Kumar Patnaik and his father were travelling on a bike on August 30 when his father slipped from the bike and died while undergoing treatment in King George Hospital, the following day.

The Gajuwaka police registered a case against Naresh Kumar Patnaik.

RTC staff worst
hit with Covid

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

The APSRTC was the worst hit because of the Covid-19 pandemic as 4,500 employees were infected, and another 72 staff died, said the Transport department principal secretary and APSRTC VC & MD, M.T. Krishna Babu on Tuesday.

Addressing the meeting of zone directors and regional managers through video conference, Krishna Babu said financial support would be extended to the deceased family members. He pointed out that the family members of the employees are also infected from Covid-19 and that one should encourage the employees to attend the duties, and the depot managers should ensure that they follow it with commitment.

Mr Krishna Babu said that the employees should follow the Covid guidelines by wearing masks, using sanitizers

and maintaining social distance. He said that as 30 to 40 per cent of the buses are permitted to ply at present, the employees can attend the duties in rotation method. He stated that APSRTC has decided to provide financial help of ₹5 lakh to the families of the deceased and soon minister for transport Purni Venkata Ramaiah will present the financial aid in a programme.

Mr Krishna Babu said that through cargo transport ₹200 crore should be earned during the year 2020-21 and private employees shall be deployed in the cargo transport section. He said that the income during Aug. and Sept. would be sufficient for diesel expenses.

The APSRTC VC & MD said that from October the buses should ply with 60 per cent occupancy and should cover at least 30 lakh km to gain an income of ₹250 crore per month, he added.

TD CORPORATOR,
MPDO SUCCUMB
TO COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, SEPT. 29

Two men, one a government official and the other political leader, died of Covid-19 in the early hours here on Tuesday.

A mandal parishad development officer, identified as Ch. Chinnababu, 49, contracted Coronavirus on September 15 and opted for home quarantine for four days. Later, he was admitted to the government hospital for treatment, where he succumbed to the virus.

Telugu Desam corporator Malladi Gangadhar, also 49, representing Division No. 16 of Kakinada Municipal Corporation, was admitted to a private hospital after getting infected with Covid-19. He died while undergoing treatment. Former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and several former ministers have condoled Gangadhar's death.

Incidentally, East Godavari superintendent of police Adnan Nayeem Asmi and additional SP K. Kumar have recovered from Coronavirus and started working from Tuesday. The two had tested negative after taking treatment for 14 days.

● **East Godavari**
superintendent of police Adnan Nayeem Asmi recovered from Coronavirus

SCR TO RUN TWO
SPECIAL TRAINS
FOR UPSC EXAM

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

The South Central Railway (SCR) is running two special trains between Vijayawada-Visakhapatnam-Vijayawada for the benefit of candidates appearing for UPSC examination on October 3 and 4.

According to a release from SCR, train No. 07233 Vijayawada-Visakhapatnam special train will depart from Vijayawada at 3 pm on October 3 and will arrive at Visakhapatnam at 10 pm on the same day.

In the return direction, train No. 07234 Visakhapatnam-Vijayawada special train will depart from Visakhapatnam at 10.30 pm hrs on October 4 and will arrive at Vijayawada at 4 am the next day.

The special trains will stop en route at Eluru, Tadepalligudem, Nidadavole, Rajahmundry, Samalkot, Tuni, Anantapalli and Duvvada stations in both the directions.

RAILWAYS
ANNOUNCES
MORE STOPPAGES

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, SEPT. 29

The Indian Railways has decided to provide several additional stoppages of the special trains from October 1, at several stations in Odisha for the convenience of the passengers. The Railways also decided to extend some special trains terminating in Khurda Road to Puri in Odisha.

ADDITIONAL STOPPAGES OF THE SPECIAL TRAINS:

- M u m b a i - Bhubaneswar Mumbai special Konark express will have an additional stop at Balugaon, Chhatrapur and Brahmapur from both the directions.

- S e c u n d e r a b a d - Howrah-Secunderabad Falaknuma special will have an additional stop at Balugaon and Berhampur from both the directions.

- Guwahati-Bangalore-Guwahati tri-weekly special will have an additional stop at Balugaon and Berhampur from both the directions.

- H o w r a h - Tiruchirapalli-Howrah bi-weekly special will have an additional stop at Brahmapur from both the directions.

- Khurda Road-Ahmedabad-Khurda Road special will have an additional stop at K a l u p a d a g h a t, Balugaon, Khalikote, Chhatrapur and Brahmapur from both the directions.

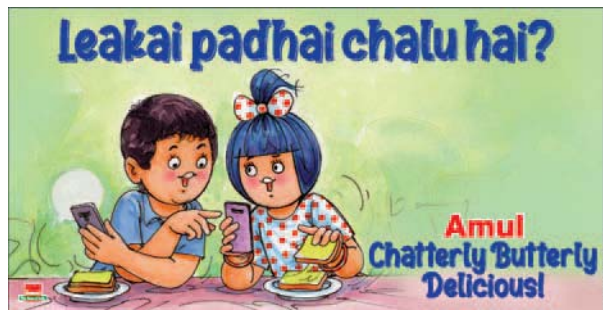
- Khurda Road-Okha-Khurda Road special will have an additional stop at Balugaon and Chhatrapur from both the directions.

- Gandhidham-Khurda Road-Gandhidham special will have an additional stop at Balugaon, Chhatrapur and Muniguda from both the directions.

- Visakhapatnam-Korba-Visakhapatnam special will have an additional stop at Muniguda and Harishankar Road from both the directions.

EXTENSION OF SPECIAL TRAINS TO PURI:

- Khurda Road-Ahmedabad-Khurda Road special both from Khurda Road and Ahmedabad from October 1, Bhubaneswar - A h m e d a b a d - Bhubaneswar special from Bhubaneswar.

Woman hires killers
to eliminate husband

D SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, SEPT. 29

Vexed with deviant behaviour of her husband, Durgamma, a native of Sivapuram village, hired five contract killers for ₹2 lakh to eliminate her husband Gangaiah.

According to Atmakur D.S.P.J. Venkata Rao, Durgamma had repeatedly complained to police that her husband had been abusing her daily in an inebriated condition. Despite counselling by police, Gangaiah, a native of Chinna Gummalapuram village, did not mend his ways.

Durgamma had married Gangaiah about 15 years ago. They have two children aged 11 years and 12 years. Because of their father's behaviour, the kids were living with Durgamma's parents in Chinna Gummalapuram since a few years.

In the interim, Durgamma was also having an affair with another person. As such, she decided not to go through the turmoil of her

husband and gave ₹2 lakh contract to five youth of Sivapuram village. The gang took ₹1 lakh from Durgamma as advance.

On Sunday night, the gang took Gangaiah to a nearby forest in the name of drink and dinner. After they all consumed liquor, the contract killers attacked on Gangaiah and strangled him with a towel. After confirming his death, they left the body in the deep forests, three kilometres from the killing spot, the DSP disclosed.

One of the killers got injured and on questioning by their village people, the five youth confessed to the killing. The villagers admitted the injured youth to the Government General Hospital in Kurnool which the other youth absconded from their village. Villagers then informed the parents of the deceased about the incident.

Police subsequently took seven persons, including Durgamma and her father, into custody.

PRIVATE JUNIOR COLLEGES ASKED TO
ISSUE PASS CERTIFICATES TO STUDENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, SEPT. 29

The Board of Intermediate Education asked the managements of private junior colleges not to insist on clearing payment dues from students for issue of pass certificates and cautioned severe action if they do so.

BIE secretary V. Rama Krishna in a release issued on Tuesday stated that pass

certificates of Intermediate Public Examination, March 2020 and Intermediate Advanced Supplementary Examination, July 2020, are available at the respective regional inspection officers in the districts. He requested the principals to issue pass certificates to the Intermediate students before October 15, without fail.

APSRTC TO RESUME INDRA AC BUSES
FROM RAJAHMUNDY TO VIZAG

DC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAHMUNDY, SEPT. 29

APSRTC will resume Indra AC buses from Rajahmundry to Visakhapatnam from October 1. The APSRTC Rajahmundry Depot Manager P.N.V.M.S.N. Murthy said that two buses would run through the route and the first bus will start from Rajahmundry Depot at 8 am and will reach Visakhapatnam by 12.25 pm and again the bus will start at Visakhapatnam 1.15 pm

and will reach Rajahmundry by 5.40 pm. The second bus will start from Rajahmundry Depot at 9.20 am and will reach Visakhapatnam by 1.45 pm and again the bus will start at Visakhapatnam by 2.45 pm and will reach Rajahmundry by 7.10 pm. He requested the passengers to utilise the services by getting a reservation. He said that the passengers could get the reservation through online or at the reservation counters in the depots.

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Sr. Dy. Materials Manager, Paradip Port Trust
PPT/PR/236/20-21 Dated:29.9.2020

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2 2C×10 3500
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Last date for down loading of Specification/tender documents from www.eproc.punjab.gov.in 03 November 2020 (upto 11:00 AM)
Last date for Bid Submission 03 November 2020 (upto 11:00 AM)
Bid Opening date. 03 November 2020 (upto 11:00 AM)
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Chief Purchase officer/MM, Central Purchase Organisation, PSPCL, Patiala.
C-312/2020 R/O: I/83468

SHORT TAKE

90 PER CENT STILL VULNERABLE TO CORONAVIRUS

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

The second sero-survey conducted by ICMR has found that one in 15 individuals, aged 10 years and above, were estimated to have been exposed to SARS-CoV2 till August 2020. According to ICMR, this shows that a considerable population is still susceptible to Covid-19.

While giving out the details of the survey, ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava said 6.6 per cent of the 29,082 people (aged 10 and above) surveyed between August 17 and September 22 showed evidence of past exposure to Covid-19 and 7.1 per cent of the adult population (aged 18 and above) also showed evidence of past exposure to it.

Dr Bhargava added that though lockdown, containment and behavioural change at population level have managed to check the potential spread of SARS-CoV2, the survey findings show that about 90 per cent of the population is still vulnerable.

The survey showed that urban slums (15.6%) and non-slum (8.2%) areas had higher SARS-COV2 infection prevalence than that in rural areas (4.4%).

The second sero-survey was conducted in the same 700 villages and wards from 70 districts from 21 states, which were covered during the first survey.

The first sero-survey of May revealed that the nationwide prevalence of Coronavirus infection was only 0.73%.

The second survey further showed that there is a lower infection to case ratio in August compared to May, which reflects a substantial increase in testing and detection across India.

Meanwhile, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday tested positive for Covid-19, the Vice President secretariat said.

It said Naidu, 71, is asymptomatic and in good health.

"The Vice President of India who underwent a routine Covid-19 test today morning has been tested positive. He is however, asymptomatic and in good health," the secretariat tweeted. Naidu has been advised home quarantine. His wife Usha Naidu has been tested negative and is in self-isolation, the tweet said.

Decline in fresh cases of Coronavirus continued on Tuesday as 70,589 new patients were detected taking India's overall tally to 61.45 lakh.

In the last 24 hours, the number of deaths too came down to 776 from a thousand that was reported daily for the last several days.

India's total deaths now stand at 96,318, as per Union health ministry.

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said considerable decline has been noted in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh but in Kerala cases are on the rise.

The health secretary also said that the government does not agree to the ₹80,000 crore figures put out by Serum Institute of India for the Covid-19 vaccines saying, "We have calculated the amount required in the meetings and currently, that amount is available with the government."

He added that a panel of experts on vaccine administration has met five times to work out the modalities.

We want to bury them in our zameen: Kin of Shopian victims

Families of the 3 youths want bodies to be exhumed and handed over to them for burial

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
MODA KATHUNI (J&K),
SEPT. 29

"My child was innocent. I'm completely shattered and broken. My heart is bleeding also because we couldn't bury him and our two other boys in our own zameen (soil)," lamented teary-eyed Shameema Akhtar while showing the photograph of her son Muhammad Imtiaz saved in her other son's mobile phone.

Imtiaz, 20, was among three youths from Rajouri killed in an alleged fake encounter by the Army in militancy-infested Shopian district on July 18, a day after the trio had arrived there to work in an apple orchard to earn living and then passed off as 'terrorists'.

J&K police say that they had provided sufficient time for identification of the corpses at the Police Control Room Kashmir at Srinagar. As no one came forward to claim the bodies and people also failed in identifying them, they were buried in a cemetery in the remotest Baramulla district, almost 250 kilometres from their home district in presence of a magistrate after conducting post-mortem and lifting DNA samples, the police said.

Bahut zulum hova oss kay saath (a great injustice was done to him), said Sabir Hussain, father of Imtiaz.

He revealed to this correspondent that his son had passed his Class 12th examination with good marks and was "very keen" to get admission in a good college either in Rajouri town, Jammu or Srinagar and in order to meet the expenses for his studies he went to Shopian to "earn some money".

Hussain said the other two slain youths Muhammad Abrar, 25, and Ibrar Ahmed Khan, 16, were his nephews (sagay bhanjaya).

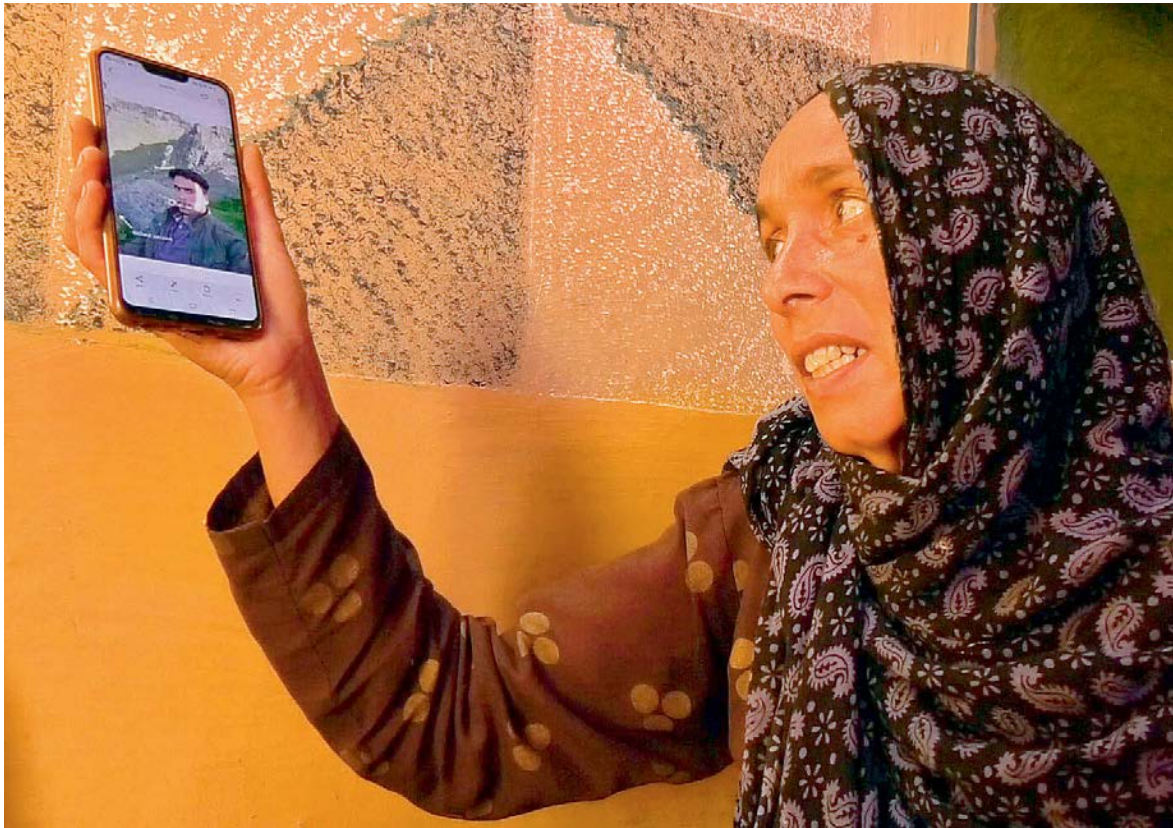
"You can understand we have been devastated," he said but added that he is quite confident that the Army "will do justice with us."

He and also his other son Muhammad Arif pleaded that since the Army has admitted that the three youths were killed by its men during a so-called operation in Shopian's Amshipora on July 18 and the J&K police have announced that the results of the DNA samples of their parents have matched those of the slain, their bodies should be exhumed and handed over to their families.

"We want to give them decent burials in our own zameen," said Hussain.

Inspector General of Police (Kashmiri range), Vijay Kumar, said in Srinagar last week, "We've received the DNA sample results of three families of Rajouri and these have matched with those of the three killed in Amshipora, Shopian on July 18. We will now take further course of action and complete the remaining formalities."

He added that a panel of experts on vaccine administration has met five times to work out the modalities.



Shameema Akhtar looks at the photograph of her son Muhammad Imtiaz saved in a mobile phone.

Polls in PoK: India lodges protest

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

India on Tuesday lodged a strong protest with Pakistan against its attempt to conduct polls in November in the Gilgit-Baltistan area of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), saying that these areas are an integral part of India and illegally occupied by Pakistan.

Amid reports that Pakistan plans to turn the Gilgit-Baltistan region into its fifth province, New Delhi termed Pakistan's action of conducting polls there as "cosmetic exercises intended to camouflage its

● Amid reports that Pakistan plans to turn the Gilgit-Baltistan region into its fifth province, New Delhi termed Pakistan's action of conducting polls there as "cosmetic exercises intended to camouflage its illegal occupation".

In another development, India — at the "second Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism" held virtually — "highlighted that the victims of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack and 2016 Pathankot terror attack are yet to get

justice due to unwillingness and non-cooperative attitude of a particular country", a thinly-veiled reference to Pakistan.

In a statement, the MEA said, "We have seen reports regarding announcement of elections to the so-called 'Gilgit-Baltistan' Legislative Assembly to be held on November 15, 2020. The Government of India has conveyed its strong protest to the Government of Pakistan and reiterated that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of so-called Gilgit and Baltistan are an integral part of India by virtue of its

accession in 1947. The Government of Pakistan has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it."

The MEA added, "The Government of India has also completely rejected the recent actions such as the so-called 'Gilgit-Baltistan (Elections and Caretaker Government) Amendment Order 2020' and continued attempts by the Pakistan establishment to bring material changes in areas under its illegal and forcible occupation. Action such as these can neither hide the illegal occupation nor the grave human rights violations of people residing in PoK territories."

According to DGP Dilbag Singh, the investigation into the alleged fake encounter is in the final stage.

"I'm myself monitoring the investigation process and very soon further details of the case will be shared with you. The Army is also investigating the case on its own and, hopefully, it will be completed in next few days," he had told reporters in Srinagar on Monday.

While Hussain has full faith in the investigation process and expects justice will be delivered soon, Arif wants those involved in this "heinous crime" to meet the fate of his brother and cousins.

"They killed them in cold blood. They too should be brought forward and shot dead," he said.

The parents and other relatives of Abrar and Ibrar who also live in mud houses in dispersed settlements tucked away in the hills of Rajouri and at a three hours walking distance from a motorable side road opening on Mughal Road that connects Srinagar with Rajouri town, endorsed the demand that the mortal remains of the trio be handed over to them for burial in their native places "before these get decomposed further."

Said Ibrar's father Baga Khan, "We must get their bodies now...No one in the families could see their faces before they were laid in their graves. Justice must be done."

Irshad Ahmed, the village panch while endorsing the demand said that the Aadhaar cards and mobile phones of the slain youths may also be handed over to the families and the government should consider sanctioning ex-gratia relief to the families which live in "extreme poverty" besides a job for the next of kin.

Sarpanch of Dhar Sakri area, Aijaz Ahmed, questioned the Army's earlier claim that it had killed "unidentified terrorists" at Amshipora on July 17.

He asked, "How is it possible for any authority to say unidentified as all the three were carrying their

identity i.e. Aadhaar cards?" He called for a judicial inquiry into the killings and strict action against the guilty.

"We also demand that an FIR be registered under relevant sections of the law against those who killed them," he added.

Lal Hussain, friend and cousin of Imtiaz said, "He and I would spend a lot of time together. He was a nice guy. I think someone had misled the Army by providing wrong information about him and other boys."

Watching out for his antecedents, Faiza Akhtar, the slain youth's neighbour said, "I never ever saw him indulging in any undesirable pastime. We are so sad that such a decent boy has been snatched from us and that too in such a cruel way."

While Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane was in the Valley, its Srinagar-based 15 Corps issued a statement admitting that the three youths were killed by its men and that "disciplinary action" in being

initiated by it under the Army Act against them.

A night before the youths were killed, they had informed their respective families over the phone that they had reached Shopian where they had been hired by a local fruit grower to work in his apple orchard.

After their killing, the Army had claimed they were "terrorists" killed in an "encounter" with it.

The Army sources said that it has now begun a 'Summary of Evidence', a step before a possible court martial of its officers and men involved in the fake encounter.

During this process, all civilian witnesses would also be cross examined, the sources added.

There are reports that the police have detained for questioning two local residents who were working as "informers" for the Army and may have been involved in the Amshipora operation. The reports said that the duo is also likely to be called by the Army for cross examination.

While Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane was in the Valley, its Srinagar-based 15 Corps issued a statement admitting that the three youths were killed by its men and that "disciplinary action" in being

SC: FOR HOW LONG WILL MEHBOOBA BE IN DETENTION?

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Centre far how long it was going to keep the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti under detention and can she be detained beyond one year under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

The former J&K Chief Minister is in detention since August 5, 2019, under the draconian PSA for over a year after Article 370 conferring special status to J&K was abrogated.

Giving the Centre a week's time to respond to a plea by Iltija — daughter of Mehbooba Mufti — seeking immediate release of her mother, Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul heading a bench also comprising Justice Hrishikesh Roy asked, for how long the detention will continue and under what orders and can detention be extended beyond one year.

Directing the next hearing on October 15, the court asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the Centre to address the court on two issues — what is the maximum period for which a person can be detained under the Public Safety Act and for how long Mufti will continue under detention.

Mehta, sought to justify Mehbooba Mufti's detention on the grounds of "public order".

Senior counsel Nitya Ramakrishnan appearing for Iltija told the court that Mehbooba has not been allowed to meet anybody including her family members and brother. She told the court that even ordinary prisoners are permitted to meet the visitors.

Mehbooba, heads the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which had formed the last government in alliance with BJP, which later broke the alliance.

Mehbooba Mufti was arrested along with former Chief Ministers — Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah — and other Kashmiri leaders on August 5, 2019.

While two Abdullahs were released in March, Mehbooba's detention was extended on May 5 for another three months but after the lapse of three months she has not been released.



AMNESTY HALTS OPERATIONS IN INDIA

New Delhi, Sept. 29: Amnesty International on Tuesday said it is halting all its activities in India due to freezing of its accounts and claimed that it is being subjected to an "incessant witch-hunt" over unfounded and motivated allegations.

Amnesty India, in a statement, said the organisation has been compelled to let go of staff in India and pause all its ongoing campaign and research work.

"The complete freezing of Amnesty International India's bank accounts by the Government of India which it came to know on 10 September 2020, brings all the work being done by the organisation to a grinding halt," it said. However, the government has said that Amnesty has been receiving foreign funds illegally.

In 2018, the Enforcement Directorate had carried out searches at the headquarters of Amnesty International in Bangalore. The raids were conducted for an alleged violation of the foreign exchange act.

There is no ED investigation against Amnesty International India Foundation, but against a private company linked to the NGO that allegedly received dubious export proceeds worth over ₹51 crore, government sources said.

The BJP alleged that Amnesty International is involved in "multiple illegalities" and it has no right to lecture on propriety. Addressing a press conference in the national capital, BJP leader Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore said any organisation can work in India but it cannot violate the laws and regulations of the country. —PTI

JAISHANKAR TO VISIT JAPAN FOR QUAD MEET

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29

In a major move that will send a strong signal to China at a time of heightened tensions, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will visit Japan on October 6 and 7 to participate in a meeting of foreign ministers of the four-nation Quadri-lateral or Quad — the United States, India, Japan and Australia.

He will also hold individual bilateral consultations with each of the other foreign ministers.

But interestingly, a statement put out by the MEA made no mention of the word 'Quad'.

The MEA did say, however, that the foreign ministers of the four nations would "discuss regional issues and collectively affirm the importance of maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific apart from Covid.

Daughter backs 'wife-beater' DGP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, SEPT. 29

Spouse of 'wife-beater' director general of police (prosecution) of Madhya Pradesh Purushottam Sharma on Tuesday, curiously, faced attacks from two fronts, from her daughter who called her mentally sick and from the media woman who accused her of encroaching upon her privacy by taking video of her house.

The top cop was placed under suspension by the state government on Tuesday evening.

The couple's daughter Diwanshi Gautam stoutly defended her father describing him a victim of marital conflict triggered by her mother. She also claimed that her mother was suffering from mental disorder.

In a letter to chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Ms

Gautam said she as well as her father have been at the receiving end of her mother's abnormal behaviours. "My mother wanted to ruin me and my father", the letter said.

She said her mother once tried to set their house on fire and also kill herself.

She described her father as innocent and pleaded to the chief minister not to take any action against him over the viral video in which Mr Sharma was seen thrashing his wife in their government quarters here.

The DGP has been relieved of his duties after the video went viral on Monday.

In a related development, the media woman who was video-graphed along with the DGP in her house by Mr Sharma's wife on Monday lodged a complaint with the local police station demanding action against her for encroaching upon her privacy.

ODISHA BABU ARRESTED FOR HARASSING WIFE

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 29

A senior bureaucrat of Odisha was on Tuesday arrested for allegedly torturing his wife.

The accused identified as Sarat Chandra Bag was posted as Deputy Collector of Boudh district. Bag's wife complained that he was regularly beating her as she opposed his extra-marital affairs.

"My husband was having an extra-marital affair. I had caught him red-handed with another woman recently. When I confronted him over his affairs, he and his other associates brutally thrashed me and snatched my mobile phone," the wife told reporters in Jharsuguda.

Dalit woman gangraped in Hathras dies

New Delhi/Hathras, Sept. 29: A 19-year-old woman, who was brutally gangraped in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district two weeks ago, died of her grievous injuries at a Delhi hospital on Tuesday, prompting outrage, protests and calls for justice.

Recalling the horrors of the Nirbhaya case, the Dalit teen was allegedly sexually attacked by four men on September 14 and referred on Monday to a Delhi hospital in an extremely critical condition with spinal injuries, paralysis and cuts in her tongue.

She couldn't survive the night and died at 3 am, Hathras Superintendent of Police Vikrant Vir quoted her family as saying.

As news of her death spread, protests broke out at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital as well as in Vijay Chowk and in Hathras, about 180 km away.

All sections of society, including politicians, sports and cine stars and activists, spoke out on Twitter and elsewhere to express their anguish and demand justice for her.

Cricket captain Virat Kohli hoped that justice would be done to the Hathras gangrape victim saying that the incident "goes beyond cruelty".

"What happened in #Hathras is inhumane and goes beyond cruelty. Hope the culprits of this heinous crime will be brought to justice. #JusticeForManishaValmiki," Kohli, who is in the UAE for the ongoing IPL, tweeted.

The four men alleged to be involved in the crime have been arrested and will now face charges under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code, according to the Hathras SP.

On September 14, the young woman had gone to

● THE DALIT TEEN was allegedly sexually attacked by four men on September 14 and referred on Monday to a Delhi hospital in an extremely critical condition with spinal injuries, paralysis and cuts in her tongue.

the fields with her mother and went missing soon after. She was found later, beaten and tortured, her tongue cut as she bit it when the accused attempted to strangle her, the SP said while giving details of the attack. A spokesperson at the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College and Hospital in Aligarh where she was first admitted said her legs were completely paralysed and arms partially paralysed.

Leading the protests outside Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital, Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad said he appealed to

all members of the Dalit community to take to the streets and demand death penalty for the guilty.

"The government should not test our patience. We won't rest until the culprits are hanged," he said as restless crowds milled around the complex. Azad held the state government "equally responsible" for her tragic death.

Hitting out at the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress questioned the "silence" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and women BJP leaders on the issue and alleged that the state has become the "crime capital" of the country. The party also staged protests demanding justice for the victim at Vijay Chowk.

The party said its leaders P.L. Punia, Udit Raj and other leaders were detained at the Mandir Marg Police station for the protest. Congress leader

Rahul Gandhi said the "class-specific jungle raj" of UP has killed another young woman. "The government said this is fake news and left the victim to die. Neither was this unfortunate incident fake, nor was the death of the victim and the brutality of the government," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said a "Dalit girl who was victim of demonic behaviour in Hathras" has passed away at Safdarjung Hospital after struggling for two weeks between life and death in hospitals.

"Law and order in UP has deteriorated to a great extent. There is no semblance of safety for women. The criminals are committing crimes in the open," Priyanka said. BSP chief Mayawati and Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav also spoke out. —PTI

IN BRIEF

Roadside bomb kills 14 in Afghan

Kabul: At least 14 civilians, including women and children, were killed on Tuesday by a roadside bomb in central Afghanistan, officials said, as violence continues despite peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government. Seven women, five children and two men died when their vehicle detonated an explosive device in Daikundi province, interior ministry spokesman Tareq Arian said in a statement. Three children were also wounded, he added, blaming the Taliban for the blast. Nasrullah Ghorri — the spokesman for the governor of Daikundi — said the victims were traveling to a shrine when their minibus struck the bomb.

TEACHER GIVEN DEATH PENALTY FOR POISONING KIDS

Beijing, Sept. 29: A kindergarten teacher in China has been sentenced to death for poisoning dozens of children in an act of revenge against a colleague that left one toddler dead.

A court in the central Chinese province of Henan said Wang Yun put sodium nitrite into porridge being prepared for her colleague's students, sickening 25.

The attack took place in March 2019 and left one boy severely ill for months before he died in January this year, according to news reports.

The Jiaozuo City Intermediate People's Court on Monday said Wang knew sodium nitrite was harmful but went ahead "with no regard for the consequences", leaving many innocent children in hospital. News reports last year said the children began vomiting and fainting after eating their breakfast.

Kindergarten students in China are aged between three and six. The death sentence was handed to Wang this week for the offence of using dangerous substances.

First US Presidential TV debate 2020 rolls

Debate to offer platform for Don and Biden to outline their visions

Cleveland (US), Sept. 29: In an election year like no other, the first debate between President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, could be a pivotal moment in a race that has remained stubbornly unchanged in the face of historic tumult.

The debate will offer a massive platform for Trump and Biden to outline their starkly different visions for a country facing multiple crises, including racial justice protests and a pandemic that has killed more than 2,00,000 Americans and cost millions of jobs.

The health emergency has upended the usual trappings of a presidential campaign, lending heightened importance to the debate. But amid intense political polarisation, comparatively few undecided voters remain, raising

● **"THIS WILL** be the first moment in four years that someone will walk on stage as co-equal to Trump and be able to hold him to account for the malfeasance he has shown leading the country," said Steve Schmidt, senior campaign aide for John McCain's 2008 Republican presidential bid and a frequent Trump critic.

questions as to how, or if, the debate might shape a race that has been defined by its bitterness and, at least so far, its stability.

Biden will step onto the Cleveland stage holding leads in the polls — significant in the national surveys, closer in the battleground states — but facing questions about his turn in the spotlight, particularly considering Trump's

withering attacks.

And Trump, with only 35 days to change the course of the race, will have arguably his best chance to try to reframe the campaign as a choice election and not a referendum over his handling of a virus that has killed more people in America than any other nation. "This will be the first moment in four years that someone will walk on stage as co-equal to Trump and be able to hold him to account for the malfeasance he has shown leading the country," said Steve Schmidt, senior campaign aide for John McCain's 2008 Republican presidential bid and a frequent Trump critic.

"If Biden is unable to indict Trump for all that he has done, (that) would be profound failure. There is no spinning that away." The president's handling of the Coronavirus will likely

dominate much of the discussion. The pandemic's force will be tangible as the candidates' podiums will be spaced far apart and the traditional opening handshake scrapped.

And the debate could be shaped by an extraordinary confluence of other recent moments: the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, allowing Trump to nominate a conservative jurist to replace a liberal voice and reshape the high court for generations, and the blockbuster revelations about Trump's long-hidden tax history, including that he paid only \$750 a year in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017 and nothing in many other years. But the impact of the debate — or the two that follow in the weeks ahead — remains unclear. — AP



The Glass Fire slowly crests the ridge outside of Calistoga in Napa Valley, California. The wildfire went from 1,500 acres to more than 15,000 acres overnight as winds spread embers across the valley.

— AFP

Thousands flee California wine country wildfires

San Francisco, Sept. 29 Northern California's wine country was on fire again on Monday as strong winds fanned flames in the already scorched region, destroying homes and prompting orders for nearly 70,000 people to be evacuated. Meanwhile, three people died in a separate fire further north in the state.

In Sonoma County, residents of the Oakmont Gardens senior living facility in Santa Rosa boarded brightly lit city buses in the darkness overnight, some wearing bathrobes and using walkers. They wore masks to protect against the Coronavirus as orange flames marked the dark sky.

The fire threat forced Adventist Health St. Helena hospital to suspend care and transfer all patients elsewhere. The fires that began Sunday in the famed Napa-Sonoma wine country about 45 miles (72 kilometers) north of San Francisco came as the region nears

● **MORE THAN 68,000** people in Sonoma and Napa counties have been evacuated in the latest inferno, one of nearly 30 fire clusters burning across the state, said Cal Fire Division Chief Ben Nichols.

the third anniversary of deadly wildfires that erupted in 2017, including one that killed 22 people.

Just a month ago, many of those same residents were evacuated from the path of a lightning-sparked fire that became the fourth-largest in state history. "Our firefighters have not had much of a break, and these residents have not had much of a break," said Daniel Berlant, assistant deputy director with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire.

Sonoma County Supervisor Susan Gorin evacuated her property in the Oakmont community

of Santa Rosa at about 1 am. She is rebuilding a home damaged in the 2017 fires. Gorin said she saw three neighboring houses in flames as she fled early Monday.

"We're experienced with that," she said of the fires. "Once you lose a house and represent thousands of folks who've lost homes, you become pretty fatalistic that this is a new way of life and, depressingly, a normal way of life, the megafires that are spreading throughout the West."

More than 68,000 people in Sonoma and Napa counties have been evacuated in the latest inferno, one of nearly 30 fire clusters burning across the state, said Cal Fire Division Chief Ben Nichols.

Many more residents have been warned that they might have to flee, even though winds eased significantly Monday afternoon, giving firefighters an opportunity to make some progress, he said. — AP

Rapid virus tests unveil as Covid deaths top 1 mn

Geneva, Sept. 29: Coronavirus tests that deliver results in 15-30 minutes are to be rolled out across the United States and in scores of poorer countries, as health authorities worldwide try to get a handle on a disease that has now killed more than a million people.

US President Donald Trump announced 150 million tests would be distributed in America, while the World Health Organisation said 120 million more would be available for the developing world at \$5 each as long as funding was secured.

The testing push comes as the virus shows no sign of

receding, with infection numbers climbing rapidly in Europe again and governments there clamping down on movement in an attempt to curb the surge.

Paris, London and Madrid have all been forced to introduce controls to slow infections, and on Monday Dutch authorities became the latest to tighten curbs, while the Czech Republic and Slovakia said they were preparing to declare a state of emergency. The WHO said its \$600 million scheme to roll out the quick diagnosis kits across

133 countries in the next six months would enable low- and middle-income nations to close the gap in testing with the rich world. The kits are far faster, cheaper and easier to administer than regular standard polymerase chain reaction (PCR) swab tests but are less sensitive and more likely to return false negatives.

This will enable the expansion of testing, particularly in hard-to-reach areas that do not have lab facilities or enough trained health workers to carry out PCR tests," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. — AFP

CHINA ENTERS GLOBAL RACE TO DEFEAT VIRUS

Beijing, Sept. 29 : A Chinese company is entering the global race to help defeat the Coronavirus, promising its testing machine will return results faster than a lab and more reliably than at-home screening kits.

The Flash 20 "is currently the fastest machine in the world for PCR tests for the Coronavirus", says Sabrina Li, founder of the company Coyote.

PCR tests are the industry standard and a major weapon against a pandemic that has now killed more than a million people and eviscerated the global economy. — AFP

INDIAN NAVY

A N O C E A N O F O P P O R T U N I T I E S

Indian Navy invites online application for a four year B.Tech degree course under the 10+2 (B.Tech) Cadet Entry Scheme from unmarried eligible Male candidates who have passed Senior Secondary Examination (10+2 Pattern) or its equivalent examinations from any Board with at least 70% aggregate marks in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics (PCM) and at least 50% marks in English (either in class Xth or class XIIth).



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3. Please read the instructions given in the website carefully before submitting your "e-Application" form. **Your candidature will be cancelled if any declaration is found wrong at any stage of selection process.**



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DECCAN Chronicle

30 SEPTEMBER 2020

Don't let political fight hurt interest of farmers

The repeated assurances given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the continuance of the minimum support price for agriculture produce notwithstanding, the farmers' protests against the three new laws governing agriculture and markets show no signs of abating. It is in this background that Congress president Sonia Gandhi's direction to the state governments her party runs to enact laws that can circumvent the three laws — the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 — gains significance. The Congress move shows the principal Opposition party has decided to take on the government politically and legally on an issue that can have nationwide appeal. Politically, it has thrown the ball in the court of the BJP's allies in National Democratic Alliance asking if they wanted to work against the interests of the farming community and risk their future. Experts are divided over the states' power to enact laws in the subject that can stand legal scrutiny but a stiff resistance by the Congress governments to the Modi dispensation could once again catapult the Congress into the centre of political activity, a role it abdicated long ago. Agriculture is on the concurrent list but "markets" are exclusively in the states' domain and hence the Centre is barred from legislating on them. It was this realisation that stopped the government from going ahead with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017, while they were challenged in the Supreme Court. This time around, the government did not interfere with the markets or mandis; instead, it removed their very raison d'être by allowing people to sell their produce wherever they want.

The state governments have economic reasons as well to fight the Centre as these laws will effectively choke and eventually stop a steady stream of their revenue as rents and taxes. A legal fight, and a possible win, could force the governments run by other parties also to follow the course, earning the Congress a decent political dividend.

The Congress has more reasons to invest in the agitation. It is not the first time a Central legislation has triggered widespread protest — those against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, are not that distant to fade away. But the government put up a resistance and defended it positions using many a card, including the communal one. But farmers as a class are unlikely to give in to such machinations as they feel a threat to their livelihoods. It is indeed wise for the Opposition to be seen on their side.

A protracted legal battle could imperil the interests of the farmer, who even otherwise feels he has little future in this country. If his interest, and the food security of the nation, are supreme, then the Union government which has committed to doubling farmers' income by 2022-23 should initiate a consultation process with the farmers, the Opposition, the state governments and other stakeholders to end the agitation and stop legal battles.

Trump: Artful tax dodger

Long before he became President of the United States Donald Trump was among those thought to be famous for just being famous. He parlayed such fame into a path to the White House where he holds court while having paid less income tax in a year — \$750 in 2016 and 2017 — than a successful hairdresser would have. The ridiculously low taxes he paid or none at all in 10 of the last 15 years, as exposed by the *New York Times*, were made possible by a show of chronic losses, which betrays his pretensions to being a billionaire honcho. Mr Trump's tricks might not be unusual for real estate businessmen bilking the US tax system, but it becomes extremely worrisome considering he personifies conflict of interest. What the expose of chicanery in computing taxes means in politics — as he is in the thick of a re-election campaign and going into the first debate with Joe Biden — is it lays bare the myth of Donald Trump, 'The Apprentice' of the reality show. He may conveniently brush it aside as "fake news", which is what he dubs anything that goes against the grain of his presidential persona. The fear that the mountebank from a parallel universe who lives and thrives in an alternative reality may be a security threat as he owns responsibility for debts of \$400 million is just dawning on America. Curiously, the facts dug out may not be the decisive tipping point in the polls. Mr Trump's antics help show up the uber-wealthy as they are seen compulsively cheating on taxes through tax havens, rebates, refunds and handouts to kin, all by employing clever accountants and sharp lawyers. Most white and blue collar workers of the world have no such devices to deny Caesar his due even if the argument is stretched into saying a person may be considered smart if he can legally avoid personal taxes. Every US President since Watergate has made public his financial records, but not Mr Trump. It remains to be seen if his name is all that marketable anymore.

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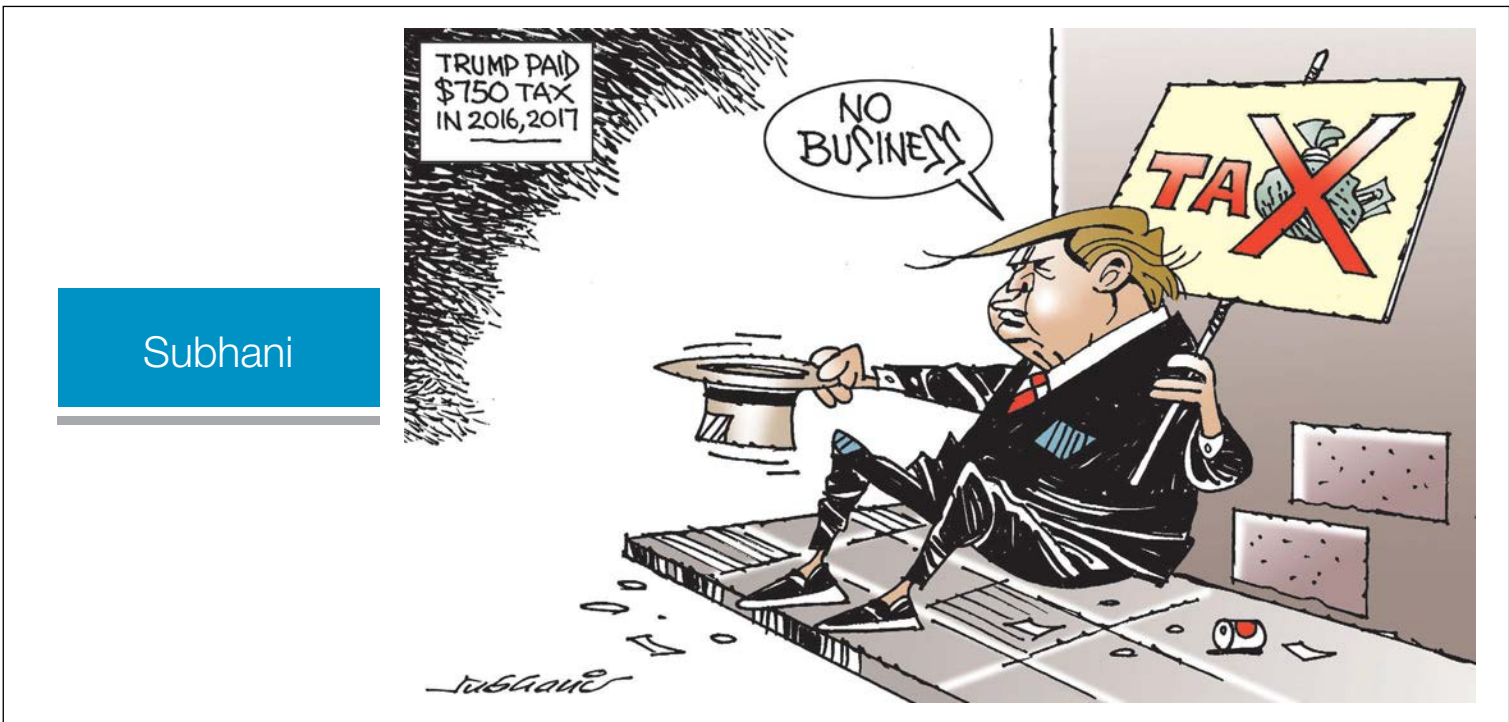
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Subhani

Unlock 5.0: Woes will linger, support a must



Sanjay Kumar

The quarterly GDP growth figures for the first quarter of 2020-21 released couple of weeks ago revealed a dismal state of Indian economy, with a growth rate of -23.9 per cent. This GDP growth rate is at its lowest since the quarterly figures started releasing in 1996. This figure does not convey anything new; it merely provides an aggregate picture of economic hardship being faced by a large number of Indians in the big cities, small towns as well as in villages. This situation cuts across people employed both in the formal and informal sectors. Several reports indicate lakhs of people losing their jobs, and salaries being reduced in different proportions in different sectors due to lockdown as a result of Covid-19. What also indicates towards economic hardship being faced by a large number of people is the amount of money withdrawn by the people from their employer's provident fund (EPF). The labour minister informed the Parliament of about 39,400 crore EPF withdrawals during the period March-August 2020. While it is true that lockdown brought economic activity to a complete standstill having an impact on the daily lives of the people, there are evidences which suggest that the economy was not doing well even before the outbreak of Covid-19 and the lockdown. What the lockdown did was to make the economic condition of the people much worse than it was before.

The GDP figures are not surprising as the strict nationwide lockdown has brought the economy to a virtual standstill, many people losing their jobs, families having faced moderate to harsh eco-

nomic hardship. Analysis of the data collected from the survey conducted by Gaon Connection team and Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) amongst 25,371 respondents spread across 23 states and Union Territories helps us unravel this story. The data presents a grim situation. More than 78 per cent of those surveyed mentioned that their work had either completely (44 per cent) or largely (34 per cent) come to a standstill due to the lockdown. It is not surprising to note that a very large number of people suffered financially resulting in many families finding it much more difficult to make ends meet during the lockdown as compared to before the lockdown. It is important to note that a large proportion of households reporting a high difficulty in making ends meet even during pre-lockdown times indicate that a very large proportion of rural households were already suffering financially even before Covid-19 struck, and the pandemic-induced lockdown only exacerbated their economic woes. Even before the lockdown, 60 per cent people in rural India found it difficult to meet their daily needs, but their numbers increased to 73 per cent during the lockdown. It is evident that Covid-19 augmented economic hardship and severely impacted economic conditions across rural India. While the lockdown affected the work of people across class groups, the change in economic conditions was sharpest in the lowest strata. Unemployment continues to remain a major concern in rural India and the situation has been worsened by the return of migrants from urban centres — more than 77 per cent people

mentioned that unemployment was a severe concern in their respective village. While it is true that a large number of migrants have either returned or are planning to return back to the cities, there are still sizeable numbers of migrants who have stayed back in the villages at least for a few more months. The findings of the survey suggest 28 per cent migrants are not willing to return to the city, while another 16 per cent are unsure if they would return or stay back in their village and engage themselves in agricultural labour or MNRGA work.

The lack of steady income meant that the severe economic shock left many across the country in a precarious situation. Almost one-fourth of those surveyed (23 per cent) mentioned that they were forced to take additional loans or borrow money as they ran out of funds during the lockdown. A small segment of rural India faced a harsher situation and was forced to sell or mortgage assets to overcome economic woes.

The only saving grace for the economy seems to have been agriculture. Agriculture and allied activities still grew at 3.4 per cent during the contraction. The findings of the survey also suggest, due to lockdown, while there were delays in harvesting of crops, selling produce, and sowing the crop for the next cycle, the impact on the income of farmers was perhaps limited compared to what people working in other sectors had to face. More than half of farmers (58 per cent) reported that they got as much as the government rate for their produce.

The negative GDP growth reflects a sharp

Almost one-fourth of those surveyed (23 per cent) mentioned that they were forced to take additional loans or borrow money as they ran out of funds during the lockdown

contraction in private consumption. Declining incomes, and uncertainly about jobs and employment opportunities, was bound to have an impact on consumption patterns. A significant number of people were forced to reduce their expenditure on everyday household items during the lockdown. Almost 49 per cent people reduced expenditure on basic food items like atta, rice, grains, and pulses. Almost two-third (63 per cent) had reduced expenditure on processed items like snacks, biscuits, and sweets. Similarly, there was a decline in the consumption of FMCG goods as well. For instance, 56 per cent people reported lower household expenditure on personal care products like soap, shampoo, etc.

The declining income not only has an impact on current expenditure patterns, but also on future consumption. The uncertainties of jobs and anticipation of further reduction in salaries has led to a large number of people deferring their plans for buying expensive goods. They are also planning to reduce expenditure by not spending on items the use of which can be avoided. About 49 per cent and 57 per cent said that they would reduce expenditure on basic food items and personal care products, respectively.

While these findings are from a survey which was conducted only in rural India, it is unlikely that the situation would be vastly different in towns and cities. As Covid-19 related restrictions have eased across the country especially after Unlock 5.0, economic activity is gradually coming back on track. However, experts have alerted that economic recovery will remain slow. This makes it imperative for the government to continue taking steps for supporting citizens through various measures.

The writer is a professor at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and a political analyst. Views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

NUTRITION

Congress president Sonia Gandhi has asked Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled states to bring a legislation based on Art. 254(2) nullifying the effects of the Central legislation on farm sector. Agriculture is in the concurrent list and state and the Union can make legislations. But the state law should get President's assent which is unlikely. The Congress-ruled states can implement farmer-friendly suggestions.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

CASTE KILLING

With three wickets down, the BJP is still optimistic of getting a clear majority in the L.S. Ram Vilas Paswan is waiting in the wings to quit if his party's demand for Bihar seats is not met. The BJP is beset with four major negatives. These are: 1. Pre-Covid-19 economy slowdown, 2. Post-Covid-19 GDP slump, 3. PM's falsehood on Galwan Valley and 4. Road-rolling of the three farm Bills. PM's confidante Amit Malviya could be the red herring.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

3 commandments for smokers

HAMBURG, Sept. 29. "There is no such thing as a clean cigarette", according to tobacco experts who attended an international Congress here this week.

The mass media last week splashed the news that tobacco scientists were working on such a "healthy" cigarette which people could smoke without fear of cancer or heart ailments. Experts admitted that the latest type of filter tips could absorb as much as fifty per cent of the dangerous stuff. The new-type filters let through much more smoke so that the smoker finds more pleasure and less danger.

Tobacco researchers are already thinking of a future compulsory label on all cigarette packages saying "cancer-producing". The three commandments of the cigarette smoker, say the experts, should be "smoke fewer cigarettes, smoke only filter-tipped cigarettes and smoke no more than one half of each cigarette for "death sits in the butt." — PTI.

Kishwar Desai
London Diary



Lonely Gandhi at Westminster; 'working' hols the new mantra

As October 2 approaches, we had hoped that the situation in London would have improved, allowing us to at least have a ceremonial placing of flowers at the feet of the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Parliament Square — remembering him at the close of his 150th birth anniversary. The Indian high commissioner, Ms Gaitri Kumar, had also suggested that, if things improved, a few of us could gather there for a simple memorial. But it seems that now further restrictions have been announced, thanks to Covid. So we would request all those for whom it is possible to go individually to place some flowers as we cannot have any kind of formal ceremony.

Summer is behind us and the chill is settling in - bringing a fresh bout of coronavirus. In the past few years, Diwali in London had just begun to be popular, with people even celebrating at Trafalgar Square. But the year has trained us well in social distancing, meeting in bubbles, wearing masks and working from home, and so though we were prepared

for skipping the festival of lights — we thought we would at least celebrate Christmas, in a big way.

Now the infection is really serious. Two weeks ago, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson was thinking of limiting gatherings to six including children. Now no one is sure. Plans to come back to office are shelved. Infections are running in four figures per week. And not only in UK but across Europe. Schools had just opened and now they face serious problems. The Conservatives never like to bring bad news especially shutting people indoors. But Boris has to deny his normally ebullient nature and be stern. There are rumours however that he escaped for a day to Perugia for a break with Carrie Symonds, and his newborn baby.

No one thought so but Covid looks like a long term guest who is loath to go away. All around hopes of getting back to normal are dashed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, who had been spending borrowed money like there was no tomorrow, was hoping to begin cutting back in his winter budget. But it

looks like he is still Superman coming to the rescue of the unemployed and the bankrupt. But even he has begun to pose for his Instagram photos in a sombre mood. The serious visage is necessary as the Chancellor will have to tell people that the easy borrowing cannot go on forever.

People are finding ingenious ways of coping. Now that going back to the office is less likely, they have realised that working from home need not mean your local home. Now you can book short or long holidays so you can work from Estonia or Anguilla or even Perugia if you want. It is all online so who is to know? There are new travel agencies who can fix you a place where your fancy takes you. So the new lifestyle mantra is to Work from the Holiday Home. Not WFH, but WFHH.

But there are sadder changes due to the virus. London has always been a global city not just for the rich tourist but even for the traders and the artisans. The first indoors shopping centre was built in Elephant and Castle a popular area with a bus terminus as

well as underground and surface railway stations in 1965. The centre had Latin American, West Indian, Turkish and many other nationalities running shops. Next to the three level shopping centre developed a further subterranean set of shops. This shopping centre is being demolished to the great sorrow of its cosmopolitan clientele. Yes, it wasn't very posh - but the messy complex was a part of London life. A new centre is promised but it will undoubtedly be much more upmarket. Incidentally the name Elephant and Castle is derived from a Spanish princess who visited London and stayed nearby. Infanta de Castile as she was called became Elephant and Castle in London-speak. All a part of London lore.

There was apparently a "clever" shooting of a kiss in Eastenders, the popular TV show - essential in Covid times where it looked like a kiss but obviously the lips of the two actors did not meet. The couple leant towards each other - though the actual act was hidden behind a pillar, so the audience could imagine the rest. I

found the excitement over this non-kiss quite funny - as Indian cinema had in the past invented a thousand ways to "show" a couple kissing or making love - right from them sinking behind a flowerbed, to being hidden behind a tree, to two flowers leaning towards each other, to two birds flying, or the camera shyly panning away when the lovers met... it was only in recent times that outright kissing became the norm. Now it seems that while some brave actors are washing out their mouths with sanitisers before and after a kiss, others are finding some euphemisms for it... they should just take look at old Indian films, and they will find a thousand ways in which couples can have assumed to have kissed, or made love, without any physical encounter.

Old Indian cinema has the answer for lovemaking in the time of Covid!

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. Her latest book, 'The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani, will be out by November.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37,973.22	-0.02
Nifty 50	11,222.40	-0.05
S&P 500*	3,339.59	-0.36
Dollar (₹)	73.85	-0.07
Pound Sterling (₹)	95.10	-0.63
Euro (₹)	86.25	-0.46
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,367.663	1.29
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	41.09	-1.34
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.037	-0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.651	-0.012

* As of 9:30 PM IST

RBI places its nominee on Dhanlaxmi board

Dhanlaxmi Bank said RBI general manager D. K. Kashyap has been appointed on its board for two years by the regulator. The bank did not disclose the reason for appointment of the RBI's nominee of its board with effect from Sept. 28. The RBI usually does not appoint its nominee on the boards of private banks unless there are exceptional circumstances to avoid any conflict of interest. Dhanlaxmi was put under the PCA in Nov. 2015.

Swatch shuts some systems after cyberattack



Swatch Group shut down some of its technology systems after detecting a cyberattack over the weekend, the world's biggest watchmaker said on Tuesday. "Swatch Group confirms that it has identified clear signs of a developing cyber-attack on some of its IT systems during the weekend," the company said. The shutdown had affected some of its operations, Swatch said, without explaining more.

Sebi to issue code of conduct for MF managers

Markets regulator Sebi decided to introduce a code of conduct for mutual fund managers, including chief investment officer of asset management companies (AMCs). In addition, AMCs have been allowed to become self-clearing member of clearing corporations for debt transactions. The chief executive officer will be responsible to ensure that the code of conduct is followed by officers.

Sebi slaps ₹1 cr fine on Brickwork Ratings

The Sebi imposed a penalty of Rs crore on Brickwork Ratings India, for lapses while assigning credit ratings to non-convertible debentures of Essel Group companies. Brickwork also failed to review the rating of NCDs of Great Eastern Energy Corporation after another credit rating agency downgraded the NCDs in April 2017. Also, the regulator has found delay in recognising default of NCDs of Diamond Power Infrastructure.



■ Wealth of 828 equals a third of GDP India's wealthy got thrice as rich in 5 yrs

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

Over the last five years, there were several stories about financial pain caused to the rich because of events such as black-money-busting demonetisation, anti-tax evading GST and a persistent fall in economic growth rate. Now here's a reality check: 828 super-rich persons commanding a wealth of Rs 1,000 crore have seen their wealth swelling three-fold in the last five years, according to the IIFL Wealth Hurun India Rich List 2020.

The survey also claimed that the combined wealth of India's richest is \$823 billion, which is one-third size of India's GDP. This further widens the inequality in wealth between the super-rich and the poor.

Their combined wealth is more than the combined GDP of India's South Asian neighbours - Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Bhutan.

According to the World Bank's Gini Index, inequality has been rising since 1993, which portrays a sorry picture of economic reforms benefiting the rich more than the poor.

While the country's economic growth slowed last year, the cumulative wealth of the 828 super-rich has increased by 20 per cent or Rs 10 lakh crore compared to that of last year. However, the average growth in wealth

SUPER-RICH LEAGUE

- Combined wealth of India's richest is \$823 billion
- Mukesh Ambani stayed top with a wealth of ₹6,58,400 cr
- Hinduja brothers occupied the second spot with ₹1,43,700 cr
- With ₹1,41,700 crore, HCL founder Shiv Nadar ranked third
- The list saw 162 new faces this time

among the 828 super-rich has remained nine per cent, suggesting few individuals in the super-elite club benefitting more than others.

"About 28 per cent of the upswing in wealth on the list has been bestowed by Mukesh Ambani, who saw meteoric success post diversifying from oil to telecom and retail. A further 21 per cent of the additional wealth has been generated by pharma, mainly on the back of the rise in healthcare spends and a realigned priority towards personal healthcare stimulated by the Covid-19," Anas Rahman Junaid, MD and chief researcher, Hurun India said.

With a wealth of Rs 6,58,400 crore, Mukesh Ambani continued to be the richest man in India. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic,

Ambani's wealth dropped by 28 per cent to Rs 3,50,000 crore and then, backed by a series of funding and strategic investments, his valuation registered a "V-shaped recovery" and increased by 85 per cent in four months.

With a wealth of Rs 1,43,700 crore, the Hinduja brothers occupied the second spot in the list. The brothers saw the valuation drop by 23 per cent due to a lacklustre performance of their flagship companies such as IndusInd Bank, Gulf Oil and GOCL Corporation. With Rs 1,41,700 crore, the founder of HCL, Shiv Nadar, ranked third, backed by a 37 per cent increase in HCL's share price.

The list saw 162 new faces, 76 per cent of which are self-made entrepreneurs. Their numbers in the list were up at 64 per cent, up from 54 per cent five years ago.

Backed by a stellar IPO of Happiest Minds, founder Ashok Soota debuted in the list with a wealth of Rs 3,700 crore. Route Mobile's IPO bestowed Sandipkumar Gupta and Rajdipkumar Gupta with a wealth of Rs 2,000 crore each.

Among the biggest gainers, Udaan co-founders and former Flipkart executives Amod Malviya, Sujett Kumar and Vaibhav Gupta had their wealth increase by 274 per cent. Chigurupati Krishna Prasad of Granules India saw the second fastest rise in wealth.

Bid for Mahindra Thar hits ₹1.1 crore

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, SEPT. 29

In a first of its kind, Mahindra & Mahindra, India's biggest utility vehicle maker, which started an online auction for the first unit of the all-new second-generation Thar SUV to donate the proceeds to fight the Covid pandemic, on Tuesday crossed the Rs 1.10-crore mark.

The company will match the amount raised at the auction and the entire proceeds will be donated to a charitable organisation supporting Covid-19 relief.

Tuesday was the last day of bidding.

While Mahindra did not officially announce the winning bidder, Aakash Minda from New Delhi had bid for Rs 1 crore early on Tuesday. Later Abhishek Datta from Medinapur raised it to Rs 1.07 crore mark. But with just a few hours to go, Arun from Chennai, surpassed that figure for the Thar No.1 at Rs 1.09 crore, industry sources said. But, finally, it was Aakash Minda who bid big in the final few minutes, taking the tally to Rs 1.11 crore.

M&M will announce the new Thar's price on October 2, which is Mahindra's 75th Founders' Day and the SUV is likely to be priced in the Rs 12-15 lakh range.

The winner of the auction can choose a charitable organisation from the three suggested.

Retro tax: Cairn seeks \$1.4 billion from govt

New Delhi, Sept. 29: British oil explorer Cairn Energy Plc on Tuesday said it is seeking from the Indian government \$1.4 billion (about Rs 10,300 crore) in losses arising from the expropriation of its investments to enforce a retrospective tax demand.

In its half-yearly earnings statement, the company said it expects an international arbitral tribunal to shortly give a decree on its challenge to the government seeking Rs 10,247 crore in retrospective taxes.

"The main evidentiary hearing of Cairn's claim under the (UK-India Bilateral Investment) Treaty took place in August 2018 in The Hague with a final hearing in December 2018," the firm said. The tribunal, it said, has indicated that "it expects to be in a position to issue the award after the end of the summer of 2020."

Cairn said it is seeking "full restitution for losses of more than \$1.4 billion resulting from the expropriation of its investments in India in 2014; continued attempts to enforce retrospective tax measures; and the failure to treat the company and its investments fairly and equitably."

This is the second most high profile retrospective tax litigation. Last week, an international arbitration tribunal ruled that India's efforts to claim Rs 22,100 crore in past taxes from Vodafone Group were in breach of fair treatment under the bilateral investment protection pact between India and the Netherlands.

Agarwal looks to raise \$5 bn to join PSU sale

NISHANT KUMAR & DINESH NAIR
SEPT. 29

Commodities tycoon Anil Agarwal is seeking at least \$5 billion for a fund targeting companies being sold off by the Indian government, marking a return to the strategy that made him wealthy.

Agarwal is targeting \$1 billion or more in an initial round of fundraising for the proposed India Direct Investment fund, according to people familiar with the matter, asking not to be identified because the plans are private. He is already scouting for targets and could spend nearly \$10 billion on the first few acquisitions, one of the people said.

The billionaire is working with London-based Centricus Asset Management Ltd on the fund, which will have a 10-year life span and use a private equity-type strategy, according to



Anil Agarwal

another person. He plans to buy companies over a five-year period and then boost their profitability before seeking an exit, the person said.

Agarwal, the founder of Vedanta Resources Ltd, is raising capital from international investors to buy stakes in government companies being sold under India's Rs 2.1 lakh crore (\$28 billion) divestment programme. The fund will also target companies being restructured under the country's bankruptcy rules.

—Bloomberg

tion pact between India and the Netherlands.

Cairn, which gave the country its biggest oil discovery, received a notice from the income tax department in January 2014, raising a preliminary assessment of Rs 10,247 crore tax liability relating to the group reor-

ganisation done in 2006.

Alongside, the department attached the company's near 10 per cent shareholding in its erstwhile subsidiary, Cairn India.

Cairn Energy had in 2010-11 sold Cairn India to Vedanta.

—PTI

Walmart may invest \$25 bn in Tata Group's super app

Bengaluru, Sept. 29:

Walmart Inc is in talks with Tata Group for a potential investment of up to \$25 billion in the Indian salt-to-software conglomerate's new "super app", a newspaper reported on Tuesday, citing people familiar with the matter.

According to ongoing discussions between the two companies, the super app could be launched as a joint venture between Tata and Walmart, leveraging on the synergies between Tata's e-commerce business and Flipkart, Walmart's e-commerce unit, according to the report.

The news comes as Reliance Industries Ltd, controlled by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani, raised over \$20 billion from investors, including Facebook, Alphabet's Google, KKR & Co and Silver Lake Partners, by selling stakes in its digital business Jio Platforms.

Separately, Bloomberg News reported that Tata Group is in discussions with potential investors about stakes in its new

digital platform.

The Walmart investment could touch \$20 billion to \$25 billion eventually for a large stake in the proposed super app that will be hosted under a Tata Sons unit.

The super app, which is scheduled to be launched in India in December or January, will bring together Tata's consumer business under one channel offering a wide range of products in the retail space.

Tata's consumer businesses include watch and jewellery brand Titan and fashion retail chain Trent. Shares of Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motors and Tata Steel gained more than 1 per cent each on Tuesday.

If the Walmart deal goes through, it will top its investment in Flipkart, for which the US-based company paid \$16 billion for a 66 per cent stake.

The report in *Mint* newspaper said Walmart had hired Goldman Sachs as the banker for the proposed deal.

—Reuters

Amazon ups festive wager with ₹1,125 crore funding

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

Building a war chest ahead of the festive season, US-based e-commerce giant Amazon has infused fresh capital to the tune of Rs 1,125 crore into its India unit Amazon Seller Services. Having pumped in Rs 2,310 crore into the same entity in June, the global e-tailer has already infused around half a billion dollar into its Indian business this year.

Amazon Corporate Holdings Private Limited, Singapore and Amazon.com Inc Limited, Mauritius have pumped in Rs 1,125 crore into Amazon Seller Services, regulatory documents sourced by business intelligence platform Tofler, showed. Amazon Seller Services allotted equity shares to these entities for the transaction on September 17.

Having pumped in fresh capital of Rs 2,310 crore in June, Amazon has infused a total of Rs 3,435 crore into the India business. This is half of the Rs 7,000 crore, or \$1 billion, announced by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos in

January to help bring small and medium businesses online.

This will help Amazon take on Flipkart as well as Reliance Industries owned JioMart during the festive season. Both entities are well-funded for the festive season. In July, Flipkart had announced that it had received funding of \$1.2 billion from investors led

by parent Walmart.

JioMart has no dearth of funds. The Jio platforms have raised around \$10 billion in a few rounds of funding.

The festive days are going to be crucial for e-tailers as the industry watchers have been predicting a notable growth in e-commerce sales despite the overall gloom.

E-comm to create 3 L jobs

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, SEPT. 29

Back-end infrastructure creation by e-commerce companies prior to festive month will create three lakh new temporary and permanent jobs. This will be driven by an estimated 1.8 times jump in shipments compared to last festive season.

E-commerce players are increasing their physical infrastructure and hiring more people before the festive month. RedSeer Consulting says this will create 300,000 new jobs.

Amazon has ramped up its delivery infrastructure and added tens of thousands of delivery partners to the network to serve the rising customer demand for the festive season. The company has added close to 200 delivery stations, including those operated by delivery service partners across the country.

Flipkart too had said it would help generate over 70,000 direct and lakhs of indirect seasonal jobs, including delivery executives, pickers, packers and sorters.

Maruti picks 5 more startups under MAIL programme



MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, SEPT. 29

Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, on Tuesday said it has short-listed five new startups as part of its third cohort of the Mobility and Automobile Innovation Lab (MAIL) programme to promote innovation in the mobility space.

The startups chosen are Clean Slate, Peer Robotics, Vicara, Hyper Reality and Urja.

Maruti, which sells one out of two car bought in the country, is now engaged with 14 startups under the MAIL programme in the last 18 months.

Maruti's MAIL initiative supports startups by co-creating innovative business solutions. The programme was launched to nurture innovation in the automobile and mobility sector in partnership with GHV Accelerator in January 2019.

The initiative aims to create an environment to nurture, foster and guide the early-stage startups, the company said in a statement.

"The five startups of cohort 3 underwent an extensive shortlisting process that included screening and pitch sessions."

"Clean Slate Technologies, a startup from Bengaluru, stood as the winner of the programme, followed by Peer Robotics from Gurgaon as 1st runner up and Vicara from Bengaluru as the 2nd runner up," the company said.

These startups will now engage with Maruti Suzuki for paid projects and also will be entitled to other benefits associated with the programme.

PLAY | BY RULE

Googles billing system takes 30% cut on payments made within app

Play billing must for selling via app: Google

New Delhi, Sept. 29:

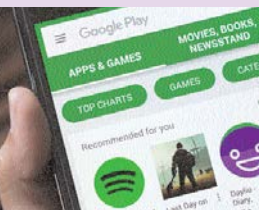
Google on Tuesday said apps that choose to sell digital content through its Play Store have to use Google Play billing system and pay a percentage of the in-app purchase as fee.

The tech giant—which was recently embroiled in a controversy after blocking Paytm app for a few hours—said while the policy for using Google Play's billing system for in-app purchases of digital goods has been in existence, there was a need to clarify it. "Today, we are clarifying a Play billing policy, which has been long standing and existing... Recent incidents and otherwise have shown us that clarifying policies and applying them equitably

and equally is very important for the ecosystem...every developer that chooses to sell digital content through Google Play will use Play billing," Google director-business development, games and applications Purnima Kochikar told reporters in a virtual briefing.

This would mean that developers will have to start using Google's billing system that charges a 30 per cent cut on the payment made within the app, starting September 2021.

Any app that chooses to offer in-app purchase of digital goods like unlocking additional features or buying tokens to power up a game character or paying for songs, will be



required to use Google Play's billing system.

However, physical goods (like ride hailing services) or paying for content subscription via the developer's own website will not require Play billing.

For developers who already have an app on Google Play (which has over 2 billion monthly active users) and require technical work to integrate with Play billing system, the company will

provide time until September 30, 2021 to complete the updates.

Kochikar said about 97 per cent of the developers seem to understand and comply with this policy, but did not name those who were non-compliant.

Both Google and Apple have drawn criticism from many developers over the high fees they are charging. As per reports, Spotify, Match Group (which runs Tinder) and Fortnite developer Epic Games had announced they were joining a non-profit coalition 'App Fair Alliance' to pressure Apple to change its stance on fees.

Kochikar said Android allows developers to distribute their apps via

third party stores. "You can also distribute your apps to the web, there are multiple ways. So, if an app is distributed through a third-party store or through the web, Play policy does not apply...It's all about openness," she said.

Third-party app stores include the likes of Galaxy Store (Samsung) and Indus App Bazaar. Kochikar said developers can communicate with their users about pricing and alternative ways to pay beyond their app via email or other channels.

"They will not be able to use other billing when they are selling digital content through the Play Store. They have multiple store options," she said.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Battery-powered masks for players

New Delhi: Claiming to be the best in ensuring optimum oxygen for the wearer, battery-operated masks designed by an IIT-Kharagpur alumni will be put on trial for India's Olympic-bound athletes by the IOA to assist their intense training. The IOA has tied up with IIT Kharagpur's Piyush Agarwal, who currently owns a startup 'PQR Technology Private Limited' and has got government funding under the 'KAWACH Mask Project'. His start-up is currently attached with IIT Delhi. IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta said that the battery-operated masks, which cost around ₹2200 each, will be trialled first on a few Olympic-bound athletes. If they don't face any breathing issues and after approval from the IOA Medical Commission, the masks will then be used by all the Olympic-bound athletes and others. "I was initially very guarded about resumption of training by athletes but since they have started training and we don't know when this pandemic will end, we have to think about the best way possible and this idea of masks which seems safe for intensive training struck us," Mehta said. — PTI

Schumacher son is closer to F1

Maranello, Italy: Michael Schumacher's son, Mick, will have an official Formula One drive during a race weekend for the first time next week at the Nurburgring, Alfa Romeo and Ferrari said on Tuesday. Schumacher gets the practice drive in an Alfa Romeo on Oct. 9 on his home track in Germany as a member of Ferrari's young driver program, taking over Antonio Giovinazzi's car for the first session of the weekend. "I am overjoyed to get this chance in free practice," Schumacher said in a statement. "I'm going to prepare myself well, so that I can do the best possible job for the team and gain some valuable data for the weekend." The 21-year-old Schumacher leads the Formula 2 standings after winning races in Monza and Sochi. He won the European Formula 3 championship in 2018 and tested a Ferrari F1 car in Bahrain in April 2019. — AP

Pliskova ends Sherif dream run

Paris: Second seed Karolina Pliskova ended Mayar Sherif's fairytale Grand Slam breakthrough to set up a Roland Garros second round clash against former champion Jelena Ostapenko on Tuesday. Pliskova squandered eight set points in the opening set as world No. 172 Sherif, the first Egyptian woman to play in the main draw at a Slam, took a shock lead. However, the Czech's greater experience eventually told as she recovered to progress 6-7 (9/11), 6-2, 6-4. Latvia's Ostapenko, the world 43, won her first match at the French Open since sweeping to her shock 2017 title when she fired 46 winners past Madison Brengle of the United States to win 6-2, 6-1. Having supplanted Kevin Anderson as South Africa's No. 1, Lloyd Harris is a man on a mission — to take tennis to the football strongholds of his country's townships. Harris won his opening match 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (9/7) against Alexei Popyrin of Australia. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Rajasthan Royals vs Kolkata Knight Riders from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Australia Women vs New Zealand Women: Third T20 from 9.15 am on Sony Six, HD

England Women vs West Indies Women: Fifth T20 from 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

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

FOOTBALL

Spanish League: Huesca vs Atletico Madrid from 10.30 pm; Real Madrid vs Real Valladolid from 1 am (Thursday) on LaLiga page on Facebook

Italian League: Benevento vs Inter Milan from 9.30 am; Lazio vs Atalanta from 12.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2

Champions League Play-offs: Midtjylland vs Slavia Praha from 12.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1

WWE NXT

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

BASKETBALL

NBA Finals (Game 1 of best-of-7): Los Angeles Lakers vs Miami Heat from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six

RED HOT SUN

Hyderabad beat high-flying Delhi for first win of season

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 29: Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 15 runs for their first win in the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday. Kane Williamson, playing his first game of the season, smashed 41 off 26 balls after SRH were put in to bat. Openers David Warner and Jonny Bairstow made 45 and 53 respectively as SRH scored 162 for four in 20 overs.

In response, Delhi Capitals ended at 147 for seven in 20 overs with Rashid Khan taking three wickets.

Earlier, Bairstow smashed two fours and one six in his 48-ball 53 and shared two crucial partnerships — 77 off 57 balls with David Warner (45 off 33) for the opening stand and 52 off 38 balls with Kane Williamson (41 off 26) for the third wicket.

Making his IPL debut, Jammu and Kashmir's Abdul Samad (12 off 7) blasted a four and six in his useful cameo.

Warner and Bairstow were circumspect with the pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Kagiso Rabada (2/21) and Anrich Nortje maintaining their line and length.

The result was Sunrisers could only score 38 in the power-play, which yielded just two fours and a six — all hit by Warner.

Bairstow picked his first boundary in the seventh over, launching a slog sweep for a six off leg-spinner Amit Mishra (2/35). The duo tried to make up for the lack of boundaries on the slow track with their excellent running between the wickets to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Warner sent one straight over Ishant's head for his second six and then picked a four off Mishra with a reverse sweep but the



Rashid Khan of Sunrisers Hyderabad celebrates the wicket of Delhi Capitals captain Shreyas Iyer in their Indian Premier League match at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. — BCCI

spinner had the last laugh as he had him caught behind with SRH reaching 82 for one in 10 overs.

Mishra returned to dismiss Manish Pandey (3) before Sunrisers crossed the 100-mark in 14th over.

Playing his first match

of the season after recovering from an injury, Williamson smashed two fours in the 16th over to take SRH to 128 for two.

Bairstow reached his fifty off 44 balls before holding out to Nortje in the 18th over. Williamson too was dismissed in the last over. — PTI

SCORECARD

Sunrisers Hyderabad:

David Warner c Pant b A. Mishra 45, Jonny Bairstow c Nortje b Rabada 53, Manish Pandey c Rabada b A. Mishra 3, Kane Williamson c Axar b Rabada 41, Abdul Samad (not out) 12, Abhishek Sharma (not out) 1. Extras: (lb-4, w-3) 7. Total: (for 4 wks, in 20 overs) 162.

FoW: 77-1, 92-2, 144-3, 160-4.

Bowling: Ishant Sharma 3-0-26-0, Kagiso Rabada 4-0-21-2, Anrich Nortje 4-0-40-0, Marcus Stoinis 3-0-22-0, Amit Mishra 4-0-35-2, Axar Patel 2-0-14-0.

Delhi Capitals:

P. Shaw c Bairstow b Kumar 2, S. Dhawan c Bairstow b Rashid Khan 34, S. Iyer c Abdul Samad b Rashid Khan 17, R. Pant c Garg b Rashid Khan 32, S. Hetmyer c Pandey b Kumar 21, M. Stoinis lbw b Natarajan 11, A. Patel b Ahmed 5, K. Rabada (not out) 15, A. Nortje (not out) 3. Extras: (lb-2, w-5) 7. Total: (for 7 wks, in 20 overs) 147.

FoW: 1-2, 2-42, 3-62, 4-104, 5-117, 6-126, 7-138.

Bowling: B. Kumar 4-0-25-2, K. Ahmed 4-0-43-1, T. Natarajan 4-0-29-1, Abhishek Sharma 4-0-34-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-14-3.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	Net Run Rate
Rajasthan Royals	2	2	0	0	4	+0.615
Delhi Capitals	3	2	1	0	4	+0.483
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3	2	1	0	4	-1.450
Kings XI Punjab	3	1	2	0	2	+1.498
Mumbai Indians	3	1	2	0	2	+0.654
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	0	2	-0.228
Kolkata Knight Riders	2	1	1	0	2	-0.767
Chennai Super Kings	3	1	2	0	2	-0.840

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

JAYAWARDENE FAITH IN SENIOR LEGS BACKFIRED

Dubai, Sept. 29: Mumbai Indians' decision to not send Ishan Kishan, who was striking the ball hard and clean, to bat in the Super Over surprised many but their head coach Mahela Jayawardene defended the tactic saying they had faith in their experienced players to do the job.

It was wicket-keeper batsman Ishan Kishan, who with his blistering knock of 99 runs brought Mumbai back in a stiff 202-run chase along with Kieron Pollard (60).

However, the match had to be decided via Super Over, where the defending champions opted to send Hardik Pandya with Pollard.

The strategy backfired as all they could manage was only seven runs off Navdeep Saini and lost the match to RCB.

Jayawardene said, Kishan felt tired after giving his all during the contest.

"If anyone could see, he (Kishan) was very tired at that moment and we were thinking that we probably need a couple of fresh guys who can go and hit the ball," he said.

"It is quite easy to say in hindsight this and that, but Polly (Pollard) and Hardik had done the job in the past in those Super Overs, two experienced guys who are capable of doing that."

"So you take a chance on these calls and it could have gone either way. If we had 10-12 runs anything could have happened," explained the coach.

Jayawardene had to admit that seven runs were too small to defend even for a bowler of the calibre of Jasprit Bumrah. — PTI

Captain Kohli all praise for Saini's Super Over heroics

Dubai, Sept. 29: Reining in the batsmen like Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya in a Super Over is no mean task and Royals Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli was quick to acknowledge a job well-done by his pacer Navdeep Saini.

Saini conceded only seven runs in the Super Over to decisively tilt the match against Mumbai Indians on Monday after both the teams finished with the score of 201 in regular contest.

"Outstanding Super Over from him (Saini), bowling against Hardik (Pandya) and Kieron Pollard. I think the longer boundary helped him gain some confidence with his yorker, because he has got the pace and then he was using the wide yorker well too," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"The guys showed real good composure to get



Navdeep Saini

these two points in the bag and very crucial points at early stages of the tournament," Kohli added.

The India skipper also praised young wicket-keeper batsman Ishan Kishan and Kieron Pollard to bring Mumbai back into the game.

"It was such a roller-coaster of a game. We bat-

ted well in the first innings to get us past 200 and then the start of bowling was outstanding. They played well in the middle overs, waited for the dew to kick in. Pollard and Ishan to bat the way they did was outstanding to keep them in the game," he said.

According to Kohli, fielding is something that his team needs to work on.

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma conceded that RCB controlled nerves better than his team.

"Nothing to take away from RCB. They stuck to their plans, although we put them under pressure, they held their nerve more than us. It was a great game of cricket, we were not in the game at all when we started with the bat."

"But great innings by Ishan (Kishan) there to get us back in the game and then Polly (Kieron Pollard) was brilliant as usual," Rohit said. — PTI



Tewatia, Samson threatens for KKR

Dubai, Sept. 29: Kolkata Knight Riders will have to bat out of their skin to stop a marauding Rajasthan Royals when the two teams clash in an IPL match at the Dubai International Stadium here on Wednesday.

Having started off as underdogs, the Royals have taken the IPL by storm, chasing down the highest tournament total 224 against Kings XI Punjab in their last match.

In two wins from two matches, the Royals have got past the 200-mark with ease. In their success, they have found two stars in Sanju Samson and Rahul Tewatia, who have outshone marquee players.

In his second coming at the Royals, little known Haryana all-rounder Tewatia has got instant stardom for his 31-ball 53 against KXIP, which helped the side chase down a record 224 with three balls to spare against KXIP.

But the season so far belongs to Samson — the wicketkeeper from Kerala.

Boasting of the season's highest strike-rate of 214.86, Samson has two successive half-centuries that has once again put him in contention for a longer rope in the Indian team as a keeper-batsman.

Skipper Steve Smith has been ever reliable, striking two half-centuries, while opener Jos Buttler will be waiting to explode.

To match or even surpass the Royals, KKR have the biggest stars in Andre Russell to go along with

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 20
- Kolkata: 10
- Rajasthan: 8
- Tied: 2 (Rajasthan Royals won both tied matches against Kolkata Knight Riders in Super Overs.)

MEETING IN 2019

- Kolkata Knight Riders beat Rajasthan Royals by 8 wickets in Jaipur.
- Rajasthan Royals beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 3 wickets in Kolkata.

FOR THE RECORD

- Sanju Samson scored 159 runs at an average of 79.50 and a strike rate of 214.86 with two fifties in two innings in this IPL.

- Eoin Morgan, who smashed 297 sixes in 278 innings of 292 matches, needs just three sixes to become the 20th batsman to complete a triple century of sixers in Twenty-20.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

reigning World Cup winning English skipper Eoin Morgan, one of the best in limited-overs cricket.

Having started off with a familiar defeat to Mumbai Indians in their opener, Kolkata Knight Riders put up a determined show to bounce back against a sloppy Sunrisers Hyderabad. — PTI

MARSH IN LIMBO AFTER HIS SCANS LOST IN UAE

Dubai, Sept. 29: Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh is unaware of the extent of his injury, which ruled him out of the Indian Premier League, as the reports of the scans performed on his right ankle went missing in the UAE.

This was confirmed by the cricketer himself on Tuesday.

"We don't really know what happened with the scans over in the UAE. Cricket Australia haven't been able to get their hands on them so it's bit of a weird situation," Marsh told reporters during a virtual press conference.

Marsh, who twisted his ankle while going for a

dive in his franchise Sunrisers Hyderabad's season opener against Royal Challengers Bangalore, is currently undergoing a 14-day quarantine in a Perth hotel.

The injury cut short his outing in the remainder of the lucrative T20 league.

"Hopefully I'll go for another scan at some point this week, if I can get clearance, and then we'll be a lot clearer on what we're dealing with."

"It's one of those frustrating injuries. I've been through a few now so I think I know how to deal with it. I moaned and groaned for about 48 hours in the UAE," Marsh said. — PTI

Klopp wowed by Reds' early surge

Liverpool, Sept. 29: Jurgen Klopp said on Monday that he has been blown away by the standards Liverpool have set at the start of their Premier League title defence after coming from behind to beat Arsenal 3-1 at Anfield.

Goals from Sadio Mane, Andy Robertson and Diogo Jota saw off the Gunners, who had won their opening two league games of the season.

While Manchester City, Chelsea, Manchester United, Tottenham and now Arsenal have all lost in the opening three weeks of the new campaign, Liverpool have taken maximum

points to lay down an early marker that they remain the team to beat in the Premier League this season.

"It's really early in the season and with this performance it is absolutely 'wow'," said coach Klopp.

"From the first second, (it was) dominant against a team in form. We had to be careful like hell of the counter-attacks. The football we played was absolutely exceptional. About this game tonight, there is nothing bad to say," he added.

The outcome of the match could have been very different, though, had Mane not

THE RESULTS

Fulham	0
Aston Villa	3
(Grealish 4, Hourihane 15, Mings 48)	
Liverpool	3
(Mane 28, Robertson 34, Jota 88)	
Arsenal	1
(Lacazette 25)	

escaped with just a yellow card for an elbow on Kieran Tierney after just three minutes.

Arsenal followed the game plan that had brought them two victories over

Liverpool in recent months as they dropped deep then looked to play around the Reds' press when in possession.

However, unlike when they met at the back end of last season's Premier League when Jurgen Klopp's men had already won the league or the Community Shield in August, Liverpool were far sharper in pulling the Gunners out of position.

The only time Arsenal did manage to pierce the Liverpool press before half-time, they opened the scoring completely against the run of play. — AFP



Liverpool's Diogo Jota (centre) is congratulated by teammate Fabinho after scoring his team's third goal against Arsenal in their English Premier League match at Anfield in Liverpool on Monday. Liverpool won 3-1. — AP