

IN BRIEF

4 held for betting on IPL matches

New Delhi: Delhi Police has apprehended four men, who were betting on the ongoing IPL matches in the United Arab Emirates, following a raid at a hotel in Nehru Enclave in southeast Delhi. The accused have been identified as Akash Jaswani (28), Kunal Kalra (26), Chetan Gandhi (34) and Kunal Gandhi (29). Police has also recovered eight mobile phones, a laptop, two notepads and cash worth Rs 93,000 from their possession. According to R.P. Meena, deputy commissioner of police (DCP), Southeast district, acting on a tip-off, a raid was conducted on late Tuesday night at Fab Hotel, Nehru Enclave, where four persons were found betting on IPL matches. "They were apprehended and laptop and mobile phones were recovered from them. During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they were running a gambling racket on IPL matches and other sports events. They used to contact their friends with different mobile phones and bet on IPL cricket matches and its different events," said the DCP. "The recovered notebooks used for recording bets revealed that more than 50 people were betting on a match through these bookies. A case under sections of the Gambling Act has been registered against them and further investigation is being carried out," said the DCP.

2 women arrested for snatching mobile

New Delhi: Two women were arrested for allegedly snatching a mobile phone from a man in west Delhi's Dwarka area, police said on Wednesday. The accused have been identified as Ramesh (41) and Kavita (33), both residents of Prem Nagar in Rewla Khanpur, they said. On September 24, police received information regarding mobile snatching in Dwarka area, a senior police officer said. The victim said that the two women took a lift on his scooter and lured him to a secluded place at Nala Road. They then allegedly snatched his mobile phone and fled, the officer said. "A case was registered at Dwarka Sector-23 police station and investigation was taken up. Based on the description given by the complainant, two women Ramesh and Kavita were apprehended," deputy commissioner of police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said. One snatched mobile phone has been recovered from their possession, police added.

Juvenile nabbed for duping man of ₹10K

New Delhi: A 17-year-old boy was apprehended from Jharkhand for allegedly duping a Delhi-based man on the pretext of updating KYC of his bank account, police said on Wednesday. They said that one Ishthikar Ahmad, who works in a saloon at Defence Colony, reported on September 7 that he was duped of ₹10,000. A case was registered at Defence Colony police station and investigation was taken up, a senior police officer said. During investigation, bank account details of the beneficiary and details of the alleged phone numbers were obtained. A technical analysis revealed that fraudsters were from Jamtara in Jharkhand, police said. Thereafter, a police team proceeded for Jamtara. On Tuesday, the boy was apprehended. Mobile phone used for online banking transactions has been recovered from him, police said.

Monsoon withdraws with 20% less rain

New Delhi: The monsoon withdrew from Delhi on Wednesday, with the city recording 20 per cent less rainfall this season, the India Meteorological Department said. The wind system had reached the national capital on June 25, two days earlier than normal, and stayed five days longer than usual. Normally, it withdraws from the city by September 25, Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the regional forecasting center of the IMD, said. According to MeT department data, the city recorded 20 per cent less rainfall this monsoon season. For smaller areas like Delhi, 19 per cent more or less than long-period average rainfall (50 years) is considered "normal".

Rape victim fell prey to entire system, says Kejriwal

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said the woman gangraped in UP's Hathras was "earlier raped by some beasts" and then "the entire system raped her", after the woman's family alleged that the police forced them to conduct her last rites in the middle of the night. The body of the 19-year-old Dalit woman, who died in Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital on Tuesday, a fortnight after she was gangraped, was cremated in Hathras in the early hours of the morning on Wednesday.

Local police officers said that the cremation was carried out "as per the wishes of the family". "The Hathras victim was earlier raped by some beasts and yesterday the entire system raped her. The entire matter is highly painful," Mr. Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

The woman was raped in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district by four men on September 14. She was referred to Delhi's Safdarjung hospital after initially being treated in UP. As news of her death spread, protests broke out in Delhi as well as in Hathras with all sections of society, including politicians, athletes, Bollywood stars and activists, expressing their anguish and demanding justice for her. Bhim Army and Congress workers staged protests at Safdarjung Hospital on Tuesday, demanding justice for the woman. The Uttar Pradesh Police took the woman's body and her family members back to the state from the hospital on Tuesday night.



Members of All India Students Association (AISA) and Bhim Army detained by police during a protest against the death of a Dalit woman who was gangraped in Hathras (UP), in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

41 Covid-19 deaths, 3,390 cases in 24 hrs

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

The national capital reported 41 Covid-19 fatalities on Wednesday, taking the toll to 5,361, while 3,390 fresh cases pushed the tally to over 2.79 lakh, authorities said.

The fresh cases reported on Wednesday came out of the 59,807 tests conducted the previous day. On Tuesday, 48 deaths were reported, the highest single-day fatalities since July 16, when 58 patients had succumbed to the viral disease.

On Saturday, Delhi had recorded 46 deaths, while the figures for the next two days were 42 and 37 respectively. According to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department, 41 new fatalities have been recorded, taking the



A medic collects a sample of a woman for Covid-19 test at the district hospital in Noida on Wednesday. — PTI

death toll to 5,361. The active cases tally on Wednesday dropped to 26,908 from 27,524 from the previous day. The death toll from Covid-19

in Delhi stood at 5,320 on Tuesday. The Wednesday bulletin said, the total number of cases has climbed to 2,79,715.

On Tuesday, 48 deaths were reported, the highest single-day fatalities since July 16, when 58 patients had succumbed to the viral disease.

Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar recorded one more fatality linked to Covid-19 on Wednesday, pushing the district's death toll due to the pandemic to 53, official data showed.

Also, 204 more people tested positive for the virus, taking the tally of cases in the district to 13,047, according to the data released by the UP Health Department for a 24-hour period.

The number of active cases came down to 1,492 from 1,542 on Tuesday, 1,599 on Monday and 1,570 on Sunday, it stated.

Act against officials who tried to save culprits: DCW

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

Demanding action against those officials who were allegedly involved in covering up the brutal Hathras gangrape and murder incident of the 19-year-old girl, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chairperson Swati Maliwal on Wednesday wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

The DCW chief also demanded a High Court-monitored investigation and a trial to ensure the strictest and swiftest possible punishment to the accused in the letter which was also addressed to the Supreme Court's judges.

In the letter, Maliwal stated that immediate suspension and punitive action against all erring police and administrative officials including the senior-most officials who tried to coverup the incident.

Water bill waiver scheme extended till December-end

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

The Delhi government on Wednesday extended its scheme, offering a one-time waiver of water bill arrears and late payment surcharge in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, till December 31.

Under the scheme, launched in August last year, all categories of houses get an exemption from late-fee payments, while their pending water bills are waived partly or fully, depending on the housing category.

"In wake of the pandemic, the water bill waiver scheme of the Delhi Jal Board has been further extended by three months and will now end on December 31," the water utility's vice-chairman, Raghav Chadha, said in a tweet. Delhi's colonies are categorised from A-H.

The A-D category

Under the scheme, launched in August last year, all categories of houses get an exemption from late-fee payments, while their pending water bills are waived partly or fully, depending on the housing category

colonies are considered as middle and upper-middle class residential areas. The 'A' category colonies include those in Maharani Bagh, Chanakyapuri and Golf Links.

For the 'A' and 'B' category colonies, a 25-per cent rebate is given on their principal arrears while for the 'C' category colonies, a 50-per cent waiver is provided. Those living in the 'D' category colonies get a waiver of 75 per cent on their principal pending arrear.

Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
-----Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in-----

Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS/2020-21/130/e-tendering
Dated:-29.09.2020

On the behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-tenders are invited from original equipment manufacturers or their authorized dealers/ representatives or reputed and experienced firms for the below mentioned works:

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (Lacs of Rs)	Time of completion (in Days)	Position of AAA/funds
1	2	3	4	5	6
Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning of Air Compressor of Capacity 200 CFM and two stage Vacuum Pump (Duplex System) along with allied works and maintenance for Three years at Govt. LD Hospital, Srinagar.	19.00	1000	0.38	30	Available

1. Downloading of Bids: The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 29.09.2020(18.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 02.10.2020 (18.00 hrs).
2. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site 05.10.2020 (10.00 hrs) to 15.10.2020 (15:00hrs) in two (02) covers.
3. Opening of Bids: The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on 17.10.2020 at 14.00 hrs or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar

DIPK-6586/20

Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

MCDs to recover property tax on Delhi govt establishments

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, SEPT 30

The three mayors of the BJP ruled municipal corporations on Wednesday said that action will be taken to recover outstanding property tax on various properties of Delhi government which include schools, hospitals, offices and plants.

North Delhi mayor Jai Prakash said that properties of the Public Works Department, Delhi Secretariat, Delhi Transco Limited, Delhi Jal Board Government

have never given property tax to the Corporation for which Corporation will take action to recover it.

"Deputy chairman of Delhi Jal Board, Raghav Chadha has asked to pay water bill of about ₹6,600 crores as outstanding on the central government and all the three corporations of Delhi, out of which about ₹2466 crores is shown to be pending on North DMC."

According to Mr Prakash, Delhi Jal Board has not paid property tax of worth ₹216 crore and

₹293 crore of road cutting to North corporation.

Reacting to development, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said, "It is unfortunate that all the three mayors of MCDs united to give completely fake figures to the media. They have made a joke of their offices. SDMC said Delhi govt owes it ₹10,000 Crores from the few properties under Delhi govt, but their total property tax collection last year was ₹940 Crore from around 12 lakh properties."

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL MANAGER CTU & DIRECTOR TRANSPORT U.T. CHANDIGARH.

Plot No. 701 Industrial Area, Phase-I, Chandigarh.

No. 10191/CT/CTU/2020

Dated, Chandigarh, 29/09/2020

CORRIGENDUM

In reference to the e-tender Reference No.8029/CT/CTU/2020, dated 03.09.2020 with Tender ID 2020_CHD_56661_1 uploaded on <https://etenders.chd.nic.in> and chdctu.gov.in for inviting e-tender for Marketing Rights for Display of Advertisement (Outside and Inside) on CTU City Buses. Due to some administrative reasons, the date of receiving of tenders is hereby extended from 30.09.2020 upto 14:00 hrs to 12.10.2020 upto 14:00 hrs and the date of opening of Technical Bid is extended from 30.09.2020 at 15:00 hrs to 12.10.2020 at 15:00 hrs.

The other terms and conditions will remain the same.

General Manager-I
For
Divisional Manager, CTU &
Director Transport, UT,
Chandigarh

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from firms/ contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <http://etender.up.nic.in> Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

A)	1.	22/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/20-21 M/o W/s (Two Year Repair of 100 HP and 40 HP VT Motor at UGR, T.W and SPS for Network Sector-106) Noida. Cost Rs. 37.89 Lacs
	2.	25/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/20-21 M/o W/s (C/o Sumpwell near DND on Express Way) Noida. Cost Rs. 95.15 Lacs

The above tenders can be uploaded by date 14.10.2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened / downloaded on date 15.10.2020 at 11.00 AM.

Office Sector-5 SENIOR MANAGER (JAL)-I NOIDA

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

Delhi Police
Shanti-Sewa-Nyaya

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

FOR DELHI POLICE COMPASSION IS A GESTURE THAT COMES STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART.

OUR ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Delhi Police Senior Citizen App

Home Visits to check on their security

Police Verification of domestic help

Regular Advice on Safety & Security measures

Identity cards to ensure close monitoring

Regular interaction over the phone

On this day Delhi Police reiterates its commitment to Love, Care and Treasure the elderly people in the society.

Senior Citizen Helpline 1291

Reduction in Heinous Crimes against Senior Citizen

Year	Reduction (%)
2017	96
2018	63
2019	42

E-mail to CP, Delhi at: cp.snsrshivastava@delhipolice.gov.in
Write to CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL: 112 TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL: 1090

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

Trial court verdict absolves the BJP of any responsibility from the most controversial aspect of the Temple movement



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

Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi, RSS general secretary



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

- PTI



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

Sanjay Raut, Shiv Sena MP



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

centre stage and given the BJP a handy plank.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Top BJP leaders hailed

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

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

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

— PTI

Jilani: Verdict will be challenged

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

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

The special CBI court has given its verdict

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

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

When pointed out that it

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— PTI

Video cassettes not sent to forensic labs: Court

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

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

The judge lent credence to the testimonies of various witnesses and said that

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

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

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

— PTI

Verdict should bring an end to issue: Joshi

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

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

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

He thanked the lawyers who appeared for

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

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

Shiv Sena says case had lost relevance

SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, SEPT. 30

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

Shiv Sena chief

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

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

HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

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

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

DEC 6, 1992: BABRI MASJID DEMOLISHED

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

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

SHORT TAKES

BSF officer shoots himself in Jammu

Jammu: A sub-inspector of the Border Security Force (BSF) on Wednesday allegedly shot himself with his service rifle in a camp here, police said. Sub-Inspector Chakerpani Prasad Tiwari (56), posted with 12th Battalion, shot himself in the head at Garoda border outpost in Gajansu area on the outskirts of Jammu, a police official said. Tiwari, a resident of Madhya Pradesh, was rushed to sub-district hospital in Marh where he was declared brought dead by doctors. According to police, it is a case of death by suicide. Police have started inquest proceedings into the incident, the official said, adding that the motive behind his taking such an extreme step was not known immediately. — PTI

750 parrots rescued from truck in Bengal

Bardhaman (WB): Around 750 parrots and 16 hill mynahs were rescued from a small truck in West Bengal's Purba Bardhaman district, a forest department official said on Wednesday. Two persons were apprehended in this connection, divisional forest officer of Bardhaman, Debashish Sharma, said. Acting on a tip-off, personnel of the forest range offices of Durgapur and Panagarh in the district stopped the small truck near Galsi on National Highway 2 after a chase on Tuesday night. The DFO said that the birds were being transported from Patna to north Kolkata's Galfif Street where a large pet market is operated on Sundays. — PTI

L.K. Advani feels 'blessed, vindicated'; Joshi hails verdict as 'historic'

■ Continued from Page 1
commitment towards the Ram Jannabhoomi Movement. Along with millions of my countrymen, I now look forward to the completion of the beautiful Ram Mandir at Ayodhya. May Lord Ram keep us blessed always," said Mr Advani in a statement. He also greeted media persons who were waiting outside his official residence and chanted "Jai Shri Ram" while his staff offered sweets to media persons.

"It is a historic decision by the court. This proves that no conspiracy was hatched for the December 6 incident in Ayodhya. Our program and rallies were not part of any conspiracy. We are happy, everyone should now be excited about Ram Mandir's construction," said Dr Joshi.

Echoing the views of BJP veterans, the VHP said the verdict is a "vindication of truth and justice" and hoped that it will "draw the final curtains on an issue that had been agitating the Hindu psyche for some 472 years."

Welcoming the decision, RSS general secretary Suresh 'Bhaiyaji' Joshi said, "After this decision, all sections of the society should come together in unity and harmony and work successfully to face the challenges before the country, and work towards the progress of this country."

Uttar Pradesh chief minister and "mahant" of Gorakhnath Math, whose guru and predecessor, late Mahant Aavaidyanath, was one of the accused in the case, tweeted, "Satyamev Jayate (Truth alone Triumphs)" and said that the court's verdict has proven that the then Congress government played politics against saints, BJP, VHP leaders and social workers to frame cases against them.

UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath also called Mr Advani and Dr Joshi after the verdict was pronounced.

Hathras teen cremated in dead of night, UP SIT set up for probe

Hathras/New Delhi, Sept. 30: The body of the 19-year-old dalit woman, whose brutal gangrape and death spotlighted once again the vulnerability of women in India, was cremated in the dead of the night on Wednesday with family members alleging they were forced by police to hurriedly conduct the last rites.

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

As protests broke out in several parts of the country and political leaders and activists voiced their



Police personnel cremate the body of a 19-year-old dalit girl, who was brutally gang-raped two weeks ago, in the wee hours in Hathras, UP, on Wednesday. — PTI

protest over the manner in which the funeral was conducted near the woman's home in a village in Hathras, a local police officer said it was carried out as per the wishes of the family. In the moments preceding the cremation of his sister in what seemed to be

a night without end, the teen's brother told PTI from his home, "Police have forcibly taken the body and my father along with them for cremation. When my father reached Hathras (from New Delhi), he was immediately taken (to the crematorium) by the police."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and said strict action should be taken against the culprits, according to the chief minister's Office.

The chief minister constituted a three-member SIT to probe the case and asked that the trial be conducted in a fast track court. The SIT has been asked to submit its report in seven days, an official said. — PTI

■ Cong seeks ouster of BJP law minister

Cash-for-job scam: Assam Cong leaders court arrest

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, SEPT. 30

Senior Assam Congress leaders, including its president Ripun Bora and former minister Rockybul Hussain, with nearly 400 Congress workers here on Wednesday courted arrest in protest against the paper leak of the Assam sub-inspector recruitment test which has rocked the state with dozens of candidates and conspirators arrested by the police in the ongoing investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police.

The police have so far arrested 19 people in connection with the question paper leak, besides probing the disproportionate assets of the retired DIG accused



Siddhartha Bhattacharya

in the exam scam to which the Congress has been describing as "Vyapam of Assam". The recruitment of sub-inspectors against 597 vacant posts was first advertised on November 4, 2018. The State Level Police Recruitment Board issued another notice for the test on November 6, 2019. The written test was scheduled on September 20 but the question paper was leaked a day ahead in hand-written form. A total of 50 candidates had sat for the "written test" on September 19 at a lodge in Guwahati.

The opposition Congress

has asked the Governor not to let the chief of the State police recruitment board quit until the probe into the leaking of the question paper for appointing sub-inspectors is over.

The Congress, which organised a massive protest on Wednesday, has also sought a directive to chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal from the governor for dropping law and justice minister Siddhartha Bhattacharya because of his alleged close ties with Bharatiya Janata Party leader Diban Deka, who is also an accused in the exam scandal.

Mr Deka has been absconding, along with another prime accused, former Deputy-Inspector General of Police Prasanta Kumar Dutta.

Cops summon Kashyap in rape case investigation

SAURABH JOSHI
MUMBAI, SEPT. 30

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

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

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



Farmers block a train track during their ongoing 'Rail Roko' or 'Stop the Trains' agitation, against the central government over newly passed agri-bills, at Devi Dass Pura village, 20km from Amritsar, on Wednesday. — PTI

80,472 fresh Covid cases, India's tally goes past 62 lakh

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

With 80,472 new cases country's Covid-19 caseload raced past 62 lakh, while the number of people recovered from the disease surged to 51,87,825 pushing the recovery rate to 83.33 per cent.

According to union health ministry data, the total number of coronavirus cases rose to 62,25,763, while the death toll climbed to 97,497 with 1,179 people succumbing to the disease in a day.

There are 9,40,441 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 15.11 per cent of the total caseload. The Covid-19 case fatality rate due to Covid-19 stands at 1.57 per cent.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, on August 23 it crossed 30 lakh, and 40 lakh on September 5. The tally went past 50 lakh on September 16 and crossed 60 lakh on September 28.

According to the Indian Council of Medical

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

The new fatalities include 430 from Maharashtra, 136 from Karnataka, 75 from Punjab, 70 from Tamil Nadu, 63 from Uttar Pradesh, 62 from West Bengal, 48 from Delhi, 39 each from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and 35 from Andhra Pradesh.

Total 97,497 deaths reported so far in the country includes 36,181 from Maharashtra followed by 9,453 from Tamil Nadu, 8,777 from Karnataka, 5,780 from Andhra Pradesh, 5,715 from Uttar Pradesh, 5,320 from Delhi, 4,899 from West Bengal, 3,439 from Gujarat, 3,359 from Punjab and 2,281 from Madhya Pradesh.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

MP: Congress, BJP vie for Madhavrao Scindia legacy

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, SEPT. 30

Ruling BJP and Opposition Congress in Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday vied for the legacy of former Union minister late Madhyavao Scindia by paying tribute to his memory on the occasion of his death anniversary, ahead of upcoming by-elections in 28 assembly constituencies in the state.

Both the parties observed 76th death anniversary of the leader in their respective state party headquarters here. The leaders of both the parties also paid tribute to the late leader by garlanding his statue in Gwalior.

Sixteen of the 28 assembly seats that are going to by-elections on November 3, come under Gwalior-Chambal region, considered the stronghold of the erstwhile royal family of Scindia of Gwalior. Late Scindia's son Jyotiraditya Scindia snapped his 2-decade-long ties with Congress in March.

SC notice to Maha House secy on Arnab Goswami's plea

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30

The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notice to Maharashtra assembly secretary on a plea by the Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami challenging a show cause notice issued to him for the alleged breach of privilege for his remarks against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray during a TV debate relating to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Issuing the notice returnable in a week, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde heading a bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, however, did not stay the notice to Goswami.

The court issued notice even as CJI Bobde expressed doubts whether issuance of a show-cause notice was a stage for Goswami to approach the court when the committee of privileges of the State assembly is yet to deliberate on the issue.

"We understand the gravity. But this is only a show cause notice and there is no motion", of the committee of privileges, observed CJI Bobde.

Mortal remains of slain Shopian youth will be exhumed

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, SEPT. 30

Conceding the demand of their parents, the authorities in Jammu and Kashmir have decided to exhume the mortal remains of three youth from the Union Territory's frontier Rajouri district who were killed by the Army troops in a fake encounter in militancy-infested Shopian district in July and then passed off as 'terrorists' and hand these over to the former.

Inspector General of Police (Kashmir range), Vijay Kumar, said on Wednesday, "As the DNA samples of the three dead bodies of Rajouri matched those of their family members, these will be exhumed and handed over to their families after due process of law" (sic).

As reported by this newspaper earlier, the parents and other relatives of the slain youth had demanded that their mortal remains be exhumed and handed over to them so that they could give these a decent burial in their native villages in Rajouri.

The trio namely Muhammad Imtiaz, 20, Muhammad Abrar, 25, and Ibrar Ahmed Khan, 16, were killed by the Army

during an "operation" in Amshipora area of Shopian on July 18, a day after they had arrived there to work in an apple orchard to earn living.

According to the J&K police, 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 police 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 had said.

The kin of the slain youth had told this newspaper that since the Army has admitted the they were killed by its men during a so-called operation at Amshipora and the J&K police have announced that the results of the DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid 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 (Soil)," Imtiaz's father Abid Hussain had said.

Cinema halls will reopen on Oct. 15

■ Continued from Page 1

lockdown was imposed from March 25 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The new guidelines are based on feedback received from states and UTs, and extensive consultations held with related central ministries and departments, the statement said.

The fresh guidelines said state and UT governments have been given the flexibility to permit social, religious and political gatherings beyond the limit of 100 persons, outside containment zones, after October 15. However, they will be subject to certain conditions like a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity with a ceiling of 200 persons and

mandatory wearing of face masks. This comes ahead of the three-phase Bihar assembly elections which will begin from October 27.

For the re-opening of schools and coaching institutions, State and UT governments can decide to do so after October 15, in a graded manner. The decision shall be taken in consultation with the respective school and institution management, based on their assessment of the situation, and subject to certain conditions, it said. Online or distance learning shall continue to be the preferred mode of teaching and shall be encouraged, the ministry said.

Where schools are conduct-

ing online classes, if some students prefer to attend online classes rather than physically attend school, they may be permitted to do so.

Students may attend schools and institutions only with the written consent of parents.

Attendance must not be enforced, and must depend entirely on parental consent, the home ministry said.

States and UTs will prepare their own SOP regarding health and safety precautions for the reopening of schools and institutions based on the SOP to be issued by the department of school education and literacy, Union ministry of education, keeping local requirements in view.

No evidence: Advani, Joshi, Uma acquitted

■ Continued from Page 1

page verdict, special judge S.K. Yadav said the CBI could not produce any conclusive evidence against any accused. He further noted that though over 351 witnesses deposed in the court, their statements were found to be contradictory and incoherent. As for the video evidence presented by the CBI, it was not reliable since the Code of Criminal Procedure was not followed, he said. He also observed that late Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Ashok Singhal wanted to save the structure because Ram idols were inside.

"Anti-social elements brought down the structure.

The accused tried to stop the demolition," the judge said, adding that the audio and video evidence produced by the CBI did not establish the charges against the leaders. He also did not rely on photographs of the incident, saying their negatives were not produced. He did not accept newspaper reports as evidence, saying that their original copies were not produced and proved.

The judge said that the CBI chargesheet has no evidence on the basis of which it can be established that the named accused had incited any riot or were part of it.

"Everything was normal when (VHP leader) Ashok Singhal announced how the

kar sewa would proceed. But a section of kar sewaks got agitated. They started throwing stones and some broke barricades and climbed the disputed structure. Ashok Singhal again asked this group, that was part of the kar sewaks, to return, but everyone started attacking him."

The judgment said: "Evidence also suggests that RSS and VHP volunteers were taking care of arrangements and regularly making announcements. Seating arrangements for women, the elderly, the media and parking was being handled by them. This points to the fact that there was no scheme of the

named accused to bring down the disputed structure on December 6, 1992."

The judge said: "The group that created a ruckus was from a section of the kar sewaks, but they were definitely hooligans because if they were actual believers of Lord Ram they would have paid heed to Ashok Singhal's statement that the disputed structure is also a temple and you have to protect it."

"That the named accused got together in common cause with anti-social kar sewaks to bring down the disputed structure, there is no evidence in the chargesheet to prove this. The leaders seated on stage and those near the Ram chabutara — Ashok Singhal, Vijaya Raje Scindia

— did not suspect that a section of the kar sewaks will get agitated and climb the disputed structure."

"Which accused person gave what speech on December 6, 1992, the prosecution has not managed to prove this with evidence. The video cassettes that have been presented, their related witnesses have themselves accepted these are edited and tampered. The prosecution has to prove that which accused gave what specific speech that led to enmity between two groups and led to a breakdown in communal harmony. If the accused have merely given an inciting speech only on that basis the person cannot be pronounced guilty," the judgment said.

THE ASIAN AGE

1 OCTOBER 2020

In Hathras, don't lose sight of justice goal

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

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

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

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

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

Was the victim targeted because she was bright and she stood out, as most liberal, young women do and are made to suffer for, and more so in rural India, where the churning is at its strongest?

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

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

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

First among equals

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

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

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

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

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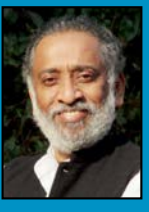
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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



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

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

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

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

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

A DIVIDED FORCE

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

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

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

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

IRS OFFICERS FEAR LOSS OF STATURE

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

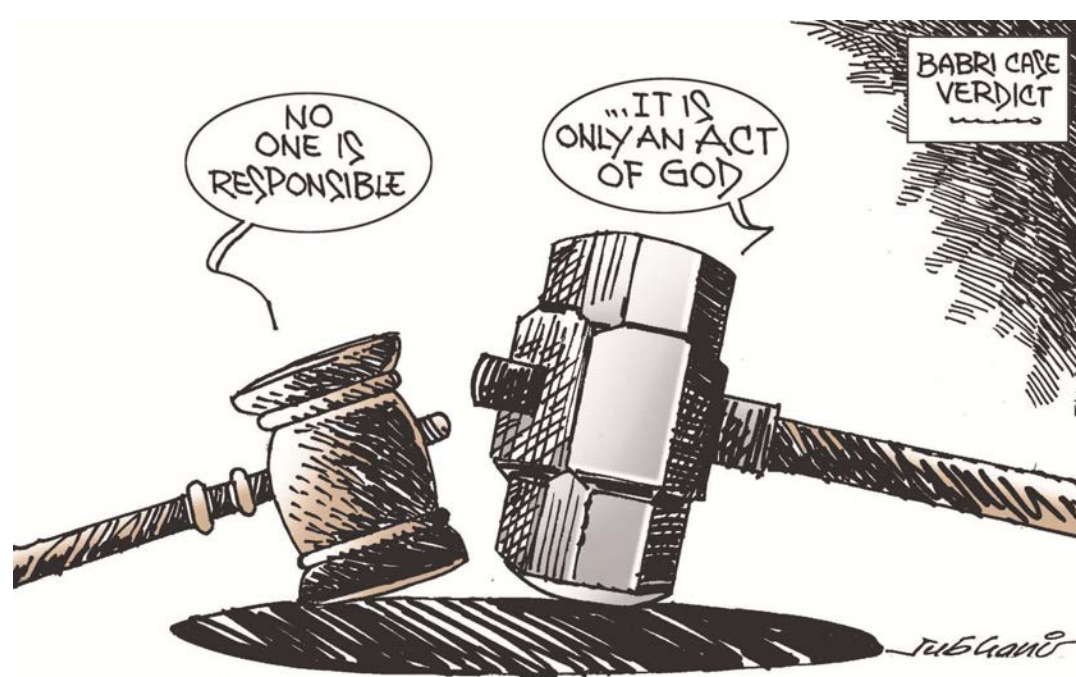
According to sources, the IRS association of the Northeast region views the decision as one that will reduce the stature of the service.

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

Under faceless assessment, AI and data analytics-based systems will be used to identify taxpayers and send notices in a transparent manner. This will inevitably require a change in how IT officials will function. The NE IRS officers are perhaps jittery about this change from the "normal".

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian) on Twitter. Let's multiply the effect.

Subhani



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

Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

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

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

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

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

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

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

tries in Europe and North America.

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

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

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

What does this mean on the ground? As the writers point out, it means building systems and institutions that can marshal the full power of government to confront the next epidemic. It means designing and building new infrastructure for disease surveillance, case reporting and contact tracing, and developing decentralised networks of laboratories.

And it means prioritising human resources — investing in the personnel that would be needed to run these new systems.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

WHITHER CLOSURE?

The judgment of the special CBI court in the Babri Masjid demolition case has come about 28 years after the incident. The CBI had framed charges against 48 people of whom only 32 are now surviving. Acquitting all accused the judge has said any conspiracy for demolition of the mosque was not established. It was impossible for the State to stop the kar sewaks in 1992 without heavy bloodshed. The Supreme Court has already decided the Ram Janmabhoomi case. This verdict has finally brought curtains down on a painful chapter of Indian history.

M.C. Joshi
Lucknow

GOVT ABDICATION

THE FARM BILLS are here to haunt the nation for a long time. The policy approach of the government to the agro-sector was clear from the Shantakumar Committee report of 2014 and the government's intent is to dilute its involvement in food procurement, and perhaps design and ensure a level playing field for all. If only the government had seeded farmer cooperatives that would grow in size and clout to negotiate in the open market from a position of strength, these laws would have been successful. But it hasn't. As they stand, the laws have taken away the protection of the farmer against an inclement market and purchaser cartels.

R. Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

YOGI MUST RESIGN

WHILE THE TWO Unnao rapes and now the rape in Hathras point to a sick and untenable mindset within society that is the cause of these crimes, the abysmal law and order in Uttar Pradesh has acted as an enabler for perpetrators. Amid such a scenario, it is best fit for the chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, to resign on moral grounds. If the young aren't safe in a society, what can redeem it?

Syed Abdul Monim
Navi Mumbai

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

IN BRIEF

'I am a woman' singer Reddy dies

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

7 parties to form Belgian govt

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

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

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

Justice Ginsburg laid to rest

Arlington (US): Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was buried Tuesday in a private ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, laid to rest beside her husband and near some of her former colleagues on the court. Washington last week honoured the 87-year-old Ginsburg, who died Sept. 18, with two days where the public could view her casket at the top of the Supreme

Court's steps and pay their respects. On Friday, the women's rights trailblazer and second woman to join the high court lay in state at the US Capitol, the first woman to do so. Already the capital is looking ahead to confirmation hearings expected to begin

Oct. 12 for Amy Coney Barrett, whom President Donald Trump announced Saturday as his nominee for Ginsburg's seat. Barrett was meeting with senators on Tuesday. Arlington is best known as the resting place of approximately 400,000 service members, veterans and family members.

ISS AIR LEAK FORCES CREW WAKEUP

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

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

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

Don won't condemn white supremacists

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

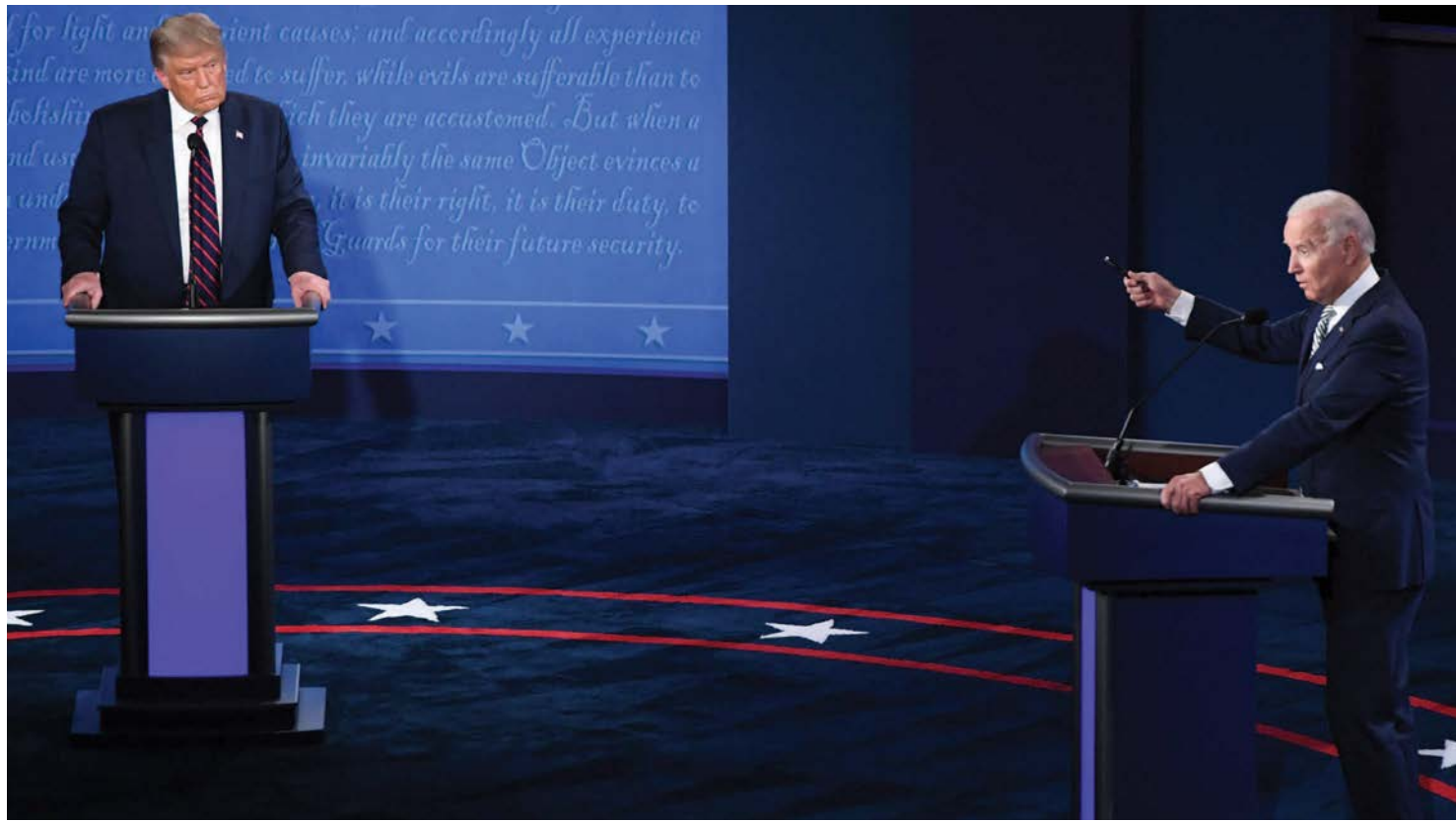
"I'm willing to do anything. I want to see peace." When pressed further, he said, "Give me a name", to which Biden chimed in, "Proud Boys", referring to a far-right outfit that has been designated as a hate group by the nonprofit legal advocacy organisation, Southern Poverty Law Centre. "Proud Boys —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

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

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

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

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



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

— AFP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— Agencies

DON DENIGRATES OFFICE OF US PREZ: HARRIS

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

— PTI

A hot mess of a debate: Goodwin

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

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

Chris Wallace acquitted themselves well.

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

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

— Agencies

Indian-American supporters in US Prez election divided

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

Over 50 women in DRC allege abuse by WHO workers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— Agencies

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

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

One respondent from Wisconsin called Trump

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

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

— Agencies

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

them for an urgent resumption of dialogue without preconditions."

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

— AP



Mike Pompeo

POMPEO ASKS VATICAN TO FLAY CHINA HR ABUSES

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

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

— AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,067.93	0.25
Nifty 50	11,247.55	0.22
S&P 500*	3,378.91	1.30
Dollar (₹)	73.75	0.14
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.64	0.49
Euro (₹)	86.50	-0.28
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,372.26	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.80	-0.23
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.015	-0.022
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.668	0.023

* As of 9:30 PM IST

FY19 tax filing date extended to November 30

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

Govt cuts gas price by 25% to lowest on record



Natural gas price touched the lowest rate on record after the government slashed the price by 25 per cent to \$1.79, denting revenues of producers like ONGC. The price of gas has been cut from the current \$2.39 per million British thermal unit for six months beginning October 1, an order of the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell said. This is the third straight reduction in rate in one year.

Mazagon Dock IPO subscribed 7.52 times on 2nd day

The IPO of defence firm Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders was subscribed 7.52 times on the second day of bidding on Wednesday. The IPO to raise about Rs 444 crore, received bids for 23,01,16,111 shares against 3,05,99,017 shares offered. The portion reserved for retail investors was subscribed 15.53 times, non-institutional investors 4.96 times and that for qualified institutional buyers was subscribed 2.83 times.

NTPC targets ₹98,000 crore revenue in FY21

NTPC is eyeing Rs 98,000 crore revenue from operations and about 15 million metric tonne of coal output from its mines in the current fiscal year. The state-owned power giant is also aiming 340 BU (billion units) of electricity generation in 2020-21 as part of its MoU with the Ministry of Power, a company statement said. The MoU was signed by power secretary Sanjiv Nandan Sahai and NTPC CMD Gurdeep Singh.

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■ Nifty IT Index delivers 61% return Sensex adds up 10,000 pts in H1

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 30

The Sensex has gained 10,000 points, or 35 per cent, in the first half of fiscal year 2020-21 in the sharpest recovery seen after the coronavirus attack dampened market sentiments. The Sensex has risen from 28,265 points on April 1 to 38,067 on September 30. After a precipitous fall from the mid-February high of 41,500 level to 25,000 levels in the third week of March, the Sensex has seen sharp recovery, along with big sectoral shifts in investors' investment strategy. Over the last six months, since the stock market crash of March, the Nifty IT Index has delivered a remarkable 61 per cent return, highest among the sectoral indices. The IT sector has benefited the most from the paradigm shift in the way the world operated in post-Covid times. "Owing to the Covid -19



pandemic, IT and related services are expected to witness an uptick in business prospects and margins. With work from home (WFH) becoming the new normal, IT companies are reassessing their cost structures and manpower requirements and renewed efforts on new technologies & products to address client's needs. The business narrative of many large-cap IT companies is very positive and is expected to reflect in the upcoming quarterly results," said Gopal Kavallireddi, head of research of stock broking firm Fyers. Apart from IT, pharma &

healthcare, telecom, online retail and speciality chemicals, among others, have seen big investments coming in. The BSE Healthcare Index is up 39.54 per cent since April 1. Market heavyweight Reliance Industries has gained big on the back of a rush in US private equity investment into its unlisted subsidiaries in the digital and retail sectors. The RIL stock has moved up from Rs 1,070.92 on April 1 to Rs 2,233.75 on September 30 and its market capitalisation has more than doubled to over Rs 15.10 lakh crore.

SELLER TO COLLECT TCS IF TURNOVER EXCEEDS ₹10 CR: CBDT

New Delhi, Sept. 30: The CBDT on Wednesday said a seller would be required to collect tax collected at source (TCS) from October 1 only if his turnover exceeds Rs 10 crore in the last financial year. The Finance Act, 2020 has amended the TCS provisions with effect from October 1, 2020 to provide that a seller of goods shall

collect tax at the rate of 0.1 per cent (0.075 per cent up to March 31, 2021) if the receipt of sale consideration from a buyer exceeds Rs 50 lakh in the financial year. "... this TCS shall be applicable only on the amount received on or after 1st October, 2020," the CBDT said. In a statement, the Central Board of Direct

Taxes (CBDT) clarified that TCS shall be applicable only on the amount received on or after October 1, 2020 and a seller would be required to collect TCS only if his turnover exceeds Rs 10 crore in the last financial year. Moreover, the export of goods has been exempted from the applicability of TCS provisions. —PTI

Govt sticks to revised target, to borrow ₹4.34 lakh crore in H2

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 30

The government has retained its market borrowing target and will borrow Rs 4.34 lakh crore via bonds in the second half of the current fiscal to meet its expenditure requirement despite expectations that it may raise more funds to support the pandemic-hit economy. The government is sticking to the Rs 12 lakh crore borrowing target for the current fiscal, economic affairs secretary Tarun Bajaj told reporters. The government's market borrowing for October-March would be Rs 4.34 lakh crore, or about 36.16 per cent of the total borrowing slated for the year, said Bajaj. This would be done through 16 weekly auctions of Rs 27,000-28,000 crore per week, he said. The government had envisaged to raise 58 per cent of the total borrowing target of Rs 6.98 lakh crore from the dated securities in the first half of the current fiscal. Against this, it has borrowed Rs 7.66 lakh crore during April-September, or 63.83 per cent of its total market borrowings, and was



expected to raise its market borrowings as it required funds to pep up the economy that contracted 23.9 per cent in April to June. Aditi Nayar, principal economist, Icra Ltd said, "The unchanged borrowing calendar may turn out to be a case of postponing the inevitable, given the considerable fiscal stress that is building up amid the unrelenting pandemic. It is possible that the government may prefer to exercise green shoe options as has been done in several recent auctions. Nevertheless, the expectations of further fiscal support to prop up the arduous recovery, should be tempered, in our view. Hard-pressed for funds to combat rising coron-

avirus infections, the government in May increased its market borrowing programme for the current financial year by more than 50 per cent to Rs 12 lakh crore. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the 2020-21 budget had pegged the gross market borrowing, which is also a reflection of fiscal deficit, for the current fiscal at Rs 7.80 lakh crore. The amount was up from Rs 7.1 lakh crore in 2019-20. The government raises money from the market to fund its fiscal deficit through dated securities and treasury bills. The budget has pegged fiscal deficit at 3.5 per cent for the current fiscal, down from 3.8 per cent of the GDP in the last financial year. Five months of data reveal a sordid tale, with the government of India's fiscal deficit ballooning to Rs. 8.7 lakh crore in April-August 2020 from Rs. 5.5 lakh crore in April-August 2019, and printing well above the budgeted target of Rs. 8 lakh crore for the full year. On a year to day basis, the contraction in revenue receipts remained uncomfortably deep at 38.6 per cent in April-August 2020, Nayar said.

Special export package for MMF, tech textiles soon

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 30

The government is contemplating a special export package for top 40 man-made fibre (MMF) product HS lines and 10 technical textiles HS lines in order to grab a bigger share in the global market. The global market for these products is over \$250 billion, said Ravi Capoor, secretary, Ministry of Textiles. He said the ministry wants to increase the share of Indian products in the global market as the country's current share is miniscule, at less than 0.7 per cent. He asked the industry stakeholders to focus on value added MMF segment, technical textiles, scaling up of the operations and indigenising textile machinery manufacturing facilities to make Indian textiles and clothing industry to become globally competitive and grab the post-Covid-19 opportunities. "The share of MMF based textiles and clothing products would account 90 per cent by 2030 while the share of cotton segment will get reduced to 20 per cent. Indian textiles and clothing manufacturers have to gear up and meet the growing global demands rather than focusing on conventional commodity products that yield very low value-added price realization," he said.

Dhanlaxmi shareholders vote out CEO Gurbaxani

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 30

In another coup in the banking sector, shareholders of Thrissur-based Dhanlaxmi Bank on Wednesday ousted the bank's managing director and chief executive officer Sunil Gurbaxani, little over seven months after he assumed charge. The development comes a day after the Reserve Bank of India appointed its general manager D. K. Kashyap on the board of Dhanlaxmi Bank for two years. In a similar incident last week, shareholders of Lakshmi Vilas Bank had voted out seven directors, including its promoters and the newly RBI-appointed CEO S. Sundar at the annual general meeting (AGM). Dhanlaxmi Bank, in a regulatory filing, said that over 90 per cent of the shareholders voted against the appointment of Gurbaxani as MD & CEO at the 93rd AGM while the rest were in support of its resolution. All the votes that were cast against the resolutions



Sunil Gurbaxani

were by public non-institutional investors, who own 87.67 per cent of the outstanding shares of the bank, including retail investors. However, the shareholders approved appointment of four independent directors—P. K. Vijayakumar, G. Rajagopalan Nair, Suseela Menon R. and G. Subramonia Iyer. Re-appointment of Gopinathan C. K. as a director on the bank's board was also approved. On Tuesday, RBI appointed Kashyap, general manager at the central bank's Bengaluru regional office as an additional director on Dhanlaxmi Bank's board till

September 27, 2022 after the bank saw several exits over the last few months, including of part-time chairman and independent director Sanjeev Krishnan, who resigned from his roles in June, with eight months of his term still remaining. Gurbaxani assumed office as CEO in February this year. A veteran banker, he has 35 years of experience with the State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur and Axis Bank. 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 Bank was put under the Prompt Corrective Action framework by RBI in November 2015 due to deteriorating financial health but came out of PCA last year after its financials improved. Bank unions—Aiboc and Aibea—had flagged concerns over few developments at Dhanlaxmi Bank and also sought immediate corrective measures by the RBI.

GENERAL ATLANTIC TO INVEST \$498 MN IN RIL'S RETAIL ARM

Bengaluru, Sept. 30: Reliance Industries Ltd said on Wednesday private equity firm General Atlantic will invest Rs 3,675 crore (\$498.31 million) for a 0.84 per cent stake in its retail arm. The deal underscores growing investor interest in the Mukesh Ambani-led company's expansion plans as it diversifies from

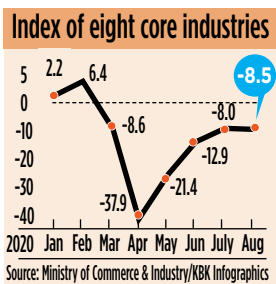
its mainstay oil-and-gas business. Reliance is being seen as a formidable rival to Amazon.com and Walmart's Flipkart as they battle for market dominance in India. Wednesday's investment gives Reliance Retail a pre-money valuation of Rs 4.29 lakh crore (\$58.17 billion), the company said. Reliance, which in May

launched an online grocery service, also operates around 12,000 brick and mortar stores. Chairman Mukesh Ambani said Reliance would leverage General Atlantic's "extensive expertise at the intersection of technology and consumer businesses" to expand its new commerce venture. —Reuters

Fiscal deficit, core sector growth add to worry lines

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 30

As the first half of the fiscal wound to a close, a disconcerting set of data emerged on the health of the economy. The fiscal deficit for the five months till August has already crossed 109 per cent of the budgeted target and analysts fear the deficit for the whole year could spike to Rs 14 lakh crore against budgeted target of Rs 8 lakh crore. Besides, the output of eight core sectors broke off from the sequential recovery with the contraction deepening in August. On the brighter side, the government is sticking to its revised borrowing programme for the second half and the country's current account surplus increased to \$19.8 billion, or 3.9 per cent of GDP, in the June quarter as merchandise imports declined. In the five months till August, the fiscal deficit stood at Rs 8.7 lakh crore, or 109 per cent of the fiscal year target of Rs 7.96 lakh crore. The fiscal deficit for the April-August period of the previous fiscal was Rs 5.5 lakh crore. The government had initially estimated the fiscal deficit for the year to be 3.5



per cent of the GDP and economists predict it could go above 8 per cent this year due to the pandemic and economic slowdown. Net tax receipts were Rs 2.84 lakh crore against total expenditure of Rs 12.5 lakh crore. "On a year-to-date basis, the contraction in revenue receipts remained uncomfortably deep at 38.6 per cent in April-August 2020, whereas the growth in revenue expenditure stood at a moderate 7.1 per cent and capital spending slipped into a year-on-year decline of 1.3 per cent. In the month of August 2020, the sequential revenue and capital spending recorded a double-digit contraction, which may reflect the impact of the expenditure management measures that had previously been put in place," said Aditi Nayar, principal economist, Icra.

The combined index of eight core industries, meanwhile, declined by 8.5 per cent year-on-year. The index's cumulative decline during April to August was 17.3 per cent. The core industries continued their contraction for the sixth consecutive month in August. Having declined to - 37.9 in April, the index has been on a recovery path till July but returned to -8 per cent in August. Among the core industries, steel production declined by 6.3 per cent in August and 33 per cent during April-August. Electricity generation declined by 2.7 per cent in the month and 10.5 per cent during the five-month period. "With the underlying sectors reporting divergent trends, the contraction in the core sector deepened to 8.5 per cent in August 2020 from the revised 8 per cent in July 2020, a sudden stalling the momentum of the recovery seen since May 2020. The sequential worsening in the core sector's performance in August 2020 was led by the deeper decline in refinery products, crude oil, electricity and cement, even as coal recorded a turnaround to a growth in that month," said Nayar.

Housing sales reach 65% of pre-Covid level



SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 30

Housing sales and new launches in the September quarter have rebounded to 65 per cent and 79 per cent of the pre-Covid-19 levels respectively. Online sales of residential properties have also seen a surge in tier II and III cities. The top seven cities witnessed housing sales of around 29,520 units in Q3 2020, which was 65 per cent of 45,200 units sold in the pre-Covid-19 quarter of Q1 2020. But sales were 132 per cent higher than 12,730 units of the pandemic-hit preceding quarter. NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Pune together accounted for 84 per cent of the sales in the quarter. Mumbai sold nearly 9,200 units, Bengaluru 5,400 units and NCR 5,200 units. In terms of new launches, the top 7 cities witnessed supply of 32,530 units in Q3 2020 as against 41,220 units in Q1 - reaching over 79 per cent of the pre-Covid-19 quarter levels. Cities like Hyderabad, Kolkata and NCR saw a growth in new supply over the first quarter. New launches in Hyderabad grew 45 per cent to 4,900 units in Q3 against Q1. NCR added 6,810 units vs 6,190 units. Meanwhile, a surge in virtual residential demand and was observed in tier-II and III cities, overshadowing the metros, as per Housing.com. Its recently launched Virtual Residential Demand Index states the demand from small cities has been increasing steadily and saw a significant spike in August. The index jumped to 210 points for the smaller cities compared to 150 for the metros since Unlock Phase 4.0. These cities include Amritsar, Chandigarh, Vadodra, Nagpur, Vijayawada and Coimbatore.

PREVENTION | & CURE Firm testing anti-inflammation drug canakinumab for Covid

Novartis chief says vaccine won't shield everyone

NAOMI KRESGE
SEPT. 30

Vaccines alone won't be enough to fight Covid-19, Novartis AG chief executive officer Vas Narasimhan said. Treatments will also play a crucial role. Significant supplies of highly effective vaccines probably won't be available until the end of next year, according to Narasimhan, who headed development for Novartis's former vaccines unit before it was sold to GlaxoSmithKline Plc five years ago. Even once such a vac-

cine is on the market, he said, it probably won't protect everyone -- as is the case with seasonal flu. "At minimum, therapeutics are a bridge to those high-volume, high-efficacy vaccines," Narasimhan said in an interview. "Likely even beyond the point of vaccines being broadly deployed, we will need therapeutics for those patients who still become ill from the virus." Some of the biggest strides against the pandemic so far have come from therapies, with the use of drugs such as steroids to help prevent



Vas Narasimhan

serious damage to the lungs. The verdict is still out, meanwhile, on the first vaccines. Early data from front-runners will probably come this fall,

with Pfizer Inc predicting it will have results as soon as October. Novartis expects data from a large study showing whether its anti-inflammation drug canakinumab can help patients with severe Covid-19 by the end of October or early November, Narasimhan said. Together with partner Incyte Corp, the company is also studying a blood and bone marrow cancer medicine called ruxolitinib in Covid patients whose immune systems have gone into overdrive and begun to attack their own bodies.

The Swiss pharmaceutical company and 15 other drugmakers issued a joint pledge with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on Wednesday promising, among other things, to support fair allocation of vaccines and therapies globally. Suppliers will decide on their own whether to use donations, not-for-profit supply or tiered pricing. They also called for "removing unwarranted political considerations" from the process to approve drugs, vaccines and tests. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Mustafizur rues missing IPL

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

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

"It would have been great to play the Test series. Sri Lanka's proposal to have us quarantined for 14 days didn't seem possible for us," Mustafizur was quoted saying by *Cricbuzz*.

The pacer was not given the NOC to take part in the IPL due to national commitments after Mumbai Indians and Kolkata Knight Riders contemplated signing him. — *PTI*

Bairstow loses grip on Test deal

London: England wicketkeeper-batsman Jonny Bairstow lost his Test central contract on Thursday but Ollie Pope, Zak Crawley and Dom Sibley have been rewarded for impressive performances by being added to the red-ball retainer list.

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

Easy openers for Srikanth, Saina

Odense: Olympic hopefuls Kidambi Srikanth and Saina Nehwal were on Wednesday handed decent draws at the Denmark Open Super 750 tournament which will mark the restart of the adjusted international calendar after a coronavirus-forced hiatus of seven months.

Former world number one Saina and Srikanth will resume their hunt for valuable ranking points to inch closer to their Tokyo Olympics dreams when the \$750,000 tournament, the only event to take place since the All England Championship, begins on October 13.

Srikanth, a Rio Olympics quarterfinalist, will open against England's Toby Pentty and may face fellow Indian Subhankar Dey in the second round.

For world number 20 Saina, France's Yaelle Hoyaux awaits her in the women's singles opener and she is likely to meet local favourite Mia Blüchfeldt, seventh seed, next. — *PTI*

Spurs beat Blues with last penalty

London: Tottenham staged a second-half comeback before eliminating Chelsea on penalties to reach the quarterfinals of the League Cup.

The first nine penalties were all successfully converted before Chelsea's Mason Mount missed the target to ensure Tottenham advanced 5-4 in the shootout after the game ended 1-1.

Tottenham was completely overwhelmed by Chelsea in a first half when Timo Werner scored his first goal for the west London club. Sergio Reguilon gave the ball away on his Tottenham debut at left back before Werner scored in the 19th minute. — *AP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

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

TENNIS

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

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KNIGHTS' DAY

Kolkata clip Rajasthan wings with clinical performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— *PTI*

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

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

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

DELHI CAPITALS CAPTAIN FINED FOR SLOW RATE

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

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

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

Rashid pays tribute to late mom after top class show

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

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

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

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



It has been a tough one-and-a-half year for me, first my dad expired and then my mom (in June this year). And it took a bit of time for me to come back. My mom was my biggest fan, especially in the IPL and when I was the MoM, she would always talk to me through the night.

— **RASHID KHAN**
Sunrisers Hyderabad player

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

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

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

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

HYDERABAD OUTPLAYED US: COACH RICKY

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

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

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

Wounded KXIP face gutted MI

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

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

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

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

Their bowling looked out of sorts against Rajasthan as they failed to defend a big total with Rahul Tewatia hitting pacer Sheldan Cottrell for five sixes in an over to win the match for his team.

Mumbai Indians are blessed with a splendid batting firepower with the likes of Rohit,

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

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

MEETING IN 2019

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

FOR THE RECORD

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

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

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

A diamond in the rough, Natarajan

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

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

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

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

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

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



Thangarasu Natarajan

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

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

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

BOLSTERING THE MIDDLE ORDER IS WARNER TRICK

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

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

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

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

Djokovic, Nadal on a roll in Paris

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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