



Pakistan, Afghanistan handling COVID-19 better, says Rahul

Page 10



Rehabilitation policy for terror recruits in the works: Lt. Gen. B.S. Raju

Page 9



Johnson says prepare for no-deal Brexit, cancels talks

Page 13



de Kock, bowlers help MI beat KKR and regain top spot

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NEARBY



Anti-Khalistan activist gunned down in Punjab

CHANDIGARH

Shaurya Chakra awardee Balwinder Singh Sandhu, who had fought against terrorism in Punjab for years, was shot dead on Friday by unidentified assailants at his house in Bhikhiwind village in Tarn Taran district, police said. Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has ordered the constitution of a Special Investigation Team headed by DIG Ferozepur to investigate the case.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

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For 4th day, Delhi sees over 3,000 new cases

NEW DELHI

As many as 3,428 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 3,24,459, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Friday. The death toll has reached 5,946 with 22 more fatalities reported in a single day. There are now 22,814 active cases in the city.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Shift case to Delhi, says Hathras victim's brother

He wants govt. to give family protection, help to find jobs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GHAZIABAD

The elder brother of the 19-year-old victim of the alleged gang rape and murder in Boolgarhi village of Hathras has demanded that the case and the family be shifted to Delhi.

Speaking to reporters in the village on Friday, he said, "We demand the case be heard in a Delhi court and we would like to look for employment opportunities in Delhi. It would be better if the government could help us in providing protection and finding employment in Delhi," he said.

Later, Sub-divisional Magistrate Anjali Gangwar, who is in-charge of the security and daily needs of the family, met the father of the victim. "We are providing rations to the family and fodder to the cattle. Their regular medical checkup is also being done," she said.

When the victim's father asked if they could work in the fields, she said they could start their normal life under police protection.

In a related development, the CBI team probing the case visited the residence of Luv Kush, one of the four accused. Local sources said the team spent at least two hours at his residence and



Up in arms: Members of the Valmiki community demanding justice for the Hathras victim, in Thane on Friday. ■ PTI

claimed that it collected the blood-stained clothes of Luv Kush. On Thursday, the team had visited the residence of the other three accused in the village.

Rahul hits out at Yogi

Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday lashed out at the Uttar Pradesh government over another case of alleged rape in the State and asked how many more incidents like Hathras would take place.

Attacking the Yogi Adityanath dispensation on Twitter, Mr. Gandhi also tagged a media report which said a Dalit girl in Barabanki was allegedly raped before being killed and the victim's family members accused the police of trying to cover it up.

13 CRIMES IN A WEEK ▶ PAGE 9

Minor raped, killed in Barabanki

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

The body of a minor girl, who was also raped, was found in a paddy field at Satrighi in Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh late on Wednesday, police said on Friday. One person has been arrested.

Additional SP Ram Sevak Gautam said the accused, Dinesh Gautam, 19, belonged to a hamlet in the same gram sabha as the victim. The officer said he had confessed to committing the crime.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

+ Delhi, Odisha applicants score 100% in NEET 2020

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Akanksha Singh of Delhi and Soyeb Aftab of Odisha both scored an unprecedented 100% in the NEET 2020, with Mr. Aftab snagging the All India number one rank, according to the tie-breaking policy, as he is

older. This is the first time a perfect score has been achieved in NEET, according to the National Testing Agency which conducts the examination.

The two topped the list of the more than 7.7 lakh students who qualified for medical and dental coun-

selling.

Cut-offs were higher across the board, with 147 for general category students, as against last year's 134. For general category students from economically weaker sections, the cut-off is 129, while for all other reserved categories it is 113.

The highest qualifying percentages were in Chandigarh and Delhi (both above 75%) and Haryana (almost 73%). Tamil Nadu recorded significant improvement, with a qualifying percentage of over 57%.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

'Car sales up 28.9% in September'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Equipped with salvage boats and sailing equipment, sailors and support staff led by national champion K. Gowtham waded through canals amid blinding rain and gusty winds to conduct rescue operations, steering many citizens in submerged colonies to safety.

Gowtham and his fellow national sailors, Y. Prasad of Rasulpura, and M. Saibaba, a bronze medallist in the Optimist class in 2017 now working as the Yacht Club coach, used the same boats they had sailed in for the Nationals.

With inflatables, radios and jackets, they proved to be the unlikely saviours, even as many government personnel also worked overnight to reach out to rain-hit citizens.

'It was surreal'

The sailors were aided by a voluntary organisation called SDIF, headed by Mohammad Azam Khan.

"We got a call around 7 a.m. on October 13, saying that about 500 people were stranded and unable to get out of their houses. So our coaches responded immediately. Never in the past 40 years have I seen such a deluge at the lake, and it was surreal as wind and water lashed the Hussainsagar in the dead of night," recalls Suheim Sheikh, president of the



Sailors rescuing citizens trapped in a rain-affected area of Hyderabad.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Yacht Club.

Gowtham and Saibaba headed out to Tolichowki, rescuing people in low-lying colonies adjacent to lakes. Prasad, on the other hand, left for Saroor Nagar and managed to ferry 15 families to safety, after which he headed to Rasulpura with his boat as he got a call from Shaikh Nayeem of the Kriya Sangh Society, informing him that water levels there were rising rapidly.

Around 1,600 rescued

By the end of the rescue job, the national champions had trained many local volunteers, and left the Yacht Club boats behind, which were used through the night. Azam Khan, who heads SDIF, was full of praise for Gowtham, Prasad and Saibaba, who, in four small Optimist class boats, rescued about 1,600 citizens in two days.

cording to industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers. Manufacturers expect 'good demand' in the festive season that kicks off from Friday, driven by improvement in customer

sentiment.

While car sales rose by 28.9%, sales of utility vehicles and vans climbed 24.5% and 10.6% respectively.

FULL REPORT ▶ PAGE 14

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MSP is key to India's food security, says PM

'Govt. is committed to procurement and improving the functioning of APMCs'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated his support for minimum support prices and government procurement of crops, at a time when farmers are protesting against agricultural reforms that they say endanger the existing system.

Speaking at a virtual event to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Mr. Modi also said the government would soon take a decision on revising the minimum age of marriage for women.

"MSP and government procurement are an important part of the country's food security. Therefore, it is important that it should continue to function with

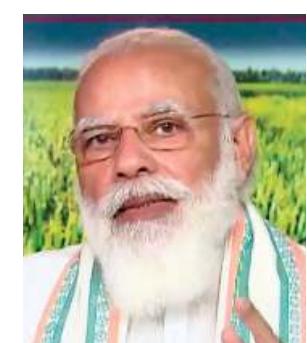
better facilities and scientific management. We are committed to this," he said.

With regard to the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis, he said the system had its own identity and strength.

'APMCs modernised'

"In the last six years, more than ₹2,500 crore has been invested to build better infrastructure in these APMC mandis. Hundreds of crores have also been spent to prepare IT infrastructure in these mandis," Mr. Modi said, adding that the recent reforms aimed to make the APMC mandis more competitive.

Earlier this week, Punjab farmer unions walked out of talks with the Agriculture Ministry, vowing to continue



Staying firm: Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the FAO event on Friday. ■ PTI

their protests and rail blockade against the reforms. When the Indian farmer is empowered, his income will increase, and the campaign against malnutrition will also gain equal strength."

going out of government procurement at MSP rates while encouraging corporate buyers who will purchase the produce at lower rates.

Mr. Modi emphasised the government's view that the reforms would increase farmers' income.

"Small farmers used to sell their produce to middlemen earlier due to lack of access to the mandis. Now, the market itself will reach their doorsteps," he said.

"Every type of protection to the farmer has been ensured through these reforms. When the Indian farmer is empowered, his income will increase, and the campaign against malnutrition will also gain equal strength."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Stubble burning: Justice Lokur, students to save NCR

SC appoints one-man panel to monitor and prevent instances of stubble burning



Casting a shadow: Haze envelops the skyline on the outskirts of Delhi on Friday morning. The national capital enjoyed a respite from air pollution till September due to the lockdown. ■ AP

A Supreme Court Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde on Friday appointed Justice Lokur as a one-man committee to monitor and prevent instances of stubble burning by farmers in the three States.

Student forces will patrol highways and fields in the three States and ensure that no fires are started in the

facilities to the committee and provide the student volunteers with adequate transportation to aid their vigil.

Existing mobile teams and nodal officers of the States will report to the committee. The Supreme Court's own Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) would consult

with the committee on issues related to stubble burning.

The court made it clear to Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati that the formation of the committee was not meant as an adverse comment on the functioning of the EPCA.

The committee will file status reports with the court at least every fortnight. The court chose Justice Lokur for the task as he had headed the Green Bench that was monitoring stubble burning for two years before his retirement.

His name was recommended by senior advocate Vikas Singh, who is appearing for two children apprehensive of the onslaught of incoming waves of smog caused by unbridled stubble burning in the three States this winter.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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Palam 34 20

Delhi Palam Today

34°C Pollution in lower level would continue. Dry and warm weather with few clouds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

34°C Hazy morning and warm day with partly cloudy sky.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.**Court grants bail to two in riot cases****PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has granted bail to two persons in two cases related to the communal violence in north-east Delhi in February, saying the complainants in the matters were not eyewitnesses to the incidents.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat granted bail to Mohd Sagir, and Mehtab on furnishing a bail bond of ₹25,000 with one surety of like amount in each of the two cases related to vandalism and torching of vehicles during the riots in Jaffrabad area.

The court said in its order passed on October 14, the present case was registered on the complaint of the complainant Wasim Khan. He had stated that he had parked his vehicle on February 24, 2020, and when he returned the next day, he found that parking had been burnt including his vehicle. He is not an eye witness to the incident.

It noted that Sagir was arrested on the basis of CCTV footage and his disclosures in another case. Mehtab was also arrested in the case based on his disclosure in another matter.

Delhi govt. defends decision on bed reservation for COVID-19 patients

Policy decision taken with an intent to mitigate surge of virus cases in Delhi'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Thursday defended before the Delhi High Court its decision directing 33 private hospitals to reserve 80% of ICU beds for COVID-19 patients. It said the policy decision was taken as a stop-gap measure with an intent to mitigate the surge of virus cases in the national capital.

In an affidavit filed before Justice Navin Chawla, the Delhi government denied that the decision, which was stayed by the High Court on September 22, was in violation of any fundamental right of the citizens of Delhi and termed the petition by 'Association of Healthcare Providers' as "wholly misplaced and baseless".

The High Court granted one week time to the petitioner association, which claims that the 33 private hos-



Healthcare workers serving food to COVID-19 patients at a Covid Care Centre in New Delhi. • FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

pitals against whom the order was passed are its members and sought to quash the order to reserve 80% ICU beds for COVID-19 patients, to file response to the Delhi government's affidavit.

The High Court will hear the case on November 18.

Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain representing the government said there is a prediction that in the up-

coming festive season, the number of COVID-19 cases will go up.

The affidavit contended that the petitioner association was looking to secure the financial interests of its member hospitals under the garb of expressing masked concerns over securing healthcare facilities for non-COVID-19 patients to be able to levy arbitrary and exorbitant

Sushant case: Mumbai police arrest Delhi resident for spreading fake news

He concocted several fake conspiracy theories on the death'

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The Mumbai Police has arrested a resident of Delhi for spreading fake news on the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput and his manager Disha Salian.

Vibhor Anand, claims to be an advocate in Bombay, was taken into custody by Cyber Crime cell. A highly placed source requesting anonymity said, "Mr. Anand has concocted several fake conspiracy theories in the death of Sushant and Disha. All the allegations on social media are sensational and defamatory and his twitter handle has been suspended."

He said: "Mr. Anand claims to be an advocate practicing in Delhi. We are investigating all social media

platforms. He is charged with sections 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman), 505 (2) (whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement, rumour or report), 500 (punishment for defamation) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and section 67 (punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form) of the Information Technology Act."

A senior Delhi police officer said that Mumbai police on Thursday morning contacted Delhi police seeking custody of Mr. Anand. He was wanted in a case registered against him in Mumbai.

"A team of Delhi police as-

sisted Mumbai police went to the house of Mr. Anand. He was taken to Mumbai on the same day by Mumbai police," said the officer.

On August 4, Mr. Anand from his twitter handle - vibhor.anand tweeted, "Well Sooraj Pancholi, Arbaaz Khan, Showik Chakraborty (Rhea's brother and Aditya Thackeray together Gangraped Disha Salian. The only person Mumbai Police is saving is Aditya, rest all are pawns..."

Last week, the Commissioner of Police Param Bir Singh had said that a case has been filed and many fake social media handles are being probed for trolling Mumbai Police for their investigation in Sushant's death.

(With inputs from Saubh Trivedi)

"A team of Delhi police as-

Delhi HC stays proceedings against Shashi Tharoor in defamation case

Plea challenged trial court order summoning him in the case

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday stayed proceedings against Congress leader Shashi Tharoor before a trial court here in a defamation case filed against him for his alleged "scorpion" remark against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait passed the direction while hearing the plea of the Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram challenging the trial court order summoning him in the defamation complaint filed by Delhi BJP leader Rajeev Babbar.

Next hearing
The High Court has posted the case for further hearing on December 9.

Mr. Tharoor has sought quashing of the April 27,



The former Union Minister has also sought quashing of the complaint. The complaint was filed under Sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code, relating to defamation.

In June 2019, a Delhi court had granted bail to Mr. Tharoor in relation to the case.

Mr. Babbar, in his complaint, stated that Mr. Tharoor made the alleged scandalous remarks at the Bangalore Literature Festival on October 28.

He said Mr. Tharoor's statement was not only "an abuse of the Hindu deity but also defamatory and an insult to BJP workers, supporters and leaders". He added that his religious sentiments were hurt by the statement as it was not only "baseless but also misleading and defamatory".

Mr. Tharoor had allegedly claimed in October 2018 that an unnamed Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leader had compared Mr. Modi to "a scorpion sitting on a shivling".

2019 order of a trial court summoning him on the criminal defamation complaint filed in 2018 by Mr. Babbar who said his religious sentiments were hurt by the statement.

He said Mr. Tharoor's statement was not only "an abuse of the Hindu deity but also defamatory and an insult to BJP workers, supporters and leaders". He added that his religious sentiments were hurt by the statement as it was not only "baseless but also misleading and defamatory".

Mr. Tharoor has sought quashing of the April 27,

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He said Mr. Tharoor

Odisha plans to ban beggars at tourist places

STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has started consultation to fine tune its 'The Draft Odisha Tourism Trade (Facilitation and Regulation) Bill, 2020' in which begging is proposed to be banned at tourist places.

Tourist police personnel will disperse those found begging at any place of tourist importance, says the draft Bill. Police will also prevent beggars or body of such persons from entering the tourist areas and they will be asked to leave the area immediately.

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PATANJALI IAS
OFFICE: 2nd Floor, Vedanta Mall, Nehru Vihar, Dehradoon-248009
E-mail: v717@yahoo.com
Mob: 8750187506, 9810172345

Brother of Ballia gunman held

BJP MLA backs accused; police face allegations of letting him flee

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

A day after a man was shot dead in Ballia even as police and district officials looked on, the brother of the main accused, who is linked to the BJP, was arrested. The local BJP MLA meanwhile defended the murder as an act of "self-defence" and accused the administration of "one-sided" action.

The police also face allegations of letting the accused flee from the spot after he fired the fatal shots.

The victim was shot dead after a dispute broke out between two groups during a village meeting over the selection process of a government ration shop in Ballia on

Thursday. Tej Pratap Pal, the brother of the deceased Jai Prakash, alleged that immediately after the firing in Durjanpur village, the police caught the accused Dhirendra Pratap Singh but then let him escape.

"When he was fleeing after firing, the administration caught him from behind but took him to a nearby embankment and allowed him to escape," Mr. Tej Pratap told reporters.

Bairia MLA Surendra Singh admitted that the accused was an associate of his and also that he supported the BJP during both the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections as a *karyakarta*. "How can I say he is not my associate? But since the firing incident is un-

fortunate, we can't call it good," he said.

Mr. Singh said though he condemned the firing incident, he was also against the "one-sided" action by the administration and media coverage. The supporters of the deceased person have initiated the violence and used lathis and rods, injuring six men and two women, he claimed. "If Dhirendra Singh had not fired in self-defence, dozens of his relatives would have been killed."

Braj Bhushan, ADG Varanasi, said Devendra Pratap Singh, the brother of Dhirendra Pratap, was arrested while 10 teams had been formed to nab the other accused. The FIR names eight accused, while others are unidentified.

BJP, Congress candidates file nominations for Baroda bypoll

Election has been necessitated due to demise of Cong. MLA S.K. Hooda

ASHOK KUMAR

GURUGRAM



Congress candidate Induraj Narwal files his nomination papers at Gohana on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

little political bearing with the ruling coalition having a comfortable majority.

Mr. Kapoor Singh Narwal, who was also among the BJP probables for the seat, has filed his nomination as an Independent with support from Meham Independent MLA Balraj Kundu. Mr. Kundu said the Congress had fielded a "dummy" candidate and Mr. Narwal, with the support of the locals, would record a landslide win.

Addressing a gathering prior to the nomination of Mr. Dutt, BJP State chief O.P. Dhankar said the people of Baroda had accepted the young, honest and eminent wrestler as the party's candidate rising above the caste politics.

While the Indian National Lok Dal fielded Jignesh Malick, former BJP MP and Loktantra Suraksha Party chief Raj Kumar Saini is also in the fray.

Though the Hoodas strongly favoured Mr. Kapoor Singh Narwal's candidature, the party decided on the name of Mr. Induraj Narwal after Ms. Selja insisted on a party worker as the candidate, party sources said. Since the Hoodas have strong political influence in the region, they have higher stakes than the party itself.

However, with four major Jan candidates in the fray, the odds are stacked against the Congress. Though the result for the election will have

Though the Congress put its bets on Induraj Narwal, the BJP again reposed faith in Olympic medalist and renowned wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt as the joint candidate of the ruling coalition. Mr. Dutt had lost to Congress' Shri Krishan Hooda by a margin of around 4,800 votes in the election last year. The bypoll has been necessitated due to de-

'Move to delist some categories from updated NRC is contempt of SC'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The opposition Congress in Assam has said the move to delist certain categories of people from the updated National Register of Citizens was tantamount to "contempt of the Supreme Court".

NRC State Coordinator Hitesh Dev Sarma had on October 13 asked deputy commissioners and district registrars of citizen registration to prepare a list of "ineligible" people belonging to the "categories of DF/DV/PFT" and their descendants who have been included in the complete NRC published on August 31, 2019.

DF, DV and PFT expand to Declared Foreigners, Doubtful Voters and Pending in Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs).

Congress MLA and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Debabrata Saikia on Friday said the NRC authorities did not obtain permission from the Supreme Court to issue the directive.

An earnest desire of the people of Assam was fulfilled when the NRC was updated under the supervision of the Supreme Court and, as such, both the Central and State governments share a responsibility towards the NRC. However, news has been published that the incumbent Coordinator has instructed various district magistrates to prepare a list of D-voters, persons facing trial in FTs, children younger than 14 years who have one parent of dubious nationality and consequences and I shall not be responsible for any acts deeds of the above said disowned persons.

NAVNEET MAJI (Advocate)

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that my client Shrimati Vimla W/o Late. Shri Jagdish Lal Virmani, R/o F-167, Gal No-7, New Shrawanpur, Sector 10, New Delhi-110062, has divorced her son Purushottam Virmani from his family and will never meet her children from her life and her moveable and immovable properties and severed all social relations from them with immediate effect because of their dishonesty and arising from their conduct and behaviour. Any person dealing in any manner with my above said son and his family, may do so at his own risk and consequences and I shall not be responsible for any acts deeds of the above said disowned persons.

NAVNEET MAJI (Advocate)

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - III

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 17 OF SECURITIZATION ACT RW PROVISIONS OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL ACT AND THE DEBT'S RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993 AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME

S.A. No. 87/2017/DRT-III

PNB HOUSING FINANCE LTD.,, Applicant

VS. ICICI BANK LTD.,, Respondent

R-3 Jainam Buildwell Pvt. Ltd., through its Managing Director, C/o Mrs. Pramila Jain, A-33, Surajmal Vihar, Delhi-92.

R-4 Mr. Arvind Kumar Chauhan S/o Sh. Surender Kumar Chauhan

R-5 Ms. Reena Rani Wife of Mr. Arvind Kumar Chauhan, Both R/o Flat No. C-223, Sector Delta-1, Greater Noida, U.P. - 201308.

Whereas the above-named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before this Tribunal on 21.12.2020 at 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above-mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Due to ongoing Pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-

(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the Cisco Webex application software;

(ii) Meeting ID and Password for the next date of hearing que cases to be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer/land Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. drt.nic.in under the Public Notice Head.

(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 23749469.

Given under my hand and seal of this TRIBUNAL ON THIS THE 7TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2020.

By Order of the Tribunal

A-18, Top Floor, Young Chamber Behind,

Batra Cinema, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009

Mob : 9891290953, 931195007/08/09

Test Series with Discussion Total 10 Tests

Starts From 24th October

English Med.

Starts From 25th Nov.

Hindi Medium

Starts From 20th Oct.

Hindi Medium

Starts From 25th Nov.

Hindi Medium

Starts From 20th Oct.

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Starts From 20th Oct.</div

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.30 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, central Maharashtra, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... -35.0	26.7	-	Kozhikode	14.5 ... -29.6	23.3	-
Ahmedabad	... -36.4	28.7	-	Kurnool	... -32.5	23.1	-
Aizawl	... -29.8	-	-	Lucknow	... -36.4	24.8	-
Allahabad	... -35.8	25.8	-	Madurai	... -37.3	24.4	-
Bengaluru	... -28.8	19.2	-	Mangaluru	67.7 ... -30.2	22.2	-
Bhopal	... -32.7	24.4	-	Mumbai	21.2 ... -32.6	24.5	-
Bhubaneswar	0.6 ... -31.2	24.9	-	Mysuru	... -30.0	20.8	-
Chandigarh	... -34.5	18.3	-	New Delhi	... -34.7	16.4	-
Chennai	... -35.2	28.0	-	Patna	... -34.6	25.4	-
Coimbatore	... -32.6	22.6	-	Port Blair	13.1 ... -29.8	23.6	-
Dehradoon	... -32.0	19.0	-	Puducherry	... -34.4	25.4	-
Gangtok	... -22.2	16.9	-	Pune	7.1 ... -27.6	21.8	-
Goa	60.6 ... -29.6	23.1	-	Raipur	6.4 ... -30.2	24.5	-
Guwahati	... -35.6	24.8	-	Ranchi	... -32.4	21.2	-
Hubballi	... -27.0	21.0	-	Shillong	... -25.3	17.0	-
Hyderabad	... -31.0	21.6	-	Shimla	... -25.0	16.3	-
Imphal	... -31.7	17.7	-	Srinagar	... -25.9	5.2	-
Jaipur	... -35.0	25.0	-	Thiruvananthapuram	8.5 ... -31.0	24.1	-
Kochi	28.8 ... -30.4	24.0	-	Tiruchi	... -37.3	24.8	-
Kohima	... -27.0	17.0	-	Vijayawada	... -31.5	26.6	-
Kolkata	... -35.5	27.3	-	Visakhapatnam	4.5 ... -32.0	26.5	-

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	28	56	.52	117	102	■■■■■
Bengaluru	... -4.27	53	... -46	... -96	... -96	■■■■■
Chennai	... -4.15	76	... -58	... -96	... -96	■■■■■
Delhi	24	80	52	306	293	■■■■■
Hyderabad	5	49	9	68	66	■■■■■
Kolkata	9	15	62	65	55	■■■■■
Lucknow	3	76	... -269	170	170	■■■■■
Mumbai	6	45	121	56	79	■■■■■
Pune	... -	... -	... -	... -	... -	... -
Visakhapatnam	... -	... -	... -	... -	... -	... -

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Moradabab, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 322 indicating an unhealthy level of air pollution in contrast, Chandrapur, Maharashtra recorded a healthy AQI score of 21

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravated respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Maharashtra's active cases dip below 1.90 lakh mark

State records 13,885 COVID-19 recoveries, 11,447 new cases and 306 more deaths

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Maharashtra reported 13,885 COVID-19 recoveries as opposed to 11,447 new cases on Friday, as the State's total case tally reached 15,76,062.

With 306 more deaths (of which 125 are from the period before last week), the total death toll has now climbed to 41,502. While the State's active cases have dipped to 1,89,715, the cumulative recoveries have risen to 13,44,368, with the State's recovery rate at 85.3%.

"Of a total of 79,89,693 laboratory samples tested thus far, 15,76,062 (19.73%) have returned positive, with around 75,000 samples across the State being tested in the last 24 hours," said State Surveillance Officer Dr.

Pradeep Awate, adding that the State's case fatality rate currently stands at 2.63%.

Pune district reported under 1,200 cases to take its total case tally to 3,21,858, and 73 deaths (of which 36 are from an earlier period) saw its total death toll climb to 6,431. As per the Pune district administration, the district's recovery rate has climbed to a new high of 88.53%, with the number of active cases in the district dipping below 24,000.

1,853 cases in Mumbai

Mumbai continued to see another big spike of 1,853 cases to take its total case tally to 2,38,544, of which 22,555 are active. With 37 fatalities, the city's death toll has risen to 9,638. In the

Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Thane reported nearly 500 cases as its total case tally crossed the 76,000-mark. Ten new deaths saw its death toll rise to 2,032.

Huge spike in Nagpur

Nagpur district in Vidarbha reported a massive spike of more than 3,000 cases, taking the district's total case tally to 92,841, of which 8,273 are active. Fifteen deaths saw the toll climb to 2,403. In western Maharashtra, Satara reported seven deaths to take its cumulative death toll to 1,336. As many as 211 fresh cases saw the total case tally rise to 43,965, of which 6,913 are active.

Sangli reported over 200 cases to take its tally to 44,219, of which 4,803 are

active. With 15 deaths, the toll has risen to 1,401. Kolhapur recorded just 58 new cases as its tally reached 46,234, of which 2,547 are active. With 12 deaths, the toll stands at 1,510.

In north Maharashtra

Nashik reported nearly 450 cases taking its tally to 88,343, of which 12,542 are active. With eight deaths, the toll has reached 1,479. Jalgaon reported its lowest surge in months, with only 64 new cases and just five deaths as its total case tally reached 51,761, of which only 3,321 are active, while its death toll stood at 1,322.

A total of 23,33,522 people across the State are in home quarantine and 23,409 are in institutional quarantine facilities, Dr. Awate said.

Crop damage: Thorat seeks financial aid from Centre

Declare wet drought in State: Fadnavis

STAFF REPORTER

MUMBAI

Maharashtra Revenue Minister and State Congress president Balasaheb Thorat on Friday demanded substantial financial aid from the Centre to farmers hit by heavy rain in the State.

"This year's monsoon has created a drought-like situation in Vidarbha and the retreating monsoon has wreaked havoc in Solapur, Osmanabad, Pune, Sangli and several other districts. He said the government is facing financial stress and CM Uddhav Thackeray will speak to PM Narendra Modi seeking more aid," he said.

Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis demanded the government to declare a wet drought in the State and provide aid to farmers.

aid," said Mr. Thorat.

He said the government has given clear directions to conduct a *panchnama* of the losses and a proposal seeking aid will be sent to the Centre at the earliest. "The Centre has always given inadequate aid. At a time of COVID-19, the State government is facing financial stress and CM Uddhav Thackeray will speak to PM Narendra Modi seeking more aid," he said.

Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis demanded the government to declare a wet drought in the State and provide aid to farmers.

CMs keep away from 'jinxed' seats in M.P.

BJP, Cong. leaders not taking any chances during this by-election

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

It is believed if the Chief Minister steps inside Ashoknagar Assembly constituency, he loses the next election.

In the past 17 years, none has visited the city. And ahead of the by-election in November, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan too didn't take chances. Last week, he attended a public meeting for Ashoknagar and Mungaoi Assembly seats in the district, but 9 km away from the city.

Congress leader Kamal Nath too stayed away from Ashoknagar. By attending a meeting 35 km away, he hoped to keep alive chances of storming back to power.

At least six Chief Ministers since 1975 have lost power subsequent to their Ashoknagar visits: Congressmen P.C. Sethi, Shyama Charan Shukla, Arjun Singh, Motilal Vora and Digvijaya Singh, and BJP leader Sunderlal Patwa.

For instance, in 1988, Mr. Vora visited the city's railway station to inaugurate an overbridge, after which he lost power within days, while Mr. Digvijaya Singh visited the city for a candidate, and lost in 2003.

Only in March 2019 did Mr. Chouhan visit the city af-

No coercive action against Sachin Pilot's media adviser: HC

MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPIUR

The Rajasthan High Court on Friday stayed any coercive action by the police against former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot's media adviser Lokendra Singh, who has been booked in a case related to phone tapping of some Congress MLAs.

Mr. Singh and another journalist were accused of spreading "misleading and fake news" on the MLAs shifted to Jaisalmer during the political crisis in the State two months ago.

The FIR had charged Mr. Singh and Sharat Kumar, State editor of a TV news channel, with circulating rumours through their reports on an alleged episode of phone tapping of the Congress MLAs, who were sequestered at a resort near

Jaisalmer.

Mr. Singh, who handles Mr. Pilot's press releases on social media, had approached the High Court last week seeking quashing of the FIR. His counsel S.S. Hora contended that no offence was made out against the accused and the filing of FIR was an attempt to curb freedom of speech, while his client faced the threat of arrest on false allegations.

The Single Judge Bench of Justice Goverdhan Bardhar directed that no coercive action, including arrest, would be taken against the petitioner and asked the police to put up the case diary on the next date of hearing, November 18.

The case was registered on the complaint of an officer of the cyber crime police station.

whoever organises a meeting from the Ramleela stage of the Mela Maidan of Bhandar in Datia district loses power, said a local Congress leader.

This includes former CMs P.C. Sethi, Arjun Singh and Mr. Vora. "Why take chances during crucial election like this? We are refraining from holding any events there now," he said.

The Ichchawidhan Sabha seat in Sehore district is another seat considered 'jinxed' by the CMs. "The belief is not the stand of any government, but held by locals," Mr. Agrawal said.

It is also believed that if a campaigner for the Madhantara seat lands at the Narmadagnar helipad, the candidate loses.

Man held for impersonation, duping people

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

The Khandeshwar police have arrested a former Mahanagar Gas contractor for duping people by posing as a staffer of the company.

The police said Pramod Krishna Mayekar (47), a resident of Wadala, on the pretext of providing a gas connection or taking the reading of the gas meter has stolen valuables from a house in Khandeshwar in N



Valley's voice

The Centre must respect the voices of reason and moderation in Kashmir

The announcement, on Thursday, by five regional parties and the CPI(M), of the formation of the 'Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration' to fight for the restoration of full statehood and special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir, is one that has also coincided with the release of former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti after 14 months in detention. The Gupkar Declaration by these parties, on August 4, 2019, had anticipated the Centre's move to repeal J&K's special status the next day and vowed to fight for its protection. J&K also lost its statehood. The NC, the PDP, People's Conference, Awami National Conference, the J&K Peoples Movement, and CPI (M) have now reiterated their earlier pledge; the Awami Ittehad Party and the Peoples Democratic Front too have declared their support. The coming together of the rival regional parties is strange and significant; this is no electoral alliance, but a political meeting point on the status of Kashmir. It is a result of the perception that politics in J&K is a face-off with the Centre and a reflection of increased Kashmiri alienation from the national mainstream. The framing of Kashmir politics as a combat with the Centre has been forced upon the regional parties by the BJP government through its reckless policies.

In 2015, the BJP-PDP coalition government in J&K appeared like the maturing of a progressive trend. The BJP and the NC were in alliance at the Centre earlier. With two main national parties, the Congress and the BJP, forming opportunistic alliances with two regional parties, there were reasons to believe that politics in Kashmir was not out of step with the national mainstream. Besides participation of Kashmiri parties in national coalition governments, the debate within had begun to echo political debates elsewhere in the country – with development and governance increasingly taking centre stage. Debates on autonomy and self-determination continued, but did not overwhelm politics in Kashmir. As it turned out, alliances with regional actors did not temper the BJP's strident opposition to the notional special status. It sought to delegitimise regional parties by terming them 'soft separatists,' and unleashed state agencies against them. J&K's reorganisation in 2019 created new international dimensions. The BJP government at the Centre evidently believes that domination, not accommodation, is the way forward in Kashmir, which has helped the party's electoral appeal in the heartland, and acts as an incentive. With sufficient amount of force, any policy is enforceable on the ground, but that is not a moral choice that democratic societies make. National integration advanced through patient negotiations and accommodation is more enduring and formidable. It is time for a new beginning in Kashmir and the Centre should be sensitive to the sentiments expressed in the Gupkar Declaration.

Hope amid uncertainty

IMF calls for more international cooperation as the world economy recovers slowly

The IMF's latest World Economic Outlook sums up the challenges ahead in the report's title: 'A long and difficult ascent'. With COVID-19 having already extracted a toll of over a million lives, accompanied by an evisceration of livelihoods and output in economies, prognosticating the economic future even as the pandemic rages on is an unenviable task. The Fund's economists have gamely sought to make forecasts for world output through 2020, 2021 and into the medium term. While the global economy is projected to shrink 4.4% this year, reflecting a less severe contraction than the 5.2% drop estimated in June, output is seen rebounding at a marginally slower 5.2% pace in 2021. The IMF has based its revision on "better-than-anticipated second-quarter GDP out-turns, mostly in advanced economies" where activity improved after lockdowns were eased, as well as signs of a stronger recovery in the July-September quarter. But the IMF has been prudent in pointing out that even as the world economy ascends out of the depths it plunged to in April, following the worldwide lockdown, there remains the danger of a resurgence in infections that is prompting countries in Europe to reimpose at least partial closures. And the risks associated with predicting the pandemic's progression, the unevenness of public health responses, and the extent to which domestic activity can be disrupted, magnify the uncertainty.

Pointing out that the pandemic is set to leave scars well into the medium term 'as labour markets take time to heal, investment is held back by uncertainty and balance sheet problems, and lost schooling impairs human capital', IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath contends that global growth will gradually slow to about 3.5% in the medium term. With the cumulative loss in output relative to the pre-pandemic projected path estimated to more than double to \$28 trillion over 2020-25, efforts to improve average living standards are certain to be severely set back. Observing that the pandemic is set to widen inequality between economies and within nations, the Fund has urged greater international cooperation. It is imperative for all countries to work closely to ensure that new treatments and vaccines are made available to all since wider and faster availability of medical solutions could boost global income by almost \$9 trillion by end-2025, reducing income divergence, she says. With no visibility yet on vaccine availability, the IMF has also stressed the need for policymakers to persist with direct income support for the most vulnerable and regulatory forbearance for stressed but viable firms. The message is clear. In a world as interconnected as it is today, the cost of economic insularity would only be more protracted pain for all.

A constitutional pickle of the Andhra kind

Checks and balances for politicians, bureaucrats and judges are a must as political mudslinging may smear the judiciary



SIRAM PANNU

The division of the larger State was a traumatic phase, and troubled times seem not to have left Andhra Pradesh's people and institutions, caught as they are between warring chieftains Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and N. Chandrababu Naidu. Of special concern now, however, is the latest controversy which threatens to suck in the Indian judiciary at its highest levels. This is embedded in the letter of October 6 written by the State Chief Minister, Jagan Mohan Reddy, to the Chief Justice of India (CJI), S.A. Bobde.

Allegations against a judge

Historical movie buffs will recall an ancient war machine called the catapult. A huge arm was attached to a tall gibbet into which was put shredded nails or molten fire. As the arm swung back and then spun forward, it released its contents across a wide arc into the opposing castle. On landing, it did devastating damage. The king of the castle had to deal with it, and quickly, to contain the damage. The young Chief Minister's letter evokes this parallel. Except that the target is not the city or the Court, it is one judge – but Justice N.V. Ramana is no ordinary judge;

he is now the seniormost after the CJI, and is due to take over from him come April 2021, if the convention on seniority holds.

The Chief Minister's letter begins with a reminder that the executive is an equal partner of the judiciary and the legislature in serving the people. It acknowledges the power of judicial review over acts of the other organs of State, and quickly swings this around to emphasise the consequent need for absolute judicial integrity. The arc thus traversed, the contents are offloaded, and they consist of damning allegations against Justice Ramana.

Reference is made to Justice Ramana's proximity to former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) as Additional Advocate General, and we are reminded that former Supreme Court justice Justice J. Chelameswar has commented adversely on their connection.

That Justice Ramana has, through the State Chief Justice, influenced the selection of the roster and allotment of key portfolios to a few judges close to the TDP.

That important matters relating to State policy and TDP interests are posted before these judges and invariably orders adverse to the government are passed.

That even a decision of the Cabinet appointing a Special Investigating Team to investigate allegations of corruption against the previous TDP administration has been stayed by the High Court.



The letter makes mention of cases where the High Court has passed orders negating a slew of key decisions of the Jagan Mohan Reddy government in the last 18 months; presumably, these include shifting the capital out of Amaravati, resolution on the abolition of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, and removal of State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar, etc.

Gag order as a misstep

The Chief Minister's missive makes specific and pointed reference to insider knowledge and purchase of large land transactions in Amaravati at old prices to make a killing when the development plans were unveiled. He mentions the involvement of D. Srinivas, previous Advocate General of the State and also makes reference to close relatives of Justice Ramana. It is not possible here to discuss the FIR filed by the government in this case owing to a most unusual order passed by the Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, Justice J.K. Maheshwari on September 15. In the face of Supreme

Court precedents, Justice Maheshwari injunction further investigation of the case. Crucially, he went one step further (and this may be the fatal misstep) and placed a gag order on the media from reporting the FIR.

Now, this goes against every tenet of freedom of speech, the right of the press to properly report on matters of public importance and our right as citizens to receive such reports, and the tenets of transparency and accountability of high constitutional office-holders in a democracy. Indeed, one would like the Andhra Chief Justice to explain to us what the crucial aspect of security of the State or integrity of the country involved in this case of alleged land grab through insider knowledge is that we the citizens should not know about it. It is galling in the extreme that a senior judge should think that after 70 years of constitutional freedom, we will merely consent to have our mouths gagged and our ears clogged. Sadly, that gag order continues, contrary to expectation that the designated sentinel on the watch, the highest court, would order its immediate extinction on becoming aware of its existence.

Onus is on the CJI

All eyes are now on the CJI to evolve a fair and transparent process which enables Justice Ramana to clear his name; brotherly absolution and Pandora's boxes will cause damage to both man and institution. And here one may express an anxiety which is dogging

us for quite some time about Chief Justices of India falling short of the standards of integrity and probity. The office of the CJI is the most august one – *pater familias* of the legal system, master of the roster, decisive say in appointment of the next generations of judges – it does not get more powerful. We deserve to get the best CJI we can get.

Wanted, a watchdog

There is pushback against the Andhra Chief Minister, saying that he has levelled these allegations against Justice Ramana because Justice Ramana is speeding up cases of corruption against politicians, and Mr. Jagan Mohan has a slew of cases involving vast amounts of money pending against him. Let us also make it clear that the utmost priority should be given to all such cases; the way to good governance lies through punishment of the corrupt governors, and the more stringent and expeditious this is, the better. Indeed, one wishes for a Leadership Commission which would focus on the measures required to obtain and keep high levels of integrity from our leaders, and that includes not just politicians and bureaucrats, but also judges. And for good measure perhaps, we should also bestow thought on the office of a judicial ombudsman.

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China's rise and fall at the UN

It's an opportune time for New Delhi to push for institutional changes and reformed multilateralism in the global system



MANJEET SINGH PURI

The United Nations turned 75 this year. In normal times,

September would have seen a grand Summit in New York but because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, world leaders were forced to do with video messages to the UN General Assembly. The UN season, though, started on an auspicious note for India, with India besting China in the elections for a seat on the UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). This was the first such victory in a decade.

To add to China's woes, soon after the CSW vote, it lost another election, this time to tiny Samoa for a seat on the UN Statistical Commission.

And a couple of days ago, it just about managed to get elected to the UN High Rights Council, coming fourth out of five contestants for four vacancies. Earlier, China's candidate had lost to a Singaporean in the race for DG World Intellectual Property Organization.

China's strengths

In 2011, India defeated China in a one-on-one election at the UN for a place on the Joint Inspection Unit. Thereafter, taking advantage of its position as a member of the P-5 and as a huge aid giver, China made itself invincible in UN elections, capturing, among others, the top positions at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Industrial Development

Organization (UNIDO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Indeed, India, too, felt this was a UN election behemoth not to be trifled with, and even as late as last year, pulled out its candidate against the Chinese from the race for the Director-General, FAO.

But how did China rise to this pre-eminent position at the UN. It all began, as is the case with India and multilateralism, a century ago with World War I. India was one of the largest contributors of soldiers in the war against Germany and Turkey and became a founding member of the League of Nations even though it was a colony. At the end of WWII, India participated in all the three UN conferences becoming a charter member of the UN even before Independence. Pakistan, on the other hand, joined the UN in September 1947 on application.

China saw an opportunity in World War I to rid itself of German occupation from some of its territory and allied with the United Kingdom and France. But they could not send soldiers as the Japanese, who were in competition with the Germans for the same Chinese territories, also allied against the Germans and refused to countenance Chinese troops in action. So, the Chinese sent large numbers of labour to support the western war efforts against Germany and won an invite at the Versailles Peace Conference. Things, however, did not turn out well as the West sided with the Japanese and China refused to sign the Versailles Peace Treaty.

The United States, though, was sympathetic to the Chinese cause, and a few years later helped reach



a peace deal between China and Germany.

World War II saw strong U.S.-China collaboration against the Japanese, including U.S. operations conducted from India. An incidental but pleasant fallout of the stationing of U.S. forces in India was the establishment of ice-cream makers in India who, at the end of the war, bought the plants brought by the U.S. for its forces.

America's 'forgotten ally'

These old trans-Pacific linkages of the U.S. and China, including the presence of a very large Chinese community on the west coast of the U.S., are not well known, especially in India, but China is really "the forgotten ally" of the U.S. to use an expression coined by Oxford Professor Rana Mitter. This is important to bear in mind as the world, and India, pontificates the outcome of a U.S.-China contestation and its implications for multilateralism.

Their bilateral ties saw the U.S. include the Chinese in the 'Four Policemen', a group of the most important countries for ensuring world peace post- World War II, along with the real victors of World War II – the U.S., the USSR and the U.K. This number morphed into the P-5, with France

being added by the UK at the San Francisco conference held in 1945 where the UN charter was finalised. The pure multilateralism of the League of Nations was thus infused with a multipolarity, with the U.S. as the sheet anchor.

The U.S. also thought that China would act as a bulwark against the USSR. But that was the Republic of China (RoC) led by the Kuomintang who were soon routed on the mainland by the communists and found themselves on the island of Formosa (now Taiwan). This is important as the People's Republic of China (PRC) would have us believe that it was a founder of the UN.

RoC retained the UN seat of China till 1971 when it was expelled from the UN and the PRC admitted as a member giving it a *de jure* pole position at the UN. U.S. President Richard Nixon visited Beijing in 1972 and the U.S.'s opening to the PRC certainly paved the way for the unprecedented economic growth of China. However, in its march to global hegemony, the COVID-19 pandemic may have caught China on the wrong foot.

Institutional transformations

Multilateralism is under unprecedented stress fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic and a certain disenchantment with globalisation. At the root, of course, is the rise of China and its challenge to U.S. global hegemony. But for global action there are no substitutes for multilateralism backed by strong multipolarity relevant to contemporary realities. This demands institutional reform and not just engagement with extant issues which form the song and dance of diplomacy.

Perhaps most important are institutional reforms in the UN Se-

curity Council (UNSC) and at the Bretton Woods Institutions so that their governance leverages the capabilities of the major players among both the developed and developing countries. In this context, it is good that recently India, Germany, Japan and Brazil (G-4) have sought to refocus the UN on UNSC reform. As proponents of reform, they must remain focused and determined even if these changes do not happen easily or come soon. This is also the way forward for India which is not yet in the front row.

A window opens

Earlier in the year, India was elected as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for a two-year term. India will also host the BRICS Summit next year and G-20 Summit in 2022. These are openings for India in coalescing the world in critical areas that require global cooperation especially climate change, pandemics and counter-terrorism. India also needs to invest in the UN with increased financial contributions in line with its share of the world economy and by placing its people in key multilateral positions.

Three defeats and a near defeat for China in elections to UN bodies post-COVID-19 and the negative reaction to its threat of veto to forestall a discussion on the pandemic in the UNSC clearly point to a disenchantment with China in the globe and is a thumbs down for them. It is also an opportune moment for India and a Reformed Multilateralism.

Manjeet Singh Puri is Former Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations. The views expressed are personal.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lettters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Joint fight

It will be a futile and lonely battle for Kashmir's politicians who want to restore the State's special status (Page 1, "J&K parties team up for restoring special status", October 16). Article 370 no longer resonates with the Indian people and its revocation is a *fait accompli*. The harsh reality they need to consider is that the national mood has shifted towards treating Kashmir as an integral part of India. The redundancy of historical claims is starkly apparent. The viable option before Kashmir's political class is to swim with the tide of public opinion and work with the Centre to claim the State's legitimate dues.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,
Thiruvananthapuram

Kashmir are now on one platform to form the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration is a welcome step. Given the rapid pace at which events have unfolded in J&K over the past year, it is easy to forget that the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party have been arch-rivals for over two decades. Mainstream Kashmiri parties stood against Pakistan-sponsored terror, but always sought, in principle, a degree of autonomy within India. The effective nullification of Article 370 has put an end to these political aspirations. They have found themselves blamed for having 'surrendered' to Delhi – the perception on the street – while Delhi's establishment sees them as untrustworthy. Both parties now recognise that it is only by putting up a joint front that they can extract a renegotiation of

Kashmir's status within India. As they cannot give up their demand for the restoration of Article 370, the other more realistic goal is to ask for statehood. This unity between Kashmir's democrats is positive, for it allows the Centre to reach a comprehensive accommodation with all. Delhi should start a sincere dialogue to restore normalcy.

B. AHSANULLAH,
New Delhi

GST move

The reported reconciliatory

stance of the Centre to break the impasse between the

Centre and the States on the

ways and means to make up the shortfall in GST owing to

economic slowdown during

COVID-19 times is welcome

(Page 1, "GST: Centre to

borrow for States", October

16). This attitude of

appreciation of mutual

concerns should continue in

the days to come, with continuity in dialogue. It is essential to provide quick relief to the common man who is also the common denominator for both governments. There is no reason not to adopt resolution even when it comes to internal matters. However, it is important to avoid pilferage of money in expenditure incurred either by the Centre or the States when there is heavy shortfall in revenues due to a pandemic.

Far from a happy toy story

While the Prime Minister says India has the potential to become a hub for the global toy industry, artisans face a range of problems. **Appaji Reddem** and **Laiqh Ahmed Khan** report on how an influx of cheaper Chinese toys, high GST, lack of innovation and funds, and inadequate training plague the traditional industry

Bent over his lathe in one of the by-lanes of Kalanagar in Channapatna, about 60 km from Bengaluru, Meer Kaleem stares at his handiwork, a piece of wood that is taking the shape of a toy's part, with deep concentration. While his nimble fingers continue their work, his face falls when he starts talking about the seemingly bleak future of the craft that has been the source of livelihood for three generations.

Business is yet to pick up for the famed Channapatna toys after a lockdown imposed across the country to contain the spread of COVID-19 stretched from three weeks to months. Only a few lathes are buzzing in the town. The lockdown worsened the woes of the craftsmen which began with the influx of cheap Chinese toys into the market. Demonetisation in 2016 and imposition of a 12% Goods and Services Tax (GST) on their products dealt additional blows to their business. "And now there is no demand for our products from local retailers. Merchants who used to come from different parts of the country are not showing up. Even exhibitions and fairs across the country, where many of our products are sold, remain closed," says a worried Kaleem.

Notwithstanding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mention of the brightly coloured Channapatna toys in his 'Mann Ki Baat' programme in August and emphasis on the promotion of locally manufactured toys, Kaleem isn't sure if the industry can return to its heyday anytime soon. The hand-crafted wooden products, which wear coats of vegetable paint and lacquer, enjoyed a good market locally and abroad. He reminisces about the variety of necklaces, bangles, beads and napkin rings he used to carve out from the logs of ivory wood in his lathe, to meet export orders, about 15-20 years ago. "Our products were in great demand in foreign countries even till the late 1990s. But not anymore," he rues.

The China crisis in Channapatna

The arrival of Chinese toys in the market at almost half the price of the Channapatna toys severely impacted the industry. The assembly line production of Chinese toys makes them far less expensive than the Channapatna toys, which are hand-crafted and hand-painted. Even though Channapatna toys are said to be more durable and safer for children (as they are coloured with vegetable dyes), the Chinese varieties rule the market, artisans say.

Channapatna toys date back to the reign of the 18th century ruler of the erstwhile Mysore kingdom, Tipu Sultan, who invited Persian artisans to train local artisans in making wooden toys. As ivory wood trees, easily distinguishable with their blooms of white, star-shaped flowers, were available aplenty in and around Ramanagara district, the craft flourished in Channapatna. Ivory wood trees help make lightweight toys. The uniqueness of the craft also helped the toys earn the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The GI tag is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

After more than 30 years in the toy-making industry, Kaleem, in his early 50s, does not see his sons taking forward the family legacy. All three of them have taken up other vocations. The number of artisans engaged in the toy-making industry is dwindling as their earnings fall well below the wages offered in other industries, he says.

However, Sunil Kumar, Assistant Director in the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Mysuru, claims that the number of Channapatna toy artisans has remained more or less unchanged for many years now, even if it hasn't increased in proportion to the growing population. About 1,500 of the 2,500 registered Channapatna toy artisans are active now, he says. Of them, about 1,000 are registered with the Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation, which purchases finished products worth a maximum of ₹3,000 from each of the artisans in a month. Two common facility centres set up in Channapatna by the government authorities offer work spaces and lathes at a concessional rate to a few artisans, but a majority of artisans work on their own lathes set up in their homes. Special attention is also paid to the export-oriented toys at one of the two common facility centres, Kumar says.

With the Central government's 'Atmanirbhav' policy expected to discourage or even impose a ban on the import of Chinese toys, the officials are hopeful that the fortunes of the Channapatna toy artisans may change. But self-reliance alone isn't sufficient; the absence of innovation in the design of toys is an area of concern, officials say. Artisans, they say, habitually produce the same set of toys without any innovation. In contrast, the new and attractive designs



An artisan at work in Channapatna, Ramanagara district, Karnataka. (Below): Women make wooden toys at their homes in Etikoppaka village in Visakhapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR, K.R. DEEPAK



and colours of the Chinese products score over the Channapatna toys.

Artisans like Krishna, who runs the Manjunatha Toys Store in Channapatna, counter this argument. Krishna displays a diverse set of products in his store, including utility items like car seats made of wooden beads, pencil sharpeners, tissue paper holders, and a variety of tops. Artisans are always willing to innovate as long as there is a market for the products, he argues. Workshops on design innovation, organised by the authorities, are few and far between, while designs introduced by the handicrafts department authorities and the prototypes approved by them rarely translate into a market for the artisans, he says.

Kumar says the government plans to create an online market for the artisans by facilitating their registration on the Government e-Marketplace portal.

Apart from the threat posed by Chinese toys and lack of innovation, there are other ills plaguing the Channapatna toy-making industry. As business is slow, some craftspersons tend to yield to the temptation of making quick money. "The ivory wood needs to be seasoned for at least three to four months before an artisan can start working on it. But a few artisans began making the toys without waiting for the seasoning period to end. The compromise shows in the quality of the product," says artisan Syed Ameeruddin. A few artisans also use chemical dyes, which are considered harmful for children, instead of vegetable colours, he says. Many countries have strict rules against the import of toys with chemical dyes. As a result, some consignments fail to make the export quality grade.

Modi's mention of the Channapatna toy industry comes as small consolation to the artisans who have been campaigning for withdrawal of 12% GST on their products as well as for intervention against the alleged hurdles posed by the Forest Department in the transport of ivory wood.

An industry with great potential

More than 700 km away, the toy makers

of Etikoppaka and Kondapalli in Andhra Pradesh, and Nirmal in Telangana, see a ray of hope in Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' speech in which he had praised their efforts in keeping a tradition alive despite meagre returns. Lauding the revival efforts of the traditional artisan C.V. Raju of Etikoppaka in Visakhapatnam district, Modi said he wanted start-ups to promote the industry and secure the future of the artisans. He said that while the global toy industry is worth over ₹7 lakh crore, India's share in it is minimal despite its wide variety of traditional and unique toys.

A back-of-the-envelope calculation by market players on the total annual business of wooden toy handicrafts in Etikoppaka, Kondapalli and Nirmal amounts to about ₹50 crore. This industry has tremendous potential and can provide employment to lakhs of people, according to market estimates.

Etikoppaka is a village on the banks of the Varaha river. Located about 65 km from the port city of Visakhapatnam, the village houses about 10,000 people. Over 200 traditional artisan families are part of the Etikoppaka toy-making industry in the village. The Etikoppaka signature toys include a standing couple, a wedding scene, automobiles, birds, and shehnai troupes. They are made with the soft variety of wood from the Ankudu tree. Like in Channapatna, here too artisans use only vegetable colours. "The soft-edged toys are useful for children. They help their eye-hand coordination, they help them recognise colours and enhance their motor skills. The industry also makes utility, decorative, ornamental and measurement utensils besides toys," says farmer and artisan Raju, 57.

In Etikoppaka and Kondapalli, the rich tradition of the handicraft needs a larger push, says Raju. He says he wrote to the Department of Science and Technology and the National Innovation Foundation in 2019 seeking help to make his initiative Hastakala an experiment, interpretation and experience

centre of handicrafts. They said they would get back on the proposal, he says.

Industry players and artisans point out that an organised approach towards enhancing the skills of artisans along with subsidies, interest-free loans, scientific development of the industry, market interventions, and official supply of wood and lacquer would ensure the industry's growth and competitiveness.

Appealing to start-ups

Modi's mention of Etikoppaka has generated a lot of interest among start-ups and other business communities, says M.P. Dubey, joint director of Software Technology Parks of India (Visakhapatnam). "Etikoppaka handicrafts have a GI tag. That is a valuable resource for start-ups for mutually beneficial tie-ups. We did a lot of research on the sector and we are finding out ways of adding value to the craft so that it can become competitive in the global market. At the same time we have organised a meet to link interested start-ups with the artisans to explore multiple business opportunities for growth," says Dubey.

Back in the village, the positive vibes from the Prime Minister's talk reverberate in the form of progressive initiatives by the local artisans to expand business. A couple of groups have chalked out a plan to tap into potential opportunities with IT and other corporate firms. Adarsh, a student of IIM Bangalore, has organised a couple of artisan groups to tap into the corporate social responsibility funding of IT firms for promotion of the crafts industry. "The IT firms, as part of CSR, give a lot of support to upcoming industries and handicrafts. We have made a plan to contact the top 10 IT firms to ask them if Etikoppaka toys can be made a part of their gifting plans. We are also approaching big-ticket wedding organisers asking them to opt for these toys as return gifts. We have positive signals from the market," says Adarsh.

But funding poses a big problem to

bulk manufacturing, says Ramanababu, president of the Etikoppaka Mutually-Aided Cooperative Society. The society urgently needs a ₹5 crore corpus fund to buy the toys in bulk from artisans and fulfil major orders, he says. "Most of the time we lose business not because of lack of expertise but the inability to fulfil expectations. Artisans are not in a position to make toys in bulk and store them with the society because of financial issues. A corpus fund can solve this problem. And there should also be a mechanism to arrest the volume of Chinese toys in our market. Chinese toys sell more than local toys even in places like Etikoppaka. The government should help us to be *atma nirbhar* this way. Many youngsters are ready to learn and pursue the handicraft," says Satyanarayana.

Online marketing avenues too are not working well for the artisans, he says. Higher prices on Amazon and Flipkart mean fewer customers. "We also need subsidised loans. Interest-free loans would work well for us. Right now we have a loan with a 9.5% interest rate. Now there is a huge dip in demand due to the pandemic. There are fewer orders, there is pressure from private lenders, maintenance costs, etc., and there is no support from any direction as usual," laments one artisan.

Meanwhile, efforts by artisans and local leaders to build a facility to promote the industry have borne fruit. The work related to a new artisan facility in the place of an old one in the middle of Kondapalli has advanced. The proposed building for wood processing is under way, according to Vijayawada MP Kesineni Srinivas (Nani). "We facilitated a ₹1.8 crore MSME fund, and a matching grant of ₹50 lakh was allocated from my MPLAD funds. The facility will be built soon," Srinivas told *The Hindu*.

to make toys, say that the government can help them create innovative tools to enable faster manufacturing. "It's a long process but it will work if the government takes interest. Making toys faster is also important in the age of technology. Sometimes, we get bulk orders from corporates but usually they give very little time for manufacturing," says Satyanarayana.

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Demand for eco-friendly toys

To encourage the next generation to take the legacy of toy-making forward, the government should provide funds and old-age pensions, says B.R. Shankar, manager of the Nirmal Toys and Arts Industrial Cooperative Society. The number of families who make the finely carved Nirmal toys in the towns of Nirmal in Adilabad district of Telangana has come down to 50 from over 100 a few years ago, says Shankar. "Apart from providing loans and longer training periods, the government should help us find ways to restart exports. There were no revival efforts after these handicrafts were banned by some countries few years ago," Shankar says.

Market research reports suggest that there is greater demand for eco-friendly wooden toys across the world. There is a visible change in the way schools and households are looking at toys for children, say artisans. Toys made of plastic and other hazardous material are being replaced by wooden toys and toys made of other non-hazardous material. This provides wooden toy-makers a great opportunity to innovate and meet the surging demand. Artisans feel encouraged by Modi's push, but the toy story can end well only if their many problems are addressed and the government

says that they are given short-term training by the skill development corporation. Training for 15 days to three months is not sufficient, they say. At least a year of training is required for professional expertise in the craft. "We need authorised wood. It needs to be supplied by the government after treatment so that it is immune to pests. The treatment plant is too expensive for us to establish," says one artisan.

The artisans, who are using their own innovative methods and advanced tools





Priyanka Gandhi

'U.P. saw 13 horrific crimes in one week'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday targeted the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh on the issue of women's safety and alleged that 13 horrific incidents of crimes against women had taken place in just one week.

"In the last one week, 13 horrific incidents of crime against women have occurred in U.P. As per reports, victims have been killed or the victims committed suicide in four such incidents," Ms. Vadra tweeted. "This poor condition of women safety is disturbing. The Chief Minister has no time to convene a 'special session' but his photo session is on."

She shared a chart of instances of crimes against women across U.P. between October 9 and 15 and alleged that the BJP was giving "protection" to the criminals, making women feel unsafe in the State.

The Congress general secretary, who is in-charge for U.P., has launched a major campaign on women security after the Hathras gang rape and murder case.

Chidambaram hails meeting of J&K parties

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Friday welcomed the "coming together" of the regional parties of Jammu and Kashmir to demand the restoration of special status under Article 370 of the Constitution.

In a series of tweets, the Congress leader said the Centre must stop looking at mainstream regional parties and the people of Jammu and Kashmir as "anti-na-

India fares poorly in hunger index

Country has the highest prevalence of 'wasted children'; even Bangladesh and Pakistan score better

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India has the highest prevalence of wasted children under five years in the world, which reflects acute under-nutrition, according to the Global Hunger Index 2020. The situation has worsened in the 2015-19 period, when the prevalence of child wasting was 17.3%, in comparison to 2010-14, when it was 15.1%.

Overall, India ranks 94 out of 107 countries in the Index, lower than neighbours such as Bangladesh (75) and Pakistan (88). 2020 scores reflect data from 2015-19. The Index, which was released on Friday, is a peer-reviewed report released annually by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.

It uses four parameters to determine its scores. India fares worst in child wasting

Where India stands

The Global Hunger Index score is computed using four indicators – undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality. A country's GHI score is classified by severity – low (green), moderate (yellow) and serious (orange).



RANK	COUNTRY	2020 SCORE
1-17*	China	<5
64	Sri Lanka	16.3
73	Nepal	19.5
75	Bangladesh	20.4
78	Myanmar	20.9
88	Pakistan	24.6
94	India	27.2
99	Afghanistan	30.3

*17 countries have scores of less than 5 and are collectively ranked 1-17

low weight for height, reflecting acute under-nutrition) and child stunting (low height for age, reflecting chronic under-nutrition), which together make up a third of the total score.

Although it is still in the poorest category, however, child stunting has actually improved significantly, from 54% in 2000 to less than 35%

now. Child wasting, on the other hand, has not improved in the last two decades, and is rather worse than it was decade ago.

India has improved in both child mortality rates, which are now at 3.7%, and in terms of undernourishment, with about 14% of the total population which gets an insufficient caloric intake.

VID-19 pandemic could have affected the progress made on reducing hunger and poverty.

"The world is not on track to achieve the second Sustainable Development Goal – known as Zero Hunger for short – by 2030. At the current pace, approximately 37 countries will fail even to reach low hunger, as defined by the Global Hunger Index Severity Scale, by 2030," says the report. "These projections do not account for the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which may worsen hunger and under-nutrition in the near term and affect countries' trajectories into the future ... COVID-19 has made it clearer than ever that our food systems, as they stand, are inadequate to the task of achieving Zero Hunger."

Pandemic effect

Globally, nearly 690 million people are undernourished, according to the report, which warns that the CO-

VID-19 pandemic could have affected the progress made on reducing hunger and poverty.

vastly different from today. Earlier, there was a wave in favour of the JD(U) and specifically Nitish Kumar, that has reversed now.

"The political situation keeps changing, the ground reality is different today. There is a huge anti-incumbency against Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. It is no longer even anti-incumbency; it is sheer anger against him," LJP's parliamentary board general secretary Abdul Khaliq said.

He added that the LJP wanted the BJP to take the lead in this election and even now their fight is to replace the JD(U) with a BJP government.

The LJP, meanwhile, claimed the situation in the last two Assembly polls was

fought together – be it Assembly elections of 2000, 2005, 2010 or 2015. Whether they are with us or against us, makes no difference to us. In 2005, they fought alone and we swept the polls. Only disappointment is in the offing for them," said JD(U) leader K.C. Tyagi.

NEWS ANALYSIS

He said the LJP's dismal performance in 2015 was in spite of active support from the BJP with Prime Minister Narendra Modi campaigning on many seats for them.

The LJP, meanwhile, claimed the situation in the last two Assembly polls was

asserted that a large number of them did come back.

"The new policy is for people who have taken up arms within the Valley."

In this direction, the focus was on encouraging surrenders by reaching out to families as well as to reduce local recruitment. "We will be doing more work on the

issue of surrenders. Because for us, getting a man back is more important than neutralising him. And that is a work in progress. Through our actions, we want to reach out to people in a manner where there should be little reason for people to take up arms," Lt. Gen. Raju observed.

Mainly because you held a gun and took a photo does not mean you have to die," he said.



Tense zone: Security forces cordoning off the Chadoora area in J&K's Budgam district on Friday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Police deserter escapes in gunfight

Six arrested for helping militants

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Just two days after a policeman deserted the service to join militancy, security forces on Friday engaged him in a gunfight in central Kashmir's Budgam where he managed to escape but his associate was arrested.

In another raid, the police arrested six persons for providing logistics to militants for carrying out attacks on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway in the last two months.

Associate held

"On a specific input, the Special Police Officer, who deserted the police and de-camped with two AK 47 rifles, along with his associate was trapped in the Chadoora area of Budgam. They

fired indiscriminately and the SPO managed to escape," Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar said.

The captured associate was identified as Jahangir Ahmad Bhat, an underground worker and a notorious stone peltler. One of the missing AK 47 rifles was recovered from his possession."

Mr. Kumar said the forces showed "maximum restraint by arresting the terrorist associate during the live encounter". "I appeal to the family of the SPO Altaf to help police in bringing him back," he said.

The police said the six other militant associates arrested "provided shelter, transportation and also conducted recce of the security force deployments" on the highway in the Valley.

Rehab policy soon for youth who give up arms

DINAKAR PERI
SRINAGAR

A rehabilitation policy for youth joining terrorism in the Kashmir Valley is in the works and if approved, "it will make some difference," according to Lt. Gen. B.S. Raju, General Officer Commanding, 15 Corps.

"The policy has been made, it has been sent, it has gone up the chain. It has not yet come back. The message I have given to the population is: irrespective of the policy existing or not existing, we are ready to go on board and we will do what is appropriate," he said on Friday. The draft is awaiting Home Ministry approval.

Pointing out that there existed a policy for those who had gone across to Pakistan to come back, Lt. Gen. Raju observed.

asserted that a large number of them did come back.

"The new policy is for people who have taken up arms within the Valley."

In this direction, the focus was on encouraging surrenders by reaching out to families as well as to reduce local recruitment. "We will be doing more work on the

issue of surrenders. Because for us, getting a man back is more important than neutralising him. And that is a work in progress. Through our actions, we want to reach out to people in a manner where there should be little reason for people to take up arms," Lt. Gen. Raju observed.

Mainly because you held a gun and took a photo does not mean you have to die," he said.

Anti-Khalistan activist gunned down

B.S. Sandhu was awarded Shaurya Chakra in 1993

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Shaurya Chakra awardee Balwinder Singh Sandhu, who had fought against terrorism in Punjab for years, was shot dead on Friday by unidentified assailants at his house in Bhikhiwind village in Tarn Taran district of Punjab, police said. He was 62.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh ordered

the constitution of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the case.

Mr. Sandhu was awarded the Shaurya Chakra in 1993 for his exemplary courage as he along with his family strongly opposed the Khalistani movement and fought terrorism for many years.

Security withdrawn

Pointing out that Mr. Sandhu has been the target of terrorists earlier also, his wife Jagdish Kaur alleged that his security cover was withdrawn earlier this year even though

the family had been on the hit list of terrorists.

According to the Shaurya Chakra citation (1993): "Terrorists have made 16 attempts to wipe out the Sandhu family in a span of about 11 months but every time, the Sandhu brothers [Balwinder Singh Sandhu and Ranjeet Singh Sandhu], with the help of their brave wives, successfully foiled the attempts. The deadliest attack was on 30th September 1990, when about 200 terrorists surrounded their house and attacked them for 5 hours with deadly weapons. Undaunted, the Sandhu brothers and wives fought with pistols and sten guns provided by the government and forced the terrorists to retreat."

Balwinder Singh Sandhu

Online applications are invited from NEET UG Qualified candidates for admission to the first year MBBS/BDS/BAMS courses in Government and Self Financing Medical/ Dental Colleges in the UT of Puducherry. Applications are invited under Government / All India (Management) Quota. For more details visit www.centacpuducherry.in

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY CENTRALISED ADMISSION COMMITTEE-CENTAC Pondicherry Engineering College Campus, Puducherry - 605 014

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION TO MBBS/BDS/BAMS COURSES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21

Online applications are invited from eligible candidates of Indian Nationals for admission to M.Sc. Program in Genetic Counselling - 02 (Two) seats for the year 2020. The candidates are requested to visit website: www.nims.edu.in for online application, prospectus and also for any updates. The hard copy of online application shall be submitted along supporting documents as detailed in prospectus (Annexure I) in person or by post (preferably India postal services) so as to reach the Associate Dean, Academic-II, 2nd floor, Old OPD Block, NIMS, Punjagutta, Hyderabad-500082, Telangana on or before 5.00 PM of 04-11-2020. R.O. No.: 589-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2020-21 Sd/- Ifc DEAN

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED TENDER NOTICE

Tender Spec. No.: 04/2020-21 of CE/Civil/V.S./Vijayawada. ECV (Approx.): Rs.78,89,754/-, Name of Work : Providing Housekeeping, Pest Control and Lawn Maintenance Services for APTRANSCO Office Complex at Gunadala, Vijayawada for the period from 01.11.2020 to 31.03.2021 or from the date of handing over of site whichever is later.

Availability of Bid Documents Online : From 17.10.2020 @ 16:00 Hrs to 26.10.2020 @ 16:00 Hrs. Contact Officer : CE/Civil/ APTRANSCO, Ph.No. 08662429243, 9490153060, 9440811021. Further Details available at www.tender.approcurement.gov.in DIPR 384PP/CL, Dt: 16-10-2020 Sd/- Chief Engineer/Civil(FAC)

NLC India Limited

Regd. Office : 'Neyveli House' No. 135, Periyar EVR High Road, Kilpauk, Chennai 600 010. CORPORATE OFFICE : BLOCK-1, NEVELL-807 801, TAMIL NADU. CIN : L93090TN1956G000359 Website : www.nlcindia.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR SUPPLIES (e-Tender Notices SI.No.3 to 6)

SI.No. Tender Ref./Scope of Supplies & Qty. Regd.

1. UNIT-MINE-002/P9/SME/2020/MINES : Annulus Gear 2nd stage, Z-150M-20 for 1500 KW Bucket wheel gear box for 1400L B.W.E. EMD : ₹1,00,000/-

2. NTPL/TUTICORIN:ENQ/NTPL/20-21/000232/C&P01(01) : Purchase of conveyor idlers/rollers.

3. UNIT:M.M.COMPLEX:ENQ/20-21/001606/MM01(06), DT.09.10.2020 :

Items of H.T. Hexagonal Bolts Due date of opening : 10.11.2020

4. PTE-ENQ/20-21/001645/MM10(01), DT.15.10.2020 : Procurement of lime stone powder. Due date of opening : 18.11.2020

5. PTE-ENQ/20-21/001645/MM10(01), DT.15.10.2020 : 3 Items of Auto Transformers Due date of opening : 18.11.2020

6. 20-21/001647/MM10(01), DT.16.10.2020 : (I) Carbon Steel Seamless pipe, ASTM A 106 Gr. B, Sch.40 of Size 10 inch (219.1 mm OD x 10.3 mm thick) Qty: 540 Metres. (ii) Carbon Steel Seamless pipe, ASTM A 106 Gr. B, Sch.40 of Size 12 inch (323.8 mm OD x 9.27 mm thick) Qty: 60 Metres Due date of opening : 12.11.2020

Cost of tender document : SI.No.1 & 2 : ₹1000/- (each)

SI.No. Last date for Sale Last date for Receipt Date & Time of Opening

1 11.11.2020 Upto 17.00 Hrs. 12.11.2020 Upto 12.00 H

Repurposed drugs did not cut down mortality, says WHO

Multi-country trial tracked the use of remdesivir, HCQ, lopinavir, interferon

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Interim results from the Solidarity Therapeutics Trial, coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO), have indicated that remdesivir, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir/ritonavir and interferon regimens appeared to have little or no effect on 28-day mortality or the in-hospital course of COVID-19 among hospitalised patients, according to information released by the global health body.

Clinical outcome
Speaking exclusively to *The Hindu* about the outcome, Prof. K Srinath Reddy, mem-



Off target: The drugs appeared to have little or no effect on hospitalised COVID-19 patients, the trial found.

ber, executive steering group, WHO Solidarity Trials and co-author of the study, said: "The Solidarity trial is the largest trial to examine the effect of four treatments on the risk of death in hospitalised patients of COVID-19. As a multi-country study, it offers the advantage of large patient numbers needed to reach meaningful conclusions on this very important clinical outcome and also provides generalisability of its conclusions across diverse populations across the world."

He added that the trial has not shown any benefit of any of the four tested drugs on reducing the risk of dying

in hospitalised patients of COVID-19.

"The trial will continue to evaluate other promising interventions for their ability to save lives, through rigorously examined evidence from a large randomised

trial methodology," said Dr. Reddy.

In six months, the world's largest randomised control trial on COVID-19 therapeutics has generated conclusive evidence on the effectiveness of repurposed drugs for

the treatment of COVID-19, noted the WHO release.

30 nations participate

It added that the study, which spans more than 30 countries, looked at the effects of these treatments on overall mortality, initiation of ventilation, and duration of hospital stay in hospitalised patients.

Other uses of the drugs, for example in treatment of patients in the community or for prevention, would have to be examined using different trials.

The results are under review for publication and have been uploaded as pre-print at medRxiv.

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), an active partner in the trials, said in a statement, "ICMR

Pak., Afghanistan did better work'

Rahul mocks Centre over economy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday attacked the Narendra Modi government for its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy. Its former president Rahul Gandhi claimed that even Pakistan and Afghanistan handled the pandemic better.

Sharing projections by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that the Indian economy is set to contract by a massive 10.3 per cent this year, Mr. Gandhi mocked it as the Modi government's "solid achievement". He tagged a chart that showed IMF growth projections for 2020-21 for Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, China, Bhutan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and India.

"Another solid achievement by the BJP government. Even Pakistan and Afghanistan handled Covid better than India", Mr. Azad tweeted.

At a press conference, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinivas said that while India's COVID-19 infection figure was now nearly 74 lakh, with 1.12 lakh COVID-19 related deaths, its economy was among the fastest declining ones.

"On the one hand, there is the corona pandemic where there has been gross mismanagement, and on the other, Mr. Modi and his team have ensured that the Indian economy has completely got ruined and is in complete shambles. Today, there is no demand, no consumption, no investment and hardly any jobs. In fact, some data suggests that 46% Indians are earning less than what they did," Ms.



Azad tests positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad took to Twitter on Friday to state that he had tested positive for COVID-19. "I have tested positive for COVID-19. I am in home quarantine. Those who came in contact with me in the last few days may kindly follow the protocol," Mr. Azad said.

Shrinivas said, "It is a cause of deep concern because today Bangladesh has higher per capita GDP and the government, instead of doing something about it, turns around and says 'our purchasing power parity is higher', she added.

On Wednesday, based on the IMF projections that Bangladesh's per capita would cross India's, Mr. Gandhi tweeted it as "solid achievement of six years of BJP's hate-filled cultural nationalism". Earlier this week, the IMF projected that India's GDP would contract by 10.3% this year but is likely to bounce back with an 8.8% growth rate in 2021.

As cases surge, Centre rushes teams to 5 States

Spike in Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Bengal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Friday deputed teams to Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, which have been reporting a surge in the number of new COVID-19 cases in recent days.

A Ministry release said the teams would support the States' efforts towards strengthening containment, surveillance, testing, infection prevention and control measures, and efficient clinical management of the positive cases. They shall also guide in effectively managing the challenges related to timely diagnosis and follow-up.

"Each team comprises a

Jt. Secretary (nodal officer for the respective State), an expert to look after the public health aspects and a clinician to look after infection prevention practices, clinical management protocol being followed by the State," said the Ministry.

In the past 24 hours, the country has reported 895 case fatalities, and of these, nearly 82% were concentrated in Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Odisha and Delhi. More than 37% of the new fatalities were reported from Maharashtra (337), the Ministry noted.

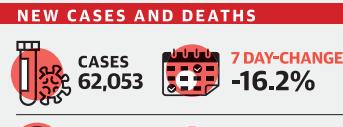
"India continues to report one of the lowest deaths per

million population, which stands at 81 today. Less than 1,100 deaths have been reported continuously since October 2. These results are boosted by 22 States/UTs which had demonstrated better performance and are reporting even lower deaths per million compared to the national average. Case fatality rate has been on the downslide continuously. At the current figure of 1.52%, it is the lowest since March 22," it stated.

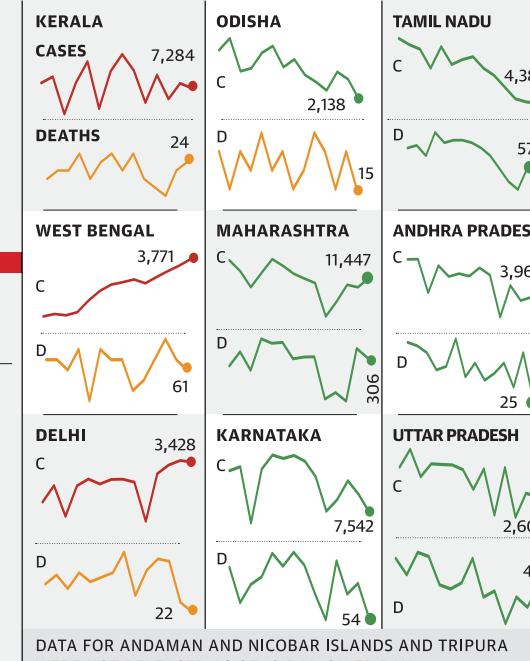
The active cases now comprised 10.92% of the total positive cases of the country standing at 8,04,528. "Higher number of recoveries has aided the national recovery rate to further improve to 87.56%", it added.

Viral tracker

With 62,053 COVID-19 cases recorded on Friday, India's tally stood at 74,30,329. As many as 796 deaths were registered, taking the toll to 1,13,015. A total of 9.22 crore samples have been tested as of October 15, according to the ICMR



The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases and deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases and deaths are rising ■; if they are lower, then dropping ■; if they are similar, then cases and deaths are flatlining ■ in that State



ED attaches DCHL assets worth ₹122 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth ₹122.15 crore of Decan Chronicle Holdings Limited (DCHL), two of its former promoters, T. Venkatram Reddy and T. Vinayakravi Reddy, and a be-nami firm allegedly floated by them. The total attachment in the case now stands at ₹264.56 crore.

The 14 properties attached under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) are located in Delhi, Gurugram, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru and other places. "All these attached assets are not covered under the National Company Law Tribunal process," the agency said in a press release. The agency said the total loan fraud allegedly committed by DCHL and its promoters was about ₹8,180 crore.

Four children murdered in Maharashtra village

All of them were hacked to death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In a shocking incident, four minor siblings were found brutally murdered on Friday morning in Jalgaon's Raver taluk in north Maharashtra, 440 km from here.

According to the police, the children – two boys and two girls – aged between five and 14 years, were hacked to death with an axe in Raver's Borkheda village while their parents were away.

Officials suspect that all the children were killed with the same axe.

The motive for the crime

is yet to be ascertained. No arrests have been made as yet.

The police have formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the grisly crime.

According to the authori-

ties, the father Mehtab Gu-

Hooch deaths: ED files chargesheet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has filed a chargesheet against Sanjay Pratap Singh and others belonging in connection with a 2013 hooch tragedy that claimed 21 lives in Bihar. Assets of the accused would be confiscated.

Clarification

With reference to the news item with the headline "CBI removes Hathras FIR from website" published in *The Hindu* on October 12, 2020, the agency's spokesperson said the press release published on the website was not revised.

The Hindu had reported how the CBI published the FIR in the gang rape and murder case and later removed it from the website.

CBI detects assets of fraudulent firms

Agency works with U.S. Dept. of Justice to bust network of false "technical support"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation, in an operation conducted in coordination with the U.S. Department of Justice against six firms that were involved in cheating hundreds of elderly and vulnerable people in the U.S., has detected assets worth over ₹190 crore linked to the accused persons.

"The CBI is collaborating with its counterparts in other countries to identify the network, dismantle their infrastructure and bring the perpetrators of crime to justice," it said.

The agency said, "The U.S. Department of Justice, the accused from Glendale in California, knowingly provided support to the India-based accomplices and facilitated the scheme through several companies, including in Singapore.

"The temporary restraining order issued by the U.S. court dismantles these de-



Internet users were asked to pay money to resolve technical bugs.

hundreds of elderly and vulnerable U.S. victims."

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the accused from Glendale in California, knowingly provided support to the India-based accomplices and facilitated the scheme through several companies, including in Singapore.

"The temporary restraining order issued by the U.S. court dismantles these de-

fendants' U.S. infrastructure, such as websites and payment processing relationships, and prohibits the defendants from continuing to facilitate the alleged scheme," the CBI said.

During the recent searches in Delhi, Jaipur, Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad and Mainpuri in Uttar Pradesh, the agency seized digital evidence and also identified bank accounts and fixed deposits to the tune of ₹190 crore. It also seized about ₹25 lakh in cash and gold worth ₹55 lakh.

The accused companies were identified as Softwill Infotech Private Limited and Saburi TLC Worldwide Services Private Limited in Delhi; InnovanaThinklabs Limited and Systweak Software Private Limited in Jaipur; Saburi Global Services Private Limited in Gurugram; and Benovillent Technologies Private Limited in Noida.

The message would display a toll free number for technical assistance. Distress calls from the potential victims would land at the call centres run by the accused persons. The victims would pay up hundreds of dollars for the technical services and software packages on the promise of fixing non-existing problems.

Any stay on proceedings is valid only for 6 months: SC

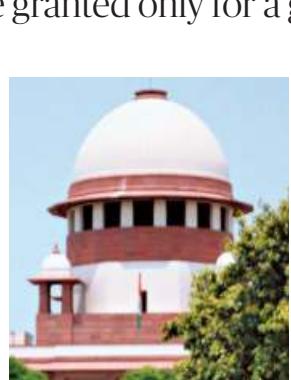
'An extension can be granted only for a good reason'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Any stay on civil or criminal proceedings is valid for a period of six months, beyond which the trial will resume, the Supreme Court held in an order on Friday.

"Whatever stay has been granted by any court, including the High Court, automatically expires within a period of six months," a Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman said.

An extension of the stay has to be granted only for a "good reason."



order must show that the case was of such exceptional nature that continuing the stay was more important than having the trial finalised," the court said.

The judgment was concerned with the case of refu-

sal of a magistrate court in Pune to resume trial as the Bombay High Court had previously stayed the proceedings.

Call to magistrates

"We must remind the magistrates all over the country that in our pyramidal structure under the Constitution of India, the Supreme Court is at the apex, and the High Courts, though not subordinate administrative, are certainly subordinate judicially. This kind of orders fly in the face of our judgment [2013 one]. We expect that the magistrates all over the country will follow our order in letter and spirit," the Supreme Court ob-

Seeking 'basic rights', Saibaba to go on fast

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Prof G.N. Saibaba, who is lodged in the Nagpur Central jail after being convicted for Maoist links, will go on a hunger strike from October 21 as he is not been provided with clothes, medicines and books for over a month.

Prof. Saibaba, a polio victim, is 90% physically disabled and wheelchair-bound, and suffers from pancreatitis, high blood pressure, cardiomyopathy, and chronic back pain.

"Saibaba has been denied reading material, medicines and clothes," said his wife A.S. Vasanth Kumar.

"Saibaba who is lodged in jail since 2014 has been denied all basic human rights where he is not given any letters or allowed any phone calls from me for over a

month," she added. Superintendent of Prisons (SP) Nagpur Anupkumar Kumare said the allegation is baseless. "Due to coronavirus we have stopped taking newspapers in jail since March but other than that books and letters are given to him after we go through them and decide on what is right and needs to be given to him," he said.

It will discuss various as-

Korea Tourism, *The Hindu* to host webinar on business travel

It will focus on trips for conferences and exhibitions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Korea Tourism Organisation and *The Hindu* will organise a webinar on 'Future of MICE Travel Post Covid with Focus on South Korea' on October 21 at 3 p.m.

The webinar will have a discussion on the future of MICE: meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions post-COVID with a focus on South Korea.

Young-seup Kwon, Consul General of the Republic of Korea, Chennai, will deliver the inaugural address.

Q and A session

A question and answer session with the participants will be held.

Present

**A WEBINAR ON
FUTURE OF MICE TRAVEL
POST COVID WITH FOCUS
ON SOUTH KOREA**

of the Republic of Korea, Telengana, Chairman Emeritus, Phoenix Group, Hyderabad; Ashok Jaiswar, group head, Marketing B2C and B2B, Greaves Cotton Limited; Shefali Khalsa, head, brand and corporate communication, SBI General Insurance; Aikta Tyagi, vice president, special events and facilities, Amway India Enterprises; and Sandeep Dutta, marketing manager, Korea Tourism Organisation.

The webinar will be moderated by Suresh Seshadri, Business Editor, *The Hindu*. To register for the webinar, visit: <http://bit.ly/KTTS> or scan the QR Code.



LESLEY SIMEON

"I've really been grateful for lockdown; it has been my most amazing six months," says Raul Rai, co-founder of lifestyle brand Nicobar. The pandemic may have pressed the reset button for many of us, but for several retail outfits it has been a time to revisit the consumer experience. "The only word that came to mind back then was 'reimagine'," says Rai, adding that for Nicobar, it meant ramping up training for its staff – helping them better understand the products so they can pivot as customers' needs change. Why? "Ultimately that affects the in-store consumer experience."

Elsewhere, brands have been pulling out all the stops – from using augmented reality to throw open entire inventories to replacing sales consultants with QR codes, they are exploring both ends of the retail spectrum.

The lure of offline

Until just a few months ago, experiential retail 'built relationships' with customers through various experiments. Think Stefano Ricci's VIP clubs with its own restaurants and cigar lounges, or Good Earth's Paro, with a library, therapy rooms and customised playlists. But the pandemic, with social distancing protocols, threw a spanner in the works. Now, as physical



stores once again welcome customers, change is the new constant. A few months ago, Amazon opened its first AI-powered grocery store in Seattle, while last month, e-commerce giant Alibaba woofed Paris with a pop-up store – complete with fashion, accessories and live 'shop-pertainment' video streaming.

Brands are packing in as much 'experience' as they can. Vivo's new flagship store in Mumbai has zones dedicated to accessories, gaming, and virtual reality. "There will be some areas where the online space might get more traction, but that doesn't mean an epitaph for offline retail," asserts Nipun Marya, Director - Brand Strategy. Vivo India is planning to open 20 other flagships within the next six months.

The lockdown has also resulted in different categories of customers, says Kavitha Rao, Coun-



try Commercial Manager of Ikea India – from exclusive online shoppers to those who like the best of both worlds. The retail veteran, known for its flat pack furniture, has introduced Click and Collect at its Hyderabad store (order a product online, pick it up, and design your space with the help of an Ikea staff through a remote planning feature). QR codes also help customers watch information videos on their phones. And going forward, the Swedish company is looking to open smaller stores in metros. "The world is looking at smaller format now; perhaps people want brands to be closer to them," says Rao.

Shop at your doorstep

While some are reinventing the retail experience, others are taking it to the source. New Delhi-based fashion rental service,



(Clockwise from left) The Stage3 bus, StyleDotMe's AR options, Vivo store, and però's virtual reality pop-up at Ogaan



tions. most recently, the India vertical of Xiaomi launched their Mi Store on Wheels, with the intent of bringing their products to customers in non-metros.

Reimagining the physical

Meanwhile, technology is stepping in to fill in the gaps. Aneeth Arora, for instance, launched però's (the Indian brand with a strong European market) latest disco-themed collection in a virtual reality store at Ogaan's Delhi outlet. The 3D space attempts to recreate an in-store experience and allows buyers to walk through, browse, zoom and click on each piece for more details.

Gaurav Baid, founder of Bengaluru-based digital marketing company Avataar.Me, says that augmented reality, artificial intelligence and virtual reality are finding more takers now. Business inquiries have grown three times in the last quarter, with major traction from segments like home decor, consumer electronics, automobile and FMCG. Avataar.Me has several projects underway, including a two-way video calling technology, where a customer can tour multiple stores in a virtual 360-degree format (reminiscent of the digital boutique Swiss watchmaker Hublot created, enabling customers to connect with sales managers in real time).

Though people are slow to adapt to such advances, Meghna Saraoji, co-founder at fashion tech start-up StyleDotMe – which uses AR to enable virtual try-ons in physical stores and online – is positive they will embrace new shopping experiences. The company is now looking to expand to watches and eyewear, along with developing the tech to include 3D try-ons.



Sari in a dress

Launched in late 2019, Malika Verma and designer Rashmi Varma's label, Kumari, now has an online home. At kumarisari.com, the young label – known for its Twice-Loved series – encourages you to buy some of their unusual sari dresses and also bring your saris for some fancy treatment. Buy or barter garments, they say, adding that their occasion wear is accessible and under ₹25,000.



More than selling on a website [I've recently started one], I find Instagram a very powerful tool. Every time I post a new product, enquiries come in and sales materialise.

Since everyone has those cheesy filters, I thought it would be interesting to use one to play with my furniture. So, using my filter, you can position the C-Chair or Marble Lamp and see how it looks in your environment. This is a new way of looking at online

ROOSHAD SHROFF,
Architect-interior designer

“



Stage3 – which had launched its flagship store last October, designed to mimic a walk-in closet – took to the road earlier this year. It revamped the back of a bus to "convert it into a sanitised store on wheels. Everyone in the van [including an in-house stylist and tailor] wears a PPE kit, and we admit one customer at a time," says co-founder Sanchit Baweja.

Levi's also put its pedal to the metal. "With lockdown, there was an increased demand for apparel suitable for video calls," says Sanjeev Mohanty, Managing Director (South Asia, Middle East & North Africa), so they took it to their clients. Levi's on Wheels, currently operating in Delhi and Gurugram, offers tops, shorts and lightweight denim to expand to watches and eyewear, along with developing the tech to include 3D try-ons.

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How luxury retailers and designers are seemingly less dependant on PR consultants and are dealing directly with their clients via IG Lives and WhatsApp consultations

Rebirth of the salesman on Instagram

KRUTIKA BEHRAWALA

In early September, Sabyasachi Mukherjee hosted an Instagram Live with Beth Armata, Manager - Fine and Designer Jewellery, at New York's luxury retailer Bergdorf Goodman. The virtual show featured staff in masks, modelling his 65-piece Haute Joaillerie collection (showcased exclusively at the store since January).

The ace designer offered a running commentary – amount of gold, number of gemstones, cut, carat, colour – with the uncanny vibe of a late-night TV infomercial from the '90s. The only differences? The medium, and an email ID instead of a toll-free number.

Haute couture labels rely on plush brick-and-mortar stores and touch-and-feel experiences to woo the luxury buyer. Before COVID-19 struck, social media was largely a playground for niche labels to build an audience base, market collections or drive sales of single products. Engaging audiences went beyond 'Swipe up to win'. Even someone like Mukherjee, who regularly launches his collections on Instagram to over 4.5 million followers, admitted on-air that "it is very stressful".

No trials, only shopping

Thirty two-year-old multi-designer boutique, Ensemble, launched their e-commerce portal in April, and their social media also saw a shift. Where executive director Tina Tahiliani Parikh had only occasionally appeared in photos with designers on their pre-lockdown Instagram feed, she was now going live with the likes of Anamika Khan and Ruchika Sachdeva of Bodice. She is open to being part of the brand's social media strategy. "It is a very personalised business, so whenever necessary, I'll do it," she says, adding that the reliance on PR consultants has reduced because



you have a direct way to talk to your customer.

"A luxury experience depends on the salesperson's customer knowledge and intimacy, product exclusivity, and the narrative behind it. The brands able to translate these values digitally will succeed," says Parmesh Shahani, author of *Queeristan* and head, Godrej India Culture Lab. For now, it is a work in progress. Like Mumbai-based multi-brand luxury house Le Mill: when lockdown eased in August, they got in-house stylists to share fall classics and curate wardrobe staples under ₹50,000 – all from their store, of course.

Like, share, shop

Designers have been focussing on launching e-commerce portals, but continue to rely on social media to spread the word. Bridal couture studio Jade by Monica and Karishma offers virtual consultations by appointment. Simultaneously, they've started an IGTV series called 'Jade Closet', where designers give styling tips on everything from ruffle saris to *lehangas*.

Luxury sari labels, traditionally defined by a tactile approach, are also creating WhatsApp catalogues for virtual pop-ups and offering video call shopping, like Bengaluru-based heritage label The House of

Angadi. "We discussed internally if it would take away from the physical experience of buying a handwoven *kanjeevaram* or Benarasi, but the connoisseur knows," says Varun Rana, fashion commentator and Communications Director at the textile label.

Tech check

While Amazon's livestream shopping function has videos by celebrity beauty brand founders such as Jessica Alba and Gabrielle Union, there has been a spurt of IG Lives closer home. Ogaan, a multi-brand store with branches in Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad, hosted Instagram Lives with designers Amrita Khanna and Gursi Singh of Lovebirds, and Rina Singh of Eka, showcasing their latest collections.

Elsewhere, designers are crowding Instagram and Facebook feeds with virtual launches, using Reels and AR filters to further their reach. If you head to jewellery designer Roma Narsinghani's profile, you can try on her collection, including headpieces and septum rings, showcased at Helsinki Fashion Week via filters.

Arnab Samanta, marketing head at Graphixstory, says that his tech-led advertising studio has created beauty filters – including Sonam Kapoor's Cannes look with metallic smoky eyes – for celebrity makeup artist Namrata Soni. "Brands like Gucci and Lacoste have used AR in the past but we're yet to see interest from high-end Indian fashion labels," he says.

Tell me a story

In this milieu, brands that tell relevant stories are able to break through the clutter. "Today, consumers aren't only looking to buy a garment, accessory or a shoe. They need a product for a reason, with a reason. They need to be convinced of why they should be on your side," says Shefalee Vasudev, editor, *The Voice of Fashion*.

Glasgow-based Indian designer Ayush Kejriwal's virtual campaign, titled *Rakhwaali*, showed silk-clad women multi-tasking at home: a comment on how gender identities govern domestic responsibilities and the burden on women in the lockdown. "Such innovative ideas rivet brands closer to the minds of a consumer. Luxury brands in India will have to find such messaging and storytelling, and do it well," she adds.

Bigger brands could also take cues from niche labels like Srila Chatterjee's Baro Market that seems to have cracked the code. After shutting down her Mumbai-based lifestyle store during the coronavirus pandemic, she launched an online marketplace of products by Indian craftspersons and artisans, telling their stories through an online magazine, newsletters, and other media.

"She doesn't just send you a list of products, but tells you why it is best for you," says Shahani. "So, when this is over, we will remember her authentic, personal connection. Will that translate into better business for Baro in future? Certainly," he concludes.



All at home (Clockwise from left) Aglio E Olio, Armenian doughnuts ponchiki, Nordic lamb ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

American, and thus rather largel) was surprisingly tasty. It came with roasted vegetables, a garlic mash, and a delightful gravy flavoured with rosemary.

The chicken had been marinated overnight with ginger and garlic and then slow cooked with a splash of garlic oil on a bed of vegetables, Chef Saby tells me. A smoked chilli rub was applied on the chicken, and then it was again slow cooked for a bit.

I loved the dessert. Called ponchiki, this is an Armenian version of a donut with a filling. The patisserie includes cookies and cream (₹150 for 200g), a rich dry fruit cake with home-made liquor (₹250 for 200g), three milk cake (with condensed milk, cooking cream, and Niagara whipping cream with sugared nuts – ₹400 for 350g), and lemon and maraschino cherry cupcakes (₹350 for a dozen). Selling dishes by weight is now a trend in food delivery, it seems.

Food is delivered (with varying charges) across Delhi-NCR. Place your order (9910731957/ 9717714687) by 6 pm, for the next day.

Chef Saby's food has rekindled my love for travel. I am thinking of Yerevan. But first, I must get to know the food!

I can vouch for this – the chicken was

just right too. The slow roasted chicken leg and thigh (the chicken was



RAHUL VERMA

A subject that never fails to intrigue me is the way food crosses borders. Take Armenian food. Who would have thought that one day you'd get to eat dishes that are a part of life in the Eurasian country? But let's not forget that India has old links with Armenia, ever since the first traders came from there in the late 17th century. There are people of Armenian origin living mostly in Kolkata.

That should explain why an intrepid chef opened a

restaurant serving Armenian delicacies in south Delhi a few years ago. I wanted to try out the food, but never managed to do so. But now, I am happy to say, Sabyasachi Gorai – known widely as Chef Saby – has started a food delivery service, and on the menu are a couple of Armenian dishes.

The outfit is called Saby's Deli - Soulful Decadence. I received a menu the other day and found it interesting. For those who like their fish and meat, there is Icelandic salmon steak (₹950 for 200g fish and 350g of mash and vegetables plus taxes), slow roasted American chicken leg (the chicken was



thigh (₹800 for 400g with bone), and Nordic lamb neck (₹600 for 300g of meat with bone). For vegetarians, the menu includes aglio e olio pepperoncino (₹450 for 500g), sautéed beans and spinach (₹200 for 250g); spaghetti Alfredo (₹450), roast vegetables (₹200 for 250g).

The produce, the Deli says, are sourced from the USA and Scandinavian countries, and then vacuum-packed and transported frozen through a cold chain. The dishes are then paired with local vegetables and oven cooked with just a little oil, it says.

The lamb dish consisted of small pieces of meat on bone that had been braised for three hours with vindaloo spices. I liked the gravy; the meat had been cooked just right too. The slow roasted chicken leg and thigh (the chicken was

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(Clockwise from far left) Sabyasachi Mukherjee; Tina Tahiliani Parikh of Ensemble; designer Ragini Ahuja of Ikai in Ogaan's IG Live; and screengrabs from the Jade Closet IGTV series and Le Mill's staff curation



Taking to the STREETS

We head to the country's open-air markets to see how things are faring

TEAM WEEKEND

"The pandemic has highlighted the importance of urban open spaces for recreation, mental health, and to enhance the liveability of a city," says Ashwathy Dilip, Senior Programme Manager, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy. She is part of the team that worked on the T Nagar Pedestrian Plaza in Chennai (conceptualised in 2011 and completed in November 2019, at an approximate cost of ₹38 crore).

"As COVID-19 made it challenging for families to come together with almost minimal space for recreation, this street provided a host of opportunities for citizens to use the street as a public space," adds Dilip.

Similarly, the Chandni Chowk Redevelopment Plan in Delhi is the first major commercial development in the city's bustling shopping hub after 300 years. The plan is to decongest the 1.3-km stretch between Red Fort and Fatehpuri Masjid, facilitate free pedestrian movement, enhance greenery and transform it into a car-free zone. The project, launched in 2004, is nearing completion. Following suit, cities across the country are transforming existing shopping hubs into retail-friendly environments – Church Street in Bengaluru, DP Road and JM Road in Pune, SM Street in Kozhikode, MG Marg in Sikkim, to name a few.

Sarojini Nagar Market, that Mecca of discounts where even fashion editors shop, is crowded enough, but Mukesh Yadav, who has been at the market since 1998, says footfall is down to 50%. "I am not getting any new stock; most of us are

zin, VP, Bangalore Commercial Association, says, "Business has been at 25% of what it was pre-pandemic." In Delhi's Hauz Khas Village, autos are not crowding around the boom barrier any more, and there are only a few people walking around. Ogaan has left its corner store and there are a several other 'To let' boards around. A couple of kilometres away in Shahpur Jat, blingy lehangas adorn shop windows, but there's hardly anyone inside.

But people are adapting. Mahaveer Singh, 72, who has a 1,000 gaj (yard) property in the village for several generations, says he is looking at a monthly rent of ₹5 lakh for a 1,200 sq ft property he has culled out from the larger space," adds Dilip.

Creating more decentralised shopping areas – like Vashi near Mumbai – should be the norm for open air retail streets, feels Siddhartha Benninger, Project Planner Centre for Development Studies and Activities, Pune. "Essentially, small commercial zones can help the community live relatively normal lives in an extended 'bio-bubble'. I do not think there is a need for huge malls. Though they might achieve economies of scale for buyers and sellers, they do the same for germs and bacteria," he concludes.

With inputs from Nidhi Adlakha, Sunalini Mathew, Surya Praphulla Kumar, Divya Kala Bhavani and Susanna Myrtle Lazarus



(top) Shopkeepers at Dilli Haat in New Delhi and (above) a snapshot of the pedestrian plaza at Chennai's Ponds Bazaar

FOOD SPOT

Chef Saby returns

With home delivery and a taste of Armenia, tickling the palate and urging the soul to travel

thigh (₹800 for 400g with bone), and Nordic lamb neck (₹600 for 300g of meat with bone). For vegetarians, the menu includes aglio e olio pepperoncino (₹450 for 500g), sautéed beans and spinach (₹200 for 300g). It was superb, nicely creamy and spiced. The pasta – tossed in olive oil, black and green olives, capers and chilli flakes – was smooth and al dente (which is how I like it). I enjoyed the roasted pumpkin and carrot, too – plump pieces that had been roasted with a dash of sea salt, olive oil, fresh herbs, and whole red chillies.

The lamb dish consisted of small pieces of meat on bone that had been braised for three hours with vindaloo spices. I liked the gravy; the meat had been cooked just right too. The slow roasted chicken leg and thigh (the chicken was

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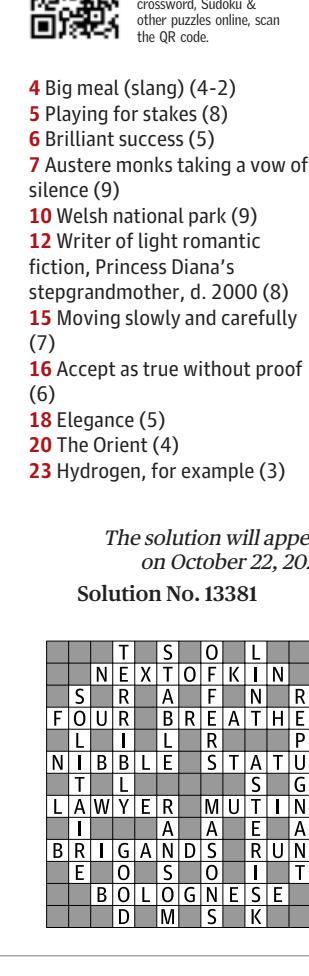
■ Across

- 1 Doing nothing and hoping for the best – being Glenn etc (anag) (6,7)
- 2 Lockjaw (7)
- 3 Australian operatic soprano, d. 1931 (5)
- 4 Kind (4)
- 5 Playing for stakes (8)
- 6 Brilliant success (5)
- 7 Austere monks taking a vow of silence (9)
- 8 Moving slowly and carefully (7)
- 9 Experts (4)
- 10 Welsh national park (9)
- 11 Container used in lubricating machinery (6)
- 12 Writer of light romantic fiction, Princess Diana's stepgrandmother, d. 2000 (8)
- 13 Stand in (8)
- 14 Hydrogen, for example (3)
- 15 Moving slowly and carefully (7)
- 16 Accept as true without proof (6)
- 17 Stand in (8)
- 18 Elegance (5)
- 19 Experts (4)
- 20 Nigerian currency unit (5)
- 21 Improving trend (7)
- 22 Scottish breed of cattle (8,5)
- 23 Hydrogen, for example (3)

■ Down

- 1 Cricket club (3)
- 2 One regarded as sure to succeed in some field (7)
- 3 Departed (4)

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The solution will appear on October 22, 2020
Solution No. 13381

AN-DOE

Trump, Biden hold parallel townhalls

Candidates present contrasting views on the handling of the coronavirus pandemic

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

With less than three weeks to go for the elections, U.S. President Donald Trump and Democratic nominee Joe Biden offered contrasting visions for the country at two separate televised townhalls. Mr. Trump had pulled out of the second debate with Mr. Biden when the organisers had said it would be held virtually following the President's recent infection with the coronavirus. The very different personalities of the candidates were also reflected in the differing tempos of the two townhalls.

Their differing visions came through in their descriptions of the handling of the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 218,000 Americans. Both candidates took questions from their respective interviewers and socially distanced and masked members of the public in the audience.

Mr. Trump, speaking on NBC to Savannah Guthrie, attempted to deflect blame for his mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We did the right thing. We were expected to lose 2,200,000 people, and maybe more than that. We're at 2,10,000 people. One person is too much, it should have never happened," Mr. Trump said. "Because of China... it happened because of China. And you have to get that and understand that."

On masks, he repeated – falsely – that a study had found that 85% of those wearing masks contracted



Big battle: Television screens at a restaurant in Florida playing the dual townhalls of Joe Biden and Donald Trump. ■ REUTERS

the virus (presumably a reference to a study cited by the Centres for Disease Control; which did reach this conclusion).

Most studies have shown that wearing a mask reduces the transmission of the virus.

Meanwhile, at his townhall in Philadelphia with George Stephanopoulos of ABC, Mr. Biden presented a contrasting perspective on Mr. Trump and masks.

"The words of a President matter," he said. "When a President doesn't wear a mask or makes fun of folks like me when I was wearing a mask for a long time, then, you know, people say, 'Well, it mustn't be that important.'"

Mr. Biden said Mr. Trump had been informed about how dangerous the virus was [in late January, weeks before a national emergency was declared].

"He didn't talk about what needed to be done because he kept worrying, in my view, about the stock mar-

ket," Mr. Biden said.

On the economy, too, the candidates presented different pictures. Mr. Biden said he would raise the corporate tax rate from 21% to 28%, reversing partly that aspect of the Trump tax cuts. Mr. Trump said raising corporate taxes would cause a depression and that he would work on a "middle income package." Mr. Biden has repeatedly stated that he does not plan on raising taxes for those earning less than \$4,000,000 a year.

Legislative record

Mr. Biden sought to defend his record in passing legislation during the "tough on crime" era in the 1990s, the consequences of which fell disproportionately on African Americans. While he accepted that the legislation was a mistake, he said those were different times and the Bill was supported by Black Mayors and the Congressional Black Caucus and that states had implemented the

legislation incorrectly. "Yes, it was. But here's where the mistake came. The mistake came in terms of what the states did locally."

On whether he would consider "packing" the Supreme Court [increasing the number of justices from nine] if Republicans confirmed Trump nominee Amy Barrett, Mr. Trump said the public would know his position by November 3. He said he would consider how the Senate handles the confirmation process of Judge Barrett.

"No matter what answer I gave you, if I say it, that's the headline tomorrow. It won't be about what's going on now, the improper way they're proceeding," Mr. Biden said.

At his townhall, Mr. Trump stuck to his guns on an unsubstantiated claim about voter fraud related to mail-in ballots. Ms. Guthrie said FBI Director Christopher Wray had concluded (as have others on both sides of the aisle) that there was no widespread fraud associated with the process.

"Then he's not doing a very good job," Mr. Trump said of Mr. Wray.

On his own taxes, Mr. Trump did not deny that he owed \$400 million in debt but said it was "a tiny percentage" of his net worth. [A New York Times investigation had recently claimed Mr. Trump was \$421 million in debt].

Mr. Trump was challenged by Ms. Guthrie on the question of denouncing White supremacy, something he had failed to do un-

equivocally during the September presidential debate. He eventually denounced it, quickly pivoting to Antifa (which is an anti-fascist broad movement or ideology and not an organisation) and "people on the left".

White supremacy

"I denounce White supremacy," Mr. Trump said. "And frankly, you want to know something? I denounce Antifa, and I denounce these people on the left that are burning down our cities, that are run by Democrats who don't know what they're doing..."

Mr. Trump refused to provide straightforward (or any) denials to other conspiracy theories. When asked by Ms. Guthrie if he would denounce the right wing QAnon conspiracy theory group's claim that Democrats are a "Satanic paedophile ring", Mr. Trump said he knew "nothing" about the group but said he did know they "are very much against paedophilia", again pivoting to Antifa and the "radical left."

Mr. Trump also defended his retweeting of a conspiracy theory that Mr. Biden killed the Navy seal team that had faked the death of al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden.

On the question of guaranteeing "the peaceful transition of power", Mr. Trump, as he has done before, made allegations of voter fraud, the Democrats spying on his campaign before eventually saying, "Peaceful transfer, I absolutely want that. But ideally, I don't want to transfer, because I want to win."

Johnson says prepare for no-deal Brexit, cancels talks

'Unless EU changes course, U.K. to go for Australia-style pact'

REUTERS
LONDON

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Friday it was now time to prepare for a no-trade deal Brexit unless the European Union fundamentally changed course, bluntly telling Brussels that there was no point in talking any more.

A tumultuous "no deal" finale to the United Kingdom's five-year Brexit crisis would sow chaos through the delicate supply chains that stretch across Britain, the EU and beyond – just as the economic hit from the pandemic worsens.

EU ultimatum

At what was supposed to be the "Brexit Summit" on Thursday, the EU delivered an ultimatum: it said it was concerned by a lack of progress and called on U.K. to yield on key sticking points or see a rupture of ties with the bloc from January 1.

"I have concluded that we



Boris Johnson

should get ready for January 1 with arrangements that are more like Australia's based on simple principles of global free trade," Mr. Johnson said. "With high hearts and with complete confidence, we will prepare to embrace the alternative and we will prosper mightily as an independent trading nation, controlling and setting our own laws," he added.

Mr. Johnson's spokesman said shortly afterwards that talks were now over and there was no point in the EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier coming to London next week barring a change in approach.

"The trade talks are over: the EU have effectively ended them by saying that they do not want to change their negotiating position," his spokesman said.

Mr. Johnson's brinkmanship, which follows an EU demand that U.K. make further concessions, may push Brexit towards disorder, though he left open the possibility that the EU could reconsider and offer Britain a better deal. "Unless there is a fundamental change of approach, we're going to go for the Australia solution. And we should do it with great confidence," he said.

A so-called "Australia deal" means that the U.K. would trade on World Trade Organization terms: as a country without an EU trade agreement, like Australia, tariffs would be imposed under WTO rules, likely causing significant price rises.

Knesset backs Israel-UAE deal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Israel's Parliament voted on Thursday in favour of normalisation of ties with the United Arab Emirates after a marathon debate with over 100 speeches lasting more than eight hours.

A total of 80 lawmakers voted to approve the U.S.-brokered agreement, with 13

from the Arab-led Joint List against.

"This historic agreement... will bring us closer to other countries in the region to sign other peace agreements," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

He said Israel had contact with another country in the region for the first time, but did not reveal its name.

The UAE in August became the first Arab state to establish relations with Israel since Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. It was quickly followed by Bahrain.

The U.S.-brokered deals were formalised at the White House on September 15.

The West Asia agreements were condemned by the Palestinians as a "betrayal".

Russia kicks off Caspian war games

Amid Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, Moscow says they pose no threat to any State

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

French police on Friday shot dead a man who minutes earlier had killed a middle school teacher by slitting his throat in the street in a suburb of Paris, police said on Friday.

The teacher had shown pupils in his class cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad, which are considered by Muslims to be blasphemous, according to a police source.

France's anti-terror prosecutor said it was investigating the attack, which took place in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, a suburb north-west of Paris.

The suspected attacker was spotted by a police patrol while carrying a knife a short distance from the scene of the attack. The police shot the suspect dead.

A police source said that witnesses had heard the attacker shout "Allahu Akbar", or "God is Greatest".

The Department of Energy announced on Thursday that President Rodrigo Du

place north of Azerbaijan's Absheron peninsula, where Baku is located, and will include artillery and rocket fire, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

They involve six ships, seven planes and more than 400 servicemen, it added.

"The activities... do not pose any threat and do not impose restrictions on the economic activities of the

Caspian littoral states," it added.

Russia has so far kept its distance from the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Armenian-controlled Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

Companies with government contracts have been notified to resume their petroleum search, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said.

Reed Bank and two other

Treaty Organisation (CSTO) military alliance and Yerevan has made clear it is hoping for Russian backing.

With protests still pressuring Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko after disputed elections, CSTO forces have also been taking part in joint military exercises this week in Belarus. The exercises are called "Indestructible Brotherhood".

Will defend rights in South China sea: Philippines

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MANILA

The Philippines is ready to defend the oil and gas exploration it has decided to resume in its internationally recognised waters in the disputed South China Sea and will not cede that right to any nation, the energy chief said on Friday.

Companies with government contracts have been notified to resume their petroleum search, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said.

Asked how the Philippines will respond if China protests, Mr. Cusi replied,

"We have to stand up for our rights, that's what we are going to do."

Exploration areas are within the Philippines' exclusive zone but China is likely to assert its claim, Mr. Cusi said. "They will not just take it without raising a word. I'm sure they're going to write us," he said.

Asked how the Philippines will respond if China protests, Mr. Cusi replied,

"We have to stand up for our rights, that's what we are going to do."

Mr. Cusi told reporters in an online news conference on Friday that China was not informed of the Philippines government's decision to resume oil exploration in its exclusive economic zone, a 320-km stretch of waters where a coastal state can exclusively exploit maritime resources under the 1982 U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Reed Bank and two other

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What is behind the anti-government demonstrations in Thailand?

Student protesters use pop culture symbols from Harry Potter to The Hunger Games to mobilise support against the military-backed govt.

STANLY JOHNY

Thailand's government, led by the Army chief turned Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha, declared a state of emergency on Thursday, banning public gatherings and censoring the media, to tackle the growing students' protests. The protesters have dismissed the emergency decree as yet another attempt by the government to take away their rights and vowed to continue the agitation, deepening the crisis that has shaken the country's political and royal establishments.

Angry youth

The roots of the current discontent go back to the 2014 coup which brought Mr. Prayuth to power. Ever since, the junta tightened its grip on power and introduced more and more restrictions on the public. Many anti-junta activists, who fled the

country during the coup and were living in neighbouring nations, went missing. At home, students were ordered to belt out a song every morning extolling Thai values. In 2017, the military introduced a new Constitution, which allowed the military to appoint a 250-member Senate that would play a role in selecting the Prime Minister. It also removed the need for the King to name a regent at home when he travels abroad.

The country held the delayed Parliamentary election last year, which was seen as an exercise to transfer power from the junta to an elected government. Mr. Prayuth retained power after last year's disputed election. Public resentment was building up against the military's outsized influence in the government.

In February, the top court's decision to dissolve the pro-democracy Future



Police trying to disperse protesters using water cannons in Bangkok ■ AP

EXPLAINER

Forward Party, which gained the third largest vote share in the Parliamentary election, triggered instant demonstrations. The protests, which subsided in the following months due to the pandemic, sprang back into action. In June protesters were back in the streets after the disappearance of a dissident in Cambodia. From July onwards, students have maintained the street pressure on the government and even

started targeting the monarchy.

Role of the monarch

The Thai monarchy has historically been shielded from public criticism by strict *lese majeste* laws. The monarchy lost absolute authority in the 'Siamese revolution' of 1932. But the King retained god-like status in society and enormous influence in the government. The reigning monarch, Maha Vajiralongkorn, assumed the throne in 2016 after the death of his father, the revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who at the time of his death was the world's longest reigning monarch.

The junta gave the new King full control of the Crown Property Bureau, which manages the palace's roughly \$30 billion worth of assets. Last year, the King brought two Army units under his direct control. King Vajiralongkorn's plan ap-

pears to be taking the country closer to absolute monarchy. The Generals are on the line. But this has triggered unprecedented resistance from the country's youth.

Students' demands

In August, Anon Nampa, a 35-year-old human rights lawyer and one of the leaders of the protesters, called for reforms to the monarchy. Students then submitted 10 demands to the government, asking for a separation of the King's assets and the Crown Property Bureau. They also wanted to cut the Palace's share in the national budget, a ban on the King from expressing his political views, and safeguards to prevent him from endorsing future coups.

MARKET WATCH

	16-10-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	39,983	0.64
US Dollar	73.35	0.00
Gold	51,704	0.39
Brent oil	42.64	1.31

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	349.95	7.15
Asian Paints	2061.20	-29.25
Axis Bank	472.40	9.80
Bajaj Auto	3044.75	17.35
Bajaj Finserv	5952.30	53.25
Bajaj Finance	3231.35	16.60
Bharti Airtel	401.65	2.45
BPCL	339.95	13.30
Britannia Ind	3747.20	16.20
Cipla	782.35	14.05
Coal India	111.35	0.75
Divis Lab	3222.70	11.30
Dr Reddys Lab	5080.55	24.30
Eicher Motors	2269.90	21.30
GAIL (India)	84.00	1.70
Grasim Ind	772.70	22.60
HCL Tech	827.15	-32.85
HDFC	1961.70	14.50
HDFC Bank	1199.35	30.10
HDFC Life	561.15	-0.35
Hero MotoCorp	3346.45	32.15
Hindalco	179.80	6.15
Hind Unilever	2150.55	-2.00
ICICI Bank	396.10	5.10
IndusInd Bank	608.30	10.30
Infosys	1127.50	19.25
Indian Oil Corp	74.20	-0.35
ITC	165.70	0.65
JSW Steel	311.05	19.50
Kotak Bank	1336.55	27.00
L&T	894.10	5.30
M&M	606.65	-10.65
Maruti Suzuki	6894.90	2.30
Nestle India Ltd.	15430.25	-172.50
NTPC	80.30	1.30
ONGC	67.25	1.20
PowerGrid Corp	158.95	3.20
Reliance Ind	2175.80	-30.70
SBI Life	799.55	-5.20
State Bank	195.95	3.10
Shree Cement	21177.45	535.20
Sun Pharma	486.90	-3.40
Tata Motors	127.75	0.80
Tata Steel	393.85	19.95
TCS	2763.30	22.70
Tech Mahindra	822.75	10.35
Titan	1223.15	9.55
UltraTech Cement	4482.10	98.80
UPL	466.95	-39.60
Wipro	339.65	-1.95

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.14	73.46
Euro	85.65	86.02
British Pound	94.57	94.98
Japanese Yen (100)	69.51	69.82
Chinese Yuan	10.91	10.96
Swiss Franc	79.87	80.22
Singapore Dollar	53.82	54.06
Canadian Dollar	55.33	55.58
Malaysian Ringgit	17.62	17.71
Australian Dollar	51.79	52.02

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



JK Tyre, other firms face antitrust scrutiny

NEW DELHI
India's antitrust regulator is investigating JK Tyre & Industries Ltd. after a State government accused the firm of bid rigging, and the probe has been expanded to other firms, as per sources. The Competition Commission of India last year ordered a probe after Haryana said JK Tyre employed unfair trade practices while bidding to supply tyres for public transport vehicles. REUTERS

Union Bank of India's Rai named IBA chief

MUMBAI
Indian Banks' Association (IBA) said Union Bank of India's MD and CEO Rajkiran Rai G. has been elected as the association's chairman for 2020-21. The managing committee of the IBA, at its meeting held on October 16, elected Rajkiran Rai G. as the chairman, IBA, a release said. State Bank of India's Chairman Dinesh Kumar Kharra has been elected as the deputy chairman. PTI

'Name nodal officers for insurance ombudsmen'

HYDERABAD
The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has advised public sector general insurers to appoint a nodal officer each for the 17 insurance ombudsman offices to ensure proper and timely disposal of complaints. This follows the ombudsmen citing difficulties in dealing with cases of these insurers in the absence of any responsible officer who can liaison with their offices.

Liberty bids for assets of Thyssenkrupp Europe

NEW DELHI
U.K.-based Liberty Steel Group on Friday said it has made a non-binding indicative offer to Thyssenkrupp to acquire the German steel major's assets in Europe. The Group is part of diversified GFG Alliance. In a statement, Liberty Steel Group said it had "made a non-binding indicative offer (NBO)" as part of a Thyssenkrupp-led process to acquire its steel activities. PTI

Diesel sales hint at rebound in October

Key transport fuel's offtake between Oct. 1-15 posts first annual increase since lockdown in March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
Diesel demand has returned to pre-COVID-19 levels as sales rose 8.8% in the first half of October from a year earlier, preliminary industry data showed. This follows the same pattern that petrol sales too had begun seeing.

This is the first annual increase in sales of diesel – the most consumed fuel in the country – since the nation imposed a lockdown in late March to curb the spread of the pandemic.

While demand for petrol has been more resilient than diesel due to an increased preference for using personal vehicles instead of public transport to follow distancing norms, the October 1-15 sales numbers showed better-than-anticipated recovery.



Revving up: Sales numbers for the October 1-15 period showed a better-than-anticipated recovery. ■ V. RAJU

ery. Pent-up demand and the upcoming festive season were expected to support fuel sales but even before that, diesel sales rose to 2.65 million tonnes in the first

fortnight of October, from 2.43 million tonnes a year earlier and from 2.13 million tonnes in the first half of September.

Petrol, which had re-

turned to pre-COVID levels last month, posted a 1.5% rise in sales to 9,82,000 tonnes in the first half of October, from 9,67,000 tonnes in the same period a year earlier and 9,68,000 tonnes in the first fortnight of September.

India witnessed unprecedented demand destruction after a nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25. Oil demand fell by as much as 49% in April.

With the easing of restrictions and reopening of the economy, fuel demand recovered sharply in June from April before slowing due to the reimposition of restrictions in certain cities because of COVID-19 and flooding in some regions. It started to climb back again in September. Even in Sep-

tember, diesel had shown a month-on-month increase. On Thursday, Shrikant Madhav Vaideya, Chairman of Indian Oil Corp., had said that September recovery was faster than expected.

'ATF sales muted'

But aviation turbine fuel (ATF) sales continue to be way below normal as airlines are yet to resume full services. ATF sales fell 57% to 1,35,000 tonnes in the first half of October from a year earlier but was 2.5% higher than the 1,30,000 tonnes sold in the first fortnight of September.

"We see (oil) demand picking up this quarter and by the end of the current financial year, we should be back to pre-COVID levels," Mr. Vaideya had said.

Farm sentiment stays positive: ICRA

Rains, Kharif prospects spur optimism

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Farm sentiment remained buoyant, driven by a healthy monsoon and further optimism of a good Kharif crop despite the COVID-19 pandemic, ratings agency ICRA said in a report.

Rural household incomes stayed resilient, supported by healthy farm cash flows across regions and aided by high levels of Rabi procurement under various government schemes after a bumper Rabi harvest, it added.

Besides, increased government support, via the likes of MNREGA and PM-KISAN, had helped create employment and easing liquidity pressure on rural incomes, brought about by



large-scale reverse migration to rural areas during lockdown, the agency said.

Shamsher Dewan, VP, ICRA, said though there were fears of disruption in the Rabi procurement process, the same was "mitigated by prompt lifting of restrictions by the Centre for agricultural activities".

E-com firms censured over origin details

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
The government on Friday issued notices to Flipkart, Amazon and other e-commerce companies for not mandatorily displaying information, including country of origin, on products sold on their platforms.

The notices have been issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. Apart from Amazon and Flipkart, notices have also been sent to other e-commerce players, sources said.

The companies have been asked to reply to the notices within 15 days.

Commercial vehicle sales fall 20% in July-September: SIAM

Volumes lower than in FY16, says Ayukawa; PV sales robust

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Commercial vehicle sales, which are usually seen as an indicator of economic activity, fell 20.13% to about 1.33 lakh units in the July-September 2020 quarter as compared with about 1.67 lakh units in same period last year.

SIAM has begun releasing wholesales CV sales data only for the full quarter. For the CV segment, the volumes are lower than in the comparable period of FY16, SIAM president Kenichi Ayukawa said. Meanwhile, passenger vehicle (PV) dispatches



to dealers recorded a strong double-digit growth of 26.45% in September.

While car sales rose 28.92% to more than 1.63 lakh units in September 2020 from about 1.27 lakh units in the year earlier

First State loans OMO on Oct. 22: RBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said it would conduct Open Market Operation (OMO) purchase of State Developments Loans as per its October 9 announcement. The OMO is to be conducted on October 22 for ₹10,000 crore.

"Depending on market response, the size of the auctions may be enhanced in subsequent auctions," the RBI said in a statement.

RBI will purchase the SDLs through a multi-security auction using the multiple price method. There is no security-wise notified amount.

'Import ban on ACs won't impact major players'

'It will help boost exports, create jobs'



built-up units.

Global research firm Jef-feries said in a note that top seven players, accounting for 90% of the market, should not be impacted by the move as they primarily import compressors/refrigerants versus the entire unit.

Micromax eyes comeback, to invest ₹500 cr.

Firm plans hiring, increments this year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Homegrown consumer electronics brand Micromax is planning a comeback in the smartphone segment with a ₹500 crore investment. As a first step towards re-entry into the segment where it made waves before Chinese phones took over, Micromax Informatics on Friday unveiled a sub brand 'in', under which it will roll out a range of smartphones.

The company's revenues grew 6.1% to ₹18,594 crore during the quarter.

"We delivered a solid performance in Q2... Our stellar performance is broad-based across verticals, service lines, geographies and Mode 1, 2, 3 offerings," president and CEO C. Vijayakumar said in a virtual briefing.

"Our new bookings remained robust: they rose 35% compared to the last quarter

Our new bookings remained robust: they rose 35% compared to the last quarter

C. VIJAYAKUMAR,
CEO, HCL Technologies

said. Mr. Vijayakumar added that the company's deal pipeline grew 20% quarter-on-quarter, which was "an all-time high".

One of the main elements that contributed to the 'brilliant performance' was the intensity of the technology spent as companies recalibrate businesses and business models for the new normal, he said.

"We are implementing the salary increments effective October 1, up to E3 levels, and effective January 1, for E4 and above levels," he added. The Board of Directors has declared an interim dividend of ₹4 per equity share for FY2020-21.

MI juggernaut rolls on, crushes KKR to reclaim top spot

Chahar, Bumrah star with the ball before de Kock settles the contest with an unbeaten 44-ball 78; Cummins' defiant fifty not enough for Kolkata

IPL 2020

SPORTS BUREAU

In a lopsided contest, Kolkata Knight Riders succumbed to Mumbai Indians at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Friday.

MI thrashed KKR by eight wickets inside 17 overs to move to the top of the table, even on points with Delhi Capitals but ahead on net run rate after eight games.

Signature shot

Chasing a target of 149, Quinton de Kock (78 not out, 44b, 9x4, 3x6) snatched the game away in a flash.

The South African executed classical cricketing shots, including his signature hook, to keep the scoreboard ticking. He found solid support in Rohit (35, 36b, 5x4, 1x6) and the partnership helped MI race to 51 without loss in the PowerPlay.

By the time Shivam Mavi dismissed Rohit, Mumbai only needed 55 off 57 balls.

Although Suryakumar Yadav did not get going, Hardik Pandya, promoted to No. 4, hastened the end with an 11-ball 21 not out (3x4, 1x6).

Disciplined effort

MI's disciplined bowling effort had earlier restricted the Knight Riders to 148 for five.

KKR started cautiously be-



Top performers: After Rahul Chahar had put the skids on Knight Riders, Quinton de Kock took over for Mumbai Indians. ■ BCCI/IPL



fore Suryakumar's quick reflexes in the point region, which helped him pouch Rahul Tripathi off Trent Boult, set things rolling for the defending champion.

Nathan Coulter-Nile scalped Nitish Rana to finish the PowerPlay on a high.

It set the stage for leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, who called the shots in the middle

overs by removing Shubman Gill and Dinesh Karthik, who had handed over the captaincy to Eoin Morgan in a bid to bat more freely. Gill and Karthik were dismissed off successive deliveries.

Bumrah nails Russell

Jasprit Bumrah then got the dangerous Andre Russell with a well-directed short

ball to further hurt KKR's chances.

Pat Cummins, who had smashed a 12-ball 33 against MI earlier this season, refused to give up the ghost, finishing with 53 not out (36b, 5x4, 2x6).

He added 87 runs off 57 balls for the sixth wicket with Morgan to save his side's blushes.

But de Kock's early assault quickly ended any hopes KKR may have had of making a match of it.

Next assignment

KKR: Oct. 18 vs. SRH
Abu Dhabi, 3.30 p.m. IST

MI: Oct. 18, vs. KXIP
Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Rahul Tripathi c Suryakumar b Boult 7 (9b, 1x4), Shubman Gill c Pollard b Rahul Chahar 21 (23b, 2x4), Nitish Rana c de Kock b Coulter-Nile 5 (6b, 1x4), Dinesh Karthik b Rahul Chahar 4 (8b, 1x4), Eoin Morgan (not out) 39 (29b, 2x4, 2x6), Andre Russell c de Kock b Bumrah 12 (9b, 1x4, 1x6), Pat Cummins (not out) 53 (36b, 5x4, 2x6); Extras (lb-2, w-5); Total (for five wkts. in 16.5 overs): 149.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-94 (Rohit, 2-111

(Suryakumar, 13.3).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Green 2.5-0-24-0, Cummins 3-0-28-0, Prasad 2-0-30-0, Russell 2-0-15-0, Varun 4-0-23-1, Mavi 3-0-24-1.

Toss: KKR.

Man-of-the-Match: Quinton de Kock.

Mumbai Indians won by eight wickets with 3.1 overs to spare.

Innings scan

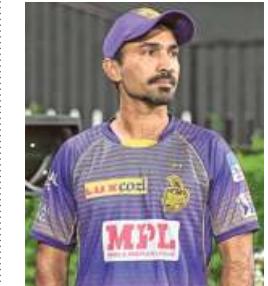
KKR	MI
54	Dots
13	42
5	4-42
33/2	5-6
7.40	51/0
	8.85

Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Mumbai Indians	8	6	2	12	1.353
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	12	0.990
Royal Challengers	8	5	3	10	-0.139
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	4	4	8	-0.684
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	3	5	6	0.009
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	6	-0.390
Rajasthan Royals	8	3	5	6	-0.844
Kings XI Punjab	8	2	6	4	-0.295

After the MI-KKR match on Oct. 16

Karthik steps down, Morgan is KKR captain



Dinesh Karthik. ■ BCCI/IPL

Y.B. SARANGI KOLKATA

Dinesh Karthik has informed the KKR management that with a view to focusing on his batting and contributing more to the team's cause, he wished to hand over the reins to Eoin Morgan, according to a KKR statement on Friday.

KKR CEO Venky Mysore said Karthik's decision had come as a surprise. The team was "fortunate that Eoin Morgan, the 2019 World Cup-winning (England) captain, who has been the vice-captain, is willing to lead the side going forward," he said.

"DK and Eoin have worked brilliantly together during this tournament," he added.

Karthik led KKR for two-and-a-half seasons.

Bowlers' mindset has changed in T20s: Vihari

Feels that they go all out for wickets

Hanuma Vihari enjoys Test cricket, but the India international also has a fair idea about the dynamics of T20 cricket.

Having featured in 24 IPL fixtures – for Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals – the 26-year-old understands the importance of time in the shortest format of the game.

"For batsmen, time depends on where you bat. If you bat at the top of the order, you have a little more time than the others who bat in the middle. It depends on the situation," said Vihari on the *Tissot presents Sportstar Extras T20 Time* show.

"The top-order has the advantage of taking a bit more time compared to a finisher, who walks in at No. 6 or 7. He does not have the luxury of a couple of extra balls and should get going from the beginning," Vihari said.

Even though T20 cricket is considered a batsman's game, the bowlers have also found ways to make their presence felt.



Hanuma Vihari. ■ FILE PHOTO

"Attack is the best form of defence and all the bowlers – even the spinners – are now trying to take wickets instead of just containing the batsmen," Vihari said.

The full interview can be watched on: <https://youtu.be/OYt8fmqoqWe>

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TV PICKS

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 5 p.m., 7.30 p.m. & 10 p.m., 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m., 9.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

MotoGP: Eurosport (SD & HD), 4 p.m.

PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 2.30 a.m. (Sunday)

Denmark Open badminton: Star Sports 2 HD, 3.15 p.m. & 7.30 p.m.; Star Sports 3, 1.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Chawrasia makes fine return from COVID

ST. ANDREWS
S.S.P. Chawrasia returned to action in style after recovering from COVID-19 as he carded three-under 69 in the first round of the inaugural Scottish Championship here. The 42-year-old Chawrasia, who had successfully fought against the virus in August, was tied 21st. Shubhankar Sharma (71) was T-46 and Gaganjeet Bhullar (75) was T-83 as Spaniard Adrian Otaegui shot 10-under 62 to take the lead. PTI

Srikanth exits from the Denmark Open

ODENSE
K. Srikanth's campaign in the Denmark Open came to an end on Friday with the Indian losing in the quarterfinals. The fifth seed went down to the second seed and World No. 2, Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, 20-22, 21-13, 21-16 in an encounter that lasted 62 minutes.

Mumbai City FC ropes in Farukh Choudhary

MUMBAI
Indian Super League side Mumbai City FC on Friday announced the signing of national team forward Farukh Choudhary on a three-year contract ahead of the upcoming season. The 23-year-old can play on either left or right side in attack as well as down the middle. PTI



Hatton grabs first-round lead in CJ Cup

LOS ANGELES
Britain's Tyrrell Hatton, coming off a European Tour victory last weekend at Wentworth, fired a seven-under 65 on Thursday to grab a one-stroke lead at the US PGA CJ Cup. American Russell Henley and American Xander Schauffele were second, followed by Spain's Jon Rahm and American Tyler Duncan in third. AP

UTT put off to next year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI
The fourth edition of Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) was on Friday postponed to next year due to concerns over health and safety of the players amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The league was originally proposed to be held in India from August 14 to 31, after the Tokyo Olympic Games, now moved to next year because of the pandemic.

"We must avoid any risk to the health and safety of the players and other stakeholders, especially with 2021 being an Olympic year."

"Furthermore, international travel restrictions are still abound with clarity awaited on the same," UTT co-promoters Vita Dani and Niraj Bajaj said in a joint statement.

"After evaluating the current situation and after due deliberations with TTFI, we have arrived at a mutual consensus to not conduct UTT in this calendar year," the statement read. "We are optimistic that 2021 will be healthier and happier, and in due course of time we hope to announce the dates for UTT to be held next year," he added.



Loud and clear: Chris Gayle makes it known who the boss is! ■ BCCI/IPL

Pooran hails Gayle as greatest T20 batsman

Team is confident when he's in the middle'

IPL 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SHARJAH

Chris Gayle's presence in the middle had the team brimming with confidence and the 'Universe Boss' with a cracking half-century proved his worth during Kings XI Punjab's win over Royal Challengers Bangalore, said batsman Nicholas Pooran.

Gayle, who was playing his first competitive match since January, overcame a sluggish start to smash five sixes and a boundary in his 53-run knock, helping KXIP snap a five-match losing streak.

"He started slowly, which is acceptable because he hasn't played cricket in a long while. He has shown once more why he is the greatest T20 batsman. It's

wonderful to see him get runs," Pooran told teammate Mayank Agarwal during a post-match show for IPL20.com.

Mood is upbeat

The West Indies wicketkeeper-batsman added that when the 41-year-old Jamaican is out in the middle, the mood in the camp is different.

"To me, he is the greatest T20 player. When Chris is batting, you always feel you have a chance of winning the game. Once he is there, it's a different mood in the camp. We, as batsmen, would want someone like him in the middle," Pooran said.

In the first match of the tournament against Delhi Capitals, KXIP had failed to score the required one run from the last three balls and the game went to a Super Over where Kings XI lost the game. On Thursday, K.L. Ra-

hul and his men needed just seven off the final two overs with nine wickets in hand but somehow took the game to the last ball.

With big-hitter Gayle departing off the penultimate ball, Pooran walked in to hit the winning six.

Deja vu

"When the last over started, it was like *deja vu*. Last three balls, one run it was like the Delhi game all over again but just the difference is that I was in the dugout," Pooran said.

"A million things were running in my mind, I was not clear, to be honest, what I was gonna (sic) do. I never wanted to be in that position. After sitting out for so long, I have to bat the last ball and 11 fielders looked like 20. Two points is the most important thing for us," Pooran added.

Both had a team of metronomic pacemakers around them who utilised Wavelight technology – a trackside visual time guidance system which lights up to indicate the world record pace. "You have to innovate, there's no question about that."

"I think Wavelight allows people in the stadium, people on television, to understand a little bit more about the incredible talent, the incredible speeds our competitors are running at actually lends to the type of understanding I want."

Coe gives the thumbs up to Wavelight technology



Wavelight technology helped Cheptegei run to a new world record. ■ AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GYDNYA (POLAND)

World Athletics president Sebastian Coe said on Friday he embraced the new track technology that features pacemaking lights, a system used to great effect in the World records set last week by Joshua Cheptegei (men's 10,000m) and Letesenbet Gidey (women's 5,000m).

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Padmanabh, Daniel sizzle

NEW DELHI: Daniel Otamendi and Padmanabh Singh struck telling blows in the fourth chukker, after the teams were level, to guide Rajinigandha Achievers to an 8-5 win over Aravalipal Polo in the last league match of the Bhopal Pataudi Cup 8-goal polo tournament here on Friday.

In the final on Sunday, Rajinigandha Achievers will face Sona Polo which beat Army Red 8 goals to 2-1.

The results (league): Sona Polo 8 (Tommy Severn 4, Siddhant Sharma 2, Akshai Malik 2) bt Army Red 2-1 (Aman Singh, Ravinder Mang, handicap 1/2); Rajinigandha Achievers 8 (Daniel Otamendi 5, Padmanabh Singh 3) bt Aravalipal Polo 5 (Angad Kalaan 4, Raghav Rao).

Liverpool up against pacesetter Everton

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

Liverpool faces Premier League pacesetter Everton this weekend, determined to prove its 7-2 drubbing by Aston Villa was just a bizarre blip while misfiring Manchester United could slip into the relegation zone.

The Merseyside derby kicks off the Premier League action on Saturday after the international break, with Manchester City's match against Arsenal also catching the eye.

United desperate
Ole Gunnar Solskjaer will be desperate to turn around Manchester United's for-

BCCI apex council to discuss home season

There is no clarity on whether competitive cricket can resume anytime soon

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

The fate of the home season, including England's scheduled tour of India early next year and the deferred domestic calendar, is set to be discussed during the Board of Control for Cricket in India's apex council meeting on Saturday.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, competitive cricket in India has virtually come to a standstill. As a result, des-

pite the Indian Premier League (IPL) being played in the United Arab Emirates, there is no clarity on whether competitive cricket can resume in India anytime soon.

ECB's apprehension

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has thus expressed apprehension over travelling to India and has instead sent the BCCI a feeler letter preferring to play the series

in the UAE. A section within the apex council is understood to be in favour of creating a bio-bubble either in Mumbai, Ahmedabad or Dharamsala for the England series. But there are sceptics about domestic cricket, with a whopping 38 teams participating in senior and junior cricket now.

"To assure ECB about safety of cricketers in India, scheduling domestic cricket is paramount but to create bubbles in four or five cities is the big risk, so it's a tricky call," said a BCCI insider.

Call on kit sponsor

It remains to be seen if the apex council takes a call on the kit sponsor for India's tour to Australia. With Nike's term having expired, the recent tenders floated by the BCCI didn't receive any response due to uncertainty over resumption of international cricket.

Mohd. Sporting secures berth

Prevails 2-0 over Bhawanipore FC

I-LEAGUE QUALIFIERS

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA

KOLKATA

Mohammedan Sporting scored once in each half to prevail over its city rival Bhawanipore FC 2-0 in the penultimate match of the qualifiers and secured a place in the main stage of the I-League.

Dominance

The match at the Kalyani Stadium on Friday saw Sporting maintaining its dominance all through as Vanlalbia Chhangte and substitute Ganji Ahmed Nigam found the target to help their team secure its third consecutive victory and bag nine points.

The victory gave Sporting an unassailable lead in the points table, rendering the

final round of action on October 19 inconsequential.

Sporting will meet FC Bengaluru United in the final round.

Bhawanipore, which is on six points with a game left, will not be able to overtake Sporting as the latter has a better head-to-head record after Friday's win.

Looking to secure the lone qualification berth on offer, Sporting began strongly, repeatedly raiding the Bhawanipore half.

Defence caves in

Bhawanipore's defence

caved in to pressure in the 28th minute when Sporting's Trinidad and Tobago striker Willis Plaza set it up for Chhangte to finish.

Bhawanipore tried to regroup after the break, but its search for the equaliser remained elusive.

Sporting took the match further away in the 67th minute when Nigam, a 46th-minute substitute, chested down a free-kick and finished with a grounder to make it 2-0.

In the other match, Garhwal FC split points with ARA FC after a 1-1 draw.

Mohammedan Sporting 2 (Vanlalbia Chhangte 28, Ganji Ahmed Nigam 67) bt Bhawanipore FC 0.

Garhwal FC 1 (Neeraj Bhandari 17) drew with ARA FC 1 (Surajit Seal 83-pen).

Barca ponders giving Messi a breather

Real Madrid awaits return of Hazard from injury

LALIGA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MADRID

Barcelona must weigh up the decision whether to rest Lionel Messi for Saturday's trip to Getafe ahead of a congested run of fixtures, while Real Madrid is still waiting for the return of Eden Hazard.

Messi played the full 90 minutes in Argentina's World Cup qualifiers against Ecuador and Bolivia during the international break, the second of which was played at altitude in La Paz.

The Barca captain has not missed a single minute for his club since football resumed in June following the coronavirus shutdown.

However, with seven games in the space of 21 days awaiting Barca, coach Ronald Koeman could elect to give Messi a breather before the start of the team's Champions League campaign.

Barca hosts Hungarian side Ferencvaros on Tuesday and then faces Real Madrid four days later at the Camp Nou.

Unbeaten run

Leader Madrid is unbeaten in La Liga since March, winning 13 of its past 15 games, and welcome Cadiz to the capital this weekend.

Zinedine Zidane could also opt to rotate some players, but Thibaut Courtois, Karim Benzema and Vinicius Junior are in line to play after resting while others were away on international duty.

Courtois left the Belgium squad with a back injury and while he is fit to return, compatriot Hazard is not yet ready for action.

The 29-year-old has yet to feature this season having picked up a muscle injury as he worked his way back from an ankle problem.

He is also expected to miss next weekend's Clasico, but Courtois believes Hazard will come good after scoring just once in an injury-plagued first season in Spain.

"I have no doubt we are going to see the best of Hazard," Courtois told Cadena Ser radio.

"He is more desperate than anyone to show it. He's coming along well and hopefully soon he can prove it."

He added: "I am sure that in no time he will explode and will give many joys to the team."

Atletico Madrid visits Cel-

ta Vigo in its first game since the sale of Ghana midfielder Thomas Partey to Arsenal on transfer deadline day.

Partey made 188 appearances for the Atletico and was part of the sides that reached the 2016 Champions League final and beat Arsenal on the way to winning the Europa League in 2018.

The Dutch-born Morocco international could make his Sevilla debut at Granada after joining the club on a five-year deal from AZ Alkmaar.

Idrissi, 24, scored 13 goals in 25 games in the Eredivisie last season before it was declared over in March due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Undefeated

Julen Lopetegui's Europa League winners are one of four undefeated teams in La Liga this term, with seven points from their first three matches.

Liverpool up against pacesetter Everton

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON