SUNDAY
11 OCTOBER
2020

The Sunday Statesman

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KOLKATA | **NEW DELHI** | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

'TALIBAN PEACE DEAL NOT DETRIMENTAL TO INDIA'S SECURITY'

P4

CAMPAIGN GAMES

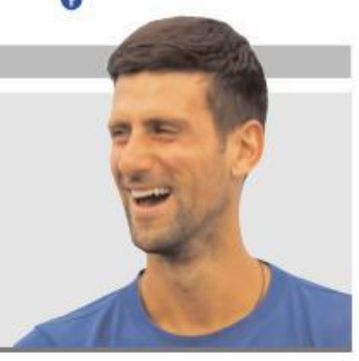
P6

BATTLE LINES DRAWN IN TAMIL NADU

P7

DJOKOVIC SETS UP HUMDINGER

P12



WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 35 and 19 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY
Max: 91% Min: 40%

TEMPERATURE
Max: 34.9°C (+1) Min: 19.2°C (-2)

SUN RISES	SUN SETS
06:20 hrs	17:56 hrs
MOON RISES	MOON SETS
01:07 hrs	14:22 hrs

THUMBNAILS

The last rites of Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan underway at the Janardan Ghat in Patna on Saturday. IANS (DETAILS ON P5)

Republic TV's CFO skips summon: Despite summons, Republic TV's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) did not appear before the Mumbai police on Saturday to record his statement in connection with the TRP manipulation racket, saying the channel has approached the Supreme Court in the case, a senior official said. Shiva Subramaniyam Sundaram against whom summons had been issued on Friday, also requested the police not to record his statement saying the top court's hearing is scheduled within a week, the official said.

Armenia, Azerbaijan truce in Nagorno-Karabakh: With Russia's mediation, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh starting Saturday following two weeks of heavy fighting that marked the worst outbreak of hostilities in the separatist region in more than a quarter-century. The countries' foreign ministers said that the truce is intended to exchange prisoners and recover the dead. Minutes after it entered force at noon (0800 GMT), Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other of breaching the cease-fire. P11

Rape cases must be probed within 2 months: Centre

MHA issues advisory on mandatory action to states, UTs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

CENTRE GETS CRACKING

- **The detailed three-page advisory of the Union Home Ministry comes days after the alleged gangrape and murder of a woman at Hathras in Uttar Pradesh sparked nationwide outrage.**
- **The Home Ministry said there should be compulsory registration of an FIR in case of a cognisable offence under the CrPC, and any failure of police to adhere to laid down rules does not augur well for the delivery of justice.**
- **The advisory also says that a victim's dying statement can't be discarded merely because it has not been recorded by a magistrate**

The Centre has issued a fresh advisory to states and UTs on mandatary action in cases of crimes against women, and said probe into rape cases must be completed within two months as per law and that dying declaration of a victim can't be discarded merely because it has not been recorded by a magistrate.

The detailed three-page advisory of the Union Home Ministry came days after the alleged gangrape and murder of a woman at Hathras in Uttar Pradesh sparked nationwide outrage.

The Home ministry said there should be compulsory registration of an FIR in case of a cognisable offence under the CrPC, and any failure of police to adhere to rules does not augur well for the delivery of justice.

The law also enables the police to register an FIR or a "Zero FIR", in case the crime is committed outside the jurisdiction of police station, in the event of receipt of information on commission of a cognisable offence, which includes cases of sexual assault on women, the Ministry said.

"However, even with stringent provisions in law and several capacity building measures undertaken, any failure of police to adhere to these mandatory requirements may not augur well for the delivery of criminal justice in the country, especially in the context of women safety," it said. "Such lapses, if noticed, need to be investigated into and stringent action taken immediately against the concerned officers responsible for the same," the advisory to states and Union Territory administrations said.

The Home Ministry told the states and UT administrations that the Section 173 of CrPC provides for completion of police investigation in relation to rape in two months and Section 164-A of CrPC provides that in rape or sexual assault investigation, the victim should be examined by a registered medical practitioner under consent within twenty-four hours from the time of receiving the information of commission of such offence.

The advisory said the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, provides that the statement, written or verbal by a person, who is dead, shall be treated as relevant fact in the investigation when the statement is made by a person as to the cause of his (or her) death or as to any of the circumstances of the transaction which resulted in his (or her) death.

The Supreme Court in an order on 7 January 2020, directed that a statement, when being offered as dying declaration and satisfies all the requirements of judicial scrutiny, cannot be discarded merely because it has not been recorded by a Magistrate, MHA said.

The Directorate of Forensic Science Services under the MHA has issued guidelines for collection, preservation & transportation of forensic evidence in sexual assault cases. In order to facilitate the State Police, Bureau of Police Research and Development has issued Sexual Assault Evidence Collection (SAEC) Kits to every State/UT, MHA said.

Pompeo: China has deployed 60K soldiers at India's border

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 10 OCTOBER

China has amassed 60,000 troops at India's northern border, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said as he hit out at Beijing for its "bad behaviour" and the threats it poses to the Quad countries.

The foreign ministers from the Indo-Pacific nations known as the Quad group~the US, Japan, India and Australia~ met in Tokyo on Tuesday in what was their first in-person talks since the coronavirus pandemic began.

The meeting took place in the backdrop of China's aggressive military behaviour in the Indo-Pacific, South China Sea and along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

"The Indians are seeing 60,000 Chinese soldiers on their northern border, Pompeo told *The Guy Benson Show* in an interview on Friday after his return from Tokyo wherein he attended the second Quad ministerial with his counterparts from India, Japan and Australia.

"I was with my foreign minister counterparts from India, Australia, and Japan a format that we call the Quad, four big democracies, four powerful economies, four nations, each of whom has real risk associated with the threats imposed by the Chinese Communist Party. And they see it in their home countries too," he said.

Pompeo met External Affairs minister S Jaishankar in Tokyo on Tuesday and they underscored the need to work together to advance, peace, prosperity and security in the Indo-Pacific and around the globe. He described his meeting with Jaishankar as "productive."

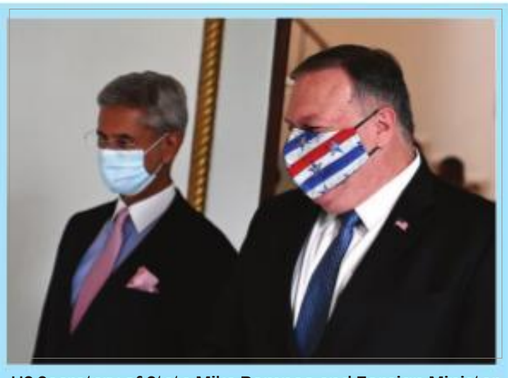
"They see, the people of their (Quad) nations understanding that we all slept on this for too long. For decades, the West allowed the Chinese Communist Party to walk all over us. The previous administration bent a knee, too often allowed China to steal our intellectual properties and the millions of jobs that came along with it. They see that in their country too," he said in the interview.

In another interview with Larry O'Connor, Pompeo said in his meetings with his counterparts from Japan, India and Australia, they began to develop a set of understandings and policies that can jointly take these countries to work to present a true resistance to the threats that the Chinese Communist Party poses to each of these nations.

India and China are locked in a bitter border standoff in eastern Ladakh since early May that has significantly strained the bilateral ties. Both sides have held a series of diplomatic and military talks to resolve the row. However, no breakthrough has been achieved to end the standoff. China unsuccessfully attempted to occupy Indian territory in the southern bank of Pangong lake in the last week of August.

"Whether it's the Australians who did the simple thing of saying the Chinese screwed this deal up with the virus, and we'd like to understand what happened and said we ought to have a full investigation, and in exchange for that, the Chinese Communist Party began to extort, coerce, bully the Australians, Pompeo said.

"The world has awakened. The tide's begun to turn. And the United States under President Trump's leadership has now built out a coalition that will push back against the threat and maintain good order, the rule of law, and the basic civic decency that comes from democracies controlling the world and not authoritarian regimes," Pompeo said. He said that the three other countries Japan, India, and Australia were building out a coalition around the world who understand the threat from the Chinese Communist Party.



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar in Tokyo for the four Indo-Pacific nations' foreign ministers meeting. AFP

US NSA hits out at China: China has attempted to "seize" control of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India by force as part of its territorial aggression, US' national security advisor has said, underlining that time has come to accept that dialogue and agreements will not persuade Beijing to change.

"CCP's (Chinese Communist Party) territorial aggression is also apparent on its Indian border where China has attempted to seize control of the Line of Actual Control by force," US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said in a remark on China early this week in Utah. "Beijing's signature international development programme, One Belt One Road (OBOR), involves impoverished companies taking on opaque and unsustainable Chinese loans to pay Chinese firms employing Chinese labourers to build their infrastructure, he said. "The time has come to accept that dialogue and agreements will not persuade or compel the People's Republic of China to change. There's nothing to be gained from looking the other way or turning the other cheek. We've been doing that for too long, he said. PTI

Bharat Biotech asked to submit phase-2 trial data of Covaxin before phase-3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

Bharat Biotech, which had sought DCGI's nod for conducting phase-3 clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate, has been asked to submit complete safety and immunogenicity data of the ongoing phase-2 trial, besides providing some clarifications, before proceeding for the next stage.

The vaccine candidate ~ 'Covaxin'~is being indigenously developed by the Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The Hyderabad-based vaccine maker applied to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) on 2 October, seeking its permission to conduct phase-3 randomised double-blind placebo-controlled multicentre trial of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate. The firm in its application said that the study would cover 28,500 subjects aged 18 years and above and would be conducted in 19 sites~including Delhi, Mumbai, Patna and Lucknow -~ across 10 states.

According to sources, the phase-2 trial of the Covaxin is going on and the second dose is yet to be given to volunteers at some sites. "The company presented phase-3 clinical trial protocol along with interim data of phase 1 and 2 clinical trials," an official said.

The subject expert committee (SEC) at the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation(CDSCO) deliberated on the application on 5 October.

"After a detailed deliberation, the committee opined that the design of the phase-3 study is in principle satisfactory except for clarification on definition of asymptomatic, etc. "However, the study should be initiated with appropriate dose identified from the phase-2 safety and immunogenicity data. Accordingly, the firm should submit safety and immunogenicity data from phase-2 trial for consideration," the panel said in its recommendations.

The SEC also observed that the vaccine was well-tolerated in all dose groups and no serious adverse events have been reported so far. The most common adverse event was pain at the injection site, which resolved transiently, the source said.

The phase-3 clinical trial application proposed a dose of 0.5 ml on day 0 and 28, sources said. Indigenously developed vaccine candidate by Zydus Cadila Ltd is in the phase 2 of the human clinical trials. The Pune-based Serum Institute of India, which has partnered with AstraZeneca for manufacturing the Oxford Covid vaccine candidate, is also conducting Phase 2 and 3 human clinical trials.

India's Covid caseload approaches 7 million mark; nearly 6 million cured

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

India reported 73,272 new coronavirus cases in a span of 24 hours, taking the overall caseload to 69,79,423, while 59,88,822 people have recuperated so far, pushing the recovery rate to 85.81 percent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday.

The death toll due to Covid-19 climbed to 1,07,416 with 926 people succumbing to the disease during the period, the data updated at 8 a.m. showed.

The number of active coronavirus cases remained below 9 lakh for a second day.

There are 8,83,185 active cases of infection in the country which make 12.65 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

The Covid-19 case fatality rate was recorded at 1.54 per cent.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5.

It went past 50 lakh on September 16 and crossed 60 lakh on September 28. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a cumulative 8,57,98,698 samples have been tested up to October 9. As many as 11,64,018 samples were tested on Friday.

Delhi adds 48 fresh deaths: Delhi today logged 48 fresh Covid fatalities, which pushed its coronavirus toll to 5,740, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The city reported 2,866 new coronavirus cases, which took its caseload to 3,06,559, the health bulletin said. These fresh cases were detected from 49,736 tests.

The positivity rate was 5.76 per cent while the case fatality rate stood at 1.87 per cent.

The tally of active cases was 22,007 while the number of patients under home isolation rose to 12,614.

According to the bulletin, 2,78,812 Covid patients have recovered in Delhi so far, with 2,766 patients having recovered over the last 24 hours. The city's Covid recovery rate climbed to 90.94 per cent.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain pointed out that over the last nine days the city's Covid count has remained below 3,000 cases per day. (SEE P2)

FACT FILE

TOTAL CASES	69,79,423
ACTIVE CASES	8,83,185
NEW CASES	73,272
NEW RECOVERIES	82,753
TOTAL DEATHS	1,07,416

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 08.00 A.M. SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER 2020

No such indication: Army commander on China-aided missile sites in PoK

SRINAGAR, 10 OCTOBER

Amidst reports that China is helping Pakistan set up sites for surface-to-air missiles in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), a top Army commander here on Saturday said there is no indication of any tactical help being extended by Beijing to Islamabad.

Corps Commander of the Army's Srinagar-based Chinar Corps Lt Gen B S Raju, however, said there is military cooperation between Pakistan and China in terms of equipment.

Amidst the continuing standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in Ladakh, media reports quoting intelligence inputs have claimed that China is helping Pakistan set up sites for surface-to-air missiles in PoK as soldiers of their armies have been carrying out joint patrols in the region.

Gen Raju said there has not been any such indication.

"I have seen the reports in the media. Whether Pakistan is helping China or China is helping Pakistan, we have no such indication," he told reporters on the sidelines of a passing out-cum-attestation parade at the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry Regimental Centre on the outskirts of the city here.

"But because of the CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), there is the presence of China in Pakistan. The military cooperation in terms of equipment is there, but we are not seeing any tactical help," he said.

According to the reports, the construction work for the installation of surface-to-air missile defence system is being carried out by the Pakistan army and China's People's Liberation Army at Pauli Pir near Lasadanna Dhok of PoK. PTI

Cannot go any further from current loan relief plan, Centre tells SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

The Centre has told the Supreme Court that going any further than the fiscal policy decisions already taken, such as waiver of compound interest charged on loans of up to Rs 2 crore for six months moratorium period, may be "detrimental" to the overall economic scenario, the national economy and banks may not take "inevitable financial constraints".

The Union Finance Ministry, through its additional secretary Pankaj Jain, filed the affidavit in compliance of the top court's 5 October order asking it to place on record the K V Kamath Committee recommendations on debt restructuring in view of Covid-19 related stress on various sectors as well as the notifications and circulars issued so far on the loan moratorium and financial difficulties.

Prior to this, the Centre had told the top court that it has decided to waive compound interest (interest on interest) charged on loans of up to Rs 2 crores for a six-month moratorium period announced due to the pandemic from individual borrowers in eight categories - MSME, Education loan, Housing Loan, consumer durable loan, credit card dues, auto loan, personal loans to professionals and consumption loans. The court, on 5 October, had asked the Centre and the RBI to file fresh ones in the case.

In the fresh affidavit, the Centre referred to its various fiscal policy decisions and the RBI and expressed inability in expanding the scope of reliefs already provided to different sectors.

"It is... submitted that while taking... decision and to supplement the earlier fiscal policy decisions under the 'Garib Kalyan' and 'Aatma Nirbhar' packages entailing substantial financial burden, the respondent government has rationalised the fiscal impact of the same, and that going any further than what has been decided may be detrimental to the overall economic scenario, and the national economy or the banking sector may not be able to take the inevitable financial constraints resulting therefrom."

The official said the Centre's decision with regard to the question of waiver of interest on interest to bear the burden of compounding of interest in respect of certain categories of loans was taken in the larger public interest only in the specific context of the pandemic, which is, by itself, an unprecedented situation.

Such fiscal policy decisions are taken after an elaborate exercise of gathering of facts, careful assessment of these facts and considering various alternatives, keeping in mind the economic impact on financial strength of stakeholders and all other relevant factors, more particularly during the pandemic when the global fiscal scenario is equally bad and the fact that it is uncertain as to till what date the present global and national economic stress will continue, the affidavit said.

The Centre said that the recommendations of the Kamath Committee have been broadly accepted by the RBI and the panel found "variable impact of the pandemic across several sectors, with varying degrees of severity and varying nature of problems".

"A perusal of the entire report would show that it is neither possible nor desirable to arrive at any one particular formula, whether sector-specific or otherwise, to deal with the stress situation arising from the unprecedented pandemic," it said.

The Kamath panel had made recommendations for 26 sectors that could be factored by lending institutions while finalising loan resolution plans and that banks could adopt a graded approach based on the severity of the pandemic on a sector.

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There is a history of war and enmity. Yet Muslims and Christians still survive in our country. They are not treated badly and enjoy all the rights here

MOHAN BHAGWAT
RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH (RSS) CHIEF

Hindu Rao hosp stir: Delhi govt shifts Covid patients

Slamming the BJP-run North MCD for not paying salaries to Hindu Rao doctors who are now agitating, Satyendar Jain says the Delhi govt will shift all Covid patients from there to its hospitals

Delhi health minister Satyendra Jain addressing media persons on Saturday. DEEPAK

Healthcare workers of Hindu Rao Hospital hold protest against non-payment of their salaries. In the Capital on Saturday. DEEPAK

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

The Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government today ordered the shifting of Covid-19 patients from the North Corporation-run Hindu Rao Hospital to its own healthcare facilities, with health minister Satyendar Jain slamming the BJP-run civic body, saying it should "hand over" municipal hospitals to the AAP government if they are not able to run them.

The Delhi government's move came days after the resident doctors of the Hindu Rao hospital went on a "symbolic indefinite strike" over their unpaid salaries for the last three months. A group of doctors and nurses also protested today by holding placards and raising slogans at the main gate of the Hindu Rao hospital.

Hindu Rao is the largest municipal hospital in Delhi, which has 900 beds and is currently a dedicated Covid facility. Many of its healthcare workers had contracted the coronavirus infection earlier.

Talking to reporters, Jain said that 20 patients were currently admitted to Hindu Rao Hospital. "Today, we have ordered to shift all Covid-19 patients from Hindu Rao Hospital to our own facilities. They have the choice to be shifted to LNJP Hospital or any other government hospital near their homes," the health minister said.

Later, Jain tweeted: "North MCD has not paid salries of Hindu Rao Hospital docs for months. Docs r going on strike from tomo. Therefore, all covid-19 patients in this hospi r being shifted to Del Govt Hospitals. MCD shud immediately pay salries of Docs. Docs hv made huge sacrifices during corona (sic)."

The agitating Hindu Rao Hospital doctors had on Thursday threatened to withdraw work from Sunday if their demands are not met.

"BJP is doing politics over the issue, they (North MCD) earn through several taxes, and if they can't run their hospitals, then they should hand them over to the Delhi government," Jain said.

He said doctors of Kasturba Hospital were also raising salary issues and the North Corporation sould look into it.

Abhimanyu Sardana, president of the Hindu Rao Hospital's Resident Doctors' Association (RDA), said, "Now, they are taking away the patients too. Do authorities want us to sit at home with no salary". He said their RDA was mulling a "legal route" to resolve the crisis.

North Corporation mayor Jai Prakash hit back at the Kejriwal government, claiming crores of funds were due to the North MCD from the Delhi government, which the latter was "not paying to handicap us".

Prakash said he had met the agitating doctors on Friday and that they had "understood the fund crunch we are facing", and they were assured that the North MCD was working to resolve their issues.

"However, Delhi government is doing politics over it by not releasing our due funds. And some of the AAP members are also instigating the doctors to continue the stir, so that AAP can get political mileage out of it for the next civic polls," he alleged.

Meanwhile, the shifting of patients from Hindu Rao Hospital began. Six of them were already taken to LNJP Hospital by this evening.

"Six patients have been brought in and six more will be coming to our facility," said Suresh Kumar, medical director of LNJP Hospital, a Delhi government-run dedicated Covid facility.

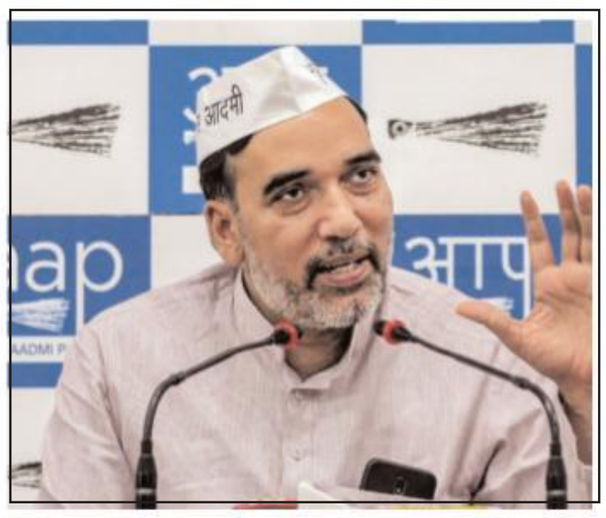
The mayor claimed that the plan to shift patients had been underway for the last one week or so. "On an average, about 20-25 patients were being treated at the 900-bed facility, so we were in communication with officials of the Delhi Disaster Management...planning to shift Covid patients to other facilities and start regular OPD at Hindu Rao," he said.

Asked if critical patients will continue to stay at Hindu Rao Hospital, Prakash said, "Yes, four patients are critical, and they won't be moved out". "We will create a corona ward where they are staying, and sanitise the facility once we get the order to restart OPD," the mayor added.

The Delhi government later released a statement, saying the BJP-ruled civic bodies must pay the salaries of their staff or "hand over the hospitals to us and we will run them better with better salaries on time".

"I do not think they are short on funds, they impose heavy taxes on people and collect hefty money but nobody knows where that money goes. Their job is to play politics and blame games. Even after the directions of the central government on the removal of health licenses, they did not do it," Jain said.

Kejriwal govt to issue directions for sale of only 'green firecrackers': Rai



PTI
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

The AAP government will soon issue directions allowing the sale and purchase of only green firecrackers in the national capital, Environment Minister Gopal Rai has said.

In 2018, the Supreme Court had banned the use of polluting firecrackers and allowed the sale of green firecrackers in a bid to control air pollution.

Guidelines are being prepared for the sale and purchase of only green firecrackers in Delhi. Soon, we will issue the directions to departments concerned, Rai told PTI.

The green crackers' are not as polluting as the conventional types of firecrackers and they contain at least 30 percent less particulate matters such as Sulphur Dioxide and Nitrogen Oxide.

The CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute was tasked with the job of developing green crackers'. But only a few varieties were available in the market last year due to licensing requirements.

The minister also said the exercise for reconstitution of the Ridge Management Board has been initiated.

The RMB is a high-powered body formed on the directions of the Supreme Court in 1995 to protect the ridge -- the green lungs of the city, spread across 7,784 hectares.

Its clearance is required before taking up any development activity in the ridge area.

The minister recently said the AAP government was taking the lead in the fight against air pollution in Delhi-NCR, but neighbouring states were still "not serious" about the issue despite it becoming "more dangerous" due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said the Delhi government wants cooperation not confrontation with other states on the issue of air pollution. The land has been divided into states but the sky is one.

Rai also questioned why the Centre was not taking any action against the 11 coal-fired power plants within 300 kilometers of Delhi, which have missed two deadlines to meet new emission norms.

We had two thermal power plants and we shut them. Why have these 11 power plants not been able to reduce emissions? What's the reason? Why action is not being taken against the brick kilns operating in nearby areas using outdated technologies, he said.

There are more than 1,640 such brick kilns in Uttar Pradesh, 161 in Haryana and 164 Rajasthan within 300 kilometers of Delhi.

JOBS & CLASSIFIEDS QUEST

CHANGE OF NAME

I, AKSHITA Parag Parekh, R/o. Bhowanipur, Kolkata changed my name to Akshita Parekh vide affidavit dated 29.09.2020 at CMM's Court, Kolkata.

PROPERTIES

FACTORY big land & small plot sale on NH-6, NH-34 in West Bengal. (M): 8584050461.

1 ACRE land for sale at Balia near Salua in Kharagpur, Rs. 50 lakh. Contact: 9830113518.

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AIR-SURCHARGE; Kathmandu - Rs. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1
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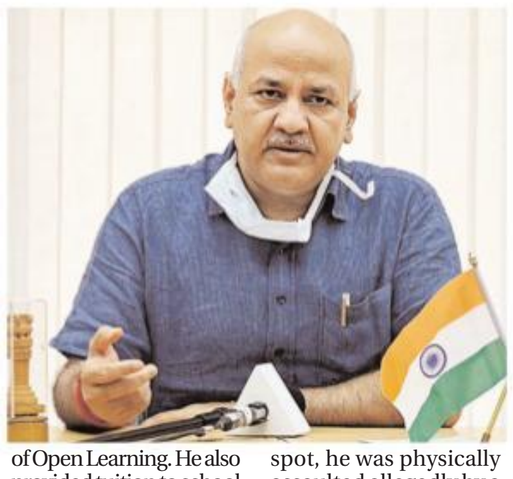
Student murder: Sisodia meets victim's family, declares ex-gratia

PTI
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER



Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday met the family of an 18-year-old DU student, who was allegedly beaten to death over his friendship with a woman in Adarsh Nagar, and announced an ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh.

Talking to reporters here, Sisodia said the Delhi government will ensure that the culprits get strict punishment at the earliest by appointing prominent lawyers in the case.

The deputy chief minister said the victim aspired to be an IPS officer.

The incident took place on Wednesday evening in northwest Delhi's Adarsh Nagar.

Rahul Rajput was a second-year student in Delhi University's School of Open Learning. He also provided tuition to school students, police said.

According to the police, the victim was friends with a woman from his locality but her family was against the friendship.

On Wednesday evening, the victim was called to Nanda Road on some pretext and when he reached the spot, he was physically assaulted allegedly by a group of four-five people, including the woman's brothers, a senior police officer had said on Friday.

The woman's brother and a relative were arrested and three juveniles apprehended in connection with the incident, the officer had said.

Delhi logs 48 fresh Covid fatalities, 2,866 cases

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

Delhi today logged 48 fresh Covid fatalities, which pushed its coronavirus toll to 5,740, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital had on 29 September also recorded 48 Covid deaths ~ the highest number of coronavirus deaths recorded in a day since 16 July, when Delhi had reported 58 Covid fatalities.

The city today reported 2,866 new coronavirus cases, which took its caseload to 3,06,559, the health bulletin said. These fresh cases were detected from 49,736 tests conducted the previous day.

The positivity rate was 5.76 per cent while the case fatality rate stood at 1.87 per cent.

The tally of active cases rose to 22,007 from yesterday's 21,955, the bulletin stated. The number of people under home isolation slightly rose to 12,614 today as compared to 12,609 the previous day.

According to the bulletin, 2,78,812 Covid patients have recovered in Delhi so far, with 2,766 patients having recovered over the last 24 hours. The city's Covid recovery rate climbed to 90.94 per cent.

The number of containment zones in the city dipped to 2,715 from yesterday's 2,727.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain pointed out that in the last nine days, the daily Covid

count has remained below 3,000 cases per day.

Asked about a report by experts cautioning that Delhi needs to be prepared for about 15,000 fresh Covid cases per day taking into account the upcoming winter season-related respiratory problems, large influx of patients from outside and festive gatherings, Jain told reporters: "I would neither comment on it nor contest it".

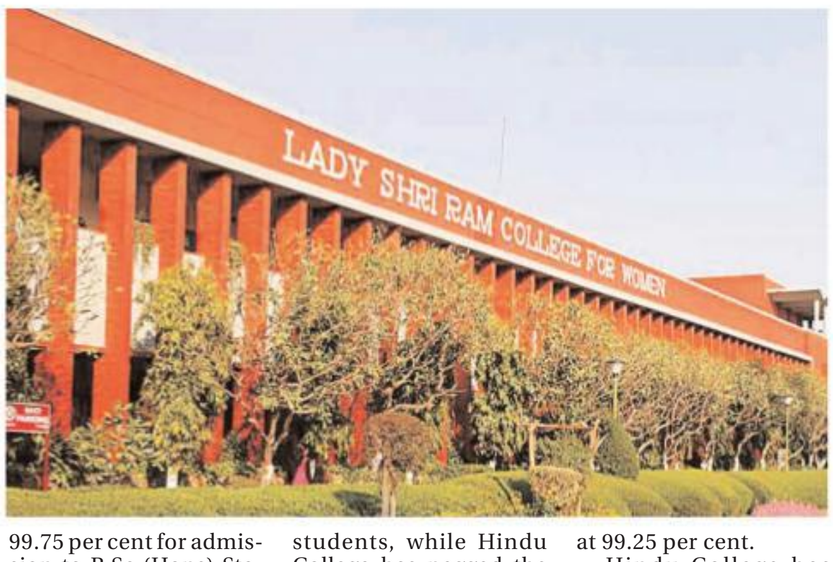
The report drafted by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the guidance of the expert group under the chairmanship of NITI Aayog member (health) Dr V K Paul has recommended that the Delhi government should make arrangements for hospitalisation of about one-fifth of these patients with moderate and severe disease.

"It is a hypothetical situation, and I can only say, as of now less cases are coming and we have sufficient beds. When the situation arises, we will step up our measures accordingly," the minister said.

Of the total number of 16,114 beds in Covid hospitals, 10,811 were vacant, the bulletin said. It stated that 1,021 beds in Covid care centres were occupied by persons under quarantine, including travellers who have returned by Vande Bharat Mission and bubble flights.

DU declares Ist cut-off list for undergraduate courses

PTI
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER



Delhi University announced its first cut-off list for undergraduate admission on Saturday with Lady Shri Ram College pegging the score at 100 per cent for three Honours courses.

Lady Shri Ram College For Women has pegged 100 per cent score for three courses for general category aspirants -- BA (Hons) Economics, BA (Hons) Political Science and BA (Hons) Psychology.

The college has the highest cut-off among Science courses as well. The college has announced a cut-off of 99.75 per cent for admission to B.Sc (Hons) Statistics for general category students, while Hindu College has pegged the score for the same course at 99.25 per cent.

Hindu College has announced a cut-off of 99.33 per cent for B.Sc (Hons) Physics.

Among the BA programme combinations, aspirants need to have a minimum of 99.25 per cent for gaining admission for a combination of Economics and Political Science to LSR College, the highest among all the combinations.

It was in 2015 that College of Vocational Studies and Indraprastha College for Women had pegged their cut-off at 100 per cent for the computer science programme for general category students.

Last year, Hindu College had pegged the highest score of 99 per cent for Political Science Honours. LSR College came a close second with a cut-off of 98.75 per cent for BA programme and Psychology Honours.

At 98.3 per cent, Hindu College also had the highest cut-off for Physics Honours.

Nearly 70,000 undergraduate seats are up for grabs with the admission process commencing from October 12. Officials of the university had said that cut-offs would be higher this year owing to more students scoring above 90 per cent marks in board examinations.

The admission process will be completely online due to the coronavirus pandemic. The new session will commence from November 18.

epaper.thestatesman.com

Even though Viswanath Pasayat hailed from a zamindar family, he fought for the weaker and underprivileged sections of the society by giving up his comforts for the love of the motherland.

BISWA BHUSAN HARICHANDAN
ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNOR

1,791 stubble burning cases in Pb till 8 Oct

These cases have been reported despite CM Capt Amarinder's appeal to Punjab farmers to ensure zero stubble burning as it could exacerbate the Covid crisis by aggravating air pollution

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 10 OCTOBER

As many as 1,791 cases of stubble burning have been reported in Punjab till 8 October even as Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has made an appeal for "zero stubble burning" in the state.

Punjab additional chief secretary, development, Anirudh Tewari said that out of the 1,791 cases of stubble burning reported till 8 October in the state, environment compensation has been imposed in 499 cases, red entries have been made in land record in 320 cases, six cases have been registered under Air Act 1981, and three first information reports (FIRs) have also been filed against the violators.

This is despite Punjab CM's appeal to the state farmers to ensure zero stubble burning as it could exacerbate the Covid-19 situation, given that increased air pollution levels would add to breathing troubles which could complicate the coronavirus infections.

Tewari said to motivate the farming community to restrain from burning crop residue, the Punjab government was providing subsidy worth Rs 300 crore ~ ranging from 50 per cent to 80 per cent to farmers for the purchase of 23,500 agro-machines for the management of paddy residue during Kharif season this year. He said 51,000 machines have been provided on subsidy and 8,500 custom hiring centres have been operationalised in the state. These machines have been provided to individual farmers, cooperative societies, panchayats and farmers groups, he said.

The Punjab chief secretary, Vini Mahajan, on Saturday asked the departments concerned to ensure strict monitoring to eradicate the stubble burning menace from the state.

She said legal action should be initiated immediately in case of any violation as this trend will further exacerbate the Covid-19 situation.

Responding to the appeal made by CM Capt Amarinder to ensure zero stubble burning in the state, according to Mahajan, many panchayats have already joined hands with the state by passing resolutions against stubble burning, but the target of zero paddy stubble burning would only be achieved when all the panchayats will pledge to shun this hazardous practice.

The district administrations have already been directed to make fool-proof arrangement for storage of paddy straw at the village level on common land, cattle ponds, gaushalas and that sufficient space should be made available for the storage of Basmati straw during ongoing Kharif harvesting season which could be used as cattle feed later, Mahajan said.

Haryana to open 500 crèche centres

REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 10 OCTOBER

The Haryana women and child development department will open 500 Crèche Centres for working women in the state.

The woman and child development minister, Kamlesh Dhanda, on Saturday said the scheme will be completed in two phases. Under the first phase, the facilities in already functional 182 Crèche Centres will be enhanced.

In the second phase, the remaining 318 new Crèche Centres will be opened in areas with high density of working women while considering the needs of working women. She informed that an agreement will also be made for training, teaching material and better functioning of these Crèche Centres.

Dhanda said the state is presently undergoing COVID-19 transition phase due to which all Anganwadi Centres are closed and children are unable to come to these Centres. She said supplementary nutrition to be given to children is being provided at their homes.

The closure of Anganwadi Centres has, however, affected the education of children going to pre-school education. In view of this, the department has decided that special worksheets, different types of colours and other materials will be made available to children between the age group between three to six years in their homes, the minister said.

Dhanda said that Anganwadi workers will periodically evaluate the work done by the children on these worksheets in the area under them and inform their parents so that they can focus on informal education of children at their homes.

'Cops inadvertently gave some protected witnesses' details to Delhi riots accused'

PTI
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

A Delhi court hearing a case related to the Northeast Delhi riots has been informed that the police "inadvertently" put a document which contained the details of some of the protected witnesses in the copies of the charge sheet supplied to the accused booked under the stringent UAPA.

Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad, appearing for the police, approached the court informing it about the lapse after it came to the knowledge of the investigating agency that at least three protected witnesses have been reached out by various persons with vested interest, in relation to the case.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat said there was a mistake on the part of the Investigating Officer and directed the Special Cell of the Delhi Police, which is investigating the case, to ensure comprehensive safety and security to all the protected witnesses.

The court ordered the accused and their counsel to return the documents. It also directed the accused or any other person or authority not to divulge, publish, disclose, disseminate or circulate the identity of the protected witnesses and not to approach them directly or indirectly.

It directed the police to file fresh copies of the charge sheet redacting the details of the protected witnesses and supply it to the 15 persons charge-sheeted in the case and their counsel.

The court's directions came after Prasad moved an urgent application saying the identity of some of the protected witnesses in the case were disclosed inadvertently by way of attaching untruncated judicial and investigation papers in the charge sheet.

"Under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, there is specific provision for protecting the identity of the witnesses for their safety and accordingly orders have been passed regarding the protection of the protected witnesses.

Thus, this particular provision was meant to protect the identity and ensure their safety for the purpose of fair trial, the judge noted

"The whole idea is to provide cover to the identity of the witnesses so that they can depose fairly and independently in the court.

"Accordingly, once the order was passed by the court, the identity should not have been disclosed," the court said in its order passed on October 9.

The application moved by Prasad stated the act was neither intentional nor deliberate. The soft copy of the charge sheet, identical to the original charge sheet, was supplied to the accused persons or their counsel, it said.

The court said, "The pen drive supplied to the counsels for accused persons contain the alleged disclosure of the name of the protected witnesses and hence, it would be in the fitness of things to ask them, who are Officers of the Court, to return them in the court.

"The return of the pen drive shall also pertain to the one supplied to the court itself. The record where the disclosure of protected witnesses has happened in the judicial file along with the pen drive in the court shall be kept in a sealed cover in the court in the judicial file and the redacted version of the said record shall be filed in the court. The Investigating Officer shall coordinate with the Ahlmad of the court for doing the needful," it said.

The accused include Pinjra Tod members and JNU students Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal, Jamia Millia Islamia student Asif Iqbal Tanha, Gulfisha Khatoon, former Congress Councillor Ishrat Jahan, Jamia Coordination Committee members Safoora Zargar, Meeran Haider, Shafa-Ur-Rehman, suspended AAP Councillor Tahir Hussain, activist Khalid Saifi, Shadab Ahmed, Tasleem Ahmed, Salim Malik, Mohd Salim Khan and Athar Khan.

They have been charge-sheeted for allegedly being part of a larger conspiracy in the riots.

JNU student Sharjeel Imam and former JNU student leader Umar Khalid have also been arrested under the anti-terror law in the case but not charge-sheeted yet.

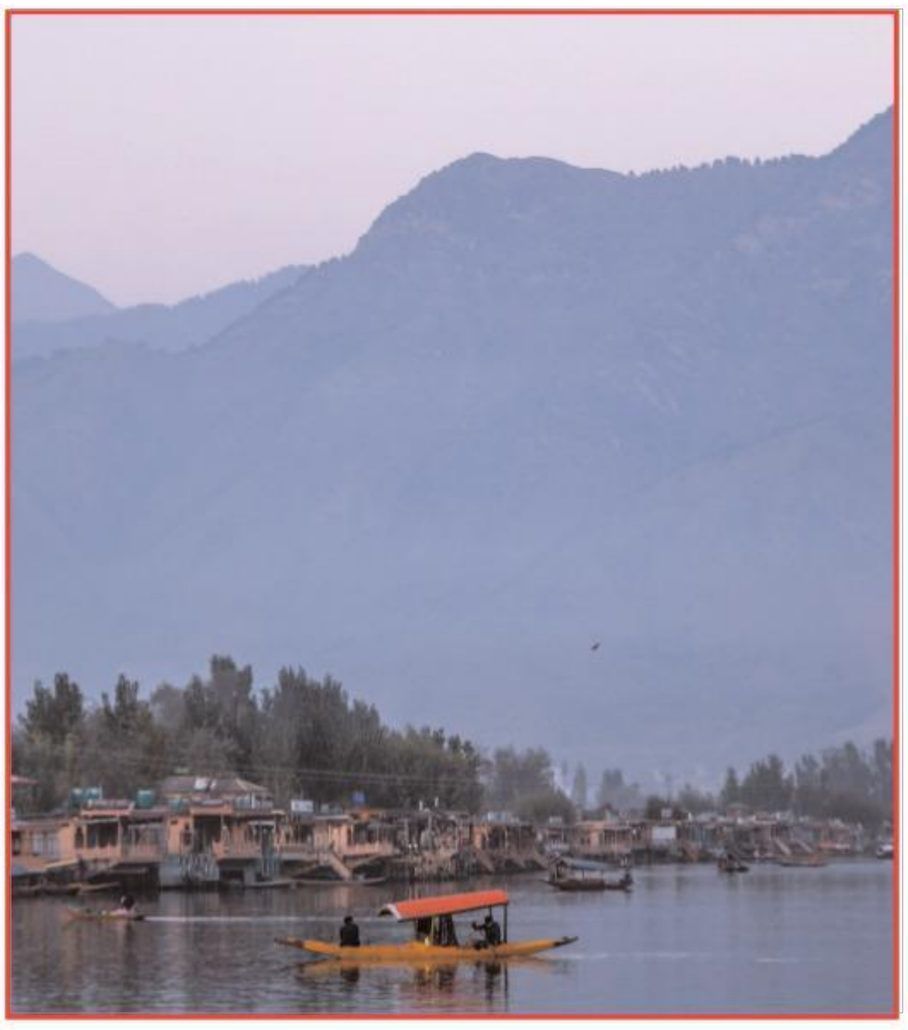
The application moved by Prasad stated that the investigating agency was conscious regarding the safety and security of the public witnesses including protected public witnesses.

"The life, liberty, safety and security of the protected public witnesses are of paramount importance. The state is the protector and guardian of the life and liberty of the citizens of this country. During the investigation of this case, the identity of some of the witnesses was kept confidential as contemplated under the UA(P) Act.

"It is also necessary that the relevant documents be extracted from the judicial file and replaced with truncated version and the original is sealed and kept on record. The present application is being filed bonafide and in the interest of justice, equity and fair play," the application said.

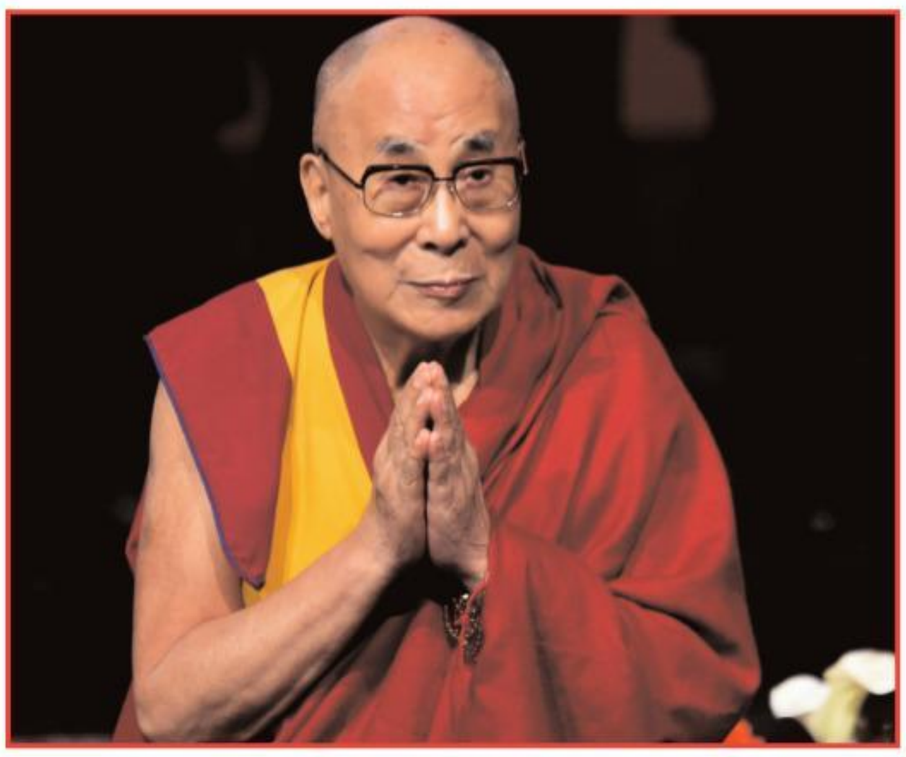
Communal violence had broken out in northeast Delhi on February 24 after clashes between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

MULTITUDINOUS



A view of Dal Lake in Srinagar on Saturday. AFP

Dalai Lama hails WFP for winning Nobel Peace Prize



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 10 OCTOBER

In a letter to David Beasley, Executive Director of WFP, Dalai Lama said this is recognition of the organisation's vital role in reducing hunger in the world.

Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama on Saturday congratulated the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) for winning this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

In a letter to David Beasley, Executive Director of WFP, Dalai Lama said this is recognition of the organisation's vital role in reducing hunger in the world.

"Through its actions to address poverty, hunger and malnutrition whether they arise due to conflict or natural disasters, the WFP is bringing help to the most vulnerable and needy. It brings peace and comfort where often there is only desperation," he added.

He said the Nobel Committee's honouring of WFP was also a reminder to all of us of our responsibility to do what we can to narrow the gap between rich and poor.

"As the current global health crisis reminds us, threats to the whole human family have to be addressed by us all, since we all want to be happy and free from suffering. Hunger and poverty can only be eliminated on the basis of international cooperation.

As a firm believer in the oneness of humanity, it is my fervent hope that the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the World Food Programme will inspire an intensification of efforts to ensure that nobody is left to die of hunger anywhere," he said.

Tibetan spiritual leader expressed gratitude to the members of the WFP, people on the ground as well as officials for the tremendous humanitarian work they do.

HP govt to launch awareness drive on disaster resilience

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 10 OCTOBER

A HP State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) official said in this campaign the role of community and the individual has been specifically emphasised in promoting disaster resilience.

The Himachal Pradesh government will start a programme for creating awareness about disaster reduction and resilience in communities across the state from 12 October.

A HP State Disaster Management Authority official (SDMA) said in this campaign, the role of community and the individual has been specifically emphasised in promoting disaster resilience.

"Individuals will be encouraged to be aware of the common hazards around them, prepare their family and community disaster management plans, and equip themselves with essential supplies required to tide through an emergency situation, like: dry ration, drinking water, medicines, torch, radio sets, spare batteries etc," he added.

He said to familiarize the community with Do's and Don'ts for the hazards that their regions are prone to, an interesting online quiz to educate the citizens has been prepared and shared electronically with the public so that they may test their knowledge about disasters and improve their understanding.

The link of the quiz is also available in HPSDMA Website www.hpsdma.nic.in.

"As a symbol of solidarity with the global efforts to observe the celebrations related to the International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) on 13th October every year, the SDMA will organize mass awareness campaign on Disaster Risk Reduction- 'Samarth'.

Started in the year 2011, Samarth, a statewide campaign is carried out at the state, district and community level and a variety of events and activities are organized in the month of October every year for two weeks," he said, adding SDMA is celebrating 10th edition of Samarth this year starting from second week of October.

He further stated that the focus for this year has been on developing content as news stories, photographs, quiz, videos, social media cards to highlight the links between good disaster risk governance and having national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in place, that align with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

"Online and digital modes will be extensively used this year to create awareness, build capacities towards promoting disaster resilience in the state.

Besides this, as part of this campaign, a table top mock exercise on chemical (Industrial) disasters has been planned on 15th October, 2020 along with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

The exercise will assess and review the preparedness of all stakeholders to deal with industrial disasters in industrial areas of the state.

As a run up to this exercise, an online training for officers of District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) and Nodal Officers of all departments has been planned on 12th October," he added.

He added a 3-day online training programme on 'Hill Area Environment' will be organized by SDMA in coordination with National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) from 21 to 23 October. Similarly, one such programme will be organized for traditional construction practices in HP and School Safety.

epaper.thestatesman.com

Opposition parties have 'division' in their DNA

UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH

ACCUSING THE OPPOSITION OF TRYING TO CREATE A RIFT IN SOCIETY ON CASTE AND COMMUNITY LINES

THUMBNAILS

A shopkeeper looks at the idols used as a decoration ahead of the *Navaratri* , in Chennai on Saturday. AFP

Mentally unstable boy held for killing elderly couple: A 16-year-old mentally unstable boy was apprehended for allegedly battering to death an elderly couple with a stone in UP`s Garholi village. The incident took place on Friday night when Shrinath Maurya (70) and his wife Maina Devi (65) were sleeping in their house. Children playing near the couple's house raised an alarm after seeing the bodies. PTI

'Peace deal with Taliban won't be detrimental to India's security '

Abdullah says people of Afghanistan are yearning for peace and stability and they will not allow terrorism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

Any peace deal with the Taliban "will not and should not be detrimental" to the national security of any country including India, and it is for New Delhi to decide whether to engage with the militant outfit, top Afghan peace negotiator Abdullah Abdullah said on Saturday.

In an interview, Abdullah, the chairman of the powerful High Council for National Reconciliation, also dispelled India's apprehensions that a prominent role for the Taliban as part of a possible outcome to the ongoing intra-Afghan peace talks could be detrimental to its strategic interests.

"It is not in our interests if any terrorist group has any foothold in Afghanistan. The agreement should be one which is acceptable to people of Afghanistan. It should be dignified, sustainable and durable," Abdullah said.

The influential Afghan leader also said if a peace deal is struck with Taliban, then all other terror groups "freelancing in mountains and deserts of Afghanistan and launching attacks on us or any other nation" will have to cease their activities.

"Peaceful settlement will not be and should not be detrimental to any country's national security including India. India is a country which has helped Afghanistan, contributed to Afghanistan. It is a friend of Afghanistan," he said.

There have been apprehensions in New Delhi that Pakistan might leverage its influence over the Taliban to step up cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir if the militant group regains political prominance after a possible peace deal between it and the Afghan government.

Abdullah arrived here on Tuesday on a five-day visit as part of his efforts to build a regional consensus and support for the historic Afghan peace process. During his stay, he briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the peace talks, and held meetings with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

Asked whether he got any indication of India's willingness to engage with the Taliban, Abdullah said,"personally, I encourage engagement of India in the peace process. I did not make the suggestion. It is for India to decide how to engage with a group or not engage with a group. I did not pursue it," he said.

The Taliban and the Afghan government are holding direct talks, aimed at ending decades of war that has killed tens of thousands of people and ravaged various parts of Afghanistan.

Abdullah said people of Afghanistan are yearning for peace and stability and they will not allow terrorism to sustain. "If somebody thinks that because of other circumstances in Afghanistan including withdrawal of the US troops, there might be a situation where one side may take advantage of it, temporarily something might happen. But that will put the will of that side to a big test if that is the calculation. Because that is a miscalculation, that will be a miscalculation. That is not in our interest," he said.

India has also been maintaining that care should be taken to ensure that any such process does not lead to any "ungoverned spaces" where terrorists and their proxies can relocate.

India has been calling upon all sections of the political spectrum in Afghanistan to work together to meet the aspirations of all people in that country including those from the minority community for a prosperous and safe future.

India has been a major stakeholder in the peace and stability of Afghanistan. It has already invested USD two billion in aid and reconstruction activities in the country.

The Afghan leader said he is taking back the message of support and commitment to the peace process from India.

"Lot of time and energy was spent to find the best way forward," he said on his talks with Indian leaders. India has been supporting a national peace and reconciliation process which is Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled.

On September 12, an Indian delegation attended the inaugural ceremony of the intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha while S Jaishankar joined it through a video conference. On whether there is a possibility of Beijing leaning on Islamabad to protect its security and connectivity interests in Afghanistan if the Taliban becomes a key influencer in Kabul,

Abdullah said his country benefits from support from different countries including China which is an important country.

COFEPOSA invoked against Swapna Suresh, Sandeep Nair

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
T'PURAM, 10 OCTOBER

Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair, the accused in the sensational Kerala gold smuggling case have been charged with Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities (COFEPOSA) act.

The order invoking COFEPOSA act on Swapna and Sandeep was issued by the COFEPOSA national advisory board after considering the contention of the Customs that the accused are posing threat to the financial security of the country

An accused charged with COFEPOSA can be kept in preventive custody for up to a year without trial. The Customs officials will hand over the warrants in this regard to the jail authorities.

Meanwhile, the Customs has found out that Swapna Suresh, key accused in gold smuggling case, has illegally taken $1,90,000 from Kerala to abroad. Swapna has misused the identity card provided by the UAE consulate to transfer the amount.

At the same time, the probe officials are also investigating whether Swapna has converted the commission amount of Life Mission Project into dollars for transferring abroad.

Earlier, Unitac MD, Santhosh Eeppan has given a testimony stating that he had converted Rs 3 .6 crore to dollars and handed over to Egyptian citizen Khalid, an official in UAE consulate for transaction related to the Life Mission project. Customs has been examining whether Swapna swindled the money from this amount.

In this connection, Sandeep Nair, the fourth accused in the gold smuggling case, has told the NIA special court in Kochi that he has been receiving death threats in the wake of the confessional statement he gave after expressing his desire to become an approver.

Meanwhile, in connection with the case, the Customs has questioned Kerala chief minister's former principal secretary M Sivasankar for a second consecutive day or Saturday.

The questioning which started at 10 am on Saturday lasted till 10 in the night. Sivasankar is directed to appear for interrogation again on Tuesday

WB trucks operators to go on 3-day strike

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY, 10 OCTOBER

The Federation of West Bengal Truck operators Association has given a call for 72 hours truck strike in the state to press their long standing demands. The Hooghly united Truck owners Welfare Association is all set up to make the 3-day-long truck strike, starting from Monday, a success.

The truck strike is expected to cause a hike in prices of essential commodities. The prices of potatoes and Onions is expected to shoot up and other grocery items will become costlier. Huge loss of perishable goods is also feared.

Mr. Prabir Chatterjee the general secretary of the Hooghly United Truck Owners Welfare Association said the truck operators had been reluctant to go on strike because of the impact this would have on the public, but they were left with no alternative.

He said: "The state government is indifferent to our long-standing demands. The entire transport business is running at a great loss, the financial condition of the lorry owners, drivers, helpers and other is in very bad shape. We want the state government should promptly come to the rescue to save the transport business in the state."

"Regular and uninterrupted transportation of essential commodities to the wholesale and retail markets keeps the prices of the essential commodities in check. It is our long standing demand to the state transport department to raise the Axle weight to 25% as per the government of India (Transport Division) notification dated 6th August 2018. The overloading of lorries from the loading point should be stopped, due to the long-drawn-out lockdown period which have caused immense loss to the transport business the road tax, fitness charges, road permits must be reduced for the time period, Truck parking zones and terminals should be set up at major highway Junctions to prevent illegal parking and accidents. The corruption in the vehicle department must be stopped. The ongoing practice of monthly payment of bribe to the police stations must be stopped,"he added.

Ganges dolphin found dead near Bulandshahar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MEERUT, 10 OCTOBER

FILE PHOTO

A Gangetic dolphin was found dead in Ganges river near Narora village of district Bulandshahar on Friday. These are highly endangered and are also the National Aquatic Animal of India .

This is a second incident of death of a dolphin within ten months period in the upper Gangetic basin here . This is concerning for the forest officials as Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced on 15 August, that conservation of Gangetic dolphins would be done on the lines of Project Tiger.

The deceased dolphin was a young female, informed NK Jaanu , chief conservator of Forest, West zone, also adding that she was two-years-old, weighed 41 Kg and was about 1.41 meter in length.

Her viscera has been sent to the lab for further examination after which the actual reason of her death would be ascertained, said the chief conservator. However, the initial examination suggests that she died of some infection, he added .

Divisional Forest officer (DFO) of Bulandshahar Ganga Prasad reached on the receiving the information of death of a dolphin in Ganges alongwith vetinary officer and forest officer. The dead dolphin was extracted out of the river for postmortem. The report said that the dolphin died of infection .

The upper Gangetic stretch is known for fresh water dolphins. It has a rich biodiversity and hence provides a favourable habitat for aquatic life particularly dolphins which are found here from Bijnor to Narora barrage.

According to the latest survey of forest department, there were 36 dolphins in this 176 km stretch of Ganges.

Prior to this incident in January, an adult male dolphin was found dead near Jora Jalalpur village of Hastinapur area in Meerut. This is second such dolphin death in ten months .

In 2009 Gangetic dolphins were declared as the National Aquatic animal of India .

Fresh water dolphins are highly endangered and found in just four river systems of the world including Ganges. They are also found in Amazon (USA), Indus(Pakistan) and Yangtze (China). They are almost extinct in China .Here in the Upper Gangetic basin they are called 'Soos' because of the whistling sounds they make. They are mammals and give birth to their calfs. These dolphins are different from Marine dolphins as they are blind by birth, have a greyish body.

These dolphins can differentiate between light and dark only and swim using sonar system. Synthetic net , pesticides used in river bank farming, poaching for its blubber, pollution in river and sand bars are some of the threats faced by the river dolphins here .

The sincere conservation efforts had resulted in declaring over a 100 km stretch between Bijnor to Narora barrages, a Ramsar site, the first in UP. Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance.

In 1971 a convention was held on conservation of wetlands and water bodies in Ramsar, Iran.

Andhra CM complains to CJI against sitting judge

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 10 OCTOBER

Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has complained to Chief Justice of India SA Bobde against a sitting judge of the Supreme Court Mr Justice NV Ramana.

In an unprecedented step he has accused the judge of the apex court of influencing the sittings of the Andhra Pradesh High Court including the roster of a few judges and sought the intervention of the Chief Justice of India to ensure that "neutrality" of the judiciary is maintained. Citing certain cases and alleging that the judgements of High Court benefited TDP, he went on to write: "The above clearly demonstrates the nexus of Shri Justice NV Ramana, TDP and a few Honourable Judges of the High Court." The chief minister has alleged the judge and his relatives are "beneficiaries of various questionable transactions of land within the area which came to be eventually notified as a location of the new capital proposed by Shri Chandrababu Naidu." Reddy also referred to former judge of Supreme Court Justice Chelameswar who had raised the issue of the proximity between Naidu and Justice Ramana.

OPTIMISTIC FUTURE

New recruits of the Jammu Kashmir Light Infantry Regiment (JKLIR) take part during the passing out parade in an army base on the outskirts of Srinagar on Saturday. 301 young men from Jammu and Kashmir were formally inducted into the JKLIR.

MOHAMAD AMIN WAR

Covid patient commits suicide

BHOPAL, 10 OCTOBER

A Covid-19 patient undergoing treatment in a government super speciality hospital at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh committed suicide by jumping from the second floor of the hospital on Friday.

This is the second incident of suicide by a corona patient at the same hospital in about a month.

There have also been two other cases of attempted suicides by corona patients at the hospital.

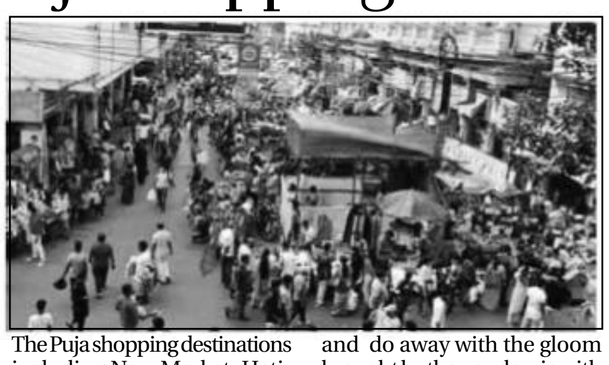
All four incidents have occurred at the state government-run Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Medical College and Hospital.

According to the hospital's dean Dr P K Kasar, the 46-year-old man was from neighbouring Katni and was undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at the hospital.

The Dean said the man jumped off from the hospital's second floor yesterday night and died within hours due to the injuries sustained in the fall. SNS

Kolkata sets aside coronavirus fear to go Puja shopping

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 10 OCTOBER



After restricting themselves to their shells for months amid the outbreak of the pandemic, the citizens of Kolkata are now setting aside the fear of the coronavirus and flocking to the city markets and malls to shop for the forthcoming Durga Puja, which is barely two weeks away.

Less than a month ago, the city markets wore a deserted look. The stall owners and hawkers in New Market, Gariahat and Hatibagan spent days longing for adequate income. However, the Puja fervour has brought the bustle back to these markets. Many market places in Kolkata are witnessing a surge in footfall with each passing day. There is hardly any distinction between the festive shopping fervour of the people of the city in the 'Covid Year' and the pre-pandemic times, except that many shoppers are sporting masks.

The Puja shopping destinations including New Market, Hatibagan and Gariahat are flooded with Puja shoppers who want to live their earlier life once more, at least during the festival.

"For the last six months, our earlier life including 'adda' with friends, shopping or dining out with family, almost became a dream," said Sneha Gupta, a shopper at New Market.

"During the upcoming Pujas, I want to relive my earlier life. Although the shopping is restricted due to budget constraint, I want to rejoice afresh and do away with the gloom brought by the pandemic with whatever I have," added the 26-year-old student of Calcutta University.

The rush for the Puja shopping has come as a blessing to the shop and stall owners along with hawkers of the city markets.

"After a long time, I earned a good amount on a single day," said an elated stall owner at New Market. "If the trend continues, it will bring us some respite from the losses that have badly hit us in the last few months," added the apparel seller.

TENDER

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL MANAGER CTU & DIRECTOR TRANSPORT U.T. CHANDIGARH.
Plot No. 701 Industrial Area, Phase- I, Chandigarh.

No. 9475/CT/CTU/2020 Dated, Chandigarh, 09/10/2020

Addendum/CORRIGENDUM

In reference to the e-tender Reference No.8028-30/CT/CTU/2020, dated, 03.09.2020 with Tender ID 2020_CHD_56664_1, 56661_1, 56656_1 uploaded on https://etenders.chd.nic.in and chdctu.gov.in for inviting tender for e-tender for Marketing Rights for Display of Advertisement (Outside and Inside) on CTU Long Route & Sub Urban Buses, for Marketing Rights for Display of Advertisement (Outside and Inside) on CTU City Buses and for supply, Installation, Marketing and Maintenance of Media Assets at ISBT-17, ISBT-43, CTU workshop No.4. Due to administrative reasons, the date of receiving of tenders is hereby extended from 12.10.2020 upto 14:00 hrs to 28.10.2020 upto 14:00 hrs and the date of opening of Technical Bid is extended from 12.10.2020 at 15:00 hrs to 29.10.2020 at 15:00 hrs.

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

WEAR MASK, WASH YOUR HANDS, WATCH YOUR DISTANCE IN BOX FORMAT

Body of priest cremated after government's assurances to family; BJP attacks Gehlot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR, 10 OCTOBER

The family of a temple priest who was burnt alive allegedly by land grabbers in Rajasthan's Karauli district refused to cremate his body on Saturday till their demands are fulfilled by the state government.

Babu Lal Vaishnav was caught by five people, who wanted to encroach on temple land, near an agriculture farm in Bukna village on Wednesday and set on fire after pouring petrol on him, according to police.

He was admitted in a critical condition to the SMS hospital in Jaipur where he died on Thursday night.

The victim's family has demanded a compensation of Rs 50 lakh, a government job for one of its members and early arrest of the accused.

Vaishnav's family members said they will not cremate his body till the state government fulfils all their demands.

The main accused in the case, identified as Kailash Meena, has been arrested, while another has been rounded up, Superintendent of Police, Karauli, Mridul Kachhawa, had said on Friday.

A case of attempt to murder was registered at Sapotra police station and it was converted into a murder case after the death of the priest, he had said.

BJP MP Kirodi Lal Meena met the aggrieved family in Bukna and sat on a 'dharna' demanding justice for them on Saturday.

"People holding responsible positions should stand with the victim's family members so that such incidents are not repeated. I am sitting on 'dharna' with his family members and local public representatives to demand justice. The Ashok Gehlot government should wake up from slumber and ensure justice," Meena said in a tweet. A three-member committee constituted by the BJP also reached the village to prepare a factual report on the incident.

"The Rajasthan government is insensitive to law and order, and justice. In this incident with the priest, the Rajasthan government assured help to the victim's family, but so far no help has been given to the victim's family," Jaipur MP Ramcharan Bohra, a member of the BJP committee, said. He said there is anger across the state. There is a demand from all corners that the culprits in this incident should get the harshest punishment and help be given to the victim's family.

Meanwhile, Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra held a meeting with CM Ashok Gehlot and discussed the law and order situation in the state, Raj Bhawan sources said. The governor discussed the law and order situation.

Our jawans are being sent in non-bullet proof trucks to get martyred and a Rs 8,400 crore aircraft is brought for the PM! Is this justice?

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI
ATTACKING THE GOVERNMENT OVER NON-PROVISION OF BULLET-PROOF VEHICLES FOR SOLDIERS

THUMBNAILS

Paramedical volunteers, previously hired to help with the Covid-19 pandemic, shout slogans as they protest against the Punjab government for discontinuing their services, in Amritsar on Saturday. ■ AFP

Grenade lobbed at Assam Rifles camp in Nagaland: Unidentified persons lobbed a grenade at an Assam Rifles transit camp in Nagaland's Dimapur district on Saturday, police said. The grenade exploded inside the camp but no one was injured, Dimapur Police PRO T Relo Aye said. The incident took place around 5 a.m. at the paramilitary force's transit camp in Purana Bazaar area, he said. The motive behind the attack is yet to be ascertained. SNS

Paswan, a man for all seasons, cremated

A sea of people could be seen, besides dignitaries led by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, at the cremation site

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, 10 OCTOBER

The mortal remains of Union-Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, a man for all seasons and one of the tallest leaders spawned by the Dalit community, were consigned to flames in Patna on Saturday with full state honours.

A sea of people could be seen, besides dignitaries led by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, at the cremation site on the banks of the Ganges in the city that has been a witness to the Lok Janshakti Party founders long journey ~from a young MLA of the socialist party in the late 1960s to having served under six prime ministers.

A large number of supporters had come to the Digha ghat from his pocket borough Hajipur, situated right across the river, which Paswan had nurtured since his Lok Sabha debut in 1977 when he won with a record margin.

He gave up the seat for his younger brother Pashupati Kumar Paras last year and chose the Rajya Sabha route for re- entering Parliament.

The sight of commoners standing chock a block, teary- eyed and eager to catch the last glimpse of their leader, unmindful of the threat posed by the Covid pandemic and reprimands of security personnel anxious to enforce social distancing, bore testimony to the popularity of the man, known as an "ajaat shatru" (one with no enemies) in the vicious politics of Bihar. Many climbed atop a steamer anchored nearby while an even larger number could be seen standing, precariously, on the decrepit embankment built along the river after they were thwarted by the administration from crowding the ghat.

Paswan's mortal remains was brought for the last rites to Janardan Ghat in the Digha locality in a massive procession from his residence in Shri Krishna Puri.

The last rites were performed by Paswan's son and political heir Chirag, who has taken a big gamble by deciding to plough a lonely furrow in the Assembly elections.

Amid deafening roars of "Ram Vilas Paswan amar rahein", Chirag, in knee-high dhoti and a white sheet around his shoulders, lit the funeral pyre. Reena Paswan, who like her husband Ram Vilas was always a perfect host, watched the ceremony from a distance.

The LJP founders other family members, who run the party affairs along with Chirag, too stood around the pyre and helped the son in completing the rituals.

Chirag collapses after lighting father Ram Vilas Paswan's pyre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, 10 OCTOBER

The burden of grief, at a juncture that might be most critical in his political career, proved too much for Lok Janshakti Party president Chirag Paswan who fell unconscious after lighting the funeral pyre of his father Ram Vilas Paswan here on Saturday.

The 37-year-old lawmaker has been a picture of bereavement ever since his father breathed last at a Delhi hospital on Thursday.

Chirag, known to be a dutiful son who even played the barber for his father during the nationwide lockdown, raised a banner of revolt against Bihar CM Nitish Kumars JD(U), announcing the stunning decision to go solo in the assembly polls, while spending most of his time beside Paswan senior's hospital bed.

He wept when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited their Delhi residence to pay his last respect. Chirag wailed inconsolably on Saturday morning when BJP MP and former minister Ram Kripal Yadav, who has known Chirag since he was a child, visited their Patna house. Yadav was also moved to tears and the two stood for some time, holding each other tightly.

At the Digha ghat on the bank of the Ganges, Chirag fainted after lighting the funeral pyre, but was saved from crashing on to the ground by his cousins who were beside him. "He is out of danger. The mental stress coupled with the dehydration brought about by standing for hours in a hot and humid weather may have taken a toll," said a source.

Four terrorists killed, M4 rifle recovered in J-K encounter

An M4 rifle

JAMMU, 10 OCTOBER,

An M4 rifle that is used by the US Army, two AK- 47 assault rifles and a pistol were recovered on Saturday by the security forces after killing four terrorists in two separate encounters in south Kashmir.

These encounters broke out in the Kulgam and Pulwama districts in the valley.

Army's spokesman based in Srinagar, Colonel Rajesh Kalia said that one M4 rifle and a pistol were recovered from the two terrorists killed in the Chingam area of the Kulgam districtin Kashmir.

Two terrorists were also eliminated in a brief encounter in the Dadoora area of Pulwama where two AK-47 rifles were recovered, said the police.

Identity of the four terrorists was yet to be established. Incriminating material was also recovered from the killed terrorists.

Meanwhile, Pakistani troops indulged in intense shelling of mortars in the civilian areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Mankote Sector of the Poonch district.

The Indian Army retaliated befittingly, said Jammu based Army's spokesman, Lt. Colonel Devender Anand. SNS

NAM will lose relevance if bilateral issues are allowed at its platform: India

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

In a veiled reference to Pakistan, India has warned that the Non-Aligned Movement NAM) would become irrelevant if member nations were allowed to raise bilateral grievances at its forum.

"If we take up issues that divide rather than unite us, reducing our Movement to a platform for venting bilateral grievances or for embarrassing fellow members, we will soon become a weak and irrelevant entity, with no say at all in global decision making," minister of state for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said at a NAM meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly meet. His remarks came after Pakistan foreign minister raised the Kashmir issue.

The Indian minister said the NAM never was and could never be a platform for pursuits that undermine the territorial integrity of a State by another State. The grouping, he said, had the potential to take the lead in addressing the primary issues of the current times that demand global cooperation.

Muraleedharan said that when the NAM members stood together and spoke in one voice, for instance in the Movement's steadfast commitment to the cause of Palestine, "we can and do have a decisive influence on global outcomes - we can be a force for good."

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded "us of our interconnectedness, and dependence on each other," he said.

"We cannot fight this adversary alone. It is the people of our countries that stand to be hardest hit by this pandemic and its consequences. Just as this disease does not respect borders, our fight against it must be coordinated to be effective," the minister added. Muraleedharan said unfortunately the pandemic was not the only pressing challenge of the current times. "Terrorism and their enablers continue to spread their tentacles unabated. Misinformation and fake news are wrecking havoc on social cohesion and collective security", he said.

"Climate change has become an existential threat, especially to the most vulnerable SIDS (Small Island Developing States) countries. Humanitarian emergencies are straining capacities. Cyber security threats and the uneven impact of frontier technologies are causing turbulence.Development concerns remain paramount for the vast majority of the world's population, he said.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance made in his recent address to the 75th session of the UN General Assembly that India's immense vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all humanity in fighting the crisis, Muraleedharan said this was a manifestation of the approach that will guide India as it takes up its responsibilities as non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2021-22 and Presidency of the G20 in 2022.

India would deploy its rich developmental experience for the peace and welfare of humanity, treating the world as one family, he said.

WE, THE WOMEN OF INDIA

Political activists hold placards and a cut-out of PM Narendra Modi during a protest to condemn the Hathras incident, on the eve of International Day of the Girl Child in Mumbai on Saturday. ■ AFP

Amid Covid-19, Siliguri gets into Puja mood

PARAG BISWAS
SILIGURI, 10 OCTOBER

A festival, a wedding, a demonstration, a procession-Siliguri is never at rest.

Vibrant with activities involving people of all strata and backgrounds, rich and poor, young and old, professionals and students, the city plays host not only to civil and religious or sports festivals but also to the fancies of the clubs, affluent individuals and various beliefs enacted by its 'street children.'

The spirit of festivities transcends all physical and mental divides and restrictions in Siliguri.

Durga Puja, which is going to be held this year under the restrictions set by the government for the puja organizers and the pandal hoppers due to the Covid-19 pandemic, may turn out be a perfect example of this.

The organizers of almost all major puja committees in Siliguri may have reduced their budget by three to six times on an average because of the pandemic and the subsequent economic slowdown, but contrary to expectations of health and medical experts as well as the local administrators, the puja celebrations in the town his year is most unlikely to be a low-key affair.

If the spike in online shopping and the shopping spree around the shops, stores and shopping arcades in the town during the past fortnight is any indication of the things to come, then the puja celebrations this year may be a boisterous carnival-like extravaganza as it usually is.

With the entire state entering the puja-mode and festive-season shopping going on in full swing, the state is already witnessing a steady spike in Covid-19 numbers.

The positivity rate - the proportion of people testing positive to those tested - has shot up from around 6.6 per cent on September 5 to around 8.3 per cent on October 5 in the state.

The positivity rate - the proportion of people testing positive to those tested - has shot up from around 6.6 per cent on September 5 to around 8.3 per cent on October 5 in the state.

Experts have already cautioned that the upcoming festivals may further add to the rising number of Covid-19 cases in north Bengal, if proper precautions are not taken, especially in the months of October and November.

But despite all guidelines and warnings, people are out on the streets in large numbers and the markets are getting hugely crowded.

The members of puja committees are also gathering where pandals are coming up, and as the case-fatality rate in India is declining steadily, most of the people on the streets as well as many of the puja organizers are not following the Covid-19 related standard operating procedures properly, raising fears of a sharp spike in the number of covid cases after the pujas.

"If the shopping does not cause the fall, the jostling through a sea of crowd at the shops and stores of Siliguri will. It's Durga Puja time again and people are out with their shopping bags to buy goodies for the family.

But it is dangerous to see that almost 40 percent of them are not wearing masks properly and almost none of them are maintaining any kind of physical distance especially in the shops and stores of the over-crowded shopping malls.

The laborers erecting the puja pandals are not even wearing masks; leave alone the question of sanitizing themselves or maintaining physical distance.

The town seems to be gearing up for a huge festivity with very little regard for Covid 19 restrictions," said Pranab Narayan Roy Chowdhury, a senior resident of Ashrampara, whose office is situated bang next to a mall on the Sevoke Road.

Paromita Sarkar, who agreed with Mr Chowdhury, expressed serious doubts about the abilities of the authorities and the puja organizers to ensure that the Covid 19 SOPs are strictly maintained during the pujas.

"The failure of the authorities to impose the Covid 19 restrictions at the crowded marketplaces in Siliguri clearly indicates that when people come out in large numbers on the streets of Siliguri during the pujas and flock the pandals in the evening, it would be almost impossible for the police and the civic authorities to tackle the situation.

The puja organizers will have to play a major role in ensuring that the Covid restrictions are maintained in their puja premises.

But all said and done, at the end of the day it is the responsibility of pandal hoppers to ensure that we do not witness an unprecedented spike in covid cases after the festival is over," she said.

Hyderabad rape victim's kin seeks stay on release of Ram Gopal Verma's *Disha Encounter*

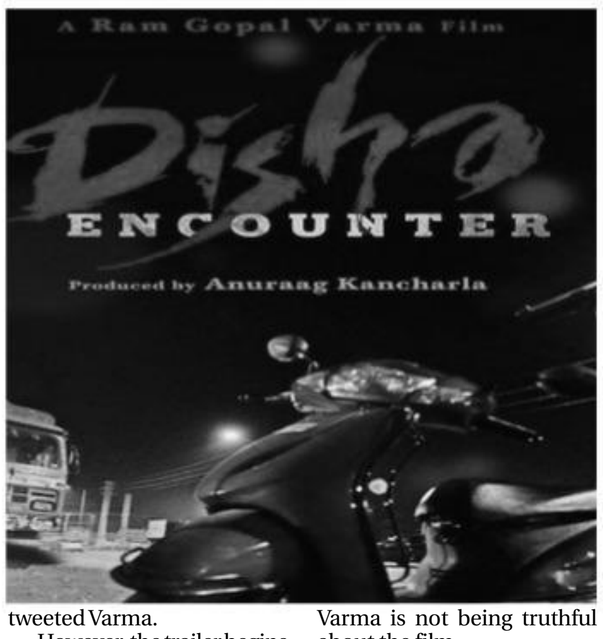
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 10 OCTOBER

The family of the young veterinarian who was raped and killed in the outskirts of Hyderabad last year has moved Telangana High Court to stop the release of an upcoming film by Ram Gopal Varma titled *Disha Encounter*.

Disha was the name used by Cyberabad police for the young victim to shield her identity. However, Varma known for his penchant for picking up sensational real life incidents and turning them into films, has now denied that the film was based on the horrific incident which took place on 26 November.

The four men accused of rape were also killed in a police encounter on 6 December.

"With regard to speculations on *Disha Encounter* film I once again clarify it's a fictional story based on many cases from Nirbhaya rape onwards,"



tweeted Varma.

However, the trailer begins with "On November 26, 2019 a gang of 4 raped, killed and burned a young woman," which clearly indicates that Varma is not being truthful about the film.

Moreover, the trailer is a frame by frame cinematic depiction of the actual tragedy and most of the viewers of the trailer left comments that it was "scary" to watch and how shocking it would be for the grief stricken family members as well as that the moviemaker should not be allowed to make money out of a horrific incident.

The victim's father too said that the family was yet to heal and it won't be right to make a movie out of the tragedy. He also said the trailer was garnering hostile comments against them. "The film has been made without consulting us," said the father demanding that the film should be banned. The court has disposed his petition as it was premature. He also said they have been asked to approach the Central Censor Board instead.

The film is slated for release on 26 November. Earlier another film by Varma on an incident of honour killing was issued a stay by a lower court after the victim's family sought a ban.

Meanwhile, another Telugu actor Vijay Deverakonda of "Arjun Reddy" fame has walked into a controversy after speaking against universal franchise as well as dictatorship. Appearing in a film show he was asked whether he will enter politics like many of his predecessors in South Indian cinema.

"I don't think everybody should be allowed to vote," he said. He also went on to ask why should money or cheap liquor swing the vote.

"I don't even think the rich people should vote. I think the middle-class who have the most at stake, people who are educated and won't get swung by little money," said the actor.

He then went to say that he does not want to stand in an election where people get swayed by money and liquor and added: "I would like to be a dictator. That's the way you can make change. Just shut up I am having good intentions. You don't know what is good for you. Just stick to this and 5-10 years down the line this is going to pay off," he said.

Ishapore Rifle Factory to produce India's first indigenous long range sniper

SOUMYADIP MULLICK
KOLKATA, 10 OCTOBER

With eyes on the scope and gun barrel protruding through gunny sacks stuffed near a dismantled window, a sniper waits for the right moment to take the one precision shot that will eliminate the target. The Ishapore Rifle Factory, in the outskirts of Kolkata, is expecting to achieve commercial production of India's first indigenous long-range 8.6x70mm calibre sniper rifle, in the next few months.

Vasily Grigoryevich Zaitsev, a Soviet sniper, is said to have shot about 225 enemy soldiers in the Battle of Stalingrad against Nazi forces, using a 7.62x52mm Mosin-Nagant bolt action rifle. His tactical sniping techniques such as 'Sixes', are still in place during urban warfare.

The ability to remain elusive and perform precision strikes makes snipers prized military assets. The Indian Army that battles in all sorts

of terrain and engages in multifarious missions require sniper rifles eliminating targets at the furthest distance with precision and without collateral damage.

The Ishapore Rifle Factory under the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) is developing a lethal long range sniper rifle of 8.6x70mm calibre with 1500m range for the Army. The prototype was launched during the recent 'Atmanirbhar Week". Last year, the Army had procured .338 Lapua Magnum Super TGT sniper rifles from the Italian gun-maker, Beretta. However, presently it wants to cut down on import of such rifles.

"The Indian Army chose the 8.6x70mm calibre sniper rifle as an import substitute as part of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat.' The Ishapore factory began the development of the long range precision rifle. Experienced designers did the complex engineering using computer aided design and engineering software.

A rifle so accurate can be manufactured only on the state-of-art CNC machines, superior heat treatment and surface coating technology" said Gagan Chaturvedi, deputy DG, OFB communications division.

A sniper takes into consideration several factors such as the wind and height, depending on the terrain, to take a shot. The official said, "The rifle has a range of 1500m and features a high strength aluminium alloy frame making the weapon lighter and durable." "The product is expected to achieve commercial production in another five to six months" the official pointed out.

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Campaign games

By refusing to participate in a virtual debate with Democratic rival Joe Biden, a change forced upon organisers by his own Covid affliction, President Donald Trump has confirmed that his understanding of the customary verbal joust involves boorish interventions and shouting down both his rival and the moderator, rather than an interplay of contrasting ideas on governance to help voters come to a decision. Mr Trump while saying he would not join such a debate on October 15 made his reason quite clear ~ his fear that he would be stopped by the moderator if he transgressed debating rules as he often did at the first debate in Cleveland. "You sit behind a computer and do a debate ~ it's ridiculous, and then they cut you off whenever they want," Mr Trump has said. Many of those who watched the first debate between the two contenders had wished that the moderator ~ from the Trump-friendly Fox News channel ~ would switch the President's microphone off on at least some of the occasions he tried to shout down his rival. The possibility that this could be far more easily accomplished during a virtual debate appears to have thrown the President off his game. That a debate can be conducted while maintaining essential courtesies, even during these politically supercharged times, was shown by the two Vice-Presidential candidates, Mike Pence and Kamala Harris, who assailed each other's positions but did so with a degree of decorum. But Mr Trump's rumbustiousness leaves no space for niceties and it is unlikely that being afflicted by the virus soon after he had mocked his rival for wearing a mask would temper his rhetoric.

While his supporters have sought to explain the President's increasingly erratic behaviour on the cocktail of drugs he is consuming, opinion polls ~ even though they have known to be wrong ~ suggest the race is fast slipping out of his hands. The latest poll shows that Mr Biden has widened his lead to 10 percentage points, with 51 per cent of Americans saying they will vote for him and only 41 per cent for the President. The poll showed that 57 per cent were dissatisfied with Mr Trump's handling of the virus epidemic and ~ startlingly ~ only 34 per cent believed he had not lied about the virus. The fact that many voters may have already made up their minds was suggested by the finding that 67 per cent were opposed to in-person campaign rallies. While nine out of 10 registered Democrats believed Mr Trump would not have been infected had he taken the virus seriously, what ought to worry the President is the finding that half of registered Republicans believed the same thing. Mr Trump who has called his affliction "a blessing from God" is preparing to hit the campaign trail over the weekend saying he does not believe he is still infected. Supporters who he expects will turn out to greet him might wish though that he carries a Covid-negative certificate.

Game time

A lot more of the Indian Premier League is yet to be played and if there have been dark mutterings about "corrupt approaches" and instant assurances of an investigation to get to the bottom of the matter, quite apart from pregnant-with-meaning expert opinions on how the later part of the competition is going to take it out of the assorted combatants in its expensive buy claustrophobic bio-secure bubble, you cannot really fault the organisers of the tournament for not trying to hold the sunny side up. They have to sell it. One part of the orchestrated feel-good factor is that the bubble has not been allowed to be pricked, which implies struggles within the isolated interior have been successfully put a lid on. There is not a word any more on from the United Arab Emirates on the comparative stringency enforced in the domains of the different hosts bound by their own quarantine rules, though it fuelled indignant, wondering-aloud journalistic outpourings around the time the teams had fetched up there though the action had yet to begin. If the mental well-being of cricketers herded into mandatory isolation is by now a popular area of curiosity and discussion elsewhere in the world, one or two admonitions from Virat Kohli could be seen to have had a very telling impact on those potentially recalcitrant ones who might, with uncalculated risk-taking, have endangered the IPL's smooth progress to its bountiful conclusion. "We're here to play the game and that's that," said the Royal Challengers Bangalore captain, aware that his global recognisability would be a dyke against intra-IPL feuding. If you wondered how a player argued against a peer's natural instinct for celebrating life as he knew it, you, of course, needed to be told that the captain as a rebel, looked askance at by the Establishment was too old a story to be repeated. It did the stand-out man, alone in his glory, no good, let alone the little matter of his bills being paid. "Let-the-backroom-boys-scoop-it-in-and-ivvy-it-up" is the mantra of the new age. And the IPL as a business platform was at it all right, if you believed what it was saying to be true. Midway through the week came a bit of the sound of official drum-beating to the effect that the tournament, once again, was proving a financial hit. More than 35 deals were said to have been clinched "across the franchises," resulting in the doubling of the takings over the previous season's venture. That equalled the more surprising nuggets out of Ripley's as the show had got going in a gloom-and-doom setting when even breaking even seemed to have been given up on, what with Covid-19 playing havoc here, there and everywhere. They had had to ship the tournament to West Asia as the coronavirus' India-specific narrative was as grim as anything by the Brothers Grimm. Industry sources are sceptical but iterated and reiterated, a certain willing suspension of disbelief among the IPL's adherents can render the truth irrelevant. That is the game.

Reforming the UN

The context in which the UN was born in 1945 has changed. The engine of growth has shifted to the Asia-Pacific. While China finds a place at the high table India is denied this privilege in spite of its impressive GDP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his virtual address to the United Nations on its 75th anniversary iterated the demand for the reform of the UN system ~ in its responses, in its processes and its very character. The United Nations was born in the aftermath of World War II as a multilateral body of sovereign countries to provide collective security. The Charter of the UN clearly enshrines its laudable objective. It has created several agencies for the promotion of world peace and common development.

The most important of its outfits is the Security Council consisting of the five permanent members ~ the USA, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, France and China, which reflected the prevalent global distribution of power. India played a very critical role in communist China becoming a member of the Security Council. Although a nascent democracy, India also played a significant role in the peaceful settlement of the Indochina imbroglio and also in the Korean Peninsula within the framework of the United Nations, when the cold war was at its peak. Over the years since its birth the UN and its affiliated agencies have played positive roles in preventing and mitigating conflicts, in fighting the menace of AIDS and in eradication of poverty despite its being dominated by big powers.

In recent times, however, there is erosion of its credibility and efficacy which were highlighted by Prime Minister Modi in his address. He bemoaned that 'the original mission of the UN remains incomplete.". It has miserably failed in preventing conflict and civil strife in many parts of the world particularly in the continent of Africa resulting in the suffering of innocent civilians including children and women.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is dominated by China and its role in the management of Covid-19 has raised serious concerns. Similarly, China has defied the ruling of the International Arbitral Tribunal with regards to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the South China Sea issue.

The context in which the UN was born in 1945 has changed. The geo-economics and geo-politics have now shifted from the Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific. The engine of growth has now shifted to the Asia-Pacific. While China is one such country which finds a place at the high table, being a member of P-5, India is denied this privilege in spite of its impressive GDP which has been halted recently due to Covid-19 and other structural impediments. According to IMF report of October 2019, with its $2.94 trillion economy India has become the fifth largest in the world overtaking the United Kingdom and France ~ two members of the Security Council. According to a study of HSBC some time back, India is likely to become the third largest economy in next ten years overtaking Japan and Germany. It is an anachronism that the composition of the Security Council does not reflect the changing economic heft of India. Besides being a nuclear power and its economic prowess, India's strategic profile has been enhanced in the recent past. India is now an important member of the G-20 and is going to take over the Presidency in 2022. India is now the member of both the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Wassenaar Agreement. In the security parameter and in terms of defence capability, India has attained comparable standing with the P-5, when it acquired the Nuclear Triad capability. In August 2016, India commissioned INS Arihant, its first nuclear powered indigenously built submarine.

RUP NARAYAN DAS

The writer is a senior fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi

With all these capabilities, India continues to be a peace-loving, democratic country always willing to extend a helping hand to other countries in the neighborhood and elsewhere. During the pandemic, it reached out to all the countries, when the country itself was fighting the virus. It augurs well, however, that most developed countries including all the members of the Security Council - the USA, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and France ~ except China have supported India's bid for the Security Council. China's stance has always been evasive and non-committal. It had earlier even created hurdles at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to give waiver to India for the Indo-US nuclear deal. It was only at the behest of USA that China agreed for the waiver.

The growth engine of the economy has shifted. It is time that the Security Council reflects the aspirations of emerging economies like India, Brazil and South Africa. Reform of the UN is urgent. Aspiring countries need to reach a consensus. While the process of globalisation after the end of the cold war has bestowed opportunities to this apex body to address global challenges, rise of extreme nationalism in many parts of the world including developed countries like the US and UK and the process of deglobalisation have put the UN system to greater stress and strain. When the US declared that it would cut America's contribution to the UN by 40 per cent, it created quite a stir not only at the UN headquarter, but also the world over.

UN needs to address the conflict situations in the world in terms of both prevention and mitigation of conflict. There are also common problems like climate change in which UN needs to play a proactive role. The UN in tandem with the Inter-Parliamentary Union can play a constructive role in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change and removal of poverty. Terrorism is yet another burning issue, which UN must address on an urgent basis.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is yet another set of challenges before the United Nations. There are altogether 17 SDGs. Although these goals are primarily to be achieved by the countries, the UN has a certain role to play in goal 13 relating to climate change. India and other developing countries support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) to protect the interests of the developing countries.

It may be mentioned that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of Third International Conference on Financing for Development (13-16 July 2015) which was adopted by the UN General Assembly stipulated that developed industrialized countries ought to provide 0.7 of their GDP to the developing and underdeveloped countries as Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). But today only a handful of countries with the exception of UK are honoring this commitment. The contribution of larger countries like the USA, France and Germany are well below the 0.7 per cent goal.

In the Paris Agreement, which also relates to SDGs, there is a commitment by the developed countries to provide $100 billion per annum to meet their index. The developed countries both in terms of development assistance, as part of SDGs as well as the Paris Agreement, are very far from fulfilling their obligations. India's proactive initiative of International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure will help realize some of the laudable objectives of SDG. India's membership of the UN Security Council is long overdue and the world community should help realize it for the collective interest of the world at large.

A MEMBER OF THE ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

Great miracles one after another

In the past 71 years, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China has gone from being poor and weak to being independent and prosperous, and achieved a tremendous transformation from standing up, growing rich to becoming strong, which created great miracles one after another in the history of human development.Since the beginning of this year, facing the Covid-19 outbreak that caught us all by surprise, the Central Committee of the CPC with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, united and led the whole nation in heart-stirring combat against the epidemic, underwent an extremely hard and bitter historical examination, made great efforts to achieve the major strategic achievements in the fight against the epidemic, creating another eastern miracle in the history of humans combating diseases. The great combat and fighting spirit against the epidemic are a surging embodiment of China's power, a highlight of the advantages of China's system, and a vivid invocation of China's spirit. It once again shows the world that in the past 71 years, under the leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people have composed a magnificent "song of struggle" and have walked a glorious way forward. Over the past 71 years, China's economic capacity and comprehensive national strength have greatly increased. The economic aggregate has increased from more than 60 billion renminbi (RMB) at the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China to nearly 100 trillion RMB in

THE NATION www.nationmultimedia.com

2019. China is now the world's second largest economy, the world's largest industrial producer, the largest trader, with the largest foreign exchange reserve, and the second largest foreign capital inflow. At present, China's economy continues to improve and is expected to become the only major economy to achieve positive growth this year, continuously injecting confidence and impetus into global economic development.Over the past 71 years, living standards of the Chinese people have greatly improved. Chinese average life expectancy has increased from 35 to 77 years. Reform and opening up have lifted more than 750 million people out of poverty. The nine-year compulsory education coverage rate has reached 94.2 per cent. Medical insurance covers more than 1.3 billion people, and basic endowment insurance covers more than 960 million people. The total treatment costs of Covid-19 patients are borne by the Chinese government. At present, we are standing at the historical intersection of the Two Centenary Goals. We are working together to overcome difficulties, resolutely ensure the successful completion of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and completely eliminate absolute poverty, a beautiful ideal that the Chinese nation has longed to make a reality for thousands of years.

IN MEMORIAM

BANERJI MALAYA — Wife of late Amar Nath Banerji, Solicitor, High Court, Calcutta and only daughter of late Chittaranjan Chatterjee, ex-Mayor of Kolkata, in loving memory of our beloved mother of 'Indralaya', Gangatikuri, Burdwan, who left us this day in 1986. — Prince and Twarita.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editor@thestatesman.com

Vital to build naval power

SIR, I refer to your editorial 'Troubled strait'. The sabre rattling by China about the Taiwan Straits is not very different from its views on Arunachal Pradesh or for that matter in the recent clash on the Ladakh front. China has the expertise to generate brand new "ancient historical maps" to stake its claims. It often does this with Arunachal Pradesh, calling it South Tibet.

With China ramping up its actions in the Taiwan Straits, it is time for India to focus on the Nicobar group of islands. India as the largest and most dominant country in the Indian Ocean Region must ensure that it has a commanding lead in both air and sea lines of communication. Towards this end it must secure and expand its base in the strategically located Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

China is weaving a web of alliances through its many multilateral and BRI-Maritime and Digital silk route projects. The $10 billion China-Myanmar Economic Corridor will give China access to the Indian Ocean through Myanmar's Bay of Bengal port at Kyaukphyu. These ports are the key to bypass the Malacca Straits, a choke point for China. The Indian Ocean is emerging as China's next major option and it is well known that the Indian Ocean forms one of the world's most important maritime routes and is the global system's centre of gravity.

India needs to build its naval power urgently with short gestation periods to complete projects. According to a recent statement by a PLA spokesperson, China plans to downsize its army by half, and instead boost its navy and air force with a purpose to transform into a modern force. Chinese muscle-flexing has made India forge closer maritime ties with USA, Japan and Australia in the Quad.

India should take a calculated view of developing and reinforcing its naval power as its own economic and transit rights through the Indian Ocean and seas will be challenged. India has limited time and options to take the right steps in the larger interests of its security and safety.

Yours, etc., HN Ramakrishna
Bengaluru, 7 October.

NOTEWORTHY DUEL

SIR, Unlike the Presidential debate, which was a vicious exchange of abuse, the duel of words between Democratic vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris and her Republican counterpart Vice President Mike Pence was noteworthy because of its ordinariness. Ms Harris and Mr Pence differed on climate, policing, racism and health care. Both signalled that their parties were ready for hardball politics. But the core of the debate was Covid-19 and it was here Ms Harris drew blood, helped by the continuing spread of the pandemic and a viral outbreak in the White House that has included the President. The pandemic and the recognition that her running mate Joe Biden is what matters in a poll where middle-of-the-road Whites are the swing vote have kept Ms Harris in the shadows. She assists Mr Biden by representing the spirit of America's future, a successful female politician, representative of two ethnic minorities and connected to the Silicon Valley. No wonder after the debate Mr Trump called Ms Harris a "Communist". The US election remains centred around Mr Trump and that, more than anything else, is why Mr Biden continues to pull ahead in the polls.

Yours, etc., Shovanlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 9 October.

WITCH HUNT

SIR, Apropos the report 'Rhea Chakraborty gets bail, leaves jail after 28 days' (October 8), it is ap-parent that one family feels relieved while the other falsely feels devastated. Though Rhea's brother continues to be in custody, her release on bail ostensibly proves the futility of the charges of murder/abetment/money laundering brought against her by the dead actor's family.

In fact, it is being said that the dead actor's family has done more harm to him, by facilitating the exposure of his drug habits. Every now and then, the electronic media is showing visuals of Sushant Singh Rajput jumping up and down, along with narratives of his substance abuse.

Some of the agenda-driven channels had earlier even gone on a witch-hunt and almost declared Rhea as a confirmed convict. The ED and NCB failed to unearth any wrong-doings by he accused; the AIIMS forensic team ruled out the possibility of murder. The unfolding events in the case have made the accusing family members desperate; they have now asked for the constitution of a fresh forensic team. The CBI should complete its investigation and follow the rule of law.

Yours, etc., Ashok Kumar Ghosh,
Kolkata, 8 October.

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It's time to invest in people

ANDREW SHENG

iStock

Everything is happening so fast that we feel as if the future is being compressed into the present at frightening speed. Conservatives hark back to the golden age of stability and gradual change. Liberals hate the current inequalities but cannot agree on how to change things. But if technology is moving at the pace of Moore's Law of exponential growth, then knowledge and complexity are expanding too fast for most of us to comprehend and decide how to cope with an unknown future.

Sociologist Mauro Guillen at the Wharton School has projected to 2030: How today's Biggest Trends will collide and Reshape the Future of Everything. All the big trends, macro and micro, will shape the future. The biggest trends are demographic, how rich countries are aging, poor ones are growing, but these numbers will push migration that create border wars. At the same time, women will grow richer, and the Asian middle class will edge out the European and American middle class. Climate change will threaten cities through rising seas, water and food shortages. Technology will be the new tool to solve problems, but job disruption is a major political threat. We may no longer need to own anything, but simply subscribe to or rent cars, houses and smart gadgets, simply to keep up with technology. Money will shift to digital currencies and finance will be very different with zero interest rates.

These trends are well known. In 2017, the US National Intelligence Council Global Trends: Paradox of Progress (to 2035) and EU's Global Trends to 2035, conducted thoughtful reviews of the future seen from their perspectives. Macro-trends that converge at unprecedented pace will make governing and cooperation harder, fundamentally altering the global landscape. Both studies recognize that conflict risks will grow, because the world is increasingly fractured between aging and shrinking rich, and growing young, poor and unemployed, packed into over-crowded cities that are ready to explode.

The US study surmises that the 2035 world will splinter into national "islands", regional "orbits", and sub-state and trans-national "communities" that will interact to make global and national governance harder. Interestingly, it predicted that "the global pandemic of 2023 dramatically reduced global travel in an effort to contain the spread of the disease, contributing to the slowing of global trade and decreased productivity." They foresaw the pandemic, except it happened three years earlier, and they bungled its management.

In contrast, the EU study focused on four possible scenarios: (1) sick men of Europe: unstable Europe in stable world; (2) Cold War: stable Europe in stable world; (3) Hollow foundations: unstable Europe in unstable world; and (4) Europe as Global Power: stable Europe in unstable world. Europe knows it has to get its act together.

What has the Covid pandemic taught us so far?

First, the pandemic was mismanaged globally, with UBRIC epicenters, namely, US, Brazil, Russia, India and Colombia, having highest infections and mortality. Europe and Africa are still adjusting and East Asia, being the first to be hit, was the first to control and economically recover. Coronavirus has its own timetable and if its spread is not properly controlled, the economy will be lower for longer.

Second, the global system is now more complex and harder to govern. If a 3x3x3 Rubik's Cube game has 43 quintillion (10 to power of 19) possible permutations, we realize that seven or more key players interacting with each other at "islands" national, regional "orbits" and transnational "communities" levels means that everything is possible, which is exactly why we are in the current mess.

We have sick men running sick economies in a pandemic that is out of control. Both leaders and economies are surviving on steroids. No one can think long-term. All are reacting short-term rather than dealing with the important long-term consequences.

With top leaders and their inner circle infected, new factors emerge every day that change the direction of the game profoundly. Covid has turbo-charged Future Fast Forward, hastened existing trends, pushing online shift faster, as well as killing off dying or obsolete industries.

Basically, hardware can be obsolete and expendable, but people are dying, which is why we need to teach them to become more resilient and adaptable to rising risks and threats.

In short, invest in people, their health, education and re-skilling them to address technological, jobs, military and natural threats. Be smart and we will survive and thrive. Dumb us down and die.

Two important studies show how investing in hardware is less effective than investing in people. Jorda, Schularick and Taylor (2017) discovered that between 1870 and 2015, risky real returns on equity and real estate averaged 7 per cent per year, whereas safe returns averaged 1-3 per cent per year, and these have been declining with lower productivity. What financialisation has done is to distort the rate of return, favouring the rich and actually slowing down productivity and the growth rate.

The World Bank study on 139 countries since 1950 showed that the average rate of return on education is 9-10 per cent per year, with private returns on low-income primary education as high as 25 per cent. Simply put, the best investment in current volatile times is to invest in our people. The world is not facing a trade war, it faces a talent war. Because East Asia has invested more in last four decades in its young, teaching them to act cooperatively rather than with narcissistic individualism, the region has been able to handle the pandemic better than other regions and catch up in technology and industries. It's not about democracy or freedom, but about inclusive education in common sense.

If people and planet are recognized as one, then the young will learn how to take care of other people and contribute to our common home, the planet, as Pope Francis emphasized in his Encyclical, Laudato Si. Politics and morality are people issues.

Future threats and opportunities are coming at us fast and furious. Future Fast Forward is not about denial and who is to blame. Throughout the ages, humanity has survived calamities because the community taught the young common sense survival skills. That is the true mission for surviving and thriving beyond this pandemic.

The writer is a former central banker and financial regulator. The views are entirely his own.
Special to ANN.

NOW AND AGAIN

A dream fulfilled

SUSHMA SAKSENA

I belong to the older generation. Born in the 1960s, I studied in Government schools at the various places where my father was posted. Frankly, I admire today's girls who can choose a career of their liking; girls of my generation were educated to be married off after graduating from college. In my case, a suitable boy was found for me when I was in B.Sc. Part I, and I completed my graduation after marriage.

Cut to twenty years later. We were in Meerut, my son had just left for college and my daughter was in High School. We stayed right opposite Meerut University; in fact, we took our morning walk in the beautiful university campus. Probably aware of my unfulfilled urge for completing my studies, my husband used to point out the Home Science department to me, referring to it as 'your Department.'

One day in June, he suggested that I should enrol for a M.Sc. degree! I was flabbergasted; I was unsure of my capabilities, having left academics long ago. However, the idea of resuming my interrupted studies appealed to something deep inside me; there were many things that I had wanted to learn. In fact, I had taken admission in M.Sc. just after my marriage but marital responsibilities had come between me and my academic career.

One day, timidly, I asked an acquaintance how I could join the University. I was told that I would have to get special permission because it was 22 years since I had graduated. The Head of the Department was openly sceptical about my capabilities; she tried to dissuade me from studying my favourite subject, nutrition, asking me to enrol in some easier branch. I was also told that to get admission, I would have to pass an entrance examination. My husband volunteered to get me admitted from the Vice-Chancellor's quota, but I wanted no special favours for myself.

Luckily, the permission to appear at the entrance examination came through but, unluckily, I broke my leg a week before the examination. But, probably, my forced immobility gave me adequate time to study and I passed the entrance test with flying colours.

I was chary of studying at the University with girls my children's age. I could visualise girls standing up and saying: "Good Morning, Ma'am" as I entered my class. Exactly what I had anticipated happened; I had a hard time convincing the class that I was a fellow student. Afterwards, I had to try really hard to fit in. I even dissuaded my husband from dropping me at the University on his way to office; I would drive down to the University in our 1984 Maruti. But slowly, I became a part of the student crowd; as a bonus, I felt young once again and I could understand my children's psyche better.

There were many other unintended benefits. I could be a companion to my daughter when she studied for her Board examinations. Each of us inspired the other, and we both passed at the top of our respective classes. I went on to do a Doctorate in nutrition and had a late-blooming career as a nutritionist in some leading hospitals.

I am lucky that I got a chance to do what I had wanted to do all along. I could also realise my father's ambition; he had always felt guilty for marrying me off early and preventing me from realising my full potential. Looking back, I conclude that there is no age for following your dreams. You may think that opportunity has passed you by, but look again; opportunity may come back to you on another day, in another form.

POLITICAL DIARY | KALYANI SHANKAR

Battle lines drawn in Tamil Nadu

IANS

The election bugle has been sounded in Tamil Nadu with the ruling AIADMK declaring its incumbent chief minister Edapaddi K Palaniswamy as its chief ministerial candidate on Wednesday. Elections to the state Assembly are due early next year.

The leadership tussle between Palaniswami (EPS) and deputy chief minister O. Pannerselvam (OPS) over the past three years ended on Wednesday. OPS announced the name of Palaniswamy as the chief ministerial candidate after a five-hour-long tumultous meeting on October 7. Significantly, the party adopted a resolution to work unitedly "like brothers" to retain power for the third time. Palaniswami, who is the joint coordinator of the party, announced the formation of an eleven-member steering committee, which has been the consistent demand of OPS. He has packed this committee with five of his loyalists.

Before the decision, the party had held an executive meeting where OPS argued that he should be the party's CM candidate as former chief minister J. Jayalalitha had chosen him, while her close aide VK Sasikala had picked EPS after Jayalalitha's demise. Sasikala is currently imprisoned in Bangalore jail on corruption charges and will finish the four year sentence next February. Palaniswami realized it was best to bury the hatchet and he joined hands with Panneerselvam, who was then appointed his deputy chief minister in August 2017. Sasikala and her nephew TTV Dhinakaran were ousted from the AIADMK.

EPS argued in the meeting that he had served well as Chief Minister since 2017 and had even handled the pandemic well, while ruling successfully for its entire term.

OPS had been insisting on his condition for a steering committee, a key demand made by him when his party merged with the AIADMK in August 2017. The main objective of this committee was to guide the party and decide how to face the elections.

The opposition DMK has been watching the divide in the AIADMK as it has a clear chief ministerial candidate in party chief MK Stalin. The AIADMK's announcement of its chief ministerial candidate has brought clarity and so now it will be Stalin versus EPS.

This is the first time Tamil Nadu is going to the polls without the stalwarts – AIADMK's Jayalalithaa and DMK's M Karunanidhi. The 2021 elections will truly determine the fate of Stalin and EPS. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the AIADMK in alliance with the BJP lost miserably while the DMK front swept the polls winning 37 of 38 seats.

It was not a surprise that AIADMK backed EPS with most of the ministers and legislators favouring him. First of all a clear decision on leadership strengthens his hands. There were rumours of a split in the party and fears that it would end up in a a fight between Gounders (EPS) and Thevars (OPS) - two influential sub-castes.

Secondly, even if Sasikala comes back and regains her position as party general secretary, EPS will remain the CM candidate.

Thirdly, to the credit of the EPS and OPS, they have managed to hold on to power since 2017. EPS won over many in the party and maintained good relations with the Centre. He weathered many storms like the Jallikattu and Neet agitations and the outbreak of Covid.

Fourthly, the DMK rank and file as well as the alliance parties have accepted Stalin as the chief ministerial candidate for the 2021 assembly polls.

What is the need for the announcement of a chief ministerial candidate for the AIADMK? Earlier its founder MGR was the undisputed leader and later Jayalalithaa had a complete grip over the party. There was no need to announce a chief ministerial candidate. Unfortunately, Jaya did not designate a successor.

Fifthly, EPS has managed to maintain a good relationship with the BJP, both in the state and at the Centre. The BJP is trying to occupy some political space riding piggyback on the AIADMK. But it remains to be seen how the alliance, which is likely to continue, will harm the AIADMK. In 2019, the loss of minority votes had hurt and thus AIADMK can now dictate the terms of the alliance from a position of strength.

It is not clear what role Sasikala will play after coming out of prison. She is keeping her cards close to her chest.

As of now for winning the state, the AIADMK needs more than a united party. Tamil Nadu has never returned the same party three times even when MGR or Jayalalitha were leading the AIADMK. So anti-incumbency is likely to kick in.

100 YEARS AGO

INDIAN APPRENTICES AT KANCHRAPARA

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - It is a pretty long time since the scheme for the technical institute at Kanchrapara has been sanctioned by Government. The scheme has attracted many educated youths of the Bengali middle-class. Last year about a hundred and fifty students appeared at the competitive examination at Kanchrapara. All of them were matriculates and a good many of them possessed the degrees of I.A. and I.Sc. Out of the said hundred and fifty, only six were able to pass the ordeal and were admitted as first-class apprentices. Of these six, two students passed the intermediate examination and the rest read up to that standard. All of these apprentices, attracted by the "Kanchrapara Scheme," are expectantly looking forward for the day when the scheme will materialise. If the scheme be not put into immediate action and these apprentices are not allowed to be benefited by the scheme their lives are doomed to despair.

AN APPRENTICE.
Indian Apprentice Hostel, Kanchrapara.

THE REFORMED COUNCIL

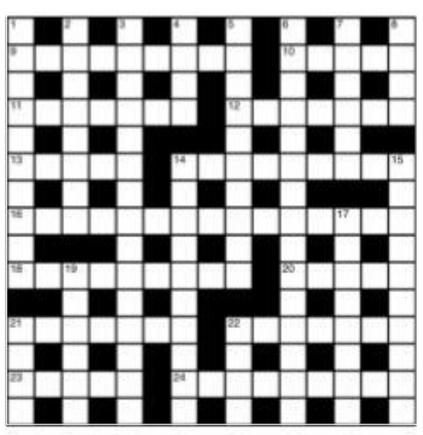
To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - With reference to the reply by His Excellency the Governor yesterday at Hooghly regarding the prayer for an additional seat for Hooghly in the Reformed Council, may I say this about another anomaly of the same sort? By the Southborough Committee's report it appeared that the Malda Mahomedan electors should have had one seat and Jalpaiguri another. The number of electors estimated then was about four thousand at Malda and nine thousand at Jalpaiguri. Now Malda electors are about twice and Jalpaiguri has more than the previous estimated figure. Why then and on what principle are these two districts divided by other districts in between the two, being allotted only one seat to them conjointly? If the matter has passed beyond control now, will the Government be pleased to draw the attention of the proper authorities to set right the anomaly immediately by sending a cablegram to the Secretary of State.

K. AHMED.
Calcutta.

CROSSWORD

NO 28100



SOLUTION FOR 04 OCTOBER

ACROSS

9 Blunt statement in house encountered with sorrow (4,5)
10 Something nasty afoot sees leader deserting alliance (5)
11 Former lover two boys lavishly praised (7)
12 Managed game in large part and cattle farms (7)
13 Complete report (5)
14 Point about much reduced page is so long (6-3)
16 Disguised in Emerald Isle, a spy: Tees won't blab (2,4,3,6)
18 Royals partying are changing the whole calendar (5,4)
20 South American greeting tasty Asian dish (5)
21 Jazz group touring see capital city (7)
22 Enduring a considerable noise inside (7)
23 Don't declare weapon (5)
24 Hot tureen needs stir in addition to that (9)

DOWN

1 Ménages à trois seem to her at odds with society (10)
2 Novel name used occasionally with Handel's last Messiah (8)
3 Washington agency to go into declaration (5,10)
4 Kitty has delightful day (4)
5 Joy surrounds a funny person — circus performer? (10)
6 Pub dinner feels wrong without whiskey for Aussie native (6-3,6)
7 Hearts put into joint work making music (3-3)
8 Extra cash, not British, becomes burden (4)
14 Deter a tour abroad that caravans might have taken (5,5)
15 Stuffing not put back in bear (10)
17 Such women could be out in north, beset by male prejudice (8)
19 Haze affected toil in smoggy city (6)
21 Youngster close to stone block (4)
22 Woodsman thus given the push? (4)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with **The Independent, London**)

epaper.thestatesman.com

Witnessing strong growth for OYO vacation homes

RITESH AGARWAL
OYO FOUNDER

THUMBNAILS

Rabo Equity sale: Rabo Equity has sold its entire stake in Vacmet Ltd for around Rs 140 crore back to promoters, thus making an exit from the investment made in 2010. Rabo Equity had invested Rs 50 crore in Vacmet in 2010. Vacmet Ltd is into flexible packaging sector, producing BOPP films, BOPET films and other specialty films at its three plants in Mathura, Agra and Indore. Rabo Equity said in a statement that it has completed the full exit of its India Agri Business Fund from Vacmet Limited via two tranches of buyback by the company. PTI

Honda plea: Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) said banks should enhance lending to two-wheeler customers in order to help revive the sector. The two-wheeler major said that even till August the industry had not witnessed any increase in lending activities by banks despite the fall in interest rates. "Banking is one of the most important enabler for us. With couple of measures taken by the RBI and the Central government, it is imperative that they (banks) would be extending loans to two-wheeler buyers which was not visible till August," HMSI director sales and marketing Yadvinder Singh Guleria told reporters. PTI

Health kits: To offer complete wellness and health solutions, Hamdard Laboratories(medicine division), introduced 'immunity booster` and 'respiratory health` kits to build a strong immunity and upkeep respiratory health system due to the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country, says a Press release statement. SNS

SpiceJet flight: SpiceJet on Saturday operated its maiden charter flight to Georgia flying 176 students from Chennai to Tbilisi. The airline will operate another charter flight to Georgia from Kochi on Sunday for 174 Indian students, according to a media statement issued by the airline on Saturday. SNS

Rupee may strengthen on RBI's policy steps

Hopes of US stimulus are also expected to strengthen the Indian currency

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

The Reserve Bank's accommodative policy along with a likely US stimulus package are expected to strengthen the Indian rupee in the short-run.

Additionally, fund inflows channelled towards stock markets and corporate deals will be other factors for the rise in the rupee's value, cited analysts.

However, the upcoming US elections along with domestic macroeconomic inflation data might dampen sentiments.

"The policy outcome had a knee-jerk reaction on the USD-INR spot and dropped close to the strong support zone of 73. With the optimism over the US fiscal stimulus deal, we expect a corrective leg towards 72.75 zones in the USD-INR spot," said Rahul Gupta, head of research-currency at Emkay Global Financial Services.

"However, the downside is limited as we head towards the US election and that there could be plenty of political uncertainties down the road. So for next week, we expect the USD-INR spot to trade within 72.75-73.50 levels."

Last Friday, the Reserve Bank made an expected move by retaining key lending rates, but cheered investors and home buyers by giving a liquidity boost and an optimistic outlook.

The Reserve Bank said it will resort to on-tap long-term repo operations and open market bond purchases to ensure liquidity in the banking system.

It has also eased capital requirements on home loans to spur lending to the real estate sector.

"The aggressive accommodative policy of the central bank supported bond and rupee. The weakness in dollar index, stronger domestic equities and foreign fund inflows altogether backed rupee gains," said Devarsh Vakil, deputy head of retail research at HDFC Securities.

"For next week US fiscal stimulus negotiations and opinion polls of the US presidential election will drive the currency markets. Spot USD-INR is having resistance at 74 and support at 72.90 for the next week," he said.

The Indian rupee had ended the week on a flat note at 73.13 to a US dollar.

Besides, the macroeconomic data point of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September will be released on 12 October.

According to Sajal Gupta, head, forex and rates, Edelweiss Securities: "Liquidity and hope of a stimulus along with inflow of Reliance Retail money bodes well for the currency markets."

"With RBI promising to maintain lower yields would also be helpful for both equity, forex and bond markets. Expect all the three asset classes to behave positively in the next few weeks. Rupee should now move towards 72," he said.

EXPERT OPINION

"The policy outcome had a knee-jerk reaction on the USD-INR spot and dropped close to the strong support zone of 73. With the optimism over the US fiscal stimulus deal, we expect a corrective leg towards 72.75 zones in the USD-INR spot," said Rahul Gupta, head of research-currency at Emkay Global Financial Services.

"However, the downside is limited as we head towards the US election and that there could be plenty of political uncertainties down the road. So for next week, we expect the USD-INR spot to trade within 72.75-73.50 levels."

Economic recovery faster than expected, says Keki Mistry

NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd's CEO Keki Mistry today said the "worst is behind us" and the economic recovery has been faster than expected.

Stating that the December quarter growth could outperform the expansion logged in the corresponding quarter a year ago, Mistry said that the Indian economy has shown its resiliency. Benign interest rate regime will continue going forward and that rates will go up only after economic activity gathers more pace and inflation pressure rises, Mistry, vice chairman and CEO, HDFC Ltd, said at an online dialogue organised by the All India Management Association (AIMA). He, however, said that interest rates have bottomed out.

The government should identify the job creating sectors and address their issues on priority, AIMA said in a release quoting him. Mistry said housing and real estate sector is the biggest employer in the economy after agriculture, and that 80 per cent of the workforce in the sector require minimal skills. PTI

Bank credit offtake remained poor in Apr-Sep: RBI report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, 10 OCTOBER

Although the banks remain flush with liquidity and interest rates lowered significantly, credit offtake from banks was very low and "anaemic" during the first half of the current financial year (2020-21).

The low credit offtake can be attributed to the weak demand and persistent uncertainty amid the pandemic.

"During H1 2020-21, bank credit offtake was anaemic, reflecting weak demand and uncertainty in the wake of the pandemic," showed the monetary policy report for the October 2020 released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

It showed that non-food credit growth (year-on-year) was 5.1 per cent as of 25 September 2020, lower than 8.6 per cent a year ago, driven by weak momentum and base effects.

It noted that the slowdown in credit growth was spread across all bank groups, especially foreign banks.

Credit growth of the public sector banks remained modest, although with some uptick since March 2020.

"Of the incremental credit extended by the scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) on a year-on-year basis (27 September 2019 to 25 September 2020), 62.3 per cent was provided by the public sector banks and 41.2 per cent by the private sector banks, while the share of the foreign banks turned negative," said the report.

The deceleration in non-food credit growth was broad-based, with credit offtake slowing down in all the major sectors.

Though personal loans and credit to agriculture registered some improvement in July 2020, the momentum could not be sustained in August.

Credit growth to services and industrial sectors has also tapered off after showing some promise in the Q1 of FY21.

Personal loans accounted for the largest share of total credit flow in August 2020, followed by services.

Unfazed AirAsia India sees sustained passenger growth

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

Despite market speculations over its future, AirAsia India foresees a sustained passenger demand to power its growth in the coming quarter.

Accordingly, the pandemic-battered airline is in fact going ahead with the planned induction of 5 fully-owned aircraft which will bring down the average fleet age to around three years.

In terms of passenger growth, the company conceded that despite directional imbalance in traffic, the trend is getting more evened out with the emergence of metro-to-metro demand.

Not responding to speculation but affirming passengers' belief in the brand, Sunil Bhaskaran, CEO and MD, AirAsia India, said: "So far as the air traffic is concerned, it has been highly directional between metro and non-metro cities, though we are now beginning to see the metro-metro traffic coming back."

"Passenger demographics have changed significantly with the proportion of under 29 year olds increasing to nearly half of the total passengers and those over 40 reduced to less than half of passengers."

"As young India starts resuming work and planning holidays this festive season, we expect this number to further increase."

However, Bhaskaran pointed out that despite encouraging traffic growth which has been witnessed over the last few weeks, "the harsh reality is that the traffic is still only 35 per cent of the pre-Covid levels on a year-on-year basis and we have a long way to go".

"We anticipate the road to recovery to be gradual and steady; we are cautiously optimistic about the festive season that is coming up," he said.

"We are already operating more than 100 daily flights now, which is between 45-50 per cent of our pre-Covid capacity now, and expect a steady rise as we near the festive period."

He elaborated that although uncertainty continues to impact the demand, there is a sizable domestic market dependent on leisure travel that will hopefully open up later this year.

Besides, Bhaskaran said that pent-up demand is now converting into a more sustained trend.

"The recent surge in traffic over the long 2 October weekend was an encouraging sign for demand for domestic holidays," he said.

"We are hopeful of continued growth in demand as we enter the festive season."

Agri exports rise 43.4% in Apr-Sep

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

Exports of agri-commodities rose by 43.4 per cent to Rs 53,626.6 crore in the first half of the current fiscal notwithstanding the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, the Union agriculture ministry said today. Farm exports stood at Rs 37,397.3 crore during the April-September period of the 2019-20 fiscal, it said.

In September 2020, agri exports rose by 81.7 per cent to Rs 9,296 crore from Rs 5,114 crore in September 2019.

"The consistent and concerted efforts of the government to boost agricultural exports are bearing fruit as despite of the on-going Covid-19 crisis, the export of essential agri commodities for the cumulative period of April-September 2020 has increased by 43.4 per cent to Rs 53,626.6 crore," the ministry said in a statement.

Positive growth was recorded in export of groundnut (35 per cent), refined sugar (104 per cent), wheat (206 per cent), basmati rice (13 per cent) and non-basmati rice (105 per cent) during the April-September of this fiscal from over the year-ago, it said.

Furthermore, balance of trade during April-September 2020 was significantly positive at Rs 9,002 crore as against trade deficit of Rs 2,133 crore in the said period, it added.

To boost agri exports, the government announced Agriculture Export Policy, 2018 which inter-alia provides for cluster-based approach for export-centric farming of cash crops like fruits, vegetables, spices, etc. whereby clusters for specific agri products are identified across the country and focused interventions are carried out in these clusters.

Eight export promotion forums (EPFs) have been set up under the aegis of agri-export promotion body Apeda to boost export of agriculture/ horticulture products.

The EPF are making concerted efforts to identify, document particulars of, and reach out to stakeholders across the entire production/ supply chain of export for increasing these exports significantly to the global market.

Trade bodies' plea for shipping regulator

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, 10 OCTOBER

Several trade bodies have urged the Centre to set up a regulator to deal with the rising freight charges, amid the problem of container shortages that exporters are facing.

Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC) claimed that shipping lines are demanding high freight charges as inward traffic from different countries, particularly from China, has declined for which the exporters are required to pay a higher amount for outbound consignments.

"Imports from China have fallen and the liners have increased freight rates. No shipping company likes to sail empty after delivery of export consignments," Sanjay Budhia, chairman of CII national committee on exports and imports, said.

He said all the exporters across the country are facing this problem.

"This is leading to a situation where cargo is lying at ports. We urged the government to set up a shipping regulator to control the freight rates," Budhia said, adding that exports have started to pick up despite the coronavirus crisis.

Market cap of BSE-listed firms rises to new high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

Total market valuation of all listed companies on the BSE rose to a new high of Rs 160.68 lakh crore on Friday following a bullish sentiment in the equity market.

Extending its gains for the seventh straight session ~ the longest winning streak in almost a year ~ the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 326.82 points or 0.81 per cent to close at 40,509.49 points.

During the week, the Sensex advanced 1,812.44 points or 4.68 per cent. Tracking gains in the broader market, the market capitalisation of the BSE-listed companies zoomed to Rs 1,60,68,725.10 crore at close of trade on Friday. Stock market benchmarks rallied on Friday as financial stocks advanced following the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) accommodative policy stance and steps to boost liquidity of the banking sector.

The benchmark repurchase (repo) rate has been left unchanged at 4 per cent, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said while announcing the decisions taken by the monetary policy committee (MPC).

"Markets are trading currently at their peak, aided by fast recovery of economic activities and increased rural demand.

"Over the week, benchmark indices have ascended to new high supported by restoration of industrial activity near pre-Covid-19 level, good start to Q2 result, in anticipation of stimulus in India and positive monetary measures by MPC," Vinod Nair, head (research) at Geojit Financial Services, said.

He added that global markets remained positive throughout the week, as corporate deals and transactions revived in spite of an increase in Covid-19 cases.

ICICI Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 3.64 per cent. Axis Bank, State Bank of India, HDFC Bank, Larsen and Toubro, ONGC and Infosys were among the other major gainers. On the other hand, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, Nestle India, UltraTech Cement and HUL declined.

ONGC to look at HPCL, MRPL merger next yr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) is likely to look at merging its two oil refining subsidiaries, Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL), post-June 2021, its chairman Shashi Shanker has said.

ONGC, India's biggest oil and gas producer, in 2018 completed the acquisition of HPCL for Rs 36,915 crore. After this takeover, it has two refining subsidiaries ~ HPCL and MRPL.

At a news conference post company's annual general meeting, Shanker said HPCL sells more fuel than it actually produces at its refineries. On the other hand, MRPL is a pure oil refining company.

"There are a lot of synergies in the merger of MRPL with HPCL. For one, it will balance the fuel marketed by HPCL with the refining capacity, eliminating the need to buy fuel from other companies," he said. But before this merger happens, ONGC is looking at merging ONGC Mangalore Petrochemicals Ltd (OMPL) with MRPL, he said.

MRPL holds 51 per cent stake in OMPL, while ONGC has 48.9 per cent. MRPL is to acquire ONGC's shareholding in the company.

"We have received approval from the petroleum ministry for the merger and we hope to complete this by June 2021. Post that we will look at the merger of MRPL with HPCL," he said.

ONGC holds a 71.63 per cent stake in MRPL. It holds a 51.11 per cent stake in HPCL. HPCL currently holds a 16.96 per cent stake in MRPL.

"First stage is the merger of OMPL with MRPL and the merger with HPCL will follow that," he said.

HPCL chairman and managing director Mukesh Kumar Surana has been since January 2018 talking of the synergy MRPL acquisition will bring to the company. For one, HPCL sells more petroleum products than it produces, and bringing MRPL's 15 million tons a year refinery under the fold would help bridge the shortfall.

Also, there can be synergies in crude oil procurement as well as in optimising refinery set-up, he has been saying. MRPL is not a new company for HPCL. It was an HPCL company before ONGC in 2003 acquired joint venture partner A V Birla Group's stake.

HPCL has 23.8 million tons of annual oil refining capacity. Together with 15 million tons refinery of MRPL, it will become India's second-biggest state-owned oil refiner after Indian Oil Corp (IOC).

Overall, it will become the third-biggest refiner behind IOC and Reliance Industries.

MRPL will be the third refinery of HPCL, which already has units at Mumbai and Visakhapatnam.

MERGER SYNERGIES

There are a lot of synergies in the merger of MRPL with HPCL. For one, it will balance the fuel marketed by HPCL with the refining capacity, eliminating the need to buy fuel from other companies, ONGC chairman Shashi Shanker said.

HPCL sells more petroleum products than it produces, and bringing MRPL's 15 million tons a year refinery under the fold would help bridge the shortfall.

There can be synergies in crude oil procurement as well as in optimising refinery set-up.

MF asset base rises by 12% in Jul-Sep qtr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 OCTOBER

Mutual funds' asset base rose by 12 per cent to Rs 27.6 lakh crore in the quarter ended 30 September, mainly due to appreciation in the value of their existing holding in equity-oriented funds.

The average asset under management (AAUM) of the industry, comprising 45 players, was at Rs 24.63 lakh crore in April-June quarter, according to data by Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi).

"The AAUM of September quarter is higher compared to June quarter majorly due to appreciation in value of existing holding in equity oriented funds ~ rise on the equity markets," said Omkeshwar Singh, head rank MF at Samco Securities.

"In debt side, there has been incremental inflows of nearly Rs 1 lakh crore and mostly in July 2020," he added.

All the top five fund houses, SBI MF, HDFC MF, ICICI Prudential MF, Aditya Birla Sunlife MF and Nippon India MF witnessed an increase in their respective average AUMs during the September quarter.

With an asset base of Rs 4,21,364 crore, SBI Mutual Fund continue to be the largest fund house in the country during the September quarter 2020. It had an average AUM of Rs 3,64,363 crore in the preceding quarter. This indicates a growth of 15.6 per cent on quarter-on-quarter basis.

HDFC MF, which is at the second position, saw its asset base rising by 5.4 per cent to Rs 3,75,516 crore during the period under review from Rs 3,56,183 crore in June quarter.

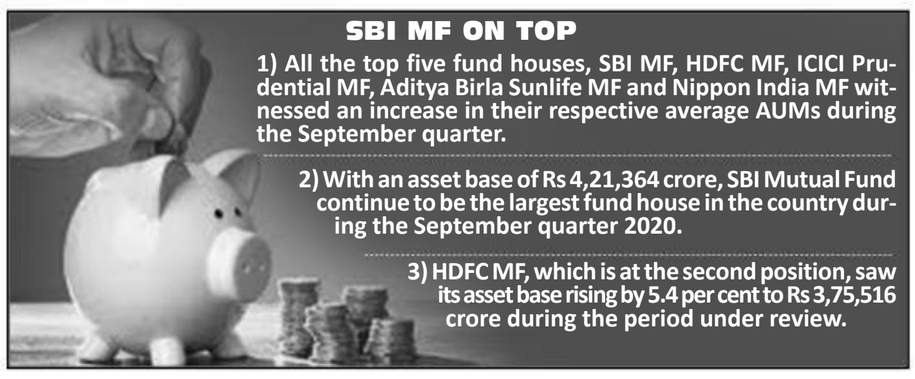
This is followed by ICICI Prudential MF at the third rank with an average AUM of Rs 3,60,049 crore in September quarter, a climb of 10.3 per cent from Rs 3,46,163 crore in June quarter.

Aditya Birla Sunlife MF, the fourth largest fund house, has seen its average AUM growing by 11 per cent to Rs 2,38,674 crore from Rs 2,14,592 crore.

Nippon India MF's average AUM rose by 11 per cent to over Rs 2 lakh crore in September quarter from Rs 1.8 lakh crore in the preceding quarter. The average asset base of Kotak MF grew by 14.5 per cent to Rs 1,91,598 crore while that of UTI MF surged by 16 per cent to Rs 1,33,361 crore.

In June quarter, the industry had registered an eight per cent decline in AUM on account of outflow pressure both in debt and equity.

"While debt outflows were triggered by debt events such as the Franklin Templeton issue, profit booking on rally led to equity inflows. Besides, lower investment, with economic uncertainty threatening jobs and leading to pay cuts, could be the reason for decline in the assets base, moreover, fresh inflows were also relatively weak," Vidya Bala, co-founder of Primeinvestor.in, had said.



SBI MF ON TOP

1) All the top five fund houses, SBI MF, HDFC MF, ICICI Prudential MF, Aditya Birla Sunlife MF and Nippon India MF witnessed an increase in their respective average AUMs during the September quarter.

2) With an asset base of Rs 4,21,364 crore, SBI Mutual Fund continue to be the largest fund house in the country during the September quarter 2020.

3) HDFC MF, which is at the second position, saw its asset base rising by 5.4 per cent to Rs 3,75,516 crore during the period under review.

Forex reserves rise to new high of $545.6b

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 10 OCTOBER

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by $3.618 billion to reach a lifetime high of $545.638 billion in the week ended 2 October 2020, the RBI data showed.

In the previous week ended 25 September, the reserves had declined by $3.017 billion to $542.021 billion.

During the reporting week, the increase in forex kitty was on account of rise in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA increased by $3.104 billion to $503.046 billion in the week ended 2 October, the data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US currencies like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves were up by $486 million in the reporting week to $36.486 billion, the RBI data showed.

The special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose by $4 million to $1.476 billion during the week.

The country's reserve position with the IMF was also up by $23 million to $4.631 billion during the reporting week, the data showed.

West Bengal police... do not arrest anyone on the basis of religion. This happens only in BJP-run states and Delhi

TRINAMUL CONGRESS LEADER FIRAD HAKIM

SLAMMING THE BJP FOR PLAYING THE COMMUNAL CARD REGARDING POLICE ACTION DURING THEIR NABANNA MARCH

Pradhan wants Centre to repeal Odisha Univ (Amendment) Act

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 10 OCTOBER

Union Petroleum and Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged upon his ministerial colleague Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishanka and take necessary action to repeal the Odisha University (Amendment) 2020 as it is 'inconsistent' with the Constitution.

The Bill was passed in the Odisha Assembly on 6 October amidst protests.

Pradhan contended that the Bill is in complete contradiction to the National Education Policy and it strips away the autonomy of universities while bureaucratizing functioning of high educational institutions.

It has pernicious provisions for replacing University's apex Senate body with the State-controlled Syndicate, manipulating the appointment of its University Vice-Chancellor by inserting a State Government appointed nominee in the Search Committee and limiting candidature of this committee to non-academic candidates are cause for grave concern, stated Pradhan in his letter to the Union Education Minister. The Bill also seeks to unethically bypass the Constitutional scrutiny and debates on utilization of public funds by withdrawing the tabling of Audit Report in the State Assembly.

The impugned Bill has been passed under entry 25 of the Concurrent List to the 7th schedule of the Constitution . This entry is subject to entry 66 of the Union list, under which the Parliament has exclusive powers to make laws in relation to coordination and determination of standards 'in institutions for higher education or research.

Regulations issued under the UGC Act, 1956 and Universities in Odisha recognized by the UGC under section 12 (b) of the UGC Act, 1956 are bound by the UGC provisions.

The 'outsourcing' of University appointments promulgated under the Odisha University Amendment Bill, 2020 is in blatant violation of guidelines pertaining to the appointment and coordination for appointments under Section 26 of the UGC Act, 1956.

As per Article 251 of the Constitution , such laws enacted by the State legislature which are repugnant or inconsistent with existing laws shall stand inoperative, noted Pradhan while noting several verdicts of the apex court.

A strong view is that the Bill should not have been done without prior instructions of the President as per article 213 of the Constitution and even if it is passed, it has to be reserved for consideration and assent of the President under Article 254(2) of the Constitution, said Pradhan.

Significantly, Pradhan has not moved Odisha Governor in this regard as yet and according to the BJD some of the provisions were based on suggestions by the Governor.

Questions over Centre, state stance on border fencing

MANAS R BANNERJEE
SILIGURI, 10 OCTOBER

Former Inspector General of Police Pankaj Datta has said that both the Centre and the state have no intention to complete the barbed wire fencing along the India-Bangladesh border soon to stop infiltration and other border crimes.

Addressing a webinar organised by a group of intellectuals close to the BJP yesterday evening to discuss "West Bengal: A Breeding Ground of Terrorism", Mr Datta, who was posted in Malda as the Superintendent of Police earlier, said: "There is a 2,217 km long land border with Bangladesh in West Bengal. Of that, 1,000 km is totally porous. I think the Centre does not have the goodwill to complete the fencing. I cannot understand this, it's a million-dollar question as to why Union Home Minister Amit Shah is not taking the West Bengal government into confidence to manage land for the construction of the barbed wire fencing in the remaining part."

Significantly, another speaker, Dr Swapan Dasgupta, a Member of the Rajya Sabha, also spoke on the matter in connection with Bangladesh, where Islamic fundamentalists are active to increase strategic weight in Bengal politically. He cited examples of violence during protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

Dr Dasgupta also said that infiltration is a serious problem and that it is high time that a rethinking is done and people made aware of it. "But a unique problem is the Centre-state relationship," he said.

"In order to maintain the national interests when both the Centre and the state should go in the same rhythm, the state, to earn electoral and political dividends, temporarily goes against the Centre's decisions," Dr Dasgupta said.

Significantly, Mr Datta echoed Dr Dasgupta's views on rethinking about the present situation and claimed that West Bengal, the land of Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramkrishna, can never become a breeding ground of terrorism and that people will have to rethink on it. These views came even as other speakers discussed a "conspiracy to create a greater Islamic Bangladesh, comprising West Bengal."

On the other hand, former Superintendent of Police, Bharati Ghosh, who contested the Lok Sabha elections on a BJP ticket, said militancy was being reared politically with the help of the police.

Another speaker, Dr Pankaj Roy, principal of a Kolkata-based degree college, pointed out how ruling political parties were in league with them to bag 125 Assembly seats, where people belonging to the minority community played a decisive role in West Bengal.

Notably, Dr Dasgupta claimed that the present trend is that people belonging to the Muslim community wanted to play a decisive role in politics in Bengal.

Mr Datta described how American expansionism was responsible for Muslim fundamentalism and terrorism and the role of the Taliban during the Cold War between America and Russia, and finally "the elimination of Barkati, and especially Osama Bin Laden, has encouraged Jihadi in the name of religious fundamentalism, which is dangerous than an atom bomb, while the ISIS has also been working."

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurating the widening & strengthening of Taladanda Canal Road, Cuttack leading to SCB medical college and hospital through Video Conferencing

SNS

Odisha govt to brand rural area specific products

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 10 OCTOBER:

Odisha government is working for commercialisation of area-specific products and making these available in supermarkets and other forums, informed Odisha Livelihood Mission , director, Rajesh P Patil.

Addressing a webinar on " Self Employment opportunities for SHGs under the new normal", he said SGHs need to be trained on branding, packaging and marketing as well as quality.

Addressing a webinar on " Self Employment opportunities for SHGs under the new normal", Patil said SGHs need to be trained on branding, packaging and marketing as well as quality.

The government is keen on commercialisation of products like 'badi' of Keonjhar district or 'haldi' of Kandhamal district so that they can be on the shelf of super markets, he stated.

"We are giving priority to contract farming, identification of prospective land for pisciculture and quality enhancement of poultry farming. Besides, we are trying to ensure that farmers get maximum profits," he added.

Efforts were on to identify at least 500 SHGs that could work as entrepreneurs to develop nurseries.

OLM has signed a contract with Fab India, a platform for products made using traditional techniques, to encourage production of handicraft items out of Sabai grass in Mayurbhanj district and commercialising them. The Sabai grass craft of Mayurbhanj has created a name for itself, Patil said.

State chief of UNDP Abha Mishra said SHGs play a vital role in socio-economic development in rural areas. During the current COVID-19 pandemic, they have reduced the burden of the government by preparing personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, masks and hand-sanitisers.

Head of corporate communication of Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL) Prashant Kumar Hota described how SHGs have made rural women economically self-reliant and improved their lifestyle. He also highlighted measures taken by JSPL to strengthen SHGs and enhance rural livelihood.

Surekha Routray of KIIT's technology business incubator, said KIIT is trying to provide alternative livelihood to women and encourage them to use new technologies. "While we are supporting them to connect to the market, we are also trying to reach out to agricultural entrepreneurs," she added.

Senior Consultant of MART Abhijeet Mohanty spoke in detail on how to expand a model through marts and involving women in it.

Mission Shakti is providing zero-interest loan up to Rs 3 lakh, informed its officer on special duty (OSD) Sudhanshu Sekhar Nayak.

Former Chief Secretary of Odisha Bijay Patnaik, who moderated the webinar, stressed on the importance of a robust marketing system to enhance rural livelihoods through SHGs.

The webinar was organised by Odisha Corporate Foundation, an NGO.

Odisha: COVID fatality breaches 1,000-mark

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 10 OCTOBER

Odisha's Covid death toll reached 1006 with 15 fresh fatalities reported today.

Odisha's fatality rate has grown by almost 15 per cent in the current month with 147 Covid patients dying of the virus during the period.

The fatality rate, the proportion of people who have died among the confirmed COVID-19 positive cases, currently stands at 0.40 per cent as against the national average of 1.54 per cent.

On the other hand, allegations fly thick and fast from various quarters that the State government has resorted to under-reporting of COVID deaths in a bid to flaunt better clinical management of the contagion.

Meanwhile the state today logged 2,854 new cases taking the total tally of confirmed positive cases to 2,49,693.

Of the new cases, 1,659 have been reported from different quarantine centres while the remaining 1,195 people tested positive during contact tracing.

Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest 393 new cases, followed by Cuttack (244) and Sundergarh (143).

There are 28,246 active cases in the state at present while 2,20,388 patients have recovered till date. The State's recovery rate currently stands at an impressive 88.26 per cent.

Odisha currently has 28,246 active cases, which 11.31 per cent of total positive cases registered in the State.

The pandemic's growth rate in October is to the order of almost 11 per cent, marking slowdown of the COVID graph in comparison to September. As many as, 26,959 positive cases were detected in the past 10 days while there was a 49% growth in September.

Odisha CM inaugurates road to SCB

Historic step for decongestion of ancient city

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 10 OCTOBER

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the newly laid three lane road, (approach to SCB) ,on both sides of Taladanda Canal at Cuttack as the first step towards his grand plan of developing SCB Medical College and Hospital into a World Class Institution.

The CM reaffirmed his commitment of beautification of the city and more importantly expansion (including reclamation of land from the river) and transforming SCB to a world class institution.

He promised that land oustees will be provided with the best rehabilitation package .

It is a historic day today for the millennium city which has all along suffered congestion. The decongesting of the ancient city is being taken up for the first time and soon Cuttack will be a beautiful modern city said 5T Secretary V Kartikeyan Pandian.

Ministers Pratap Jena, Prafulla Mallick, local MLA, bureaucrats were present at the function held in virtual mode.

Floating boat ambulance in Kendrapara

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KENDRAPARA , 10 OCTOBER

Kendrapara district administration has pressed into service floating boat ambulances to cater to the health emergencies of villagers in Rajnagar tehsil lying cut off from the mainstream.

It will become a sort of a 'vessel of hope' for over 25,000 people living in the far-flung river-locked pockets of Gupti, Iswarpur, Junusnagar, Rangani, Kuthighat, Keruapala, Baghamari, Talachua, Kanhupur, Magarakandha and other villages lying on the periphery of Bhitarkanika national park.

'It will become a sort of a 'vessel of hope' for over 25,000 people living in the far-flung river-locked pockets'

The boat ambulance service has already been successfully introduced in river-locked pockets of Jamboo and Batighar gram panchayats in Mahakalpara tehsil.

The floating boat ambulance service was launched yesterday in Rajnagar tehsil, said Kendrapara Collector, Samarth Verma. Rivers, creeks or water-inlets encircled the villages from all directions, he added.

145 new Covid -19 cases in Darj dist

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 10 OCTOBER

As Darjeeling district recorded a whopping 145 new Covid-19 infections today, two Siliguri residents died at Desun Hospital, the designated hospital for Covid patients at Kawakhali in Siliguri, sources said.

An 83-year-old from Subhas Pally had been admitted there on 29 September, it is learnt. A 64-year-old person from Champasari, who had been admitted there on 4 October, also died there.

A 53-year-old resident of Jaigaon in Alipurduar district also died in a private nursing home in Siliguri today.

On the other hand, the chairperson of the board of administrators of the Siliguri Municipal Corporation, Asok Bhattacharya, today wrote to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, requesting her to take over complete control of the private hospital at Kawakhali for the treatment of Covid-19 patients again, as, according to him, the number of Covid cases was on the rise.

Meanwhile, Darjeeling district recorded 145 new Covid-19 cases today.

Sixty-four of the fresh cases were from the Siliguri Municipal Corporation, five in Darjeeling Municipality, 13 in Kharibari, eight in Kurseong Municipality, 16 in Sukna, 17 in Matigara, six in Mirik, 10 in Naxalbari, two in Phansidewa, one in Pulbazaar/Bijanbari, and three in Takdah, source said.

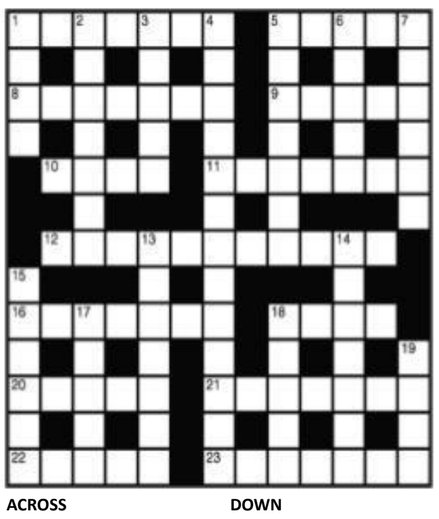
A total of 17 cases were also recorded in the Jalpaiguri portion of the SMC, the sources said. Also today, 62 patients who recovered from the virus were release either from home hospitals or home isolation.

116 more in Malda

In Malda, another 116 samples of the 1001 tested at the VRDL in the Malda Medical College and Hospital last night were found positive, sources said. The English Bazaar Municipality area had almost 40 cases, while the remaining were distributed across the other blocks. Health officials and experts have expressed their concerns over the increase in the number of new infections during the festive season. The district has so far witnessed 7600 cases in total, with 57 deaths and around 800 active cases.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Person who verifies (7)
5 European nobleman (5)
8 Liberty (7)
9 Indian instrument (5)
10 Young bears (4)
11 Sewing implements (7)
12 Gravity (11)
16 Instance (7)
18 Brood sullenly (4)
20 Gaiters (5)
21 Stir (7)
22 Scorch (5)
23 Withstand (7)

DOWN
1 Sleeve end (4)
2 Put to death (7)
3 Prestige (5)
4 I, II, III, etc (5,8)
5 WC water tank (7)
6 Up to (5)
7 Beat (6)
13 Stalemate (7)
14 Dried grape (7)
15 Against (6)
17 Once more (5)
18 Cricket fielders (5)
19 Gas used in lighting (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Fort, 3 Aced (Foretaste), 7 Tutored, 8 Rust, 9 Unrestrained, 11 La-di-da, 13 Heaven, 16 Mademoiselle, 19 Plus, 20 Peasant, 21 User, 22 Dole.

DOWN
1 Fitfully, 2 Retired, 3 Airline, 4 Ensue, 5 Iris, 6 Adore, 10 Unsettle, 12 Dresser, 14 Volcano, 15 Morph, 17 Atlas, 18 Snap.

By arrangement with The Independent
Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker

RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson

DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski

NEED TO KNOW

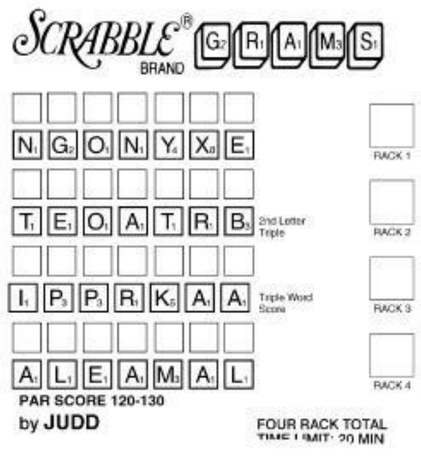
HOSPITALS
- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 22586262, 22585007

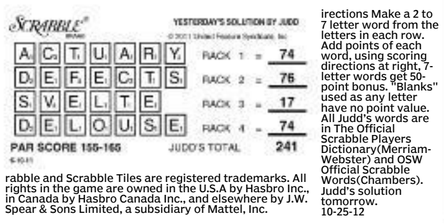
RAILWAY INQUIRY
General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY
- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- Haryana Roadways 23861262
- Himachal Roadways 23717473, 23325320
- Punjab Roadways 23867842, 23860626
- Rajasthan Roadways 23864470
- U.P. Roadways 23868709

FLIGHT INQUIRY
- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airport 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838
- JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111
- EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 33773377
- Air Canada Flight Inquiry 25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528181
- Air France Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport)
- Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

SCRABBLE BRAND GRAMS





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irections Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary(Merriam-Webster) and OSW Official Scrabble Words(Chambers). Judd's solution tomorrow.
10-25-12

SUDOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

				8		3	7	
			6					4
			1	9				8
	7	6						
5		3				4		6
						5	2	
6				7	4			
1					9			
	9	2		5				

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 7/13

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answer to previous puzzle

Answer to previous puzzle

3	1	8	6	4	7	2	5	9
5	7	2	3	1	9	8	4	6
4	6	9	2	5	8	7	1	3
6	5	4	7	8	3	1	9	2
1	2	3	9	6	4	5	8	7
9	8	7	1	2	5	6	3	4
7	4	1	5	3	6	9	2	8
8	9	5	4	7	2	3	6	1
2	3	6	8	9	1	4	7	5

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that no row, no column and no 3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level increases through the week.

I have to say clearly that the situation is not good

CZECH INTERIOR MINISTER, JAN HAMACEK

AS THE CZECH REPUBLIC SEES SURGE IN NEW COVID-19 INFECTIONS

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN	
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C	H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C	H
TOKYO	17°C	12°C	H
LONDON	13°C	09°C	H
DUBAI	30°C	25°C	S
SAN FRANCISCO	13° C	04° C	H
NEW YORK	19° C	11° C	S
MOSCOW	14° C	09°C	H

S= sunny, CL= clear, H=hazy, R= rainy...

THUMBNAILS

People cross a road on a polluted day in Beijing on Saturday. AFP

Anti-nuclear activist dies: Anti-nuclear activist Sister Ardeth Platte, a Dominican nun who spent time in jail for her peaceful protests, died in her sleep on 30 September. She was 84. Sister Carol Gilbert, who confirmed Platte's death, lived with her at a Catholic Worker house in Washington, D.C. . AP

Fire in Pak oil depot : A white former Philadelphia police officer was charged Friday with first-degree murder in the fatal shooting of a Black man, Dennis Plowden Jr., after a high-speed car chase nearly three years ago.Plowden, dazed and unarmed, was holding his empty left hand in front of his face when Ruch fired the fatal shot, prosecutors said. AP

Trump to hold 1st rally in Florida since illness

President also increasing his radio & TV appearances to make up for lost time

A group of murals encouraging Philadelphians to vote, called "To The Polls," are displayed in Love Park during early voting at City Hall on Saturday, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. AFP

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON 10 OCTOBER

Looking to shove his campaign back on track, President Donald Trump and his team laid out an aggressive return to political activities, including a big White House event on Saturday and a rally in Florida on Monday, a week after his hospitalization for a virus that has killed more than 210,000 Americans.

As questions linger about his health ~ and Democratic opponent Joe Biden steps up his own campaigning ~ Trump planned to leave the Washington area for the first time since he was hospitalized. He is also increasing his radio and TV appearances with conservative interviewers, hoping to make up for lost time with just over three weeks until Election Day and millions already voting.The president has not been seen in public ~ other than in White House-produced videos ~ since his return days ago from the military hospital where he received experimental treatments for the coronavirus.

Two weeks after his Rose Garden event that has been labeled a "superspreader" for the virus, Trump is planning to convene another large crowd outside the White House on Saturday for what his administration calls "a peaceful protest for law & order." More than two dozen people linked to the White House have contracted Covid since the president's 26 September event announcing Judge Amy Coney Barrett as his nominee to the Supreme Court.

Trump will address the Saturday group, expected to be at least several hundred supporters, from the White House balcony. All attendees are required to bring masks or will be provided with them, and also will be given temperature checks and asked to fill out a brief questionnaire. Attendees will be strongly encouraged to follow CDC guidelines, which include mask-wearing and social distancing.

Trump's Monday rally in Sanford, Florida, was originally scheduled to be held on 2 October, the day after he tested positive. Announcement of the new event came as Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease expert, cautioned the White House again to avoid large-scale gatherings of people without masks.

He said of the Barrett event in an interview , "I was not surprised to see a superspreader event given the circumstances." That means "crowded, congregate setting, not wearing masks. It is not surprising to see an outbreak," he said. District of Columbia virus restrictions prohibit outdoor gatherings larger than 50 people, although that rule has not been strictly enforced. Masks are mandatory outdoors for most people, but the regulations don't apply on federal land, and the Trump White House has openly flouted them for months.

And next week in Florida? Trump tweeted on Friday that he would be in Sanford "for a very BIG RALLY!"

Meanwhile, next Thursday's town hall-style Trump-Biden debate was officially canceled, a few days after Trump backed away when the sponsoring commission switched it from face-to-face to virtual following Trump's diagnosis.

Trump said the Commission on Presidential Debates was protecting Biden from having to take on the president in person. But Biden's team said the one demanding protection was Trump.

"It's shameful that Donald Trump ducked the only debate in which the voters get to ask the questions — but it's no surprise," said Biden spokesperson Andrew Bates. "Everyone knows that Donald Trump likes to bully reporters, but obviously he doesn't have the guts to answer for his record to voters at the same time as Vice President Biden."

Trump is now making the rounds of friendly conservative media, calling in to Fox News host Sean Hannity on Thursday night and spending two hours live on air with radio host Rush Limbaugh on Friday in what his campaign billed as a "radio rally."

Second presidential debate between Trump & Biden cancelled

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 10 OCTOBER

The second presidential debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden set for October 15 has been cancelled, the organisers have announced, after the incumbent US President refused to do a virtual face-off with his Democratic challenger despite concerns over his COVID-19 diagnosis.

In a statement, the non-partisan (CPD) confirmed on Friday that the second version scheduled to be held in Miamai, Florida, would be scrapped. The CPD said it was preparing for the next debate to held on October 22 in Nashville, Tennessee, less than two weeks ahead of the November 3 presidential election.

The first presidential debate between Trump and Biden was held on September 29 in Cleveland, Ohio. The one-off debate between the vice presidential candidates Mike Pence and Kamala Harris took place on October 7 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"On October 8, CPD announced that for the health and safety of all involved, the second presidential debate, scheduled for October 15 in Miami, would be conducted virtually," the CPD said in a statement, officially announcing the cancellation of the second debate.

"Subsequently, the campaigns of the two candidates who qualified for participation in the debate made a series of statements concerning their respective positions regarding their willingness to participate in a virtual debate on October 15, and each now has announced alternate plans for that date."

"It is now apparent there will be no debate on October 15, and the CPD will turn its attention to preparations for the final presidential debate scheduled for October 22," the CPD added.

VIRUS SCARE

People wearing face masks walk along Red Square in central Moscow on Saturday. AFP

Voting-related lawsuits pepper US before Election Day

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 10 OCTOBER

Hundreds of lawsuits about voting have been filed before the November 3 election. The cases concern the fundamentals of the American democratic process, including how ballots are cast and counted.

A look at some of the top lawsuits in battleground states:

ARIZONA: A federal judge ruled in favor of Democrats by holding that voters who neglected to sign their early ballots before mailing them in get up to five days after the election to fix the problem.

The judge ruled that it was not fair for elections officials not to give voters a chance to cure the problem. The case has since been appealed to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

IOWA: Several of the election disputes involve mail-in voting rules. In one, Democrats are challenging a new GOP-backed law that blocks county auditors from filling in any missing voter ID information on absentee ballot applications returned by voters. In a related case, Republicans have persuaded judges to invalidate tens of thousands of absentee ballot applications submitted by voters whose ID information had been pre-filled on the forms by county auditors.

Democrats are challenging the Republican secretary of state's rules that drop boxes must be located on county property and not at grocery stores or other community sites.

MICHIGAN: Officials are mired in litigation over how long ballots can be counted after November 3. State law requires the ballots to be counted by Election Day. But a state judge, citing mail delays, has ordered that they be counted if they are postmarked by November 2 and arrive by November 17.

The Republican-led Legislature is appealing. The issue could be crucial in determining the winner of the presidential contest in the state, which Trump won by less than 10,000 votes in 2016. Absentee voting has only been permitted since 2018, but some 2.7 million people have requested absentee ballots.

MINNESOTA: Republicans have challenged the state's Nov. 10 deadline for mail-in ballots to arrive this year, a 7-day extension granted because of the pandemic. Under a consent decree, the ballots must be postmarked by 3 November.

Republicans are appealing the plan. Meanwhile, Democratic U.S. Representative Angie Craig has challenged a state law that pushed voting for her 2nd District seat to February due to the September 21 death of Legal Marijuana Now Party candidate Adam Weeks.

A delay could have national implications if the presidential election remains in dispute in January and the seat remains empty when her first term concludes in January.

NEVADA: The Democratic-led Legislature passed a law this year that sends mail-in ballots to every registered voter and lets someone else return it on the voter's behalf.

The latter practice, known as ballot harvesting, had previously been illegal.

The law, signed by Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak, also let county election officials start counting mailed ballots on October 19. The Trump campaign challenged the law, suggesting mail-in voting was rife with fraud, but a federal judge said they failed to show any actual harm.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: A judge in April struck down a 2017 New Hampshire law that made it more difficult for people to vote if they registered the month before the election.

The judge said the added paperwork was unreasonable. The Republican-led Legislature had passed the law after Trump's loss there in 2016. State officials have appealed to the state Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the American Federation of Teachers, citing the pandemic, challenged some state voting procedures in August, including an Election Day deadline and lack of prepaid postage for absentee ballots.

NORTH CAROLINA: The Trump campaign and the Republican National Committee are suing in federal court to block state election officials from enforcing rule changes that could boost the number of ballots counted.

That includes guidance that will allow the fixing of absentee ballots with deficient information without forcing the voter to fill out a new blank ballot.

OHIO: A federal judge in Cleveland this month ruled that a new Ohio directive allowing ballot drop boxes at locations outside boards of elections means they can be placed at multiple locations a ruling at odds with the intention of the state elections chief. It's not yet clear how many drop boxes will be available across the state before the election.

Barrett signed second anti-abortion ad

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 10 OCTOBER

President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett signed on to a second "right to life advertisement against the landmark Roe vs. Wade decision, according to supplemental material filed late Friday with the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Barrett said her name was included while she was on the faculty at Notre Dame Law School and member of the University Faculty for Life group that sponsored the ad in the student newspaper. She included a copy of the ad, which is not dated, but notes the 40th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision in 1973.

We renew our call for the unborn to be protected in law, said the ad signed by dozens of faculty and staff at the university. The committee released the 11-page supplemental filing ahead of the start of Barrett's confirmation hearings on Monday, nearly three weeks before the presidential election.

Trump nominated Barrett, a conservative judge on the 7th Circuit US Court of Appeals, to fill the seat made vacant by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg last month.

Additional paperwork is not unusual, the committee said. However, the filing will be heavily scrutinized for Barrett's views.It's the second known ad she signed on to opposing abortion, both marking milestones in the landmark 1973 rule by the high court now at stake.

Last week it was disclosed that Barrett in 2006 signed on to an ad opposing abortion on demand that was part of a two-page spread in a local newspaper that was also in conjunction with the anniversary of court ruling. It's time to put an end to the barbaric legacy of Roe v. Wade and restore laws that protect the lives of unborn children, said the second unsigned page.

TENDER

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION RAMBAN

(Short Term) NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
e-NIT No: 33 of 2020-21 Dated: 07-10-2020 (E-tendering).

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir UT, the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Ramban invites tenders by e-tendering mode on **Item/%age rates** from approved and eligible Contractors/Firms registered with J&K UT. CPWD, MES & Railways for the following work:-

S.No. 1 Name of Work :- Construction of drain along NH1A form old town Hall to HDFC Bank Banihal Distt.Ramban (Length 275 Mtr) (Under Languishing).
Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Division Ramban
Estimated cost of Work (in Lacs):- 40.00, Cost of Tender Doc.(in Rs) :- 1000, Earnest Money (in Lacs):- @ 2% of Adv. Cost , Time Allowed for completion :- 03 month, Time & date of opening of tender (Technical Bid):- 22-10-2020 at 12.00 A.M, Class of Contractor :- "A& B" Class

S.No. 2 Name of Work :-Construction of drain along NH1A from Talha communication to old town Hall Banihal Distt.Ramban (Length 275 Mtr).(Under Languishing)
Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Division Ramban
Estimated cost of Work (in Lacs):- 38.00, Cost of Tender Doc.(in Rs) :- 1000, Earnest Money (in Lacs):- @ 2% of Adv. Cost , Time Allowed for completion :- 03 month, Time & date of opening of tender (Technical Bid):- 22-10-2020 at 12.00 A.M
Class of Contractor :- "A& B" Class

S.No. 3 Name of Work :- Construction of drain along NH1A from HDFC Bank to Hotel Alpine Banihal Distt.Ramban (Length 275 Mtr).(Under Languishing).
Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Division Ramban
Estimated cost of Work (in Lacs):- 37.90, Cost of Tender Doc.(in Rs) :- 1000, Earnest Money (in Lacs):- @ 2% of Adv. Cost , Time Allowed for completion :- 03 month, Time & date of opening of tender (Technical Bid):- 22-10-2020 at 12.00 A.M
Class of Contractor :- "A& B" Class

S.No. 4 Name of Work :- Construction of drain along NH1A form Transit Camp to Talha Communication Banihal Distt. Ramban (Length 275 Mtr).(Under Languishing).
Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Division Ramban
Estimated cost of Work (in Lacs):- 37.38, Cost of Tender Doc.(in Rs) :- 1000, Earnest Money (in Lacs):- @ 2% of Adv. Cost , Time Allowed for completion :- 03 month, Time & date of opening of tender (Technical Bid):- 22-10-2020 at 12.00 A.M
Class of Contractor :- "A & B" Class

S.No. 5 Name of Work :- Construction of drain along NH1A from Hotel ALPINS to Gund Morh Banihal Distt.Ramban (Length 250 Mtr).(Under Languishing).
Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Division Ramban
Estimated cost of Work (in Lacs):- 34.21, Cost of Tender Doc.(in Rs) :- 1000, Earnest Money (in Lacs):- @ 2% of Adv. Cost , Time Allowed for completion :- 03 month, Time & date of opening of tender (Technical Bid):- 22-10-2020 at 12.00 A.M
Class of Contractor :- "A & B" Class

Position of AAA = Available
Position of funds = Available

1. Date of Issue of Tender Notice :- 07-10-2020
2. Period of downloading of bidding documents :- From 08-10-2020,10.00 A.M to 21-10-2020, 4.00 P.M
3. Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting :-
4. Bid submission **Start Date :- 08-10-2020 From 10.00 A.M**
5. Bid Submission **End Date :-21-10-2020 up to 4.00 P.M**
6. Submission of hard copy of tender documents :- Only successful bidder who is declared as L1 should submit the hard copy after opening of financial bids
7. Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online) -[The date should be one day after deadline for receiving of hard copies] :- 22-10-2020 at 12.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Ramban.
8. Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online) :- To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed
1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website **www.jktenders.gov.in**

Sd/- (Er. Maqbool Hussain) Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Division Ramban

No. DIP/J-5649/20 Dated: 09.10.2020

Indian-origin billionaire brothers, academic, Skipping Sikh, Covid heroes on Queen's Birthday honours list

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 10 OCTOBER

A pair of Indian-origin billionaire brothers, a leading Oxford University academic and a septuagenarian fundraiser fondly referred to as the Skipping Sikh, lead the "most ethnically diverse" Queen's Birthday Honours List released on Saturday.

Zuber and Mohsin Issa (*photo above, left*), who recently hit the headlines with their multi-million-pound acquisition of the UK's supermarket chain Asda, have both been honoured with CBEs for services to business and charity.

The brothers from Blackburn, whose parents moved to the UK from Gujarat in the 1970s, own the Euro Garages chain of petrol stations as part of their EG Group business.

They are joined by Yadvinder Singh Malhi, Professor of Ecosystem Science at the University of Oxford, who receives a CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for his services to ecosystem science. Malhi had been appointed Trustee of the Natural History Museum in London earlier this year.

British Indians honoured with an OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) include Nilay Shah, Professor of Chemical Engineering at Imperial College London for services to the decarbonisation of the UK economy, and Dr Sanjiv Nichani, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Healing Little Hearts for services to medicine and charity.

The list, which had been deferred from its usual early June release to consider nominations of people playing crucial roles during the first months of the pandemic, includes numerous British Indians under this category led by Rajinder Singh Harzall.

The 74-year-old Skipping Sikh (*photo above*) receives an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for his inspirational health and fitness videos during lockdown. Harzall, who has raised nearly 14,000 pounds for the National Health Service, is joined by Lavina Mehta, who also receives an MBE for services to health and fitness during Covid for her work encouraging people to stay active during the lockdown.

Among other community heroes celebrated for their work during lockdown is Sandeep Singh Daheley, who receives his MBE for taking the initiative to create an online portal for prayers whilst gurdwaras were closed, to keep the community spirit alive for British Sikhs.

Among MBE recipients recognised for their wider community work are Manjit Kaur Gill, founder of Binti, for services to the provision of menstrual products to women in developing countries, the UK and the US; dance teacher Pushkala Gopal for services to South Asian dance; Vasant Patel, Senior Policy Officer at the Department for Education, for services to adopted children and their families; and Baljeet Kaur Sandhu, founder of the Centre for Knowledge Equity, for services to equality and civil society.

The honours list, which is traditionally published to coincide with the 94-year-old British monarch's official birthday celebrations in early June, showcases 414 exceptional contributions of unsung heroes in all four nations of the UK in response to the pandemic.

These recipients include Sir Captain Tom Moore, the World War II veteran who also served in India and became a hero earlier this year with his achievement of raising millions of pounds for the NHS by doing laps around his own garden using a walking frame.

However, the majority of the list, dubbed a "bumper list" this year for making up 1,495 honours, was compiled before the ongoing pandemic and 72 per cent go to those who have worked tirelessly for their local community.

The UK Cabinet Office, in charge of compiling the list, said it reflects the huge voluntary effort across the country in response to Covid, with recipients cumulatively supplying millions of free meals and clocking up countless voluntary hours to support those at risk. It described it as the most ethnically diverse list to date, with 13 per cent of recipients from a minority ethnic background.

Sir Philip Barton, former British High Commissioner to India and now the Permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Head of the Diplomatic Service, said: I congratulate everyone receiving an honour and thank them for their hard work and years of service.

"The UK's impact around the world depends on exceptional people like those recognised in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. We are grateful for their outstanding contribution.

With whipping winds, *Delta* drenches Louisiana, Mississippi

LAFAYETTE, 10 OCTOBER

Ripping tarps from already damaged roofs and scattering debris piled by roadsides, Delta inflicted a new round of destruction on Louisiana as it struck communities still reeling after Hurricane Laura took a similar path just six weeks earlier.

Delta hit as a Category 2 hurricane, with top winds of 100 mph (155 kph) but rapidly grew weaker. By early Saturday, it dwindled to a tropical storm with 60 mph (95 kph) winds.

Still, forecasters warned of danger from storm surge and flash floods across much of southwestern Louisiana and parts of neighboring Texas. Mississippi also got its fair share of rain overnight.

Delta made landfall Friday evening near the coastal town of Creole a distance of only about 15 miles (24 kilometers) from where Laura struck land in August, killing 27 people in Louisiana.

The earlier storm damaged nearly every home and building in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Piles of moldy mattresses, sawed-up trees and other debris still lined the streets. AP

We're seeing really high turnout at the moment for advance voting. We want to make sure everyone uses their voice until election day

NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER JACINDA ARDERN
AS SHE VOTES A WEEK BEFORE POLLS CLOSE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

THUMBNAILS

Iraqi children in an amusement park in Baghdad's Zawraa Park on Saturday. AFP

Lebanese bakery blast :A diesel tank exploded inside a Beirut building, killing four people and injuring several others, the Lebanese Red Cross has said. It was not immediately clear what triggered the blast in the western neighbourhood of Tariq Jadidah. The state-run National News Agency said the blaze erupted inside a bakery in the basement of the building on Friday night. AP

Pak singer shot dead: Unidentified gunmen shot dead a popular local singer and father of a human rights activist in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, police said. Hanif Chamrok, a Baloch singerwas taking a music class at his home when unidentifi- ed gunmen riding on motorcycles opened fire at him. PTI

Mideast wildfires: Wildfires around the Middle East triggered by a heatwave hitting the region have killed two people, forced thousands of people to leave their homes and detonated landmines along the Lebanon-Israel border, state media and officials said.The areas hit by the heatwave are Syria, Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian territories PTI

Armenia, Azerbaijan agree on truce in Nagorno-Karabakh

Countries' foreign ministers said the truce is intended to exchange prisoners & recover the dead

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 10 OCTOBER

With Russia's mediation, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh starting Saturday following two weeks of heavy fighting that marked the worst outbreak of hostilities in the separatist region in more than a quarter-century.

The countries' foreign ministers said in a statement that the truce is intended to exchange prisoners and recover the dead, adding that specific details will be agreed on later. Minutes after it entered force at noon (0800 GMT), Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other of breaching the cease-fire with new attacks.

The claims couldn't be independently verified.

The announcement of the truce followed 10 hours of talks in Moscow sponsored by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who read the statement. It stipulated that the cease-fire should pave the way for talks on settling the conflict.

If the truce holds, it would mark a major diplomatic coup for Russia, which has a security pact with Armenia but also cultivated warm ties with Azerbaijan.

The latest outburst of fighting between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces began September 27 and left hundreds of people dead in the biggest escalation of the decades-old conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh since a separatist war there ended in 1994. The region lies in Azerbaijan but has been under control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia.

Volunteers pack food and other stuff in boxes to be sent as aid to Karabakh residents, in Yerevan, on Saturday, amid the ongoing fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region. AFP

The talks between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan were held on invitation from Russian President Vladimir Putin, who brokered the cease-fire in a series of calls with President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian.

Since the start of the latest fighting, Armenia said it was open to a cease-fire, while Azerbaijan insisted that it should be conditional on the Armenian forces' withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh, arguing that the failure of international efforts to negotiate a political settlement left it no other choice but to resort to force.

Russia has co-sponsored peace talks on Nagorno-Karabakh together with the United States and France as co-chairs of the so-called Minsk Group, which is working under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. They haven't produced any deal, leaving Azerbaijan increasingly exasperated.

Speaking in an address to the nation Friday hours before the cease-fire deal was reached, the Azerbaijani president insisted on his country's right to reclaim its territory by force after nearly three decades of international talks that haven't yielded an inch of progress."

Fighting with heavy artillery, warplanes and drones has engulfed Nagorno-Karabakh, with both sides accusing each other of targeting residential areas and civilian infrastructure.

According to the Nagorno-Karabakh military, 404 of its servicemen have been killed since September 27. Azerbaijan hasn't provided details on its military losses. Scores of civilians on both sides also have been killed.

Shortly after the truce took force, the Armenian military accused Azerbaijan of shelling the area near the town of Kapan in southeastern Armenia, killing one civilian. Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry rejected the claim as a provocation.

The Azerbaijani military, in turn, accused Armenia of striking the Terter and Agdam regions of Azerbaijan with missiles. Armenia's Defence Ministry denied that.

The current escalation marked the first time that Azerbaijan's ally Turkey took a high profile in the conflict, offering strong political support. Over the past few years, Turkey provided Azerbaijan with state-of-the-art weapons, including drones and rocket systems that helped the Azerbaijani military outgun the Nagorno-Karabakh separatist forces in the latest fighting.

Armenian officials say Turkey is involved in the conflict and is sending Syrian mercenaries to fight on Azerbaijan's side.

Turkey has denied deploying combatants to the region, but a Syrian war monitor and three Syria-based opposition activists have confirmed that Turkey has sent hundreds of Syrian opposition fighters to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In an interview with CNN Arabic aired Thursday, Azerbaijan's president admitted that Turkish F-16 fighter jets have stayed on in Azerbaijan weeks after a joint military exercise, but insisted that they have remained grounded.

Armenian officials had earlier claimed that a Turkish F-16 shot down an Armenian warplane, a claim that both Turkey and Azerbaijan have denied.

Turkey's involvement in the conflict raised painful memories in Armenia, where an estimated 1.5 million died in massacres, deportations and forced marches that began in 1915. The event is widely viewed by historians as genocide, but Turkey denies that.

Turkey's highly visible role in the conflict worried Russia, which has a military base in Armenia.

The two countries are linked by a security treaty obliging Moscow to offer support to its ally if it comes under aggression.

But at the same time, Russia has sought to maintain strong economic and political ties with oil-rich Azerbaijan and ward off Turkey's attempt to increase its influence in the South Caucasus without ruining its delicate relations with Ankara.

Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have negotiated a series of deals to coordinate their conflicting interests in Syria and Libya and expanded their economic ties.

A lasting cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh would allow the Kremlin to stem Turkey's bid to expand its clout in Russia's backyard without ruining its strategic relationship with Ankara.

Pak Opposition parties come out openly against military

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KARACHI, 10 OCTOBER

After Sharif, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari accused the military of rigging the 2018 polls

For the first time, Pakistan's two major Opposition parties have come out openly against the country's powerful military, accusing it of rigging the 2018 elections that brought Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf party to power.

In the past, political leaders have only indirectly pointed to the involvement of the military establishment in the country's political affairs but this is the first time that the leaders of the two main Opposition parties -- the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) have openly criticised the military.

Former prime minister Sharif, who is in London since November last year and facing a number of corruption cases, fired the first salvo at the inaugural meeting of the Pakistan Democratic Movement, an alliance formed by Opposition parties last month to oust Prime Minister Khan.

Sharif alleged that the military rigged the 2018 elections to bring Prime Minister Khan to power. He said interfering in politics in uniform amounts to treason under the country's Constitution. His allegations sparked an angry response from Khan, who said Sharif was playing a very dangerous game by humiliating the military and intelligence services. He dismissed the allegations of rigged elections as baseless.

Sharif served as Pakistan's prime minister three times, first removed by a president in 1993, then by military ruler Pervez Musharraf in 1999. A court in 2017 ousted him from power over corruption allegations. Khan,came to power in 2018. After Sharif, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday accused the military of rigging the 2018 elections. Bilawal said that any interference in the coming legislative assembly elections in Gilgit-Baltistan would lead to a strong reaction from his party, including a siege of Islamabad and a sit-in in the city. Such things were never witnessed even in dictatorships of General Zia and Gen Musharraf, Bilawal was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper.

I wonder how you deploy a soldier inside and another outside the polling station. That was so strange. Even if you (military establishment) have done something wrong or not, you would be blamed either way. This should not happen, he said. He said the "PPP would not allow anyone to steal the peoples mandate in the coming elections in Gilgit-Baltistan."

Pakistan has announced that the once-postponed election for the legislative assembly of Gilgit-Baltistan will be held on November 15, amidst India's strong objection to Islamabad's move to alter the status of the militarily-occupied region.

Zuma summoned to appear before commission in November over graft charges

JOHANNESBURG, 10 OCTOBER

Former South African president Jacob Zuma has been issued with a legal summons to appear before an inquiry commission probing corruption charges, including the veteran politician's alleged role in assisting the controversial Indian-origin Gupta family in looting billions of rands from the state-owned entities.

Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo said Zuma would be required to appear on November 16-20, adding that if the former president wished to present his evidence virtually rather than in person, it would be permitted. Zuma, 78, has evaded appearing before the State Capture Inquiry, complaining about his illness with controversial doctors' letters, as well as claims that he needed time to prepare for the separate court cases where he is facing corruption charges.

Zuma's supporters have also called for Zondo to recuse himself alleging that Zuma would not get a fair hearing from him.

Clearly irritated by the frequent delays from Zuma's legal team, Zondo gave the dates for the former president's appearance on Friday but added that he could request an extension if he needed more time to prepare.

He said Zuma could not refuse to appear before the commission, because if he refuted the allegations made against him, he was being given the opportunity to do so. Zuma has been implicated in state capture by 34 witnesses before the commission so far, much of it during his nine years in office before he was forced to step down in February 2018 by his own African National Congress to be replaced by Cyril Ramaphosa, who was subsequently elected President.

Among the issues being ventilated at the commission is Zuma's alleged role in assisting the three Gupta brothers in looting billions of rands from state entities. PTI

ORDEAL NOT BY CHOICE

A woman walks with a child hanging on her back in a make-shift carrier at the Washukanni camp for the internally displaced near the town of Tuwaynah, Syria's northeastern city of Hasakah on Saturday. AFP

Kyrgyzstan govt bans rallies, imposes curfew to end turmoil

SSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 10 OCTOBER

Authorities in Kyrgyzstan on Saturday banned rallies and imposed a curfew in the Central Asian nation's capital, seeking to end a week of turmoil sparked by a disputed parliamentary election.

The declaration of the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. curfew in Bishkek followed President Sooronbai Jeenbekov's decree on Friday announcing a state of emergency in the city until Oct. 21. He also ordered the military to deploy troops to the capital to enforce the measure.

Convoys of military trucks were seen driving into the city. Jeenbekov has faced calls to step down from thousands of protesters who stormed government buildings a night after pro-government parties reportedly swept parliamentary seats in Sunday's vote. The demonstrators also freed former President Almazbek Atambayev, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison in June on charges of corruption and abuse of office that he and his supporters described as a political vendetta by Jeenbekov.

The turmoil marks a third time in 15 years that protesters have moved to topple a government in Kyrgyzstan, a Central Asian nation of 6.5 million that is one of the poorest to emerge from the former Soviet Union.

As in the uprisings that ousted Kyrgyz presidents in 2005 and 2010, the current protests have been driven by clan rivalries that play a dominant role in the country's politics.

After an initial attempt to break up protesters in the hours after the vote, police have pulled back and refrained from intervening with the demonstrations. Residents of the capital began forming vigilante groups to prevent looting that accompanied previous uprisings in the country.

Under pressure from protesters, the Central Election Commission has overturned the parliamentary vote results and protest leaders have moved quickly to form a new government. An emergency parliament session on Tuesday named lawmaker Sadyr Zhaparov as new prime minister, but the move was immediately contested by other protest groups, plunging the country into chaos.

On Friday, supporters of Zhaparov assailed pro-Atambayev demonstrators on Bishkek's central square, hurling stones and bottles. A man with a pistol fired several shots at Atambayev's car as it sped away, but the former president was unhurt. Two other politicians affiliated with Atambayev also had their cars shot at as they left the square, their party said. They weren't injured.

Another politician was badly injured amid the clashes on the square, and several other people were also hurt.

North Korea celebrates party anniversary

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL, 10 OCTOBER

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un took center stage at a massive military parade and public rally in Pyongyang early Saturday marking the 75th anniversary of the country's ruling party.

Outside observers were expecting the North to possibly unveil the latest weapons in its growing nuclear arsenal that threatens U.S. allies in Asia and the American mainland.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said early in the day that there were signs that the North had mobilized large crowds and equipment for a military parade at Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Square during the early morning hours.

In the evening, North Korean state television began airing a taped broadcast of the event, which began late Friday.

Goose-stepping troops were seen marching in the streets in front of the brightly illuminated square, as a military band performed while moving in formation, shaping the numbers 10.10, 1945, and 2020, as well as a hammer and sickle symbols of the ruling Workers' Party.

People watch a television news broadcast of a speech by North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un during commemorations of the 75th anniversary of the North's ruling Workers' Party held in Pyongyang, at a railway station in Seoul on Saturday. AFP

The performers and tens of thousands of spectators roared as Kim, dressed in a gray suit and tie, appeared from a building as the clock struck midnight. Kim, flanked with senior officials and smiling widely, waved to the crowd and kissed children who presented him with flowers before taking his spot on the podium.

It's unusual for the North to hold a military parade during dark pre-dawn hours, although such conditions may provide benefits in protecting sensitive information about crucial weapons that were rolled out or creating spectacles through the use of lights.Earlier Saturday, masked citizens lined up to lay flowers at the statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, the father of the current ruler, at Pyongyang's Mansu Hill. A huge street poster highlighted the ruling Workers' Party's symbol a hammer, brush and sickle with letters that read Best glory to our great party.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said residents in Kaesong and other regions who had lost their homes to recent natural disasters marked the party anniversary by moving into newly built houses and that they praised Kim Jong Un for looking after them as their father.

KCNA also reported that Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a letter to Kim saying that Beijing would continue to defend, consolidate and develop bilateral relations with Pyongyang.

This year's anniversary comes amid deadlocked nuclear negotiations with the Trump administration and deepening economic woes that analysts say are shaping up as one of the biggest tests of Kim's leadership since he took power in 2011.

South Korean officials and analysts have said North Korea could showcase a new intercontinental ballistic missile or other nuclear-capable weapons during a parade, which would highlight how the country has continued to expand its military capabilities amid stalled nuclear talks.

Expressing deep frustrations over the diplomacy, Kim pledged in December to soon unveil a new strategic weapon to the world while declaring to bolster his nuclear deterrent in face of gangster-like US pressure.

But while he may put on a huge display of his military hardware for the anniversary, analysts say Kim will likely avoid direct or harsh criticism toward Washington during his speech at the event and instead focus on a domestic message of unity in the face of economic hardship.

China protests US Navy mission in SCS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, 10 OCTOBER

China said it dispatched ships and planes to track the US guided-missile destroyer John S McCain as it passed near Chinese-held islands in the South China Sea.

The People's Liberation Army accused the US warship of trespassing into Chinese territorial waters on Friday near the Paracel Islands called Xisha by China during the latest freedom of navigation missions by the US Navy aimed at defying China's vast claims in the strategic waterway.

Spokesperson for the PLA's Southern Theatre Command Col. Zhang Nandong said Beijing demanded the US end such actions, calling them blatant navigation hegemony and military provocation that seriously violated China's sovereignty and security interests, and gravely jeopardized peace and stability in the South China Sea.

We urges the US side to immediately stop such kind of provocative actions, strictly manage and control its maritime and air military

operations so as not to cause any eventuality, Zhang was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

China claims sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea, which is also claimed in whole or in part by Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam. Frictions between China and Indonesia have also increased over activities by China's fishing vessels, the coast guard and navy within Indonesia's exclusive economic zone.

China ignored a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated most of its territorial claims in the South China Sea, but has encountered persistent pushback from the US, its allies and China's Southeast Asian neighbours over its moves to cement its control in the disputed area.

Pak court asks Sharif to appear by 24 November

ISLAMABAD, 10 OCTOBER

A Pakistani court through newspaper advertisements asked Nawaz Sharif to appear before it by November 24 to avoid being declared a "proclaimed offender" after the former three-time prime minister reportedly refused to receive non-bailable arrest warrants at his residence in London.

The Islamabad High Court on Friday noted that it was left with no option but to order issuance of proclamation for intimating 70-year-old Sharif, to appear before it on November 24. A two-member bench comprising Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani and Justice Aamer Farooq observed that the examination of statements of witnesses as well as the documents showed that all out efforts were made for serving the non-bailable warrants of arrest on Sharif to ensure his attendance before the court in the the Al-Azizia and Avenfield graft cases.

Irked by the attitude of Sharif's representatives at his residence in London, the high court on October 7 had ordered that advertisements be issued in newspapers to summon him. PTI

The Sunday Statesman
Sport
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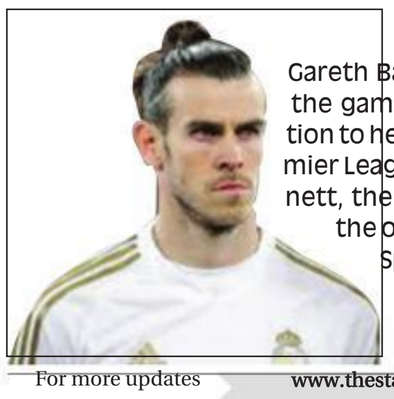

AMONG THE BEST

Gareth Bale (in photo, left) remains one of the game's top players and has the ambition to help Tottenham Hotspur win the Premier League. That's the view of Jonthan Barnett, the Welshman's agent, who says that the on-loan Real Madrid man could help Spurs "get very close" to winning the title this season.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Pay & watch: English football fans will have to pay £14.95 a match to watch certain televised games from next weekend after the Premier League revealed a pay-per-view model to boost club finances. At least 14 matches will be televised behind paywalls.

Ozil axed: Mesut Ozil was "told face-to-face" by Arsenal's technical director Edu that he would not be included in the Europa League squad. The German appears to have no future at the Emirates, with Arteta freezing him out this season. Ozil was omitted from the squad.

Transfer cash: The amount of money spent on international transfers in the window which closed on Monday dropped by more than 30 per cent compared with the corresponding period last year amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Fifa said in a report on Friday.

House burgled: Cristiano Ronaldo's house in Madeira has been burgled. The thief is said to have got into the £7 million renovated property in the island capital of Funchal through an open garage door while the footballer was away with the Portugal team.

Series shifted: A three One-day Internationals series between Pakistan and Zimbabwe has been shifted from Multan to Lahore though Rawalpindi is unchanged as the venue of three Twenty20 Internationals next month. An inspection team of Zimbabwe will visit Lahore.

New normal: The Centre on Friday announced the standard operating procedure for reopening swimming pools outside containment zones across the country, saying not more than 20 people would be allowed to train in one session at an Olympic-size pool.

Surprise supporter: Rohan Jaitley, son of the late Arun Jaitley who is in the poll for the presidential position in the Delhi and District Cricket Association, had a surprise visitor on Friday, with Leander Paes wishing him well ahead of his foray into cricket administration.

Bottas beats Hamilton to pole for Eifel Grand Prix: Valtteri Bottas ended Lewis Hamilton's run of five consecutive Formula One pole positions by claiming first place on the grid at the Eifel Grand Prix on Saturday. Hamilton briefly sat atop the time charts after toppling Max Verstappen in the third session, but his teammate Bottas sped through seconds later with an unbeatable time, fastest in all three sectors of the Nrburgring track.

New look of Kalinga Stadium: The Kalinga Stadium has completed a two-year milestone since being refurbished for the Hockey men's World Cup held in Bhubaneswar in 2018. The capacity of the main stadium was increased to 15,000. Two new galleries, one on north and other on the south side, were added to the iconic venue, making it a total of four grand stands.

Narine wins a thriller for KKR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ABU DHABI, 10 OCTOBER

Sunil Narine *(in photo, centre)* and Prasidh Krishna displayed ice-cool temperament at the death as Kolkata Knight Riders pulled off a stunning two-run victory over a self destructive Kings XI Punjab in an IPL game on Saturday. Dinesh Karthik's side pulled off yet another Houdini Act after they were seemingly down and out when KXIP opening pair KL Rahul (74) and Mayank Agawal (56) had put on 115 runs in 14.2 overs while chasing 165.

It looked like it would be only a matter of time when KXIP would wrap up the match and snap their four-match losing streak. But in the end, KXIP made a mess towards the end of their run chase to suffer their sixth defeat from seven matches and fifth on the trot while KKR notched up their fourth win in six matches. KXIP will now need a mathematical miracle to qualify. The Mohali-based outfit needed 22 from the final three overs but the match turned on its head in the 18th over. Nicholas Pooran (16) gifted his wicket in the over bowled by Narine who conceded just two runs.

Needing 20 runs in the last two overs, KXIP lost two wickets in the space of three balls, including that of Rahul, in the penultimate over bowled by pacer Prasidh Krishna.

KXIP needed 14 runs from the last over and six of the final delivery to take the match to Super Over but Glenn Maxwell could only score a boundary for KXIP to lose the match by two runs. Earlier, Rahul and Agarwal, the top two run getters in this IPL, avoided taking undue risk while getting the odd boundaries to keep the asking rate under control. They were 47 for no loss after powerplay with Pat Cummins bowling three of the first six overs. Rahul was dropped by Andre Russell off the bowling of Prasidh Krishna in the second over when he was on two. Russell hurt himself while fielding after a few overs but returned in the 11th over only to leave the field again in the 13th over.

KXIP were 76 for no loss at the halfway mark and the duo kept on getting the ones and twos without much trouble with the KKR suddenly finding a death over bowler less without Russell. KKR finally got the breakthrough with Agarwal holing out to Subhman Gill in the 15th over but new man in Pooran went for an unnecessary shot that led to his and KXIP's downfall.

Opting to bat, a counter-attacking 58 off just 29 balls by skipper Dinesh Karthik and opener Shubman Gill's 57-run knock helped KKR post 164 for 6. Karthik's decision to bat first seemed to be backfiring as KKR were struggling at 63 for 3 in the 11th over but he changed the complexion of the innings with a magnificent knock which included eight fours and two sixes. The KKR captain, who was run out in the last ball of the innings, had some exquisite shots and his placements were brilliant, besides his top-class running between the wicket. His fifty came off just 22 balls. Young opener Gill contributed a 47-ball 57 which had five fours. The 82-run stand between Karthik and Gill for the fourth wicket was the cornerstone of the KKR innings on a slow and difficult pitch.

SCOREBOARD

Kolkata Knight Riders innings:

Tripathi b Shami	4
S Gill run out	57
Nitish Rana run out	2
M Maxwell b Ravi Bishnoi	24
Karthik run out	58
Russell c Singh b A Singh	5
Cummins not out	5

Extras: 9 (b 1, lb 2, w 6, nb 0, p 0)
Total: 164 (6 wkts, 20 Overs)
Bowling: Shami 4-0-30-1, A Singh 4-1-25-1, Jordan 4-0-37-0, Mujeeb 4-0-44-0, Bishnoi 4-0-25-1.

Kings XI Punjab innings:

KL Rahul b Prasidh	74
M Agarwal c Gill b Prasidh	56
N Pooran b Narine	16
Simran Singh c Rana b Prasidh	4
Glenn Maxwell not out	10
M Singh c Green b Narine	0
Chris Jordan not out	0

Extras: 2 (b 0, lb 2, w 0, nb 0, p 0)
Total: 162 (5 wkts, 20 Overs)
Bowling: Cummins 4-0-29-0, Krishna 4-0-29-3, Nagarkoti 3-0-40-0, Chakravarthy 4-0-27-0, Narine 4-0-28-2, Rana 1-0-7-0.

Kohli's 90 not out leads RCB to 169 for 4 vs CSK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI, 10 OCTOBER

A brilliant unbeaten 90 by captain Virat Kohli powered Royal Challenger Bangalore to a competitive 169 for 4 after a slowish start against Chennai Super Kings in an IPL match here on Saturday. Kohli, who walked in at the fall of Aaron Finch in the third over, led from the front with a majestic 52-ball knock that was the finest blend of skill and peak fitness. His innings had four fours and as many sixes but in searing Dubai humidity ran four doubles in the final over, a testament to the hours put in physical training.

The RCB captain was involved in two half-century partnerships - one with opener Devdutt Padikkal (33 off 33 balls) and Shivam Dube (22 off 14 balls) for the fifth wicket, an unbeaten 76-run stand, which powered the total. The last five overs yielded 74 runs as the CSK bowlers appeared to falter after having allowed RCB to score only 95 in the first 15 as Kohli and the left-handed Dube went on the overdrive.

Deepak Chahar finished with 1 for 10 from three overs while Shardul Thakur (2/40) was the best in terms of wickets. Veteran Dwayne Bravo (0/29 in three overs) again showed his value by being economical at the death. RCB did not get off to a rapid start as the CSK bowlers kept them on a leash after an out-of-sorts Aaron Finch (2) went early.

Young Padikkal and skipper Kohli kept the scoreboard ticking but there were no big hits to be seen. Padikkal hoisted leggie Karn Sharma for a huge six in the 10th over. However, his attempt to clear mid-off did not materialise as he ended up giving a catch to Faf du Plessis to give Thakur his first wicket. Three balls later, Thakur struck a huge blow for CSK, getting AB de Villiers to nick one to Dhoni with a cross-seam delivery with the South African ace not troubling the scorers.

Brief Scores: Royal Challengers Bangalore: 169 for 4 in 20 overs (Virat Kohli 90 not out; Shardul Thakur 2/40).

I-League: Sporting take on newcomers ARA FC

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 10 OCTOBER

Mohammedan Sporting will look to put their missed chances from the previous game behind as they play newcomers ARA FC in the I-League Qualifiers here on Sunday. The match will be played at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan.

Mohammedan head coach Yan Law stressed on the innumerable chances that his side missed in the previous match. Star striker Willis Plaza's penalty hit the woodwork, and another clear cut chance also met the same fate against Garhwal FC.

"It is unfortunate that we missed so many chances in the last game. We even hit the woodwork twice. It just wasn't our day. Perhaps it was down to a lack of concentration in the final third, but we have been working on it during our training sessions," said Law.

Meanwhile ARA FC, the first side from Ahmedabad to compete in the second division league last season, will be playing their first match of the I-League Qualifiers.

Head coach Vivek Nagul echoed the sentiments of the squad, which is eager to return to football after a long time.

"The boys are playing really well. When you are going to play a match for the first time in such a long time, the mood in the camp is bound to be good," said Nagul. He stated that his charges were prepared to carry their form from last season, when they ended at the top of their respective zonal group.

"We had a very good performance in the second division league last season, and the spirits are high as the boys want to carry that form into this season.

"Mohammedan are a strong side, but we believe that we can perform on the given day and take the points," he said. The ARA head coach said that due to the current format of the I-League Qualifiers, his side will treat the round-robin matches as knockout games. "Every match is like a final for us. So we are going at it with the objective of picking up three points per game," he said.

FC Bengaluru United, Garhwal FC look to bounce back

Having lost their respective opening games of the I-League Qualifiers 2020, FC Bengaluru United and Garhwal FC will look to get off the mark when they lock horns at the Kalyani Municipal Stadium here on Sunday.

This is the first sporting event to be held in India post the seven-month long COVID-19-forced hiatus.

On the eve of the match on Saturday, Bengaluru head coach Richard Hood sounded cautious, stating that he expects nothing less than a "hard battle" from the Delhi-based side.

"We have maintained right from the start that there are no favourites or underdogs in this tournament and Garhwal proved us right. They are a very well-drilled unit that has everyone on the pitch playing out a very clear game plan," said Hood.

"They posed a serious challenge (in their last game against Mohammedan SC) for the three points right until the end with their intensity, physicality and collective play both on and off the ball."

Garhwal FC head coach Vikas Rawat was appreciative of the efforts put in by FC Bengaluru United to play an expansive style of football.

However, he implied that his charges will have their own plans of putting the ball in the Bengaluru net.

"Bengaluru are a strong team. We have obviously read them and seen what they are capable of. I really appreciate the efforts put in by them in the first match, though the result may not have been enough for them," said Rawat.

Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals face off in battle of equals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ABU DHABI, 10 OCTOBER

Many small battles are expected to unfold when the season's two most consistent teams -- Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals -- cross swords in a clash of equals in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday. Be it a potent top-order, a strong middle-order or a lethal bowling attack, there is hardly anything that separates the two sides.

If at all one team has a slight upper hand in any department, it's the experience in Mumbai Indians' pace bowling arsenal. Both Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult, with years of experience behind them, could be the difference in the most sought-after contest of this edition. It means that Shikhar Dhawan will have to strive harder to give the Capitals a solid start. The left-handed batsman has got starts in the last few games but needs a bigger innings under his belt and if it comes in a big contest, Capitals will have gained a lot.

MI vs DC: Match begins at 7.30 pm IST.

In a way, young Prithvi Shaw and the in-form Rishabh Pant will face their first stiff test when they face Bumrah and Boult, who can trouble any batsman with their pace and accuracy. The good news for Capitals is Shimron Hetmyer getting his touch back with the innings against Rajasthan Royals on Friday. He seemed to be the only weak link in Capitals' ranks but his six-laden knock against Royals has removed that worry.

Capitals' skipper Shreyas Iyer has been very impressive so far both as a batsman and as the leader of the pack. It will be interesting to see how he uses his resources against his in-form counterpart Rohit Sharma and his smashing middle-order due of Hardik Pandya and Kieron Pollard. They can change the complexion of the game within minutes and handling them will be the key.

RR look to capitalise on Stokes' probable return against SRH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI, 10 OCTOBER

Bruised and battered after a string of defeats, Rajasthan Royals will hope the presence of Ben Stokes gets the adrenaline flowing as they seek a revival of fortunes against a charged-up Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League on Sunday.

Rajasthan are struggling at the penultimate spot on the points table after two wins and four straight defeats, while Sunrisers have won three out of their six games so far and occupy the third position.

The Royals will be relieved to have the services of Stokes who completes his mandatory quarantine on Saturday. His absence has severely impacted the team's campaign, as the inaugural season champions struggled to figure out their best combination. Stokes had taken compassionate leave in the middle of England's home Test series against Pakistan in August and travelled to New Zealand to attend to his father who had been diagnosed with brain cancer. It was Stokes' father who reminded the star all-rounder of his duty towards his job and that might be playing in the 29-year-old's mind.

RR vs SRH : Match begins at 3.30 pm IST.

It is to be seen whether the World Cup winner, who has been out of action for some time now, is afforded the luxury of some practice or is played straight up. "Stokes hasn't had a lot of practice, he gets out of quarantine tomorrow, so we'll see if he plays the day after tomorrow," skipper Steve Smith had said after the match against Delhi Capitals.

Rajasthan, having lost to Delhi Capitals by a big margin of 46 runs, will look to stage a comeback. An aggressive bowling display coupled with some good fielding saw them restrict Delhi Capitals to 184 for eight. However, the batsmen, save Yashasvi Jaiswal (34) and Rahul Tewatia (38), struggled during the chase.

The top guns -- Jos Buttler, Smith and Sanju Samson -- will again need to live up to the expectations by contributing in a big way. Samson (176) and Smith (157) scored runs in their first two matches, twice taking the side past the 200-mark. Rajasthan's bowling is shouldered by pacer Jofra Archer and spinners Tewatia and Shreyas Gopal. The Royals were off to a flying start, winning both their games at Sharjah but the former champions have since struggled to replicate those performances.

Novak Djokovic sets up final with Nadal

AGENCIES
PARIS, 10 OCTOBER

Novak Djokovic *(in photo)* eventually saw off a battling Stefanos Tsitsipas over five sets to set up a French Open final with Rafael Nadal.

Djokovic looked to be easing to a relatively straightforward victory when he served for the match at 5-4 in the third set, only for Tsitsipas to save a match point and turn the contest completely around.

But the world No 1, who showed no signs of the neck and arm problems that bothered him in his quarter-final win over Pablo Carreno Busta, did not panic and reasserted control in the decider to win 6-3, 6-2, 5-7, 4-6, 6-1 after three hours and 54 minutes.

Earlier, Nadal gained revenge on Diego Schwartzman to reach his 13th French Open final. Schwartzman had managed his first victory over Nadal in 10 meetings at the Italian Open in Rome last month, but a repeat never looked on the cards in the Spaniard's fortress. Nadal's 6-3, 6-3, 7-6 (0) victory made it 99 wins and only two defeats at Roland Garros and he will challenge for yet another title on Sunday.

Nadal's dominance slipped in the third set and Schwartzman fought back from 2-4 before the second seed re-established control in the tie-break.

Nadal said: "I had a couple of mistakes. He played some good points. I knew against Diego it's very difficult until the end. Two and a half weeks ago I lost in Rome, so I expected a very tough match. I'm happy with the way I played."

Nadal was beaten by the 12th seed a little over two weeks ago on the claycourts in Rome but the 12-time French Open champion showed he was still the undisputed king of Roland Garros as he notched up a 10th win in 11 meetings over the Argentine. A victory on Sunday for the 34-year-old left-hander will tie him with Roger Federer's men's singles record of 20 major titles. The Spaniard reached his 13th French Open final without dropping a set in this year's edition.

Schwartzman, playing his first Grand Slam semi-final, had two breakpoints in the opening game but Nadal saved both to win the game after battling for 14 minutes.

The Spaniard went on to break the Argentine twice in each of the first two sets.

The duo traded double service breaks in the third set before Nadal aced the tiebreak without losing a point. Schwartzman found the net with a return to hand Nadal victory in three hours and nine minutes.

Leader explains why Kalyani doesn't mind in-camera matches

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

SHORT POINT

Soirees or soccer, the sleepy hicktown comes alive when it gets visits from outsiders relevant to the big event of the day and we all know why it's so. The marquee event is a welcome break from the monotony of its usually leisurely but uneventful existence. Kalyani revels in the bigtime sport brought to it periodically, what with football's Kolkata-based authorities passing the hosting responsibilities on to it quite often as they are short on facilities within or on the fringe of the metropolis.

The arrangement is fraught with a certain irony given that the town isn't represented in the ranks of the players that are to be seen in action but then, sensitivity is hardly a characteristic feature of football administration in this land. Kalyani, like other places similarly utilised but cast aside once the show is over, takes it in its stride.

With radio commentator Nilimesh Roychowdhury leading its civic body, it's nowadays a magnet for major events. Well, quite frequently. But how can it come to terms with in-camera matches and players cooped up in so-called bio-secure bubbles? Roychowdhury says Kalyani isn't hurt or fuming. "It's okay, I guess," he says, adding: "Covid - 19 has left us with few options. But still, everyone in and around Kalyani knows the I-League's second division matches have been split between Kolkata and this town in Nadia district. They watch the action on the telly but the ground, complete with the stadium, is being used and that too makes the people here happy and proud."

Roychowdhury concedes district football should have been taken greater care of but hopes things will look up in due course as winds of change blow around Sooterkin Street, in central Kolkata, where the state association is headquartered. But the hopeful note might seem feeble as it dates from the long-forgotten past, the passage of years having taken the vigour off it.

Among those who wanted the districts on the competitive platform as the Calcutta Football League's better-known clubs was PK Banerjee, who could be characteristically eloquent when he saw an exceptionally gifted footballer or a particularly peppy team with natural flair in a rural or suburban milieu. Banerjee never failed to remind people of the possibility of Kolkata's glamour clubs coming a cropper against the stars of the sticks in a home-and-away league that could unearth fresh talent, giving Bengal a leg up at a time when reliance on local talent is scarcely deemed a winning ploy out on the Maidan. People like Roychowdhury, whose personal initiatives have to be read into the efforts made in Kalyani, give us a chance we should not spurn.

Roychowdhury, of course, still relishes going on air. "I'm never very far away from it," he says, adding: "When we had the Durand Cup going on here, it was for me like yesterday once more. I was very happy doing the commentary. The sheer enjoyment of life that underpins Kalyani's elaborate arrangement also builds - or so we hope -a future, maybe one that justifiably stirs fresh expectations. That can keep us going. If the hope is fulfilled, well might we climb out of the dark pit of stagnation with a whoop and a holler.

Swiatek beats Kenin for French Open title

AGENCIES
PARIS, 10 OCTOBER

Teenager Iga Swiatek *(in photo)* became the first Polish player to win a Grand Slam singles title when she beat American fourth seed Sofia Kenin 6-4 6-1 in the French Open final on Saturday. The unseeded 19-year-old, who did not drop a set throughout the claycourt tournament, is the youngest winner since Monica Seles lifted the Suzanne Lenglen Cup in 1992. "I'm so happy. I'm so happy my family was here finally. It was overwhelming for me," said world number 54 Swiatek, the lowest-ranked player to win the women's title at Roland Garros since WTA rankings were introduced in 1975. "Two years ago I won a junior Grand Slam and now I'm here. It feels like such a short time. I'm just overwhelmed," she added as a sorry Kenin watched from her chair in tears.

Swiatek raced into a 3-0 lead for the loss of just three points before 21-year-old Kenin got into her groove, only for the Pole to bag the opening set on her opponent's serve after another trade of breaks. Kenin, who was gunning for a second major title after winning this year's Australian Open, received an off-court medical treatment on her left thigh after the third game of the second set.

It all proved too much to handle for the American, who won only three points after coming back on court as Swiatek swept to the title.

She is the first player not to drop a set en route to the women's title here since Belgium's Justine Henin in 2007.

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