

IN BRIEF

Illegal firearms supplier arrested

New Delhi: A man has been arrested for allegedly supplying illegal firearms to criminals in Delhi and its neighbouring areas, police said on Wednesday. The accused, Sajid, hails from the Mewat region of Rajasthan's Bharatpur district. He has been supplying arms and ammunition to criminals for four years, the police said. Twenty-one semi-automatic pistols and 40 live cartridges were seized from his possession. These arms and ammunition were to be supplied to criminals based in Delhi-NCR, the police said. "We received information that Sajid, who was earlier arrested by the Special Cell in a case of illegal firearms trafficking, was released from jail on bail and had again started indulging in inter-state illegal firearms trafficking," deputy commissioner of police (Special Cell) P S Kushwah said. Acting on a tip-off, a trap was laid and the accused was apprehended from northwest Delhi's Shastri Park, where he had come to supply arms and ammunition to criminals, the officer said. Sajid previously worked as a truck driver and also ran a dhaba in Dhar in Madhya Pradesh. — PTI

Ambedkar varsity releases 2nd cut-off

New Delhi: Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) released its second cut-off list for admission in undergraduate courses on Wednesday with the highest cut-off being 98.25 per cent for Psychology for aspirants from outside the national capital. The candidates from Delhi will need 97 per cent marks for admission in Psychology (Honours). For English, the cut-off for Delhi-based candidates is 95.25 per cent while candidates from outside the national capital need 95.75 per cent. Similarly for BBA, the cut-off for Delhi-based and outside Delhi candidates is 94.25 and 95.25 per cent, respectively. For Economics (Honours), the cut-off is pegged at 95.25 and 96.25, respectively. AUD is a Delhi government-run university and reserves 85 per cent of seats for candidates from the national capital and announces separate cut-offs for candidates from Delhi and outside the city. The cut-off for other popular courses like History, Mathematics and Sociology stands at 96 per cent, 92.5 per cent and 96.5 per cent. — PTI

Delivery man held for duping customer

New Delhi: A man working for an e-commerce platform has been arrested for allegedly duping a customer by falsely telling him that his order had been cancelled and promising him a refund, the police said on Wednesday. The accused, identified as Manoj (22), is a resident of Kirti Nagar in West Delhi, it said. When the man checked the status of his order, it showed that the mobile phone was delivered to him. He immediately contacted the Amazon office regarding refund of the amount paid. The e-commerce platform told him that according to their enquiry the mobile phone had been delivered to him. A probe was initiated after a complaint was received by a customer at the Kotla Mubarakpur police station in South Delhi on October 19, the police said. A raid was conducted and the accused delivery man was arrested. The customer's mobile phone was recovered from one Dhamvir, to whom the accused had sold the mobile phone, police said. — PTI

Criminal held after shootout in Noida

Noida: An alleged criminal was held after an encounter with police in Noida, officials said on Wednesday. The shootout took place near Sector 34 Metro station late on Tuesday night when the accused and his partner were intercepted for checking by a Sector 24 police team, they said. "The scooter was without a number plate and it was intercepted for checking. But the riders sped away. The pillion rider opened fire on police personnel who had surrounded them. One of them got injured in retaliatory firing and fell down along with the scooter while the other managed to escape from the spot, police said. — PTI

Over 2,000 patients benefited from plasma therapy, says Jain

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Wednesday asserted that over 2,000 Covid-19 patients here have benefited from plasma therapy, a day after a top ICMR official indicated that the Centre was considering removing it from the clinical management protocol. At a press conference, Jain also said these patients received convalescent plasma through the dedicated plasma banks of the city government, besides other people getting it directly from donors.

The first plasma bank was opened on July 2 by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at the state-run Institute of Liver and Biliary Science (ILBS) in south Delhi. After that



Satyendar Jain

another bank was opened at L N J P Hospital, a dedicated coronavirus facility. "We have been doing it (plasma therapy) trials after getting due permission. The ICMR-AIIMS study has not shown much breakthrough. But people are getting benefited from it here, and over 2,000 have benefited by receiving plasma from the dedicated bank only," Jain said, when asked about the Centre considering removing it from Covid-19 clinical management protocol. The Delhi health minister, himself a Covid-19 survivor, asserted that

"this has helped save my life too".

"Even America has acknowledged its benefit. And, research going on it world over. Delhi in a way is a pioneer in it and plasma therapy benefits have been seen. You should go and ask family members of those patients who were administered the plasma therapy," he said. The Centre is considering to remove convalescent plasma therapy from the national clinical management protocol for Covid-19, a top ICMR official had said on Tuesday.

Presently, the use of off-label convalescent plasma for treating Covid-19 patients in the moderate stage of the illness is allowed under "investigational therapies". — PTI

Covid +ve woman escapes from AIIMS, husband files report to mislead police

New Delhi, Oct. 21: In a bizarre turn of events, a 20-year-old woman who tested positive for coronavirus at AIIMS here allegedly escaped from the hospital, even as her husband filed a missing person complaint despite knowing her whereabouts, police said on Wednesday. According to police, the woman went to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on October 18 as she was unwell. She got herself tested for the infectious disease and was found positive.

The hospital staff asked her to get admitted at the dedicated Covid centre, but she escaped from there, they said.

Meanwhile, the woman's husband filed a police complaint alleging that his wife has gone missing, police said.

During the course of investigation, it was found that the woman, after leaving the hospital, managed

to reach her rented house in Zamrudpur village in south Delhi. Fearing that she would be caught, she left for her maternal house, a senior police official said.

"Her relatives, however, said that she had not reached her maternal house," he said.

The police said the woman's husband was aware that she was Covid-19 positive and had escaped from AIIMS. He filed the missing person complaint to mislead the police.

A case has been registered under IPC section 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 269 (Negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) at the Greater Kailash Police Station.

The matter is being investigated and teams have been formed to trace the couple," said the police. — PTI

■ Air quality 'very poor' in Faridabad, Gurgaon, Greater Noida**Pollution level worsens in Delhi, neighbouring cities**

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Delhi's pollution level worsened on Wednesday with the air quality index falling to 268 from 223 on the previous day but remained in the "poor" category, a government agency said.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board, Delhi's air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 268 on Wednesday morning. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, stated the share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution stood at 15 per cent on Wednesday.

"It is forecasted that the air quality will remain in marginally very poor category tomorrow and in marginally very poor to higher end of poor for October 23."

"The SAFAR synergised stubble burning fire counts around Haryana, Punjab and neighbouring regions stand at 849 for yesterday (Tuesday). The SAFAR model estimate of stubble burning share in PM2.5 is 15 per cent for today," it said.

The city recorded a 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) of 223 on Tuesday. It was 244 on Monday and 254 on Sunday.

The Delhi government has also kick-started its 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' anti-pollution campaign for which it has deployed 2,500 environment marshals at 100 traffic signals across the city to generate awareness and curb vehicular pollution.

The drive will go on till November 15 from 8 am to 8 pm. It is an awareness drive by the Delhi govern-



Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai along with civil defence volunteers during 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign, launched by the Delhi government to tackle air pollution in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

Sensitise students against bursting firecrackers, Delhi govt tells schools

New Delhi, Oct. 21: The Delhi government has directed all schools in the national capital to sensitise students against bursting firecrackers during the festival season in view of the deteriorating air quality, which is an increased cause of concern during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since the schools continue to be closed, the authorities have been advised to use WhatsApp groups and other virtual mediums to motivate the students to

"say no to crackers".

"Festive season of Diwali, Chhat Puja and Guru Parb is marked by heavy use of firecrackers, which release toxic pollutants like sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and many others which pollute the air and cause serious ailments like asthma, bronchitis, hypertension and cardiovascular problems. The air and noise pollution caused by the firecrackers also affect the lives of animals, birds and other living beings on earth," the Directorate of

Education (DoE) said in a letter to the school principals.

"The ailing and old persons are all the more prone to catch different allergies and diseases caused by pollution. During the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring better ambient air quality is essential since respiratory ailment is one of the major symptoms in corona patients and bursting of firecrackers can deteriorate air quality," it added. — PTI

ment and no person will be challaned, the government has said.

The air quality plunged to 'very poor' category in parts of Faridabad, Gurgaon, Gautam Buddh Nagar, and Ghaziabad in the National Capital Region on Wednesday, according to a government agency.

In Faridabad, the AQI was recorded at 365 at the station in Sector 11 followed by 316 at New Industrial Town, 278 at Sector 30 and 271 at Sector 16A, according to the CPCB data at 8 pm.

In Gurgaon, an AQI of 331 was recorded at the station in Sector 151 followed by 238 at Vikas Sadan and

228 at the Teri Gram, while there was insufficient data from the station at NISE Gwal Pahari. In Gautam Buddh Nagar's Noida, the AQI of 277 was measured at Sector 116, 264 at Sector 62 and 249 at Sector 1, while the station at Sector 125 showed "insufficient" data for the last 24 hours. — PTI

Toxic air in India killed 1.16L infants in '19: Study

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Air pollution contributed to the death of 16.7 lakh people in India in 2019, with over a lakh of them less than a month old, a new global study by a US-based NGO has revealed. According to the State of Global Air, 2020, a report on global exposure to air pollution, released by Health Effects Institute (HEI) on Wednesday, air pollution is the biggest health risk in India.

"Outdoor and household particulate matter pollution contributed to the death of more than 1,16,000 Indian infants in their first month of life in 2019. More than half of these deaths were associated with outdoor PM2.5 and others were linked to the use of solid fuels such as char-

coal, wood, and animal dung for cooking.

"Long-term exposure to outdoor and household air pollution contributed to over 1.67 million annual deaths from stroke, heart attack, diabetes, lung cancer, chronic lung diseases, and neonatal diseases, in India in 2019," the report said. The report also said there is clear evidence linking air pollution and increased heart and lung disease, creating a growing concern that exposures to high levels of air pollution could exacerbate the effects of Covid-19.

Dan Greenbaum, the president of HEI, said an infant's health is critical to the future of every society and this newest evidence suggests an especially high risk for infants born in

▶ **ALTHOUGH THERE** has been a slow and steady reduction in household reliance on poor-quality fuels, air pollution from these fuels continues to be a key factor in the deaths of these youngest infants, said Dan Greenbaum, president of Health Effects Institute

south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

"Although there has been a slow and steady reduction in household reliance on poor-quality fuels, air pollution from these fuels continues to be a key factor in the deaths of these youngest infants," he said.

Infants in the first month of life are already at a vul-

nerable stage. But a growing body of scientific evidence from multiple countries, including recent ICMR-supported studies in India, indicates that particulate air pollution exposure during pregnancy is linked to low birth weight and pre-term birth, the report said.

The new analysis reported in the State of Global Air this year estimates that nearly 21 per cent of neonatal deaths from all causes are attributable to ambient and household air pollution.

"Addressing impacts of air pollution on adverse pregnancy outcomes and newborn health is really important for low- and middle-income countries, not only because of the high prevalence of low birth weight, preterm birth, and

child growth deficits but because it allows the design of strategic interventions that can be directed at these vulnerable groups," said Kalpana Balakrishnan, an expert in air pollution and health. The report said overall, air pollution is now the largest risk factor for death.

According to it, South Asian countries, including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal, featured among the top 10 nations with the highest PM2.5 exposures in 2019.

"All of these countries experienced increases in outdoor PM2.5 levels between 2010 and 2019," the report stated, adding that since 2010, more than 50 million fewer people have been exposed to household air pollution. — PTI

■ First-ever khadi footwear range launched**Khadi fabric footwear will generate higher income for artisans: Gadkari**

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

The first ever khadi footwear range was launched on Wednesday by Union minister Nitin Gadkari. He suggested that Khadi India needs to tap on the purse, wallet, and women's bag market made of khadi fabric which has high global demand, particularly in the European countries.

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) footwear range was launched by Mr Gadkari in the presence of Union minister of state for MSME (Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) Pratap Sarangi and KVIC chairman Vinai Saxena. Praising the new range of footwear, Mr Gadkari said that such unique products had high potential of capturing the international market.

"At the same time, khadi fabric footwear would create additional employment and higher income for our artisans," he said.

"Khadi footwear is a unique product.



International quality and use of fine fabric like Patola silk, Banarasi silk, cotton, and denim would attract youngsters who can purchase it online.

These footwear are cost-effective," Mr Gadkari. She urged the KVIC to develop other leather accessories like ladies' handbags, purses, and wallet in handcrafted khadi fabric that has a huge potential in foreign markets.

"By developing and marketing such products overseas, Khadi India can capture a market worth ₹5,000 crore," Mr Gadkari added.

According to Mr Saxena, to begin with, the footwear have been launched in 15

designs for ladies and 10 designs for men.

Exquisite khadi products like Patola silk of Gujarat, Banarasi silk, Madhubani-printed silk of Bihar, khadi denim, Tussar silk, Matka-Katia silk, a variety of cotton fabric, tweed wool, and Khadi Poly Vastra have been used to make these footwear unique and trendy.

"Available in a wide range of designs, colours, and prints, these footwear have been designed to suit clothing for all purposes—formal, casual, and festive occasions. The khadi footwear price ranges from ₹1,100 to ₹3,300 per pair," said Mr Saxena.

Juvenile, friend held for stabbing man to death

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

Beaten by a man a few days back during an altercation, a juvenile and his friend allegedly stabbed him to death in outer Delhi's Kishan Colony, following which the accused were nabbed, police said on Wednesday.

The body of a man in his 20s with multiple stab injuries was recovered from behind a temple near Deep Vihar Chowk in Kishan Colony on October 12, they said.

During investigation, it was revealed that a teenager, a resident of the area, was missing since the night of October 11. Also, a man named Surjeet, a resident of the same area, was missing since the same night

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the juvenile told police that a few days ago they had an altercation with the man and were beaten up by him. Since then, the juvenile held a grudge against Vishal and planned to kill him, the police officer said.

On the evening of October 11, the juvenile called up the man seeking to meet him and patch up. When he arrived for the meeting, the juvenile and Surjeet stabbing him multiple times leading to his death, the DCP said.

SHORT TAKES

1st commissioned IAF woman dies

Bengaluru: Wing Commander (retd) Dr Vijayalakshmi Ramanan, the first woman commissioned officer of the Indian Air Force, has died at the age of 96. Ramanan, a recipient of Vishisth Seva Medal (VSM), died peacefully due to old age ailments on Sunday at her daughter's home here, her son-in-law S.L.V. Narayan said. Born in February 1924, she did her MBBS and later was commissioned in the Army Medical Corps on August 22, 1955 and was seconded to the Air Force with effect from the same day. Besides having served as a gynecologist at various Air Force Hospitals, including here, she had also attended to the troops wounded during wars and performed administrative duties. Ramanan was promoted to the rank of Wing Commander in August 1972, and honoured with the Vishisth Seva Medal five years later. She had retired in February, 1979. — PTI

'Dalits, tribals being raped in J'khand'

Dumka (J'khand): Senior BJP leader Babul Marandi on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the Hemant Soren government in Jharkhand, alleging that the law and order situation has "collapsed" under the incumbent administration and Dalit and Tribal girls are being raped and murdered in the state. The BJP Legislating Party leader, addressing a by-election rally in Dumka, alleged that legislators and officials are trying to brush off the rape and murder cases, with some even suggesting that such crimes are happening due to the use of mobile phones by girls. "More than 1,000 rapes, murders, kidnappings and lootings have taken place in Jharkhand in the last 10 months. Small girls, mostly Dalits and Tribals, are being raped and killed. — PTI

'Maha farmers to get compensation'

Mumbai: The flood-hit Maharashtra farmers, whose crops have been damaged by heavy rains, will soon get the compensation from the state government. A relief package will be announced in couple of days to ensure that there are no tears in the farmers' eyes during the festive season, said chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. The CM on Wednesday toured parts of the Marathwada region, which has been ravaged by the heavy rains. While Mr Thackeray assured compensation for the farmers, he also reiterated that the Centre has failed to give Maharashtra the state's share of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The state is yet to get its share of GST from the Centre. Had it been received, we could have done a lot.

COVID TOLL RISES TO 76,511 WITH 54K NEW CASES

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

As several European countries have started witnessing resurgence of a second wave of novel coronavirus, India seems to be slowly coming out of its first wave as the fresh Covid-19 cases and deaths in the country continue to decline. On Wednesday, India's overall Covid-19 tally crossed 76,511 with 54,044 new cases and 717 fatalities in a day. Total deaths in India so far due to the virus has been 1,16 lakh. "India has sustained its trend of maintaining the active cases below the 7.5 lakh mark for the 2nd successive day. With a high number of Covid-19 patients recovering every day, India's steady trend of posting high levels of daily recoveries also continues. 61,775 recoveries were registered in the last 24 hours in the country compared to 54,044 new confirmed cases," said the officials of union health ministry. They added timely treatment has led to the consistent slide in the National Fatality Rate which has fallen to 1.51 per cent now. The Centre has advised States and UTs to aim at bringing down the CFR to below 1 per cent. Presently 14 States and UTs are reporting Case Fatality Rate less than 1 per cent.

LJP promises Sita temple in Bihar

Party's vision document promises temple on lines of Ayodhya's Ram mandir

NAYEAR AZAD
PATNA, OCT. 21

LJP chief Chirag Paswan on Wednesday released his party's manifesto for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections. During the event, Chirag Paswan said that the manifesto was based on his party's vision of "Bihar first Bihar first" which will resolve many serious problems being faced by the people of the state. The manifesto promises to create job opportunities, better policies for education, health and industrial growth in the state. The vision document also emphasises on constructing a grand Sita temple in Sitamarhi on the lines of Ram Temple in Ayodhya to promote religious tourism in Bihar.

"There is tremendous scope for religious tourism in Bihar. We can construct a grand Sita temple in Sitamarhi and connect it with Ayodhya. Besides, there are other religious centres in the state which needs to be developed", Chirag Paswan said. Highlighting the failures of the state government led by chief minister Nitish Kumar he said that the vision document has been prepared based on ideas and suggestions received from four lakh Biharis. "The state will be ruined if Nitish Kumar becomes the Chief Minister again by mistake", LJP Chief Chirag Paswan said while releasing the manifesto at his party's office in Patna on Wednesday. Mr Paswan who broke away from the NDA citing ideological differences with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is contesting 143 out of 243 seats in Bihar. On many seats, he has fielded candidates against the JD(U) and two other NDA partners HAM and VIP.

He recently created a stir in Bihar politics by giving tickets to several sitting BJP MLAs after their seats went to the JD(U). The LJP had earlier decided not to field any candidates against the BJP during the entire polls. "I am fighting this lone battle to bring back the lost dignity of Biharis. Time has come when Nitish Kumar should explain why there are no industries in the state despite him being in power for 15 years. He keeps giving excuses that investment or industries couldn't come to Bihar because it is a landlocked state then why other states like Punjab and Haryana have developed despite facing similar problems", he said.

'Multilateralism in serious danger, time to reform UN'

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Sounding a note of caution, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday said multilateralism is in serious danger and it would be in the interest of the global community to reform the United Nations.

"If we can continue the way we are and given the fact that there is less and less common ground, especially between the P5, the permanent five powers, actually, we are going to make the UN less credible, less relevant, and I don't think the world wants that," he said. He said this during a panel discussion on the occasion of the release of book *Portraits of Power: Half a Century of Being at Ring Side* written by former bureaucrat and current finance commission chairman N.K. Singh.

The minister said it is time to reform the United Nations and move beyond speeches and commitments. In the past 15 years, the UN reform process is a bit like the Groundhog Day, he said, adding that every year, they have the same conversation and start all over again. "If this is to be serious, it has to be a negotiation. Negotiation means text, and record."



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav arrives to participate in his election campaign rally ahead of Bihar Assembly Polls at Premnagar in Rohtas district on Wednesday. — PTI

Yogi raises dilution of Art 370 in J&K to woo Bihar voters

Patna, Oct. 21: In a statement that may ruffle many feathers, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday asserted that the abrogation of Article 370 has given people of other states a "licence" to own property in Jammu and Kashmir.

The firebrand BJP leader made comments to the effect at rallies he addressed in Jamui, Tarari and Paliganj assembly constituencies of Bihar.

"Earlier, a person from this part of Bihar could not even think of owning property in Kashmir. The Congress had put such a system in place. But Narendra Modi and Amit Shah changed all that. Article 370 has been scrapped and the people now have a license to purchase and own property in any part of Kashmir, he said. The remarks come at a time when there have been vociferous demands for ensuring that jobs and property in Jammu and Kashmir, downgraded from a state and split into two Union Territories, be reserved for locals. Yogi also remarked



Yogi Adityanath

mockingly that Pakistan could no longer think of sponsoring terrorism for fear of surgical strikes.

People from this part of the country, desirous of visiting Kashmir, may rest assured. Anybody who casts a malevolent glance at them will have bullets pierced between their two eyes, said the seer-politician, evoking a thunderous applause.

Mr Yogi also took potshots at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, both of whom have questioned the revocation of special status to Kashmir.

The people of the country are happy over scrapping of Article 370. But these two leaders seem to be more interested in making Pakistan happy, he said. — PTI

Cong to give 10L jobs, loan waiver

Party releases manifesto for Bihar, promises repeal of farm laws brought by NDA

Patna, Oct. 21: The Congress on Wednesday released its manifesto for the Bihar Assembly polls, promising 10 lakh government jobs, farm loan waiver and a monthly unemployment allowance of ₹1,500 if voted to power. It also assured the farmers of 50 per cent rebate in electricity bills and repeal of the three farm laws brought by the Centre.

Actor-turned-politician Raj Babbar released the manifesto titled "Badlav Patra 2020" (The Document of Change) here at the party's state headquarters

Sadaqat Ashram in the presence of national general secretaries Randeep Singh Surjewala and Tariq Anwar and AICC Bihar incharge Shakti Singh Gohil.

The Congress is contesting 70 out of the 243 Assembly seats in alliance with the RJD, and three Left parties.

The RJD will contest 144 seats, CPI(M) 19, CPI six and CPI(M) four.

Brushing aside chief minister Nitish Kumar's mockery of the Mahagathbandhan's promise of sanctioning 10 lakh

governance of the Nitish Kumar-led alliance government. Addressing a rally here in Bhagalpur district ahead of the Assembly polls beginning October 28, Singh said, "The alliance of the BJP and the JD(U) is as superhit as the opening pair of Sachin and Sehwag of Indian cricket team."

He said the alliance government has provided basic facilities of electricity, road and water, which Bihar lacked for decades. "People have seen the 15-year rule of 'lalten' (RJD's poll symbol lantern) and they have also seen the development of Bihar during the BJP-JD(U) alliance government. The performance of these two governments cannot be compared. Bihar transformed under the NDA government," he said. — PTI

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Pakistan likely to remain in FATF grey list

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, OCT. 21

Pakistan may remain on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as it has been unable to comply with six of the 27 points in the global terror financing and money laundering watchdog's action plan, a media report said on Wednesday.

The Paris-based global watchdog will hold its virtual plenary session from October 21 to 23. It will review Pakistan's progress on the 27-point action plan.

The FATF had placed Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action to curb money laundering and terror financing by the end of 2019, but the deadline was extended later on due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In making 20 per cent progress in the remaining six points of the action plan, it said. The country has complied with the points related to money laundering. The remaining six points pertain to terrorism financing. The International Cooperation Review Group of the FATF has acknowledged that Pakistan had complied with 21 points of the action plan, the report said.

Seeking to wriggle out of the FATF's grey list, debt-ridden Pakistan in August imposed financial sanctions on 88 banned terror groups and their leaders, including 26/11 Mumbai attack mastermind and Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar and underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. Pakistan won a three-month further extension to complete FATF's 27-point action plan because of the coronavirus pandemic. — PTI

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India & US to hold 2+2 dialogue on October 27

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

United States secretary of state Michael R. Pompeo and secretary of defence Mark T. Esper will indeed visit New Delhi on October 26 and 27 and will hold talks with their Indian counterparts S. Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh on October 27 as part of the Indo-US 2+2 talks at the foreign and defence ministerial level, New Delhi finally announced on Wednesday, adding that the agenda would "cover all bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest". In a separate late evening statement, the United States said the talks were "to advance the U.S.-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and expand cooperation to promote stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and the world".

Mr. Pompeo meanwhile will separately visit Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia after his visit to India.

The tense situation on the Sino-Indian border in the Ladakh sector and Chinese military brinkmanship in Asia are bound to figure during the Indo-US talks, observers point out.

"India will be hosting the third India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue on 27 October 2020 in New Delhi. US secretary of state Michael R. Pompeo and secretary of defence Mark T. Esper will be visiting India on 26-27 October 2020 to participate in the Dialogue

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New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Administrative Building, Sector - 6, Noida - 201301 (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

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SR. No.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD B&R PANCHKULA.	TENDER FOR THE WORK OF CONSTRUCTION OF PARKING AREA IN THE CAMPUS OF GOVT. POST GRADUATE COLLEGE, SECTOR-1, PANCHKULA (BACKSIDE OF RESIDENTIAL AREA). + 4 OTHER WORKS	20.10.2020 05.11.2020	946.94 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2920477 pwd-eeep-panchkula@hry.nic.in
2	PWD B&R, AMBALA	CHC OF CENTRAL AC PLANT (INCLUDING 24/ 7 OPERATION INCLUDING HOLIDAYS) IN BLOCK - A, B & C IN CIVIL HOSPITAL SEC-6, PANCHKULA FOR THE YEAR 2020-21 (PERIOD 01/11/2020 TO 31/03/2021). + 15 OTHER WORKS	23.10.2020 05.11.2020	228.85 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0171-2630877 pwd-eeed-ambala@hry.nic.in
3	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES PANCHKULA	PHOTOSTAT WORK IN SINCHAI BHAWAN, SECTOR-5, PANCHKULA FOR ONE YEAR	CLOSING DATE 02.11.2020	4.94 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2570325 xencost1@yahoo.com
4	ADDITIONAL DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, FARIDABAD	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION/CONS. & COMMISSIONING OF GOBARDHAN PROJECT IN GRAM PANCHAYAT MOHNA, BLOCK BALLABGARH, DISTRICT FARIDABAD	27.10.2020 05.11.2020	58.97 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	fbdhshbm@gmail.com 0129-2279922
5	CONTROLLER, PRINTING & STATIONERY DEPARTMENT, HARYANA, CHANDIGARH	PURCHASE OF STATIONERY ITEM FOR ELECTION 2020-2021	CLOSING DATE 09.11.2020	32 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	6239476892 basurajender1964@gmail.com

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SHORT TAKES

Punjab farmer relax 'rail roko' stir

Chandigarh: The farmer bodies in Punjab, which have been protesting the three farm laws passed in the monsoon session of Parliament, announced on Wednesday an easing of their three-week-long 'rail roko' agitation by allowing movement of goods trains in the state. The decision came a day after the Punjab Assembly passed Bills to counter the Centre's contentious farm laws. Farmer leader Satnam Singh said the decision was taken keeping in mind the shortage of coal and diammonium phosphate (DAP) fertiliser. "We have decided to allow only goods trains from today till November 5," he said after a meeting of different farmers' organisations. Chief minister Amarinder Singh welcomed the decision, saying it was in the interest of the state's economy and its revival. — PTI

24 more Palghar case accused held

Palghar: At least 24 more people were arrested on Wednesday in connection with the mob lynching case, in which three persons were killed in a Gadchinchale village of Maharashtra's Palghar district, an official said. A total of three FIRs have been registered in connection with the incident that took place on April 16, following which the government came down heavily on the police personnel. The Maharashtra CID, which is probing the case, has arrested 24 more persons. As many as 128 persons, including two juveniles, have been arrested in connection with the attack. — PTI

Police summons Kangana, sister

Mumbai: The police issued notices to Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli, asking them to appear before cops next week to record their statements in connection with a case filed against them for allegedly promoting enmity between communities through their remarks. The Bandra Metropolitan Magistrate's court had on Saturday ordered the police to probe a complaint filed by Munawwar Ali Sayyed, a Bollywood casting director, which referred to Ranaut's and her sister's tweets and other statements. — PTI

GJM's Gurung suddenly surfaces

■ **Continued from Page 1** political solution for the hills. It has not included 11 Gorkha communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes. We were cheated. So we are quitting the NDA."

He added: "But Mamata Banerjee kept her promises. In next year's election, we will ally with her party to give a fitting reply to the BJP. Our demand for Gorkhaland is still alive. Our aim and vision is to take our cause forward. In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, we will support the party which will take up our cause."

Mr Gurung revealed that he spent a long time in New Delhi after fleeing the hills in the wake of cases on the violence. He said that he came to Jharkhand only two months ago. But his calculated move came at a time when the BJP is raking up the Gorkhaland demand to corner the ruling Trinamul Congress in the Assembly polls.

It also coincides the Centre's attempt to hold talks on Gorkhaland with the GJM and the Mamata Banerjee government. On October 19, BJP president J.P. Nadda had assured a meeting of different communities in North Bengal of fulfilling the demands for Gorkhaland and the inclusion of 11 Gorkha communities in the Scheduled Tribes' list.

State BJP spokesman Sayantan Basu alleged that the TMC had exercised pressure tactics on Mr Gurung to toe its line.

Cabinet okays J&K changes

■ **Continued from Page 1** boards, which were chaired by a Cabinet minister or a minister of state, and included MPs, MLAs and MLCs.

The decision taken at the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday. Mr Javadekar said the decision was people friendly and another step towards assimilation of the region's people with the mainstream after Article 370 was abolished in August last year and Jammu and Kashmir was made a Union territory, separating it from Ladakh,

Khadse to join NCP, blames Fadnavis for leaving BJP

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, OCT. 21

Veteran BJP leader Eknath Khadse on Wednesday resigned from the BJP. After spending almost four decades in the BJP, Mr Khadse is all set to join Sharad Pawar led NCP on Friday. While Mr Khadse blamed Mr Fadnavis for his decision to leave the BJP, NCP's state president Jayant Patil claimed that some sitting MLAs also want to join the NCP, but their entry into his party has been put on hold to avoid byelection during coronavirus pandemic.

Announcing his decision to resign from the BJP, Mr Khadse, who is a senior OBC leader, said that he was not upset with any other party leader except for Mr Fadnavis. "I am upset with former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, who made the police fabricate false cases against me. One case of



I am upset with former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, who made the police fabricate false cases against me. One case of outraging the modesty of a woman was registered against me on the orders from Mr Fadnavis

— Eknath Khadse, Ex-BJP leader

outraging the modesty of a woman was registered against me on the orders from Mr Fadnavis, who was then CM and home minister," he said.

The 68-year-old leader said that the NCP did not offer him any post and he is not joining the NCP for any post. If he wanted any post, he would have easily got it in the BJP, he said.

Mr Patil said that Mr Khadse will be officially inducted in the NCP on Friday. "Several BJP MLAs are in touch with him and want to join the NCP. But we don't want elections at the time when the state is dealing with

the coronavirus pandemic. A decision on it will be taken later," Mr Patil said.

When asked about Mr Khadse's allegations against him, Mr Fadnavis said, "It is very unfortunate that Nathabhau (Mr Khadse) has resigned from the party. He should have complained against me to senior leaders. Whatever, he is saying is half-truth. But today, I will comment on it. I will answer at an appropriate time."

Meanwhile, BJP state chief Chandrakant Patil said that the party tried its best to keep Mr Khadse in the party but the efforts turned out to be futile.

Don't touch innocents: L-G to police

If people sleep at ease, it is because of police force, says Manoj Sinha

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, OCT. 21

Jammu and Kashmir lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday asked the police and other security forces not to touch the innocents, but, at the same time, play tough against those found breaking law in their fight against militancy and anti-national activities.

Speaking at a police commemoration parade at Zewan near here, he said, "Don't touch the innocents and don't spare the culprits". As put by an official statement here, this was "a stern message to the anti-national elements" and a push to the police and security forces "to go all out in neutralising the threats".

Commending the J&K

Over 6,000 cops killed in J&K since 1989

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, OCT. 21

As many as 6,000 policemen were killed while fighting militants in J&K where the separatist campaign burst into major violence in 1989. Thirteen such deaths took place in past one year.

DGP Dilbag Singh said on Wednesday that 13 J&K policemen were among over 40 security personnel who laid down their lives

police's role in combating a three-decade-old insurgency, Mr Sinha said, "If people sleep at ease, it is because of the police force which works tirelessly to protect J&K from the evil

in the line of duty across the UT in past one year. "From September 1, 2019 to October 21 2020, thirteen policemen and 27 other security forces personnel were killed in militancy and other violence-related incidents. The recent causality is of an inspector Muhammad Ashraf of Anantnag," he said.

The police chief, while addressing the policemen at the commemoration day parade at Zewan, said

the families of policemen killed in line of duty were being provided with due compensation and that their morale was high. "I met the family members of slain inspector Muhammad Ashraf and his daughter told me that she wants to keep the mission of her father alive," he said. Inspector Ashraf was gunned down by suspected militants in Anantnag's Kenalwan areon Monday.

He asserted that there was a need "to take stories of bravery and sacrifice of our policemen to our future generations so that they acknowledge the sacrifices of our martyrs".

EC serves Kamal Nath notice over his 'item' jibe

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

The Election Commission of India has issued a notice to Congress leader Kamal Nath for his derogatory comments against BJP candidate Imarti Devi. Mr Nath, during an election rally at Dabra, Gwalior, on October 18 had, without naming Imarti Devi, addressed her as an "item," a comment that has not gone down well with the EC.

It has said that such a derogatory statement is a violation of the General Code of Conduct and construed as being repugnant to the honour and dignity of women and asked Kamal Nath to submit an explanation in the next 48 hours failing which the EC will take its call.

The EC has mentioned that it has received a complaint from National Commission of Women chairperson, saying Mr Nath has used the word "item" for a woman minister and has "strongly condemned such irresponsible and disparaging statement by a person holding responsible office." A video clip of the speech in which Mr Nath used such a word was also submitted before the EC. The EC said it has found Mr Nath's statement to be in violation of the provisions of General Conduct of Model Code of Conduct.

Ex-CM's 'item' remark at mantri divides Cong

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, OCT. 21

Veteran leader Kamal Nath's "item" jibe against women and child development minister Imarti Devi has divided the Madhya Pradesh Congress with an influential section of leaders demanding an apology from him.

Senior leader Mayank Agrawal also criticised Mr Nath for refusing to apologise for his remark. "In fact, Mr Nath should have offered his apology immediately after making the statement and set the con-

troversy at rest. He should apologise now since Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has taken exception to his remarks," Mr Agrawal, considered close to former CM Digvijay Singh, told reporters here.

Several senior Congress leaders privately disapproved of Mr Nath's "item" jibe fearing that his remarks may have negative impact on the prospects of Congress in by-elections to 28 Assembly seats, in which party sees an opportunity to return to power in the state.

Shivraj plays son of soil card, dubs Nath 'outsider'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, OCT. 21

With crucial bypolls barely 12 days away, chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday sought to play "son of the soil" card to counter the Congress by dubbing his arch rival Kamal Nath as an "outsider".

Addressing an election meeting at Chhatrapur district's Bada Malhera, Mr Chouhan said, "I was

born in Jaita village of MP. But Mr Nath is an outsider. No one knows from which state Mr Nath hailed. He is alien to the state and its culture".

He said the Congress leader has kicked up a row by terming state women and child development minister Imarti Devi, a dalit, as 'item' since he is not aware of culture of the state where girls are worshipped and women are respected.



Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal during a jeep safari at the Kaziranga National Park.

Mizoram to remove forces, Assam to let trucks cross border
Assam & Mizoram agree to restore normalcy at border

Assam Rifles ambushed in Arunachal, 1 jawan martyred

AGE CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI, OCT. 21

In an ambush a rifle-man of Assam Rifles was killed by suspected National Socialist Council of Nagaland (I-M) militants near Sanliam village, about 10 km south of Khonsa, in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district on Wednesday.

Informing that heavily armed Naga rebels ambushed a patrolling

team of the Assam Rifles, security sources said that a rifle-man Babu Rao, a resident of Andhra Pradesh, sustained bullet injuries and died on the way to hospital.

The development came three months after 6 Assam Rifles killed six NSCN (I-M) militants in an early morning encounter near Nginu village, close to Myanmar border, in neighbouring Longding district.

Both the states agreed to restore peace and tranquility along the border areas, provide security and instil a sense of safety among the people there, an offi-

cial spokesperson said. Mr Garg said the central, Assam and Mizoram governments had fruitful discussions and resolved to settle the matter amicably

Farooq again quizzed by ED in J&K's cricket scam

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, OCT. 21

Former chief minister and NC chief Farooq Abdullah was on Wednesday again summoned by the Srinagar wing of Enforcement Directorate (ED) to its office here where he was grilled by its officials in connection with an alleged multi-crore scam in J&K Cricket Association (JKCA).

This was the second time in three days that the three-time J&K chief minister had to face the cross-examination by the ED officials, termed by the NC as "part of a coercive plot." His son and NC vice-president Omar Abdullah lamented, "This on a day when my father turns 84!"

On Monday, Mr Abdullah was "interrogated" by the ED officials for seven hours over his alleged role in misappropriation of ₹113.66 crore (including bank interest) received by J&KCA from the BCCI between April 2002 and December 2011.

The NC lambasted the government over its "agenda of cornering voice of dissent." Terming it a "calculated coercive measure", party spokesman Imran Nabi Dar asked, "What is it that the ED forgot to ask during the six hours it interrogated the 83-year-old member of Parliament (on Monday)?"

Maharashtra govt withdraws 'general consent' to CBI

Mumbai, Oct. 21: The Maharashtra government on Wednesday issued an order withdrawing consent accorded to the members of the Delhi Special Police Establishment to exercise the powers and jurisdiction under an act in the state.

According to sources, the move implies that the CBI will not have general consent, accorded by the Maharashtra government by an order on February 22, 1989, to exercise its powers and jurisdiction in the state and will have to get the state government's permission to probe any matter.

Earlier this year, the Sushant Singh Rajput death case was being probed by Mumbai police. However, the investigation into the case was later handed over to the CBI based on an FIR registered by the actor's father in Patna.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (25 of 1946), the government of Maharashtra hereby withdraws the consent accorded to the members of Delhi Special Police Establishment," the order read.

The consent was given through an order of the home department dated February 22, 1989, as also by any other instruments issued by the state government from time to

and Assam home secretary G.D. Tripathi, the spokesman said.

Mr Tripathi said both the sides held meetings to restore peace and normalcy in the disturbed areas.

Teams of officers from the two states led by their home secretaries met at an Army camp close to Lailapur, along the interstate boundary, to resolve the imbroglio rising out of the clash between the people of the two states on Saturday night and to restore peace and normalcy in the disturbed areas, the spokesman said.

As part of confidence building measures, both the sides will interact and coordinate once a month at the deputy commissioner of police and divisional forest officers' levels to sort out any issue. — PTI

Fake TRP scam: Names of 2 more channels crop up

Mumbai: The names of two more TV channels have surfaced during the investigation of alleged fake Television Rating Points (TRP) scam, police said on Wednesday.

While one is a news channel, the other one is an entertainment channel, the official said.

Earlier, three channels, including Republic TV, were found allegedly involved in the scam.

Meanwhile the probe team once again recorded statements of Republic TV CFO S. Sundaram and executive editor Niranjan Narayanswami. — PTI

time, to exercise the powers and jurisdiction under the said Act in the state of Maharashtra, it read.

According to sources, if the CBI wants to probe any matter, it will have to approach the state government for its consent.

"Though the general consent has been withdrawn, the government can decide on giving permission on a case to case basis," they said.

Sources said that the states like West Bengal and Rajasthan have already taken such a step. — PTI



A family member of a martyr pays tribute on the occasion of National Police Commemoration Day in Chikmagalur on Wednesday.

— PTI

Ending longest shutdown, Kaziranga park opens for tourists

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, OCT. 21

Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Wednesday formally opened the Kaziranga National Park for the tourists and flagged off jeep safari which have been allowed to ply in two—Kohora and Bagori ranges of the national park while other two ranges would be opened from November for the visitors where elephant safari will also be started.

Hoping that Assam's

tourism sector would be able to overcome the setback of COVID-19 lockdown soon, Mr Sonowal told reporters that the national park has been opened for both domestic and foreign tourists.

He also expressed optimism that the unemployed youths in and around Kaziranga would find meaningful employment again through jeep safari and other tourism activities.

Referring to one time financial assistance provided to people engaged in

jeep safari by the state government to alleviate their economic stress brought by Covid-19, Mr Sonowal said that the state government would take more such initiatives in future for providing succour to the people engaged in tourism sector of the state. He also called on the people of the five districts covered by Kaziranga National Park and the local communities residing in the surrounding areas of the park to extend full hospitality to the visitors coming from outside

so that the best picture of the state can be presented to the outside world.

He also highlighted the achievement of the state government in stopping rhino poaching to a great extent in the last four and half years and he thanked the people of the nearby areas for extending their full cooperation. He also called on the people to maintain all Covid-19 protocols while visiting the national park and other such places so that the spread of the pandemic can be contained.

THE ASIAN AGE

22 OCTOBER 2020

Punjab makes a point, will other states follow?

The passage of four bills and a resolution by the Punjab Assembly seeking to undo the impact of the three recently passed Central laws to regulate farming could trigger a political war between the Opposition-ruled states and the Centre on agriculture, a state subject as per the seventh schedule of the Constitution.

While the unanimous resolution passed by the Assembly in the Congress-ruled state has asked the Centre to annul the Central laws and promulgate an ordinance making procurement of food grains on minimum support price (MSP) a statutory right of the farmers, the three state laws seek to address the grievances of the farmers who have been protesting against the Central laws. According to the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020, no sale of paddy and wheat will be valid in the state unless the rate of payment is equal to or above the MSP and its violation could attract imprisonment of not less than three years and a fine. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020, provides for a fee to be levied on traders or electronic trading and transaction platforms for trade outside the mandis run by the Agricultural Produce Market Committees. The Bill amending the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, seeks to protect the farmers from attachment of land below 2.5 acres in recovery proceedings, insulating small farmers from the provisions of the Central law that facilitates contract farming. The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions and Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2020, empowers the state to set stock limits

The Punjab bills offer pretty little in terms of reforming them. If it really wants to support the farmers and win the argument on the issue of farm bills, the Congress government should make the functioning of the mandis transparent and non-exploitative.

under extraordinary circumstances, a power the Central law had reserved for the Union government.

While the Central laws concerned made the mandis redundant by allowing farmers to sell outside them, the state law makes such trade unviable by making it a costly deal.

That these laws followed the exhortation of Congress president Sonia Gandhi to the states her party rules to take legislative route to checkmate the Centre's move makes their fate uncertain as governors can sit on them or consult the President, as per the constitutional provisions. It is highly likely that courts will be called upon to decide on the constitutionality or otherwise of the bills and the farmers will have to wait to benefit from them, if there is any.

It's pretty clear that the Capt. Amarinder Singh government is making a political point by moving the bills. The BJP had claimed that the Modi government was doing what the Congress had promised in its manifesto—to free up the mandis from all controls. The Congress, however, had explained that the party was aiming at reforms of the markets that were long overdue. It may be noted that the Punjab bills offer pretty little in terms of reforming them. If it really wants to support the farmers and win the argument on the issue of farm bills, the Congress government should make the functioning of the mandis transparent and non-exploitative. Whether it will walk the talk is the moot question.

'Rapist' trolls: Shame them

The cyber wing of the Chennai police should not stop with registering the case against the Twitter user who issued a rape threat to the daughter of award-winning film actor Vijay Sethupathi. The police should pursue the pervert, going by the Twitter handle @itsrithikrajh, in all earnestness and arrest him. Earlier, the five-year-old daughter of cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni was threatened similarly by a 16-year-old boy from Gujarat on Instagram. Though the police cracked down quickly and caught the boy, it is not clear what action was taken under the law, which would serve as a deterrent to every other pervert lurking in the shadows of social media.

Traditionally, rape threat has been used as a weapon by roguish men to establish their gender supremacy and to intimidate women they disliked. That it is now used freely in social media to silence women who have a mind of their own is one of the banes of modern society. It is a tragedy that not much has been done by the enforcing agencies so far to put an end to this cheap tactic employed by men running short of ideas and words to counter women intellectually.

Now that the trend has degenerated further, touching such an abysmal level wherein men threaten children just because they do not agree with their fathers' behavior, whatever it is, the crime has to be seen in a new light. Rape threat should be treated as a felony and dealt with accordingly by the police. Also, such persons need to be exposed to society with a view to telling all men that as a civilised society we have zero tolerance to rape and rape threat. Above all, we need to enlighten young men that such threats come out of men's impotence in dealing with themselves and their problems.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



CIC sans chief, only 10 of 28 panels worked during lockdown

Fifteen years after the Right to Information (RTI) Act came into force, does the nation have more transparency or less? The story is quite sombre. More than 2.2 lakh cases are pending at the Central and State Information Commissions. Nine out of 29 information commissions are functioning without a chief, one-fourth of information commissioner posts are vacant and the state commissions in Jharkhand and Tripura are defunct. No new commissioners have been appointed.

Even the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has refused to disclose details on the PM-Cares Fund stating that the fund is "not a public authority" within the ambit of the RTI Act!

The absence of a commissioner has serious ramifications for the effective functioning of the information commissions. But even the Central Information Commission, which hears second appeals against all central government departments and UTs, has been without a chief since August this year. Bimal

Julka, who headed the CIC for barely six months, demitted office in August, upon reaching the age limit stipulated in the Act.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, only 10 of the 28 information commissions worked and even these hardly heard any appeals.

Yet, it is not just the transparency law that has suffered. There are other vacancies in key organisations that indicate a drift not usually associated with the Modi sarkar. Sources say that the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PSEB) has been headless for more than a month after Rajiv Kumar, a former finance secretary, demitted office at the end of August and was appointed Election Commissioner in place of Ashok Lavasa. Similarly, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has been headless for more than seven months, among others.

Apparently, as many as six ministries and departments are awaiting regular secretaries. Some estimate that dozens of board-level positions in several central PSUs are lying vacant with no sign of

when these will be filled.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

The 360-degree method of empanelment of officers has been a major administrative "reform" introduced by the Modi sarkar to judge the performance of officers. However, not all officials have been happy with it, since it allows retired officers to influence their careers. Many careers have been marred as a result, say sources.

But that may have changed, with the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) deciding not necessarily to act on the advice of the 360-degree committees, and even rejecting their recommendations as and when required. The case of UT cadre IAS officer G. Narendran Kumar is often cited as an example of the subjectivity often behind recommendations of these committees.

In September 2017, Mr Kumar was posted in Puducherry was booked by the CBI for alleged irregularities in admission to postgraduate medical courses in private colleges. Though the allegations turned out to be false, Mr Kumar's

career was damaged. It is only now that his name has finally put on the list of the review empanelment order issued last month, after missing the opportunity for empanelment in 2018 due to the case against him. The consensus among babus is that Mr Kumar is among the best officials but suffers from the "disability" to network. Mr Kumar had got caught in the political battle between the chief minister and then lieutenant governor of Puducherry and has paid a price. Some retired senior officers are said to have played a part in this episode and their advice proved costly to Mr Kumar, in career terms.

The damage may have been done, but observers say that the government's belated move does send out a message that fair dealings may be delayed for a while, but not forever.

NEW PORTFOLIOS FOR RBI DEPUTY GOVERNORS

The recent appointment of Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s senior-most executive director M. Rajeshwar Rao as the deputy governor of the bank, has now led to a reallocation

of portfolios of the four deputy governors. Mr Rao replaced N.S. Vishwanathan, who stepped down three months ahead of the end of his tenure on health grounds. Mr Rao will oversee the department of regulations and also the departments of communication, enforcement, inspection, legal and risk monitoring.

The RBI's other three deputy governors are B.P. Kanungo, M.K. Jain and Michael Debabrata Patra. While Mr Patra will continue to look after the monetary policy department, Mr Jain will be in charge of central security cell, corporate strategy and budget departments, while Mr Kanungo will oversee coordination, currency management and external investments and operations. In April this year, the government had extended Mr Kanungo's tenure by a year.

Deputy governors of RBI are appointed for an initial period of three years and can be reappointed.

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



Step up pressure on Xi; bring France into Quad



Claude Arpi

Since five months now, Indian and Chinese troops have stood face-to-face in the high Himalayas; in all probability, the standoff will continue during the cold winter months ahead in Ladakh.

It has consequences at many levels, not just militarily.

The first: what has President Xi Jinping achieved by trying to advance a few hundred metres in Galwan, Gogra or Pangong Tso?

Different motives have been attributed to the Chinese chess moves.

To cite a few, Beijing wanted to stop the Darbuk-Shyok-DBO Road, protect China's projects in Gilgit Baltistan (and Shaksam valley occupied by China); gain strategic advantages on the ground; enhance Chairman Xi's prestige; boost the standing of the People's Liberation Army; humiliate an arrogant competitor (India) in a period of weakness; it was even rumoured that Gen. Zhao Zongqi, the Western Theatre Command chief, thought he would get a seat in the powerful Central Military Commission after Ladakh.

China is today the loser: infrastructure development will continue, India will not renounce its legitimate claims on Gilgit-Baltistan, and so on.

Further, Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Xinjiang may come up for discussion in the not-too-far future and the "One-China" policy may be questioned in many quarters.

This didn't stop Zhao Lijian, the Chinese foreign ministry's "wolf warrior" spokesman, to continue with his anti-India tirades: "China does not recognise the so-called 'Ladakh Central Territory' and 'Arunachal Pradesh' illegally established by India, and opposes development of infrastructure construction in border dispute areas for the purpose of

military control."

This diplomat had the cheek to add: "Neither party should take any actions in the border area that would complicate the situation in order to avoid affecting the efforts of both parties to ease the situation." This was the day Beijing announced a new strategic road leading up to Metok, north of the McMahon Line.

A Chinese TV report said the Pai-Metok Highway will be completed by the end of September 2022: "After completion, the length of the road from Nyingchi City to Metok County [North of Upper Siang of Arunachal Pradesh] through Bomi County will be shortened from 346 km to 180 km, and the driving time will be shortened from 11 hours to 4.5 hours."

At the same time, the world is fast becoming aware of the constant double standards in Chinese propaganda, and for the first time it is taking steps to counter Beijing's moves.

Take France for example. In the past, Paris was often reluctant to offend China as it was "doing business" with Beijing. But things are changing; realising the danger of Chinese hegemony for the planet, French President Emmanuel

Macron recently appointed Christophe Penot, his ambassador to Australia, to the new post of ambassador for the Indo-Pacific.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported: "The coronavirus has catalysed European concern over Chinese government actions in Hong Kong, the treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, military incursions into the South China Sea and political interference." In June, Mr Penot had already warned that international standards were increasingly called into question, adding that the current Covid crisis was likely accelerate the process: "France and Australia have a particular

responsibility here to ensure that the post-Covid world does not get worse and, if possible, that it becomes better than the world before."

The Australian newspaper commented: "France is the last European power to change its vision of China and the region. In September, Germany, Europe's largest economy, which has long enjoyed close ties with Beijing, released its first Indo-Pacific strategy focused on increasing diplomatic pressure on China."

FRANCE IN THE QUAD?

A couple of years ago, I had asked an Indian observer why France was not included as a participant in the Quad. "Nobody thought of it", he had told me. This has changed after President Macron's visit to India in March 2018. Addressing a French gathering in New Delhi, the young President reminded his countrymen: "France is a power of the Indian and Pacific Oceans; we are present at Reunion, we are also there in French Polynesia and New Caledonia. And we are a maritime power, it is often forgotten but France is the second maritime power in the world. We have a strong navy, we have nuclear submarines equipped like few other powers in the world; a maritime surveillance capability through our own satellites and technologies; it is obvious we are a military and intelligence power ranking us among the first nations in the world."

France is ready to work with India on the oceans.

A few months earlier, C. Raja Mohan and Darshana Baruah had written for Carnegie India about *Deepening the India-France Maritime Partnership*. "As maritime security acquires greater salience in India's foreign policy, New Delhi is

In the past, Paris was often reluctant to offend China as it was 'doing business' with Beijing. But things are changing...

increasingly looking to leverage its strategic partnerships, particularly with Paris. Although India and France have joined forces on a number of issues since 1998, regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific has never risen to the top of the agenda. However, this may be about to change."

After the Quad's last meeting in Tokyo last week, US spokesperson Cale Brown said the foreign ministers of the US, Japan, Australia and India had reaffirmed their collective efforts towards a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific: "they pledged to continue regular consultations to implement their vision of a peaceful, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific".

US deputy secretary of state Stephen Biegun more recently explained: "The Quad is a partnership driven by shared interests, not binding obligations, and is not intended to be an exclusive grouping. Any country that seeks a free and open Indo-Pacific and is willing to take steps to ensure that should be welcome to work with us."

It seems that Paris' vision could perfectly fit into this scheme. So why can't France join the four founding nations?

Emmanuel Lenain, French ambassador to India, answered the question in an interview with *India Today*: "Indo-Pacific is a priority. Both the leaders [Modi and Macron] have been working on that at least for the past four or five years. It is about values. We want an open, transparent Indo-Pacific. Now, what would be the framework. I don't think anything is exclusive... All like-minded countries should join efforts towards an open, transparent Indo-Pacific."

It sounds like the US secretary of state's definition.

Whether France joins or not, there is no doubt all these new collaborative efforts should be credited to President Xi and his reckless foreign policies. One more "loss" in his balance sheet.

The writer is based in South India for the past 42 years. He writes on India, China, Tibet and Indo-French relations.

LETTERS

EAR TO THE GROUND

Ground reports in Bihar suggest that the BJP-JD(U) alliance has a tough fight ahead of it in the Bihar election.

Their campaign is seeing vociferous protests by voters who are also boycotting their elections rallies at various venues. This shows that the citizens are very angry with the chief minister, Nitish Kumar, and are waiting for the final opportunity to reject him. The days of the BJP-JD(U) combine certainly seem numbered now.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

TANISHQ'S LOSS

TAN (MEY) ISHQ *par mann mey darr*. What a beautiful advertisement by Tanishq, now withdrawn due to trolling on social media. It's really disappointing that Tata Group showed such a fragile spine to the real anti-nationals who have problems with interfaith matters, especially marriages when the groom is from a minority community. Tata Group probably didn't have the courage of conviction, but in succumbing to pressure has set a wrong precedent for future generations. I don't know how many would have stopped buying from Tanishq after seeing the ad but certainly they have lost one valuable customer.

Syed Abdul Monim
Navi Mumbai

BENCH STRENGTH

AS AVERRED IN your article, all great teams have a sell-by date. Verily, the CSK have turned out to be kittens during this IPL season. No doubt they miss players like Suresh Raina and Harbajan Singh. But that can't be an excuse for clinging to the "Dad's Army" formation and not giving a chance to talented youngsters like N. Jagadeesan, who is an opening batsman, and Rituraj Gaikwad. Time to test the bench strength and build a new team. There are many Tamil Nadu players who are shining for other franchises and winning matches.

N. Mahadevan
Chennai

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

IN BRIEF

Houston club shooting: 3 dead

Houston: Three people were killed in a shooting at a Houston nightclub where about 30 people had gathered for an open mic night and authorities were searching early Wednesday for suspects, police said. Police had been called to the DD Sky Club at about 9:45 p.m. Tuesday on reports of multiple people dead inside, Houston Police Commander Caroleta Johnson said. Once there, officers found three people dead at the scene and a fourth person in critical condition, Johnson said. Investigators believe two men opened fire after a fight broke out, but officers don't yet have a clear description of the shooters. Kade Trammell, who was inside the club attending the open mic show, said he heard seven to 10 gunshots before he and his friends dropped to the floor and then fled. "We got really scared, we ran for our ... lives," he said. "Everybody starting running for their lives after the gunshots," he said.

Five killed in Pak explosion

Islamabad/Karachi: A powerful explosion ripped through a four-storey building in Pakistan's Sindh province, killing at least five people and injuring 20 others, police said. At least two floors of the building near Maskan Chowrang in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area in Karachi were severely damaged, leading authorities to fear that the toll may rise. The death toll in the incident has increased to five, Faisal Edhi of the Edhi Ambulance Service said. Seven of the injured are said to be in critical condition. The security forces have cordoned off the area after the explosion. Police chief Mushtaq Mahar said the bomb disposal squad and anti-terrorism officials are yet to determine the cause of the explosion. A police official said that initial investigations suggested that the explosion could have been caused due to a gas leak. The official said that no trace of an improvised explosive device (IED) was found at the scene. The incident happened a day after five people were injured when an IED bomb exploded.

UK navy seizes 450 kg meth

Dubai: A British royal navy vessel seized 450 kilograms (990 pounds) of methamphetamine in the northern Arabian Sea in the largest-ever bust by a joint maritime operation in the region, officials said Wednesday. The HMS Montrose seized the drugs hidden aboard a stateless dhow, a traditional cargo ship that plies the Persian Gulf and surrounding waters, the joint task force said in a statement. The seizure took place last Wednesday. The task force said it was unable to say where the drugs came from, who manufactured them or their ultimate destination. However, Iran over the last decade has seen an explosion in the use of methamphetamine, known locally as "shishah" or "glass" in Farsi. That's bled into neighbouring Iraq as well. While drug lab busts have dropped in recent years in Iran, there appears to be an uptick in meth drug labs in Afghanistan.

NASA CRAFT LANDS ON ASTEROID

Washington, Oct. 21: After a four-year-long journey, NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft successfully touched down on the rugged surface of asteroid Bennu on Tuesday, and unfurled its robotic arm to collect a sample of rocks dating back to the birth of our solar system to bring back to Earth, the US space agency said. The Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security, Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-REx) spacecraft briefly touched the near-Earth asteroid to collect dust and pebbles from its surface for delivery to Earth in 2023.

Asteroid Bennu is currently more than 321 million kilometres from the Earth. It offers scientists a window into the early solar system as it was first taking shape billions of years ago and flinging ingredients that could have helped seed life on Earth, NASA said. If Tuesday's sample collection event provided enough of a sample, mission teams will command the spacecraft to begin stowing the precious primordial cargo to begin its journey back to Earth in March 2021.

Pope nod for same-sex civil unions in interview

Says homosexual people have the right to be in a family

Rome, Oct. 21: Pope Francis endorsed same-sex civil unions for the first time as Pope while being interviewed for the feature-length documentary *Francesco*, which premiered on Wednesday at the Rome Film Festival.

The papal thumbs-up came midway through the film that delves into issues Francis cares about most, including the environment, poverty, migration, racial and income inequality, and the people most affected by discrimination. "Homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God," Francis said in one of his sit-down interviews for the film.

"What we have to have is a civil union law; that way they are legally covered." While serving as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Francis endorsed civil unions for gay couples as an alternative to same-sex marriages. However, he had never come out publicly in favour of civil unions as pope. The Jesuit priest who has been at the forefront in seeking to build bridges with gays in the church, the Rev. James Martin, praised the pope's comments as "a major step forward in the church's support for LGBT people."

"The Pope's speaking positively about civil unions also sends a strong message to places where



Pope Francis arrives for his weekly general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican on Wednesday. — AFP

the church has opposed such laws," Martin said in a statement. One of the main characters in the documentary is Juan Carlos Cruz, the Chilean survivor of clergy sexual abuse whom Francis initially discredited during a 2018 visit to Chile.

Cruz, who is gay, said that during his first meetings with the Pope in May 2018, Francis assured him that God made Cruz gay. Cruz tells his own story in snippets throughout the film, chronicling both Francis' evolution on understanding sexual abuse as well as to document the Pope's views on gay people. Director Evgeny Afineevsky had remarkable access to cardinals, the Vatican television archives and the Pope

himself. He said he negotiated his way in through persistence, and deliveries of Argentine mate tea and Alfajores cookies that he got to the pope via some well-connected Argentines in Rome.

"Listen, when you are in the Vatican, the only way to achieve something is to break the rule and then to say, 'I'm sorry,'" Afineevsky said in an interview ahead of the premiere. The director worked official and unofficial channels starting in early 2018, and ended up so close to Francis by the end of the project that he showed the pope the movie on his iPad in August. The two recently exchanged Yom Kippur greetings; Afineevsky is a Russian-born Jew who lives in Los Angeles. But

"Francesco" is more than a biopic about the Pope.

Wim Wenders did that in the 2018 film *Pope Francis: A Man of His Word*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival.

"Francesco," is more a visual survey of the world's crises and tragedies, with audio from the pope providing possible ways to solve them. Afineevsky travelled the world to film it: the settings include Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh where Myanmar's Rohingya sought refuge; the US-Mexico border and Francis' native Argentina. "The film tells the story of the Pope by reversing the cameras," said Vatican communications director Paolo Ruffini, who was one of Afineevsky's closest Vatican-based collaborators on the film.

Ruffini said that when Afineevsky first approached him with the idea of a documentary, he tried to tamp down his hopes for interviewing the Pope. "I told him it wasn't going to be easy," he said. But Ruffini gave him some advice: Names of people who had been impacted by the Pope, even after just a brief meeting. "I told him that many of those encounters had certainly been filmed by the Vatican cameras, and that there he would find a veritable gold mine of stories that told a story," Ruffini said.

— AP

Trump paid \$1.8L tax in China for licensing deals

Washington, Oct. 21: President Donald Trump spent a decade unsuccessfully pursuing projects in China, operating an office there during his first run for president and forging a partnership with a major government-controlled company, *The New York Times* reported Tuesday.

China is one of only three foreign nations — the others are Britain and Ireland — where Trump maintains a bank account, according to a *Times* analysis of the president's tax records. The foreign accounts do not show up on Trump's public financial disclosures, where he must list personal assets, because they are held under corporate names. The Chinese account is controlled by Trump International Hotels Management LLC, which the tax records show paid \$188,561 in taxes in China while pursuing licensing deals there from 2013 to 2015. In response to questions from *The Times*, Alan Garten, a lawyer for the Trump Organisation, said the company had "opened an account with a Chinese bank having offices in the United States in order to pay the local taxes" associated with efforts to do business there.

He said the company had opened the account after establishing an office in China "to explore the potential for hotel deals in Asia." "No deals, transactions or other business activities ever materialised and, since 2015, the office has remained inactive,"

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ALAN GARTEN, lawyer for the Trump Organisation

Garten said. "Though the bank account remains open, it has never been used for any other purpose." Garten would not identify the bank in China where the account is held. China continues to be an issue in the 2020 presidential campaign. — AP

Don says will win by 'bigger' margin

Erie (US), Oct. 21: US President Donald Trump has exuded confidence that he will win the November 3 election by a bigger margin than that of 2016 and urged his supporters to deliver a "thundering" defeat to his Democratic challenger Joe Biden. In his hour-long speech at an election rally here, Trump reiterated that his challenger Biden and his running mate Senator Kamala Harris, if elected, would convert the

US into a socialist country. "It's time to send a message to these wealthy liberal hypocrites by delivering Joe Biden, sleepy Joe, a thundering defeat on November 3rd. Got to get out and vote," Trump told his supporters in Pennsylvania on Tuesday. Trump asserted that his victory on November 3 is going to be bigger than that of 2016. "This is going to be bigger than four years ago." — PTI



Qamar Javed Bajwa

PROBE INTO ARREST OF NAWAZ KIN

Karachi, Oct. 21: Pakistan's Sindh Police chief has deferred his leave and asked his officers to set aside their leave applications for 10 days "in the larger national interest" after Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa ordered an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the arrest of former premier Nawaz Sharif's son-in-law, an issue that brought the paramilitary forces and police in direct conflict in the country's largest city.

In a series of tweets, Sindh Police said on Tuesday that the "unfortunate incident" that occurred on the night of 18/19 October caused "great heartache and resentment" within its ranks, referring to the circumstances surrounding the arrest of Sharif's son-in-law Capt (retd) Muhammad Safdar.

Opposition parties have alleged that the Sindh police chief was reportedly forcibly taken away by paramilitary Frontier Corps from his home in Karachi in the wee hours of Monday and pressurised to order for the arrest of Safdar.

"As a result, IG Sindh decided to proceed on leave and subsequently all ranks decided that they would also apply for leave to protest the humiliation meted out to Sindh police," it said.

It added, "This was a spontaneous and heartfelt reaction and made on an individual rather than a collective basis, because every single member of the department felt an acute sense of disrespect." — PTI

PAK MAY NOT EXIT FATF GREY LIST: REPORT

Islamabad, Oct. 21: Pakistan may remain on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as it has been unable to comply with six of the 27 points in the global terror financing and money laundering watchdog's action plan, a media report said on Wednesday.

The Paris-based global watchdog will hold its virtual plenary session from October 21 to 23. It will review Pakistan's progress on the 27-point action plan. The FATF had placed Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action to curb money laundering and terror financing by the end of 2019, but the deadline was extended later on due to the Covid-19 pandemic. — PTI

Support for Thai royals



Royalist supporters take part in a rally to show support for the Thai royal establishment in Su-ngai Kolok District in Thailand's southern province of Narathiwat on Wednesday. — AFP

Europe records weekly high of 927K cases

Geneva, Oct. 21: The World Health Organisation says Europe again reported a new high in the weekly number of Coronavirus cases during the pandemic last week, recording more than 927,000 cases.

The UN health agency said in its latest global report on the deadly Coronavirus pandemic that the continent saw a 25 per cent spike in confirmed cases last week and was responsible for 38 per cent of all new cases reported worldwide. Russia, the Czech

Republic and Italy accounted for more than half of new Coronavirus cases in Europe.

The WHO report says the number of deaths in Europe also "continues to climb," and increased by one-third from the previous week.

The health agency says Slovenia reported a 150 per cent increase in cases in a week with a record 4,890 cases.

Slovenia also reported 1,924 Coronavirus deaths, compared to one week before. — AP

CDC: 300K more deaths in US

New York, Oct. 21: A new government report shows that since the Coronavirus pandemic began, the US has seen 300,000 more deaths than it usually would. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has been tracking how many deaths have been reported and comparing them with counts seen in other years. Usually, between the beginning of February and the end of September, about 1.9 million deaths are reported. This year, it's closer to 2.2 million — a 14.5 per cent increase. The CDC says the Coronavirus was involved in about two-thirds of the excess deaths. CDC officials say it's likely the virus was a factor in many other deaths too.

For example, someone with heart attack symptoms may have hesitated to go to a hospital that was

busy with Coronavirus patients. The largest segment of the excess deaths, about 95,000, were in elderly people ages 75 to 84. That was 21.5 per cent more than in a normal year. But the biggest relative increase, 26.5 per cent, was in people ages 25 to 44. Deaths in people younger than 25 actually dropped slightly. Deaths were up for different racial and ethnic groups. — AP

busy with Coronavirus patients. The largest segment of the excess deaths, about 95,000, were in elderly people ages 75 to 84. That was 21.5 per cent more than in a normal year. But the biggest relative increase, 26.5 per cent, was in people ages 25 to 44. Deaths in people younger than 25 actually dropped slightly. Deaths were up for different racial and ethnic groups. — AP

NEW ANALYSIS

Sub-Saharan Africa has households that struggle to survive on \$1.90 a day

One in six children live in extreme poverty: UN

United Nations, Oct. 21: An estimated one in six children — or 356 million globally — were living in extreme poverty before the Covid-19 pandemic began, and this is set to worsen significantly, according to a new World Bank Group and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) analysis. Global Estimate of Children in Monetary Poverty: An Update', notes that sub-Saharan

aran Africa, with its limited social safety nets, accounts for two-thirds of children living in households that struggle to survive on an average of \$ 1.90 a day or less per person — the international measure for extreme poverty, while South Asia accounts for nearly a fifth of these children. The analysis shows that the number of children living in extreme poverty

decreased moderately, by 29 million, between 2013 and 2017.

However, UNICEF and the World Bank Group warn that any progress made in recent years, has been "slow-paced, unequally distributed, and at risk" due to the economic impact of the pandemic. "One in six children living in extreme poverty is one in six children struggling to

survive," UNICEF Director of Programmes Sanjay Wijesekera said.

"These numbers alone should shock anyone. And the scale and depth of what we know about the financial hardships brought on by the pandemic, are only set to make matters far worse. Governments urgently need a children's recovery plan to prevent countless more children and their families from reaching levels of poverty unseen for many, many

years," Wijesekera said. Although children make up around a third of the global population, around half of the extreme poor are children. The youngest children are the worst off — nearly 20 per cent of all of them below the age of 5 in the developing world live in extremely poor households, the report highlights. — PTI

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quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,707.31	0.40
Nifty 50	11,937.70	0.34
S&P 500*	3,448.44	0.15
Dollar (₹)	0.87	-0.15
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.02	-0.96
Euro (₹)	87.25	-0.82
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	51,354,444	0.87
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	41.93	-1.23
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.912	-0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.817	0.021

* As of 9:30 PM IST

AirAsia India starts flights on 6 new local routes

Budget carrier AirAsia India on Wednesday launched flights on six new routes, connecting Chennai with Ahmedabad, Goa, Mumbai and Visakhapatnam, Mumbai with Goa, and Jaipur with Kolkata as it expects an increase in demand during the festive season. All new routes are now open for bookings. It also offered 'Flex Fares' allowing customers the flexibility to change their travel dates unlimited number of times.

Fire breaks out at Royal Enfield's Jaipur stockyard



Eicher Motors on Wednesday said a fire broke out at Royal Enfield's Jaipur-based transit stockyard facility. Royal Enfield is a part of Eicher Motors. At around 12.30 pm on Wednesday, a fire incident occurred at Royal Enfield's transit stockyard facility at Kukas, Jaipur. "All manpower and personnel have been evacuated. There has been no harm or injury to personnel working at the facility," Eicher Motors said.

L&T Infotech shares zoom 5% on Q2 earnings

Shares of IT company L&T Infotech, the tech arm of L&T, gained nearly 5 per cent on Wednesday after the company reported a 26.7 per cent increase in consolidated net profit for the quarter ended September 2020. The stock jumped 4.73 per cent to close at ₹3,105 on the BSE. During the day, it rose by 5.88 per cent to ₹3,139. On the NSE, it gained 4.73 per cent to close at ₹3,105.

Bajaj Finance Q2 net profit drops 36% to ₹965 cr

Bajaj Finance Ltd (BFL) on Wednesday reported a 36 per cent drop in its consolidated net profit at Rs 965 crore for the second quarter of the 2020-21 fiscal year. The NBFC had posted a net profit of ₹1,506 crore in the July-September quarter a year ago. Its total consolidated income grew 3 per cent to Rs 6,523 crore during Q2FY21 as against ₹6,323 crore in the same quarter a year earlier.

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Centre plans sops for industry

More sectors likely to get production-linked incentives to boost manufacturing

Focus on investments, jobs, reskilling: Report

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 21

The government should focus on increasing investments, creating jobs and skilling workforce for the next 10 years, else it may be on the path to a breakdown nation. Since the 1990 reforms, six per cent real GDP growth in India was a given. It no longer is and the potential growth is estimated to be below 6 per cent from FY22-FY25, according to a report by Quantum India Advisors. India's labour force participation rate and the

employment rate have fallen consistently over the last five years. The employment situation has become worse. The Indian economy and its informal workforce suffered a major blow post the shocks of demonetisation, GST and the credit crisis. Distress in rural India was ignited by demonetisation of November 2016. While rural areas haven't been hit as hard in the Covid-19 related lockdown, demand is yet to recover fully from past shocks. Lower aggregate demand in urban and rural India as a result of

duction, he said. "So, the kind of response that we received on the mobile phones where we have finalised the contractors gives me a lot of confidence that there is

demand in the world now, to have a diversification of supply chains, and India can definitely take advantage," he said. For global manufacturer, he said, the country pro-

vided a large domestic market other than the exports potential. "So, this is a scheme that will give cash incentives for 5-7 years, and all the sunrise sectors and im-

portant sectors are proposed to be covered in these areas," Bajaj said. He added that "so, I think that with all these efforts and as finance minister (Nirmala Sitharaman) said we are seeing what all other things can we do (to boost manufacturing and economy)." Speaking about raising infrastructure spending, Bajaj said the government is trying to cajole chairmen and managing directors of public sector enterprises to meeting their capital expenditure (capex) plan for the current financial year. The government has been doing review meetings at all levels to push infrastructure spending, he said, adding that the finance minister recently announced another tranche of ₹37,000 crore going into the infrastructure spend. "While we are in the process of making our budget for the next year, we are also looking at what has been the expenditure this year and what is the extra requirement that is required by various sectors," he said. — PTI

1 in 2 adults worried about jobs, 2 in 3 expect reskilling

New Delhi, Oct. 21: More than half of the working adults globally are concerned about losing their job in the next 12 months, including 57 per cent in India, but more than two-thirds are hopeful that their employers will help them retrain for new employment opportunities, a global survey showed on Wednesday.

JOB WORRIES

In India, nearly 57 per cent of respondents said they are 'concerned' about their jobs — over 25 per cent are 'very concerned' and 31 per cent are 'somewhat concerned'.

Globally, 54 per cent concerned about job losses in the next 12 months, the World Economic Forum -Ipsos global survey of more than 12,000 working adults in 27 countries showed. The prevalence of job-loss concern was highest at 75 per cent among people in Russia, followed by 73 per cent in Spain and and 71 per cent in Malaysia.

scored the best with 26 per cent, while it was 30 per cent in Sweden, and 36 per cent in the Netherlands and the US. However, 67 per cent of workers worldwide said they can learn skills needed for the jobs of the future through their current employer. Nearly nine in 10 workers in Spain think they can gain essential new skills on the job, whereas fewer than half in Japan, Sweden and Russia. Across the 27 countries, perceived ability to learn and develop those skills on the job was found to be the most widespread in Spain (86 per cent), Peru (84 per cent), and Mexico

(83 per cent) and the least common in Japan (45 per cent), Sweden (46 per cent), and Russia (48 per cent). India also scored very high at 80 per cent. World Economic Forum managing director Saadia Zahidi said, "The current crisis means that the job creation rate has gone significantly down compared to two years ago but there is an optimistic scenario overall compared to the rate of job destruction." The countries where those who can gain new skills on the job outnumber those who are concerned about losing their job by the largest margins are the US and Germany (by 40 points). — PTI

India needs bond market: Sebi

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 21

Development of bond market is necessary to help the government to achieve its target of investment in infrastructure and there is an urgent need to diversify funding requirements from the banking sector, feels Ajay Tyagi, chairman, Securities and Exchange Board of India. "It would be a challenging task to achieve the government's target of achieving ₹100 lakh crore investment in infrastructure by 2024-25 unless the bond market is adequately developed," said the Sebi chief, while addressing

the CII Financial Markets Summit. "The corporate bond market needs to become more robust because there is an urgent need to diversify funding requirements from the banking sector," the Sebi chairman said. The Sebi chairman also acknowledged that illiquidity in the bond markets was an issue and that it needed a long-term solution. The Sebi chief further mentioned that the recovery in capital markets after the initial hit by the pandemic in March 2020 has been broad-based. "Retail participation has gone up with 63 lakh new

demat accounts opened between April-September 2020 compared to 27 lakh demat accounts opened during the same period last year, marking 130 per cent rise. Also the Indian market has seen inflows

Small cities drive e-tail, sales up 48% in festive season

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 21

The e-commerce sector has clocked ₹22,000-crore or \$3.1 billion worth business during the first four days of the initial festive season sales event, according to the data of RedSeer Consulting. The seven-day festive sales event began on October 15. E-commerce players have achieved 77 per cent of the predicted sales of ₹4 billion or around ₹28,000 crore for the first festive sales event.

- GOING BY RedSeer's estimation of \$4 billion, the e-commerce sector has seen a 48 per cent growth at \$4 billion in sales during the first event compared to the last year's \$2.7 billion.
- SOME OF the factors that have helped the growth are the demand growth in smaller cities driven by reverse migration to hinterland, digital adoption and value offers post Covid-19 pandemic.

While RedSeer expects that the festive month from October 15 to November 15 will see total sales of \$7 billion, Forrester has predicted the total sales to be around \$6.5 billion. Of this, 75 per cent of \$4.8 billion sales could happen in the first seven-day event. Going by RedSeer's estimation of \$4 billion, the e-commerce sector has seen a 48 per cent growth at \$4 billion in sales during the first event compared to the last year's \$2.7 billion. "Sharper sales growth against the last year, especially in the first three days, indicates that the industry is on track to reach or even surpass our forecasts of \$4 billion," said a researcher at RedSeer. Some of the factors that have helped the growth are the demand growth in tier-2 cities driven by reverse migration, digital adoption and value offers post Covid-19. Flipkart saw over 666

million visits with over 52 per cent of these visits recording from tier-3 cities and beyond. It has seen 51 per cent growth in customers from tier 2+ markets in fashion. Tier-3 customers drove the sale of large appliances with nearly 50 per cent demand coming from these cities. Of the 35 per cent new seller base this time, around 60 per cent were from tier-2 and tier-3 towns. "Over 1.1 lakh sellers receiving orders, 66 per cent sellers, 91 per cent of new customers, and 66 per cent of new Prime sign-ups from small towns, shopping in five Indian languages and orders from over 98.4 per cent of India's pin-codes in just 48 hours — it's truly Bharat's biggest celebration on Amazon ever," said Manish Tiwary, Vice President, Amazon India after two days of the event.

SBI slashes home loan rate by 0.25%

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, OCT. 21

State Bank of India on Wednesday announced up to 25 basis points (bps) concession on home loan rates as part of its festival offers. SBI home loan customers would get an interest concession of 25 bps for buying their dream homes of above ₹75 lakh based on CIBIL score and through YONO app. "In an extension of its festive offers announced recently, SBI offers a credit score based concessions of up to 20 bps from 10 bps earlier, for a home loan of above ₹30 lakh to ₹2 crore across India. The same concession would also be

applicable for home loan customers for a loan amount of up to ₹3 crore in eight metro cities. An additional 5 bps concession for all home loans is given if applied through YONO," said the lender. SBI now offers interest rates starting at 6.90 per cent for a home loan of up to ₹30 lakh and 7 per cent for above ₹30 lakh. SBI commands nearly 34 per cent market share in home loans and nearly 33 per cent in the auto loans segment. SBI has already announced a slew of special offers for its retail customers with 100 per cent processing fee waiver on car, gold, personal loans.

StanChart to lease biggest campus in TN

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 21

In one of the largest commercial realty deals in recent times, Standard Chartered GBS is leasing 7.7 lakh square feet of office space in Chennai for its largest office globally. The office space is located at DLF Downtown at Taramani in Chennai's IT corridor. DLF has inked an anchor deal with Standard Chartered GBS for their office building. DLF and GIC, Singapore's sovereign wealth fund, had entered into a strategic partnership to develop a rental assets portfolio with GIC as one-third partner, under the consolidated portfolio of DLF Cyber City Developers Ltd (DCCDL), a subsidiary of DLF. DLF Cyber City Developers, the joint venture of DLF-GIC and TIDCO, announced the launch of DLF Downtown, Chennai with an investment of ₹5,000 crore earlier this year. According to reports, Standard Chartered could pay around ₹100 crore (\$14 million) each year for leasing the space. — AP

Australia may file anti-trust suit against Google

ROD MCGUIRK CANBERRA, OCT. 21

Australia's competition watchdog will consider its own antitrust case against Google, the commission chairman said on Wednesday after the US Justice Department sued the company for abusing its dominance in online search and advertising. Competition and Consumer Commission chairman Rod Sims described the US case filed on

Tuesday as one of the world's biggest antitrust cases in the past 20 years. "I'm delighted the Department of Justice's taking it on and we'll follow it really closely," Sims told the National Press Club, referring to the US Department of Justice. "We're going to look at it and see whether there's any value in what we might do," Sims added. Separately, Sims is drafting legislation to address the imbalance in bargaining power between Google and the Australian media businesses that want the tech giant to pay for journalism. The bills, that will be

ready to be introduced to Parliament by December, would empower an arbitrator to make binding decisions on how much Google and Facebook must pay media companies for news content. Sims said his commission "had a lot of talk" with the US Justice Department before he released a report in July last year that recommended more government regulation on the market power of Google and Facebook that

would ensure fair deals for other media businesses and more control for individuals on how their data was used. Sim's commission launched Australian court action against Google in July alleging the company misled account holders about its use of their personal data. The commission alleges the Google misled millions of Australians to obtain their consent and expand the scope of personal information that

Google collects about users' internet activity to target advertising, Google denies the allegations. In October last year, the commission sued Google in an Australian court alleging the company broke consumer law by misleading Android users about how their location data was collected and used. That case will be heard by the Federal Court next month. Google also denies that allegation. — AP

SHORT TAKES

Anju vice-prez of athletics body

New Delhi: Incumbent Adille Sumariwalla is set to be elected unopposed as Athletics Federation of India (AFI) president for his third term while former long jumper Anju Bobby George will be made senior vice-president in the national governing body's polls on October 31. Sumariwalla and Anju were the only candidates who filed their nomination papers for their respective posts till the deadline of 4 pm on Wednesday. Returning officer Vijayalakshmy K. Gupta issued the list of nominated candidates after the deadline.

The deadline for withdrawal of nominations is 6 pm on Friday. For Anju, the lone Indian to win a medal in the World Championships (a bronze in 2003), it will be her highest post in the AFI executive committee. She was in the executive committee of last term by virtue of being a member of the Athletes' Commission. The AFI constitution mandates at least one woman among five vice-presidents, five joint secretaries and eight executive committee members. — PTI

Three U-19 Bangla players Covid +ve

Dhaka: Three Bangladesh U-19 national team cricketers have tested positive for the novel Coronavirus, while 15 others are symptomatic. In a report published in Dhaka-based *The Business Standard*, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) game development manager AEM Kawser was quoted as saying that all the players were part of the training camp being held at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) as a part of Junior Asia Cup preparations, a tournament which now stands cancelled. "According to our protocol, we have to isolate everyone who has come into contact with symptomatic persons," Kawser said. The BCB has shut down the camp. — PTI

Covid-recovered F1 racer returns

Silverstone, England: Formula One driver Lance Stroll said he intends to race at the Portuguese Grand Prix this week after finishing a period of self-isolation following a positive test for the Coronavirus. Stroll, who drives for Racing Point, pulled out of the Eifel Grand Prix at the Nrburgring a day before the October 11 race because he felt unwell and said Wednesday he later tested positive for Covid-19. In a post on Instagram, Stroll said he spent 10 days at home in self-isolation with mild symptoms and returned a negative test on Monday. "I feel in great shape," the Canadian driver wrote, "and I can't wait to be back with the team and to race in Portugal." Stroll, who was replaced by Nico Hlkenberg at the Eifel GP, is in ninth place in the drivers' standings on 57 points. — AP

Coco in second round at Ostrava

Prague: American teenage sensation Coco Gauff beat Czech doubles specialist Katerina Siniakova in straight sets to clinch a second-round spot at the Ostrava Open WTA tournament on Tuesday. Gauff will face third-seeded Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus, the world number 12, in the second round. Daria Kasatkina of Russia saw off sixth seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, while her compatriot Veronika Kudermetova upset Croatia's Donna Vekic 6-2, 6-4. — AP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Rajasthan Royals vs Sunrisers Hyderabad from 7:30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL

Europa League: Young Boys vs Roma from 10:25 pm on Sony Six; Rapid Wien vs Arsenal from 10:25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Leicester vs Zorya Luhansk from 12:30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 3; Celtic vs AC Milan from 12:30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 1; Tottenham Hotspur vs LASK from 12:30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2; Hoffenheim vs Crvena Zvezda from 12:30 am (Friday) on Sony Six

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SUPER SIRAJ SHOW

Seamer wrecks KKR as RCB win big

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 21: Pacer Mohammed Siraj took three wickets upfront as RCB hammered KKR by eight wickets in an IPL match, here on Wednesday. Skipper Eoin Morgan's knock of 30 was the best batting effort in KKR innings.

Devdutt Padikkal top scored for RCB in their chase with his 17-ball 25.

Mohammed Siraj and Yuzvendra Chahal wreaked havoc in a stunning display of swing and spin bowling as Kolkata Knight Riders could just manage a paltry 84 for eight.

The masterstroke from skipper Virat Kohli to include Siraj in place of spinner Shahbaz Nadeem worked as Siraj (4-2-8-3) ran through the KKR top order to trigger a stunning batting collapse and became the first bowler in the history of IPL to bowl two maiden overs while Chahal (2/15) stymied their revival hopes.

It is KKR's second-lowest total after their 67 all-out against MI in 2008.

Playing without Windies star players Sunil Narine and Andre Russell, KKR struggled to get going after electing to bat and it was all over for them after skipper Eoin Morgan was dismissed by Washington Sundar for 30.

Siraj began with a double wicket maiden over in which he dismissed opener Rahul Tripathi (1) and Nitish Rana (0) off successive deliveries. — PTI



Mohammed Siraj (right) of Royal Challengers Bangalore celebrates taking the wicket of Tom Banton of Kolkata Knight Riders during their IPL match at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: S. Gill c Morris b N. Saini 1, R. Tripathi c de Villiers b M. Siraj 1, N. Rana b M Siraj 0, T. Banton c de Villiers b M. Siraj 10, D. Karthik lbw b Y. Chahal 4, E. Morgan c Gurkeerat b Sundar 30, P Cummins c Padikkal b Y. Chahal 4, K. Yadav run out 12, L. Ferguson not out 19. **Extras:** (LB-2, WD-1) 3. **Total (for 8 wickets in 20 overs) 84.** **For:** 1-3, 2-3, 3-4, 4-14, 5-32, 6-40, 7-57, 8-84. **Bowling:** C Morris 4-1-16-1, M Siraj 4-2-8-3, N Saini 3-0-23-1, I. Udana 1-0-6-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-15-2, Washington Sundar 4-1-14-1.

Royal Challengers Bangalore: D. Padikkal run out 25, A. Finch c Karthik b Lockie Ferguson 16, Gurkeerat Singh not out 21, Virat Kohli not out 18. **Extras:** (LB-2, W-3) 5. **Total (for 2 wickets in 13.3 overs) 85.** **For:** 1-46, 2-46. **Bowling:** Pat Cummins 3-0-18-0, M. Prasidh Krishna 2-3-0-20-0, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-28-0, Lockie Ferguson 4-0-17-1

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals	10	7	3	0	14	+0.774
Royal Challengers Bangalore	10	7	3	0	14	+0.182
Mumbai Indians	9	6	3	0	12	+1.201
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	5	5	0	10	-0.828
Kings XI Punjab	10	4	6	0	8	-0.177
Rajasthan Royals	10	4	6	0	8	-0.591
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	3	6	0	6	+0.008
Chennai Super Kings	10	3	7	0	6	-0.463

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

Must-win game for SRH & RR

Dubai, Oct. 21: The inexperienced young guns of both RR and SRH would like to put their hands up in testing times when both teams square off in a must-win IPL game on Thursday.

Whether it is Priyam Garg, Abdul Samad of Sunrisers or Kartik Tyagi, Riyan Parag of the Royals, the youngsters from both sides will be feeling the pressure of doing something out of the box in case their illustrious seniors fail in that pursuit.

SRH are currently tottering at the second last place in the eight-team table with just six points from nine game while Royals are a notch ahead with eight points after their comprehensive win over CSK in the previous game.

While SRH can't afford to slip up even one bit with five games remaining, RR would be hoping to continue the winning momentum. — PTI

DHAWAN ON A HIGH AFTER TWO TONS

Dubai, Oct. 21: In rampaging form, Delhi Capitals opener Shikhar Dawan says he is running faster, feeling fresher and has no fear of being dismissed this IPL season.

Dhawan has scored two consecutive IPL hundreds, the first to achieve the feat, and slammed two fifties as well, making it a season to remember for him so far.

"I have been playing for 13 years, and this is the first (back-to-back hundreds). So, really happy," said Dhawan after the unbeaten 106 off 61 balls, albeit in a lost cause against Kings XI Punjab on Tuesday.

"I keep my mindset quite positive. Just look to score runs, and not think pitch is doing this or that. I play with courage. I am not afraid to get out," he added dissecting his approach to batting. — PTI

Bravo out of IPL with groin injury

Dubai, Oct. 21: Chennai Super Kings all-rounder Dwayne Bravo has been ruled out of the ongoing IPL with a groin injury, dealing a massive blow to the already struggling side which has very slim chances of advancing to the playoffs.

The 37-year-old Bravo, an integral part of the CSK team for years now, couldn't bowl the final over against Delhi Capitals in a match in Sharjah on October 17. Skipper MS Dhoni was forced to bowl Ravindra Jadeja, who conceded three sixes.

"Dwayne Bravo is ruled out of the IPL due to a groin injury," CSK CEO Kashi Viswanathan said.

Bravo played six games and scored only seven runs in two innings. However, he got six wickets in as many games with an economy



Dwayne Bravo

rate of 8.57.

CSK's campaign has already been derailed after seven losses from 10 games. They are currently currently lying at the bottom of the league table. CSK were already hamstrung by absence of senior players Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh, both of whom pulled out citing personal reasons. — PTI

Holder sad with no BLM in IPL

Dubai, Oct. 21: West Indies captain Jason Holder has expressed his disappointment over none of the IPL teams taking a knee in solidarity with the "Black Lives Matter" movement, which, he feels, has gone unnoticed in the world's most glamorous cricket league.

Holder, who is member of Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL, made the statement while receiving the prestigious Peter Smith Award on behalf of the West Indies cricket team in a virtual ceremony organised by the Cricket Writers' Club.

The Peter Smith Award is an annual honour which recognises outstanding contribution to the presentation of cricket to the public.

"To be honest, I haven't had one conversation up here around it (BLM). Sometimes it seems it has gone unnoticed, which is a sad thing," Holder said in his address posted on Cricket West Indies website.

"Cricket West Indies has done an excellent job in continuing awareness of it. The women had a series in England where they wore the Black Lives



Jason Holder

Matter logo and continued to push the movement as well," he added.

Taking a knee as a gesture of support to BLM started in the West Indies' Test series in England this summer. It followed the global furore over African American George Floyd's death at the hands of a white police officer in Minneapolis.

But it was later discontinued for the subsequent tours of Pakistan and Australia.

"...it's a long debate, a long hard challenge, a long road. We as people need to continue to come together...and genuinely find ways to fix the inequalities in the world," Holder further added. — PTI

Iyer wants batters to be responsible

Dubai, Oct. 21: It's a wake up call, said Delhi Capitals skipper Shreyas Iyer as he urged his team's batsmen, with the exception of an in-form Shikhar Dhawan, to take "more responsibility" following a surprise IPL loss to Kings XI Punjab here.

Delhi Capitals lost by five wickets after putting 164/5 on the board. Opener Dhawan continued to be in great form and his sequence of scores now read 69 not out, 57, 101 not out, and 106 not out, the last one coming in a losing cause.

"This is like a wake-up call for us. Going forward we are going to face tough situations and tougher teams. We have played amazing cricket in the past but we have to leave that in the past," Iyer said at the post-match virtual press conference.

"We have to come out all guns blazing, play with freedom and take more responsibility. We need one match to qualify and keeping that in mind, we will

take one match at a time," he added.

Against KXIP, Dhawan alone scored 106 while the quintet comprising Iyer, Prithvi Shaw, Marcus Stoinis, Rishabh Pant and Shimron Hetmyer contributed 54 runs collectively.

"I am really happy for Shikhar Dhawan for the way he is going. He is creating an amazing platform for us as batsmen. We should be knowing our roles pretty well," the DC skipper said.

"Other than that, I feel all the batsmen are in really good frame of mind and few matches can go wrong here and there as fatigue creeps in. Keeping that aside we need to focus on our strengths," he further added.

Iyer didn't blame the Dubai track as he felt that it played the same in both innings.

Asked about what Dhawan is doing that others aren't able to do, Iyer spoke about clarity of mind and planning. — PTI

SYDNEY COULD BE INDIAN TEAM'S PORT OF ENTRY

Sydney, Oct. 21: Sydney and Canberra are emerging as potential venues to host India's limited-over series against Australia during the upcoming tour starting next month. The Indian team was initially supposed to land in Brisbane but apparently Queensland state health authorities won't allow the visitors to train during the mandatory 14-day quarantine period.

According to a report in *ESPNcricinfo*, Sydney could emerge as Indian contingent's port of entry and the city may allow them to train during their quarantine. It is learnt that the SCG could be hosting four of the six white ball games (three T20 and three ODIs) while Canberra's Manuka Oval hosting two games.

New South Wales state's sports minister Stuart Ayres confirmed that they have received a request from Cricket Australia to allow the Indian as well as the Australian team to undergo its mandatory quarantine as well as training. If CA and the NSW state government are able to reach an agreement, a revised plan would then be submitted by Cricket Australia to the BCCI for approval. — PTI

Rash rocks PSG, Barca win

Paris, Oct. 21: Marcus Rashford once again sank Paris Saint-Germain after netting the decisive goal in a 2-1 Champions League win in the French capital on Tuesday, while Barcelona sent a message with a thumping 5-1 victory over Ferencvaros.

Rashford, who scored the winning spot-kick when United knocked PSG out in 2019, drilled home a low shot three minutes from the end which won a thrilling Group H contest at a near-empty Parc des Princes.

United had taken the lead in the 23rd minute when Bruno Fernandes slotted home from the spot at the second attempt, but Anthony Martial inexplicably headed Neymar's corner into his own net 10 minutes

THE RESULTS			
Barcelona (Lionel Messi 27-pen, Anshu Fati 42, Coutinho 52, Pedri 82, Dembele 89)	5	Juventus (Morata 46, 84)	2
Ferencvaros (Kharatin 70-pen)	1	Dynamo Kiev	0
Manchester United (Bruno Fernandes 23-pen, Rashford 87)	2	Lazio (Ciro Immobile 6, Hitz 23-og, Akpa Akpro 76)	3
Paris Saint Germain (Martial 55-og)	1	Borussia Dortmund (Erling Braut Haaland 71)	1
Chelsea	0	RB Leipzig (Angelino 16, 20)	2
Sevilla	0	Istanbul Basaksehir	0

utes after the break.

The win sets United up nicely for next week's home clash with RB Leipzig, who are top of the group after beating Istanbul Basaksehir 2-0 in Germany. Meanwhile, Ronald Koeman got his first

Champions League campaign as Barcelona coach off to a winning start with a confident win over Ferencvaros that gives them control of Group G, top but level on three points with Juventus. Messi won and converted the penalty

to give the Catalans a 27th-minute lead and the match was as good as done when Ansu Fati clipped home Frenkie de Jong's sumptuous pass just before the break. Coutinho, Pedri and Dembele also scored for Barcelona. — AFP



Marcus Rashford (left) of Manchester United is poised to score a goal against PSG during their UEFA Champions League first-leg match at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris on Tuesday. Manchester United won 2-1. — AFP