

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SATURDAY 24 | OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 31°C
Min: 19°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aippasi 8
Tithi: Ashtami/ Navami
Star: Uthiradam/ Thiruvonam
Rahukalam:
9 am to 10.30 am
Yamagandam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.49 am
Zohar: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.14 pm
Maghrib: 5.46 pm
Isha: 6.58 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.46 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.01 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 1.14 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.56 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+50,715)	(+572)
78,10,405	1,17,908

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+3,057)
TN: 7,03,250 | 10,858

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

4,22,71,844

DEATHS

11,46,211

COUNTRIES
AREAS WITH
CASES
215

worldometers.info

**Not interested in contesting
polls till Aug 5 decisions
are rolled back: Mehbooba**

Srinagar: Hardening her stand on the restoration of special status for Jammu and Kashmir, the erstwhile state's last chief minister Mehbooba Mufti on Friday said she was not interested in contesting elections or holding the national tricolour till the constitutional changes enforced on August 5 last year were rolled back. In her first media interaction after her release from 14-month detention, the PDP president said she would hold the tricolour only when the separate flag of the erstwhile state would be restored.

**ED summons Punjab
CM's son for questioning
in FEMA case**

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's son for questioning in an alleged foreign exchange violations case, official sources said on Friday. Raninder Singh has been asked to depose at the central probe agency's office in Jalandhar on October 27, they said. The summons pertain to a case registered by the ED under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) with regard to alleged possession of undisclosed assets abroad.

**Par panel to move against
Amazon if it doesn't appear
on Oct 28: Lekhi**

New Delhi: A joint committee of Parliament will move breach of privilege motion against Amazon if a representative of the e-commerce giant does not appear before the panel on October 28, panel chief Meenakshi Lekhi said on Friday.

COUNTER POINT



**Hope it's not a promise
like achhe din!**

STATE | 3

**Foundation stone for
₹10,062 cr projects laid**



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WORLD | 5

**Trump, Biden clash on
Covid, racism, climate**



SPORT | 8

**Mumbai Indians thump
CSK by 10 wickets**



Modi slams Oppn over Art. 370 in campaign for Bihar polls PM rakes up 'lawlessness' under RJD rule

**NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, OCT. 23**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday launched his campaign for Bihar Assembly elections with three back-to-back rallies in Sasaram, Gaya and Bhagalpur where he castigated the Opposition over its stand on repeal of Article 370 and reminded people of the 15-year reign of 'crime' and 'loot' under the Rashtriya Janata Dal. In Sasaram, Mr Modi began his speech by paying tribute to veteran Dalit leader and LJP founder Ram Vilas Paswan and socialist leader Raghuvansh Prasad Singh who passed away recently due to prolonged illness.

Blaming the Opposition parties for "creating hurdles" in the progress of Bihar, Mr Modi said that "people have decided to stop all those who have a history of making Bihar a BIMARU state". "They were so angry over being defeated by the NDA that they tried every possible way to sabotage the development of Bihar. I as Gujarat CM and Nitish Kumar from Bihar used to attend Central meetings regularly and I used to see him requesting them not to stop the development of Bihar. They wasted 10 years of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to his supporters during an election rally, at Gandhi Maidan in Gaya, on Friday.

— PTI

Nitish Kumar as CM," Mr Modi said. The RJD-led grand alliance has emerged as the main challenger to the JD(U)-BJP alliance in the state where polling is scheduled to begin in three phases from October 28. Mr Modi, who is to address 12 public meetings across the state ahead of Bihar polls, sought votes for another term of the NDA government in Bihar, saying that he has been working with Mr Nitish Kumar only for the last three-four years and the state has progressed during this period. He also

spoke of the poor law and order scenario during 15 years of RJD rule. "The era of the lantern is over... people are now using electricity everywhere in the state. I don't have to remind you about the condition of Bihar before NDA, led by Nitish Kumar, came to power in Bihar. Earlier life would come to a standstill after sunset, but today roads and electricity are there. People live without fear in the present time," he said. "The people who were once in power have greed in their eyes for Bihar

which is now developing. People of the state must not forget the condition of Bihar when they were in power and how they pushed the state towards backwardness," the Prime Minister added. He also raised the Galwan valley clash, Article 370 and Pulwama terrorist attack in his speeches. "I bow my head at the feet of brave soldiers who were martyred in Galwan to save the honour of our motherland and the tricolour. In Pulwama also Bihar jawans were martyred," he said.

Pak to remain in FATF 'grey' list

New Delhi, Oct. 23: Pakistan will remain in FATF's 'grey' list till February 2021 as it has failed to fulfil six key obligations of the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog that include failure to take action against two of India's most wanted terrorists — Maulana Masood Azhar and Hafiz Saeed, officials said on Friday. The virtual plenary of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), held for the last three days, concluded that Pakistan will continue to reman in its 'grey' list.

The decision has been taken after a thorough review of Pakistan's performance in fulfilling the global commitments and standards on the fight against money laundering and terror financing. "Pakistan remains in the increased monitoring list or the grey list," FATF president Marcus Pleyer said at a virtual press conference from Paris. Pakistan failed to fulfil six of the 27 mandates so far as a result of which the country continues to be in the 'grey' list of the FATF. — PTI

Kapil Dev suffers heart attack, on road to recovery after angioplasty

New Delhi, Oct. 23: India's first World Cup-winning cricket captain Kapil Dev underwent an angioplasty after suffering a heart attack here on Friday but is "well on the road to recovery" and likely to be discharged in the next couple of days. The 61-year-old, who is based in Delhi's Sundar Nagar area, complained of chest pain on Thursday following which he was taken to Fortis Escorts Heart Institute emergency department in Okhla. "Kapil



Dev suffered a heart attack. He was evaluated and an emergency coronary angioplasty was performed in the middle of night," the hospital said in an updated health bulletin. — PTI ■ P8

Govt imposes stock limits on onion traders

New Delhi, Oct. 23: To boost domestic supply and provide relief to consumers from rising onion prices, the Centre on Friday imposed stock limits on both retailers and wholesalers with immediate effect till December 31. Now, retailers can stock onion only up to 2 tonnes, whereas wholesale traders are allowed to keep up to 25 tonnes.

This will check hoarding and blackmarketing, it said. Onion prices have shot up sharply to over Rs 75 per kg in the past few weeks in the wake of damage to the standing kharif crop in producing areas due to heavy rainfall as well as hoarding.

● **Now, retailers can stock onion only up to 2 tonnes, whereas wholesale traders are allowed to keep up to 25 tonnes**

Addressing media, Consumer Affairs Secretary Leena Nandan said, "This is a decisive step. We have imposed stock limits on onion traders with an immediate effect till December 31 after concerns that traders were releasing their stored stocks slowly, creating artificial price rise situation." She said the government

had to invoke the recently passed Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, which provides regulation of agri-commodities "only" in the times of extraordinary price rise situation. "Under this law, normally, we would not be regulating agri-food stuff like cereals and onion. But, in times of extraordinary price rise, we can regulate if the retail price breaches the trigger levels specified in the law," she said. In case of onion, the average all-India retail price of onion of ₹55.60 per kg that prevailed on October 21 breached the trigger level as per the formula specified under the EC

Amendment Act, she said. The all-India average retail price of ₹55.60 per kg was higher by 22.12 per cent compared with last year's rates of ₹45.33 per kg and by 114.96 per cent as against average rate that prevailed in past five years. So, the retail price had actually more than doubled and, therefore, decided to impose the stock limits on the commodity, she added. Later, Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted that the Modi government has taken third step to curb hoarding and check prices. Stock limits have been imposed on retailers and wholesale traders of onion. — PTI

5 killed in cracker unit blast near Madurai

Madurai, Oct 23: At least five women were killed in a blast at a private fireworks factory here on Friday, police said. Citing initial probe, police said chemicals which were being mixed and stuffed caught fire due to friction leading to a series of explosions, severely damaging the structure located at Muruganeri village. Several other workers managed to escape to safety, police said, adding fire service units from Virudhunagar and Srivilliputhur were used to put out the blaze.

■ **TN solatium to victims' kin: P3**

Social distancing goes for a toss at Chennai airport

**DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 23**

The Chennai airport is a picture of chaos with Covid-19 protocols going for a toss as counters are flooded with passengers with no social distancing. While airport officials have made several warnings and announcements regarding social distancing at the counters, the passengers blame it on the

airport authorities and demand opening of extra counters to avoid rush. The problem area is the entry point of the departure hall of the terminals and near the e-pass counters in the arrival hall. Daily, around 15,000 passengers travel through Chennai airport and 160 to 170 flights are handled. Airport sources said the crowding has gone up with the increase in the num-

ber of flights and passenger traffic. The crowding at e-pass counters happens as many passengers apply for the e-pass at the arrival hall, Chennai Corporation officials say that this has been a regular problem since many inter-state passengers are unaware of the norms and get the e-pass only after they land at the airport.

■ **Turn to P3**

against women. "This is completely wrong. We are struggling for women's emancipation and those unable to tolerate this are doing such things to create a flutter in the DMK alliance ahead of the elections," he said in a video uploaded on his Twitter page. VCK, which has two MPs including Thirumavalavan, is part of opposition Secular Progressive Alliance led by the DMK. Incidentally, the leader had courted controversy earlier too when his comments on women statues in temples did not go down well with pro-Hindu organisations.

As per the latest bulletin released by the IMD, heavy rains with thunderstorms are likely to occur in isolated places in Villupuram, Kallakurichi and Cuddalore districts in the next 24 hours. It added that the skies over Chennai and its suburbs will be cloudy for the next 48 hours and mild showers might occur over some places in the city. In the last 24 hours, Pallipaatu in Tiruvallur district recorded 17 cm of rain, the highest amount for the day. Several stations in Tiruvallur and Kanchipuram, received 11-9 cm of rain. Madurantakam, Chennai N u n g a m b a k k a m , Uthiramerur , Gummidipoondi , and Puducherry) recorded 7 cm of rain each in the last 24 hours.

**SINDHIYA SAMUEL | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 23**

The Cyber Crime wing of Chennai Police (CCB) on Friday filed a case against VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan. The allegation against the Member of the Parliament from Chidambaram Lok Sabha constituency is that he spoke ill of women, in the context of the Manusmriti. However, in the video being circulated, Thirumavalavan says he is stating what the *Manusmriti* allegedly says about women. The VCK leader has denied denigrating women and insisted that he

● **"I said that Manusmriti demeans women. But those with an eye on political mileage, a casteist-communal group is spreading falsehood against me and creating an impression as if I spoke against women" — Thol Thirumavalavan**



was working for their emancipation. Sources said a case has been slapped against him under sections 153 (Wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 153 A (1) (a) (dealing with attempts to promote ill-will between communities), 295 A (Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), 298 (Uttering, words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person), 505 (1) 9B), and Section 505 (2) of the IPC. The clip has now gone viral on the social media . In the video clip which is being circulated on social media, the politician says, "How are women, who form around half of the

● **"He is a political party leader and should be aware of what he is saying.. women cannot be objectified... you should apologise," Khushbu said and pointed out there were women in his family too**



population, treated in Sanatana Dharma? How are they oppressed and taken advantage of for a long time? What does Sanatana Dharma say about women? Women were basically created by God as prostitutes. All women are prostitutes, as per Hindu dharma, Manu dharma," he says. Reacting to the charges about his clip,

● **"Look at China, how filthy it is. Look at Russia. Look at India, it's filthy. The air is filthy. We have the best emission numbers that we've had in 35 years under this administration. We are working so well with the industry," Trump said in final presidential debate with Biden ■ See P5**

The US official also said, "The 2+2 format is reserved for our closest friends and partners and reflects our belief that the United States and India are stronger, more secure, and more prosperous when we work together. The 2+2 discussions will focus on global cooperation, on pandemic response, and challenges in the Indo-Pacific: economic space and energy collaboration, people-to-people ties, and defence and security cooperation." US secretary of state Michael R. Pompeo and secretary of defence Mark T. Esper will be visiting New Delhi on October 26 and 27 and will hold talks. with their Indian counterparts, S. Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh.

NE monsoon will set in over TN by Oct. 28, says IMD

**DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 23**

The northeast monsoon is expected to set in over Tamil Nadu by October 28, according to the Indian Meteorological Department. IMD announced that the northeasterly winds that act as a precursor to the monsoon may come in around October 26 and 27 and set the platform for the northeast monsoon. Speaking to the media on Friday, Deputy Director of Regional Meteorological Centre S. Balachandran said that the northeast monsoon is expected to arrive by October 28.

"It is expected that this year's northeast monsoon rainfall will be close to the annual normal amount in north Tamil Nadu and below the normal amount in south Tamil Nadu," he said. He added that in the next 24 hours, light to moderate rains with thunderstorms will occur over some places in north Tamil Nadu and Pudukcherry.

He said a combination of factors compromising an east-west Shear Zone and the depression over north-west and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal brought thunderstorms over the state. Chennai may see light rains in some areas during the weekend and the maximum temperature will be around 33 degree Celsius, he said.

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SHORT TAKES

VIT donates ₹1cr for Telangana flood relief work

Chennai: Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) on Thursday donated ₹1 crore to Telangana Chief Minister Relief Fund for the relief and rehabilitation measures in the rain and flood-hit areas of the state. VIT Founder and Chancellor Dr. G. Viswanathan said that Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) has provided ₹1 crore to Telangana Chief Minister Relief Fund as it would help the state government in its efforts to provide relief and rehabilitation to people affected by heavy rains and flood in the state.

Registrar of VIT-AP University Dr. C.L.V. Sivakumar handed over the Demand Draft (DD) for Rs. 1 Crore to Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development and Information Technology, Government of Telangana, Mr. K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday.

IIT-M to conduct convocation ceremony in mixed reality mode

Chennai: Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) will conduct the 57th convocation ceremony using a unique 'Mixed Reality' mode on Sunday.

Nobel Laureate Dr. David J Gross, Chancellor's Chair of Theoretical Physics, University of California will be the Chief Guest while Prof. Bhaskar Ramamurthi, Director, IITM, will be presenting the annual report on the occasion. For the first time in the history of the institute, convocation is to be held virtually in a unique 'mixed reality' mode, ensuring the safety of all amidst the global pandemic. At the same time it will be a memorable moments for all graduating students. The ceremony can be watched online via www.iitm.ac.in, www.youtube.com/user/ReachIITM/, and <https://www.facebook.com/ReachIITM/>.

Gold worth ₹16.5 lakh concealed in rectum

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

The Customs officials at the Chennai airport seized gold worth ₹16.5 lakh concealed in a passenger's rectum. The passenger has been arrested.

According to sources, on a specific intelligence input that gold was likely to be smuggled from Dubai, a passenger, Masthan Gani (49) of Thondi, Tamil Nadu, who arrived from Dubai by a Fly Dubai flight was intercepted at the exit on suspicion of carrying gold. The officials questioned him and he confessed to carrying gold in the rectum. On search, one bundle of gold paste was recovered from rectum and on extraction 215 grams of gold were recovered.

Further, two gold cut bits weighing 50 grams were recovered from his pant pocket. Masthan was arrested as he had an earlier offence registered against him. Total 315 grams of gold valued at ₹16.7 lakh were seized under the Customs Act 1962.

Ayudha puja not rosy for flower vendors



N. SAMPATH | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

Allowing shops in the city to function till 10 pm has not enthused flower sellers much as, in this Navarathri season, fewer people are celebrating the nine-day festival with flowers for puja.

This year several IT companies and industries have not opened their offices because of Covid-19 and are not celebrating

Ayudha puja like in previous years. Hence sale of flowers has come down drastically, affecting the livelihood of flower vendors.

The Flower Bazaar in Parry's area is not buzzing with business this season. Only 70 shops are open in this area which used to have 120 shops selling about 3,000 kg of various varieties of flowers.

With no regular suburban train service and express trains bringing

very less flowers from other parts of the state and neighbouring states, the shortage has soared flower prices. Jasmine flower is sold at ₹1,500 per kg, Chrysanthemum at ₹160/kg and 100 pieces of Rose at ₹50.

Flower sellers association general secretary S Venkatesan said the sudden rain has also contributed to the price rise, making livelihood of flower vendors miserable.

Test positivity rate in Chennai shoots up

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

As the government relaxed lockdown norms, the test positivity rate of Covid-19 continues to spiral in the city for the last 60 days. According to the data provided by the state health department, 23,274 positive cases were reported in the state in the last 20 days (between October 2 and 22).

As many as 22,434 cases were reported between September 12 and October 2 while it was 22,202 between August 23 and September 12. The trend in daily positivity rate shows a 1,692 (June 24 and July 14), 1,166 (July 15 and August 3) 1,120 (August 3 and 23) 1,110 (August 23 and September 12), 1,121 (September 12 and October 2) and 1,163 (October 2 and October 22).

The growth of the positive cases shows 1,273 on May 3 to 4,882 on May 13 to 9,364 on May 23 to 16,585 on June 3 to 45,814 on June 24 to 79,662 on July 14 to 102,985 on August 3 to 1,25,389 on August 23 to

The growth of the positive cases shows 1,273 on May 3 to 4,882 on May 13 to 9,364 on May 23 to 16,585 on June 3 to 45,814 on June 24 to 79,662 on July 14 to 102,985 on August 3 to 1,25,389 on August 23 to 1,47,591 on September 12 to 1,70,025 on October 2 to 1,93,299 on October 22

1,47,591 on September 12 to 1,70,025 on October 2 to 1,93,299 on October 22.

Meanwhile, active cases registered a negative growth in the city during the same period. The active cases came down from 12,013 on October 2 to 11,107 on October 22.

Active cases had peaked from 1,007 on May 3 to 4,012 on May 13 to 5,461 on May 23 to 7,805 on June 3 to 18,673 on June 24 and then came down to 15,814 on July 14 to 11,983 on August 3, up to 13,223 on August 23, down to 10,645 on September 12 and up to 12,013 on October 2.

The recovery rate has recorded an improvement

in the last 20 days, registering 23,852 cases against 20,784 in the previous 20 days. The trend of daily recovery shows as 1,803 (between June 24 and July 14) to 1,313 (July 14 and August 3) to 1,038 (August 3 and 23) to 1,220 (August 23 and September 12) to 1,039 (September 12 and October 2) and to 1,192 (October 2 and 22).

While the recovery case improved between August 23 and September 12, there was decline between August 3 and 23. The number of recovery cases declined from 26,274 (between July 14 and August 3) to 20,759 (between August 3 and 23).

The number had quadrupled from May 3 to May 13, doubled between May 13 and May 23, rose between May 23 and June 3 and improved between June 13 and June 24 as 18,673 cases and climbed as 36,079 between June 24 and July 14.

However, the death rate recorded an upward trend in the last 20 days. A total of 328 Covid-19 related deaths were registered in the last 20 days against 282

between October 2 and September 12.

The daily death rate has increased from 26 (between June 3 and June 24) to 31 (June 24 between July 14) to 44 between July 14 and August 3. But the daily death rate had started declining between August 3 and 23 as 20 and 19 between August 23 to September 12. The rate touched 14 between September 12 and October 2. It went up to 16 in between October 2 and October 22. The death toll mounted from 17 cases on May 3 to 3,569 on October 22 (almost 6 months).

This comes at a time when the latest serological survey in the city found that one-third of the population has been exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 infection and developed antibodies. According to the Greater Chennai Corporation, of the 6,389 samples tested 2,062 were positive for the presence of IgG antibodies, recording an overall positivity of 32.3 percent. Following this, the Chief Minister the other day promised a free vaccine for all people in the state.

Puducherry adds 158 fresh Covid-19 cases

Puducherry, Oct. 23: Puducherry registered 158 fresh coronavirus cases taking the overall tally in the union territory to 33,986, a top Health department official said on Friday. The new cases in the last 24 hours were identified at the end of the examination of 3,784 samples, Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release.

The overall tally of infections rose to 33,986 (after transfer of four cases to Tamil Nadu). While the Puducherry region accounted for 95 new cases, Mahe reported 36, followed by Karaikal (18) and Yanam (nine). He said that two people including a 47-year old woman succumbed to the virus during the last 24 hours pushing the toll to 584. The fatality and recovery rates were 1.72 per cent and 86.59 per cent respectively. The Health department Director said that 2.82 lakh samples had been tested so far and it was found that 2.44 lakh out of them were negative.

The result of the examination of remaining samples was awaited. He said 216 patients were discharged from hospitals during the last 24 hours. —PTI

HC refuses to quash a case relating to attempt to murder Balasingham

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

The Madras high court has dismissed a petition, which sought to quash the proceedings pending before the committal court (XI Metropolitan Magistrate, Saidapet, Chennai), relating to an alleged attempt to murder Balasingham, a confidant and spokesperson of LTTE supreme Prabhakaran, by planting and exploding a bomb near his residence at Besant Nagar in Chennai on December 23, 1985.

Justice P.N.Prakash dismissed the petition filed by Veerasangili Kanniah @ V.K.T.Balan, a lone available accused (out of 7 accused) in the case.

According to prosecution, the incident in this case took place when the Sri Lankan Tamil issue was at its crescendo and emotions were ruling the roost. Balasingham was the confidante of LTTE supreme Prabhakaran and was his spokesperson. He was residing in D.No.135-E, Elliot's Beach Road, Besant Nagar, Chennai. There was a bomb explosion in the early hours on December 23, 1985, near his house, in connection with which a case was registered by the



police. During the course of investigation, it came to light that a bomb with timer device was placed near the house of Balasingham for assassinating him, however, he survived. The CBCID police arrested Kandasamy, V.K.T.Balan, Ranjan, Manavai Thambi and Radhakrishnan on June 7, 1986 and Pavani @ Latu on June 27, 1986. However, Premkumar @ Kannan was still in abscondance. Kandasamy and Ranjan absconded after they were released on bail and it was reported that Ranjan was dead now. It was also reported that Manavai Thambi had died and Pavani was absconding. Premkumar was never arrested during the investigation and was shown as the absconding accused. Only V.K.T.Balan was available for trial. In the meanwhile, the complaint was taken on file as CC No.15361 of 1987 and thereafter it was transferred from one court to

A resolution for a New Year protest



G. Babu Jayakumar

Just spamming

As the world expects to step into a New Year with a sense of regained bonhomie, sans the shackles of the coronavirus-induced restrictions, Tamil Nadu may face a political turmoil, if one were to go by the threat issued by PMK founder Dr S. Ramadoss. After reviving his 40-year-old demand for 20 per cent exclusive reservation for the Vanniyar community in admissions for educational institutions and government employment some time back, Ramadoss gave a clarion call to his community youth on Thursday to gear up for a big fight against the government in January after Covid-19 havoc subsided.

Though appeals from politicians, trade unions and community leaders for direct action is quite common, when Ramadoss calls for an agitation, it sounds ominous, at least for those who were around in 1987. That was the year the infamous protest by the then Vanniyar Sangam for exclusive reservation for the com-

munity paralysed the state, mostly the northern districts. Vignettes of fully grown trees chopped and the trunks laid out on roads to block traffic is still green in the memories of those who suffered the overall mayhem.

What is more frightening now is that the call made through the Facebook page of Ramadoss has evoked quick responses from followers, who have expressed their willingness to start the fight as soon as possible. "Once again it is an opportunity to prove to the world who we are," says a follower indicating that the pride of the community rests on its ability to wreak havoc and that they had shown their might through the 1987 agitation.

Several followers say that they were children when the previous agitation was held and they could not contribute much then and hence were waiting for the launch of the next one, suggesting that they want to jump in and cause as much damage to public property as the par-

ticipants of the 1987 protest did. "I am now 41. As a child I placed stones on the roads to block traffic. Today even my 11-year-old son is preparing to join the stir," says one follower.

Another one recalls the classes he attended and the training he received at Thailapuram (the place where Ramadoss house is) as a third standard student and how he had understood the basic ideology that drives the party. Another one says that he was not even born during the previous agitation but was now ready to lay down his life in the next.

Other comments like "until we get 15% reservation our youth would have no future," "It is our right" and "We shall make this agitation better than the previous one and fight till the end" are just samples pointing to the mood in the community that is raring to go. Many followers pledge not only their support for Ramadoss but also eulogise him as their only leader. "Who else is there, sir, for us," says one.

Of course there are a few comments raising questions against Ramadoss "what happened to the properties donated by our ancestors to help the community," asked one, recounting the denial of help to some community people in the past like the families of the 21 persons who died in the 1987 agita-

What is more frightening now is that the call made through the Facebook page of Ramadoss has evoked quick responses from followers, who have expressed their willingness to start the fight as soon as possible

tion, the family of PMK's late firebrand leader Kaduvetti Guru and forest brigand Veerappan's wife, Muthulakshmi.

Another Facebook user, who is a BJP supporter, openly asked with what positions were the families of the 21 'martyrs' of 1987 compensated. Another one sarcastically asked, "why sir, the cash bags have not arrived?" But such discordant notes were far and few with most people replying in the affirmative like 'I am ready', 'waiting for the day' 'victory is ours,' 'awaiting your orders, sir' and 'definitely, sir'.

Perhaps enthused by the overwhelming support, Ramadoss put out another post in Facebook urging the government to appoint a commission headed by a High Court judge with three members to study how much the Vanniyar community had benefitted out of the 20% MBC quota that was carved out of the 50% BC quota in 1989 following the previous agitation. The Commission should submit its report by December and if Vanniyar representation

in education and jobs was found to be less than 15%, the intensive agitation would be launched.

The grouse of Ramadoss was that in MBC quota, Vanniyars had to share the privilege along with 108 communities and that his people had not benefitted much from it. He claimed that it was imposed on him. It's a different matter that after agreeing for the creation of MBC category, the PMK, which also came into being in 1989, had contested many elections, won several seats in the State Assembly and both the Houses of Parliament and had its representatives in the Union Cabinet. In fact, Ramadoss himself emerged as a politician only after that.

Probably, now that he finds his party in the dumps with many youth even deserting to join the BJP and his own popularity in the wane among the Vanniyars, he has called for the massive agitation with a view to reinventing himself. Perhaps by making the community, particularly youth, rally around him with the hope of getting exclusive reservation for Vanniyars, he hopes to regain his popularity in the community and thus improve his bargaining power with the major alliance partners. For it is still not clear in which coalition he would be in when the elections come.



North Beach station cops seize banned gutka products worth ₹45 lakh from a Bengaluru to Chennai container on Friday.

— DC

Girl dies, 5 injured as van falls into ditch

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

A 19-year-old girl died and five others were injured, on their way back from work, when the van in which they were travelling overturned and fell into a roadside ditch on the Pudukkottam-Thirupur road on Thursday midnight.

Police said 12 people were travelling in the van and the driver who was overspeeding lost control of the vehicle. The van proceeding from Kelambakkam towards Pudukkottam skidded and overturned.

The victims, hailing from Thandara and Amrita Pallam villages near Thirukazhukundram in Chengalpet district, were on their way to home after work at a private company in Kelambakkam around 12:30 am when the accident took place.

Police said, as it was raining that night, the road was slippery and despite several warnings by the women, the driver speeded the vehicle, causing the accident. When on Pudukkottam-Thirupur road, the vehicle overturned and fell into a roadside ditch. The driver

escaped from the scene after the accident.

Anushya, 19, from Amrutha Palam village, died on the spot. The local police, highway patrol police and paramedical staff in '108' ambulance rushed to the site and rescued the injured. Six persons escaped unhurt, police said adding the five injured persons were admitted at the government hospital in Chengalpet. The body of the deceased has been sent for post-mortem. Police said, due to the rain, the vehicle skidded and swerved to one side after the driver applied the brake.

SHORT TAKES

TN urges rly ministry to resume suburban services

Chennai, Oct. 23: The Tamil Nadu government on Friday urged the railway ministry to resume suburban train services in the city, suspended since March in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, saying it will benefit the public, as well as aid economic revival.

Chief Minister K. Palaniswami wrote to Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, pointing out that inter and intra-state train services had already resumed in Tamil Nadu.

Metro rail services here are also operational.

The state government had already made a request on September 2 to resume Electric Multiple Units (EMUs) and suburban trains in and around Chennai for the public, the Chief Minister said in the letter.

"Resumption of EMU/suburban trains will greatly help the general public and facilitate in the quick revival of the economy."

"Hence, I request you to give instructions to the Southern Railway to resume EMU/ suburban trains in and around Chennai, duly adopting standard operating procedures (SOPs) for COVID-19," he added.

The suburban EMU services connect the city to its southern and northern parts, including areas from nearby districts and are considered a lifeline for this metropolis. — *PTI*



MTC has stickers pasted on buses specially operated for commuters visiting shopping hubs and malls during this festive season. — *DC*

Mock fire drill held

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, OCT. 23

A mock fire drill was conducted at the Seamless Steel Tube Plant (SSTP) of BHEL here on Friday, to check the preparedness of various safety, security and rescue systems in the factory.

Speaking on the occasion, Joint Director, Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health (IS&H), S Malathi, said that preparedness and mock drills are vital to prevent accidents in manufacturing industries.

District fire officer, Tiruchy and Pudukkottai, E Banu Priya, oversaw the fire drill which simulated a situation in the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) yard at SSTP which has two LPG bullets of 40 tons each. They appreciated the joint efforts of all the teams under the Mutual Aid Scheme for successfully conducting the mock drill demonstrating the prompt response for any situation.

Firefighting teams from HAPP, OFT, IOCL and TNFRS which are under the 'mutual aid scheme' also joined BHEL's fire services to conduct the drill, a BHEL release said.

Record 72 lakh tons of paddy procured: Min

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUVARUR, OCT. 23

The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) has created a new record in paddy procurement through its direct purchase centres (DPCs) by procuring 72 lakh tons of paddy in the first 22 days of the current kariff season, said Food minister R Kamaraj.

The minister was accompanied by district monetary officer Dr K Manivasagan and Tiruvarur Collector T Anand. After inspecting a few DPCs in Nannilam area in the district on Friday, they said that in Tiruvarur district kuruvai paddy covered one lakh acres, and so far, 93,000 acres of paddy has been harvested.

He said in Tiruvarur district that there are 249 DPCs of which 93,727 metric tons of paddy was procured in which 17,418 farmers were benefitted. A sum of Rs 171.60 crore has been directly credited to the respective farmer's bank accounts.

Foundation stone for ₹10,062 cr projects laid



Chennai, Oct 23: Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Friday laid the foundation stone for nine industrial projects worth ₹10,062 crore, which will generate 8,666 new jobs.

He also took part in the inauguration of seven companies which had already signed Memorandum of Understanding with the state government and commenced commercial production at its facilities today, an official release said. Both functions were done through video-conferencing.

These companies had committed investments of Rs 1,298.20 crore, generating 7,879 new jobs and signed MoUs with the state government during the Global Investors Meet in 2019 and also during the

Chief Minister's three nation visit last year. Wheels India Ltd, Salcomp's electronic component manufacturing facility at Nokia SEZ, Sriperumbudur, Dindigul Renewable Energy Pvt Ltd, Power Gear's electric component production facility, Mudhra Fine Blanc auto-component facility were among those that commenced commercial production today.

The projects for which Palaniswami took part in the foundation stone staying ceremony include Hyundai Motor India's new ₹50 crore training centre at Irungattukottai, Vikram Solar's ₹ 5,512 crore solar module production unit, Adani Gas's ₹ 2,000 crore city-gas distribution project, Integrated Chennai Business Park's Rs 1,000 crore logistics park and Shreevari Energy Systems Rs 250 crore project. An official release said he state government signed MoUs with 304 companies which committed investments of ₹3.50 lakh crore that would create 10.50 lakh jobs in the state during the Global Investors Meet in 2019.

With the companies com-

mencing commercial production today, 89.47 per cent of the 304 projects have gone on stream, the release said.

Meanwhile industries minister M. C. Sampath handed over the dividend cheque for ₹14.66 crore of state-government owned Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Ltd for the 2019-20 fiscal to Palaniswami, the release said. On Friday, Palaniswami unveiled a short film on 'Guidance Tamil Nadu, commemorating its 28th anniversary. Guidance Tamil Nadu is a nodal investment promotion agency, facilitating investments and providing single window facilitation to companies which plan to set up manufacturing facility in the state. — *PTI*

Solatium of ₹2 lakh each to kin of victims

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam and DMK president M. K. Stalin were among those who condoled the death of five persons, including three women, in an explosion at a firecracker unit at Muruganeri village in Peraiyur taluk of Madurai district on Friday.

Announcing a solatium of Rs 2 lakh each to families of those killed and Rs one lakh to those injured in the fire accident, Palaniswami said he had deputed the Revenue Minister R B Udhayakumar to oversee the expedition of the relief operations.

He had also urged the district collectors to visit firecracker factories and ensure that all safety measures were adhered to by the units and also requested the companies to be careful in view to the approaching Deepavali season.

Conveying his condolences to the family members of the deceased, Panneerselvam, in a tweet, prayed to Lord Almighty for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Stalin, in his Facebook post, accused the AIADMK government of being negligent when it came to firecracker units adhering to safety norms.

He urged the government to pay adequate compensation to the victims and also ensure that in this Deepavali season firecracker units ensured their safety and security.

War of words over 7.5% quota for government school children

CM expresses confidence over Guv giving nod to quota

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

A war of words has erupted in the state's political scene even as the DMK geared up to hold a agitation in front of Raj Bhavan on Saturday, protesting against Governor Banwarilal Purohit for holding back the Bill providing for 7.5 per cent reservation to students from government schools in medical college admissions.

Accusing DMK president M. K. Stalin of indulging in 'statement politics', Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami said the DMK had no right to blame the government of inaction in getting the Governor's consent for the Bill as it was during the UPA regime, in which Congress and DMK were part of the government, that Neet was introduced in India.

Replying to Stalin's charge that the state government had covered up the Governor's contention that he required three to four weeks to look into the merits of the Bill before giving assent, fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar said that it was not appropriate for the ministers to reveal what happened in a closed door meeting.

Speaking to the media at the Chennai collector's office after an event, Jayakumar said the government was confident of the Governor giving his nod for the Bill soon and that the DMK need not be organizing the protest in front of Raj Bhavan.

Palaniswami, in a statement, accused the DMK of

trying to seek political gain through the issue and explained that the 7.5 per cent reservation for government school students was brought about because the socio-economic background of students in government and private schools were vastly different.

Be it the schools or the home environment or income of parents, private school students were at an advantage and judging all students on the same scale was against equality. It was in view of this fact that he announced the 7.5 per cent reservation in the Assembly under Rule 110 and subsequently passed the Bill in the Assembly to send it to the Governor for approval on September 18.

Before moving the Bill in the Assembly, the government had sought a report from a committee headed by former High Court judge P. Kalaia-rasan to study the prospects of government school students getting admission in medical courses.

After sending the Bill to the Governor, the government had been following it up periodically, the Chief Minister said. When he went to Raj Bhavan to brief the Governor about the work done on controlling Covid-19 spread along with Ministers, he had taken up the issue and hoped the consent would come soon.

Even on October 20, he personally met the Governor and put pressure on him to give his nod for the Bill when he promised to look into it. He said that DMK had no right to blame the govern-

ment of not pressurizing the Governor at this moment when the whole exercise was about to yield results.

He said that it was the AIADMK government that increased the total number of medical seats in the state to 1,400 and made efforts to set up new medical colleges with a view to raising the number of seats to 1650.

Referring to the Governor's reply to Stalin's letter demanding speedy approval for the Bill, stating that he would require three to four weeks, TNCC president K. S. Alagiri said that delay in giving assent would have serious repercussions.

Alagiri regretted that he was given to understand that the Governor wanted the government to implement the Central government's 10 per cent reservation for 'Economically Weaker Sections' among the upper castes if they wanted him to approve the 7.5 per cent reservation for government school students.

CPM Politburo member G Ramakrishnan said the Governor should leave the state if he could not follow the Constitution and give his nod for the Bill passed in the State Assembly. He also wondered why the State Minister did not reveal to the people that the Governor had sought three to four weeks' time to clear the Bill.

VCK general secretary Thol Thirumavalvan wrote to the President of India requesting him to recall the Governor and protect the Constitution.

Misty treat to Ooty hills

DC CORRESPONDENT
OOTY, OCT. 23

It appears to be the 'Season of Mist' here ahead of the puja holidays as the weather has predominantly turned misty, reducing the visibility of motorists.

When the NE monsoon season begins in October and there are meteorological changes over the Bay of Bengal, it reflects in the Nilgiris as the weather here begins to see rapid changes.

On Fridaynoon, a thick sheet of mist began to engulf the Ooty - Valleyview - Coonoor belt accompanied with a mild drizzle, making it an experience for residents and tourists alike.

Since the thick sheet of mist reduced the visibility range, motorists turned on their head lamps and fog lamps in their effort to drive safely. This weather condition is certainly a different experience for tourists here this season.

SUBWAY TO NOWHERE: FULL OF FILTH



The pitiable condition of a subway under construction to replace the railway level crossing at Radha Nagar, near the northern end of the platform of Chromepet railway station. In 2000, the Pallavaram municipality passed a resolution urging the Southern Railway to construct a pedestrian subway to replace the level crossing. A few years later, the state highways department and the Southern Railway agreed to construct a vehicular subway. In 2010 the level crossing was closed to construct the subway. The Southern Railway completed its portion of the work, but the remaining portion - access to the subway from Grand Southern Trunk Road and also from Radha Nagar main road is pending for more than a decade due to legal tussles. The government needs an additional portion of land for constructing service roads, but residents are objecting to any further land acquisition for the project. The delay is not only posing inconvenience to thousands of residents and motorists, but also health hazards due to stagnation of sewage. Activists have appealed to convene a meeting of all stakeholders - residents, citizen welfare groups, Pallavaram municipality, Southern Railway and the state government to resolve all issues so that the subway work is completed at the earliest. — *E.K. Sanjay*

TN reports 3,057 new Covid-19 cases; 33 deaths

Chennai, Oct. 23: Tamil Nadu on Friday recorded 3,057 fresh COVID-19 cases and 33 more deaths, taking the infection count to 7,03,250 and toll to 10,858, the health department said on Friday. Recoveries continued to outnumber the fresh infections as 4,262 people walked out of health care facilities after treatment aggregating to 6,59,432 till date, a bulletin said.

Active cases, including those in isolation, stood at 32,960. Testing of samples on Friday stood at 81,472 with the total specimens getting examined going up to 93,56,580 till date. Tamil Nadu does not use Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADT) and all the tests are RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase

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Chain Reaction based). A private lab in Madurai was accorded approval for conducting COVID-19 tests, taking the total number of facilities operating in the state to 198. Among districts Chennai leads in the number of infections with 844 people contracting the virus followed by Coimbatore 280, Chengalpet 186, Salem 185, Thiruvallur 168, Tiruppur 130, Erode 106.

Perambalur was the least in the number of fresh infections with five people testing COVID-19 positive.

With 844 fresh cases, Chennai's tally mounted to 1,94,139 adding to the State's over 7.03 lakh cases. Among the 33 deceased, three of them were without co-morbidities or 'chronic illness' which include a 53-year-old woman from the city who was brought dead to the Government Medical College here. She died on October 20 and had tested positive on October 18. Twenty-four of the deceased were above 60, the bulletin said. As many as 3,580 people from Chennai have died contributing to the State's COVID death toll of 10,858 till date. — *PTI*

YOUTH ARRESTED FOR TRANSGENDER'S MURDER

DC CORRESPONDENT,
COIMBATORE, OCT. 23

Police here on Friday have cracked the mystery behind the murder of a 60-year-old transgender with the arrest of a 23-year-old youth.

Police said Sangeetha, chief of Coimbatore transgender association, was found dead under mysterious circumstances last Wednesday at Sai Baba Colony here, and the body with cut wounds all over, was recovered from a plastic drum.

A month ago, Sangeetha

had started a restaurant here named 'Covai trans kitchen' with a seating capacity of 32 persons, which was completely managed by transgenders. This was claimed to be the first ever restaurant in the state run by transgenders.

Before Sangeetha's murder came to light last Wednesday, her colleagues had gone to her house searching for her since her mobile remained switched off for two days. They were shocked to see the front doors of the house kept open and blood stains all over the bed

with a foul smell emanating around the house.

Acting on the information, Sai Baba Colony police rushed to the spot and during investigations, found the body dumped inside a plastic drum filled with rock salt kept in the back yard of the house.

Police subsequently picked up 23-year-old Rajesh from Nagapattinam, who was a staff in Sangeetha's hotel, and was staying with her.

On intense grilling, Rajesh admitted to murdering Sangeetha.

'Several passengers standing too close putting everyone at risk'

From P1

"Long queues and crowding occur at the entry point because of checking each passenger takes time. But passengers should be cautious and stand apart. Many of them are stand-

ing too close to each other, putting everyone at risk," an airport source said.

Officials of the Airports Authority of India said they had taken steps to control crowding and maintain physical distance

ing at the terminal. "We have placed floor markers everywhere and announcements are also made. However, passengers are crowding the counters throwing the cautions to the wind."

"Some wear masks and a few of them take them off sometimes. They should be cautious and stand apart, but many of them are standing too close to each other, putting each other at risk," an airport source said.

Plea to hike paddy, cane procurement price

G. SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR, OCT 23

Farmers of Kumbakonam have appealed to the government to increase the amount paid per quintal of paddy and per tonne of sugarcane.

Participating in the monthly farmers grievances day meet through video-conferencing on Friday, farmers led by Sundara Vimalanathan, district secretary, Thanjai district Cauvery Farmers Protection Association, pointed out that Kerala government was paying ₹,795 per quintal of paddy, while Chattisgarh government paid ₹2,500 per quin-

tal. But, the price in Tamil Nadu now is Rs 1,995 per quintal.

For sugarcane, the governments of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh were paying ₹3,500 per tonne.

Vimalanathan said police and revenue officials should raid direct purchase centres (DPCs) and take action on officials taking bribes from farmers for procuring paddy. He alleged that some amount is demanded from farmers for every bag of paddy.

Veevakumar, a farmer of Budalur, said that onion is grown by farmers in their area and that a

cold storage should be created for the crop at Valappakudi.

Some farmers of Thiruvaiyaru said that the bypass road project around Thiruvaiyaru was a threat to cultivable lands, and hence, the location of the road should be re-considered.

Another farmer from Thanjavur, Govindaraj, said that crushing sugarcane should be started from December at Arignar Anna sugar mills at Kurunkulam.

Collector Govinda Rao said that Kuruvai crop was raised this year in 58,948 hectares, and standing crops on 55,748

hectares have been already harvested.

Samba transplantation has been completed on 72,157 hectares and the nursery of another 50,000 hectares is ready for transplanting.

A total of 1,655 tonnes of samba paddy seeds has been distributed so far and another 735 tonnes are in stock.

With respect to fertilisers, there is a stock of 7,709 tonnes of urea, 3,303 tonnes of DAP, 3,112 tonnes of Potash and 1,390 tonnes of complex fertiliser.

Joint director, Agriculture, Justin, participated in the meeting.

SHORT TAKES

CENTRAL AGENCIES
DENY LEAKING SSR
CASE INFORMATIONDC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 23

Union government told the Bombay High court on Friday that none of their three agencies — Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) — which are investigating cases related to Sushant Singh Rajput's (SSR) death, have leaked probe information to the media. Last week, the court had pulled up the Union government for sharing probe information to the media.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a public interest litigations filed by former IPS officers alleging that some news channels are maligning image of Mumbai police in SSR death case and asked the court to restrain the media coverage. The HC is hearing arguments on whether a statutory mechanism is required to control the TV news content.

On Friday, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh filed affidavits before the court on behalf of the CBI, ED and NCB stating they had not leaked any probe related details to the media.

The court was irked when lawyers of news channels, which are party in the PIL, put forth Supreme Court judgments and opposed the idea of statutory regulatory mechanism on news channels. The HC remarked that the media has changed now.

ANTI-BENGALI
RANT: MEGHALAYA
CALLS FOR PEACEMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, OCT. 23

After a racial campaign by an influential students' body targeting Bengalis ahead of Durga Puja, the Meghalaya government on Friday appealed to all to maintain peace and harmony in Meghalaya. The Khasi Students Union (KSU) had put up posters in Shillong accusing all Bengalis in the state of being "Bangladeshis". The state police has removed the posters and warned of action against those trying to "incite communal disharmony". Police specifically warned the KSU to refrain from such activities or face legal action.

Former Meghalaya governor Tathagata Roy, also a BJP leader in Kolkata, tweeted, "I say this taking full responsibility as ex-governor of Meghalaya: KSU needs to be banned just like HNLC. It is an anti-national terrorist organisation, threatening Indian citizens, some of whom are residents of Meghalaya since British times. Like my family on both sides." The Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council is a banned militant outfit in Meghalaya.

Meghalaya home minister Lahkmen Rymbui said, "Anything we do, we should not vitiate the atmosphere... I request everybody not to give communal colour to any incident."

Sources in the student body indicated that the poster campaign has its roots in the Ichamati incident earlier this year when a KSU member was killed in clashes with non-tribals who were largely Bengalis.

We will not forget Art. 370,
restore it, says Mehbooba

Former J&K chief minister regrets trusting PM Narendra Modi

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, OCT. 23

Renewing her pledge to fight for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special status till her last breath, former chief minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti said on Friday that the Centre had no right or power to abrogate Article 370. She regretted reposing faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and allying with the BJP.

She said that the bigger issue before her, the PDP and the people of J&K, was to seek a resolution on the Kashmir issue.

"Our fight is not confined to restoration of

Article 370, but for the resolution on Kashmir issue as well. Kashmir is an issue and nobody can turn a eye blind to it," she said while addressing a press conference here, her first after her release from a 14-month long detention earlier this month.

Mufti, 61, who looked in a defiant mood, said, "Those who think we will forget Article 370 are living in a fool's paradise. People have made a lot of sacrifices and we won't allow those sacrifices to go waste."

She added "We (the leaders of various political parties who are part of the recently formed People's Alliance for

Gupkar Declaration) are united and people should also fight it in unison. It is not the fight of Dr Farooq, Sajad Lone or any other leader but of one and all."

She vowed that she will be the first person among the political leaders to give her blood "for this cause in case the need arises".

Accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the Centre of hurting the sentiments of the people of J&K by snatching from them the special status and taking other "anti-people" decisions, she said, "This is highly regrettable that since the unconstitutional and illegal abrogation

of Article 370, the government has left no stone unturned to hurt the sentiments of the people with their anti-people decisions. They don't want people of Jammu and Kashmir, who are expendable for them."

She asserted, "The people of J&K are shell-shocked. They have lost hope. August 5 was loot and theft."

On PDP joining hands with the BJP to cobble up a government in J&K in 2015, she said that she regretted trusting Modi who belonged to a party of which Atal Bihari Vajpayee was also a part.

She, however, claimed that her party did not forge an alliance with the

BJP to come to power.

She said, "We didn't ally with the BJP for power. If you remember, my father made a statement on July 28, 2014 wherein he stated that he wants to work for people of Jammu and Kashmir. He knew a Tsunami was coming."

She also asserted that it was not the PDP's alliance with the BJP that led to the abrogation of Article 370. "It was the Parliament that was misused. Parliament had no right to do this," she said.

She said, "These BJP leaders have ruined the Constitution of India. This country will work on the constitution and not as per the BJP manifesto."

DCGI CLEARS
THIRD PHASE OF
COVAXIN TRIALKANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 23

Phase 3 clinical trials on humans for Covaxin, the ingeniously developed Covid-19 vaccine, have been approved by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) on 26,000 participants in 25 centres.

The tests will be carried out in hospitals in major cities. Symptomatic patients of Covid-19 with confirmed CT scan and chest X-ray and who are under treatment will be given the vaccine dose.

The dose is 0.5 ml on day zero and day 28, according to sources.

An expert committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) evaluated the safety and efficacy data of Phase 1 and Phase 2 trials of Covid-19 before giving the final approval.

Bharat Biotech, which has developed Covaxin in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology, said on Friday that it has received approval for Phase 3 trials from DCGI.

Sai Prasad, executive director of Bharat Biotech, has stated if everything goes well there is a possibility of Covaxin being available by June 2021.

The expert committee meeting of CDSCO was held on October 5 where the data of Phase 1 and 2 was evaluated. It discussed the efficacy of the inactivated Coronavirus vaccine BBV152 along with the proposal to conduct event-driven Phase 3 trials to assess the efficacy of the vaccine. The committee instructed that symptomatic cases who will be given the dose must have symptoms of breathlessness, oxygen saturation levels less than 94, vomiting, nausea, diarrhoea and severe cases and must be in intensive care treatment.

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TS toll nears 1300: The Covid-19 death toll in Telangana neared the 1,300 mark, with the state recording six fatalities from the disease on Thursday.

Mumbai mall fire mishap



Smoke rises from City Central Mall after a fire broke out in it in Mumbai on Friday. The fire brigade evacuated around 3,500 people residing in a building adjacent to the Mall which caught a huge Level-5 fire on Thursday evening.

— PTI

Govt-sanctioned conversion
killed of lakes in HyderabadMADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 23

The death knell for the city's lakes was sounded in the 1990s when the then government issued a notification stating that water bodies smaller than 10 acres could be used to build residential and commercial purposes. As a result, more than 3,000 water bodies within the city limits disappeared by mid-2000s which also saw a real estate boom.

There are now a mere 185 lakes in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits. What is even more alarming is that as many as 10 lakes in the city are on the verge of disappearance, with four lakes already disappearing.

● **THERE ARE** now a mere 185 lakes in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits. What is even more alarming is that as many as 10 lakes in the city are on the verge of disappearance, with four lakes already disappearing.

The full tank level of 25 waterbodies under the Himayatsagar alone has reduced to about 1,222 hectares from 2,081 hectares. A study has also revealed that combined water spread under the basins of three lakes, which served as major watersheds for Hyderabad and surrounding areas, has come down by 40 per cent between 1978 and 2013.

A technical report, 'Documenting disappearing water bodies of Hyderabad city', prepared by the Society for Participatory Development revealed that 27

government asked the committee to mark the FTLs of the lakes and fence them to stop further encroachments.

Even though records of Hyderabad's lakes from the Nizams' times are safe at the State Archives and Miralam tank systems have totally disappeared during this period. The impact has been manifold, with aquatic life deteriorating, groundwater levels declining, and waterlogging and flash floods becoming common during heavy rains.

The Hyderabad Urban Development Authority then came up with the idea of not considering water bodies below 10 acres as lakes and kuntas and that they can be used for residential and commercial purposes. This even led to a government order, which has resulted in disappearance of 3,000 of the 7,000 manmade and natural bodies.

FIRE | POWER

Militants now shift bases to north, central regions

Army reins in ultras in S. Kashmir

DC CORRESPONDENT
PULWAMA, OCT. 23

Security forces combating three-decade-old insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir have over the past several months mounted pressure on militant outfits in south Kashmir, forcing the latter to shift their bases to central and north Kashmir. South Kashmir — consisting of the four districts of Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam and Anantnag — has been the hotbed of insurgency, especially since militant commander Burhan Wani and his two associates were killed by the Indian Army in July 2016.

The killing of 22-year-old poster boy of frontline indigenous militant outfit Hizb-ul-Mujahideen not only triggered widespread unrest in Kashmir Valley and parts of Chenab valley of Jammu region during which more than eighty people were killed, most of them in security forces' actions, it also inspired hundreds of youth to join

● **IN THEIR** stepped up operations, the Indian Army and other security forces have inflicted heavy casualties on militants during the past four years.

● **AS MANY** eight encounters took place in Srinagar city alone this year, in which 18 militants, including an important Hizb commander Junaid Ashraf Khan, were killed.

militants' ranks. With it, the separatist campaign gained a new life, and south Kashmir became a stronghold of new-age militancy.

Also in the three years since Burhan's killing, most radicalised cadres within the Hizb and Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen ended up creating the Ansar-ul-Gazwat-ul-Hind (AGH), an Al Qaeda affiliate, the Islamic State Jammu and Kashmir (ISJK) and the Islamic State's Hind Province (ISHP), another ISIS affiliate.

However, in their stepped up operations, the Indian Army and other security forces have inflicted heavy casualties on militants during the past four years. Officials say that nearly 1,000 militants, including more than three dozen commanders, were killed in counterinsurgency opera-

tions, 187 of them so far this year even though the security forces also suffered a heavy toll — more than 40 in the past one year alone.

Hundreds of civilians too perished during this period. Most of the killings took place in south Kashmir. Despite these killings, major militant outfits found new recruits from among the local youth in large numbers. At the same time, sustained pressure from the security forces and tightening of borders led to logistical issues within established militant groups such as the Hizb and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT), officials said. They added that the shortage of weapons is a recurring issue in these outfits and increasing incidents of weapon snatching from security forces over the past couple of years is

testimony to that. Lt. Gen. B.S. Raju, the commander of the Army's Srinagar-based 15 corps (also known as Chinar corps), recently said that even though infiltration from across the Line of Control (LoC) has been restricted to a fewer incidents due to the increased vigil, recruitment of local youth into militants' ranks went up slightly in September-October. According to the security forces officials, that militants are shifting their bases out of south Kashmir is borne out by the fact that as many as eight encounters took place in Srinagar city alone this year, in which 18 militants, including an important Hizb commander Junaid Ashraf Khan, were killed. However, J&K's police chief Dilbag Singh claimed, "Whenever a terrorist outfit tries to establish its foothold in Srinagar, we successfully corner the militants with the help of our intelligence and other sources."

COLLEGES TO OPEN
FROM NOV. 17 IN
KARNATAKAVINAY MADHAV | DC
BENGALURU, OCT. 23

After witnessing a downward trend in the number of Covid-19 cases for over a week, the Karnataka government has decided to open the educational institutions starting from November 17.

As the first step, the government would allow opening of degree colleges, along with diploma and engineering colleges. However, decisions on Pre-University and High Schools would be taken after studying the situation for a month.

Karnataka higher education minister Dr Ashwath Narayana said that the idea behind opening of the colleges is to maintain bonding between students and college. It has been seven months since the students have gone to their colleges and they were learning online.

While the government is opening colleges, it would be made optional as the students are free to choose between online coaching and direct teaching in colleges.

Court takes cognisance of
Elgar Parishad chargesheetDC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 23

A Sessions court in Mumbai on Friday took cognisance of the chargesheet filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) against eight persons including Stan Swamy, Anand Teltumbde and Gautam Naulakha in the Elgar Parishad case. The agency claimed that the conspiracy related to the violence against Dalits in Bhima Koregaon on January 1, 2018 was part of a "well chalked-out strategy", and spread across the country and beyond.

The NIA has filed the chargesheet under various sections of IPC, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). The agency in its charge sheet has claimed that Teltumbde was one of the convenors of 'Bhima Koregaon Shaurya Din Prerna Abhiyan' and was present for the Elgar

Top BJP leaders
advised me to
join NCP: KhadseSONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, OCT. 23

Claiming that several senior leaders are unhappy in the BJP and want to quit the party, former Maharashtra minister Eknath Khadse on Friday said that he joined the Sharad Pawar-led party as advised by some senior BJP leaders from Delhi.

Khadse, who has been sulking in the BJP ever since he had step down from the Maharashtra cabinet in 2016 after corruption charges, joined the NCP along with his daughter and number of supporters in presence of NCP president Sharad Pawar.

The 68-year-old leader, who was BJP's OBC face in the state along with late Gopinath Munde, said that his supporters as well as his seniors from Delhi wanted him to join the NCP.

While joining the NCP, he said that injustice was meted to him in the BJP and that he was fleeced, insulted and defamed and a false charge like molestation, too, was levelled against him.

"When I discussed the situation with seniors in Delhi, they said Natha Bhau (Khadse) you don't have a future here (in the BJP). I asked what I should do? They asked me to change the party. I asked which one should I join? Then they suggested the NCP," Khadse said.

He also claimed that several leaders in the BJP are fed up and think they should jump the ship but cannot do so as they are apprehensive the ED will be after them. "I am not afraid of anyone. If they send ED after me, I will play a CD," he said.

In his induction ceremony at NCP's office, Khadse showed his influence in the Jalgaon unit of the BJP as his supporters including Jalgaon district general secretary and members of Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti turned out in large numbers.

Targeting the BJP state leadership, Khadse said that after serving 40 years in the BJP, he did not want to leave the party but he was forced to do so as he had been defamed and harassed in the last four years.

Active Covid cases
below 7-lakh markDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

With 54,366 fresh cases, India on Friday registered a total of 77.61 lakh cases of Coronavirus. In the last 24 hours 690 new deaths were recorded taking the country's total death tally to 1.17 lakh.

According to the Union health ministry, India has leaped across a significant milestone in its fight against Covid-19 as active caseload of the country has fallen below 7 lakh for the first time after two months.

The active caseload was below the 7 lakh mark last on August 22.

The total positive cases of the country are 6.95 lakh and they comprise 8.96 per cent of the total cases.

AP tally crosses 8-lakh mark: Andhra Pradesh on Friday crossed the eight-lakh mark in total number of Covid-19 cases by registering 8,00,684 instances of the disease, with 3,765 new cases having been added during the last 24 hours, the day also saw 20 persons succumbing to the disease, taking the death toll to 6,544.

Out of the total of 74,28,014 samples tested so far in the state, 7,62,419 patients have been discharged after recovery from various hospitals in the state, while 31,721 patients are still active with the virus and undergoing treatment.

TS toll nears 1300: The Covid-19 death toll in Telangana neared the 1,300 mark, with the state recording six fatalities from the disease on Thursday.

According to the health department bulletin on Friday, the state also recorded 1,421 Covid positive cases, taking the tally to 2,29,001 and toll 1,298. Total recoveries are 2,07,326 and there are 20,377 active cases in the state. GHMC recorded 249 new cases, Medchal Malkajigiri 111 and Ranga Reddy 97. There were only 38,484 tests carried out as the cases are declining and fewer people are coming to hospitals. The in-patient load is also reducing.

K'taka tests 1.08 lakh samples: Karnataka on Friday reported 5,356 new cases of Covid-19 and 51 more deaths, taking the total number of infections to 7,93,907 and the toll to 10,821. The state conducted 1,08,356 tests on the day alone, and 21,615 among them were rapid antigen tests, the health department said. Out of 5,356 fresh cases reported today, 2,688 cases were from Bengaluru urban alone.

Kerala active cases to touch 1 lakh: Kerala is near to achieving the dubious distinction of hosting one lakh active Covid19 positive cases soon as the total number patients undergoing treatment rose to 95,657 with the addition of 8,511 fresh cases on Friday while the toll rose to 1,281 with the addition of 26 deaths. The state's cumulative infection count stood at 3,64,895 on a day when 64,789 samples were tested.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Thiruvananthapuram bureaus)

IN BRIEF

Greta urges EU farm bill veto

Brussels: Environmental activists on Friday piled pressure on the European Parliament to vote down the EU's massive farm subsidy bill, saying it fell short of commitments to fight climate change. Leading climate change activist Greta Thunberg told MEPs that "this is your chance to turn empty words into action." "The eyes of future generations are upon you," she added. Thunberg has also taken shots at the media for putting under-served attention on a minor aspect of the package — a proposed ban on using the term "veggie burger" for non-meat products. The proposal, pushed by cattle and dairy farmers, was rejected as an amendment by MEPs on Friday although a ban on using "yoghurt style" and "cheese substitute" tags on plant-based goods survived.

US drone strike kills 17 jihadists

Beirut: The US army said on Thursday it carried out a drone strike against Al-Qaeda leaders in northwestern Syria near the Turkish border, killing 17 jihadists, according to a war monitor. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said five civilians were also among those killed. "US Forces conducted a strike against a group of Al-Qaeda in Syria (AQ-S) senior leaders meeting near Idlib, Syria," said Major Beth Riordan, the spokeswoman for United States Central Command (CENTCOM). "The removal of these AQ-S leaders will disrupt the terrorist organisation's ability to further plot and carry out global attacks threatening US citizens, our partners and innocent civilians," Riordan said in a statement. She did not specify the number of deaths from the strike.

15 detained after abortion rally ban

Warsaw: Poland's police said Friday they detained 15 people during protests in Warsaw against a court ruling that toughened the nation's strict abortion law and banned abortion of fetuses with congenital defects. Hundreds of people protested on Thursday night in front of the ruling right-wing party offices and the home of its leader, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, in defiance of a pandemic-related ban on public gatherings. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd. Warsaw police spokesman Sylwester Marczak said on Friday that 14 people remain in detention and 35 have been fined for having broken the ban. They were protesting the ruling by the government-controlled Constitutional Court Thursday that declared abortion of defective fetuses unconstitutional, thus shutting a major loophole in the 1993 abortion law that was a hard-won compromise.

AGEING CHIMPS CHOOSE FRIENDS CAREFULLY

Washington, Oct. 23: When it comes to friendships, people are known to become more selective with age. It turns out the same is true of male chimps, who have fewer yet more genuine pals to ape around with as they get older, according to a study published in the journal Science on Thursday. The research, which was led by animal psychologist Alexandra Rosati at the University of Michigan, was said to provide the first evidence that animals exhibit age-related social selectivity and could help us understand more about why humans behave as they do.

The authors drew on a huge dataset of 78,000 hours of observations performed at the Kibale National Park in Uganda between 1995 and 2016.

They reported on the social interactions among 21 wild male chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes) ranging in age from 15 to 58 years. Males were chosen because they remain in the communities in which they are born, whereas the majority of females disperse to new groups when they become sexually mature.

Aside from being our closest animal relatives, chimpanzees are an ideal species to compare to humans because they live long lives — sometimes until their 60s — and have a wide-degree of choice in whom they befriend.

Male friends groom one another, hunt and share meat together, collectively patrol the boundaries of their territories, and form alliances to attain and keep high rank in their groups, which in turn leads to more individual reproductive success.

Trump, Biden clash on Covid, racism, climate

Over 47 million Americans have already cast their votes

Washington, Oct. 23: US President Donald Trump and his challenger Joe Biden clashed over Covid-19, immigration, racism and climate change during their final debate, ahead of the November 3 presidential election, presenting Americans with sharply divergent views of where they would lead them over the next four years.

The two leaders traded barbs during the debate that lasted just over 90 minutes, attacking each other's positions on controlling the raging Coronavirus pandemic and curbing the country's world-leading death toll of over 2.23,000.

The prime-time debate in Nashville, Tennessee, was a less acrimonious and more substantive affair than their previous showdown on September 29, which devolved into insults and name-calling. This prompted the debate organisers to put in place muted microphones during the candidates' opening statements on each topic to minimise disruption.

The debate, deftly moderated by NBC's Kristen Welker, saw plenty of personal attacks between 74-year-old Trump, a Republican, and his 77-year-old Democratic rival, Biden, whose mutual dislike was quite evident. Millions of Americans have already made up their minds about the election, with more than 47 million people having cast early ballots by mail or in person due to Covid-19 fears.

The figure exceeds the early vote total in 2016. There are about 230 million eligible voters in total. The Coronavirus dominated the opening minutes of the Trump-Biden face-off with President Trump terming the contagion a "world-wide problem". "This has been a worldwide problem, but I've been congratulated by many countries on what we've been able to do," he said. Trump once again blamed China for the virus and said Beijing failed to prevent the disease from becoming a pandemic. — PTI

India, China 'filthy', says Don, rejecting climate talk

Nashville, Oct. 23: US President Donald Trump on Thursday described the air in India and China as "filthy" as he denounced Democratic rival Joe Biden's plans to tackle climate change.

At their second and final presidential debate, Trump renewed his criticism that action on climate change was unfair to the United States.

"Look at China, how filthy it is. Look at Russia, look at India — it's filthy. The air is filthy," Trump said at the debate in Nashville. Trump charged that Biden's climate plan was an "economic disaster" for oil states such as Texas and Oklahoma.

Biden said that climate change is "an existential threat to humanity. We have a moral obligation to deal with it." "We're going to pass the point of no return within the next eight to 10 years," he said.

The planet has already warmed by around one degree Celsius (34 degrees Fahrenheit) from pre-industrial levels, enough to boost the intensity of deadly heat waves, droughts and tropical storms.

Trump has pulled the United States out of the Paris climate accord, which aims to cap global warming "well below" two degrees Celsius.

Trump's remarks come days before Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper visit New Delhi for talks on building the growing US-India partnership.

At the first presidential debate, Trump also spoke critically of India, questioning its coronavirus data amid criticism of his handling of the pandemic.

China's foreign ministry on Friday said Beijing hoped the US would "stop dragging China into its election campaigns." — AFP



US President Donald Trump, Democratic Presidential candidate former US vice-president Joe Biden participate in the final presidential debate at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. — AFP

TRUMP SAYS HE WILL VOTE IN PERSON

Washington, Oct. 23: President Donald Trump is taking his own advice and plans to vote in person in the presidential election on Saturday in Florida.

Trump is heading to his home state on Friday for campaign rallies at The Villages and in Pensacola. He's scheduled to spend the night at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach and says he'll vote on Saturday before he flies

north for more campaign rallies.

Trump revealed his plans on Thursday after the presidential debate with Democrat Joe Biden. Earlier this year, as Trump pressed unfounded claims about fraud surrounding mail-in and absentee ballots, Trump said people should be required to show up in person at the polls to vote. Trump also has voted by absentee ballot in the past. — AP

CEOs OF FB, TWITTER ORDERED TO TESTIFY BY GOP SENATORS

Washington, Oct. 23: The GOP push against Facebook and Twitter accelerated on Thursday after Republican senators threatened the CEOs of the social media companies with subpoenas to force them to address accusations of censorship in the closing weeks of the presidential campaign.

With Democrats boycotting the hearing, the Republican-controlled Senate Judiciary Committee voted to authorise the legal orders if Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and Twitter's Jack Dorsey did not agree to testify voluntarily.

The committee wants to hear from them about "the

suppression and/or censorship of two news articles from the New York Post," according to the subpoena document. Senators also want information from the executives about their companies' policies for moderating content "that may interfere" with federal elections.

Representatives of Facebook and Twitter declined comment. The urgency ratcheted higher Thursday as US officials said Russian hackers have targeted the networks of dozens of state and local governments in recent days, stealing data from at least two servers. — AP

US gives approval to use remdesivir against Covid

Washington, Oct. 23: US regulators on Thursday approved the first drug to treat Covid-19: remdesivir, an antiviral medicine given through an IV for patients needing hospitalisation. The drug, which California-based Gilead Sciences Inc. is calling Veklury, cut the time to recovery by five days — from 15 days to 10 on average — in a large study led by the US National Institutes of Health.

It had been authorised for use on an emergency basis since spring, and now becomes the first drug to win full Food and Drug Administration approval for treating Covid-19. President Donald Trump received it when he was sickened earlier this month.

Veklury is approved for people at least 12 years old and weighing at least 40 kilograms who need hospitalization for their coronavirus infection. For patients younger than 12, the FDA will still allow the drug's use in certain cases under its previous emergency authorization. The drug works by inhibiting a substance the virus uses to make copies of itself. Certain tests are required before starting patients on it.

And the label warns against using it with the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, because that can curb its effectiveness. "We now have enough knowledge and a growing set of tools to help fight Covid-19," Gilead's chief medical officer, Dr Merdad Parsey, said in a statement.

The drug is either approved or has temporary authorisation in about 50 countries, he noted. Its price has been controversial, given that no studies have found it improves survival. Last week, a large study led by the World Health Organ-

Pope cautioned on Covid after he met infected Bishop

Canberra, Oct. 23: Pope Francis has been warned of potential exposure to Covid-19 after a Vatican diplomat was infected, Australian media reported on Friday.

Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, the Holy See's ambassador to Australia, had a face-to-face meeting with Francis at the Vatican on Oct. 6, less than two weeks before testing positive to Covid-19 in Australia, *Nine News* reported.

Australian authorities say a diplomat who flew into Sydney on Oct. 9 had tested positive to the Coronavirus. They won't reveal the diplomat's identity. The diplomat tested positive 10 days after he started quarantining at home in the national capital Canberra, the Australian Capital Territory Health Department said in a statement.

The department said the risk of infection was "low" for the two people who drove the diplomat 300 kilometers (185 miles) from Sydney to Canberra. Australia's Health Department said in a statement on Friday "all relevant international state parties have been notified." The Vatican did not immediately respond to a request for comment. — AP

isation found the drug did not help hospitalized Covid-19 patients, but that study did not include a placebo group and was less rigorous than previous ones that found a benefit. Gilead charges \$2,340 for

UN CHIEF URGES G20 TO UNITE, FIGHT PANDEMIC

United Nations, Oct. 23: The UN chief says it's "very frustrating" that leaders of the 20 major industrialised nations didn't come together in March and establish a coordinated response to grapple with the Coronavirus in all countries as he proposed. The result, he says, is every country is taking its own sometimes contradictory actions, and the virus is moving "from east to west, north to south," with second waves of infections now affecting many countries.

Ahead of the Group of 20 summit next month, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in an interview that he hopes the international community now understands "they need to be much more coordinated in fighting the virus." Guterres says the United Nations also will be "strongly advocating" during the G-20 summit for a guarantee that when a vaccine is available, "it becomes indeed available and affordable for everyone, everywhere." — AP

TEEN SEARCHED NET TO KILL BIDEN: COURT

Washington, Oct. 23: A 19-year-old man charged with possession of child pornography and arrested over a van-load of weapons had conducted internet searches related to killing Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, according to court documents.

Alexander Hillel Treisman was arrested in May after a search of his abandoned white Ford van in Kannapolis, North Carolina revealed several weapons including an AR-15 style semi-automatic rifle, and a canister of explosive material.

The search also found books on bomb making, \$509,000 in US currency and drawings of swastikas and planes crashing into buildings, according to the October 6 filing in the US District Court for the Middle District, North Carolina.

The currency was believed to be Treisman's inheritance, officials said in the filing. Following his arrest, the Federal Bureau of Investigation searched his phone, computers and other devices and found 1,248 videos and 6,721 images of child pornography content, according to federal prosecutors. — AFP

Libya rivals sign 'permanent' truce

Geneva, Oct. 23: Libya's two warring factions signed a "permanent" ceasefire agreement on Friday after five days of talks at the United Nations, which hailed the deal as a historic moment following years of turmoil and bloodshed.

"Today is a good day for the Libyan people," said Stephanie Williams, the UN's acting envoy to the troubled North African country, where a UN-recognised government in Tripoli has been battling a rival administration based in the east and dominated by military commander Khalifa Haftar. "The two Libyan delegations... signed a complete, country-wide and permanent ceasefire agreement with immediate effect," she told journalists afterwards.

Williams said the parties agreed that "all military units and armed groups on the front lines shall return to their camps", while "all mercenaries and foreign fighters" must leave within three months.

Williams has warned that further measures are needed to prevent spoilers undermining the deal in a country wracked by conflict for nearly a decade, since the overthrow and killing of dictator

● **STEPHANIE WILLIAMS**, the UN's acting envoy said the parties agreed that "all military units and armed groups on the front lines shall return to their camps", while "all mercenaries and foreign fighters" must leave within three months.

Moamer Kadhafi in a NATO-backed uprising in 2011.

Since then, it has been dominated by armed groups, riven by local conflicts and divided between the two bitterly-opposed administrations.

Tripoli is held by the internationally recognised Government of National Accord, while a parliament based in the eastern city of Tobruk is backed by Haftar's forces.

But hopes for a solution rose after the two sides separately announced in August that they would cease hostilities.

Ahmed Abu Shahma, who headed the GNA delegation in Geneva, urged Libyans to come together and rebuild a united, stable country.

"We have had enough suffering, enough divisions, enough bloodshed," he said at the signing ceremony. — AFP

World's largest fountain opens in Dubai



Dubai launches the Palm Fountain in a bid to break a Guinness World Record as the world's largest fountain, at Palm Jumeira. Spread over 14,366 square feet of seawater, the fountain's super shooter stands tall at 105 metres and comes alive with over 3,000 LED lights. — AFP

SINKING | RISK 1.3 million barrels of crude may spill into water, no water ingress found on vessel by expert team

Venezuelan tanker tilts, may spill oil into ocean

Caracas, Oct. 23: Trinidad and Tobago said on Thursday that a damaged oil tanker off the island's coast was "stable" after opposition politicians in neighboring Venezuela warned of a potential "environmental catastrophe."

The damaged tanker, which is in the waters separating Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago and is owned by Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA, threatens to spill 1.3 million barrels of crude into the water.

"The ship is straight and stable without any visible

risk of sinking," Energy Minister Franklin Khan said during a video conference in Puerto Espana.

The Nabarima tanker, anchored for several months in the Gulf of Paria, is used to store oil, but video footage shared on October 16 by the Fisherman and Friends of the Sea NGO showed it tilting.

A team of three "experts" boarded the ship on Tuesday, the day after receiving the green light from Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government, Khan said.

The findings showed that

"there was no water ingress on the vessel visible to the team. Which means the ingress reported in early September no longer exists," the minister said.

According to Khan, the team reported that maintenance tasks were being carried out on the ship, such as repairing and replacing pumps and electric motors if necessary, which the experts described as "quite satisfactory."

Eudis Girot, a Venezuelan oil sector union leader, said the 855-foot (264-meter) ship has had maintenance problems since 2014. But he said

those problems "have been ignored" by PDVSA.

Girot said several PDVSA employees reported on October 12 that the tanker was listing by eight percent while the engine room is flooded and water pumps have broken down.

"If the oil is not transferred, and even if the Nabarima can be stabilized, we risk a permanent environmental catastrophe," Venezuelan opposition legislator Robert Alcalá said. The Nabarima is owned by Petrosucre, a company majority owned by PDVSA, with Italian

multinational oil and gas firm Eni holding a 26 percent share.

According to Luis Stefanelli, another opposition legislator, PDVSA has sent two ships to try to unload the Nabarima.

PDVSA on Tuesday started transferring the crude oil stored on the Nabarima with the vessel Icarus, according to the Trinidadian government. However, Khan recommended using a larger vessel, since the Icarus can barely hold a quarter of the tanker's 1.3 million barrel-load. — AFP



A video image released by the Fishermen and Friends of the Sea NGO shows the tilted Nabarima oil tanker.

DECCAN Chronicle

24 OCTOBER 2020

Polls before policy? BJP vaccine carrot unethical

The announcement of Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the Assembly election campaign trail in Bihar on Thursday that the BJP would offer free anti-Covid vaccines to everyone in Bihar is apt to be seen as a con by the people of the state. This is because it is widely understood that the timelines for the arrival of a safe, effective, efficacious vaccine are fuzzy and confusing.

Top labs and top scientists in the world have made contradictory observations on this matter, although some governments, including our own, have chosen the seemingly reassuring way and hinted that we should have the cure in the bag early next year. Here too the basis is purely political, with not a shred of science attaching to it.

The government strategy is clearly to spread a 'feel-good' sentiment. The underlying message is that the government is in control, and that we are in trustworthy hands. Ms Sitharaman's statement appear to attempt to further that strategy, except that she was speaking on an election platform and unveiling her party's election manifesto for the state poll, where free vaccine is point one on the agenda.

There are hosts of problems with such an announcement, especially when it comes from the country's finance minister. Her wearing of the party hat is not relevant here. What's noteworthy is that only the ruling party could have made such a statement, and not its opponents. The Election Commission will therefore be called upon to see if this is a violation of the principle of each party being offered a level playing field. This is as far as elections go, but other questions also arise.

If Bihar is to get the Covid vaccine free, will other states also get it free? Has the cost of this been calculated? If the zero-price favour is only for the state going to the polls, then it is clearly a bribe — a case of the use of political power to influence an election in which the ruling coalition's prospects look less promising than previously. More, there is also the question of all states having equal status in the eyes of the Centre.

If cynical opportunism is what the BJP is playing at in order to defend its electoral position in Bihar, then Bihar can ask about the promise of a 'special package' that has been spoken of *ad nauseam* by chief minister Nitish Kumar for more than a decade.

On the coronavirus front, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had pointed the right way recently when he said that in the distribution of the vaccine the country will have to take the right lessons from the planning of logistics in the process of holding national elections or coping with natural calamities. This would need a national-level conceptualisation and distribution effort. Those at the frontlines of risk, such as health workers, will have to be prioritised, followed by those placed high under a hierarchical gradation of vulnerability, for example elderly people with co-morbidities. The BJP's announcement in Bihar mocks such planning and places narrow politics above the nation.

Pope and family values

Christians live their lives in the perpetual fear of their sins catching up with them as they fight the world, the flesh and the devil but Jesus Christ would not have intended it that way when he built his church on the rock called Peter, the first Pope. The Lord was unequivocal when he said "my yoke is light and my burden is easy", promising to make a break with a believer's life till then, tied to the tough knots of rules, rituals and sets of beliefs. The Church had different ideas about itself. Over the course of history, it built on itself immense structures and then the paraphernalia to protect them. The yoke ceased to be light and the burden grew to be daunting.

Pope Francis, the bag-carrying Franciscan in Jesuit robe who wrote encyclical *fratelli tutti* to drive home the point that all are brothers, now says LGBT persons have the same rights every other who belongs to the species has. *Francesco*, the newly-released documentary on the Pope has him say this: "Homosexuals have a right to be a part of the family. They're children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out, or be made miserable because of it."

The conservatives say the Pope has only reminded the families of LGBT persons not to throw them out and that it is not an imprimatur for them to start families of their own; the liberals see some fresh thought entering the dogmatic Holy See. The debate could heat up in the coming days, and well, Jesus had seen it happening. "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." We would say amen to that and then wait for the yoke to lighten and the burden to ease at the end of it all.

Subhani



The 'perils' of euphoria: Govt messaging flawed



Shashidhar Nanjundaiah

Why are you people not listening?" That might as well have been the central problem for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's seventh coronavirus-related address to the nation on October 20, when he exhorted us to adhere to the Covid-19 safety norms and not falsely assume that the coronavirus has gone. The answer to that presumed question, however, lies in his government's political messaging in its health communications.

The problem is by no means exclusive to India. The United States and India now have the most numbers of Covid-19 cases, and arguably, mixed messages have exacerbated the crisis. The 2020 Ig Nobel Prizes for Medical Education —the global satirical "awards" for the worst inventions and ideas—was "awarded" to, among others, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump for "teaching the world that politicians can have a more immediate effect on life and death than scientists and doctors can".

In the US, Mr Trump outdid himself in September by offering a confusing array of rhetoric related to the coronavirus, swaying back and forth between conflicting messages. As a result, that nation is divided between mask-wearers and non-wearers, largely differentiated on political lines of whose voice they trust. Just in one week in September, he announced that he had "downplayed" the pandemic in order to make people "feel safer". Exactly three days later, he claimed he actually played it up.

Prime Minister Modi's own rhetoric has been far more measured than Mr Trump's. By that I mean he and his ministers have gone about their Covid narratives with more planning and conviction. The concept of mixed messaging is valid — we need to hear the problem along with the solution.

Mr Modi's first address to the nation after the pandemic broke out was mixed — an appeal to people to be cautious as well as an appeal to their faith. "This loud sound is for thanksgiving, and also for the beginning of the victory march in a long fight," Mr Modi said in a tweet that followed his speech. As though in a Pavlovian response, his followers took out marches in the streets, disobeying the lockdown norms and affirming their faith in a leader's words. Is downplaying statistics the answer? This was a critical, almost rhetorical, question that I was asked at a recent webinar.

In times of crisis, governments and media platforms put in their best efforts to make available information and insights that are immediate and usable. These include critical health information to insights that build a psychological fortification and acceptance. The media's dependence on official sources is more pronounced than usual in a crisis. In that communicative framework, how has our government has disseminated public messages during this crisis, and to what effect?

When the pandemic broke out, the health ministry started issuing daily press briefings. These briefings were largely informative, albeit compulsively political as this government is known to be. Then, with no warning in May, the ministry took a break from the daily briefings and only restarted them much later. The horror of the migrant exodus had unfolded. When the briefings did restart, there was forceful nation-

alism with convenient comparisons, positive spin de-emphasising the rising cases and deaths, and a defensive tone. In the interim, according to some reports, the government set up a committee to examine how to state with conviction that it did not botch up its policy on the migrant crisis.

"The industrialists and innovators turned the Covid situation into an opportunity, and successfully established a home-grown ventilator industry," health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said in August, adopting a storyteller's tone and demeanour. "The biggest news this week is that we have conducted two crore tests... The number of recovered cases is more than double the active cases."

These are briefings of what the government hopes will be seen as achievements rather than problems. That fact that the pandemic is far from gone and is still worsening is downplayed. Euphoria is an obvious impact of the spin among believers. We see it all around us — educated, urbane people walking in groups with no masks on. In the environment of conflicting messages, it seems we assume the most convenient possibility — sometimes with unexpected results. A few days ago, I took an autorickshaw for a short ride to a store. The driver did not have a mask on. When I questioned him, his response was startling: "Corona is gone so I've stopped wearing it." When I prodded further, he explained: "There is only *sarkari* corona left

The media, too, must realise the damage overdependence on official sources brings, even in a crisis, and must temper the official narratives with scientific reason and simpler news that people can use

now. The government is playing games, making money and enabling big people to make money."

As the World Health Organisation (WHO), points out, we are also in the middle of an infodemic: "An overabundance of information — some accurate and some not — that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it." But should the blame be passed on as usual to the social media, where millions of people are talking about it and passing their own judgments, and to our mainstream media, where the bombarding of ever-developing stories and eclectic insights lead to public confusion, and leave the elephant in the room unaddressed?

Already, news platforms must grapple with evolving information and insights. Additionally, television news channels both relay and bust silly myths about the virus. On the other hand, they are carriers of information and political narrative. If the news-you-can-use becomes so mind-boggling, politically charged narratives only exacerbate public confusion. These official narratives often come in a nationalistic package, with a liberal dose of political braggadocio.

So, the narratives put out by government communicators — from the Prime Minister to health ministry officials — have often been too clever by half. There is a dire need for them to rethink the strategy that is dividing the nation between the panic-stricken and euphoric and stop taking undue advantage of the media's pronounced dependence on official sources during a health crisis. The media, too, must realise the damage overdependence on official sources brings, even in a crisis, and must temper the official narratives with scientific reason and simpler news that people can use.

The writer is a communications expert and has led reputed institutes of media and communications

LETTERS

FREE VACCINE

It's interesting to note that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami has promised free vaccine for Covid-19 to all in the state once it is developed. The election manifesto of BJP in Bihar also contains this. This is the beauty of political tribe in this part of the world who can promise us to get anything and everything except parents. One only hopes that the vaccine would be developed at the earliest to benefit the society at large.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

A NOVEL FREEBIE

POLITICAL PARTIES in India have started to politicise the pandemic keeping in mind the future elections and trying to "Make hay while the Sun shines" which is a disgrace. The BJP in Gujarat has shown the way to other states like Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to woo the hapless voters by promising "free covid19 vaccine". No other country in the world has resorted to such an act. Shame on the politicians who in the guise of 'welfare' of people are making the people scapegoats by offering a novel kind of 'freebie' to stay in power. The central government could have given subsidies to all states in India (cost of vaccine) when the vaccine it is available for distribution by using the ₹3,737 crores which is to be given as bonus to Central government employees. Clinging on to power at any cost seems to be more important to ruling parties (Central and State) than welfare of the citizens.

M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

MALABAR NAVAL EXERCISE

AUSTRALIA'S PARTICIPATION in the upcoming Malabar naval exercise, finally making it a drill and see participation of all the four 'Quad' countries, the US, India, Japan and Australia is significant on many counts. It reflects the determination of all the four Quad countries to forcefully resist any attempts by China to impose its hegemony. The threat of China to open societies, economy self-reliance and rules based international order is real. Given the expansionist postures and continued aggression by China along LAC with India, India has fewer options than to explore and deepen international alliances which can serve as a source of symbolic and substantive support. As China respects power and strength, India should focus more on improving its economic strength even while taking concerted steps to deepen and strengthen Quad.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

KAUSHIK MITTER

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Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



*"I am the last to finish a meal
Because I eat so slowly
O Bachchoo, must you
be condemned
Because of this as lowly!"*

— From **Row Row K. Gumbihara**
by Bachchoo

I've written in several genres for the small and large screen but, gentle reader, never a courtroom drama. And that's strange because as a viewer I find them fascinating, mesmerising even, if well written with the suspense maintained till the last word, as in Billy Wilder's adaptation of Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution*.

My taste for courtroom drama was perhaps formed when reading my grandfather's discarded paperbacks of the Perry Mason books by Erle Stanley Gardner. I still feel compelled, though I restrain myself, from dismissing a friend's, foe's or dining-table-guest's argument, with "that's incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial!" Those were Perry Mason's nails in the coffin of evidence, but I suppose I am more inclined to say

"aiy don't be silly yaar!" when confronted with some absurdity.

Having seen two very compelling courtroom dramas on television this week, made me wonder why I hadn't ever attempted the genre. I've always thought writing should reflect one's own experience, observation, insight and memory, even through the invention, as in Shakespeare or Dickens, of dramatic characters.

The first of the TV shows I admired was a recreation of the British 'Mangrove Nine' trial of 1970, in which four out of nine of the accused were friends and 'comrades' of mine and two others were people I knew. The trial arose from the West London Police's reaction to and attack on a demonstration of 160 black people protesting against the unjustified, repeated and destructive raids on a West Indian restaurant called The Mangrove.

The restaurant was owned by the late Frank Critchlow and was subjected to regular, vicious and destructive raids by the West London police under the pretext of closing down a drug den. The Caribbean community of Notting Hill and North Kensington used the

restaurant as a meeting place. I went there occasionally. No drugs were ever found and no prosecutions brought, though the police smashed up the restaurant, wrestled its clientele and arrested its owner, workers and customers without any evidence with which to charge them.

In reaction to the raids the 'political' elements and individuals in the community called a demonstration to expose these raids as racist attacks on the innocent. The British establishment, and the West London police force as its arm, had not faced such a militant protest before. The demonstrators, in the argot of the time were shouting slogans of Black power, notably "the Pigs, the Pigs, we gotta get rid of the Pigs". This was, in that era, a porcine metaphor for the police force (later known to the black young as "de Babylon").

The confrontation ended in a mild fracas, with flaying police batons, women being held on the ground by three burly policemen and some demonstrators aiming kicks at blue-uniformed crotches and shins.

Nine people ended up in court accused of riot and affray and other lesser charges. These charges were

absurd. It's possible that the British prosecutors were throwing the book, or even a shelf of the library, at the accused in order to *encourager les autres*.

The film of the trial, seen today as a historical milestone in the settlement of the new communities of Britain, is as fair a representation of the events and the court proceedings as dramatic reproduction can make it. Yes, I spotted twenty discrepancies or petty falsehoods in the retelling, with some characters with the wrong names and wrong accents, but the overall impression captured the events before and in the courtroom.

The second trial on screen was that of the Chicago 7, individual leaders of the hippie generation who opposed the draft law which would send thousands of young men and women to fight and possibly die in the American war in Vietnam. I remember following reports of the trial in which the accused had led protests against the Democratic Party convention in Chicago.

In both trials, the defendant's fate was in the hands of a jury. Jurors are not allowed to speak at or during a

trial, so the drama is confined to the interaction between the lawyers, the judge, the witnesses and defendants, with occasional contributions from the press and the spectators.

This re-enactment of the Chicago 7 trial, with Bobby Seale, the only black defendant, bound and gagged in public when he vociferously protested against a judgement of the bench, was also an essential and telling record of US history.

And now, gentle reader, I am inspired to mull over which trial I can dramatise and attempt to have produced for the screen. To tell the truth, I have only been indicted personally in one trial I which I defended myself and was acquitted of the charge of assaulting policemen in a London demonstration. Ten-minute drama if that. Then there were two trials in India in which I was peripherally involved: the failed attempt to get my film *Bandit Queen* banned and the dismissal of the case against my other film *Mangal Pandey, the Rising*. Both dramatic — the first with the future minister of the BJP, the late Arun Jaitley, appearing to represent, believe it or not, freedom of speech and truth.

Tried! When Arun Jaitley batted for art & when BJP wished to ban it

quick
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,685.50	0.31
Nifty 50	11,930.40	0.28
S&P 500*	3,448.13	-0.16
Dollar (₹)	73.60	-0.06
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.44	0.13
Euro (₹)	87.15	0.01
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,685.81	0.16
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	41.89	-0.57
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.844	-0.071
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.858	0.010

* As of 9:30 PM IST

IDBI Bank posts
₹324 cr profit,
NPA ratio drops

Bank Aisa Dost Jaisa

IDBI Bank on Friday reported a net profit of ₹324 crore for the second quarter of the current fiscal year against a loss of ₹3,459 crore for the same period of the previous fiscal. Compared sequentially, the bank registered a 125 per cent jump against the first quarter net profit of ₹144 crore. Total income of the bank fell by 7.5 per cent to ₹5,761.06 crore during Q2FY21.

RBI fears India entering
recession in H1 of FY21

Central banker awaits NSO data on economic growth in Nov

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, OCT. 23

For the first time in its history, India has entered a technical recession in the first half of the year, said Reserve Bank of India deputy governor Michael Patra, quoting the projections of the central bank for real GDP growth for 2020-21.

According to minutes of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) that were released by the RBI on Friday, the RBI deputy governor said: "The projections of real GDP growth for 2020-21 that are set out for the first time in the MPC's resolution provide a sense of the wounds on the soul of the economy inflicted by Covid-19."

"If the NSO's provisional estimates for Q2 that are expected at the end of November corroborate at least the direction of these forecasts, India has entered a technical recession in the first half of the year for the first time in its history," Patra said.

The RBI deputy governor also said that it may take years for India to reach pre-Covid output as the potential of the economy has declined.

"GDP is an aggregative indicator of economic activity and hides the extent of human misery and the loss of social and human capital caused by the health crisis. Nonetheless, if the projections hold, the level of GDP would have fallen approximately six per

Wealth increases in
India despite Covid

New York, Oct. 23: The pandemic that's led to more than one million deaths globally has also led to a decline in individual wealth, yet household wealth largely held up and even increased in China and India.

That's one of the main findings in Credit Suisse Group AG's 2020 Global Wealth Report released Thursday. Thanks to government and central-bank actions to mitigate the Covid-19 fallout, wealth rebounded from an initial slump in the first quarter of the year, adding \$1 trillion by June after ending 2019 at \$399.2 trillion.

"Given the damage inflicted by Covid-19 on the global economy, it seems remarkable that household wealth has emerged relatively unscathed," said economist Anthony Shorrocks, one of the report's authors, adding as a caveat that the findings are based on provi-

sional household balance sheets for the second quarter issued by few countries.

Global wealth creation is expected to rebound next year as the economy recovers. The "main outlier" is North America, the report says, where the economy is hobbled by the "continued weakness due to the high prevalence of Covid-19" in the U.S.

Only China and India saw gains in household wealth in the first half of the year, growing by 4.4 per cent and 1.6 per cent, respectively. Latin America suffered the most, with a 13 per cent plunge in household wealth.

The number of millionaires remained stable after soaring to 51.9 million last year, while the club of the ultra-high net worth individuals with more than \$50 million in net assets lost only 120 members to 175,570.

— Bloomberg

Flipkart buys 8% stake in
Aditya Birla Fashion RetailSANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

In a bid to build its omnichannel presence in the fashion business, Flipkart has acquired 7.8 per cent stake in Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail (ABFRL) for ₹1,500 crore.

The ABFRL board has approved the raising of ₹1,500 crore by way of preferential issue to the Flipkart Group.

The equity capital will be raised at ₹205 per share. With this infusion, Flipkart Group will own 7.8 per cent equity stake in ABFRL on a fully diluted basis. The promoter and promoter group companies of ABFRL will hold about 55.13 per cent upon completion of the issuance.

The investment agreement provides Flipkart preemption rights and



right of first refusal which are for a limited period of one to five years from the date of allotment of equity shares or if the equity shareholding of the investor falls below a certain threshold.

Through this partnership, the Flipkart Group will strengthen the range of brands offered on its e-commerce platforms Flipkart and Myntra, and enhance the range of premium international and Indian brands on offer. ABFRL owns brands like

Pantaloon, Allen Solly and Peter England.

Flipkart's technology prowess will enhance ABFRL's omni-channel capabilities, enriching customer experiences while continuing to provide access to premium loyalty programmes and affordability constructs.

ABFRL, which has more than 3000 stores, plans to use this capital to strengthen its balance sheet and accelerate its growth trajectory.

The company plans to increase presence in emerging high-growth categories such as innerwear, athleisure, casualwear and ethnic wear.

ABFRL will also aggressively accelerate execution of its large-scale digital transformation strategy that will build strong omni-channel functionalities.

Maharashtra invites Tesla
to set up electric car plant

Mumbai, Oct. 23: Maharashtra is looking for potential investment from the US electric car major Tesla in the state and has held discussions with the company, weeks after Tesla revealed its plans to enter the Indian market.

State tourism minister Aaditya Thackeray said in a tweet on Thursday that industries minister Subhash Desai held a video call, in which he also participated, with the Tesla team, inviting the



electric car maker to Maharashtra. Maharashtra is already home to a host of domes-

tic and foreign automobile manufacturers with Chakan Industrial belt near Pune.

"This evening I had the opportunity to participate in a video call by industries minister @Subhash_Desai ji with @Tesla team to invite them to Maharashtra. I was present not because of just the investment but my firm belief in electric mobility & sustainability @elonmusk," Thackeray said in a tweet. — PTI

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



Aries: Focus on creative, rather than business aspects, and you will do well. Efforts to get backing will be rewarded. You may express unhappiness at work.



Taurus: You may be provoked into arguments at home and work. Recurring mental tensions may spoil health. Working women may take a vacation to attend a function.



Gemini: Legal problems and litigations are possible. You may be implicated in a scandal. Projects may face hurdles. Small gestures will pay off in romance.



Cancer: Failure to sort out work problems will compound them. Subordinates will prove helpful. Home repairs are likely. Spend time with family.



Leo: You will share your feelings with a friend. Keep a check on diet. Take quick decisions and put in relentless efforts to succeed.



Virgo: Make efforts to harmonize strained relations with relatives. Your girlfriend's desire for an apartment might be fulfilled. Consider well before embarking on a love journey.

You share your b'day with

Drake, Canadian rapper and songwriter. He is best known for his albums *Thank Me Later*, *Take Care*, *Nothing Was the Same*, *If You're Reading This It's Too Late* and *Views* amongst others.



Libra: Financially a productive day, but expenses will rise too. Those in printing or pharmaceuticals will do well. You will get in touch with people who will guide you properly.



Scorpio: Your plans to buy a new home may not be totally successful. Friends and relatives will agree to help. Pay attention to your career. Superiors will be supportive.



Sagittarius: Family life will be peaceful. State your views clearly. Those in business will do well. Relationships with peers at work will have a new beginning.



Capricorn: Religious activities will prove meaningful. An unexpected monetary gain is indicated. Newlyweds may be in for some tussles. Work will require effort.

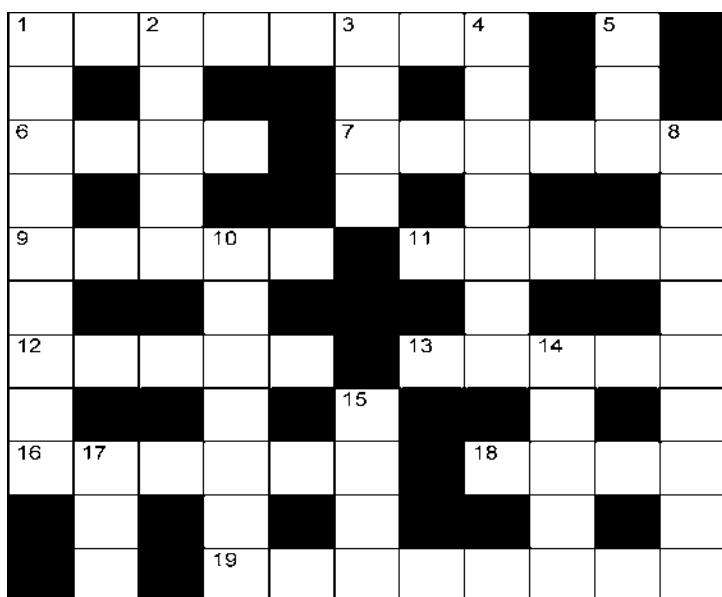


Aquarius: Be calm. Don't let small issues stress you. Work will progress. The domestic situation may be tense. Expenses will be within control.



Pisces: Take the opportunity to demonstrate your skills at work. An important project could meet with a hurdle. A spat with your spouse will be made up soon. People you meet today may have a profound influence on your future.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- Assisting breeze (8)
- Hospital photo (1-3) (4)
- Course-end exams (6)
- Sediment (5)
- Grey (5)
- Salary increase (5)
- Dragonfly larva (5)
- Hankers (6)
- Resign (4)
- Make-up (8)

Down

- Stuffing and mounting (9)
- Silly (5)
- Uncertain, dubious (4)
- Ruling family line (7)
- Leather-piercing tool (3)
- Artificial (9)
- Of the stomach (7)
- Climb (5)
- Invites (4)
- Moose (3)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

- Across: 6. Xenophobes, 8. Ashes, 10. Sushi, 13. Altercation, 14. Lands, 17. Wrong, 19. Vegetarian.
- Down: 1. Mesh, 2. Boss, 3. Thus, 4. Ebbs, 5. Espionage, 7. Balacava, 9. Emend, 11. Utter, 12. Icy, 15. Nigh, 16. Sets, 17. Ward, 18. Oral.

Word Mine

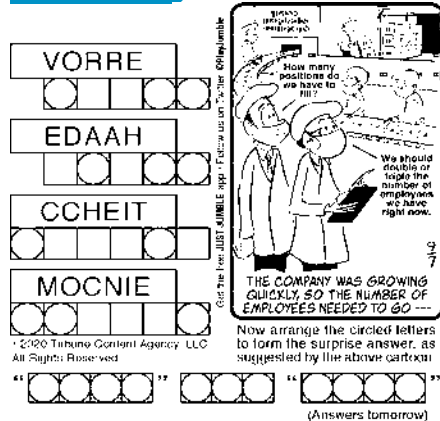
W
I
B
A
O
N
S
T
A

TODAY'S RATINGS: 70 AVERAGE; 77 GOOD; 85 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

ANSWERS	South	West	North	East
W	W	W	W	W
I	I	I	I	I
B	B	B	B	B
A	A	A	A	A
O	O	O	O	O
N	N	N	N	N
S	S	S	S	S
T	T	T	T	T
A	A	A	A	A

jumble



Saturday's Jumble: SNUFF RUGGY METRIC FURIA A Answer: It took him a year to lose 100 pounds, which resulted in a — BIG FAT GRIN

sequence. So Hemant Lall (West), Justin's father, led the club 10. At trick two, Justin accurately switched to a spade. Declarer took the trick with dummy's king and played a club to the queen and ace. West shifted to his heart, East's nine driving out South's ace. Declarer cashed his spade winners and led his last spade. West played a diamond to the jack and ace.

If South had been Justin Lall, he

would have cashed his club jack, then led a red suit, catching East in an end-play to escape for down one. But declarer immediately ran the diamond 10. East won and returned a diamond to dummy's king. South played a club to his jack, then had the choice of giving the last two tricks to either defender: down two.

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



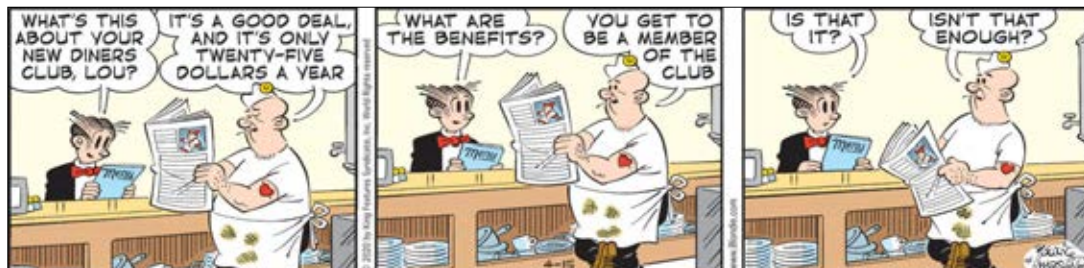
THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



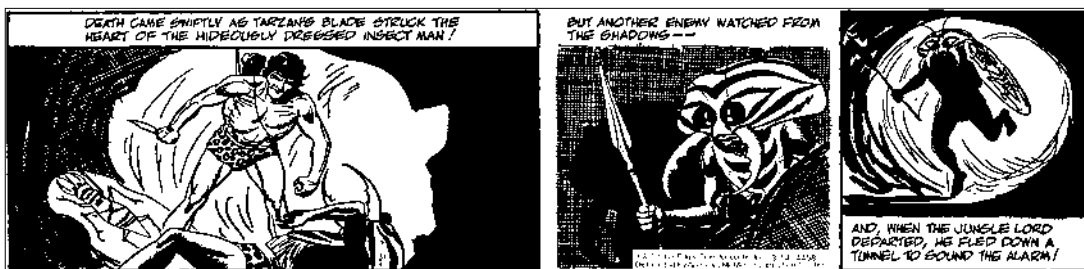
BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



bridge
PHILLIP
ALDER

A
GREAT
TALENT
LOST
TOO YOUNG

One of the most naturally talented players, not just in the United States but also the world, Justin Lall, has died at the very early age of 33 from liver disease.

He was a two-time world junior team champion, and he won a silver medal in the 2011 Bermuda Bowl world team championship. He captured six national championships, and at the time, aged only 25, was the youngest-ever Grand Life Master,

which requires 10,000 masterpoints and a national title.

In today's deal, Lall, sitting East, heard his opponents bid their full values in reaching game. Aware that the suits were breaking badly for declarer, Lall doubled three no-trump.

Often, this double would have requested a specific lead from partner — either the first suit bid by the dummy or West's shorter major — but not after this crawl-into-game

SHORT TAKES

Indian squad make online chess semis

Chennai: The top-seeded Indian women's team on Friday stormed into the semifinals of the Asian Nations (Regions) Online Cup 2020 Championship, while their male counterparts eked out a fighting win over Mongolia to secure the last four berth. The Indian women made short work of Kyrgyzstan in the last-eight round, winning the two match-ups easily — 4-0 and 3.5-0.5 — after having topped the preliminary Swiss system phase. The Indian women will face Mongolia in the semifinal on Saturday. The Indian men, on the other hand, were given a tough fight by Mongolia. Both the matches ended with a similar 2.5-1.5 scoreline in favour of India. The Indian men will take on Iran in Saturday's semifinal. Young woman Grandmaster R Vaishali continued her good run, winning both her matches. She beat Alexandra Samaganova. — *PTI*

Bottas fastest at Friday practice

Portimao, Portugal: Valtteri Bottas topped the times ahead of Formula One leader Lewis Hamilton in a one-two finish for Mercedes in Friday's opening practice for the Portuguese Grand Prix. Finn Bottas maintained a habit that has seen him enjoy being 'fastest on Friday', but not always with success on the following days, as he clocked a best lap of one minute and 18.410 seconds at the Algarve International Circuit 15 kilometres inland from the coastal town of Portimao. That lap was enough to lift him three-tenths of a second clear of six-time world champion and Mercedes teammate Hamilton, who this weekend is seeking to overtake Michael Schumacher and claim a record 92nd GP victory. — *AFP*

Aryna downs Coco in Ostrava thriller

Prague: Aryna Sabalenka came back from 2-5 down in the third set to defeat American teenager Coco Gauff and reach the Ostrava WTA quarterfinals on Thursday. The big-hitting Sabalenka, the world number 12, took two hours and 13 minutes to beat 55th-ranked Gauff 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/2). The third-seeded Belarusian got off to a slow start against the patient Gauff who had few problems taking the first set. Sabalenka won the second 7-5 after breaking Gauff's serve for the first time. — *AFP*

Munoz grabs lead as Tiger teeters

Los Angeles: Colombia's Sebastian Munoz endured a roller-coaster round on his way to an eight-under par 64 Thursday to lead the PGA Zozo Championship while defending champion Tiger Woods struggled to a woeful 76. The 27-year-old South American star, had two eagles, eight birdies, five pars, two bogeys and a double bogey on his trip to the top of the leaderboard after the opening round at Sherwood Country Club.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Mumbai Indians from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FORMULA ONE

Portuguese Grand Prix: Practice 1 from 2.25 pm; Practice 2 from 6.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

FOOTBALL

Spanish League: El Clasico — Barcelona vs Real Madrid from 7.30 pm on LaLiga page on Facebook

English Premier League: Aston Villa vs Leeds United from 12.30 am (Saturday) on Star Sports Select 2, HD

Italian League: Sassuolo vs Torino from 12.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

WWE SMACKDOWN

Bouts from 5.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1

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Editor: **KAUSHIK MITTER**

THUNDERBOULT

Mumbai Indians thump CSK by 10 wickets

Sharjah, Oct. 23: Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah's devastating pace-bowling spell in tandem before Ishan Kishan's batting heroics helped Mumbai Indians post a comprehensive 10-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in a completely lop-sided IPL match here on Friday.

With the embarrassing loss, CSK are all but out of reckoning for the play-offs with just six points from 11 games, while MI jumped to the top spot with 14 points from 10 matches.

Bowling in tandem, Boult (4/18) and Bumrah (2/25) reduced CSK to 21 for 5 inside the Powerplay period with three and two wickets respectively and CSK never recovered from there, limping to 114 for 9, largely thanks to Sam Curran's 52.

Needing 115 for a win, Kishan (68 not out), opening in place of regular skipper Rohit Sharma who missed out due to a hamstring injury, and Quinton de Kock (46 not out) knocked off the required runs in just 12.2 overs.

The duo toyed with the CSK bowling attack on a dreadful day for the MS Dhoni-led side.

The left-handed Kishan, who has not had a substantial score after his knock of 99 against Royal Challengers Bangalore, was at his attacking best as he smashed six fours and five sixes during his 37-ball innings.

— *PTI*



Trent Boult of Mumbai Indians celebrates the wicket of Ruturaj Gaikwad of Chennai Super Kings during their IPL match at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Friday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Chennai Super Kings Innings: Ruturaj Gaikwad lbw b Boult 0, Faf du Plessis c de Kock b Boult 1, Ambati Rayudu c de Kock b Bumrah 2, N Jagadeesan c Yadav b Bumrah 0, Mahendra Singh Dhoni c de Kock b Chahar 16, Ravindra Jadeja c Krunal b Boult 7, Sam Curran b Boult 52, Deepak Chahar st de Kock b Chahar 0, Shardul Thakur c Yadav b Coulter-Nile 11, Imran Tahir not out 13, Extras (B-1, LB-3, W-8) 12. **Total (for 9 wickets in 20 overs) 114.**
FoW: 1-0, 2-3, 3-3, 4-3, 5-21, 6-30, 7-43,

8-71, 9-114.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-1-18-4, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-25-2, Krunal Pandya 3-0-16-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-22-2, Nathan Coulter-Nile 4-0-25-1, Kieron Pollard 1-0-4-0.

Mumbai Indians: Q de Kock not out 46, I. Kishan not out 68, Extras (LB-2) 2. **Total (for no loss in 12.2 overs) 116.**

Bowling: D. Chahar 4-0-34-0, Hazlewood 2-0-17-0, Imran Tahir 3-0-22-0, S. Thakur 2.2-0-26-0, R. Jadeja 1-0-15-0.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	10	7	3	0	14	+1.448
Delhi Capitals	10	7	3	0	14	+0.774
Royal Challengers Bangalore	10	7	3	0	14	+0.182
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	5	5	0	10	-0.828
Sunrisers Hyderabad	10	4	6	0	8	+0.092
Kings XI Punjab	10	4	6	0	8	-0.177
Rajasthan Royals	11	4	7	0	8	-0.620
Chennai Super Kings	11	3	8	0	6	-0.733

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

It was do-or-die game for me, says Vijay Shankar

Dubai, Oct. 23: All-rounder Vijay Shankar says he treated the match against RR as a 'do-or-die game' as his good show with both bat and ball may have saved his place in SRH's playing XI.

Manish Pandey (83) and Shankar (52) stitched an unbroken 140-run partnership to help SRH chase down RR's 154 for six on Thursday.

"If you ask personally it was a do-or-die game for me. That's how I saw this game. I didn't have the best of time with the bat, so I had to perform in this game and fortunately or unfortunately, we lost early wickets which made the team to send me up the order," Shankar said.

The Tamil Nadu crick-



Vijay Shankar

eter, who also picked up a wicket on Thursday, said the team should have previous couple of close games.

"We just slipped in the last minutes. A win like this will give confidence to each and every member of the team. We can win the remaining

games and keep ourselves alive in the tournament," he said.

After SRH lost two early wickets during their chase, Shankar said their plan was simple — forge a partnership and take the game as deep as possible.

"Manish was actually hitting the ball really well early on. I actually didn't bat (faced) that many balls before this innings. I batted just 18 balls before this innings so it was really important for me to have a feel of it. Archer was bowling quick so it was important for me to stay at the wicket.

"We wanted to take the game deep so I opened up and then we got few boundaries and it made things easier for us," he said.

— *PTI*

Warner all praise for middle order

Dubai, Oct. 23: Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper David Warner on Thursday said their middle order, under the scanner in the ongoing IPL, proved itself by guiding the team to a victory against Rajasthan Royals.

Manish Pandey (83) and Vijay Shankar (52) scored unbeaten half-centuries after Warner and Jonny Bairstow were dismissed early in the run chase to help SRH register a comfortable eight-wicket win.

"It is just great to show people that we do have a middle order.

"For them to come out and play like this, I am so happy for them. They showed they can build a platform for us to get across the line. Or set a big total. I am chuffed for them," Warner said at the post-match presentation.

Jason Holder, who was brought as a replacement

for the injured Mitchell Marsh, impressed in his first match of the season. The West Indies Test skipper came up with figures of 3/33, while also affecting a run out to destabilise the RR innings.

"Jason adds an extra string to our bow. His height. His experience. And he couldn't bat today, but he is an all-round package," Warner said.

The Sunrisers excelled on all fronts and Warner felt a victory like this was needed going ahead.

"It was a stunning performance. Starts with the toss where you questioned my decision to chase. We were able to bring them back after powerplay. All in all, the kind of game we were asking for," he added.

Jofra Archer dismissed Warner yet again and the Australian said it was frustrating.

— *PTI*

Kapil has heart attack, is stable

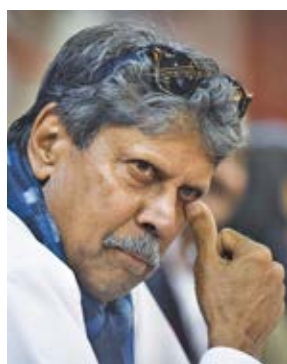
New Delhi, Oct. 23: India's first World Cup-winning cricket captain Kapil Dev suffered a heart attack and underwent an angioplasty here on Friday but is expected to be discharged in the next couple of days, said the hospital where he is currently admitted.

The 61-year-old, who is based in Delhi's Sundar Nagar area, complained of chest pain on Thursday following which he was taken to Fortis Escorts Heart Institute emergency department in Okhla.

"Kapil Dev suffered a heart attack. He was evaluated and an emergency coronary angioplasty was performed in the middle of night," the hospital said in an updated health bulletin after only mentioning chest pain in its initial statement.

"Currently, he is admitted in ICU and under close supervision of Dr Atul Mathur and his team. Kapil Dev is stable now and he is expected to get discharged in a couple of days."

Indian Cricketers Association (ICA) President Ashok Malhotra, a friend of Kapil, earlier said that the iconic crick-



Kapil Dev

eter is doing fine.

"He is feeling okay now. I just spoke to his wife (Romi). He was feeling uneasy yesterday. He is undergoing check-ups at a hospital as we speak," Malhotra, also a former Test player, said.

Kapil's former teammate Madan Lal said he has conveyed some of the concern of his well-wishers to the Chandigarh-born legend's family.

"To those who have called to inquire your prayers and wishes are conveyed to the family and received with gratitude. Good health and strength kaps," read a tweet from Kapil's former teammate Madan Lal.

— *PTI*

CRICKETERS REACT

Praying for your speedy recovery. Get well soon paaji.

— **VIRAT KOHLI**
Team India captain

Take care @therealkapildev! Praying for your quick recovery. Get well soon Paaji.

— **SACHIN TENDULKAR**
legend

The big hearted #Kapildev our captain, with a never say die attitude, has recovered. For this mighty giant of Indian cricket nothing is impossible.

— **KIRTI AZAD**
former India player

"Dear paaji. Praying for your speedy recovery! Get well soon please ...after cricket I still need some golfing lessons.

— **YUVRAJ SINGH**
Ex-Indian cricketer

Spirited SRH take on hungry KXIP

Dubai, Oct. 23: Their campaign back on track with a hat-trick of wins, KXIP will take on another resurgent team — SRH — here on Saturday in a must-win IPL game for the two well-matched sides.

Both KXIP and SRH are on the same pedestal, having garnered eight points apiece after 10 games, but the Hyderabad outfit is a rung ahead in the eight-team standings, on the fifth spot by virtue of a better net run rate.

And both the teams need to win their remaining four games to guarantee their place in the play-offs. It has been a terrific turnaround especially for KXIP after a slow start to the tournament.

After the initial hiccups, KXIP got its campaign back on track with three consecutive wins — over mighty DC, MI and RCB where SRH also look confident post their thumping eight-wicket win over RR on Thursday night after three consecutive defeats.

— *AFP*

TABLE TOPPERS DELHI LOOK TO TROUBLE KKR

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 23: Table-toppers DC would expect more from their batsmen after an underwhelming performance in the loss to KXIP when they take on a low-on-confidence KKR in an IPL game here on Saturday.

For Delhi, opener Shikhar Dhawan has been in brilliant form but even his record-setting hundred was not enough to save the side from a defeat against KXIP for lack of contribution from other batters.

Meanwhile, KKR are heading into the contest after an embarrassing batting performance against RCB. Sitting at fourth place in the table with 10 points, they would be desperate to increase their tally to stay alive in the play-offs race.

— *PTI*

SRFI calls off junior nat'l championship

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

The Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI) has announced the cancellation of the Sub-Junior/Junior National Squash Championship 2020 due to the ongoing corona virus pandemic.

"It has become clear that it is not yet appropriate to conduct any all-India squash competitions due to the risk associated with travel within India for young players and their accompanying parents and coaches etc. Moreover, it is also to be noted that some state governments have yet to grant permission to open up clubs/courts and other sporting arenas to

the public for training and practice," said Cyrus Poncha, secretary of SRFI.

"This is indeed disappointing news for the squash fraternity at large. However, after a lot of deliberation and keeping the safety of all stake holders; players, coaches, parents, officials, spectators and support staff in mind, the SRFI has cancelled championship," he added.

The SRFI, however, said it will encourage organisers to conduct intra district/city or state closed tournaments, in states that have permitted the opening up of their sporting facilities. Districts can host a maximum of 2 tournaments from December 2020 onwards.



Lucas Moura of Tottenham Hotspur in action during the UEFA Europa League first round match against Linzer ASK at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London on Thursday. — *AFP*

Tottenham lay LASK low; Milan send Celtic packing

Paris, Oct. 23: Gareth Bale said it felt good to be "loved and appreciated" after helping Tottenham to a 3-0 win over LASK of Austria in the Europa League on Thursday.

The Welsh international started his first match since his return from Real Madrid and played for an hour before Jose Mourinho gave him a break.

Despite Bale starting, it was on-loan Carlos Vinicius who made an impressive debut in the Group 'J' opener.

Vinicius started in place of the resting Harry Kane and he made goals in either half for Lucas Moura and Son Heung-min, while he would have also netted himself had Andres Andrade

not scored an own goal.

Bale made that goal where Andrade put through his own net.

Leicester made the perfect start in Group 'G' with a comfortable 3-0 win over Zorya Luhansk of Ukraine.

James Maddison, Harvey Barnes and Kelechi Iheanacho were on the scoresheet.

In Glasgow, Celtic struggled against Serie 'A' leaders AC Milan who were 2-0 up at half-time thanks to goals from Rade Krunic and Braham Diaz.

Mohamed Elyounoussi reduced the arrears after the break, but Jens Petter Hauge broke clear to secure Milan's Group 'H' 3-1 win in stoppage time.

Milan were so comfort-

able that they could afford to take off Zlatan Ibrahimovic just after the hour.

Earlier Thursday, Arsenal came from behind to down Rapid Vienna 2-1 and Rangers beat Standard Liege 2-0.

After a goalless first half Arsenal went behind when keeper Bernd Leno fluffed a clearance on a night he will want to forget.

David Luiz put them level with a deft glancing header off Nicolas Pepe's freekick, with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang then tapping home to bag the three Group 'B' points. It was an eventful night for Mikel Arteta's side. Elsewhere, Bayer Leverkusen ran riot 6-2 against Nice.

— *AFP*