

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2020



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Buddhism helps me stay peaceful, it has helped me gain a lot: Tusshar Kapoor



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RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

Vol. 27 No. 251 | 16 PAGES | ₹5.00



A model displays a creation during the China Fashion Week in Beijing on Monday. — AFP

Sub-inspector held for molesting 4 women in W. Delhi

New Delhi: A 35-year-old Delhi police sub-inspector was arrested for allegedly molesting four women in west Delhi's Dwarka area, the police said on Monday. According to a senior police officer, the women lodged four separate FIRs regarding molestation in Dwarka area against sub-inspector Puneet Grewal, a resident of Janakpuri area. The incidents took place between October 17 to 20. **Full report on Page 2**

TV actress arrested for procuring drugs

Mumbai: A 30-year-old television actress was arrested by the NCB after she was allegedly caught buying drugs in Mumbai, an official said on Monday. Acting on a tip-off, the NCB officials apprehended the actress while she was allegedly receiving ganja from a person in Andheri on Saturday. **Full report on Page 3**

SC rejects TN govt plea on 50% quota

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has rejected the interim prayer of Tamil Nadu and the AIADMK party for grant of 50 per cent quota in medical seats surrendered by the state in all India quota for under graduate, post graduate and dental courses for the 2020-21 academic year.

COUNTERPOINT



Don't buy... our candidates are distributing masks and sanitisers free!

WEATHER



Max: 32°C
Min: 15°C
RH: 29%
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Shuddha Ekadasi till 10.47 am
Star: Satabhisham till 6.36 am
Variyam: 1.41 pm to 3.27 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.19 am; 10.44 pm to 11.34 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.39 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.29 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.43 PM
MOONSET TODAY 2.33 AM

Will soon bring law to tackle pollution: Centre to top court

SC keeps in abeyance appointment of Lokur panel that govt had opposed

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

New Delhi, Oct. 26: The Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that it will soon be bringing a comprehensive legislation to deal with the recurring annual problem of stubble burning by farmers in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh that leads to an alarming increase in air pollution in Delhi and the larger National Capital Region.

Describing the proposed move by the Centre as a “welcome step”, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, heading a bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, put in abeyance its October 16 order setting up a one-man committee of former Supreme Court judge, Justice Madan B. Lokur, to monitor steps taken by the Punjab, Haryana and UP governments to discourage stubble burning in their states.

Appreciating the move by the government, CJI Bobde said that this is something that the government should have acted on, without requiring a PIL, as people are choking because of pollution.

At the outset of the hear-

▶ Appreciating the move by the govt, CJI Bobde said that this is something that govt should have acted on, without requiring a PIL

ing, seeking to keep in abeyance the functioning of the Justice Lokur committee, solicitor general Tushar Mehta told the court that the Central government has proposed to bring in a comprehensive law to tackle the high level of air pollution and stubble burning. He informed the court that government will shortly issue an ordinance that will put in place a nodal body to regulate and monitor stubble burning in NCR. The nodal body will have representatives from all the affected areas.

Senior counsel Vikas Singh, appearing for the petitioner Aditya Dubey – a minor – told the court that the proposed law will come into effect next year.

At earlier hearings, appointment of the Justice Lokur committee was opposed by the Centre. Its resistance was rooted in Justice Lokur addressing a number of seminars and writing articles on free speech and the importance of dissent in democracy.

Delhi air in ‘very poor’ index, stubble burning share may rise

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

The national capital's air quality was recorded in the “very poor” category on Monday morning and the share of stubble burning in the city's PM2.5 pollution is likely to increase, according to a Central government agency. The ministry of

earth sciences' air quality monitor, Safar, said the wind direction and the wind speed is favourable for the transport of the pollutants from farm fires in Haryana, Punjab, and other neighbouring regions to Delhi.

The city recorded an air quality index (AQI) of 343 at 10 am on Monday.

■ **More on Page 2**

Kashyap rape accuser joins Athawale's party, RPI

Mumbai, Oct. 26: Actor Payal Ghosh, who accused film maker A n u r a g Kashyap of raping her, joined the Republican Party of India (Athawale) on Monday. She along with some others joined the party in the presence of its chief and Union minister Ramdas Athawale.

Ghosh was appointed vice-president of the women's wing of the party. Mr Athawale said the entry of Ghosh and others into the party would strengthen it.

He also claimed Kashyap would be arrested soon. The filmmaker has continuously denied the allegations leveled by Ghosh.

“I told her RPI(A) is Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's party. It helps all sections of society, be it Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs, villagers, slum dwellers. The RPI will get a good face if you join the party. After I discussed this with her, she was ready to join the party,” Mr Athawale said.

Ghosh said she joined RPI(A) to do something for the country and thanked Athawale for supporting her in her fight against Kashyap.

— PTI

■ Slipper thrown at CM ■ Campaigning ends for 1st phase of polls

Nitish faces protest at Sakra rally

Sakra/Mahua/Mahnar/K anti/Patna, Oct. 26: A slipper was flung towards chief minister Nitish Kumar by some protesters while he was going towards his helicopter after completing speech at an election meeting in Sakra in Muzaffarpur district, but it missed the target.

The police took four persons in custody on the charge of creating disturbances at the chief minister's rally, police sources said.

The Sakra incident is in the series of protests Kumar is facing during his rallies in different parts of the state.

At many places, Mr



Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar during a rally at Mahua in Vaishali district on Monday.

Kumar lost his cool and chided the protesters for “acting on behalf of political rivals” and telling them that nobody is bothered even if they don't vote for him. Addressing rallies in

Sakra and Mahua, Mr Kumar hit out at the RJD for making “fake” promises during polls to “cheat” the people.

Mr Kumar has been deriding Opposition chief ministerial candidate

Tejashwi Yadav's promise of providing 10 lakh jobs if voted to power.

Mr Kumar addressed rallies at Sakra and Kanti in Muzaffarpur district then he moved to neighbouring Vaishali district where he spoke at public meetings in Mahua and Mahnar Assembly seats.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will address two public election meetings at Valmiki Nagar and Kusheshwar Asthan in Bihar on October 28.

Meanwhile, curtain came down on Monday over campaign for 71 Assembly segments of Bihar which go to polls on October 28, in the first phase of elections. — PTI

■ People celebrate, endorse plan to tear up Pinochet-era charter

78% Chileans opt for new Constitution



Demonstrators supporting the reform of the Chilean constitution celebrate while waiting for the referendum official results at Plaza Italia square in Santiago. — AFP

thousands of jubilant people singing in unison as the word “rebirth” was beamed onto a tower

above. With more than three quarters of the votes counted, 78.12% of voters had opted for a new charter. Many have expressed hopes that a new text will temper an unabashedly capitalist ethos with guarantees of more equal rights to healthcare, pensions and education.

“This triumph belongs to the people, it's thanks to everyone's efforts that we are at this moment of celebration,” Daniel, 37, told Reuters in Santiago's Plaza Nunoa. — Reuters



US secretary of state Mike Pompeo and his wife Susan arrival at the airport in New Delhi.

India is delighted to host the US secretary of defence, Dr Mark Esper. Our talks today were fruitful, aimed at further deepening defence cooperation in a wide range of areas

— **Rajnath Singh,**
Union minister

security” in Asia as well as the menace of the “completely unacceptable” cross-border terrorism from Pakistan.

On his bilateral meeting with Mr Esper, Mr Singh tweeted, “India is delighted to host the US secretary of defence, Dr Mark Esper. Our talks today were fruitful, aimed at further deepening defence cooperation in a wide range of areas. Today's

discussions will add new vigour to India-US defence relations & mutual cooperation.”

With India facing a major security challenge from China in the Ladakh sector, the 2+2 talks are expected to focus prominently on Indo-US strategic and defence cooperation, especially between the two Navies in the Indo-Pacific region, intelligence and data sharing

as well as sale of state-of-the-art American defence equipment to India.

The two nations will ink the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement defence pact on Tuesday. It will enable India to use the US' geospatial intelligence and satellite imagery to improve the accuracy of missiles and drones and boost maritime Intelligence-sharing in the Indo-Pacific region.



Devotees immerse an idol of Goddess Durga in the river Ganga on the final day of the Durga Puja festival in Kolkata on Monday.

3 PDP leaders quit amid outrage over Mufti's flag remark

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, OCT. 26

Three senior Jammu-based leaders of the PDP, including a former MP, on Monday resigned from its basic membership, saying they felt “uncomfortable and suffocated” in the party. The move comes amidst increasing outrage, mainly in Jammu, against PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's recent assertion that she won't raise any other flag unless the state flag of Jammu and Kashmir is restored.

At a press conference on Friday, her first after her release from a 14-month-long detention, Ms Mufti had said, “I'm not going to raise any other flag till the flag of the J&K state is returned.”

Accusing Ms Mufti of

Assam minister rejects exhibits for Bengali Muslims in museum

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, OCT. 26

In what has snowballed into a major controversy, Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has outright rejected a proposal of a Congress legislator to facilitate space in a heritage museum for displaying the culture and her-

Ex-minister Dilip Ray gets 3-year jail in '99 coal scam

Convicts out on bail

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 26

The CBI special court of Investigation in Delhi on Monday sentenced former Union coal minister Dilip Ray and two other senior ex-officials to three year prison term in the 1999 coal block allocation scam. Special Judge Bharat Prashar also imposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh on each convicted individual.

Moments after the three were awarded the three-year jail term, the court granted bail to all of them on a bond of ₹1 lakh each. The three were also given time till November 25 to appeal in the high court.

Mr Ray was minister of state (coal) in the Atal Behari Vajpayee government.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had asked for life imprisonment for the convicts saying it will set an example for other influential people not to indulge in such scams.

The convicts, however, had prayed to the court to be lenient, citing their old age.

On October 6, the court had convicted Mr Ray, two former senior officials of the Union coal ministry — Pradip Kumar Banerjee and Nitya Nand Gautam — in a case pertaining to the allocation of 105.153 hectares of abandoned coal mining area in Brahmadaha coal block in Giridih district of Jharkhand to Castron Technologies Ltd (CTL) in 1999.

Special judge (CBI) Bharat Parashar had held Mr Ray guilty of cheating, criminal conspiracy and breach of trust.

hurting of nationalistic sentiments, three party leaders — former MP T.S. Bajwa, former MLC Ved Mahajan and former PDP state secretary Choudhary Hussain Ali Waffa — resigned from their posts as well as from the party membership. Mr Bajwa and Mr Mahajan were founding members of the PDP whereas Mr Waffa had joined it in 2008.

The joint resignation letter begins with, “We, your colleagues in Jammu region, most of whom remained associated with the party through every thick and thin since its formation are feeling quite uncomfortable over some of your actions and undesirable utterances especially which hurt the patriotic sentiments.”

itage of the people living in the “char-chaporis”, the riverine island of Assam. Majority of the people living on these islands are from the “Miya” community — the name given to Bengali-speaking Muslims in the state, who are often tagged as illegal immigrants.

■ **More on Page 4**



IN BRIEF

Ex-home ministry typist arrested

Ghaziabad: The Khoda police has arrested a man, who worked as a typist at the Union home ministry on a contract basis, for allegedly getting undue favours to people known to him by posing as a former IAS officer. Abhishek Kumar Chaubey, a resident of the Azad Vihar colony under the Khoda police station area, used the WhatsApp profile picture of retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer R N Chaubey and sent messages to officers on the instant messaging platform, dictating them "in a commanding tone", for getting his work done. Deputy Superintendent of Police of the Indira Puram circle Anshu Jain told PTI, adding that at times, he even reprimanded some officers. Dubey has denied charging money for the services he provided to his acquaintances, the officer said, adding that the possibility cannot be ruled out. — *PTI*

Man held for sexually assaulting friend

New Delhi: A 27-year-old man was arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting his friend in southeast Delhi's Govindpur area, police said on Monday. The accused, identified as Lalu Kumar, is a resident of Patna in Bihar, they said. On October 19, police got information that a woman was lying injured under a foot over-bridge at Harkesh Nagar. She was shifted to All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Hospital, a senior police officer said. The woman's husband said that his 25-year-old wife was missing since October 18 from her home under suspicious circumstances when he and his son had gone to attend a birthday party in Tughlakabad village, police said. He did not report the matter and searched at his own level, they said. During investigation, CCTV footage and technical surveillance revealed that the victim left her home alone and was seen with Kumar at Govindpur metro station, police said. "Later, it was found that Kumar, who works at a hardware shop in Govindpur, was missing. He went to his home without informing anyone. Police went to Patna and arrested him from his village," Deputy commissioner of police (southeast) R.P. Meena said. During interrogation, he said that he was in a relationship with the victim. On the intervening night of October 18 and 19, they both went to Chandiwalla park, where he sexually assaulted her, police added.

Man kills brother over property

Ghaziabad: A man shot dead his elder brother over a property dispute here, police said on Monday. According to police, Raj Kamal was called by his brother Rahul at Sanjay Puri Colony to settle the dispute. As the victim reached there, Rahul fired at him indiscriminately, police said. Superintendent of police (Rural) Neeraj Kumar Jadaun said the victim was rushed to a hospital in Modi Nagar from where he was taken to Meerut, where he succumbed to his bullet injuries. The victim's father has lodged a complaint against his younger son and one Mintu. They are on the run right now, the superintendent of police said, adding that they are conducting raids on their possible hideouts. — *PTI*

Gr Noida: Fire at scrap dealer's warehouse

Noida: A fire broke out at a scrap dealer's warehouse in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida on Monday, but nobody was injured in the incident, officials said. The incident took place around 5 pm in the Dadri area after a short circuit led to a fire in the bushes in an empty plot which eventually reached the warehouse, officials said. "The warehouse is owned by a man named Mohsin, who is a scrap dealer. A part of the warehouse was gutted in the blaze before it could be doused," a police spokesperson said. Fire tenders were pressed into service and the blaze was controlled around 6 pm, the spokesperson said, adding that nobody was injured in the incident. — *PTI*

■ 4 cases lodged against SI, including Pocco Act

City cop arrested for molesting 4 women

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

A Delhi Police sub-inspector has been arrested for allegedly molesting, stalking and passing lewd remarks at women. He was arrested on Saturday after complaints from at least four women. On October 17, three women in south west Delhi's Dwarka complained of being stalked and molested by a person in a grey Baleno between 8 am and 9 am. A fourth person too filed a similar complaint.

Four separate cases have been lodged against him including the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Delhi Police said.

One of the women described the horror in a video, narrating the incident that took place when she went for cycling on the morning of October 17. "While cycling, I noticed a small, grey car which had its rear glass broken. After some time, I noticed that



Puneet Grewal

the car was being driven beside me. I didn't look at him. He honked at me. I gestured him to move ahead. He didn't move ahead and chased me."

The woman said the man in the car asked her for directions to Sector-14 in Dwarka and when she was about to tell him, he unzipped his trousers and started touching his private parts. "I angrily asked him to leave. I then realised that there was nobody around me and that cars were passing by in high speed. The man in the car started saying nasty things," she said in the video. "He wasn't stopping. He went on."

The man fled when she started screaming for help

▶ **ON OCTOBER 17**, three women in south west Delhi's Dwarka complained of being stalked and molested by a person in a grey Baleno between 8 am and 9 am. A fourth person too filed a similar complaint

when she saw a few vehicles parked.

To trace the accused, the police went through footage from 200 CCTV cameras and deployed nearly 200 police personnel.

Details of 286 Balenos registered in Delhi were also tracked down. The car used by the accused, however, did not have a registered number.

The accused was finally tracked down to his home in west Delhi's Janakpuri on Saturday and was identified as sub-inspector Puneet Grewal.

He was posted at Special Cell unit of Delhi Police and is currently under judicial custody, the police said.

MCD mayors stage sit-in outside CM residence

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

The mayors of the three BJP-led municipal corporations on Monday staged a sit-in right outside the Delhi chief minister's residence, seeking a meeting with chief minister Arvind Kejriwal over the issue of funds in crores of rupees which, they claimed, was due to the civic bodies from the AAP government.

The three mayors — Jai Prakash (North Delhi), Anamika (South Delhi) and Nirmal Jain (East Delhi) — jointly claimed that ₹13,000 cr in total was due to the three corporations from the Delhi government.

North Delhi municipal corporations Mayor Jai Prakash said he and the other two mayors had reached the residence of the chief minister around 11 am seeking a meeting with Kejriwal over the issue.

"Three mayors are sitting on ground since morning, and the Delhi chief minister who talks about upholding Constitution, has insulted the Constitutional post of a mayor, insulted us three leaders, who are the first citizens of Delhi," North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash alleged in the evening. South Delhi Mayor Anamika said, Delhi minister Satyendar Jain, "we learned through media, invited us through Twitter, to meet him". "Why can't they send a representative or Jain sahab himself could have come and all of us could have gone to meet the chief minister," she said.

Docs go on mass leave over pending salaries

New Delhi, Oct. 26: Senior doctors of North Corporation-run hospitals went on a day-long casual leave en masse on Monday as the crisis over pending salaries of medics of civic-run facilities deepened with no resolution in sight, officials said.

R.R. Gautam, president of the Municipal Corporation Doctors' Association (MCDA) on Monday said, "If our demands are not met, we will go on indefinite strike from tomorrow."

The MCDA, an association of senior permanent doctors of the civic hospitals, was established in

HINDU RAO STIR

▶ **THE ASSOCIATION** already has given sufficient time to authorities concerned to resolve the issue and pay salaries

1974 and has about 1,200 members. It also includes doctors from hospitals run by other two municipal corporations.

The MCDA on Saturday had issued a statement and threatened that its members from NDMC hospitals would go on a mass casual leave if their pending salaries of the last three months were

not released. The association already has given sufficient time to authorities concerned to resolve the issue and pay our salaries, "but they have not done anything to solve the problem, and instead they appear to be unconcerned with the plight of doctors," it had said.

Recently, it had also issued a statement expressing solidarity with their agitating colleagues - resident doctors - of Hindu Rao Hospital and Kasturba Hospital, both under the North Corporation, who are also protesting over their pending salaries. — *PTI*

Delhi's air 'very poor' for 4th day, likely to remain so till October 31

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

A layer of toxic haze lingered over the national capital on Monday as the city recorded its air quality in the "very poor" category for the fourth consecutive day.

A central government air quality monitoring agency said the air quality was likely to remain "very poor" till October 31.

The city recorded a 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) of 353 on Monday. It was 349 on Sunday, 345 on Saturday and 366 on Friday.

Most of the air quality monitoring stations in the city recorded the air quality in the "very poor" category, while pollution levels rose to "severe" levels at Vivek Vihar (AQI 414), Wazirpur (404) and Anand Vihar (418).

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

According to the

Pollution isn't a problem of AAP alone, says Gopal Rai

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai on Monday said air pollution was not a problem of just the Aam Aadmi Party or the Delhi government and everyone, irrespective of their party affiliations, should join efforts to tackle it.

The minister also said the "Red light on, Gaadi off" campaign will cover all the 70 assembly constituencies in the national capital starting Monday.

By November 2, the campaign to curb vehicular pollution will cover all the 272 wards in the city, he

Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, the wind direction and wind speed were favourable for the transport of pollutants from the farm fires in Punjab, Haryana and neighbouring regions. The share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5

said. The minister said he had invited opposition MLAs and MPs to join the campaign but "there has been no positive response from them so far".

"But I hope that they will take steps at their own level. Air pollution is not a problem of just the AAP or the Delhi government," he said. "It is the responsibility of all governments and citizens of Delhi to contribute in reducing pollution. The problem is not of the AAP alone. I want to appeal to everybody to participate in this campaign, keeping their party affiliations aside," Mr Rai said.

concentration was 16 per cent on Monday. It was 19 per cent on Sunday and nine per cent on Saturday. NASA's satellite imagery also showed a very dense cluster of fires in Punjab, Haryana and nearby regions. SAFAR said the farm fire count was 1,275 on

Sunday. According to Punjab Pollution Control Board, the state has recorded 14,461 incidents of stubble burning between September 21 and October 25 as compared to 9,796 during the corresponding period last year. Haryana has recorded around 4,284 incidents of stubble burning this season so far.

The central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the predominant surface wind direction is northwesterly with wind speed up to 12 kmph, favourable for transport of pollutants from farm fires. A large number of farm fires were observed over Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, which is likely to impact Delhi-NCR's air quality, it said.

"The very poor air quality is likely to persist till October 31," it said.

The air quality warning system said the ventilation index — a product of mixing depth and average wind speed — was around 12,500 meter square per second on Monday — favourable for dispersion of pollutants.

Email address:-exenmcdsmcgr@gmail.com		Contact No. 0194-2503097	
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECH. CITY DRAINAGE DIVISION SRINAGAR.			
Subject:- Procurement of vehicle mounted manhole desilting machine.		CORRIGENDIUM	
Ref:- This office N.I.T NO:CDM_E_06_OF_2020-21, D A T E D :- 16-10-2020			
Please read as under in respect of above mentioned NIT.			
Sl.No. mentioned in the NIT	Read as		
Time of Completion	45 days		
Cover list Documents to be uploaded:- Clause 1 part (b)			
Prequalification Criteria:- Clause (2) part x.	<p>i. The Bidder has to produce documentary proof for supply of vehicle Mounted Desilting Machine/sewer cleaning machines/suction cum jetting machines in a single allotment order not less than 80% of the estimated cost to any Central Government Department/Autonomes Body or Public sector undertaking in Last three Years. The bidder should provide allotment order and completion/ performance certificate in support of above. The department shall have right to verify the experience certifi cate provided by the bidder.</p> <p>ii. The Bidder has to produce documentary proof for supply of vehicle Mounted Desilting Machine/sewer cleaning machines/suction cum jetting machines in two allotment orders not with less than 50% each of the estimated cost to any Central Government Department/Autonomes Body or Public sector undertaking in Last three Years. The bidder should provide allotment order and completion/ performance certificate in sup port of above. The department shall have right to verify the experience certificate provided by the bidder.</p> <p>iii. The Bidder has to produce documentary proof for supply of vehicle Mounted Desilting Machine/sewer cleaning machines/suction cum jetting machines in three allotment orders with not less than 40% each of the estimated cost to any Central Government Department/Autonomes Body or Public sector undertaking in Last three Years. The bidder should provide allotment order and completion/ performance certificate in support of above. The department shall have right to verify the experience certificate provided by the bidder.</p>		
Technical Annexure A Scope A-vehicle Para (iii)	0.7 Cum (minimum) capacity Hopper mounted on load body having a tipping arrangement in order to shift the silt from Hopper to some suitable dumping vehicle. The Hopper shall be fabricated out of 2mm (minimum) thick M.S. plate and designed in such a way that the silt can be dumped in other suit able dumper easily. The Hopper shall be painted with anti-corrosive paint.		
B-Hydraulically operated desilting equipment:- Para-(ii)	Bucket (Grab Bucket) assembled in two halves which shall be opened/closed using the lever of the hydraulic system and the bucket can go upto a depth of 10 Mtr in the manhole. Total capacity of bucket/20 Litres (minimum) and should be of such size that it can be lowered into a manhole. The material of the bucket shall be such that it should with stand high acidic nature of the medium of working.		
All other terms and condition shall remain same as laid down in the main N.I.T. NO.CDM/1664 Dated:-22-10-2020			
DIPK-7898/20 Dated 25.10.2020		EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECH. CITY DRAINAGE DIVISION SGR.	

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is notified for the information of passengers that the timings of the following Special/Festival Special/Clone Special Trains will be revised as under:-

Train No. 04084 Delhi Jn. - Katihar Special Train				
TRAIN NO. 04084				
STATIONS	Existing time		Revised time	
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
Moradabad	01:55	02:03	02:30	02:38
Bareilly	03:21	03:23	04:03	04:05

Train No. 02226 Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh Superfast Special Train				
TRAIN NO. 02226				
STATIONS	Existing time		Revised time	
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
Lucknow Jn.	03:00	03:20	Same	
Malhaur	03:50		04:00	
Shahganj Jn.	08:00	08:25	08:10	08:35
Azamgarh	09:30		09:40	

Note : The timings of 02573 at Barabanki Jn. to be revised as 20:30 hrs instead of 20:40 hrs.

The change in Stoppage timings over Lucknow Division for train no 02226 (Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh) special train are as under:-

Train No. 02226 Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh Superfast Special Train				
Change Timing	STATIONS		Existing Timing	
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
04:17	04:19	Barabanki Jn.	04:07	04:09
05:12	05:13	Rudauli	05:00	05:01
05:48	05:50	Faizabad Jn.	05:35	05:37
06:08	06:10	Ayodhya	05:55	05:57
06:53	06:55	Akbarpur	06:44	06:46
07:20	07:22	Mailpur	07:04	07:06
08:10	08:35	Shahganj Jn.	08:00	08:25

Above change is only for 02226 (Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh) Spl. train not for 12226 (Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh) Kafiyat Express.

Train No. 04059 Varanasi - New Delhi Clone Special Train				
TRAIN NO. 04059				
STATIONS	Existing time		Revised time	
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
Ghaziabad	Pass	06:30	Pass	07:38
New Delhi	07:20	---	08:30	---

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Beware of Touts Always buy your tickets from an authorised railway counter or authorised rail travel agent only.

Note: For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

Security Helpline No. 182 Integrated Helpline No. 139

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

■ Demands of hackers still not known

Ransomware attack on Noida restaurant chain, probe on

Noida, Oct. 26: Cyber criminals have allegedly hacked data of restaurant chain Mithaas with ransomware, with Noida police launching a probe into the matter, according to officials.

An FIR was lodged at the Phase 3 police station on Sunday and investigation launched into the online crime, they said.

The case comes with in a fortnight of a similar incident with fast food and snack company Haldiram's, whose servers were also attacked with ransomware, a virus used to encrypt data by hackers who then demand a ransom to decrypt it.

In the complaint to police, a Mithaas representative said the hacking and ransomware implant on their company server took place in the afternoon of October 22.

"... due to which all our data has been encrypted in a particular format due to which complete data has become useless for us and there is a ransomware screen in front which is asking us to contact them for further information of recovery," the FIR stated.

The company, which runs outlets in Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad and Meerut, said it has been provided a recovery link and the com-

promised system is located at their office in the industrial Sector 63 here.

When contacted, a local police official told PTI, "The matter is under investigation."

Earlier this month, hackers allegedly stole crucial data of popular food and snack company Haldiram's and demanded Rs 7,50,000 for releasing the information which included financial and sales details.

The unidentified accused had hacked the server of the company based in the industrial Sector 62 and here using ransomware, according to the officials. — *PTI*

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Chandni, D/o Munna, R/o H.No. 4483, Gali No. 1 (Raju ka Makan) Old Seelampur, Delhi** has been missing/ kidnapped since 25.09.2020. In this regard **FIR No. 462/2020 u/s 363 IPC dated 26.09.2020 has been registered at P.S. Krishna Nagar, Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing/ kidnapped girl is as under: **Name:** Chandni, **Gender:** Female, **Age:** 17 years, **Height:** 4'11", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Thin, **Identification:** Mentally Unstable, **Wearing:** black and white colour suit, black colour salwar and slippers on her feet. If anyone has any information regarding this missing girl, kindly inform SHO/Krishna Nagar, Delhi

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/251/SHD/2020

SHO
P.S. Krishna Nagar, Delhi.
Ph. No. 011-22093224, 22093887

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority		
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, (UP)		
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com		
E-TENDER NOTICE		
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & http://etender.up.nic.in . Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.		
1.	24/SPE/PE(PH-II)/ET/2020-21	P/F of Bamboo Net before covered drain & on open drain in front of market in PH-II area in Noida
		Rs. 1535908.54
The above tenders can be uploaded by date 02-11-2020 upto 5.00 PM . Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 03-11-2020 at 11.00 AM .		
Sr. Project Engineer (Public Health)		Noida
Office Sector-39		
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA		

ग्रेटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण	
भूखण्ड संख्या-1, नॉलेज पार्क-04, ग्रेटर नोएडा सिटी, गौतमबुद्ध नगर	
सार्वजनिक सूचना	
ग्रेटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण क्षेत्र के अन्तर्गत M/s SAM INDIA ABHIMANYU HOUSING के भूखण्ड संख्या-GH-02 सेक्टर-16C ग्रेटर नोएडा पर दिनांक 08.07.2013 को मानचित्र स्वीकृति प्रदान की गयी थी। तबसेपुनर् बिल्डर द्वारा पुनर्शोधित मानचित्र स्वीकृति (Revised Sanction) हेतु दिनांक 15.10.2020 को आवेदन किया गया है, जिसमें पूर्व स्वीकृत भवन मानचित्र के डिजाइन व अन्य कतिपय संशोधन किया जा रहा है। अतः प्रत्येक आवेदियों द्वारा अपनी consent दी गई है या नहीं के सम्बन्ध में अपार्टमेंट और अपनी आपसित दर्ज करवा सकते हैं। इस सम्बन्ध में बिल्डर द्वारा प्रस्तुत संशोधित declarations एवं मानचित्र का परिक्षण किसी भी कार्यदिवस में सुबह 9.30 से सायं 6.00 बजे के मध्य नियोजन विभाग के displayed में नक्शों में किया जा सकता है। मानचित्रों में 2090 अपार्टमेंट एन्ट-2010 के प्राधिकारों के अन्तर्गत उक्त प्रस्तावित संशोधन की घोषणा के सम्बन्ध में अपार्टमेंट स्वामियों/संघ को नोटिस जारी करने के साथ 30 दिन के अन्दर आपत्तियाँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।	
अतः उपरोक्त के निहाय अपनी आपत्तियाँ लिखित रूप से अपने आवंटन पत्र, नाम, पता एवं दृढाभा नम्बर के साथ कार्यालय समय व कार्यदिवस में ग्रेटर प्राधिकरण के मुख्य प्रशासनिक कार्यालय, भूखण्ड संख्या-1, नॉलेज पार्क-04, ग्रेटर नोएडा में स्थित वरिष्ठ प्रबंधक (वास्तु) विभाग में निश्चित अवधि अर्थात् सूचना प्रकाशित होने के 30 दिनों में प्राप्त कराया जा सकता है।	
महाप्रबन्धक (नियो0/वास्तु0)	

SHORT TAKES

NCB ARRESTS TV ACTRESS, TWO PEDDLERS

SAURABH JOSHI
MUMBAI, OCT. 26

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) arrested three persons, including a television actress, in Mumbai while she was buying cannabis from a peddler in Versova at Andheri. The officials said that they laid a trap at the Machimar Colony and arrested Preetika Chauhan while procuring 99 gram of narcotic substance.

The officials said that they would probe if the arrested peddlers were in contact with any of the peddlers arrested in the actor Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case. Apart from the actor, those arrested were identified as Mohammad Faizal (20) and Dipak Rathor (42), officials said.

The investigations revealed that Faizal who was apprehended while handing over the banned narcotics substance to the actress. When he was questioned about the procurement, he revealed of getting it from Rathor, who was apprehended from Versova soon after, officials said. The officials later raided the residences of the three accused persons.

BHATT MOVES HC AGAINST LUVIENNA LODH

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 26

Film producer and director Mahesh Bhatt and his brother Mukesh Bhatt have moved defamation suit against aspiring actress Luvienna Lodh for maligning their image in public and on social media. Bhatt brothers have also demanded Rs one crore in the form of compensation for damages.

Justice A.K. Menon, who heard the suit filed by the Bhatts on Monday, directed Ms Lodh to file a reply on the suit and adjourned the hearing for three weeks.

Ms Lodh's counsel assured the court that henceforth, Lodh would not publish or circulate any statement or video against the Bhatts.

Ms Lodh last week posted a video on social media claiming to be married to one Sumit Sabharwal, Mahesh Bhatt's nephew. In the video, Ms Lodh alleged that Sabharwal was in the business of supplying drugs and human trafficking. Ms Lodh also alleged that Mahesh Bhatt operates this business. After the video was posted, Mahesh Bhatt, through his counsel Ameet Naik, sent a legal notice to Ms Lodh asking her to stop making such false statements.

On Monday, the Bhatts filed a suit in the Bombay High Court seeking Lodh to be restrained from making, publishing and circulating any defamatory and slanderous comments against them.

"The suit is also seeking damages to the tune of Rs one crore from the Lodh for making various grossly defamatory, slanderous, distasteful and false allegations and statements against the Bhatts," the suit said.

'UDDHAV WORST PRODUCT OF NEPOTISM'

Mumbai, Oct. 26: Hitting back at Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for his comments at a rally, actor Kangana Ranaut on Monday described him as the worst product of nepotism.

The actor, who has been vocal about her criticism of the state government's handling of the investigation into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death and labelled Bollywood a drug haven, lashed out against Thackeray a day after his Dussehra address.

"People who have no means of livelihood in their home come to Mumbai and betray it. Calling Mumbai PoK is in fact the failure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He had said he would get back PoK into India," Thackeray said on Sunday.

Ranaut, known for her provocative statements, struck back in a series of tweets and a video on the social media platform and said Thackeray had abused her in his speech by calling her 'namak haraam'. "Shame on you, I am your son's age. This is how you speak to a self-made single woman. Chief minister, you are the worst product of nepotism."

The noted actress also took umbrage at Thackeray's reference to ganja fields in Himachal Pradesh and said it is actually dev bhoomi', land of the gods.

India-US pact to help drones precisely strike targets

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

In what will help the military to launch precise missile or drone strikes during any confrontation, defence ministry confirmed that Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for geo-spatial cooperation will be signed by India and US during 2+2 Dialogue on Tuesday between the foreign and defence ministers of the two countries.

BECA will allow sharing of military grade geo-spatial data in real time between India and US which will be helpful to navigate missiles or drones to precisely hit their targets. BECA is one of four basic agreements which US signs with its close strategic and defence allies. US and India have already signed three other foundation agreements which are General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA),

Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA). LEMOA allows logistics sharing between India and US military. Under COMCASA, US will provide India with encrypted communications equipment and systems so that two militaries can communicate with each other through a secure network.

Given the ongoing military stand-off between India and China in Eastern Ladakh, the signing of BECA has military significance and is keenly watched by Beijing. BECA will also allow India to buy armed drones from US which will be fed with the data. The current conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has underlined the importance of armed drones during a war. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar and defence minister Raj-nath Singh, and US secretary of state Michael Pompeo and defense secretary Mark T. Esper will hold dialogue on Tuesday.

Defence minister Singh on Monday held a bilateral meeting with US defense secretary in South Block, New Delhi.

The two ministers reviewed bilateral defence cooperation and also discussed ways to take bilateral cooperation forward.

Seaplane to debut soon



India's first seaplane lands on Sabarmati river ahead of its inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ahmedabad on Monday. The 19-seater seaplane will be used for flights between the Sabarmati riverfront and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's Statue of Unity as part of a first-of-its-kind service in the country. The service is likely to be launched on October 31.

— PTI

India registers over 45,000 new cases and 480 casualties

Covid-19 fatality rate at lowest since March 22

AGE CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

India on Monday recorded the sharpest decline in its fresh coronavirus cases and daily death figures with 45,148 new detections and 480 fatalities in one day.

India's total case tally has now reached 79.10 lakh while the total number of deaths is 1.19 lakh.

This is the first time in several weeks that the fatality figures have dipped below 500.

India's Covid-19 fatality rate has dropped to 1.50 per cent, the lowest since March 22, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday, crediting the focused efforts of the Centre, states and UTs on effective clinical management of hospitalised cases.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar is among those who have tested positive for Covid-19 and has been hospitalised on Monday.

Delhi has recorded over 4,000 cases for the second

● **THE RECOVERY** rate has now reached 90.23 per cent as 59,105 new recoveries were added in last 24 hours. With this, the total number of recoveries has crossed 71 lakh.

day even as nationwide cases decline.

Union health ministry officials said that many states have conducted surveys to map and identify the vulnerable population like the elderly, pregnant women and those with comorbidities.

"This, with the help of technological solutions like mobile apps, has ensured keeping the high-risk population under continuous observation, thus aiding early identification, timely clinical treatment and reducing fatalities. At the ground level, frontline health workers like ASHAs and ANMs have done a commendable job of managing the migrant population and to enhance awareness at the

community level. As a result, there are 14 states and UTs with CFR lower than 1 per cent," officials said.

The recovery rate has now reached 90.23 per cent as 59,105 new recoveries were added in last 24 hours. With this, the total number of recoveries has crossed 71 lakh.

India also continues to report a trend of steadily decreasing active cases. Presently the active cases comprise 8.26 per cent of the total positive cases of the country standing at 6,53,717. This is the lowest since August 13 when the active cases were 6,53,622.

With an effective containment strategy, aggressive testing and standardised clinical management protocols based on holistic standard of care protocol across government and private hospitals, the number of new deaths has significantly dipped, the ministry said.

As part of the Covid-19 management and response policy, the Centre has had a sharp focus on not only contain-

ing the spread of the disease but to reduce deaths and save lives by providing quality clinical care to critical and severe patients, it said.

Collaborative efforts of the Centre, states, and union territories have resulted in strengthening of the health facilities across the country. Presently, 2,218 dedicated Covid hospitals are providing quality medical care, it said.

As part of a unique initiative to build the capacities of ICU doctors in clinical management of critical patients towards reducing fatalities, e-ICU has been started by AIIMS, New Delhi, it said.

Twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, tele/video-consultation sessions are held by experts for doctors manning the ICUs in the state hospitals. These sessions started from July 8. Till date, 25 tele-sessions have been held, and 393 institutions across 34 states and UTs have participated in them.

Bitter campaign: Leaders think foul is fair in polls

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, OCT. 26

Leaders have found a potent weapon in profanity to settle their rivalry, turning the electioneering for the November 3 by-polls to 28 assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh, the bitterest one in electoral history of the state.

Foul language such as 'lucha', 'lafanga', 'item', 'rakhal' and 'bhoka nanga' were used liberally as leaders of both

Opposition Congress and the ruling BJP tried to outsmart each other in the run up to the November 3 assembly by-elections, which may prove crucial for survival of Shivraj government.

"I have never seen the election campaign in the electoral history of MP reaching such low", Pradesh Congress Committee vice president and former minister Raja Pateria said.

It all started when Congress coined a slogan "Bikau nahin tikau chahiye" to target the candidates who quit Congress and joined the BJP ahead of the assembly by-elections, saying that they caused bypolls by resigning from the assembly.

The turncoats were dubbed as 'gaddars' (traitors) by the Congress.

The BJP has countered the Congress campaign by dubbing the Kamal Nath government which floundered in March following resignation of 22 former Congress MLAs as 'Looteras' (stealers), alleging that large scale corruptions marked the outgoing Congress regime in the state.

Tempers ran high in the BJP when Congress veteran and former chief minister Kamal Nath termed state women and child development minister Imarti Devi as an 'item' in

SC STAYS MP HC ORDER ON VIRTUAL RALLIES

New Delhi, Oct. 26: The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the Madhya Pradesh High Court order asking political parties to conduct their campaign for the November 3 assembly bypolls virtually instead of holding physical rallies due to Covid-19.

A bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar asked the Election Commission of India to take an appropriate decision with regard to political rallies as per law and keeping in mind Covid-19 guidelines.

The top court was hearing pleas of the ECI and Madhya Pradesh Energy minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar challenging the high court's order of October 20.

The top court also asked senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Tomar, to make a representation to the ECI for loss of time in electioneering due to HC's order.

— PTI

MADHYA PRADESH

one of his election speeches.

The BJP has made it an emotive issue to put Congress on the defensive. The party has portrayed it as insults heaped on a dalit woman by Mr Nath.

Ms Devi, however, tried to settle the score with Mr Nath by calling him 'lucha', 'lafanga', a colloquial language used to define a man who has gone astray.

Senior Congress leader and former minister Ajey Singh even went to the extent of saying that he would make Ms Devi a 'jalebi', which was seen as offensive by the woman minister.

Earlier, senior Congress leader Dilip Gurjar had called chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan 'bhoka-nanga' for hailing from a humble family background sparking furor in the ruling party.

Bisaul Singh, a member in Shivraj cabinet, had called the wife of his rival Congress candidate in Annupur assembly constituency, as 'rakhal', leading Congress to move the election commission for action against him.

"We have never seen such a bitter election campaign in MP", BJP spokesman here Rajneesh Agrawal said.

Meanwhile, Kamal Nath on Monday accused the ruling BJP of trying to poach his party MLAs due to the fear of a setback in the November 3 by-elections.

Mr Nath's allegations come a day after Congress MLA Rahul Singh Lodhi resigned from assembly as well as the party and joined BJP on Sunday.

It may be noted that he was the 26th Congress legislator to quit party and join the BJP in the last seven months in the state.

BJP WORKER FOUND HANGING IN BENGAL DIST

Datan (West Bengal), Oct. 26: A middle-aged BJP worker was found hanging outside a village in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district on Monday evening, around 24 hours after he went missing, the police said. The BJP alleged that miscreants of the Trinamul Congress murdered Bacchu Bera. The ruling party, however, denied the charge.

"We have started an investigation into the case. No arrests have been made," a police officer said. The police said that Bera had gone missing on Sunday afternoon.

— PTI

DRESS | CODE

This is second time that a lawyer has appeared on screen without a shirt

SC dismayed as lawyer appears without shirt

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

A bench headed by Justice D. Y. Chandrachud was dismayed when a lawyer appeared on the screen without shirt raising eyebrows and screams in bewilderment from all those who were watching the court proceedings being held through video conferencing since Covid lockdown.

Though the screen showing lawyer without shirt was immediately blacked out by the control room, the bench comprising, besides Justice Chandrachud, Justice

Indu Malhotra and Justice Indira Banerjee disapproving of what they had seen a short while ago, raised the matter with Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on lawyers not abiding by the dress code.

"At least you (lawyers) should be properly dressed when you (lawyers) are appearing before the court even through video conferencing. Once you are already on the screen, you must be properly dressed", Justice Chandrachud told Tushar Mehta obviously suggesting that he should use his position as the senior most law officer of

the country after Attorney General K.K.Venugopal to inculcate some sense in the lawyers to be conscious of their dress code while appearing before the court even through video conferencing.

Describing what had happened as "unpardonable", the Solicitor General recalled a recent incident of an internal meeting of the judges in Florida where a judge when he appeared on the screen was not appropriately dressed.

Realizing his slip, the said judge instantly retreated to appear again in a proper attire.

Mehta also recalled a case before a court in the United States where a lawyer invoking his fundamental right sought freedom to dress the way he wanted and not to be restricted to a dress code.

The United States court, Mehta said, held that in the "interest of institutional decorum, your right to freely dress the way you like can be curtailed as everything you wear has the significance of the institution.

This is the second time that a lawyer has appeared on the screen to argue a matter without wearing a shirt.

GUJARAT HC BEGINS LIVE STREAMING OF PROCEEDINGS ON TRIAL BASIS

Ahmedabad, Oct. 26: The Gujarat High Court on Monday started live streaming of proceedings of its first court on an experimental basis.

Anyone willing to view the live proceedings could access the link of the Youtube channel from the homepage of the Gujarat High Court website, Chief Justice Vikram Nath said in an order.

The order said proceedings of the Division Bench No 1 [First Court] of the



SHORT TAKES

NADDA HITS OUT AT CONG OVER EFFIGY BURNING

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

Blaming Congress' Rahul Gandhi for the burning of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's effigy in Punjab, a state which is witnessing farmers' protests against the recently passed three legislations regarding the farm sector, BJP president J.P. Nadda on Monday claimed that the "Nehru-Gandhi dynasty has never respected the office of the PM" and its "deep personal hatred" against a person who was born in poverty and became the Prime Minister is historic.

Accusing the Congress of spreading lies against the Modi government, Mr Nadda said Mr Gandhi's "directed drama of burning the PM's effigy in Punjab is shameful but not unexpected."

"Combination of despondency and shamelessness is dangerous. Congress possesses both. Empty rhetoric of decency and democracy by the mother is 'complemented' by live demonstrations of politics of hate, anger, lies and aggression by the son. Double standards galore," he tweeted.

In a series of tweets, the BJP president accused the Congress of various issues while asserting that more the Congress' lies and hate against Mr Modi increases, the more people will support the Prime Minister.

SC REJECTS PLEA ON 50% QUOTA IN MEDICAL SEATS

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

The Supreme Court on Monday declined Tamil Nadu government's plea seeking to implement 50 per cent OBC reservation in admission to medical courses in the all India seats surrendered to the state.

A bench comprising Justice L. Nageswara Rao, Justice Hemant Gupta and Justice Ajay Rastogi dismissed the petition by Tamil Nadu government and the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party.

Earlier, a number of political parties in Tamil Nadu including main opposition party DMK haqd moved the top court seeking 50 per cent reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the all India seats surrendered by the centre.

However, the top court bench headed by Justice Nageswara Rao sent the matter to Madras high court for determination.

In July this year, the high court held that there was no impediment to providing 50 per cent OBC reservation medical courses and had asked the Central government to take a decision in the matter within three months.

The top court had on July 13 asked Madras high court to "expeditiously" decide on petitions that were pending before it seeking 50 per cent OBC reservation in all India quota seats for admission to medical and dental courses.

SURRENDER BY GURUNG TRIGGERS RALLIES

Kolkata, Oct. 26: Days after the supremacy of the undivided Gorkha Janamukti Morcha supremo Bimal Gurung surfaced in Kolkata after being in hiding for three years, Darjeeling hills witnessed rallies by his supporters and detractors welcoming him and opposing his return respectively. Gurung had made a dramatic reappearance in Kolkata on October 21, quit the BJP-led NDA and aligned with TMC asserting that the saffron party has "failed to find a permanent solution" for the Hills which had witnessed major unrest over demand for a separate state in 2017.

The Binay Tamang faction of the hill party, currently in political control of the Darjeeling hills, took out protest rallies on Saturday and Sunday claiming that Gurung's return meant reverting to violence. Gurung will not be allowed to enter Darjeeling hills, the Tamang faction asserted.

The Tamang faction of GJM is scheduled to take out more rallies on Tuesday and Wednesday to pressurize the state government to stop Gurung's return to the hills.

The GJM Gurung faction too took out rallies in Darjeeling in his support and demanded that he be allowed to return immediately.



BJP MP Manoj Tiwari leaves in a helicopter after an election campaign rally ahead of the Bihar Assembly polls in Kaimur district on Monday.

— PTI

People jostle to occupy vantage positions at election rallies in Bihar

Covid caution goes for a toss

Patna/Bhagalpur/Gaya, Oct. 26: With the campaign for the Bihar assembly election reaching a fever pitch, the Election Commission's warning of stern action for violation of Covid-19 protocol has gone unheeded with people gathering in huge numbers at rallies without wearing masks or caring for social distancing.

Several senior leaders including Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, BJP incharge for Bihar polls Devendra Fadnavis, former union minister and Chapra MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy, his Gaya counterpart Vijay Manjhi, BJP national spokesman Syed Shahinawaz Hussain and former state minister Narendra Singh have fallen victim to the contagion.

However, these have not had any salutary effect and the crowds remain unrestrained as people jostle for occupying vantage positions at election rallies.

Strict Covid-19 protocol was maintained at the rallies addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Dehri, Gaya and Bhagalpur, and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's public meetings at Hisua and Kahalgaon on Friday, but elsewhere the crowds throw caution to the wind in their unbridled enthusiasm.

The Election

Commission had on October 21 directed Bihar's Chief Electoral Officer and district administrations to "invoke appropriate and relevant penal provisions" under the Disaster Management Act and the Indian Penal Code against candidates found violating its orders.

"Instances of such public meetings have come to notice of the Commission, where large numbers of crowds have assembled in utter violation of social distancing and the political leaders/campaigners are addressing the gathering without wearing masks in complete disregard of the guidelines/instructions issued by Election Commission," the poll panel had said.

Candidates and organisers found violating the poll watchdog's instructions could face cases and imprisonment up to two years under the relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and the IPC.

Hundreds of people are still seen attending the rallies of top leaders including Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the grand alliance's chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav without wearing face masks and pushing and shoving each other for space.

"When questioned why are they not wearing face masks, they come up with

● **SEVERAL SENIOR** leaders including Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, BJP incharge for Bihar polls Devendra Fadnavis, former union minister and Chapra MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy, his Gaya counterpart Vijay Manjhi, BJP national spokesman Syed Shahinawaz Hussain and former state minister Narendra Singh have fallen victim to the contagion.

● **HOWEVER, IT DID NOT** have any salutary effect and the crowds remain unrestrained as people jostle for occupying vantage positions at election rallies.

lame excuses like they forgot it at their home or fish out one from their pocket saying they find it difficult to put it on due to oppressive heat," said a police officer.

Additional chief Electoral Officer Sanjay Kumar Singh said magistrates deployed at rally venues have been instructed to strictly enforce Covid-19 norms, including wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing.

"We are trying to enforce the Election Commission's guidelines to the extent possible. If someone is

found deliberately trying to violate the social distancing norm, then a case will be lodged against them," he said. He said several cases have been registered against those found violating the Covid-19 protocol but expressed his inability to share the exact number.

PTI reporters covering election rallies found leaders on the dais wore masks and maintained appropriate physical distance from each other, but people tumbled over one another to have a glimpse of helicopters landing at the rally grounds.

A Bhagalpur report said the dais was choc-a-bloc with people at Tejashwi Yadav's public meeting at Sanokha on Tuesday. "Right now we have to defeat Nitish Kumar. We can defeat corona later," said a supporter, and joined the chorus of *Tejashwi Yadav zindabad*.

Similar was the situation at the rally of Bhojpuri singer-actor and North East Delhi's BJP lawmaker Manoj Tiwari at Sharda school compound in Kahalgaon.

BJP candidate Pawan Kumar Yadav said that many people wore masks but social distancing could not be maintained despite the circles drawn on the ground because of the heavy rush.

Nitish Kumar is addressing 4-5 rallies every day,

and the situation is more or less the same. "Corona will strike people like Lalu Prasad and his partymen who turned the state into jungle raj," said an attendee at Kumar's rally in Bhore in Gopalganj district.

Chaos prevailed at a grand alliance rally at SBJ High School in Madhepura's Bihariganj where Subhashini Yadav, daughter of socialist veteran Sharad Yadav, is in the fray on a Congress ticket.

"We will get jobs if he comes to power. Can there be a bigger issue for people like us who don't have jobs?" said a grand alliance supporter, brushing aside questions about not wearing a mask at Tejashwi Yadav's rally in Aurangabad.

There have been some instances where organisers of such rallies have been booked for violation of the Covid-19 norms.

The Gaya district administration lodged an FIR against the organisers of a rally of BJP president J.P. Nadda on October 11 where social distancing norms were allegedly violated.

The FIR was registered on a complaint by circle officer Rajiv Ranjan. An FIR was also registered against Sadhu Yadav, the estranged brother-in-law of RJD supreme Lalu Prasad, in Gopalganj.

Another jawan in J&K ends life, 6th suicide in 3 weeks

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, OCT. 26

Another security forces jawan deployed in restive Jammu and Kashmir has ended his life by shooting himself with his service rifle. The officials said that a constable with D-Coy of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)'s 141 battalion, succumbed to injuries in Srinagar's Sri Maharaja Hari Singh late Sunday night, days after he had shot himself inside its camp at nearby Shergari.

Nath is the sixth security personnel who has committed suicide in J&K during past three weeks. A constable P.G. Naidu who was a resident of Andhra Pradesh ended his life in similar way in City's Mehjoor Nagar area earlier. Before him, Jagjit Singh, an Army soldier, committed suicide at a military camp in the central Ganderbal district and 22-year-old soldier, Rakshit Kumar, shot himself with a service rifle in the border district of Baramulla. Another Army jawan N.K. Mullia Raj of 25 Madras deployed in Naugam sector of the Line of Control committed suicide on October 11 and Amit Kumar, a constable at the 37th battalion of Sashastra Seema Bal ended his life by shooting himself with his service weapons in neighbouring Handwara area a day later.

The officials said that inhouse investigations in each case are underway and results as to why these security personnel took extreme steps would be known soon.

But these incidents already serve a grim reminder of the incidence of suicides and fratricide being on the rise among security forces on counterinsurgency or law and order assignments in J&K.

As per official statistics, hundreds of incidents of fratricide and suicide have taken places within the security forces in J&K in past over three decades. Stress is mainly believed to be the root cause of the incidence although the Army as well as paramilitary forces have initiated 'concrete steps' in the light of in-depth analysis of past incidents and identification of windows of prevention which, the concerned officials claim, have helped in addressing the issue greatly.

Psychologists say security forces personnel often commit suicides or target their colleagues under duress as they per-

● **PSYCHOLOGISTS ARE** of the opinion that security forces personnel often commit suicides or target their colleagues under duress.

form long-term duties in unfamiliar environments and unfavorable conditions and that the level of frustration in them increases when they are denied leave to go home.

Kashmir's leading psychiatrist Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan told this newspaper, "Violence and bloodshed have been going on in Kashmir for many years. As a result, the security forces are more prone to trauma than the general population. When they wear bulletproof jackets before taking part in an operation or are sent out of the barracks to perform duty somewhere, they immediately feel strongly that they are about to go through a traumatic situation".

He added, "When this situation takes the pressure on a soldier's mind to an unbearable level, he vents his anger either on himself or on one of his comrades. It is easy for him to do so because he is already armed".

However, officials say a number of measures have been taken to reduce the stress on soldiers and provide them with recreational opportunities, which has significantly reduced their tendency to think negatively.

CRPF Director General for North India Zulfiqar Hassan said, "We have launched a number of programmes to reduce stress in our boys and provide them with better opportunities for rest and recreation. They are now allowed to go home on vacation. We strongly hope that the situation with regard to suicide among our boys will get better in the future".

He also claimed that the rate of fratricide and suicide among the security forces particularly the CRPF deployed in J&K was the lowest among various states in India.

Explaining recent decisions to relax strict rules for security personnel to go home on holiday, CRPF spokesman Junaid Khan said, "There is no problem for our men in their going home on holiday. In the event of a death in the family or any other emergency, a jawan or officer also gets leave which is not due. And as far as obligatory holidays are concerned, they are given on time. There has been any problem in such cases ever".

Roadside barber tries his luck in bypolls

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO
BALASORE, OCT. 26

Amid the hustle and bustle of high-voltage campaigns by the ruling BJD, BJP and Congress in Balasore Sadar assembly constituency, a 80-year-old man — Benudhar Barik — is trying his luck for the seat, quite silently.

He has no motor vehicles, nor large band of followers and high decibel loudspeakers to make his campaign visible and impressive. His bicycle,

quite old and rusty, is his only constant companion.

Barik, a resident of Gudipada in Balasore town, ekes out his living by giving haircuts to poor people under a tree. The eldest among his six siblings, the octogenarian has been rendering his service for six decades now.

"I know I'm a mismatch to the BJD, BJP Congress candidates locking their horns in this battle. I don't have much money to print enough banners and posters. I'm pedaling my

bicycle from village to village, making personal appeals to the voters to cast their ballot in favour of me. I promise one thing to them — uncompromising fight against corruption and irregularities and ensuring socio-economic justice to all," said Benudhar.

Initially, Benudhar's campaign evoked lukewarm response from voters. But as the November 3 poll date approaches, he is seen to be attracting quite a good number of people. Several Odia film industry

and opera actors, including Rani Panda, have expressed their solidarity with him.

This is not the first time Benudhar is fighting an election. Earlier, he had unsuccessfully contested in the civic body elections around a decade back.

A father of four, Benudhar has never gone to school. In his affidavit, he has mentioned that he can read and write Odia. He does not own any agricultural land nor has any savings. He has borrowed ₹10,000 for his poll deposit.

"I'm quite confident that a large number of voters will vote for me on my symbol 'kettle' this time. They will choose a simple and committed man like me over the rich and powerful candidates of registered political parties.

Benudhar began his journey as a barber when he was only 18-year-old. Unable to earn more in his native Bishnupur village he moved to Balasore town in 1945. Since then he has become a pillar of support for the poor and downtrodden of Gudipada.

FRESH | ROW

Assam has estimated 64 lakh Bengali Muslims, total Muslim population in state is around 1 crore

Bengali-speaking Muslims' plea to be part of museum rejected

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, OCT. 26

In what has snowballed into a major controversy, Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has outrightly rejected a proposal of a Congress legislator to facilitate space in a heritage museum for displaying the culture and heritage of the people living in the *char-chaporis*, the riverine island of Assam.

The majority of the people living on these islands are from the "Miya" community — the name given

to Bengali-speaking Muslims in the state, who are often tagged as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

The controversy started with a letter of Congress MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed of Bagbar to Assam's Director of Museums suggesting to set up a museum to preserve the culture of the *char-chaporis* inside Srimanta Sankar Dev Kalakshetra in Guwahati. He wrote the letter referring to the recommendation of the department related standing committee of the Assam assembly.

"I would like to inform you that one museum reflecting the culture and heritage of the people living in *char-chaporis* of Assam, in the premises of Srimanta Sankar Dev Kalakshetra in Guwahati, was recommended by DRSC (department-related standing committee) on Education, 2020-21 in its 47th report on art and culture," he wrote requesting to expedite the process of implementing the recommendations.

Justifying his plea Mr Ahmed said, "As the people in char areas are most-

ly referred to as 'Miya', I have proposed to the government to establish a museum for them. The museum should be established at Sankardev Kalakshetra to highlight and reflect the culture and heritage of the Miya people."

Assam health minister while posting the letter on his social media posts said, "In my understanding there is no separate identity or culture in *char anchal* (riverine area) of Assam as most people had migrated from Bangladesh. Obviously in

Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra (a cultural institution that documents the culture of communities in the state) we cannot allow any distortion. Sorry, MLA saheb."

Assam has an estimated 64 lakh Bengali Muslims. The total Muslim population in the state is around 1 crore. The "char" referred to by both Mr Ahmed and Mr Sarma are riverine islands that refer to the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries. These islands and islets are found mostly in Western Assam, where Bengali-

speaking Muslims are in majority in terms of population.

However, the minister had to face a volley of attacks as Congress leaders pointed out that the proposed museum was recommended by the 15-member committee of legislators in which party wise strength was — BJP-6, AGP-2, BPF-2, Congress-3 and AIUDF-2.

Referring to the party wise position of the assembly committee dominated by BJP and AGP, Adv. Nilay Dutta in a social media post tagged

Mr Sarma and many civil society leaders including some MPs and dared them to start a public debate on this issue.

Following Mr Sarma's outright rejection of the *Miya* museum proposal, Congress MP Abdul Khaleque also responded to Mr Sarma's post and said, "Sorry sir (Himanta Biswa Sarma)... Ancestors of these people migrated from erstwhile Bengal, which was an integral part of undivided India. Kindly don't distort history more just (for the) sake of getting power."

THE ASIAN AGE

27 OCTOBER 2020

Govt needs its critics, can't trample rights

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on the list of the 100 most influential people drawn by *Time* magazine last month but the honour came with a strong indictment of the leader of the world's largest democracy. Underlining the importance of the rights of those who did not vote for the winner in a democracy, it said Mr Modi has governed by othering the dissenters or even those who did not subscribe to his ideas.

The pattern of events that preceded Mr Modi's selection has not changed since; in fact, it continues in a virulent form. It is very plain: use the teeth of the law to incarcerate people who voice their protest against the government or those who support the government's opponents. Fr Stan Swamy, the 83-year old Jesuit priest working among the tribals in Jharkhand, has not been the last. The Parkinson's disease patient has been held in connection with the Elgar Parishad case of 2018. The government has jailed a number of poets, activists, intellectuals and academics on the premise that they were all in league with the people who were behind the violence in Bhima Koregaon, a Maharashtra village. A journalist who works for a Malayalam portal has been picked up on his way to Hathras in Uttar Pradesh where a dalit teenager was gangraped and killed. Many university students across the country, especially those in the national capital, who protested against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 face the same fate. In almost all these cases, the victims have been slapped with sections in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, which has strict and impossible conditions for bail.

It's sad that a leader who got an unequivocal mandate from the people on the promise of a better tomorrow is being rated as being partisan and that his fellow citizens have to fear for their liberties for speaking up against the powers-that-be

With the courts opting to be silent spectators, save the occasional intercession, all those who have been picked up by the National Investigation Agency have been languishing in jails for varying periods. The Supreme Court directive to Dr Sudha Bharadwaj, a trade unionist, that she was entitled to proper bail but needed to approach a lower court perplexed even people who served in the judicial service. Poet Varavara Rao's family has now moved the apex court seeking humane treatment of the octogenarian suffering from a series of diseases including early symptoms of dementia during the time of the pandemic.

The people who man the NDA dispensation need no lecture on democratic rights, including the right to dissent, as most of them, including Mr Modi and law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, were leaders of the anti-Emergency agitation in the 1970s seeking restoration of human and democratic rights and the right to dissent. They also know how totalitarian regimes that smother human rights have ended up in history but the NDA government has shown no signs that it has a plan to learn from history. It's sad that a leader who got an unequivocal mandate from the people on the promise of a better tomorrow for all his people is being rated as being partisan and that his fellow citizens have to fear for their liberties for speaking up against the powers-that-be. The government must rethink its policy on dealing with legitimate voices of dissent and adopt one that suits the spirit of democracy.

Power shift in Parivar

The traditional Vijayadashami address of the RSS *sarsanghchalak* or organisational head, delivered by Mohan Bhagwat on Monday, in which he backed even the recently passed controversial Central laws on farmers' remuneration and markets for their produce, touchy subjects on which BJP's oldest North India ally Akali Dal quit the Narendra Modi government, besides endorsing the Modi government's policy on foreign investment while all along RSS has stood for *swadeshi* that was indistinguishable from autarky, can cause amusement in RSS and BJP circles or possibly even some consternation among the old school.

This is because Mr Bhagwat's speech is suggestive of the fact that the balance of power between the BJP and the RSS would appear to have tilted heavily in favour of the former, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi being not only head of government but also the de facto Pied Piper of the BJP.

The annual Vijayadashami speech was once a much-anticipated event in the RSS calendar. This was when the chief gave the tactical line to the rank and file. The BJP and its earlier incarnation heard it with attention and shaped its own positions to be in line with the mother-body. However, the positions Mr Bhagwat has taken on a range of issues makes his peroration a repeat of official policy, in effect something akin to what the Press Information Bureau does.

It is unusual for the RSS's top leader to be critical of the BJP's political opponents since Hindutva's mother outfit has, for the sake of form, held that it is non-partisan and concerns itself with social issues and those relating to the propagation of ancient 'Hindu' culture and there is no discrimination on party lines. But, abandoning caution, Mr Bhagwat reportedly noted that the Opposition parties and the "tukde-tukde gang" were "trying to weaken Indian society by creating social strife".

THE ASIAN AGE

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Editor in Chief

Printer & Publisher: K. SUDHAKAR

THE ASIAN AGE office is located at:
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for
Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.
London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.

RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Aakar Patel

Draw lessons from US, make voting in India better & safer

India's electoral system, run by the Election Commission of India, is one of the world's wonders. It was not too long ago (and in fact many of us can remember those days) when Bihar's elections were associated with violence and booth-capturing. A series of innovations from the Election Commission under T.N. Seshan and his successor M.S. Gill resulted in violence reducing considerably. And also the introducing of machines ensured that voting happened smoothly and counting quickly.

Many things have changed in the democratic space in India but it is still the case that almost all parties believe or assume that the autonomous Election Commission run by 300 officials in New Delhi is independent of the government. The EC also has an international reputation because of its accomplishments, and officials from Russia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, South Africa, Bangladesh, Thailand, Nigeria, Namibia, Bhutan,

Australia, Afghanistan and even the United States have visited it to see how they can improve their own systems better.

Voting systems in older democracies come from tradition and are difficult to change both from the point of view of the State and the voting citizen. It is for this reason that the broad and quick reforms and their wide acceptance in India is all the more remarkable.

Having accepted all this, it must be asked if we cannot further reform the process and also learn from practices that other nations follow that might help us. Bihar is going to the polls in three phases between October 28 and November 7. This splitting of voting will help the state machinery manage its resources such as security personnel better and reduce the load on the EC.

However, the phase-wise voting will not be of any use in reducing the risks of Covid-19 transmission. The number of people queuing up to vote in any given polling station will remain the same.

Is there a way that this can be addressed? We could look at what is happening in the United States, which is going to the polls on November 3 to elect the President, one third of the Senate and the entire House of Representatives. As of October 24, about 5.5 crore Americans had already voted in that election. This was a figure that was 40 per cent of the total votes that had been polled for the 2016 presidential election. This means that these 40 per cent voters would not have to show up in the queue on November 3, greatly reducing the risk of the coronavirus' spread overall.

In the days that lead up to the election, it is possible that another 30 per cent or more people will also have voted in advance, or have mailed in their ballots, and that will reduce the stress and risk at the polling booth for officials and for voters. Voting rules in the US are a state and not federal subject and so each of the 50 US states has its own rules. They allow for voting by mail

(voters have to request for a mail-in ballot which is sent to them, and which they can then post back) or voting in person at the designated voting booth, which opens three weeks before the official voting day.

The counting of votes does not begin till the last day, as it would in other countries. This ensures that there is no advantage or perception of one side appearing to be so far ahead in early voting as to discourage the other side's voters from showing up. Though this is not a new system and has been around for many years, it is without doubt that it is going to help American voters and officials reduce the Covid-19 transmission risks in a way that Bihar will not be able to.

A record number of people are expected to vote in this year's US election and even with that it is indisputable that the mail-in ballots and the in-person advance voting system gives America a great advantage. Indeed, the safety of the voting process is also one reason why the numbers of those showing

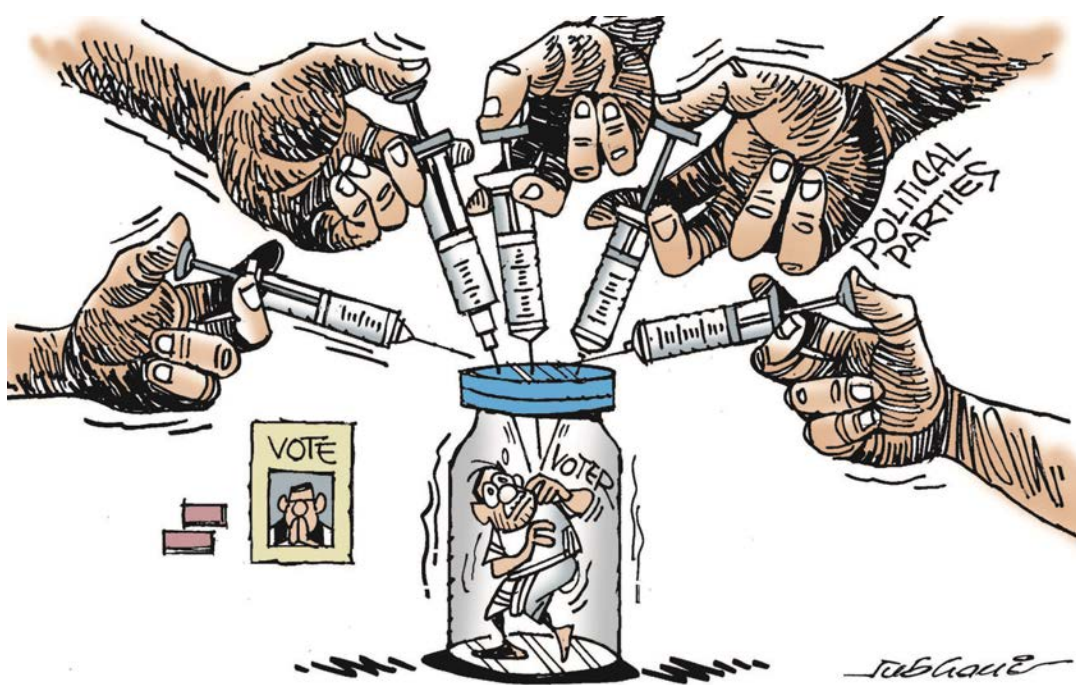
up to vote is so high.

The hope is that the Bihar election also passes safely, but we are entering into a fairly long election season when large states like West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh are going to vote. India needs to examine some way in which, assuming that there is either no vaccine or a delay in administering it to everyone, voting can be made safer. This will have to be done with the consent of all parties, but it needs to be considered. It is one of the things that America does better and can be examined.

Of course it is the case that our system is superior to most in some ways. In a part of the world where there was endemic electoral violence and controversy, the most important element — counting — has been comprehensively solved. But the times we are in require even this great and proven system to be more flexible in the interest of public safety.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

Subhani



Talk ties mindfully, do not squander options



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

On October 27, the foreign and defence ministers of India will sit down with their US counterparts for what is called a 2+2 dialogue. The dialogue would take place exactly one week before the US Presidential elections scheduled for 3rd of November 2020. Former Vice-President Joe Biden has a 10-point lead over the incumbent President Donald Trump in the national polls. However, given the manner in which the US electoral college system is structured, it does not guarantee a victory on election night. Hilary Clinton and much of the world's liberals realised it much to their peril despite Mrs Clinton leading in the polls by a wide margin in 2016.

The 2+2 dialogue is taking place when the Sino-Indian border situation remains tense and peace is at best fragile. On the agenda is the signing of the last of the foundational agreements — BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement). It will enable the sharing of advanced geo-spatial intelligence between the US and India and enable better targeting of armed drones and missiles.

Earlier in August 2016, The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was signed between the two nations that gave basing facilities to each other's militaries, especially both the navies. Later in September of 2018 India and the US signed The Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) that allows for encrypted communications between the defence establishments of the two nations — a la dedicated WhatsApp or Telegram.

This troika of foundational agreements marks the conclusion of a process that commenced three decades back when the Agreed Minute on Defence Relationship was signed in 1995. It was followed by

extended continent hopping dialogue between Late Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbot post the nuclear tests of 1998. That conversation set the tone for the reset of the Indo-US relationship. It was followed by the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) in 2003, New Framework for the Indo-US Defence Relationship in 2005 and the Indo-US civil nuclear deal in 2008, Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) in 2012, the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region in 2015 and the US-India Knowledge Partnership in Defense Studies to flag but a few key milestones of this momentous journey.

Out of all these agreements, the 2005 New Framework for Defence Cooperation was seminal. Signed on the 28th of June 2005 between the US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and the Indian defence minister Late Pranab Mukherjee it crossed the rubicon of distrust and ushered in a new era in defence cooperation. Its objectives were as follows — maintaining security and stability; defeating terrorism and violent religious extremism; preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and associated materials, data, and technologies; and protecting the free flow of commerce via land, air and sea lanes. The agreement envisaged that the Defense Policy Group shall continue to serve as the primary mechanism to guide the US-India strategic defence relationship.

The reason why this agreement is important — it surmounted a trust deficit that had bedeviled the Indo-US strategic paradigm despite the US helping India in the Sino-India border war of 1962. At that critical point in time India reached out to the US when the erstwhile Soviet Union winked, nudged, looked the other way and essentially greenlighted the Chinese aggression in 1962 so that the Chinese would

not break ranks with the broader Communist bloc over the Cuban missile crisis.

However the roots of the Indo-US mistrust pre-date this brief period of cooperation if not bonhomie in 1962. It had everything to do with Pakistan. There was a sizeable body of opinion in India that believed that the creation of Pakistan had less to do with the Chowdhary Rehmat Ali, Iqbal and Jinnah combine and more to do with the Anglo-American alliance looking for a reliable buffer in West and Central Asia against Soviet expansionism post World War-2. This theory gained credence when Pakistan in the May of 1954 signed the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with the United States. Later in that year it became a member of the South-East Asian Treaty organisation SEATO along with United States, Britain, France, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.

On 24th February 1955, it joined the Baghdad Pact-Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), another mutual defence organisation along with Britain, Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The United States was the linchpin of this arrangement. Early in 1959, Pakistan signed (as did Turkey and Iran) a bilateral Agreement of Cooperation with the United States, which was designed further reinforce CENTO. In December 1971 at the height of the war to liberate Bangladesh the US attempted to intervene in Pakistan's favor when the US Navy's Task Force-74 of the Seventh Fleet steamed into the Bay of Bengal in conjunction with a British naval group led by the aircraft carrier, *HMS Eagle* with commando carrier

HMS Albion, several destroyers that headed into India's territorial waters from west.

India requested Moscow for help under the August 1971 treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. Responding to India's request with alacrity Moscow on December 13, 1971, dispatched a nuclear-armed flotilla, the 10th Operative Battle Group (Pacific Fleet) from Vladivostok, under the Command of Admiral Vladimir Kruglyakov. Russia deployed two task groups; in total two cruisers, two destroyers, six submarines, and support vessels. A group of IL-38 Anti Submarine Warfare aircraft from Aden air base in Yemen provided support. India's relationship with two super powers had traversed the whole nine yards in the nine years between 1962 and 1971.

With the People's Liberation Army of China menacing India's northern borders it is quite natural for India to look for military allies. The US by far remains the most powerful outside power balancer even today in every part of the world. The quad is also anchored by the US for all intents and purposes. However, defence relationships define a country's foreign and strategic policies in the global arena. It would have implications qua Russia and even the other mid-sized powers around the world. Moreover, if Joe Biden were to become the US President, the US may look for a reset of its relationship qua China. The Democrats have a far different worldview from the current incumbent of the White House. India should evaluate its options with open eyes and not without a full debate in Parliament. For the only logical step after this would be to become a non-Nato ally of the US, just as Pakistan and 16 other countries are. Incidentally, despite leading the US up the garden path post 9/11, the Pentagon and the Pakistani deep state remain very close.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

LETTERS

WASTED FUNDS

The recent laying of the foundation stone for a new sports university at Patiala does not seem to be a viable decision. Patiala is known as a royal city and it has the world-class National Institute of Sports as well as Punjabi University, thereby providing enough opportunity to the youth of nearby areas to practise different sporting activities. Opening a new sports university here is sheer wastage of money and this capital could have been used for setting up an industry, thereby generating employment.

Navneet Sethi
Dhuri, Punjab

LOSING BATTLE

JUST THREE DAYS ahead of the first phase of Bihar assembly elections, BJP put up life-size posters with only Narendra Modi's image across the state, manifestly indicating that the party has decided to seek votes only in his name. Curiously, the dropping of Nitish's photo has also happened ahead of Modi's second leg of electioneering on October 28. This clearly shows that the BJP is hoping to have its own chief minister in Bihar should it win the election. But it is not going to be easy because this betrays the party's losing touch with reality.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

SECOND WAVE

IS A SECOND WAVE coming? The festival season has just passed its first leg. In the last four days, cases of Covid-19 in Delhi have risen to over 4,000 daily. The Delhi government has assured that it has enough beds but had had to face crisis after crisis in the past months. West Bengal too is reporting a rising graph in the meantime. Experts have predicted that these may even reach 14,000 in winter due to the lowering of temperatures. There is an urgent need to step up efforts all over again.

D.B. Madan
New Delhi

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Syed Abdul Monim (Oct. 22). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

IN BRIEF

Airstrike kills 50 fighters in Syria

Beirut: A Syrian opposition spokesman and a war monitor say an airstrike on a training camp in the last rebel enclave in northwestern Syria has killed over 50 fighters.

Youssef Hammoud, a spokesman for the Turkey-backed Syrian opposition groups, said the airstrike on Monday is believed to have been carried out by Russia. Hammoud said it targeted a training camp in Idlib province run by Failaq al-Sham, one of the largest rebel groups in the Turkey-backed opposition. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the war in Syria, said the strike killed 56 fighters and wounded nearly 50. Rescue missions are still underway, the Observatory said.

Bodies of migrants found in shipment

Asuncion (Paraguay): Paraguayan officials say workers have discovered the remains of seven people — apparently would-be migrants — in a shipment of fertiliser from Serbia.

Three of the men were Moroccan and one was from Egypt, the chief investigator, Marcelo Saldivar said. The other three had not yet been identified. Investigators said the shipment left Serbia along rivers on July 22 and the migrants apparently had hoped to get off at some point along the trip, which wound up in the South American nation.

UN: 11 drown in shipwreck in Libya

Cairo: At least 11 migrants trying to reach Europe, including a pregnant woman, drowned on Sunday when their boat capsized off the coast of Libya, the UN migration agency said, making it the third migrant shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea in a week. Safa Msehi, spokeswoman for the International Organisation for Migration, said fishermen and the Libyan Coast Guard rescued at least 10 other migrants and returned them to shore. On Tuesday, at least 15 migrants drowned after their boat capsized off Libya. The IOM said five people also died when their boat capsized Thursday off the coast of Lampedusa, Italy.

POPE DECLARES FIRST PERSON OF COLOUR CARDINAL

Vatican City, Oct. 26: Pope Francis on Sunday named 13 new cardinals, including Washington D.C. Archbishop Wilton Gregory, who would become the first person of colour US prelate to earn the coveted red hat.

In a surprise announcement from his studio window to faithful standing below in St. Peter's Square, Francis said the churchmen would be elevated to a cardinal's rank in a ceremony on Nov. 28.

Francis asked for prayers so the new cardinals "may help me in my ministry as bishop of Rome for the good of all God's faithful holy people."

The selection of Gregory won praise from LGBTQ advocates in the United States, days after Pope Francis grabbed headlines for voicing support for civil unions for gay couples.

Other new cardinals include an Italian who is the long-time papal preacher at the Vatican, the Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa, who is a Franciscan friar; the Kigali, Rwanda, Archbishop Antoine Kamukama; the Capiz, Philippines, Archbishop Jose Feurtado Advincula; and the Santiago, Chile, Archbishop Celestino Aros Braco.

In 2010, while preaching at a Good Friday service attended by the then-pontiff Benedict XVI, Cantalamessa upset both Jewish and sex abuse survivors' group when he likened allegations that the pope had covered up sex abuse cases against clerics to the "more shameful aspects of anti-Semitism." The Vatican quickly distanced Benedict from Cantalamessa's remarks. Another Franciscan who was tapped is Friar Mauro Gambetti, in charge of the Sacred Convent in Assisi. The pope, when elected in 2013, chose St. Francis of Assisi as his namesake saint.

Earlier this month, the pontiff journeyed to that hill town in Umbria to sign an encyclical, or important church teaching document, about brotherhood.

Gambetti was so surprised, at first he thought the pope was joking when he heard he was named, convent spokesperson the Rev Enzo Fortunato said.

Over 58.7 mn votes cast, but wait for results could be long

In 2016 polls, around 58.3 million pre-election ballot were declared

Trump's assault on Biden intensifies in Pennsylvania

Harrisburg (US), Oct. 26: In a late gambit to win the battleground state of Pennsylvania, President Donald Trump and his GOP allies have intensified attacks on Joe Biden over fracking, hoping to drive a wedge between the former vice president and the white, working-class voters tied to the state's booming natural gas industry.

That assault is playing out in a barrage of TV ads and conservative and right-wing websites, and is repeated at every Trump rally in the state.

It relies on a series of confusing statements from the former vice president — including remarks on the oil industry from last week's debate — to claim he intends to "ban" or end



Donald Trump

national gas extraction, although that is not the Democrat's official position.

Trump's fracking play comes as polls show the president is struggling to overtake Biden in Pennsylvania and in need of a boost from the rural and exurban white voters

who helped him to a narrow victory in Pennsylvania in 2016.

It also shoots to snap the tightrope that Biden is walking between the Democratic Party's left wing, which is hostile to fossil fuels, and its bedrock blue-collar union base that is building an expanding network of gas pipelines, power plants and processing facilities in Pennsylvania.

Biden's climate change plan aims to reach net-zero greenhouse gases emissions by 2050, and does not involve banning fracking, the process formally named hydraulic fracturing that along with horizontal drilling made the United States an oil and gas superpower over the past decade. — AP

DON LEAVES INTERVIEW, CLIP GOES VIRAL

Footage of the US president abruptly walking out of a CBS 60 Minutes interview has been released by the network, in a row that has been rumbling since the interview was taped on Tuesday.

Donald Trump had already posted clips on his own social media, in an effort to show he had been mistreated by the interviewer, Lesley Stahl. He had called the segment "fake" and "biased" in advance, according to The Guardian.

Trump had told Stahl: "You brought up a lot of subjects that were inappropriately brought up." She replied: "Well, I said, I'm going to ask you tough questions." After a question about whether his use of social media and name-calling was "turning people off", Trump brought the recording to an end. — Agencies

FBI to probe Boston ballot box that was set afire

Boston, Oct. 26: A fire was set Sunday in a Boston ballot drop box holding more than 120 ballots in what appears to have been a "deliberate attack," Massachusetts election officials said.

The state has asked the FBI to investigate the fire that was set around 4 am in a ballot drop box outside the Boston Public Library downtown, Massachusetts

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin's office said.

In a joint statement, Galvin and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh called it a "disgrace to democracy, a disrespect to the voters fulfilling their civic duty, and a crime."

"Our first and foremost priority is maintaining the integrity of our elections process and ensuring

transparency and trust with our voters, and any effort to undermine or tamper with that process must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," they said in the emailed statement.

There were 122 ballots inside the box when it was emptied Sunday morning, and 87 of them were still legible and able to be processed, Galvin's office said. — AP

CHINA IMPOSES SANCTIONS ON TOP U.S. DEFENCE FIRMS

Beijing, Oct. 26: China said on Monday it will impose sanctions on top US defence firms, including Boeing and Lockheed Martin, for supplying weapons to Taiwan, amid deepening tensions between Beijing and Washington over increasing American arms sales to Taipei.

China's retaliation followed after the US State Department approved the sale of 135 Standoff Land Attack Missile Expanded Response (SLAM-ER) missiles and related equipment estimated to be worth over USD one billion. The US, a major arms supplier to Taiwan, also approved 11 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems M142 Launchers and related equipment for an estimated USD 436.1 million and six MS-110 Recce Pods and related equipment for an estimated USD 367.2 million.

"China has pointed on multiple occasions that the US arms sales to Taiwan would severely undermine One-China policy besides sovereignty and security interests. We strongly oppose it and condemn it," Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here on Monday.

It is not yet clear what impact this will have on these firms as there is not much defence cooperation between the US and China. — PTI

Students take to the streets in Belarus



Riot police officers detain students who took part in a nationwide strike pressing for the resignation of the country's authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko, in Minsk on Monday.

— AFP

WHO calls for solidarity on vaccine

Berlin, Oct. 25: The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Sunday called for global solidarity in the rollout of any future coronavirus vaccine, as the number of cases soared across the world.

In a video address at the opening of the three-day World Health Summit in Berlin, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the only way to recover from the

pandemic was together and by making sure poorer countries had fair access to a vaccine.

"It is natural that countries want to protect their own citizens first but if and when we have an effective vaccine, we must also use it effectively. And the best way to do that is to vaccinate some people in all countries rather than all people in some countries,"

he said.

"Let me be clear: vaccine nationalism will prolong the pandemic, not shorten it." Scientists around the world are racing to develop a vaccine against Covid-19, which has killed over 1.1 million people.

Several dozen vaccine candidates are currently being tested in clinical trials, ten of which are in the most advanced "phase 3"

stage involving tens of thousands of volunteers.

The European Union, the United States, Britain, Japan and a slew of other nations have already placed large orders with the companies involved in developing the most promising vaccines.

But concerns are growing that countries with smaller wallets could be left at the back of the queue. — AFP

Imran accuses Macron of 'attacking Islam'

Islamabad, Oct. 26: Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan accused French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday of "attacking Islam", after the European leader criticised Islamists and defended the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed.

Khan's comments follow statements Macron made last week after a French teacher was beheaded near Paris after he had shown cartoons of the Prophet during a class he was leading on free speech.

Macron said the teacher "was killed because Islamists want our future." In a series of tweets, Khan said the remark would sow division.

"This is a time when Pres Macron could have put healing touch & denied space to extremists rather than creating further polarisation & marginalisation that inevitably leads to radicalisation," Khan wrote.

"It is unfortunate that he has chosen to encourage Islamophobia by attacking Islam rather than the terrorists who carry out violence, be it Muslims, White Supremacists or Nazi ideologists," Macron already sparked controversy earlier this month when he said "Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world".

The French teacher became the target of an online hate campaign over his choice of lesson material — the same images that sparked a bloody assault by Islamist gunmen on the offices of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, the original publisher, in January 2015.

Caricatures of Mohammed are forbidden by Islam. Blasphemy is an explosive issue in ultra-conservative Pakistan, where anyone deemed to have insulted Islam or Islamic figures can face the death penalty.

"By attacking Islam, clearly without having any understanding of it, President Macron has attacked & hurt the sentiments of millions of Mus-

ERDOGAN DOUBLES BACKLASH AGAINST FRENCH PREZ

Istanbul, Oct. 26: The backlash against President Emmanuel Macron's comments on Islam intensified on Sunday, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan again urging him to have "mental checks" and protests in Muslim-majority nations.

The French foreign ministry meanwhile called on authorities in affected countries to ensure the security of French citizens.

It described some social media calls for protests as "heinous", lamenting manipulations "by a radical minority" and dubbing nascent boycotts of French goods "groundless".

Speaking after teacher Samuel Paty was beheaded for showing caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed to pupils in a lesson on free speech earlier this month, Macron vowed France would "not give up cartoons" and said Paty "was killed because Islamists want our future".

But Erdogan on Saturday urged Macron to have "mental checks" for treating "millions of members from different faith groups this way" — comments which prompted Paris to recall its envoy to Ankara.

The Turkish leader doubled down on Sunday, again contending that Macron "really needs to have checks" and this time also accusing him of being "obsessed with Erdogan day and night". — AFP

Sharif attacks Pak Army, ISI chief

Karachi, Oct. 26: Pakistan's deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif has blamed Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and ISI chief Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed for the current political situation in the country, as the Opposition parties held their third massive joint rally against Prime Minister Imran Khan-led government.

The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), a coalition of 11 Opposition parties, was formed to oust Khan from power on September 20. The alliance held two massive back-to-back gatherings in Gujranwala and Karachi this month. The third rally was held in Quetta, capital of the restive Baluchistan province, on Sunday.

Addressing the gathering via video link from London, the three-time prime minister and chief of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) again blamed Army chief Bajwa and ISI Director General Hameed for Pakistan's current situation.

"Gen. Bajwa, you will



Nawaz Sharif

have to answer for record rigging in the 2018 elections, for horse-trading in Parliament, for making Imran Niazi prime minister against people's wishes and [by] tearing apart the Constitution and laws, for pushing people towards poverty and hunger." 70-year-old Sharif said.

Sharif, who is entangled in a number of corruption cases, has been in London since November last year after the Lahore High Court granted him permission to go abroad for four weeks for treating the heart disease and an immune system disorder. — PTI

WHITHER | JUSTICE Sentenced to death in 1986, freed African American wants Trump to be defeated at polls

Wrongly jailed for 30 yrs, POC says justice needs voting

Montgomery, Oct. 26: Anthony Ray Hinton, an innocent man, spent 30 years on death row in Alabama because, he says, he was "person of colour and poor." His name finally cleared, he now campaigns for justice — which he says can only be achieved by beating Donald Trump at the ballot box.

The 64-year-old African-American, his hair and beard graying, has mixed

memories of the fateful day of April 3, 2015.

After three decades behind bars — and under constant threat of execution — he regained his freedom on that day to start the second phase of his life.

"It was like I was walking on clouds" as he fell into the arms of welcoming relatives, he recalled.

But his sense of joy was tempered. "It was good

that I was finally free. It was bad that my mother was no longer here on this Earth to see her baby boy walk out of prison."

That day — which he had dreamed of so often before waking up, innocent, in a claustrophobic "five by seven" foot cell — finally ended his judicial nightmare.

Arrested in July 1985, Hinton was sentenced to death the following year, at

the age of 29, for allegedly murdering two employees of fast-food restaurants, killed in separate armed hold-ups in Birmingham, the largest city in the southern state of Alabama.

His court-appointed lawyer, Hinton later told talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, had rejected his protestations of innocence, telling him "All of y'all is always doing some-

thing, and then saying you didn't do it." There was no fingerprint evidence against Hinton and the testimony of a ballistics expert hired by his attorney was torn apart when it emerged the man was half-blind. Nor did an alibi from Hinton's employer help.

He was convicted largely because bullets recovered at the scene appeared to come from a gun owned by

Hinton's mother, with whom he lived.

"The state of Alabama, in one word, kidnapped me," he said firmly, speaking in his deep, sonorous voice. "Because we have a system that, if you are born person of colour and poor in America, the system can pretty much do with you as it pleases."

It was not until 1999, when lawyer Bryan Stevenson — founder of the Eq-

ual Justice Initiative (EJI) — took up Hinton's case that the truth began to emerge. Very, very slowly.

Hinton was to spend another 16 years on death row, saved only by a new ballistics test, an intervention by the US Supreme Court and a second trial.

For years in prison he obsessed over the thought of gaining revenge for his wrongful conviction. — AFP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,145.50	-1.33
Nifty 50	11,767.75	-1.36
S&P 500*	3,384.81	-2.33
Dollar (₹)	73.85	-0.32
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.14	0.31
Euro (₹)	87.28	-0.14
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,965▲126	0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.49	-1.28
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.834	-0.010
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.809	-0.032

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Gland Pharma gets Sebi nod to float IPO

Gland Pharma has received capital markets regulator Sebi's go-ahead to launch an initial public offer that includes fresh issue of shares worth up to Rs 1,250 crore. Apart from the fresh issue, there is an offer for sale (OFS) of a little over 3.4 crore shares as part of the initial public offering. The Hyderabad-based company, backed by China's Fosun Pharma, develops, manufactures and markets complex injectables.

Oil drops on rising virus cases, more Libyan output



Oil prices fell on Monday, extending last week's losses, as increasing coronavirus cases in the United States and Europe raised worries about energy demand, while Libya's fast growing production also weighed on prices. Brent was down 80 cents, or 1.9%, at \$40.97 by 1121 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) dropped 82 cents, or 2.1%, to \$39.03. Both contracts fell almost 2.5% last week.

Sebi bans Birla Pacific Medspa, Yash for 2 years

Sebi has barred Birla Pacific Medspa Ltd, Yashovardhan Birla and eight others from the securities market for two years for mis-utilisation of the IPO proceeds. Birla Pacific Medspa Ltd (BPML), which came out with offer documents in March 2011, had floated its over Rs 65-core initial public offering (IPO) in June 2011. The regulator found that the company made mis-statements in the prospectus in respect of the objects of the IPO.

Muthoot Finance plans to raise ₹2,000 cr bonds

Muthoot is offering its 23rd series of Public Issue of Secured Redeemable Non-Convertible Debentures of face value of ₹1,000 each. The Issue is with a base issue size of ₹100 crore with an option to retain oversubscription up to ₹1,900 crore aggregating up to tranche limit of ₹2,000 crore. The issue opens on October 27 and closes on November 20 with an option to close on such earlier date or extended date as may be decided by the Board of Directors or NCD committee.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: T.Venkatram Reddy, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

Future, Reliance to move ahead with deal despite interim order

SIAC's interim order asks Future Group to hold its deal with Reliance

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 26

Future Group and Reliance Industries have claimed that they will go ahead with the proposed deal unhindered by the interim order from the Singapore arbitration panel. While Future hinted at approaching Indian arbitration forum, both Future and Amazon seem to have agreed upon the Singapore panel in its 2019 agreement.

On Monday, Future group acknowledged that Future Retail has received an interim order from the Singapore International Arbitration Centre under shareholders' agreement between Amazon, Future

STOCK MARKET SINKS ON INTERNATIONAL WORRIES

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 26

The Sensex fell over 700 points intra-day on weak global cues as Covid-19 second wave in US and Europe is leading to high rise in fresh cases and fresh US fiscal stimulus hopes are fading.

Reliance Industries' 3.97 per cent fall also weighed on the market as Reliance-Future Group deal was put on hold by Singapore based single bench arbitration panel after Amazon questioned the deal.

Sensex finally settled 540

Coupons and the promoter group.

Future Group said that Future Retail was not a party to the agreement under which Amazon has invoked arbitration proceedings. Future Retail would take appropriate steps to ensure that the proposed transaction will proceed unhindered with

points or 1.33 per cent lower at 40,145. Nifty-50 closed 162.60 points or 1.36 per cent down at 11,767.75. Only eight of the Sensex 30 pack managed to close in the green while in the Nifty-50 only 11 advanced and 39 declined. The top losers in the Nifty-50 pack were Hero MotoCorp (-6.2 per cent), Bajaj Auto (-6.01), Hindalco (-5.29), Mahindra & Mahindra (-4.68) and JSW Steel (-4.44). Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice president-Equity Technical Research, Kotak Securities said, "After the massive

struggle for the last five days to sustain and close above 11850 levels, finally, the Nifty gave up. The Nifty closed below the level of 11800 following hefty selling in index giants namely Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Infosys Technology."

The broader market fell sharply too with the Mid-cap index down by 1.77 per cent and Small-cap index down by 0.88 per cent. BSE Metal (-3.37 per cent) & Auto indices (-3.28 per cent) fell the most among the sectoral indices.

Meanwhile, Reliance also stated that it intends to purchase Future Retail's assets "without any delay". Shares of both entities fell on Monday. The SIAC had passed an interim order on Sunday asking Future Group to hold its deal with Reliance Group and wait for the

final judgement on the plea filed by Amazon. Amazon had filed an arbitration petition with SIAC claiming that Future breached the contract which was entered while taking an indirect stake in their retail business by buying shares in Future Coupons last year.

"Future Retail has been

legally advised that actions taken by the company or its board, which are in full compliance of the relevant agreements and eminently in the interest of all stakeholders cannot be held back in arbitration proceedings initiated under an agreement to which Future Retail is not a party," it said.

As part of the deal agreement entered while buying 49 per cent stake in Future Coupons, Amazon would have a call option to acquire all or part of the promoters' shareholding in Future Retail of 47.02 per cent between the third and tenth year of the transaction and this would be subject to law. In future, Amazon could own 47.02 per cent in Future Retail apart from 3.6 per cent through Future Coupons.

"The agreement had also mentioned that the approval of Amazon, Premji Invest and Blackstone has to be taken for any further development regarding the deal," said a source.

Gold slips on strong dollar, US stimulus doubts

New York, Oct. 26: Gold fell below the key psychological level of \$1,900 on Monday to its lowest in more than a week, pressured by a firmer dollar and stalled progress in talks for a new U.S. coronavirus aid package. U.S. gold futures fell 0.3% to \$1,900.50. "There seems to be a

lack of impetus to find extra buyers (for gold)... A lot of it is because we're trading in the looming shadow of the U.S. elections and stimulus speculation," said IG Markets analyst Kyle Rodda. The dollar rose 0.3% against a basket of other currencies.

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday said the Trump administration was reviewing the latest plan for more COVID-19 relief and that she expected a response on Monday.

But with the presidential elections fast approaching, analysts said a victory for

Democrat rival Joe Biden could help gold rally on a potential large stimulus package, especially amid COVID-19 cases surging in the United States.

France registered a record increase in infections over the weekend and Spain announced a state of emergency as cases surged through

Europe. Widely viewed as a hedge against inflation and currency debase-ment, bullion has gained 25.1% this year as central banks and governments unveiled unprecedented stimulus to cushion the economic fallout from the pandemic. —Reuters

China to impose sanctions on US firms over Taiwan arms sales

BEIJING, Oct. 26: The People's Republic of China will impose sanctions on Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defense, Raytheon and other United States companies it says are involved in Washington's arms sales to Taiwan (Republic of China), a foreign ministry spokesman said on Monday.

Zhao Lijian told journalists that China was acting to protect its national interest, but did not spell out what form the sanctions would take.

The United States State Department has approved the potential sale of three weapons systems to Taiwan, including sensors, missiles and artillery that could have a total value of \$1.8 billion, the Pentagon said last week.

Beijing considers Taiwan, also known as Republic of China, a wayward province it has vowed to bring under control, by force if necessary. "To safeguard our national interests, China decided to take necessary measures and levy sanctions on United States companies such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defence, and Raytheon, and those individuals and companies who behaved badly in the process of the arms sales," Zhao said.

China has imposed sanc-

tions on Lockheed Martin and other U.S. companies in the past for selling weapons to Taiwan, though it is unclear what form the penalties have taken.

The United States, like most countries, has no official diplomatic ties with Taiwan, but Washington is bound by law to provide the island with the means to defend itself.

The Donald Trump-led administration has ramped up support for Taiwan through arms sales and visits by senior U.S. officials, adding to tensions in relations between Beijing and Washington, already strained by disagreements over the South China Sea, Hong Kong, human rights and trade.

A spokesman for Boeing said in an emailed statement that the company's partnership with China's aviation community had long-term benefits and that Boeing remained committed to it.

Lockheed Martin said in an emailed statement that all of its international military sales are strictly regulated by the U.S. government, and that its presence in China is limited.

Raytheon did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment.

—Reuters

Telcos flag E & V bands, other issues with Trai

New Delhi, Oct. 26: Telcos, under the aegis of COAI, have jointly pitched for spectrum allocation in E and V bands only through an auction and urged the regulator to expedite the process of fixing floor tariffs for data at a recent meeting with the new Trai chief, industry sources have said.

Other issues highlighted by the top industry representatives at the meeting include a reduction in levies and review of the regulatory stance on over-the-top (OTT) communication services.

These issues were flagged by the industry at a meeting with the new Trai Chairman last week, sources told PTI.

It is pertinent to mention that P D Vaghela took over as the new Chairman



of Trai from October 1.

The sources said the industry maintained that spectrum in highly commercial and valuable E and V bands should not be delicensed.

All licensed private access service providers are prepared to bid and buy spectrum in these bands through an open and transparent bidding

process, generating revenues for the government, the industry contended.

The industry has, therefore, urged the regulator to recommend to the government for allocation of spectrum in E and V bands only through transparent auction to licensed access service providers.

The telecom industry – which wants Trai to set

Mercedes-Benz announces record sales of its cars

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 26

Mercedes-Benz, India's largest luxury car maker, on Monday announced record sales of its range of cars during the auspicious occasion of Navratri and Dussehra, delivering over 550 Mercedes cars to customers across the country, repeating the record sales achieved during the same festival period last year.

The Pune-headquartered automaker expects robust demand for the upcoming Diwali and Dhanteras period.

Strong demand came from across key markets like Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Gujarat and other Northern markets which saw a resurging customer demand, owing to the return of normalcy and stabilisation of businesses.

In Delhi-National Capital Region alone, 175 new Mercedes-Benz cars were handed over to their owners.

The C-Class, E-Class sedans and the GLC, GLE and GLS SUVs were the vehicles customers preferred the most.

Mercedes-Benz earlier witnessed a sequential growth in its monthly sales in third quarter of 2020, growing 25 per cent M-o-M sequentially and four-times over the second quarter of 2020 sales amidst the current market challenges prevalent owing to the raging pandemic. "The festive season this

year has begun on a very strong note and we are glad to witness this positive customer sentiment," Martin Schwenk, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer at Mercedes-Benz India, said.

"This impressive sale numbers makes us confident of a good festive season despite facing multiple challenges," he pointed out. Schwenk said the exciting quarter ahead would see new product line-up to keep exciting the market and continuing the recovery of sales for the rest of the year.

—Reuters

COAI had cautioned that any decision on delicensing or administrative allocation of E and V band spectrum would be against the prevailing policy framework, create non-level-playing-field for licenced telcos, cause huge revenue loss to the government, and would be legally untenable.

Radiowaves in E band, which falls in 71-76 GHz and 81-86 GHz, and V band in 57-64 GHz can transmit data at very high speed, and the method of spectrum allotment in these bands has been a subject of high-voltage debate in the sector, and within the government circle. —PTI

BAJAJ'S NEW BIKE LAUNCHED AT ₹46,432

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 26

Bajaj Auto, India's motorcycle specialist, on Monday launched an updated version of its most affordable bike, the CT100 kick-start, at Rs 46,432 at Delhi showroom to woo buyers during the on-going festive season.

At this price, it costs around Rs 2,000 more than the model it replaces. The entry level 2020 CT100 gets eight new features. Among them are the new tank grips – an old-school feature that is making a comeback, thanks to the TVS Radeon.

Other new features include fork gaiters, a cross tube on the handlebar, a larger grab handle and clear-lens indicators.

However, the new feature that will be the most appreciated is the fuel gauge. "The brand CT has always delivered on its strong build, robust engine, high reliability and great mileage making it one of the best motorcycles in the commuter segment," Narayan Sundaramaram, Head of Marketing at Bajaj Auto, said.

The Bajaj CT range has sold over 68 lakh motorcycles since inception.

— Reuters

IT MAY be likely for Samsung C&T to consider increasing dividends for the family to cover such a high inheritance tax.

JEONG DONG-IK Analyst

said NH Investment Securities analyst Kim Dong-yang.

"It may be likely for Samsung C&T to consider increasing dividends for the family to cover such a high inheritance tax," KB Securities analyst Jeong Dong-ik said.

Lee, 78, died on Sunday,

Death sparks Samsung hopes

Seoul, Oct. 26: Shares in Samsung Electronics Co Ltd and affiliates rose on Monday after the death a day earlier of Chairman Lee Kun-hee sparked hopes for stake sales, higher dividends and long-awaited restructuring, analysts said.

Investors are betting that the imperatives of maintaining Lee family control and paying inheritance tax - estimated at about 10 trillion won (\$8.9 billion) for listed stock-holdings alone - will be the catalyst for change, although analysts are divided on what form that change will take.

Shares in Samsung C&T

and Samsung Life Insurance closed up 13.5% at a two-month high and 3.8%, respectively, while shares in Samsung SDS also rose. Samsung Electronics - the jewel in the group's crown - finished 0.3% higher.

Son and heir apparent Jay Y. Lee has a 17.3% stake in Samsung C&T, the de facto holding firm, while the late Lee was the top shareholder of Samsung Life with 20.76% stake.

"The inheritance tax is outrageous, so family members might have no choice but to sell stakes in some non-core firms" such as Samsung Life,

told Reuters. "We'll be fire-fighting from the 1st of January."

The current row over whether Britain leaves the EU with or without a deal has helped mask the fact that the deal on offer represents the biggest change to UK trade since the formation of the single market in 1993.

Outside the bloc, companies will have to complete paperwork and submit goods for random checks to cross borders, increas-

ing both the cost and time it takes to do business.

In 2019 Britain imported EU goods worth 253 billion pounds (\$331 billion) and exported 138 billion pounds-worth to the bloc, when removing goods like oil and gold which distort trade flows.

To keep goods moving after Brexit, the government has published a new 271-page Border Operating Model, covering everything from the trade of rough diamonds to mol-

lucses, chemicals and cultural goods.

A step-by-step guide on one of the main customs clearance sites gives a flavour of what traders can expect.

Points 12 to 15 state that "A Movement Reference Number" is generated by a "Transit Accompanying Document" and "Exit Summary Declaration", and should be lodged with the "Goods Vehicle Movement Service". — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

Leon wins chess title in Hungary

Chennai: Young Indian International Master Leon Luke Mendonca earned his maiden Grandmaster norm after winning the title in Rigochess International Festival tournament in Hungary. The 14-year old Mendonca won six games, drew two and lost one to emerge winner in the 10-player field which included three GMs and was played over the board. He secured seven points from nine rounds in the tournament. The Goa-based player (Elo 2499) won his opening round match against fellow IM William Paschall before going down to lower-rated Alex Krstulovic (Elo 2341). He drew his third round match and then won five games on the trot, beating two GMs — Nguyen Huynh Minh Huy and David Berceç — on the way. — PTI

Entire S. African board resigns

Johannesburg: Cricket South Africa's 10-member Board of Directors has resigned, clearing the decks for an interim administrative structure in the crisis-ridden body as sought by the country's olympic committee. Six directors, including former acting president Beresford Williams, had stood down following a meeting on Sunday. The remaining four quit on Monday. "After the Members' Council had deliberated and resolved that in order to best serve the interest of cricket in South Africa, the entire Board should resign — which they did. All Independent and Non-Independent Directors have now resigned," CSA said. The development comes just days before the start of the domestic season on November 2. England's men's team also arrives next month to play three ODIs and three T20Is. — PTI

Vardy hurts Arsenal again

London: Jamie Vardy kept up his brilliant scoring record against Arsenal by coming off the bench to earn Leicester a 1-0 win at Emirates Stadium in the Premier League. Restricted to just the final half-hour while he manages his return from a calf injury, Vardy had enough time to net his 11th league goal against Arsenal the most he has scored against a single opponent in the competition. It was an excellent goal, too, with a fine pass over the defense by Youri Tielemans setting free substitute Cengiz Under, who crossed for Vardy to stoop and head home from close range in the 80th minute. Leicester bounced back from home losses to West Ham and Aston Villa to record a first win away to Arsenal since 1973. — AP

Masia gets 800th GP win for Honda

Aragon, Spain: Jaume Masia on the NSF250RW took a thrilling win at the Teruel GP of the 2020 MotoGP World Championship, the 800th win for a Honda mounted rider in Grand Prix history. Honda has written an incredible story from the first win of Australian Tom Phillis on the Honda RC143 in the 125cc Spanish GP of 1961, to Sunday where Jaume Masia rode a masterful race to cross the line for Honda's 800th win — a feat no other manufacturer has achieved. It was a classic Moto3 race, over 20 riders in the leading group for the majority of the race. Fresh from becoming Honda's 100th different Grand Prix winner, Masia followed up the result with another win.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1

FOOTBALL

Champions League: Lokomotiv Moscow vs Bayern Munich from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Shakhtar Donetsk vs Inter Milan from 11.25 pm on Sony Six; Atletico Madrid vs Salzburg from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 3; Borussia Monchengladbach vs Real Madrid from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six; Marseille vs Manchester City from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2; Liverpool vs Midtjylland from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C – 9, Sector – III, Noida – 201301. Editor – T. Venkatram Reddy, RNI Registration number 57290/94, Price in Nepal - Nep. Rs. 20.00 per copy.

Kings crush Knights

Punjab put up all-round show in big win over Kolkata

Sharjah, Oct. 26: Kings XI Punjab beat Kolkata Knight Riders by eight wickets in an Indian Premier League game here on Monday. Chasing 150, Chris Gayle (51, 29b) and Mandeep Singh (66 not out, 56b) posted half century each as Punjab reached the target in 18.5 overs and grabbed the fourth spot on the points table. Punjab skipper K. L. added 28 to complete the rout. This was the fifth win in a row for KXIP. Earlier, Kings XI Punjab dished out a disciplined bowling show, especially at the back-end, to restrict Kolkata Knight Riders to a modest 149/9. Mohammed Shami (3/35) was the pick of the Kings XI Punjab bowlers while leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi (2/20) and Chris Jordan (2/25) claimed two wickets apiece to put brakes on KKR who were invited to bat first. After a familiar jittery start, KKR got the momentum going with opener Shubman Gill (57 off 45 balls) and skipper Eoin Morgan (40) firing all cylinders inside the Powerplay. But KXIP's last match hero Jordan pulled things back for his team by brilliantly mixing up his slow deliveries, while Bishnoi took the prized scalp of Morgan after KKR reached 54/3 inside the Powerplay. — PTI



Chris Gayle of Kings XI Punjab en route to his 51 against Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL match at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Monday. — BCCI

SCORECARD	
Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubman Gill c Pooran b Shami 57, Nitish Rana c Gayle b Maxwell 0, Rahul Tripathi c Rahul b Shami 7, Dinesh Karthik c Rahul b Shami 0, Eoin Morgan c M Ashwin b Bishnoi 40, Sunil Narine b Jordan 6, Kamlesh Nagarkoti b M. Ashwin 6, Pat Cummins lbw b Bishnoi 1, Lockie Ferguson (not out) 24, Varun Chakravarthy b Jordan 2, Prasidh Krishna (not out) 0. Extras (lb-3 w-3) 6. Total (for 9 wkts, in 20 overs) 149.	
ForW: 1-1, 2-10, 3-10, 4-91, 5-101, 6-113, 7-114, 8-136, 9-149.	
Bowling: Glenn Maxwell 2-0-21-1, Mohammed Shami 4-0-35-3, Arshdeep Singh 2-0-18-0, Murugan Ashwin 4-0-27-1, Chris Jordan 4-0-25-2, Ravi Bishnoi 4-1-20-2.	
Kings XI Punjab: K. L. Rahul lbw b Varun 28, Mandeep Singh (not out) 66, C. Gayle c Prasidh Krishna b Ferguson 51, N. Pooran (not out) 2. Extras (lb-2, w-1) 3. Total (for 2 wkts, in 18.5 overs) 150.	
ForW: 1-47, 2-147.	
Bowling: P. Cummins 4-0-31-0, M. Prasidh Krishna 3-0-24-0, C. Varun 4-0-34-1, S. Narine 4-0-27-0, L. Ferguson 3.5-0-32-1.	

IPL POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	11	7	4	0	14	+1.252
Delhi Capitals	11	7	4	0	14	+0.434
Royal Challengers Bangalore	11	7	4	0	14	+0.092
Kings XI Punjab	12	6	6	0	12	-0.049
Kolkata Knight Riders	12	6	6	0	12	-0.479
Rajasthan Royals	12	5	7	0	10	-0.505
Sunrisers Hyderabad	11	4	7	0	8	+0.029
Chennai Super Kings	12	4	8	0	6	-0.602

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

SUPER KINGS ARE FIRST TO BE ELIMINATED

Dubai, Oct. 26: Three-time champions Chennai Super Kings have been knocked out of the race to secure an IPL play-offs' berth for the first time in 13 years after Rajasthan Royals defeated Mumbai Indians by eight wickets in Abu Dhabi. The M.S. Dhoni-led side had made it to the play-offs in each of the 10 IPL seasons that they participated since the league started in 2008. However, CSK endured an inconsistent run in this IPL. Dhoni's men on Sunday notched up an eight-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore on Sunday to keep their slim chances alive for a few hours but all hopes ended when RR beat MI later in the day. The win over RCB took CSK to 8 points from 12 matches but they can only achieve a maximum of 12 points if they win their last two games, which won't be enough. — PTI

DC eye playoff berth in clash against Sunrisers

Dubai, Oct. 26: Delhi Capitals would look to complete the unfinished business and seal their place in the playoffs when they take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in a crucial IPL match here on Tuesday. Two back-to-back defeats against Kolkata Knight Riders and Kings XI Punjab must be hurting but DC need to shrug it off and add two points to take their tally to 16, which will elevate them to the top of the table. On the other hand, Sunrisers' hopes to reach the playoffs are hanging by a thread. David Warner and his men occupy the penultimate spot with eight points from 11 outings. To reach the qualifiers they must win their remaining three games and hope all other results go their way. The Capitals possess

NUMBERS GAME	
HEAD TO HEAD	
OVERALL:	
● Matches: 16 ● Hyderabad: 10 ● Delhi: 6	
MEETING IN 2019	
● Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 5 wickets in Delhi.	
● Delhi Capitals defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by 39 runs at Hyderabad.	
● Delhi Capitals beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 2 wickets at Visakhapatnam (Eliminator).	
MEETING IN 2020	
● Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 15 runs in Abu Dhabi	
FOR THE RECORD	
● David Warner is the only batsman who made fifty 50 plus scores in IPL. He scored 4 hundreds and 46 fifties in 137 innings of as many matches.	
● Kagiso Rabada is highest wicket taker in this IPL with 23 wickets at an average of 14.52 in 11 innings of as many matches.	
— S. PERVEZ KAISER	

an explosive batting department as well as a formidable bowling unit. They have not been dependent on any one person, as different players have raised their hands at different

HARDIK TAKES A KNEE IN IPL FOR A CAUSE

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 26: Mumbai Indians all-rounder Hardik Pandya has become the first player in the ongoing Indian Premier League to take a knee in support of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. Pandya's gesture came during the game against Rajasthan Royals here on Sunday. The Mumbai Indian all-rounder smashed 60 run from just 21 balls. After reaching his half century in the 19th over, he went down on a knee with his right arm raised to show solidarity with the movement against racism. West Indies all-rounder and Mumbai's stand-in skipper Kieron Pollard responded by raising his right fist. After the match Pandya even tweeted a picture of himself with the caption "#BlackLivesMatter". — PTI

AUSTRALIA | TOUR

Rohit out, Rahul is new white ball V-C

New Delhi, Oct. 26: India's limited-over vice-captain and senior opener Rohit Sharma was on Monday left out of all three squads for the tour of Australia due to a recurring hamstring injury which is set to oust him from the remainder of the Indian Premier League as well. In Rohit's absence, the inform K.L. Rahul will be Virat Kohli's deputy in the white ball teams and is also back in the Test squad after a considerable period of time. Wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant failed to make the cut for the limited overs even though he retained his place in the Test squad. "The BCCI Medical Team will continue to monitor the progress of Rohit Sharma and Ishant Sharma," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a press release announcing the squads. The tour of Australia comprises three T20 Internationals, as many ODIs and four Tests. It is set to get underway from November 27. It is learnt that in case of Rohit, it might take a good six to eight weeks for complete recovery from the injury that he picked up during the IPL. "It is unlikely that Rohit

THE SQUADS	
■ T20I: Virat Kohli (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Mayank Agarwal, K. L. Rahul (vice-captain and wicketkeeper), Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Sanju Samson (wicketkeeper), Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Shami, Navdeep Saini, Deepak Chahar, Varun Chakravarthy.	
■ ODI: Virat Kohli (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Shubman Gill, K. L. Rahul (vice-captain & wicketkeeper), Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Mayank Agarwal, Ravindra Jadeja, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Shami, Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur.	
■ Test: Virat Kohli (captain), Mayank Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw, K. L. Rahul, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (vice-captain), Hanuma Vihari, Shubman Gill, Wriddhiman Saha (wicket-keeper), Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Shami, Umesh Yadav, Navdeep Saini, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj.	

will take any further part in this year's Indian Premier League. He will have to go back to India and be at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) for the rehabilitation," a senior BCCI source said. — PTI



Mohammad Ikram plays snooker with his chin at a local club in Samundri town in Pakistan on Sunday. — AP

No arms, no issue for snooker player

Samundri, Oct. 26: Mohammad Ikram leans over the snooker table, his face at almost touching distance behind the white ball as he assesses his options, then knocks it with his bearded chin. At the other end of the table a moment later, a red ball sinks into the corner pocket. With a twist of the neck this way, or a lighter nudge another, the 32-year-old Ikram has worked out how to pot snooker balls without the use of a cue stick. He was born without arms. He lives in a dusty rural town in the northeast of Pakistan in Punjab province. He hasn't let anything stop him from fulfilling his childhood dream of playing the game of snooker. Ikram remembers watching other children playing on dusty pool tables outside his home when he was a 10-year-old kid. He always wished one day he could also play the game, but just needed to work out how. "At that time I wished I

● Ikram lives in a dusty rural town in the northeast of Pakistan in Punjab province. He hasn't let anything stop him from fulfilling his childhood dream of playing the game of snooker. "People didn't believe me in the club that I could play with my chin," he said, "but they gradually started admiring my skills when I started hitting the cue ball with the chin." Mohammad Nadeem, owner of the Cue Club in Samundri, recalled the time about 10 or 12 years ago when Ikram approached him with a request to play snooker. — AP

Stokes finally found his mojo in IPL with superb knock



Hemant Kenkre Silly Point

One got afflicted with a heightened sense of déjà vu as the week ended thanks to two unrelated episodes involving Englishmen. Cricketers that had hogged the lime-light for different reasons, with decades between them. The first, an incredible player called Ben Stokes who finally found his mojo in the Indian Premier League (IPL) with a stupendous knock against table leaders Mumbai Indians (MI). The second, Sir Geoffrey

Boycott, who celebrated his 80th birthday on Wednesday locked up in a castle in his home state, Yorkshire with close family members. Rajasthan Royals were faced with a daunting task to score 196 in order to keep their nose above the water line. They had seen their fellow wooden spooners, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) beat Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) with ease at Dubai and still in the race to qualify for the playoffs as RR skipper Steve Smith

walked out for the toss. With two wickets down (including that of Smith) at 44 runs, the total to chase became even more imposing than it was for Stokes who had the unpredictable Sanju Samson for company. The 152-run stand that Stokes stitched together with the young marvel from Kerala not only kept his team afloat in the competition but has given them a sense of confidence to march ahead with two more matches to go. Looking back, the drama that was played out at Abu Dhabi had featured another protagonist — New Zealander Trent Boult. The wiry Kiwi left arm seamer must have gone back to July 14, 2019, with memories of Stokes' heroics in the International Cricket Council (ICC)

World Cup final at Lord's. Boult's mind must have processed how Stokes had slowly taken the coveted championship away from his team in the company of Jos Buttler with a 110-run partnership and carried on with England's tail (which contributed to only 12 of the 45-runs) to tie the match and win in the super over. On Sunday night, Stokes and Samson decided to give Buttler, the third protagonist of the two games, a rest while they sealed the deal for RR, making their win the highest scored against an inform MI who had looked at being the first team to qualify for the IPL playoffs. Four days earlier, when Sir Geoffrey went past 80-years, the mind wandered to the early 70s when one was growing up wanting to play the game in a cricket

crazy city. Coaches then used to tell us to learn from Sir Geoffrey whose batting technique they used to gloat about. We were bereft of videos then, and word of mouth, from the lucky few, who had seen the Yorkshireman accumulate runs against the best was enough to paint a picture in one's head about what batting technique was all about. The first time I saw Sir Geoffrey batting was at Lord's in a One Day (ODI) international against the West Indies in 1980. More than many heroes playing that match, the excitement was of watching the famed opener pit his skills against the pace quartet featuring Andy Roberts, Mike Holding, Joel Garner and Malcolm Marshall. While walking past the stall of bookmakers

Ladbroke's one saw the board that displayed the odds for punters. The odds for Sir Geoffrey becoming the man of the match were listed at 70-1. Those who may have placed their bets on Sir Geoffrey must have popped corks of champagne as he achieved that with a belligerent innings to 70 runs. The second time one met him was during England's tour of India when they played a charity match on my club's home ground, the Brabourne Stadium, in 1981. Sir Geoffrey had wanted a private net session and the club had young Bombay bowlers delighted to bowl to the legendary opener. Sir Geoffrey struggled in the nets and what we heard were more curses than the sweet sound of the ball hitting the middle

of his bat. Dissatisfied with himself, he let loose on a few club staff members who were sleeping in the stands by calling them 'lazy and lackadaisical' only to be told that they were resting in between duties. From 1981 till now, Sir Geoffrey has taught me many things as suggested by my coaches of yore of batting and cricket. As a batsman one learnt from him the grammar of correct batting technique and how to put a big price on one's wicket. As far as cricket (and life) goes, his history of disrespecting fellow players and colleagues, raving and ranting as a crusty old curmudgeon (bordering on being racist) also taught me what *not* to do in one's quest of becoming a better human being.