

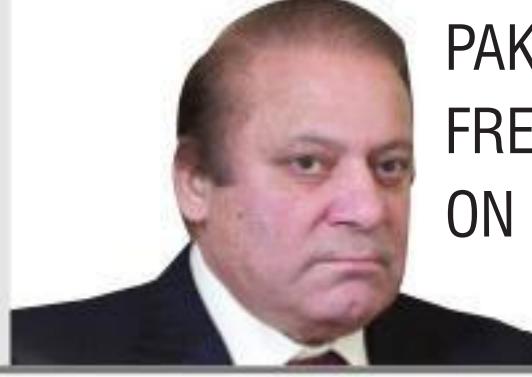
NEXT 3 MONTHS DECISIVE
FOR INDIA'S COVID
TRAJECTORY: VARDHAN

P5



'VAJPAYEE
CONSULTED
NDA ALLIES'

P7



PAK BODY SLAPS
FRESH GRAFT CASE
ON NAWAZ SHARIF

P11



KAPIL DEV
UNDERGOES
ANGIOPLASTY

P12

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Mist in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 34 and 14 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 93% Min: 35%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 34.0°C (+2) Min: 14.4°C (-2)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

06:28 hrs 17:43 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

13:36 hrs 00:41 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Women devotees at a Durga Puja event organised by Arambagh Puja Samiti in the Capital on Friday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

33 Indians stuck in Somalia: 33 Indian labourers have allegedly been held hostage by a company in Somalia for 8 months. The government is in touch with the Somalian authorities to ensure their safe return. "MEA and our High Commission in Nairobi are working on the relief & return of 33 Indians stuck in Mogadishu, Somalia. The HC @IndiainKenya has taken up their predicament with the Somalian authorities. We are also in touch with the Somali Embassy in India. Hope for an early resolution," external affairs minister S Jaishankar tweeted.

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

India's active virus caseload below 7L after 2 months

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

The Covid-19 recoveries in India have crossed 69 lakh, while the number of coronavirus infections reported in a span of 24 hours remained below 60,000 for the fifth consecutive day as the country's caseload rose to 77,61,312, according to the Union health ministry today.

A total of 54,366 new infections were reported in a day, while the death toll climbed to 1,17,306 from 69 fatalities, the ministry data updated at 8 am stated. In a "significant milestone" India's active COVID-19 caseload has fallen below 7 lakh for the

first time after two months, while the total recoveries have crossed 69 lakhs, the Union health ministry said. The recovered cases are nearly 10 times more than the active cases, it pointed out.

There are 6,95,509 active cases of COVID-19 in the country as on date, which comprises 8.96 percent of the total caseload.

A total of 69,48,497 people have recuperated from the disease so far pushing the national recovery rate to 89.53 per cent while the case fatality rate due to Covid was recorded at 1.51 per cent.

India's Covid tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on

August 23 and 40 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on

September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28 and crossed 70 lakh on October 11. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a cumulative total of 10,01,13,085 samples have been tested up to October 22 with 14,42,722 samples being tested on Thursday. The active caseload of the country has fallen below 7 lakh for the first time after two months (63 days), the ministry said. The active caseload was below the 7-lakh mark (6,97,330) last on August 22.

"With a high number of COVID-19 patients recovering every day along with a steadily falling and sustained low mortality rate,

India's trend of registering decreasing active cases continues," the ministry said. Increased country-wide medical infrastructure, implementation of the Centre's Standard Treatment Protocol by states and union territories (UTs), and dedication and commitment of doctors, parapublics and frontline workers have "led to a persistent increase in the number of total recoveries with a commensurate dip in the fatality rate", the ministry said. "These have together resulted in a consistent slide in the active cases," the ministry underscored.

Twenty-four states and UTs have less than 20,000 active cases of COVID-19.

The ministry said 81 per

cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 states and UTs which are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Maharashtra has contributed more than 16,000 to the single-day recoveries followed by Karnataka with more than 13,000 recoveries, it said.

Of the total 54,366 new cases of Covid recorded in a span of 24 hours, 78 per cent are from Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, West Bengal, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha.

FACT FILE
TOTAL CASES
77,61,312
ACTIVE CASES
6,95,509
NEW CASES
54,366
NEW RECOVERIES
73,979
TOTAL DEATHS
1,17,306
UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8 A.M. FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER 2020

STATESMAN NEWSERVICE
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

The United States will discuss with India the situation at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the wake of the ongoing Sino-India military stand-off at eastern Ladakh when the two countries hold their third '2+2' ministerial dialogue in New Delhi next week.

While US officials confirmed that the India-China border row would come up for discussion, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said the two sides would exchange views on salient regional

and global issues.

U.S. Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo and Secretary of Defence Mark T Esper will be visiting India on 26-27 October to participate in the dialogue. From the Indian side, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will lead the delegations from the ministries of Defence and External Affairs, respectively.

The first two '2+2'

ministerial dialogues were held in New Delhi in September 2018 and in Washington in 2019.

The agenda for the third

dialogue will cover all bilat-

eral, regional and global issues of mutual interest. When asked if the LAC tensions would figure, a US official said: "We're watching the situation closely. I think both sides have expressed a desire to de-escalate violence."

The Indian spokesperson said the dialogue would entail a comprehensive discussion on cross-cutting bilateral issues of mutual interest.

The US official confirmed that the two sides were in the process of finalising several agreements, including the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for geospatial cooperation.

Trump fires 'filthy air' barb at China, India, Russia

PTI
WASHINGTON, 23 OCTOBER



'Look at China, how filthy it is. Look at Russia. Look at India, it's filthy. The air is filthy,' Trump said during the final presidential debate with his Democratic challenger Joe Biden in Nashville, Tennessee on Thursday night.

We are working so well with the industry, he said responding to a question on climate change during the debate that lasted just over 90 minutes.

Trump has repeatedly

blamed countries like India and China for not doing enough on climate change, labelling them as regions with air that is impossible to breathe. Reiterating that he loves

the environment, Trump said he wants cleanest, crystal-clear water, the cleanest air.

"We have the best, lowest number in carbon emissions, which is a big standard that I notice (Barack) Obama goes with all the time, not Joe. I haven't heard Joe use the term because I'm not sure he knows what it represents or means, but I have heard Obama use it," he said. "The Paris Accord, I took us out because we were going to have to spend trillions of dollars and we were treated very unfairly. When they put us in there, they did a great disservice. They were going to take away our businesses," he asserted. In 2017, Trump pulled the US out of the 2015 Paris climate agreement, saying the international deal to keep global average temperatures rises below 2 degree Celsius was disadvantageous to US workers.

Biden, on the other hand, said that if voted to power in November, he would rejoin the historic Paris agreement on climate change and hold countries like China accountable for pollution.

Trump has continuously argued that countries like China and India are benefiting the most from the Paris agreement. Speaking to his cheering supporters at an election rally in the key battleground State of North Carolina last week, Trump had blamed countries like China, Russia and India for adding to the global air pollution.

"We have the best environmental numbers, ozone numbers, and so many other numbers. In the meantime, China, Russia, India all these countries they're spewing stuff into the air, he alleged. China is the world's biggest carbon emitter followed by

the US, India and the EU.

Trump's latest comments come at a time when pollution levels in New Delhi dropped to the 'very poor' category and are likely to worsen in the coming days. Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) has been recorded at 302, which is in the 'very poor' category. Trump asserted that he will not sacrifice tens of millions of jobs, thousands and thousands of companies, because of the Paris Accord.

"It was so unfair. China doesn't kick in until 2030. Russia goes back to a low standard. And we kicked in right away. It would have destroyed our businesses, he said. "We have done an incredible job environmentally. We have the cleanest air, the cleanest water, and the best carbon emission standards that we've seen in many, many years," Trump claimed.

(SEE ALSO PAGE 10)

Amazon refuses to appear before Parliament panel

PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

E-commerce giant Amazon has refused to appear before the Joint Committee of Parliament on the Data Protection Bill on October 28 and this amounts to breach of privilege, panel chairperson and BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi said on Friday.

Lekhi said that "the panel is unanimous in its opinion that coercive action can be suggested to the government against the e-commerce company".

"Amazon has refused to appear before the panel on October 28 and if no one on behalf of the e-commerce company appears before the

panel it amounts to breach of privilege," she told PTI.

Meanwhile, Facebook's policy head Ankhi Das appeared before the panel on the issue of data security on Friday.

Facebook India representatives were asked some tough and searching questions by the members of the panel, sources said.

During the meeting, a member suggested that the social media giant should not draw inferences from the data of its users for commercial benefits of its advertisers.

The panel has summoned officials of micro-blogging site Twitter on October 28, and Google and Paytm on October 29.



After mocking the RJD for promising to create 10 lakh jobs, the NDA has promised to create 19 lakh jobs in Bihar if elected.

P CHIDAMBARAM
FORMER FINANCE MINISTER

Treat as representation plea to stop bursting of crackers, burning effigies: HC to AAP govt, CPCB

PTI

NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed the AAP government and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to treat a plea seeking a ban on the bursting of crackers and the burning of Ravana effigies as a representation.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan directed the Delhi government's Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) and CPCB to decide the representation in accordance with the law, rules, regulations and government policy applicable to the facts of the case.

The court also directed them to keep in mind the Supreme Court's directions on the issue while deciding the representation.

With these directions, the bench disposed of the plea by lawyers Chetan Hasija and Sahil Sharma, who wanted that the DDMA and the CPCB be issued instructions to prohibit the burning of effigies and bursting of crackers during October and November due to the holy festivals of Dussehra and Diwali," the plea said.

"Apart from stubble burning, Delhi experiences degradation of air quality because of the burning of effigies and crackers during October and November due to the holy festivals of Dussehra and Diwali," the plea said.

However, as the petitioners had not moved any representation before any authorities, the court directed that their plea be treated as one and a decision be taken on the issues raised by them.

witnessing a surge in pollution levels since September 25 due to ongoing practices of stubble burning and hence, the situation is getting alarming keeping in mind the pandemic".

"From stubble burning, Delhi experiences degradation of air quality because of the burning of effigies and crackers during October and November due to the holy festivals of Dussehra and Diwali," the plea said.

The lawyers contended in their plea that Delhi was "already

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF SH. UMED SINGH GREWAL Addl. District Judge-02 (West)
Room No. 127, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, PC No. 18/2020
Sunita Yadav Versus State & Ors
CITATION UNDER SECTION 283(2) OF SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant or probate of the Will or for letters of Administration to the estate of Late Sh. Bhansi Pratap Yadav, s/o Late Sh. Chaudhary Chaudhary, respondent of property, Flat No. 8-50 situated at Raksha Laramchari Co-op. Group Housing Society Ltd., Zone G-17, Opp. G-Block, Rohtak Road, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi, died on 22nd October 2018 at Delhi has been made by Smt Sunita Yadav w/o Sh. Rajeev Yadav, r/o A/52, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110062.

Whereas the 04th day of November, 2020 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the Administration of the Estate of the said deceased may if he/she desires to appear in this court on the above said date and see the proceedings the Grant of Probate (or for Letter of Administration).

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 23rd day of October, 2020
Addl. District Judge-02 (West)

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF SH. AKASH KUMAR Admin-Cum-Commercial Civil Judge-cum-Additional Rent Controller (West), Court Room No. 112, 1st Floor, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054, Petition No. SC-45/2020

To, Nishant Datta, s/o Lt. Sh. Vinod Datta, r/o 13/18, Punjabi Bagh Extension, New Delhi-110026, Versus State.

FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

To, All concerned.

Where in the abovenoted petition, the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased Late Manash Chandra, s/o Suresh Chandra Sarkar, died on Dt. 23-11-2018 at Fortis FLT Rajah Dhal Hospital Pocket-1 Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, Sector-5, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. Are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Court, to be standing in the name of deceased.

Whereas the 08-12-2020 10 O'Clock in the forenoon has been fixed for hearing and the application notice is hereby given to all concerned.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 22-10-2020.

ACJ/CCJ/ARC
Patiala House Courts, New Delhi, Seal of the Court

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI Notice Under Order V Rule 20 Code of Civil Procedure Case No. MACA 265/2019 & CM Appl. 8/2019

Appeal/Interlocutory order dated 17-11-2018

Passed By M.K. Nagpal, PO-MACT, Patiala House Court, New Delhi

MACP No. 58/18 (Original No. 13/99/11)

The New India Assurance Co. Ltd.

— Appellants

Versus Promila Prabhakar & Ors.

— Respondents

Notice to: R-6 Sh. Gulbir Singh, s/o Sh. Chatter Singh, r/o B-15, Ayurviyan Nagar, Defence Colony, New Delhi. (Actual owner of the Bus)

R-7 Sh. Madan Kumar, s/o Sh. Ram Nath Singh, r/o C-3, Gokulpuri, Delhi-110094.

Whereas the abovenoted appellant has presented an appeal under Section 173 of the MV Act, 1988 which was listed before the Court on 20-02-2019 and the Court ordered issuance of notice to you.

And whereas it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Court that you cannot be served in the ordinary manner. Notice is hereby issued that if you wish to defend the above mentioned appeal and application you may cause and appearance to be entered on your behalf either in person or through an advocate duly appointed by you for the purpose before the Joint Registrar (Judicial) on 05-11-2020 at 11.00 a.m.

If no appearance is made on your behalf by yourself your pleader or someone by law authorized to act for you in the said appeal and application on the aforementioned date no

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PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

My clients Mr. Puranam, s/o Late Sh. Ram and Smt. Suresh Devi, w/o Sh. Puranam both r/o C-26, Double Story, Motia Khan, Delhi have divorced their daughter Jyoti, d/o Puranam from their moveable/immovable properties, because Jyoti married to Mr. Vicky on 19-10-2020 after ran away from home against the wishes and consent of my clients therefore my clients have severed all kind of relations with her

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The Centre has to pay ₹38,000 crore to the state government... If they had cleared the amount, we would not have faced difficulties in announcing the relief package

UDDHAV THACKERAY

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 2020

'SAD's U-turns on farm laws indicate collusion with BJP'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 23 OCTOBER

Taking on the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) over its alleged another U-turn on the Centre's farm laws, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Friday lashed out at SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal for repeatedly compromising the interests of the farmers with his "brazen lies and petty political games, which were clearly aimed at promoting the Centre's anti-farmer agenda".

In rejecting the state's amendment Bills, which SAD had backed in the Assembly, Sukhbir had not just exposed his lack of moral scruples but had also echoed the recent statements of various Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders, said the CM.

This showed clear collusion between SAD and BJP, suggesting that the entire drama of Harsimrat's resignation from the Union Cabinet and the withdrawal of the Akalis from National Democratic Alliance was nothing but a total farce aimed at foiling the farmers and sabotaging their



fight against the central laws, he added.

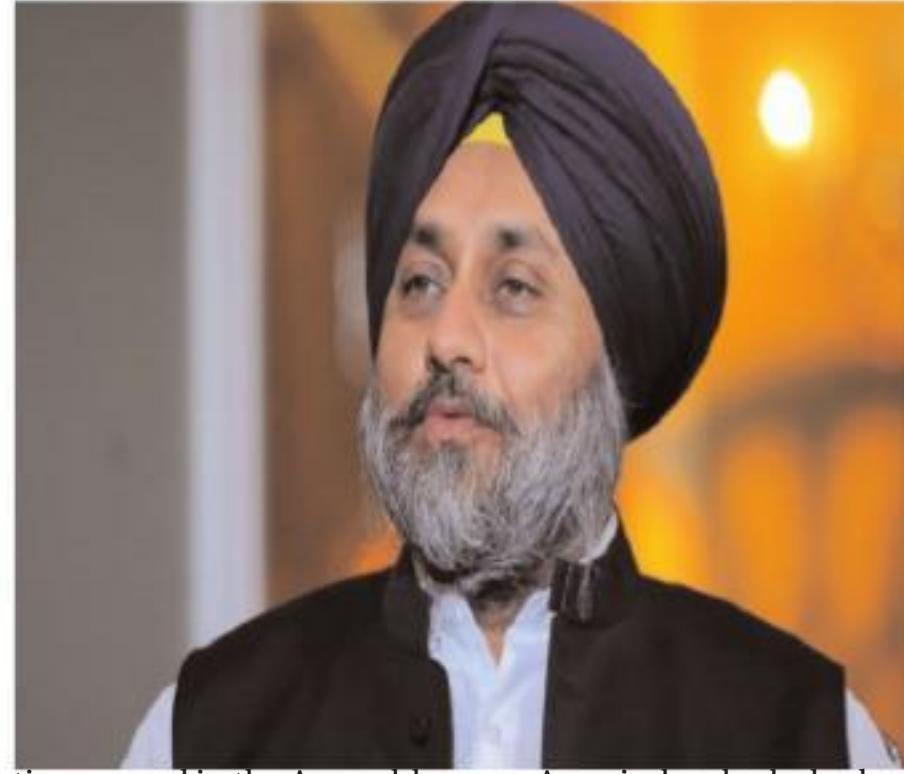
The Akalis had made farmers a pawn on their political chessboard, he said, expressing shock at the pathetic levels to which the Badals had fallen in their desperate bid to protect their vested interests.

The CM trashed Sukhbir's argument that the Akalis did not get the time to study the state government's Bills, quipping that this was not possible considering the massive

legal and other infrastructure at the disposal of SAD.

He took a jibe at Sukhbir's claim that his party MLAs voted for the Bills without properly going through them, saying "this might explain why the Akalis have been stamping their approval on all kinds of anti-people, anti-India and anti-Punjab legislations of the Union government over the past 6 years."

Slamming the SAD chief over his blatantly shameless lie with regard to the resolu-



tion passed in the Assembly, Amarinder pointed out that nowhere was it mentioned that the Punjab Government was committed to declaring the entire state as Principal Market Area, as claimed by Sukhbir.

In any case, he said, what was important was not declaring the state as Principal Market Area but to protect the Minimum Support Price and ensure that the state retained control with no punitive action, which were the main concerns of the farmers.

Amarinder also lashed out at Sukhbir for persistently misleading the farmers by lying about the Constitutional and legal position of the state.

The Constitution gives the state clear and unequivocal right under Article 254 (II) to seek amendments to central laws, he pointed out, adding that the legislations of the Union government of India also fail to stand scrutiny on grounds of being anti-federal.

BJP bent on dividing society: Amarinder

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 23 OCTOBER

"I will not let them disturb the peaceful atmosphere of Punjab at any cost," the CM declared, pointing to the BJP's futile attempt to take out a so-called 'Dalit Insaf Yatra' without taking due permissions.

"I will not let them disturb the peaceful atmosphere of Punjab at any cost," the CM declared, pointing to the BJP's futile attempt to take out a so-called 'Dalit Insaf Yatra' without taking due permissions.

These divisive tactics will never succeed in Punjab, whose people are happily living together for their collective progress, he added.

The BJP said Amarinder, had no moral right to talk about Dalit rights, which they had been brazenly trampling wherever they were in power. He pointed to the shocking statistics that showed that Uttar Pradesh, under BJP rule, accounts for over 25 per cent of the total cases of atrocities against SC people in the country, and had recorded the highest number of such incidents in 2018.

"Is this your definition of justice for Dalits? Is this

Dalit decision of the BJP-led Union Government, the cash-strapped Punjab government had not only introduced a new scheme - B R Ambedkar SC Post-Matric Scholarship - for SC students but even expanded its ambit to benefit more youngers, he pointed out, adding that the BJP clearly could not digest this.

Bereft of any justification for its anti-people acts, the BJP was now resorting to the 'divide and rule' tactics which the British had used to keep the people of India in shackles for nearly a century, Amarinder said.

He however, warned that today's India was not the India of the 19th century, and the BJP would never succeed in its divisive politics.

"We Punjabis will sacrifice anything, as we did during the freedom struggle, to protect our unity and integrity, which forms the ethos of the Indian Constitution," the Chief Minister said, warning the BJP against continuing with its dangerous and reckless agenda.

The people of Punjab will not be taken in by your theatrics, he told the BJP, which currently has only 2 MLAs in the state assembly and is indulging in desperate measures to strengthen its presence in the state.

PM KUSUM Yojana implemented in HP to provide irrigation to farmers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 23 OCTOBER

The scheme has been implemented in the state so that the farmers could grow more cash crops and increase their income with irrigation facility.

structure has been proposed in the state.

Besides this, to facilitate the farmers various irrigation schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana, Pravah Irrigation Scheme and Suksham Irrigation Scheme have been implemented in the state.

Under PM KUSUM Yojna, a provision of 85 per cent financial assistance for pumping machinery has been made

for setting up of solar pumps at personal and community level by farmers.

In the present financial year, a provision of Rs 12 crore has been made under the scheme.

A target of setting up one thousand solar pumps has been set during this year, for which 50 per cent expenditure would be borne by Central government and 35 per cent by the state government, whereas 15 per cent would be borne by the beneficiary.

He said that priority would be given to Kisan Vikas Sangh, Krishak Vikas Sangh and registered organisation of farmers, which are registered under Society Act-2006. Under the scheme, priority would also be given to small, marginal farmers and to such farmers

who are dependent on rain for irrigation.

He said that those farmers who have the availability of water source for drip/sprinkler are also eligible for the scheme.

Farmer can apply for assistance under the scheme in the Subdivision at the Land Conservation Office. The farmer has to submit land respective documents, self attested ration card, photocopy of Aadhar card, land certificate and affidavit.

For further information regarding the scheme, the farmer can contact the nearest sub-divisional land conservation officer, Agriculture Officer of Block Development Office, Deputy Director Agriculture or office of Director Agriculture.

RIVETING SAGA



Artists performing in Ram Leela at Sector 20 in Chandigarh on Friday.

PARDEEP SAINI

Upset Harak Singh announces he won't contest next election

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 23 OCTOBER



Harak Singh told media in Dehradun on Friday, "I will not contest the next election and told my party about it. But, I will continue to remain active in politics."

l owing the instructions of the party. His statement provides little clarity.

Harak Singh Rawat joined hands with former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna to stage a revolt against the then CM Harish Rawat in 2016. Harak and other Congress leaders joined

BJP and now many are inducted in the Trivendra Singh Rawat cabinet.

The situation is challenging for Harak Rawat, as in the present situation even the Congress will not trust him if he decided to make a return to his old party.

As the state forest minister is not commenting anything on the allegation of corruption in the Uttarakhand Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. Even on Friday, he repeated, "I will not comment anything till meeting the Chief Minister."

Political experts feel that Harak is merely creating pressure and he is presently not in a position to dictate terms.

HC seeks Centre, UPSC response on PIL claiming inadequate seats reserved for disabled persons

PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

The Delhi High Court on Friday sought a response from the Centre and the UPSC on a PIL seeking quashing of the notice for civil service preliminaries and an interim stay on the declaration of results on the ground that not enough seats have been reserved for those with visual and multiple disabilities.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan issued notice to the Ministry of Social Justice, Department of Personnel and Training and the Union Public Service Commission seeking their stand on the plea by a disability rights organisation that seats have not been reserved in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act of 2016.

Evara Foundation urged the bench to put on hold the declaration of the results but the court did not accede to the request, saying the UPSC will be asked to recompute its result if the final order goes in their favour.

A similar plea was raised by another organisation, Sambhavana, through an application seeking early hearing of its main petition challenging the examination notice.

Sambhavana, represented by advocates Krishan Mahajan and Ajay Chopra, claimed in its petition that the notice neglects the minimum reservation to be provided to disabled persons and urged the bench that the results not be declared till its plea is decided.

The bench declined to entertain the application, saying the civil services main examination was scheduled

Shoolini varsity to follow NEP, to introduce 4-yr graduation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 23 OCTOBER

to commence from January and the next date of hearing was in November.

Evra Foundation, represented by advocates Pankaj Sinha, Kamlesh KMishra and Anurag Ojha, has contended that due to inadequate number of advertised vacancies for visually impaired and those with multiple disabilities, fewer candidates belonging to these two categories will qualify for the main examination.

It also contended that the number of seats reserved for visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing and locomotor disabilities is not in accordance with the RPWD Act.

The foundation sought a direction to the UPSC and the Centre to "amend the impugned notification by earmarking not less than 8 seats for blind/low vision and multiple disabilities category each in the impugned notification".

It also sought "equal bifurcation of the vacancies (meant for disabled) among the categories of persons with disabilities minimum one percent each in terms of law".

Besides, it sought directions to the UPSC and Centre to fill all the backlog vacancies of persons with disabilities from 1996 till date.

The plea by NGO Sambhavana has alleged that in the exam notice only expected approximate vacancies for the disabled are mentioned and not the four per cent mandatory reservation mandated under the law.

Sambhavana said in its

plea that the UPSC exam notice only mentions "expected approximate vacancies", a category that does not exist under the law.

He said the registration for the new batch would start from October 30 and an induc-

ter and spirit from the next academic session. He said this would include a four-year graduation programme with provision to exit after each year of the session as provided in the policy.

The University has also decided to introduce interdisciplinary programmes as envisaged in the new education policy. Under this provision, students would be given the choice to select subjects of their choice from departments other than those in which they get enrolled.

The Vice-Chancellor pointed out that the Government of India has ranked Shoolini University at the third spot in the country for filing the highest number of patents.

He said all the 23 IITs have been clubbed together to place these at the number one position. The University has so far filed 425 patents since its inception 11 years ago.

HP-based university will start second batch of first semester from 3 November

tion programme for them would be held on November 3, he added.

Prof Khosla said the admissions this year so far had been very good and have far exceeded the expectations. The academic session had started as per the schedule from September.

However, in view of continuous inquiries and requests for admissions, the Academic Council has decided to start another batch from November 3 and admissions for it have already begun.

The Vice-Chancellor said the Academic Council has also decided to follow the new Education Policy (NEP) in let-





Legally, anything can be promised in the manifestos. However, SC has said the promises should not be unreasonable. But it does raise ethical question, because the model code is all about ethics

S Y QURAISHI

FORMER CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 2020

Covid-19: Next 3 months decisive, says Vardhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Friday said the next three months are going to be decisive in determining the coronavirus situation in the country as he urged people to follow COVID appropriate behaviour in the coming festival season and winter months.

He also highlighted that the number of active COVID-19 cases in the country are less than 7 lakh and the doubling rate has increased to 97.2 days.

Vardhan, who reviewed the COVID-19 preparedness with the health and medical education ministers and other senior officials of Uttar Pradesh, said in the last three months, the country has seen significant improvement in the COVID parameters, the health ministry said in a statement. From recording over 95,000 COVID-19 cases in a day, they have been substantially reduced to less than 55,000 per day. The recovery rate of India



is nearing 90 percent. The Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is also declining. CFR stands at 1.51 percent and is moving towards the target of being less than 1 percent," he was quoted as saying in the statement.

The number of active cases are less than 7 lakh and the doubling rate has increased to 97.2 days, as of now," Vardhan said.

From just one lab, the country now has nearly 2,000 laboratories. The number of total COVID-19 tests conducted across the country have sur-

passed 10 crore. "This is a positive indication that we are moving in the right direction," the minister said. He said appropriate measures are being taken to combat the infectious disease.

"But the next three months are going to be decisive in determining the situation of COVID-19 in the country. If we take adequate precaution and follow COVID appropriate behaviour in the coming festival and winter season, we will be in a better position to fight coronavirus," Vardhan said.

For a big state like Uttar Pradesh, it becomes important that maximum thrust is given to simple precautionary measures which are effective in preventing the spread of the disease to a large extent like wearing masks/face cover, especially in public spaces, and following hand and respiratory etiquettes, he added.

The health minister also spoke to officials of the districts where fresh COVID-19 cases or deaths are increasing.

He said as on date, Uttar Pradesh has a fatality rate of 1.46 per cent which is less than the national average. The recovery rate of the state (92.2 per cent) is also more than the national recovery rate. The positivity rate is 3.44 per cent, the statement said. Vardhan also stressed that the northern state needs to focus on increasing testing, surveillance, contact tracing and early diagnosis to keep the fatality rate low. He appreciated the efforts of the state in vaccinating those children who were left out of immunisation due to the pandemic, it added.

Chandra belongs to the 1988 batch of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Maharashtra Cadre. As Director General (Acquisition) in the Ministry of Defence from 1st December, 2017, he chaired the Committee to draft the new Defence Acquisition Procedure.

The Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 has come into effect from 1st October 2020, on the day he joined the Ministry of Labour and Employment as Secretary.

Govt plans special immunisation programme for COVID-19 vaccine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

The coronavirus vaccine, once available, will be distributed under a special COVID-19 immunisation programme with the Centre procuring the doses directly and making it available for priority groups, official sources said.

According to them, the Centre will procure the vaccine directly to make it available to the priority groups free-of-charge through the existing network of states and districts.

States have been asked not to chart separate pathways of procurement, they said.

The Centre, with the help of state and union territory governments, has started the process of identifying around 30 crore priority beneficiaries who would be given vaccine dose in the initial phase.

This special COVID-19 immunisation programme would run in parallel with the Universal Immunisation Programme, but will use its processes, technology and network of the existing vaccine distribution framework, sources said.

The government has demarcated four categories of people for vaccination in the initial phase -- around one crore healthcare professionals including doctors, MBBS students, nurses and ASHA workers, etc.; around two

crore frontline workers including municipal corporation workers, personnel of the police and armed forces; about 26 crore people aged above 50; and a special group of those below 50 years of age with comorbidities and requiring specialised care.

"States have been asked to enlist by mid-November the priority population groups... Each person in the immunisation list will be linked with their Aadhaar cards so as to track them," a source said.

The existing digital platform and processes used for the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) are being enhanced to track COVID-19 vaccine administration and movement -- from procurement to storage to distribution to individual beneficiaries -- as and when the vaccine becomes available, Health Ministry officials have said.

Also, online training modules are being developed for vaccinators. The digital platform that is being enhanced is Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN), which provides real-time information on vaccine stocks and storage temperatures across all cold chain points in the country under UIP.

Under UIP, children, adolescents and pregnant women are currently vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases free-of-cost by the state. The National Expert Com-

COVID-19 vaccine: Bharat Biotech to conduct Phase-3 trials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HYDERABAD, 23 OCTOBER

Bharat Biotech, which is into developing Covaxin, a vaccine candidate for COVID-19, on Friday said it has successfully completed interim analysis of Phase I and II trials and is initiating Phase III trials in 26,000 participants.

"After successful completion of the interim analysis from the Phase 1 & 2 clinical trials of Covaxin, Bharat Biotech received DCGI approval for Phase 3 clinical trials in 26,000 participants in over 25 centres across India," the vaccine maker said in a communication.

Covaxin is being developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - National Institute of Virology (NIV).

The city-based vaccine maker had on October 2 sought the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)'s permission to conduct Phase 3 randomised double-blind placebo-controlled multi centre trial of its COVID-19 vaccine, sources said.

In July, the DCGI had given permission to Bharat Biotech to conduct Phase 1 and 2 clinical trials of its COVID-19 vaccine.

sensed that people have made up their mind to vote NDA back to power and bless Nitish babu with another term."

People have decided that those who have a history of making Bihar 'Bimaru' and looted it when in power will not be allowed to rule it again, Modi said.

'BIMARU' is an acronym for Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, considered laggard states on development parameters.

Barring the rally at Dehri where people were seen jostling with each other to comment on TV about the election prospects of parties, social distancing norms were enforced elsewhere. People were seated on ground or chairs away from each other and wore masks.

The Election Commission had Wednesday warned political parties of action if its instructions on maintaining crowd discipline and other COVID precautions were violated.

It had directed the state's Chief Electoral Officer and the district administrations to invoke appropriate penal provisions under the Disaster Management Act and the Indian Penal Code against candidates found violating its orders.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead in front of Village Kharkhan Nahar, Delhi on 17.10.2020. In this regard a DD No. 9A, Dated 17.10.2020 has been registered at P.S. Jafarpur Kalan, Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown R/o: Unknown, Age: about 60 years, Height: 5'6" Face: Long, Complexion: Black, Hair: Black and White, ID Mark: A cut mark on left eye, Wearing: Suit and Salwar. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.

S.H.O
P.S. Jafarpur Kalan, Delhi
Ph.: 011-2518100

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this male Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 65-70 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 162 CM, Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: Yellow Colour Kurta and Blue Colour Pant has been found dead at in front of K.L. Jain Textiles Pvt. Ltd. Shop No. 9/1741, Main Road, Kailash Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Delhi on 19.10.2020. In this regard a DD No. 67-A, dated 19.10.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Gandhi Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this male but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information about his known and relatives or clue about this male may kindly inform to the following:

S.H.O
P.S. Gandhi Nagar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22072761, 7065036024

MORE FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2020

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during forthcoming Festival Season, Railways have decided to run the following additional Festival Special Trains as per details given below:-

09803/09804 Kota-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-Kota Express Special (Weekly)		TRAIN NO. 09803	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 09804
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.
—	14:30	Kota	23:50	—
14:55	—	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	—	21:55

Days of Run : 09803 from Kota on every Saturday from 24.10.2020 till further advice and 09804 from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on every Sunday from 25.10.2020 till further advice.

Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Stoppages: Indargarh, Sawai Madhopur, Ganganagar City, Hindua City, Bayana Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Mathura Jn., Faridabad, New Delhi, Bahadurgarh, Rohtak Jn., Jind Jn., Narwana Jn., Tohana, Jakhal Jn., Sangrur, Dhuri Jn., Malerkotla, Ludhiana, Phagwara Jn., Jalandhar Cantt., Mukerian, Pathankot Cantt., Kathua, Jammu Tawi, & Udhampur stations.

09805/09806 Kota-Udhampur-Kota Express Special (Weekly)		TRAIN NO. 09805	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 09806
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.
—	14:30	Kota	11:10	—
12:15	—	Udhampur	—	14:20

Days of Run : 09805 from Kota on every Wednesday from 28.10.2020 till further advice and 09806 from Udhampur on every Thursday from 29.10.2020 till further advice.

Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Stoppages: Indargarh, Sawai Madhopur, Gangapur City, Hindua City, Bayana Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Mathura Jn., Faridabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi, Sonipat, Panipat, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Ambala Cantt., Ludhiana Jn., Jalandhar Cantt., Pathankot Cantt., Kathua & Jammu Tawi stations.

02183/02184 Bhopal-Partapgarh Jn.-Bhopal Express Special (Tri-Weekly)		TRAIN NO. 02183	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 02184
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.
—	19:15	Bhopal	08:50	—
09:00	—	Partapgarh	—	19:10

Days of Run : 02183 from Bhopal on every Tuesday, Friday & Sunday from 25.10.2020 till further advice and 02184 from Partapgarh on every Monday, Wednesday & Saturday from 26.10.2020 till further advice.

Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Stoppages: Vidisha, Bina Jn., Lalitpur, Jhansi Jn., Orai, Kanpur Central, Lucknow, Rae Bareli Jn., Jais & Amethi stations.

01449/01450 Jabalpur-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Jabalpur Express Special (Weekly)		TRAIN NO. 01449	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 01450
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.
—	07:10	Jabalpur	07:15	—
14:55	—	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	—	21:55

Days of Run : 01449 from Jabalpur on every Tuesday from 27.10.2020 till further advice and 01450 from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on every Wednesday from 28.10.2020 till further advice.

Accommodation : First AC, AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Stoppages: Katni Murwara, Damoh, Saugor, Khurai, Malkheri, Jhansi Jn., Gwalior, Morena, Agra Cantt., Mathura Jn., Faridabad, Tuglakabad, Okhla, Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi, Delhi Kishanganj, Shakurbasti, Bahadurgarh, Rohtak Jn., Jind Jn., Narwana Jn., Jakhal Jn., Sangrur, Dhuri Jn., Ludhiana, Jalandhar Cantt., Pathankot Cantt., Kathua, Jammu Tawi & Udhampur stations.

04321/04322 Bareilly-Bhuj - Bareilly Festival Special Express		TRAIN NO. 04321	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 04322
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.

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Utter disregard

While the Election Commission and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan may feel aggrieved at an order of the Gwalior bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court restraining district magistrates of nine districts from permitting election rallies, it must fairly be conceded that they are protesting far more than the facts justify. Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath and Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar may feel similarly aggrieved at the court's instruction that cases be registered against them. Yet the fact is that the Court had put the state, political parties and their leaders on notice several weeks ago. Acting on a Public Interest Litigation initiated by an advocate on 11 September, more than five weeks ago, the Court had appointed an Amicus Curiae to examine the petitioner's grievance that political gatherings were taking place in the state without public health protocols in place. The Court had issued notices to the state's Chief Secretary, District Collectors and Superintendents of Police. Since all officials come under charge of the Election Commission once the poll process is initiated, neither Nirvachan Sadan nor the Chief Minister can claim to be unaware of the concern expressed by the Court. On 29 September, the Court considered the report of the Amicus Curiae that pointed out several breaches of Covid-19 protocols. After hearing District Magistrates of five districts, the Court on 4 October felt constrained to pass an interim order that said: "The DMs of the nine districts falling within the territorial jurisdiction of this Bench i.e. Gwalior, Guna, Morena, Bhind, Vidisha, Ashok Nagar, Datia, Shivpuri and Sheopur are directed by writ of mandamus to register offences by invoking penal provisions of Disaster Management Act and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) not only against the defaulting members of the congregation but also against political/governmental/State or social functionaries in whose name or on whose behest and behalf the said congregation takes place, failing which the DMs of the concerned nine districts shall be liable for contempt of this Court and shall also be exposed to the rigours of penal provisions of relevant laws." The political class, including leaders of the BJP and Congress, were thus fairly warned that the Court would not allow public health to be sacrificed at the altar of politicking. Yet, in utter disregard of the order, political rallies were held, and safety norms flouted while masks were reduced to ornaments for the chin. It is at this stage that the Bench intervened to say physical rallies be restricted. To feel aggrieved, as Mr Chauhan is, by the application of the order to some districts and not others (that is districts which fall outside the Bench's jurisdiction), or to suggest that since Bihar is getting away with flouting safety norms so must Madhya Pradesh, is both dishonest and disingenuous. The Election Commission, too, has failed in its responsibility of conducting elections with adequate safety measures in place.

Indo-Pak games

If Lalchand Rajput, as Zimbabwe's coach, is required to tour Pakistan with his team, what New Delhi tells him is that he shouldn't, given that there's this thing about inviting trouble. Or words to much the same effect. And we get to know of it only after the Africans fetch up in India's neighbouring country minus their tutor, which stirs curiosity and fuels comments, though you get the hang of the complications in Indo-Pak relations and that, of course, is something to share with your coffee house chums. Not that anyone harbours any illusions that everything has ever really been hunky-dory. The chums add their own bits to the narrative, leaving you wondering what things were like when Pakistan too was, well, India. An inalienable part of it, in fact. But that was a long while ago and, in the none too distant past, Pakistan's shooting squad found themselves barred from a world championship that New Delhi hosted. India copped it rather badly in consequence, of course, given that no governing body would want sport's never-stopping wheels being stalled in any way, but if the Indian Olympic Association was obliged to turn stones and explore avenues galore to square themselves with global high-ups, official India betrayed no contrition. Truth to tell, Pakistan seldom fails to get India's ~ and a lot of Indians' ~ dander up. If we had a patriotism test at any level, hatred for Pakistan would be one of its major areas of scrutiny, certainly when exaggerated jingoistic regimes call the shots. Which is why Pakistan has begun its administrative spadework for October 2021's Twenty20 World Cup, to be hosted by India, as early as October 2020. "We run up against all sorts of problems trying to go to India, you see," it has told the International Cricket Council, adding, for good measure, that the ICC has to take up with India the little matter of visas for its tour contingent. Not that the selections are to be made overnight.

Remarkably matter-of-fact in his statement on the way things are, Pakistan Cricket Board chief executive officer Wasim Khan has let it be known that there won't be any bilateral series in the foreseeable future. Not on your nelly. The Indian board, he says, has to secure the crucial go-ahead from the government in New Delhi, the tactfully glossed-over implication being that it won't come through like water out of a tap unless it's worked for strenuously and persistently, with bureaucracy finding support in official policy. But the World Cup is a much bigger show and an India, required to let all teams come and put them up, being difficult about Pakistan can't fail to be spoken ill of. And the longer it drags on, the worse will be the hostility. Pakistan has hit upon a crack-jack ploy.

Robbing the Child

If realisation dawns that we are heading for a generation of mental giants but emotionally crippled pygmies, we might avoid the scenario where a one-month-old baby is found interacting with the computer screen



It's a lost world for children. In the second half of the twentieth century kids first lost their innocence by getting themselves exposed to the essence of generation gap; their authority was rejected in the age of protest. Faced with a lonely world, kids lost their love. Plagued by the horror of a nuclear nightmare they lost their hope. Growing up with the irrationality of a postmodern world kids lost their power to reason and found out that they had lost their imagination too.

And, finally, the last shreds of their innocence have been lost, thanks to the cyber world and celebrity. The astonishingly grown-up air of our nursery entrants in recent years, coupled with escalating parental expectations has compelled almost every nursery applicant to attend a play school. Many of them are stretched to KG level standards and their parents appear to be vastly impressed by the 'phenomenal' knowledge that their toddlers display.

The proud parents lament their own lack of knowledge and awareness even when they were much older. Their charged-up countenances are eager to find out the latest pedagogic approaches and technology that would enhance their wards' quantum and quality of learning.

Added to all this is NITI Aayog's innovation drive in educational institutions for stimulating and nurturing young minds to inculcate a scientific attitude. The decision to establish open-ended innovation workspaces equipped with sophisticated sensor technology kits, elementary electronic gadgets and computers, robotics to promote creativity, curiosity and imagination is something more to cheer parents.

Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLS), the Centre's flagship initiative in selected schools across the coun-

try, has the potential to boost the children to become innovators of tomorrow. By using science and technology to support basic education and stimulate innovations, a new India has been envisaged.

To top it all, WhiteHat Jr has emerged as a coding learning platform for young minds with the lone mission of transforming kids from consumers to creators of technology. This is made for children (6-8 years) to learn programming and they are then encouraged to create games, animations and applications. Fundamentals of coding - logic, structure, sequence and algorithm are taught to enable kids to generate creative outcomes like websites, animations and apps.

However, experts are of the view that building software is not a child's play; it may take years to become an apt software developer if one starts from scratch. How to code cannot be taught easily to children; they can just be trained in how to modify a template. To learn directly how to make an App without total computer knowledge is not an easy task. It is not practicable to develop software without sound knowledge of any programming language or technology stack.

One begins to wonder if this is the unalterable truth of naked reality - are all our conceptions and myths about "innocent" children themselves an exploitation by the conscious "experienced" adults? Do we take that innocent affection and simple love of which only a child is capable as our birthright? Do those to whom we give birth have no right?

Children have not denied us

the fulfilment that they can offer; they continue to reassure us of the existence of a future, while we can only stand for that which is past. They justify for us the debility and helplessness of old age as being symbolic of the stage of life when the old man transformed acquires a new simplicity - as Nietzsche implied in Thus Spake Zarathustra when dealing with the "three transformations". It is adults who, strengthened by the new awakening force that children provide, can make their lives meaningful by looking on them as symbolic of the "mystic centre". Do adults have the right to be psychologically and emotionally supported by children when they lock the gates of a dignified life to them, when they place them on doorsteps under declining shadows?

In Christian iconography, children often appear as angels. Paintings abound with soft figures of little ones, draped over the large bodies of grown-ups. In almost all cases the little angels with soft limbs and cherubic faces stand for undefiled beauty and unfallen perfection. In art, they frame with elegance and innocence the central passion of evil and destruction which are enacted by the central figures of adults. They stand for the ideals of happiness and harmony. Their psychological impact is on the soul; they symbolise formative forces of an unconscious, beneficial and protective kind. It is not ironic that adults should derive psychological protection from beings to whom they do not offer even material protection.

The mythology of many major religions conceives of the

entrance of God into this world as a troubled child. When Christ was born the "Massacre of the Innocents" destroyed thousands of little children. The Christ-child survived by escaping to the Land of the Jews, but even there was no room for him in the manger.

The birth of Lord Krishna amidst the tumult of storm and tempest and the fiery wrath of King Kansa is also well-known. When God as a child survived human cruelty, he stood for a future awakening. Even today when one dreams of a child, the interpretation is that some great spiritual change is about to take place. One also thinks of the mystical child who solves riddles and teaches wisdom, the "child is father of man".

But men forget that at least on the physical level they owe a responsibility to children who sustain them so well mentally and spiritually. On the mythic plain of the general and the collective, one thinks of the heroic child who liberates the world from monsters. The youthful activities of Lord Krishna are the Indian contribution to this universal concept of child as deliverer. In alchemy, the child wearing a crown or regal garments is a symbol of the philosopher's stone, that is of the supreme realisation of mystic identification of the "god within us" with the eternal.

It is true we realised that man does not live by bread alone but needs an emotionally warm climate to realise his potential. Although urbanisation has altered the functional and structural pattern of the family unit, it does not mean that parents should not be co-partners of other socialising agents in society. Hopefully, if realisation dawns that we are heading for a generation of mental giants but emotionally crippled pygmies, we might avoid the scenario where a one-month-old baby is found interacting with the computer screen.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

We pause to think

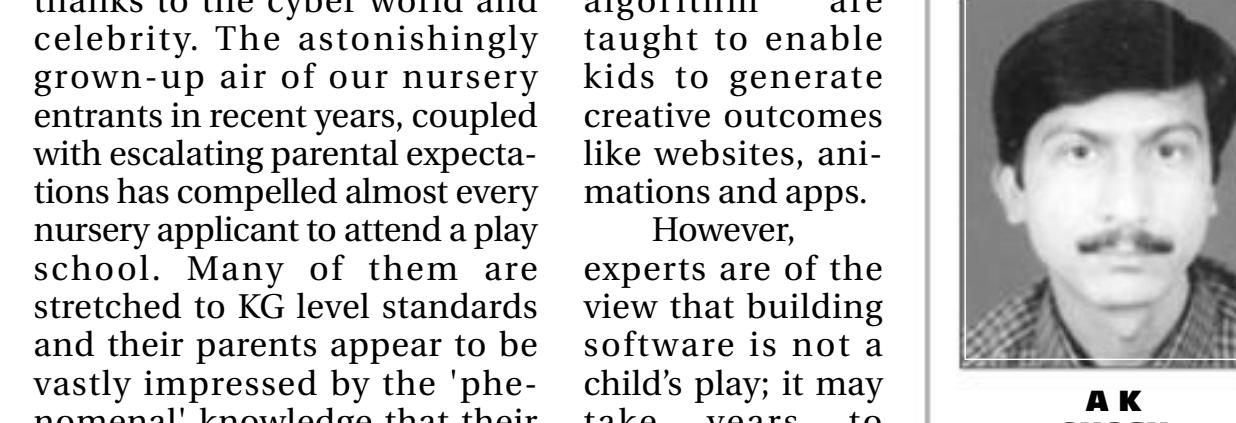
Bhutan's border with India, about 700 kilometres of wildlife infested jungle, characterised by brutal terrain and harsh weather most of the year, has been vulnerable to crime, including armed militancy, for decades. With the menacing implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are reminded that this porous border will always be a threat to our well-being. It takes special attention and effort to understand the conditions and circumstances that affect life along this expanse. Even as we enjoy a relatively comfortable life in most other parts of the country, the current situation requires that we stop to think about the reality that is daily life along the border for our fellow citizens.

An unprecedented crisis can only be overcome by an unprecedented response. Between September 26 and October 13 His Majesty The King visited the settlements along Bhutan's southern border and talked to government officials, security troops, volunteers, businessmen and women, students, farmers ~ people who understood that they are not left on their own. The Bhutanese population was also comforted to see His Majesty The Fourth King visiting the Southern dzongkhags last week.

The diligence of officials, the loyalty of security troops, and the outpouring of volunteers inspired by His Majesty The King has been heartwarming. But this Royal tour also focused on the Bhutanese people. It brought home the veracity that, while we appreciate the work of our front liners, the daily lives of the average citi-

KUENSEL
izens play a critical role in protecting the rest of the country. They, too, are our defense line. And their lives are not easy. Bhutanese living in the south are sometimes more connected with their neighbours living across the border than with the people who live inland. Farmers depend on Indian workers to till their fields, they buy their basic necessities from Indian stores, and there are even intermarriages with people across the border. Today, the restrictions on the communities on both sides of the border are necessary and their lives are understandably disrupted. Such a situation heightens the sensitivities and cross-border implications of the pandemic. India not only ranks high on the international Covid-19 infection scale, we are told that the actual numbers may be greater. The real level of infection and death and the difficulty of tracing, monitoring, and treating a population of 1.5 billion often seems like an exercise in futility.

Medical experts predict that it will be months before a vaccine is available. Trends indicate that the situation will become worse before it gets better. For Bhutan, every new infection is felt with excruciating consternation. Meanwhile, the least we can do is to appreciate and support our people in the south who are, in many ways, holding the fort. We were reminded, once again, of the values that truly matter, on October 13 ~ the ninth wedding anniversary of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Gyaltshen.



AK GHOSH

The writer is former Associate Professor, Department of English, Calcutta University, Kolkata, and is presently with Rabindra Bharati University



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

World needs more like her

SIR, Apropos your editorial, "Performance rewarded", published today, the New Zealand PM, Ms Ardern's remarkable success in her nation's parliamentary polls may arguably be attributed to her handling the Covid crisis with great aplomb and considerable acumen.

Her nation seems to have wrested the initiative from this wily affliction, at minimal cost, even as a few other nations have also done perhaps as creditably.

But then the preventive remedy of Covid lies not in the hands of

political leaders but in research laboratories.

Long before Covid, a greater scourge had been creeping in. Hard won democracies were sweeping Right in the global political canvas. Recently Sri Lanka, earlier some European nations, Brazil, India, the US, swinging hard right under Trump, all in step with the anthem of exclusivity set to the score of hollow claims to majoritarianism.

Clearly affluence, falsely related to a supremacist tenet, is breed-

ing increasing intolerance in a viral onslaught on democratic politics. Amidst such loud majoritarianism, New Zealand under Mrs Ardern acquires an enviable lustre of utopian and progressive liberalism, be it in handling the mosquito attacks or ensuring wide-ranging ethnic representation in the legislature, or the welfare schemes for the lesser enabled. Such a generous bandwidth in the socio-political spectrum of a nation is a political rarity.

The world caught in a maelstrom of social discord, could do with more leaders like her.

Yours, etc., R Narayanan,

Mumbai, 20 October

CAUTION NEEDED

SIR, This refers to the editorial, "Necessary caution" (October 22). India is now in "Unlock" mode, and people seem to be assuming that things are back to normal. Faced with a potential reversal of gains that India has made in slowing the spread of Covid-19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is right in asking us to be cautious against weakening the fight during the annual season of festivals. Over the past six months, numerous individual events have enabled the infection to explode and spread. Every single Covid-19 safety protocol is being violated by almost every political party in election ral-

CURBING ART

SIR, Opposition from sections of Tamils mainly the film industry and political parties, has led to versatile Tamil film star Vijay Sethupathi withdrawing from a planned biopic on the Sri Lankan bowing legend, Muttiah Muralitharan. The reason that Muralitharan had not raised his voice against the Sri Lankan state, and some Tamils have warned the actor against playing his character. It is a shame that these protests have prevented a talented actor from essaying a role based on the story of Muralitharan, who scaled peaks in international cricket and was appropriately named '800', in celebration of the number of Test wickets he bagged. Protest against art is not new to Tamil Nadu. Madras Cafe, a Hindi film, could not be screened in the State after opposition to its portrayal of the LTTE. In 2008, a Sri Lankan producer was forced to give up his footage while he was in Chennai to process his film at a studio. Some of those who demanded that Sethupathi withdraw from the biopic have emphasised that they were merely making an appeal to him, given his past political views in favour of causes that resonate with the people of Tamil Nadu. Whether it was an appeal or a threat, it has brought pressure on an artist to give up his professional decision. As for Muralitharan's political views, it may be that some of his remarks were seen as supporting the Sri Lankan Army's triumph over the LTTE. However, that is no reason to run down his monumental achievements in sport. It is unfortunate that the heckler's say has prevailed.

Yours, etc., Vandana, Chandigarh, 22 October.

lies. Cases of people throwing caution to the winds as they make purchases during the festival season are examples we must be aware of.

A lack of safe behaviour during Kerala's Onam festivities is an indicator of what might happen, reversing all the good work done. As a part of standard operating procedures, there is no effective system to enforce the rules in public as neither civil defence person-

nel nor volunteers are stationed at all hours to make sure people follow protocols.

Let us not forget what WHO chief scientist Dr Soumya Swaminathan said recently: "There will be a lot of guidance coming out, but I think an average person, a healthy young person, might have to wait until 2022 to get a vaccine."

Indians do need to be cautious.

Yours, etc., SS Paul,

Nadia, 22 October.





We are fighting the war of our generation. Let's respond with innovation, with new thought processes, with cooperation and collaboration between all the elements...

SANGITA REDDY
FICCI PRESIDENT AND APOLLO HOSPITALS MD

THUMBNAILS

BPLC: Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPLC), which controls around 12 per cent of the lubes market with its Mak-branded lubricants, will next week launch two high-grade synthetic lubes for premium cars and bikes. BPLC sells around 3.3 lakh tonnes of lubes under the main brand of Mak annually, which is worth around Rs 3,000 crore in terms of value. The company is launching Mak Titanium C4K, which is an ultra-low emission diesel engine lube for BS-VI cars, and Mak BlazeSynth for high-end bikes, the company said adding that these lubes are fully synthetic.

PTI

NBFCS: Non-banking financial companies (NBFCS) have written to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to include them as beneficiaries for availing funds under tap targeted long-term repo operations (TLTRO) scheme. To ensure comfortable liquidity conditions in the system, the RBI on October 9 announced to conduct on tap TLTRO worth Rs 1 lakh crore.

PTI

LIC: LIC has raised its stake in IRB Infrastructure Developers, which operates the iconic Mumbai-Pune Expressway, to 5.27 per cent in the September quarter, the highway construction firm said on Friday. LIC has been increasing their holding in our company for long. In the September quarter, LIC's stake in the company rose to 5.27 per cent from 3.81 per cent in the June quarter, IRB Infra chairman and managing director Virendra D Mhaiskar said in a statement.

PTI

Aureana: Ahead of festive season, Aureana's Luminos range offers a unique blend of skin brightening ingredients which help skin to get glow. Its ranges include brightening face wash, brightening serum, brightening day cream making skin look fresh, healthy and natural, according to a Press release statement.

PTI

IGL move: Days after diesel generators were banned in Delhi and neighbouring cities, Indraprastha Gas Ltd on Friday said it will help housing societies as well as commercial establishments to replace diesel in generators to environment-friendly natural gas.

PTI

Oriental Hotels: Hospitality service provider Oriental Hotels Ltd has said it has reported standalone net loss of Rs 17.71 crore during the quarter ending September 30, 2020. It recorded standalone net loss at Rs 2.53 crore during the corresponding quarter last year, a statement said on Friday. Oriental Hotels Ltd is an associate company of The Indian Hotels Company Ltd.

PTI

Markets back to winning ways; auto, power stocks rally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 23 OCTOBER

Domestic equity markets on Friday resumed their northward journey after a day's hiatus, with gains mainly in auto, power and consumer durable shares offsetting losses in IT and realty stocks.

The BSE benchmark Sensex settled 127.01 points or 0.31 per cent higher at 40,685.50; and the broader NSE Nifty rose 33.90 points or 0.28 per cent to end 11,930.35.

On a weekly basis, the Sensex rallied 702.52 points or 1.75 percent, while the Nifty advanced 167.90 points or 1.42 per cent.

On the Sensex chart on Friday, Maruti Suzuki was the top gainer, rallying around 4 per cent, followed by M&M, Tata Steel, PowerGrid, Bajaj Auto and NTPC.

On the other hand, UltraTech Cement, HCL Tech, HUL and Bajaj Finserv were among

the laggards.

On the sectoral front, BSE auto, consumer durables, power, utilities, industrials and capital goods indices rose up to 2.76 per cent; while realty, basic materials, IT, healthcare, teck and bankex ended in the red.

Broader midcap and small-cap indices rose up to 0.71 per cent.

"Markets consolidated further for yet another day and ended marginally higher. A mixed trend was witnessed on the sectoral front wherein noticeable buying was observed in auto, consumer durables and capital goods space, while realty, IT, and healthcare traded subdued," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

All eyes are on US markets for updates on the stimulus package and upcoming presidential elections, he said adding that the news on COVID-19 cases in Europe will also remain on the participants' radar. Bourses in Hong

Kong, Tokyo and Seoul closed up to 0.54 per cent higher, while Shanghai finished in the red.

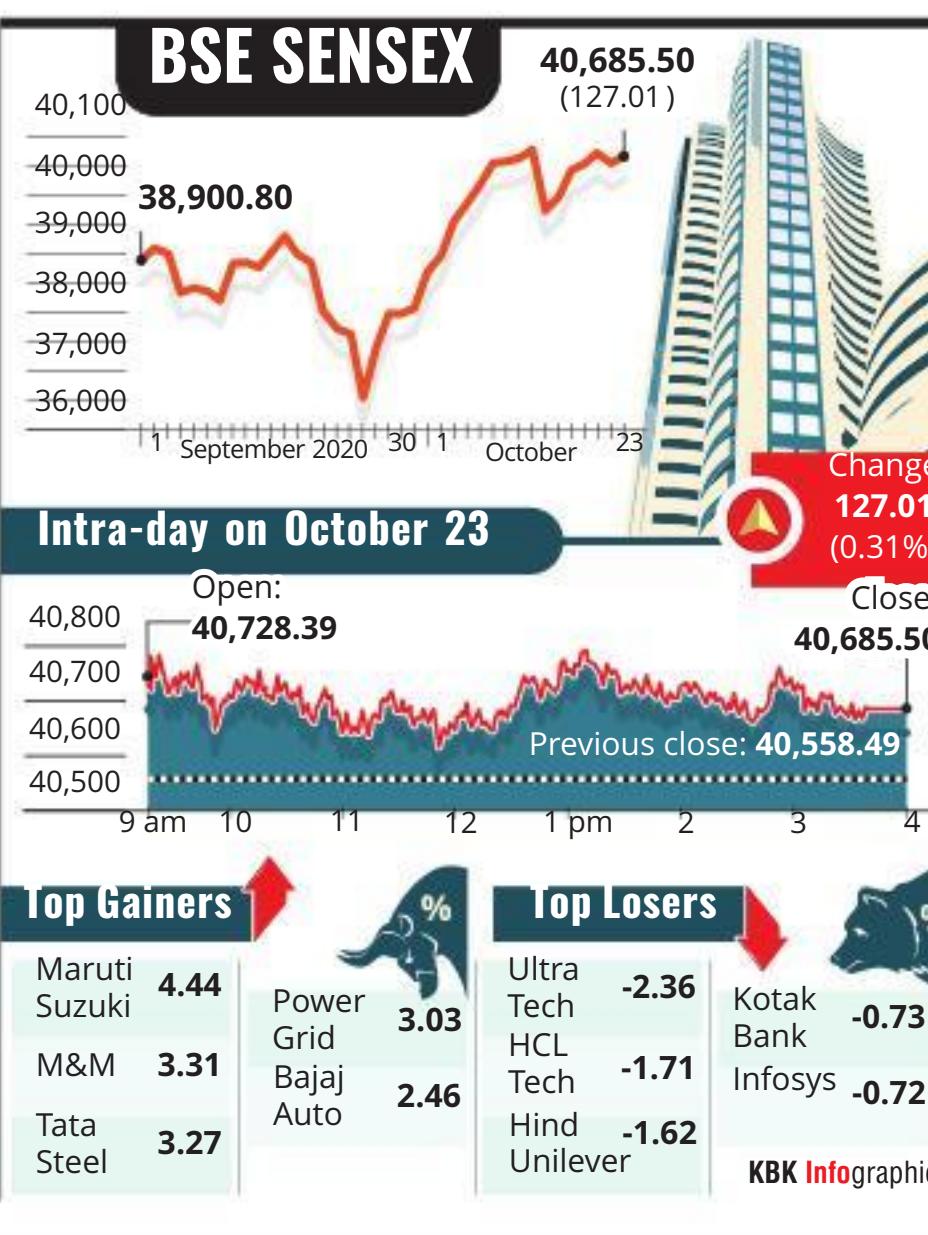
Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading in the green in early deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.38 per cent higher at \$42.62 per barrel.

In the forex market, the rupee depreciated by 7 paise to close at 73.61 against the US dollar on Friday due to dollar buying by banks possibly on the behalf of the Reserve Bank.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened weak at 73.62 against the US dollar and remained under pressure for the most part of the session. It moved in a range of 73.46 to 73.67 against the US dollar in day trade.

The local had settled at 73.54 against the greenback in the previous session on Thursday.



Govt to provide fortified rice under mid-day meal programme: Food Secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER



The government has decided to supply fortified rice in schools covered under the mid-day meal programme as part of its effort to fight malnutrition, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Friday.

The rice will be fortified with three micronutrients -- vitamin B12, iron and folic acid, he said.

Addressing a seminar organised by industry body PHDCCI, the secretary noted that micronutrients play an important role and said the government is focusing on this area.

"Formative years of child are extremely important. Therefore, all children who are attending ICDS and all mid-day meal programmes will be supplied with fortified

centres and all children who are attending schools and are covered under the mid-day meal programme, they should get fortified rice," Pandey said.

He informed that the Department of Food and Public Distribution had good interactions with the Ministries of Women & Child Development as well as HRD (Education Ministry).

"We decided that across the country all ICDS centres and all mid-day meal programmes will be supplied with fortified

rice. These fortified rice will carry three micronutrients - B12, iron and folic acid," the secretary said.

This would supplement the government's effort towards fighting the menace of malnutrition, Pandey said.

The secretary highlighted that the government has distributed around 10 lakh tonnes of pulses and chana during this COVID pandemic to provide nutritious food to people through rations shops.

Pandey said India runs the world's biggest food programme in the form of National Food Security Act (NFS), that gives a legal entitlement to 81 crore beneficiaries covered under this law.

He said all ration cards have been digitised and 93 per cent have been linked to Aadhaar numbers.

HPCL raises ₹2,000 cr debt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) on Friday said it has raised Rs 2,000 crore in debt for funding its capital expenditure during the current year.

In a stock exchange filing, HPCL said it has issued unsecured, redeemable, non-convertible, non-cumulative, taxable, debenture of Rs 10 lakh each aggregating to Rs 2,000 crores on private placement basis for funding of capital expenditure, including recoupment of expenditure already incurred.

Coupon rate will be 4.79 per cent per annum for the debt instruments which will mature on October 23, 2023. HPCL debt raising follows similar moves Indian Oil Corp (IOC) and Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) earlier this week.

IDBI Bank reports ₹324 crore profit for Q2; NPA ratio down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

IDBI Bank on Friday reported a net profit of Rs 324 crore for the second quarter of the current fiscal year against a loss of Rs 3,459 crore for the same period of the previous year.

In a stock exchange filing, IDBI said it has issued unsecured, redeemable, non-convertible, non-cumulative, taxable, debenture of Rs 10 lakh each aggregating to Rs 2,000 crores on private placement basis for funding of capital expenditure, including recoupment of expenditure already incurred.

Total income of the bank fell by 7.5 per cent to Rs 5,761.06 crore during July-September 2020-21 compared to Rs 6,231.02 crore in the same period of 2019-20, the private sector lender said.

The bank's net interest

income grew by 4 per cent to Rs 1,695 crore during the reported quarter, while the net interest margin improved by 37 basis points to 2.70 per cent from 2.33 per cent.

The lender promoted by LIC said it also improved on its bad assets ratio by reducing gross non-performing assets (NPAs) to 25.08 per cent of gross loans as on September 30, 2020, against 29.43 per cent a year ago. Net NPAs improved to 2.67 per cent from 5.97 per cent.

In absolute value, gross NPAs stood at Rs 41,090.53 crore by the end of September 2020 against Rs 52,052.78 crore by September 2019. Net NPAs were down at Rs 3,362.66 crore from Rs 7,918.61 crore.

Provisions for bad loans

GST: Centre borrows, transfers ₹6K cr as first tranche to 16 states

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

back borrowing coordinated by the Ministry of Finance," reads the press release of the Finance Ministry.

Five states did not have any shortfall on account of GST compensation.

The first tranche given to 16 states namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and 2 Union Territories: UT of Delhi and UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

The tenor of borrowing is expected to be broadly in the range of 3 to 5 years, the ministry said.

ICICI Lombard stock settled nearly flat at Rs 1,257.50 on BSE.

ICICI Lombard Q2 profit jumps 35 pct to ₹416 cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

ICICI Lombard General Insurance on Friday reported 35 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 415.74 crore for September quarter 2020-21.

The insurer had posted a net profit of Rs 307.91 crore for the year-ago period.

Total income in the quarter under review rose to Rs 2,883.40 crore from Rs 2,739.67 crore in the same period of 2019-20, ICICI Lombard said in a regulatory filing.

Net premium earned during the quarter grew to Rs 2,462.52 crore from Rs 2,356.92 crore. Gross direct premium income rose 8 per cent to Rs 3,189 crore.

"We have stepped up efforts to check the price rise. We have requested state governments and union territories to take onion from our buffer stock for retail intervention," Consumer Affairs Secretary Leena Nandan told

'Centre offers buffer stock onion to states/UTs to check prices'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

In a bid to cool down retail onion prices that are ruling over Rs 75 per kg in some places, the centre has stepped up efforts and asked states and union territories to take the kitchen staple from the central buffer stock for retail intervention.

As per data maintained by the Consumer Affairs Ministry, retail onion prices in Mumbai were ruling at Rs 86/kg, Chennai at Rs 83/kg, Kolkata at Rs 70/kg and Delhi at Rs 55/kg on October 22.

"We have stepped up efforts to check the price rise. We have requested state governments and union territories to take onion from our buffer stock for retail intervention," Consumer Affairs Secretary Leena Nandan told

To check prices in Delhi, Nafed is also offering onion from the buffer stock for retail sale via Kendriya Bandhan and Mother Dairy's Safal outlets in the national capital, she said.

The government has so far offloaded 30,000 tonnes of onion from the buffer stock at a procured rate of Rs 26-28 per kg to states which wish to lift the stock on their own.

For others who want it to be delivered, the offered price would be Rs 30 per kg, she added.

Besides this, the secretary said that cooperative Nafed, which is procuring and maintaining the onion buffer stock on behalf of the government, is offloading the stock in wholesale mandis across the country.

The centre is offering onion from the buffer stock stored at Nashik, Maharashtra, at the procured rate of Rs 26-28 per kg to states which wish to lift the stock on their own. For others who want it to be delivered, the offered price would be Rs 30 per kg, she added.

The kharif onions are likely to start arriving soon in mandis and the government hopes that an estimated kharif crop of 37 lakh tonnes is likely to boost supply and soften prices.

Meanwhile, the government is considering import of onion and has relaxed fumigation and phytosanitary norms till December 15 and activated Indian consulates to facilitate shipment.

Yes Bank posts ₹130 crore net profit in Q2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

Yes Bank on Friday reported a standalone net profit of Rs 129.37 crore for the second quarter ended September despite a spurt in bad loans.

The private sector lender had posted a net loss of Rs 600 crore in the corresponding quarter of previous fiscal.

Total income slipped to Rs 5,952.1 crore during July-September quarter from Rs 8,347.50 crore in the same quarter last year, the bank said.

Gross bad loans more than doubled to 16.9 per cent of gross advances as on September 30, 2020 from 7.39 per cent a year ago.

Net non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans also rose to 4.70 per cent from 4.35 per cent a year ago.

Govt to sell up to 15 pc stake in RVNL via OFS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

The government is planning to sell up to 15 per cent stake in Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) and has invited bids from merchant bankers for managing the share sale.

"The GoI intends to disinvest up to 15 per cent paid up equity capital of RVNL out of its shareholding of 87.84 per cent through Offer for Sale (OFS) method of shares by promoters through the stock exchanges," the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) said while inviting bids from merchant bankers.

The government will appoint up to three merchant bankers for managing RVNL share sale. The responsibilities of the merchant

SBI's multi-purpose card in pact with Delhi Metro

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

SBI Card on Friday launched a contactless multi-purpose card in partnership with Delhi Metro that can function as a credit card as well as a metro smart card.

The unique combo credit card 'Delhi Metro SBI Card' is thoughtfully designed for regular commuters on the Delhi Metro, SBI Card said in a release.

The Delhi Metro SBI Card is a multi-purpose card which functions as a credit card as well as a metro smart card, offering the convenience and safety associated with both in one card, the pure-play credit card company said.

Customers can apply for the combo card through the sales team present at metro stations as well as online through the app platform on SBI Card website at an annual fee of Rs 499, SBI Card said.</p



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

K PALANISWAMI
CHIEF MINISTER, TAMIL NADU

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 2020

We will take final decision on contesting polls in J&K: Mehbooba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR, 23 OCTOBER

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti (*in photo*) on Friday said her party and the recently-floated People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration will take a final decision on whether to contest elections or not in the union territory.

Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream political parties, including the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party, formed the Gupkar alliance on October 15 for restoration of special status of the erstwhile state and also to initiate a dialogue between all the stakeholders on the issue.

In her first media interaction in over 14 months after



the abrogation of provisions of Article 370 in August last year and her subsequent detention, Mufti said personally she was not interested in contesting polls till the erstwhile state's flag and constitution were restored.

"As far as the PDP is concerned, now we are not alone. If you remember, we, along with the NC, had taken a united stand before the commencement of panchayat

polls (in 2018) that we will not participate in them. This time also, we will discuss it in the party, with our workers, and then discuss it in the People's Alliance (for Gupkar Declaration). Whatever decision we take there, will be bound on everyone," she told reporters at a press conference at her Gupkar residence.

However, the former chief minister said on the personal front, she had no interest in contesting any elections till the erstwhile state's flag and its constitution was restored.

"As far as I am concerned, I have no interest in elections. Till the time the constitution, under which I used to contest elections, is returned to us, Mehbooba Mufti has got nothing to do with elections, let me tell you that," she said.

Mufti said she was not for

power even if the union territory was upgraded to a state. "I am no more for power be it a union territory or even a state. I was never for power. If I had any greed for power, we would not have left the Congress and created the PDP. We are not only for power. We could have made the government with the Congress (after 2014 polls), but we entered into an alliance with the BJP for a reason," she said, adding that "I am not ready to take any oath without my flag and my constitution".

When asked about whether her party and the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration will contest the District Development Councils (DDCs), she said a meeting of the alliance was being held on Saturday where these issues

will also be discussed apart from the general situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

However, when enquired further if not contesting those polls will be like conceding the space to the Bharatiya Janata Party, Mufti said it was a hypothetical question.

"You are discussing everything hypothetically. The alliance will sit and discuss it. It is not about the BJP; it is about the BJP and its cronies. Because, people have to survive and God forbid, it should not happen that they (people) will come into the hands of those where they will be kicked out. So, we will take a decision keeping in mind all the pros and cons. Farooq (Abdullah) sahib is our leader, so we will take the right decision after everyone gives their opinion," she said.

Plasma therapy will continue in Goa due to good results: Rane

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI, 23 OCTOBER



The Goa government on Friday said it would continue to perform plasma therapy on COVID-19 patients as it has yielded good results in the state so far. Health Minister Vishwanath Rane (*in photo*) said.

The move of administering plasma and giving medicines like remdesivir and steroids is leading to good recoveries among the COVID-19 patients at the state-run facilities for COVID-19.

As per the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Centre was considering to remove convalescent plasma therapy from the national clinical management protocol for COVID-19.

"But we are not going to stop plasma therapy on our patients. We will continue with it as advised by our experts," Rane said, in response to a query.

The state government does not want to have a "false sense of satisfaction" over the drop in the number of COVID-19 cases, the minister said, adding that 2,000 to 2,500 tests need to be conducted daily to know the exact number of infected patients.

Row erupts in TN over MP's alleged remarks on women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 23 OCTOBER

A row erupted here on Friday over the alleged derogatory remarks of Lok Sabha MP and Viduthalai Chiruthaigai Katchi (VCK) founder Thol. Thirumavalavan about women, with the BJP lashing out at him and demanding an apology.

The allegation against the Chidambaram Member of Parliament was that he spoke ill of women, in the context of Hindu text Manusmriti, but the VCK leader denied denigrating them and insisted he was working for their emancipation.

A video clip in social media purportedly showed him making some remarks but the

leader alleged "communal" forces were creating a wrong impression that he belittled women. Users on micro-blogging site Twitter debated the issue, with some supporting him and others criticising the MP.

BJP leader Khushbu Sundar hit out at Thirumavalavan and asked him to be careful of what he speaks since he was a political leader. Addressing reporters at the state BJP headquarters, Kamalalayam, Sundar said women cannot be objectified and accused him of "using religion" against them.

"He is a political party leader and should be aware of what he is saying. Women cannot be objectified... you should apologise," she said and pointed out

there were women in his family too. Without naming anyone, she said womenfolk of leaders claiming to be followers of rational leader, the late EVR Periyar, "go from temple to temple and click pictures."

Responding to the charges, Thirumavalavan said he had made no disparaging remarks against women while participating in an online conference recently. "I said that Manusmriti demeans women. But those with an eye on political mileage, a casteist-communal group is spreading falsehood against me and creating an impression as if I spoke against women," he said in a video uploaded on his Twitter page.

Khadse joins NCP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 23 OCTOBER

Former Maharashtra BJP leader Eknath Khadse on Friday joined the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in the presence of the party's chief Sharad Pawar.

Sulking since his unceremonious exit from the Devendra Fadnavis-led ministry in 2016 over land grab allegations, Khadse (68) on Wednesday quit the BJP. The same day, state NCP chief Jayant Patil announced he would be joining the Pawar-led party.

NCP is part of the ruling alliance in the state along with Shiv Sena and Congress, whose Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government assumed office 11 months ago.

We didn't leak information about Sushant case: CBI to HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 23 OCTOBER

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which is probing actor Sushant Singh Rajput's (*in photo*) death told the Bombay High Court on Friday that it had not leaked any information related to the case to the media.

Hearing PILs about "media trial" in the case, the court remarked that the media has become "polarised" and it was a question not of regulation but of checks and balances.

Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, representing the CBI, asserted that the Enforcement Directorate and Narcotics Control Bureau, which are also probing cases related to the actor's death by suicide

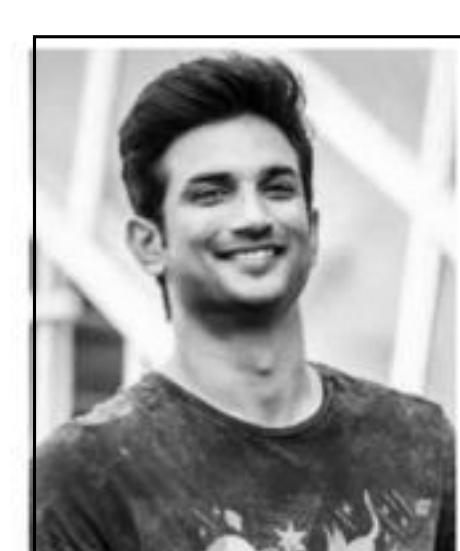
in June, too had not leaked any information.

All the three central agencies had filed affidavits in the court stating that they had not leaked any probe-related information, he said.

"We know our responsibilities and there is no question of leaking information by any of the agencies," the ASG added.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni was hearing final arguments on public interest litigations seeking that the media be asked to be restrained in its coverage of the probe into the actor's death. The HC is hearing arguments on whether a statutory mechanism is required to control the TV news content.

At an earlier hearing, the petitioners, which include a group



news channels which are party to the case told the HC that the electronic media has a self-regulatory mechanism and the state must not have any control over their content. On Friday, as lawyers of news channels cited old judgments to argue against a statutory regulatory mechanism, the HC remarked that the media has changed.

"The media was neutral then (in the past). It is now highly polarised... This is not a question of regulation, this is a question of checks and balances. People forget where to draw lines," the judges said. "You want to criticize the government, do it. The issue is someone has died and the allegation is you are interfering," the HC said. The hearing will continue next week.

Mumbai mall blaze: 3,500 people evacuated from adjacent tower

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 23 OCTOBER

Mumbai fire brigade personnel are engaged in controlling the blaze at a mall 12 hours after fire broke out there, even as around 3500 people from an adjoining building were evacuated, civic sources said on Friday. A major fire erupted at the City Center Mall in Mumbai Central area at 8.50 pm on Thursday. Two fire personnel have been injured while controlling the blaze, the sources said. Around 300 people were rescued from the basement plus three-storey mall after the fire broke out, an official said.

A Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) release said the Mumbai Fire Brigade has given a 'brigade call' in

which fire engines are called from all agencies in the city. Around 50 fire fighting vehicles, including 24 fire engines and 16 jumbo tankers are engaged in the fire fighting at the spot, besides over 250 officers and firemen, it said. A fireman sustained minor injuries on his right hand during the fire fighting operation and was rushed to nearby JJ Hospital, it said, adding his condition is stable. The fire erupted in a mobile shop on the second floor of the mall, which mainly houses shops for mobile accessories, besides a few other stores. The BMC said around 3500 residents of the 55-floor Orchid Enclave tower adjoining the mall were shifted as a precautionary measure. A police officer said they eva-

cuated around 300 people from the mall when the blaze erupted. The fire was initially categorised as level 1 (minor) but was upgraded to level-3 at 10.45 pm and to level-4 at 2.30

am, after flames spread to other parts of the building.

Mumbai Mayor Kishor Pednekar visited the site and reviewed the fire fighting operation. According to fire brigade

officials, the exact cause of the fire was not yet known.

Earlier on Thursday, a fire broke out in a garment factory at Kurla in Mumbai. It was doused after two hours.

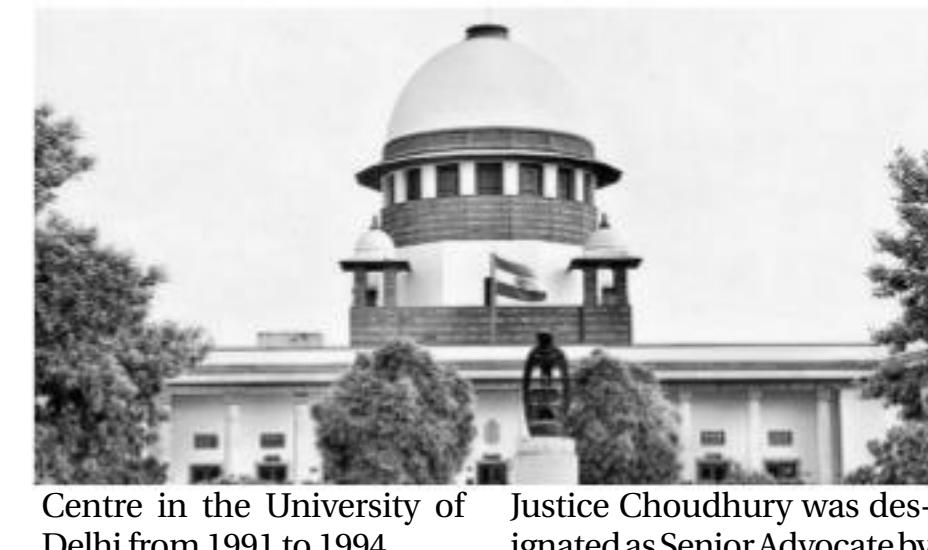
SC Collegium approves appointment of 3 Additional Judges of Gauhati HC as Permanent Judges

NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

The Supreme Court Collegium has approved the proposal for appointment of three Additional Judges of Gauhati High Court as Permanent Judges.

The collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India S A Bobde, recommended the proposal for appointment of Justice Manish Choudhury, Additional Judge of Gauhati High Court as Permanent Judge.

It also approved the proposal for appointment of Justices Sanjay Kumar Medhi and Nani Tagore Permanent Judges of Gauhati High Court. Justice Medhi completed his school from the Don Bosco School, Guwahati and was enrolled as LLB student in Campus Law

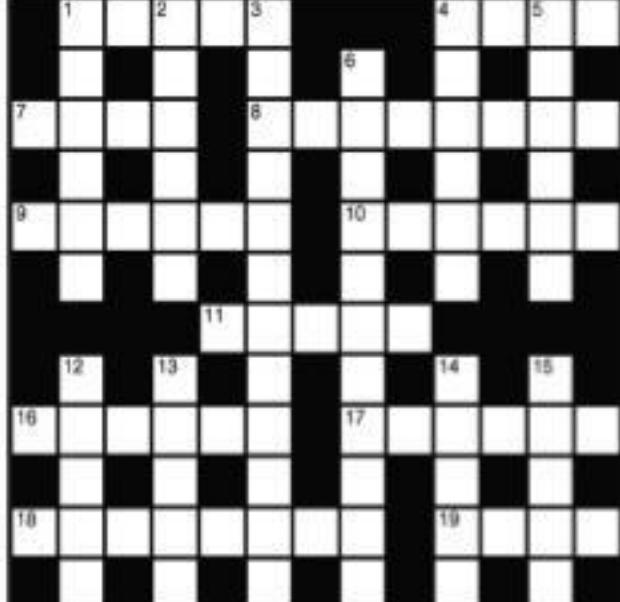


Centre in the University of Delhi from 1991 to 1994.

He was elevated as an Additional Judge of the Gauhati High Court on November 19, 2018. Justice Tagore was designated as Senior Advocate by the Gauhati High Court on August 4, 2019. Apart from CJI Bobde, Justices NV Ramana, RN Naranian, UU Lalit and AM Khanwilkar are part of the 5-judge Collegium.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



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FOOTBALL INQUIRIES

• Deon Dayal Upadhyay 2386836, 23865181

RAILWAY INQUIRIES

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• Air Canada Flight Inquiry 25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528181

AIR FRANCE Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)

• 25652294 (Airport)

KUWAIT AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

• 25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528181

DOMESTIC FLIGHT INQUIRIES

• AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407

DOMESTIC AIRPORT INQUIRIES

• Deon Dayal Upadhyay 2386836, 23865181

DOMESTIC ROADWAYS INQUIRIES

• Deon Dayal Upadhyay 2386836, 23865181

DOMESTIC AIRPORT INQUIRIES

• Deon Dayal Upadhyay 2386836, 23865181

DOMESTIC ROADWAYS INQUIRIES



As the British side broke its own promises, the Chinese government will consider not recognising the BNO passport as a valid travel document, and reserve the right to impose further measures

ZHAO LIJIAN

CHINA'S FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	32°C	26°C
HONG KONG	24°C	23°C
TOKYO	18°C	16°C
LONDON	16°C	8°C
DUBAI	33°C	23°C
SAN FRANCISCO	18°C	12°C
NEW YORK	21°C	17°C
MOSCOW	15°C	8°C

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

THUMBNAILS



A woman stands at a makeshift memorial for Azerbaijanis killed during the military conflict with Armenia over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh, outside the Azerbaijani embassy in Moscow on Friday.

AP



US President Donald Trump (R) Democratic Presidential candidate, former US Vice President Joe Biden and moderator, NBC News anchor, Kristen Welker (C) participate in the final presidential debate at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, on Thursday.

AP

PTI
WASHINGTON, 23 OCTOBER

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

The two leaders traded barbs during the debate that lasted just over 90 minutes, attacking each other's positions on controlling the raging coronavirus pandemic and curbing the country's world-leading death toll of over 223,000.

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

The debate, moderated by NBC's Kristen Welker, saw plenty of personal attacks between 74-year-old Trump, a Republican, and his 77-year-old Democratic rival, Biden, whose mutual dislike was quite evident.

The coronavirus dominated the opening minutes of the Trump-Biden face-off with President Trump terming the contagion a worldwide problem.

"This has been a worldwide problem, but I've been congratulated by many countries on what we've been able to do, he said.

Trump once again blamed China for the virus and said Beijing failed to prevent the disease from becoming a pandemic.

He claimed that America was very close to developing a vaccine against the deadly disease that Biden said was claiming 1,000 lives daily in the US.

"We have a vaccine that's coming, it's ready. It's going to be announced within weeks and it's going to be delivered," Trump said.

The president said his generals lined up for the fast distribution of the vaccine, as he expects to have 100 million vials.

Biden challenged Trump and alleged that his policies have resulted in a large number of deaths in the country.

"We are about to go into a dark winter. A dark winter and he has no clear plan and there's no prospect that there's going to be a vaccine available for the majority of the American people before the middle of next year, he said.

Trump, who has often said the worst is over with the pandemic, reassured this, claiming the US was rounding the turn" and the country is learning to live with it.

"He always says people are learning to live with it. People are learning to die with it. I will take care of this. I will make sure we have a plan," Biden responded.

On climate change, Trump accused China, India and Russia of not taking care of their filthy air as he justified America's withdrawal from the landmark Paris climate agreement.

"Look at China, how filthy it is. Look at Russia. Look at India, it's filthy. The air is filthy. We have the best emission numbers that we've had

in 35 years under this administration. We are working so well with the industry," he said.

"The Paris Accord, I took us out because we were going to have to spend trillions of dollars and we were treated very unfairly. When they put us in there, they did a great disservice. They're going to take away our businesses," he asserted.

"We have the best environmental numbers, ozone numbers, and so many other numbers. In the meantime, China, Russia, India all these countries they're spewing stuff into the air, he alleged.

Biden and Trump clashed on race relations, a topic that has gained prominence after the horrific murder of an African American in police custody early this year in Minneapolis.

Biden termed Trump "one of the most racist presidents we've had in modern history", asserting that his Republican rival at his last debate did not condemn white supremacy and told an extremist group to "stand down and stand by."

"Here is one of the most racist presidents we've had in modern history. He pours fuel on every single racist fire. Every single one," Biden alleged.

The US president portrayed himself as a champion of Black people and reiterated that no president has done more for Black Americans than anyone other than former US President Abraham Lincoln.

"Nobody has done more for the black community than Donald Trump. And if you look, with the exception of Abraham Lincoln, possible exception, with the exception of Abraham Lincoln, nobody has done what I've done," Trump

claimed.

When the debate moved to the topic of immigration,

Trump appeared callous about the toll that his policies have taken on over 500 children who were separated from their parents at the border.

"They are so well taken care of. They are in facilities that are so clean," Trump said.

Trump's cold response allowed Biden to attack the president, calling his family separation policy contrary to everything that America stands for.

The two candidates accused each other of serious

an expanded electoral map.

After the debate, Biden told reporters he would not ban fossil fuels or move away from them for a long time. Tackling climate change means sharply cutting oil, gas and coal emissions, scientists say, and that means eliminating most burning of fossil fuels. Biden talks of a 30-year transition to a carbon-free economy, by encouraging more wind and solar power and more energy efficiency.

I would transition away from the oil industry, yes," Biden said in the debate's closing minutes under pepper-

ing from Trump.

The oil industry pollutes, significantly. It has to be replaced by renewable energy over time."

The Biden campaign's clima-

te plan calls for the U.S.

to have net-zero greenhouse

gas emissions by 2050. He also

repeated his pledge to end fed-

eral subsidies for the oil and

gas industry. Biden's plan

doesn't call for a ban on cli-

mate-damaging fossil fuels.

But Republicans see Biden's

comments as potentially

damaging in states that rely

on the oil and gas industry.

Trump has sought to make

hydraulic fracturing, a process

of natural gas extraction, a key

issue in Pennsylvania, wrong-

ly charging Biden would ban

the practice.

The back-and-forth came

as the debate was coming to

a close, during a segment on

how the candidates would

respond to climate change.

Biden says the country has a

moral obligation to tackle

climate change, while Trump

has questioned the well-

established science behind it.

Polls show about three in

four Americans are con-

cerned about climate change.

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The decision to mute

microphones comes after a

chaotic first presidential

debate that saw the two

candidates interrupting

each other repeatedly.

The final debate was

moderated by NBC News

correspondent Kristen Welker.

Under the new rules,

Trump and Biden each had

two minutes of uninterrupted

time to speak at the

beginning of every 15-

second segment of the debate.

Both campaigns had

agreed to the two-minute,

uninterrupted rule.

The mute button was

under a member of the

production crew who works

for the Commission on

Presidential Debates. The

person was responsible for

turning off the microphone.

A member of each of

the Trump and Biden cam-

paigns monitored the per-

son who controlled the

mute button backstage.

As hoped by the com-

mission officials, the but-

ton allowed for a more

civilised exchange of views.

WEATHER

Trump, Biden spar over Covid, race, climate in final debate



A woman stands at a makeshift memorial for Azerbaijanis killed during the military conflict with Armenia over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh, outside the Azerbaijani embassy in Moscow on Friday.

AP

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DONALD TRUMP
US PRESIDENT

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 2020

11

THUMBNAILS



Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn and Queen Suthida greet royalist supporters after a Buddhist ceremony for the late king Chulalongkorn in Bangkok on Friday.

AFP

Japan youngster starts volunteer online message counseling: Suicides are on the rise among Japanese teens and that worries 21-year-old Koki Ozora, who grew up depressed and lonely. His nonprofit Anata no Ibashi, or A Place for You, is run entirely by volunteers. It offers a 24-hour text-messaging service for those seeking a sympathetic ear, promising to answer every request within five seconds for urgent ones. The online Japanese-language chat service has grown since March to 500 volunteers, many living abroad in different time zones to provide counseling during those hours when the need for suicide prevention runs highest, between 10 p.m. and the break of dawn. What makes Ozora's idea work during the pandemic is that it's all virtual, including training for volunteers. Online volunteer services are rare in Japan. This really gives me hope, Ozora said of the flood of volunteers. They tell me they just had to do something. A Keio University student, Ozora designed the site setup, which allows more experienced staff to supervise the counseling.

AP

Libyan factions sign countrywide UN-brokered cease-fire

AP

GENEVA, 23 OCTOBER

The rival sides in Libya's conflict signed a permanent cease-fire Friday, a deal the United Nations billed as historic after years of fighting that has split the North African country in two. But skepticism over whether the agreement would hold began emerging almost immediately.

The breakthrough, which among other things orders foreign mercenaries out of the country within three months, sets the stage for political talks in November to find a lasting solution to the chaos unleashed after a 2011 NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gadhafi.

Previous diplomatic initiatives to end the war have repeatedly collapsed but the UN-brokered deal aims to cement a months-long lull in fighting and boost the political process.

I am honored to be among you today to witness a moment that will go down in history, said Stephanie Turco Williams, the top UN envoy for Libya, who led mediation talks this week in Geneva. She did, however, express some caution, noting that a long and difficult road remains ahead.

It's not clear how the cease-fire will be enforced given the patchwork of militias in Libya but Williams said armed groups and military units had agreed to return to their camps and that the deal would take effect immediately.

Foreign mercenaries will depart from all Libyan territories land, air and sea" within three months, she added, referring to the thousands of Syrian fighters deployed by



A handout photo released on Friday by the United Nations Office in Geneva shows Head of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces delegation A. Amhimmid Mohamed Alammami (L) and Head of the Government of National Accord's (GNA) military delegation Ahmed Ali Abushahma shaking hands next to deputy special representative of the UN Secretary-General for Political Affairs in Libya

to the holding of national elections, the UN mission said.

Friday's deal follows a series of breakthroughs since fighting came to a halt in June, when Haftar's 14-month campaign to capture Tripoli collapsed.

International pressure has been building on the parties to avert a battle over the strategic city of Sirte, the gateway to Libya's major oil export terminals. This fall, Haftar and allied eastern tribes announced the end of a months-long blockade of Libya's oil facilities, initially imposed to protest alleged corruption in the oil sector and unfair distribution of revenues to the east.

Last month, the two sides reached preliminary agreements to exchange prisoners and open up air and land transit across the country's divided territory. On Friday, Williams said that a passenger plane flew from Tripoli to Benghazi for the first time in months, paving the way for a regular flights between eastern and western Libya. In another sign of progress, she said the key oil ports of Ras Lanuf and al-Sidr would soon resume production. Libya's prized light crude has long been a key factor in the country's civil war, with rival militias and foreign powers jostling for control of Africa's largest oil reserves.

To maintain the ceasefire, the two sides agreed to establish a joint police operations room that will help secure areas following the withdrawal of armed groups. The rivals also agreed to form a joint limited military force" of personnel who report to the UN's Joint Military Commission under Williams' watch.

The Geneva-based talks come ahead of a political forum in Tunisia in November. That forum aims to generate consensus on a unified governance framework and arrangements that will lead

supported by an array of fractious militias, though the administrations often struggle to control them. In much of the country, heavily armed militias hold sway and have repeatedly undermined cease-fire attempts.

Ali Abushahma, a field commander for the administration in Tripoli and the head of its delegation, said: We have had enough suffering, enough bloodshed." I appeal to all Libya: Be one hand, he said, warning of polarization by factions.

Meanwhile, Amraja Alammami, the head of Haftar's delegation, pledged in a short speech to implement what had been agreed upon in Geneva. The meetings this week mark the fourth round of talks involving the Joint Military Commission under Williams' watch.

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Israel strikes Gaza after Palestinian militants fire rockets

PTI
JERUSALEM, 23 OCTOBER

The Israeli military said Friday it launched overnight airstrikes in the Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants fired two rockets, with no reports of casualties or major damage on either side.

The military said fighter jets and other aircraft struck a weapons manufacturing site and underground infrastructure belonging to the Islamic militant group Hamas, which rules Gaza.

Late Thursday, Palestinian militants fired two rockets into Israel. One was intercepted by Israeli missile defenses while the other fell in an open area.

Israel and Hamas have fought three wars and several skirmishes since the militant group seized power from rival Palestinian forces in 2007. Israel holds Hamas responsible for all attacks emanating from Gaza, including those claimed by other militant groups.

Israel and Egypt have maintained a crippling blockade on the coastal territory, which is home to 2 million Palestinians, since Hamas seized power.

Earlier this week, Israel announced the discovery of an unfinished tunnel dug by militants that had crossed into Israel before it was detected by underground sensors. It said the tunnel ran dozens of meters (yards) underground and was intended to facilitate attacks.

Israel has uncovered around 20 such tunnels since the last war with Hamas, in 2014.

Pak's anti-corruption body slaps fresh graft case on Nawaz Sharif

PTI
ISLAMABAD, 23 OCTOBER

Pakistan's anti-corruption body has slapped a fresh corruption case on deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, compounding the legal woes of the embattled Opposition leader who has frequently attacked the powerful military as well as the government.

Sharif, the 70-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) who was ousted from power in 2017 by the Supreme Court on corruption charges, is currently in London for medical treatment.

The National Accountability Bureau also approved cases against Sharif's ex-personal secretary Fawad Hasan Fawad, former federal minister Ahsan Iqbal, former foreign secretary Aizaz Chaudhry and former Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief Aftab Sultan, Dawn newspaper reported.

On Thursday, a total of 11 cases were approved at NAB's Executive Board Meeting (EBM) presided over by its chairman, retired Justice Javed Iqbal.



According to the NAB, a fresh case was approved against Sharif along with Chaudhry, Sultan and Fawad for illegally purchasing 73 high-security vehicles for the security of foreign dignitaries. They are accused of favouritism and illegal use of vehicles, causing a loss of over Rs 1,952 million to the national exchequer.

The case against Iqbal was approved two days after he had said in a private TV talk show that the NAB had been investigating the Narowal Sports City case against him for the last two-and-a-half years but did not file a reference. Sharif is already facing several cases of corruption and misuse of authority which he has declared as a result of politi-

cal vendetta by the current government led by Prime Minister Khan.

The approval of fresh cases followed a recent speech by Prime Minister Khan that the Opposition would see a different Imran Khan, which was interpreted as a threat to arrest more opposition leaders and court cases.

Apart from Sharif and his close aides, the NAB approved cases worth billions of rupees of alleged corruption against several officials and businessmen for causing losses to the country in different projects. Sharif criticised the military establishment in recent speeches at gatherings of the opposition Pakistan Democratic Movement.

Days before the July 2018 general elections, Sharif was convicted in the Avenfield properties case and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

His daughter Maryam was sentenced to seven years in prison for abetting and his son-in-law Captain (retd) Mohammad Saifur to one year. In December 2018, anti-corruption court judge Arshad Malik convicted Sharif in Al-Azizia Steel Mills case and sen-

tenced him to seven years in prison. Judge Malik was later dismissed from service over misconduct.

The IHC later granted bail to Sharif, Maryam and Safdar Sharif, after his conviction in the Al-Azizia case, was sent to jail but released for eight weeks on medical grounds. The bail-granting order lapsed while the former premier was in London.

The IHC had in September fixed the appeals against conviction of Sharif in Al-Azizia and Avenfield cases. After hearing the pleas, the court rejected Sharif's applications seeking hearing in absentia and issued his non-bailable arrest warrants.

The court then issued his proclamation giving the former premier final opportunity to join the proceeding before confiscating his properties.

Separately, an accountability court in Islamabad has already confiscated movable and immovable properties of Sharif because he absconded in the Toshakhana case, which is about alleged corruption in purchase of vehicles.

R&AW chief's meeting with Nepal PM sparks criticism

PTI
KATHMANDU, 23 OCTOBER

Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli has come under fire, including from the ruling Communist Party leaders, for breaching diplomatic norms over his meeting with Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) chief Samant Kumar Goel.

Goel called on Prime Minister Oli at his official residence at Bhaluwatar on Wednesday evening.

However, the Indian intelligence chief's visit did not go down well with some political leaders of the country, including members of the ruling party Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

The meeting that took place between RAW chief Goel and Prime Minister Oli was against diplomatic norms and it doesn't serve Nepal's national interest, said senior ruling party leader Bhim Rawal.

"As the meeting took place in a non-transparent manner without consulting with the concerned section of the For-

en Ministry, this may also contribute to weakening our state mechanism," he pointed out.

Bishnu Rijal, deputy chief of the foreign affairs department of ruling NCP said politicians should not overstep in matters related to diplomacy.

Diplomacy should be handled by diplomats not politicians, he said.

The present confusion over the visit of the R&AW chief is the result of the handling of diplomacy by politicians, he said.

Nepali Congress central leader Gagan Thapa in a tweet said the meeting posed a threat to national security.

The meeting was not only the breach of our diplomatic norms but it also poses threat to our national security, he said.

Nepal's three former prime ministers, Prachanda Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Madhav Kumar Nepal from the ruling NCP and Sher Bahadur Deuba from Nepali Congress,

refuted media reports that they also held meetings with the visiting R&AW chief.

Secretaries of former prime ministers and senior leaders of ruling NCP asked the general public not to be misled by the false, fictitious and illusory news reports in some local media about their meeting with the R&AW chief.

Deuba's secretariat has also made it clear that Deuba did not meet with Goel.

Goel's visit came ahead of the upcoming official trip of Indian Army chief Gen. M M Naravane to Nepal in the first week of November.

The ties between the two countries came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Darchula in Uttarakhand on May 8.

Nepal protested the inauguration of the road claiming that it passed through its territory. Days later, Nepal came out with the new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories.

Facebook, Twitter CEOs ordered to testify by GOP senators

AP
WASHINGTON, 23 OCTOBER

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

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

The committee wants to hear from them about "the suppression and/or censorship of two news articles from the New York Post," according to the subpoena document.

Senators also want information from the executives about their companies' policies for moderating content "that may interfere" with fed-

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

The revelation was certain to stoke fears that Americans' confidence in the November 3 election results could be undermined.

Russia backed President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign through hacking of Democratic emails and a covert social media campaign. Facebook became an unwitting conduit for misinformation and election disruption.

Facebook and Twitter acted last week to limit the online dissemination and sharing of an unverified political story from the conservative-leaning New York Post that targeted Democratic presidential nom-

inee Joe Biden.

The story, which other publications have not confirmed, cited unverified emails from Biden's son Hunter that were reportedly disclosed by Trump's allies. One email purported to show a top advisor for Burisma, the Ukraine gas company where Hunter Biden held a board seat, thanking Biden for giving him an opportunity to meet the elder Biden, who was vice president at the time.

Trump's campaign seized on the report, though the account raised more questions than answers, including whether emails at the centre of the story were hacked or fabricated. The FBI is investigating whether the emails are part of a foreign influence operation. It was the first time in recent memory that the two social media platforms enforced rules against misinformation on a story from a mainstream media publication.

With the election looming, Facebook and Twitter have scrambled to stem the tide of material seen as potentially inciting violence and spreading disinformation and baseless conspiracy theories.

Facebook has expanded its restrictions on political advertising, including new bans on messages claiming widespread voter fraud. Trump has raised the prospect of

mass fraud in the vote-by-mail process.

The companies also have wrestled with how strongly they should intervene in speech on their platforms.

With Trump leading the way, conservatives have stepped up their claims that Facebook, Twitter and Google, which owns YouTube, are biased, charging without evidence Silicon Valley's social

platforms are deliberately suppressing conservative views.

The Justice Department has asked Congress to roll back long-held legal protections for online platforms. The proposed changes would strip some of the bedrock protections that have generally shielded the companies from legal responsibility for what people post on their

platforms.

Trump signed an executive order this year challenging the protections from lawsuits under a 1996 telecommunications law that has served as the foundation for unfettered speech on the internet.

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation, on a bipartisan vote, recently authorized subpoenas for Zuckerberg, Dorsey and Google CEO Sundar Pichai. The three have agreed to testify for a hearing planned for next week.

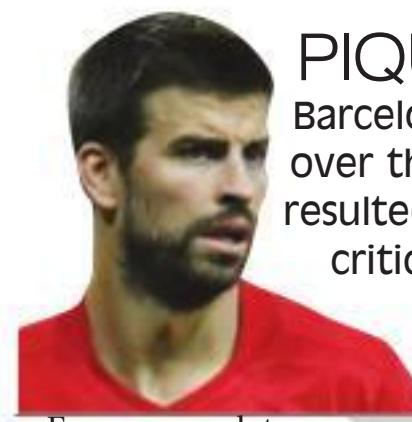
Democrats have focused their criticism of social media mainly on hate speech, misinformation and other content that they say can incite violence or keep people from voting. They have criticized the CEOs for failing to police content, focusing on the platforms' role in hate crimes and the rise of white nationalism in the United States.

In 2017, following the deadly violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, tech giants began banning extremist groups and individuals espousing white supremacist views and support for violence. Facebook extended the ban to white nationalists.

From both political parties, the companies have come under increasing scrutiny in Washington and from state attorneys general over issues of competition, consumer privacy and hate speech.

On Tuesday, the Justice Department filed a landmark antitrust case against Google, accusing it of abusing its dominance in online search and advertising to boost profits. It was the government's most significant attempt to protect competition since the groundbreaking Microsoft case more than 20 years ago.

Facebook, Amazon and Apple also have been targets of antitrust investigations by the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission.



PIQUE BLAMES BARCA

Barcelona defender Gerard Pique (in photo) has torn into the club over their handling of the Lionel Messi contract situation, which resulted in the forward attempting to leave in the close-season. The criticism comes on the eve of the first Clasico against Real Madrid this season and two days after the 33-year-old Pique signed a new three-year deal at Barca.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Misbah's view: Pakistan's head coach Misbah-ul-Haq wants the ICC to conduct the World Test Championship exactly the way it has been planned even if it means extending the duration of the event due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Misbah's statement came amid reports that the ICC is considering splitting points for unplayed games in the championship cycle which was originally scheduled to end in June-July 2021 with the final in England.

Captaincy doubts: Pakistan Test captain Azhar Ali may lose his job as leader of the side when the team tours New Zealand amidst speculations that either white-ball skipper Babar Azam or Muhammad Rizwan could replace him. Azhar, who is the most Test capped player now in the national team with 81 appearances, is said to have lost favour with a influential member of the cricket committee while the PCB Chairman and CEO are also said to be having second thoughts about retaining him as captain.

Grindtech cricket tournament: The first U-17 Grindtech cricket tournament organised by Sood Cricket is scheduled from 26 October at Madanpur Cricket Ground in New Delhi. The 40 overs tournament will be played on league-cum-knock out basis and in every match, in addition to the man of the match, the best batsman, best bowler, man of the tournament, best wicket-keeper, fast half-century, fast century and hat-trick bowler will be awarded prizes too.

Kapil Dev suffers heart attack; says on road to recovery after angioplasty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 23 OCTOBER

India's first World Cup-winning cricketer captain Kapil Dev underwent an angioplasty after suffering a heart attack here on Friday but is "well on the road to recovery" and likely to be discharged in the next couple of days.

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

"Kapil Dev suffered a heart attack. He was evaluated and

an emergency coronary angioplasty was performed in the middle of night," the hospital said in an updated health bulletin after only mentioning chest pain in its initial statement.

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

Angioplasty is a procedure to open blocked arteries and restore normal blood flow to the heart.

Later in the day, a short statement on his Instagram account expressed gratitude for the concern and support extend-



ed to his family.

"Thank you everyone for all the love and concern. I am overwhelmed with the good wishes and well on the road to recovery," the statement read.

The 1983 World Cup-winning legendary all-rounder was wished a speedy recovery by many on social media, including India's current captain Virat Kohli and Sachin Tendulkar among others.

"Praying for your speedy recovery. Get well soon paaji," Kohli said.

"Take care @therealkapildev! Praying for your quick recovery. Get well soon Paaji," wished Tendulkar. Also wishing him good health were India batsman Shikhar Dhawan and badminton player Saina Nehwal.

"Wishing the @therealkapildev a swift recovery. The nation is well aware of his grit

and spirit and we are very sure he will be out of the hospital soon," he added.

One of India's greatest cricketers, Kapil played 131 Tests and 225 ODIs.

"You are a fighter and we know you will win this fight too," tweeted BCCI Secretary Jay Shah.

The imposing former player, who also tried his hand at golf after retiring from cricket, is the only player to claim over 400 wickets (434) and accumulate more than 5000 runs in Tests.

He also served as India's national coach between 1999 and 2000.

Kapil was inducted into the International Cricket Coun-

cil's Hall of Fame in 2010.

"The bighearted #Kapildev our captain, with a never say die attitude, has recovered. For this mighty giant of Indian cricket nothing is impossible," tweeted Kirti Azad, also a former teammate of Kapil.

"Kapil The invincible @therealkapildev is a great friend and super human being. Captain, Looking forward for a meal together soon," he added.

Another World Cup-winning former India cricketer Yuvraj Singh said, "Dear paji. Praying for your speedy recovery! Get well soon please...after cricket I still need some golfing lessons."

DC eye to keep place at top, KKR aim to stay in hunt

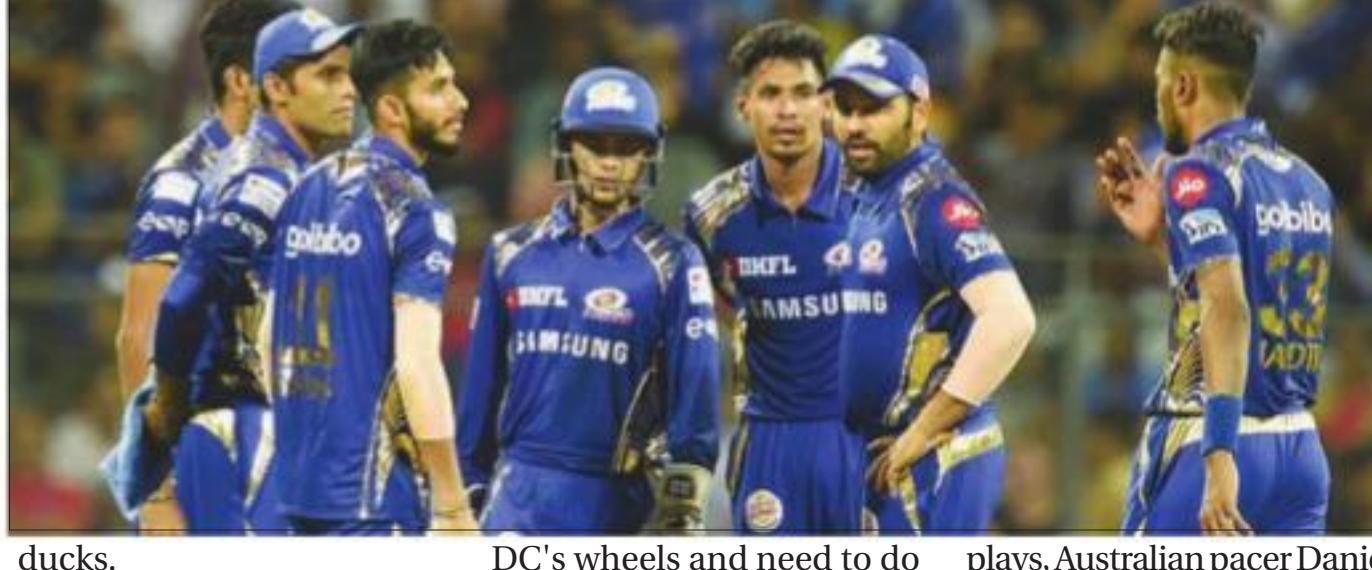
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ABU DHABI, 23 OCTOBER

Table-toppers Delhi Capitals would expect more from their batsmen after an underwhelming performance in the loss to Kings XI Punjab when they take on a low-on-confidence Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL game here on Saturday.

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

Young Prithvi Shaw needs to bat with more responsibility at the top since Dhawan may not be able to rescue the side all the time. Shaw's last four innings have included two



ducks.

Skipper Shreyas Iyer too has not been hitting the ball as fluently as he was before suffering a side strain. Rishabh Pant, who made a comeback from injury against Punjab, too has not yet set the stage on fire.

Iyer and Pant, along with Marcus Stoinis, form the backbone of Capitals' middle order. They are vital cogs in

DC's wheels and need to do more than just making good starts.

Pacer Anrich Nortje, who has been instrumental in Capitals' superb run thus far along with his South African compatriot Kagiso Rabada, had a niggle and missed the last match against Punjab.

If he comes back, it will add

sting to DC's attack. If he

plays, Australian pacer Daniel Sams will have to make way for him.

KKR are heading into the contest after an embarrassing batting performance against Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Blown away by Mohammed Siraj's furious spell, KKR managed just 84 runs on the board.

It certainly was a confidence-crushing defeat and KKR need to regroup quickly. Sitting at fourth place in the table with 10 points, they would be desperate to increase their tally to stay alive in the play-offs race.

Even the change in captaincy has not instilled much confidence in the side.

The performance of pacer Lockie Ferguson has been the only bright spot for them amid the disappointment of Andre Russell's poor run.

Russell missed out on the last match due to an injury and it will be interesting to see if the team management repose faith in him, if he is fit.

KKR needs a collective effort from now on with skipper Morgan, Dinesh Karthik, Shubhman Gill, Nitish Rana all required to contribute.

Match starts at 3.30pm

Battle of survival on cards as resurgent KXIP face SRH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, 23 OCTOBER

Their campaign back on track with a hat-trick of wins, Kings XI Punjab will take on another resurgent team - Sunrisers Hyderabad - here on Saturday in a must-win IPL game for the two well-matched sides.

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

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

After the initial hiccups, KXIP got its campaign back on track with three consecutive wins -- over mighty Delhi Capitals, Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bangalore and the KL Rahul-led side

would be hoping to carry the winning momentum forward to break into top four.

While KXIP's batting is in the safe hands of skipper Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Chris Gayle and Nicholas Pooran, the shaky form of Glenn Maxwell remains a concern.

It has been an erratic season for KXIP so far despite having the tournament's top two run-getters in openers Rahul (540) and Mayank Agarwal (398) in its ranks.

But the successful return of Gayle has been a welcome relief for KXIP as it reduced the burden on the shoulders of star openers, especially allowing Rahul to play more freely.

SRH too find itself in similar position and needs to win its remaining four matches to seal a play-off berth.

The side managed to keep itself in the play-off hunt with a confidence-boosting eight-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals on Thursday night after three consecutive defeats.

Match starts at 7.30pm

Munoz in the lead and Woods with his worst score at Sherwood

AGENCIES

THOUSAND OAKS, 23 OCTOBER

The scorecards of Sebastian Munoz and Tiger Woods were unusual for different reasons in the Zozo Championship at Sherwood. That was only good news for one of them.

Munoz twice holed out for eagle from a combined distance of 219 yards on Thursday. He also had eight birdies. Throw in a wild tee shot for double bogey, three bogeys and only five pars and it added to an 8-under 64 and a one-shot lead.

"Not a normal round," Munoz said.

That especially was the case for Woods. For the first time in his 1,277 rounds on the PGA Tour as a pro, he made bogey or worse on three par 5s in a single round. That led to a 4-over-76 by two shots his worst score in 49 rounds at Sherwood Country Club that left him 12 shots out of the lead and in no mood to talk.

Munoz, the Colombian

Curran's 52 pulls listless CSK to 114/9

IANS

SHARJAH, 23 OCTOBER

Sam Curran's 52 pulled a listless Chennai Super Kings to 114/9 wickets as they struggled to keep up with Mumbai Indians' bowlers led by a clinical Trent Boult in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match here on Friday. Boult recorded figures of 4/18.

CSK made some big changes to their batting order, dropping Shane Watson and demoting Curran back to the lower order. Ruturaj Gaikwad was sent out to open the innings with Faf du Plessis and the 23-year-old was bowled for a duck by Boult in the first over. Boult finished the innings with the wicket of Curran at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

Jasprit Bumrah dismissed Ambati Rayudu and N Jagadeesan in the next over after which Boult sent back du Plessis in the third and CSK found themselves 3/4. Dhoni and Ravindra Jade-



ja tried to provide some stability but the latter was dismissed in the last over of the powerplay. Dhoni fell in the seventh over, which meant that CSK had lost their top six batsmen for just 30 runs.

The most prominent partnerships for CSK came only for the eighth and nine wickets with Shardul Thakur and Imran Tahir providing good assistance to Curran. Curran was eventually bowled off the last ball of the innings.

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS INNINGS	
RD Gaikwad	Ibw b Boult
F du Plessis	c de Kock b Boult
A Rayudu	c de Kock b Bumrah
N Jagadeesan	c Yadav b Bumrah
MS Dhoni	c de Kock b Chahar
R Jadeja	c KH Pandya b Boult
SM Curran	b Boult
D Chahar	st de Kock b Chahar
S Thakur	c Yadav b Coulter-Nile
Imran Tahir	not out
Extras:	(b, 1 lb, 3, w 8)
TOTAL:	(20 Ov, RR: 5.7)
BOWLING:	T Boult 4,1,18,4 J Bumrah 4,0,25,2 K Pandya 3,0,16,0 R Chahar 4,0,22,2 NM Coulter-Nile 4,0,25,1 KA Pollard 1,0,4,0

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

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

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

It's just great to show people that we do have a middle order: Warner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, 23 OCTOBER

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

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

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

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

Jason Holder, who was brought as a replacement



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

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

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

On a good night for Premier League clubs, Leicester earned a comfortable 3-0 home win over Zorya Luhansk. AC Milan earned a 3-1 away win at Celtic, while Roma came from a goal down to win 2-1 at Young Boys as did Granada to upset PSV Eindhoven away. Rangers' Kemar Roofe



defender Andrs Andrade deflected into his own.

Earlier, Lucas Moura finished off another free-flowing move to open the scoring after being set up by Vinicius. The Brazilian, who is on loan from Real Madrid, collected a pass from Erik Lamela in the 27th and sent a low cross into the area from the right that

Arsenal went behind when goalkeeper Bernd Leno played a poor pass that fell to Rapid forward Taxiarhis Fountas, who slotted in a low shot from a tough angle in the 51st minute.

Manager Mikel Arteta sent on Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Hector Bellerin in the 61st, and the substitutes helped spark the comeback.

After David Luiz headed in a free kick from Nicolas Pepe to level the score, Mohamed Elneny freed Bellerin down the right to cross for Aubameyang to complete the comeback from close range for Arsenal, which won its group in its previous three campaigns in the second-tier European competition.