



Middlemen behind agitation against farm laws, says J.P. Nadda

Page 10



The fight in Bihar is between RJD and BJP, says Manoj Jha

Page 9



Back on campaign trail for Biden, Obama rips into Trump

Page 11



Pandey and Vijay Shankar power Sunrisers past Royals

Page 13



CPCB flags unsafe disposal of carcasses

NEW DELHI About 30% of India's dead cattle and 40% of goats weren't skinned and nearly nine million bovine hides were "lost annually due to non-recovery", according to a note by the Central Pollution Control Board proposing guidelines on proper disposal of deceased livestock.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Delhi riots: suspended councillor denied bail

NEW DELHI A city court on Thursday denied bail to suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain in three different FIRs related to the north-east Delhi riots, noting that he used "muscle power and political clout to act as a kingpin" in planning and instigating communal violence. The court also rejected Hussain's contention that he be treated at parity with other co-accused who have been released on bail.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

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IN BRIEF

Chadha meets Puri to discuss ₹216-crore dues

NEW DELHI
DJB Vice Chairman Raghav Chadha on Thursday met Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri, on the "exorbitant" arrears the Central Public Works Department and the Delhi Development Authority have to pay to the DJB, said the Delhi government. He requested the Minister's intervention in recovering the dues of about ₹216 crore so that the DJB's paucity of funds can be cleared, an official statement read.

Delhi govt. asked to give phones to DTC workers

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Parivahan Mazdoor Sangh has asked the Delhi government to provide mobile phones with data connections to contractual Delhi Transport Corporation employees following the public transporter's decision to restrict deployment aboard its buses only to conductors with the 'Charter' app on their phones.

BJP plans to increase house tax by 34%: AAP

NEW DELHI
AAP on Thursday alleged that the BJP-ruled North Delhi Municipal Corporation is planning to increase house tax by 34%. The party also said that the North body under pressure from parking and advertising contractors, who are allegedly close to BJP Ministers, is also planning to waive off tax on parking and advertisements. The party said it has opposed both the developments.

Not being allowed to step out of cell: Umar Khalid
Official pulled up for muting microphone

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Former JNU student Umar Khalid, who was arrested under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in connection to the north-east Delhi riots case, on Thursday told a court here that he was not allowed to step out of his cell similar to "solitary confinement".

Mr. Khalid made the allegation while he was being produced before Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat through videoconferencing on expiry of his judicial custody in the case.

Mr. Khalid said that the official told him his microphone will be unmuted if the judge gave the permission for it.

The judge said if an underrtrial wants to say something, then unmute and let him speak or the jail staff should tell us that he wants to say something. The judge also said that Mr. Khalid should not be punished for putting forward his grievances.

During the hearing, special public prosecutor moved an application for extending Mr. Khalid's judicial custody by 30 days.

Official summoned
Taking note of the issue, Judge Rawat directed Tihar jail superintendent to be present before the court on Friday to hear the matter. The judge also pulled up the jail staff for muting the microphone of Mr. Khalid when the case was going on.



Former JNU student Umar Khalid. ■ FILE PHOTO

Court denies bail to suspended councillor in Delhi riots case

'Tahir Hussain used muscle power in instigating flames of communal conflagration'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday denied bail to former Aam Aadmi Party councillor Tahir Hussain in three different FIRs related to the north-east Delhi riots, noting that he used his muscle power and political clout to act as a kingpin in planning, instigating and fanning the flames of communal conflagration.

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav said that the public witnesses against Mr. Hussain were residents of the same locality and if released on bail at this stage, the possibility of him threatening or intimidating them could not be ruled out.

The court also rejected Mr. Hussain's contention that he be treated at parity with other co-accused persons in the cases who had been enlarged on bail.

It said that the role assigned to Mr. Hussain in the cases was totally different and distinct from the rest of the co-accused, as he was the "main kingpin/conspirator in the case".

The judge noted that at the time of the eruption of the communal riots, Mr. Hussain had been in a powerful position (sitting AAP Councillor of the area).

Mr. Hussain, who had been in judicial custody



Paramilitary forces march in north-east Delhi after the riots in February. ■ FILE PHOTO

since March 16, argued that there was no cogent and legal evidence which was admissible in the eyes of law to connect him with the incident alleged in the cases.

"There is no evidence by way of even a single video footage or CCTV footage to prove that the applicant [Hussain] had participated in the riots or caused damage to any property," he argued.

'Victim of circumstances'
Mr. Hussain said he belonged to 'Aam Aadmi Party' and was a 'victim of circumstances', as he had been caught up in a political crossfire, and the allegations levelled against him were nothing but a political blame game to malign his image.

He also contended that

the primary witness had initially not named him in his complaint but implicated him only while recording of his statement by the investigating agency. This, he said, was nothing but merely an "improvement" done at the instance of the investigating agency.

"Even if there were no direct acts of violence attributable to the applicant, he cannot shy away from his liability under the provisions of the Sections invoked against him, particularly on account of the fact that his house/building became the hub/centre point for the rioters and rabble-rousers to unleash the worst communal riots since Partition in Delhi," the court said.

The judge stated that he found "ocular evidence" of independent witnesses to be categorical, which gave the clear details quo the active role played by him in the incidents in question.

The Call Detail Record analysis of Mr. Hussain's mobile number confirmed his presence at or around the scene of crimes on the dates of incidents, the court said. It also rejected his contention on the delay in the recording of statements of witnesses by the investigating agency.

HC declines petition on stubble burning

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday declined to hear a plea to deal with stubble burning in neighbouring States of Punjab and Haryana, noting that the Supreme Court is already seized of the matter.

An HC Bench said the top court on October 16 had constituted a committee headed to monitor the steps taken by these States to prevent stubble burning. The court disposed of the application, which was moved by advocate Sudhir Mishra, in his main petition filed in 2015 – seeking directions to the Centre to take immediate steps to control increasing air pollution in the Capital. The application had contended that stubble burning would increase the air pollution drastically in the Capital and could further aggravate the health problems in the city in view of the pandemic.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma said the sun was not visible on Thursday and it was an emergency-like situation in the Capital due to the "poor" air quality. The ASG referred to a news report, which said people who have recovered from the virus were facing respiratory issues as air quality worsened.

Man arrested for killing brother and sister-in-law

Accused dumped bodies in Haryana

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A man has been arrested for allegedly killing his brother and sister-in-law in outer Delhi's Mundka, the police said on Thursday.

On October 19, the police received information regarding missing of one Rajesh alias Raju and his wife Ruchi, both residents of Friends Enclave in Mundka.

During investigation, one Sushila Devi told the police that her brother – Bhagwan alias Kala – told her that her another brother, Raju, and his wife were missing.

She reached Mundka and came to know that her

brothers had fought over something on October 16. She noticed that Bhagwan was not cooperating in search of Raju and Ruchi.

"A team was constituted to search the missing couple. During enquiry, Baghwan said he murdered the couple on October 16 and dumped their bodies in Haryana's Rohtak," an officer said.

On his disclosure, the bodies were recovered from Rohtak.

Baghwan also said Raju was unemployed and used to quarrel with everyone. Baghwan told the police that he committed the crimes due to Raju's "irresponsible behaviour".

More farmers now allowed inside mandis, says Haryana government

Kharif crop procurement to be completed by November 10'

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Amid allegations of slow procurement of Kharif crop and delayed payments, the Haryana government on Thursday said the number of farmers being allowed to mandis had been increased and the process would be completed by November 10," said Mr. Das.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Additional Chief Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, Pranab Kishore Das, said that initially the department had decided on conservative scheduling in view of the social distancing norms, but it had been increased this week. "We are now allowing

250-300 farmers in big mandis and 100-150 for smaller ones per day. The total number of farmers and the likely number of purchase days have been mapped mandi-wise and the number of gate passes per day increased accordingly. We hope to finish the procurement process by November 10," said Mr. Das.

He claimed that payments to farmers were cleared till October 5. "We make payment within three days of the produce reaching the gond down and online approval received. It takes a few extra days for off-line purchase," said Mr. Das. He said around 90-95% farmers reached mandis as per their schedule, when informed through SMS, denying there were any issue with the mechanism to inform them.

Swaraj India chief Yogen-dra Yadav demanded that the government came clean on the allegations of slow procurement by making public the number of farmers registered under the 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' in the State for each mandi and those pending. The report by Swaraj India recently pointed out that only 5-11% of total registered farmers in the four districts - Bhiwani, Mahendragarh, Charkhi Dadri and Rewari - managed to sell their crops in the first two weeks of the six-week procurement session.

Small, improvised ceremonies to mark Dussehra celebrations

Special effects to stage symbolic effigy burning

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

After Ramlila, Dussehra celebrations have contracted into local affairs due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While the biggest among such events has been cancelled due to caps on gatherings limiting attendance to 200, according to organisers, local functions featuring small effigies scheduled to be 'burnt symbolically' with the aid of lights or audio visual effects are being planned over the weekend.

Restrictions on religious gatherings, up to a maximum of 200 attendees, related to the festive season were lifted till October 31 by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) in view of the pandemic. The directive, however, prescribed strict restrictions on activities ranging from setting up food stalls to standing or squatting when attending such events.

"Due to the restrictions on the number of attendees being allowed by the administration as well as the problem of air pollution, only small ceremonies with many improvisations are being organised this year," said Ashok Goel Devraha, general secretary of the Delhi Dharmik Sangh which is an umbrella body that facilitates the organisers of Ramlilas. Over 700 Ramlilas are organised across the city every year.

Many events cancelled
Ashok Agarwal of Luv Kush Ramlila Committee, one of the oldest Ramlila organisers in the city, said it had decided to cancel Dussehra celebrations and the *Raavan dahan* this year would be a televised repeat of last year's festivities.



Artists perform Ramlila at a Rohini society in New Delhi.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

year would be a televised repeat of last year's festivities.

Rajesh Gehlot, chief patron of Dwarka Sri Ram Leela Society, a traditional crowd-puller in Sector 10 where Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in attendance last year, said the pandemic had affected the preparation of effigies as usual. "We have decided to cancel this year," he said.

Among the smaller events, will be a narration-based staging of the traditional 10-day Ramlila crunched into four days leading up to the *Raavan dahan* aided by lighting in south Delhi, and another being planned as a three-hour gala in east Delhi.

Anil Sharma of the R.K. Puram Ramlila Religious Committee said the event would unfold between October 22 and October 25. "There will be no traditional burning of the effigies; we will use lights and sound effects to stage a symbolic effigy burning," Mr. Sharma said.

Satish Aggarwal of East Delhi's Shri Balaji Ramlila Committee said they would stage the epic, followed by a *dahan* within three hours on Sunday.

Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Hospital & Central Heating Division, Government Medical College & Hospital, Jammu

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MHDJ/e-NIT -56 of 2020-21

Dated: 16.10.2020
due: 28.10.2020

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S.NO	Description of work	Estimated Cost	Estimated Time of Submission	Cost of tender document	Time of completion	Eligibility Criterion of Bidder
1	SITC of Oxygen manifold panel(10-10) along with allied works in Govt. Pathological Disease Hospital Jammu.	18,458 lacs	Rs 37000.00 in the Shape of CDR planned to be carried out by Executive Engineer M&H GMC Jammu.	Rs 1000.00 in the shape of Challan through J&K Govt. Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & Date of Submission and the name of work duly credited to 0059-PWD (Revenue) and uploading a copy of Treasury challan / receipt on e-tendering portal OR	15 days	OEM /Authorized Dealers/ Registered /Proposed firms having sufficient experience for the Similar nature of work

The bid consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (BOQ) sets of terms & conditions of contract & other details can be viewed / downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in

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Hospital & Central Heating Division, GMCH Jammu

Timings <small>DELHI</small>		
FRIDAY, OCT. 23		
RISE 06:27 SET 17:44		
RISE 13:10 SET 23:43		
SATURDAY, OCT. 24		
RISE 06:28 SET 17:43		
RISE 13:56 SET 00:00		
SUNDAY, OCT. 25		
RISE 06:28 SET 17:42		
RISE 14:36 SET 00:42		

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	33	17
Safdarjung	33	17
Palam	32	19

Delhi Palam Today
34°C A pleasant morning with thick smoke haze and warm day likely. Few clouds expected.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
34°C Dry and warm weather with light winds and mainly clear sky.

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IN BRIEF

Special festival package for Delhi govt. employees

NEW DELHI
Deputy CM Manish Sisodia on Thursday said that the Delhi government will provide an advance special festival package and every Delhi government employee will get ₹10,000 in advance. "Keeping in mind the hardship of employees due to the COVID-19 and the lockdown, the government took the decision," he said.

Delhi's AQI inches close to 'very poor' category

Air was slightly better in Gurugram, but very poor in Noida

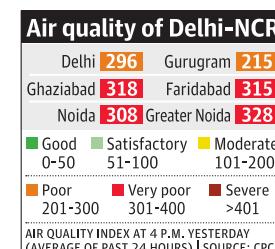
STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi inched closer to the 'very poor' category on Thursday while Noida's slipped to the 'very poor' category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. The air was slightly better in Gurugram, but remained in the 'poor' category.

Delhi's air quality is expected to remain in the 'poor' to 'very poor' category for the next two days. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



Delhi's air quality is expected to remain in the 'poor' to 'very poor' category for the next two days. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



respectively, as per CPCB's 4 p.m. bulletin on Thursday, which is an average of the past 24 hours.

Reading at 10 p.m.
By 10 p.m., the air quality of Delhi was 321 and that of Noida was 339.

The stubble burning fire counts around Haryana, Punjab, and border regions of

Delhi increased to 1,428 on Wednesday from 849 on Tuesday, as per SAFAR. The contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring States to PM2.5 in Delhi is estimated to be around 9% on Thursday.

The local wind speed is "highly" unfavourable and the wind direction in neighbouring States is favourable for a "moderate" transport of pollutants to Delhi due to stubble burning.

Campaign picks up
In a related development, Environment Minister Gopal Rai and AAP MLAs took part in the "red light on, gaadi off" campaign at Tilak Marg intersection to reduce air pollution in the city.

Case against family of journalist

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have registered a case against the family members of freelance journalist Rajeev Sharma, who was arrested in an espionage case under the Official Secrets Act, for allegedly threatening and intimidating a witness in the case, said a senior police officer on Thursday.

The officer said that when Mr. Sharma's flat in Pitampura was raided, a man from the locality was called as a witness.

"The witness filed a complaint at Rani Bagh police station. An FIR was registered and the case was transferred to Special Cell for further investigation," added the officer.

Adish Aggarwala, who was representing Mr. Sharma, said that they provided the entire transcript of the conversation between the witness and family members and there was nothing threatening. The transcript and the clip of call recording have been submitted in the court.

A Delhi court on Tuesday had rejected the bail plea of Mr. Sharma.

"...the order issued by the

Vice Chancellor during his period of absence on medical ground without joining the office properly and officially is not valid and should not be acted upon by the university functionary. In future, if the VC wants to join the office, proper medical fitness certificate issued by the competent authority, who treated him, may be obtained," said the letter sent on Thursday by Education Ministry Deputy Secretary Birendra Kumar Singh. It reiterates that Mr. Joshi will act as the VC.

The Ministry's letter also notes that the Pro VC had written to the Education Ministry on Wednesday to inform it that Mr. Tyagi was not discharging his duty.

The Education Ministry wrote a letter supporting Mr. Joshi. In a letter addressed to Mr. Gupta, he stated that Mr. Tyagi's order should be considered invalid, as he was on medical leave.

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Administrative Building, Sector - 6, Noida - 201301 (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

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E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

S.no	Job no/Work name	Amount
1.	166/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o two year maintenance Sector-108 Near (Divine Apartment)	Cost Rs. 69.35 Lacs
2.	167/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, D/o RSP with two year maintenance Sector 49 & 101 Near Hanuman Murti Side Verge	Cost Rs. 43.11 Lacs
3.	168/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, D/o RSP with two year maintenance Sector-47 (Dust Free)	Cost Rs. 42.53 Lacs
4.	172/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, D/o RSP (Central verge) with two year maintenance Sector-115 Fly Over To Hindon Bridge,	Cost Rs. 44.41 Lacs
5.	176/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Green Belt With Two Year maintenance Sector-52	Cost Rs. 30.86 Lacs
6.	117/D(H)/DD(H)-III/2020-21, D/o Park (C/o Noida Bio Diversity Park Sh: Golf Cart, Sector-91, Noida)	Cost Rs. 35.30 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date 05/11/2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 06/11/2020 at 11.00 AM.

(b).

S.no	Job no/Work name	Amount
1.	108/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, D/o RSP with two year Maintenance (Dust Free Program) FNG Chhajri Village to Bahlopur Proposed underpass, Sector-63A to Ajana Roundabout MP-II/ld, Noida	Cost Rs. 77.25 Lacs
2.	109/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Park with two year maintenance sector-27 (A to I Block All Parks), Noida	Cost Rs. 50.14 Lacs
3.	110/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Green Belt with two year maintenance sector-62, A-05, A-06, A-07, A-08 and A-10, Noida	Cost Rs. 33.92 Lacs
4.	111/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Park with two year Maintenance Sector-122 near Sarmik Kunj and SK-01 to SK-140 and 5% Abadi Village Partha and Sector-120 Park Noida	Cost Rs. 32.02 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date 29/10/2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/ downloaded on date 02/11/2020 at 11.00 AM.

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Starts 28th October

PERSONAL**CHANGE OF NAME**

I. ATUL Kumar Joshi Alias Atul Krishan Joshi S/O Sh. Kishan Chand Sharma R/O of D-25, I.R. Colony, Pusa Campus, New Delhi 110012 and permanent address KC Niwas, VPO-Kumarhatti, District-Solan, Himachal Pradesh-173229 want to change my name to Atul Krishan Joshi for all future purposes

OTHERS

JC-330510P SUH Rajesh Kumar, Of

fce at GE (I) R & D Delhi-54. Cor

rect DOB of my wife Smt. Seema Sai

ni is 25/11/1975 as per Aadhar

Card no 54586236267. Wrongly men

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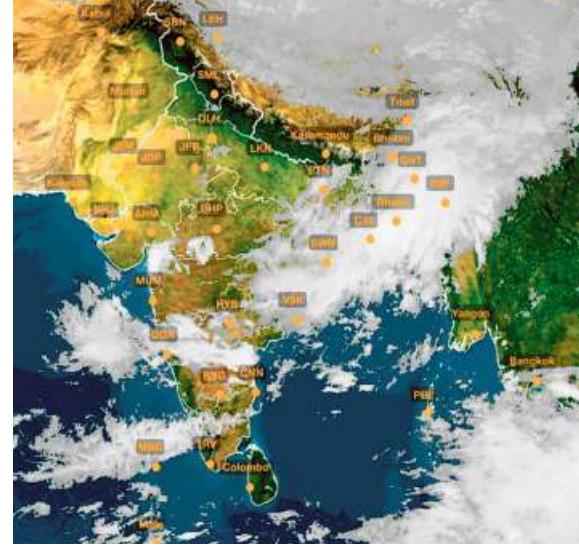
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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, West Bengal, Odisha, coastal Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rayalseema, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	28.4	25.2	Kozhikode	5.7	31.4	24.0
Ahmedabad	—	36.8	25.9	Kurnool	7.2	32.3	23.9
Aizawl	—	3	26.2	Lucknow	—	33.9	21.2
Allahabad	—	33.8	23.0	Madurai	—	35.2	24.4
Bengaluru	5.4	27.5	20.8	Mangaluru	34	29.1	23.0
Bhopal	—	33.7	19.0	Mumbai	3.5	32.7	25.7
Bhubaneswar	3.2	26.6	24.6	Mysuru	1.5	29.7	21.3
Chandigarh	—	33.5	19.0	New Delhi	—	33.4	17.2
Chennai	0.5	34.5	26.0	Patna	—	33.0	24.6
Coimbatore	—	32.0	22.4	Pond Blair	—	30.5	25.4
Dehradun	—	31.0	14.6	Puducherry	4.1	33.3	23.2
Gangtok	—	21.6	14.3	Raipur	11.2	32.7	21.9
Goa	3.8	30.0	23.8	Ranchi	—	33.7	23.2
Guwahati	—	32.2	24.1	Shillong	—	31.9	21.0
Hubballi	—	28.0	21.0	Shimla	—	32.1	16.0
Hyderabad	—	32.0	21.0	Srinagar	—	24.9	15.9
Imphal	6.7	26.8	19.6	Tiruvannamalai	5.3	30.3	24.2
Jaipur	0.5	34.9	22.0	Tiruchirappalli	—	34.0	25.0
Kochi	19.6	30.2	24.0	Vijayawada	—	33.8	26.5
Kohima	7.8	23.6	17.0	Visakhapatnam	1.3	30.8	27.0
Kolkata	—	28.0	25.8	Visakhapatnam	—	33.4	28

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing**Yesterday**

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	23	.32	.38	.78	.117	—
Bengaluru	.8	.13	.25	.134	—	—
Chennai	11	.15	.71	.115	—	—
Delhi	19	158	.66	.364	.406	—
Hyderabad	.8	.65	.42	.151	.140	—
Kolkata	10	.10	.12	.25	.34	—
Lucknow	12	.82	.136	.344	.258	—
Mumbai	.1	.36	.158	.102	.109	—
Pune	.9	.13	.52	.32	.26	—
Visakhapatnam	.5	.52	.25	.143	.129	—

Air Quality Code: █ Poor █ Moderate █ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Relief for Mukhtar Ansari's sonsSPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Allahabad High Court has granted interim relief from arrest to the two sons of jailed MLA Mukhtar Ansari in a case of alleged illegal occupation of government land.

An FIR was lodged against the MLA and his two sons Abbas Ansari and Umar Ansari in Hazratganj police station of Lucknow in August on charges of illegal occupation.

The charges included criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery and Section 3 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984. Mr. Abbas Ansari is a national-level shooter and had also contested the 2017 Assembly elections only to lose by a thin margin.

Pact inked to develop virus antibodiesSPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

The Serum Institute of India (SII), along with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), a non-profit scientific research organisation, on Thursday announced an agreement with pharmaceutical major Merck to develop SARS-CoV-2 neutralising monoclonal antibodies.

Monoclonal antibodies are co-invented by IAVI and Scripps Research as 'innovative interventions' to address the COVID-19 pandemic. If the antibody candidates being advanced through this partnership are shown to be efficacious in clinical trial, then SII will lead global manufacturing.

On October 16, 90% physically disabled and wheelchair-bound Saibaba announced he will be going on hunger strike from October 21 as he has not been provided with clothes, medicines and books for a month.

On Thursday, he called his wife Vasantha Kumari and said the DIG (Prisons) had visited him on October 20 and accepted all his demands. Prof. Saibaba told

'Want to avoid political interference in probes'

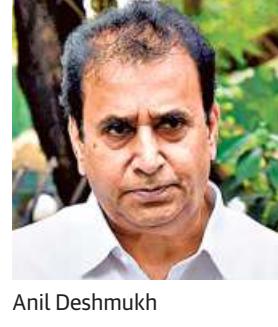
Concern over CBI intervening in TRP case: Home Minister

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

A day after the Maharashtra government withdrew its 'general consent' to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe cases in the State, Home Minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday said the decision was taken to prevent possible political interference in the Mumbai Police's ongoing investigation into the alleged role of three television channels in the Television Rating Points (TRP) scam.

Henceforth, the CBI will need the Maharashtra government's permission to probe any case. The agency cannot hold any investigation until sanctioned by the State government," he said.

The government's move comes a day after the CBI took over a case registered by the Uttar Pradesh Police against "unknown channels and persons" in the TRP scam. The development led to suspicion that the CBI



Anil Deshmukh

might also take over the Mumbai Police's investigation into a similar case.

Mr. Deshmukh recalled the manner in which the probe into the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput was taken over by the CBI despite opposition from the Mumbai Police. He said, "Earlier, the CBI had taken up the investigation in some cases. We are concerned about the CBI being used to intervene in the ongoing TRP scam."

The minister also recalled that a Supreme Court judge had described the Central agency as a "caged parrot" a few years ago.

The Mumbai Police had

registered an FIR on October 6 against three channels, including Republic TV, for allegedly manipulating TRPs. Republic TV has claimed innocence in the case and approached the courts.

Prof. Saibaba calls off hunger strike after DIG Prisons accepts demands

He sought clothes, medicines and books for a month

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Professor G.N. Saibaba called off his hunger strike after the DIG (Prisons) visited him in Nagpur Central jail and accepted his demands.

On October 16, 90% physically disabled and wheelchair-bound Saibaba announced he will be going on hunger strike from October 21 as he has not been provided with clothes, medicines and books for a month.

On Thursday, he called his wife Vasantha Kumari and said the DIG (Prisons) had visited him on October 20 and accepted all his demands. Prof. Saibaba told

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The Committee for the Defense and Release of Dr. Saibaba released a press statement quoting the DIG Prisons as saying, "The jail authorities shall not stop the medicines given by his family members and advocates and the medicines will be given to him immediately. The complaint letter documenting his harassment and lack of basic rights in the prison since the last few months addressed to the DIG (Prisons) Pune shall be delivered immediately. Previously the jail authorities were not sending

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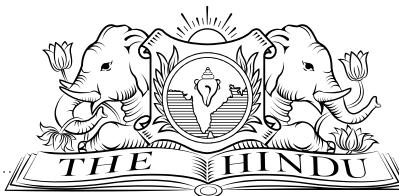
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Unrest in Pakistan

Popular sentiment is building against the Army and the government

Events in Pakistan's Sindh province in the last few days indicate that the Imran Khan government is dealing with a serious political crisis, perhaps its biggest, since taking office in 2018. Eleven Opposition parties, which have now formed the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), have held two mammoth rallies, part of a plan for nationwide agitations, calling for the resignation of the PTI government over law and order, food shortages, inflation and gas cuts. They have called the Prime Minister both a failure at governance and the military's "puppet". But what has surprised many is their solidarity as well as the sharpness of their attack: at the rally in Gujranwala, former PM and Pakistan Muslim League (N) chief Nawaz Sharif, speaking from London, named Army Chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa and ISI chief Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed for "rigging elections", restrictions on the media, harassment of journalists, putting pressure on the judiciary and subverting other democratic institutions. While most Pakistani politicians, Mr. Khan included, have attacked Pakistan's omnipotent military establishment when in opposition, and drop the rhetoric when they come to power, Mr. Sharif's comments indicate a popular sentiment that is chafing at the curbs by the Pakistani establishment. The PTI government's response is a well-worn script. For the past few months, government prosecutors, on Mr. Khan's orders, have focused on preparing cases to send as many members of the Opposition to prison. The co-chairperson of the Pakistan's People's Party and former Pakistan President, Asif Ali Zardari, is already in custody on money laundering charges, while the government has requested the U.K. many times to extradite Mr. Sharif so that he can be charged and tried again.

With the next generation of Bilawal Bhutto and Maryam Nawaz taking the stage at PDM rallies, the government swung into its next act: arresting Ms. Nawaz's husband, Captain Safdar, after a midnight raid on their hotel in Karachi, charging him with disrespecting Jinnah's mausoleum by raising anti-government slogans there. What made matters erupt was the arrest that had reportedly been carried out after Army rangers surrounded the Sindh Inspector General's home and forced him to sign the FIR against Mr. Safdar. Top echelons of Sindh's police force, backed by the Provincial PPP government, rose in outrage, applying en masse for leave after expressing their distress over the humiliation meted out to their chief. This was an unprecedented response which could have seen a more serious stand-off between the police and the Army. Matters are under control for the moment after Gen. Bajwa has promised an inquiry report on the controversial arrest within the next 10 days. However, with politics on the boil again and the PDM planning at least four more rallies this year, it is clear that Pakistan's ruling party will find its feet held to the fire more frequently.

Sooner, better

Indigenously developed tests will allow scaling up of efforts to detect infections

Thanks to the pandemic, scientific institutions in India have been able to demonstrate their ability to rise to the occasion and show why the country should increase funding for science research and development. The ICMR's approval, recently, of two indigenously developed tests that are rapid, low-cost and have high sensitivity and specificity provides the much-needed boost to scale up daily testing without diluting accuracy. After carrying out about one million tests each day for the last few weeks, India, for the first time, tested nearly 1.5 million samples on October 21. While most tests done each day were the low sensitivity rapid antigen tests, the ones developed by the Delhi-based Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, a CSIR institute, and IIT Kharagpur will now enable the shift to more accurate tests. The low sensitivity of rapid antigen tests has meant that even people with symptoms were being handed out a negative result nearly half the time, leading to undetected cases. With unrestricted movement, businesses opening up, the festival season beginning and winter around the corner, the requirement for a rapid, low-cost test with high accuracy is crucial in checking the virus spread through early detection and repeated testing of even asymptomatic cases. Having locally developed tests with higher accuracy will now help States to offer tests on demand – as required in a September 4 ICMR advisory – while keeping costs low.

While the low sensitivity of rapid antigen tests arises from not isolating the viral RNA from the swab samples and amplification of the DNA before detection, the two indigenously developed tests follow these two vital steps, the reason why the sensitivity and specificity are far superior to that of the rapid antigen tests. But, at the same time, both the tests developed locally do require minimum laboratory infrastructure to isolate the viral RNA from the samples. For that reason, India has to still rely on rapid antigen tests in rural areas that have no laboratory infrastructure. But the tests developed by the Indian institutions, once commercially available, can readily replace the rapid antigen tests in places where such laboratory infrastructure is in place. Rapid antigen tests will become less important even in rural areas once research institutions succeed in developing protocols and tests for using saliva rather than swabs, and do not require isolation of viral RNA from patient samples before amplification and detection. Field testing and validation of such protocols is now pending. Relying on saliva samples would mean non-invasive sample collection, and probably even self-collection. Thus, the reliance on trained personnel would reduce and also minimise the risk of health workers getting infected.

Drive a harder bargain at the Delhi meet

At the 2+2 Ministerial forum, India must ensure that its gamble with Trump's regime so close to the U.S. election pays off



SUHASINI HAIDER

In August 2016, just months before the United States presidential elections, then U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had detailed discussions about the Paris Climate Change Agreement, with the U.S. urging India to sign it at the earliest. Part of the statement they issued included the U.S.'s [developed countries] commitment to mobilise \$100 billion per year by 2020 as part of a Green Climate Fund (GCF) to help developing countries such as India with climate adaptation methods and renewable technologies.

Then, the Paris Accord push
The ratification of the Paris Agreement was then U.S. President Barack Obama's legacy project, and Washington was pushing for India to join before election day, November 8, in a bid to help Democrat nominee Hillary Clinton with her campaign against Republican nominee Donald Trump, who was against the Paris deal.

While New Delhi could have chosen to wait for the results of the U.S. elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not, and announced a few weeks after Mr. Kerry's visit that India would ratify the UN climate protocol on October 2, to mark Mahatma Gandhi's birthday.

Months later, on June 1, 2017, the new U.S. President, Donald Trump, announced that the U.S. would exit the Paris agreement, and also revoked U.S. promises towards the GCF, calling it "very unfair" (<https://bit.ly/3oqjw9s>). "India makes its participation contingent on receiving billions

and billions and billions of dollars in foreign aid from developed countries," Mr. Trump added, conveniently ignoring the fact that it was based on his predecessor's promises that India had made its calculations.

This time, the Indo-Pacific
As the U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, makes his way to India next week, history may just be repeating itself. This time, Mr. Pompeo is coming exactly a week before the election, and his brief is clear: to ensure that New Delhi (also Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia that are on his itinerary, from October 25 to October 30), makes a strong, public, strategic commitment to the U.S. on its plans in the Indo-Pacific. Mr. Pompeo has made no bones about his mission. In Washington on Wednesday, he said he was sure that his meetings "would include discussions about how free nations can work together to thwart threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party".

Just a few weeks ago, at the Quad Foreign Ministers meeting in Tokyo, Mr. Pompeo had said that as partners in this Quad (Australia-India-Japan-U.S.), "it is more critical now than ever that we collaborate to protect our people and partners from the Chinese Communist Party's exploitation, corruption, and coercion." In contrast, India has maintained that its membership of the Quad is aligned to its Indo-Pacific policy, and as Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated at the Shangri-La dialogue, in June 2018 (<https://bit.ly/37vdHRZ>), "by no means... directed against any country".

While there is no doubt that Beijing's relentless aggression against India at the Line of Actual Control this year and its refusal to disengage or withdraw from land China's People's Liberation Army has occupied for more than six months is changing India's priorities, the Narendra Modi govern-



ment has maintained that it will resolve issues with China bilaterally. Any shift in that position at the U.S.'s prompting must also accrue benefits for India.

Electoral calculations

Mr. Pompeo's tenuous position must also be considered closely. For one, it is by no means clear that Mr. Trump will win the presidential elections or that Mr. Pompeo will remain in that spot. In fact, all presidential polls, as well as predictions for the U.S. electoral college point to a probable win for Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.

Even if Mr. Trump does win the election, it remains to be seen how far he will take ties with China to the brink once he dusts off his campaign rhetoric. The weight of commitments made by Mr. Pompeo during his India visit could thus be assessed better in a similar visit made even a week later, once the election results are more clearly known.

In the event Mr. Biden wins the election, India will hardly have endeared itself to the incoming administration by making strong statements of solidarity with Trump policy, strategic or otherwise. The two rallies Mr. Modi has held with Mr. Trump in Houston (2019) and in Ahmedabad (2020), as well as his use of the Trump campaign slogan, "Ab ki baar Trump Sarkar", have already been noted within the Democratic campaign, and it may be recalled that most supporters of India in the Demo-

cratic leadership skipped the Houston rally.

China and India's three fronts

As a result, South Block must consider carefully just what it discusses and projects from the meeting with Mr. Pompeo and U.S. Defence Secretary Mark Esper as they arrive for the Third India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. China has gone from being the "Elephant in the Room" (as U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun described it earlier this month) to becoming an agenda item on the table. Therefore, it is critical to study just how India hopes to collaborate with the U.S. on the challenge that Beijing poses on each of India's three fronts: at the LAC, in the maritime sphere, and in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region surrounding India.

On the maritime sphere, discussions will no doubt include strengthening ties in the Indo-Pacific, enhancing joint military exercises like the 'Malabar', where the entire Quad including Australia will participate next month in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, and completing the last of the "foundational agreements" with the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Cooperation (BECA).

On the SAARC region, Mr. Pompeo is speaking with his feet, given that his travels will take him to Male and Colombo as well. In Male, the U.S. has already announced a defence agreement that will pave the way for a strategic dialogue, and unlike in the past, New Delhi has not objected to ceding space in its area of influence in the Indian Ocean Region, as it will allow the U.S. to counter Chinese influence there. With Sri Lanka too, the U.S. has a pending defence agreement, but more importantly, discussions on infrastructure projects, and progress on its "Millennium Challenge Corpora-

tion" (MCC) offer of a five-year aid grant of about \$480 million, that is meant to offer alternatives to the Rajapaksa government, will be key. At a time when India is delaying Sri Lanka's requests for debt relief, given its own economic constraints, the U.S. aid offer will be seen as one way of staving off China's inroads into Sri Lanka.

Finally, and of most interest, will be how the U.S. and India can collaborate, if they can, on dealing with India's most immediate, continental challenge from China: at the LAC. While the Indian Army will defend its borders with China on its own, there is much that Mr. Pompeo could promise, apart from enhancing and expediting U.S. defence sales to India. Mr. Pompeo must, for example, commit to keeping the pressure on Pakistan on terrorism, despite the U.S. need for Pakistan's assistance in Afghan-Taliban talks. A firm U.S. statement in this regard may also disperse the pressure the Indian military faces in planning for a "two-front" conflict with China.

Other key areas

Mr. Pompeo should be pushed on resolving trade issues with India, an area the Trump administration has been particularly tough, and perhaps commit to restoring India's Generalised System of Preferences status for exporters. The government could press for more cooperation on 5G technology sharing, or an assurance that its S-400 missile system purchase from Russia will receive an exemption from the U.S.'s Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) sanctions.

By inviting Mr. Pompeo this close to the U.S. elections, New Delhi has taken a calculated and bold gamble. Unlike the experience of 2016, however, our leaders must drive a harder bargain to consolidate the pay-offs from the visit.

suhasini.h@thehindu.co.in

A compelling life story, lost in the fog of illogic

Critics have cast Murali as a 'generic' Sri Lankan Tamil to inflame their biases, but his story is more deeply layered



ANDREW FIDEL FERNANDO

Occasionally, Muttiah Muralitharan has spoken of the anti-Tamil pogrom in 1977 when Sinhalese mobs ran a blade 12 inches across his father's back, then burned down the family's biscuit factory on the outskirts of the hill capital of Kandy, Sri Lanka.

In recent years, this harrowing story has been recounted at political events in support of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, and his Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Front). The suggestion from Murali is that if he can forgive this heinous act of racial violence and go on to become one of Sri Lanka's most celebrated figures, forgiveness should be beyond no one. This is glib, of course. For many Sri Lankan Tamils who suffered the appalling privations of war for decades, and were not insulated by the kind of wealth and status Murali enjoyed from his youth, forgiveness could not – and perhaps should not – come so easily.

But is Murali any more guilty of simplistic reasoning than those who have spearheaded the backlash against his biopic, *800*? Across social media, Murali has

been flamed as a traitor to the "Tamil cause"; accused of siding up to the Sinhalese to perform the role of the Tamil mascot through whom southerners lived out delusions of their own benevolence. That Murali's forays into political conversation have ranged from naivete to calamitous is plain. (It is a view held even by some of his closest confidants.) But the suggestion that he should uncritically attach himself to the "Tamil cause" requires investigation.

Many layers to history

There is layered history here. Thanks largely to its position along one of the planet's busiest maritime routes, the island is a place of near-unfathomable ethnic, religious and historical complexity.

Waves of migrants have arrived over several millennia, some from North and East India, from the Malabar coast, the Arabian gulf, and from Java, each group forming a unique relationship with the state. Tamils, likewise, had come in waves, for over 2,500 years, and Malayaha (hill country) Tamils, from among whom Murali hails, were among the last to make landfall, lured over by the British to live and labour in hill-country plantations in almost uniformly abysmal conditions, for little pay. More than 150 years into life on the island, Malayaha Tamils remain among the nation's most impoverished ethnic groups, with most estate workers earning less than 800



rupees (about ₹320 Indian) a day. The community's health care and education outcomes continue to desperately trail national averages.

The 'Tamil cause'

More to the point, there has been no substantial political movement from Malayaha Tamils to join the separatist struggle that was produced in the north and east. For Tamils in the hills, economic concerns have long outstripped appetites for self-determination, and still do. Many also feel condescended to by northern Tamils, for their lower caste status, the recency of their arrival, and their use of a more common Tamil than the classical iteration of the language heard in Jaffna. If Murali is betraying the "Tamil cause", which Tamil cause, exactly? Higher wages for plantation workers was not among the LTTE's primary demands. Minorities are not always political monoliths.

Although Murali himself grew

up in relative wealth, his father and uncle having sold biscuits out of the back of a car to build the business up in the 1960s, it can be no surprise that it is poverty that Murali has concerned himself with in his considerable charitable works. Though at the peak of his cricketing career at the time, Murali had been a key figure in securing the resources to build more than 1,000 homes for tsunami victims after the 2004 disaster. In the years since he has supported significant humanitarian operations across the island. Perhaps this is tangential, but it is certainly not irrelevant. Murali has helped transform more lives through his goodwill than arguably any living cricketer. Many of those who have had his support are Tamils, particularly in the aftermath of the tsunami, when he personally organised and delivered a convoy of rations filled with supplies to the north.

Perhaps we should not be surprised that in casting Murali as a generic Sri Lankan Tamil, with no mention of his particular community, his harshest critics have stumbled into the same mire of illogic that inflamed the Sinhalese who attacked central hill-country Tamils over separatist agitations in the north and east. Nationalism, of any stripe, makes no concession to complexity. It smelts nuance down to a razor tip, for it has use only for weapons. Only a poster announcing the film was seen, but

Indian actor Vijay Sethupathi has been forced to withdraw from the project. Somehow, Murali had not been so toxic when he played for Chennai Super Kings between 2008 and 2010 – years in which the war whipped up to its furious conclusion.

Gripping script

If the film is canned following Sethupathi's exit, one of sport's most compelling stories will go untold on screen. Beyond his monumental cricketing exploits, Murali had also been strung up in a career-long tussle over his bowling action, which served as a flashpoint between the sport's grudging western powers and South Asia's burgeoning administrative heft. His politics have long been viewed as problematic, but who is to say *800* would not have enriched itself with such contentions? The latest novel from the film's co-writer, Shehan Karunatilaka, is a searing critique of wartime Sri Lanka. Sethupathi's track record suggests he possessed the depth and range to honestly and sensitively draw out the conflicts in Murali's story. Lost on detractors was the notion there can be more than one kind of biopic. Just as there can be more than one kind of Sri Lankan Tamil.

Andrew Fidel Fernando is a writer for ESPNcricinfo, and the author of *Upon a Sleepless Isle*, an award-winning book on Sri Lanka

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

It is inhumane

It is shocking that post-independent India still entertains the abhorred occupation of manual scavenging when better methods of waste removal are available (OpEd page, "The manacles of caste in sanitation work", October 22). How long will the exploitation of helpless oppressed citizens continue? States should join hands with the Union and come forward to abolish manual scavenging and allied activities that are synonymous with neo-slavery. The rehabilitation and skill development of scavengers are two areas which should be focused upon. Sectarian differences should be stopped and the

right to life should be propagated with gusto.

ARAVIND SANTHOSH,
Thiruvananthapuram

■ The accompanying picture was disheartening – to see a manual scavenger nearly lost in a manhole filled with human waste and other solids. The Constitution, ironically, speaks of social justice requiring an abolition of inequities. Alas, it is just on paper as there is no mass movement to end the barbarous practice. The lack of social safety and security for manual scavengers should be a wake-up call to revamp policy. Else, it is meaningless to call ours a civilised society.

E.S. CHANDRAKESWARAN,
Chennai

■ It is tragic that even in today's technologically advanced world, there is hardly any mechanism in sanitation work in India.

There must be an awakening among the general public to end the practice. Till such time, such workers need a union, medical insurance and a supervisor.

RITHI ANDAL POOJA V.,
Madurai

■ Deplorably, the caste syndrome and sanitation have become inextricably intertwined. This has resulted in the exploitation of manual scavengers, which has led to the perpetuation of the abominable practice. It is a pity that despite a plethora of laws banning this dehumanising practice,

has only become more entrenched in the system.

P.K. VARADARAJAN,
Chennai

■ Like it or not, sanitation relies heavily on the services of the most oppressed castes. Not only is the work itself degrading, it is also performed under extremely hazardous conditions. It is only when tragic incidents occur involving scavengers, that their social background, the indignities they face in society, and the risks they take come to light. There is a near-institutionalisation of such work. Ending the practice is a challenge India faces, which calls for a sustained approach.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

Health messaging

Has India passed the COVID-19 peak?

PARLEY

We cannot emphatically say that it has, as the virus has not spread uniformly across the country

Since mid-September, the number of daily new COVID-19 cases recorded has been reducing from the peak of 90,000-odd cases. A few days ago, the COVID-19 India National Supermodel Committee, constituted by the Department of Science and Technology, based on mathematical modelling studies, concluded that India had passed the COVID-19 peak in September. It also found that there will be fewer than 50,000 active cases from December and if proper safety protocols continue to be followed, the pandemic can be "controlled by early next year" with "minimal" active symptomatic infections by end-February. In a conversation moderated by R. Prasad, Gautam Menon and Giridhara R. Babu discuss whether India has gone past the peak. Edited excerpts:



Gautam Menon
is Professor of Physics and Biology at Ashoka University and co-author of COVID-19 modelling studies



Giridhara R. Babu
is Professor of Epidemiology at the Public Health Foundation of India, Bengaluru, and a member of the Karnataka COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee



Scan the QR code to watch the full interview online

At 75, the UN needs a rebirth

There must be a global push against the rules that have privileged rule of the few over the many

SREERAM CHAULIA

October 24 marks the diamond jubilee of the United Nations. But far from joyous celebration, it is an occasion to sombrely reflect on why the UN is stagnating at 75 and how it can regain its lost lustre.

Although much has changed in the international system since 1945, the world body continues to see a tussle between 'principle' and 'power'. On the one hand, the UN represents hopes of a peaceful and just world order through multilateral cooperation, abidance by international law, and uplift of the downtrodden. On the other, the institution has been designed to privilege the most powerful states of the post-World War II dispensation by granting them commanding heights over international politics via the undemocratic instruments of veto power and permanent seats in the Security Council (UNSC).

Arguably, if the great powers of that period were not accommodated with VIP status, we may have seen a repeat of the ill-fated League of Nations. Keeping all the major powers inside the tent and reasonably happy through joint control over the UNSC was intended to be a pragmatic step to avoid another world war. Presumably, the collective command model of big powers built into the UNSC is one of the reasons why there has been no third world war.

A model that didn't work

But this model has also caused havoc. Almost immediately after the UN's creation, it was pushed to the verge of irrelevance by the Cold War, which left the UN little room to implement noble visions of peace, development and human rights. It was only in the uncontested post-Cold War political milieu, when the liberal sole superpower, the U.S., strode like a colossus, that the UN could spring back to life and embark on a plethora of peacekeeping missions, nation-building interventions and promotion of universal human rights. In the U.S.-led 'new world order' of the 1990s, it appeared as if the problem of 'power' cutting out 'principle' had been resolved under the benign hegemony of a Washington that would be the

flag-bearer of UN values.

However, that golden age of the UN was too deceptive to last. We are now past the unipolar moment and the ghosts of the Cold War are returning in complex multi-sided avatars. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has labelled the present peaking of geopolitical tensions as a "great fracture". The phrase 'new Cold War' is in vogue to depict the clash between China and the U.S. Tensions involving other players like Russia, Turkey, Iran and Israel in West Asia, as well as between China and its neighbours in Asia, are at an all-time high.

The rerudescence of the worst habits of competitive vetoing by P-5 countries has prevented the UNSC from fulfilling its collective security mandate. So dangerous are the divisions and their spillover effects that Mr. Guterres has lamented that "we have essentially failed" to cooperate against the immediate global threat of the pandemic. He has also rekindled the old maxim, "The UN is only as strong as its members' commitment to its ideals."

Obstacles to reforms

But apart from rivalries of member states, there is a larger underlying problem. At the core of the paralysis of the UN is the phenomenon of P-5 countries (China, France, Russia, the U.K., and the U.S.) blocking reforms. Outmoded procedures based on the discriminatory original sin of superior prerogatives to P-5 countries have to be discarded. Why should expansion of the UNSC require consensus of the P-5? In the 21st century, why should there be veto power in anyone's hands? If a simple majority voting method could replace the P-5 consensus method, the obstacles to UNSC reforms would reduce.

On the 75th anniversary of the UN, there must be a global push against ossifying 'rules' which have privileged 'rule' of the few over the many. That is the only way to restore some balance between 'power' and 'principle' and ensure a renaissance of the UN.

Sreeram Chaulia is Dean, Jindal School of International Affairs

susceptible people versus how the infection is spreading will ensure that a bigger peak comes much faster, especially when people have been hiding away from the virus. So, we will have to see how it plays out during the winter and afterwards, especially when people start mixing with young people who can spread the infection to the elderly and to those who have co-morbidities. It is not a single wave at the national level which we should be looking at; instead, we should be looking at the State level. We should also be looking at the data from serological surveys, verbal autopsies and missed deaths from the States that are not reporting well, to understand the real nature of the peak.

Except Telangana, the other southern States have been reporting a high number of daily new cases, while large populous States such as U.P., M.P., and Bihar have reported far fewer cases. How do you explain this enigma?

GRB: Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Just because the southern States or some other States, including some in the north, are reporting more cases does not mean that only these States have circulation going on and other States have controlled it. Saying that only a few States have higher transmission compared to others is a statistical fallacy. This is the biggest trap we have seen in many infectious diseases. Due to integrity of reporting cases, many States get classified as high-risk States. The same thing happened, for instance, in the HIV programme. We should not repeat that mistake. We should build strong and resilient systems of data collection and reporting.

There are many ways of assessing whether a State has already gone past the surge in cases or whether it is yet to surge. One of the key things I would like to see is State-level serological surveys throughout the State, and also pick some infections in the acute phase. Testing randomly throughout the State will help us know the case-to-infection ratio, and comparisons between reported cases versus those who have already developed antibodies. Knowing



what proportion of people in the general population have positivity by doing random antigen tests and RT-PCR and verbal autopsies of deaths will tell us whether the State has gone past the surge in cases or is yet to surge.

GM: Data are vital. What we need is much more granular data that will give us a better idea of whether it is just lack of reporting or insufficient testing that is governing these numbers or whether there is a genuine reason to be happy.

But some of these States, like U.P., have been doing a high number of daily tests, yet the cases are low. Is it because of over-reliance on rapid antigen tests or under-reporting?

GM: The ratio of RAT to PCR test is fairly high in both Bihar and U.P. The method of who you test and what level you test is certainly an issue. Also, whether the testing is done broadly enough in the general population to pick up certain numbers is a question. As a fraction of the absolute population of the State, those test numbers are not good on their own.

GRB: Also important is when the testing is done. If testing is increased at a time when the surge in cases has not happened already, or the surge in cases has already happened, the number of people who are actually infected might be low. So, if the tests are increased when prevalence is low, you will obviously pick up fewer numbers. And we don't know which districts are in which stage of transmission in several States.

The Indian Council of Medical Research's second sero survey says over 7% of the adult population has been infected

C We should be looking at the data from serological surveys, verbal autopsies and missed deaths from the States that are not reporting well, to understand the real nature of the peak.

GIRIDHARA BABU

and the virus has spread to the rural districts. Is testing really good in rural areas or will these areas see a surge later?

GRB: I feel that there is disparity in the way we test in metros and urban areas and in rural areas, which is a function of this trend of the health system as such. The ICMR survey gave a clear approximation that the infection has spread to rural areas, at least in the surveyed areas. The rural areas should not be ignored; we will have to do more testing in rural areas to corroborate that. We also need to understand whether the rural dynamics of transmission are similar to urban areas. And that can only be known by doing more sero surveys there. We still don't know what proportion of people are acutely infected and yet not detected. So it's a sum total of all these things that will give a clearer picture. Without that kind of granular data, we will not be able to say whether rural areas have missing transmission or not.

GM: From informal reports it does seem like many more people in rural areas are ill than are actually going in to be tested. Also, the delays in getting tested after falling ill, and in getting tested and getting a result, are significant in the progression of the disease from person to person.

The expert committee has projected a minimal number of

fresh cases by end-February. Is it correct based on mathematical modelling to project for a period of four months during the pandemic?

GM: Well, I would not do that and I would not recommend that anyone does it either with any degree of confidence. I think all one can say is that this particular model with these particular numbers show that cases will come down for three or four months down the line. But we have no reason to believe that those numbers will remain the same, the parameters in that model will remain the same. A much better index is what is the fraction of the population of the country that you think is currently infected. And that will tell you how many more people are there to be infected.

Currently there are about 7.5 lakh active cases but the committee says it will drop to 50,000 in December. Do you think it's feasible?

GM: It could be unusual for that to happen. They believe that 300-400 million people in India are already infected, which seems a little too high to me. I think 200-million plus is probably a reasonable ballpark figure. There are lots of people yet to be infected, a lot of them are in areas that have not been exposed yet. So, at what rate they will get infected is the important question. I suspect that there will be a background of infection as we go towards the next couple of months. It will not dip very significantly at least for the next two or three months.

GRB: These predictions are good as long as they serve the purpose of planning, ensuring that we are stepping up our resources. But then if they give some kind of robust confidence that all is well and we might be free from this disease beyond December, I don't think any of us have that kind of optimism yet. I would want to look at seven days average, at the minimum, to understand what is going to happen in the next seven days.

GM: Yes, I agree. I don't see what the point is of saying that something's going to happen four months later when we don't have enough knowledge. A week, two weeks in advance is the best that one can do.

I worry that putting such a long horizon serves a political purpose rather than a public health purpose.

The committee has not been able to provide any valid explanation for why India seems to have peaked. What could be the reasons considering that India has gone through various stages of unlock and movement of people has increased?

GRB: The data suggest that areas that were prone to increased population movement and where people were working even when the lockdown was there and who did not follow the public health regulations were the ones who got the earlier waves of circulation. With the most dense areas having been affected already, it's only the lesser population density areas which are the next focus. Therefore, the speed at which it will spread is going to be different from what it was earlier. The test positivity is also going down as testing numbers have not majorly decreased. Definitely there seems to be some decrease in cases but since we have not touched the baseline, we can't be sure that this is over.

What will the combined effect of the festival season, winter, unrestricted movement of people, opening up of business establishments and non-adherence to non-pharmaceutical interventions be on the virus spread?

GRB: We don't know what has happened before to actually know what is happening now and to predict what's going to happen in the future. Let's assume region A has already had a surge in cases and nearly 40%-50% of the people have been infected. So, even if festivals are celebrated and people congregate, one may not see that kind of a spike in cases in that region. Whereas, in region B, if the earlier surge was not there, the same kind of behaviour might result in big hotspots and many deaths. We don't know what's happening at the district level. So we need to make a beginning of trying to understand what is happening in each district to be able to predict which districts require more care. We are not using the data in the wisest manner. That's my worry.



NOTEBOOK

Reading in the time of a contagion

COVID-19 only added to the publishing world's other pressing anxieties

SUDIPTA DATTA

One of the most awaited moments for those handling book review pages in newspapers and magazines is the annual catalogues of various publishers. They are elegantly designed, with special attention to fonts, and announce the titles that will highlight the upcoming year. For 2020, on offer were books by Thomas Piketty, Pankaj Mishra, Shashi Tharoor, Pernicious Murugan, Romila Thapar, Ira Mukhoty, and a host of volumes on the U.S. in an election year. There were biographies of an old emperor (Akbar), a shrewd politician (Muhammad Ali Jinnah), India's first woman doctor (Anandibai Joshi) and a river (Brahmaputra).

But with China reporting a cluster of pneumonia cases late in 2019, the new year began ominously. By March, when a stringent lockdown was announced in India to control the spread of the novel coronavirus, life as we knew it was changing forever. With people falling sick, others forced indoors and the economy in a tailspin, it was inevitable that publishing, like every other cog in the wheel, would have to brace for hard times.

Uncertainty ruled the next three months. As schedules began to go awry for publishers, with printing presses shut, a shortage of hands and commissioning issues, the worry was that there would not be easy access to books for reading and review. With books not listed in the "essential" category, distribution was hit hard. Big wine and cheese launches became a thing of the past and were replaced by livestreams and webinars. The digital connect ensured the flow of material as PDFs, that included several books on the dreaded virus, but reviewers complained of we-

ary eyes and said they missed the rustle of pages.

For anyone in the publishing industry what Indians prefer reading, and there's no clear answer. At the moment, books on health, economy, politics, religion, sport, romance and thrillers are "doing well", though no one likes to define what it means in terms of sales. But the genres provide a clue to a reader's mind. Why else would there be a renewed wish to read George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984? Or all the sci-fi novels on contagion? Writers around the world are already keeping journals of the 2020 virus. In a recent literary anthology, Mario Vargas Llosa said when we cannot understand what is happening around us, as a society we turn to books to see if they offer any answers. Will this lead to novels like Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*? Time will tell and readers will keep an eye.

Then there are other challenges, from the overriding trend of a gradual decline in reading for pleasure, and the shift to digital. India may be a population of 1.6 billion, but how many have access to the digital world for reading? COVID-19 laid bare the glaring inequities. The sale of e-books may have risen during the lockdown but it comprises a small portion of the publishing world in India and won't make up

for losses.

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The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 23, 1970

Indo-US relations under cloud

Indo-American relations are once again passing through a periodic phase of mutual recrimination and unnecessary suspicion, when the real issues of the day get completely overshadowed by minor irritations, and avoidable distortions are allowed to develop even in the exchange of routine diplomatic courtesies between the two Governments. From India's point of view, the most immediate provocation for this new wave of disenchantment is the latest U.S. move to resume military aid to Pakistan which can only add to the prevailing tension in the sub-continent without achieving anything tangible for the furtherance of the American interests in the region. Acting with characteristic maladroitness, the U.S. has decided to ignore India's sensitivity and introduce this new element of bitterness in Indo-American relations in the hope of scoring compensating gains in Pakistan's domestic politics by strengthening the hands of the pro-American lobby in the forthcoming general election. The timing of the American arms aid resumption is evidently intended to buttress the prestige of President Yahya Khan who is being severely assailed by hardliners like Mr. Z.A. Bhutto and Air Marshal Nur Khan for his attempts to reduce Pakistan's dependence on China by seeking a balancing relationship with both the Soviet Union and the U.S.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 23, 1920
Wilful murder
(From an editorial)

We published yesterday the full text of counsel's opinion on the Punjab criminals. It is a document that will repay careful study as it does from some of the ablest of British jurists. The local champion of the Dyer-hards went into mild hysterics over it and pretended to see in it nothing but the latest development in the "hounding" of that much-maligned hero, General Dyer. It also attempted to discount the value attaching to the opinions of so eminent a lawyer as Mr. Upjohn by assuming that the conclusions were based upon one-sided and perverted promises. A study of the full text will show that counsel have not gone a hair's breadth beyond the facts conclusively established. Their opinion is founded firstly upon the admissions of General Dyer as to the actual happenings and as to his motives and second upon the report of the Hunter Committee which cannot be held to be unduly prejudiced against General Dyer.

FROM PAGE ONE

Government relaxes visa restrictions

"Foreign nationals intending to visit India for medical treatment can apply for a Medical Visa including for their medical attendants," the MHA said.

All such travellers should, however, strictly adhere to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on quarantine and other health/COVID-19 matters, the statement said.

The travel restriction, prohibiting international travel to and from 107 immigration check-posts was is-

sued on March 23, a day before the first phase of the 21-day-countrywide COV-19 lockdown.

The visa restrictions have been gradually relaxed, and on August 18, the MHA allowed foreign journalists and their dependents to enter India.

On August 7, it allowed foreign nationals from the U.S., the U.K., Germany and France to travel to India on "business, medical and employment" visas under the air bubble scheme.

BJP manifesto promises free vaccine for Bihar

BJP information technology cell chief Amit Malviya said, "Like all programmes, the Centre will provide vaccines to the States at a nominal rate. It is for State governments to decide if they want to give it free or otherwise. Health being a State subject, Bihar BJP has decided to give it free."

The manifesto also promised 19 lakh jobs in the next five years, including the appointment of three lakh teachers within the next year in schools and higher education institutions and one lakh jobs in the health sector.

Jobs have become a major issue in the election, with Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav promising that his first act, on being elected to power, would be to create 10 lakh

jobs. A promise to construct 30 lakh pucca houses for the poor was also made. Special emphasis would be given to the information technology sector, as well as the establishment of 13 food processing parks, the manifesto said.

Under the New Education Policy, engineering and other technical education will be made available in Hindi in the State. A minimum support price regime will be put in place for pulses too.

Bihar is one State where all citizens are politically sensitive and well-informed. They know and understand the promises a party makes. If anyone raises questions on our manifesto, we can answer them with confidence as we fulfil what we promised," Ms. Sitharaman said.

Will COVID care depend on elections, asks Rahul

Tagging a video clip of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's comment, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said, "You vote for me and I will give vaccine.... what appalling cynicism! Will the Election Commission rap her & her shameless Govt on the knuckles?"

As the issue snowballed into a major controversy, senior BJP leader Bhupender Yadav stepped in and accused Mr. Tharoor of twisting Ms. Sitharaman's state-

ment. "Your attempt to twist Smt Nirmala Sitharaman's statement reeks of desperation. All parties issue manifestos. Vaccines will be made available to all Indians at nominal costs. States can make it free. In #Bihar, we will," Mr. Yadav said.

The Congress's official Twitter handle pointed out that every major vaccination programme has been free in India, and asked if the BJP government intends to reverse the policy.

Dr. Reddy's shuts units due to cyberattack

The cyber attack comes days after the pharma giant received the Drugs Controller General of India's approval to conduct Phase 2/3 human clinical trial for Sputnik V vaccine, developed by Russia, in the country.

This followed Russia's sovereign wealth fund RDIF, which is piloting the COVID-19 vaccine candidate, announcing last month a collaboration with Dr. Reddy's for clinical trials and distribution of the vaccine in India.

On Saturday, the drugmaker and Russian Direct

Investment Fund (RDIF) had announced receipt of the DCGI approval for a multi-centre and randomised controlled study, for Sputnik V which would include safety and immunogenicity study.

As per the plan, the RDIF intends to supply 100 million doses of the vaccine to Dr. Reddy's.

Subject to completion of successful trials and registration of the vaccine by regulatory authorities in India, deliveries could potentially begin in late 2020, the RDIF had said in September.

U.S. to nix business visas for H-1B speciality jobs

It is likely to impact several Indian firms which send their professionals on B-1 visas for a short stay to complete jobs on site.

The State Department estimates that this proposal will affect not more than 6,000 to 8,000 foreign workers per year.

rather than H-1B visas, the State Department said.

"The proposed changes and the resulting transparency would reduce the impact of foreign labour on the U.S. workforce of aliens performing activities in a speciality occupation without the procedural protections attendant to the H-1B classification," it said.

The State Department said the application process for a B-1 visa does not include similar procedural requirements to protect the U.S. workers like that of H-1B visas. Also, the fees for the B-1 visas are far lower than that of H-1B visas.



Adding fire power: INS Kavaratti in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. •PTI

Army chief commissions INS Kavaratti at Visakhapatnam

It is the last of four indigenously built ASW stealth corvettes

SUMIT BHATTACHARJEE
VIKAS KHATRI

INS Kavaratti, the last of the four indigenously built Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvettes built under Project 28 (Kamorta class), by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, was formally inducted into the Navy at the Naval Dockyard in Eastern Naval Command here on Thursday.

It was commissioned by

General Manoj Mukund Naravane, Chief of the Army Staff, in the presence of Vice-Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command (ENC).

India-made steel used

The ship, named after the capital of the Lakshadweep group of islands, has been constructed using high-grade DMR 249A steel produced in India.

The ship spans 109 metres in length, 14 metres in breadth with a displacement of 3,300 tonnes and is regarded as one of the most potent Anti-Submarine Warships to have been constructed in India.

Experts say the induction of the ASW corvettes will be a game changer in the eastern seaboard, especially with the Chinese submarines trying to make sorties in the Indian Ocean.

Telangana scribe's minor son kidnapped, killed

Abductor was known to boy's parents, demand for ransom ends in tragedy

MARRI RAMU
HYDERABAD

The kidnap for ransom of a nine-year-old boy, Deekshit Reddy, son of a journalist in Mahbubabad town, 220 km from here, ended in tragedy after the police found him murdered on Thursday. The boy's father, Ranjith Reddy, is a reporter for Telugu TV channel T News.

The parents had arranged ₹45 lakh to be paid to the abductor for the safe return of the boy. The Mahbubabad

district police, which launched 10 special teams to crack the abduction, reported four days ago, received a rude jolt as the boy's body was found just 5 km from his home.

A person known to the boy's parents emerged the abductor and killer. Presenting the accused Manda Sagar before the media at Mahbubabad, Superintendent of Police Koti Reddy said greed to make a fast buck drove the accused to kidnap and kill the boy.

Fraud charge: Kummanam, 8 others booked

STAFF REPORTER
PATHANAMTHITTA

BJP leader and former Mizoram Governor Kummanam Rajasekharan has landed in a controversy after the Aranmula police booked a case against him and eight others for allegedly defrauding a person of several lakhs of rupees.

Praveen V. Pillai, former private secretary of Mr. Rajasekharan, is the prime accused and Mr. Rajasekharan is the fourth accused in the case.

LDF inducts Jose K. Mani faction of KC(M)

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) on Thursday inducted the Jose. K. Mani faction of the Kerala Congress (M) into the ruling coalition.

Mr. Mani's inclusion comes barely four months after the United Democratic Front (UDF) announced that the faction had lost the right to continue in the front.

Bickering over the chairpersonship of the Kottayam district panchayat with the KC(M) group headed by P.J. Joseph had paved the way for Mr. Mani's acr-

imonious exit from the UDF and subsequent entry into the LDF.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) were initially unsympathetic to the proposal. The CPI(M) leadership smoothed out the process by persuading the two to shed their frostiness towards Mr. Mani.

It also managed to overcome the CPI suggestion to test Mr. Mani's electoral sway in Central Travancore in the upcoming local body elections before admitting

The Congress maintained



Jose. K. Mani

him into the coalition. The Election Commission of India's decision to award the 'Two Leaf' symbol to Mr. Mani also hastened his admittance.

The Congress maintained

that the arrangement was patently incongruous. The CPI (M) and the KC(M) had differed on every political issue for the last 39 years. Both parties did not see eye-to-eye at the grassroots level. KC(M) workers would reject the pact Mr. Mani struck with the CPI(M), Congress sources said. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said political expediency and not principle had prompted the LDF to embrace Mr. Mani.

LDF convener A. Vijayraghavan said KC(M) joined the LDF unconditionally to advance the secular and pro-farmer policies of the front.

IN BRIEF



Anticipatory bail plea by Sivasankar closed

KOCHI The anticipatory bail plea of M. Sivasankar, former Principal Secretary to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, before the special court of the National Investigation Agency was closed by the court on Thursday as the agency submitted it did not have any plans to arrest him presently.

Forest teams drive tusker back into T.N. forests

CHITTOR One-eyed lone tusker, which had reportedly killed a forest jeep driver last week, was driven into the Tamil Nadu forests on Wednesday night, following a five-day operation by the forest officials of Chittoor and Gudiyattam range. Sources said the animal had turned aggressive after it got separated from its herd.

Kerala govt. examining Sprinkler inquiry report

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM The Kerala government is examining a report submitted by a two-member committee constituted to look into the pact with the U.S.-based data analytics firm, Sprinkler. The panel is headed by M. Madhavan Nambiar, former Civil Aviation Secretary. Cyber expert Gulshan Roy is the other member.

HC suggests law imposing death penalty for gang rape

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has suggested that a law be framed at the national level prescribing death penalty for the gang rape of women.

The court made the observation while upholding the life imprisonment imposed by the trial court on seven convicted persons, who had gang-raped a 21-year-old law student near

Jnana Bharathi campus in the city on October 13, 2012.

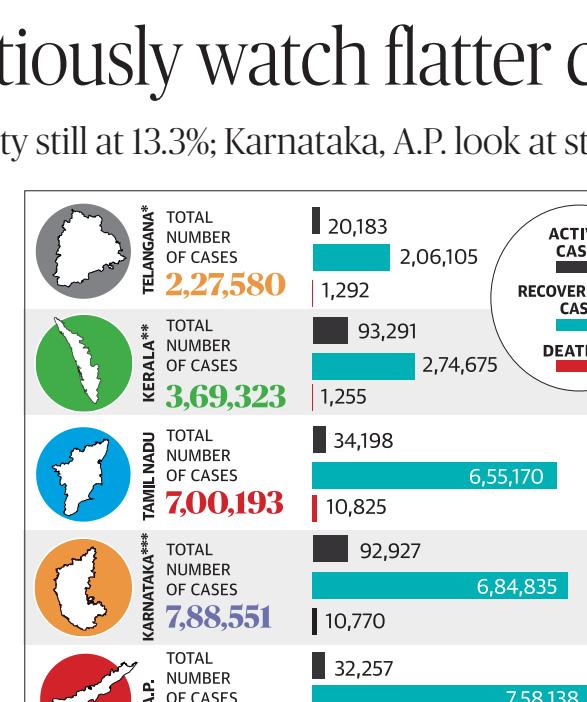
"She [the victim] had boldly lodged a complaint at 1.30 a.m. in order to 'protect Dharma'. Her 'tolerance' and 'courage' to proceed against the accused in accordance with the law ... and for fighting the legal battle against the accused to get justice in an unfortunate incident in her life has to be appreciated," the court observed.

APPEAL

I. Vaishnavi aged 4 years need your support to bring a new hope to my life. I suffer from B Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and require Rs.8,00,000/- towards Chemotherapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Donations sent by Ch.D.D favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch.D.D/NEFT/Transit (Synchronic Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No.60182010063310, IFSC No. SYNB0006018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT. Please do not mention patient name on the cheque.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No.GF 1, Corridor Apartments, O.No.29, Pyrocks Garden Lane, Chennai - 600008. Ph: 044-42137401/283524 E-mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

Vaishnavi



fresh cases on Wednesday.

The Health department said on Thursday that five more deaths were reported.

Another 38,565 samples were tested on Wednesday.

There were 254 cases from Greater Hyderabad Municipality.

Bengaluru Urban reported 2,807 cases

pal Corporation area.

Karnataka on Thursday reported 5,778 new cases and 74 deaths.

The positivity rate for the day reduced to 5.38%,

and Case Fatality Rate (CFR) touched 1.28%. Bengaluru Urban reported 2,807 cases

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Crucial M.P. bypolls turn Scindia-Nath battle

Ex-Congress leader's sway is a crucial factor

SIDDHARTH YADAV
BHOJPUR

Amid portraits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president J.P. Nadda and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on the hoardings at the party's Bhopal office, the absence of a popular face, whose 19 supporters are in the fray in the byelection to 28 Assembly seats in Madhya Pradesh, is glaring.

"Members of the party, even if a 'Maharaj', have to stick to its discipline and convention," explained a worker, referring to Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya



Political drama: Jyotiraditya Scindia, left, and Kamal Nath, who were once on the same side, now stand apart. ■ PTI

Scinda who does not figure on the hoardings.

Mr. Scindia, who led the Congress to victory in the Assembly election in 2018, is now a BJP member but his stature as a new entrant has meant that he is eclipsed by the party's older leaders.

fallen vacant after the deaths of legislators.

However, the polls are more a prestige battle between Mr. Scindia, who left the Congress and is eyeing a ministerial berth at the Centre, and former Congress Chief Minister Kamal Nath.

The BJP has given ticket to all the defectors.

The Congress, which won 27 of the 28 seats in 2018, needs to win all to pull up its tally of 88 MLAs and assume power again. However, after the political drama of the defections and change of government, it can no longer rely on the support of the four Independent, two Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the lone Samajwadi legislators, which had helped it cross the 115 simple majority

mark previously.

The BSP MLAs seemingly backed the BJP during the political turmoil, while Independents are eager to secure ministerial berths, irrespective of the party in government.

The BJP needs to extend its tally of 107 by at least nine seats in the 230-member Assembly to retain power.

Area of dominance

With 16 seats up for grabs in the Gwalior-Chambal region, the Scindia stronghold, the BJP is drawing strength from the former Congress leader's cadre.

Both the parties are intent on winning the Dalit vote as nine seats are reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates. But the BSP's considerable

popularity among Jatavs in pockets adjacent to Uttar Pradesh such as Chambal and Vindhya Pradesh is likely to throw up a triangular contest in a few seats. In 2018, the party secured the second spot in Gorakhpur, Dabri and Pohri. Two of its contestants this time are former Congressmen.

The Congress vote share jumped by nearly four points to 40.85% in the 2018 election, marginally behind the 40.91% of the BJP, which has ruled the State for 15 years.

On the 34 seats of Chambal, the Congress had won 26 with Mr. Scindia's support and the BJP just seven.

The Congress is asking voters to reject 'traitors' and 'sold out' leaders to win in Bhind and Morena districts.

2+2 talks will focus on regional issues

Timing not unusual, says MEA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India and the U.S. will discuss "salient regional" issues when U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.S. Defence Secretary Mark Esper travel to India next week for the "2+2 Ministerial dialogue", the government said on Thursday, in an indication that ties with China will be on the agenda for talks on October 27.

"The Third India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue will entail a comprehensive discussion on cross-cutting bilateral issues of mutual interest. In addition, both sides will also exchange views on salient regional and global issues," said MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava during a weekly briefing with journalists.

On Wednesday, Mr. Pompeo had said talks during his visit will include "discussions on how free nations can work together to thwart threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party".

However, the MEA did not respond to a specific question about whether border tensions, and the ongoing talks with China would feature during the 2+2 meeting, nor would Mr. Srivastava comment on which agreements, including the geo-spatial agreement BECA would be signed, adding that he would rather not "prejudge the outcomes" of the visit.

"India and U.S. have a comprehensive global strategic partnership which includes political, security and defence, economic, commercial, technology



Mark Esper, left, and Mike Pompeo. ■ AFP

and people-to-people contacts. We have regular dialogue for various levels to discuss ongoing bilateral cooperation and to exchange views on developments in the region," the MEA statement said.

The MEA denied that the timing of the visit of senior U.S. officials exactly one week before U.S. elections on November 3, was unusual, and said it followed the pattern of "2+2" meetings in previous years.

"As regards the timing of the meeting, you know that diplomatic calendars have their logic, and you will notice that the earlier two meetings have been held towards the end of the year," Mr. Srivastava said in response to a question from *The Hindu*.

In a separate response on progress in border negotiations with China, the MEA said, "India and China continue to have discussions through both diplomatic and military channels to peacefully resolve the issues along the LAC in India-China Border areas. [The immediate task is to ensure a comprehensive disengagement of troops in all the friction areas."

"India and U.S. have a comprehensive global strategic partnership which includes political, security and defence, economic, commercial, technology

INTERVIEW | MANOJ K. JHA

'The fight is between RJD and BJP'

RJD spokesperson discounts chances of the JD(U), says there is no fight with it

SOBHANA K. NAIR

Senior RJD leader and party spokesperson Manoj K. Jha speaks on the prospects of the party, Tejashwi Yadav's rallies and the burden of the 15-year Lalu-Rabri regime that the party carries:

The opinion polls have suggested that the RJD-Congress-Left combine lags behind the NDA in the Assembly election in Bihar. Your comments.

I would just say they should check their opinion polls of 2015 also. I know their compulsions and I know the pressures under which they work. I know the mandate given to them by their top bosses – opinion polls are often opinionated polls.

Tejashwi Yadav's rallies have become a talking point, drawing a huge crowd. Don't you fear that such huge participation could be seen as Yadav assertion and could have a counter consolidation?

■ Across Bihar, Tejashwi is drawing an interactive crowd. These are not just limited to Muslims and Yadavs. Look at the areas where the rallies were held – Aurangabad, Goh, Taimur, Magadh, Aliganj... it is a mixed crowd. I have not seen such an enthusiastic and interactive crowd in recent times.

Bihar CM and JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar in almost every rally of this is invoking the "jungle raj" during the 15-year Lalu-Rabri rule. Is that why the RJD has removed Lalaji's and Rabriji's pictures from its posters?

■ I give you a task – compare NCRB data 1990 to 2005 and subsequently 2005-2020. The data for the two periods whether it is kidnapping or dacoity is not different. Story lies in the data, not only what one says. I have seen an unprecedented degeneration in the language employed by Mr. Nitish Kumar, our honourable Chief Minister. He addresses Tejashwi

regret letting go of Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Samata Dal, Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustan Awam Morcha and Mukesh Sahnih's Vikassheel Insaan Party?

■ No, way. It is the other way round. They chose their own trajectory, I wish them well. I would say, very frankly, the fight is between the RJD alliance and the BJP and on certain seats with the LJP. There is virtually no fight with the JD(U).

So you are saying it's going to be a cakewalk for you?

■ No, election is an election. It cannot be described by words like 'cakewalk'.

What are your political observations about the LJP's solo fight in this election? Who will stand to benefit?

■ I tell you, the BJP is actually part of four alliances with different parameters – direct, indirect and invisible.

The BJP is in direct alliance with the JD(U), indirectly with the LJP and invisibly with Asaduddin Owaisi. This has never happened.

This election, by all accounts, looks like a close contest. Do you at this stage



C The BJP is in direct alliance with the JD(U), indirectly with the LJP and invisibly with Asaduddin Owaisi

"karta hai, bolta hai". This is not the language of Bihar. People may differ with each other fundamentally, but they will never employ such derogatory language.

If there were 15 years of Jungle Raj under Lalu and Rabriji then in 2015, why did you [Nitish Kumar] have an alliance with the RJD?

This election, by all accounts, looks like a close contest. Do you at this stage

**DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER (D)
VARUNALAYA PHASE-II: KAROL BAGH
NEW DELHI - 110005**

STOP CORONA

"WASH YOUR HAND" "WEAR MASK" "MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING"

Applications are invited for filling up the post of Law Officer on deputation in Delhi Jal Board in the PB-3 of Rs. 15600-39100 plus Grade pay Rs. 7600/- (Pre-revised) from the eligible officers. Last date of receipt of application will be the date of completion of 60 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in "Employment News". The eligibility criteria and application format can be downloaded from Delhi Jal Board website i.e. www.delhijalboard.nic.in

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 197 (2020-21)

ASSTT. COMMISSIONER (D)

DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT
ICPS-SARA, Poojapura, Thiruvananthapuram

NOTIFICATION Date: 07/10/20

(Issued as per 6(6) of Adoption Regulations, 2017)

1. Name of the Child	: Amal
2. Sex	: Male
3. Age	: 10 years
4. Place where the Child Found	: Palakkad Railway Station
5. Date of Admission of the Child to the Children's Home	: 04/09/16
6. Temporarily Admitted Institutes	: Govt. Children's Home, Palakkad
7. CWC Order No. & Date	: 1354/P/2016, dated : 04/09/16

If anybody has any type of claim over the parent responsibility of the above said child, can inform the following address: District Child Protection Officer, Municipal Complex, Palakkad, Pin: 678001 (Ph: 0491-2531098, Email: dcupukd@gmail.com) with proper documents within 30 days of publications of this notice otherwise it will be considered as the child has no legal parents hence will go forward with adoption process.

Sd/- Director

Women and Child Development Department (ICPS-SARA/2574/20)

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IN BRIEF



Govt. warns Twitter over map misrepresentation

NEW DELHI India has warned Twitter over its location setting that showed Leh in China, saying any disrespect of the country's sovereignty and integrity is totally unacceptable. Ajay Sawhney, secretary in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, asked Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to respect the sensitivities, sources said.

CBI books four Railway officials for corruption

NEW DELHI The CBI has booked four Railway officials and two top functionaries of a private company for allegedly causing a loss of crores to the exchequer by tampering with bills raised against execution of work contracts. The accused are the then deputy chief engineer S.P. Deshmukh, assistant executive engineer (construction) Pradip Kumar Sharma, assistant finance adviser Tapeswar Rabha and one Bimal Dey.

New app for National Museum

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Hundreds of miniature paintings from the National Museum's collections can now be seen through the Google Arts & Culture app after Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel launched the "Life in Miniature" project on Thursday. Mr. Patel virtually launched the project, a collaboration between the National Museum, Delhi, and Google Arts & Culture, a Ministry statement said.

The project uses technologies such as machine learning, augmented reality and digitisation with high-definition robotic cameras, to showcase these special works of art in a magical new way," the statement said. The app allows users to magnify the paintings to see the details.

Kerala reports most cases, says Ministry

More than 8,000 test positive in State; Maharashtra continues to register most number of deaths

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India reported 55,839 new coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, with 78% recorded from 10 States and Union Territories (UTs). Kerala reported the most number of cases, followed by Maharashtra (which continues to register the most number of fatalities) and Karnataka, according to data given on Thursday by the Union Health Ministry for Wednesday.

Both Kerala and Maharashtra were reporting a very high number of new cases, with more than 8,000 cases each, followed by Karnataka, with more than 5,000 cases, a Ministry release said.

Active cases at 10%
India also reported 702 case fatalities, as per the data. Of this, nearly 82% was concentrated in 10 States/Union Territories and more than 25% of the new fatalities were from Maharashtra (180), the Ministry said.

The active cases have been sustained below 10% of

Viral tracker

With 52,129 COVID-19 cases recorded on Thursday, India's tally stood at 77,56,827. As many as 623 deaths were registered, taking the toll to 1,17,301. A total of 9.86 crore samples were tested as of October 21, according to the ICMR.

NEW CASES AND DEATHS



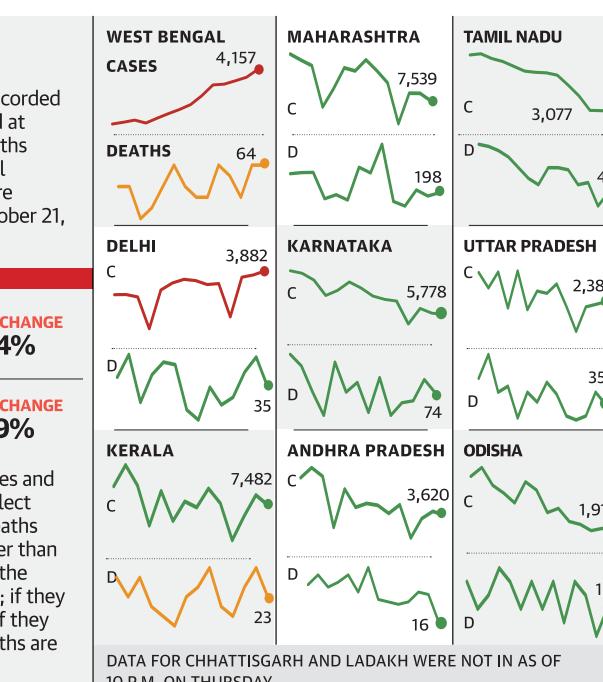
The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases and deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases and deaths are rising; if they are lower, then dropping; if they are similar, then cases and deaths are flattening in that State.

"The positivity rate has also been maintained to less than 5% over the past three days, indicating that the spread of infection is being effectively contained through focussed strategies and actions of the Centre and the States/UTs. Today, the daily positivity rate is reported to be 3.8%," said the release.

India also reported a total recovered cases close to 69 lakh (68,74,518). As per the data, 79,415 patients have recovered and discharged, with 81% of the new recoveries concentrated in 10 States/UTs. Maharashtra contributed more than 23,000 to the single day recovery.

Not the last: WHO

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,



DATA FOR CHHATTISGARH AND LADAKH WERE NOT IN AS OF 10 P.M. ON THURSDAY

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in a release issued on Thursday, said that with the ongoing pandemic, it had never been clearer that health was a political and economic choice.

"In the past 20 years, countries have invested heavily in preparing for terrorist attacks, but relatively little in preparing for the attack of a virus – which, as the COVID-19 pandemic has proven, can be far more deadly, disruptive and costly," he said. This would not be the last pandemic, he noted.

"But when the next one comes, the world must be ready. Part of every country's commitment... must therefore be to invest in public health, as an investment in a healthier and safer future," he said.

Pakistan has carried out 3,800 unprovoked ceasefire violations so far in 2020, said an official of the Ministry of External Affairs. The official spokesperson of the Ministry, Anurag Srivastava, said in the weekly virtual press briefing on Thursday India had regularly taken up these violations with Pakistan through diplomatic channels.

The accusations are timed with the ongoing FATF Plenary meeting (October 21-23) which is looking at Pakistan's compliance with the 27-point FATF Action Plan. The official also said that Pakistan had not fulfilled several of the action items. "Pakistan continues to provide safe havens to terrorist entities and individuals and has almost not yet taken any action against entities and individuals including those proscribed by the UNSC such as Masood Azhar, Dawood Ibrahim, Zakiur-Rahman Lakhvi."

"Pakistan forces have continued to engage in unprovoked ceasefire violations, often from civilian areas, to support infiltration of terrorists across the LoC. This is a clear violation of the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding between the two sides. This year, till date, Pakistani forces have carried out more than 3,800 unprovoked ceasefire violations. There have also been attempts to drop arms and ammunition close to the LoC in the garb of civilian

Pak. made 3,800 ceasefire violations'

India's charge timed with FATF Plenary activities," Mr. Srivastava said.

He also accused Pakistan of using drones and quadcopters for smuggling of arms and narcotic substances across the International Border (IB). "Such violations are regularly highlighted to Pakistan through diplomatic channels and at the regular DGMO level talks," Mr. Srivastava said.

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CPI-IW base year revised to 2016

New series not to affect dearness allowance given to government staff for now

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Labour and Employment Ministry on Thursday revised the base year of the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) from 2001 to 2016 to reflect the changing consumption pattern, giving more weightage to spending on health, education, recreation and other miscellaneous expenses, while reducing the weight of food and beverages.

Apart from measuring inflation in retail prices, the CPI-IW is used to regulate the dearness allowance (DA) of government staff and industrial workers, as well as to revise minimum wages in scheduled employments, a Ministry statement said.

Labour Bureau Director-General D.P.S. Negi said the new series would not have

an impact on the DA given to government employees for now. The linking factor of the new series to the old series was 2.88, something which employer federations had raised in consultations.

At the launch of the new series, Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar said the Bureau would work towards revising the index every five years. The reduction in weight to spending on food and beverages indicated an increase in disposable income.

The Minister also released the first index, with 2016 as the base year. The index for September, calculated for 88 centres as opposed to the previous 78 centres, was 118.

The sample size was increased from 41,040 families to 48,384, and the number of selected markets for collecting retail price data from 289 to 317. The weight to food and beverage was reduced from 46.2% to 39%, while spending on housing increased from 15.2% to 17%.

The index for October will be released on November 27.

Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar releasing CPI(IW) series in New Delhi on Thursday. ■TWITTER

come. Mr. Gangwar said the new series, representing the latest consumption pattern, would be in the interest of workers. The number of centres, markets and the sample size for working class family income and expenditure survey were all increased.

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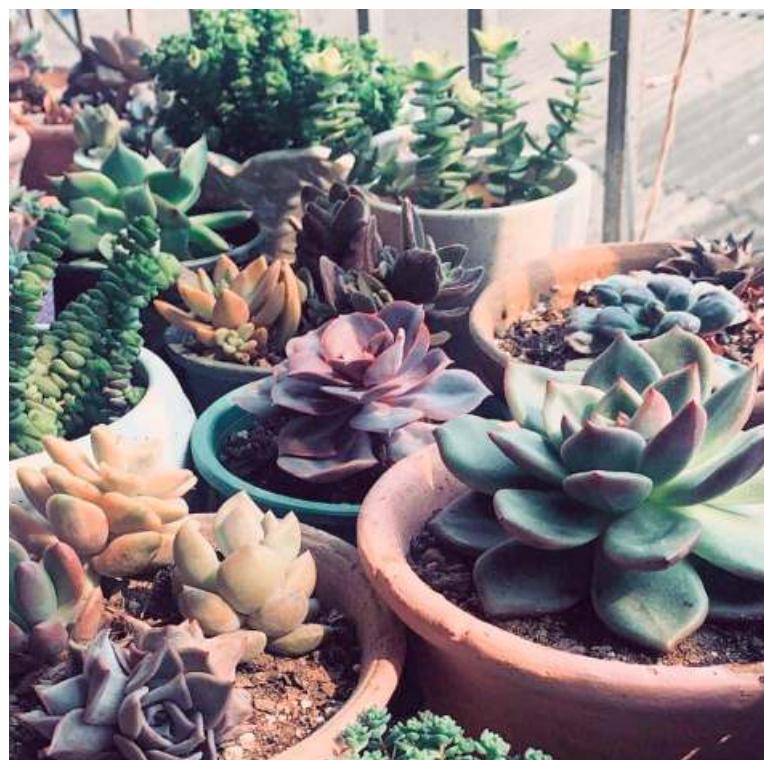
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The rarity factor
According to Vinayaka Garg of Lazy Gardener, a Delhi-based online supplier of garden accessories, "Variegation is caused by a genetic mutation. But it is not easy to grow one from a cutting, as it may not always create the splashes of colour on green leaves. In case there is a completely green leaf, one has to keep plucking it out till the plant only has variegated leaves. Tissue culture is a better way to ensure best results."



Meet my green, leafy collectibles

Money does grow on trees after all, find collectors and sellers of rare plants, which are seeing a bloom in popularity — and price — during lockdown

SARASWATHY NAGARAJAN

"The market for rare plants used to be like the art market: discreet, rich and a passion nursed by the wealthy. But social media, especially Instagram and Pinterest, changed all that," says Chennai-based plant collector and nursery owner Maanas Vibhu of Thirteen Degrees North. He adds, "Millennials are now fuelling the demand, especially for foliage and succulents."

Plants are being sourced from all over the country and also from South Korea, China, Thailand, Myanmar and the Philippines, for Indian buyers. Auctions on social media are where the action takes

place with certain plants, like monstera variegated, whose tiny cuttings with few leaves fetch thousands of rupees.

Green with splashes of white, the tropical monstera variegated plant has become the neighbour's envy and owner's pride. Lockdown has made this variety of monstera, some kinds of hoya, bonsai of a few ficus and certain other foliage, cacti and succulents more popular than before, says Maanas.

Bulupriya Sharma, a 28-year-old collector and grower in Imphal, says plants that were selling for

around ₹2,000 before lockdown, now cost ₹4,000 to ₹5,000. A mature monstera variegated can now sell for more than ₹20,000, she points out, recalling how a friend got her a single node — with one leaf — from Kolkata. "I nurtured it like a baby and now it's three feet tall. I plan to propagate it for auctions and sales," says Bulupriya, a popular name among plant parents on Instagram. The star in her extensive collection is the Musa Ae Ae, a banana plant with variegated leaves and fruits that she got from Thailand



Notes of caution

Rekha Jesudason, former Deputy Director of Agriculture, Kerala, and an ardent gardener herself, points out, "Ideally, importers are supposed to have a quarantine period to ensure that pests or new plant diseases are not introduced into the country. But these rules are not always followed or implemented. Leading importers inform nurseries about new varieties, and most are booked in advance and sold within days of their arrival in the country."

She says buyers must keep in mind that many of these plants might have been grown in ideal conditions and treated with hormones and chemicals. So newcomers might be disappointed when an expensive plant they bought does not thrive in their care. She advises beginners to start with hardy plants, before going in for trendy varieties.

"In countries like Thailand, nurseries are market savvy and have sophisticated greenhouses and growing methods for plants that are in demand. We in India have a long way to catch up with them," she adds.

for approximately ₹7,000.

Meziwang Zeliang, a 32-year-old collector from Kohima, is thrilled about how she managed to buy a kind of hoya in September, at a flash sale by a collector in Bengaluru. News of an auction is posted a couple of days before it takes place. Usually, it is one-day auction within a specific period of time.

Sri Harsha Koppaka from Visakhapatnam also bought a variegated monstera at an auction. "Buyers from all over India participate and there are multiple bids for the same plant," Harsha says, adding that he, too, conducted a sale and made about ₹15,000 in a day.

Nangluhomseeng Chiring Daosong from Guwahati laughs at how she has been besieged with requests after she posted a photo of her extensive collec-

tion on Instagram. Since she lives in Guwahati, she says the climate is ideal for plants from different places in India, Thailand, Myanmar and the Philippines. "However, imported plants can be expensive," adds Meizi. "So I frequent Dimapur in Nagaland where a local market on Wednesdays has sales of foliage plants; it is much cheaper."

Adds Maanas, "Olives from Europe and the bonsai versions of certain ficus varieties, can go up to ₹35 lakh to ₹50 lakh. The plants are bought by people who want to make a statement. They don't sell or propagate them."

Nurturing their investments
Collectors are willing to create the climate needed by the plants they invest in. "So if those in dry areas go in for humidifiers, garden enthusiasts in places in Chennai invest in air conditioners and the like," says Nangluhomseeng. Owners also install cameras and other measures as precautions against theft.

The green collectors aver that they are not plant flippers — people importing plants only with the intention of selling parts to collectors for money. Says Meizi "We grow plants for the love of them."



Dance, with a side of banter

Shakti and Mukti Mohan talk about celebrating dance ahead of their reality show

GOWRI S

Even on a Zoom call, the camaraderie is unmissable: Shakti and Mukti Mohan, the dancer-actor-sister duo, is actively looking for chances to poke fun at each other.

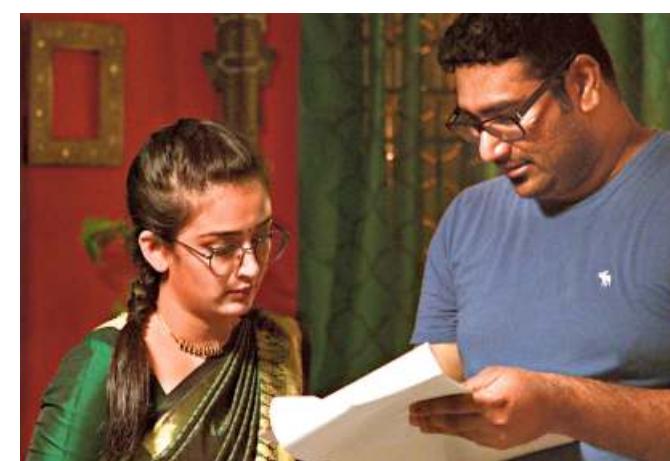
The 'we' factor Shakti (left) and Mukti ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

It is this effortless dynamic, sans filters, that they wish to bring to Zee TV's new reality show *Dance With Me*, as co-hosts. An interactive show, *Dance With Me* will invite entries from viewers (in the form of videos) which will be reviewed by the Mohan sisters, who will also take the audience through a 'hook step' every week. Former *Dance India Dance* episodes will also be featured. And, in between all the teaching, there will be a whole lot of

"sisterly banter".

The idea is to create a community of and for dancers. The relaxed format works for these times, too. "As a result of the pandemic, dancers have the chance to introspect on why they started dancing in the first place. When you sit back and think, you end up creating more," says Shakti.

Dance With Me will be aired Sundays from October 25, at 10 pm on Zee Cafe and 10 am on Zee TV.



Values based approach Akshara Haasan with Raja Ramamurthy while filming *AMNP* ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

with their lives, it speaks volumes. But this is also the time to start making movies for the big screen. I am not talking about the mass films we do with huge market heroes, but films that warrant a big screen watch.

Akshara: We have no choice due to COVID-19 but not everyone watches a lot of content online or subscribe to OTT platforms. However, it has definitely grown, and it is exposing people to newer filmmaking styles because of the wide range of content that is available.

What are your upcoming projects?

Akshara: There are a couple of stories under discussion but nothing much I can reveal now. I spent most of lockdown reading, writing and watching a lot of films on OTT platforms. I also kept myself active because it is easy to feel like kids when we have no work, and just sit at home and eat pizza. But as we grow older, we need to be more active. I have also recently started making preserves and jams, and that is keeping me busy.

What maketh a woman?

Akshara Haasan and filmmaker Raja Ramamurthy discuss their upcoming film *Achcham Madam Naanam Payirppu*

PRADEEP KUMAR

It is hard to categorise or guess what *Achcham Madam Naanam Payirppu* (AMNP) is about. If you have watched the film's trailer, it is clear that debutant director Raja Ramamurthy does not want you to get even a hint of the plot. Starring Akshara Haasan, Usha Uthup and Malgudi Shubha among others, AMNP follows the story of a 19-year-old girl, Pavithra (played by Akshara), who hails from a conservative family. In a Zoom chat, Akshara and Raja discuss the upcoming film, scheduled to be released on a digital streaming platform soon. Excerpts:

Can you tell us what AMNP is about?

Raja: Growing up in our society, girls are brought up by parents with these four values: *achcham* (fear), *madam* (innocence), *naanam* (shy), *payirppu* (chaste). This is what she is told she requires to be a 'good woman'. These value systems become the central argument in my storyline.



You are releasing the film on OTT platform. What are your two cents on the OTT vs theatre debate?

Raja: Until we find a vaccine, people will be comfortable watching films from the comfort of their homes. Theatres and OTT will have to co-exist. If a movie like *Tenet* didn't do well because people did not want to take a chance

On *Kuruthipunal*'s 25th anniversary, cinematographer-filmmaker PC Sreeram discusses the events that led to its making and why its emotion is relevant even today



Adrenaline rush PC Sreeram with Kamal Haasan on the set ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A remake that is original

SRIVATSAN S

They are cut from the same cloth, driven by their own ideologies. One comes from a position of privilege and is with the State, while the other is a messiah to the oppressed. But what sets them apart is, one is bound by the conventions of law and order, the other is not.

Kamal Haasan's DCP Adhi Narayanan and Nassar's Badri, leader of a militant outfit, gave an edge to the PC Sreeram-directed *Kuruthipunal*, making its proceedings contemplative rather than it being a regular case of a cat-and-mouse game.

There is a general anger against the system at fault that creeps into the narrative. Sreeram agrees that the anger and resultant feeling of being dwarfed by the system were what attracted him towards remaking *Kuruthipunal*. "In that sense, it is a very personal film to me. If you look at the photographs we had used in the first scene, we were angry with what had

happened in the country then," says Sreeram over phone, "The anger in me was a reflection in my shots; the camera was always in close proximity with the subject. I don't have a theory behind it, but this was the way I wanted to tell the story."

Tight budget, tighter schedule

Kamal and Sreeram were in Bombay when veteran filmmaker Govind Nihalani invited them for the screening of *Drohkaal*, starring the legendary duo Om Puri and Naseeruddin Shah. The film evoked a feeling inside of Sreeram, which he could not express then and even now. Kamal's immediate response was to remake *Drohkaal* in Tamil and asked Sreeram what he thought. "That's the best thing to do," he said on a whim.

Commercial viability was still a question of concern, given the absence of songs and the nature of the film (it was rated 'A'). But Sreeram says they pulled it off in under 30 days with a tight budget and a tighter schedule — "The shooting was akin to a war footing. You cannot shoot three or four scenes a day, if not for a great star cast."

He credits Kamal Haasan for treading a fine line between displaying desperation and betrayal, which were the film's underlying themes. "Kamal sir conveys the feeling of helplessness quite remarkably when he discovers that his boss [played by K Vishwanath], the one he looks up to, was a sellout," says Sreeram, of an association that dates back a few decades preceding *Kuruthipunal*.

When the film released a year after its Hindi counterpart in 1995, the response it got was overwhelming. It was ultimately chosen as India's entry for the Oscars that year, but was not nominated.

"We all know the process one must go through to make it into the final list. For me, it [Oscars] was not a big deal. Although you could say that *Kuruthipunal* had the intensity of a Hollywood film," he adds.

The bigger deal, for Sreeram, was when Govind Nihalani came for the premiere and called it "a remake that is original".





ANASUYA MENON

There is something meditative about sitting with people who matter and watching food slowly sizzle; especially in these times, when our social lives have shrunk suddenly and painfully.

With social distancing in place, cities under successive lockdowns since March, WFH and cooler weather, COVID-19 has inadvertently revived old-fashioned family bonding over barbecues in the garden or on small balconies.

"What started as a trial has evolved into a weekend ritual," says Dhruv Ramachandran, a Law student in Delhi, who has been home in Chennai since the virus outbreak. With time on hand, Dhruv decided to experiment with the barbecue set his father ordered online. He cooks with his dad – a barbecue enthusiast – and the duo has tried out Iranian kebabs and Peshawari grills among a host of other recipes using chicken, beef, mutton and seafood. For Dhruv, the process is more about spending quality time with family on the verandah in his backyard. Delicious food is a bonus.

A lot of Indians have been setting up grills at home over the past few years. The equipment, charcoal, accessories,

WOOD WORKS
The type of wood added to the coal embers in a barbecue enhances the flavour of the meat. Apple, cherry, maple and mesquite wood are the most sought-after. Since trees such as maple and mesquite are not available in India, barbecue enthusiasts source it through friends.

Some get creative, using wood of native fruit trees and even chicory, for their distinctive flavours.

meat and marinade can be bought online. "You learn how to marinate the meat, ignite the coal, and cook the meat... all through trial and error," says Sayan Majumdar, a manager working with an MNC in Kolkata, who took to grilling during the lockdown, experimenting with what he has learnt from watching American barbecue shows. "For humid Kolkata evenings are the only good time to do this though," says Sayan, who has his grill on the balcony.

Ever since the lockdown, Shaun George Joseph says his Kochi-based brand Pepe Bbq, has seen a spike in sales. "I've been getting a lot of queries about smaller barbecue grills," he says, adding that this period has been



Bond over barbecue Good company and smoked food go well together. (Bottom right) Roy Abraham Varghese with a pork rib rack; Grilled tapioca with bird's eye chilli chutney (centre) ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

more productive than he expected. He asked a vendor to make stainless steel equipment and now has a range that starts at ₹800 and goes up to ₹5,000.

For lockdown grillers, it is a DIY food adventure. But barbecuing extracts a certain amount of commitment, says Sampurna Gupta Chatterjee, a Delhi-based lawyer whose barbecues are a yearly calendar event for her friends. Every New Year's eve,

she hosts a barbecue on her apartment terrace. "It requires a lot of patience as you need to watch over the meat as it cooks slowly," she says.

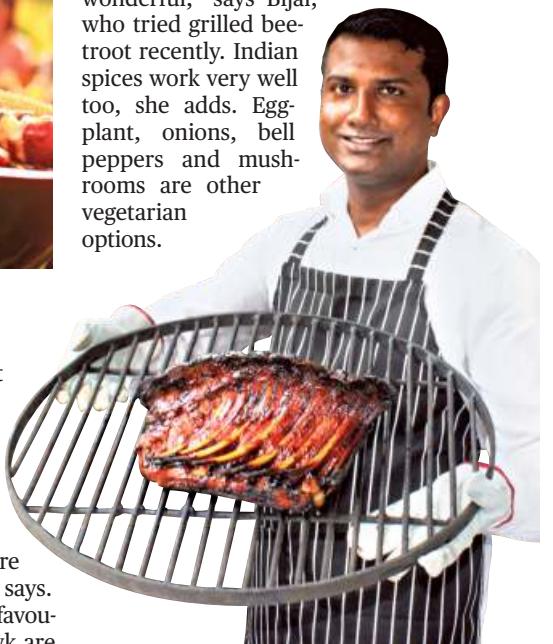
Purists point out that barbecuing is often confused with grilling. While the former is smoking the meat in indirect hot air, the latter is cooking the meat on direct heat, says Bengaluru-based Roy Abraham Varghese, a marketing communications professional, who



has been barbecuing for the past 15 years. Pitmaster Roy says he learnt the fine art through sheer practice. "It is a vast area. One needs to understand the meats and the cuts. The wood added to the coal embers brings out the entire flavour profile of the meat," he says. While Roy picks pork butt as his favourite, fillet mignon and tomahawk are

his pieces de resistance. While sourcing good meat is a problem in India, pitmasters have found their way around the challenge. Joel Rebbi from Kochi showed his butcher YouTube videos of the specific cuts he wanted. Days of trial and error later, he got the butcher to deliver the right cut. The quality of the meat may not match up to international standards, but to make a brisket in spite of the constraints is rewarding, says Joel, who devoted four years just to master the brisket. "Initially, it felt like chewing on bark, but now it melts in the mouth," he says.

"It isn't only about mulling over meat; why not some beet?" asks Bijal Hindocha, a homemaker from Chennai, who says vegetables such as zucchini, broccoli, carrots and beetroot work very well in a barbecue. "Let's think beyond potato and paneer. A char-grilled zucchini tastes just as wonderful," says Bijal, who tried grilled beetroot recently. Indian spices work very well too, she adds. Eggplant, onions, bell peppers and mushrooms are other vegetarian options.



Mira Nair describes the making of *A Suitable Boy* as a huge, monumental and joyful task

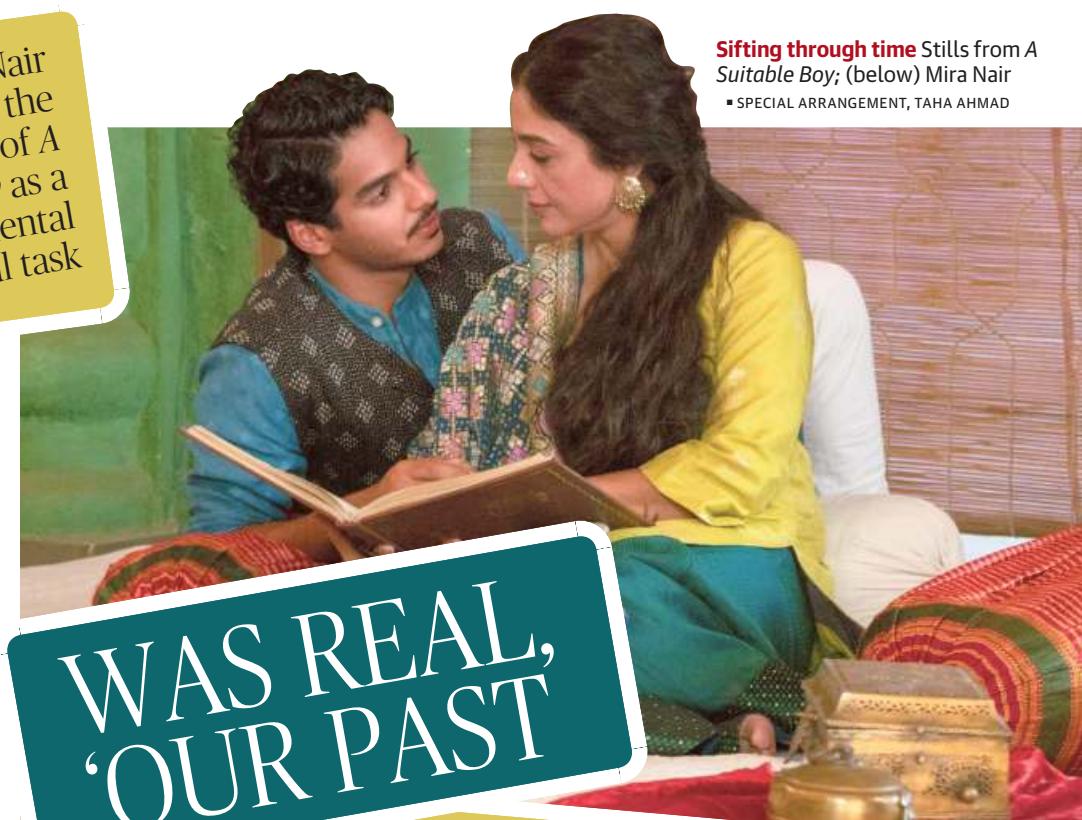
MINI ANTHIKAD CHHIBBER

The world of Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* is a familiar one for Mira Nair. The auteur's latest project has been the beautiful BBC show based on the 1,349-page tome.

"It was 1951," Mira says over a video call from the US. The filmmaker, who turned 63 on October 15, continues, "It was the year my parents got married. My father was a civil servant; he moved from Punjab to Orissa. I have lived in that time in a very real way. It is an era I have known, smelt, enjoyed and loved."

From *Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love* (1996) and *Vanity Fair* (2004) to *Amelia* (2009), Mira has worked on period dramas. "I do not set out to make a period drama. For me, it is quite the reverse. It is how to make a period drama, not feel period at all. How to make it breathe with life and with the unpredictability of life and yet be true in every single detail, to the time it was. Making *A Suitable Boy* was about how to sift through the modern mayhem of current Indian life, away from the frame."

Making *A Suitable Boy* was a huge, monumental and joyful task, says Mira. "I always saw it as cinema, so the horizons were vast and there was great depth of field. In the scenes with the Ganga, with the boats and the ghats, we are seeing three or four levels into the horizon. We had to change everything – from the house, ships and the sails to what fishermen and pilgrims wore. I hope people feel the pulsation of life of the era. In Maheshwar, this lovely village by the Narmada where we shot Barsaat Mahal, there were these beautiful old streets. The people who lived there looked like they belonged to the landscape. In the homes that we filmed in Lucknow, I cast the retainers, who had worked in those homes for 20, 30, 40 years because they looked like a part and parcel of that place. All this adds to the authenticity and to the sense of it brimming with life."



Sifting through time Stills from A Suitable Boy; (below) Mira Nair ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, TAHIA AHMAD

WAS REAL,
'OUR PAST'

TRUTHFUL
AND PRICKLY'

Manikala plays Lata, whose mother wants to find her a suitable boy and Ishaan Khatter plays Maan, who is in love with the completely unsuitable Saeeda (Tabu). Both are practically newcomers. "I am unafraid of casting first timers. I have to see the spirit of the character in the person, that they have what feels to me like the essence of the character."

A dewdrop in action

"For instance, I could see the mercurial and charming Maan in Ishaan. It was not fake it was coming from within. It was the same with casting Tanya. *A Suitable Boy* rests on her shoulders. I call Lata a dewdrop in action. She is on the brink of life, she hasn't seen everything yet. But she is also intelligent and very self-possessed. Lata has a certain innocence, of observing without fully knowing what life has to offer." Mira is grateful to her casting directors, Dilip Shankar, Nandini Shrikant and Karan Mally. "They cast all my films. This was a one-year casting process. This is the first international show that is entirely cast and made in India, because I insisted on it."

The script, however, was



written by Britisher Andrew Davies. Would not a South Asian script writer have been a more apt choice? "To be honest, yes, but I came to the party a little later when Andrew had already been picked and eight hours of script written. I loved his distillation. Andrew gave it the television pace that we needed. I wanted to shift the emphasis to being a marriage of the politics of the time and the personal journey of Lata and Maan and not have just a *Pride and Prejudice* kind of vibe of who will she marry. Lata and Maan were the embodiment of modern India – of that India of 1951."

Does that mean upper caste, middle class, educated families were representative of the larger Indian experience of the time? "Oh, no," Mira clarifies. "India is based in the hinterland. But Vikram Seth's story is resolutely set in the anglicised, privileged class. Even though several classes are depicted, the major characters are

'English-soaked'. I wanted to bring out the truth of these characters. The characters are who they are as Vikram wrote them."

Interwoven cultures
While Mira has joked about *A Suitable Boy* being Crown in brown, one wonders what part nostalgia plays in the appeal of the show.

"It was important for me to hold a mirror to what India used to be at that time – politically and emotionally. Despite the wounds of Partition, there was still a deeply syncretic and interwoven culture between Hindu and Muslim, from the poetry and music, to the friendships and the great loves. That absolutely inextricable tapestry is being threatened today. The young of today will not have any idea of how it could have been. My mother used to say 'savere hum Id manate the or shaam mein Diwali...' [we would celebrate Id in the morning and Diwali in the evening]. That is not going to be remembered if we are not careful. Our past in *A Suitable Boy* was real, truthful and prickly. It was not nostalgia for its own sake, but about holding a mirror so that the young of today can remember a time from whence we came."

A Suitable Boy will stream on Netflix from October 23

The superhit golu

How a Chennai father-son duo recreated South Indian classic film *Mayabazaar*, complete with moving characters, for this year's *golu*



All decked up R Suresh and Saketh's 'e-enabled' display features Krishna, Abhimanyu and Ghatotkacha ■ R RAGU

SRINIVASA RAMANUJAM

The Tamil classic song 'Kalyana Samayal Saadham' fills the air in the *golu* room at R Suresh's Mandavellipakkam residence.

Inside, more than 50 toy dolls have been transformed into various characters, including Krishna and Ghatotkacha. There are recreations of seven vital scenes from the 1957 fantasy Tamil-Telugu film *Mayabazaar*, starring NT Ramarao, SV Ranga Rao, Savitri and Gemini Ganeshan.

Suresh and his son Saketh have used the last few weeks to recreate *Mayabazaar* in their *golu* this Navratri. Keeping COVID-19 social distancing precautions in mind, the family does not even step into the room when there are visitors: they give instructions to the Google Assistant placed between two dolls in the *golu*, to play the relevant scene and music.

"I remember watching this story as a street play in Vijayawada 40 years ago," reminisces 60-year-old Suresh, a former IT professional with a passion for the arts. "When it was made into a film, I was awestruck by its plot, songs and grandeur."

Suresh has watched *Mayabazaar* in Tamil and Telugu multiple times, and introduced it to his 29-year-old son recently. "It has so many elements – of fantasy, magic and



romance – all packed neatly," says Saketh. The duo's love for the film shows in its theme-based *golu*, which not only narrates the storyline but also adds extra elements such as music and lighting.

Suresh is known among his family as the one most interested in dolls and miniatures; travelling relatives would always pick up something to gift him. Over the years, this collection, along with the ones he bought himself, grew: the lots of all his rooms are filled with them.

They take a trip downstairs during Navratri, metamorphosing into the various characters Suresh plans for them every year.

The year 2020 saw them

turning into Krishna, Abhimanyu, Sasirekha/Vatsala and Ghatotkacha, with Suresh painstakingly designing special clothes for them to fit into the characters that feature in *Mayabazaar*.

With the lockdown in full effect over the last few months, Suresh has had to make do with household items and a bit of online shopping. "I used a 3D pen to draw a creative *jalebi*, and some unused CDs became the wheels of a chariot," he laughs. He also put his knowledge of engineering and digital arts to good use: there's a 'flying' Ghatotkacha attached to a rope, and dolls that revolve in a circular fashion using a small motor fitted beneath.

All this is for his family and friends to witness from across the globe. Due to the pandemic, Suresh and Saketh have 'e-enabled the *golu*'. Chips in Saketh, "We have timed the entire *Mayabazaar* story to seven minutes, using Google Routines."

When they have visitors, Saketh sits in the hall and instructs his e-assistant, which dutifully narrates the tale of *Mayabazaar*, complete with sound and light. For relatives and friends abroad, the family plans to have Zoom sessions every evening. Says Suresh, "We have celebrated Navratri every year with a unique *golu*, but 2020 will remain the most memorable."

Obama rips into Trump at rally

Former President campaigns for Joe Biden, criticises govt's pandemic response

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

WASHINGTON

With less than two weeks to go before the election day, former U.S. President Barack Obama campaigned in Pennsylvania for his former Vice-President and Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

At a rally in Philadelphia, Mr. Obama delivered an impassioned speech, in which he painted a picture of a "highly dysfunctional" President, Donald Trump, and his failing administration, while he made a character- and policy-based case for a Biden-Harris administration.

Mr. Obama said Mr. Trump was not interested in the job and was using the presidency as a reality show to get attention. He criticised Mr. Trump's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, saying at least 2,22,000 Americans had died, millions of jobs were gone and 1,00,000 small businesses were closed. He compared South Korea and Canada's handling of the pandemic to the U.S.'s, which has been far worse in terms of mortality and infections than the other two countries in question.

"Donald Trump wants to take full credit for the economy he inherited and no responsibility for the pandemic



Poll pitch: Barack Obama participating in a discussion with local officials in Philadelphia on Wednesday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

he ignored," Mr. Obama added.

Mr. Obama took a shot at Mr. Trump having a bank account in China. The New York Times had reported earlier this week that Trump International Hotels operated an account in the country.

"We know that he continues to do business with China because he has got a secret Chinese bank account. How is that possible? How is that possible?" Mr. Obama said. However, the bank account is not technically "secret" as the New York Times reported it had got the information from an analysis of Mr. Trump's tax records.

"Listen, can you imagine if I had had a secret Chinese bank account when I was running for re-election? You think Fox News might have

been a little concerned about that? They would've called me 'Beijing Barry,'" Mr. Obama told the audience.

Mr. Obama vouched for Mr. Biden's character, saying he had empathy and decency. He criticised the Republicans for repealing and not replacing the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), and said Mr. Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris would expand Medicare (public health insurance) and create green jobs as part of Mr. Biden's \$2 trillion climate plan.

Trump's conduct'

Mr. Obama kept returning to the theme of the President's conduct. "With Joe and Kamala at the helm, you're not going to have to think about

the crazy things they said every day... You're not going to have to argue about them every day... You'll be able to go about your lives, knowing that the President is not going to retweet conspiracy theories about secret cabals running the world or that Navy SEALs didn't actually kill Bin Laden. Think about that, the President of the United States retweeted that," he said, referring to a conspiracy theory that Mr. Trump had shared, according to which Mr. Obama and Mr. Biden had U.S. soldiers killed to cover up a plot related to Osama bin Laden.

Mr. Obama said that with a Biden-Harris administration, the country would not have to deal with a President who threatened people who disagreed with him.

"We wouldn't tolerate it from a high school principal. We wouldn't tolerate it from a coach. We wouldn't tolerate it from a co-worker. We wouldn't tolerate it in our own family, except for maybe crazy somewhere, you know?" he said, asking why people were making excuses for Mr. Trump's conduct.

Mr. Trump spent the Wednesday evening campaigning in Gastonia, North Carolina.

Amid calls for resignation, Thai PM lifts emergency

Political situation has improved, says government

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BANGKOK

Thailand's premier on Thursday revoked an emergency decree that had been intended to quell pro-democracy rallies, despite it failing to stamp out daily protests demanding his resignation and reforms of the unassailable monarchy.

The student-led pro-democracy movement has been gaining momentum since mid-July, with mostly young demonstrators calling for Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha's removal and a rewrite of a 2017 military-scripted constitution. Some protest leaders have also issued controversial demands to reform the ultra-powerful and wealthy monarchy, whose influence permeates every aspect of the Thai society.

The "severe" emergency measures were imposed last week after anti-government protesters flashed a three-finger salute to a royal motorcade. But the ban on gatherings of more than four people failed to discourage tens of thousands of demonstrators, who amassed daily around

intersections. The former military chief – who masterminded the 2014 coup – had indicated late Wednesday that he was preparing to lift the state of severe emergency to defuse tensions. Mr. Prayut said in a televised address on Wednesday that the country must "step back from the edge of the slippery slope that can easily slide to chaos". He had earlier also called for an extraordinary session of Parliament to discuss the crisis. That session will be held on Monday.

However, a government statement announcing the withdrawal of the emergency measures on Thursday said the decision was be-



Speaking out: Pro-democracy protesters attending a rally in Bangkok on Wednesday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

cause the political situation had improved. "The severe state of emergency has decreased and ended into a situation in which government officials and state agencies can enforce the regular laws," it said.

Following careful assessment of this case in Brazil, there have been no concerns about safety of the clinical trial and the independent review in addition to the Brazilian regulator have recommended that the trial should continue," a spokesman for the university said in a statement.

The vaccine has been licensed to AstraZeneca.

A source familiar with the matter said the trial would have been suspended if the volunteer who died had received the COVID-19 vaccine, suggesting the person was part of the control group that was given a meningitis jab. The Federal University of Sao Paulo, which is helping coordinate phase 3 clinical trials in Brazil, said an independent review committee had also recommended that the trial continue.

Golden Dawn leaders sent to prison

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATHENS

A Greek court on Thursday ruled to imprison the leadership of the extreme right-wing Golden Dawn party, following their convictions for running the party like a criminal organisation, but granted suspended sentences to five of the party's 18 former lawmakers, who were convicted of lesser charges.

The ruling came after two weeks of summations by defense lawyers following the prosecutor's recommendation that all former Golden Dawn lawmakers be allowed to remain free pending appeal.

The party was founded as a neo-Nazi group in the 1980s and rose to prominence during Greece's financial crisis. It was blamed for planning multiple hate crimes, including brutal street attacks on immigrants and left-wing activists. Eleven former party leaders convicted of simple participation received sentences of between five and seven years.

The decision ends a five-year-long trial involving 68 defendants, dozens of lawyers, and encompassing four cases, including the 2013 fatal stabbing of left-wing Greek rap singer Pavlos Fyssas and physical attacks on Egyptian fishermen and left-wing activists. Fyssas' killer, Giorgos Roupkias, was also ordered to begin serving his life sentence. Lawyers representing the victims expressed satisfaction with the decision.

Sri Lankan Parliament passes 20th Amendment

It gives wide powers and immunity to the President

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

The controversial 20th Amendment to Sri Lanka's Constitution that envisages expansive powers and greater immunity for the Executive President was passed in Parliament with a two-thirds majority, following a two-day debate.

The 20th Amendment was the Rajapaksa administration's first big test in the legislature, since it triggered concern and resistance from not just the political opposition, but also the influential Buddhist clergy that Sri Lanka's southern polity venerates.

As many as 156 MPs in the 225-member House voted for it, while 65 legislators voted against the Bill.

Significantly, eight opposition MPs voted in favour of the legislation that their parties and leaders not only vehemently opposed, but also challenged at the Supreme Court. Following as many as 39 petitions filed by opposition parties and civil society groups, the new legislation in turn reduces the Prime Minister's role to a ceremonial one.



Activists protesting outside Parliament against the controversial Amendment in Colombo on Wednesday. ■ AP

quired only a two-thirds majority, except for four clauses that needed additional public approval through a referendum, unless they were amended in line with the determination.

Ceremonial role

The 20th Amendment rolls back Sri Lanka's 19th Amendment, a 2015 legislation passed with wide support from the Rajapaksa camp – then in Opposition – that sought to clip presidential powers, while strengthening Parliament. The new legislation in turn reduces the Prime Minister's role to a ceremonial one.

In the two-day debate, opposition MPs broadly argued that the Amendment threatened to take the country on a path of authoritarianism, giving the President unbridled powers, while government MPs emphasised the need for centralised power for better governance.

The 20th Amendment's passage comes at a time when the country is facing a new wave of COVID-19, with the number of cases rapidly increasing – after Sri Lanka contained the pandemic in the early months – to 6,028 cases and 14 deaths as of Thursday evening.

Saad Hariri renamed Lebanon PM

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BEIRUT

Three-time Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri was renamed to the post on Thursday to create a cabinet that can lift the country out of its worst economic crisis in decades.

Mr. Hariri, 50, made his comeback almost

a year after stepping down under pressure from a protest movement demanding an overhaul of Lebanon's political system. The country is under international pressure to form a crisis cabinet to address a plummeting economy made worse by COVID-19 and the blast at the Beirut port on August 4.

Arce's victory is legitimate, says OAS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BOLIVIA

International observers declared Bolivia's presidential election transparent and Luis Arce's incoming government legitimate, as an official but incomplete tally showed a huge victory for the ex-president Evo Morales' protege.

"People voted freely and the result was clear and overwhelming..." said Manuel Gonzalez, head of the observer mission for the Organization of American States (OAS).

The deal allows both Beijing and the Holy See a say in appointing bishops in an attempt to close a schism in

Vatican, Beijing renew deal on appointment of bishops

Agreement allows both China and the Holy See a say in it

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BEIJING

A 2018 agreement between Beijing and the Vatican was renewed on Thursday, despite strident U.S. condemnation and warnings from underground Chinese priests loyal to Rome that they have only become more marginalised since it was signed.

The deal allows both Beijing and the Holy See a say in appointing bishops in an attempt to close a schism in

China's 12-million-strong Catholic community. Washington had put pressure on the Vatican to scrap the agreement, saying it has failed to shield Chinese Catholics from persecution.

Both sides agreed to the extension "for two years", foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Thursday. "The two sides will maintain close communication and consultation, and continue to push forward

the process of improving relations."

China severed ties with the Holy See in 1951, forcing Catholics to choose between membership of the State-run Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association or non-sanctioned churches loyal to the Pope. However, while some have hailed the deal, others fear that China's underground churches will become even more marginalised.

Egypt executed 49 prisoners in 10 days

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BEIRUT

Egypt executed 49 prisoners in just 10 days in October, Human Rights Watch said on Thursday, calling for authorities to "immediately halt" carrying out death sentences.

"Egypt's mass executions of scores of people in a matter of days is outrageous," said HRW's Joe Stork. The systematic absence of fair trials in Egypt, especially in political cases, makes every death sentence a violation of the right to life," Mr. Stork said in a statement. Of the 49 killed, 15 were men convicted for alleged involvement in political violence.

e-Tender Notice

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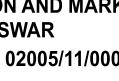
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S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (In Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date / time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	providing Laying Internal D.I. Water distribution system in Shaheen Bagh (Abul Fazal Enclave Pt-I) in Okhla Constituency AC-54 under EE (South)IV	8,03,61,502/-	2020_DJB_195852_1 21.10.2020	26.11.2020 up to 3.00 pm

Further details in this regard may be seen at (<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>)

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(RAJEEV KUMAR GUPTA)

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH) IV

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TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS : TIRUPATI S.V.PRAYER HALL CUM INFORMATION CENTRE, CHENNAI.

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited for SUPPLY OF 22 LITRES OF CURD PER DAY FOR USE IN PREPARATION OF DHADYOJANAM IN SV PRAYER HALL CUM TTD INFORMATION CENTRE, CHENNAI FOR A PERIOD OF TWO (2) YEARS WITH EFFECT FROM THE DATE OF AGREEMENT. INTENDING PARTICIPANTS MAY OBTAIN THE TENDER DOCUMENTS IN PERSON FROM THE O/O D.Y. EXE. OFFICER (CHENNAI), NO.26, VENKATARAMA ROAD, T.NAGAR, CHENNAI FROM 23-10-2020.

THE LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF SEALED TENDERS IS 05.00 P.M. ON 30-10-2020.

RO.C.NO.PRA/13923/Adv.NO.186/PR/2020; Dated:22-10-2020

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ANERT - EPC EMpanelment

MARKET WATCH

	22-10-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	40,558	-0.37
US Dollar	73.54	0.05
Gold	51,405	-0.02
Brent oil	42.71	0.28

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	358.35	3.00
Asian Paints	2099.90	-14.40
Axis Bank	510.30	8.85
Bajaj Auto	3006.20	-11.80
Bajaj Finserv	5873.40	-30.75
Bajaj Finance	3314.45	91.60
Bharti Airtel	430.65	11.65
BPCL	349.35	-0.20
Britannia Ind	3458.35	61.10
Cipla	757.50	-9.60
Coal India	115.80	0.70
Divis Lab	3093.50	14.55
Dr Reddys Lab	5022.00	-24.75
Eicher Motors	2159.45	-21.90
GAIL (India)	88.65	1.00
Grasim Ind	791.65	-0.10
HCL Tech.	866.25	-4.80
HDFC	2042.55	-6.20
HDFC Bank	1233.30	-13.40
HDFC Life	561.10	-1.60
Hero MotoCorp	3081.50	-96.85
Hindalco	184.45	-1.50
Hind Unilever	2179.35	16.20
ICICI Bank	412.90	-7.40
IndusInd Bank	608.75	-19.35
Infosys	1129.05	-19.30
Indian Oil Corp	77.70	1.70
ITC	168.55	0.90
JSW Steel	325.50	2.55
Kotak Bank	1393.05	-0.25
L&T	936.30	11.85
M&M	604.35	3.50
Maruti Suzuki	6811.55	-50.30
Nestle India Ltd.	15909.45	-121.40
NTPC	84.65	2.35
ONGC	68.85	1.05
PowerGrid Corp	165.10	1.35
Reliance Ind	2106.95	-17.65
SB Life	780.80	-4.55
State Bank	203.30	-0.45
Shree Cement	20991.70	-155.80
Sun Pharma	485.55	-4.65
Tata Motors	133.50	3.25
Tata Steel	409.65	5.60
TCS	2671.15	-4.25
Tech Mahindra	837.45	-8.45
Titan	1229.45	-15.25
UltraTech Cement	4614.55	-14.55
UPL	454.50	0.30
Wipro	344.45	1.00

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar.....	73.33	73.65
Euro.....	86.83	87.23
British Pound	96.06	96.49
Japanese Yen (100)....	70.02	70.33
Chinese Yuan.....	10.98	11.03
Swiss Franc.....	80.87	81.22
Singapore Dollar.....	54.03	54.28
Canadian Dollar.....	55.78	56.03
Malaysian Ringgit.....	17.69	17.77
Australian Dollar.....	52.04	52.28

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



RBI to buy ₹20,000 cr. of G-Secs on October 29

MUMBAI The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday announced that following a review of the current liquidity and financial conditions, it had decided to purchase Government securities for an aggregate amount of ₹20,000 crore under Open Market Operations (OMO) on October 29. The multi-security auction will use the multiple price method.

Cognizant to acquire IIoT company Bright Wolf

BENGALURU Cognizant said it would acquire U.S.-based Bright Wolf, a privately-held technology services provider specialising in custom Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) solutions for Fortune 1000 clients, for an undisclosed sum. This is Cognizant's eighth acquisition in 2020 aimed at accelerating growth in IoT, cloud, AI and analytics and digital engineering, it said.

Burger King files IPO papers to raise ₹542 cr.

NEW DELHI Burger King India Ltd., a quick-service restaurant chain, has filed draft papers with markets regulator SEBI to raise ₹542 crore through fresh issuance of shares in an IPO. As per the draft red herring prospectus, the IPO comprises fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to ₹542 crore and an offer for sale of up to 6 crore equity shares by QSR Asia, the promoter. PTI

QThree Techpark, AB AJ to set up TV, AC plant

AHMEDABAD Bengaluru-based QThree Techpark has partnered with AB AJ Group to set up a television and air-conditioner manufacturing facility near Mehsana in Gujarat. The unit would be outfitted with robotic technology and machinery to meet a demand for 25 lakh LED TVs and six lakh air-conditioners a year. The companies said they would invest ₹1,000 crore to set up the unit.

CM YK

Time is ripe for a demand push: Sanyal

'Govt. had been reticent about a large stimulus earlier so as to conserve resources for the future'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

In a fresh signal that the government could unveil another stimulus package soon, the Principal Economic Advisor in the Finance Ministry on Thursday said that the time was right for a generic push to spur demand in the economy.

The official's remarks come on the back of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statement on Tuesday that she had not shut the door on another relief and stimulus package to revive the economy, which had shrunk an estimated 23.9% in the April-June quarter.

"The general problem is that there has been a shock to the system and we need to rebuild demand," Mr. Sanyal said at the CII Financial Markets summit. "Some of it is



Wide canvas: Mr. Sanyal urged firms to ask for big things and not seek sops such as interest subventions. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

coming back naturally, but not in every sector such as hospitality."

Mr. Sanyal stressed that the government had been 'reticent' to provide a large demand stimulus at the time of the lockdown as there was no point in pushing the accelerator with one foot on the brake.

Bajaj Auto Q2 net drops 19%

Unit sales fall 10% year-on-year; cost control helps margins

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Bajaj Auto Ltd. reported a 19% decline in net profit to ₹1,138 crore for the quarter ended September 30, from a year earlier. The company attributed this to lower treasury income and government restrictions on export benefits.

The company's turnover during the period fell 8% to ₹7,442 crore. Revenue from operations declined 7% to ₹7,156 crore. The company said optimisation of fixed costs had helped in improving the margin profile.

Total unit sales during the quarter was 10% lower at 1,053,337 from a year earlier.

"Domestic two-wheelers registered a strong turnar-

round in the first half of the quarter driven by pent-up demand," the company said in a regulatory filing.

"While the exact festive spike is awaited, early signs show indications of a recovery."

It added that domestic commercial vehicle (CV) volumes continued to remain muted and was dependant

on adequate demand for short-distance mobility returning.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

"Cargo fares better" Within CV, cargo has fared better than passenger and our share has increased to 37% which is the highest ever. Overall, our market share was 53.3%," it said.

September recorded the highest-ever sales in exports at 2,12,000 units.

"Strong revival of demand was witnessed in Latin America and Africa while ASEAN continues to be weak; Sri Lanka has stopped all vehicle imports. The growth in Latam is driven by the sports segment, namely Pulsar and Dominar," the company said.

"The filing with the Registrar of Companies after the final closing based on agreed closing adjustments is likely to be done within 30 days," Mr. Gupta added.

Indian Bank posts profit on non-interest income

Operating profit rose 40% in Q2: CMD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Public sector lender Indian Bank has posted a standalone net profit of ₹412 crore for the second quarter ended September, against a net loss of ₹1,755 crore, mainly on account of a 29% rise in non-interest income.

"This has been a quarter of strong growth in all key parameters," Padmaja Chunduru, MD & CEO, Indian Bank told the media.

"The bank has recorded a 40% growth in operating profit and earned a net profit of ₹412 crore during the quarter," she said.

"The performance of Q2 is better than Q1. Going forward, we expect 8-10% uptake in credit growth during the current fiscal."

Allahabad Bank had merged with the Indian Bank as on April 1. At that time, Allahabad Bank carried accumulated losses worth ₹19,000 crore. Net interest income rose 32% to ₹4,144 crore.

Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) declined to 9.89% of gross advances, from 12.64%, while net NPAs dropped to 2.96%, from 4.59% of net advances.

Padmaja Chunduru

merged with the Indian Bank as on April 1. At that time, Allahabad Bank carried accumulated losses worth ₹19,000 crore. Net interest income rose 32% to ₹4,144 crore.

TII's engineering division's revenue grew to ₹565 crore from ₹554 crore, while the revenue of its cycles and accessories unit declined to ₹212 crore from ₹217 crore.

The revenue of metal formed products contracted to ₹53 crore from ₹379 crore, the company said.

Ashok Leyland aims to boost ICV share to 30%

Unveils 'Boss' trucks costing ₹18 lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) is planning to increase its market share in the intermediate commercial vehicle (ICV) segment from the current over 20% to 30%, according to a top official.

"We have been steadily gaining market share in the ICV segment for the past eight years and our brand, Boss, has been leading that growth," said Anuj Kathuria, COO, Ashok Leyland.

"From a 6% market share in FY12, we are now selling over 20% of the ICVs in the Indian market," he said. "The plan now is to take the market share to 30%."

The company on Thursday rolled out the Boss LE and LX trucks with i-Gen6 BS VI technology. These two vehicles will address the 11.1

tonne to 14.05 tonne gross vehicle weight market.

"ICV is the fastest-growing segment. It has also been recovering from the COVID-19 impact due to demand from construction, mining and e-commerce segments," he said.

"With the launch of these two trucks, we now have a complete portfolio. These new vehicles address a fast-growing segment that demands high uptime for long distances. The volumes are expected to pick up from October," he added.

The vehicles are priced from ₹18 lakh (ex-showroom Mumbai, New Delhi and Chennai).

flating demand in a fuller sort of way; not just provide safety nets as we had been doing so far," he added.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi expected to meet industry captains and large global investors soon, Mr. Sanyal urged domestic businesses to refrain from seeking sectoral sops such as interest subventions.

"Many of you will be interacting with the PM soon. Do talk to him, this is a moment in history that we do want to do big things. So, please do not go with the kind of ideas often seen in these meetings, seeking some subvention... Please do not waste our time with this. Think big. Ask for big things and if it can be done, we will do it," he said. Mr. Sanyal pointed out how

'difficult' changes like labour laws and agricultural market liberalisation had been pushed through.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Terming reforms in the legal system and the police critical, Mr. Sanyal said a national debate was needed to push them through. "The single biggest constraint to India's growth is the poor quality of contract enforcement and legal resolution," he added.

The nitty-gritties for including Indian bonds in global bond indices were also being ironed out, Mr. Sanyal said.

"Those who make the bond indices - JP Morgan, Bloomberg, Barclays... they have looked at [the changes we have made on ownership limits that restricted India's inclusion], are happy with it and holding consultations with their investors."

Foreign funds raise stake in Reliance to record 27.2%

Pandey's masterclass helps Sunrisers flatten Royals

His sensational 83 n.o. is complemented by Vijay Shankar and Holder's efforts; Rajasthan batsmen manage below-par 154

IPL 2020

SPORTS BUREAU

On his day, Manish Pandey can be devastating with a bat in his hands. Rajasthan Royals was at the receiving end of his beautiful onslaught at the Dubai International Stadium on Thursday.

Chasing what looked like an under-par target of 155, his unbeaten 83 (47b, 4x4, 8x6) helped Sunrisers Hyderabad post an eight-wicket win after three straight defeats. His 140-run stand for the unbroken third wicket with Vijay Shankar (52 not out, 51b, 6x4) ensured RR had little chance after Jofra Archer had made early inroads.

David Warner's men, with eight points, have now caught up with RR and KXIP, as the battle for a place in the playoffs heats up in the lower half of the table.

Warner, Archer's bunny
The chase had begun disastrously, though, as Archer extended his stranglehold over Warner, removing him with the fourth ball of the innings.

The delivery moved away to take the outside edge and Ben Stokes justified Steve Smith's decision to have a second slip with a diving catch. It was the sixth time in the last seven innings that Archer had dismissed the Australian.

Archer dealt another severe blow in his next over, this time with a ball that came back in sharply, at 149kmph.



The dazzlers: Manish Pandey and Vijay Shankar became the first Indian pair to forge a century partnership for Sunrisers. ■ BCCI/IPS



It was too good for Jonny Bairstow, who was bowled through the gate.

This meant SRH's two most successful batsmen, both with over 300 runs in the tournament, were back in the dugout inside the third over, with the score on 16. It also meant that Pandey had an opportunity to showcase his talent. He stroked the ball well from the beginning, hitting two boundaries off Karthik Tyagi.

In the following over, he smashed two sixes off Ben Stokes, including one with a stunning flick over square-leg. Pandey timed his shots well and paced his innings wonderfully. At the other end, Vijay Shankar was growing in confidence too. By the time Archer was brought back after his two-over

burst, it was too late. He was even hit for three successive fours by Vijay Shankar. Earlier, RR struggled after being put in. None of the batsmen were able to convert their starts against tight bowling, especially by Rashid Khan. Stokes (30, 32b, 2x4) and Sanju Samson (36, 26b, 3x4, 1x6) put on 56 for the second wicket before it was broken by Jason Holder, who

made his first IPL match in four years count by taking three wickets.

Innings scan

RR	Dots	SRH
41	45	
12	12	
4	9	
47/1	58/2	
7.70	8.58	

SCOREBOARD

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Robin Uthappa run out 19 (13b, 2x4, 1x6), Ben Stokes b Rashid 30 (32b, 2x4), Sanju Samson b Holder 36 (26b, 3x4, 1x6), Jos Buttler c Nadeem b Vijay Shankar 9 (12b), Steve Smith c Manish b Holder 19 (15b, 2x4), Riyam Parag c Warner b Holder 20 (12b, 2x4, 1x6), Rahul Tewatia (not out) 2 (3b), Jofra Archer (not out) 16 (7b, 1x4, 1x6), Extras (w-3); Total (for six wkt in 20 overs): 154.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-30 (Uthappa, 3.3 overs), 2-86 (Samson, 11.4), 3-86 (Stokes, 12.1), 4-110 (Buttler, 15.3), 5-134 (Smith, 18.1), 6-135 (Parag, 18.2).

SUNRISERS BOWLING

Sandeep 4-0-31-0, Holder 4-0-33-3, Vijay Shankar 3-0-15-1, Natarajan 4-0-46-0, Rashid 4-0-20-1, Nadeem 1-0-9-0.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

David Warner c Stokes b Archer 4 (4b, 1x4), Jonny Bairstow b Archer 10 (7b, 1x4, 1x6), Manish Pandey (not out) 83 (47b, 1x4, 8x6), Vijay Shankar (not out) 52 (51b, 6x4); Extras (1b, w-6); Total (for two wkt in 18.1 overs): 156.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-4 (Warner, 0.4), 2-16 (Bairstow, 2.4).

ROYAL BOWLING

Archer 4-0-21-2, Rajpoot 1-0-11-0, Tyagi 3.1-0-42-0, Stokes 2-0-24-0, Shreyas Gopal 4-0-32-0, Tewatia 4-0-25-0.

Toss: SRH.

Man-of-the-Match: Pandey.
SRH won by eight wickets with 11 balls to spare.

Next assignment

SRH: Oct. 24 vs. KXIP
Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST
RR: Oct. 25 vs. MI
Abu Dhabi, 7.30 p.m. IST



N. Jagadeesan... will he get an opportunity to prove his case? ■ BCCI/IPS

TODAY'S MATCH



SHARJAH, 7.30 P.M. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 29

CSK 12 | **MI** 17

FORM GUIDE

(last five matches, latest game first)

CSK L | L | W | L | L
MI L | W | W | W | W

STAR SPORTS 1 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD)

Super Kings have to hang on for dear life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Its campaign turning from bad to worse, Chennai Super Kings is expected to try out a few younger players when it takes on Mumbai Indians here on Friday.

CSK can still get to 14 points if it wins its remaining four games, giving it an outside chance of making the playoffs.

Things have gone awry for CSK since the victory over MI in the tournament opener.

The team has lost the services of the injured Dwayne Bravo. Captain M.S. Dhoni has not been at his best and, barring Faf du Plessis, nor have his teammates. The team's persistence with a struggling Kedar Jadhav has come in for a lot of flak and it remains to be seen if he makes way for either N. Jagadeesan or Ruturaj Gaikwad.

MI won five games in a row before KXIP halted the juggernaut in a double Super Over on Sunday.

However, a well-rounded and consistent MI could prove too much for CSK.

Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Delhi Capitals	10	7	3	14	0.774
Royal Challengers	10	7	3	14	0.182
Mumbai Indians	9	6	3	12	1.201
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	5	5	10	-0.828
Sunrisers Hyderabad	10	4	6	8	0.092
Kings XI Punjab	10	4	6	8	-0.177
Rajasthan Royals	11	4	7	8	-0.620
Chennai Super Kings	10	3	7	6	-0.463

After the RR-SRH match on Oct. 22

Indian women in UAE for T20 Challenge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI

The top 30 women cricketers from India arrived here on Thursday for the Women's T20 Challenge scheduled to be held in Sharjah from November 4 to 9. They will undergo a six-day isolation, with tests on the first, third and fifth days, before entering the 'bio-bubble.'

"Let's hear it for our girls! Hello UAE! The Supernovas, Trailblazers, Velocity have arrived. CANNOT WAIT for WomensT20Challenge," IPL tweeted.

The teams will be led by Mithali Raj, Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur and the tournament will mark the beginning of the Indian women's cricket season.

Capitals are hungry to win: Rabada

RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI

A lot of credit for Delhi Capitals' stay at the top of the points table is being attributed to Purple Cap holder Kagiso Rabada. But he was quick to point out several other performers responsible for the team's impressive showing.

Rabada, during Thursday's press conference, backed his response with facts. "We've seven players who've won (eight) Man-of-the-Match awards... there are match-winners galore. It shows all of us are hungry to win. Every bowler has bowled well. It is just that I happen to have the purple cap. That's it!"

The team's award winners so far are Shikhar Dhawan (twice), Anrich Nortje, R. Ashwin, Axar Patel, Shreyas Iyer, Prithvi Shaw and Marcus Stoinski.

Open mind

He praised Nortje for his impressive efforts. "He's bowling really well. He has a lot of pace. He's always willing to learn and open to new ideas, and I think that's a



Bonding well: Delhi Capitals has gelled as a unit and this has reflected in its performance. ■ BCCI/IPS

great trait to have. Anrich and I are always giving our best for our team."

About the conditions in the UAE, Rabada said: "I feel there is seam movement sometimes. But all the pitches have definitely slowed down, so it's pretty similar to India, but it's a different kind of slow. I feel the conditions in the UAE have something for everyone."

He was lavish in his praise of skipper Shreyas. "Shreyas has been really unbelievable.

Leading overseas players on a big stage is a huge task. Shreyas is a just a normal guy who is chilled out. When we get on to the field, he is a captain who has to make decisions. I am sure Ricky (Ponting) is helping him. Shreyas has many tools around him, and he has used them well so far.

"It's a very liberal environment in our team – not a dictatorship – which is one of the reasons we've been really successful."

My magical performance came true'

SPORTS REPORTER

BENGALURU

Mohammed Siraj was elated to have finally come up with the "magical performance" he had always hoped to produce for Royal Challengers Bangalore. The speedster's three for eight was instrumental in RCB's thumping eight-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders on Wednesday.

"I get a lot of support from RCB fans, staff and others," said Siraj. "I had always hoped for such a magical performance. Every season I wanted to do something different... something good for RCB. And finally the magical performance happened."

"At first, it didn't feel like the ball would swing much. When we entered the field, Virat [Kohli] asked me to get ready for the new ball. Bowling with the new ball gives you a different kind of confidence and I backed myself to deliver," Siraj added.

India's Australia tour green-lit, set to begin with Sydney ODI

BCCI wants CA to allow players' families to travel

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

Having obtained the requisite government clearances, Cricket Australia (CA) has shared the provisional itinerary of India's forthcoming tour with the BCCI.

The impending issues, as confirmed by a BCCI insider, have more to do with the size of the touring entourage and whether the players' families will be allowed to travel with them.

"CA has advised families of players to be barred from

travelling, considering the sensitivity and sanctity of the bio-bubble. But given the prolonged duration of the bubble the players will remain in, it would be in their interest if the families can be with them in Australia, at least for some time. Hopefully, the issue will be sorted out soon," revealed the BCCI insider.

Despite the itinerary not formally being made public, the Test specialists, along with the coaching and support staff, are set to arrive in Dubai by Sunday.

Once they complete their quarantine, they can train together before the touring party departs for Sydney from Dubai after the IPL final on November 10.

It is also learnt that the Indian team management has requested the BCCI for a psychologist and motivational trainer in Australia to better handle the challenges of living in the bio-bubble.

The provisional schedule

The dates of India's three ODIs, three T20s and four Tests on its tour of Australia.

ODIs
Nov. 27, Sydney
Nov. 29, Sydney

TV PICKS

Portuguese Grand Prix: Practice, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 2.25 p.m. & 7.55 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 12.15 a.m. (Saturday)
Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 12.10 a.m. (Saturday)
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 2.30 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF



Julia Goerges calls it a day

BERLIN
Germany's Julia Goerges, a Wimbledon semifinalist in 2018, announced her retirement from tennis on Wednesday. The 31-year-old, World No. 45 won seven singles and five doubles titles on the WTA Tour. AFP

WADA investigating 'doppelganger' samples

MONTREAL
Eighteen weightlifters from six countries are suspected of supplying false urine samples after a World Anti-Doping Agency investigation found evidence of "doppelgangers" being used to impersonate athletes, it said on Thursday. WADA said the 18 cases will be forwarded to the International Testing Agency for review. AFP

Altamash to play Jaisan for top honours

NEW DELHI
Altamash Saifi scored a 52-12, 54-1, 42-8, 19-38, 64-12, 32-19 victory over Sunil Kumar in the semifinals of the Delhi State Suresh Sharma memorial 6-Red snooker championship. In the final, Altamash will face Jaisan Malhotra.

World junior badminton championship cancelled

NEW DELHI
The 2020 World junior badminton championship, to be held in New Zealand in January, was on Thursday cancelled due to the uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. PTI

Bayern Munich off to a cracking start

Crushes Atletico in opener; City, Liverpool post wins; Real suffers stunning reverse against Shakhtar

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Bayern Munich began its defense of the Champions League title in ominous fashion by crushing Atletico Madrid 4-0 on Wednesday, while Liverpool and Manchester City also won but Real Madrid suffered a shock defeat.

Madrid, the record 13-time European champion, went down to a 3-2 home loss against Shakhtar Donetsk, showing how far Zinedine Zidane's side is just now from the standards being set by Bayern.

Kingsley Coman put Bayern ahead against Atletico in Group A and later scored a stunning individual effort to wrap up the victory at an empty Allianz Arena.

Long ranger

In between Leon Goretzka and Corentin Tolisso were also on target for the German champion, with the latter's strike a stunner from long-range.

It was Bayern's 12th consecutive Champions League win while the result for Atletico equalled its worst defeat



Big scalp: Shakhtar Donetsk's players are joy unbound after Tete's opening goal against 13-time champ Real Madrid. ■ REUTERS

under Diego Simeone.

Bayern next goes to Russia to play Lokomotiv Moscow, which battled back to draw 2-2 at Red Bull Salzburg.

Depleted Shakhtar

Real was 3-0 down at half-time against a depleted Shakhtar and fell short with a second-half fightback.

Strikes from Tete and Major Soloman, either side of a Raphael Varane own-goal, gave the Ukrainian champion a three-goal half-time lead.

Luka Modric and Vinicius Junior pulled goals back and Fede Valverde thought he had grabbed an injury-time equaliser but his deflected

shot was ruled out for an offside.

Liverpool shook off the absence of Virgil van Dijk to edge Ajax 1-0 behind closed doors in Amsterdam in Group D.

Jurgen Klopp's side kept a clean sheet and took all three points after Nicolas Tagliafico turned a wayward Sadio

Mane shot into his own net on 35 minutes.

Pep Guardiola's City made it three wins for English clubs this midweek as it came from behind at home to beat Porto 3-1.

Luis Diaz gave Porto the lead with a superb individual goal but Sergio Aguero's penalty soon brought City level and Ilkay Gundogan's free-kick put it ahead on 65 minutes. Substitute Ferran Torres then scored a superb goal to make sure of the win.

The results:

Group A: Salzburg 2 (Szoboszlai 45, Junuzovic 50) drew with Lokomotiv Moscow 2 (Eder 19, Lisakovich 75); Bayern Munich 4 (Coman 28, 72, Goretzka 41, Tolisso 66) bt Atletico Madrid 0.

Group B: Real Madrid 2 (Modric 54, Vinicius Junior 59) lost to Shakhtar Donetsk 3 (Tete 29, Varane 33-og, Solomon 42); Inter Milan 2 (Lukaku 49, 90) drew with Borussia M'gladbach 2 (Bensebaini 63-pen, Hofmann 84).

Group C: Manchester City 3 (Aguero 20-pen, Gundogan 65, Torres 73) bt FC Porto 1 (Diaz 14); Olympiakos 1 (Hassan 90+1) bt Marseille 0.

Group D: Ajax 0 lost to Liverpool 1 (Tagliacico 35-og); Midtjylland 0 lost to Atalanta 4 (Zapata 26, Gomez 36, Muriel 42, Miranchuk 88).

National camp starts after quarantine period ends

Shooters, coaches and staff were tested twice for COVID-19



Back to school: Most shooters reported for the National camp for the Olympic core group at the Dr. Karni Singh Range. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

C We did zoom sessions for fitness training during the quarantine period.

— DEEPALE DESHPANDE, high performance coach for rifle

coach Ennio Falco, who trains the skeet shooters, Angad said that he was following the guidance of his coach Tore Brovold for training routine at home.

For the other Olympic quota holder in skeet, Mairaj Ahmad Khan, nothing much has changed as he has been training at the range, ever since it opened for training, long before the camp.

"We did zoom sessions for fitness training during the quarantine period," said Deepali Deshpande, the high performance coach for rifle.

Meanwhile, the high performance coach for pistol, Delhi-based Samarendra Jung said that he had finished the formalities of home isolation and testing, and would be joining training on Friday. Most of the shooters reported for the camp.

There were rare exceptions like Asian skeet champion Angad Vir Singh Bajwa who continues to train at his home range in Chandigarh, as he has to take care of his grandparents.

Deepavali break
There will be a break for a week for Deepavali, before the shooters assemble once again for training and continue till December 17.

Prajnesh enters quarterfinals

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
ISMANNING (GERMANY)

Prajnesh Gunneswaran beat Lukas Lacko of Slovakia 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 to move into the quarterfinals of the €44,820 Challenger tennis tournament here.

However, Ramkumar Ramanathan lost his singles second round and the doubles pre-quarters with Purav Raja. Sriram Balaji also lost the doubles first round while partnering Luca Margaroli.

mar Ramanathan 6-2, 6-2.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Sebastian Korda & Brandon Nakashima (USA) bt Luca Margaroli (Sui) & Sriram Balaji 6-4, 7-5.

Lloyd Glasspool (GBR) & Alex Lawson (US) bt Purav Raja & Ramkumar Ramanathan 5-7, 6-3, [10-4].

\$15,000 ITF men, Sharq El Sheikh, Egypt: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Martins Podzus (Lat) bt Arjun Kadhe 6-2, 6-1.

Doubles (quarterfinals): Vladislav Manafov (Ukr) & Arjun Kadhe bt Flavio Coboli (Ita) & Alexander Donski (Bul) 6-1, 6-4.

Dhruvpal, Vishal shine

NEW DELHI: Dhruvpal Godara and Vishal Chauhan scored all goals between them in helping Sphiro-Cavalry-ASC (SCA) to a 10-9 victory over Army Polo and Riding Club (APRC) in a league match of the Cavalry Gold Cup 10-goal polo tournament here on Thursday. It was second defeat for APRC which had been beaten 11-3 by Jindal Panther on Wednesday.

Sona Polo inflicted a second defeat on Velocity-48, racing to a 10-5 victory.

All the four winning teams will compete in the

last league match on Friday to decide the final berths.

The results (league): Sona Polo 10 (Siddhant Sharma 6, Angad Kalaan 2, Tommy Severn 2) bt Velocity-48 5 (Samir Suhaag 2, Shamsheer Ali 2, Gaurav Sahgal); Sphiro-Cavalry-ASC 10 (Dhruvpal Godara 6, Vishal Chauhan 4) bt APRC 9 (Arjun Patil 5, Basheer Ali 4).

Rajnigandha Achievers 8 (Daniel Otamendi 5, Padmanabh Singh 3) bt Velocity-48 6 (Samir Suhaag 5, Shamsheer Ali 4).

Jindal Panther 11 (Simran Shergill 6, Dhananjay Singh 2, Phil Seller 2, Venkatesh Jindal) bt APRC 3 (Arjun Patil 2).

Meanwhile, the high performance coach for pistol, Delhi-based Samarendra Jung said that he had finished the formalities of home isolation and testing, and would be joining training on Friday. Most of the shooters reported for the camp.

There were rare exceptions like Asian skeet champion Angad Vir Singh Bajwa who continues to train at his home range in Chandigarh, as he has to take care of his grandparents.

Guidance
In the absence of national

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