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NEARBY

Women can enter NDA, Centre informs SC

NEW DELHI
 The Union government on Wednesday gave the Supreme Court the "good news" that it had taken a decision to allow women entry into the National Defence Academy. If this decision comes through formally on paper, women can prepare for a career in the armed forces after Class XII.

Talks fail, farmers to intensify Karnal sit-in

GURUGRAM
 Leaders of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha on Wednesday announced their intention to strengthen the sit-in agitation outside the mini-secretariat in Karnal after another round of talks between the farmer leaders and the district administration failed.

CITY PAGE 3

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Amid protests, Centre hikes MSP for rabi crops

It will ensure maximum remunerative price for farmers: Modi

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI
 The government on Wednesday increased the minimum support price (MSP) for wheat for the upcoming rabi season to ₹2,015 per quintal, a 2% hike from the ₹1,975 per quintal rate of last year.



Grain supply: A worker sorting wheat at a farm in Patiala.

Oilseeds and pulses such as mustard, safflower and masoor dal saw higher MSP hikes of up to 8% in a bid to encourage crop diversification, a statement on the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs said.

The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers. Currently, rates are fixed for 23 crops, including six crops during the upcoming rabi or winter season for which sowing will begin in October.

In a tweet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the government had taken another big decision in the interest of farmers by increasing the MSPs of rabi crops. He said it would ensure maximum remunerative price for farmers and also encourage them for sowing operations.

Cabinet approves incentive scheme for textile sector

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared an outlay of ₹10,683 crore on a production linked incentive scheme aimed at attracting fresh investments in the man-made fibre apparel, fabrics, and technical textiles sectors. The

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the decision was proof that the government was committed to the MSP system.

The protesting farm unions under the Samyukt Ki-

san Morcha pointed out that the rate of inflation was higher than the MSP hike for most crops, arguing that in real terms, the MSP for wheat has dropped 4%.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

SC rejects door-to-door vaccination plea

Can't ask govt. to scrap current drive, it says

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court shot down a petition to direct the government to immediately embark on a door-to-door COVID-19 vaccination policy, saying such pleas were a product of ignorance about the diversity of the country and complexity of governance.

A Bench, led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, asked Youth Bar Association of In-



At this stage, it's difficult to give a general direction considering the diversity of this country... We should not impinge upon the administrative power of the state to give vaccine, including door-to-door

SUPREME COURT

dia, the petitioner, whether it wanted the court to direct the government to scrap its current vaccination drive when more than 60% of the population had already received at least one dose of the vaccine and start down

the path of door-to-door vaccination.

'Lack of understanding'
 "Do the same conditions prevail in Ladakh and Kerala, or Uttar Pradesh? Are the challenges same in urban

parts of India and the rural areas? There is a lack of understanding about the diversity of the country, about the complexity of governance. You cannot ask the same thing, in one stroke of the brush, for the entire country... Over 60% of the population has taken one dose of the vaccine, it is not for us now to turn around and say scrap that and go for door-to-door vaccination," Justice Chandrachud addressed the counsel on the petitioner's side.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

1 dead, at least 35 missing after ferries collide in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

One person died and at least 35 are missing after two ferries collided on the flooded Brahmaputra river off Neamatighat in Jorhat district of Assam on Wednesday.

The dead and the missing were on the smaller ferry, *Maa Kamala*, that capsized after the collision with the bigger vessel, *Tipkai*, around 3.30 p.m.

Officials said 42 others on-



NDRF personnel carrying out rescue work. PTI

board *Maa Kamala*, which had set sail from Neamatighat for Kamalabari ferry point in Majuli "island", either swam to safety or were rescued.

All passengers on *Tipkai*, which was en route to Neamatighat from Kamalabari, were rescued by the personnel of the National Disaster Response Force and the State Disaster Response Force.

Jorhat SP Ankur Jain said the rescued included seven children. A few were admitted to local hospitals, but a 28-year-old woman among them died.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

T.N. Assembly urges Centre to repeal CAA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Assembly on Wednesday adopted a resolution urging the Centre to repeal the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. While the BJP walked out, its ally, the PMK, welcomed the resolution. AIADMK members were not present when the resolution was adopted as they had walked out over another issue.

DETAILS PAGE 5

Chirag Paswan calls on Tejashwi Yadav

Meeting stokes speculation over LJP and RJD forging an alliance in Bihar

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

Lok Janshakti Party leader and MP Chirag Paswan on Wednesday met Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav in Patna to invite him to the first death anniversary of his father and founder of the LJP, Ram Vilas Paswan.

The meeting triggered speculation over the forging of a new alliance in Bihar politics but Mr. Chirag said this was not "a moment to talk about politics".

When asked about RJD chief Lalu Prasad's earlier



Chirag Paswan, right, with Tejashwi Yadav in Patna. PTI

suggestion that both the young leaders should come together, Mr. Yadav told mediapersons: "We can't say

anything after what Lalu ji has said."

'Close family ties'
 He added, "Late Ram Vilas Paswan ji had close family ties with Lalu ji."

Mr. Yadav also said, "I remember learning some of my early lessons in politics while campaigning with Paswan ji in the 2010 Assembly polls, which he had fought along with my father."

Mr. Chirag said he will go to Delhi on Thursday to meet Mr. Prasad. "Today, I have come to invite Tejashwi bhai

on the first death anniversary of my father, which is going to be held on September 12. Had my father been alive, he would have liked Lalu ji and his family to be part of any function taking place in my family... I'm just carrying forward the tradition."

Mr. Chirag has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi to the event. He has also extended the invitation to his estranged uncle and Union Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Jharkhand House clears Bill for 75% quota for locals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

The Jharkhand Assembly on Wednesday passed a Bill, which provides 75% reservation for locals in private sector jobs with a monthly salary of up to ₹40,000. Once notified, Jharkhand will become the third State, after Andhra Pradesh and Haryana, to pass such a law.

"The Jharkhand State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2021" was tabled in the House in March but was later referred to a six-member select committee.

The committee, chaired by Labour Minister Satyanand Bhokta, amended the Bill with a few changes. It was named "The Jharkhand State Employment of Local Candidates in Private Sector Bill, 2021" and the monthly salary cap was increased from ₹30,000 to ₹40,000. "Every employer shall register such employees receiving gross monthly salary as wages not more than ₹40,000 as the limit notified by the government from time to time on the designated portal," states the Bill.

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'Probe into media leak should be done by independent dept.'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A Delhi riots accused on Wednesday alleged before the Delhi High Court that an internal enquiry conducted by the police into the leakage of sensitive information to media about the probe "yielded no results" and was an "eyewash" and the probe into it should be conducted by an independent department.

Asif Iqbal Tanha, a student

of Jamia Millia Islamia, who is chargesheeted in the Delhi riots conspiracy case told the court that sensitive information was leaked during the course of the investigation to people who were not supposed to have it.

Arguing before Justice Mukta Gupta, his counsel said it was necessary to "insulate the investigation" from the persons who are to be subjected to the scrutiny. "If an enquiry is not yielding the

result, it is only important to go to the next step, which is investigation," said senior counsel Siddharth Aggarwal, appearing for Mr. Tanha.

"When enquiry yields no result, where people to be investigated are the same as those conducting it, where enquiry was within closed doors with no oversight, there is a mandate of entrusting that investigation to an independent department," the senior advocate contended.

Capital likely to receive rain for next three days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The national capital is likely to receive rain for the next three days, according to the India Meteorological Department. While rain was forecast for Wednesday, the city received only scattered showers. In the past 24 hours, ending at 8.30 a.m., it received 5.3 mm of rainfall.

The weatherman has forecast generally cloudy sky with light rain/thunder-showers on Thursday. Maxi-

mum and minimum temperatures are likely to hover between 33 and 25 degrees Celsius, respectively.

"Scattered to widespread rainfall likely over most parts of north-west India till September 12. Isolated heavy rain likely over J-K, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana from September 8-11; U.P. and western Rajasthan from September 9-11; Uttarakhand and eastern Rajasthan from September 8-12," the Met department said.

Environment protection to become robust: Rai

Central government reconstitutes State-level authorities

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday said the State-level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) and State-level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) have been notified by the Centre, "following a proposal by the Delhi government". Mr. Rai said that now it will be easier to handle applications and the environment impact assessment will become more robust and transparent in the State.

"Category 'B' projects requiring environmental clearance will not have to wait for the Central government's approval and approval will now be given in a fast-tracked manner by the Delhi government itself. As much as fast tracking will be a sought after solution, we will also make the system more robust and transparent. Environment protection is one



Gopal Rai inspecting the newly inaugurated smog tower in Connaught Place.

FILE PHOTO

of the prime responsibilities of the Delhi government and we will not compromise on it," Mr. Rai said.

Delhi government had sent its proposal for reconstitution of SEIAA/SEAC, along with names of experts, to the Central government in 2020 and after multiple correspondence and meetings, the notification was finally issued, as per authorities.

"It is to be noted that as per the Environment Protec-

tion Rules, all category 'A' projects [mega projects] are approved by an Expert Appraisal Committee of the MoEFCC while all category 'B' projects [large projects] are approved by the State Level Authority (SEIAA)," an official statement said.

Lower pendency

The authority will meet monthly, leading to faster decision making and lower pendency of cases and it can also mandate regular inspection of project sites which have been granted environment clearance (EC) to ensure that they are complying with norms, the Delhi government said.

As per the gazette notification, Sarvagya Kumar Srivastava will be Chairman of the SEIAA, Reena Gupta, Special Secretary of Environment Department of Govt. of Delhi, will be the member Secretary.

DELHI POLLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE (DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT)

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PUBLIC NOTICE - BATTERIES MANAGEMENT

Batteries (Management & Handling) Rules, 2001 came into force w.e.f 16th May, 2001. These rules mandate various responsibilities on manufacturers, importers, assemblers, re-conditioners, dealers, recyclers, consumers, bulk consumers and auctioneers. Major responsibilities of each of these stakeholders are listed as under.

Manufacturers/Importers

✓ Shall ensure that the new batteries be sold only to the registered dealers and the used batteries are collected back as per the schedule against new batteries sold excluding those sold to original equipment manufacturer and bulk consumer(s).

✓ Shall file a half-yearly return of their sales and buy-back to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) in Form- I latest by 30th June (for Oct-Mar) and 31st December (for Apr-Sept) of every year.

✓ Set up collection centres either individually or jointly at various places for collection of used batteries from consumers or dealers and shall ensure that the collected batteries are sent only to the registered recyclers.

✓ Shall ensure that necessary arrangements are made with dealers for safe transportation from collection centres to the premises of registered recyclers and shall ensure that no damage to the environment occurs during the transportation.

✓ Create public awareness through advertisement, publications, posters or by other means with regards to (a) hazard of lead (b) responsibility of consumers to return their used batteries only to the dealer or deliver at designated collection centre and (c) address of the dealer and designated collection centres.

✓ Buy recycled lead only from registered recyclers.

✓ Bring to the notice of the DPCC or the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India for any violation by the dealers.

✓ Importers shall apply for registration as per Form II and Form III on the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) online portal for a period of five years (link: <http://cpccbrrms.nic.in>).

Assemblers/Re-conditioners

✓ Shall ensure that the used batteries collected back are of similar type and specifications as that of the new batteries sold and shall ensure that used batteries collected are sent only to registered recyclers.

✓ Create public awareness through advertisement, publications, posters or by other means with regard to hazards of lead.

Dealers

✓ Apply for registration by submitting online application in Form- IV available on DPCC website by creating user ID and password for the period of five years.

✓ Shall ensure that the used batteries are collected back as per the schedule against new batteries sold.

✓ Shall ensure safe transportation of collected batteries to the designated collection centres or to registered recyclers.

✓ Shall file a half-yearly return of their sales

means with regards to (a) hazard of lead, and (b) obligation of consumers to return used batteries only to the registered dealers or deliver at the designated collection centres.

Consumers/Bulk Consumers

✓ Shall ensure that used batteries are not disposed off in any manner other than by depositing with the dealer/ manufacturer/ registered recycler/ importer/ re-conditioner or at the designated collection centres.

✓ Bulk consumers shall file half-yearly return latest by 30th June (for Oct-Mar) and 31st December (for Apr-Sept) in Form- I to DPCC.

✓ Bulk consumers to their user units may auction used batteries to registered recyclers only.



and buy-back of old batteries to the DPCC and manufacturer in Form-V latest by 31st May (for Oct-Mar) and 30th November (for Apr-Sept) of every year.

Recyclers

✓ Shall apply for registration to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change or an agency designated by it (if not applied already), by submitting information in Form VI.

✓ Shall submit half-yearly returns as per Form-VII to the DPCC latest by 30th June (for Oct-Mar) and 31st December (for Apr-Sept) of every year.

✓ Shall make available all records relating to receipt of used batteries, sources, quantities and metal yield to be submitted to the DPCC.

✓ Create public awareness through advertisement, publications, posters or by other

Auctioneers

✓ Shall ensure that used batteries are auctioned to the registered recyclers only.

✓ Shall maintain records relating to receipt of used batteries, sources, quantities and metal yield and submit to DPCC.

✓ Shall file half-yearly returns of their auctions latest by 30th June and 31st December to DPCC in Form-IX.

Note:- As per Batteries (Management and Handling) Amendment Rules, 2010, every dealer of Lead Acid Battery shall obtain registration from DPCC, within 30 days of this Notice and in case of failure legal action including prosecution shall be initiated.

Member Secretary

HC transfers probe into custodial death to CBI

Gangster died inside Tihar last month

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday transferred the probe into the death of gangster Ankit Gujjar, inside the Tihar jail last month, to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) noting he "lost his life to custodial violence".

The 29-year-old gangster was found dead in Tihar jail on August 4. Justice Mukta Gupta directed the CBI to submit a status report, after carrying out investigation, on October 28.

"A perusal of the post-mortem report of Ankit belies the version of the Deputy Superintendent, Narender Meena and other staffers that a scuffle took place in which both Narender Meena and Ankit received injuries," the High Court said.

"From injuries sustained by Ankit, it is evident that deceased was brutally beaten and left unattended by the jail doctor and nursing staff," the court remarked adding: "It is unfathomable that when the jail doctor on duty visited at midnight, he did not see the multiple injuries on Ankit."

"Not only did Narender Meena and others assaulted the deceased mercilessly, the jail doctor on duty also

failed to perform his duty when he examined Ankit at 1 a.m. and administered the injection, as he neither informed the senior officers of the condition of Ankit nor referred him to the hospital," Justice Gupta remarked.

Role of jail doctors

"In case proper medical treatment was provided to him, his life could have been saved. Thus an investigation not only as to who all committed the offence of brutally beating the deceased to death, but the role of jail doctors in not providing proper treatment at the right time is also required to be ascertained by a proper inquiry," the court ordered.

"Walls of prison, however high they may be, the foundation of a prison is laid on the rule of law ensuring the rights to its inmates enshrined in the Constitution of India," Justice Gupta remarked.

She said that this case calls for immediate remedial actions by the State and Director General, Prisons so that unscrupulous officers at the jail do not take advantage of knowledge of the non-working of the CCTVs to get away with any illegal act/offences.

'Elevated cross taxiway to be ready by Dec. next year'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's first elevated cross taxiway, which is being constructed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, is scheduled to be ready by December 2022 with 60% of the work already complete, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) said on Wednesday.

Once completed, it will cut 55,000 tonnes of CO₂ emission annually and minimise aircraft delay.

Passengers will be able to reach the terminal faster after landing, as the elevated eastern cross taxiway is set to reduce the distance that an aircraft has to taxi from 9 km to 2 km, it said in a statement.

"Environment has emerged as a major focus area in the aviation sector. We have implemented Airport-Collaborative Decision Making for airport operations and all runway operations to minimise aircraft delay and associated emissions. We have ensured that all airside vehicles run on CNG to reduce carbon emission," said I. Prabhakar Rao, Deputy Managing Director, GMR Group, that operates the Delhi airport.

IIT to launch lectures for school students

The aim is to kindle interest in science

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

IIT-Delhi is launching weekend lectures and laboratory demos titled 'Sci-Tech Spins' for high school students where professors will engage with students sharing their research in science, technology and allied fields.

The institute said the lectures will take students on "short, but riveting spins" into the fascinating world that surrounds us. The lectures will be informal and in a dialogical settings, with the hope to kindle interest in students.

The first lecture, titled 'Design Thinking - A Powerful Tool for Problem Solving', accompanied by a lab demo, will be deli-

vered by P.V. Madhusudan Rao, Head, Department of Design, IIT-Delhi on September 11.

Proactive stance

The institute said it regularly receives multiple requests from schools for campus tours, workshops and mentorship programmes for their students and this was a proactive stance on academic outreach for schools.

V. Ramgopal Rao, Director, IIT-Delhi said: "We want to connect with thousands of other students who are outside the IIT system and inspire and help them in all possible ways. The goal of Sci-Tech Spins is to connect with every school in the country."

पढ़ाई न छूटे एक भी सपना न टूटे

Delhi Govt will support uninterrupted education of children who lost their parent during COVID-19

- Children who have become orphaned or have lost a parent after March 2020, will be able to continue their studies.
- All such children studying in private schools will now have free education in their own school till class 8.
- After class 8, students may be admitted to any Govt school.

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	RISE 09:13	SET 20:53
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	RISE 10:18	SET 21:33

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	34	26
Safdarjang	34	26
Palam	33	27

Delhi Palam Today
33°C Light rain and thunderstorm will occur at some areas. Warm and humid day likely with light winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
32°C Few spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-shower with gusty winds may occur at some areas. A humid day with mainly overcast sky.

Ashoka varsity to double seats, faculty by 2027

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI
Ashoka University laid the foundation stone for its new campus on Wednesday, with plans to double its students, faculty and built-up spaces over the next six years with an overall investment of about ₹1,500 crore. It will also move from a focus on the humanities to a greater emphasis on sciences as well, according to Ashish Dhanwan, chairman of the board of trustees.

The Sonapat-based university is currently sited on a 25-acre campus and had purchased a contiguous plot of another 27 acres three years ago. "It took us nine years to build the current campus, and we are now bursting at the seams in terms of capacity for students," Mr. Dhanwan told *The Hindu*.

By 2027, he expects to add 1.8 million square feet of built-up space to the current 1.5 million square feet, and increase the student population to up to 6,000 from the current strength of 2,500. The 180-strong faculty team is also expected to double.

More than the numbers though, the expansion is about a shift in focus. "We want to start more graduate courses, postdoctoral research programmes," said Mr. Dhanwan.

In the first phase starting this week, Ashoka will construct a major research facility for the biosciences, and an innovation hub to encourage entrepreneurial ventures.

Talks fail, farmers to intensify Karnal sit-in

More protesters from Punjab, U.P. to join soon, says Tikait

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Leaders of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a conglomerate of hundreds of farmer unions, leading protests against the three farm laws, on Wednesday announced their intention to strengthen the sit-in agitation outside the mini-secretariat in Karnal after another round of talks between the farmer leaders and the district administration failed to break the deadlock.

Bharatiya Kisan Union national spokesperson Rakesh Tikait, at a press conference, said the protest outside the mini-secretariat would continue till their demands were met and more farmers from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh would join soon. He said that along with the ongoing sit-in agitations around Delhi, the protest at Karnal would be another front against the government. He, however, added that the farmers were willing to talk to the administration for a peaceful resolution and would ensure that the visitors to the secretariat were not inconvenienced.

Jai Kisan Andolan leader Yogendra Yadav said there was not the slightest change



BKU spokesperson Rakesh Tikait with farmers during their sit-in protest outside the mini-secretariat in Karnal. •PTI

in the "obstinate attitude" and "insensitivity" of the Haryana government, causing the talks to fail for the second day.

Conduct of IAS officer

He said farmers had been demanding registration of a case against IAS officer Ayush Sinha on charges of murder and attempt to murder, but the government was unwilling. "Suspension of government employees pending inquiry is a routine in Haryana, but the government is not willing to even suspend this official. It shows that he was acting at the behest of the Chief Minister," said Mr. Yadav.

Indrajit Singh, vice-presi-

dent, All-India Kisan Sabha, Haryana, said the conduct of the IAS officer Ayush Sinha was "unpardonable" and "unacceptable", according to service rules and the criminal law, and the unions were firm on seeking action against him. "It is an important and a crucial matter for us," said Mr. Singh.

Karnal Deputy Commissioner Nishant Kumar said the agitating farmers were adamant on action against the officials for the baton charge, but no action could be taken without a probe. He said the administration was exhibiting patience, restraint and prudence and wanted an amicable solution.

Govt. bans Ganesh Chaturthi events

Observe festival at home: DDMA order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Wednesday said Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations were prohibited in the Capital, advising citizens to observe the festival at home.

This, even as the Delhi government was scheduled to organise an event to mark the occasion on Friday with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his Cabinet colleagues and their respective family members supposed to be part of a traditional pooja on the day.

Build oxygen plants

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri accused the

Delhi government of wasting taxpayers' money on "propaganda" through the event and arguing that the money being spent on it could be utilised on building oxygen plants in Delhi.

The DDMA, in an order on August 30, had announced that all social, political, religious, sports, entertainment, cultural, and religious gatherings were prohibited in the city given the COVID pandemic.

The DDMA order said it had been decided that Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations may not be allowed in public places. It directed all district officials to ensure that no pandal or tent was erected or any congregation was allowed.



An artist works on an idol of Lord Ganesha ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi in Delhi, on Wednesday. •R.V. MOORTHY

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Afghan panel chief booked for violating COVID norms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A case has been registered against Afghan Solidarity Committee chief Ahmad Zia Ghani for allegedly violating COVID-19 guidelines while protesting outside the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) office here, the Delhi Police said on Wednesday.

Amid the crisis in Afghanistan after the Taliban took over the war-torn nation, a large number of Afghan refugees in India held protests in front of the UNHCR office at Vasant Vi-

har in South Delhi demanding the release of "support letters" from the UN agency to migrate to other countries for better opportunities.

An FIR was registered against Mr. Ghani at Vasant Vihar police station on August 31. "We registered a case under Indian Penal Code Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) last week for violating COVID guidelines. No one has been arrested yet," Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-West) Ingit Pratap Singh said.

Oxygen plant set up at Batra Hospital

City reports zero COVID-19 deaths

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An on-site oxygen generation plant has been set up at Batra Hospital, a private hospital here, where people had died due to oxygen shortage during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On May 1, the hospital did not have oxygen for more than an hour and 12 people, including a senior doctor from the hospital, who was undergoing COVID-19 treatment, died because of it, as per hospital authorities.

Similar plant

The plant is expected to serve around 150 hospital beds and the hospital is planning for another similar plant, according to the company which installed the oxygen plant.

Meanwhile, the city reported zero COVID-19 death in 24 hours and the total number of deaths stood at 25,083, as per a bulletin re-



The plant is expected to serve around 150 hospital beds.

leased by the Delhi government on Wednesday.

Also, 41 new cases were reported, taking the total cases to 14,38,082.

A total of 75,079 tests were done in a day and that test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.05%. Of the total cases, 14,12,585 people have recovered and there are only 414 active cases.

The COVID-19 vaccine stock on Wednesday morning would last for six days, another another bulletin stated.

BJP resolution calls AAP govt. 'anti-women'

Party's Mahila Morcha meet under way

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP, following inauguration of its State Mahila Morcha executive meeting here on Wednesday passed a resolution against the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government.

In addition to flagging several alleged issues related to its functioning, the unit also questioned the absence of women from the Delhi Cabinet.

The meeting was addressed by senior BJP leaders, including Union minister Smriti Irani, national general secretary of the party Dushyant Gautam and Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta. National Mahila Morcha vice-president Rekha Gupta and Delhi BJP Mahila Morcha president Yogita Singh were also present.

The executive sought to take the opportunity to castigate the Delhi government for allegedly hoodwinking the people of the city in the name of free water and power though they were al-



Union Minister Smriti Irani at the meeting in Delhi on Wednesday. •PTI

legedly being made to pay for these. There was no pure drinking water while consumers were allegedly being looted in the name of fixed charges when it came to power.

The resolution alleged that the Kejriwal government was "anti-women", arguing that though it talks of women's welfare there was not even single woman Minister in the Cabinet. The Morcha alleged that for past years over 20,000 teachers' posts were lying vacant in city schools but the State government is deliberately not filling them up.

BJP leader meets DERC chief over bills

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after he was appointed vice-chairman of the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti by its chairperson, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Union Minister Vijay Goel met Shabihul Hussain, the new chairman of DERC, regarding the rising electricity bills in the city.

Mr. Goel alleged that since the last many years, fixed charges have been increased six times without any reason; notice is given to increase the fixed load, but no notice is given to the consumer when the fixed load is reduced, so that he can save money.

During the lockdown, when most of the commercial establishments, shops, factories remained closed, in the name of fixed charges, "huge recovery" was made from the public, in which relief should be given, Mr. Goel demanded.

He said that apart from the per unit price of electricity, power firms were charging many "wrong charges" about which companies were "not able to give any account".

Good Intention Always Brings Victory

My Esteemed Investors & Kartavyayogi Worker Friends,

For past some days, some unscrupulous elements have been propagating that our organization is not making repayments to our esteemed investors. **In this regard, it is to be informed that repayments are being made to the esteemed investors but certainly there has been a situation of delayed repayments. However, in case of delay the esteemed investors are being paid interest for the delayed period.**

Why Delay In Payment

Due to the embargo imposed by Hon'ble Supreme Court that if Sahara Group sells or mortgages any of its property, then the money generated through this goes to Sahara-SEBI account and not even one rupee can be used for public repayment.

This way our amount with interest deposited in Sahara-SEBI account has been more than ₹24,000 crore while SEBI after advertising in around 150 newspapers throughout the country for 4 times could pay only around ₹150 crore in over the last 8 years.

It is a typical case of double payment of single liability.

Our Intention

Sahara India Pariwar is one such organization whose management has openly been putting its inconveniences and problems before its esteemed investors and workers from time to time. We deem it our responsibility to keep you apprised of the prevailing situations. Our intention has never ever been wrong. In 44 years of its existence, barring the last eight years when there has been a situation of delayed payments because of the embargo by Hon'ble Supreme Court in Sahara-SEBI case, no one's payment was delayed before nor will it be delayed in future. If our intentions had been wrong, we would have adopted an escapist attitude in the year 2014 when the organization was suddenly struck by enormous problems. We could have hastily sold our assets at throw away prices and got ourselves free from all our problems by depositing money with SEBI. But we didn't do so considering the best interests of our organization, our esteemed investors and our workers. In the past, assets of many companies were taken over by the Government, yet even after that the esteemed investors couldn't get even a single rupee back in more than two decades. **It means all your payments have to be made by Sahara India Pariwar only.**

Overseas-Air Services

In my last address I told you in detail how our business activities had been affected due to Corona pandemic in last one and half year, and how we couldn't complete

our those projects through which we expected to get money from, to repay our esteemed investors. I had also said that if the situation got normal and business operations around the world were back on track after recovering from the Corona pandemic, we would be in a position to repay in the months of July, August and September, 2021. At that time we had hoped that overseas travel will restart, but it didn't happen and even today, international air travel has not resumed. Now the Government of India has extended the curtailment of international flying till 30th September.

I had told you that most of our business transactions had happened overseas from which we would have received sufficient funds. But due to Corona, our representatives and those of other countries are not able to visit each other and the agreements are not getting finalized. Hence, we are not able to get adequate funds.

₹24,000 Crore

I had also told you the places, including the Sahara-SEBI account (**more than ₹24,000 crores**), where our funds were stuck. We assumed there would be progress in this direction and we would get our money that we were to use to make payments to our esteemed investors, but the adverse circumstances kept coming in our way. Due to Corona we didn't get a date of hearing from the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the last 14 months. Despite all these things our efforts are going on.

We are hopeful that the situation will normalize soon and our business activities will speed up again, which will take our deals to finalization and we will get enough money that will enable us to provide relief to all.

Because of the prevailing circumstances, at present we are not in a position to tell you how long it will take to happen.

However, we assure you that your payment is our responsibility which we will fulfill at all cost and by all means and **very soon we will be before you with good news.**

My regards to all the elders and loving blessings to the younger ones!

Always Yours,

Saharabhai
Subrata Roy Sahara



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Jacket of ABHA Volume 6, Issue 1, June 2021

Celebrate the Himalaya Day, Sep 9, with fifty-three (53) picture postcards showcasing the loftiest and its gateway. Each card unfolds a Himalayan adventure. Pick your next adventure for less than four rupees (₹4).

Happy Himalaya Day!
September 9

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(3) magzter.com (Individual copy and subscription), and
(4) pressreader.com (Individual copy and subscription).

About Best Himalayan Adventures (ABHA), a publication by theofinfo, is an e-travel magazine dedicated to the Himalayas.



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LEGAL NOTICE

THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL, NEYATTINKARA, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT, KERALA
O.P.(M.V) No.1074 of 2013
PETITIONER : (Additional 4th Respondent) The Oriental Insurance Company Limited, Motor Third Party Claims Hub, S.M.V. Vela, Uloor, Thiruvananthapuram, represented by its Assistant Manager
Counter Petitioners: (Respondents 1,2 and Additional 5th Respondent) 1) Ramesh Kumar S/o. Karan Singh, Ambedkar Colony, Sector 2, Panchkula P.O., Panchkula District, Haryana State 2) Santhosh Kumar, S/O Vijaya Vora Sakena, Devar Kancha, Jaint Nagar, Badau District, Uttar Pradesh State. 3) Mr. Ashok Kumar Garg, 104, GHS-12, SEC 20, Panchkula District, Haryana State
Notice to counter petitioners Respondents 1,2 and Additional 5th Respondent
Take notice that the petitioner/additional 4th respondent has filed a petition as I.A. No.5 of 2020 in O.P.(M.V) No.1074 of 2013 before the Tribunal for production of RC Book, Permit and Fitness Certificate of the HTV TATA Truck bearing Reg.No.HR-68-A-5172 and the valid effective Driving License and Badge of the 2nd respondent Mr.Santhosh Kumar, valid on the date of accident which occurred on 25-06-2011, before this Tribunal. The said petition stands posted to 27-09-2021. Hence you are hereby called upon to appear before this Court in person or by pleader and to produce the documents at 11 AM on 27.09.2021. If you fail to appear on the date aforesaid, the matter will be determined in your absence.
(By Order)(Sd/-) Advocate for additional 4th Respondent P.S.SURESH KUMAR

TENDERS

STEEL & INDUSTRIAL FORGINGS LTD.
(A Government of Kerala Undertaking)
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Competitive Tenders are invited for erection and commissioning of the following machinery. For more details please visit the E-Tendering Portal <https://tenders.kerala.gov.in> or www.sifilindia.com 1) 6T capacity open forging hammer 2) Gas/Oil furnace 3) 3 axis CNC machine 4) Screw compressor 1026 CFM (Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता नवम् वृत्त, लो.नि.वि., देहरादून।
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मंजूर: 7247/1/वि-9/21 **सूचि पत्र (Corrigendum)** दिनांक: 08.09.2021
इस कार्यालय की ई-निविदा सूचना सं. 7194/1/सी-9/21, दिनांक 07.09.2021 द्वारा जनपद देहरादून के 02 कार्यों हेतु राष्ट्रीय प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक निविदा (ई-निविदा) आमंत्रित की गयी है, जो दिनांक 13.09.2021 से <https://www.uktenders.gov.in> पोर्टल पर उपलब्ध होंगी, किन्तु उक्त निविदा अपरिहार्य कारणों से निरस्त की जाती है। (ई. पी.एस. नूजवाला)
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, नवम् वृत्त, लो.नि.वि., देहरादून।

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of female found in two khaki colour cartons in jungle near Railway yard, Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi, in which imputed body parts of an unknown female and headless body was found. In this regard FIR No. 328/21 U/S 302/201 IPC Dated 05.09.2021 has been lodged at Police Station, Patparganj Ind. Area, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body is as under:
Name: Unknown, Age: Not Known, Height: Approx 5', Built: Strong, Face: Missing, Identification: Flower like tattoo on left hand wrist and an unspecified tattoo on right hand, Wearing: Yellow colour torn salwar on the lower body part and trunk portion is nude.
If anyone has any information or clue about this female deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.
SHO
Police Station, Patparganj Ind. Area, Delhi
DP/695/ED/2021 Ph.: 011-22146491, 8750870626

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION, NASHIK

E-Tender Notice No.28 for 2021-22 (Online)
Online E-Tenders in "B-1" Form for the following works invited by Executive Engineer, P.W.Division, Nashik Phone No. (0253/2583761-64, 2575324) for and On behalf of Governor of Maharashtra State From Capable of P.W.Deptt. Registered / Unregistered Contractor or International Contractor whose Sub company / branch in India and also complete terms and conditions mentioned in tender document .
Tender document download on our website <https://mahatenders.gov.in>. Right of rejection of E-tender / cancellation of E-tender reserved by The Executive Engineer, P.W. Division, Nashik. *Conditional Tender will not be accepted.
Note :- Above mentioned E-Tender Notice including Total 17 (Seventeen) (Costing from Rs. 150.00 Lacks) Work And details of mentioned E-Tender Notice available on below website.
1. www.mahapwd.com
2. <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
Tender Document Sale 09.09.2021 To 23.09.2021
Start and End Date Time From 11.05 To Upto 17.00
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All eligible/ interested Contractors are required to be enrolled on portal <https://mahatenders.gov.in> before downloading tender documents and participate in e-tendering
The information of E-Payment Gateway available on E-Tendering website <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
Please Note this to all Registered / Unregistered Contractors.
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Executive Engineer,
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DGIPR/2021/2022/1864

Truce in Rajasthan BJP, MLA drops motion to censure LoP

Kailash Meghwal talked out of moving resolution at party meet

never they appeared. Mr. Meghwal had alleged in his letter that misappropriations to the tune of crores of rupees had taken place under Mr. Kataria's protection during the distribution of party posts and tickets. "There is a common refrain in the public on how the Opposition is being unsuccessful in effectively raising the issues of people's problems and public welfare in the Assembly," he said.

BJP national general secretary and in-charge for Rajasthan Arun Singh, who rushed to Jaipur, convinced Mr. Meghwal to withdraw his move and work in the interest of the party. Mr. Meghwal, 87, who was also a Union Minister of State, wrote a 10-page letter to party president J.P. Nadda with his grievances and charges against Mr. Kataria.

A known supporter of former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, Mr. Meghwal said the main reasons for his decision to bring the resolution against Mr. Kataria at the BJP's Legislature Party meeting before the Assembly session were his statements on Rajput warrior

Mr. Singh summoned the octogenarian leader to the party headquarters here and had a detailed discussion with him. Mr. Meghwal agreed to drop his plan to move the censure motion and said he would join the fight against the ruling Congress as a "disciplined BJP worker".

"The BJP has promoted me throughout my political career. It is my duty to work in the interest of the party," Mr. Meghwal told reporters while coming out of the meeting. Mr. Singh earlier said after his arrival here that the BJP was not going to keep such statements in cold storage, when they appeared.

Mr. Meghwal had alleged in his letter that misappropriations to the tune of crores of rupees had taken place under Mr. Kataria's protection during the distribution of party posts and tickets. "There is a common refrain in the public on how the Opposition is being unsuccessful in effectively raising the issues of people's problems and public welfare in the Assembly," he said.

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MARRIAGE NOTICE

Mr. Ajitesh Kochar holder of India Passport No. V9117269 and Mrs Adriana Angelica Huerta Gonzalez holder of Mexico Passport No. G37512194 intend registering marriage at the Embassy of India, Mexico City, 325 Alfred de Musset, Polanco Sec-V, Mexico- 11550 under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969 of India. Objections, if any, may be conveyed to the Embassy of India, Mexico City within 30 days.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Before The District Consumer Redressal Forum, Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu
C.O.P.No: 33/2019
K.Jagaveerapandian, S/o A. Kanesan residing at No.12/31, Balaji Nagar, Unnamalai Chetti Chavadi, Cuddalore
...Petitioner
-Versus -
The Manager, Videcon, Plot No. 296, Udyogvihar, Phase-2, Gurgaon. Pin:122015, Haryana. Ph:0123-327309
...Respondent
The above named petitioner filed a petition against the Respondent in this Court. Hence you are advised to appear on 27.09.2021 at 10.00 A.M. in the forenoon in person or pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions relating to the above said proceedings.
If you failed appear before forum, this forum pass order against you.
S.RAMSINGH B.A.B.L., ADVOCATE M.S 114/1991 TAMILNADU

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Banti, D/o Shri Rajender, R/o H. No. 6, Gali No. 6, Jeewan Park, Delhi. Age: 19 years, Height: 4'8", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Yellow colour Suit-Salwar and Slipper in feet has been missing since 12.08.2021 from the area of PS Samaipur Badli, Delhi. In this regard a DD No.120A, dated 12.08.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.
SHO
P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi
Ph. 011-21710062, 21710052
DP/1226/ON/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Banti, D/o Shri Rajender, R/o H. No. 6, Gali No. 6, Jeewan Park, Delhi. Age: 19 years, Height: 4'8", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Yellow colour Suit-Salwar and Slipper in feet has been missing since 12.08.2021 from the area of PS Samaipur Badli, Delhi. In this regard a DD No.120A, dated 12.08.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.
SHO
P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi
Ph. 011-21710062, 21710052
DP/1226/ON/2020

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person Namely: Unknown S/o Unknown R/o Unknown Age : about 35-40 years, Height : 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Built : Thin, Face: Long, Identification : A Tattoo mark (P. HEMA) on right hand, Wearing: White and Blue colour check shirt and Black colour pant & Chappal in feet was admitted in injured condition at Maharaja Agrasen Hospital, Punjabi Bagh, Delhi on 26.02.2021, where during treatment doctor declared him dead on 24.03.2021. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 164/21 dated 26.02.2021 has been registered at P.S. Punjabi Bagh, Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about this dead person may kindly inform to the following:-
SHO
P.S. Punjabi Bagh, Delhi
West Dist., Delhi
DP/538/WD/2021 Ph. No. 8287641531 & 8750871124

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a lady namely Sarika along with her two children Chayan and Sayata, W/o Ranjeet R/o J-789, Gali No. 2, Khadda Colony Swaroop Nagar, Delhi has been missing since 31.07.2021 from the area of Swaroop Nagar, Delhi. In this regard, DD No. 21-A dated 01.08.2021 has been registered at PS Swaroop Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing lady and her children but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing lady and her children are as under:
Name: Sarika, Gender: Female, Age: 23 years, Height: 4'5", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Oval, Built: Thin, Identification Mark: A tattoo mark of BN on the right hand, Wearing: Sky blue colour salwar-suit and sleeper.
Name: Chayan, Gender: Male, Age: 1.5 years, Name: Sayata, Gender: Female, Age: 3 years
If anyone has any information regarding this the missing lady and her children, kindly inform SHO/Swaroop Nagar, Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/1213/ON/2021
SHO
P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi,
Ph. No. 011-27811415

झारखण्ड सरकार महिला, बाल विकास एवं सामाजिक सुरक्षा विभाग

झारखण्ड मंत्रालय, प्रोजेक्ट भवन, धुर्वा, राँची - 834 004
नोटिस
संसा03/संसा04-संसा03आ0-48/2006 (खण्ड-III)- राँची, दिनांक-
विषय- झारखण्ड राज्य बाल अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग, राँची में अध्यक्ष एवं सदस्यों के रिक्त पदों पर नियुक्ति हेतु आवेदन समर्पित करने के संबंध में।
1. दिनांक- 17.07.2021 को सर्वसाधारण की सूचना हेतु समाचार पत्रों में विज्ञापन प्रकाशित कर विषयांकित पदों पर योग्य एवं इच्छुक उम्मीदवारों से JAP-IT के Recruitment Portal-recruitment.jharkhand.gov.in पर दिनांक-21.07.2021 से 16.08.2021 तक ऑनलाइन आवेदन आमंत्रित किये गये थे। ऑनलाइन आवेदन समर्पित करने में कतिपय अम्बुशियों के सम्म उत्पन्न तकनीकी कठिनाईयों को ध्यान में रखते हुए ऑफलाइन आवेदन भी प्राप्त करने का निर्णय लिया गया है।
इस हेतु आवेदन समर्पित करने की अंतिम तिथि को 16.08.2021 से बढ़ाकर 29.09.2021 को अपराह्न 05.30 बजे तक किया जाता है।
2. अतः इच्छुक उम्मीदवारों द्वारा ऑनलाइन अथवा ऑफलाइन माध्यम से आवेदन समर्पित किया जा सकता है। ऑनलाइन आवेदन JAP-IT के Recruitment Portal-recruitment.jharkhand.gov.in पर एवं ऑफलाइन आवेदन पत्र विभाग के वेबसाइट <http://socialwelfare.jhar.gov.in> के Recruitment खण्ड से आवेदन पत्र डाउनलोड कर प्रधान सचिव, महिला, बाल विकास एवं सामाजिक सुरक्षा विभाग, झारखण्ड, प्रोजेक्ट भवन, धुर्वा, राँची-834004 को संबोधित करते हुए अपना आवेदन सिर्फ निबंधित डाक से भेज सकते हैं।
3. ऑफलाइन आवेदकों द्वारा अध्यक्ष एवं सदस्य के लिए अलग-अलग आवेदन पत्र समर्पित किया जायेगा। आवेदक लिफाफे के उपर बड़े अक्षरों में "आवेदित पद का नाम" एवं "झारखण्ड राज्य बाल अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग के पद पर नियुक्ति के लिए आवेदन" अंकित करेंगे।
4. जिन आवेदकों द्वारा JAP-IT के Recruitment Portal-recruitment.jharkhand.gov.in पर ऑनलाइन आवेदन समर्पित किया जा चुका है, उन्हें फिर से आवेदन करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। आवेदक किसी एक ही माध्यम (ऑनलाइन अथवा ऑफलाइन) से अपना आवेदन समर्पित करेंगे।
5. आयोग में रिक्तियों की संख्या, अर्हता, चयन प्रक्रिया, महत्वपूर्ण निदेश आदि से संबंधित विभागीय अधिसूचना संख्या-1145, दिनांक-14.07.2021 विभाग के वेबसाइट <http://socialwelfare.jhar.gov.in> के Recruitment खण्ड से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है।
संयुक्त सचिव, महिला, बाल विकास एवं सामाजिक सुरक्षा विभाग, झारखण्ड, राँची
PR 252929 Women, Child Development & Social Security(21-22)RD

35 arrested for clearing forest in Odisha

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Forest and Environment Department has arrested 35 people for illegally clearing a reserve forest area to set up a hamlet.

"These people mostly tribals from Deogarh and Rairakhol of Odisha and from bordering Jharkhand were trying to clear one hectare of land inside the Tal reserve forest to construct permanent dwelling units," said Ramakant Nayak, Divisional Forest Officer of Rairakhol in Sambalpur district, on Wednesday.

This group had made a similar attempt earlier and it was thwarted by forest employees, he stated.

Replying to a query in the Assembly on Tuesday on the steps being taken to prevent felling of trees and poaching of wild animals, Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha said, "during five years [2016-17 to 2020-21], a total of 55,412 forest offences had been registered and the involvement of 50,740 criminals found in these cases. The enforcement agencies have seized 6,185 cubic metres of timber and 558 vehicles".

Literacy Day celebrated

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

On the occasion of the International Literacy Day, hundreds of young girls from West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on

Wednesday participated in a virtual storytelling session and were presented with books.

The event was organised jointly by Emirates Airlines Foundation and NGO IIM-PACT which is working for empowering girls through education and dedicated to transforming the lives of women in India.

An Emirates cabin crew member treated the girls to a virtual storytelling session and they were also given a glimpse into the exciting life of an Emirates cabin crew.

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झारखण्ड सरकार महिला, बाल विकास एवं सामाजिक सुरक्षा विभाग

झारखण्ड मंत्रालय, प्रोजेक्ट भवन, धुर्वा, राँची

IN BRIEF



Take up ring road under Bharatmala project

BENGALURU
Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Wednesday called on Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari and urged him to instruct the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to take up the development of the remaining part of the Satellite Town Ring Road around Bengaluru under the Bharatmala Pariyojana.

Kerala to offer incentives to vaccine units

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
The Kerala government will offer attractive incentives, including long-term loans and fast track approval within 30 days, to industrial units willing to launch vaccine-manufacturing enterprises inside the Life Sciences Park at Thonackal here.

Boys outshine girls in engineering test in A.P.

VIJAYAWADA
Boys stole the thunder by elbowing out the girls from the top 10 ranks in the engineering stream of the Engineering Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (EAPCET-21). Education Minister A. Suresh released the results on Wednesday and said Koyi Sree Nikhil from Parigi mandal in Anantapur district bagged the first rank in the engineering stream.

Man kills parents under influence of alcohol

THRISSUR
In a gruesome incident under the influence of alcohol, a man bludgeoned his parents to death at Avinissery in Thrissur, Kerala. The deceased have been identified as Karuthedath Ramakrishnan and wife Thankamani. The police arrested their son, Pradeep, in connection with the incident that happened on Tuesday.

T.N. Assembly calls for repeal of CAA

BJP walks out, PMK hails resolution

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI
The Tamil Nadu Assembly on Wednesday adopted a resolution urging the Union government to repeal the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. While the BJP walked out, its ally, the Paattali Makal Katchi (PMK), welcomed the resolution.

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) members were not present when the resolution was adopted as they had walked out earlier over another issue.

The resolution said: "This august House considers that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is not in tune with

the secular principles laid down in our Constitution, and also not conducive to the communal harmony that prevails in India."

According to the established democratic principles, a country should be governed on the basis of the aspirations and concerns of all sections. "But it is clear the Act was passed in such a way that it does not accord a warm support to the refugees, considering their plight, but discriminates against them on the basis of their religion and country of origin," said the resolution, moved by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin.

Therefore, to protect India's unity and communal harmony and uphold the secular principles enshrined in the Constitution, "this august House resolves to urge



Taking a stand: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin addressing the Assembly on Wednesday. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the Union government to repeal the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019", it said. After a voice vote, Speaker M. Appavu said the resolution was being adopted "unanimously".

Before staging the walk-out prior to the adoption of the resolution, BJP floor leader Nainar Nagenthran

(Tirunelveli) contended that the CAA was not against the Muslims living in India. While India was protecting the rights of minorities living in the country in line with the Liaquat-Nehru Pact of 1950, the status of minorities in Pakistan was not the same. While 20% of the population in Pakistan was Hin-

dus during Partition, it stood at a mere 3% now.

The Chair intervened and pointed out that even people from the same community could not coexist in Afghanistan. PMK floor leader G.K. Mani (Pennagaram) urged that the Act favour the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees living in India too.

Since Leader of the Opposition and AIADMK floor leader Edappadi K. Palaniswami had earlier led his party members out over another issue, AIADMK MLAs were not present when the resolution was moved and adopted.

While moving the resolution, Mr. Stalin said, "We feel that the Union government must stop the preparation of the National Population Register and the Register of Citizens."

Actor Rana Daggubati appears before ED in drug racket case

He was summoned as part of an ongoing probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Telugu actor Rana Daggubati appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Hyderabad, Telangana, on Wednesday after being summoned as part of an ongoing money laundering investigation in connection with a high-end drug racket busted in 2017.

The actor is among the over 10 Telugu film industry personalities, including actors and directors, to be summoned by the ED.

Since August 31, noted film-maker Puri Jagannadh, and actors Charmee Kaur, Rakul Preet Singh and Nandu have appeared before the Central agency.

On July 2, 2017, the Prohi-



Rana Daggubati

hibited. According to officials, the gang catered to around 1,000 customers, including school and college students, persons associated with the Telugu film industry, senior officials of multinational corporations (MNCs) and employees of Information Technology companies in Cyberabad.

The names of personalities from the Telugu film industry surfaced during the interrogation of the persons arrested in connection with the drug bust.

A Special Investigation Team of the Prohibition and Excise Department had also probed the alleged drug links with the Telugu film industry, and had then questioned 11 persons.

Nipah scare eases as 46 test negative in Kerala

They include 17 symptomatic persons

STAFF REPORTER KOZHIKODE

Concern over the Nipah infection seems to be fading away in Kerala as 46 persons on the contact list of Mohammed Hashim, the 12-year-old from Chathamangalam in Kozhikode district who had succumbed to it earlier this week, have tested negative for the virus.

They include 17 persons symptomatic of the infection, such as Hashim's parents, relatives and healthcare workers who attended to him at various levels. This was declared by Health Minister Veena George on Wednesday. While the results of 20 samples were declared on Wednesday morning, those of 16 others were announced in the evening. The other results were

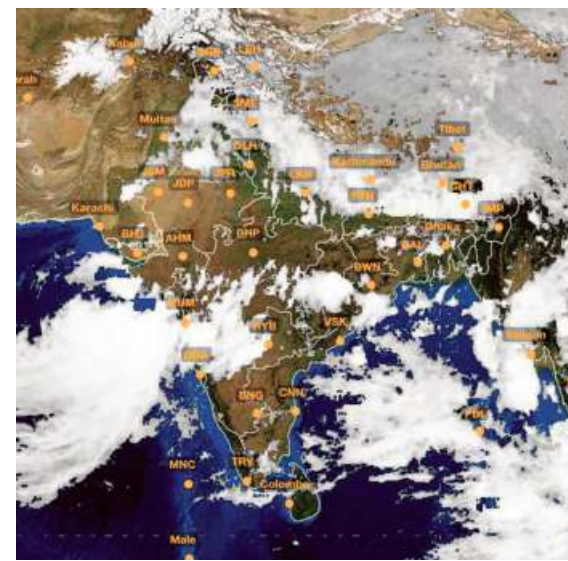
made public on Tuesday.

Ms. George said though there was no need to get scared, the public should remain alert. The samples were tested at the National Institute of Virology lab in Pune and a special facility set up at the Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode. The results of 15 more samples would be made available by Thursday. Meanwhile, the number of persons on the contact list had risen to 265. This follows the publication of an institutional route map of Hashim, who had visited five healthcare institutions between August 29 and September 1.

Right now, only 12 persons were symptomatic of the infection, but their condition was stable.

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 Thursday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Haryana, Delhi, Jharkhand and Kerala

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	26.0	32.8	26.0	Kozhikode	42.0	30.3	23.5
Ahmedabad	7.0	34.9	27.2	Kurnool	0.7	32.6	22.7
Aizawl	21.0	28.8	21.4	Lucknow	3.0	33.0	26.9
Allahabad	31.4	26.6		Madurai	37.6	30.1	23.5
Bengaluru	0.4	27.6	20.5	Mangaluru	41.0	29.0	23.0
Bhopal	30.0	24.6		Mumbai	79.0	30.1	23.8
Bhubaneswar	31.5	24.6		Mysuru	4.0	28.4	21.0
Chandigarh	34.4	28.1		New Delhi	5.0	33.7	26.0
Chennai	35.5	27.1		Patna	17.0	34.0	25.5
Coimbatore	31.3	22.7		Port Blair	30.5	26.6	
Dehradun	18.0	32.9	22.9	Puducherry	35.2	24.0	
Gangtok	0.4	21.7	16.4	Pune	2.2	29.7	22.5
Goa	39.0	28.9	23.2	Raipur	0.2	32.2	23.6
Guwahati	6.0	35.0	24.5	Ranchi	6.0	29.6	23.0
Hubbali	25.0	21.0		Shillong	5.0	24.6	16.4
Hyderabad	0.5	29.2	21.4	Shimla	3.0	26.4	19.0
Imphal	30.2	21.6		Srinagar	3.0	33.3	18.4
Jaipur	31.0	26.0		Thiruvananthapuram	31.4	25.1	
Kochi	30.4	25.4		Tiruchir	35.3	24.2	
Kohima	3.0	26.0	16.4	Vijayawada	34.8	26.2	
Kolkata	22.0	32.7	25.5	Visakhapatnam	47.0	31.2	24.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	5	30	172	144
Bengaluru	11	24	110	41
Chennai	26	17	36	42	50	...
Delhi	5	29	74	62	125	...
Hyderabad	4	62	18	11	111	...
Kolkata	11	22	43	18	28	...
Lucknow	7	41	57	45	89	...
Mumbai	14	10	57	66	103	...
Pune	29	57	32	30	30	...
Visakhapatnam	17	55	48	30	53	...

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.

NO₂: 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

WEST

BMC issues fresh curbs for Ganeshotsav

Maharashtra reports 4,174 new COVID-19 cases, 4,154 recoveries, 65 deaths

STAFF REPORTER PUNE

Amid fears of a third wave of the pandemic, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has issued fresh curbs for Ganesh Chaturthi.

The civic body has banned physical *darshan* for devotees at public Ganpati mandals and has appealed to citizens to celebrate the festival without ceremony.

As per the norms, restrictions have been imposed on the number of participants in processions for bringing the idols and during their immersion. Not more than 10 people will be allowed in the processions of public pandals and not more than five for household Ganpatis. All participants should have taken both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and completed 15 days after taking the second dose, the rules said.

In a previous notification, the BMC had restricted the height of household Ganpati idols to two feet, and four feet for the public mandals.

Meanwhile, the State reported 4,174 new COVID-19 cases against 4,154 recoveries during the day. The active tally stands at 47,880, while 65 deaths took the total toll



Festive mood: An artist gives finishing touches to a Ganapati idol at a workshop in Lalbaug on Wednesday. ■EMMANUEL YOGINI

to 1,37,962. The case fatality rate remains at 2.12%. The total case tally has reached 64,97,872, while recoveries have risen to 63,08,491, with the recovery rate at 97.09%.

"Of 5,53,38,772 laboratory samples tested thus far, 64,93,698 (with the average case positivity falling incrementally to 11.77%) have returned positive, with more than 1.79 lakh samples being tested in the last 24 hours," said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate.

Pune reported nearly 1,000 new cases, taking its tally to 11,26,345, while four deaths pushed the total toll

over 18,760. As per district authorities, the active case tally has exceeded 8,600.

532 cases in Mumbai

Mumbai reported a surge of 532 cases to take its total case tally to 7,47,605, while the active case tally rose to 4,435. Four deaths took the city's death toll to 16,004.

Ahmednagar reported over 800 new cases and 12 deaths, taking its total cases to 3,15,193, of whom 5,263 are active. The district's death toll rose to 6,629.

Satara reported 436 new cases and six deaths. Sangli saw 236 cases and no deaths.

Traffic restrictions on NH-66

RAINIA ASSAINAR NAVI MUMBAI

Ahead of Ganeshotsav, the State government has decided to regulate traffic on National Highway 66.

Vehicles with gross weight of over 16 tonnes will be barred from using the highway from the midnight of September 7 till 8 p.m. on September 10; from 8 a.m. on September 14 till 8 p.m. on September 15; and from 8 a.m. on September 19 till 8 p.m. on September 20.

Vehicles transporting sand will not be allowed to ply from midnight on September 7 till 8 p.m. on September 20.

The ban will not apply to vehicles transporting milk, petrol, diesel, cylinders, liquid medical oxygen, foodgrains, and vegetables.

People have fundamental right to drinking water: HC

Court criticises service provider for failing residents of village in Thane district

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday severely criticised a drinking water service provider for failing to provide for the residents of a village in Thane district.

"It is unfortunate that even after 75 years of Independence people have to knock on the doors of the court to get regular drinking

water, which is their fundamental right," the court said.

A Division Bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and Milind Jadhav was hearing a petition filed by some residents of Kambe village in Bhiwandi. They complained that they got drinking water only twice a month and that too for two hours. The service provider is STEM Water Distribution and Infrastructure,

a joint venture of the Thane Zilla Parishad and the Bhiwandi Nizampur Municipal Corporation. The villagers said the service provider illegally supplied water to politicians and tanker lobbies.

Bhausaheb Dange, STEM's MD, told the court that water was being supplied daily, but only up to a particular location. He claimed that the distribution

of water from that point to the petitioners' homes was not the responsibility of the company but that of the village's gram panchayat.

The court interrupted him and said, "Water has to be supplied daily for at least a few hours. This is their fundamental right. People cannot suffer like this."

The court directed Mr. Dange to file an affidavit.

Let's get your skills into action

Recruitment of Sub Inspectors and Constables in Technical and Support Services cadre of Punjab Police

"The police force of tomorrow will be tech-savvy and knowledge-driven"

Online Applications are invited from Technically qualified candidates for Sub Inspectors (267 vacancies) and Constables (2340 vacancies) in Technical and Support Services' Cadre of Punjab Police in the following, having Domain knowledge and expertise in following Domains and Specializations.

Domain & Specialization/Function	Number of Candidates to be selected	
	Sub Inspector	Constable
Information Technology Services (IT)		
Cyber Security	05	25
Geographical Information System (GIS)	04	10
Data Mining	08	22
OS/INT Analysis	15	25
Network Management	12	85
Data Analytics	30	505
Wireless & Telecommunications	05	150
Website Administration	02	10
Computer / Digital Forensic Analysis	12	12
System Administration	15	120
Programming / Coding	28	100
Database Administration	15	100
IT Support	05	118
Cyber Crime	05	100
Sub Total	161	1382

Domain & Specialization/Function	Number of Candidates to be selected	
	Sub Inspector	Constable
Community & Victim Support and Counselling Services		
Community & Victim Support	27	382
Community Counselling	12	38
Forensic Sciences (FS)		
Forensic Analysis	27	81
Computer / Digital Forensic Analysis	12*	12*
Human Resource Management		
Human Resource Management	40	60
Legal Services		
Legal Support	---	382
Road Safety and Regulation		
Road Safety and Regulation	---	15
Sub Total	118	958

Total Vacancies (*The number of candidates at are counted only once in total)	267 SIs	2340 Constables
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To apply, please visit the Portal <https://iur.ls.punjabpolice.recruitment2021>
For Detailed Advertisement, please visit www.punjabpolice.gov.in

Opening Date and Time: 9:00:00 on 9th September, 2021.
Closing Date and Time: 23:59:59 on 29th September, 2021.

Scan QR code to download the PDF of Detailed Advertisement



Back at school

The nascent reopening of schools can be sustained with a commitment to safety

State governments have taken the difficult decision to reopen schools for some classes, encouraged by a consensus among public health experts that the benefits to students and society at large outweigh the risks of a COVID-19 surge. A week after many of them reopened, mainly at the secondary and higher secondary level, infections among teachers and students have not triggered an alarm, although general social attitudes towards the pandemic have turned negligent. Data from Tamil Nadu show that post-reopening, about 30 students and teachers have tested positive, to which the State has responded by tracing contacts and testing, while keeping the institutions open. Kerala, which has struggled to contain the infection rate and continues to report about 25,000 cases a day, is venturing only to reopen residential higher education institutions and final-year college classes within a bio-bubble of at least single-dose vaccination; resumption of schooling continues to pose a dilemma. The crippling absence of education for millions in the country has raised the question of whether governments have shown alacrity to limit the harm from prolonged closures. A study by economists in August showed that a mere 8% of students in rural areas had regular access to online learning and 37% were not studying at all. It also found that only a minority of students with smartphones, i.e., 31% in urban areas and 15% in rural settings, received regular instruction. This crisis has remained neglected for over a year, and the findings underscore the need for in-person teaching to resume.

Among the major concerns surrounding reopening of schools is possible transmission of the virus on campuses, with implications for vulnerable individuals in the students' home. Here, the advocacy of the European Technical Advisory Group on schooling during COVID-19 – smaller class sizes, wider spaces between desks and staggered breaks at school – is worth considering. The panel underscores the importance of evolving a follow-up protocol, when a cluster of cases leads to school-wide testing. Many public health experts argue that younger children, typically in the 6 to 14 age group, have the lowest risk of moderate or severe COVID-19 infection, while this is also the cohort that needs good foundational teaching. Most of these students are not eligible for vaccination. WHO recommends that for these pupils, the approach towards reopening should be caveated: risk based, and taking note of community transmission, ability to maintain physical distancing and good ventilation. Vaccination of teachers and school staff and eligible students, and free testing for all are other major factors. Hesitancy or refusal should be firmly countered. Governments should end their populist indulgence of unsafe behaviour in public spaces to prevent community-level spikes that can jeopardise the nascent return of schooling.

The lag between jabs

Kerala HC order on allowing earlier second dose flags need to review 84-day gap

The Kerala High Court's intervention regarding the time lag between the two doses of Covishield vaccine is both interesting and unusual. It has asked the Government to allow the scheduling of the second dose four weeks after the first for those who want it. A single judge has held that the relaxation in the 84-day norm for some categories of people, when it is normally not open to the public to get their second jabs earlier, amounts to discrimination. The direction that CoWIN, the national vaccination portal, should allow scheduling of the second dose after 28 days – the period initially fixed – for those who want early protection is likely to be questioned on appeal, even though it has its own logic. The petitioners are two companies that have purchased vaccines for their employees and their family members and did not want to wait for the current mandatory 12-16 week period to administer their second doses. Pointing out the relaxation from the minimum 12-week rule for some categories among those travelling abroad, the petitioners wanted the same relaxation for employees availing of paid vaccination. The court has countenanced this argument favourably and termed as discriminatory the denial of "early protection" to those who wanted the second dose after 28 days.

The court framed it as an issue over "better protection" offered by the scientifically validated 12-week gap between two doses, and "early protection" favoured by individuals. The Union government argued that the relaxation was to meet unavoidable contingencies, and an earlier second dose could not be claimed as a matter of right. The court based its order on what it believed to be "discrimination" in favour of some sections but refrained from deciding the question "whether a person is entitled to make a choice between early protection and better protection" while accepting the Government's free vaccine. It is fairly obvious that a delayed second dose enables reaching more people for their first dose. This means the order to allow earlier administration of the second dose could impinge on the public health objective of giving some protection to more people rather than full protection to fewer people. To that extent, the court's intervention in a policy matter may invite an appeal. However, it also raises the issue whether the policy of an 84-day gap between doses should continue, given the increased pace of vaccination. Despite being approved by experts, the change from the four-to-six weeks norm to the current 12-16 weeks may have been dictated as much by higher efficacy as by the extent of vaccine availability then. The time may have come for the Government to review the norm and allow a shorter gap based on the availability of vaccines and COVID-19 prevalence in a given geography.

Farmers' stir, the new dimension in U.P.'s politics

Its retrieval of the old secular political language openly counters the BJP's divisive and communal politics



SATENDRA KUMAR

On September 5, 2021, in Uttar Pradesh, lakhs of farmers gathered at Muzaffarnagar's government inter-college ground for the kisan mahapanchayat organised by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM). At the mahapanchayat, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait reiterated the farmers' demands to repeal the three farm laws and for the "legal guarantee of MSP [Minimum Support Price]." Mr. Tikait and other farmer leaders present declared their determination to oust the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Uttar Pradesh in the upcoming 2022 State legislative elections. The farmer leaders unanimously appealed for communal harmony while chanting 'Allah Hu Akbar' and 'Har Har Mahadev' together with an estimated three to four lakh farmers.

Secular vs the divisive

This retrieval of the old secular political language openly counters the BJP's divisive and communal politics that has gripped the local and the national scene after the 2014 general election. Women and young farmers across religious and caste lines, from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand and other States attended the mahapanchayat in Muzaffarnagar. It is a surprise that the ongoing farmers' movement has been openly engaging with gender and environmental issues and has provided them their rightful space.

By enabling the convergence of different farmer organisations and

space for the voices of marginalised groups, the Muzaffarnagar Kisan Mahapanchayat has not only reclaimed the language of secularism and communal harmony but also shows cautious potential to challenge the BJP's politics and hegemony in the legislative assembly elections due in five States next year (Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Goa and Manipur).

Message of harmony

Muzaffarnagar had communal riots in 2013 which polarised the western Uttar Pradesh region along religious lines. The BJP local leadership converted a caste dispute into brutal communal riots which ended up benefiting the BJP in the 2014 and 2019 general elections, across Uttar Pradesh, as this was the local script used at the State and the national levels. The communal polarisation not only caused fissures in the social fabric but also impeded the farmers' identity and unity that was traditionally the support base of the BKU under the leadership of the late Mahendra Singh Tikait in the 1980s.

Realising this social and political loss, his son, Rakesh Tikait, and his supporters, over the last couple of years, began to revive the BKU's old legacy of secularism. However, these attempts have only gathered momentum since January 2021 when the BJP government forcefully attempted to remove the protesting farmers including Mr. Tikait from the Ghazipur border of Delhi. An emotional appeal by an overwhelmed Mr. Tikait mobilised both Hindu and Muslim Jat farmers, changing the epicentre of the farmers' protest from Punjab to rural western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

The SKM has spectacularly reasserted the secular language particularly in the post-2014 socio-political environment. Its act of courage in the Muzaffarnagar Kisan Maha-



REUTERS

panchayat is a reminder to the 'timid' political Opposition and other political parties to do their constitutional duty in maintaining India's political legacy. In their appeal for communal harmony, Mr. Tikait and other farmer leaders have categorically said no to communal violence in the region. Mr. Tikait and other farmer leaders accepted being swayed by communal divisiveness and have vowed to counter the hatred and violence. "They talk of dividing, we speak of uniting. The hallmark of the BJP is the hate politics", Mr. Tikait declared loud and clear.

More importantly, Mr. Tikait and the BKU's activists have been visiting village after village and organising collective meetings with Hindu and Muslim farmers. In numerous street corner meetings, BKU activists have been attempting to recreate a common platform for farmers across religious and caste divisions by reclaiming and reasserting religious and caste unity among the farmers to heal and repair the damage caused by the Muzaffarnagar riots.

Mission 2022 and hope

The Muzaffarnagar Kisan Mahapanchayat has transformed the ongoing farmers' protests into a national movement. With the BJP government's lack of acknowledgement and response to the movement, farmer leaders under the SKM have decided to connect the sufferings of farmers with electoral politics directly with the announcement of 'jaslo ke dam nahi, to vote nahi' (no vote, if no legal

guarantee of MSP) and pronouncing their method as 'vote ki chot (hit by vote)'. The SKM and its leadership will campaign against the BJP in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections due next year. In addition to spreading the message of peace and communal harmony, farmer leaders including Mr. Tikait have announced that they will go to every home in the villages to educate farmers about the three farm laws and the ways in which these laws will destroy farmers and farming. Using the idioms of *kheti, kisan* and *bhaichara*, the BKU and its leadership will also inform them about the BJP's betrayal of farmers through its pro-corporate policies.

Besides the farm laws, several other proximate factors have set the stage for broad electoral mobilisation that may convert angry farmers and labourers into politically conscious voters when they face continued agrarian distress, the doubling of electricity charges, and the rising cost of diesel and fertilizers. More importantly, the unpaid dues of sugarcane mills to farmers have severely affected farmers and labourers across generation, caste and religious lines.

Furthermore, in Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government's stringent anti-cattle slaughter measures have devastated already broken farmers as stray cattle continue to plunder fields and ruin crops. The COVID-19 epidemic has not only struck another major blow against the rural economy but has also highlighted the fragility of urban jobs. The participation of young farmers in large numbers explains in one go the ongoing agrarian crises and jobless growth that has created a big class of rural-urban precariat.

While the emerging broad alliance and solidarity generate hope and a new grammar of politics, competitive party politics and existing socio-economic divisions

continue to pose several challenges to Mission 2022. The ongoing farmers' movement does not show any sign of converting itself into a political party. In this case farmer voters depend on the existing political parties that have already lost steam and failed in the face of the BJP's propaganda, organisational skills and politics. In fact, some of them have started imitating the BJP's style by adopting a softer version of the Hindutva.

U.P. politics today

In Uttar Pradesh in particular, Opposition political parties such as the Congress, the Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal are competing for the same pie. Hence, it is too early to know how these competing parties will compromise their interests and put up a united opposition. Besides, the Jats are no longer a politically united group as they were in the 1970s and 1980s. The emerging political competition led by the aspiring middle class within the Jats has produced new leaders such as Sanjeev Baliyan that has opened a chasm to be exploited by the BJP's style of politics. Moreover, farmers from the most 'backward' castes such as Morya, Nishad and Gaderiya have hardly been an ally of the BKU and a part of the 'kisan' identity popularised by Charan Singh.

By projecting these farmers as the victims of the dominant landowning farmers the BJP has weaponised them as new warriors of Hindutva. Despite these limitations, the Muzaffarnagar Kisan Mahapanchayat has shown the way to reclaim the Indian Constitution and the legacy of secularism by simultaneously linking socio-economic injustices to environmental and gender issues.

Satendra Kumar teaches Sociology at the G.B. Pant Social Science Institute, University of Allahabad

Green hydrogen, a new ally for a zero carbon future

It holds promise as an alternative, truly clean fuel and in aiding the world's decarbonisation goals



PRITAM SINGH

Scientists and technocrats have for years been engaged in the quest of discovering alternative fuels to fossil fuels which are responsible for the production of over 830 million tons per annum of carbon dioxide, in turn catalysing human-induced global heating. The latest studies by a battery of scientists representing about 195 countries have signalled the crucial issue of climate vulnerability, especially for the Asian countries. The forthcoming 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow from November 1-12, 2021 is to re-examine the coordinated action plans to mitigate greenhouse gases and climate adaptation measures.

In order to achieve the goal of an alternative source of energy, governments are placing large bets in the hope of adopting a multi-faceted practical approach to utilise 'Green hydrogen' as a driving source to power our industries

and light our homes with the 'zero emission' of carbon dioxide.

Energy-rich source

Hydrogen is the most abundant element on the planet, but rarely in its pure form which is how we need it. It has an energy density almost three times that of diesel. This phenomenon makes it a rich source of energy, but the challenge is to compress or liquify the LH₂ (liquid hydrogen); it needs to be kept at a stable minus 253°C (far below the temperature of minus 163°C at which Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is stored; entailing its 'prior to use exorbitant cost'.

The production techniques of this 'Energy-Carrier' vary depending upon its applications – designated with different colours such as black hydrogen, brown hydrogen, blue hydrogen, green hydrogen, etc. Black hydrogen is produced by use of fossil fuel, whereas pink hydrogen is produced through electrolysis, but using energy from nuclear power sources.

'Green hydrogen', the emerging novel concept, is a zero-carbon fuel made by electrolysis using renewable power from wind and solar to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. This 'Green hydro-



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gen' can be utilised for the generation of power from natural sources – wind or solar systems – and will be a major step forward in achieving the target of 'net zero' emission. Presently, less than 0.1% or say -75 million tons/year of hydrogen capable of generating -284GW of power, is produced.

The obstacle of cost

The 'production cost' of 'Green hydrogen' has been considered to be a prime obstacle. According to studies by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IREA), the production cost of this 'green source of energy' is expected to be around \$1.5 per kilogram (for nations having perpetual sunshine and vast unused land), by the year 2030; by adopting various conservative measures.

The global population is growing at a rate of 1.1%, adding about 83 million human heads every

year on the planet. As a result, the International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasts the additional power demand to be to the tune of 25%-30% by the year 2040. Thus, power generation by 'net-zero' emission will be the best solution to achieve the target of expert guidelines on global warming to remain under 1.5°C. This will also be a leap forward in minimising our dependence on conventional fossil fuel; in 2018, 8.7 million people died prematurely as result of air pollution from fossil fuels

A power hungry India

India is the world's fourth largest energy consuming country (behind China, the United States and the European Union), according to the IEA's forecast, and will overtake the European Union to become the world's third energy consumer by the year 2030. Realising the impending threats to economies, the Summit will see several innovative proposals from all over the world in order to reduce dependence on use of fossil fuels.

The scale of interest for 'plucking the low hanging fruit' can be gauged by the fact that even oil-producing nations such as Saudi Arabia where the day temperature soars to over 50°C in summer, is

prioritising plans to manufacture this source of energy by utilising 'idle-land-banks' for solar and wind energy generation. It is working to establish a mega \$5 billion 'Green hydrogen' manufacturing unit covering a land-size as large as that of Belgium, in the northern-western part of the country.

India is also gradually unveiling its plans. The Indian Railways have announced the country's first experiment of a hydrogen-fuel cell technology-based train by retrofitting an existing diesel engine; this will run under Northern Railway on the 89 km stretch between Sonapat and Jind. The project will not only ensure diesel savings to the tune of several lakhs annually but will also prevent the emission of 0.72 kilo tons of particulate matter and 11.12 kilo tons of carbon per annum.

It is high time to catch up with the rest of the world by going in for clean energy, decarbonising the economy and adopting 'Green hydrogen' as an environment-friendly and safe fuel for the next generations.

Pritam Singh is a retired Officer from an R&D institution in Dehradun. He delivers scientific lectures in colleges and universities on vehicular pollution

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.

On the Taliban

The newly announced interim government in Afghanistan is a disappointment and is certainly non-inclusive (Page 1, September 8). If it is composed of UN-designated terrorists and has a stamp of Pakistan all over it, one cannot expect peaceful, prosperous, progressive and friendly rule. Given its doubtful credentials and fanatic history, there is bound to be trouble. Pakistan may be the only nation that is satisfied with the turn of events as it can fish in troubled waters. The international community should act as one without any bias in dealing with the new rulers of Afghanistan. There cannot be a sprouting of terrorism again.

D. D.V.G. SANKARARAO,
Nellimarla, Andhra Pradesh

■ The suggestion that the world community should

strive to restore peace in Afghanistan, which would include putting pressure on it in the form of imposing conditions on financial grants which the Taliban badly require, is welcome. But international pressure, without sufficient military backing, will have little impact on recalcitrant groups such as the Taliban. Besides, every nation engaging with the Taliban in Afghanistan has its own agenda to fulfil. The question is who will bell the cat dispassionately?

DHARMAARAJAN A.K.,
Thalassery, Kerala

■ We are indeed struck by the incongruity of the situation in Afghanistan: those who have been in the 'wanted lists' with multi-million dollar bounties announced on their persons now take up leading roles in the new Taliban government. The tasks of launching an insurgency and sustaining it for two decades and running

a government require different commitments, skills and priorities.

The Taliban have to reinvent themselves as an organisation that respects human rights, divergent opinions and ways of life, women's autonomy and prioritises economic renewal above religious agenda if they are to succeed as a government and gain international recognition.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

■ It is clear that Pakistan now wields tremendous influence. The cabinet formation in Afghanistan is sure to be dominated by or controlled back stage by the Haqqani faction. Therefore, it is time to bid farewell to the idea of an all-inclusive government. The situation now is going to be very dangerous and will ensure that terror casts its dark shadow over the whole region. The puppet string master, Pakistan's

Inter-Services Intelligence, must be forced to withdraw.

PANKAJ G.,
Panchkula, Haryana

■ For the U.S., Afghanistan was too distant till the falling of the Twin Towers in 2001, by inspired terror elements. It then stormed into Afghanistan with massive troop strength in revenge. In these two decades it has suffered some losses with no palpable economic or political gains except for a macho image. It is Pakistan that has thrived all the while on big U.S. grants while China has quietly built its politico-economic web around the region which it would like to encash. In delayed wisdom, the U.S. has now walked away and could well suffer criticism, domestic and international. But time will vindicate U.S. President Joe Biden's pragmatism and resolve.

R. NARAYANAN,
Navi Mumbai

■ One of the aspects of the U.S.'s long and disastrous war in Afghanistan is its "gifting away" a vast amount of military gear and equipment "that have made the Taliban better armed than ever". Reports say that the Taliban and its associates are believed to control sophisticated armoured vehicles, military drones and other high-technology hardware and ammunition. The havoc all this can cause in the wrong hands is unfathomable. There is also the factor of China in all this which would be waiting to reverse engineer much of this sophisticated technology. Is the U.S. planning to do something about this?

ANUVANSH RAWAT,
New Delhi

■ Referring, not refining The reservation policy needs reforms and not merely refining as the article (OpEd September 8) "Refining the reservation policy",

proposes. Reservation today, is more a political instrument than a social justice tool. The makers of the Constitution never intended that the reservation pie should expand infinitely. A farcical regime of affirmative action will create a new underclass of discontents. If we go on creating more backward classes years after Independence, there is something wrong with society and our notion of progress because it presumes backwardness persists across generations. Limiting the reservation scheme to two generations is the least one can think of in infusing a degree of fairness into the principle of compensating for historical injustice. The argument that economic advancement has no impact on social status is questionable.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,
Thiruvananthapuram

INTERVIEW | JOHN PILGER

'The invasion of Afghanistan was a fraud'

The journalist says the Taliban were a convenient target to satisfy a political lust for revenge for 9/11

JIPSON JOHN & JITHEESH P.M.

John Pilger is one of the world's most acclaimed investigative journalists and documentary filmmakers. He is a recipient of several prestigious awards, including an Emmy and a BAFTA. He has contributed to various international publications and news services, including *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *BBC World Service*, and *Al Jazeera*. Mr. Pilger has directed more than 60 documentaries capturing some of the important events of 20th and 21st centuries. In 2003, he directed *Breaking the Silence: Truth and Lies in the War on Terror*. In this interview, he talks about the present political developments in Afghanistan, the war on terror, and the history of the Taliban. Edited excerpts:



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Twenty years ago, the U.S. entered Afghanistan with the promise of overthrowing the Taliban, establishing democracy and ending terrorism. But today the Taliban are back. How do you look at the situation?

President George W. Bush's 'promise' to establish democracy in Afghanistan was a rhetoric for domestic consumption. The invasion of Afghanistan was a fraud; the Taliban were a convenient target to satisfy a political lust for revenge for 9/11. An authentic military response to 9/11 might have seen U.S. bombs falling on the palaces of Saudi Arabia – most of the 9/11 hijackers were Saudi nationals, not least Osama bin Laden himself; not one was an Afghan.

Moral posturing over 9/11 had almost nothing to do with the invasion of Afghanistan; bin Laden had already left Afghanistan and the Taliban anyway wanted to get rid of him. To the U.S., Afghanistan's usefulness had been as a battleground on which to bring down the Soviet Union. This had been achieved long before 9/11.

The suffering in Afghanistan has also been profitable. The American war industry has tested and deployed numerous new products there. A recent study tells us that if you purchased \$10,000 worth of stock in America's top five defence contractors on September 18, 2001 – the day President George W. Bush signed the Authorization for Use of

Military Force in Afghanistan – you would now be much richer.

As someone who has observed West Asia for decades, who are the major stakeholders in the Arab world? The unrest in West Asia is often attributed to be the by-product of the U.S. or 'imperial' involvement in the region.

Without imperial intervention, the Arab world would have been very different. Egypt might not be the tyranny it is today. With the rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser and the popular hope of a nationalist, semi-socialist Egypt and a region shaped by pan-Arabism, the U.S. and Britain responded by deploying religious extremism. Their first victory was the crushing of Nasserism. Since then, Israel, a colonial creation of the West, has been modern imperialism's watchtower and attack dog in the region. Without American support, Israel would have been forced to become a normal country and to make peace with its neighbours; Palestine would have emerged as an independent entity. Instead, Israel remains a permanent provocateur.

The general narrative created before any intervention perhaps is that 'imperial occupation is the only viable solution to bring about regime change in a corrupt and dictatorial state'. How do you look at this in the light of examples from Latin America, Africa, West Asia, etc.?

When you accept that 'might is right' – the maxim of imperialism – you accept the place of criminality in world affairs.

You have been a critic of Western foreign policy for decades. How is it

possible for a 'superpower' to retain its dominance without 'dealing' with the threatening countries?

Modern powers can and do assert their power without behaving like 19th century enforcers. China's 'Belt and Road' plans have brought welcome structural investment to hundreds of developing nations. China, while asserting its undisputed developmental power, gives no impression of seeking to dominate by force or coercion: the principal methods of imperialism. This is not to say that 'client' nations can afford to drop their guard when dealing with China, or Russia, or any other apparently benign great power; but the historical and contemporary record tells us that China has none of the colonising ambitions of Europe and the U.S. Whatever criticism one may have of China, its modernism and willingness to live in peace with the world are demonstrable.

The Taliban are in power in Afghanistan. What helped them gain power so rapidly?

The Taliban were part of the rise of jihadism brought about by the U.S. and Britain in the 1980s and 1990s. They are a puritanical offshoot of the mujahideen, which were backed and emboldened by Pakistan's intelligence services and bankrolled and armed by the CIA and Britain's MI6. For the U.S., the singular strategic purpose was destabilising the Soviet Union, which shares a border with Afghanistan. When the Soviets walked into the 'trap' laid by the West, and invaded Afghanistan, the international power of jihadism grew rapidly. There are many ironies and tragedies. The Taliban gained power

in Afghanistan by overthrowing that country's most progressive government – which in the 1970s had given equal rights to women.

In planning to leave Afghanistan, the Trump administration chose the Taliban to discuss the transfer of power in Doha. Many argue that this action gave some legitimisation to the Taliban. Why did it prefer the Taliban to the Western-supported democratically elected government?

The Afghan government was not democratic, neither was it democratically elected. It was a corrupt shell, and Donald Trump and his planners knew it would fall without U.S. backing. They were being expedient. When the U.S. abandoned the South Vietnamese regime in 1975 – which it had installed – the regime fell overnight. Its only legitimacy was its American sponsorship. The people suffering at Kabul airport are the victims of this same sponsorship; they are the victims of imperialism.

With the Taliban in Kabul, will Afghanistan be a haven of Islamist terrorists in the coming days?

Well, it depends on what you mean by terrorism. The most ubiquitous terrorism in the world is state-sponsored; America's 'war on terror' was, in reality, a war of terror. Eight Muslim countries were devastated. In Latin America, the U.S. has been running a war of terror since the early 20th century. If you mean 'Islamic terrorism', the future is unclear. The Taliban have a serious enemy in the Islamic State, whose terrorism is only too well known.

What does the Taliban rule mean for the world and West Asia in particular?

I am not a futurist. I don't know what Taliban rule will be like for Afghans. If the UN allows the West to isolate and 'sanction' Afghanistan, the Taliban will develop a siege mentality and their rule is likely to be harsh. The one lesson of the disaster in Afghanistan is that imperialism causes incalculable human suffering. Isn't it time we learned that lesson?

Jipson John and Jitheesh P.M. contribute to various national and international publications

Detecting Fragile X Syndrome

The symptoms cannot be treated but early detection and therapy can improve the individual's quality of life



SOMA BASU

In 2017, a man in Delhi, affected by autism, underwent his first DNA blood test at the age of 40. He tested positive for Fragile X Syndrome (FXS). This is caused by changes in a gene called FMRI which make an important protein (FMRP). This protein is required for brain development.

Largely undetected in India

It was in 1991, 14 years after that man was born, that the mutation was discovered and named FRAXA by three American geneticists – Ben Oostra, David Nelson and Stephen Warren. They found that it was the leading inherited cause of autism worldwide.

Three decades ago, there was no primary knowledge of this among healthcare professionals. However, even after the discovery of FMRI, the lack of awareness and appropriate training to diagnose FXS in time prevails everywhere. In India, the lack of adequate screening and diagnostic facilities, the stigma attached to mental health, the absence of surveys in community settings, and bare minimum hospital data based on clinical experience have all kept FXS largely undetected.

According to a 2019 review paper of the Advanced Centre for Evidence-Based Child Health, established by PGIMER, Chandigarh, under the aegis of the Indian Council of Medical Research, "there is an under-recognition of the genetic disorder due to delay in diagnosis at young age and the lack of uniform application of validated, accessible and affordable diagnostic tools." It is estimated there are 4,00,000 individuals who have been identified with mutated FMRI in India and 40 lakh undiagnosed carriers of the gene.

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in 7,000 males and one in 11,000 females are affected with FXS. FXS is the leading inherited cause of autism in 4% of the population worldwide. The CDC estimates that one in 259 women and one in 800 men carry Fragile X. A mother who is a carrier has a 50% chance of passing the mutated gene to her children, who will either be carriers or have FXS. Men who are carriers do not pass the pre-mutation to their sons, but only daughters, who become carriers. This knowledge is crucial and the numbers are critical and demand attention, according to Professor Sumantra Chattarji, senior neurobiologist at the National Centre

for Biological Sciences in Bengaluru. His research is focused on correcting the powerful emotional symptoms of FXS. It helps empower parents with information about babies in whom the FMRI shuts down the production of FMRP.

Shalini Kedia, who founded the Fragile X Society of India in 2003 as a support system for families impacted with FXS, says that it is every woman's right to make an informed choice of becoming a special mother. Studies suggest a high effect of consanguineous parenting on FXS prevalence.

Timely detection

The simplest tool for timely detection is a DNA test. In the U.S., FXS testing is mandatory for every child diagnosed with autism. This helps parents plan their family better. In India, doctors often fail to appropriately guide women who have fertility issues, late pregnancies, opt for IVF with donor eggs, or donate embryo for surrogacy.

Experts suggest an overhaul of the MBBS curriculum to include a detailed chapter on FXS and more government-organised Continuing Medical Education programmes for practising healthcare professionals so that FXS is treated as a major public health concern. Mass awareness and an additional test in the list of pregnancy and prenatal and neonatal tests for other chromosomal abnormalities (such as Down Syndrome) will be beneficial. But the majority of people are either not aware of the FXS test or cannot afford it. Tests are done in major government hospitals and in a few private labs and cost between ₹4,500 and ₹7,500.

People must understand that autism triggered by FXS is a behavioural condition. The symptoms are learning difficulty, speech delay, aggressive behaviour, hyperactivity, attention deficit, fear of the unfamiliar, sensory processing disorders and problems in motor skills. These cannot be cured, but early therapy can improve the individual's quality of life.

The National Policy for Treatment of Rare Diseases, 2017, was limited by challenges in implementation. This year, the government introduced the National Policy for Rare Diseases Act. It calls for systematic epidemiological studies on incidence and prevalence of rare diseases. Without naming FXS directly, it recommends prenatal tests for lesser-known single-gene and other genetic disorders. This is profound as the dialogue on rare diseases has to be kept open, even during the pandemic. Or else, it will leave all those who are trying to cope feel even more vulnerable and isolated.

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A questionable quota policy

A proposal of the Odisha government betrays a lack of political will in improving government schools

ANANYA BEHERA

Reservation as a tool of social engineering seems to be flavour of the season in India. To add to the competitive populism of caste-based reservations, a few months ago, the Odisha government proposed a 15% reservation for government school students in medical and engineering colleges to reduce "inequity arising" from lack of "physical and economic access to coaching institutions". The state machinery hailed it a historic decision. But is it?



A number of reports highlight the poor condition of government schools in many parts of the country. Odisha is no exception. Whether the State government has any serious plan of action to improve the functioning of government schools is not clear. But this decision certainly reflects a lack of political will in improving the state of education in schools. This intervention gives the impression that little can be expected of government schools. The current obsession with developing model schools reinforces this impression.

Failing in its duty

About 62% of students attend government and government-aided schools in India. The other 38% go to private institutions, some of which belong to the elite category and the rest of which are of questionable quality. A much higher percentage of students in Odisha go to government schools. Reserving seats in higher technical institutions for government school students rather than focusing on improving these publicly funded institutions defies all logic. By announcing this policy of reservation, the government seems to be admitting that it has failed in its duty to provide the majority of students with good education and equip them with requisite competence to get admission in technical institutions on the basis of their own merit.

Decades ago, students from Odisha had a high success rate in national-level competitive examinations. This was attributed to the strong educational foundation laid in govern-

ment-run schools. During those days, teachers were known for their unquestionable sincerity and integrity. They were dedicated to their calling and commanded respect from the society. Over time, this seems to have changed.

There is no dearth of ideas or practices that can improve the quality of education in government schools. What is lacking is the government's resolve to work on these ideas including capacity building of teachers to implement new pedagogical practices, emphasis on language teaching, filling up vacant teaching posts, and a change in the mindset among people and policymakers that govern-

ment schools are typically backward and inferior to private schools. Instead of addressing relevant issues, government is trying to find a solution which could worsen the problem. The policy of automatically promoting the students to higher classes without passing examinations needs to be scrapped. Building an institution is tough. Rebuilding it is even more so. The state can't simply shirk this responsibility of improving education in government schools where an overwhelming majority of the children study. Focusing on them will go a long way in building the morale of teachers and students who are likely to grow up with an inferiority complex if flawed policies like the one mentioned above are pursued.

Benefits to few

Some may argue that the quota would help some sections of the society which have long been deprived of good education and decent jobs. But this justification can nevertheless be questioned on several grounds. One of them is that the benefits of quota, if any, would be cornered by the creamy layer of students with better access to coaching and additional technology-enabled resources. There might also be an urban bias in the benefit-sharing.

Ananya Behera holds a PhD in Sociology from Utkal University

DATA POINT

In search of jobs

In August, India's unemployment rate increased to 8.3% from 7% in July. This was due to two factors. The first is the recurring job loss in the agriculture sector. As farm-related jobs are seasonal, the sector routinely engages and ousts workers. The second factor is unusual. Normally, apart from the services sector, the construction or the manufacturing sector absorb the workers who are ousted by the agriculture sector. However, in August, only the services sector hired most of the returning farm workers, while those in the construction and manufacturing sectors continued to lose jobs. More worryingly, most of the jobs secured in the services sector were informal, so the quality of jobs was poor. The figures and observations were sourced from CMIE



The table lists the no. of jobs gained/lost (-) in million (mn) among industry groups, within the service sector and occupation groups. In August 2021, 7.6 mn jobs were lost in the agri sector, while 8.5 mn jobs were gained in the services sector

	TOTAL	INDUSTRY GROUP				SERVICES GROUP			OCCUPATIONAL GROUP			
		AGRI	MANUFACTURING	CONSTRUCTION	SERVICES	RETAIL TRADE	NON-PROFESSIONAL*	OTHERS	BUSINESS	SALARIED	TRADERS & LABOURERS	FARMERS
Aug-19	0.2	0.8	-0.5	2.6	-1.7	-1.8	0.9	-0.7	-2.2	-5.5	12.2	-4.3
Sep-19	3.5	-12.5	4.1	2.8	7.7	0.6	5.1	1.9	4.3	10.1	-11.2	0.3
Oct-19	-2.6	2.5	-1.3	-4.5	0.4	-0.2	0.7	-0.1	0.1	-1.0	-4.4	2.6
Nov-19	-1.1	9.1	-0.4	-3.5	-5.4	-1.3	-2.2	-2.0	-1.0	-4.1	1.7	2.4
Dec-19	2.6	-8.2	0.4	6.4	5.0	1.4	1.4	2.2	1.4	-4.6	15.9	-10.0
Jan-20	4.8	-6.3	3.1	5.6	1.5	3.8	-2.8	0.5	4.4	7.9	-11.2	3.7
Feb-20	-4.5	4.1	-6.2	-4.2	1.4	-1.1	4.3	-1.8	-2.7	-2.3	-4.0	4.2
Mar-20	-10.1	6.8	0.7	-8.0	-9.0	-3.3	-6.5	0.8	-0.8	-3.3	-9.6	3.7
Apr-20	-113.6	-15.0	-17.0	-47.5	-33.9	-12.6	-8.1	-13.2	-20.2	-14.9	-78.7	0.0
May-20	31.6	4.2	2.0	15.5	9.2	3.6	6.2	-0.6	8.2	-0.7	22.7	1.6
Jun-20	63.2	18.1	4.1	24.2	16.9	4.9	8.4	3.6	6.9	5.6	38.6	12.2
Jul-20	15.3	7.1	1.4	8.3	-1.2	2.3	-6.4	2.9	1.4	-4.8	23.5	-4.8
Aug-20	0.2	-3.6	-1.3	1.7	4.4	5.8	0.7	-2.1	8.5	-3.4	-4.5	-0.5
Sep-20	5.2	-5.8	-3.0	11.5	1.0	-2.6	1.1	2.5	-6.1	4.5	13.7	-6.8
Oct-20	-1.3	-0.9	3.8	-8.0	4.1	3.5	0.1	0.6	4.2	4.1	-10.6	0.8
Nov-20	-2.3	3.0	-0.6	0.3	-4.8	-5.3	0.1	0.4	-1.4	-5.3	2.3	2.3
Dec-20	-5.4	-11.8	1.6	1.2	4.9	0.0	2.5	2.3	-2.3	7.3	-0.2	-10.1
Jan-21	11.9	4.5	0.4	8.5	-3.3	-0.1	-2.5	-0.6	-6.0	6.4	11.1	0.4
Feb-21	-2.5	1.2	1.0	-4.0	-0.2	4.2	-2.6	-1.8	1.7	0.3	-10.0	5.4
Mar-21	-0.1	6.7	-0.6	-2.2	-4.3	-5.8	1.4	0.1	-1.2	-5.5	4.0	2.8
Apr-21	-7.4	-8.6	-0.6	2.7	0.9	4.7	-0.7	-3.1	2.1	-3.4	-0.2	-5.9
May-21	-15.1	8.3	-3.6	-11.6	-9.7	-8.6	-0.3	-1.0	-7.7	0.4	-17.0	9.3
Jun-21	7.7	-4.9	3.8	2.2	6.9	11.2	-3.5	0.1	4.8	6.3	-2.1	-1.3
Jul-21	16.2	11.2	-0.8	5.3	0.5	-3.2	0.0	3.0	-0.9	-3.6	18.4	2.4
Aug-21	-1.9	-7.6	-0.9	-0.5	8.5	4.5	4.7	-0.7	4.0	0.7	2.1	-8.7

In the past 25 months, whenever the agri sector shed jobs, the construction or manufacturing sector or both would absorb those workers, along with the services sector. August 2021 was an exception. Despite the agri sector shedding 7.6 mn jobs, not many were absorbed either by the construction or the manufacturing sector. Instead, most got into services sector, which gained 8.5 mn jobs. Trends during April-July 2020 were an outlier due to the national lockdown

While the services sector recorded a net gain of 8.5 mn jobs, about 4.7 mn got into non-professional services*. Households, cooks, beauticians, plumbers and security guards come in this category. About 4.5 mn entered the retail trade. Only a few gained jobs in the IT, financial, healthcare and professional services

Worryingly, while many farmworkers did get into some service sector job, most such employment was informal. Salaried jobs increased by only 0.7 mn, while there was a significant rise in self-employed persons, small traders and wage labourers. This points to the poor quality of employment

Source: *From farms to the kitchen-sink, Mahesh Vyas, CMIE

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 9, 1971

Spectre of civil war in N. Ireland

Roman Catholic opposition leaders rebuffed a British peace feeler to-day [Belfast, September 8] as bomb blasts rocked Northern Ireland's capital and a Protestant politician raised the spectre of outright civil war. Fears of an impending offensive by gunmen of the outlawed Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) sent Chief of Britain's General Staff Gen. Sir Michael Carver flying into Belfast to review the military set-up. He flew from London unexpectedly last night for talks with officers commanding 12,500 British troops on peace-keeping duties in Ulster. Two bombs exploded in Belfast after midnight, one at an army veterans club and the other at a small factory. Five persons were taken to a hospital with undisclosed injuries. The British peace move was announced in London last night after two days of summit talks between Prime Minister Edward Heath and Irish Republic Prime Minister Jack Lynch that ended in icy dispute over ways of stopping the bloodshed in the North. One hundred lives have been lost in the past two years. Home Secretary Reginald Maudling invited all sections of Northern Ireland's feuding communities to a round table conference aimed at giving the Catholic minority "an active, permanent and guaranteed role" in the British province ruled by Protestants for 50 years.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPT. 9, 1921

The Moplah revolt

The Bengalee of the 7th inst. writes:- His Excellency the Governor of Madras has observed that the Moplah revolt is the outcome of a widespread conspiracy hatched with the object of overthrowing the British Government. In view of this observation it is worth while to inquire how long ago the fact of this conspiracy was brought to the notice of Lord Willingdon, and why no attempt was made to scotch it before the actual outbreak. Did His Excellency hear of the conspiracy before or after? The question is important enough as the answer to it will determine whether and how far the Intelligence Department in Madras is efficient. We think therefore, we have a right to seek positive information on this point. Supposing, however, that the Governor of Madras was, as he should have been, aware of the conspiracy long before the outbreak of lawlessness, we are at a loss to make out why the opportunity was at all allowed to the conspirators to rise in open defiance of the majesty of law.

FROM PAGE ONE

Amid protests, Centre hikes MSP for rabi crops

The unions are now in the tenth month of protest against the three farm reform laws, which they claim will hurt the MSP regime, and have also demanded a legal guarantee for MSP.

The Agriculture Minister, in a statement, said, "Some people who are spreading the illusion that MSP will be abolished should also learn from this decision. After the passage of the new agricultural reform laws, not only have the rates of MSP increased but there has also been a continuous increase in the procurement by the government."

According to the Centre, the cost of production of wheat for the upcoming marketing season of 2022-23 is ₹1,008 per quintal, meaning that the new MSP of ₹2,015 will result in 100% returns. Rapeseed and mustard farmers, who saw MSP rise 8.6%, or ₹400 per quintal, to a rate of ₹5,050 per quintal can also expect 100% returns. Masoor dal also saw a ₹400 per quintal hike, which means MSP for the lentil will be 7.8% higher than last year, with 79% returns over the cost of production. Chana or gram saw a 2.5% hike in MSP, resulting in 74% returns.

Mr. Tomar said the government had decided to fix the MSPs of all kharif and rabi crops at least 1.5 times more than their production cost and this has helped in enhancing the farmers' income.

The Centre's decision to procure pulses and oilseeds apart from wheat and paddy is also benefiting farmers,

he added. "The expected returns to farmers over their cost of production are estimated to be highest in case of wheat and mustard seed (100% each), followed by lentil (79%), gram (74%); barley (60%) and safflower (50%)," an official statement said.

The government also said that concerted efforts were made over the past few years to realign the MSPs in favour of oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals to encourage farmers to shift to a larger area under these crops and adopt best technologies and farm practices to correct the demand-supply imbalance.

BKS welcomes hikes

The RSS-affiliated farm union Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), which held a nationwide agitation on Wednesday, welcomed the MSP hikes, but pointed out that most farmers would not get the benefits as they were still unable to sell their crops at that rate.

"We welcome this attempt to diversify crops and encourage pulses and oilseeds like masoor and sarson (mustard). The water and labour costs are lower for these crops, and since the MSP has been increased, profits should be higher for farmers," said Badrinarayan Chaudhary, general secretary of the BKS. "Our *andolan* remains because the government does not procure crops from all farmers. We still want a law which will guarantee remunerative prices for all," he added.

(With PTI inputs)

Court rejects plea for door-to-door vaccination

The petition had sought a general order to the Centre to begin door-to-door vaccination for the disabled, the aged, those unable to approach vaccination centres, among others.

It asked the court to direct the government to frame a Standard Operating Procedure for door-to-door administration of vaccines. It sought a 24x7 portal for this type of vaccination.

"Vaccination is already under way. The court is monitoring it in a *suo motu* petition... The court has constituted a National Task Force. At this stage, it's difficult to give a general direction considering the diversity of this country... We should not impinge upon the administrative power of the state to give vaccine, including door-to-door," the court said. It, however, gave the petitioner liberty to ap-

proach the Ministry of Health with the suggestions.

In a separate case, the court admonished the petitioner for presuming that every death caused by the pandemic was due to the negligence of the State.

"We cannot start with the presumption that every death was due to negligence... Our country has gone through an unprecedented pandemic," Justice Chandrachud addressed petitioner Deepak Raj Singh's counsel advocate Sriram Parakkat.

This PIL petition had sought action against the authorities for "committing" gross negligence, leading to the deaths of patients in the second wave of COVID-19. It urged the court to direct the government to initiate a compensation scheme for those affected by the pandemic.

1 dead, 35 missing after ferries collide in Assam



Timely help: Local residents trying to rescue passengers of the ill-fated ferry on Wednesday. •PTI

"A communication error between the operators of the two boats perhaps led to the collision," he told *The Hindu*.

The ferries on the Brahmaputra operate under the Inland Water Transport Department. Passengers pay the fare onboard but since tickets are not issued, officials could not specify the number of passengers on the ill-fated ferry. The mechanised ferries have a capacity to carry 70-80 people along with vehicles, mostly two-wheelers. But locals claim most ferries haul 100-120 people. About 30 two-wheelers on the capsized

ferry sank. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "Saddened by the boat accident in Assam. All efforts are being made to rescue the passengers. I pray for everyone's safety and well-being."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah called up Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to take stock of the situation. The Chief Minister is scheduled to visit Neamatighat on Thursday to assess the situation. Ports and Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, who represents the Majuli Assembly constituency, expressed deep anguish over the ferry mishap.

BJP workers set fire to CPI(M) office

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

BJP workers set fire to the CPI(M) State office in Agartala and burnt down several vehicles parked outside on Wednesday. The workers were protesting against a clash with CPI(M) cadres at Dhanpur in Sepahijala district recently. The activists also attacked the office of *Pratibadi Kalam*, a vernacular daily, and ransacked the building. The vehicle of its editor was vandalised and motorbikes of journalists were burnt.

Three journalists were injured and two of them were admitted to hospital. The office of *Daily Desher Katha*, the CPI(M) mouthpiece, was also raided and ransacked. The CPI (M) alleged that police and paramilitary troops were mere spectators when the attacks were taking place.

The party said senior leaders would speak about the incidents at a press conference later.

(With inputs from PTI)

NDA will admit women: govt

Centre informs SC of its decision, to file an affidavit by September 22

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Wednesday gave the Supreme Court the "good news" that it had taken a decision to allow women entry into the National Defence Academy (NDA), so far a male bastion for recruitment into the armed forces.

If this decision comes through formally on paper, women can prepare for a career in the armed forces immediately after Class 12.

"There is good news. The forces at the highest level and the government has taken a decision last evening to induct girls for permanent commission through the National Defence Academy," Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati informed a Bench led by Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and M.M. Sundresh.

The Bench asked the government to file an affidavit in this regard by September 22, the next date of hearing. It said the armed forces was a respected institution, but it



In command: Women officers of the Army have brought laurels to the force, the Supreme Court said. •FILE PHOTO

had more to do regarding gender equality.

The court admitted that it was not a happy situation for it to constantly nudge the authorities into taking action on bettering gender representation. The Bench said the authorities needed to act by themselves.

The court commended Ms. Bhati for taking proactive measures in favour of women interested in a career in the armed forces.

Ms. Bhati urged the court for the time being to maintain status quo about the ad-

missions to the NDA in the present academic year. She said the NDA exam, originally scheduled for September 5, had been postponed to November.

"Consider granting status quo for this examination and let it continue, as it will need policy, procedure, training and infrastructure changes," she submitted. On August 18, the court issued an interim order allowing women candidates to take the NDA exam, which was then scheduled on September 5.

The court had also then

questioned why "co-education is a problem" in the armed forces. It had orally observed that it was "absurd" that women were not allowed to appear for the exam even after the Supreme Court, in a judgment, directed permanent commission for women in the Army.

Feb. 2020 ruling

On February 17 last year, the court upheld permanent commission for women officers. It dismissed the government's submissions that women were physiologically weaker than men as a "sex stereotype". It declared that Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers were eligible for permanent commission and command posts in the Army irrespective of their years of service.

"Women officers of the Indian Army have brought laurels to the force... Their track record of service to the nation is beyond reproach," Justice Chandrachud had observed in a 54-page judgment in the Army case.

Don't want press freedom muzzled: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it did not want press freedom to be muzzled even as it granted interim protection to journalists of a news website from any coercive action by the State of Uttar Pradesh.

"We are aware of fundamental rights. We do not want press freedom to be muzzled," Justice L. Nageswara Rao addressed advocates Nitya Ramakrishnan and Shadan Farasat, appearing for the Foundation for Independent Journalism, which runs The Wire website.

The foundation and some journalists with the website had approached the court against FIRs registered against them by the State. The court, however, advised the petitioners to approach the Allahabad High Court first. The petitioners agreed to withdraw the plea from the Supreme Court.

Ceasefire with NSCN(K) Niki group

Agreement will boost the Naga peace process under way, says Home Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Wednesday entered into a one-year ceasefire agreement with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (K) Niki Group. More than 200 cadres of the outfit, with 83 weapons, have joined the peace process.

The agreed ceasefire ground rules were also signed. In a statement, the Union Home Ministry said the agreement would boost the Naga peace process, under the guidance of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of an insurgency-free and prosperous northeast.

The development came days after demands were again raised by some politicians and activists for a new



Long road: A deserted street in Dimapur on August 3 during a bandh by the NSCN-IM in protest against the Centre's 'silence' on the Framework Agreement. •PTI

interlocutor, in place of Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi, for the peace process, owing to the sharp disagreements between him and the Isak Muivah faction of National Socialist Council of Nagaland or NSCN-IM.

The Centre has already signed a framework agreement with the NSCN-IM and

stream in Tripura. With the signing of the Bodo Agreement in January last year, over 2,250 cadres of insurgent groups, including all factions of National Democratic Front of Boroland, along with 423 weapons and a huge quantity of ammunition, had surrendered in Assam and joined the mainstream.

On February 23, 1,040 leaders and cadres of various underground Karbi groups of Assam surrendered along with 338 weapons, which was followed by the signing of the Karbi Anglong Agreement on September 4.

In December 2020, the government had accepted the offer of Niki Sumi to revive the ceasefire agreement after he floated a new faction of NSCN-Khaplang.

ceasefire agreements with other Naga groups, the NSCN (NK), NSCN(R) and NSCN(K)-Khangho.

In August 2019, the government had signed an accord with National Liberation Front of Tripura-Sabir Debbarma (NLFT-SD), under which 88 cadres along with 44 weapons joined the main-

Centre can extend ED Director's term, says SC

But no further extension, Bench rules

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday did not intervene with the government's decision to "retrospectively extend" the tenure of Sanjay Kumar Mishra as the Director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), saying his tenure is anyway drawing to a close in November 2021.

In a judgment pronounced on Wednesday, a Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao, however, said Mr. Mishra should not be given any further extension at the top of the specialised Central agency which investigates sensitive cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The court, however, upheld the power of the government to extend his te-

nure beyond two years.

"As the tenure of appointment of Director of Enforcement is not a maximum period of two years, a person can be appointed as Director of Enforcement for a period of more than two years... The decision to extend the tenure of the respondent [Mishra] is pursuant to the recommendation made by the high-powered committee," Justice Rao, who authored the 30-page judgment, interpreted the law on a petition by NGO, Common Cause, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan. However, the court said the power to grant extensions for a "reasonable period" to the ED Director should be done rarely and only after recording the reasons.

Late-running trains to cost Railways dear

Passengers must get relief: SC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has held that the Railways will have to pay passengers compensation for the late running of trains if unable to establish or prove that the delay was due to reasons beyond its control.

"These are the days of competition and accountability. If the public transportation has to survive and compete with private players, they have to improve the system and their working culture," a Bench of Justices M.R. Shah and Aniruddha Bose observed in an order on Tuesday.

The court upheld the compensation awarded to a passenger whose train was delayed by four hours while travelling to Jammu with his family in 2016. They missed their flight and had to take an expensive taxi to Srinagar. They also lost their booking of a boat on Dal Lake.

The District Consumer Forum put it down as deficiency in service by the Railways.

The order ordered the North Western Railway to pay the disgruntled passenger ₹15,000 for taxi expenses and ₹10,000 towards booking expenses, along with ₹5,000 each towards mental agony and litigation expenses.

Though the Railways went on appeal, the effort failed both at the State and National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions.

The consumer fora, in the same voice, said the Rail-



The court said every passenger's time is precious.

ways had never explained why the train was delayed.

Railways' argument

In the top court, Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, for the Railways, vehemently submitted that late running of trains could not be said to be a deficiency of service. She quoted Rules 114 and 115 of the Indian Railway Conference Association Coaching Tariff, which said there should not be any liability of the Railways to pay compensation for the late running of trains.

"There may be a number of reasons for delay and late running of trains," she argued.

However, the court was not convinced. "No evidence at all was led by the Railways explaining the delay and/or late arrival of trains at Jammu," it said.

The court said "every passenger's time is precious, they might have booked tickets for further journeys".

"Like in the present case from Jammu to Srinagar and thereafter further journey," it noted.

Asthana appointment: HC allows more time to Centre

The Bench will hear the case on September 16

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday allowed more time to the Centre to submit its response to a petition challenging the appointment of Gujarat-cadre IPS officer Rakesh Asthana as Delhi Police Commissioner.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh permitted Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's plea for more time. The High Court will hear the case on September 16.

The High Court issued a fresh notice to the IPS officer as it was not served on him due to want of payment of process fee by the petitioner.

Last week, the High Court had allowed an application



Rakesh Asthana

filed by a non-government organisation, Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL), seeking to be made a party in the case. The CPIL, in its impleading application, argued that the petition before the High Court filed by Sadre Alam was a "copy-paste" of its plea before the

Supreme Court. The CPIL has stated that it got to know about the filing of Mr. Alam's petition before the High Court from media reports and "was surprised to see some of the paragraphs of the writ petition, as quoted by media, to be copy-pasted from the applicant's writ petition filed before the Supreme Court". The NGO said his petition "seems to be only to defeat public interest by scuttling the genuine, bona-fide and well-researched and deliberated PIL petition filed by the applicant [NGO] before the Supreme Court".

Mr. Alam's plea said the 1984-batch IPS officer was appointed Delhi Police Commissioner just four days before his retirement.

Sadanand Singh passes away

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Senior Bihar Congress leader Sadanand Singh (76) passed away on Wednesday. He had been undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Patna for two months.

Mr. Singh was the Congress Legislature Party leader in the Assembly and nine-time MLA from Kahalgao in Bhagalpur. He was a Minister and Assembly Speaker (2000-2005). He had been the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee president twice.

Akali Dal swaps two seats with 'ally' BSP in Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal on Wednesday decided to swap two seats with the Bahujan Samaj Party, its alliance partner for the Punjab Assembly poll next year.

SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal said his party has given two Assembly seats, Sham Chaurasi and Kapurthala, to the BSP and taken back Amritsar North and Sujanpur Assembly constituencies from it.

The Akali Dal had last month declared its two candidates from Amritsar North and Sujanpur constituen-

cies. At that time, Mr. Badal had said the decision was taken with the consent of the BSP.

Both Amritsar North and Sujanpur were among the 20 seats given to the BSP as part of the seat-sharing arrangement between both the alliance partners.

"SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal announced that it has taken Amritsar North and Sujanpur seats back from the BSP. In place, the BSP has been given Sham Chaurasi and Kapurthala Assembly seats," senior SAD leader Daljit Singh Cheema said on Wednesday.

IN BRIEF



CBI to probe more cases related to judge's death

NEW DELHI The Central Bureau of Investigation has taken over two more cases linked to the death of Additional District and Sessions Judge Uttam Anand (in photo) in Jharkhand's Dhanbad in July. Earlier lodged with the local police, the FIRs pertained to the theft of three mobile phones allegedly involving Rahul Verma, who is an accused in the case.

Chargesheet against three in IS module case

NEW DELHI The NIA on Wednesday filed a chargesheet against three for allegedly being part of an Islamic State-inspired module that was involved in promoting violence. The accused have been identified as Mohammed Ameen, Mushab Anwar and Rahees Rasheed, all residents of Kerala. On March 5, the agency had registered the case against seven known persons and others.

Cadres of Manipur outfit killed in Myanmar

NEW DELHI Two cadre of the Manipur extremist outfit, People's Liberation Army (PLA), were executed at the Nanyang Wakathan camp of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang-Yung Aung) in Myanmar on August 16-17 for deserting the organisation, according to security agencies. The incident happened days after six members were killed in a factional fight, triggered by the decision of some cadre to desert the outfit, said an official.

India, Russia review Afghanistan situation

New Delhi raises issues of Pakistan's links with the new Taliban regime, JeM and LeT in the talks

SUHASINI HAIDAR NEW DELHI



High-level meet: NSA Ajit Doval with Secretary of the Russian Security Council General Nikolai Patrushev in New Delhi.

India and Russia conducted their first "detailed and extensive review" of the situation in Afghanistan...

trushev] touched upon humanitarian and migration problems in [Afghanistan], as well as prospects for the Russian-Indian joint efforts aimed at creating conditions for launching a peaceful settlement process...

on the Afghan settlement." The Russian Security chief also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar...

erating in Afghanistan as well, in the talks with the Russian delegation.

The Indian delegation also raised the "special responsibility that Pakistan bears to ensure that Afghanistan soil is not used to spread terrorism," the sources said.

The U.S. has been discussing the issue of housing its Afghan evacuees who are being processed in other countries, the emerging terror threat from developments in Afghanistan and any future engagement with the Taliban

government, now headed by Mohammed Hassan Akhund, who is also on the list of UNSC-designated terrorists.

The Modi government has thus far maintained an independent posture from both the U.S. and Russian stands on the Taliban regime...

In an interview to RIA Novosti on Tuesday, Ambassador to Russia Venkatesh Verma said the results of the U.S.'s Doha Agreement...

On Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host Russian President Vladimir Putin and leaders of China, Brazil and South Africa for the BRICS summit in a virtual format.

Outgoing U.S. envoy meets RSS chief, discusses 'inclusivity'

The meet comes days ahead of Modi's visit to America

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

U.S. Acting Ambassador Atul Keshap met RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday, in a meeting considered significant as it comes days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit this month to the U.S., where he is expected to hold his first bilateral meeting with President Joseph Biden and attend the Quad summit.

"Good discussion with Shri Mohan Bhagwat about how India's tradition of diversity, democracy, inclusivity and pluralism can ensure the vitality and strength of a truly great nation," Mr. Keshap tweeted.

Mr. Keshap was on a round of farewell calls, and had also met Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday. He is expected to return to the U.S. shortly, after completing just over two



Farewell call: U.S. Acting Ambassador Atul Keshap with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat in New Delhi on Wednesday.

months as Charge D'Affaires. "The U.S.-India relationship has never been better. Working together, our two great democracies will continue to advance human happiness around the world for years to come," Mr. Keshap said in a statement announcing his departure.

The Deputy Chief of Mission will officiate until Mr. Biden's Ambassadorial nominee, Los Angeles Mayor Eric

Garcetti, receives confirmation in the U.S. Senate.

U.S. Embassy officials declined to comment on whether the Ambassador's words to Mr. Bhagwat were meant to carry any special import. During a visit to Delhi last month, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken had also mentioned the importance of "democracy, pluralism, human rights and fundamental freedoms".

SC Collegium approves 12 names as permanent judges

10 additional judges from Karnataka and two from Kerala

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana, has approved the names of 10 additional judges of the Karnataka High Court and two from the Kerala High Court for appointment as permanent judges of these courts.

Elevation to the High Court Bench is followed by a period of work as an additional judge before the Collegium recommends for permanent judgeship.

The Collegium recommendations were made on September 7, close behind the August 24 and September 1 recommendations of a

whopping 68 names for appointments to 12 High Courts. The past few weeks had begun on a historic note with the Collegium recommending nine judges to the Supreme Court in one go.

Filling vacancies The Collegium is pushing hard to fill vacancies. There is likely to be a steady flow of recommendation of names for filling vacancies in the 25 High Courts, which have over 465 vacancies. This is over 41% of the total sanctioned judicial strength of

1,098 in the High Courts.

The additional judges recommended for permanent judgeships in the Karnataka High Court are Justices Maralur Indrakumar Arun, Engalaguppe Seetharamaiah Indresh, Ravi Venkappa Hosmani, Savanur Vishwajith Shetty, Shivashankar Amarannavar, M. Ganeshiaiah Uma, Vedyayasachar Srisanananda, Hanchate Sajeekumar, Padmaraj Nemachandra Desai, and P. Krishna Bhat. The Collegium has also recommended the appointment of additional judges of the Kerala High Court Justices M.R. Anitha and K. Nair Haripal as permanent judges.

Mamata begins campaign for bypoll

Addressing a meet at Bhabanipur, she targets BJP for alleged political vendetta

SHIV SAHAY SINGH KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday began her campaign for the Bhabanipur Assembly by-election by addressing a meeting of party supporters in the constituency.

"Just after the bypoll dates are announced, Trinamool Congress leaders are being summoned by Central agencies. Notices are being sent to Abhishek [party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee] and Partha [party leader Partha Chatterjee]," she said. She dared the agencies to investigate the allegations against Mr. Banerjee.



Game on: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a party workers' meeting in Kolkata on Wednesday.

Her remarks come after the Enforcement Directorate served a second notice on Mr. Banerjee in a coal pilferage case.

The Chief Minister has to face the byelection as she lost the election at Nandigram by a narrow margin of 1,956 votes to BJP leader Su-

CPI(M) fields lawyer to take on Bengal CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

A day after the Congress decided not to field a candidate against West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee in the Bhabanipur Assembly bypoll, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Wednesday announced its candidate, Shrijeeb Biswas, a 31-year-old lawyer at the Alipore court, for the seat.

Since the Congress will stay away from campaign, the candidate will not campaign under the banner of the Samyukt Morcha, a front created before the Assembly polls with the Left Front, Congress and Indian Secular Front.

BJP announces poll managers

5 States go to the polls early next year; Dharmendra Pradhan is in charge of U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday announced a slew of organisational appointments for the five States going to the polls early next year.

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has been put in charge of elections in Uttar Pradesh, along with Union Ministers Shobha Karandlaje, Arjun Meghwal, Annapurna Devi and Anurag Thakur as co-in-charge. Saroj Pandey and Captain Abhinav are part of the team.

Mr. Pradhan has overseen important polls in the past, having held charge of States such as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka during Assembly polls.



Dharmendra Pradhan

Uttar Pradesh has also been divided into six parts for organisational purposes, with Lok Sabha member Sanjay Bhatia being put in charge of western Uttar Pradesh, Bihar MLA Sanjeev

Chaurasia of the Brij region, national secretary Y. Satya Kumar of Awadh, additional treasurer of the BJP Sudhir Gupta of Kanpur, national secretary Arvind Menon of Gorakhpur and Sunil Ojha (sah prabhari for Uttar Pradesh) of Kashi.

Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has been given charge of Punjab, along with Union Ministers Hardeep Singh Puri and Meenakshi Lekhi and Lok Sabha member Vinod Chavda.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi has been asked to look after Uttarakhanda along with Lok Sabha member from Bengal Lockett Chatterjee and party spokes-

person R.P. Singh. Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav has been put in charge of Manipur, along with Union Minister Pratima Bhowmick and Assam State Minister Ashok Singhal.

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who had held charge of the Assembly election in Bihar in 2020, has been put in charge of Goa, along with Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy and Minister of State for Railways Darshana Jardoosh.

With this, the BJP seems to have put in place an organisational architecture to go into the very crucial set of polls next year.

5 die as heavy rain lashes Gujarat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AHMEDABAD

Five people have died in rain-related incidents in Gujarat, as parts of Saurashtra and a few other regions have come under heavy spell of monsoon rains since Tuesday.

The five died in separate incidents of lightning strikes, as heavy rains battered Rajkot, Morbi and Amreli districts among others. According to the weather department, more than 10 districts have received moderate to heavy showers and this will continue till Friday.

So far, Gujarat has missed good rains due in the absence of any system in the Arabian Sea, which normally brings good rains during the south western monsoon.

4 journalists detained, freed in Kashmir

Police link it to an FIR lodged last year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir police conducted searches and detained four journalists in Srinagar on Wednesday. They were freed at night.

Around 7 a.m., simultaneous searches were carried out by multiple teams of the police at the residences of Hilal Mir, Shah Abbas, and Azhar Qadri, all freelance journalists, and Showkat Motta, editor of the Kashmir Narrator magazine, in different locations in Srinagar.

"We were asleep when the police raided my house. Later, they took away my mobile phone and laptop. Even my wife was asked to hand over her mobile and laptop. Our passports were

also seized," one of the four detained journalists told The Hindu.

Another journalist said the mobile phones of all the family members were seized. Three of the four detained journalists contribute to foreign publications. "We were asked about our background. We were not told about the case in which we have been summoned nor intimated of any charges," another detained journalist said.

A senior police officer said the four were detained in connection with the FIR 82/2020 lodged last year. "They are questioned as part of the investigation in the case," he said. Reporters Sans Frontiers termed the detentions "crude intimidation".

'Restore J&K's Statehood before poll'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR

National Conference president Dr. Farooq Abdullah said the government must restore Statehood in Jammu and Kashmir before elections. He pledged to continue the fight for restoration of special status.

Advertisement for the Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Sarkar, Office of the Executive Engineer (South)-II, Jal Sadan, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi - 110024. It includes details about a tender for sewerage system improvement.

Advertisement for the Office of the Principal S.M.S. Medical College & Controller of the Attached Hospitals, Jaipur. It includes a notice inviting bids for supply and installation of medical equipment.

Advertisement for the additional Chief Engineer PHEd NCR Region Alwar, Manu Marg Alwar (RAJ.). It includes details about a tender for work of construction of sources, rising main pipelines, CWRs, pump houses, etc.

Advertisement for the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). It includes a notice about an e-auction for scrap vehicles and materials.

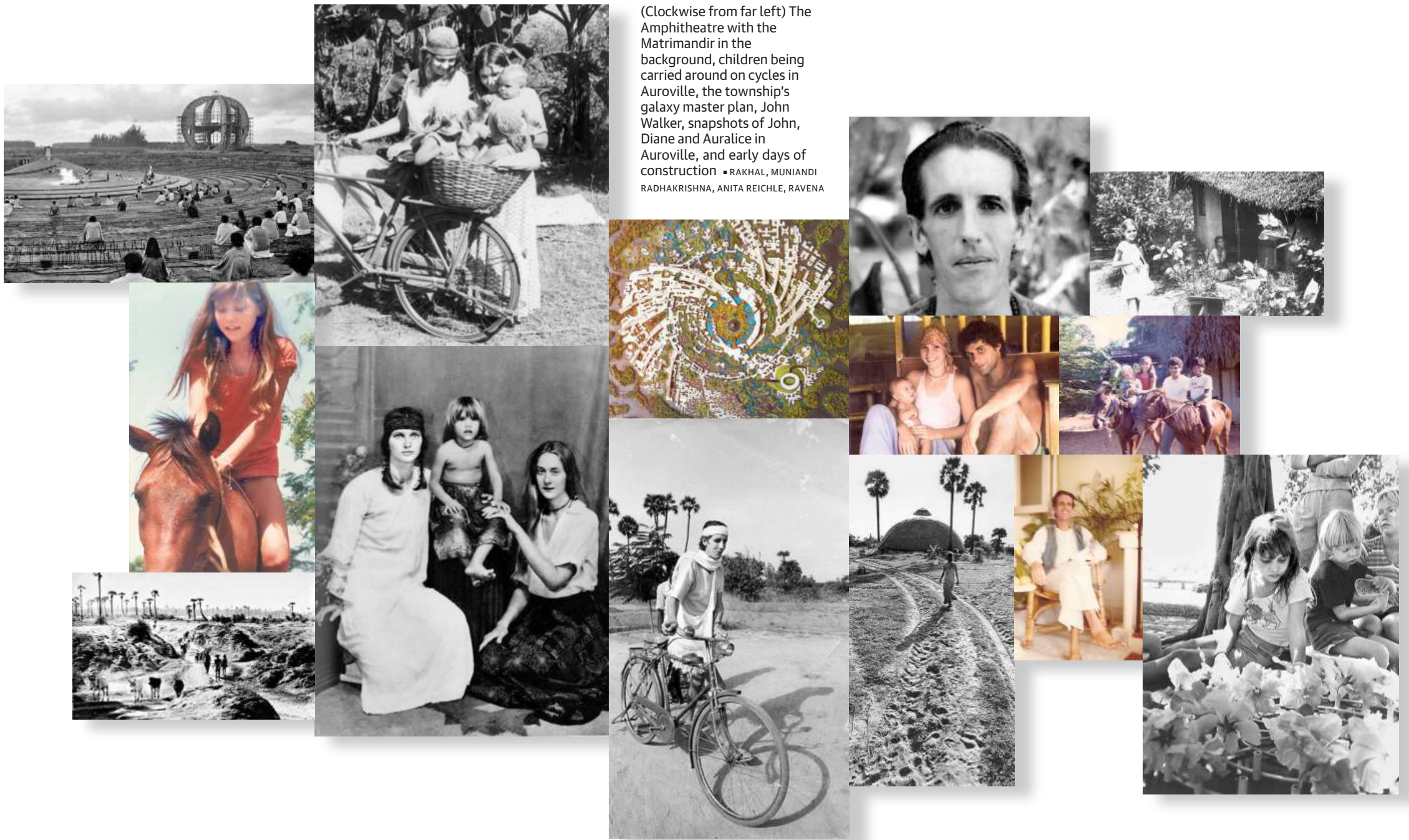
Advertisement for the Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Sarkar, Office of the Executive Engineer (South)-II, Jal Sadan, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi - 110024. It includes details about a tender for sewerage system improvement.

Advertisement for the National Institute of Siddha, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India. It includes an employment notification for a Hospital Superintendent position.

Advertisement for Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). It includes a notice inviting tenders for printing and supply of 6 sheet calendars.

Advertisement for the Ajmer Vidut Vitran Nigam Limited. It includes details about e-bids for the work of 'For Establishment of Customer Care Helpdesk Operations at Sub-Division Level as service under Ajmer Discom for 2 Years against TM-IT-46'.

Advertisement for the Office of the Additional Chief Engineer (PPP), P.W.D., Rajasthan, Jaipur. It includes an invitation for RFP for toll collection.



(Clockwise from far left) The Amphitheatre with the Matrimandir in the background, children being carried around on cycles in Auroville, the township's galaxy master plan, John Walker, snapshots of John, Diane and Auralice in Auroville, and early days of construction • RAKHAL, MUNIANDI RADHAKRISHNA, ANITA REICHEL, RAVENA

Auroville and the price of perfection

Writer Akash Kapur turns his gaze inwards in his new book, *Better to Have Gone*, to investigate the mystery behind the deaths of two family members, and unravel larger truths about the City of Dawn



Akash Kapur with his wife Auralice • SIMBARASHE CHA

•• MUKUND PADMANABHAN

History is believed to never happen by chance, but it was an accident that created and shaped this mesmerising account of the past. Ten years ago, author and journalist Akash Kapur was looking through the contents of a drawer in a New York apartment when he came across a bunch of folders crammed with letters, pages from diaries, and old photographs. They were papers of John Walker, the adoptive father of Akash's wife, Auralice.

The discovery of the folders, which were preserved by John's sister, was at once painful and liberating. In 1986, when Auralice was just 14, John and Auralice's mother Diane had died within hours of each other in Auroville under circumstances that were obscure and perplexing. John had grown up in privilege, born in a family of great wealth, an impressive lineage, "a pedigree he has to live up to". Diane was a beautiful, sunny and flirtatious Belgian hippie who lived near Antwerp with a mother who relied on welfare checks. What these two unlikely partners shared was an itch to escape their lives and follow their dreams, a hankering that would lead them separately to Auroville, not so long after it was founded in 1968.

Soon after John and Diane mysteriously died, Auralice would move to the US to live with the former's family. In America, she would marry Akash, who also grew up in Auroville; the two knew each other as children. In 2004, the couple returned to live in the experimental city that manifested in the dreams of Sri Aurobindo's foremost disciple, the Mother (Frenchwoman Mirra Alfassa). Their reasons for moving back, Akash says, were varied, and included such things as being homesick and wanting to try something. But the searingly tragic saga of Auralice's parents — which included a fall that paralysed Diane's hips for years and the death of an infant son (Aurolouis) by drowning — continued to hang like a fog over their heads.

The diaries offered a forensic as well as a cathartic opportunity: to clear the mist and come to terms with the past.

Bringing up the divide
It is a journey that took Akash, now 46, almost 10 years to complete, a project that involved "tracking down old friends of John and Diane's, their

former lovers, fellow-travellers from Auroville... on six continents".

As he set out to write about the two, the scope of the book, perhaps inevitably, widened. The story of John and Diane would also become a social history of Auroville; their lives, after all, were inextricably twinned with the place they chose to live in.

Delving into Auroville's past meant dealing with a shadowy time when the utopia that was designed to be a place for "unending education, constant progress, and a youth that never ages" turned dark and almost dystopian.

The passing of the Mother in 1973 was followed by deep divisions within the multi-cultural community. A part of the reason for this was the struggle for power and self-determination, one that pitted the Pondicherry-based Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS, which owned most of the land and assets in the expansive township) against residents of Auroville. There was an attendant ideological dimension, which cleaved Auroville down the middle.

There were revolutionaries (loosely, those who wanted to break free from the SAS) and the Neutrals (a grouping that was attacked for its alleged lack of revolutionary ardour and their supposed softness towards the SAS).

The collective that dominated Auroville was revolutionary and there was a period in which there prevailed a climate of slander, threats, evictions, deportations, and arrests. Children were 'liberated' by the closure of schools and, quite astonishingly, a bonfire was lit of books pulled from shelves from its library. Akash says terrible though it was, the book burning was an "isolated incident", a moment of madness. "The greater long-term damage was done by shutting down the schools. The ideology behind this and book burning was the same though. That the old forms of knowledge were unnecessary at a time when Aurovilians were going to reinvent the world."

Even children were infected by the polarisation. Akash recalls, with a stirring honesty and immense regret, that when he was about 10, some friends and he chased a couple of Neutrals down the road, sneering and throwing twigs and pebbles at them. "I am embarrassed about this and very ashamed. All kinds of things happened to the Neutrals at that time. They are now reintegrated into the community, but one of the revelations in talking to them for the book is that the pain still runs below the surface for many of them."

Balancing the dark and the light
"Auroville walked to the edge of the precipice and back," he says when talking of that period. Has it walked back too far? Hasn't some of that early fervour, which saw the first few Aurovilians living simply in thatched huts with no money and few resources, vanished?

"It's fair to say that Auroville is middle-aged now, and with this comes a certain complacency," he replies. "But there are still people here who are very idealistic, sometimes to a fault. As the book suggests, there is a darker side to idealism and extremism. If that has dimmed, maybe it is not such a bad thing at all."

Bigger, more prosperous
Auroville is also much bigger today, with about 3,500 people from almost 60 countries. And, of course, much more prosperous. "Yes, that is true. And then, there is the tourism economy. And the restaurants. But within the Auroville master plan, none of us owns a house," he says. "My kids are in a school where it doesn't matter whether your dad has a flashy car or the biggest house. None of the games that play out in big cities play out here."

What sets *Better to Have Gone* (Scribner, ₹699) apart is Akash's voice and approach. It would have been far easier to have pulled off, for example, what Peter Washington did of another new age movement (the Theosophists). In Madame Blavatsky's *Baboon*, he panned the main players as eccentric founders of a cult, which claimed to receive divine wisdom in their visions and which encouraged all kinds of irrational ideas (which of course they did).

Notions such as immortality and talk of transforming cellular consciousness were very much present in the thoughts of the Mother and those close to her. But despite being someone who lives "closer to the side of reason", Akash is empathetic to even those he disagrees with.

There is a recognition, the kind that good novelists have, that everyone has a story and that the truth is often not in black and white, but shades of grey. "Auroville has so many different points of view. I decided that I was going to state things as they were, but also that I was going to step out of the frame."

There are meditations on doubt and certitude, on the dangers that result when an imperfect species flirts with notions of utopia, and the virtues of fallibilism, moderation and incrementalism — values that lie at the heart of any true liberal project. The result is an empathetic non-judgmental work, written with a spare, almost frugal beauty, illuminating in its silences, and revealing in what is left unsaid.

Is Auralice in a better place now that she knows about the tragedies of Diane and John? "I think so," Akash replies. Yes, it was difficult when the research threw up painful facts. But overall, if you have family members die in these circumstances and if you don't understand why or how, it is liberating to see the bigger picture and what happened to them."

In short, and to tweak the title of the book a little, it is better to have known.



Professor, you looked different on Zoom

Back on campus Colleges reopened for offline class on September 1 • R RAGU

What is it like to meet your classmates for the first time, after almost two academic years online? As colleges reopen, join this student on her first day on campus at the University of Madras

•• SOWMYA BAI

How sad is it that my first day of college, in offline mode, is also one of the final days of my college life? That students of this generation have spent more than one-and-a-half years staring at screens from closed spaces.

Nevertheless, I consider myself lucky: at least I enjoyed two-and-a-half years of my under-graduation in a real classroom, before COVID wreaked havoc on the world, before we began to live our lives online, from March 2020. I finished my third year at Ethiraj College online, and then joined the University of

Madras for a two year post-graduation in November 2020. After 10 months of studying at the University of Madras, last week, I finally walked through its doors.

September 1 will be cherished by many students, as 'the' day we got to finally step into college after spending an academic year entirely online. I entered my post-graduate classroom with mixed emotions. There were traces of uncertainty but the excitement to meet my friends, whom I had only connected with virtually till now, surpassed the doubt and nervousness. Social distancing was not a problem, since the

SOPS FOR REOPENING COLLEGES

All colleges should ensure that the classes, chairs and sporting equipment are properly cleaned and sanitised

All students, teachers and support staff should compulsorily have taken both doses of vaccination. Certificates should be kept ready for Government inspection

If any student shows symptoms of COVID-19, people in close contact should undertake RT-PCR test

Clean drinking water should be made available for all students

classroom is huge and only 50% of the class strength is present for offline classes, set to be held on alternate days. The rest have chosen to continue learning online.

The room bustled with greetings, gossip and laughter. I walked in seeing a familiar face (despite the mask) and yelled out, "Atul". I expected Atul Ignatius David's eyes to light up with equal joy in response, but he seemed confused. It took him a minute to realise that it was me.

"You're tall. I've always assumed that you'd be short," exclaimed Shermin Oviya Jegath, another surprised classmate. I too had assumptions about my classmates, made over a year of corresponding via Zoom and WhatsApp, only to have them shattered the moment we met. Rasmi M, who always looked serious on screen, turned out to be funnier than the rest of us.

Despite the awkwardness of having just met, we managed to connect. Informal online meets back in our first year had ensured that we didn't 'disconnect' after class like our modems, making this easier.

A sight we never get to see online, that gave me goosebumps, is when our professors walked into the classroom together. Four hours a day of

virtual class did not give us much of a chance to engage with professors. The six offline lectures so far have been a completely different experience. We do not have to go running to answer the doorbell, and there are no Internet glitches to worry about.

Small joys

During virtual classes, we had missed the little connections: passing chits during lectures, or making eye contact with a classmate till they giggle. These memories were finally created on our first day.

Until I got home, I did not realise that I hadn't used my mobile for almost five hours. Locked in our homes, the only entertainment most of us had were binge-able webseries and social media. My eyes would tear up, just to remind me that I have been staring at the screen for hours.

Many of my classmates travel for almost an hour to reach college before classes start at 10 am, since most of us live in different corners of the city. I was surprised to see many students from other districts and states in class: They somehow managed to arrange university hostels and private hostels within a week's notice, despite being given the choice to continue online.

Given the possibility of a third wave, I am unsure about how long offline lectures will continue. Since we do not know how much time we will get together, we are going all out to create memories as quickly as we can.



What makes a city?

Windowscapes to portraits that mimic sculptures — this group show by Chennai-based photographers meditates on a moment in time



•• GOWRI S

A green tin trunk. Inside are toffee boxes filled with stamps that have travelled countries, continents and time. Handwritten recipes, letters, and sepia-tinted envelopes. A pictorial stamp inscribed for the Ottoman Empire in 1914, when they were nearing total collapse, featuring the former Ministry of War which is now the entrance to the Istanbul University; a handwritten recipe for Everton toffee; a 1935 stamp of Ferdinand Magellan's landing on the island of Cebu (now part of the Philippines) in 1521.

When photographer Ami Gupta chanced upon this treasure chest, a new world opened up. The world of Banoo Pestonji, a woman she had never met and to whom the trunk belonged. Ami instantly realised that this unique collection of historical markers is worth a display.

In the group show A Moment In Time at VA Art Gallery, curated by Varuna Arvind and Upasana Asrani, Ami uses photography to record them for posterity. "This was given to my father by his friend in the '80s, but they date back to much earlier. There was also a book that was part-recipe and part-stamp book. For the stamps, I also used a magnifying lens to show the details, especially the texture of the paper," she says.

Alongside her display stand portraits, landscapes, people and architecture, frozen in time by other Chennai-based photographers: Praneeth Reddy, Rakshitha Arvind and Nirali Datta. In the quaint gallery space, each artist gets their own section, amid a flurry of art and decor pieces that have a permanent place.

Praneeth's collection is a series of powerful black-and-white images — all shot in one corner of his room. The four portraits show models in veils, drapes falling in waves across their



Fleeting frames (Top) Praneeth Reddy's Hew; a frame from Rakshitha Arvind's series of windowscapes • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

faces; an attempt to recreate medieval sculptures through portraits. "In all of my pictures, I would like it if the identity of the person is not revealed. I try to use masks or similar props to ensure that," says Praneeth. In his notable work titled Hew, thin, streaked fabric masks a face. The controlled lighting makes a powerful statement.

As for Nirali, mundane activities call for documentation. Hers is a mix of black and white, as well as coloured photographs, with a specific interest in the sea and skies of Chennai. A seemingly pixelated frame of a building keeps one guessing: It is the reflection of a building on a pool of water.

Meanwhile, Rakshitha Arvind's windowscapes take one through Chennai in lockdown. Says Rakshitha, who shoots on film, "Last year, I found myself drawn to windows. There was something about trying to show the space or the people inside. There's a little mystery to it."

A Moment in Time is on display at VA Art Gallery, Gandhi Mandapam Road, till September 21

•• GOWRI S

On the cylindrical facade of a former cyclone shelter in Thiruvottiyur, a scene unfolds: smiling fisherfolk, some wielding oars and others holding baskets of their haul, invite you into the frothy ocean.

The expansive sea meets the sky dotted with clouds in what reminds one of simpler, happier times. The two-storied building of around 17,000 square feet, located where Ennore Express Road meets Kathivakkam High Road, is now a canvas.

The debris that once surrounded this shelter has now disappeared; and so have the empty liquor bottles. Cut to Manali, and a *therukoothu* artiste gazes into the distance from the compound wall of the bus terminus.

These are only a couple of the new-found canvases that North Chennai is now home to. As part of the Greater Chennai Corporation's Singara Chennai 2.0 initiative that looks at multiple beautification drives across the city, this wall art project bolstered by CSR initiatives is a work-in-progress.

The artists? Chennai's very own, born out of a near-forgotten practice called banner art.

Leg up to local talent

Helmed by JPK Vijay, this team of artists who have had a difficult couple of years due to the pandemic, has worked on the facades of Chennai Primary School, Manali; Manali bus terminus; Madhavaram roundabout and the former cyclone shelter/Amma Unavagam, Kathivakkam. The overarching theme of these murals points to Tamil Nadu's culture.

"The first site I got was the Amma Unavagam building and I

Noticed lifelike murals dotting parts of the city, recently? Behind these public art projects are banner artists, now turning the walls of North Chennai into their canvas



wanted it to be one-of-a-kind. I wanted to use the art to spread awareness. I took inspiration from the area and depicted the fishing community that forms the heart of Ennore," says Vijay. He recalls resentment from the local community when they started work. "But as soon as we started painting, they became curious and wanted to help us. It has now become a special place for them to preserve," he says, adding that their success lies in how the artwork helped bring behavioural changes indirectly.

"We are looking for sponsors to fund landscaping and fountains in the entrance to the building, benches for senior citizens and toilets. The wall art project is only one part of the beautification planned for the site," says R Jayakumar, Assistant Executive Engineer, Zone 1, Kathivakkam. "We want the public to benefit from this."

On the compound walls of Chennai Primary School, Manali, a group of children in uniform play a heated game of *gilli-danda*. "Games like *gilli* remain for-



Sea and sand, on an expressway



gotten. Children don't know of them anymore," says Vijay.

In the bus terminus, on the other hand, *therukoothu* takes centre stage. The fact that *therukoothu* is not portrayed as often as other traditional artforms like *silambam* is what led him to pick the folk form.

On another plastered wall, stone sculptures of Mamallapuram seamlessly blend into the texture of the facade. "When it comes to Madhavaram roundabout which was a small site, we thought of depicting traditional

foods," says Vijay.

What makes these murals stand out is their realistic portrayal of people: familiar faces that call for an instant, rather personal connection for a passer-by. This life-like quality is an offshoot of the artists' years of experience with handpainted boards and cine banners.

This expertise with banner art, which uses emulsion paints and acrylics, helps them move from wall to wall swiftly. A public art project usually takes anywhere between two weeks to



City walls, redefined (Clockwise from left) The compound walls of Manali bus terminus; Amma Unavagam at Kathivakkam; at Chennai Primary School, Manali; and artist Vijay at the site • B JOTHI RAMALINGAM AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

months to be completed, but some of these walls were done in a day's time.

"Wall art is also eco-friendly. Flex prints for instance, leave a huge carbon footprint. Now, after seeing such works, the public is also slowly moving back to hand painted boards, banners and walls," adds Vijay.

In the noughties most banner artists lost their livelihood, owing to the digital shift and the flex culture. Handpainted boards that ensured employment to many small-scale artists were the norm until then. Vijay's father JP Krishna, president of Bharatiya Kalakar Sangh was one among them; a pioneer in cine banner art in the 1990s. "There were lakhs of artists in Chennai who lost work around the time when flex printing started dominating," says Vijay.

Singara Chennai 2.0 is a revival, and a tribute to their talent.

Vijay's next for the city will be the one kilometre-long subway near the RBI building and Secretariat. "The walls and the ceiling will be inspired by the wall paintings inside the Brihadeeswara temple's *gopuram*, which gave birth to the Tanjore style of paintings," says Vijay. The biggest advantage of such beautification projects is its scope for employment, especially for those who belong to the widely-hit arts sector, he adds.

"Many of the large-scale artworks that we see in Indira Nagar MRTS and Kannagi Nagar are done by artists from across India and abroad. We have the talent, right here in our State, but we don't utilise them," he says.

A silver lining to these projects is that the Greater Chennai Corporation is also identifying local, upcoming artists from each zone to beautify their own localities.

