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IN BRIEF



Leadership tussle: Rahul likely to visit Chhattisgarh

NEW DELHI
Amid the leadership tussle in Chhattisgarh, ex-Congress president Rahul Gandhi is likely to visit the State by the end of September. After the change of guard in Punjab, speculation grew that Chhattisgarh was likely to be the next State that could see a leadership change.

Terrorism knows no age, says NIA

NEW DELHI
A remark from the Supreme Court on Wednesday that two Kerala youth, accused under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for Maoist links, were but "young boys" saw the NIA respond that "terrorism knows no age" and "Naxalites, Maoists are very sharp, shrewd people" who covered their tracks.

JNU to reopen for third-year scholars

NEW DELHI
Jawaharlal Nehru University will start with its third phase of reopening from September 23, in which all third-year PhD research scholars, both hostellers and day scholars, will be allowed to enter the campus.

Covishield fine, but not Indian certification: U.K.

Both countries hoped the issue will be sorted out soon

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

In an unexpected move, the United Kingdom added Indian-made Covishield to its list of recognised vaccines, but refused to recognise vaccine certificates given to those administered the vaccine in India. The decision, which means Indian travellers to U.K. will still be subject to 10-day quarantine rules, is expected to further fuel the rift between both countries over what India has called a "discriminatory practice", and had threatened reciprocal measures against, even as officials from both countries continued to discuss the issue.

British and Indian officials said they hoped ongoing discussions on "vaccine certifications" would be resolved soon, but could not confirm when. According to the amended U.K. government rules set to be adopted from October 4, "Formulations of the four approved vaccines [AstraZeneca, Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna and Janssen], such as AstraZeneca Covishield, Vaxzevria and Moderna Takeda qualify as approved vaccines."

However, India continued to remain on the list of "Amber countries", and not included in the list whose "public health bodies" were



Waiting for clearance: The recognition given to Covishield will become effective from October 4. • AP

recognised for issuing vaccination certificates.

The U.K. cleared 18 countries, including Canada, Denmark, Antigua and Barbuda, for the "Green List", allowing fully vaccinated travellers from those countries to fly to the U.K. without any quarantine requirements.

Quarantine required

The latest U.K. travel guidance rules and the recognition of Covishield means that a traveller from the 'Green List' countries who has been vaccinated with the Covishield vaccine can enter the U.K. without quarantine, but not a traveller from India who has been administered the vaccine.

"Covishield is not an issue...[But] India is an Amber country, and there are still some COVID cases in India," U.K. High Commissioner Alex Ellis told news channel NDTV in an interview on Wednesday, adding that "the

question is on certification".

Mr. Ellis said U.K. NHS app officials and Indian officials who deal with the Co-WIN app had been in talks, on the working of their respective apps and security protocols used, explaining that the U.K. hopes to eventually find a mutually acceptable protocol for accepting Indian travellers without quarantines. "Because we have to have confidence, obviously, just as India would have to have confidence in the U.K., from our app, to make sure, 'This looks okay,'" Mr. Ellis added.

The development came a day after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met his British counterpart, Elizabeth Truss, in New York and urged the U.K. to address the issue around the status of the Covishield vaccine and the 10-day quarantine for Indian travellers.

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₹50,000 for each COVID death

States to pay kin from SDRF as per NDMA recommendation, govt. informs SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Wednesday informed the Supreme Court that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has recommended the payment of ₹50,000 each as ex gratia assistance to the next of kin of those who died of COVID-19, including those who succumbed to the virus while involved in relief operations and preparedness activities.

Certification required

The financial aid would be given, provided that the cause of death is certified as COVID-19.

The money would be provided by the States from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). The disbursement of the amounts would be carried out by the District

Relief measure

A look at how the ex gratia of ₹50,000 will be paid as per the NDMA recommendation

The funds: The States will provide the ex gratia relief from State Disaster Response Fund. The District Disaster Management Authorities will make the disbursement

The procedure: After documents proving a COVID-19 death are submitted, the claim will be settled within 30 days. The amount will be deposited in Aadhaar-linked bank accounts

Addressing grievances: District-level committees will deal with grievances regarding certification of death and issue amended documents

Disaster Management Authority/district administration concerned to the families.

In case of grievances regarding certification of death as prescribed by the Health Ministry and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), district-level committees comprising Additional District Collector,

Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), Additional CMOH/Principal or HOD Medicine of a medical college (if one exists in the district) and a subject expert would propose the necessary remedial measures, including issuance of amended official document for COVID-19 death after verify-

ing facts in accordance with the Health Ministry and ICMR guidelines.

"In case the decision of the committee is not in favour of the claimant, a clear reason for the same shall be recorded," the NDMA guidelines annexed in the 11-page affidavit said.

The Supreme Court, in a judgment on June 30 based on a plea filed by advocate Gaurav Bansal, had directed the NDMA to recommend guidelines for giving ex gratia assistance to the families of persons who died of COVID-19 as mandated under Section 12 (iii) of the Disaster Management Act of 2005.

The guidelines underscored that the payment of ex gratia would be a "continuous scheme".

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NEET fraud: CBI books coaching centre

'They offered seats for ₹50 lakh by arranging proxy candidates to write the exam'

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case against a Nagpur-based coaching centre and others for offering to arrange admissions in top government medical colleges by adopting fraudulent means.

On specific information that proxy candidates would be appearing for bonafide students in the NEET held at five centres in Ranchi and Delhi on September 12, the CBI's Anti-Corruption Branch, Delhi, registered a case against Parimal Kotpalliwar, who runs M/s R.K. Education Career Guidance, an education consultancy

firm in Nagpur. The probe agency was informed that Mr. Kotpalliwar had contacted parents of candidates and offered admission in reputed colleges for a huge amount. The parents were asked to deposit post-dated cheques and original mark sheets of the candidates for Class-X and Class-XII as security,

which would be returned after receiving the agreed amount of ₹50 lakh. The modus operandi was to use forged documents by morphing photographs in identity cards to facilitate proxy candidates to write the exam, the CBI FIR said.

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Yogesh Singh is new DU V-C

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

Professor Yogesh Singh, currently Vice-Chancellor of Delhi Technological University, has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Delhi. The varsity has not had a permanent V-C since Yogesh Tyagi was suspended in October last year.

In a phone interview with *The Hindu* soon after the announcement, Mr. Singh emphasised that he was a team player and would take all viewpoints on board. He acknowledged the challenge that almost half of DU's faculty positions are vacant, and expressed hope of bringing in hybrid learning innovations that he has experimented with at DTU.

DETAILS PAGE 2

'I offered to quit, was asked to stay'

Gandhi siblings' advisers misguiding them: Amarinder Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Former Punjab Chief Minister and Congress leader Amarinder Singh on Wednesday said he had offered to resign three weeks ago, but was asked to continue.

"I was ready to leave after a victory, but never after a loss. I had offered my resignation to Congress president Sonia Gandhi three weeks ago, but she asked me to continue. If she had just called me and asked me to step down, I would have," he said. "As a soldier, I know how to do my job and leave once I am called back."

Capt. Amarinder said he had told Ms. Gandhi after leading the Congress to another sweeping win in Punjab that he was ready to hang up his boots and allow someone else to take over as



Amarinder Singh

Chief Minister. "But that did not happen, so I will fight."

He said he felt humiliated when the Congress Legislature Party meeting was called in a secretive manner, without taking him into confidence. "I would not have taken MLAs on a flight to Goa or some place. That is not how I operate. I don't do gimmicks, and the Gandhi siblings [ex-Congress presi-

dent Rahul Gandhi and AICC general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi] know that is not my way," he said. "Priyanka and Rahul are like my children... this should not have ended like this. I am hurt."

'Keeping options open'
He said the Gandhi siblings were quite inexperienced and their advisers were clearly misguiding them. He said he was still keeping his political options open.

"You can be old at 40 and young at 80," he said, making it clear that he did not see his age as a hurdle.

Referring to complaints that he was not acting against the "Badals" and "Majithia" in the sacrilege and drugs cases, he said he believed in allowing the law to take its course.

WHO tightens global air quality norms

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The World Health Organization (WHO), in its first-ever update since 2005, has tightened global air pollution standards in recognition of the emerging science that the impact of air pollution on health is much more serious than earlier envisaged.

The move does not have an immediate effect in India as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards do not meet the WHO's existing norms. Experts say the move sets the stage for shifts in policy towards evolving stricter standards.

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Judge sets unusual bail condition

Accused to wash clothes for women free of cost for 6 months

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

In an unusual order, a local court in Bihar's Madhubani district has granted bail to an accused charged with outraging the modesty of a woman and attempted rape, on the condition that he washes and irons the clothes of all women of the village free of cost for six months.

The accused is required to obtain a certificate of completion from the mukhia (village headman) or any respectable public servant of the village and file the same

in court. Additional Sessions Judge-1 of Jhunjhpur Avinash Kumar also asked the accused to furnish a bail bond of ₹10,000 with two sureties of the same amount.

Earlier in August this year, Judge Kumar had granted bail to a man arrested under the State's prohibition laws on the condition that he paid for the education of five poor children for three months and their parents duly certified it.

His latest order followed a virtual bail hearing of Lalan Kumar Safi, 20, a washer-

man by profession, lodged at Laukaha police station of Madhubani district since April 19.

"The petitioner shall wash and iron the clothes of all women of the village of informant, including informant/victim free of cost for six months and after completion of six months shall obtain a certificate from mukhia/sarpanch or any respectable public servant of the village and file it in the court concerned," said the judge in his order on September 16.

On World Rhino Day, 2,500 horns turned to ashes in Assam

Event aimed at dispelling myths that have driven the illegal trade and poaching of the rare animal

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

The "world's largest stockpile" of rhino horns was consigned to flames in eastern Assam's Bokakhat, the headquarters of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, amid Vedic rituals on Wednesday.

The event, timed with World Rhino Day, was aimed at dispelling myths that have driven the illegal horn trade and the poaching of the animal. Wildlife officials said 2,479 of the 2,623 horns stored in 12 district treasuries since 1979 were burnt in six large iron pyres placed at a stadium in Bokakhat, about 240 km east of Guwahati. The pyres were lit remotely through drones.

Among those destroyed were 21 fake horns seized from smugglers and traders



In flames: Rhino horns being set on fire by the Assam forest department at Bokakhat on Wednesday. • RITU RAJ KONWAR

and 15 African rhino horns brought from the Assam State Zoo in Guwahati. "We organised this event to convey to the world that rhino horns are just a mass of compacted hair and they have no medicinal value. We urge people not to kill these rare animals or buy their

horns based on superstitions or myths," Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said after initiating the programme.

"Rhino horns are burnt in Africa but not so many at a time. I think we have set a world record," Dr. Sarma

said, adding that all horns recovered from rhinos dying naturally or during disasters and accidents would henceforth be burned annually.

P. Sivakumar, Director of the Kaziranga National Park, said 29 horns implicated in court cases, will be kept in the treasuries while 94 others, including the heaviest at 3.05 kg, will be preserved for exhibition or educational purposes.

Museum planned
The State government will set up a natural history museum near the national park to showcase the preserved horns.

The weight of the horns destroyed was 1,305.25 kg while the weight of those to be preserved is 131.05 kg, officials said.

Before the destruction,

experts had studied the horns using scientific methods that the treasuries they were kept in. Each horn was cleaned, weighed, photographed, labelled with a unique barcode, packed and sealed again after extraction of DNA samples.

The ashes will be stored in a life-size rhino replica to be displayed at Mihimukh, the main entrance of Kaziranga Park, Mr. Sivakumar told *The Hindu*. The event was preceded by an elaborate Vedic ritual that entailed performing the last rites.

Wednesday's event was the second mass-burning of animal body parts in eastern India. A stockpile of rhino horns and elephant tusks was burnt in West Bengal's Chilla patha forest (Alipurduar district) in 2005-06.

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DSEU course in hygiene management

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU) on Wednesday said that it will be offering a BBA in Facilities and Hygiene Management, a first-of-its-kind course in India for which it has partnered with JLL India.

JLL is a professional services firm that specialises in real estate and investment management and will be designing the curriculum for the course.

The course shall include components of on-the-job training which shall be supported by JLL, along with placements for the graduates. DSEU V-C Neharika Vohra said that the entire course strength of 60 students on completion of their degree may be absorbed by JLL. She said the university was set up with the aim to make students job-ready which the new course would ensure.

Yogesh Singh appointed new DU V-C

He acknowledges challenge over faculty vacancies, hopes to introduce hybrid learning innovations

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

Professor Yogesh Singh, currently Vice-Chancellor of Delhi Technological University, has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Delhi. The university has not had a permanent V-C since Yogesh Tyagi was suspended in October last year.

In a phone interview with *The Hindu* soon after the announcement, Mr. Singh emphasised that he was a team player and would take all viewpoints on board. He acknowledged the challenge that almost half of DU's faculty positions are vacant, and expressed hope of bringing in hybrid learning innovations that he has experimented with at DTU.

The appointment was made by the university's Visitor, President Ram Nath Kovind, the Education Ministry said on Wednesday. He also appointed professor Neelima Gupta as the new Vice-



Chancellor of Hari Singh Gour University at Sagar in Madhya Pradesh.

Leadership background
DU's new V-C comes with a background of leadership at three educational institutions already. Apart from his current position as DTU V-C, Mr. Singh has previously been director of Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology and V-C of Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, and is also a member of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council. He, him-

I will be a Vice-Chancellor for everyone and we will take everyone together. For a V-C, the interests of the university should be protected

PROFESSOR YOGESH SINGH

self, is an alumnus of National Institute of Technology at Kurukshetra, with a PhD in computer engineering.

Apart from his academic credentials, Mr. Singh was appointed as an independent director of Gujarat government public sector firm Gujarat State Petro Net in May 2013 and Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation in March 2015. This August, he was also appointed as an additional director on the board of Gujarat Gas.

RSS link

Asked about the perception that he is ideologically aligned with the RSS and its

education wing, Mr. Singh did not deny it but insisted that he would represent all interests.

"A Vice-Chancellor has to take everyone together. After joining Delhi University, I will be a Vice-Chancellor for everyone and we will take everyone together. For a V-C, the interests of the university should be protected," he said. "DU is one of the oldest seats of learning in our country. We will take all necessary steps which are essential for the growth and development of the university. I'm a team player," he said.

The new V-C acknowledged that DU currently has the highest level of faculty vacancies among Central universities in the country, with 846 of its 1,706 sanctioned posts lying vacant. "We will start the process. Recruitment is a very important activity and is the prime responsibility of any V-C to do it. We will do it on a regular

basis, not as a one-time affair," Mr. Singh said.

Hybrid learning is among the innovations, he hopes to introduce.

"Right now, many students feel that classrooms are very boring. So the teaching pedagogy needs to be improved... Online education has become a reality now. It has helped us so we could say this has been a year of students. But now the time has come, we have to think about new pedagogy and teaching-learning processes," he said.

He said it was too early to comment about other initiatives or priorities, including the National Education Policy's proposed reforms, but promised that changes were in the pipeline. "Leadership is very important for any institution. Wherever I have worked, I have worked with positivity and enthusiasm. Here too, I will take all steps. You will see the difference very soon," Mr. Singh added.

JNU to reopen for third-year scholars

ABVP calls administration notice a farce

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University will start with its third phase of reopening from September 23 in which all third-year PhD research scholars, both hostellers and day scholars, will be allowed to enter the campus.

The university said that it had taken this decision keeping with the guidelines issued by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority regarding reopening of educational institutions with maximum of 50% of seating capacity and strict compliance with the standard operating procedures.

It added that phase IV of the reopening will commence on September 27 in which all final-year MSC, BTECH fourth-year and MBA final-year students will be allowed to enter and reside on the campus.

The university said that in

order to avoid overcrowding, it has been decided to decentralise the process of issuance of ID cards from the security office. The ID cards will be issued at the school/special centre level. It also said that buses will be allowed to enter the campus following COVID-19 protocol.

JNU students who have been demanding the reopening of the campus called the circular a farce and an attempt to mislead students. "The notice is a farce since no MSc final-year students have been allotted hostel yet and they are being called back to the campus. The administration must explain where the students will stay," the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad said.

Students said that they will continue to protest until all students return to the campus and hostels are allotted.

Delhi riots: court drops arson charges against 10

Police covering up flaw, clubbing incidents: judge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday dropped charges of arson against 10 people accused of allegedly looting shops during the February 2020 riots, saying the police were trying to cover up a flaw and clubbing incidents of two different dates.

The case was registered on the basis of three complaints — one Birjpal stated that his rented shop was looted by a riotous mob at Brij-puri road on February 25, while Diwan Singh claimed that two of his shops were looted on February 24.

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav said the complainants did

not state a single word regarding the riotous mob committing "mischievous by fire or explosive substance" in their initial statements.

Diwan Singh, in his supplementary statement, however, said that the riotous mob put his shop on fire, to which the court said that the investigating agency cannot "cover up the flaw" by recording the supplementary statements.

ASJ Yadav said that he is unable to comprehend how an incident that occurred on February 24 could be clubbed with the incident which occurred on February 25 unless and until there was clear evidence that the same rioters were operating on both dates.

L-G reviews progress of e-waste park

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the setting up of e-Waste Management Eco-Park in the Capital.

The facility will seek to ensure the scientific and environmentally safe dismantling, refurbishing, recycling and disposal of e-waste.

According to government sources, the meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain and Gopal Rai, in addition to senior government officials.

2 lakh tonnes of waste

It is estimated that Delhi generates about two lakh tonnes of e-waste that emanates from electrical appliances, electronic items, computers and accessories and mobile phones, among others, sources said.

"The L-G pointed out that this waste was potentially very hazardous to not only the environment but had serious implications on human health, and its sustainable disposal was required to be done at the earliest," a source said.

"The setting up of the park, which will be first-of-its-kind in the country, will serve the purpose and also provide an example for the rest of the country," the source added. After detailed discussions on Wednesday, it was decided that the park be set up in a time-bound manner.

Experts welcome stricter air quality norms

'Revised WHO guidelines will put more pressure on govt. to combat pollution'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The stricter air quality standards issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday are a welcome move but it will be challenging for Delhi to achieve the new limits, experts and officials said.

"The new norms will put more pressure on the government to form policies to achieve stricter standards of air pollution. But achieving the new standards is going to be challenging," said an official of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee.

The WHO, in the first update of its air quality guidelines in 15 years, has tightened global air pollution standards in recognition of emerging science that the impact of air pollution on health is much more serious than earlier envisaged.

Anumita Roychowdhury, head of Clean Air Programme at the Centre for Science and Environment, said the WHO's air quality norms are not legally binding on countries, but rather



A long way to go: In 2020, the annual average level of PM2.5 in Delhi was 98 micrograms per cubic metre, against the national standard of 40. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

a general guide for what nations should set as goals.

"The Central Pollution Control Board is expected to revise the national ambient air quality standards soon and the new WHO guidelines need to be the reference point for developing appropriate intermediate targets for India," she said.

For Delhi and large parts of north India, it will be difficult to achieve these new guidelines, but the WHO has proposed a step-by-step approach through progressive

The Central Pollution Control Board is expected to revise the national air quality standards soon... the new WHO norms need to be the reference point

ANUMITA ROYCHOWDHURY
Head of Clean Air Programme, Centre for Science and Environment

tightening of intermediate standards, she added.

"During the lockdown, air pollution halved in Delhi

when local pollution and regional influence could be minimised. Even then we were not near the WHO guidelines. In 2020, the annual average level of PM2.5 in Delhi was 98 micrograms per cubic metre, against the national standard of 40. The WHO is asking for annual average of 5 micrograms per cubic metre. This bears out the scale and speed with which we need to push action in Delhi and across the regions to meet our own standards first," the expert said.

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Notice inviting E-Tender
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1	Design, Construction, Successful testing & Commissioning of 0.82 Lac Gallon Capacity RCC Service Reservoir with Sluice Chamber (1 No.), 0.33 Lac Gallons capacity SR with sluice Chamber (1 No.), Construction of spring protection works (2 No.), collection chamber (2 No.), Construction of Chowkidar's Quarter (2 No. 's) with Bath rooms, Chain Link fencing around structures, Land developments, including complete providing, laying and fitting of Pipe Network i.e. Supply main, Distribution Network incl. accessories/Specials, regulating valves (Sluice Valves, Gate Valves, Air release valves) including stabilization of existing pipe network and existing S.R. by way of jacking including Conducting complete necessary soil tests, specifications as required at selected site, as per the Parameters / Specification mentioned in the tender document. Architectural aesthetics shall also be kept in consideration to make the structures appealing drawings Design & specifications with Trial run for a period of 06 months after completion of the work for Water Supply Scheme Loolipora Iskandarpura under NABARD.	₹ 568.00	₹ 0.06	₹ 11.36 (Pledged to the Superintending Engineer Hyd. Circle Budgam)	18 months	"	Office of the Superintending Engineer, Hyd. Circle /Budgam on 05.10.2021	Special Class
2	Design, Construction, Successful testing & Commissioning of 0.57 MGD rapid sand filtration plant with construction of clarifier / flush mixer near rapid sand filtration plant, Construction of 1.0 Lac gallons capacity clear water sump underground, construction of 1.30 lac gallon capacity overhead tank, Construction of protection works including saddle blocks and construction of approach road, Construction of Chowkidar's quarter with Bath room, Chain Link fencing around structures, Land developments including complete providing, laying and fitting of Pipe Network i.e. Supply main, Distribution Network incl. accessories/Specials, regulating valves (Sluice Valves, Gate Valves, Air release valves) including stabilization of existing pipe network including Conducting complete necessary soil tests, specifications as required at selected site, as per the Parameters / Specification mentioned in the tender document, drawings Design & specifications, Architectural aesthetics, S.I.T.C. of electro mechanical equipments and other allied works, Creation of 250KVA substation along with HT/LT network, Mechanical equipments all complete, With Trial run of the scheme for a period of 06 months after completion of the work for WSS Chinar Colony Kawoosa, all complete under NABARD.	₹ 459.00	₹ 0.05	₹ 09.18 (Pledged to the Superintending Engineer Hyd. Circle Budgam)	18 months	"	Office of the Superintending Engineer, Hyd. Circle /Budgam on 05.10.2021	Special Class
3	Design, Construction, Successful testing & Commissioning of water supply scheme Handjan Mirwadar by way of laying and fitting of pipes, construction of 02 No OHT's of 41000' & 36000 Gallon capacity collection Sump, 02 No Chowkidar Quarters, Chain link fencing, 05 No Sluice chamber, Anchor Blocks and D.G set Shed including stabilization of existing pipe network including Conducting complete necessary soil tests, specifications as required at selected site, as per the Parameters / Specification mentioned in the tender document, drawings Design & specifications, Architectural aesthetics, S.I.T.C. of electro mechanical equipments and other allied works, Creation of 250KVA substation along with HT/LT network, Mechanical equipments all complete, With Trial run of the scheme for a period of 06 months after completion of the work all complete under NABARD.	₹ 385.47	₹ 0.03	₹ 07.71 (Pledged to the Superintending Engineer Hyd. Circle Budgam)	15 months	"	Office of the Superintending Engineer, Hyd. Circle /Budgam on 05.10.2021	Special Class

Head of Account:-NABARD;
Position of AAA:- Accredited;
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of Jammu & Kashmir.

Exec: PHE/Bud/CS/3979-4009
Dated:-18.09.2021

Sd/-
(Er. Najeeb A Tamboor)
Executive Engineer,
PHE Division Budgam,

DIPK-9127/21

Bharat Nirman through Rural Roads
Chief Engineer (Kangra Zone) HPPWD Dharamshala H.P., 176215
BHARAT NIRMAN
UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)
e-Procurement Notice

The Government of India has received a loan/credit number "P124639" under PMGSY (Rural Road Project) Rural Roads Financing towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the bidding document.

The Chief Engineer (Kangra Zone) HPPWD Dharamshala-176215 on behalf of Governor Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the district of Chamba as detailed in the Table below from the eligible contractors registered with HPPWD/CPWD/P&T, Railways/other state govt./Central Govt agencies. Non-registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

Division	Packa-ge No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (Rs Lacs)		Total Cost (Rs Lacs)	Period of Com-ple-tion (Months)	Bid Security (Rs Lacs)
			Construction	Maintenance			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Chamba	HP-02-307	Construction of Rajera to Bali Road Km 0/0 to 4/500	258.14	-	258.14	9	5.16
Chamba	HP-02-315	Construction of link Road to village Sanotha Km 0/0 to 4/600	294.13	-	294.13	9	5.88
Chamba	HP-02-306	Construction of Sach to Fatehpur Road Km 0/0 to 5/560	214.75	-	214.75	9	4.29
Chamba	HP-02-314	Construction of link Road to village Ghar Gram Km 0/0 to 7/300	377.36	-	377.36	9	7.55
Bharmour	HP-02-332	Construction of Road from L0312/400 to Bhatra Km 0/0 to 2/0	172.75	12.04	184.46	12	3.70
Bharmour	HP-02-320	Construction of Urali to Ghatore Road Km 0/0 to 4/0	184.46	-	184.46	9	3.69
Bharmour	HP-02-308	Construction of Kharamukh Dhajji to Mindra Road Km 0/0 to 5/500	489.93	-	489.93	12	9.80
Bharmour	HP-02-343	Construction of Kharamukh Dhajji to Mindra Road Km 0/0 to 5/500	762.06	45.17	807.23	18	16.14

Other details can be seen in the bidding document. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Submission of all physical documents will be accepted only up to or before the time and date of submission of bids. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids.

Last Date/ Time and place for receipt of bids through e-procurement:-

Bids can be submitted online from Date 24 Month 09 Year 2021 to Date 04 Month 10 Year 2021 upto 1700 Hours and will be opened on Date 05 Month 10 Year 2021 at 1130 Hours in the Office of Superintending Engineer, 7th Circle, HPPWD, Dalhousie.

For further details please log on to <https://pmgsy tendershp.gov.in>

The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons there-of.

Chief Engineer,
Kangra Zone, H. P.P.W.D.,
Dharamshala-176215.
Fax: 011892-223100.
Tel: 011892-224948.

HP / 4242/21-22
HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

Centre's stand sought on rules for pvt. detectives

Petitioner free to seek apt remedy: HC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Centre to respond to a petition seeking to frame guidelines to regulate the work and domain of private detectives till the codified Act comes into existence.

Justice Rekha Palli, who was hearing a plea by a woman aggrieved by an allegedly illegal investigation carried out by a private investigator, asked the Centre to submit its response within six weeks.

"You [Centre] have to take a balanced view. You have to take care," the High Court said.

Free to act

The Central government's counsel said that the petitioner was free to take action under the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act which were applicable to any offence committed by private detectives. "These are professionals.

We can't have a guideline for everything... All [professionals] have to follow the law. There is IPC, IT Act. FIR or complaint can be filed," the counsel said.

The High Court also clarified that it was not going to examine any other issues raised by the woman in her plea and that she was free to seek appropriate remedy in accordance with the law.

Illegal investigation

The woman, in her plea, claimed that a private detective shared certain personal information about her with a foreign national after conducting an illegal investigation. She claimed that there were several private detectives in the country operating without being subjected to any oversight.

The plea said that although a Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 2007 on this aspect, no progress was made ultimately. The HC will hear the case on January 10.

Remove provisions from statute: plea

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Centre to consider as representation a petition seeking to remove provisions from the statute such as Section 66A of the Information and Technology Act, which have already been declared unconstitutional.

The plea filed by advocate Anshul Bajaj said there are several criminal law sections that were struck down by the Supreme Court but continue to be used by police officers.

The petition referred to a news article which stated that the Supreme Court was informed that people were being prosecuted under the scrapped Section 66A of the IT Act and the police as well as trial court across India continue to use it.

In some cases, trial courts went ahead with framing charges under the defunct IT Act provision.

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(PSPCL Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala)
Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010BSC033813/Website:pspcl.in
(Contact Number 9646107248, Email: se-4-jal@pspcl.in)

Tender Inquiry No. 11 & 12 Date 21-9-21

Dy. Chief Engineer/TL Circle, Punjab State Power Corporation Limited, Room No. 310, 2nd Floor, Shakti Sadan, Jalandhar, invites two No. E-Tender of: (1) Laying of tower foundations, Erection of towers and stringing & sagging of conductor with earth wire for the construction of 66 KV line from 220KV S/S Rashtra to 66 KV S/S Focal Point Taran Taran (Balance work) (2) Dismantlement of 33KV Mahipur Chabbawal Idle Rail Pole line 9.500 KM/0.15" ACSR. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 24.09.2021 from 5.00 PM onwards.

Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
C 342/21 DPRPB 76155/12/455/2021/8150

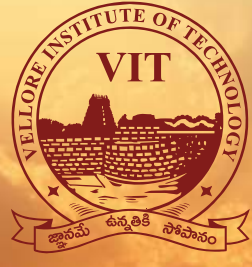
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RISE 06:10 SET 18:17
RISE 19:50 SET 08:04

FRIDAY, SEP. 24

RISE 06:11 SET 18:16
RISE 20:21 SET 08:58

SATURDAY, SEP. 25

RISE 06:11 SET 18:14
RISE 20:55 SET 09:53

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	32	26
Safdarjang	32	26
Palam	32	26

Delhi Palam Today
33°C One or two spell of light rain or thunderstorm may occur with cloudy sky at some places and gentle winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
34°C Slight warm and humid day would prevail with cloudy sky. A few spell of light rain would occur at some areas.

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IN BRIEF

30 fresh COVID-19 cases reported in the Capital

NEW DELHI
The city reported no new COVID-19 deaths in 24 hours for the fifth consecutive day and the total number of deaths stood at 25,085, as per a bulletin released by the Delhi government on Wednesday. Thirty new cases were reported, taking the total cases to 14,38,586. A total of 70,651 tests were conducted in a day and the TPR was 0.04%.

ED summons to Gupta politically motivated: AAP

Party claims it is BJP's vendetta politics

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday said that party national secretary Pankaj Gupta appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) after being summoned and termed it as a "politically motivated and fabricated case" at the behest of the BJP.

AAP national spokesperson Raghav Chadha said that the party is unfazed by the "vendetta politics" of the Modi government and will fully cooperate in the process.

Image tarnishing

Earlier this month, the ED had summoned Mr. Gupta in connection with an alleged money laundering case involving Sukhpal Singh Khaira, former Leader of the Opposition in Punjab Assembly, and a former AAP member who is being probed for his alleged links with some suspects in a drug smuggling case.



Pankaj Gupta

"Panicked by the AAP's rising graph and Arvind Kejriwal's growing popularity across the country, the BJP is attempting to tarnish our image by sending us notices. This notice is part of the BJP's conspiracy to harass the AAP to break down our spirits before the Assembly elections in Uttarakhand, Punjab and Goa. We are undeterred and people are with us," Mr. Chadha said.

The AAP leader claimed that in the last seven years, not a single BJP leader has received notices from the ED, but the AAP gets notices from almost every investigative agency every year.

Unemployment aid by Kejriwal a poll stunt: BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The State BJP on Wednesday staged a demonstration outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence demanding compensation for the unemployed in the Capital. Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta termed Mr. Kejriwal's promises to provide unemployment allowance during his tours of Uttarakhand, Punjab and Goa "just election stunts." "He should first tell people how much allowance he has given in the last seven years to 14 lakh unemployed registered on the government portal," Mr. Gupta said.

Responding to the allegations, the AAP said, "The Delhi government has done more than any other State to help the unemployed deal with the impact of the pandemic. Under our Rojar Bazaar platform, 17,000 employees have posted more than 10 lakh jobs in the last one year itself. Over 13,000 youths have been deployed under the bus marshalls programme, and thousands additionally through the civil defence and doorstep delivery initiative. In all, over 1.5 million jobs have been provided."

'BJP-ruled North body has floated tenders to lease school buildings'

AAP says BJP planning to lease 14 schools, latter refutes it

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday alleged that the BJP-governed North Delhi municipal corporation has floated tenders to lease buildings of 14 municipal corporation-run schools to private coaching centres.

"Corporations do not have enough students left to run schools so they have merged 36 schools to empty the buildings. Out of these 36 schools, the BJP-ruled corporation has released tenders for 14 schools. For many years this

will be leased out as prime land and the BJP will benefit from it. This is so shameful and disturbingly contrary to the civic body claims that they don't have enough land to give out to mohalla clinics, as they keep selling the land to private institutes," AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said. The AAP leader said that these plots are located in Narela Zone, City Zone, Sadar Paharganj Zone, Civil Lines Zone, and Karol Bagh Zone.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that the North body was not

leasing or selling any of its schools to private coaching centres and Mr. Bharadwaj, in his "fervour to defame the municipal corporations", had not verified the facts before speaking.

"The North body has several school buildings lying empty as certain areas, especially in City Zone, have gone commercial with very little population left, thus rendering schools useless," Mr. Kapoor said. He alleged that AAP leaders keep levelling "baseless charges" against the corporations.

AAP and BJP enmeshed in graft: Cong.

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Wednesday alleged that the AAP and the BJP have been caught in a "deep embrace of corruption" as a sitting municipal councillor, who was expelled by the BJP for corruption on Sunday, was welcomed with open arms by the Aam Aadmi Party two days later.

Responding to the allegations, an AAP leader said, "Pooja Madan wanted to join the AAP and when the BJP came to know about it, they called her corrupt."

Paddy crop destroyed in 70 villages: Bidhuri

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

After surveying them in a boat since they were flooded, Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri on Wednesday alleged thousands of hectares of cultivable land had been rendered useless in the Capital.

Irrigation Department nor other departments concerned cleaned drains on time nor had arrangements been made for the drainage of water, Mr. Bidhuri alleged. As a result, he said, paddy crop had been destroyed on 50,000 bighas of land in 70 villages falling in the constituencies of Bawana, Narela, Mundka, and Matiala.

Discontent brewing over pay hike in Maruti plant

Casual labourers are upset over nominal increase

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

Resentment seems to be brewing among the casual workers at the plants of Maruti Suzuki, the largest car-maker in the country, in Gurugram over the past few days over nominal increase in their wages. The former general-secretary of the company's workers' union, Kuldeep Janghu, has written a letter to the Labour Department referring to the discontentment and seeking their intervention.

In a letter to Deputy Labour Commissioner, Mr. Janghu said the company's management had announced an increase in the

wages of the casual employees on September 18, but the hike had been nominal causing resentment among them. He made an appeal to the department officials to intervene and ask the management for the re-consideration of their decision.

"While the regular employees are getting paid in the range of ₹70,000-₹80,000, the casual skilled employees are getting around ₹25,000 for the same work," Mr. Janghu said.

Deputy Labour Commissioner Ajay Pal told *The Hindu* that the department had received the complaint and was looking into the matter. "We will speak to the casual workers and the management if required," Mr. Pal said.

Three organs retrieved from brain-dead woman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

Doctors at Fortis Memorial Research Institute enabled retrieval and donation of three organs from a 44-year-old woman following brain death at the hospital on Wednesday. The feat became possible after the patient's family consented to donate her organs.

National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation allocated the organs to three separate recipients - two wait-listed recipients at Fortis Gurugram received the liver and one kidney, and a recipient at private hospital in Delhi received the second kidney. Both corneas were sent to an eye bank.

SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo), **Namita, D/o:** Rafiq, **R/o:** Amtoli, West Bangal, Present address: Kikari Rainbow Home, Kashmere Gate, Delhi. **Aged:** 13 years, (now 19 years) has been missing/kidnapped from Kikari, Rainbow Home, Kashmere Gate, Delhi, since 01.07.2015 In this regard a case FIR No. 322/15 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 04.07.2015, has been lodged at P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi. Her physical description is as under: **Height:** 4'2" Feet at present not known, **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Thin, **Clothing:** Blue Shirt and Blue Scurt and Black Shoes Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, Kashmere Gate, Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-23014046 (Direct), 23015229 & 23015218.

S.H.O. P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi Ph. 011-23968730

DP/1481/N/21

Augmentation of power supply and Electrification works

E-Tender Notice No. DR/CEE/CON/MLG/02/21, Dated: 18-09-2021. Open tender through e-Tendering system is invited from experienced and reputed Contractor (s)/firm(s) having valid electrical contractor and supervisor license for the following work. S/N-1; Tender No.: EL-C-MLG-06-21-22-DGU-HJ. Name of works: Augmentation of power supply arrangement for reliable power, installation of safety items including HT line cover through insulation sleeve for 11 KV & 33 KV conductor, provision of inverter at L.C. Gates etc and provision of LED name board in connection with Digaru - Hojai - Lumding (PD) Project. Tender value: ₹3,04,66,354.54, Earnest money: 3,02,300.00. S/N-2; Tender No.: EL-C-MLG-08-21-22-NBQ-AGT. Name of works: Electrification of 232 units staff Qrs and augmentation of power supply arrangement in newly constructed level crossing gates in between section New Bongaigaon - Rangjya - Agthori under New Bongaigaon - Agthori via Rangjya patch Doubling Project. Tender value: ₹6,73,59,790.00, Earnest money: 4,86,800.00. S/N-3; Tender No.: EL-C-MLG-09-21-22-NBQ-AGT. Name of works: Augmentation of power supply arrangement in newly constructed station building between New Bongaigaon Railway station to Agthori Rly station under patch doubling project. Tender value: ₹9,92,17,891.00, Earnest money: 6,46,100.00. All above E-tender will be closed at 14:30 hrs. on 19-10-2021 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 19-10-2021. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 14:30 hrs of 19-10-2021 in website www.ireps.gov.in & www.nfrlyconstruction.org. Dy.CEE/CON, Maligaon Northeast Frontier Railway (Construction Organisation) "Serving Customers with a smile"

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CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS), Electric Loco Shed, Ajni / Nagpur invites e-tenders from the experienced contractors for the following work. **Name of work :** Repairing of Complete Dynamic Braking Resistance (DBR) of A.C. Locomotive of ELS/Ajni. **Tender Notice Number :** ELS/AJN/DRG/WCQ/21-22/15. **Completion period :** 24 Months from the date of issue of LOA. **Estimated Cost :** Rs. 1,28,33,618/- (Rs. One crore Twenty Eight Lakh Thirty Three Thousand Six Hundred and Eighteen only). **Cost of tender form :** Nil. **Earnest Money Deposit :** Nil. **Date & Time of Tender Closing :** 18.10.2021 at 12.00 Hours. **Tender opening Authority :** Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, Traction Rolling Stock, Electric Loco Shed, Ajni - Nagpur. **Validity of offer :** 63 days from the date of opening of tender. **Web address for downloading tender paper :** www.ireps.gov.in. Railway reserves the right to accept / reject any / all tenders (s) or part thereof without assigning any reason thereof. Sr. DEE/TRS/ELS/AQ, Nagpur RailMadad Helpline 139

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS

E-Tender Notice

Sr. Divisional Engineer (Co), South East Central Railway, Nagpur, acting for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for execution of works mentioned below:-

Sl. No.: 1. Name of the work: Supply and delivery in stacks 50mm gauge machine crushed stone ballast approx. 60,000 cum. conforming to Railway's specifications at Kalumna Ballast Depot "A" and loading the same in to Railway wagons at Kalumna depot. Tender Notice No.: C/16/NGP/2021-22. Approx. Tender Value: ₹ 4,08,00,000/-.

Sl. No.: 2. Name of the work: Supply and delivery in stacks 50mm gauge machine crushed stone ballast approx. 60,000 cum. conforming to Railway's specifications at Kalumna Ballast Depot "D" and loading the same in to Railway wagons at Kalumna depot. Tender Notice No.: C/17/NGP/2021-22. Approx. Tender Value: ₹ 4,08,00,000/-.

Sl. No.: 3. Name of the work: Hiring of 2 Nos. 3T/9T capacity trucks for carrying Railway Materials 1 for SSE/Pway/Nagbhir and 1 for SSE/Pway/Chandfort separately for a period of one year under the jurisdiction of ADE/Nagbhir. Tender Notice No.: S/17/NGP/2021-22. Approx. Tender Value: ₹ 20,84,137/-.

Sl. No.: 4. Name of the work: Miscellaneous P. Way work such as Distressing of Track, Tie-Temping work, lifting and packing of track etc., in between Gondia-Chandfort section under the jurisdiction of ADE/Nagbhir. Tender Notice No.: S/18/NGP/2021-22. Approx. Tender Value: ₹ 86,13,311/-.

Sl. No.: 5. Name of the work: Miscellaneous P. Way work for maintenance of track in KRCL type pattern under the jurisdiction of SSE/Pway/Nagpur. Tender Notice No.: N20/NGP/2021-22. Approx. Tender Value: ₹ 25,30,105/-.

Sl. No.: 6. Name of the work: Casual Renovation of damaged PSC sleepers in NIR-JBP section under the jurisdiction of ADE/Nagpur. Tender Notice No.: N/21/NGP/2021-22. Approx. Tender Value: ₹ 70,34,615/-.

For all the above tenders:- **Earnest Money: 0.** Special attention to the tenderer: The tenderer should read the special technical criteria condition No. 1.1 explicitly and upload the documents accordingly. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto 15.00 Hrs. on 14.10.2021 only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders and any such manual offers received shall be rejected. Details are available on our website www.ireps.gov.in.

Divisional Engineer(North), S.E.C. Railway, Nagpur. Clean India Drive एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

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DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

RESPECTFUL HOMAGE Tenth Death Anniversary 23.09.2021

On his Birth Anniversary, we would like to pay homage to the departed soul of **Shri Vempati Venkatachalapathy, former secretary of Kuchipudi Art Academy.** His contributions to the World of Kuchipudi cannot be forgotten. **SRIMAYI VEMPATI SECRETARY KUCHIPUDI ART ACADEMY**

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Sri Vaibhav Apartment AB-42, New No. 12, 2nd Floor, 6th Main Rd, Annanagar, Ch-40 Ph: 044 - 43557496 / 9840806079

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a man namely **Rohit S/o: Jhilli Ram, R/o: H. No. 345, Sushant Vihar, Gali No. 14, Ibrahimpur, Delhi** has been reported missing since 16.07.2021 at about 7:00am from her house in this regard DD No. 39A dated 19.07.2021 has been registered at P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi. The description of missing man is as under:

Name: Rohit, Age: 26 Years, Height: 5'5", Built: Midium, Face: Round, Complexion: Shallow, Wearing: Black Colour Shirt & wearing Hawal Chappal in feet.

If anyone have any information about this missing man please inform P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639 SHO Police Station Swaroop Nagar, Delhi DP/1269/ON/2021 Ph: 011-27811415, 7065036327

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KIADB is inviting tenders for providing consultancy services for Project Management Consultancy Services from Consulting Firms under two cover system for the works of (1). Project Management Consultancy Services for the work of Formation of proposed Sub-Layout in bigger plots at Harohalli 3rd Phase Industrial Area, Ramanagar District. (2). Project Management Consultancy Services for the work of Formation of 24M Wide Road (Road No.34), 18M Wide Roads (Road No.2A, 2B, 3, 4C, 4D, 13 14A, 27, 31, 33, 37, 38) 15M Wide Road No.37, 12M Wide Road No.36, 7M Wide Road No.35 & 39 Including Asphaltting, Construction of RCC Side Drains, RCC Storm Water Drain, Spur Culvert & Box Culvert at Dobaspet 4th Phase (Avverahalli) Industrial Area, Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **11.10.2021 upto 04:00 pm**

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DIPR/DDU/Zen/R.O:1642/2021-22

STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.

Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene

IN BRIEF



TTD increases 'sarva darshan' tokens to 8,000

TIRUMALA
In a major relief to the common pilgrims, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) on Wednesday decided to provide 8,000 slotted Sarva Darshan tokens per day on a par with the Special Entry Darshan tokens from September 26.

Bengaluru woman alleges rape, driver held

BENGALURU
The Bengaluru police on Wednesday arrested a taxi driver after a 24-year-old woman filed a complaint alleging that he raped her. The woman, who works as a manager at a restaurant, claimed she had been to a party at a friend's house. She booked a cab at 3.20 a.m. "She fell asleep in the taxi. When she woke up, near her apartment, she found the cab driver on her," the police said.

SC rejects Sree Padmanabha Trust plea

Bench orders that the special audit be completed within three months

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Wednesday rejected a plea by Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple Trust (SPSTT) to exempt it from a special audit of accounts spanning 25 years.

In a judgment in July last year, the court ordered that the trust's finances be audited along with those of the temple for 25 years. The SPSTT wanted the court to modify its direction and confine such an audit to the temple and not include it.

On Wednesday, the court refused the plea. A Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit, S. Ravindra Bhat and Bela M. Trivedi held that the July 2020 order did not intend to confine the audit to the temple alone. It said the SPSTT had agreed to cooperate with the audit in its submissions to the court.

"In the light of developments leading to the passing

of the judgment dated July 13, 2020, it is quite clear that the audit contemplated was not intended to be confined to the temple but was also with respect to SPSTT... We are certain that SPSTT will render complete cooperation in the conduct of special audit," the court noted.

It stated that the financial crisis mentioned by the temple's administrative and advisory committees due to the pandemic lockdown in their report called for "immediate action".

"We, therefore, direct that the special audit, as referred to herein above, with respect to Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple and SPSTT be completed as early as possible and preferably within three months from the date of this order," it ordered.

The court, however, refrained from passing orders on the trust's plea to declare it as an "independent and



The Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple Trust wants the court to confine audit to the temple and not include it. ■ FILE PHOTO

distinct entity" from the temple. The trust wanted to be outside the administrative control of the temple committees formed under the Travancore Cochin Hindu Religious Endowments Act of 1950.

'Very difficult times'

The trust was formed by the erstwhile Travancore ruler in 1965 for "the perpetual continuation of the devotional offerings to the temple, other specified religious rites and certain functions

integral to the royal family traditions."

On September 13, in the last hearing before the court reserved the judgment, the administrative committee of the Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple informed the Bench that the temple was passing through "very difficult times" financially.

The panel, led by the Thiruvananthapuram District Judge, had said it was necessary to know how much of the temple's property was with the trust.

"My properties are also with the trust... In April 2014, the Supreme Court's *amicus curiae* had recommended that 25 years of accounts of both the temple and the trust should be audited... The trust used to care for the day-to-day expenses of the temple," senior advocate R. Basant, representing the committee, had submitted.

The committee had explained that the court, in its July 2020 judgment upholding the Travancore royals' right of shebaitship over the temple, had ordered an audit "as suggested by the *amicus curiae*".

Mr. Basant had argued that the judgment referred to an April 15, 2014 report filed by senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam, who was then *amicus curiae*.

In his report, the *amicus* had recommended a "special audit" by former Comptroller and Auditor-General Vinod Rai of the 25 years of accounts of both the temple and the SPSTT.

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 rainfall likely at isolated places over Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, Vidarbha, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	34.9	25.4	Kozhikode	17	31.8	25.0
Ahmedabad	17	30.8	25.4	Kurnool	1	32.8	24.3
Aizawl	5	29.1	21.0	Lucknow	—	34.8	26.4
Allahabad	—	34.5	27.0	Madurai	—	37.4	24.2
Bengaluru	11.3	28.0	20.6	Mangaluru	7.3	29.4	24.0
Bhopal	—	31.4	23.0	Mumbai	59	28.7	23.7
Bhubaneswar	—	32.7	24.6	Mysuru	—	32.7	22.1
Chandigarh	8.6	31.6	26.0	New Delhi	4	31.8	26.0
Chennai	54	33.1	24.0	Patna	—	32.2	26.0
Coimbatore	—	33.6	23.2	Port Blair	—	27.9	22.3
Dehradun	17	29.6	21.5	Puduchery	—	34.2	22.6
Gangtok	0.2	22.2	15.1	Pune	—	26.0	22.0
Goa	42	27.8	24.0	Raipur	14.6	29.6	22.4
Guwahati	7	33.6	24.5	Ranchi	16.6	27.2	22.5
Hubballi	—	28.0	22.0	Shillong	8	22.2	15.5
Hyderabad	13.2	27.5	22.0	Shimla	—	23.2	18.5
Imphal	8	28.7	20.4	Srinagar	—	27.8	16.6
Jaipur	2.2	32.8	24.8	Thiruvananthapuram	0.5	32.9	24.8
Kochi	6	31.0	24.8	Tiruchi	—	35.1	25.2
Kohima	20	26.0	16.8	Vijayawada	—	34.2	26.0
Kolkata	3	29.6	25.6	Visakhapatnam	—	34.4	26.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	Pollutants in the air you are breathing				Yesterday
	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	
Ahmedabad	31	50	30	66	103
Bengaluru	6	24	65	23	66
Chennai	5	32	84	30	38
Delhi	25	56	111	76	90
Hyderabad	5	75	25	48	57
Kolkata	12	19	18	25	50
Lucknow	8	51	69	100	115
Mumbai	14	41	95	23	49
Pune	7	50	109	36	30
Visakhapatnam	19	39	47	61	102

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

U.P. gets a surfeit of statues ahead of polls

Caste icons are being installed across the State by CM Adityanath and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The statue of Samrat Mihir Bhoj, an icon for both the OBC Gurjar and dominant Rajput communities, unveiled by Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath in Gautam Buddha Nagar's Dadri town on Wednesday is one of the many such cultural icons and political figures that have been recently installed in the poll-bound State.

Be it icons appealing to communities and castes, boasting a local legacy or those linked to the freedom struggle, the BJP and the Samajwadi Party (SP) have gone on an installation spree to honour such figures.

On September 9, Mr. Adityanath unveiled a statue of Bharatendu Harishchandra at the Bharatendu Natya Akademi here on the noted Hindi playwright and poet's 171st birth anniversary.

In July, Mr. Adityanath along with Defence Minister



U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath being presented a memento during a public rally in Dadri on Wednesday. ■ PTI

Rajnath Singh was present as a statue of Lalji Tandon was unveiled in Lucknow's prime Hazratganj area on the first death anniversary of the veteran BJP leader from the Khatri community.

In August, President Ram Nath Kovind unveiled a statue of former CM Sampoorananda and also inaugurated an auditorium named after him at the U.P. Sainik School in Lucknow. Mr. Kovind had said Sampoorananda and Param Vir Chakra awardee Captain Manoj Kumar Pandey, after whom the

school is named, shared the common idea of dedicating everything to national pride.

Interestingly, Sampoorananda is not the only former CM from the Congress whose statue has been installed. Mr. Adityanath in August also inaugurated a statue of Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna at the Yojana Bhavan here. The statue was seen as a move to woo the Brahmins.

Earlier in March, Mr. Adityanath unveiled a statue of Hindu Rajput king Maharana Pratap in Bahraich district and also laid the foundation

stone of a statue of Rudendra Bikram Singh, former royalty of Payagpur who was also a BJP legislator from Kaiser-ganj in 1991. This came a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of a memorial for Maharaja Suheldev and development work of the Chittaura lake in the same district.

'Rectifying mistakes'

Medieval Bhar chieftain Suheldev, whose legacy is contested by both Pasis (Dalits) and Rajbhars (OBC), has over the years been projected as a Hindutva icon by the RSS-BJP for stopping the march of a nephew of Mahmud Ghaznavi even though his historical existence is shrouded in mystery. At the event, Mr. Modi had said the country was rectifying the mistakes, injustice and tampering of history.

Not to be left behind, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has also

been inaugurating statues dedicated to caste icons. Last month, Mr. Yadav unveiled a statue of senior SP leader and former Minister Bhagwati Singh in the Bakshi Ka Talab Inter College here months after his death. Earlier in July, Mr. Yadav unveiled a statue of OBC-Nishad leader Manohar Lal in Unnao district.

In March, Mr. Yadav unveiled a statue of Kotwal Dhan Singh Gurjar, known as a martyr in the 1857 fight for independence in Mawana in Meerut. He also unveiled a statue of former Union Minister and Kurmi stalwart Beni Prasad Verma in Barabanki. SP leaders have also announced they would install a statue of Phoolan Devi in Rae Bareilly. Apart from these, the SP has promised to build a statue of Lord Parshuram in a bid to woo the influential Brahmin community, a vow also made by BSP chief Mayawati.

Warrant issued against Mumbai ex-police chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Second bail warrant has been issued against former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh for not appearing before a commission set up to probe corruption charges against former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh levied by Mr. Singh.

The warrant has been issued by retired judge of the Bombay HC K.U. Chandiwala. The one-member committee was appointed on March 30 by the State government to inquire into the allegations made by Mr. Singh in a letter he wrote to the Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on March 20. The letter had mentioned several instances where Mr. Deshmukh directed now dismissed Assistant Police Inspector Sachin Vaze to collect ₹100 crore a month from bars and restaurants.

14 get life term in scribe's murder case in Bihar

AMARANTH TEWARY
PATNA

A local court in Bihar's Samastipur district on Wednesday sentenced to life imprisonment 14 accused persons in journalist Vikas Ranjan murder case. Ranjan was killed over a land dispute on November 25, 2008, in Rosera sub-division of the district.

The family members of the deceased had accused 14 persons, including a local Lok Janshakti Party leader Swayamvar Yadav. While hearing the case, a local district court pronounced life sentence to all the 14 accused persons after 13 years

of the incident.

"Journalist Vikas Ranjan was killed on November 25, 2008, in Rosera over a land dispute. The dispute was with cousins of his village and they had hatched a conspiracy to kill him by hiring goons," prosecution lawyer Heera Devi told local media persons.

She added, "We produced strong evidences including audio and video clips. The accused had threatened Vikas Ranjan and his family members with dire consequences. We produced eye-witnesses which finally helped to get justice for Ranjan."

Rectify remark, Pinarayi asks Bishop

Kerala CM warns of action against divisive rhetoric

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday urged Pala Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt to rectify his incorrect and polarising sermon on a covert 'narcotic jihad' campaign by radical Islamists to entrap Catholic and non-Muslim youth with fatally addictive mind-altering drugs.

Mr. Vijayan said the government would be unsparring against those who propagated such false theories. He said Leader of the Opposi-



Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt

tion V.D. Satheesan had demanded the same. The government would not remain a mute witness to divisive speech. It would crack the whip on inflammatory rhetoric irrespective of the com-

'Withdraw statement'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOZHIKODE

A meeting of Muslim religious organisations in Kozhikode on Wednesday demanded that the Bishop of Pala withdraw his controversial statement on 'narcotics jihad'.

Briefing the media after the meeting, IUML

mentator's social stature.

"If society does not agree with a person's view, then civic behaviour and propriety demanded the individual correct it," he said. Mr. Vijayan squarely blamed the

high-power committee member and Malappuram district president Panakkad Syed Sadiqali Shihab Thangal and party organising secretary E.T. Mohammed Basheer, MP, said any statement that undermined the religious harmony of the State was improper.

bishop's remark for the current social tensions. "The wrongful statement had precipitated the controversy," he said. However, he rejected the Opposition demand for an all-party meeting.

4 held in A.P. CMRF scam, 88 suspicious claims identified

Accused were resorting to fraud since 2014-15: ACB officers

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Officials of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested four persons, including two government employees, in the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) scam. The accused allegedly swindled more than ₹60 lakh in about 70 cases since 2014-15, the ACB sleuths said on Wednesday.

The arrested were Ch. Subrahmanyam, office subordinate in CMRF wing at the State Secretariat; K. Jagadish alias Dhanaraju alias Nani, who claimed to have worked as PA to some MLAs in East Godavari district; and Ch. Murali Krishna and

S. Ramesh, office subordinate in the revenue section at the Secretariat.

Following a complaint lodged by CMRF officials, the ACB officers registered a case and took up investigation. Investigating officers seized records from different hospitals and the Secretariat, verified the bank accounts and arrested the accused.

A total of ₹1,81,78,000 was sanctioned in respect of 88 suspicious medical claims, of which ₹61,68,000 was credited in 35 claims. Officials stopped transactions for ₹1.20 crore of CMRF for 53 claims, the investigation officers said.

"We verified the accounts in the banks in which the cheques were cashed. The *modus operandi* of the gang is to steal the login ID and password and claim money from CMRF by using fictitious names, case sheets and other documents," an ACB officer said.

Investigating officers found that amlunts were given in excess than the sums specified in the medical packages, similar phone numbers and same diagnoses were detected in multiple applications and other discrepancies were noticed. "More persons are likely to be arrested in the case," the officer said.

'Second jab before 84 days not advisable'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The Centre on Wednesday filed an appeal before a Division Bench of the Kerala High Court against a single judge's verdict allowing willing persons to take a second paid dose of the Covishield vaccine two weeks after the first jab.

The single judge had directed the Centre to make necessary provisions on the Co-WIN portal to enable those who want to take the second jab after four weeks.

In its appeal, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said any insistence on taking the second dose prior to 12 weeks would impede the development of immunity.

Wide-bodied jets to resume service at Kozhikode airport

Operation stopped after crash last year

BIJU GOVIND
KOZHIKODE

Efforts are on to resume operation of wide-bodied aircraft at the Calicut International Airport, with a nine-member committee chaired by Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Khara positively indicating its resumption in two months.

The operation of wide-bodied aircraft has remained suspended after an Air India Express flight crash in August last year. Sources said a report had suggested that the Airports Authority of India (AAI) install a Runway Visual Range



Sad remains: Wreckage of an Air India Express flight that overshot the runway at the airport. ■ FILE PHOTO

(RVR) system for better landing and take off at the table top airport. The installation of RVR system that measures visibility, background luminance, and light intensity to help the pilot navigate the runway during foggy conditions has been given high priority by the AAI at many

airports.

The AAI was permitted to resume operation of wide-bodied aircraft in 2018 after it committed itself to installing a transmissometer for the RVR system. However, at the time of the accident, RVR instruments had not been installed at the airport.

Teacher dies of suspected COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHADRADRI-KOTHAGUDEM

Though the daily COVID-19 positivity rate continued to remain below 1% in Telangana's Bhadradi-Kothagudem district, a few sporadic cases of COVID-19 were reported from three State-run schools in the district in the last three days.

A 55-year-old female teacher of the Zilla Parishad High School at Padamati Narasapuram died of suspected COVID-19 complications on Monday night. School education officials concerned attributed her death to co-morbidities.

A COVID-19 testing camp was conducted on the school premises. All students and staff members have tested negative.



A time to introspect

More Centre-State deliberations needed with GST regime at a critical turning point

At its first physical meeting during the pandemic, the GST Tax Council approved a flurry of changes. Concessional tax rates on vital COVID-19 equipment such as oxygen concentrators will lapse on September 30, while the lower rates on medicines were extended till December. Whatever the pace of vaccination, there are no signs the virus and its variants would be extinct on New Year's Day, so the Council could have taken a more considerate view on pandemic essentials. Tax rate tweaks were okayed for an eclectic range of sectors with long-pending course correction on inverted duty structures plaguing several items, including footwear and textiles. The semblance of clarity brought in on a much-disputed issue – the definition of an intermediary – is welcome, for it was hurting several sectors, including IT services exports. Double taxation on the import of leased aircraft goes. Food delivery services players shall be made liable to collect and remit taxes instead of the restaurants. One awaits the fine print to assess the impact on consumers and smaller outlets. The plan to tax coconut oil as a personal care item at 18% for pack sizes below one litre and retain the 5% rate on edible oils for larger packs, has been held back for study, and will hopefully be shelved for good.

These pluses and minuses aside, two things stand out for Indian consumers – the Council's firm dismissal of any shift of petroleum products to GST to lower the tax burden and the fact that GST cess on automobiles, tobacco and aerated drinks will now be levied till April 2026, not June 2022 as originally envisaged. While the Council may have discussed petro products only briefly to comply with a Kerala High Court order, consumers who need some relief on fuel prices – irrespective of who cuts taxes – may have held misplaced hopes. If the Government really wants a consumption rebound that may reignite private investments, the Centre and States must begin talks on rationalising fuel taxes. The Finance Minister has often expressed the worry: 'What if we cut taxes and States do not'. Perhaps, a compact could be arrived at, so both give up a little revenue to spur spending. A similar dialogue is needed for an honest review of the GST regime's progress and the way ahead. With just nine more months of assured compensation for States, they are worried about revenue streams falling off the cliff thereafter. Their pleas for an extension in the compensation period have met with stern diffidence and the argument that GST revenues are below expectations. Two ministerial groups have been tasked to augment revenues using technology and rate rationalisations. The Centre need not wait for their reports to hold a special Council meeting to discuss States' compensation concerns, as had been promised. At this juncture, the Council should be a forum for empathetic contemplation, not fractious friction.

Status quo ante

Voters backed Trudeau, but took a dim view of his decision to call the snap election

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had framed the September 20 Parliamentary election as Canada's "pivotal moment". Two years into the four-year term of his minority government, he dissolved Parliament and called the snap election hoping that Canadians would give him an absolute majority. However, Mr. Trudeau must be both relieved and disappointed with the preliminary results. His Liberal Party got the most seats in Parliament, at 158, just one more than what they won in the 2019 vote, but well short of a majority of 170 seats. To continue to stay in power, the Liberals will have to depend on smaller parties. The Conservatives, who under the leadership of Erin O'Toole took a moderate position on contentious issues from carbon tax to a ban on assault rifles, failed to make any gain. His plan was to reach out to the voters beyond the Conservative base and take on the liberals on policy specifics rather than on ideology. They secured 119 seats, down from 121 in 2019. While the centre-left New Democrats, led by Jagmeet Singh, won 25 seats, one more than in the last vote, the Bloc Québécois, which backs Quebec independence, took 34 seats, a gain of two. Mr. Singh, whose party backed Mr. Trudeau's minority government after the 2019 election, has hinted that he would continue to support the Liberals.

Mr. Trudeau, son of the former Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, took over the party's reins in 2013 at a time when the liberal prospects were dim. But a young Mr. Trudeau not only revived the Liberal Party but also led it to a surprise election victory in 2015. He has remained the most influential voice in Canada's political landscape. In 2019, he secured victory but without an absolute majority, which forced him to seek the support of the New Democrats. Poll numbers for the Liberals soared after the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling the snap election, Mr. Trudeau's plan was to turn those numbers into actual votes and win a fresh four-year term with a clear majority. But the decision to call a mid-term election was controversial. His rivals called him a political opportunist who had pushed the country into an expensive election – at C\$600 million, it is the most expensive in its history – in the midst of the COVID scare. Voter turnout, at 58.44%, was the lowest ever. In the end, the voters backed Mr. Trudeau's government but stopped short of endorsing his political gamble. Having led the party to three back-to-back victories, he is the undisputed leader of the Liberals. He should focus on the art of coalition politics, finding common ground with the New Democrats for his progressive legislative agenda and providing stable governance to tackle Canada's myriad problems, from the COVID challenge to the climate crisis.

This judicial selection needs more than a tweak

The collegium system and the mysteries underlining its decision-making dilute the importance of the High Courts



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

In recent weeks, the Supreme Court of India's collegium has been busy. New judges have been appointed to the Court on its advice and long overdue vacancies have been filled up. Now, after a meeting held on September 16, the body has made proposals to alter the existing composition of various High Courts. When these recommendations are notified, new Chief Justices will be appointed to as many as eight different courts, five existing Chief Justices will swap positions with others, and a slew of puisne judges will be moved to new courts.

A need for transparency

These recommendations are seen as reflective of a new and proactive collegium. A resolve for swiftness is fine as far as it goes; clearing up vacancies is a minimal requirement of a functioning system. What ought to concern us, though, is that long-standing apprehensions about the collegium's operation remain unaddressed: specifically, its opacity and a lack of independent scrutiny of its decisions. These misgivings are usually seen in the context of a battle between the executive and the judiciary. Less evident is the effect that the failings have on the status of the High Courts. Today, even without express constitutional sanction, the collegium effectively exercises a power of supervision over each of the High Courts.

For nearly two years, despite vacancies on the Bench, the collegium made no recommendations for appointments to the Supreme

Court. The conjecture in the press was that this logjam owed to a reluctance amongst some of its members to elevate Justice Akil Kureshi to the Court. Indeed, it was only after a change in its composition that the panel recommended on August 17 a list of names for elevation. This list did not contain Justice Kureshi's name.

The perfunctory nature of the collegium's resolutions means that we do not know the reasons for his exclusion. We also do not know why five Chief Justices, including Justice Kureshi, and several other puisne judges are now being transferred to different courts. This is not to suggest that these decisions are unfounded. It is possible that each of the choices made is predicated on administrative needs. But whatever the rationale, surely the public has a right to know.

The middle course

Separation of powers is a bedrock principle of Indian constitutionalism. Inherent in that idea is the guarantee of an autonomous judiciary. To that end, the process of appointing and transferring judges assumes salience. But the question of how to strike a balance between the sovereign function of making appointments and the need to ensure an independent judiciary has long plagued the republic.

The Constitution's framers wrestled over the question for many days. Ultimately, they adopted what Dr. B.R. Ambedkar described as a "middle course". That path stipulates the following: Judges to the Supreme Court are to be appointed by the President of India in consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and such other judges that he deems fit. Judges to the High Courts are to be appointed by the President in consultation with the CJI, the Governor of the



State and the Chief Justice of that court. In the case of transfers, the President may move a judge from one High Court to another, after consulting the CJI.

Where primacy rests

In this design, there is no mention of a "collegium". But since 1993, when the Supreme Court rendered a ruling in the Second Judges Case, the word consultation has been interpreted to mean "concurrency". What is more, that concurrence, the Court held there, ought to be secured not from the CJI alone, but from a body of judges that the judgment described as a "collegium". Thus, the Court wound up creating a whole new process for making appointments and transfers and carved out a system where notional primacy came to rest in the top echelons of the judiciary.

This procedure has since been clarified. The collegium for appointments to the Supreme Court and for transfers between High Courts now comprises the CJI and his four senior-most colleagues, and for appointments to the High Courts comprises the CJI and his two senior-most colleagues. When appointing judges to the High Courts, the collegium must also consult other senior judges on the Supreme Court who had previously served as judges of the High

Court under consideration. All of this is contained in a "Memorandum of Procedure" (MoP). But there is, in fact, no actual guidance on how judges are to be selected.

The NJAC and after

In 2015, Parliament sought to undo the labyrinthine procedures put in place by the Court through the 99th Constitutional Amendment. The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), that the law created, comprised members from the judiciary, the executive, and the lay-public. But the Court scuppered the efforts to replace the collegium and it held in the Fourth Judges Case that judicial primacy in making appointments and transfers was an essential feature of the Constitution. In other words, the Court held that a body that found no mention in the actual text of the Constitution had assumed a position so sacrosanct that it could not be touched even by a constitutional amendment.

To be sure, the NJAC was far from perfect. There were legitimate fears that the commission might have resulted in the appointment of malleable judges. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that until a proper alternative is framed, the collegium represents the best solution; that allowing senior judges of the Supreme Court primacy in matters of appointments and transfers is the only practical way to guarantee the independence of the judiciary.

But when the Court struck down the NJAC, it also promised to reform the existing system. Six years down the line those promises have been all but forgotten. A new MoP, for instance, is nowhere in sight. The considerations that must go into the procedure for selecting judges is left unexplained. The words "merit" and "diversity" are thrown around without any

corresponding debates on what they, in fact, mean. Somehow, amidst all of this, we have arrived at a consensus that enveloping a veil over the process of selection is essential to judicial autonomy, and that there is no legitimate reason why the public ought to know how judges are chosen and transferred.

In the case of the latest set of recommendations, five Chief Justices of High Courts have been reshuffled. Our constitutional scheme envisages no power of administrative superintendence in the Supreme Court over the High Courts. But when transfers are made routine, when the process of appointing Chief Justices to High Courts is shrouded in secrecy, a *de facto* system of oversight is put in place.

Getting back the shine

It is clear that we have come a long way from a time when Chief Justices of High Courts declined invitations to the Supreme Court, because they valued the work that they were already entrusted with. Restoring High Courts to that position of prestige must be seen as essential to the process of building trust in our Constitution. Achieving this will no doubt require more than just a tweak in the process of appointments. But what is clear is that the present system and the mysteries underlining the decision-making only further dilute the High Courts' prominence.

When Chief Justices are moved around with alacrity, and when they are accorded tenures lasting a matter of months, at best, it is impossible for them to make any lasting changes. At some point we must take seriously the task of reforming the existing scheme, because the status quo is ultimately corrosive of the very institutions that it seeks to protect.

Suhrith Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

Rulings that impact a State's medical infrastructure

The removal of domicile requirement and in-service quota is affecting super-specialty medical education in Tamil Nadu



P.M. YAZHINI & JEYANNATHANN KARUNANITHI

Tamil Nadu has been in the middle of a journey for some time to set up a medical college in every district. The aim is to ensure efficient delivery of advanced medical care to residents. This has required having specialist and super-specialist doctors to staff various departments in the medical colleges and the hospitals in the State.

Policies by the State

To ensure full value to its investment and maintain institutional continuity, the State brought in three policies. A quota was created wherein 50% of the seats in government medical colleges was earmarked for doctors working in government institutions (in-service candidates) with the stipulation that they needed to work in the Tamil Nadu Medical Services until superannuation. To absorb trained super-specialists who are not associated with Tamil Nadu Medical Services (non-service candidates), it created a bond for them to serve in government hospitals (after the completion of their training) for not less than two years; it also created a domicile requirement for them to appear for the super-specialty entrance examination.

Until 2015-16, admission to Tamil Nadu super-specialty medical seats was on the basis of a State entrance exam, with domicile requirement and in-service quota. The domicile requirement for the admissions to super-specialty courses required by the States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was dismantled in 2016 following a judgment by a Supreme Court Bench comprising Justices Dipak Mishra and Prafulla C. Pant. They indirectly invoked the nine-judge Bench judgment in *Indra Sawhney etc. vs Union Of India* (1992) which requires super-specialty seats in medicine to be outside the ambit of reservation, with expression of no plausible reasons associated with domicile or reservation or 'efficiency of administration'.

With the introduction of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Super Specialty (NEET-SS) conducted by the National Board of Examinations from 2017-18, State governments were robbed of their ability to conduct entrance examinations and counselling for super-specialty seats created in their medical colleges as the States were required to surrender 100% of their seats to the all-India quota. As an extension, the in-service quota stood null and void.

In-service quota, directive

A writ petition (Writ Petition (Civil) No. 196 of 2018; <https://bit.ly/2XHFagc>) was filed by the Tamilnadu Medical Officers Association (TNMOA) on behalf of in-service doctors in Tamil Nadu to contest the removal of 50% in-ser-



vice quota for post-graduate medical courses. The Constitution Bench disposed of this case on in-service quota with an order on August 31, 2020, stating that except for the determination of minimum standards and coordination, the State's power in regulating medical education is preserved. They stated that the State authorities may provide quota for in-service doctors from within the State's own merit list, also adding that aspiring in-service doctors must clear the NEET examination with the minimum prescribed marks.

The Tamil Nadu G.O.

Extrapolating the directions of the Constitution Bench, the Health and Family Welfare Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu on November 7, 2020, issued G.O. (Ms) No. 462. Through this G.O., the Government of Tamil Nadu sought to implement a 50% quota in super-specialty seats in the State for in-service candidates. As the admission process was in the final stages, the Supreme Court Bench, on November 27, 2020, decided not to permit a quota for in-service doctors for the year 2020-21 alone.

With doubts around the line of the judgment in *TNMOA vs Union of India* and the validity of the G.O. (Ms) No. 462 by the Government of Tamil Nadu, it remains to be seen what trajectory the Supreme Court's decisions will take.

Administration and inclusion

Maintenance of the efficiency of administration is an argument which is consistently invoked by the Supreme Court through Article 335 of the Constitution, to negate demands for reservations/quotas. It is here that one is motivated to question the working definition of "efficiency", "merit" and "efficiency of administration" in government that the courts abide by. A welcome move in this regard is the judgment by the two-judge Supreme Court Bench (Justices Uday Umesh Lalit and D.Y. Chandrachud) in *B.K. Pavitra vs Union of India* (2019) which nudges the courts to define the multidimensional term of "efficiency of administration" that is grounded in inclusion.

This definition should have a systems-view of the cascading impact that the removal of domicile requirement and in-service quota can have on the integrity of the State medical infrastructure. On August 25, 2021, the Director of Medical Education issued a letter to the deans of medical colleges requesting them to obtain an undertaking from the non-service super-specialty doctors of 2020-21 who have not opted or are not willing to take up posting even when vacancies are available in their specialty departments. It is under-

stood that nearly 80% of the other State super-specialty candidates, who constitute more than 50% in government medical colleges in Tamil Nadu did not attend counselling held for posting. In Tamil Nadu, with domicile and in-service quota, the percentage of in-service candidates in super-specialty seats used to hover around 40%. But with removal of domicile and in-service quota, in the post-NEET-SS scenario, the percentage of in-service candidates has come down to as low as 6%.

It is here that the point raised by Advocate Wilson in *Dr. Prerit Sharma vs Dr. Bilu B.S.* (2020), invoking the Supreme Court judgments permitting in-service quota in super-specialty medical courses as seen in *T.N. (2001) 2 SCC 538* and *Modern Dental College and Research Centre and Ors. vs State of Madhya Pradesh and Ors.* (2016) 7 SCC 353, assumes greater importance.

With the sustenance of the medical infrastructure intimately linked to the delivery of public health which the States are responsible for through the Constitution, one is left to wonder why the higher judiciary consistently rules against the interventions by the State to maximise the outcomes through domicile, quota for in-service candidates and bond requirements.

Dr. Yazhini P.M. is a general practitioner based in Chennai. Jeyannathann Karunanithi is an independent policy analyst and a water professional, also based in Chennai. The views expressed are personal

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.

New Delhi must ponder

Much may be made about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States, but what should be of concern to New Delhi is the series of developments on the global stage and whether India is being systematically excluded from playing an effective role in international affairs. India was not a part of the negotiating teams that deliberated peace talks with the Taliban prior to their 'takeover' of Afghanistan, though none can dispute the exemplary role played by India in the country's infrastructural development. It was again not viewed as a strategic ally in connection with

AUKUS especially as China has been the catalyst for this. Can India be kept at a distance, especially by fellow Quad members on an issue involving peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region? To add insult to injury, Britain invoked bizarre quarantine rules, undermining India's vaccination capability and its potential as a prime trade partner. The Prime Minister's outreach to France on the issue of the AUKUS row could only be deemed as a face-saving exercise. The formation of AUKUS may even make the existence of the Quad infructuous in course of time. With unfriendly neighbours and the West

apparently not viewing India seriously, the Prime Minister has his task cut out.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,
Chennai

Crack the whip

There is no point in the judiciary issuing stricture after stricture if these are not matched by strict enforcement ("Madras HC upholds ban on use of crash guards, bull bars", September 22). In Chennai, for example, bikers riding without helmets is a common sight, although helmet wearing is mandatory. Car drivers not wearing seat belts, talking on cellphones while driving, the use of tinted

glass or sun-control film, fancy number plates, and the use of prominent pictures of political leaders in cars are some other instances of violations. If a rule has to succeed, the enforcement agencies have to go for the kill without fear or favour. Road safety should come first.

P.G. MENON,
Chennai

Spin quartet

The column, "The man who kept in touch with his inner child" ("Sport" page, September 22), brought back nostalgic and evergreen memories of India's famous spin quartet that wove circles around the world's finest batsmen

at a time when India was still considered as the underdog in world cricket. Although the column is linked to the 75th birthday of the 'Sardar of Spin' Bishen Singh Bedi, the references to Bedi's illustrious contemporaries, Erapalli Prasanna, B.S. Chandrasekhar and S. Venkataraghavan rekindled their magic. It would be no exaggeration to say that all four of them have served as beacon lights to a whole generation of spinners.

C.V. ARAVIND,
Bengaluru

Some of the hills

Some of us residents in Aruvankadu in the Nilgiris face a peculiar problem.

Between the Cordite factory and Kanikkai Raj Nagar, lies a dense forest. Unfortunately, tourists enter this jungle and are spoiling it. Of concern to us is how this jungle is becoming an open air lavatory and with it, an overpowering of our olfactory senses all day. A number of residents (of Periya Bickatty, Chinna Bickatty, Indira Nagar and Old Aruvankadu) have to walk through the jungle to the main road. The authorities need to act as the Nilgiris needs to remain the 'Queen of Hill Stations'.
B.M. KRISHNAN,
Aruvankadu, the Nilgiris

A flawed calculation of inflation

The current official inflation rate does not correctly measure price rise



ARUN KUMAR

Inflation for the last four months has been worryingly high – wholesale price index (WPI) has been above 10% and consumer price index (CPI) crossed the 6% mark in June, which was above the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s tolerance band. This is happening at a time when demand has been down, unemployment has been high, many have lost incomes and poverty has aggravated. So, why is there high inflation and does the official data capture the real picture?

Data issues

In April and May 2020, data on production and prices could not be collected due to the strict lockdown. Unlock had gradually started in June and July 2020 but normalcy had not returned. So, the current data on prices for April to July 2021 are not comparable with the same months of 2020. As such, the official inflation figures for these months in 2021 do not reflect the true picture.

Anyway, a single number for inflation is an aggregate across different commodities and services – the price rise differs for different items of consumption. So, the single number is arrived at by assigning weights to different commodities and services. For WPI, the weights in production are used; for CPI, the consumption basket is used. But people are not homogeneous. The consumption basket is vastly different for the poor, the middle classes, and the rich. Hence, the CPI is different for each of these classes and a composite index requires averaging the baskets. So, in a sense, it represents none of the categories.

During lockdown and unlock in 2020, people largely consumed essentials. RBI data show that consumer confidence fell drastically from 105 in January 2020 to 55.5 by January 2021. That means, even when the economy started to grow officially, consumer confidence had not recovered. Employment and incomes were still down and according to one report, 230 million slipped below the poverty line. All this implies that the consumption basket for different sections of the population had changed. While the consumption pat-



REUTERS

tern of the well-off sections may have changed little, the poor and middle classes, especially those who lost jobs and incomes, would have had to cut back on their consumption. Thus, the weights in the CPI would have changed and inflation required recalculation, but this has not been done. Consumer confidence was down to 48.6 in July 2021 due to the impact of the second wave of COVID-19.

Additionally, inflation data under-represents services in the consumption basket. In production, services are about 55% of the GDP but have no representation in WPI and about 40% in CPI. We know that health costs shot up during the pandemic, but is this captured in inflation figures? Similarly, education costs soared with the requirement of mobile phones, laptops and Wi-Fi. Many services were not used. Eating out and travel, for instance, should have been factored out.

In brief, the shock of lockdowns not only made data collection difficult but the consumption basket for calculating CPI should have been changed.

Inflation pinches the pockets of the consumer. If the rate of inflation is 10%, then compared to the previous year a person has to spend 10% more to buy the same amount of things. If the person's income also rises by 10%, inflation does not matter. But if the person's income rises by less than 10%, their budget gets impacted adversely. For the middle classes, both consumption of less essential items and savings get reduced. But the poor, who hardly save, have to curtail essential consumption.

In India, 94% work in the unorganised sector and mostly earn low incomes and have little savings. By definition, they cannot bargain for higher incomes as prices rise, and get hit by inflation. Further, due to lockdowns, the wages of many declined, both in the unorganised and organised sectors. This has impacted their family budgets.

Consequently, demand has declined not only for non-essentials but even for essentials. In a vicious cycle, this is slowing down economic recovery and

employment generation. Further, this impacts the government's revenues and tends to increase the budgetary deficit. This puts pressure on the government to cut back budgetary expenditures, especially on the social sector. That aggravates poverty and reduces demand further. Thus, inflation in times of low demand and reduced incomes leads to a vicious cycle of slowing the economy and a growing crisis in the lives of the poor and unemployed, most of whom belong to the unorganised sector and some to the organised sector.

Factors underlying inflation

The government has increased taxation of energy to raise resources. Since energy is used for all production, prices of all goods and services tend to rise and push up the rate of inflation. Further, this is an indirect tax, it is regressive and impacts the poor disproportionately more. It also makes the RBI's task of controlling inflation difficult.

The lockdowns disrupted supplies and that added to shortages and price rise. Prices of medicines and medical equipment rose dramatically. Prices of items of day-to-day consumption also rose. Fruits and vegetable prices rose since these items could not reach the urban markets. Their prices collapsed in rural areas but rose sharply in urban areas. Big business raised prices since competition from the unorganised sector decreased. And in spite of a lower wage bill, they raised prices as reflected in a sharp rise in the profits of the corporate sector.

International factors have impacted prices. Most major economies have recovered and demand for inputs has increased while supplies have remained disrupted (like chips for automobiles). So, commodity and input prices have risen (like in the case of metals). Businesses claim increase in input costs underlies price rise. The weakening of the rupee also added to inflation.

In brief, the current official inflation rate does not correctly measure price rise since the lockdown administered a shock to the economy. The method of calculating it needed modification. Many of the non-rich have suffered a double blow due to loss of income and rise in prices. This is slowing down the pick-up in growth by curtailing demand.

Arun Kumar is Malcolm Adiseshiah Chair Professor, Institute of Social Sciences, and author of 'Indian Economy's Greatest Crisis: Impact of the Coronavirus and the Road Ahead'

Sea level rise is certain

This has implications for the future even under the low emissions scenarios



SUJATHA BYRAVAN

The recently published Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report from Working Group I – 'Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis' – is a clarion call for climate action. It provides one of the most expansive scientific reviews on the science and impacts of climate change.

The report discusses five different shared socio-economic pathways for the future with varying levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The scenarios illustrated are the following: very low and low GHG emissions, where emissions decline to net zero around or after the middle of the century, beyond which emissions are net negative; intermediate GHG emissions; high and very high emissions where they are double the current levels by 2100 and 2050, respectively. Even in the intermediate scenario, it is extremely likely that average warming will exceed 2°C near mid-century. The average global temperature is already 1.09°C higher than pre-industrial levels and CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere is currently 410 ppm compared to 285 ppm in 1850.

Over 200 experts working in several domains of climate have put the report together by assessing the evidence and the uncertainties. They express their level of confidence (a qualitative measure of the validity of the findings) ranging from very low to very high. They also assess likelihood (a quantitative measure of uncertainty in a finding) which is expressed probabilistically based on observations or modelling results.

Come hell or high water

Close to 700 million people worldwide live along the coast and there continue to be plans to expand coastal cities. Therefore, understanding the risks involved from climate change and sea level rise in the 21st and 22nd centuries is crucial. Sea level rise will continue after emissions no longer increase, because oceans respond slowly to warming. The centennial-scale irreversibility of sea level rise has implications for the future even under the low emissions scenarios.



AFP

Sea level rise occurs mainly due to the expansion of warm ocean waters, melting of glaciers on land, and the melting of ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica. Global mean sea level (GMSL) rose by 0.2m between 1901 and 2018. The average rate of sea level rise was 1.3 mm/year (1901-1971) and rose to 3.7 mm/year (2006-2018). While sea level rise in the last century was mainly due to thermal expansion, glacier and ice sheet melt are now big contributors.

In the low emissions scenario, GMSL is expected to be 0.19m in 2050 and 0.44m by 2100. In the very high emissions scenario, GMSL is expected to be about 0.23m in 2050 and 0.77m in 2100. These increases are relative to 1995-2014 and do not include uncertainties in ice sheet processes.

Scientists rely on ice sheet models to estimate future glacier melt. While these models have improved over the years, there are shortcomings in the knowledge and representation of the physical processes.

Uncertainties

Ice sheets can destabilise rapidly as the water gets warm (marine ice sheet instability or MISI). Ice cliffs can collapse swiftly in a related process, leading to rapid sea level rise; this is marine ice cliff instability (MICI). Such changes are difficult to model and MICI events are not included in the sea level projections mentioned above.

As Siebert et al. indicate, changes in ice-ocean interactions can cause extensive and rapid sea level rise. This happens from mass loss of ice shelves (ice that flows into cold oceans while attached to the land), which may disintegrate suddenly. Under strong warming scenarios, ice shelves become vulnerable and lead to MISI. In the very high emissions scenario, with low confidence (and in the 17th-83rd percentile range), sea level rise can be as high as 1.61m by 2100.

Using ice sheet models coupled with ocean models to create probabilistic scenarios for the future is therefore

tricky. The models do not capture the abrupt and non-linear dynamics of changes that take place. The report has a high-end storyline that includes processes where there is uncertainty. The main uncertainty lies in 'when' rather than 'if' the high-end scenario occurs. Projections based on 'structured expert judgments' indicate that sea level rise as high as 2.3m by 2100 cannot be ruled out.

According to the UN Environment Programme Emissions Gap Report, the world is heading for a temperature rise above 3°C this century, which is double the Paris Agreement aspiration. And there is deep uncertainty in sea level projections for warming above 3°C.

Vulnerability in India

Communities along the coast in India are vulnerable to sea level rise and storms, which will become more intense and frequent. They will be accompanied by storm surges, heavy rain and flooding. Even the 0.1m to 0.2m rise expected along India in the next few decades can cause frequent coastal flooding. A speculator might think that if less than a metre sea level rise by 2100 is the likely scenario, they have another 60-80 years to continue developing infrastructure along the coast. That would not, however, be the right way to interpret the IPCC data.

The uncertainty regarding a metre or more of sea level rise before 2100 is related to a lack of knowledge and inability to run models with the accuracy needed. Low confidence does not mean higher sea level rise findings are not to be trusted. In this case, the low confidence is from unknowns – poor data and difficulty representing these processes well in models. Ignoring the unknowns can prove dangerous.

Adaptation to sea level rise must include a range of measures, along with coastal regulation, which should be stricter, not laxer, as it has become with each update of the Coastal Regulation Zone. The government should not insure or bail out speculators, coastal communities should be alerted in advance and protected during severe weather events, natural and other barriers should be considered in a limited manner to protect certain vulnerable areas, and retreat should be part of the adaptation strategies for some very low-lying areas.

Sujatha Byravan is a scientist who studies science, technology and policy

Improving the economic game

Businesses can help meet the objectives of the Quad

CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE

The Quad (Australia, Japan, India and the U.S.) meets in a landmark physical summit this week. The agenda for the Quad has widened – till now, it was largely focused on strengthening strategic and defence pillars. This should now bring industry into the dialogue process to advance the desired outcomes.

The four nations are vibrant democracies and open economies. Three are developed countries and one is an emerging market. The Quad leaders met formally but virtually for the first time in March this year, and the joint statement captured the "spirit of the Quad", stressing democratic values, while pledging to strengthen cooperation on the "defining challenges" of the times.

On the economic side, challenges were identified as the economic and health impacts of COVID-19, cyberspace, critical technologies, and quality infrastructure investment. Working groups were set up on vaccines, critical and emerging technologies, and climate action.

For India, each of the other three countries is a strategic partner, and bilateral and multilateral initiatives have been taken across multiple areas in different fora with each. The Quad syncs with India's other regional programmes such as the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative and the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative.

India's total trade with the three Quad partners was over \$108 billion in 2020-21, accounting for almost 16% of its total merchandise exports and imports. On the investment side, the U.S. is India's second largest source of foreign direct investments, while Japan has a notable footprint in India's major infrastructure projects. Inflows from Australia amount to less than a billion dollars, but the country has outlined a long-term strategy for economic engagement with India.

Business partnerships

To advance their goals for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific, the four participants of Quad must activate business partnerships meaningfully with definitive measures to align economic and strategic objectives.

The first piece of the economic pillar is trade and investment. Joint ef-

forts by all Quad countries can help to establish alternative manufacturing hubs and make regional supply chains more diversified. The SCRI with India, Australia and Japan aims to address vulnerabilities in existing supply chains that were exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, the Quad could consider adding a trade ministers' interaction to its agenda which may engage in lowering trade barriers and boosting trade linkages among the partner countries as well as in the Indo-Pacific region. With India as a natural option for a China-Plus strategy, domestic policies to promote manufacturing and ease of doing business would help in the long-term success of trade cooperation.

Quality infrastructure investment is another challenge highlighted in the statement. Innovative financing and public-private partnership models can enlarge the space for private industry and support public funds in the endeavour. Green infrastructure creation must be built into the template. A working group on this area could look into specific projects for the region that would best feed into trade objectives. As in the vaccine cooperation proposal, different partner countries could focus on various aspects of construction, drawing on their respective strengths.

The third priority area for the Quad is climate change for which a working group has been set up. Cooperation on multiple dimensions of the climate challenge is proposed, including finance, emissions reduction, technology and capacity-building. With mitigation and adaptation as key aims, the involvement of industry to support governmental efforts would be critical.

As a grouping of like-minded nations working on shared objectives in the Indo-Pacific region, the Quad is a formidable economic force that can deliver many gains on the identified pillars for the participating nations as well as the region. By adding businesses into its strategy mix, its initiatives would be further fortified and expanded. We hope that the governments would consider a forum for such private sector engagement.

Chandrajit Banerjee is Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry

DATA POINT

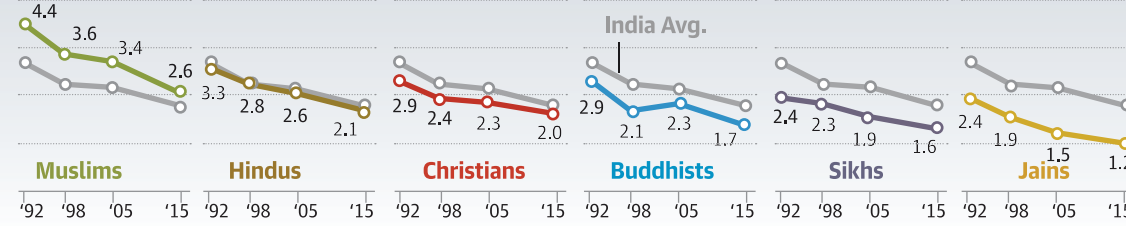
Stable growth across religions

The religious composition of India's population has remained largely stable since Independence as fertility rates have declined across all religious groups, according to a study by the Pew Research Center. Fertility rate is the number of children a woman would have on average in her lifetime. There has been a significant decline in fertility rates across religious groups, with Muslims recording the highest drop. As a result, the population growth rates have also declined across all religions. The fertility rates of religious groups have, in fact, converged over time. Another recent Pew study suggests that religious conversion had little bearing on the composition of the population

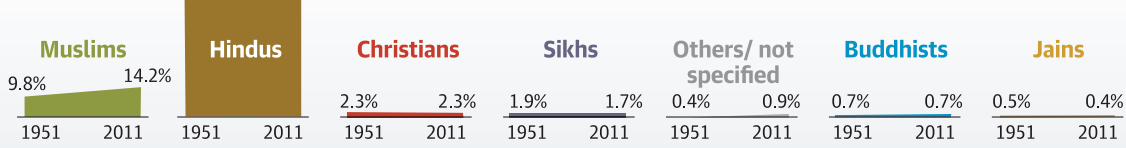
● 98% said they currently identify themselves with the same religion they were raised in, pointing to the minimal impact of religious conversion

● The population growth rate of Muslims dropped from 32.7% in 1951-61 to 24.7% in 2001-11. In the same time periods, the population growth rate of Hindus dropped from 20.7% to 16.7%

Drop in fertility levels | The chart depicts the steep fall in fertility rates across religious groups. The sharpest fall was recorded among Muslims. Also, the gap in fertility levels between religions has reduced. In 1992, a Muslim woman gave birth to an average of 1.1 more children than a Hindu. However, in 2015, this difference reduced to 0.5



Minimal change in composition | The chart depicts the change in India's religious composition between 1951 and 2011. There have been only modest changes in the overall religious make up of the population in the 60-year period



Stable even at 2050

According to Pew Research Center's demographic projections for 2050, Hindus will form 77% of India's total population (a 2% point

decrease from 2020) and the share of Muslims will grow by 3% points to 18% in 2050

Impact of conversion

While the fertility rate has been the primary driver of change in the composition of the population, another Pew report study says religious conversion had no impact on demographic change. Only 0.7% of Hindus said they were raised Hindu but identified with some other religion, while 0.8% said they weren't raised Hindu but now identified as Hindu. This suggests that there has been little movement in and out of religious groups

^ PEW survey published on June 29, 2021
Source: Religious composition of India, Pew Research Center

Religion	% of Indian adults who were/are ...		% of Indian adults who were ...	
	Raised as	Currently identify as	Raised in another religion but now identify as (i.e., entering)	Raised as but now identify as something else (i.e., leaving)
Hindu	81.6%	81.7%	0.8%	0.7%
Muslim	11.2%	11.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Christian	2.3%	2.6%	0.4%	0.1%
Sikh	2.3%	2.3%	0.1%	0.1%
Buddhist	1.7%	1.7%	0.1%	0.1%
Jain	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%
Other	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%
Nil	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 23, 1971

21 dead in Madras after taking varnish

Twenty persons including two women died to-day after consuming varnish in Tiruvottiyur in North Madras [Madras, Sept. 22]. Of them eleven died at the Stanley Hospital. The others died in their homes before they could be taken to hospital. Yesterday a middle-aged man of Perambur Barracks who consumed varnish later died in the Government Hospital. Forty-eight persons were admitted to the Stanley Hospital since midnight of Tuesday. More than hundred persons mostly slum-dwellers had taken what was described as 'kalakkal' (varnish) since Monday. Patients with symptoms of blurred eye sight, nausea, and respiratory trouble came streaming in after 9 this morning to the hospital. The poisonous element in the drink is suspected to be methyl alcohol. A hospital spokesman said that the patients were administered orally ethyl alcohol to neutralise the methyl alcohol. Sodium bicarbonate solution and glucose was also given intravenously. For those who experienced breathing trouble, oxygen was administered. According to a Tiruvottiyur Councillor, the victims had bought the varnish from a shop on Tiruvottiyur High Road as there was no toddy or arrack shop in that locality.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPT. 23, 1921

Swadesi campaign.

Mahatma Gandhi has issued the following message from Madurai... Only a few days are left for us to complete the boycott of foreign cloth enjoined by the All-India Congress Committee. It is not yet too late if every Congress worker will devote his and her exclusive attention to the boycott. If everyone realises that without Swadeshi, i.e., boycott of foreign cloth and manufacture of all the required cloth by hand-spinning and hand-weaving there is no Swaraj, and without Swaraj there is no settlement of the Khilafat and the Punjab problems, there should be no difficulty in bringing about the desired boycott and the required manufacture... Many will find it difficult to replace their foreign cloth all at once. Millions are too poor to buy enough khaddar to replace the discarded cloth. To them I repeat my advice given on the Madras beach. Let them be satisfied with a mere loin cloth. I give the advice under a full sense of my responsibility. In order therefore to set the example I propose to discard at least up to the 31st of October my topi and vest and to content myself with only a loin cloth and a chaddar whenever found necessary for the protection of the body.

FROM PAGE ONE

₹50,000 compensation for each COVID death

"The ex gratia assistance to families affected by COVID-19 deaths will continue to be provided for deaths that may occur in the future phases of the COVID-19 pandemic as well, or until further notification," the NDMA said.

The NDMA made a point that the pandemic has not abated. The total number of deaths continues to rise. There is also uncertainty about new variants of the virus and likely future waves. It advocated "financial prudence".

Financial prudence

"Therefore, it is not possible to ascertain the total financial burden emanating from the ex gratia assistance. Financial prudence demands that we plan in a manner that assistance can be provided to a large number of people, should the number of deaths rise," its guidelines said.

The guidelines noted that States have already been incurring large expenditure from SDRF on various as-

pects of COVID-19 prevention, management and response.

The Centre has also, from the national budget, announced several measures to curb the impact of the pandemic. The vaccination drive, provisions for the welfare and support of orphaned children and the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana package were among the measures.

"State governments have announced welfare measures from the State budgets. So, in effect, some financial and material assistance has already been provided in different forms to some of the most vulnerable sections," the NDMA said in its guidelines.

The NDMA said that while the pandemic was an "unprecedented disaster", other natural disasters that occur frequently must also be taken into account. "It is important that sufficient funds are available under SDRF to provide a timely and effective response to other disasters as well," it said.

Covishield fine, but not Indian certification: U.K.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla had stated on Tuesday that India could impose "reciprocal measures" if the U.K. did not keep its assurances to resolve the issue, and called the policy that excluded Indian-made vaccines and Indian travellers, as "discriminatory". British entry protocols also came in for severe criticism from the Opposition Congress, with Kerala MP Shashi Tharoor cancelling a visit to the U.K. in protest.

In response to the calls for India to place reciprocal quarantine restrictions on U.K. travellers, Mr. Ellis tweeted, "They already do",

pointing to Indian Health Ministry guidelines that require travellers from U.K., Brazil and South Africa to remain in home quarantine for seven days, even if they test negative on arrival in India. The MEA declined to comment on the U.K.'s latest decision, as well as the British High Commissioner's contention that they were not completely assured about the working of the CoWIN app, that issues certificates of vaccination for Indians, including those who have been administered the Serum Institute's Covishield, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Russian-made Sputnik vaccines.

NEET fraud: CBI books coaching centre

The username and password of the candidates who applied for NEET was obtained to make necessary modifications to get desired examination centres. Copies of e-Aadhaar of the candidates were taken for morphing photographs.

According to sources, at least five students engaged the services of proxy candidates arranged by Mr. Kotpalliwar, with the help of two persons Diwakar and Munna, at one centre in Ranchi and four centres in Delhi. Mr. Kotpalliwar, along with his associates, had come to Delhi on September 9, 2021.

The CBI's FIR said the actions of the suspects prima facie revealed offences of cheating, forgery and other offences under the provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000. The coaching centre and unknown others indulged in fraudulent acts in NEET UG-2021 conducted on Sep-

tember 12, 2021, "thereby cheating the National Testing Agency, genuine meritorious candidates and the general public at large," the CBI said.

However, sources in the agency said the proxy writers engaged for the candidates did not turn up at the NEET centre and the candidates were marked "absent".

Five persons who were associated with the coaching centre in Nagpur were taken into custody for acting as middlemen.

"The proxy candidates who were engaged to impersonate the bonafide students did not turn up. Investigators were tracking the case closely and there was evidence to corroborate information received. A probe is on to check how many candidates engaged proxy writers with the help of the suspects and whether any fraud was actually committed," a CBI official said.

U.P. CM asks public to follow 'rashtra dharma'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday raised the nationalist pitch before the Assembly election by appealing to people to follow "rashtra dharma" (duty towards nation) and shun caste differences.

Striking a conciliatory note with farmers in Amroha, Mr. Adityanath said a committee had been formed to look into increasing the State Approved Price (SAP) of sugarcane without delay.

The panel will also look into "ensuring the smooth payment of sugarcane dues

of farmers by the mills", the Chief Minister said, highlighting that during the COVID-19 pandemic no sugar mill was shut down in the region.

On a tour of western Uttar Pradesh to share the accomplishments of the BJP rule, Mr. Adityanath said his tenure remained "riot-free" and the State was "emerging as an export hub". He was speaking in the Dadri town of Gautam Buddha Nagar before moving to Hapur and Amroha.

On Tuesday, he addressed meetings in Moradabad and Sambhal.

WHO tightens global air quality norms

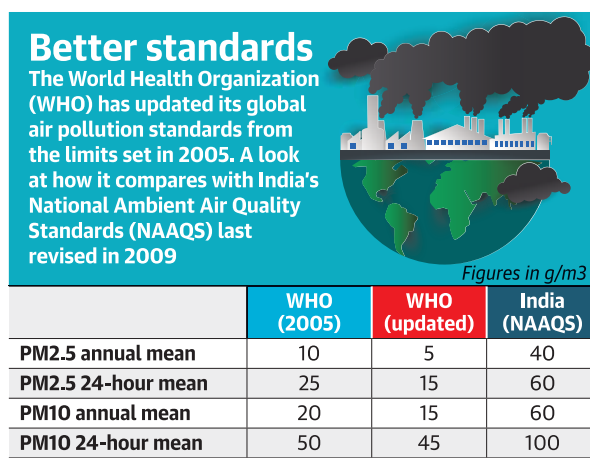
Move has no immediate effect in India as its rules don't meet world body's existing standards

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The World Health Organization (WHO), in its first-ever update since 2005, has tightened global air pollution standards in recognition of the emerging science in the past decade that the impact of air pollution on health is much more serious than earlier envisaged.

The move does not have an immediate effect in India as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) do not meet the WHO's existing standards. The government has a dedicated National Clean Air Programme that aims for a 20% to 30% reduction in particulate matter concentrations by 2024 in 122 cities, keeping 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration. These are cities that do not meet the NAAQS when calculated from 2011 to 2015.

However, experts say the WHO move sets the stage for eventual shifts in policy in



the government towards evolving newer stricter standards.

"This will soon become part of policy discussions — much like climate targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions keep getting stricter over time — and once cities and States are set targets for meeting pollution emission standards, it could lead to overall changes in national standards," said a senior official, who is part of a high-level commission to monitor air quality standards. The person declined to be identified as he is not authorised to speak to the media.

The upper limit of annual PM2.5 as per the 2005 standards, which is what countries now follow, is 10 microgram per cubic metre. That has now been revised to five microgram per cubic metre. The 24-hour ceiling used to

be 25 microgram but has now dropped to 15. The upper limit of PM10, or particulate matter of size exceeding 10 microgram, is 20 microgram and has now been revised to 15, whereas the 24-hour value has been revised from 50 to 45 microgram.

India's NAAQS — last revised in 2009 — specify an annual limit of 60 microgram per cubic metre for PM10 and 100 for a 24-hour period. Similarly it's 40 for PM 2.5 annually and 60 on a 24-hour period. There are also standards for a host of chemical pollutants including sulphur dioxide, lead and nitrogen dioxide.

Environmental organisation Greenpeace, in a statement, said the new guidelines meant that among 100 global cities, Delhi's annual PM2.5 trends in 2020 was 16.8 times more than the WHO's revised air quality guidelines, while Mumbai exceeded eight-fold, Kolkata's 9.4, Chennai's 5.4, Hyde-

rabad's 7 and Ahmedabad's 9.8.

"WHO's new Air Quality Guidelines are an evidence-based and practical tool for improving the quality of the air on which all life depends. I urge all countries and all those fighting to protect our environment to put them to use to reduce suffering and save lives," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

Every year, exposure to air pollution is estimated to cause 7 million premature deaths and result in the loss of millions more healthy years of life.

Severe health crisis

"Air pollution is a severe health crisis and WHO's revised air quality guidelines bring back the focus to the issue," said S.N. Tripathi, professor, IIT Kanpur & Steering Committee Member, National Clean Air Programme, India.

Terrorism knows no age, says NIA

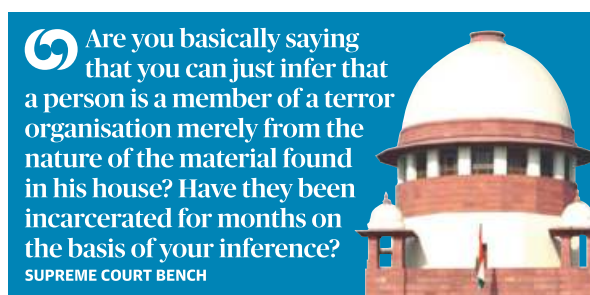
On bail plea, agency counters SC remark that 2 UAPA accused were 'young boys'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A remark from the Supreme Court on Wednesday that two Kerala youth, accused under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for Maoist links, were but "young boys" saw the National Investigation Agency (NIA) respond that "terrorism knows no age" and "Naxalites, Maoists are very sharp, shrewd people" who covered their tracks.

Arguing against their bail before a Bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Abhay S. Oka, Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, for the NIA, said it was not as if they were "caught reading Karl Marx".

The "incriminating" material found on students Thwaha Fasal and Allan Shuhaib, in their twenties, clearly drew the "inference" that they were "members of a terror organisation", he said.



"Terrorism knows no age. There are enough instances of young people involved in terrorism. They catch them young as they are amenable," Mr. Raju said.

But the court then asked the law officer why Section 20 of the UAPA, which dealt with punishment for being a member of a terror organisation, was dropped against the two in the NIA chargesheet.

The NIA has chargesheeted the two young men and another for associating and supporting a terror organisation.

If found guilty, these offences attract either a fine or imprisonment up to 10 years. However, being a member of a terror organisation is a far graver offence. It is punished with imprisonment up to life.

"Are you basically saying that you can just infer that a person is a member of a terror organisation merely from the nature of the material found in his house? Have they been incarcerated for months on the basis of your inference? Where is the incriminating material to show

they are members?" Justice Rastogi asked.

Maoist notices

Mr. Raju said investigators found 15 Maoist notices ostensibly for distribution of literature urging armed revolution and independence for Jammu and Kashmir and loads of electronic evidence.

Countering for Fasal, senior advocate Jayant Muthuraj said the police had not found any incriminating material on the two youths, except a copy of the Madhav Gadgil report on the ecology of Western Ghats, at the time of arrest.

Senior advocate R. Basant, for Shuhaib, said the very fact that the accused had been chargesheeted only for associating or supporting a banned organisation pre-supposed that they were not members of the outfit. Mr. Basant will continue his submissions on Thursday.

Cong. demands probe into heroin seizure

PM must answer the nation, says party

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday demanded a Supreme Court-monitored investigation into the alleged bribery case involving e-commerce firm Amazon and the recent seizure of nearly 3,000 tonnes of heroin in Gujarat.

At a press conference, party general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said these were "very serious" issues involving national security and Prime Minister Narendra Modi should answer the nation.

Mr. Surjewala claimed that the company whose imports were seized had earlier imported 25,000 kg of the same type of drugs worth ₹1.75 lakh crore. He said that as per media reports, Ashish Traders, whose import-export licence was allegedly used for the consignment, received merely ₹10 lakh as commission.

"Who is the drugs cartel? Why is the drug cartel prospering right under the nose of Narendra Modi and [Home Minister] Amit Shah? Is this not pushing India's youth into the menace of drugs? Where are those drugs now? Is it not a breach of national security as these came from and are connected to the Taliban and Afghanistan. Why has Adani Mundra port not been investigated," he asked.

On the alleged bribery allegations involving e-commerce giant Amazon, he asked how can the company spend ₹8,546 crore in "legal fee when the Law Ministry's annual budget is only ₹1,100 crore".

"Who received the money? Was this money given to annihilate the trade and business of crores of small shopkeepers, MSMEs and traders so that e-commerce company like Amazon could take away their businesses and livelihood," he asked.

Ex-Meghalaya CM meets Trinamool leaders, sparks speculation of rift

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Former Meghalaya Chief Minister and Congress veteran Mukul Sangma met Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee in Kolkata on Tuesday, triggering speculation amid a reported rift within the Congress in the State.

A party loyalist confirmed Dr. Sangma's meeting with

Mr. Banerjee in the West Bengal capital. "He was in Kolkata for some work and honoured an invitation from the Trinamool leadership. Nothing much should be read into the meeting," the loyalist said on Wednesday.

A few days ago, Dr. Sangma and some MLAs skipped a programme where five senior leaders rejoined the Congress. He also avoided a

Drug haul: role of Pakistani elements being examined

Syndicate has roped in locals to facilitate smuggling racket

DEVESH K. PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) is questioning the suspects arrested in connection with the 3,000-kg heroin seizure at the Mundra port in Gujarat to determine the identities of other foreign nationals who were part of the international drug trafficking syndicate.

The agency has so far arrested eight persons, including four Afghan nationals, one Uzbek and three Indians.

During further searches, it also seized about 10 kg of powder suspected to be cocaine.

A Kandahar-based company, Hassan Hussain Limited, was shown as the exporter of the consignment that was sent through the Bandar Abbas port in Iran. A possible role of Pakistan-based



Local connect: The locked Aashi Trading Company office in Vijayawada which is under the scanner #K.V.S. GIRI

elements is also being examined. The syndicate had roped in several local people to facilitate the smuggling on the pretext of importing talc stones from Afghanistan. Among them were allegedly Govindaraju Durga Purna Vaishali and her husband, Machavaram Sudhakar, who had been living in Chennai for the past several years.

The masterminds used an import-export licence in her

name to show import of the consignment by Aashi Trading Company in exchange for commission, as alleged. The Vijayawada premises, from where it was being run, is owned by her mother.

On Tuesday, the Vijayawada police said Ms. Vaishali had taken GST registration in August last year "on the address at D.No. 23-14-16, Satyanarayanapuram, Gadiyaramvari Street, Vijayawada".

J&K constable killed by colleague's fire

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

A policeman died of bullet injuries after another policeman opened fire at him mistaking him to be an "anti-national element" at Handwara in north Kashmir late on Tuesday.

A police spokesman said Ajay Dhar, a resident of Handwara's Langate, suffered bullet injuries when "a sentry assumed that there was an attack by anti-national elements and opened fire". Dhar died of injuries, the police said, adding that he was "forcibly trying to enter a temple at midnight".

Meanwhile, the body of a missing soldier has been recovered after a year at Kulgam. Locals said the body of rifleman Shakir Manzoor Wagey was spotted at Mohammad Pora and was identified by his father.

Shakir of the Territorial Army and was missing since August 2, 2020.

Six more government staff sacked in J&K

Administration claims security threat

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday terminated the services of six government employees for "posing a threat to security" under amended Article 311(2)(c), which requires no departmental inquiry except for a police or official report.

Among the terminated employees are two policemen and two teachers who hail from Kishtwar in the Chenab Valley, Poonch the Pir Panjal Valley and Anantnag, Baramulla and Budgam districts in the Kashmir Valley.

They were identified as teacher Hamid Wani from Bijbehara in Anantnag; Kishtwar constable Jaffer Hussain Butt; junior assistant in the Roads and Buildings Department Muham-

mad Rafi Butt, also from Kishtwar; teacher Liyaqat Ali Kakroo from Baramulla; range officer in the Forest Department Tariq Mehmood Kohli from Poonch; and constable Showkat Ahmad Khan from Budgam.

Parties protest

The administration, since the Union government ended J&K's special constitutional position in 2019, has started a process of terminating services of government employees with alleged militant links on the basis of police investigations. J&K regional parties, including the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), have opposed the amended law and demanded that such employees should be allowed to be heard in the court of law.

IN BRIEF



Traders' strike brings Jammu to a standstill

SRINAGAR Life in Jammu was affected on Wednesday due to a traders' strike. The bandh was called by the Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industries (JCCI) in protest against the government's "anti-traders measures" and "proposed opening of Reliance stores" in Jammu. Markets, shops, business establishments and malls were closed.

SC dismisses appeals in 'fake toolkit' case

NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed appeals filed by the Chhattisgarh government challenging a State High Court order to stay the investigation on an FIR against former Chief Minister Raman Singh and BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra for their tweets in connection with an alleged fabricated toolkit case.

Term Moplah rebellion a genocide: Prajna Pravah

NEW DELHI Prajna Pravah, an organisation associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, has demanded that the 1921 Moplah Rebellion be termed a "genocide" and a memorial be set up in memory of those who lost their lives in that set of events. It announced a series of events to raise support for the move. J. Nandakumar, convener of Prajna Pravah, said the body was going to organise events on September 25 and 26 in Delhi and at the block-levels in Kerala to make their demands.

U.P. govt. orders CBI probe into seer's death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government late on Wednesday recommended a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the death of prominent seer Mahant Narendra Giri in Prayagraj, the State Home department said.

Mr. Adityanath had on Tuesday said those guilty in

the alleged death by suicide case of Narendra Giri would be punished after an independent investigation.

The police, meanwhile, have booked Anand Giri, a close disciple of Narendra Giri till they had a public fall-out earlier this year, for abetment of suicide and brought him to Prayagraj for questioning after detaining him in Haridwar.

Former CM's remark on Ram flayed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Former Bihar Chief Minister and president of the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) Jitan Ram Manjhi's comment on Lord Ram and the Ramayana sparked a row on Wednesday.

BJP leaders launched an attack on Mr. Manjhi, whose party is part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the State, and said he should delete the word "Ram" from his name. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Congress, too, condemned Mr. Manjhi's comment and said the relevance of Lord Ram in Indian society was not to be questioned. "No one can erase the existence of Lord Ram and the relevance of the Ramayana... Mr. Manjhi says such things to be in the news," said BJP leader Prem Ranjan Patel.

Rahul likely to visit Chhattisgarh where a leadership tussle is on

Arrival of State Ministers in Delhi fuels talk of a possible change of guard

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid the leadership tussle in Chhattisgarh, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi is likely to visit the party-ruled State by the end of September.

After the change of guard in Punjab, speculation gained ground that Chhattisgarh was likely to be the next State that could see a leadership change.

It was not clear if the Congress high command would take a call on the leadership question before Mr. Gandhi's visit, but the issue was wide open.

The arrival of State Health Minister T.S. Singh Deo in Delhi on Monday and Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu meeting party general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal on Tuesday further fuelled talks of a possible change of leadership and Cabinet reshuffle in the State.



Tight spot: CM Bhupesh Baghel and Congress leader P.L. Punia after meeting Rahul Gandhi in Delhi last month. ♦ PTI

Top party sources, however, said the talks about an impending reshuffle were not correct. "The date or other issues of rotating chief minister have not been finalised. Both the leaders have been told to keep quiet and not issue statements against each other. The high command will let them know when it takes a call on the issue," said an All India Congress Committee (AICC) functionary.

According to a rotation formula agreed in December 2018 when Mr. Gandhi was the party president, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel was to hand over his position to Mr. Deo by June 16 this year.

Though both the leaders have avoided making direct public statements, Mr. Baghel had been using various public events to show his strength and support among the MLAs. On Tuesday, Mr. Baghel hosted a dinner for the tribal MLAs from the Bastar region, comprising seven districts, at the Chief Minister's residence.

Last week, 36 Congress MLAs were said to have expressed their support by pledging to resign if the Chief Minister was changed.

R.N. Ravi, now T.N. Governor, resigns as Naga interlocutor

Since early 2020, NSCN-IM refused to hold talks with him

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

R.N. Ravi, who has taken charge as the Tamil Nadu Governor, on Wednesday resigned from his position as interlocutor in the Naga peace talks and his resignation has been accepted by the Union Home Ministry.

"Shri R.N. Ravi's resignation as interlocutor for the Naga peace process, submitted by him today has been accepted with immediate effect by Government of India," the Ministry tweeted.

Mr. Ravi, a 1976-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Kerala cadre, retired as Special Director, Intelligence Bureau, in 2012.

He was appointed as Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) in September 2014 and subse-



R.N. Ravi

quently made the interlocutor in the Naga peace talks.

In 2019, he was appointed as Nagaland Governor to further facilitate the talks.

Mr. Ravi signed a framework agreement with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak Muivah), the largest Naga group, on behalf of the Union government on August 3, 2015. The Naga talks had hit rough

weather since early 2020, as the NSCN-IM refused to hold any dialogue with Mr. Ravi. Following this, Home Minister Amit Shah deputed a team of Intelligence Bureau officials to continue the discussions with the NSCN-IM. Currently, former Intelligence Bureau Special Director A.K. Mishra, who was appointed an adviser in the Ministry last year, is holding talks with the NSCN-IM. He is likely to succeed Mr. Ravi as interlocutor.

The NSCN-IM has been demanding a separate constitution and flag for the Nagas and the assimilation of all Naga-inhabited areas in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. On Monday, Mr. Mishra resumed talks with the NSCN-IM leadership in Dimapur.

'Let women take NDA exam in Nov.'

Armed forces must live up to their reputation as best response team we have: SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday pushed the armed forces to live up to their reputation as "the best response team we have" to stand up to an emergency, iron out creases and make history happen by allowing women to write the National Defence Academy (NDA) examination in November this year.

The court was responding to a statement made by the Defence Ministry in an affidavit that it would have the "mechanism" to induct women into the NDA ready by May 2022. Senior advocate Chinmoy Pradip Sharma and advocate Mohit Paul, for pe-



itioner Kush Kalra, countered that if the NDA entrance exam was announced in May 2022, the actual exam would take place in September. This would mean that the actual induction of women cadets into the presti-

gious military academy, the gateway to the three Services, would happen in 2023.

A Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and B.R. Gavai said it was time the armed forces buckled up and made "a beginning". The court re-

used to vacate its order of August 18 that women would write the NDA entrance exam in 2021 itself. The exam is scheduled for November.

The Ministry, represented by Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, urged the court to let the November 2021 exam go on as before, without women taking it. It stated that the military establishment would need at least six months to "prepare" for the start of the process for induction of women into the NDA.

"The armed forces treat everything as an emergency. They are the best response team we have... Do not ask us to vacate our order [of August 18]," Justice Kaul said.

PM urges mutual consent for COVID-19 vaccine certificates

Will ease international travel, Modi says amid row with U.K.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that international travel should be made easier through mutual recognition of vaccine certificates, amid several countries adopting different sets of rules to allow foreigners to enter their territory in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that has caused unprecedented disruption.

In his video remarks at the Global COVID Summit hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden, Mr. Modi also said India was ramping up produc-

tion of vaccines and emphasised that supply chains of raw materials must be kept open.

"We also need to focus on addressing the pandemic's economic effects. To that end, international travel should be made easier, through mutual recognition of vaccine certificates," Mr. Modi said.

His remarks come on a day when the U.K. government issued an updated international travel advisory to include AstraZeneca's Covishield among the eligible COVID-19 vaccines, but kept India out of the 18 coun-

tries on an approved vaccinations list, requiring Indians to follow rules set out for "non-vaccinated" travellers.

On Monday, the U.S. announced a new international travel system under which fully vaccinated individuals would be allowed to enter the country beginning early November.

Pointing to the unprecedented disruption due to the pandemic, Mr. Modi said: "And, it is not yet over. Much of the world is still to be vaccinated. That is why this initiative by President Biden is timely and welcome."

Thackeray begins 2-day Nashik tour

STAFF REPORTER
PUNE

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray began a two-day tour of Nashik on Wednesday with the objective of rebuilding his party's sagging fortunes ahead of the crucial civic body polls to be held in February 2022.

This is Mr. Thackeray's third visit to the district in less than two months, signifying his intent on "recapturing" the Nashik Municipal Corporation, which was once considered his party's bastion.

He has been concentrating on rebuilding the party in Pune as well, inaugurating a "war office" earlier this year in Pune city.

Credit for nation-building can't go to only one family: Minister

'It is an effort that sees contributions from PM of the day, citizens'

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

Nation-building was too important a task "to credit one family or one Prime Minister", Culture Minister G. Kishan Reddy said during the annual general meeting of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) society on Tuesday.

According to a written statement from his office, Mr. Reddy said in his speech: "We all know that nation-building is too important a task for us to credit one family or one Prime Minister. Nation-building is a collective effort that sees contributions from the Prime Minister of the day to the ordinary honest tax-paying citizen. It, therefore, gives me immense pleasure that the Ministry of Culture has been given the task of building of the new Museum of Prime Ministers..."

The museum dedicated to all the Prime Ministers so far and in the future has been under



G. Kishan Reddy

construction at the Teen Murti Estate, which was home to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and was converted into the NMML after his death.

Mr. Reddy said since India had started the celebrations of 75 years of Independence, which will be in 2022, the NMML should engage the youth in order to become "architects of India at 100".

"The Government of India is not only celebrating the 75 years as Mahotsav but also working towards developing a

common vision for the next 25 years. Hence, we need to ensure that the road to 2047 is marked by progress and prosperity," Mr. Reddy said.

He said the government would provide whatever help necessary for the growth of the institute. "This sangrahalaya [museum] will be a glowing tribute to the role played by Prime Ministers in the making of modern India," he added.

The meeting, which was chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is the Vice-President of the NMML Society, also included discussions about the kind of space and exhibits dedicated to various Prime Ministers, according to sources.

NMML Director and Culture Secretary Raghendra Singh did not respond to a request for comment on when the project would be completed. The project was announced in 2018 and was scheduled to be completed by October 2020.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BIOMEDICAL GENOMICS
(An Autonomous Institution of the Govt. of India, Dept. of Biotechnology)
P.O. : NETAJI SUBHAS SANATORIUM, KALYANI - 741251

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION
Advertisement No. NIBMG/Admn/Estb/Rec/2021-22/156 Date : 01/09/2021
Applications are invited from suitable candidates for the following position :

Post ID	Post	No. of Vacancy	Category
2102	Manager (Finance)	One (01)	UR
2103	Assistant Professor	One (01)	OBC
2104	NIBMG Fellow (Contractual)	One (01)	UR

Last date for receipt of both Online application and Hard Copies at NIBMG is **45 days** from the date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News, Rozgar Samachar and **60 days** for the candidates residing abroad, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands, States/Union Territories in the North Eastern Region, Ladakh, Jammu, Kashmir, Sikkim, Sub-division Chamba and Lahaul and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh.
Manager (Administration)

GREATER VISAKHAPATNAM MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Procurement Short Tender Notice No.69/2021-22/SE(P3)/EE(Mech)/GVMC, Dt:20-09-2021(4th Call)

01.Number of Works : 1 No
02.Value of Works (ECV) : Rs.124.00 Lakhs
03.Down Loading Starting Date : 21-09-2021 @ 04.00 PM
04.Down Loading Ending Date : 28-09-2021 @ 04.00 PM
05.Last Date of bid submission : 28-09-2021 @ 05.00 PM
06.Date of PQ Opening : 28-09-2021 @ 05.30 PM
07.Date of Commercial Opening : 04-10-2021 @ 01.30 PM
08.Date of TQ Opening : 07-10-2021 @ 05.00 PM

Note: For any other details required in respect of above tender notice, please contact E.E.(Mech) before applying for tender schedules and visit vsp @ www.approcurement.gov.in COMMISSIONER, GVMC

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDS
SE/PROC-IT/NIB-04/2021-22/BN-9016002111 to BN-9016002112
1. BN-9016002111, UBN- VPN2122GLOB00656 Purchase and installation of Distributed type Numerical Bus-bar Protection Schemes through open tender.
2. BN-9016002112, UBN- VPN2122GLOB00657 Purchase of Stationary type Lead Acid (Tubular Type) 220V-400AH and 110V-200AH Battery Sets through open tender.

The detailed NIB and Bid document (specification are available for viewing/ downloading on the procurement portal http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://spp.rajasthan.gov.in and departmental website energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvnpn.
RRVPN /TR-5237/2021
Raj.Samwad/C/6319/21-22
Superintending Engineer (Proc-II)

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS:TIRUPATI

MARKETING DEPARTMENT
Roc.No.M2-34022(31)/156/2021. Dated: 21-09-2021

e-Tender-cum-Reverse Auctioning / Reverse Tendering Notice
e-tenders are invited for procurement of "3,12,000 Kgs of Cashew Splits 'S' grade for a period of four months" by the Marketing Department, T.T.D, Tirupati through online e-Tender-cum-Reverse Auctioning / Reverse Tendering process. For tender notice and tender details log on to the website http://www.tirumala.org and https://tender.approcurement.gov.in. Click on current tenders select "more" and "Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams-Marketing". For further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264079, 2264555, Fax No.0877-2264554.

Name of the Item	E.M.D. Rs.	Tender Period	Date of Tender
3,12,000 Kgs of Cashew Splits 'S' Grade	Rs.55,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Five Lakhs only) (to be uploaded online)	Four Months	29-09-2021 30-09-2021 (02-00 p.m. to 05.00 p.m.)

Roc.No.PR4/13934/Adv.No.170/PRO/2021,Dated:22-09-2021 **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

GOVERNMENT COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, KEONJHAR
(Formerly Orissa School of Mining Engineering (Degree Stream), Keonjhar)
At : Jamunalia, P.O.: Old Town, Dist., Keonjhar, Pin: 758002 (Odisha)
Web: www.gcekr.ac.in / Mail id- principal@gcekr.ac.in

Advertisement No. : 858 Date: 22.09.2021

EXTENSION OF LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR RECRUITMENT OF REGULAR PROFESSOR AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

In continuation to this office advertisement No.705, Dt.13.08.2021, this is for information of all concerned that the last date of submission of application for the recruitment of regular position of Professor and Associate Professor is extended up to **Dt. 21.10.2021**. The details are available at the Institute website www.gcekr.ac.in.
Principal
KK-98: OPR-14088/11/0003/2122

E-mail:ID-sectorb_2008@yahoo.co.in; Tel/Fax - 0671-2301751/2302751
Government of Odisha

1st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No.CCE.Ctc.(R&B)17/2021-22

Tender Reference - CCE.Ctc.(R&B) 17/2021-22
The Bid availability period and Date of opening of the tenders have been modified as follows:-

Sl. No.	Bid Identification No.	Bid Availability period as per Tender Notice	Revised Bid Availability Period	Bid Opening Date as per Tender Notice	Revised Opening Date
1	CCE.Ctc.(R&B) 17/2021-22	21.09.2021 to 16.00 Hours of 07.10.2021	28.09.2021 to 16.00 Hours of 16.10.2021	18.10.2021 at 11.00 Hours	18.10.2021 at 11.00 Hours

Further details can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.
Sd/- P.K.Pradhan
Chief Construction Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Circle
B-412: OPR-34012/11/0027/2122

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATIVE CORPORATION OF ODISHA LTD
Rupali Square, Bhoi Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751022, Odisha
Tel No.2542475, 2542617, FAX-2544828, Email : admin@tdccodisha.org

E-Auction Notification No : 1841 Date : 21.09.2021

E-Auction for Sale of Sal Seeds, Seeded Tamarind, De-Seeded Tamarind & Seeded Harida 2021 Crop procured under MSP Scheme through forward auction platform of MSTC Ltd (E - RaKAM) & NCDEX e-Market Ltd. The e-auction will be held on **07.10.2021** & the same will be reflected in www.neml.in & www.msstcecommerce.com. The details terms and conditions can be downloaded from the website www.tdccoindia.org. Any changes/modification in the auction documents will be posted on website.
Sd/- 21.09.2021
Managing Director
CAD-1247: OPR-26005/11/0018/2122

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH
HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ROADS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (HPSRTP)
Request for Expression of Interest Proposal (EOI)

Name of Project: Himachal Pradesh State Roads Transformation Project (HPSRTP)
Loan No./Credit No.: 9066-IN
Grant No.:
Date: September 21, 2021

The Chief Engineer-cum-Project Director, State Roads Project, HPRIDCL Nirman Bhawan, Nigam Vihar Shimla-171002, Himachal Pradesh India invites the Request for Expression of Interest Proposals from national consultants for the consultancy services as detailed in the table below:-

Sr. No.	Description of the Consultancy Services	Date of availability of Detailed Request for Expression of Interest Proposals Document on HPRIDCL web site	Last date/Time for submission of Proposals
1.	Consultancy Services for Replacement up gradation of Existing Web based Road Management System (RMS) application with RAMS along with data collection and engineering services" (RAMS) for HPRIDCL	September 23, 2021 (Request for Expression of Interest Proposal document)	October 18, 2021

Note:- Any further addendum/Corrigendum to this Request for Expression of Interest Proposals Documents shall be available to all interested firms on official web site of HPRIDC under link <http://himachalservices.nic.in/hpnid/HPSRTP.html>. Proposal must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by post) by **October 18, 2021 at 15:00 hours (IST)**.
Chief Engineer-cum-Project Director, State Roads Project, HPRIDCL, Nirman Bhawan, Nigam Vihar, Facsimile: +91-177-2620663; Tel: +91-177-2627602
HP/ 0423/2021-2022

ANDHRA PRADESH POWER GENERATION CORPORATION LTD
VIDYUTH SOUDHA: VIJAYAWADA

NIT No. E- 610000863/HP/SCADA&VMS/USPH/APGENCO/2021
APGENCO invites tender for the work of "Design, Manufacture, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of DCS based SCADA(Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition) system for Unit Nos.1 to 4, Common Auxiliary Equipment and Switchyard at Upper Sileru Power House (4X60 MW) in addition with Supply, Installation, Commissioning of Field Instruments and Vibration Monitoring System," through APGENCO e-procurement platform. Estimated Value of Work : Rs.2.30 Crores. Bid Submission available Date & Time : from 17:00 Hrs on 22.09.2021 onwards. Bid Submission Closing Date & Time : 17:00 Hrs on 25.10.2021. For further details visit website: www.apgenco.gov.in or <https://tender.apgenco.gov.in/iri/portal>
Contact No. 0866-2526802.

Coal India Limited
(A Maharatna Company)

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd www.coalindia.in/ respective Subsidiary Company, CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in/>"

भारत सरकार - अंतरिक्ष विभाग / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA - DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
निर्माण एवं अनुसंधान समूह, एसडीएससी-शार / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC-SHAR
श्रीहरिकोटा / नेल्दूर (जिला), आ.प्र./ SRHARKOTA - 524124

सक्षिप्त ई-निविदा सूचना / Brief E-TENDER NOTICE
सं.शार-सीएमजी-सिविल-अनुसंधान-ई-निविदा / No: SHAR:CMG:CIVIL:MAINT:E-PT-03(A)/21-22 तिथि/Dt. 22.09.2021

शुद्धिपत्र / CORRIGENDUM-A
"सुरक्षा निगरानी टावर कनिर्माण" (टी/सी-21-017, अनुमानित लागत ₹16.28 लाख)। विक्री अवधि 04-10-2021 तक बढ़ाई जाती है। अन्य नियम एवं शर्तें समान रहेंगी। विस्तृत सूचना हेतु इच्छुक निविदाकार हमारी वेबसाइट www.isro.gov.in or www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO देखें। "Construction of Security watch tower"(T/C-21-017, Est cost ₹16.28 Lakhs). Sale period extended upto 04.10.2021. All other terms and conditions remain unaltered. Interested tenderers may visit www.isro.gov.in or www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO for details.
हस्ताक्षरित Sd/- समूह प्रधान, सीएमजी, एसडीएससी शार / Group Head, CMG, SDSC SHAR

IN BRIEF



WHO thanks India for restart of vaccine export

NEW DELHI World Health Organisation (WHO) chief Tedros Ghebreyesus on Wednesday thanked Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya for announcing the resumption of COVID-19 vaccine shipments to the COVAX global pool. "Thank you Health Minister @mansukhmandaviya for announcing #India will resume crucial #COVID19 vaccine shipments to #COVAX in October. This is an important development in support of reaching the 40% vaccination target in all countries by the end of the year. #VaccinEquity," Mr. Ghebreyesus tweeted. PTI

Cong. supports demand for Parliament session

MUMBAI A day after Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray asked Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari to write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to call for a Parliament session to discuss atrocities against women, the Congress extended support to Mr. Thackeray's demand. The State unit of the Congress on Wednesday pointed to the numbers from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2020, saying Uttar Pradesh was at the forefront in atrocities against women.

U.P. ATS arrests cleric in illegal conversion case

GHAZIABAD The U.P. police Anti-Terrorist Squad has arrested prominent cleric and scholar Maulana Kaleem Siddiqui in the illegal conversion case on Tuesday night from Meerut. On Wednesday, the ATS presented him before a court in Lucknow that refused to grant police custody. "He was sent to 14-day judicial custody," said his advocate. According to a release, Mr. Siddiqui had direct links with the racket that was busted by the ATS in June this year.

Court posts Yunus case hearing for October 14

MUMBAI The Maharashtra government on Wednesday told the Bombay High Court that it would not appoint a new prosecutor till the plea seeking to bring back the old prosecutor was heard on October 14 in the custodial death of 27-year-old Khwaja Yunus in 2009. Those accused are then assistant police inspector (now dismissed) Sachin Vaze and three policemen — Rajendra Tiwari, Rajaram Nikam and Sunil Desai. They have been booked for murder, conspiracy and destruction of evidence and the trial against them commenced on May 3, 2017, at the city civil and sessions court. The court posted the matter for October 14.

Responses to travel fears should evolve: Minister

Countries coming to grips with pandemic: Chandrasekhar

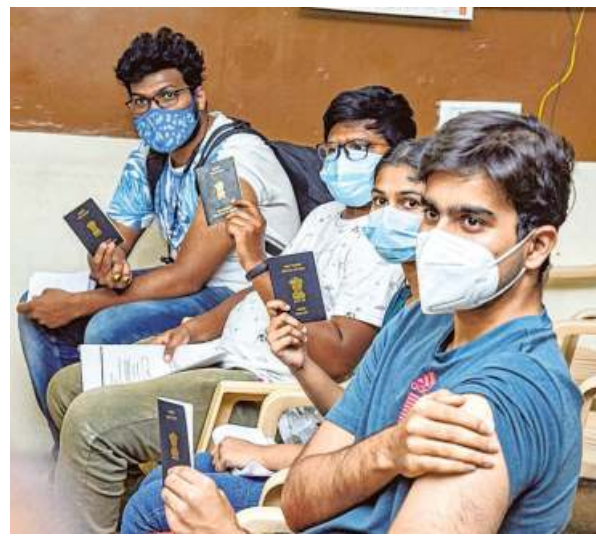
**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

As India and the U.K. go back and forth on the recognition of Indian-made Covishield and the vaccine certificates issued by New Delhi for travel to Britain without the mandatory quarantine period, Minister of State for Information Technology Rajeve Chandrasekhar said the "fear and paranoia" that has gripped the world with regard to travel during the pandemic needed to evolve as countries came to grips with COVID-19.

Answering a question on the current exchange between the Indian and British governments on the terms of travel and recognition (or the lack thereof) of Indian vaccine certificates, even of Astra-Zeneca developed Covishield, Mr. Chandrasekhar said the general "atmosphere of the unknown" was informing most decisions by various countries.

"During this pandemic, fear and paranoia is high with regard to travel. As countries get more confident, these things will have to evolve in terms of their response," he stated.

He said it was his personal



Going abroad: As travel opens up, discussion on vaccination certificates is on between India and the U.K. ■ FILE PHOTO

opinion that some countries would take a stronger view on which vaccine would be accepted by their medical fraternity because of the "unknown about the pandemic" whereas earlier "an approval by the World Health Organization (WHO)" used to suffice.

Mr. Chandrasekhar was addressing a media conference at the BJP headquarters here on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the U.S. in the next few days.

"As the world will seek a more rule-based, transparent and democratic future in the post-COVID order, India under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi will play a most significant role in shaping it," he said.

He said Mr. Modi had, especially in the last 18 months, led India not only under the challenging circumstances of the pandemic but also amid terror threats and expansionism by other countries.

Hetero cleared to make Sputnik V

Advisory panel recommends proposal to manufacture Russian vaccine

**N. RAVI KUMAR
HYDERABAD**

A subject expert committee that advises India's drug regulator has recommended Hetero Biopharma's proposal to manufacture Sputnik V, the Russian COVID-19 vaccine.

The panel's decision, which will help enhance availability of the vaccine, followed a proposal from the Hetero group that included interim safety and immunogenicity results from the Phase III clinical trials it had conducted.

The committee, which examines COVID-19 related proposals under an accelerated approval process, at its meeting on September 16,



More doses: Hetero is among the firms with whom Russia's RDIF had entered into manufacturing partnerships. ■ REUTERS

said: "After detailed deliberation, the committee recommended for grant of permission to manufacture Sputnik V vaccine for restricted use in emergency situations subject to various regulatory provisions."

Sputnik V is one of the

three vaccines being used in India's inoculation programme. The Drugs Controller General of India had accorded it emergency use authorisation in April this year. However, four months after a pilot launch of the Sputnik V in the country, the

vaccine is available only in select towns and cities.

Hetero is among a clutch of firms with whom Russia's sovereign wealth fund RDIF, which is globally marketing the vaccine, had entered into manufacturing partnerships.

While recommending grant of permission to Hetero Biopharma, the expert committee said regulatory provisions would include the firm submitting the safety and immunogenicity data from the ongoing clinical trial for review, as and when available, besides submitting the PI (Product Information), SmPC (Summary of Product Characteristics) and factsheet to CDSCO.

Activist writes to CJI on MP, MLA defections

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI**

An Assam-based activist has written to Chief Justice of India (CJI) N. V. Ramana asking why MPs and MLAs cannot be booked under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code for cheating people who voted for them.

The elected representatives betrayed the voters of a constituency by switching parties, said Satya Ranjan

Borah of Kutumba Surakshya Mission in his letter on September 21.

"It has become common nowadays for political leaders to change their parties just after being elected, whether it is panchayat and municipality, Assembly and Lok Sabha elections and even Rajya Sabha elections," he wrote.

"If any individual can be punished under Section 420

for cheating or misleading another individual, why should we give an open platform for these cheats who have cheated not an individual but the people of this nation," he stated.

Impose curbs

Mr. Borah requested the CJI to ensure that certain restrictions are imposed on elected representatives, such as preventing them from joining

any other political party for four years after the date of winning an election and a 10-year ban on contesting any kind of election after defection.

Congress MLAs Rupjyoti Kurmi and Sushanta Borgohain joined the BJP soon after being elected in May last. All India United Democratic Front MLA Phanihar Talukdar also joined the BJP less than a month ago.

Rising crime worries Rajasthan Police

Recent daylight shootings cause panic

**MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR**

The rising crime graph in Rajasthan has become a cause of concern for the State police, while recent daylight shooting incidents in Jaipur, in which several persons were killed, have created panic among the public.

Six unidentified persons shot a history-sheeter in broad daylight in Jaipur's Bani Park area on Tuesday. A Gurugram-based project consultant was earlier shot dead outside the National Highways Authority of India's office in the city's posh Vaishali Nagar on August 26. The National Crime Records Bureau's data for 2020 has put a spotlight on crimes against women in the State, while several cases of alleged involvement of policemen in bribery and liquor and opium smuggling have highlighted the need for discipline and tough action in the police force. The police also faced embarrassment recently when a video of an officer indulging in indecent acts went viral.

Rajasthan has registered the highest number of rape cases in the country, as per NCRB data. Though the State

stood fifth in crimes against women, as many as 5,310 rape cases were registered in 2020. The pendency rate with the police, at 13.2%, was counted among the lowest.

More FIRs being lodged

The increase in crime figures is mainly attributed to the State government's instructions that every complaint made to the police must be registered as a First Information Report. Following Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's remarks that there was no need to worry if more FIRs led to rise in figures, the office of Director-General of Police sent several circulars to the districts with the orders for registration of cases under all circumstances.

Additional DGP (Crime) Ravi Prakash Meharda said the NCRB report had stated that the rise in crime and increase in registration of crime by the police were clearly two different things, which were often confused.

The statistics released by the State police also depicted a 28% increase in atrocities against Dalit women, 20% in burglary and 28% in cases of theft between January and July this year.

Assam govt. flags Mizoram 'encroachments'

Forest Department report lists areas 'occupied' by neighbouring State

**RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI**

The government and people of Mizoram have been encroaching upon land in Assam along the 164.6-km interstate boundary since 1980, an Assam Forest Department report has alleged.

At the heart of the land conflict between the two northeastern States is the 1,318-sq.km Inner Line Reserve Forest along the boundary. The conflict most recently claimed the lives of six Assam police personnel in July, a fortnight after the report was prepared by the department's Southern Assam Circle headquartered in Silchar.

Inner Line boundary

According to the report, the boundary was notified on March 9, 1933, which clearly defines "Inner Line" as the district boundary of the Lushai Hills. A district of undivided Assam, Lushai Hills became Mizoram, first as a Union Territory in 1972 and a State in 1987.

"The major portion of the boundary between Assam and Mizoram runs along natural features like rivers, streams and watersheds. Only two portions of the boundary, from Chattachura Peak to Longai and from Rukni river to Dholai river, do not fol-



Sensitive line: CRPF personnel standing guard at Kulichara village along the Assam-Mizoram border in Cachar district of Assam. ■ RITURAJ KONWAR

low definite natural features," the report said.

"During the time of demarcation in 1959-60, one of the camps of the Assam Survey party engaged in the demarcation work was set on fire by the local Mizo people and as a result, valuable government properties like tents, survey equipment, official records, maps... were gutted," it said.

Incidents of encroachment in both Singla and Longai were recorded in November 1985, the report said. Portions of Kalakand and Shantipur areas inside Singla "were occupied with the help of armed forces of Mizoram" and they "gradually en-

croached upon a total of 75 hectares," the report alleged. But while the encroachers left these areas "with no known reasons" after senior Assam officials visited these areas in February 2017, the "government of Mizoram" has continued to control areas under Longai Reserve Forest by forcing Assam Forest personnel to retreat about two km inside the boundary, the report said.

"Since then, they have encroached 320 hectares within Longai by raising teak plantations, constructing permanent buildings, etc.," the report said, adding that the Mizoram government has

been controlling the entire two km stretch after constructing a road.

Hailakandi division

Similarly, in the Hailakandi division of the Assam Forest Department, an encroachment of about 1,000 hectares of forest land by Mizoram at two different locations — 425 hectares at Kachurtal and 575 hectares at Dholcherra — have been recorded.

Mizoram has rejected the 1933 demarcation of the interstate boundary. The State recognises a regulation in 1873 that "includes areas wrongfully tagged with Assam" in 1933.

Rajiv Bansal is Civil Aviation Secretary

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Wednesday approved a reshuffle of senior IAS officers, appointing new Secretaries for a dozen departments.

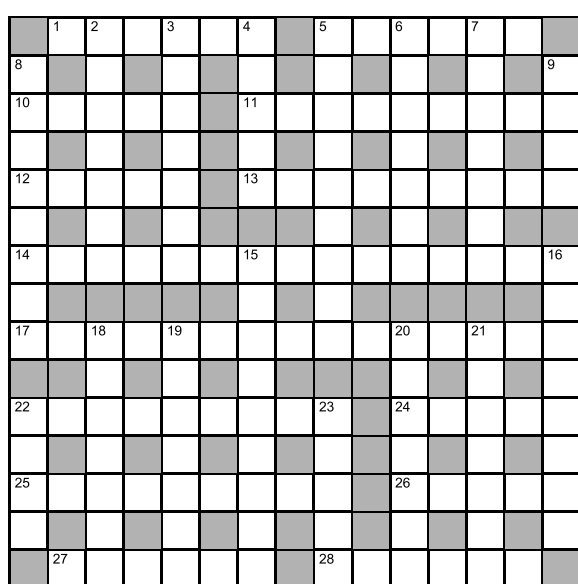
Chairman and Managing Director of Air India Rajiv Bansal was appointed Secretary of the Civil Aviation Ministry. He will take over from Pradeep Singh Khawla, who is set to retire on September 30.

Labour and Employment Ministry Special Secretary Anuradha Prasad was appointed Secretary of the Inter-State Council Secretariat of the Home Ministry. Pradeep Kumar Tripathi was shifted from the post of Steel Secretary to Department of Personnel and Training Secretary.

Govind Mohan was appointed Culture Secretary, K. Rajaraman as Telecommunications Secretary and Delhi Development Authority Vice-Chairman Anurag Jain was appointed Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade Secretary.

K. Sanjay Murthy was appointed Higher Education Secretary.

THE CROSSWORD + 13359 Display keystrokes of genius. Type your answers in our online grids. @ <https://qrqo.page.link/jjpTn> SCAN TO PLAY



- ACROSS**
- 1 A casual name to describe earliest of proto-humans (6)
 - 5 Knotty ones do look knotty (6)
 - 10 Honour a child (5)
 - 11 ATM's broken! I can't shop! (9)
 - 12 Holding together small time body of muslim nations (5)
 - 13 Repeat VOA broadcast is dry (9)
 - 14 Porting camera, he's working! (15)

- 17 Working style of petty bosses? (15)
- 22 All-time popular retriever, Greenland resident (9)
- 24 A rich criminal and a professor (5)
- 25 John on flip side is regarded as saint (9)
- 26 Creation of jobs? (5)
- 27 Pics morphed by editor, made more savoury (6)
- 28 Free, adventurous English Royal sailor (6)

- DOWN**
- 2 Top loan processing unit (7)
 - 3 A little peculiar way of working, saying time flies (7)
 - 4 Husband in comfortable position (5)
 - 5 Love! A lasting, painful yearning for the yore (9)
 - 6 Foolishly paid around lots of money, at first, for a certificate (7)
 - 7 Narrate a chapter — "A Sailor's Addiction" (7)
 - 8 Covers one with peppers (8)
 - 9 Misty-eyed having inflammation (4)
 - 15 Run back over lines covered (9)
 - 16 Free trade in wine is hindered (8)
 - 18 Uncle and Pa made a great profit (7)
 - 19 Caring about consuming nothing natural (7)
 - 20 Disheartened lad, leaving Cleveland, moving to some place like Vatican (7)
 - 21 Old palm shaped base of temple for instance (7)
 - 22 Get head shaved to impress (4)
 - 23 Lowest point for Iranian Ruler (5)

SUDOKU

				5	8	9	7	
2								
		7			2		3	5
9	5					6	4	8
4	6	8					1	3
5	8		3			2		
								1
7	3	9	2					

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 13358

C	R	A	T	E	R	I	E	S	T
P	E	H	I	A	U	O	G		
R	I	F	L	E	S	O	L	I	C
A	U	R	O	E	K	A	I		
C	A	S	T	E	U	N	T	A	I
I	N	L	A	N	D	B	E	G	R
E	A	R	L	I	E	S	T		
A	N	T	A	N	S	G			
C	H	I	E	F	T	A	I	N	
U	M	I	T	A	L	A			
T	R	E	A	D	M	I	L		
E	N	E	O	A	L	S			
S	T	O	L	E	N				

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	5	9	3	2	6	7	8	1
3	2	1	8	4	7	9	5	6
8	7	6	9	5	1	4	3	2
1	3	2	5	6	9	8	4	7
9	4	8	7	3	2	6	1	5
7	6	5	1	8	4	3	2	9
2	8	4	6	7	5	1	9	3
5	1	7	4	9	3	2	6	8
6	9	3	2	1	8	5	7	4

FAITH

The path of light

Sage Parasara in his Vishnu Purana says that the One who knows about what happens to the atmas, their births and deaths, that One is the Paramatma. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna talks about two paths — the path taken by those who reach His abode and the path taken by those who go to svarga. Those who reach Sri Vaikuntha remain there, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi in a discourse. The other category of people perform meritorious deeds, and reach svarga.

But stay in svarga is not permanent. Once a person's punyas are exhausted, he leaves svarga, to be born again and the cycle continues. But the one who goes to Sri Vaikuntha never returns to the earth. The path that leads to Sri Vaikuntha is called archiradi marga, the path of light. The path that leads to svarga is called dumadi marga, the path of darkness. In other words, archiradi marga takes one to the Supreme One. In the path that leads to Sri Vaikuntha, one is welcomed at each stage by different deities, each presiding over that particular segment of the path.

On the other hand, the path taken by the one who merely performs meritorious acts is known as dhumah gati, or the path of darkness. He does these acts, with a view to enjoying the fruits of his actions. His performance of good deeds gets him svarga as a reward. There the atma enjoys many pleasures, before returning in its next birth. This path that leads to svarga also has presiding deities. These are the deities of smoke, the dark night, the waning phase of the moon, dakshinayana (Southern solstice). Upanishads also speak of the bright and dark paths. Krishna says that a jnani cannot exist even for a moment without thinking of Him. A jnani takes the archiradi marga, or the path of light, to reach the Lord.

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MARKET WATCH

	22-09-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	58,927	-0.13
US Dollar	73.87	-0.35
Gold	45746	1.07
Brent oil	75.4	1.58

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	745.30	-4.30
Asian Paints	3317.50	8.30
Axis Bank	788.35	-7.00
Bajaj Auto	3757.15	28.35
Bajaj Finserv	17614.75	27.50
Bharti Airtel	7793.65	-20.20
BPL	420.15	6.35
Britannia Ind.	4058.50	-17.05
Cipla	963.50	7.40
Coal India	162.10	5.70
Divis Lab	5139.90	-39.55
Dr Reddys Lab	4846.35	-7.30
Eicher Motors	2842.85	-11.55
Grasim Ind.	1574.65	17.50
HCL Tech	1315.50	16.00
HDFC	2734.70	-39.65
HDFC Bank	1533.70	-18.25
HDFC Life	733.05	-2.75
Hero MotoCorp	2847.20	-3.25
Hindalco	463.00	12.00
Hind Unilever	2784.50	-27.95
ICICI Bank	703.35	-8.50
ICICI Bank	1141.40	3.85
Infosys	1716.90	-1.55
Indian Oil Corp	116.45	1.45
ITC	243.50	2.00
JSW Steel	678.55	9.60
Kotak Bank	1985.55	-25.40
L&T	1710.90	-10.00
M&M	752.50	14.05
Maruti Suzuki	6831.00	54.00
Nestle India Ltd.	19925.20	-264.35
NTPC	124.40	0.30
ONGC	133.65	-1.55
PowerGrid Corp	176.75	0.85
Reliance Ind.	2430.50	25.80
SBI Life	1191.30	6.70
State Bank	438.85	0.05
Shree Cement	29792.50	-267.40
Sun Pharma	770.10	5.60
Tata Consumer		
Products Ltd.	854.15	-4.75
Tata Motors	310.10	8.15
Tata Steel	1305.80	13.60
TCS	3862.15	-0.80
Tech Mahindra	1513.60	51.90
Titan	2081.05	-4.80
UltraTech Cement	7625.60	32.90
UPL	724.90	3.05
Wipro	668.15	0.55

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on September 22

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.67	73.99
Euro	86.44	86.82
British Pound	100.50	100.94
Japanese Yen (100)	67.26	67.56
Chinese Yuan	11.39	11.44
Swiss Franc	79.89	80.25
Singapore Dollar	54.50	54.74
Canadian Dollar	57.65	57.91
Malaysian Ringgit	17.56	17.67

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Fossil unveils Gen 6 smartwatch in India

NEW DELHI
U.S. watchmaker Fossil has introduced its newest generation of wearable — the Gen 6 Touchscreen Smartwatch — in India. The watch is priced between ₹23,995 and ₹24,995 and can be bought September 27 onwards, the company said.

Govt. extends Kotak's term as IL&FS chairman

MUMBAI
The Centre has extended the term of banker Uday Kotak as non-executive board member and chairman of debt-ridden IL&FS by six months till April 2, 2022. His current term was set to expire on October 2. "I am confident that under Mr. Kotak's guidance, we would accomplish the resolution targets," said C.S. Rajan, MD.

Goyal unveils single window for businesses

NEW DELHI
Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal soft-launched the National Single Window System (NSWS) for businesses and said the portal will usher in freedom from the legacy of running to government offices for approvals and registrations. "This is freedom from bureaucracy," he said. PTI

India, UAE talks on FTA to start today: Minister

NEW DELHI
India and the UAE have formally started negotiations for a free trade agreement and the first round of talks will begin from Thursday with an aim to conclude it by end-December, a move aimed at boosting trade and investments between the countries, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday. PTI

Greater automation may lead to slack in the labour market: Das

Need to guard against a post-pandemic 'digital divide', cautions RBI Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A major challenge to inclusiveness post pandemic would come from the fillip to automation provided by the pandemic, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das noted on Wednesday. "Greater automation would lead to overall productivity gain, but it may also lead to slack in the labour market. [This] calls for significant skilling of our workforce," Mr. Das said, speaking virtually at an annual convention of the All India



Pillar of demand: Restoring durability of private consumption will be crucial for the economy, says Das. *REUTERS

Manufacturers Association. "We also need to guard against any emergence of 'digital divide' as digitisation gains speed after the pandemic," he added. He pointed out that the need for professionals trained in science,

technology, engineering and mathematics had been rising briskly. "In the short-term, the supply of such a workforce cannot be increased by the traditional educational system; there is a need for close involvement of corporates in the design and implementation of [suitable] courses," he said. On economic recovery, he said: "Restoring durability of private consumption, which has remained historically the mainstay of aggregate demand, will be crucial going forward."

India said to likely block Chinese investment in LIC

Govt. views insurer as strategic asset, 'trust deficit' weighs

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

New Delhi wants to block Chinese investors from buying shares in Life Insurance Corp. (LIC) which is due to go public, four senior government officials and a banker told Reuters, underscoring tensions between the two nations. State-owned LIC is considered a strategic asset, commanding more than 60% of India's life insurance market with assets of more than \$500 billion. While the government is planning to allow foreign investors to par-



ticipate in what is likely to be the country's biggest-ever IPO, worth a potential \$12.2 billion, it is leery of Chinese ownership, the sources said. Tensions between the

countries rocketed last year after their soldiers clashed on the disputed Himalayan border and since then, India has sought to limit Chinese investment in sensitive companies and sectors, banned a raft of Chinese mobile apps and subjected imports from China to extra scrutiny. "With China, after the border clashes, it cannot be business as usual. The trust deficit has significantly widened," said one of the government officials, adding that Chinese investment in companies like LIC could pose risks.

Sony unit in talks to acquire Zee

Sony Pictures to hold majority, lead transition to digital play

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) and Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEEL) said they had initiated talks for a merger, sending Zee shares soaring 32%. The companies have entered into an exclusive, non-binding term sheet to combine networks, digital assets, production operations and programme libraries. The deal provides an exclusive negotiation period of 90 days during which ZEEL and SPNI would conduct mutual

diligence and negotiate definitive, binding agreements. The combined entity would be publicly-listed in India and better positioned to lead consumer transition from traditional pay TV into the digital future. "The merger of ZEEL and SPNI would benefit consumers across content genres," Sony Pictures said. "The combined company is expected to benefit all stakeholders given the strong synergies between ZEEL and SPNI," it added. SPNI's parent Sony Pic-

DICGC to pay depositors of 21 co-op banks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

In a positive development for lakhs of depositors of 21 urban cooperative banks, including the scam-hit PMC Bank, the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) has announced it would pay them up to ₹5 lakh within 90 days. The banks have been directed to submit the claims within 45 days after obtaining willingness of the depositors, the DICGC said.

Semiconductor market may see glut in 2023: IDC

'Global supply to normalise by mid-'22'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The global semiconductor industry is expected to reach a state of balance by the middle of 2022 with the chip shortage easing and supply normalising, IDC said on Wednesday. The research firm in fact sees potential for overcapacity in 2023 as larger scale capacity expansions begin to come online towards the end of 2022. IDC forecast worldwide

semiconductor market growth will accelerate to 17.3% in 2021, from 10.8% in 2020. Growth would be driven by mobiles, notebooks, servers, automobiles, smart homes, gaming and wearables, with increased memory pricing. IC shortages are expected to continue easing through Q4 of 2021 as capacity additions quicken. "The semiconductor content story is intact," said Mario Morales, IDC's Group VP, Enabling Technologies.

Vodafone Idea to seek board nod for funds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Vodafone Idea will seek board approval afresh to raise funds after the government issues detailed guidelines on telecom reform measures, and its promoters will get a chance to participate in the fundraising round, MD and CEO Ravinder Takker said on Wednesday. Mr. Takker told PTI the company was gearing up to invest in the business and compete in the market.

'FDI more than doubles to \$20.42 billion'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investments (FDI) into the country more than doubled to \$20.42 billion during the April-July period of the current fiscal, the commerce and industry ministry said on Wednesday. Total FDI inflow rose to \$27.37 billion during the first four months of 2021-22. In the year-earlier period, this was at \$16.92 billion. Automobile industry emerged top, accounting for 23% share of the total FDI equity inflows, followed by computer software and hardware (18%) and services sector (10%). Karnataka was the top recipient with 45% share of the total FDI equity inflows followed by Maharashtra (23%) and Delhi (12%).

Combine investments in textiles under PLI: official

This will boost output, says V. K. Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE

Textile entrepreneurs can consider undertaking joint investments to meet the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme's minimum investment criteria, said V. K. Singh, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, at an Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) meeting. Noting that the minimum investment criterion of ₹100 crore under the PLI to make apparels and the condition that the products should have 85% manmade fibre content may be unviable for garment units, Sanjay Jain, chairman of the ICC expert committee on textiles and jute, earlier urged a reduction in the minimum investment criterion. Mr. Jain also pointed out that raising GST



rates for garments priced lower than ₹1,000 to 12% from 5% would lead to higher inflation. He appealed to the Ministry to recommend to the Finance Ministry to not raise the rates, for the benefit of MSMEs. Mr. Singh said there were requests for a reduction in the investment criteria. However, two or three industries could collaborate to invest in a company to meet the criteria and achieve higher scales of production.

'EV import duty cut may spur domestic demand'

It will help bring in more models: Audi

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Reducing import duty on electric vehicles (EVs) will help boost domestic demand by enabling automobile manufacturers to bring in more models, thus paving the way for local manufacturing, said Balbir Singh Dhillon, head of Audi India. "The local manufacturing of electric vehicles (EVs) can start only once we have a certain threshold volume is reached," he said, adding, "Till that time, we will be importing the car." "I am 100% sure that if the government reduces the import duties, we will be able to not just bring in more models, but also sell more and that will make us reach the threshold volumes faster," he said.



Balbir Singh Dhillon, Head, Audi India, at the unveiling of Audi e-tron GT. *PTI

The German luxury car maker, which expects electric vehicles to account for 15% of its sales in India by 2025, on Wednesday unveiled two more EVs — Audi e-tron GT at ₹1.79 crore, and the Audi RS e-tron GT at ₹2.04 crore — taking the total number of such vehicles in its India portfolio to five.

Most industry chiefs keen to try start-ups

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

About 90% of C-Suite professionals from industry are willing to explore solutions from Indian start-ups to address boardroom challenges, the CII Institute of Logistics said in a recent white paper. Based on primary research interviewing 50 Indian start-ups and 50 C-Suite professionals, the challenges from the boardroom were mapped with solutions being offered by the start-ups. Cost optimisation, process streamlining and automation were found to be top priorities for business, with deep learning, machine learning, predictive analytics, cloud computing and IoT seen as technology levers to address them.

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SCAN FOR DOORSTEP DELIVERY

Taliban want to address the world at UN

In a letter to Guterres, Taliban nominate spokesman Suhail Shaheen as Afghanistan's UN Ambassador

REUTERS
UNITED NATIONS

The Taliban have asked to address world leaders at the United Nations in New York this week and nominated their Doha-based spokesman Suhail Shaheen as Afghanistan's UN Ambassador, according to a letter seen by Reuters on Tuesday.

Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi made the request in a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday. Muttaqi asked to speak during the annual high-level meeting of the General Assembly, which finishes on Monday.

Mr. Guterres' spokesperson, Farhan Haq, confirmed Muttaqi's letter. The move sets up a showdown with Ghulam Isaczkai, the UN Ambassador in New York representing Afghanistan's government ousted last month by the Taliban.

Mr. Haq said the rival requests for Afghanistan's UN seat had been sent to a nine-



Seeking recognition: Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi speaking at a news conference in Kabul. ■ REUTERS

member credentials committee, whose members include the United States, China and Russia. The committee is unlikely to meet on the issue before Monday, so it is doubtful that the Taliban Foreign Minister will address the world body.

Eventual UN acceptance of the ambassador of the Taliban would be an important step in the hard-line Islamist group's bid for international recognition, which could

help unlock badly needed funds for the cash-strapped Afghan economy.

Only leverage

Mr. Guterres has said that the Taliban's desire for international recognition is the only leverage other countries have to press for inclusive government and respect for rights, particularly for women, in Afghanistan.

The Taliban letter said Mr. Isaczkai's mission "is consi-

Don't boycott them: Qatar

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI

The ruling emir of Qatar urged world leaders gathered at the United Nations on Tuesday against turning their backs on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers.

Speaking from the podium of the UN General Assembly, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani stressed

dered over and that he no longer represents Afghanistan", said Haq.

Until a decision is made by the credentials committee Mr. Isaczkai will remain in the seat, according to the General Assembly rules. He is currently scheduled to address the final day of the meeting on September 27, but it was not immediately clear if any countries might object in the wake of the Taliban letter.

The committee tradition-

"the necessity of continuing dialogue with Taliban because boycott only leads to polarisation and reactions, whereas dialogue could bring in positive results".

He urged world leaders against repeating past mistakes in Afghanistan "to impose a political system from outside".

ally meets in October or November to assess the credentials of all UN members before submitting a report for General Assembly approval before the end of the year.

The committee and General Assembly usually operate by consensus on credentials, diplomats said.

Others members of the committee are the Bahamas, Bhutan, Chile, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Sweden.

In U.S., Gotabaya promises to engage Tamil diaspora

President's offer sparks scepticism among Tamils

MEERA SRINIVASAN

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's recent statement in New York that he would invite the Tamil diaspora for discussions on resolving pending questions of war-time accountability and justice in the island nation has sparked more scepticism than hope among Tamils.

In a meeting on Sunday with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the UN Headquarters, President Rajapaksa - who is attending the 76th session of the UN General Assembly - said "internal issues" of Sri Lanka should be resolved through "an internal mechanism" of the country. The Tamil diaspora would be invited for discussions in this regard, he said, according to a media release his office.

The announcement is significant, coming from President Rajapaksa, whose government proscribed several Tamil diaspora organisations six months ago, branding their members "terrorists". The Rajapaksa administration has repeatedly referred to diaspora groups as "pro-LTTE" outfits, often accusing them of attempting to revive the Tigers' separatist struggle.

'Welcome gesture'

"President Gotabaya Rajapaksa wanting to engage with the Tamil diaspora is certainly a progressive move and we welcome it," said Suren Surendiran, spokesman of the Global Tamil Forum (GTF), a diaspora group with members across North America, Europe, the U.K., Australia, and South Africa.

"When requests are made by democratically elected



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

representatives of Tamil people in Sri Lanka to meet with the President, they are "deferred with flimsy excuses", [and] now from New York, he has declared that he wants to engage with us, Tamil diaspora," Mr. Surendiran said in a statement, questioning President Rajapaksa's "sudden change of mind", months after his government proscribed organisations including the GTF.

In June, Mr. Rajapaksa was scheduled to meet a delegation of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the largest parliamentary grouping representing Tamils of the war-affected north and east.

The announcement of the meeting drew much attention, for it was the first time that the President was going to meet the TNA, led by the 88-year-old veteran leader and Trincomalee district parliamentarian R. Sampanthan, who has been demanding a political solution to the Tamil question through substantive constitutional reform. But the meeting was postponed with no announcement yet on a likely new date for talks.

Meanwhile, political observers see little reason for optimism in the President's possible discussion with Tamil diaspora.

Describing Mr. Rajapaksa's recent remark in New

York "a diversionary tactic", senior journalist and political commentator V. Thambalingham said although Tamil diaspora groups have been backing the call for a political solution to Sri Lanka's Tamil national question, they are no cohesive political force. "You cannot consider them to be representatives of Sri Lankan Tamils, either. They left Sri Lanka and have obtained citizenship elsewhere," he told *The Hindu*.

Tamils in Sri Lanka rely on diaspora groups to exert pressure on the international community, but many groups espouse "extremist positions", he observed. "When the President seems reluctant to fulfil the demands put forward by moderate Tamil voices within the country, what is it that he [President] can talk with diaspora elements?" asked Mr. Thambalingham, suggesting that the diaspora be engaged on matters such as foreign investment.

While the diaspora could try garnering international support for reconciliation efforts undertaken in Sri Lanka, "they can never be the prime force in achieving a political solution". "It is ironic that the President who underscores the need for a domestic solution wants to engage the diaspora," he said.

"When it comes to the ethnic question, the President must first speak to elected representatives of the Tamils," he said, adding that even elected Tamil representatives - with known disagreements over many issues - are not in a position to approach the government with a coherent view or demand. "That is our Tamil people's misfortune."

Biden speaks to Macron to smooth tensions

French Ambassador Philippe Etienne to return to Washington next week

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

France's Ambassador to the U.S., Philippe Etienne, will return to Washington next week. This was announced after U.S. President Joe Biden spoke to his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, on Wednesday.

This was the first call between the two leaders after a falling out over the September 15 announcement of a trilateral security partnership (AUKUS) between Australia, the U.K. and the U.S., which led France to recall its envoys to the U.S. and Australia

lia. The call was initiated at Mr. Biden's request, a joint statement said.

It is quite rare for statements to specify who initiated the call and suggests the Biden administration is engaged in significant damage control with the U.S.'s oldest ally. The AUKUS pact was worked out behind closed doors and came as a surprise to other nations, enraging Mr. Macron.

The French said the establishment of AUKUS had significantly disrupted their plans in the Indo-Pacific and also had come at a hefty



U.S. President Joe Biden with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron. ■ FILE

price tag. France and Australia signed a \$66 billion deal in 2016 under which Australia got diesel electric submarines. Australia is now exiting that deal as a result of AUKUS, whose main deliverable, for now, is providing Australia with a fleet of supe-

rior submarines that run on nuclear fuel.

Open consultation

"The two leaders agreed that the situation would have benefitted from open consultations among allies on matters of strategic interest to France and our European partners. President Biden conveyed his ongoing commitment in that regard," the statement said.

Mr. Etienne will begin "intensive work" with U.S. officials when he gets back next week, the White House said, to build confidence between the two countries, whose leaders will next meet in Glasgow at the UN Conference on climate.

"President Biden reaffirms the strategic importance of French and European engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, including in the framework of the European Union's recently published strategy for the Indo-Pacific," the joint statement said, presumably responding to a statement from French officials calling for greater strategic autonomy for Europe following the AUKUS announcement.

Wednesday's statement also said that Mr. Biden recognised the importance of a more capable and strong European defence contributing to transatlantic and global security and complimenting NATO.

No new coal projects abroad: Xi

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
UNITED NATIONS

China will stop funding coal projects overseas, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday.

Addressing the UN General Assembly, Mr. Xi made the promise as he vowed to accelerate efforts to help the world battle the climate crisis. "China will step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low carbon energy and will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad," Mr. Xi said in a pre-recorded address.

"We should foster new growth drivers in the post-COVID era and jointly achieve leapfrog development, staying committed to harmony between man and nature," he said.

U.S. to donate 500 million Pfizer doses to poor countries

This takes the total number of doses the U.S. is sending abroad to over a billion

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

The U.S. is going to buy another half a billion doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for distribution to low and lower-middle-income countries, President Joe Biden said on Wednesday.

Half a billion Pfizer doses were already promised in the summer and at least 80 million, mostly AstraZeneca doses, were committed to other countries in June.

"For every one shot we've administered to date in America, we have now committed to do three shots to the rest of the world," Mr. Biden said while inaugurating a virtual global COVID-19 summit, convened to end the current pandemic and prepare for the next one.

The summit will involve the participation of various government leaders and heads of international organisations, NGOs and philanthropic organisation.

The 500 million Pfizer doses will be made in the U.S. and start being distributed in January; the U.S. will ship out 800 million vaccines between January and September next year, a senior administration official told reporters on Tuesday night.

'All hands on deck'

Mr. Biden called on other high-income countries to deliver on their own vaccine donation pledges during his remarks on Wednesday. "We're not going to solve this crisis with half measures, or



A person getting jabbed in Reading, U.S. ■ AP

middle of the road ambitions," Mr. Biden said.

"We need to go big. And we need to do our part - governments, the private sector, civil society leaders, philanthropists. This is an all hands on deck crisis."

Mr. Biden also announced an EU-U.S. partnership to expand vaccines across the world (but did not provide details of this during his re-

marks). He said countries should donate - not sell - vaccines to poorer countries and with "no strings attached".

Senior administration officials said the summit would involve getting measurable commitments from countries in three areas: first, vaccinations, their equitable distribution and administration; second, access to oxygen supplies, PPE and tests and therapeutics; third, establishing health security financing mechanisms.

The officials said they had sent a list of targets across these areas to summit participants and a set of tasks. One of the targets involves countries committing to vaccinate 70% of their respective populations within a year from now.

Mr. Biden suggested leaders come together in the first quarter next year to review

progress, with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken convening his Foreign Minister counterparts later this year to check on the collective progress towards the indicators.

Vaccine production

"Another goal is dramatically boosting global and regional vaccine manufacturing capacity, enhancing transparency so that vaccine production and distribution is predictable and coordinated," Mr. Biden said, citing the successful vaccine manufacturing process within the U.S.

While the U.S. produced more than enough vaccines for itself, this came at a cost to the manufacturing processes in other countries.

The Trump administration had invoked the Defense Production Act (DPA), under which the U.S. government

orders get priority. While the Biden administration denied that global manufacturing was being held hostage to the DPA, in April this year it diverted its orders for vaccine filters (an input in the process) to India, which was experiencing a raging second wave of COVID-19.

Mr. Biden said work was now on to scale up manufacturing capacity in other countries as well.

Quad initiative

In this context, he said the Quad Vaccine Initiative was "on track" to help produce at least 1 billion vaccine doses in India for distribution by the end of 2022.

The U.S. was also providing money and manufacturing assistance to South Africa to produce more than 500 million Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines for Africa, he said.

Fed foresees potential rate hike next year

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

The Federal Reserve signalled on Wednesday that it may start raising its benchmark interest rate sometime next year, earlier than it envisioned three months ago and a sign that it is concerned about high inflation pressures.

In a statement, the Fed said it will likely begin slowing the pace of monthly bond purchases "soon" if the economy keeps improving. The bond purchases have been intended to lower longer-term loan rates to encourage borrowing and spending. Chair Jerome Powell said the Fed could announce a pullback in bond buying as soon as its next meeting in November.

SPORT

Suarez fires Atletico to the top

Inter extends unbeaten run with win at Fiorentina

EURO LEAGUES

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MADRID

Luis Suarez scored two late goals to give Atletico Madrid a 2-1 win at Getafe in the Spanish league on Tuesday, ending the team's two-match winless streak and extending a decade-long unbeaten run against its Madrid rival and taking it to the top with 14 points.

After scoring only once in his first six matches this season, Suarez got the equaliser in the 78th minute and the winner in the 90th to boost Atletico after two 0-0 draws.

In Serie A Inter Milan recovered from a goal down for a 3-1 away win on Tuesday over a Fiorentina side that had won three straight.



Two-goal hero: Luis Suarez, left, starts Atletico Madrid's comeback with this equaliser against Getafe. ■ GETTY IMAGES

The results:
LaLiga: Getafe 1 (Mitrovic 45) lost to Atletico Madrid 2 (Suarez 78, 90+1); Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ciss 33-og) lost to Rayo Vallecano 2 (Garcia Rivera 5, Falcao 90+6).
Levante 0 lost to Celta Vigo 2 (Aspas 66, Mendez 85).

Serie A: Atalanta 2 (Gosens 3, Zappacosta 37) bt Sassuolo 1 (Berardi 44).
Fiorentina 1 (Sottili 23) lost to Inter Milan 3 (Darmian 52, Dzeko 55, Perisic 87); Bologna 2 (Hickey 49, Arnautovic 85-2pen) drew with Genoa 2 (Destro 55, Criscito 89-2pen).

Praggs finishes third, makes tour finals

CHESS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

R. Praggnanandhaa tied for second place before finishing third in the Hou Yifan Challenge online rapid chess tournament on Tuesday.

The Indian aggregated 11.5 points from 16 games to match the tally of USA's Christopher Yoo. Since Yoo was victorious in their encounter, Praggnanandhaa was placed third.

Leon Mendonca (10 points) was fifth, Aditya Mittal (9.5) finished joint ninth and R. Vaishali (6.5) ended up tied 11th.

Germany's Vincent Keymer (13.5 points) won the title with a round to

spare. He also tops the list of eight Tour finalists who fight for \$40,000 in a knockout final that takes place from October 14 to 17. Praggnanandhaa (5th) and Mendonca (8th) are the two Indians in the line-up.

Mendonca also through

With D. Gukesh not taking part in the last leg of the Tour, Mendonca made the 'cut' as the eighth finisher.

After the four legs of the Tour, Team Polgar defeated Team Kramnik 324.5 points to 302.5. That meant, Team Polgar's Gukesh and Nihal Sarin have earned a chance to travel to Dubai to witness the World chess championship title clash involving Magnus Carlsen and Ian Nepomniachtchi in December.

COVID-19 contingency plan in place

Will be used only for singles matches that conclude the event

RYDER CUP

REUTERS
KOHLER (WISCONSIN)

If a golfer playing in the Ryder Cup later this week tests positive for COVID-19, a contingency plan is set, following a rarely-used rule involving secret names placed in envelopes.

European captain Padraig Harrington said on Tuesday that he and U.S. captain Steve Stricker agreed to have a "COVID envelope" in addition to an injury envelope - to be used in the event that the coronavirus takes one of their players out of competition. The envelope contingency is only necessary for the singles matches that conclude the three-day event.

Harrington and Stricker



Not revealing much: Rival captains Steve Stricker and Padraig Harrington have not specifically said whose names are in the contingency envelopes. ■ AFP

will place the names of three of their players into an envelope before Sunday's 12 singles matches. If one team has someone forced out by COVID-19, the other team would then sideline the top player from the COVID enve-

lope list to re-balance the matches, and the point would be halved.

"There's an injury envelope and there's a COVID envelope, so that's two separate envelopes at this stage," Harrington said.

Capitals punish a listless Sunrisers, climb to the top of the table

Rabada, Nortje and Axar help the Delhi team restrict its opponent to 134/9; Dhawan, comeback man Shreyas and Pant chase down the target with ease



Fine spell: Anrich Nortje conceded a mere 12 runs in his four overs while striking twice. •SPORTSPICS/IPL

IPL 2021

SPORTS BUREAU

After its fearsome attack kept Sunrisers Hyderabad on a leash, the Delhi Capitals' top-order cut out the flamboyance for a business-like eight-wicket triumph in Dubai.

Capitals' seventh victory, with 13 deliveries to spare, resulted in Sunrisers' seventh loss in IPL 2021. Back on top of the points table, Capitals are now a victory away from the playoffs. Sunrisers stayed at the bottom of the table and moved closer to finishing among the also-rans.

After Kane Williamson opted to bat, wickets fell at regular intervals beginning with the third-ball duck for former skipper David Warner.

Sunrisers struggled to stitch partnerships. The addition of 56 runs off the six overs, thanks to Abdul Samad and Rashid Khan, brought some dignity to the innings.

Customary flourish
Delhi's chase started with the customary flourish with Prithvi Shaw finding a few boundaries before perishing. Thereafter, Shreyas Iyer, making a comeback after an injury layoff, took his time to

settle down while Shikhar Dhawan (32-ball 43) continued with the form he displayed in the first half of the league.

Milestone
Dhawan went on to cross 400 runs for the sixth IPL season in succession and looked good for another half-century before Rashid got his revenge.

Pant replaced the left-hander and Shreyas' continued presence ensured Sunrisers could never get back into the

match. Fittingly, Shreyas finished the chase with a six.

The only worry for Capitals was the hamstring injury to Marcus Stoinis.

At the toss, Williamson's decision to bat suited Rishabh Pant who wanted to chase a target – something Capitals had not done at Dubai.

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
David Warner c Axar b Nortje 0 (3b), Wriddhiman Saha c Dhawan b Rabada 18 (17b, 2x4, 1x6), Kane Williamson c Hetmyer b Axar 18 (26b, 1x4), Manish Pandey c & b Rabada 17 (16b, 1x4), Kedar Jadhav lbw b Nortje 3 (8b), Abdul Samad c Pant b Rabada 28 (21b, 2x4, 1x6), Jason Holder c Shaw b Axar 10 (9b, 1x6), Rashid Khan run out 22 (19b, 2x4, 1x6), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (not out) 5 (3b, 1x4), Sandeep Sharma run out 0 (1b); Extras (b-1, lb-6, w-3, nb-3): 13; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 134.

DELHI CAPITALS BOWLING
Nortje 4-0-12-2, Avesh 4-0-27-0, Axar 4-0-21-2, Rabada 4-0-37-3, Stoinis 1.1-0-8-0, Ashwin 2.5-0-22-0.

DELHI CAPITALS
Prithvi Shaw c Williamson b Khaleel 11 (8b, 2x4), Shikhar Dhawan c Samad b Rashid 42 (37b, 6x4, 1x6), Shreyas Iyer (not out) 47 (41b, 2x4, 2x6), Rishabh Pant (not out) 35 (27b, 3x4, 2x6); Extras (w-4): 4; Total (for two wkts. in 17.5 overs): 139.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-0 (Warner, 0.3 ov), 2-29 (Saha, 4.6), 3-60 (Williamson, 9.5), 4-61 (Pandey, 10.1), 5-74 (Jadhav, 12.6), 6-90 (Holder, 15.1), 7-115

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Khaleel 4-0-33-1, Bhuvneshwar 3-0-21-0, Holder 3.5-0-33-0,

and Manish Pandey looked to rebuild the innings, but that was not to be.

Dropped twice in the space of four deliveries – by Pant off R. Ashwin and by Prithvi off Axar – Williamson holed out off the next ball, with Shimron Hetmyer accepting the offering wide of long-off.

When Rabada took an easy return catch to send back Pandey to make it 61/4 in 11 overs, Sunrisers never looked like setting a challenging target.

Rashid 4-0-26-1, Sandeep 3-0-26-0.

Toss: SRH; **MoM:** Nortje.
Capitals won by eight wickets with 13 balls to spare.

Innings scan		SRH	DC
54	Dots	43	
9	Fours	13	
4	Sixes	5	
32/2	PP	39/1	
6.70	RR	7.79	

Next assignment

DC: Sept. 25 vs RR, Abu Dhabi, 3.30 p.m. IST
SRH: Sept. 25 vs PBKS, Sharjah, 7.30 p.m. IST



Back in the hunt: Shreyas returned to the crease in style, taking Capitals past the finish line with an unbeaten 47. •SPORTSPICS/IPL

Uncertainty over Rohit and Hardik continues

Galvanised KKR primed to take on MI

SPORTS BUREAU

It has been one of the most lopsided contests in the Indian Premier League. But, besides planning to continue its domination over Kolkata Knight Riders, with a 22-6 head-to-head record in its favour, the Mumbai Indians camp would be fretting over the availability of two of its key members – captain Rohit Sharma and all-rounder Hardik Pandya.

Neither the stand-in skipper Kieron Pollard nor head coach Mahela Jayawardene spelt out what kind of “niggles” were the two carrying.

Boult stays guarded
Trent Boult, the left-arm pacer, continued the trend by remaining guarded about the duo's injury.

“They are both recovering very well. In terms of their selection for the next game, I'm not too sure what's going on there. But day by day, they are improv-

TODAY'S MATCH

MUMBAI INDIANS VS. KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

ABU DHABI, 7.30 P.M. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 28

MI 22 | KKR 6

In 2021

Played 1 | MI 1 | KKR 0

STAR SPORTS 1 & 5S SELECT 1 (SD & HD)

ing,” Boult said on Thursday.

“They are obviously two vital players in the XI for Mumbai. And we are desperate to get them back.”

KKR, meanwhile, would be looking forward to maintain its momentum after rolling over Royal Challengers Bangalore. Should the KKR bowling unit repeat its heroics against an under-pressure MI batting line-up, it can hope for a rare victory against the five-time champion.

Approach was to finish in 19 overs: Kumble



Hail the hero: Kartik Tyagi is mobbed by RR teammates after his brilliant, match-winning final over. •SPORTSPICS/IPL

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Snatching defeat from the jaws of victory is not an alien experience for Punjab Kings. Yet, the two-run loss to Rajasthan Royals at Dubai on Tuesday must have hurt.

Coach Anil Kumble admitted it was a bitter pill to swallow. “It's sort of become a pattern for us, especially as soon as we get to Dubai, it seems,” said Kumble.

“The approach was to finish the game in 19 overs. But unfortunately we (left) it till the end. (When you leave it to the last two balls), it becomes a lottery. But credit to

(Kartik) Tyagi for the way he bowled the last over.”

Kumble felt the Punjab batsmen didn't handle the final over properly. “It was pretty obvious he was going to bowl wide outside the off-stump,” said Kumble.

Rajasthan Royals' Riyan Parag conceded the game was slipping away. “In the 19th over, while I was at mid-off, I asked Mustafizur (Rahman) not to let the game finish in that over and that we had a chance with Kartik bowling the 20th,” he said. “Those boys were insane; defending eight off the last two overs is just incredible.”

POINTS TABLE

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Delhi Capitals	9	7	2	14	0.613
Chennai Super Kings	8	6	2	12	1.223
Royal Challengers	8	5	3	10	-0.706
Mumbai Indians	8	4	4	8	-0.071
Rajasthan Royals	8	4	4	8	-0.154
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	3	5	6	0.110
Punjab Kings	9	3	6	6	-0.345
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	1	7	2	-0.689

After the DC-SRH match on Sept. 22

Sunrisers' Natarajan tests positive

The left-arm seamer has isolated himself from the rest of the squad

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad suffered a big setback when left-arm seamer T. Natarajan tested positive for COVID-19 after a scheduled RT-PCR test before its match against Delhi Capitals in Dubai on Wednesday.

The player has isolated himself from the rest of the squad. He is said to be asymptomatic.

The medical team has identified the following six close contacts of the player: Vijay Shankar (player), Vijay Kumar (team manager), J. Shyam Sundar (physio), Anjana Vannan (doctor), Tushar Khedkar (logistics manager) and G. Periyasamy (net bowler). They have also been placed in isolation.



Natarajan. •SPORTSPICS/IPL

The rest of the contingent, including the close contacts, underwent RT-PCR tests at 5 a.m. local time this morning and the test reports are negative.

TV PICKS

IPL 2021: Star Sports 1 & 5S Select 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

QUICK SINGLES



Samson fined for RR's slow over rate

DUBAI
Rajasthan Royals captain Sanju Samson has been fined ₹12 lakh for his side's slow over rate during the team's two-run win over Punjab Kings in an Indian Premier League match here on Tuesday. PTI



Samson charged under ICC Anti-Corruption Code

DUBAI
The ICC, on behalf of the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB), has charged former West Indies player Marlon Samuels with breaching four counts of the ECB Anti-Corruption Code for Participants of the T10 League (the 'Code'). ANI

BCCI not to compensate match officials for 2020-21

AMOL KARHADKAR MUMBAI

Even as domestic cricketers have welcomed the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI's) hike in match-fee, more than 500 match officials in Indian cricket are in for a rude shock with the BCCI deciding against compensating them for the curtailed 2020-21 domestic season due to COVID-19.

Besides introducing graded match-fee for senior men's and women's cricketers, the BCCI apex council on Monday approved 50% of the 2019-20 Ranji Trophy edition's match-fee for those who missed out on the last year's tournament.

Not the primary source

However, the apex council decided against including match officials – match referees, umpires, scorers and video analysts – in the compensation package. “Most of the match officials are employed elsewhere on a permanent basis, so their primary source of income wasn't affected,” a BCCI official told *The Hindu* on the condition of anonymity.

“Besides, a majority of them were assigned at least a few games during the limited season we could host, so it was decided to consid-

er only the cricketers who missed out on Ranji Trophy for the compensation package.”

The match officials, just like cricketers, are not contracted with either BCCI or a State association. *The Hindu* understands that some of the major associations will request the BCCI office-bearers for the issue to be tabled during the AGM.

Despite the heartburn for match officials, the cricketers, especially those who have established themselves in domestic cricket but haven't been able to be in India contention, were in for a windfall. The apex council ratified a steep hike for those who have played 40-plus matches in Ranji Trophy and Vijay Hazare Trophy to ₹60,000 per match-day from ₹35,000.

Amazing move

“It's an amazing move. I would sincerely like to thank the BCCI, especially president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah, for being considerate about financial well-being of domestic cricketers,” Sheldon Jackson – who has moved back to his home team Saurashtra after representing Puducherry last season – told *The Hindu* from UAE.

It will be 'batters' and it is official

ASSOCIATED PRESS LONDON

The language of cricket is changing in an attempt to make the sport more inclusive.

The gender-neutral term ‘batter’ will be used instead of ‘batsman’, cricket's lawmaker said on Wednesday, to reflect the growth of the women's game. “MCC believes in cricket being a game for all and this move recognises the changing landscape of the game in modern times,” said Jamie Cox of Marylebone Cricket Club, the Lord's-based organisation regarded as the guardian of the laws of the game.

Amendment needed

The last redraft of the laws, in 2017, kept the terminology “batsman” and “batsmen” after consultation with key figures in women's cricket. The MCC said an amendment, effective immediately, was now needed as it “helps reinforce cricket's status as an inclusive game for all.”

“The changes announced today reflect the wider usage of the terms ‘batter’ and ‘batters’ which has occurred in cricketing



A game for all: MCC believes that the use of ‘batter’ recognises the changing landscape of cricket in modern times. ■FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

circles in the intervening period,” the club said.

“The move to ‘batter’ is a natural progression, aligning with the terms of bowlers and fielders that already sit within the laws.” The MCC pointed to the women's World Cup final

between England and India in 2017 taking place in front of a capacity crowd at Lord's and a record international crowd for a women's game – 86,174 – seeing Australia beat India in the T20 World Cup Final in Melbourne in 2020.

Nasaf hits ATKMB for six

Scores five goals in the first half

AFC CUP

SPORTS BUREAU

Uzbekistan Super League side FC Nasaf pulverised ATK Mohun Bagan 6-0 in the inter-zonal semifinal of the AFC Cup at the Markazi Stadium, Qarshi, on Wednesday.

Forward Khusain Norchaev performed a hat-trick while Oybek Bozorov and Doniyorjon Narzullaev netted the other two. ATKMB defender Pritam Kotal had scored an own goal in the fourth minute of the game.

Nasaf, which proved superior to ATKMB in speed,

passing and coordination, raced to a 5-0 lead by half-time despite Bozorov's 43rd-minute penalty coming off the underside of the ATKMB crosspiece.

Nasaf, the 2011 AFC Cup champion, slowed down the pace in the second half even as the Kolkata giant produced a more disciplined effort.

The host still managed one more strike midway through the session, making its domination complete.

The result: FC Nasaf 6 (Pritam Kotal 4-og, Khusain Norchaev 18, 21, 31, Oybek Bozorov 45+1, Doniyorjon Narzullaev 71) bt ATKMB 0.

Sreeja edges Kukulkova

WTT

SPORTS BUREAU DOHA

India's Sreeja Akula overcame a tough challenge from Tatiana Kukulkova of Slovakia before winning 11-5, 8-11, 11-3, 9-11, 11-9 in a women's singles first-round match of the World Table Tennis (WTT) Star Contender here on Wednesday.

The results:
Men: Round-of-64: Marcelo Aguirre (Par) bt Harmeet Desai

11-8, 12-10, 11-8.

Doubles (round-of-16): Kazuhiro Yoshimura & Yuto Kizukuri (Jpn) bt G. Sathiyar & A. Amalraj 11-5, 9-11, 11-5, 11-6; Yukiya Uda & Shunsuke Togami (Jpn) bt Harmeet & Manav Thakkar 11-5, 11-7, 11-8.

Women: Round-of-64: Sreeja Akula bt Tatiana Kukulkova (Svk) 11-5, 8-11, 11-3, 9-11, 11-9; Archana Kamath bt Tin-Tin Ho (Eng) 11-7, 6-11, 13-11, 11-8.

Mixed doubles (round-of-16): Wong Chun Ting & Doo Ho Kim (Hkg) bt Manav & Archana Kamath 11-8, 11-7, 11-8.



IN BRIEF
Pankaj Advani wins his 24th World title

DOHA
Star Indian cueist Pankaj Advani won his 24th World title when he triumphed at the IBSF 6-Red snooker World Cup with a 7-5 victory over Pakistan's Babar Masih in the final here on Tuesday. PTI

India to host three ITF 15K tournaments

BENGALURU
India is set to host three ITF 15K men's tennis tournaments in back-to-back weeks starting November 8, in Indore, New Delhi and Gurugram. The country last held an ITF 15K event in early April this year.

Ranjeet enters quarterfinals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

Top seed and former national champion V.M. Ranjeet was stretched to three sets by Sam Chawla in the pre-quarterfinals of the ₹1,00,000 AITA men's ranking tennis tournament at the Tennis Project in Baliaas on Wednesday.

In the quarterfinals, Ranjeet, who had missed a couple of match points in the second set against Chawla before closing it out in the third, will play Parikshit Somani.

The results (pre-quarterfinals): V.M. Ranjeet bt Sam Chawla 6-0, 6-7(5), 6-3; Parikshit Somani bt Mohit Bhardwaj 6-3, 6-3; Raghav Jaisinghani bt Ricky Choudhary 6-1, 6-1; Jagmeet Singh bt Sanket Tomar 7-6(3), 7-5; Abhishek Gaur bt Amrutaj Mohanty 5-7, 6-3, 6-3; Chinmay Dev Chauhan bt Aman-deep Rathee 6-3, 6-3; Neeraj Yashpal bt Gourav Gulia 6-3, 6-3; Jatin Dahiya bt Deepender Grewal 6-2, 6-0.

Vishal Grewal wins 100m freestyle

Prachi Tokas does the same in the women's category

SWIMMING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Vishal Grewal and Prachi Tokas won the men's and women's 100-metre freestyle gold in the 56th Delhi State Swimming Championship at the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Swimming Pool here on Wednesday.

The results: Men: 100m freestyle: 1. Vishal Grewal 52.14; 2. Anurag Dagar 53.80; 3. Kushagra Rawat 54.30. **800m freestyle:** 1. Kushagra Rawat 8:24.41; 2. Sanskar Tokas 9:08.65; 3. Parth Lakhina 10:13.97. **100m backstroke:** 1. Siddhant Sejwal 59.25; 2. Tanmay Das 59.88; 3. Anurag Dagar 1:00.60. **200m breaststroke:** 1. Aditya Dubey 2:29.44; 2. Kartik sharma 2:49.65; 3. Gurpreet Singh 2:51.81. **50m butterfly:** 1. Sameer Sejwal 25.22; 2. Vinayak Parihaar 26.30; 3. Achintya Ghosal 26.61. **400m individual medley:** 1. Sanskar Tokas 5:00.04; 2. Nishay Malik 5:37.35; 3. Yash Vardhan Bishnoi 6:01.82. **Women: 100m freestyle:** 1. Prachi Tokas 1:02.97; 2. Rinki Bardoloi 1:06.74; 3. Pallavi Sej-



Prachi Tokas. ■ FILE PHOTO

wal 1:07.33. **800m freestyle:** 1. Prachi Tokas 9:27.39; 2. Surbhi Sharma 11:48.14; 3. Pragya Shokeen 14:56.97. **100m backstroke:** 1. Yashwani Suhag 1:12.20; 2. Rinki Bardoloi 1:14.51; 3. Simran Badwar 1:18.12. **200m breaststroke:** 1. Yashwani Suhag 3:05.69; 2. Vaishali Grewal 3:29.22; 3. Chandani Arya 3:43.90. **50m butterfly:** 1. Pallavi Sejwal 24.99; 2. Vanshika Sharma 34.56; 3. Moneesha 45.46. **400m individual medley:** 1. Yashwani Suhag 6:00.75. **Boys: Group-1: 100m freestyle:** 1. Madhur Aggarwal 54.74; 2. Pratham Sharma 55.11; 3. Rakshit Chitkara 56.11. **800m**

freestyle: 1. Mayank Solanki 9:32.50; 2. Tejasvi Arora 9:36.19; 3. Divyansh Arora 9:47.21. **100m backstroke:** 1. Madhur Aggarwal 1:01.39; 2. Aryaman Jain 1:07.91; 3. Ishaan Rathi 1:11.21. **200m breaststroke:** 1. Utkarsh Sarkar 2:53.17; 2. Gaurav Chauhan 2:53.18; 3. Karan Rana 3:10.20. **50m butterfly:** 1. Pratham Sharma 25.32; 2. Mayank Solanki 27.93; 3. Dhruv Bajaj 28.50. **400m individual medley:** 1. Neerav Kumar 5:16.70; 2. Tejasvi Arora 5:19.14; 3. Ishaan Rathi 5:40.30. **Group-2: 100m freestyle:** 1. Bhaghya Gehlot 59.49; 2. Prateek Singh 1:01.30; 3. Yuvraj Singh 1:04.87. **800m freestyle:** 1. Yuvraj Singh 9:49.61; 2. Dhruv Sejwal 9:57.26; 3. Ravit Kharb 11:21.75. **100m backstroke:** 1. Pranav Singh 1:11.87; 2. Robin Sen 1:17.06; 3. Prakhya Mohan 1:21.50. **200m breaststroke:** 1. Dhruv Sejwal 2:49.09; 2. Akshat Kumar 2:55.35; 3. Shubham Chaudhary 3:17.90. **50m butterfly:** 1. Robin Sen 29.60; 2. Prateek Singh 31.25. **400m individual medley:** 1. Dhruv Sejwal 5:26.30; 2. Akshat Kumar 5:48.90; 3. Ravit Kharb 6:23.19. **Girls: Group-1: 100m freestyle:**

1. Bhavya Sachdeva 1:02.84; 2. Muskaan Kaur 1:07.00; 3. Sanjana Mehlatw 1:08.16. **800m freestyle:** 1. Bhavya Sachdeva 10:00.44; 2. Simran 12:19.42; 3. Vanshika Chowdhary 13:07.46. **100m backstroke:** 1. Saanvi Sood 1:12.88; 2. Utsav 1:15.32; 3. Ananya Bisht 1:16.60. **200m breaststroke:** 1. Saisha Sehrawat 3:14.22; 2. Koushiki Singh 3:15.72; 3. Pranja Jadhav 3:36.12. **50m butterfly:** 1. Hema 30.69; 2. Muskan Kaur 33.02; 3. Khawish Dabas 34.00. **400m individual medley:** 1. Saanvi Sood 5:39.20; 2. Hema 5:55.96; 3. Nandani Sharma 7:12.59.

Group-2: 100m freestyle: 1. Ananya Rawat 1:05.84; 2. Titiksha Rawat 1:08.13; 3. Yajusha Dahiya 1:11.77. **800m freestyle:** 1. Ananya Rawat 10:24.66; 2. Sanya Zutshi 11:21.58; 3. Unnati Garg 12:40.05. **100m backstroke:** 1. Ananya Chauhan 1:18.78; 2. Manya Bisht 1:20.92; 3. Titiksha Rawat 1:22.22. **200m breaststroke:** 1. Suhani Sharma 3:09.61; 2. Unnati Garg 3:47.66; 3. Ebha Dudi 4:03.09. **50m butterfly:** 1. Nitika Saini 34.11; 2. Yajusha Dahiya 35.26; 3. Garishma Kataria 39.23. **400m individual medley:** 1. Suhani Sharma 6:23.94; 2. Harshita Lakhina 7:10.34.

Nishit stuns Ajeet

SPORTS BUREAU JALANDHAR

Nishit Pandey knocked out the top seed Ajeet Bhardwaj 7-6(7), 6-1 in the pre-quarterfinals of the over-55 event in the ITF seniors tennis tournament at the Singha Sports Academy, here.

The results (pre-quarterfinals): Over-35: Vipin Sirpal bt Harvinder Singh 6-0, 6-0; Dinesh Chandra Suyal bt Rupjit Bharali 7-5, 7-5; Arjun Uppal bt Harinder Sharma 6-2, 6-0; Rajesh Jain bt Parag Chutia 6-0, 6-0. **Over-45:** Monty Roy bt Ulhal Mohile 6-0, 6-0; Sunil Lulla bt Shahnawaz Zaffar 6-2, 6-0; Dinesh Laungani bt Ashish Pant 6-3, 4-6, 7-5.

Himanshu Bhatia bt Ashwini Kumar Purohit 6-0, 6-1; Sheetal Sharma bt Pavan Gaikwad 6-0, 6-0; Akhil Mathur bt AVNish Chandra Rastogi 6-1, 6-2; Gopal Soni bt Diganta KONwar 6-1, 3-6, 6-4. **Over-55:** Nishit Pandey bt Ajeet Bhardwaj 7-6(7), 6-1; Sanjiv Mehra bt Rajendra Menon 6-0, 6-0; Sanjai Kumar bt Bharat Phukan 6-2, 6-1; Ashish Sen bt Dipankar Chakravarti 2-6, 6-3, 2-0 (ret.); Lakpa Sherpa bt Dilip Singh Nongmaithem 6-3, 6-1.

Surekha and Abhishek advance to third round



V. Jyothi Surekha. ■ FILE PHOTO



Abhishek Verma. ■ FILE PHOTO

ARCHERY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA YANXTON (USA)

Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Abhishek Verma reached the women's and men's third round of the Archery World Championships after finishing sixth and seventh in the compound qualification rounds here.

Surekha shot 684 while Abhishek scored 695 and then got byes in the first two elimination rounds. Muskan Kirar also earned a first round bye in women's compound event after finishing 29th in the qualification. Priya Gurjar will face Isa-

belle Carpenter of Great Britain in the first round after finishing 51st in the qualification.

Sangampreet Singh and Rishab Yadav will feature in the first round of the eliminations after finishing 26th and 49th respectively.

In men's recurve section, Salunkhe Parth Sushant, Aditya Choudhary and Atul Verma will compete in the first round of the eliminations after finishing 45th, 53rd and 56th respectively.

Ankita Bhakat, Ridhi and Bari Komalika made it to the second round of women's recurve after finishing 20th, 26th and 29th respectively.

Sania-Shuai duo enters last eight

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU NEW DELHI

Sania Mirza, seeded second with Shuai Zhang of China, overcame Emina Bektas and Tara Moore 6-7(3), 7-5, [10-7] in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the €535,530 WTA tennis tournament in Ostrava (Czech Republic).

Other results: **€565,530 WTA, Ostrava, Czech Republic: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Kaitlyn Christian (US) & Erin Routliffe (NZ) bt Emily Webley-Smith (GBR) & Rutuja Bhosale 6-3, 6-4; Shuai Zhang (Chn) & Sania Mirza bt Emina Bektas (US) & Tara Moore (GBR) 6-7(3), 7-5, [10-7].

€481,270 ATP, Metz, France: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Hunter Reese (US) & Sem Verbeek (Ned) bt Jonny O'Mara (GBR) & Divij Shaan 6-3, 3-6, [10-8].

\$52,080 Challenger, Columbus, US: Singles (first round): J.J. Wolf (US) bt Sasikumar Mukund 6-3, 6-2; Prajesh Gunneswaran bt Aleksandar Kovacevic (US) 3-6, 6-3, 7-5.

\$52,080 Challenger, Biel, Switzerland: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Maxime Janvier (Fra) & Arjun Kadhe bt Toshihide Matsui & Kaito Uesugi 7-6 (4), 7-6(3).

\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Singles (first round): Ryotaro Matsumura (Jpn) bt Abhinav Sanjeev Shanmugam 6-3, 7-6(1); Ajeet Rai (NZ) bt

Niki Poonacha 7-6(1), 7-6(5).

15,000 ITF men, Cairo, Egypt: Singles (first round): Rishab Agarwal bt Faris Zakarya (Egy) 7-6(6), 6-3; Zachary Eisinga (Ned) bt Muthu Aadithiya Senthilkumar 5-7, 6-3, 6-1.

\$25,000 ITF women, Santarem, Portugal: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Alicia Barnett & Olivia Nicholls (GBR) bt Ana Filipa Santos (Por) & Sathwika Sama 6-0, 6-2.

\$15,000 ITF women, Monastir, Tunisia: Singles (first round): Eszter Meri (Svk) bt Jennifer Luikham 6-3, 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF women, Cairo, Egypt: Singles (first round): Anastasia Zolotareva (Rus) bt Ashmitha Easwaramurthi 6-3, 6-0.

Formidables begins well but Solaris fights back

BRIDGE

KAMESH SRINIVASAN NEW DELHI

Formidables, led by Kiran Nadar, had a good start as it led by 16 IMPs against Solaris in the semifinals after the first set of the Team of four Gold event in the 18th HCL International bridge championship, played virtually on the Real Bridge platform on Wednesday. However, Solaris led Partho Sarathi Mukherjee fought back in the second set to reduce the gap to just one IMP.

Earlier, Formidables had asserted itself with an imposing victory by 77 IMPs against Slammers in the

quarterfinals. Solaris had got past Maximus by 23 IMPs after the lead was reduced to five by the third set.

Shree Cement, which had outplayed Russia by 66 IMPs in the quarterfinals in which the Russian team had to concede the tie in the fourth set as one of its players had internet connectivity problem, trailed Texan Aces by 11 IMPs after one set in the semifinals.

Texan Aces increased the lead to 33 IMPs after the second set.

In the Team of four Silver event, Ganga Gomti, led Prayas by two IMPs after two sets, after the latter had enjoyed a good start with a

lead of 12 IMPs after the first set.

In the other semifinal, Dr. SSMC bounced back to lead by one IMP at the end of the second set, after having trailed by three IMPs against Dr. Sanghi in the first set.

Meanwhile, in the Open match point pairs event, the team of Uttam Swarup Gupta and Animesh Raj led with 65.75% from among 226 pairs.

The duo was followed by D. Sudhanand & G. Veerabhadr Rao (63.13), Tapan Kumar Roy & Sailen Das (62.64), Sethuraman Mahadevan & H. Anjaneya Swamy (60.99) and Nirmal Kumar Jain & Rahul Shetty (60.94).

After the second session of the first elimination round played over 24 boards, the top 112 ranked teams will qualify for the second elimination round in which they would be joined by 11 seeded pairs, from among the losing finalist teams of Gold and Silver events.

The results (quarterfinals): Team of four Gold: Solaris bt Maximus 109-86; Shree Cement bt Russia 109-43; Texan Aces bt Monica Jajoo 89-68; Formidables bt Slammers 119-42.

Team of four Silver: Prayas bt Jiya 105-81; Dr. SSMC bt Sahyadri 112-82; Dr. Sanghi bt Talluri 117-101; Ganga Gomti bt Jagorion 133-75.

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