on Sunday



Jaishankar to visit Israel to strengthen strategic partnership



Two more civilians killed in Kashmir; two



President Xi warns 'common prosperity' push will be 'long-term' Kohli says the ultimate goal is to win the

LeT militants shot dead



T20 World Cup

Plenary.

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page 15

IN BRIEF



Gehlot's Delhi visit sparks speculation about rejig

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's visit to New Delhi to attend the Congress Working Committee meeting on Saturday has sparked speculation about a Cabinet reshuffle in the State.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

Marginal dip in DU

third cut-off list Delhi University released the third cut-off list on Saturday, with the required marks for admission seeing a decline of 0.25% to 1.5%. There is a glimmer of hope for students as seats in popular courses are still available **CITY** ▶ PAGE 2



CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGES 2 & 4 MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES

Singhu murder: 1 more arrested, 2 'surrender'

Main accused remanded in custody; Morcha seeks probe

ASHOK KUMAR

GURUGRAM

A second arrest was made on Saturday in connection with the murder of a man at the site of the farmers' protest at the Singhu border, with the "surrender" of Narain Singh at Amritsar in

Punjab. Narain, a member of the Nihang Sikh community from Amarkot village, was arrested by the Amritsar rural police.

News agencies reported late in the evening that two more persons, belonging to the Nihang order from Fatehgarh Sahib in Punjab, had "surrendered" before the Sonipat police in Kundli in connection with the killing.

Lakhbir Singh, a resident of Tarn Taran in Punjab, was found dead at Sonipat in Haryana on Friday. The body was tied to a police barricade with the wrist and leg severed. He was "punished" for allegedly desecrating the

holy Sikh scripture. The prime accused Sarabjit, also a Nihang Sikh, who was arrested by the Haryana police a few hours after the murder, was remanded in police custody for seven days by the District and Sessions Court in Sonipat on Saturday.



Crime patrol: Sarabjit Singh being taken to police custody after he was produced before a court in Sonipat on Saturday. • PTI

Soon after his arrest, Narain claimed that he had informed the Senior Superintendent of Police, Amritsar, over phone that he wanted

to surrender. He said he had sought permission to visit the Akal Takht, but the police took him into custody near Jandiala town, around 25 km from Amritsar.

Talking to reporters before his arrest, Narain said Lakhbir was "punished" allegedly for the sacrilege. Members of many Sikh outfits reportedly garlanded him with currency notes when he paid obeisance at a gurdwara.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of farmer organisations protesting against the three farm laws, has demanded an investigation into "the allegation of conspiracy to sabotage the movement through sacrilege and promotion of disturbance by hurting religious sentiments".

"From media reports, it appears that he had been receiving mysterious calls which he would take in secrecy. Lakhbir Singh is supposed to have told his sister that 'his reach has increased now and has gone far'... All this information points to a deep conspiracy of some sort," the Morcha said in a statement.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7

Cong. announces organisational poll

Sonia asserts her position as party president

SANDEEP PHUKAN NEW DELHI

In a clear message to the dissident-reformists or the group of 23 (G-23) Congress leaders who had sought internal reforms, party president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday told the Congress Working Committee (CWC) that she was a full-time, hands-on president and there was no need for colleagues to speak to her



Making a stand: Congress president Sonia Gandhi with party leader Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Saturday. • PTI

through the media. After a nearly five-hour meeting, the CWC also announced an elaborate sche-

dule for organisational elections, according to which a new party president would be elected between August

colleagues to take back the reins of the Congress, Rahul Gandhi, for the first time after he quit in May 2019, said he "will consider it".

21 and September 20 next year and thereafter, elec-

tions to the CWC would be held by October at the All In-

dia Congress Committee

Amid a chorus from party

But he also pointed out that the Congress should have clarity of thought and decide where it stands on the question of ideology.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7

8 killed as rain causes havoc in Kerala

Landslips, floods devastate central and southern districts of State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Torrential rain, powered by a low-pressure system in the southeast Arabian Sea, pummelled southern and central Kerala districts throughout Saturday, triggering landslips and floods which left eight dead and wreaked havoc across Pathanamthitta, Kottayam and Idukki districts.

Six of a family were killed while 15 others were reported missing in landslips at Plapally and Kavali in the



Swamped: Passengers being evacuated from a KSRTC bus in Poonjar on Saturday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Koottickal panchayat of Kottayam.

Search and rescue operations were hindered by heavy rain and poor light. A man and a woman from

Koothattukulam were killed

after their car was washed away by the floodwaters at Kanjar near Thodupuzha in Idukki district.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7 YELLOW ALERT ▶ PAGE 6

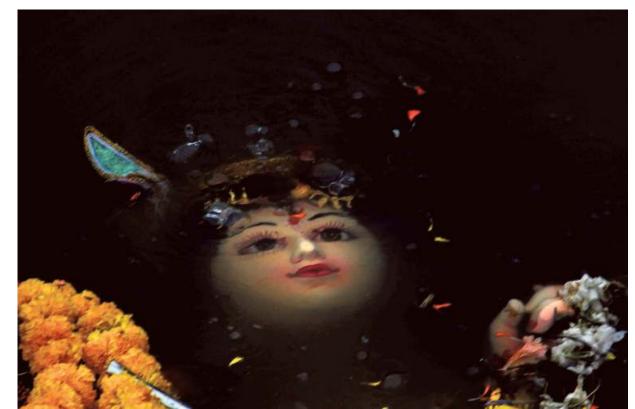
New Delhi to host NSAs on Afghan issue

SUHASINI HAIDAR NEW DELHI

Two months after the Taliban takeover of Kabul, India is planning to engage regional powers on the future of Afghanistan. It is sending an official team to attend the Moscow process of talks on October 20 that will include the Taliban Government's Deputy Prime Minister. India has also invited regional National Security Advisers to New Delhi for a meeting in November, including Pakistan's NSA, Moeed Yusuf.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7

Sacred rites



Earth and water: An idol of Goddess Durga gently sinks after immersion by devotees in the Kuakhai river at the end of Dasara festivities in Bhubaneswar on Saturday. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

Mining-affected villagers in Odisha denied relief

They have been told they belong to a different administrative block in Keonjhar

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

SALARAPENTH (ODISHA) Ghasinath Penthei and fellow villager, Jaya, have been taking turns to stage a protest at the foothills of Gandhamardan Iron Ore Mines for the past fortnight. Joining them are the women of Salarapenth, a tiny village in Ke-

onjhar district of Odisha. Putting their livelihood at risk, the villagers have decided to give up daily wage work and block traffic on the road near the iron ore mine to demand compensation.

The residents of Salarapenth are protesting against their exclusion from welfare programmes meant for villages affected by the mines. Though Salarapenth is just two km from the iron ore mines, it comes under the jurisdiction of Keonjhar's SaThe waste water flows through our village and during summer, the dust blankets

GHASINATH PENTHEI sident of Salarapenth village

dar block whereas the mines are situated in the neighbouring Banspal block. These villagers have been deprived of relief. The Gandhamardan Load-

paying ₹5,000 per month for

the whole village

ing and Transporting Cooperative Society was created to take care of villages situated around the mines. An amount is set aside for the society for every truck that rolls out with iron ore from the mines. According to local people, the cooperative society has recently started

each family affected by the mining activities.

Mr. Penthei said, "We are directly affected by pollution caused by iron ore mining. The waste water flows through our village and during summer, the dust blankets the whole village. But we have been denied benefits just because we come from a different administrative boundary." They have tried to explain their woes to cooperative society officebearers and the district ad-

ministration. But, their pleas

have fallen on deaf ears. 'Sold land for jobs'

Mr. Jaya Penthei said, "About a decade and half ago, seven crusher companies set up their units in Salarapenth. Villagers were assured that they would get steady em-

year, besides other indirect benefits. Villagers had sold all their land to these crusher units. After a few years, these units became nonfunctional due to a Government Order." He said the villagers now neither have a job nor can retrieve their land from the crusher units. Another problem the villagers face is their caste iden-

ployment throughout the

tity. "We are from the Nahra community. Going by our social conditions and descriptions in the gazette, we should be included in the Scheduled Tribes list. Since we are very poor, our children cannot continue their studies beyond Class X. In Salarapenth, none of the residents has completed college studies," said Sudarshan Penthei, another villager.

Jashpur tragedy: Baghel takes potshots at U.P., M.P. Govts.

ANUP DUTTA

Friday's Jashpur incident, in which a person died and over 16 others were injured when a speeding SUV allegedly hauling drugs from Odisha to Madhya Pradesh ploughed into a group of devotees, assumed political overtones a day later after Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath tweeted asking the Chhattisgarh Government to provide as-

sistance to the victims. Stressing that the two accused - residents of Singrauli district in Madhya Pradesh - have been arrested, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday challenged his U.P. counterpart to arrest all the accused involved in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident of October 3.

'Police shielding accused' "Yogi Adityanath did not succeed in arresting the accused, instead Uttar Pradesh Police was shielding the son of the Union MoS (Home) in Lakhimpur Kheri violence... Here, action has been taken and the accused have been arrested," Mr. Baghel said in Raipur.

The Chhattisgarh CM also took potshots at the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP Government in Madhya Pradesh. "Both the accused are from M.P. and had reached Chhattisgarh with ganja. The probe continues. It is also necessary to investigate who is protecting them," he said.

The Jashpur Superintendent of Police said of the 16 injured, 12 are undergoing treatment at Pathalgaon Primary Health Centre and four have been admitted at Raigad District Hospital. The Chhattisgarh Government has suspended one policeman and announced a compensation of ₹50 lakh for the kin of the deceased.

All 6 policemen arrested in Kanpur ⁺ property dealer murder case

He was allegedly assaulted in a hotel in Gorakhpur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Uttar Pradesh police on Saturday said they had arrested all six policemen accused in the death of Kanpur property dealer Manish Gupta. He had died allegedly in an assault in a hotel in Gorakhpur where he was staying with two friends.

Gupta's family had alleged that he had died after being assaulted by the police. The six policemen were suspended and booked for murder. The incident led to

position parties questioning the conduct of the police.

The Government then re-

commended a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe. It said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) would probe the matter till the CBI took over. Gupta's wife was given a government job in the Kanpur Development Authority as an officer on

special duty. On October 10, inspector Jagat Narayan Singh and sub-

political outrage against the inspector (SI) Akshay Kumar State Government, with Op- Mishra were arrested. A reward of ₹1 lakh each was an nounced for information on the other four accused.

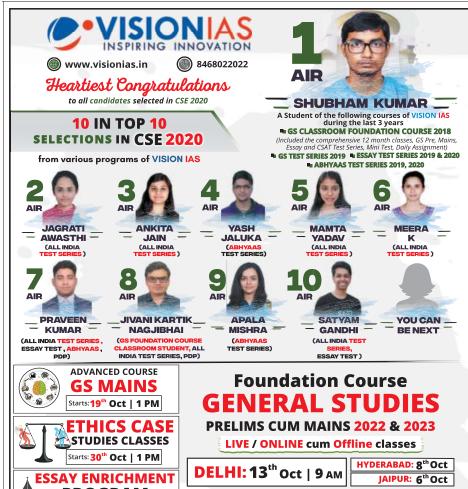
The police later arrested

SI Rahul Dubey and consta-

ble Prashant Kumar, head

constable Kamlesh Yaday and SI Vijay Yadav. Vijay Yadav was the last to be nabbed on Saturday near the Railway Museum, said the police, adding that further action would be taken after informing the SIT and se-

nior police officials.



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Timings **DELHI**

SUNDAY, OCT. 17 RISE 06:23 SET 17:50 RISE 16:20 SET 03:07 MONDAY, OCT. 18 RISE 06:24 SET 17:49

RISE 16:52 SET 04:04 TUESDAY, OCT. 19

RISE 06:24 SET 17:48 RISE 17:22 SET 05:00

Delhi Weather Delhi City **Delhi Palam Today**

31°C Shallow fog and mist in polluted morning. Few spells of moderate rain and thundershower with strong winds to occur

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 30°C A comfortable weather to prevail. Few spells of moderate rain and thundershower with strong winds to

At least six persons were in-

jured in a clash between

members of two communi-

ties in Dwarka's Dabri area

on Friday night. Over 25 peo-

ple were detained following

the clashes, the police said.

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Marginal dip in DU 3rd cut-off list

Seats available in popular courses; admissions to commence on October 18

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Delhi University released the third cut-off on Saturday with the required marks for admission to courses seeing a decline of 0.25% to 1.5%.

Even though the cut-offs continue to remain on the higher side, there is a glimmer of hope for students as seats in popular courses are still available.

Over 51,000 students have secured admissions to various colleges under the first two cut-offs. The admission process under the third cutoff will start on October 18.

BA (Honours) economics is open at Hansraj College, Lady Shri Ram College and Hin-

Bindapur JJ Colony. The sit-

uation escalated to the point

where both groups attacked

each other with sticks and

swords. "They injured each

other with the intention of

causing such bodily injuries

which are sufficient to cause

death," said DCP (Dwarka)



Students filling out forms at Delhi University. ■ FILE PHOTO

du College at a cut-off of 99%, while the course has been closed in Janki Devi Memorial College, Kalindi College, Kamala Nehru College, Kirori Mal College and Miranda House. The Indraprastha College for Women has pegged the cut-off for BA (Honours) economics at 98%, while at Ramjas College, the cut-off is pegged at 98.75%.

Shri Ram College of Commerce has kept the highest cut-off for the course at 99.5%. Sri Venkateswara College is seeking 98.5% for admission to the same course.

BA (Honours) English is available at Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College, Aryabhatta College, College of Vocational Studies, Daulat Ram College, Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, Gargi College and Hansraj College. It is, however, closed at Hindu College and Bharati College.

The LSR has pegged the cut-offs for BA (Honours) English at 98.5%, down from 98.75%, while Hansraj and Kirori Mal College have pegged the cut-off at 98%.

Political Science (Honours), which is one of the most sought-after courses, is closed at Aryabhatta College, Miranda House and Hindu College. Lady Shri Ram College has pegged the highest cut-off for the course among all colleges at 99%, down from 99.5% in the second list.

Seats for the course are also available at ARSD (98%), Daulat Ram College (98.5%), DCAC (98%), Dyal Singh College (97.5%), Indraprastha College For Women (97%) and Kirori Mal College

SDMC launches smart parking app

MUNEEF KHAN

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Thursday launched a mobile application - "MyParkings" - which aims to provide users details of vacant parking spaces within the corporation's jurisdiction. It will also allow the users to book vacant spots through online

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Currently, there are 145 surface-level parking sites, six multi-level and two automated parking sites operational within the four SDMC zones – Central, South, West and Najafgarh.

Residents welcome move Local residents praised the SDMC's parking initiative, with most citing past concerns of "lack of space" and "no vehicle safety". "We were able to manage twowheeler parking near our homes but my friends had to park their cars at unsupervised far-off corners due to lack of space. This had resulted in car parts, such as batteries, being stolen on multiple occasions. This initiative might help in terms of security and space," said a resident of Johri Farm area.

Senior official from J&K

STAFF REPORTER

A senior official of the Jammu and Kashmir administration was robbed allegedly by members of the 'Thak-Thak' gang in south Delhi's Sangam Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Benita Mary Jaiker said the official complained that the incident took place when she was travelling from Vasant Kunj to Fari-

dabad. "When she reached the Khanpur T-point, two boys signalled her to stop saying fuel was dripping from her car. As soon as she stopped the vehicle to check, two persons riding a scooty snatched her sling bag and fled," Ms. Jaiker said. The bag contained ₹2,000, her identity cards and an ATM card. "The official sustained injuries when she tried to grab her bag back from the ac-

A friend asked me some days ago if there was anything that I could eat day in and day out and not get bored of it. I gave it some thought and then said, 'samosa'. I am inordinately fond of this dish, and there is a good reason why I never tire of it. For. within a triangular flour casing, there can be various kinds of fillings.

Some of my favourite ones – from Kallan Sweets in the Jama Masjid area, for instance - are stuffed with minced meat. The Bengali singara may have cauliflower florets in it, or small pieces of potatoes with the skin, sautéed with peanuts. The small dry samosa, found in some parts of Delhi, is stuffed with peas. And I have also had kheerer singara, a Bengali khoya-stuffed samosa.

Within a

triangular flour

packs regional

flavours from

casing, a samosa

across the country

century mentions the sam-

busa). In India, food histor-

ian K.T. Achaya points out,

Amir Khusro had described

a samosa in 1300 as a dish

prepared with meat, ghee

and onions and eaten by

aristocrats. In 1350 or so, Ibn

Batuta referred to the samu-

sak "as minced meat cooked

with almond, walnut, pista-

chio, onions and spices,

placed inside a thin enve-

lope of wheat and deep fried

Now, of course, it doesn't

have to be deep fried, it can

be baked. The fillings vary,

though potatoes are largely

the preferred choice. The

Jodhpuri samosa had a

boiled potato filling - deli-

ciously spicy and just mildly

sweet. The Bengali samosa

was tasty but I thought it

could have done without the

haldi the diced potatoes had

been tempered with. I par-

in ghee".

That is why, as the city went into festive mode earlier this week, I went looking, on the Net, for some samosas to mark the occasion. I had earlier come across an eatery called Samose (https://samose.in; Address: Shop No. 5, Lotus Plaza, Vaibhav Khand, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad) and found its menu rather interesting. I went to the site and decided that we could do with a Jodhpuri samosa, a Bengali samosa (₹20 for one), chicken masala samosa (₹55), mini chicken masala samosa (₹30) and aloo samosa ghugni chaat (₹65). I ordered through a food aggregator app, timing it such that the

samosas arrived at tea time. As I bit into the Jodhpuri samosa, I mulled over the fact that samosas have regional varieties from across the country. They are so intrinsically a part of our food culture that it is difficult to remember that they actually came in from West Asia (poetry from Iran of the 9th ticularly liked the chicken masala samosa - small pieces of chicken that had been cooked with spices. The casing in all the samosas was wonderfully crisp.

I love samosa chaats and have been fond of them ever since I had my first plate in Muzaffarnagar decades ago. I still salivate over the picture of the samosa being smashed in a dona, and then topped with curd, chutneys and spices. I had pictured the ghugni chaat somewhat differently though - I thought it would be more like the Bengali ghugni (matthra with onions and what have you). This had some yellow peas but it was largely a chaat preparation with a samosa, curd and chutneys. It was delightful and I scooped out the last remaining bits of the chaat once I had tasted the rest.

The samosas gave a festive touch to my tea that day. I used to enjoy visiting the food stalls at the Durga Puja pandals but this year the stalls had been disallowed, for obvious reasons. I couldn't go for the festive food but the food came to

The scuffle started when a Shankar Chaudhary. tempo driven by a member A case under relevant sections of rioting and causing of a community hit a member of another community in hurt has been registered. payment methods.

Six hurt in group clash

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ANUJ KUMAR

A Raj loyalist or a social refor-

mist, the conundrum has

shrouded the legacy of Syed Ah-

mad Khan (1817-1898) for more

than a century. In Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: Reason, Religion *And Nation* (Routledge India),

Professor Shafey Kidwai has

penned an objective analysis of

the man who was undoubtedly

more than the founder of the

Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental

College that grew into Aligarh

Muslim University more than

With a foreword by Professor

Irfan Habib, the book deals with

Sir Syed's attitude towards Con-

gress leaders, his shifting con-

cepts of watan (nation) and

qaum (community) and his

A seasoned professor of jour-

nalism at AMU, Prof. Kidwai has

written extensively on Sir Syed.

In 2019, Sawaneh-e-Sir Syed: Ek

Bazadeed, a biography of Sir

Syed in Urdu, fetched him the

prestigious Sahitya Akademi

Ahead of Sir Syed's birth an-

niversary this Sunday, Prof. Kid-

wai says despite his Anglophile

streak, he refused to accept the

prevalent culture of genuflect-

ing. "His scientific outlook re-

quires a thoughtful exploration

that a simplistic, historiographi-

cal work could not produce."

Isn't it difficult to write

and took a long time to

about a personality who

espoused conflicting ideas

He was not a mere reconciler,

and he made no effort to wrap

the conflicting ideas into a

single narrative. I have

tried to put a premium

on showcasing how

he employed reason

even in dealing with

emotive issues relat-

ed to faith and how

rationalism never de-

serted him. On the

phemy that frequently

surfaced during Sir

Edited excerpts:

evolve?

views on girl education.

award.

two decades after his death.

Vihar, the police said on

cused," the officer said.

'Sir Syed unfailingly stood for all Indians'

In Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: Reason, Religion And Nation, Professor Shafey Kidwai combines the rigour of a scholar and the flair of a scribe to evaluate a complex figure who merits an honest appraisal

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of desecration amounts to sedition and Muslim caliphs impose corporal punishment, but it cannot be implemented in a non-Islamic state. Sir Syed said that in India, the issue is to be settled according to the country's laws. It requires to be opposed with a logical rebuttal, and noisy protest will serve no purpose. How does the book add to the existing work on Sir

Syed?

Not much has been written about how he strove for mitigating the sufferings of the beleaguered while being a member of several apex bodies under the British rule. Notwithstanding his occasional emotional outbursts bordering on communalism, he unfailingly stood for all Indians as he was the first citizen who demanded that the entry age of ICS aspirants be raised to 23 instead of 21 as Indians started education quite late.

He also demanded that the coveted examination be held in India. Later, the Con-

gress made these two demands its central plank. Similarly, he was the first Indian member who introduced the compulsory smallpox eradication vaccination Bill

and vehemently

supported Ilbert

thorny issue of blas-Prof. Shafey Kidwai. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Syed's time, he made it clear Bill that empowered Indian that the Koran does not prejudges to hear the criminal casscribe corporal punishment for es filed against the British. Cuthe offender. The deplorable act riously, other Indian members Muslim identity that is both In-

sided with the Anglo-Indian community, which fiercely opposed the Bill.

Do you find a dichotomy in Sir Syed's usage of qaum and watan, which, decades later, led a section of Pakistani thinkers to consider him the Father of the Nation?

Sir Syed attempted to locate the concept of nation in terms of faith, language and geographical framework simultaneously and separately at regular intervals. It is a topic that still provides ammunition to his admirers and opponents in almost equal terms. It is pertinent to point out that Sir Syed was not swayed by the pan Islamism propagated by Jamaluddin Afghani (1838-1897) and Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905). and he vehemently opposed it by writing several editorials in his multilingual newspaper -Aligarh Institute Gazette.

Significantly, he never used the term *ummah* (Muslims all over the world are one) in his writings. For him the concept of Khilafat had very little relevance in the Indian context hence sowing the seeds of separatism among Muslims cannot be attributed to him.

Sir Syed asserted that all the religious communities living in India form one unified nation. He did make a difference between patriotism, nationalism and citizenship. He did repudiate the territorial or racebased concept of nationalism and candidly talked about a dian and Islamic.

How do you make sense of Sir Syed's shifting views on girl education?

Sir Syed's concept of girl education seemed skewed and unpalatable as he suggested tutorbased home education for girls. Taking a cue from Edward H. Clarke's book, Sex In Education, or, A Fair Chance For Girls (1873) that favoured single (male) education, Sir Syed did plead for setting up government schools exclusively for bovs and home-based tutor education for girls. He was not an opponent of women education, however, he tried to offer them a faulty model. Though later on he relented, his call for women's education seems too irresolute and

From the existing material, can we infer how would Sir Sved have negotiated a Hindutva-led India?

It is a tricky question to answer how Sir Syed would have responded to the tremendous emotive appeal of ethnicity or religion-based nationalism that get at us but a closer look into his writings prompts me to say that Sir Syed would have pushed for an alternative model of nationalism, resembling his indigenous model of modernism that he produced as an antidote to colonial modernism. He would have emphasised constitutional nationalism or in the terms of Hannah Arendt, "civic nationalism" that drew sustenance from tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity.

M ND-NDE

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A Space Marketing Initiative

Air quality falls to 'poor' level in Delhi

Many areas register 'very poor' AQI

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The air quality of the city deteriorated to "poor" level on Saturday and is expected to remain the same on Sunday, according to authorities.

In many parts of Delhi such as Anand Vihar, Bawana and Punjabi Bagh, the air quality dropped further to "very poor" category.

Rise in stubble burning The contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring States to the rising PM2.5, a chief pollutant, in Delhi increased to 14% on Saturday, according to governmentrun monitoring agency SA-FAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research).

Also, the number of fire counts in the region jumped to 1,572 on Saturday from close to 500 on Friday, said SAFAR. This is more than the fire counts recorded in this period last year.

The AQI of Delhi was 284 on Saturday, up from 198 on Friday, stated the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) 4 p.m. bulletin, which is an average of the past 24 hours.

By 7 p.m., the AQI further worsened to "very poor" category with a reading of 305,



A farmer burning stubble on the Yamuna riverbed in Delhi. ■FILE PHOTO

according to the real-time data of the CPCB.

"Fire counts are gradually increasing and the wind direction is favourable, coming from the north-west direction. Under the influence of approaching western disturbance, wind reversal to easterly will happen by tomorrow (Sunday) and rainfall is likely. The AQI is forecasted to improve but will remain in poor (category) for tomorrow, but thereafter it is likely to be moderate for the next three days," SAFAR said in a statement.

Air pollution in Delhi rises during the winter chiefly due to a combined effect of stubble burning in neighbouring States and climatic conditions, which lower wind speed and trap pollutants.

CM attends Ramlila in House

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday participated in the 'Sampurn Ramlila' celebrations at the Delhi Assembly, which he termed a "new tradition".

The Vidhan Sabha, Mr. Kejriwal said, was considered a very "boring and dull" place where various

political debates took place, but Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel had "broken the mould by attempting to add a measure of love and peace" to its proceedings through the event. "This attempt to celebrate every festival had made the Assembly "harmonious, lively and beautiful," Mr. Kejriwal said, terming it "remarkable".

Minor raped, cousin held

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A 15-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her cousin in south Delhi's Kotla Mubarakpur area, the police said on Saturday, adding that the accused has been arrested.

A senior police officer said the matter was reported on October 14. The victim's mother said she was

not at home when the incident happened. After she returned, the daughter told her that the cousin, a 22year-old who lives in the neighbourhood, came to the house and raped her. "The accused had threa-

tened the girl not to disclose

the incident to anyone, the mother stated in her complaint," the officer said. SHRIRAM BHARATIYA KALA KENDRA presents





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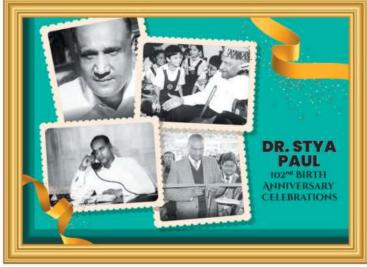
Dr Stya Paul's 102nd Birth Anniversary celebrates the life and times of the visionary with a mission

October 17, New Delhi: The Apeejay Stya family recently commemorated the 102nd Birth Anniversary of Dr Stya Paul – a visionary, eminent industrialist, educationist, philanthropist, freedom fighter and inspiration behind the Apeejay Stya and Svran Group, in a virtual mega celebration. It paid obeisance to the indomitable spirit of 'an ordinary man who rose to extraordinary heights' and the values he stood for.

Shri Suhas Yathiraj, IAS, District Magistrate, Gautam Budh Nagar, who has done the entire nation proud by winning the Silver Medal at the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 was the esteemed Chief Guest for the occasion. Musician par excellence Shri Hariharan mesmerised the audience in a virtual music concert.

Speaking on the occasion, Mrs Sushma Paul Berlia, President, Apeejay Stya Group and Svran Group said, "Dr Stya Paul was born a very ordinary man, but a man who rose to extraordinary heights. The reason that we want to celebrate his life is to commemorate, to remember, to be inspired by and to take forward all that he stood for and exemplified in his life," she stated. "Each one of us has the potential within us to become the grandest versions of who we are. But many of us don't allow ourselves to bloom as we get lost in day to day activities without understanding the purpose for which we are in this world," she added.

Mrs Berlia paid a rich tribute to her father, Dr Stya Paul while remembering the fascinating journey of his life from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of success and glory, despite many challenges including a physical





Mrs Sushma Paul Berlia, President, Apeejay Stya Group and Svran Group, offers a Vinamra Shraddhanjali to hei father, Dr Stya Paul.

one. Dr Stya Paul's legacy of excellence is being carried forward by his daughter and only child, Mrs Sushma Paul Berlia. Mrs Sushma Paul Berlia is a leading woman entrepreneur and educationist of the country who has made outstanding contributions to industry and education. Dr Stya Paul's sonin-law, Mr Vijay Berlia and grandsons - Mr Nishant and Mr Aditya Berlia, along with granddaughter Dr Neha Berlia -also attended the event.

Shri Suhas L. Yathiraj said, "Seeing the kind of work Dr. Stya Paul has put in, I think



Mr Suhas L Yathiraj, IAS, District Magistrate of Gautam Budh Nagar, delivering the chief guest's address at the 102nd birth anniversary celebrations of Dr Stya Paul.

he is a legend." In an inspiring address, which motivated thousands of Apeejay Students, Shri Yathiraj said, "If you really want something in your life, put your heart and soul into it, then destiny will conspire to give you that thing. If we think about the greatest scientific achiever of the 20th century after Einstein, it is Stephen Hawking.

He couldn't get up from his wheelchair, write or communicate. If he can become one of the best scientists of the century, we very well do not have any excuse for what we can't achieve in life," he added.

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BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

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Awadhi Bengali

Bhojpuri

Bihari Chhattisgarhi

English

Guiarati

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Hindi

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Punjabi Saurashtra

Sindhi

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Advocate

Business

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DOCTOR GIRL MD Anesthesiology 32/ 165 Fair pretty well mannered and cultured Chennai based well placed doctor family. Father doctor Ker-ala Nair. Mother Tamil Christian. MD MS MCh boys from good families preferred. Ct: 9840050381/

HINDU SC PR 25 yrs / 5.6, Poosam, Kadagam, MBBS, Parents Govt, Seeks MBBS/MD/MS, ongoing PG Groom preferably Govt. below 28 yrs. Contact: 94446 53587 / 97881 54437.

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Doctor Parents need MD/MS, 30-32 vrs upper Brahmin for MD Girl 5.8"29

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HINDU NAIR Aswathi aged 34 MBBS

DNB working in Kerala seeks well settled Doctor or other professionals groom. Contact: 9345450365 / Whats App: 8144140365

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SC AD Hindu 28/155 Rohini Wheatish Affluent M Tech B'lore Reasearch Scholar own house well educated, ntact:9620432082

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ASST. PROF. Tuluva Vellal Mudaliar Good looking Girl 34 (Uthiratathy, Meenam, Ph.D(Physics), Family Seeks Alliance from First and Unmarried Bachelor Bridegroom Aged 34 – 36 Yrs, Employed, Caste no bar. Contact advnc1990@gmail.com, 8590192574. RCSC 31/163 MCom, B.Ed, Bangalore 34 - 36 Yrs, Employed, Caste bar. Contact : After 7 PM 7550245659 settled, Upper Middle class seeking professionally qualified Con-

HINDU AD. 26/154/Hastham/BE. MNC 6L PA Seeks Suitable Groom from Govt/PSU.same caste Ct:94441 55781 NAIR GIRL 47 Tamilnad Educated MSC

Citizen.Caste /Language No Bar. Ct NAIDU 30 172cm MBA HR Uthiram Kanni ragu/ kethu V fair.Seek Well qualified,decent family boy in for-SENGUNTHA MUDALIAR, 30/157. Chithi-rai, Thulam, Sevvai dosham, BTech, ward or backward caste parents

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suitable

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CH, Ludhiana , sikh Ramdasia ,92 born ,Height- 5 ft 7 inch. 9872887393

SOFTWARE ENGR 38. 5ft 5 inch.

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wedadv09@gmail.com HINDU NADAR, KK District, Widower

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seeks Bride KA Raman Nadar-(W)

9380791999. Mail: ramannadar2008@

Widower 67 Hotel B'ness needs life KAMMA-NAIDU 33YRS/156/B.SC Anurad MALAYALI DEEVARA, Hindu 27/ partner 50-55 with good health to hal/Scorpio F&B Mngr,Singapore Sal MBA workg P.Ltd, Magayiram seeks girl fr Chn / Kerala CNB. 9789915547 brance. 97869 85957 7397792931

KAMMA 32YR/156/BE-ECE Makaram/ Midunam Sr.Engr L&T 75000 slightly 16 house B.E. Mech 26 years handsto-Midunam Sr.Engr L&T 75000 slightly Polio Seeks Bride 9550557682/

NAIDU Boy 31 Fair M.Sc., Central Govt. Employee, Seeks Bride from any Hindu Community Bride (CNB). Ct:

9994329563 / 9600489726 SEEKS VEGETARIAN Life Partner for KAMBALATHU NAICKER Bank Employee

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7904354855

B.E., Asst Manager (Data Science) Chennai seeks bride Send BHP 9884510626 MUDALIYR INNOCENT divorcee 38vrs. Govt Sports GM 2Lac/month. Dr ents. Hindu simple Bi Bride HINDU BOYAR Rajus 28/183 Dhanusu

Ct:8778934848 VANNAR , Divorced, 47years, Own Business, House. Suitable rom Any Caste. Ph: 9841450214 Girl

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ger Nationalised Bank. Seeks Suitable Bride. Ct. No. 80563 71995

a Bridegroom aged 47,MBA,Asst Manager,Own House Chennai.

ager,Own Ct:9789037973.

MUDALIAR DIVORCE,30/182, MS.MBA, DM, MNC, 1200000.PA, No Child, Well Settled, CNB. 7299576644,

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OLD RAJINDER NAGAI

MVA govt. is the most corrupt in Maharashtra's history: Fadnavis

There is only one agenda of this government and that is extortion, says ex-CM

STAFF REPORTER

A day after Maharashtra Minister Uddhav Thackeray slammed the Bharativa Janata Party (BJP) at Shiv Sena's annual Dussehra rally over the use of investigation agencies for political gains against the Opposition, BIP leader and former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said the present tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi government is the most corrupt in the history of the State.

Countering Mr. Thackeray's claim that the Centre was encroaching on the States' rights by violating the principle of federalism, the BIP leader claimed that the Shiv Sena president was taking along individuals of Left and communist ideology to change the constitution pre-



pared by Dr. Babasaheb Am-

'No misuse of agencies'

"Had the ED, CBI and other agencies been misused, half of the State Cabinet would be in jail. But we believe in democracy and will not misuse these agencies," Mr. Fadnavis told reporters in Nagpur. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi would never let agencies be misused.

The Leader of the Opposi-

tion in Assembly went on to say that the present State government would be recorded in the history as the most corrupt. "There is only one agenda of this government and that is extortion," he claimed.

"Dalali in this government has reached such levels that some Ministers have even got extortion software created to know how much money has been extorted. Why blame the ED and the CBI if such things are happening?" he asked, adding that the Central probe agencies were acting on the directions of the court and had no political motive.

Commenting on Mr. Thackeray's statement about the BIP not fulfilling the promise of making a Sena worker Chief Minister, Mr. Fadna-

vis said the MVA government is formed through dishonesty. "Respected Uddhavii should accept that he had ambitions of becoming a Chief Minister. In politics, having ambitions is not wrong. But if you wanted a Sena worker at the helm. then why didn't you choose

senior Sena leaders like Diva-

kar Raote, Subhash Desai or

Eknath Shinde?" he asked.

Mr. Thackeray had on Friday appealed to the Sena workers to fight against the BJP the way Mamata Banerjee did in West Bengal. Mr. Fadnavis said the CM wants to turn Maharashtra into West Bengal where no industry could flourish due to union activities and extortion. " We will never let Maharashtra turn into West Bengal,"

The day after



Left unattended: Waste material and other puja items litter the Yamuna riverbank in New Delhi on Saturday at the end of Navratri and Durga Puja celebrations. • PTI

Sasikala visits Jaya's memorial on eve of AIADMK's 50th anniversary

I placed my heartache of past 5 yrs there, says ex-CM's close aide

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

V.K. Sasikala, close aide of Jayalalithaa, visited the former Chief Minister's memorial on the Marina beach Saturday on the eve of the start of the AIADMK's 50th anniversary celebrations.

She left her T. Nagar residence around 10.30 a.m. in a car fitted with the AIADMK flag and reached the memorial an hour later. Her supporters lined the route sporting the flags of the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) and the AIADMK. This was Ms. Sasikala's first visit to the memorial after serving out her jail term in Bengaluru in the disproportionate assets case. A tearyeyed Ms. Sasikala spent some time at the memorial

and paid floral tributes. "Amma [Jayalalithaa] and I were inseparable. I placed my heartache of the past five years at her memorial today. I also told her about what has happened so far and assured her that there would be better days for the party. I have confidence that Amma and MGR will save the party and the cadre," she told reporters. However, she refused to answer a question whether she would try to



This was Ms. Sasikala's first visit to the memorial since her release from prison • RAGUR

take control of the AIADMK. Later, she visited the MGR and Anna memorials. Her nephew and AMMK leader T.T.V. Dhinakaran did not accompany her.

On the day she left Chennai to begin her prison term in 2017, she visited Jayalalithaa's memorial en route and took a vow by slapping the ground multiple times. The AIADMK wrote that day on its official Twitter handle that Sasikala, who was then the party's interim general secretary, had vowed to "overcome the conspiracy, treachery and crisis against her". She was later ousted

from her position. The AIADMK is now led by former Chief Ministers O. Panneerselvam and Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

When Ms. Sasikala was freed in February this year, she could not visit the memorial because it was shut on account of COVID-19.

While she stayed away from active politics ahead of the Assembly election, her recent overtures are seen as an attempt to revive her political career.

Meanwhile, former Minister and AIADMK leader D. Jayakumar termed the visit

High Court quashes complaint against Alagiri

Case pertained to asset details

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

The Madras High Court has quashed a private complaint preferred by the Returning Officer of Madurai Parliaagainst former Union Minister M.K. Alagiri for having allegedly suppressed certain details regarding his assets while filing nominations for the 2009 Lok Sabha elec-

Justice M. Nirmal Kumar quashed the case after advocate R. Srinivas contended that the complaint was barred by limitation. The counsel pointed out that the Returning Officer (Collector of Madurai) had preferred the complaint before a Judicial Magistrate only in 2014 for an alleged offence committed in 2009.

It was brought to the notice of the judge that the allegation pertained to non disclosure of a piece of land owned by Mr. Alagiri in Tiruvarur. An individual named S. Jaganathan had reported about the discrepancy in May 2013 and therefore the Returning Officer had chosen to lodge the complaint in February 2014.

Pointing out that the complaint had been lodged



M.K. Alagiri

under Sections 177 (furnishing false information) of the Indian Penal Code and 125A (penalty for filing false affidavit) of the Representation of the People Act of 1951, the petitioner said both the leprovisions pressed against him were pari mate*ria* (one and the same).

Since IPC was a common law and the Representation of the People Act was a special law, the petitioner contended that it was a well settled position of law that only the provisions of a special law should be preferred by the courts whenever a person gets charged of similar offences under two different

He went on to state that Section 125A of the 1951 Act provides for a maximum imprisonment for six months if a person was found guilty

IPFT, TIPRA to work on tribal State demand

SYED SAJJAD ALI

Tripura's regional parties, including BJP's ally IPFT, and some prominent intellectuals from the indigenous community on Saturday discussed a plan to streamline a movement for a separate tribal State and implementation of the contentious National Register of Citizens. They attended a meeting convened by IPFT general secretary Mevar Kumar Jamatia to chalk out programmes for a joint movement over the two key demands. Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (TIPRA) chairman Pradyot Kishore Debbarman and president Bijoy Kumar Hrangkhawl attended the meeting held at a government guest house. After the meeting, Mr. Debbarman said the idea of his 'Greater Tipraland' (separate state for tribal people) and 'Tipraland' of the IPFT were almost the

He asserted that both parties and others who be lieved in 'Thansa' (unity) could work together for the sake of 'Tiprasa (indigenous people)'. "The IPFT will get back to me within a few days with some concrete proposals," he said.

Won't tarnish name, Aryan tells NCB officials in jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan assured the Narcotics Control Bureau officials during counselling that he would work for the welfare of the poor and never do anything that would tarnish his name in the future, an official said on Saturday.

Aryan (23) is currently

lodged in Arthur Road prison after he was arrested by the NCB following alleged drug seizure from a cruise ship on October 2.

During counselling Aryan said, after his release he will work for "social and financial uplift of the poor and downtrodden" and never do anything to bring him publicity for the wrong reasons, an official said.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Tender Notice

Notice No.- 04, Dated 14-10-2021

Invitation of tenders through e-Procurement System behalf of the President of India, invites tenders through e-procuremen system for the supply of the following items. Complete description of the item and other condition are available on website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. No.	Tender No. Due Date	Brief Description of Stores	Reserved to be procured from	Qty. Requ- ired	Earnest Money (Rs.)
01	17195186D Dt.08-11-2021	Key lock relay with different ward combination as per Specn. No. IRS:S:46, IRS: S:34, IRS:S:23		267 Nos.	₹ 50,410/-
02	17215048 Dt.11-11-2021	Supply, Installation, Transportation and commissioning of Block Proving by axle counter (BPAC) using block panel and UFSBI for double line operation as per RDSO specification No. IRS:S-105/2012 (Ver.0)	RDSO	26 Pairs	₹ 5,24,630/-

(1) Above tenders are available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in, The firm desirous in participating against e-tender are advised to electronically regd nemselves on the above website for which they would require to obtain class III digital certificate (if already not obtained) from certifying agencies authorized under govt. of India IT Act. 2000. Manual offers will not be ccepted. (2) Advertised tender of Dy. Chief Material Manager/Construction North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur are being opened through EPS (E-Procurement System) only. Firms desiring to participate in Dy. Chief Materia Manager/Construction North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur tenders, should obtain necessary digital certificate and get themselves registered wit CRIS/New Delhi. Necessary details in this regard can be obtained from the vebsite http://www.ireps.gov.in (3) In case of difference between English and Hindi version of the tender notice the English version shall prevail. (4) Head of allocation towards cost of Earnest Money & S.D. Money is 00844556 Dy. Chief Material Manager/Construction, Gorakhpur

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Mob forces girl to take off burkha, shoots video

Men seen in video let off with warning

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A girl was forced to remove her burkha and face covering by a group of people in Bhopal on Saturday afternoon after suspecting that the man on whose scooter she was riding pillion was a Hindu, the police said.

No case has been registered in this connection with the incident that took place in Islam

A video of the incident went viral soon after, but preventive action had been taken under

Shopkeeper killed

Four people allegedly

beat a shopkeeper to

death after they were

asked to pay for the ciga-

rettes they had taken, the

police in Shahdol in Mad-

hya Pradesh said on Sa-

turday. The incident oc-

curred in Deolond on

The accused had been

Friday, an officer said.

over cigarettes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Section 151 of Indian Penal Code against two people, Intkhedi police station in charge R.S. Verma said.

In the video, a man from the group, who is apparently shooting the video, is heard telling the girl her act was disgracing "our" community, while some women can be seen trying to force her to show her face.

"Two men seen in the video were let off with a warning to not repeat such an act," he

PRESS NOTE

NOTICE INVITING BIDS FOR ROAD/ BRIDGE/ BUILDING WORKS

Executive Engineer, Bharwain Division, HP. PWD, Bharwain-177109 on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh nvites on line e-tenders on item rate basis from approved and eligible contractors registered in CPWD/ HPPWI

Name of Work	Estimated cost	,	of the	for compl- etion	Time and date of opening of technical bids	Class of Contra- -ctor
A/R & M/O link road Chururu to Dhussara km 0/0 to 6/500 (SH: P/L BC between km 5/0 to 6/500.) with paver		27000/-	500/-	Three months	11.30 AM on 30.10.2021	A ll classes

Bidding documents can be downloaded from the website http://hptenders.govt.in from 22.10.2021 (5.00 PM to onward. The bids can be deposited in electronic format on the website http://hptenders.gov.in. w.e. 23.10.2021 to 29.10.2021 up to 5.00 PM & documents submission on dated 30.10.2021 up to 10.30 AM. The bids received will be opened at 11.30 AM on 30.10.2021 in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend. I the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

Bid document along with general terms and conditions of the work can be seen at and downloaded from th website http://hptenders.govt.in.

The bidders are advised to quote rates inclusive of GST as applicable. GST shall not be paid extra.

IP / 4498/21-22 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

OUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY **ELECTRICAL WORK** Tender No.: 05/Tender/EL/CON/

SECR/BSP/2021, Date: 06.10.2021 Name of Work: "Electrification of (5.20TKM) by 25KV, 50HZ, A.C. Single Phase Over Head Equipmen with Modifiction of Ramtek Yard in Nagpur Division Over South East Central Railway". Tender Value: 3 2.74.46.987/- (₹ Two Crore Sevent Four Lakh Forty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Seven Only). Earnes Money Deposit: Nil.

Date & Time of Tender Closing At 15.30 hours on 01.11.2021. Date of Completion: 09 (Nine) Months from the date of issue of LOA.

Website Particulars & Notice Board Location: For further details related to e-tender document eligibility criteria and the complete details for the above work, please refer/download tender documen which is available on our website www.ireps.gov.in

For Chief Electrical Enginee (Con)/Nagpur

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PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

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PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

THE MARK HINDU

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.Pc.) Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused person Salim@Ahmad S/o Sarif Ahmad R/o H.No. 1034, Gali No. 34. Jafrabad, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR

No. 266/21, u/s 307/387/506/34 IPC PS Welcome, Delhi and it has been returned to warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused person **Salim@Ahmad**, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Salim@Ahmad, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Salim@Ahmad of FIR No. 266/21, u/s 307/387/506/34 IPC PS Welcome, **Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 23.11.2021.

Animesh Bhaskar Mani Tripathi MM-03, Room 19, DP/1097/NE/2021 Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one unidentified dead body of male Namely: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 30-35 years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'4", Face: Oval Built: Thin, Wearing: Brown Pant only, who was found dead at Monastery Market, Civil Lines,

Delhi. In this regard a case DD No. 83A, Dt. 01.10.2021 has been registered at P. S. Civil Lines, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the above deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone

DP/1591/N/2021(UIDB) Tel. No. 011-23815444



Sd/- SHO P. S: Civil Lines, Delhi



"DO NOT TRAVEL WITH INFLAMMABLE ARTICLE IN TRAIN"

identified as Monu Khan, Pankaj Singh, Virat Singh and Sandeep Singh. "Three of the four ac-

cused have been detained. Efforts are on to nab one of them," officer said.



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TO ADVERTISE

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India's National Newspaper

IMD issues yellow alert for 7 districts in Kerala

Fury might abate, but rain to persist today too

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Several Kerala districts are poised to receive isolated heavy rain on Sunday also, but the rain fury which swept the central and southern districts on Saturday is expected to abate by then.

A low-pressure area over the southeast Arabian Sea, which powered the intense spells on Saturday, was expected to move inland over Kerala on Saturday night and weaken thereafter, according to the IMD Meteorological Centre here.

Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, Malap-

IN BRIEF

Cinemas see full

witnessed house full

VIJAYAWADA

occupancy in Vijayawada

Several cinemas in the city

occupancy since the second

Government relaxing COVID

safety norms and allowing

four shows per day from Thursday, occupancy in most

of the cinemas increased.

festival in Kurnool

60 injured during Banni

Sixty people were injured,

four of them critically, during

the Banni festival organised

as part of the Mala Mallanna

Swamy Kalyanotsavam here

tradition, people take part in

stick fight during the festival.

the number of injured were

more than 100.

Unconfirmed reports said that

on Saturday. As per the

wave of COVID infections.

With the Andhra Pradesh





Scary drive: Vehicles stranded on the busy Kottayam-Kumily Road after a landslide (right) on Saturday.

puram, Kannur and Kasaragod districts are on yellow alert for isolated heavy rainfall on Sunday, an IMD update said. The IMD has forecast light to moderate

rainfall for the other districts. Fishers have been advised against venturing out

to sea till Sunday, given the possibility of squally weather along the Kerala coast and

the Lakshadweep Islands. Cyclonic which persisted over the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal had organised into low-

pressure areas, bringing rainfall over Kerala over the past week. But the IMD had predicted that both systems will not intensify further. Over the past few days, the IMD had issued heavy

rainfall alerts with the low pressure system over the southeast Arabian Sea in close proximity to the Kerala coast. In the first 16 days of Oc-

tober, all 14 districts have reported excess rainfall with 11 districts recording a "large excess" (percentage departures of more than 60% from the normal) during the pe-

earthed "forced conversion

rackets" in Udupi, Bengalu-

ru, and Chickballapur in the

last month alone. Chief Mi-

The conversation around

"forced conversions" re-

gained momentum in Sep-

tember when Goolihatti

Shekhar, BJP MLA, com-

plained in the Assembly that

his mother was allegedly

converted by force to Chris-

tianity. Incidentally, he

chaired the Legislature

Committee meeting on Oc-

tober 13, issuing directions

Rev. Peter Machado,

Archbishop of Bangalore, in

a statement, expressed con-

for the survey.

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Assam, Tripura, Jharkhand, central Maharashtra, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Puducherry, Karaikal and Lakshadweep

TY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	N
jartala		34.8	25.4	Kozhikode		32.4	26
ımedabad	–	35.6	19.1	Kurnool		32.7	24
zawl	–	29.2	21.5	Lucknow		35.6	23
lahabad	–	36.1	25.2	Madurai		34.2	2
ngaluru	15	28.9	21.5	Mangaluru	1	30.9	2
opal		33.8	18.7	Mumbai			
Iubaneswar	13.8	29.4	25.6	Mysuru			
andigarh		37.3	20.6	New Delhi			
iennai	0.3	32.7	27.4	Patna			
imbatore		32.2	24.2	Port Blair			
hradun		34.7	18.3	Puducherry	2.5	33.2	26
ngtok	1	24.0	17.7	Pune			
oa	5	32.7	24.6	Raipur		34.0	2
ıwahati		36.5	25.4	Ranchi			
ıbballi	–	32.0	21.0	Shillong			
derabad		30.7	24.0	Shimla		30.9	17
phal		28.8	20.5	Srinagar		25.1	8
ipur		34.8	20.5	Thiruvananthapuram	57	26.9	25
ochi				Tiruchi			
hima		26.5	16.2	Vijayawada	34	31.2	2
lkata				Visakhapatnam			
				•			

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

I-T search was \pm

political, says

DesignBoxed

DesignBoxed, a political

management

STAFF REPORTER

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI) 502: 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 statue

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 caus 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 prematu death in people with heart or lung disease

Sabarimala Ayyappa temple opens, rain restricts pilgrims

New melsanthis to be picked through draw of lots today

STAFF REPORTER PATHANAMATHITTA

The Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala was opened in connection with the five-day monthly rituals at 5 p.m. on Saturday. Under the guidance of Tantri Kandararu Mahesh Mohanararu, Melsanthi V.K. Jayaraj Potti opened the sanctum sanctorum at 5 p.m. This was followed by the opening of the various *upadevatha* temples and the lighting of the aazhi near the 18 holy steps.

As there were no special rituals on the opening day, the temple was closed for the day after the Harivarasanam rendition by 7.30 p.m. It will reopen at 5 a.m. on Sunday for nirmalya dar-



Melsanthi V.K. Jayaraj Potti opening the sanctum sanctorum of the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple on Saturday.

san. After Usha Puja at 7.30 a.m., the selection of the new melsanthis through a draw of lots will be held at 8

The new melsanthis, to be appointed for a year, will take charge on the first day of the Malayalam month of Vrischikam, when the anpilgrimage

In view of the heavy rain,

District Collector Divya S. Iver has banned the entry of pilgrims to the holly hillock on October 17 and 18. A meeting convened by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to assess the rain situation later extended the ban to October 19 as well.

After the Thulam month rituals, the temple will reopen for Chithira Aattatirunal on November 2.

nister Basavaraj Bommai also recently asserted that a over alleged "forced conversions" in Karnataka. The Le-"tough anti-conversion law" is on the anvil.

BJP gears up for 'tough'

Report on places of worship sought

anti-conversion law

preparing ground for a 'tough anti-conversion law" gislature Committee on the Welfare of Backward Classes and Minorities has asked for a report on churches and missionaries, "both legal and illegal" in the State to check "forced conversion".

The ruling BJP seems to be

STAFF REPORTER

However, the proposed survey by the Minorities Welfare Department has been opposed by the Congress and heads of the Christian community on the ground that it is veiled targeting of the community.

The committee's move follows at least four instances where activists associated with Hindutva organisations have barged into prayer halls claiming to have un-

cern, saying, "our places of worship as also pastors and sisters will be identified and may be unfairly targeted".

⁺ Kumaraswamy calls The Great Indian Kitchen gets Kerala's best film award Siddaramaiah 'anti-Muslim'

'He is terminator of minority leaders'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah, who in a series of tweets was dubbed "anti-Hindu" by Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, on Friday faced attack by JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy who called him "anti-Muslim".

Mr. Kumaraswamy, who has been attacking Mr. Siddaramaiah on various fronts in recent times, on Friday held him responsible for rajakeeya naramedha ("political genocide") of several Muslim leaders in the party and called him "terminator of minority leaders".

He alleged that Mr. Siddaramaiah was the force behind the declining political fortunes of several Muslim leaders in the Congress, including Roshan Baig, Tanveer Sait, and Igbal Ahmed Saradagi among others. Mr. Kumaraswamy held Mr. Siddaramaiah responsible for the recent expulsion of M.A. Saleem for making disparaging remarks about KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar. Interestingly, without di-

rectly naming him but calling him "Siddha shoora", Mr. Kumaraswamy said that soon the "true colours" of Mr. Siddaramaiah would be exposed to the minority community. He added that neither the Congress nor Mr. Siddaramaiah held any "patent" for minority wel-

Mr. Siddaramaiah refused to comment on the tweets by Mr. Kumaraswamy.

Earlier this week, Mr. Bommai and Mr. Siddaramaiah had engaged in a Twitter war.

Jayasurya, Anna Ben adjudged best actors

STAFF REPORTER

Jeo Baby's The Great Indian Kitchen, which won praises from all across for its portrayal of a woman's bold fightback within an oppressive patriarchal family, has been chosen as the best film at the 51st Kerala State Film Awards. The awards were declared on Saturday after-

Jeo Baby also won the award for the best original screenplay. Choosing the film, which insisted that democracy should start at home, was a unanimous decision for the jury, according to jury chairperson Suhasini.

Jayasurya won his second State award for best actor (male) for his performance in Vellam, which kept afloat an archetypal drunkard tale,





while Anna Ben won the best actor (female) for her performance in *Kappela* as a naive young woman who has to negotiate many a pitfall when she goes out into the big

Sidhartha Siva won the award for the best director for *Ennivar*. Writer-director Sachy, who passed away last vear, also found a place in the winner's list for his last film Ayyappanum Koshiyum, which won the award for the best film with popular

Now, a trip to Russia for globetrotting tea-seller couple

Vijayan and Mohana have visited 25 countries across six continents in the past 14 years

appeal and aesthetic value. These are the first awards

after amending the rules to introduce a two-level mechanism for the jury in the wake of an increase in entries for the awards. The main jury had to view around 30 films selected from 80 submissions by a preliminary jury. The jury also includes eight-time national award winner and Kannada director P. Seshadri and director Bhadran, who were also the chairpersons of the two committees of the preliminary adjudication

Declaring the award, Minister for Cultural Affairs Saji Cherian said the award would send across a message that women coming forward in all walks of life, including in cinema, was the need of

Ms. Suhasini said Kerala had to be appreciated for going ahead with organising the award during the CO-VID-19 pandemic period, providing inspiration for ar-

"The quality of all the films have been good. Only when there is a calamity, people think differently. It will bring out different emotions in people. Production would have been difficult during this period, yet we had 80 films for consideration," said Ms. Suhasini. She said the competition for the best actor (female) award was tough with seven contenders in the final round

firm working for the Opposition Congress and recently the target of search and seizure operations by the Income Tax Department, has alleged that the raids were 'obviously political' and 'part of the process of stifling the Opposition through State power'.

Naresh Arora, MD, DesignBoxed, said I-T sleuths 'found absolutely nothing – no unaccounted valuable of any kind'.

"They targeted me and my colleagues only because we have been working for the Opposition. It is unfortunate that even after being so powerful, the ruling dispensation needs to intimidate those working with the Opposition."

Child drowns in river, father arrested

STAFF REPORTER

The Kerala Police arrested a man on Saturday for allegedly pushing his wife and his year-and-a-half-old child into the Vallayi river at Kathirur here. The child's body was later retrieved from the river.

In her statement to the police, Sona, the woman, alleged that she and her daughter, Anvitha, were pushed into the river by her husband, K.P. Shiju.

She said the three of them had come to the riverside on Shiju's motorbike around 6 p.m. on Friday, when the incident happened. Local people found Sona, 25, holding onto a bush on the edge of the river and calling for help. However, Anvitha

could not be saved.

For those who have not heard about the couple Vijayan and Mohana, the banner in front of their unassuming coffee shop at Gandhi Nagar in Kochi may appear intriguing. It declares that the shop will remain closed from October 21 to 28 as the couple will be away on a trip to Russia.

But, it hardly evokes curiosity among the locals as they know that it is just another foreign trip for the globetrotting tea-seller couple, who has visited 25 countries across six continents in the past 14

"We will be visiting Moscow and St. Petersburg in the week-long visit. Russia is a country that has always

fascinated me right from the Soviet Union era. It is the land of the bloody October Revolution and of people who suffered not just at the hands of occupants but also that of their own rulers," said Mr. Vijayan. The trip would have happened last year if not for the pandemic.

The couple took bank loans to fund their initial trips and repaid it from what little they could save from the coffee shop. They run the shop alone and leave for themselves the daily wages, which they would have had to pay had they engaged others. But, as the number of trips increased, so did the loan, which last year stood

at around ₹4 lakh. However, as their fame spread, they started getting sponsors to the point that



Unlike their past trips,

they need not have to pay for their trips any longer. Their last trip to Australia and New Zealand was sponsored and so is their latest trip to Russia, which is being funded by a travel

this time they will be accompanied by their two daughters and their families who, however, will have to fund the trip on their own. "It will take around ₹13.50 lakh, which they will raise

by taking loan from their provident fund or pawning their ornaments," said 71-year-old Mr. Vijayan, who considers life as countless journeys strung together.

He also has a trip to Singapore lined up to inaugurate the office of a travel agency, of which he is the brand ambassador, a role for which he is being paid. Japan is where he wants to head next followed by Vietnam and Cambodia with his 69-year-old wife who is also enthusiastic about travelling.

The couple brought out a book last year, Chaaya Vittu Vijayanteyum Mohanayudeyum Loka Sancharangal, which loosely translates into 'The global tours of Vijayan and Mohana by selling tea'.

'Clues team did not follow my instructions'

DCP answers Disha case panel

ABHINAY DESHPANDE HYDERABAD

The videographer of Clues Team of Hyderabad city police failed to follow his instructions while recording the topography and other evidence of the alleged encounter spot at Chatanpally on December 6, 2019, and he had realised it only after he received the copies of the videographs, said J. Surender Reddy, DCP, Rachakonda SOT who was appointed to probe the incident.

"I had instructed the videographer to record the position of the dead bodies, scene of the place. Until I received the videographs on December 10, 2019, I was under the impression that the former has acted according to my instructions,

member commission of inquiry, appointed by the Supreme Court to probe the Disha gang rape and murder case and the aftermath, on Saturday. Mr. Reddy submitted the two USB flash drives containing 25 videographs and 51 photographs of the alleged encounter spot. However, the SC panel members expressed disappointment over the duration of the videos submitted before them as the majority of the clippings were only of a few

but not," he told the three-

"Did it not give you the impression that the videos are too short and some editing has been done, Bombay High Court's former judge Sondur asked.

FROM PAGE ONE

Singhu murder: 1 more arrested, 2 'surrender'

The autopsy report of Lakhbir has revealed 37 wounds, including six wounds caused by sharp-edged and pointed weapons.

"The rest are lacerated and abrasion wounds caused by blunt weapons. The report attributed the death to haemorrhagic shock," said Virender Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Law and Order, Soni-

Later in the afternoon Lakhbir Singh was cremated at his native village in Punjab's Tarn Taran amid tight security in the presence of his family members. No Sikh priest was present to perform Ardas (Sikh funeral prayer) and no one from his village, Cheema Kalan, attended the last rites.

"Sarabjit has named four people, including Narain Singh, for their involvement

in the murder. He said that more people were involved and he could identify them," Mr. Singh told *The Hindu*.

Producing Sarabjit before the court of Kimmi Singla, Judicial Magistrate First Class, the Haryana Police sought 14 days remand for the identification of the coaccused in the case and recovery of the murder weapon and blood-stained clothes.

"The police told the court that the accused was to be taken to Punjab's Chamkaur Sahib and Gurdaspur for the identification and arrest of the co-accused. They also pleaded that the murder weapon and the bloodstained clothes of the accused were to be seized from Kundli," said Sarabjit's counsel Monarch Bhardwaj.

(With inputs from Vikas Vasudeva)

Congress announces organisational poll

Mr. Gandhi then cited the example of the 2015 Dadri lynching incident, and said he had wanted to visit the family of Akhlaq, the Muslim man who was lynched by a mob but was prevented as some in the party had reservations

Mr. Gandhi is learnt to have said that when rights of the poor and marginalised sections are "under attack" from the Narendra Modi government, the Congress should be able to defend them and not be concerned about "whose leadership is acceptable".

Party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was among a host of leaders who asked Mr. Gandhi "to lead

But it was Ms. Gandhi's opening remarks that set the tone for the marathon meeting of the CWC, the first physical meeting after a gap of 18 months because of the pandemic. Her assertion of being a hands-on president was a direct rebuttal of senior leader Kapil Sibal's remarks that "in our party, at the moment, there is no president". The entire organisation wanted its revival, but it required "unity, discipline, self- control and keeping party's interest paramount," Ms. Gandhi

"I am, if you will allow me to say so, a full-time and hands on Congress president," Ms. Gandhi observed. In the past two years, a large number of young colleagues have taken leadership roles in taking party policies and programmes to the people, she asserted. "I have always appreciated frankness. There is no need to speak to me through the media. So let us all have a free and honest discussion. But what should get communicated outside the four walls of this room is the collective decision of the CWC," she noted.

Responding to her, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma, both members of the G-23, said there has never been any doubt over her leadership and that they were among the leaders who had requested her to take charge after Mr. Gandhi stepped down.

Among the leaders who requested Mr. Gandhi to take over the reins were A.K. Antony, Ambika Soni, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi, Chhatisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, Meira Kumar and Harish Rawat.

New Delhi to host NSAs on Afghan issue

According to sources, New Delhi has reached out to countries that participated in the "Regional Security Dialogue" in Tehran – Iran, Russia, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan for the meeting to be chaired by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval. A Pakistani official confirmed receiving the invitation, but said a decision on participation was yet to be taken.

In another development, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla included Pakistan's Senate Chairperson in an invitation to parliamentary leaders of Commonwealth nations for the centennial celebration of the creation of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament in early December.

A senior official told The *Hindu* that the invitation to Pakistan comes amid pressing need for discussions on terrorism and trans-national security emanating from the developments Afghanistan.

The Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed that India will send a senior official to the Moscow format conference on Wednesday, which includes delegations from Afghanistan, India, Iran, China and Pakistan. Taliban officials said a delegation led by its Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi would attend.

Eight killed as rain causes havoc in Kerala

Also in Idukki, seven people were feared missing in a landslip at Kokkayar. In Thiruvananthapuram, a migrant labourer from Jharkhand went missing in the Amayizhanjan canal.

With flood waters cutting off roads and access to several regions, the Army and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were deployed in various districts to coordinate rescue operations. The Air Force also is on standby.

Chief Minister Pinarayi

Vijayan, who chaired a review meeting, described the situation as grave and promised all-out efforts to rescue people stranded in cutoff locations.

Rivers including the Pampa, Kallada and the Achencoil were in spate. Shutters of dams have been raised to let out water following steady rainfall in the catchment areas in several districts.

Higher education institutions which were slated to function from Monday will reopen only on Wednesday.

Two more civilians killed in Kashmir

They were from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh; two suspected LeT militants also shot dead in Valley

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR

Two persons from outside Jammu and Kashmir and two suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants were killed in the Valley on Saturday. One of the militants is said to be behind the murder of a policemen.

In Poonch, where antimilitancy operations in a forested area entered the sixth day, the bodies of two more Army jawans were recovered on Saturday.

On the civilian killings, an official said suspected militants opened fire at Arvind Kumar from Bihar, a roadside vendor, in the Eidgah area of the old city in Srinagar. The victim suffered bullet injuries in the head. "He was declared brought dead to a nearby hospital," the official said.

Sajeer Ahmad, a carpenter from Uttar Pradesh, was shot dead in the Litter area of Pulwama.

Ninth civilian killing

This is the ninth civilian killing by militants in the Valley this month. Earlier, seven civilians, including a non-local



Struck by fear: Women crying after a gunfight between militants and security forces in Pampore on Saturday. • NISSAR AHMAD

Hindu vendor, a local Hindu teacher, a Sikh school principal and a Kashmiri Pandit chemist, were killed.

J&K's regional parties have condemned the killing. "This is yet another case of a civilian being targeted like this. All Arvind Kumar did was come to Srinagar in search of earning opportunities & it's reprehensible that he was murdered," National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah said.

Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti said, "Strongly condemn today's attack on a street vendor who sadly succumbed. Such unfortunate incidents only reinforce the immediate need to reach out to the people of J&K by initiating a constructive dialogue."

Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone said, "This is pure terror. Yet again a golgappa vendor shot and killed. What a shame. How cowardly can it get."

"A top LeT 'commander', Umer Mushtaq Khanday, was

killed along with an associate in the gunfight in Pampore [in Pulwama]. The bodies were retrieved from the debris after eight hours of search," Inspector-General of Police Vijay Kumar said.

Khanday, a resident of Tulagh in Pampor, was involved in the killing of two police personnel at Baghat Srinagar on February 19, he said.

A total of 13 militants had been killed in stepped-up operations against militants in Kashmir. These operations were launched immediately after militants killed seven civilians in the Valley.

Poonch operation With the recovery of the bo-

dies of two jawans, the death toll of soldiers has gone up to nine in two operations in Poonch since October 11. "Subedar Ajay Singh and Naik Harendra Singh were killed in action during search operations conducted by the Army along with the police in densely forested area of Nar Khas forest in Mendhar, District Poonch, on October 14," an Army spokesman said. The twin operations

NSG to offer anti-drone cover in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The National Security Guard (NSG), the counterterrorism commando force, has been deployed at the Indian Air Force (IAF) stations in Srinagar and Jammu to provide antidrone security cover to these vital installations, M.A. Ganapathy, the force's Director-General, said on Saturday.

The first-ever drone attack took place on June 27 at the IAF station in Jammu, where two unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which came from across the border, dropped bombs, injuring two airmen and damaging a portion of a building.

The NSG chief said the federal counterterrorist and counter-hijack commando force was enhancing its "counterterrorism profile" and preparing itself to meet emerging security challenges. He was speaking at the 37th Raising Day celebrations of the force, also known as the "black cats", at its garrison

Heat of protest



Loud anguish: Congress workers protesting against the increase in fuel prices outside the house of Petroleum Minister Hardeep

Singh Puri in New Delhi on Saturday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

NSCN (I-M) remains firm on flag as talks resume

'Its divine origin cannot be traded'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The resumption of peace talks between the Centre and two sets of extremist groups has put the focus back on the Naga flag and the Yehzabo, or the Naga Constitution.

The Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, or the NSCN (I-M), said it would not forgo the 'Naga national flag' and the Yehzabo for arriving at an honourable solution to the peace process after more than 24 years.

In a statement, the group said it would "not follow the forbidden route to the Naga solution that is linked to forgoing the Naga national flag and Constitution, which is the face of the Naga political struggle and identity". The

"Naga flag with divine origin cannot be traded or bargained".

The group had been insisting on a federal form of arrangement that allows people across the Naga-inhabited landscape to be part of India but governed by a separate Constitution and identified by a separate flag.

The organisation slammed New Delhi for indulging in "divisive policy and flattery" in the name of finding a political solution. It viewed rival organisations as "made in India collaborators" planted to confuse and hoodwink the Nagas with high-sounding promises.

This was in reference to the meeting of the leaders of the Naga National Political Groups with representatives

of the Centre on October 13. RSS chief.

Currently at a rescue centre in Mysuru

Tiger T3 being treated

for severe wounds

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The tiger, MDT23, which was captured after a 22-day operation in Mudumalai on Friday, is being fed and treated for its wounds at a rescue centre in Mysuru.

Tamil Nadu Chief Wildlife Warden Shekhar Kumar Niraj and his team had secured the tiger, which had killed two persons and over 20 head of cattle, after tranquillising it in the jungle.

As the tiger had several injury marks and wounds, officials of the Tamil Nadu Forest Department had a detailed discussion with the doctors and rescue officials at Mysuru at midnight Friday and on Saturday morning. The tiger's haemoglobin levels were falling



The tiger had killed two persons and over 20 head of

gradually, and it was also found to be dehydrated. The doctors made an initial diagnosis and listed the problems, which included several body cuts, some of which had led to cell degradation and might cause septicemia, Mr. Niraj said. The canines have to be restored as it can't eat properly.

Sai University Quiz finals

Battle of the Buzzers at

Bengaluru teen tops event held in association with *The Hindu*

STAFF REPORTER CHENNAI

The Sai University National Quiz 2021 organised in association with The Hindu In School, had three students emerge as winners in the finals held on September 24, following gruelling preliminary and semifinal rounds.

V. Sohan from Bengaluru bagged the first place with 130 points and was given a trophy, a certificate, a tab and a 75% scholarship if he chooses to study at Sai University. Meenakshi R.S. from Kozhikode won the second prize with 80 points, and Navya Prakash J.K. from Bengaluru came in third with 65 points. They won smartphones, trophies, certificates, and a 50% scholarship if they choose to study at Sai University. A 25% scholarship was announced for the remaining 12 finalists, if they study at Sai University

Over 1.040 students who passed out of class 12 in 2021 took part in the prelims and around 240 students qualified for the semifinals. From this, 15 students qualified from the finals. Participants were tested on their knowledge of a wide range of topics. Arvind Rajeev from 'X Quiz It' was the Quiz Master.

The entire event took place virtually, with an exciting final buzzer round held via Zoom. The finalists had just 15 seconds to press the buzzer and answer the questions posed to them and the first three participants to press the buzzer were given the chance to answer.

K.V. Ramani, Founder and Chancellor, Sai University, a special guest at the event, appreciated the enthusiasm, knowledge, and skills of the youyj. He applauded the uniqueness of the quiz in its format, content and participation, and the nature of its platform. The dignitaries included Dr. Jamshed Bharucha, Vice-Chancellor, Sai University, and Sridhar Vice-President Aranala,

(Sales and Distribution), The

Hindu Group.

deputy set to visit Ayodhya SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat and his second-incommand, Dattatreva Hosabale, will visitAyodhya between October 19 and 21, ostensibly for the conduct of the Sangh Sharirik Abhyas Varga (physical training component of the RSS

training course). The senior RSS officebearers will be staying at various rest houses on the Karsewakpuram campus close to the site where the Ram temple is being built. Such a high-powered delegation visiting Ayodhya is significant as also the fact that the physical training camp of the RSS is to be held there, whereas it is usually held in Nagpur.

Jaishankar to visit Israel for high-level engagement

He will hold talks with Foreign Minister of Israel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will leave on a five-day visit to Israel on Sunday, for the first such high-level engagement with the four-month-old Government of Prime Minister Naftali Bennet, and his first visit to the country as Minister, the Ministry of External Afannounced

Saturday. During the visit, Mr. Jaish-

talks with Foreign Minister of Israel Yair Lapid, who is also the Alternate Prime Minister, and is expected to take over the PM's post in 2023, as part of the coalition agreement of the Israeli Government that succeeded Benjamin Netanyahu. He is also expected to call

ankar will hold bilateral

on President Isaac Herzog, PM Bennet and the speaker of the Knesset Mickey Levy. all of whom have taken their new posts in the past few months. The Israeli Ambassador-designate to India, Naor Gilon, who has yet to present his credentials in In-



dia, said the visit would be "intensive".

"Awaiting to accompany Dr. S Jaishankar on his first visit as EAM," Mr. Gilon wrote in a tweet, adding that

"a very intensive visit is planned, aiming to further solidify the Strategic Partnership announced during the 2017 historic visit to Israel of PM." The 2017 visit marked the

first time an Indian Prime Minister had visited Israel. "Since then, the relationship between the two countries has focused on expanding knowledge-based partnership, which includes collaboration in innovation and research, including boosting the 'Make in India' initiative," the MEA statement said, indicating that Mr.

Jaishankar would also inte-

ract with business leaders in the hi-tech and innovation industry.

Tribute to soldiers

He is also expected to travel to Haifa to pay tribute to Indian soldiers who were killed during the First World War, and will hold meetings with the "Indian-origin Jewish community, Indologists and Indian students who are currently pursuing their education in Israeli universi-

Mr. Jaishankar's travel to Israel also comes close on the heels of the Pegasus surveillance controversy, and

ties", the statement added.

revelations that a number of Indian journalists and key political and business figures among people from other countries had their phones hacked using Israeli company NSO's Pegasus software. While the company NSO

insists it only sells software to government agencies, and deals must be cleared by the Israeli Government, New Delhi has denied carrying out the surveillance, that allegedly began after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel and meetings with former Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu.

Diabolical designs on farmers, says CWC Why didn't the CWC react

Resolution says India no longer considered a democracy, has earned the label of 'electoral autocracy'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) on Saturday adopted three strongly worded resolutions on inflation, the farmers' protests and the country's political situation, especially regarding the border stand-off with China and the deteriorating security situation in Jammu and Kashmir after the Talitakeover Afghanistan.

The party also decided to take to the streets over runaway inflation by undertaking a Jan Jagaran Abhiyan between November 14 and 29. It also announced a series of training programmes for its leaders and workers on grassroots management, election management and the failures of the Narendra Modi Government. The first such training would take place at Sewagram in Wardha, Maharashtra, between November 12 and 15.

On the issue of the farmers' protests, the CWC said the past seven years had witnessed a "diabolical design"



In session: Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi at the CWC meeting. • PTI

to attack the livelihood of the annadatas and the landless farm labourers. The CWC said the "brutal" mowing down of farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri was a manifestation of the Union Governcontinuing "arrogance". It slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not removing the Union Minister whose son had been arrested in connection with the incident.

In a resolution on the political situation in the country, the CWC said the "ason democratic institutions completes the sad and shameless narrative of the Modi Government", and claimed that India was no longer regarded as a democracy and had earned the label of an "electoral autocracy"

The Congress alleged that independent watchdog bodies such as the Information Commission, the Election Commission and the Human Rights Commission had been "debased and rendered virtual ciphers".

The CWC expressed alarm over what it said was "rapid deterioration" in the security of the country, both external and internal.

"Nearly 18 months after the clashes in Ladakh in which 20 soldiers lost their

lives, Chinese troops continue to be in occupation of Indian territory," the political resolution said.

'The aggressive posture of China and the unabated infiltrations by Pakistan have resulted in a dramatic deterioration of the security of Iammu & Kashmir (I&K). After the change in regime in Afghanistan and the takeover by the Taliban, the situation is even graver, but the Government remains oblivious or in deep slumber," it

Calling the administration of J&K incompetent, the CWC demanded the restoration of full statehood and holding of democratic elections. Expressing grave concern

over the move to grant the Border Security Force search and seizure powers up to 50 km from the border in States such as Assam, West Bengal and Punjab, the CWC said, "This is a dangerous encroachment on the exclusive power of the States and the powers of the State

to the murder at Singhu?'

It is a *parivar bachao* working committee, says BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The BJP criticised the Congress Working Committee (CWC) that met on Saturday for not reacting to the ghastly murder of a Dalit man at the Singhu border, one of the sites of the farmers' protests, and questioned if the Opposition party stood with the "Talibani mindset" behind the killing.

At a press conference, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia described the CWC as a "parivar bachao working committee [save the dynasty committee]". Mr. Bhatia alleged that it offered no answers to the issues of the party's internal rift and its leadership's failures, and instead indulged in spreading

'Deafening silence'

"For the sake of petty and cheap vote bank politics, Opposition parties, especially the Congress, will maintain a deafening silence on



Gaurav Bhatia

this [Singhu border killing] key issue. They will not have courage to call spade a spade because it does not suit their political narrative," Mr. Bhatia said. He attacked farmer leader Rakesh Tikait for his reported remarks that organisers could not be blamed for such an incident.

Taking a swipe at Sonia Gandhi for her assertion that she was a "full-time and hands-on" Congress chief, he noted her status as the interim president of the organisation, and the demand of the group of disaffected party members, referred to as the G-23, that it should have a full-time head.

'Black law in Punjab' Mr. Bhatia cited the police

lathi-charge on a group of protesting farmers in the Congress-ruled States of Puniab and Raiasthan. He remarked that a law on contract farming brought in by Punjab stated that farmers could be arrested for breaking the agreement. "This is what a black law is, and the Congress president should ensure that it is withdrawn," he added.

Mr. Bhatia also took a dig at Ms. Gandhi for the part of her statement in which she noted that all CWC members were now doubly vaccinated, paving the way for its first physical meeting since the COVID-19 outbreak.

"The Congress should offer words of thanks to scientists and doctors when 100 crore doses of vaccines are completed in a few days," he

'Compensate kin of Singhu border victim

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Saturday asked Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi to provide a compensation of ₹50 lakh to the kin of the Dalit labourer who was found brutally murdered at the Singhu border.

Ms. Mayawati also demanded that the family of the Dalit labourer, whose body was found at the site of the farmers protest on Friday, be provided a job.

The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister referred to the Dalit background of the Punjab Chief Minister, and asked him to provide monetary compensation to the kin of the victim from the State just like he had announced a compensation for the victims in Lakhimpur Kheri where three cars from the convoy of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra mowed down protesting farmers on October 3.

Ms. Mayawati, in a tweet, described the murder of the Dalit youth as "extremely sad and disgraceful".

SGPC comes out in support of farmers

Punjab Deputy Chief Minister demands judicial probe, blames Haryana govt., police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

While the BJP has targeted the farmers' unions over the murder of a young Dalit man at the protest site at the Singhu border in Sonipat, Haryana, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) - the body responsible for the management of all gurdwaras - on Saturday said the "unfortunate incident" was being used to tarnish the ongoing farmers' movement.

SGPC president Bibi Jagir Kaur said the unfortunate incident would not have taken place had the Government been serious about resolving the issues of the farmers. "Some people were deliberately trying to tarnish the image of the peasant struggle and, as a result, such incidents were taking place. Conspiracies are being hatched to discredit the peasant struggle, which is worrisome," she said. Punjab Deputy Chief Mi-

nister Sukhiinder Singh Randhawa demanded an inquiry from a sitting judge into the incident. Hitting out at the BJP-Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) Government in Haryana, he said the State Govern-



Not backing down: Farmers protesting at the Singhu border in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ment and the police could not shrug responsibility for the incident as they were accountable for law and order.

"This is very sensitive issue, which is related to the religious beliefs of the people and, on the other hand, is associated with the farmers who have been peacefully protesting from almost a year against the draconian farm laws of the Union Government. At this crucial juncture, it was very important to identify anti-social elements inciting religious sentiments and defaming the farmers agitation as these kinds of desperate attempts, aimed to sabotage

this most peaceful and well-

disciplined agitation, were

already being made by some disgruntled elements," he

On the other hand, BJP Punjab State president Ashwani Sharma blamed the farmer unions for the "rising violent and criminal incidents" at the protest sites at Singhu-Kundli on the Delhi

Mr. Sharma said the farmer unions were responsible for the safety of people as they did not let the police come near those participating in the protests.

"The farmer leaders have been giving provocative speeches only to spoil the peaceful atmosphere of the country. The protest sites have become areas of heinous crimes and every time a crime is committed, the union leaders immediately distance themselves from it. The recent murder of a Dalit is another example as the leaders have distanced themselves from the Nihangs," said Mr. Sharma

Complaint submitted

Meanwhile, several Schedule Caste (SC) organisations submitted complaints to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) Chairman, Vijay Sampla, seeking justice for the Singhu victim.

The SC organisations included Bhartiya Baudh Sangh, Rashtriya Bhantu Sansi Samaj Vikas Sangh, Shri Guru Ravidas Vishwa Mahapeeth (Delhi Province), Jai Baba Rama Peer Janmotsay Committee, National Scheduled Caste Alliance, Delhi Prantiya Raigar Panchayat, Valmiki Mahapanchayat, Shri Sant Kabir Janmotsav Committee, Akhil Bhartiya Bairwa Vikas Sangh, SC/ST/OBC & Minority Employees Welfare Association and Jangpura Bhogal SC/ST Resident Welfare Association.

Gehlot's Delhi visit sparks speculation about reshuffle

He visits Delhi after seven months to attend CWC meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's visit to New Delhi to attend the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting on Saturday has sparked speculation about its ramifications for the State's politics. All eyes are on a Cabinet expansion and reshuffle as well as political appointments here, which been inordinately have

Congress president Sonia

Gandhi's assertion at the CWC meeting that she was a "full-time, hands-on" party chief is likely to make an impact on the prospects for Mr. Gehlot, who has so far been unwilling to agree to a power-sharing arrangement with the rival faction. The camps led by Mr.

Gehlot and his former deputy, Sachin Pilot, have been at loggerheads for more than a year, though the recent turmoil in Punjab had led to the hopes of an early settlement of the issues raised by the latter during his rebellion along with 18 MLAs in July last year. Party emissaries from New Delhi have been unable to convince Mr. Gehlot to carry out an early reshuffle.

While Mr. Gehlot is visiting New Delhi after a gap of seven months, the Cabinet reshuffle took a back seat after the announcement of byelections to the Vallabhnagar and Dhariawad Assembly seats on October 30.



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'Global Hunger Index not based on an opinion poll

Undernourishment misunderstood: non-profit

JAGRITI CHANDRA NEW DELHI

German non-profit Welthungerhilfe (WHH), which co-published the Global Hunger Index (GHI) this year, rubbished the Union Government's allegation on Saturday that its ranking of India as among the 16 worst countries was based on an opinion poll. It also said the Government was wrong to confuse "undernourishment" with "undernutrition".

Following the launch of the GHI on Thursday that ranked India 101 out of 116 countries, the Government expressed its shock and questioned the "unscientific" methodology used by its two publishers, Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, which relied on a "four-question" opinion poll to calculate one of the four indicators used to arrive at the GHI score. The Government singled out the "undernourishment" indicator, because it was the only one where India's performance deteriorated relative to previous years - undernourishment prevalence rose from 14% to 15.3% between 2017-2019 and 2018-2020.

"The GHI uses the prevalence of undernourishment indicator, which is assessed by FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization] using Food Balance Sheet data from each country," Miriam Wiemers, Advisor, Global Hun-



A mother feeding her child at a government hospital in Palghar, Maharashtra. • PRASHANT NAKWE

ger Index, told The Hindu in an email. A Food Balance Sheet presents a comprehensive picture of the pattern of a country's food supply during a specified reference period. It shows for each food item the sources of supply and its utilisation.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development on Friday said instead of relying on a poll, the index should have used the measurement of weight and height to calculate the "under-

nourishment" indicator. "This represents a misunderstanding of the undernourishment indicator. Undernourishment is a measure of the proportion of the population with inadequate access to calories and is based on data regarding the food supply in the country. It is not a measure of weight and height," said Ms. Weimers.

Senior NC leader Rather's son joins Sajad Lone's party

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR

Senior National Conference (NC) leader and former Finance Minister Abdul Rahim Rather's son Hilal Rather joined Sajad Lone's Peoples Conference (PC) on Saturday. This is the second known face's exit from the NC in the past five days.

There are many soothsayers who refuse to see reality as it exists and want to create reality as they want to see it... The PC has arrived and will conquer for the best interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," Mr. Lone, who quit the Gupkar alliance earlier this year, said after Mr. Hilal joined him.

Mr. Hilal is facing a case of corruption in the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ABC) over loans taken from the J&K Bank.

Mr. Lone termed Mr. Hilal "an enterprising, educated and capable young man who has the interests of the people of J&K at the core of his politics". Mr. Hilal said the conflict had destroyed the youth of J&K to a great extent. 'My dream is to see the youth of I&K prosper in every field they take the plunge in and make it a hub of peace, tranquillity and progress. As I decided to join politics, I didn't think of anyone but Sajad Lone. He is a dynamic leader," he said.

vincial president, Devender Rana, had quit and joined the BJP.

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E-Tender Information Corrigendum INVITATION FOR ONLINE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST EMPENALMENT

Online previously publish E-Bid Notice No-236/Seven-3/Poultry/Bundelkhand Package Broiler Chicks-E.O.I./2021-22, Dated 04-10-2021 is modified as per following details:- Feed for broiler chick should supplied of on the basis Buraeu of Indian Standard - Payment of supplied feed will be made after Quality Testing Report Detail of broiler feed for chick is as below-

Feed Max. % | Min. % | Max. % Max. % Min. % Quantity of No. Name moisture Protein AIA Crude Fiber | Crude Fat | Feed per chick Broiler Starter Finisher

The Scheduled Date and Time for E-Bid:-18-10-2021 11.00 A.M. - Prebid Meeting Date 23-10-2021 up to 6.00 P.M. - Expression of Interest of Empanelment document Submission end date & Time

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Director, (Administration and Development Animal Husbandry, U.P., Lucknow

25-10-2021 3.00 P.M.

Earlier this week, the NC's pro-



Manmohan's health improving: AIIMS official

NEW DELHI Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been diagnosed with dengue, but his health condition is improving, officials from the All India Institute Of Medical Science (AIIMS) said on Saturday. The 89-year-old Congress leader was admitted to AIIMS here on Wednesday. "His platelet count is now increasing and his condition is improving, an AIIMS official said on Saturday. PTI

10 inmates escape from **Bihar remand home**

At least 10 juvenile inmates escaped from a remand home in Ara in western Bihar amid chaotic events following the death of another inmate on Friday. "Taking advantage of the commotion that erupted after an inmate was found hanging in the bathroom, 10 other inmates escaped from the remand home after breaking open the main gate. Search is on to locate and bring back them to the remand home," said Ravi Shankar Verma, superintendent in charge of the remand home located at Dhanupara in Ara of Bhojpur

Geelani's grandson sacked from service

The grandson of pro-Pakistan separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani was terminated from government service on Saturday for allegedly aiding terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Anees-ul-Islam, son of Altaf Ahmed Shah alias Altaf Fantoosh, was sacked using special provisions under Article 311, they said. In 2016, he was appointed as a research officer in the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre. PT

COVID-19 vaccination anthem launched

Union Ministers Mansukh Mandaviya and Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday jointly launched an anthem on the country's vaccination programme against COVID-19. The song is produced and sung by Kailash Kher. Expressing his gratitude to frontline and healthcare workers, Mr. Mandaviya said India has been able to "administer more than 97 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccine" so far. He said the government and the people reposed "faith (Sabka Vishwas) in our scientists, researchers and medical fraternity in developing the indigenous vaccine". "Due to the efforts of all (Sabka Parvas), we were able to undertake the herculean task of delivering the vaccines to every nook and corner of the country, and vaccinating such a large number in a short

period," the Minister said. PTI

Army Air Defence steps up procurement

Progress is being made on trials and some missile deals that were facing delays, say officials

DINAKAR PERI

After several delays in its modernisation process, the Army Air Defence (AD) is looking at major progress in the next few months in terms of deals and trials. These include additional indigenous Akash surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems, the underdevelopment medium range surface-to-air missile (MRSAM) and Igla-S very short range air defence (VSHORAD) systems from Russia, according to defence officials.

The Army had contracted a small number of Igla-S systems from Russia under emergency procurement through the Vice-Chiefs emergency financial powers and deliveries were expected soon, two officials confirmed.

'The Army has two Akash regiments in service and negotiations are on for two more. Contract is expected



Indigenous take: More Akash surface-to-air missiles are to be procured for Air Defence. • FILE РНОТО

to be concluded by January,"

an official said. Akash is the indigenously designed and developed medium-range SAM system with a range of 25 km.

In addition, the Army variant of the MRSAM, being jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), is nearing induction with the final stage of trials scheduled to be held in the next few months. "It's in

the penultimate state of in-

duction," the official said.

Air defence functions at three levels - gun/missile system, medium range and high range. Within this, the AD guns are of two types: AD gun missile system and the AD self-propelled guns. The Army is looking for guns in both the categories. In the medium segment, it has the indigenous Akash SAM, while MRSAM fits in the high

Last month, the first deliverable firing unit of the MRSAM System was handed over to the Indian Air Force (IAF), which can engage targets up to a range of 70 km.

The repeatedly delayed Igla-S VSHORAD deal, which has seen several controversies over the past few years, was on track and close to conclusion, the two officials said. The contract should be concluded by January, one of them said.

The Igla-S bid from Rosoboronexport of Russia was declared the lowest bid (L1) in the tender in 2018 from among three contenders. other contenders, MBDA of France and SAAB of Sweden, lodged a protest after Igla-S was declared the winner. Further, SAAB lodged an official complaint detailing procedural violations in the evaluation process.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) was first issued in October 2010 for over 5,000 missiles, 258 single-launchers and 258 multi-launchers

with an estimated cost of ₹6,400 crore and trials began in 2012.

Air Defence guns

On October 14, 2021, the Army issued the Request For Proposal (RFP) for 220 air defence guns and 1,41,576 rounds of ammunition to be procured under the buy and make category of the acquisition procedure. Within this, 25 guns and 44,440 rounds of ammunition would be procured under the buy portion and the remaining under the make portion of the contract, as per the RFP. The last date for submitting bids is January 6, 2022.

In another category, while a global tender to procure Quick Reaction (QRSAMs) has been delayed, an indigenous project by the DRDO is moving ahead. "The DRDO has presented the proof of concept, and so far, three trials have been conducted," an official said.

Detention of HIV+ sex worker upheld

Court says she poses danger to society

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A Mumbai court recently upheld a magistrate court order to detain a sex worker for two years as she was HIV-positive, and setting her free was likely to "pose danger to the society".

On August 20, the lower court directed the detention of the woman for two years under the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act.

The court directed the detention of the victim as she was found to be infected with HIV, observing that there was a possibility that the woman will transmit the virus through sexual intercourse.

The magistrate directed that the woman was to be rehabilitated and stopped from sex work through counselling.

The woman filed an appeal against the order before Additional Sessions Judge S.U. Baghele.

The court said, "It is undisputed that she is suffering from HIV which can be easily transmitted through sexual intercourse. The setting of the victim at large is likely to pose danger to the society. The care and protection of the victim can also be ensured, by detaining her, as directed by the learned Magistrate, so as to ensure that the victim leads a normal life in future, after getting necessary

brainwash." It added, "There is no substance in the submission that the victim is not likely to indulge in such immoral activities, being financially sound. As prima facie apparent from the FIR, whereby the victim is said to have agreed to indulge in prostitution at the particular moment by accepting ₹1 lakh."

Perfect synchronisation



Pride of India: Army personnel performing stunts to mark the 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' in Jalandhar on Saturday. • PTI

Industry seeks role in framing regulations for medical devices

Proposed Bill should align with MDR 2017, say stakeholders

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN NEW DELHI

The proposed drugs, cosmetics and medical devices Bill should align with the Medical Devices Rules (MDR), 2017, experts have said.

They noted that an inclusive framework of industry experts and representatives was needed for a holistic understanding of all issues and perspectives while framing the new Act.

Chairman of the Medical Technology Association of India Pavan Choudary said medical devices were governed by the MDR 2017, which were meticulously developed by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) after extensive consultations with stakeholders.

"These rules also follow

the World Health Organisation Regulatory Framework for Medical Devices (including in vitro diagnostics) and adhere to the step-wise approach to regulating medical devices based on guidance documents developed by the Global Harmonization Task Force (GHTF) and the International Medical Dev-Regulators Forum (IMDRF)," Mr. Choudary

said. He pointed out that the harmonised regulations also enable Indian manufacturers to get greater acceptability of their products in global markets, furthering the Make in India objective of the Government and keeping India aligned to global supply chains.

Sanjav Bhutani, country manager, Bausch and Lomb, explained that the industry

had worked extensively with the CDSCO to strengthen the regulatory framework and would continue to do so to further patients' access to quality medical devices.

Managing director of German medical and pharmaceutical device major B. Braun Medical (India) Indranil Mukherjee said that over the last decade, and especially with the pandemic, the regulatory authorities and policymakers have realised the urgent need for establishing a well-defined and comprehensive framework for medical devices, diagnostics and equipment.

"An inclusive framework of industry experts and representatives in this expert network is required and will help in a holistic understanding of all issues," he

Saline soil reclamation works wonders in Sundarbans I-T searches bust racket

'It will provide long-term sustainable ecological and economic empowerment to farmers'

SHIV SAHAY SINGH KOLKATA

In the last week of May 2021, when large areas of the Sunderbans were inundated by saline water under the impact of Cyclone Yaas, farmers across the region had given up hope for fresh crop this season. Based on earlier experiences of cyclones, many farmers like Biswajit Jana thought that they might not cultivate for the next few

However, a unique project of reclamation of soil salinity in the Sonagaon village in Gosaba block has given hope to many farmers of the

Restoration project

A group of conservationists and scientists has come together in this restoration project cultivating paddy in a 10-bigha plot months after the cyclone has ravaged the landscape. "Usually, the focus in the Sundarbans after a cyclone is on short term relief but what we tried to do is to provide a long-term sustainable ecological and economic empowerment to the people," Diva Baneriee of Uttarayan Wildlife told The

Hindu. Ms. Banerjee said initially those behind the desalination project were not very sure about the success but the yield of paddy has surprised everyone. The novel

initiative is supported by the Uttaravan Wildlife and the Nature Mates provided logistical support to the initiative. Both the organisations have been working in the Sundarbans for quite some time.

Pradip Sen, retired additional director research, Department of Agriculture, said the only technique known for desalination is freshwater irrigation which is very difficult in the Sunderbans.

"The salinity of the plot af-

ter the cyclone was 17.4 dS/m [salinity is measured using deciSiemens per metre -dS/m] but after the desalination exercise it was down to 2.04 dS/m. We also cultivated a variety of paddy which is relatively less resistant to soil salinity and the output has been very encouraging," said Dr. Sen, who is associated with the Uttarayan Wildlife and provided scientific support to the desalination

on undervaluing imports

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Searches by the Income Tax Department in and around Delhi, Haryana and West Bengal have revealed underinvoicing by an importer and trader of laptops, mobile phones and peripheral parts. The goods were being imported in the name of shell entities.

While the value of imports declared at the port of entry through shell compa-

nies in the past three years was ₹20 crore, the agency has estimated that the actual value of the goods could be more than ₹2.000 crore.

The search operations were initiated on October 10, and multiple locations were covered to gather evidence, revealing the group was involved in under-invoicing and wrongful declaration of goods. Unaccounted-for investment was made in properties too.

SUDOKU

	6		9				5	
4				7				6
7		9	3					6 8 3
	7	1			2	8		3
8		5	1			6	7	
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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

INTERVIEW | MIHIR SHAH

'Shift focus to demand management of water'

Head of the panel drafting new water policy calls for 'nature-based solutions' for storage, supply

Changing patterns and intensity of precipitation require greater emphasis on agility, resilience and flexibility in water management, says Mihir Shah, Distinguished Professor, Shiv Nadar University, and Chairman of the 11-member drafting committee of the country's new water policy.

We have had a National Water Policy in 1987, 2002, 2012 and now the latest one that is in the works. Why do we need a new one, or is it necessary to have a review once a decade?

■ We need to take very serious cognisance of the current context of climate change and the grave crisis of water facing the country. Recent estimates suggest that if the current pattern of demand continues, about half of the national demand for water will remain unmet by 2030. With water tables falling and water quality deteriorating, a radical change is needed in the approach to water management. Changing patterns and in-

tensity of precipitation, as also rates of discharge of rivers, show that it can no longer be assumed that the water cycle operates within an invariant range of predictability. This requires greater emphasis on agility, resilience and flexibility in water management, so that there could be an adequate response to the heightened uncertainty and unpredictability of the future.

What are two major recommendations of the proposed NWP?

■ The two major recommendations are one: shift focus from endlessly increasing supply of water towards measures for demand-man-



NWP places major emphasis on supply of water through rejuvenation of catchment areas, which needs to be incentivised

agement. This means diversifying cropping pattern to include less water-intensive crops. It also needs lowering the industrial water footprint, among the highest in the world by reducing fresh water use and shifting to recycled water. Cities must mandatorily shift all nonpotable uses, such as flushing, fire protection, vehicle washing, landscaping etc. to treated wastewater. Two: shift in focus within

the supply-side also because the country is running out of sites for further construction of large dams, while water tables and groundwater quality are falling in many areas.

There is mounting evidence across the globe in favour of "nature-based solutions" for water storage and supply. Thus, the NWP places major emphasis on supply of water through rejuvenation of catchment areas, which needs to be incentivised through compensation for ecosystem services, especially to vulnerable communities in the upstream,

Renewed thrust on local rainwater harvesting to catch the rain where it falls, when it falls, must be com-

mountainous regions.

bined with demarcation, notification, protection and revival of traditional local water bodies in both rural and urban areas. This would form part of urban bluegreen infrastructure for improved water levels and quality, as also flood mitigation.

Does the policy have recommendations on having 'more people pay', or 'some people pay more' models for the use of water?

■ We propose that economic services (like industrial and commercial use) be charged at a rate where the O&M (Operation and Management) costs and part of the capital cost would be the basis for the water service fees. At the same time, concessional rates should be provided for vulnerable social sections.

(The full interview is at bit.ly/mihirshahwaterpolicy)

Four CRPF personnel hurt in blast

ANUP DUTTA RAIPUR/BHOPAL

At least four Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were injured after a box containing an igniter set fell on the floor in a compartment and caused an explosion at platform 2 of the Raipur railway station on Saturday morning.

The explosion is said to have taken place when a few CRPF personnel were shifting boxes containing igniters in a compartment on a train going from Jharsuguda to Jammu Tawi at around 6.30 a.m. The train was standing at platform 2 of the station when the explosion took place.

Senior CRPF officials visited the Raipur railway station, an official said. Government Railway Police (GRP) Superintendent of Police Rakesh Kukreja said the CRPF would investigate the case. A report would also be sent to the headquarters by the GRP, he added.

Prosperity steps will be long term: Xi

Campaign includes curbing the influence of e-commerce giants and cracking down on the fan culture

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China's President Xi Jinping has warned that his government's current push for "common prosperity", which is likely to see a major overhaul of many sectors of the Chinese economy in coming months, will be "long term".

The "common prosperity" campaign came into prominence after it was highlighted by Mr. Xi at a meeting of the Central Finance and **Economic Affairs Committee** in August. It has been seen by observers as underlining many of the major recent moves anregulatory nounced by the Party leadership that have alarmed foreign investors and wiped off close to \$1 trillion in market value of major Chinese private tech and education firms since February.

These include anti-trust investigations of major private sector companies, such as Alibaba and Tencent, and overhauling the booming private education industry, which may be ordered to turn non-profit.

The broad campaign has ranged from curbing the growing influence of fintech and e-commerce giants to cracking down on the gaming industry and even celebrities and fan culture in

On Friday, the Party's offi-



New vigour: The push for 'common prosperity' seeks to arrest the growing inequality while reinvigorating the youth and expanding the size of the middle income group. •AFP

cial journal, Qiushi or Seek*ing Truth*, published for the first time Mr. Xi's full speech at the August meet, which provides his most detailed comments yet on the "common prosperity" campaign.

He said the campaign would be long-term and was here to stay, and would be "the focus point" to ensure both the well-being of people and the Party's "long-term ruling foundation". He flagged growing income inequality around the world as a serious threat that would lead to the collapse of the middle class as well as social and political polarisation, saying it offered "profound lessons" for China.

The campaign, he said, would be based on several core principles, starting with encouraging innovation as a means to prosperity. This would require "more inclusive and equitable conditions for people to improve their education" in order to "prevent social stratifica-

Disillusioned youth

In July, the Party essentially banned the booming private education industry from raising funds and going public, leading to a crash in the share prices of major firms, and ordered the sector to go non-profit.

These moves, Mr. Xi said, would be aimed at "avoiding 'involution' and 'lying flat'" referencing two current buzzwords among young Chinese pushing back against the education and

jobs rat-race, and an all-consuming work culture known as "996" – 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week. "Involution" refers to a feeling of stagnation, while "lying flat" has been deemed by some to be the answer, by opting out of the race and doing the bare minimum to survive.

The second principle was "adhering to the basic economic system" and "the public sector as the mainstay". Regulators will "accelerate the reform of monopolistic industries" and "support the development of small and medium enterprises", he

The focus of these moves, Mr. Xi said, was on "expanding the size of the middle income group". The authoriregulate "high income" and "excessive income", including by reforming the personal tax system.

Ambit of the policy

With fintech and e-commerce companies, including Alibaba, Tencent, and the ride-hailing app Didi Chuxing, among those currently in the sights of regulators for "monopolistic" practices, the "common prosperity" campaign is expected to be broadened in coming months to include the financial sector and the many highly leveraged real estate firms, who have been warned that they cannot expect state bailouts.

Mr. Xi is "zeroing in on the ties that China's state banks and other financial stalwarts have developed with big private-sector players," the Wall Street Journal reported this week, with a "sweeping round of inspections" of financial institutions expected in coming weeks as part of a broader "push to curb capitalist forces in the economy".

The campaign is expected to continue in the months ahead and in the lead-up to next year's 20th Party Congress, a once-in-five-year event expected to be held next autumn, which will see Mr. Xi, who abolished term limits, begin his third fiveyear-term in office.

Chinese astronauts dock

Three astronauts successfully docked with China's new space station on Saturday on what is set to be Beijing's longest crewed mission to date and the latest landmark in its drive to become a major space power. The three blasted off shortly after midnight and are expected to spend six months at the Tiangong space station. AFF

China's media hail Bhutan deal as 'breakthrough'

They reach a three-step roadmap to speed up border talks

ANANTH KRISHNAN

Thursday's agreement between China and Bhutan on a "three-step roadmap" to speed up border talks will "break the deadlock" in negotiations, reports in the Chinese media have said.

Bhutan and China signed the agreement at a videoconference on Thursday. China's Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Jianghao said the MoU "will make a meaningful contribution to speeding up the negotiation on demarcation and promoting the process of establishing diplomatic ties between the two countries", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The statement also quoted Bhutan Foreign Minister as saying Bhutan "will work with China to implement the MoU, unswervingly push forward the negotiation on demarcation, and be committed to strengthening bilateral relations".

While Bhutan's Foreign Ministry issued a brief press release on the agreement, neither side has released details on the roadmap. The Chinese state media did, however, hail the MoU as the first "breakthrough" in the border talks, which began in 1984, with 20 rounds held.

Wang Shida, a South Asia scholar at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, a thinktank affiliated to the Ministry of State Security, told the Party-run Global Times the MoU "is a milestone and would help break the deadlock."

"The boundary issue between China and Bhutan is special because it not only relates to Bhutan but also has become a negative factor for China-India ties," he said. "If China and Bhutan make



After the Doklam standoff, China and Bhutan did not hold border talks for a long time, a Chinese expert said. • FILE РНОТО

progress in solving boundary disputes, India will have fewer chances and excuses to make troubles on border areas.'

Doklam factor

Wang Se, another expert at CICIR, expressed the commonly held view in Beijing that India's concerns over the Doklam plateau, the site of the 2017 stand-off with China, was one reason for negotiations stalling in the past couple of years with New Delhi wary over a border deal that "would undermine its interests". "After the Doklam standoff, China and Bhutan did not hold a meeting for border talks for a long time, which shows India was exerting great influence on Bhutan," he said. As the talks go forward, it

remains unclear to what extent China would be willing to make territorial concessions, which a settlement would require from both sides.

Earlier negotiations had dealt with territories in Bhutan's north and west, including Pasamlung and Jakarlung valleys in the north and Doklam to the west.

China had, according to reports, previously offered a package solution that would see Beijing controlling Doklam and ceding the northern valleys. The inclusion of Sakteng into the dispute last year was seen by some observers as a negotiating tactic to bring Bhutan back to the table.

Since the 2017 stand-off with India, Beijing has already strengthened its de facto control over much of the Doklam plateau, located strategically along the India-China-Bhutan trijunction.

Barring the face-off site where India had objected to a road being built that would push the tri-junction point further south, China has deepened its presence elsewhere on much of the plateau and faced little opposition from Bhutan in doing so. Chinese media last year even showed images of a newly built village in Doklam, in territory disputed by Bhutan and China.

While no details of the three-step roadmap have been revealed, Mr. Wang added that the roadmap might follow the three-step process of the India-China border talks. It remains to be seen, however, if the border negotiations with Bhutan would be as tortuous.

Qian Feng of Tsinghua University told the South China Morning Post that the steps "might include setting up a framework first, confirming the specific disputes with an exchange of maps, and then a resolution stage."

Sri Lanka eyeing green agriculture

A task force will look into the quality of organic fertilizer produced in the country

MEERA SRINIVASAN

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has appointed a task force on 'green agriculture', his office said on Saturday, while Sri Lanka's farmers continue protesting his government's abrupt 'organic fertilizer only' policy shift since May this

The 'Presidential Task Force' will be responsible for looking into the requirement of fertilizers and improving the quality of organic fertilizer produced in the country, a statement from the Presidential Media Division said, listing the panel's 14 members, a majority of whom are private sector representatives. No farmers' organisation was part of it.

The move comes about five months after the government banned all chemical fertilizers, shifting immediately to organic fertilizers. Agriculture experts have slammed the move as "ill-advised" and "unscientific", while farmers anticipate that the drastic policy change could slash their yield. Paddy farmers anticipate a 25 % production slump, while growers of tea, which is a key foreign exchange earner for Sri Lanka, fear a likely 40 -60 % fall in output.

Import bill

The ruling administration sought to justify the decision by citing President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's poll pledge in 2019, and an urgent need to bring down the country's import bill as the economy reels under the impact of the pandemic. Until now, Sri Lanka spent an estimated \$300-\$400 million annually on fertilizer imports.

If the government's policy shift took the country by shock, the newly appointed panel has drawn attention for its composition. "It is

striking that even now the task force has no scientists who study and research agriculture," said Saman Dharmakeerthi, Professor of Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. The "danger" with the heavy private sector presence is that "they might promote anything they produce and insist that farmers use them," he added.

Describing the government's fertilizer ban "a blunder" that threatens food production in the country, the soil scientist told *The Hindu*: "It is a contradiction because our import of organic fertilizer [that continues] will still keep the import bill high, and if we don't have enough produce, we would be forced to import more food items from other countries, which will also be expensive." The government must

instead go in for an integrat-

ed plant nutrient management scheme, combining chemical and organic fertilizers, in Prof. Dharmakeerthi's view. Sri Lankan scientists are also concerned about the limited availability of organic sources in the country, he said.

Organic fertlizers, whether produced locally or imported, are subject to quality checks by authorities. Last month, Sri Lanka halted a 96,000-tonne shipment of fertilizer from a Chinese company, citing poor quality. In a tweet on the development, the Chinese Embassy said the Sri Lankan authori-"hasty conclusion" lacked scientific basis and was "questionable". Meanwhile, Sri Lanka is mulling importing liquid nitrogen from China and India, even as the country's second major agricultural season, the 'Maha season' began on October 15.

IS behind bombing of Shia mosque

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a deadly suicide bombing on a Shia mosque in Afghanistan that killed 47 people and wounded scores more. Relatives laid the bodies of the victims to rest on Saturday and called on the Taliban to protect them.

IS said that two of the group's members shot and killed security guards manning the entrance of the Fatimiya mosque in Kandaprovince. One detonated his explosives at the entrance of the mosque and the other inside.

Two killed in religious unrest in Bangladesh

Toll at 6 after death of two Hindu men

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Two Hindu men have been killed in fresh religious violence in Bangladesh, police officials said on Saturday, taking the death toll to six from recent unrest in the Muslim-majority country.

Protests began on Wednesday after footage emerged of a Koran being placed on the knee of a Hindu god during celebrations for the Hindu festival Durga Puja. The minority community make up about 10% of the population.

Police said the latest violence occurred in the southern town of Begumganj when hundreds of Muslims formed a street procession after Friday prayers on the

final day of Durga Puja. More than 200 protesters attacked a temple where members of the Hindu community were preparing to perform the last rites of the 10-day festival, local police station chief said. The attackers beat and stabbed to death an executive member

of the temple committee. On Saturday morning, another Hindu man's body was found near a pond next to the temple, district police chief Shahidul Islam said.

ASEAN shuns Myanmar junta chief

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Myanmar's junta chief will be excluded from an upcoming ASEAN summit, the group said on Saturday, a rare rebuke as concerns rise over the military government's commitment to defusing a bloody crisis.

Foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed at an emergency meeting on late Friday that a "nonpolitical representative" for Myanmar would be invited to the October 26-28 summit, current ASEAN chair Brunei said in a

ISI chief's appointment in a week: Pak. Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said the issue of appointment of the new chief of spy agency ISI would be resolved within a week, amid widespread speculation that Prime Minister Imran Khan and the powerful Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa were not on the same page over the key posting.

The issue of appointment of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) director general has been in the news since last week after delay in the issuance of appointment notification of Lt Gen Nadeem Ahmed Anjum.

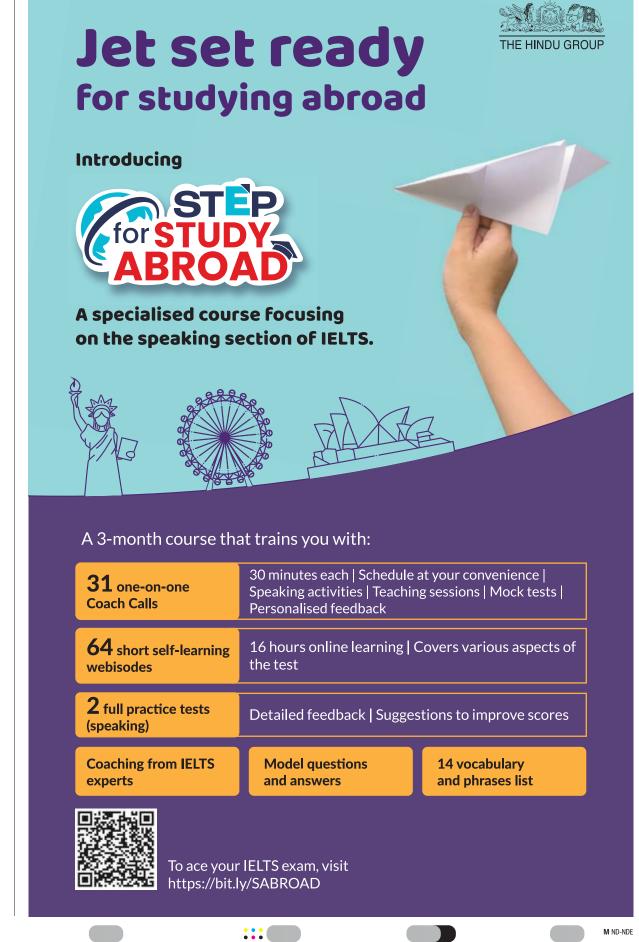
The Interior Minister, however, was reluctant to give reasons for the delay.

The Army in a statement on October 6 announced Lt Gen Anjum replacing Lt Gen Faiz Hameed, but the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) withheld the official notification. After initial silence on the issue, the government this week said PM Khan was not properly consulted while making appointment.

According to a report published in The Dawn newspaper on Friday, Sheikh Rashid told a private TV channel that the issue has

been amicably settled between the civil and military leadership of the country and "now the appointment (of ISI chief) will take place before next Friday" When asked about the

reasons for the delay, the Interior Minister said though he knows the reasons, he cannot make them public as only Prime Minister Khan could apprise the people on the matter.





Tobacco use

Archaeologists have uncovered evidence that hunter-gatherers in North America were using tobacco around 12,300 years ago — 9,000 years earlier than was previously documented. There is much debate on how and when tobacco plants were first domesticated. Researchers have discovered the oldest direct evidence of tobacco use at a hunter-gatherer camp in Utah's West Desert.



Advantage seagrass
Research by Dalhousie
University and reported in
Science found that seagrass
meadows are much more
genetically diverse and thus
resilient in areas where otters
are present. Otters leave their
trademark pits and craters on
ground while digging for
clams. The rough treatment of
lush seagrass meadows
appears to be producing a



reproductive favour.

New class of object
University of Sydney
astronomers have discovered
unusual signals coming from
the direction of the Milky
Way's centre. The radio waves
fit no currently understood
pattern of variable radio
source and could suggest a
new class of stellar object. The
light from the new signal
oscillates in only one direction
and that direction rotates with
time. The brightness also



varies dramatically.

Age of moon rock
A lunar probe launched by the
Chinese space agency recently
brought back the first fresh
samples of rock and debris
from the moon in more than
40 years. Now an international
team of scientists has
determined the age of these
moon rocks at close to 1.97
billion years old. All of the
volcanic rocks collected by
Apollo were older than 3

billion years.

'Virus less likely to develop resistance to molnupiravir'

R. PRASAD

after Merck announced via a press release the highly encouraging news of an interim analysis of a phase-3 trial using the antiviral drug molnupiravir, the company has submitted an emergency use authorisation application to the FDA. Preliminary data, which is yet to be peerreviewed, shows molnupiravir can reduce risk of hospitalisation or death by 50% in non-hospitalised adult patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 disease. That molnupiravir is an oral drug is a major advantage in treating patients as it would not require hospitalisation. In an email, Dr. Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology at CMC, Vellore, explains the other advantages that the drug will have, if granted an EUA.

On October 11, just 10 days

Since it is an oral drug unlike Remdesivir, can molnupiravir (if given an EUA) substantially change the way COVID-19 disease is managed?

Yes, molnupiravir has significant promise. But there are some concerns about how early and how mild the disease has to be for molnupiravir to work. It seems important to treat within the first few days of diagnosis or symptoms and the drug does not work towards the more severe end of the spectrum,

including what is considered moderate disease.

Why was the drug tested only in people older than 60 years and those with at least one risk factor associated with poor outcomes?

The study was designed to include people with at least one risk factor for severe disease, because the goal was to study progression to severe disease. Had completely healthy people been included the study size would have needed to be much larger to get clear outcomes. Merck's selection strategy of people at risk of severe disease led to a clear answer on efficacy in mild disease, such that the study was stopped for efficacy with data on 775 people.

What is the precise mechanism by which the drug prevents the SARS-CoV-2 virus RNA replication process through "error catastrophe"? Besides blocking replication, can the drug also reduce the viral load in humans? Like in ferrets, can the drug also block virus transmission in humans?

Molnupiravir is a pro-drug, which means that it needs to undergo processing in the body to become active. It is metabolised to a ribonucleoside analog, which is essentially a sugar molecule linked to a molecule that resembles a nucleic acid. Nucleic acids

Gagandeen Kang • c VENKATACHALAPATHY

are needed to make RNA, and if molnupiravir is used, the viral enzyme instead of using real cytidine or uridine uses a molecule that is generated by metabolism of molnupiravir called NHC-TP. The virus has a proof-reading mechanism but the viral exnuclease which is responsible for removing mistakes does not recognize NHC-TP as an error, so that when the viral RNA polymerase is making copies of RNA that contains molnupiravir, then it randomly replaces cytidine or uridine. This causes more mutations that can be survived by the virus or it becomes unable to replicate this is called lethal mutagenesis or error catastrophe. A Phase IIa study conducted

upper respiratory tract, which will indirectly reduce transmission.

How has the drug performed against other viruses, including influenza, tested in the past?

The drug has performed well against influenza in animal studies and was set to go into phase-1 trials in 2020. It has also worked well against Ebola and Chikungunya.

Can the virus develop resistance to molnupiravir considering that the drug can induce several point mutations in the virus at random locations?

It is always possible for a virus to develop mutations that will render an antiviral

ineffective, but molnupiravir's mode of action makes it a little less likely than for many other antivirals. If multiple antivirals are available then using a combination that targets different steps in the replication of the virus is the best way to delay the development of resistance. Both remdesivir and molnupiravir target the same enzyme but in different ways, so while ideal to have the same target, it may be worthwhile to test a combination therapy, with the caveat that giving IV infusions as required for remdesivir negates the ease and reach of an oral drug such molnupiravir.

Is there a possibility that the nucleoside analog can turn out to be mutagenic?
Though none were seen in the trial, what are the chances that the drug might cause serious adverse events?

There are opinions that molnupiravir may potentially drive mutagenesis in viral RNA and mammalian DNA. Scientists from Emory who developed the drug say they have not seen any evidence of mutagenicity. In April 2021, Merck reported results of preclinical research using assays that should identify the ability of drugs to induce mutations - animals were given molnupiravir at high doses and for longer times than in human clinical trials, and no evidence of mutagenicity or genotoxicity was found. But the clinical trials excluded pregnant and breastfeeding women and required men to not donate sperm and required either abstinence or contraception

for all genders.
Since Merck has signed
non-exclusive agreements
with generic manufacturers
in India to produce the drug
for low- and middle-income
countries, will we see the
drug becoming accessible to
people in these countries
unlike the vaccines?

With eight Indian companies manufacturing the drug, I assume it will become accessible, but indiscriminate use should be prevented. The last thing we want is for a promising drug to become useless if it is inappropriately used, as happens all too often with antibiotics in India. Since the virus replication blocking mechanism may not be affected by variants that might emerge in future,

can the drug be seen as a

substitute for vaccines

especially in countries

deprived of vaccines?

The drug is not yet in the market and vaccine supply is increasing so this is not an either/or situation. An antiviral to be used in early treatment of an infected person with 50% efficacy in those with conditions predisposing to severity has a role that is very different from vaccines

prior to exposure.

As in the trial, will the drug be restricted for use only in unvaccinated people belonging to the approved categories?

Restricting the drug to unindividuals vaccinated makes no sense whatsoever, but using it for people at risk does. The reason for not giving it to vaccinated individuals in the trial was because vaccination reduces the risk of progression to severe disease, which is what the trial wanted to measure. But once the trial is done, we want to prevent progression to severe disease in all infected individuals, vaccinated or unvaccinated. Vaccinated individuals who are older and have co-morbidities continue to have a higher risk of severe disease and certainly should be given the drug if they develop symptoms,

A Merck spokesperson has said what is regarded as a "moderate" case in India is considered severe in the U.S. How does one define "moderate" disease?

The Indian definition was 90-93% oxygen saturation for moderate disease, while anything lower than 93% would be considered severe in the US. The important thing about definitions in trials is that they should be the same measured using the same protocol.

IIT Kanpur team identifies a novel target to treat prostate cancer

In mice, BET inhibitors used alone or in combination with anti-androgen drugs was found effective

earlier this year showed a re-

duction in viral load in the

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur, have discovered that a particular gene (DLXI) which plays an important role in the development of jaws, skeleton, and interneurons in the brain has an important role to play in the growth and development of prostate cancer.

The DLX1 protein is found at elevated levels in prostate cancer patients, the reason why the DLX1 protein has been used as a urine-based biomarker. Now the team of researchers led by Dr. Bushra Ateeq, Professor at the Department of Biological Sciences and Bioengineering, IIT Kanpur has found that the DLX1 protein, which is expressed at higher levels in the prostate cancer cells, has a huge role in the growth and development of the tumour and the spread of the cancer to other organs in the

body (metastasis).

Using small molecules as inhibitors, the researchers have shown in mice a new therapeutic strategy to treat people with DLX1-positive prostate cancer.

First, the researchers found around 60% of the prostate cancer tissues have higher levels of DLX1 protein. And when the team genetically ablated the DLX1 gene that produces the protein, the ability of cancer cells to grow, develop and spread to other parts of the body was compromised.

"We used mice models to further ascertain the role of DLX1 protein in prostate cancer growth and metastasis," says Sakshi Goel from IIT Kanpur and first author of a paper published in *Nature Communications*.

To carry out the experiments in mice, the researchers first genetically engineered prostate cancer cells that expressed higher levels

of DLX1 protein to generate the cells which cannot produce the DLX1 protein. Both types of cancer cells were then implanted in two groups of mice. While mice that had received cancer cell implants expressing higher levels of the protein developed huge tumour, the mice that were implanted with DLX1-ablated cancer cells developed only small tumours, and had fewer cancer cells migrating to other organs.

The second experiment on mice was to examine the ability of cancer cells to metastasis and grow in bones. "Prostate cancer cells have a tendency to metastasize in bones. So, we checked the role of DLX1 protein in cancer metastasis," says Goel. For this, they used cancer cells that were either DLX1ablated or those expressing higher levels of the protein, and implanted the cancer cells into the tibia (bone) of the mice. A month after im-



Vital discovery: Bushra Ateeq's team found that the DLX1 protein, expressed at higher levels in the prostate cancer cells, has a huge role in the growth of the tumour, and metastasis.

plant, the tumour growing in the tibia was monitored using CT scan. Mice implanted with cancer cells with elevated levels of DLX1 exhibited more bone damage than the cells that were DLX1-ablated. "These findings proved the role of DLX1 in prostate tumour growth and bone metastases." Goel says.

Androgen receptor is responsible for promoting the development of prostate cancer. Also, about 50% of prostate cancer harbour an aberrant gene which is a product of two genes (TMPRSS2 and ERG) being fused together and results in production of higher levels of ERG protein.

"Interestingly, exploring the association between these important factors revealed that about 96% of TMPRSS2-ERG fusion-positive prostate cancer patients show high levels of DLX1 protein as well. In concert with this, about 70% of the patients with high androgen receptor signaling also have elevated DLX1 protein levels," says Prof. Ateeq.

The researchers have further shown that both androgen receptor and fusion gene product, ERG are responsible for increased level of DLX1 in prostate cancer cells. Having understood the mechanism responsible for prostate cancer growth and development, and it's spread to distant organs, the researchers turned their attention to finding a way to reduce the expression of DLX1 protein in the cancer cells. They found that a particular protein (Bromodomain and extra terminal or BET) assists

the function of both androgen receptor and ERG. "We found that if the BET protein is inhibited using small molecules, the function of both the androgen receptor and the ERG protein to upregulate DLXI gets inhibited. As a result, the expression of the DLXI protein and its tumorigenic potential is reduced," says Goel.

Preclinical mice studies showed that administering BET inhibitors alone or in combination with anti-androgen drugs resulted in about 70% reduction in tumour burden along with di minished distant metastases "Those prostate cancer patients with higher levels of DLX1 may benefit by this treatment strategy. There are several commercially available diagnostics tests for detecting DLX1 levels, therefore it is relatively easy to categorize the patients who could respond to BET inhibitors," says Prof. Ateeq.

Zeolite oxygen concentrators: chemistry in three dimensions

At the heart of this technology are synthetic frameworks of silica and alumina with nanometer-sized pores that are rigid and inflexible



D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

Chemists, when they are designing or building new molecules, can be thought of as architects and builders. An organic chemist can plan a blueprint for a new molecule, and synthesize it with precision out of atoms of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and so on. After centuries of finetuning this skill, chemists in the early 20th century moved up to synthesizing long, thread-like one-dimensional polymers. The polyethylene of plastic bags is made from repeating units of the ethylene molecule, (importantly, the units are linked by the same firm chemical bonds as are seen within an organic molecule. This provides the stability that ensures that a shirt made from polyester-mixed yarn is long lasting). In bio-

logical systems, proteins are

1-dimensional polymers of amino acids.

Adding new dimensions

In recent years, this has been taken to a new level by the creation of extended 2- or 3dimensional structures from linking together molecular units just as was done for polymers, but in two or three dimensions. The basic units go on fitting together to form large networks, like a wire mesh fence. The network is constructed by repeated additions of a molecule with symmetry. A few such networked sheets, when stacked one over another, form a functional 2-D entity. Because words like polymer do not do justice to this complex arrangement of atoms, such molecular networks are

called frameworks.
Uses for these Covalent



Preferentially adsorbed: Zeolite beads separate oxygen from nitrogen in air by tightly binding to hydrogen, while oxygen remains free. •T. KRISHNA REDDY AND REC JOHNSON

Organic Frameworks (COFs) take advantage of their stability, large surface area, controlled pore sizes, and tunable chemical environments. Just as you choose the size of the 'pore'/hole in a wire mesh, frameworks can be designed to act as sieves in separating out molecules of a specified size. The smallest whiff of a toxic gas could be sensed - in an industrial environment, or in airline bag-

gage. They are also suitable for both storing energy (as capacitors) and for conducting it (along membranes in fuel cells). Metal Organic frameworks

(MOFs) are structured like COFs but have metals in complexes with organic entities. The choice of metals is wide, from Beryllium to Zinc, though relatively abundant metals are preferred for economic and environmental

reasons. They offer great advantages: for gas storage, as in the case of hydrogen storage in fuel cells; in catalysis, where they replace very expensive metals; in sensors; and in drug-delivery - anticancer and other drugs with severe side effects can be trapped in the porous confines of MOFs, to be released in small and steady doses.

Use of zeolites

Zeolites are highly porous, 3-D meshes of silica and alumina. In nature, they occur where volcanic outflows have met water. Synthetic zeolites have proven to be a big and low-cost boon. One biomedical device that has entered our lexicon during the pandemic is the oxygen concentrator. This device has brought down the scale of oxygen purification from industrial-size plants to the volumes needed for a single person. At the heart of this technology are synthetic fra-

technology are synthetic frameworks of silica and alumina with nanometer-size pores that are rigid and inflexible. Beads of one such material, zeolite 13X, about a millimeter in diameter, are packed into two cylindrical columns in an oxygen containing tailer ingy trator resonant transmit transmit transmit tors.

centrator.

The chemistry here is tailored to the task of separat-

ing oxygen from nitrogen in air. Being highly porous, zeolite beads have a surface area of about 500 square meters per gram. At high pressures in the column, nitrogen is in a tight embrace, chemically speaking, with the zeolite. Interaction between the negatively charged zeolite and the asymmetric nucleus (quadrupole moment) of nitrogen causes it to be preferentially adsorbed on the surface of the zeolite.

Oxygen remains free, and is thus enriched. Air has 78% nitrogen, 20.9% oxygen and smaller quantities of argon, carbon dioxide, etc. Once nitrogen is under arrest, what flows out from the column is 90%-plus oxygen. After this, lowering the pressure in the column releases the nitrogen, which is flushed out, and the cycle is repeated with fresh air.

Global volunteer efforts have made available very detailed instructions on building your own oxygen concentrator, with locally available resources. In India, IISc has transferred the technology of making oxygen concentrators to over 20 companies.

(Co-authored with molecular modeler Dr. Sushil Chandani) dbala@lvpei.org and sushilchandani@gmail.com



Climate stimulated

Did Venus ever have oceans?

While previous studies have suggested that Venus may have been a much more hospitable place in the past, with its own liquid water oceans, a recent study by astrophysicists led by the University of Geneva found that Venus is unlikely to have harboured any ocean anytime in the past.

The researchers simulated the climate of the Earth and Venus at the very beginning of their evolution, when the surface of the planets was still molten. The high temperatures seen in Venus meant that any water would have been present in the form of steam. Using sophisticated three-dimensional models of the atmosphere, similar to

those scientists use to

simulate the Earth's current climate and future evolution, the team studied how the atmospheres of the two planets would evolve over time and whether oceans could form in the process, a release says.

"Thanks to our

simulations, we were able to show that the climatic conditions did not allow water vapour to condense in the atmosphere of Venus," says Martin Turbet of the University of Geneva and the first author of a paper published in Nature. This means the temperatures never got low enough for the water in its atmosphere to form raindrops that could fall on its surface. Instead, water remained as a gas in the atmosphere, and oceans never formed. "One of the main reasons for this is the clouds that form preferentially on the night side of the planet. These clouds cause a very powerful greenhouse effect that prevented Venus from cooling as quickly as previously thought," he says in a release.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

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12 FAQ

Quelling the chills: The RTS,S vaccine (Mosquirix) is made by GlaxoSmithKline after successful pilot programmes in Kenya, Ghana and Malawi. • GETTY IMAGES

Vaccine for malaria

What has the WHO recommended for children in sub-Saharan Africa? Will India benefit?

RAMYA KANNAN

The story so far: On October 6, the World Health Organization made a historic announcement, endorsing the first-ever malaria vaccine, RTS,S, among children in sub-Saharan Africa, and in other regions with moderate-to-high Plasmodium falciparum malaria transmission. It made its recommendations based on the results from a pilot programme administering the vaccine to children in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi.

Why is this significant?

■ Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by micro-organisms that belong to the genus Plasmodium, and is transmitted by infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. In 2019, according to the WHO, there were an estimated 229 million cases of malaria, and the estimated deaths were 4,09,000. About 67% of the deaths were among children aged under five, the group most vulnerable to malaria. Furthermore, 94% of the cases and deaths due to malaria occurred in the WHO African region, a disproportionately high share of the burden. But the WHO says its regions of Southeast Asia, eastern Mediterranean, western Pacific, and the Americas are also at risk. While research for a vaccine and therapeutics for malaria had been on for nearly half-a-century, success has been elusive until recently. While preventive and treatment interventions have continued (bed nets and indoor residual insecticide spraying) over the years, it was clear that the best tool against the constantly mutating pathogen would not emerge until an effective vaccine was at hand.

Bharat Biotech has entered into a partnership with GSK for technology transfer and production of the vaccine, which is likely to be ready in India in a couple of years As Matthew B. Laurens argues in a paper in Human Vaccines and Immunotherapeutics: "An effective malaria vaccine would be an important tool to combat the enormous socioeconomic burden caused by this disease. Vaccines promote both individual and public health, and are thus considered among the most highly successful

public health tools. After provision of clean water and sanitation, vaccination against infectious diseases has contributed the greatest to public health worldwide, compared with other human interventions." And it was at a time when it was believed that anti-malarial research was flailing, that RTS,S did emerge. Pilot projects rolled out in sub-Saharan Africa showed that among children aged 5-17 months who received the recommended four doses of RTS,S, the vaccine prevented approximately 4 in 10 (39%) cases of malaria over four years of follow-up; about 3 in 10 (29%) cases of severe malaria, with a significant reduction in overall hospital admissions due to malaria or severe anaemia (a side effect). The need for blood transfusions to correct life-threatening anaemia also came down by 29%.

What path did the RTS,S vaccine take?

■ RTS,S/ASO1 is a recombinant protein-based vaccine that acts against P. falciparum, believed to be the deadliest malaria parasite globally and the most prevalent in Africa. It reportedly offers no protection against P.vivax malaria, found in many countries outside Africa. The development of the vaccine was led by pharma major GSK over 30 years ago. In 2001, GSK began collaborating with PATH's Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI). A five-year Phase 3 efficacy and safety trial that concluded in 2014 was implemented through a partnership between GSK and MVI, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and a network of African research centres. In July 2015, the European Medicines Agency authorised the use of the vaccine, concluding that the benefits of the vaccine outweighed the risks. Known side-effects include pain and swelling at the injection site and fever, similar to the other children's vaccines. It is associated with an increased risk of febrile seizures within seven days of administration. In the Phase 3 trial, children who had febrile seizures after vaccination recovered completely, and there were no long-lasting consequences, the WHO reported.

Pilots were launched in Malawi, Ghana, and Kenya over 2019. Health workers reported that the vaccine was easy to introduce and integrate into their schedule. The data were submitted to the WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunisation and the Malaria Policy Advisory Committee that gave the go-ahead for the first ever anti-malarial vaccine.

Will India use it too?

■ Malaria is a major public health problem in India, endemic to many States, and involves multiple Plasmodium species, including P. falciparum, said the authors of a paper in *Acta Tropica*, an international journal on infectious diseases. India will therefore benefit from the vaccine, and Bharat Biotech has entered into a partnership with GSK for technology transfer and production. This vaccine is likely to be ready for use in India, in a couple of years, as per reports.

Will Tatas be able to turn around Air India?

How does the company plan to revive the debt-laden carrier? What are the challenges and advantages?

MURALI N. KRISHNASWAMY

The story so far: On October 8, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey announced at a press conference that the Tata Sons subsidiary, Talace Pvt. Ltd., had won the bid for the national carrier Air India. He said that after the setting of a reserve price of ₹12,906 crore, the Tata Sons subsidiary had emerged the winner, quoting a figure of ₹18,000 crore. The other shortlisted bidder, Ajay Singh of SpiceJet, had quoted ₹15,100 crore. Within minutes, Ratan N. Tata, Chairman Emeritus, Tata Sons, and Chairman, Tata Trusts, put out a tweet, "Welcome back, Air India!"

What will Tata Sons get?

■ The Air India group is made up of these components: Air India, Air India Express, Air India Engineering Services Limited (AIESL), Air India Air Transport Services Limited (AIATSL: ground handling services to the Air India group and other airlines) and Airline Allied Services Limited, or AASL (Alliance Air); the Hotel Corporation of India (Centaur hotels and the Chefair flight kitchens); and Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited.

The Air India sale is the third attempt by the Government of India (incidentally, all under the National Democratic Alliance regime), the earlier bids having been made in the early 2000s and 2017-2018. This time around, the government offered management control and sale of 100% equity share capital, each, of Air India and Air India Express and a 50% equity share capital of Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited – which the Tatas have won.

It was the mountain of dues and deep losses that prompted the sale. How will the debt be cleared?

■ The airline's total debt at the end of August this year was ₹61,562 crore. Of this, Tata Sons (its holding company Talace Pvt. Ltd.) would be taking over ₹15,300 crore, with a cash payment of ₹2,700 crore. The rest, an estimated ₹46,262 crore, will be moved to Air India Assets Holding Ltd (AIAHL), a special purpose vehicle formed by the government to handle the debt and non-core assets of Air India such as land and buildings.

Much of the debt is related to the merger between Air India and the other state-owned carrier, Indian Airlines, which was cleared by the Cabinet on March 1, 2007 to form the National Aviation Company of India Limited (NACIL). Preceding this development – the merger – the then United Progressive Alliance government had in 2005 approved the purchase of 68 aircraft by Air India (from Boeing), and a year later, 43 planes for Indian Airlines (from the Airbus 320 family for \$2.2 billion). The Boeing deal was for 23 777s, 27 787s and 18 737s (for the low-cost carrier Air India Express). Boeing has also built and transferred a state-of-the-art maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility at Nagpur.

Following the mounting losses, there was an investigation into allegations about the nearly ₹70,000-crore deal that had caused a financial loss to the "already stressed national carrier". It also inducted A320Ns on lease from ALAFCO (Aviation Lease and Finance Company) in 2017. As far as debt clearance is concerned, the government is to transfer to the AIAHL about ₹16,000 crore of unpaid fuel bills and other pending dues that Air India owes to airports and vendors.



Tough road ahead: The Tatas could have a 26% share of the domestic aviation market that would put them behind market leader IndiGo, which has an estimated 57% market share. • REUTERS

In short, it will hold about 75% of the airline's debt that the Tata Group is not taking over. An aviation consultant said the Tatas could also take over an additional and estimated ₹9,000 crore worth of lease obligations for over 40 Air India jets. The non-core assets, including land and buildings that are estimated to be valued at ₹14,718 crore, are being transferred to the AIAHL. There are

An estimated ₹46,262 crore will be moved to Air India Assets Holding Ltd., a special purpose vehicle formed by the government to handle the debt and non-core assets of Air India

reports that the government is planning to add the feeder/regional airline, Alliance Air (the second Air India subsidiary), to this mix with an eye on selling it. If this happens, the government will completely exit the airline business.

According to Mr.
Pandey, the airline loses
₹20 crore a day. And,

from 2009-10 to date, the government has infused over ₹1,10,276 crore into the airline: ₹54,584 crore in cash support and ₹55,692 crore in loan guarantees. The sale deal is expected to be wrapped up by December-end (though some experts say it could go on till March). The four Air India subsidiaries – AIATSL, AASL, AIESL and the Hotel Corporation of India Ltd. – and non-core assets that include the fabled collection of art work, paintings and artefacts and other non-operational assets have been transferred to the AIAHL.

Do the Tatas have a business model ready?

Air India, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Tata Sons did not respond to queries from *The Hindu* on the subject. However, aviation experts have tried to piece things together. The contours cover human resources, fleet management, flight scheduling and technology services. The Tatas already have two airlines, which are still in poor financial health: Vistara (a joint venture with Singapore Airlines Limited as a 51:49% stake partnership) and Air Asia India, a low-cost service, in which the Tatas have a nearly 84% stake. An aviation analyst said that going by the data from the Directorate- General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Tatas could now have a 26% share of

the domestic aviation market that would put them behind market leader IndiGo with its estimated 57% market share. Opinion is that there could be mergers and synergy between the four airlines.

What are the positives and the negatives?

The Air India deal catapults the conglomerate into the big league, making it the largest player from India on international routes. First, the positives. The brand, Air India, has an instant connect. According to a Tata data-sheet, there will be a fleet strength of 141 aircraft (117 from Air India and 24 from Air India Express), and a widespread domestic and international footprint (over 7,000 slots and codeshare agreements) with a significant share of the revenue from international operations. Its non-stop flights from India to the United States are a high point. There is also a repository of bilateral rights, which experts say could be used to expand flights in a big way to Europe, Africa and South America. The Air India frequent flyer programme has nearly three million members. The airline has experienced crew, ground staff and engineers. It is also part of the 26-member global aviation grouping, Star Alliance.

According to an aviation expert, the negatives would be linked to the structure of its finance lease/bridge loans and operating leases for a part of its fleet, the poor state of the cabins, seats and in-flight amenities on most of its aircraft fleet, staff strength in certain administrative functions, the cost contracts for some of its subsidiaries, and the training and safety record of Air India Express The total number of permanent and contractual employees of Air India and Air India Express is 13,500. According to Captain Mohan Ranganathan, a retired airline instructor pilot, aviation safety expert and an industry watcher, "The Tatas have got just the airline, aircraft, routes and landing slots. The hangars and engineering belong to the AIESL, and will all be sold off separately. If the Tatas want them, they have to bid and pay!" Former Executive Director, Air India, Jitender Bhargava, in a commentary, has said, "The question of how rapidly the Tatas can make the airline profitable needs to be viewed in the context of the impact of the pandemic, additional domestic factors such as price sensitivity of Indian passengers and high operational

What is the extent of India's coal crisis?

Has domestic production stagnated? Why is supply insufficient? How are power companies placed?

PRASHANTH PERUMAL J.

The story so far: India could be on the verge of a power crisis as the stock of coal held by the country's thermal power plants has hit critically low levels. Many power plants are operating with zero reserve stock or with stocks that could last just a few days. Some States have witnessed partial load-shedding aimed at saving power. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, however, is reported to have termed worries about a possible shortage of coal and power supplies "absolutely baseless" and is said to have asserted during the course of a trip to the U.S. that India is now a power-surplus country.

How bad is the problem?

According to data released by the Central Electricity Authority, as of Wednesday, India's 135 thermal power plants overall had on average coal stock that would last just four days. In all, 112 of the 135 power plants are operating with stocks that are at critical or super-critical levels. The government usually mandates the power plants to hold stocks that would last at least two weeks. It has, however, reduced this requirement to 10 days now to avoid hoarding and ensure more equitable distribution of coal among the plants. India relies on coal to meet over 70% of its power needs, and Coal India Limited (CIL) supplies over 80% of the total coal. The current coal crisis comes amid a broader energy crisis across the world with the prices of natural gas, coal and oil rising sharply in the international market.

What has caused it?

■ The current crisis in the availability of coal has been the result of lacklustre domestic production and a sharp drop in imports over the last few years. According to BP Global Energy Statistics, domestic coal production in India has stagnated since 2018. It peaked at 12.80 exajoules (EJ) worth of coal in 2018. At the same time, the amount of coal imported from other countries to meet domestic demand, too, has dropped significantly. Coal imports have dropped from the peak of 6.46 EJ in 2016 to 4.22 EJ in 2020. Stagnating supply did not cause trouble last year with the economy shut down to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. But the rise in power demand this year has exposed the government's inability to push domestic production or compensate for insufficient domestic production by increasing imports. In fact, the government last year said it would stop all coal imports by FY24.



Coal to the fore: India relies on coal to meet over 70% of its power needs. •AP

Many factors have been blamed for the insufficient supply of coal this year. These include short-term issues like flooding in coal-mining areas, transport issues, labour disruptions in major coal-mining countries and the sudden rise in power demand as the economy revives from the pandemic. But it should be noted that deeper structural problems have plagued the power industry in general for long. Populist politics has ensured that the price that many consumers pay for power is not commensurate with the production costs. In FY19, for instance, the revenues of distribution companies covered only about 70% of their total costs. This has discouraged private investment in power generation and distribution even as the demand for power continues to rise each year. It has also increased the debt burden on public sector distribution companies as they have not been compensated for the losses they incur while selling power at subsidised rates. According to the credit rating agency ICRA, the consolidated debt of public sector distribution

companies is expected to hit ₹ 6 trillion in FY22.

It should also be noted that the mining of raw materials such as coal is nearly monopolised by public sector companies like CIL that are not run primarily for profits. In fact, CIL has kept the price of its coal low even as international prices have risen significantly this year. It has also been forced to share some of the pain of power generation and distribution companies.

generation and distribution companies.

According to the government, indebted power generators and distributors owe over ₹21,000 crore to CIL. So, overall, there is very little financial incentive that major producers across the supply chain, including

miners, possess to ramp up production.

What lies ahead?

■ In recent years, many countries have been trying to cut down on their fossil fuel consumption in order to meet emission targets. But with the current energy crunch, which is prevalent not just in India, fossil fuels are likely to make a strong comeback. India and China, the top two consumers of coal in the world, are expected to further increase production of fossil fuels. The Indian government has been pushing CIL to ramp up production to meet the rising demand and cut down on the country's reliance on imported coal. However, it is expected to ease restrictions on imported coal in the near future to tide over the crisis. The government last week mandated the thermal power plants to blend imported coal with domestic coal up to a limit of 10%. Meanwhile, China, which consumes half of the world's coal output and has committed itself to reducing its carbon emissions by 65%by 2030, is set to install more coal-powered power plants to meet its rising energy needs. Structural problems that have plagued the Indian power industry, however, are unlikely to be resolved anytime soon. Allowing the price that consumers pay for power to be determined by market forces is likely to remain politically unpopular, so fundamental pricing reform is unlikely. But with coal selling at high prices in the international market and CIL unable to meet production targets, many power generators may be unable to increase their output unless they are allowed to price their output freely.

BSF

In Focus

formed on

December 1,

1965 after the

India-Pakistan

war. Till then,

with Pakistan

was guarded

by the armed

battalions of

State police

departments

■ It was raised

by drawing personnel

State armed

armed forces

and from 25 battalions.

The BSF has

expanded to

around 200

battalions

■ The force

has also faced

allegations of

killings and

violations. In

a procession

at Bijbehara in

1993, BSF

personnel

South

Kashmir

killing 43

civilian

rights

police, the

the border

■ The BSF was

In the line of defence, with growing powers

The 56-year-old force, deployed along the Bangladesh and Pakistan borders, is currently at the centre of a political storm after the MHA enhanced its operational limits in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam

VIJAITA SINGH

uring the Kargil war in 1999, the Army and intelligence agencies faced a peculiar problem. Their interception centres in the high-altitude region were unable to interpret the wireless communication of the Pakistani intruders. The Pakistanis spoke in Dardi, Balti, Pushto and Farsi as they occupied key heights along the Line of Control (LoC). A small unit of the Border

Security Force (BSF), posted at Channigund, was asked to interpret and analyse the conversations taped by the agencies on a cassette. BSF Inspector Habibullah, a local from Drass, assisted the Army in translating the wireless conversations in Dardi and Balti. According to a book, BSF: India's First Line of Defence, edited by Anirudh Deshpande, associate professor, History, Delhi University, the BSF Inspector "also helped in motivating local youths for working as porters" as large number of population had fled the area in panic due to shelling from across the border.

Though the BSF played a key role in the Kargil war − it was the first to send five specific intelligence inputs about a Pakistani build-up, months before the war commenced in May 1999 - the achievements of the central armed police force (CAPF) that reports to the Ministry of Home Affairs, were lost in footnotes of government

The BSF was raised on December 1, 1965 after the India-Pakistan war. Till then. the border with Pakistan was guarded by the armed battalions of State police who were ill-equipped to stop trans-border crimes and infiltration. The then Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, constituted a commission of secretaries and based on its report the BSF was raised. Its first director general (DG)

The BSF does not have policing powers and after detaining a suspect, it can only conduct 'preliminary questioning' and the suspect has to be handed over to the local police

was police officer K.F. Rustamii.

.....

Former police officer P.V. Rajagopal, who authored an autobiographical narrative on the founding DG, quotes Rustamji: "After handing over charge as IGP Madhya Pradesh, I reached Delhi and wrote my joining report on 21 July 1965...I became the head of a one-man organization. I was the sole Borderman; nobody below me, nobody above me..."

Pivotal role

It was raised by drawing personnel from the State armed police, the armed forces and from 25 battalions (a battalion is 1,000 personnel approximately). The BSF has now expanded to around 200 battalions.

The BSF played a pivotal role in the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war. The BSF and its counterpart – the Border Guards Bangladesh – are now commemorating 50 years of Bangladesh's liberation (formerly East Pakistan) through year-long events. The 56-year-old force, deployed along the Bangladesh (4,096.7 km) and Pakistan (3,323 km) borders, is currently at the centre of a political storm after the MHA enhanced its operational limits in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam.

The MHA, through a notification in the Gazette of India on October 11, enhanced the "arrest, search and seize" powers of BSF up to 50 km from the international boundary in the States of Punjab, West Bengal and Assam. In Gujarat, the limit was reduced from the existing 80 km to 50 km and in Rajasthan, the 50 km limit has remained unchanged.

Opposition parties have questioned the move, terming the order an attack on federalism. According to the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, policing is a State subject. However, according to the BSF Act, 1968, passed by Parliament and the rules framed in 1969, the BSF has been assigned three primary tasks while deployed along the borders - promote a sense of security among the people living in the border area; prevent trans-border crimes/unauthorised entry into or exit from the territory of India and prevent smuggling and any other illegal activity.

In border areas, the BSF can "arrest, search and seize" in cases pertaining to smuggling of narcotics, prohibited items, illegal entry of foreigners and offences punishable under any other Central Act and select provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

The BSF does not have policing powers and after apprehending a suspect, it can only conduct "preliminary questioning" and the seized consignment or a suspect have to be handed over to the local police within 24 hours. Such powers under CrPC are already available to other central forces such as the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). The ITBP (raised to protect the China border) and the SSB (for Bhutan and Nepal border) are also border guarding forces but can be deployed in the hinterland at the request of State governments.

In 2011, the Congress-led UPA government proposed legislation to grant similar powers to the BSF across the country, but the Bill was not passed. In 2012, Narendra Modi as Gujarat's Chief Minister had written to the then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, opposing the Centre's proposed move.

Over the years, the BSF's role expanded and it was also deployed in areas affected

Left-wing extremism (LWE), for law and order situation and on election duty. The October 11 notification replaces a 2014 notification under the BSF Act, 1968, which also empowered the BSF to conduct counter-insurgency operations in the States of Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir

Territorial limit "The BSF does not have any investigating powers. Say, if a drone has been spotted near the Punjab border and has to be tracked beyond the 15 km limit, the present notification gives us a legal teeth to conduct the searches in nearby areas and not be constrained by territorial limit. We anyway alert all the agencies and the local police," said a senior BSF official.

and Ladakh.

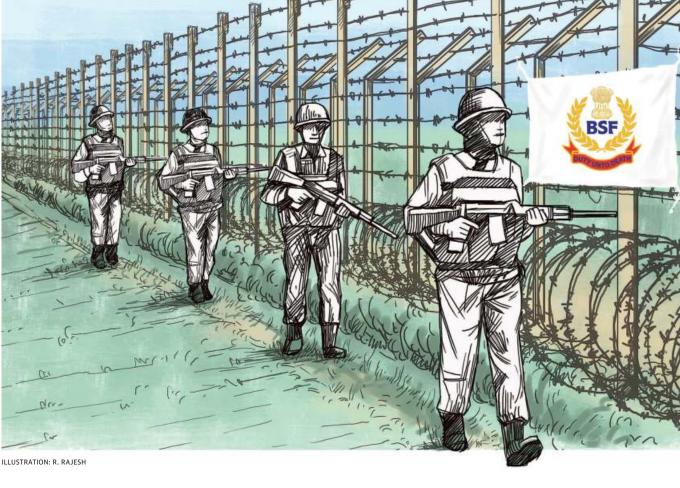
The recent order only enhances the BSF's "territorial jurisdiction", said the official, giving the force an opportunity to also conduct independent searches. "But the FIR and investigation has to be done by the local police and concerned agency only, we have no such powers. The 50-km limit is being implemented to enforce uniformity," the official added.

Further explaining the order, the official said it would remove any confusion as the territorial limit was 15 km, 50 km and 80 km in different States. "In case of northeast States, except Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, the BSF's jurisdiction was already there in the whole of the other five States. Even the Central Acts and CrPC. where the BSF is empowered to act, there are certain specified sections. There is no change in the sections and the Act, this notification has only increased the territorial jurisdiction."

After the Kargil war, a committee on internal security headed by retired IAS officer N.N. Vohra recommended that all internal security duties should be dealt by one force, which led to the gradual withdrawal of the BSF from Kashmir Valley. The BSF has a thin presence in the interiors of J&K now. Its primary responsibility is guarding the 192-km international border in Jammu and a few kilometres along the LoC that is protected by the Army. The force's rise has not come without controversies.

It has faced allegations of civilian killings and human rights violations. In 1993, BSF personnel opened fire at a procession at Bijbehara in South Kashmir, killing 43 people.

In 2011, Felani Khatun, a 15-year-old girl from Bangladesh, was shot dead by BSF soldiers while she was entering Bangladesh from Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. Photographs of the teenager's body that remained hanging on the barbed wire fence for several hours before being brought down created a huge public outcry in Bangladesh. This led to a policy change and the BSF was asked to use non-lethal weapons along the densely populated Bangladesh border. BSF officials later complained that they often came under violent attack by cattle smugglers active along the West Bengal border and the non-lethal weapon policy was an impediment to their operational capabilities. That issue remains unsettled. But now, with enhanced territorial limits in States, the border agency is set expand its operations, especially at a time when the borders remain tumultuous.



NAJIB MIKATI

The billionaire Prime Minister

With sectarian clashes returning to Beirut, Lebanon PM has one more problem

STANLY JOHNY

n October 14, Hezbollah, the powerful Shia political partycum-militia, took out a demonstration in the Lebanese capital against the judge leading the probe into the August 2020 Beirut blast. Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah's leader, had termed the probe "political" that has "nothing to do with justice and truth". The rally, Hezbollah later claimed, came under sniper attack from the city's Christian quarters. In the ensuing clashes, which revived the memories of the country's brutal civil war of the 1980s, six people were killed and more than 30 others were iniured.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati, who formed his government just weeks earlier, apologised to the public for the clashes and said the security situation had improved after the Army had been deployed. But the incident also showed the challenges he is facing as Prime Minister at a time when his focus is on addressing Lebanon's economic woes.

Mr. Mikati was invited by the President to form the government in July after two PMs-designate failed to win enough support in Parliament. The country had plunged into a political crisis after Prime Minister Hassan Diab announced his resignation in August last year following the blast. The Lebanese had to wait for more



government, thanks to the country's confessional political system in which sectarian blocs and leaders hold political sway. According to the Lebanese Constitution, the PM should be a Sunni, the President a Christian and the Speaker a Shia.

Deep connections Mr. Mikati, a self-made billionaire, was a two-time Prime Minister with deep connections with Lebanon's political elite as well as the Assad regime in neighbouring Syria. According to Forbes, he has a net worth of \$2.9 billion. In 1982, Mikati co-founded Investcom with his billionaire brother Taha Mikati, which was selling satellite phones at the height of Lebanon's civil war. Later, Investcom made billions from its businesses in Africa where the company built cellphone towers. In 2005, South Africa's MTN bought the Mikati brothers' stake in Investcom for \$3.6 billion.

had become an influential member of Lebanon's political elite. His political career started in 1998 when he was appointed the Public Works and Transport Minister. Two years later, he would be elected to the Lebanese Parliament for the first time from Tripoli, a seat he has held continuously except

from 2005 to 2009. In 2005, when the country was still struggling to come out of the political crisis triggered by the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, Mr. Mikati emerged as a consensus candidate as Acting Prime Minister, after Omar Karami's resignation. He would hold that post for a few months. But his real stint at the top of the Government would come six years later. In January 2011, Mikati formed his Cabinet as the candidate of the March 8 alliance of Hezbollah, Christian politician Michel Aoun (currently Lebanon's Presi-

dent) and Druze leader Wa-

lid Kamal Jumblatt. The alliance wanted to keep the bloc of Saad Hariri, Rafiq Hariri's son who was backed by Saudi Arabia, out of power. Mr. Mikati emerged the favourite of the Shia-Sunni-Christian-Druzecoalition. But the government would unravel within two years as he would fall out with his Hezbollah allies.

This time, Mr. Mikati says

he has formed a technocratic government and his focus would be on addressing Lebanon's economic crisis. The Mediterranean country, which was once called 'the Paris of the East', is facing a once in a generation crisis. Even before the blast, the Lebanese economy was facing a steep contraction. It dates back to the 2019 financial meltdown, which saw the country defaulting on its bonds for the first time since its Independence in 1943. According to the World Bank, Lebanon's GDP contracted by 40% between 2018 and 2020, pulling the country into one of the top three economic crises in the world in the past 150 years. Foreign reserves have plunged from \$38 billion in 2019 to \$15 billion this year. At home, many Lebanese receive just two hours of electricity, and the country is also facing an acute fuel

Resolving these issues itself would take years and Mr. Mikati would like at least to start the process. But then comes sectarian violence, which has made his task even more difficult.

AJAY KUMAR MISHRA

Father, son and a protest

The Minister is under pressure after his son was arrested over U.P. violence

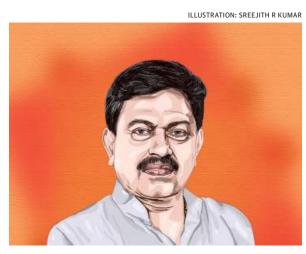
OMAR RASHID

7hen Ajay Kumar Mishra 'Teni', MP for the Kheri constituency in Uttar Pradesh, was inducted into the Union Council of Ministers in July, he was relatively unknown outside his close political circles.

A Brahmin, Mr. Mishra was the only MP from the non-OBC and non-Dalit communities to feature among the seven inductees into the government from Uttar Pradesh. The Assembly elections are due in the State in early 2022, and the surprise induction of Mr. Mishra was seen as attempt by the BJP to reach out to the disgruntled Brahmins, the core support and ideological base of the party. In three months, however, Mr. Mishra would be at the centre of a political storm in the State.

Mr. Mishra's clout runs deep in parts of Lakhimpur Kheri, the largest district in U.P., located in the green belt of Terai close to the India-Nepal border, also known as the sugar bowl. On October 3, three cars from Mr. Mishra's convoy ran over a group of farmers peacefully protesting against the visit of Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya in Tikonia.

The protest was fuelled by Mr. Mishra's provocative remarks a few days earlier, when he threatened to evict the farmers from the district. Four farmers and a local journalist were killed



and several others injured. Three BJP workers, including a driver, were also killed in the clashes that followed.

Ashish Mishra, alias Monu, Minister Mishra's son, was accused of being in the car leading the carnage and was arrested later. Before the media, father and son have claimed innocence in the murder case, and said Monu was not even at the site of the incident. They said he was in in their ancestral village Banveerpur, supervising the annual wrestling event held in the memory of Mr. Mishra's

father Ambika Prasad. Power-lifting and wrestling are among Mr. Mishra's hobbies. According to a local source who was associated with the RSS, Ambika Prasad, who had moved to Lakhimpur from Kanpur, earned goodwill in the village initially by lending money and utensils for marriag-

es and other events. Born in 1960, Mr. Mishra

Kanpur and, apart from owning farming land, runs a rice mill.

People of Tikonia alleged that during his early years, his family was associated with illegal smuggling of the Khair tree, which was once found in abundance in the region, sandalwood and foodgrains. Bharatiya Kisan Union spokesperson Rakesh Tikait had recently referred to these allegations.

Political career

Mr. Mishra's political career has seen a constant upward trajectory, though his early days in public life were shadowed by allegations of a murder of a political rival. Mr. Mishra first won the Lok Sabha election in 2014 when the BJP under Narendra Modi's leadership won a landslide. He ended the long streak of Kurmi (OBC) domination in Kheri, becoming the first Brahmin to win the constituency.

Before contesting for Parhas an LL.B. degree from liament, he was an MLA

from Nighasan (2012). He was mentored by former MLA Ram Kumar Verma. In 2019, Mr. Mishra improved his margin, defeating the SP-BSP combine by almost 20% votes. From 2000 to 2005, Mr. Mishra served as the vice-president of the district cooperative bank. It was during this time that he was accused of shooting dead a Samajwadi Party youth worker, Prabhat Gupta, in

A local sessions court, in March 2004, acquitted Mr. Mishra and three others in the case, but a criminal appeal filed by Prabhat's brother Rajeev Gupta is pending before the Allahabad High Court. The last hearing was in February 2019. From 2005 to 2010, Mr. Mishra was a member of the Kheri Zilla Panchayat.

On September 25, while warning protesting farmers to "mend themselves" or else he would not take more than two minutes to mend them himself, Mr. Mishra had also reminded them of his past record before he was elected a public representative. He asserted that he did "not run away from

any challenge". However, the Tikonia incident, which has led to demands for his dismissal from the Union government, has mounted pressure on the Minister. On October 5, he dismissed all allegations, regarding his past. "All cases against me had concluded in my favour," he said, describing the cases as "fake".

By that time, Najib Mikati than a year to get another

Climate finance,

not defined: FM

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

transfer accounted for, re-

Minister Nirmala Sithara-

man said at the conclusion

of the Washington DC leg of

The Minister – who is in

the city for the World Bank

and IMF Annual Meetings,

bilateral dialogues with the

U.S. and meetings with oth-

er countries, as well as the

private sector - has repeat-

edly raised or discussed the

issue of climate finance obli-

gations in several meetings,

as per statements and

given to measure if money

spent on a particular project

by somebody will be part of

that \$100 billion, or what,"

she said in response to a

question from *The Hindu* on

climate finance during a

press conference on Friday

\$100 billion? How do we

measure if actually \$100 bil-

lion has been given or only

some amount has been gi-

have committed under the

Paris Agreement to allocate

\$100 billion per year from

2020 onwards to facilitate

emission cuts in poorer

countries and also to effect

technology transfer in this

Ms. Sitharaman said a si-

milar issue existed with

technology - what consti-

tuted designated technolo-

gy for these purposes and

how the transfer is to mea-

countries

"So what constitutes the

evening.

context.

ven?" she said.

Developed

"We actually don't know if there were any measures

WASHINGTON DC

her U.S. visit.

tech transfer norms

Fuel-efficient cars to gain traction: report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

With fuel prices going up by 35% over the past 15 months thereby impacting overall vehicle running costs, cars that have higher fuel efficiency and lower maintenance costs are expected to gain higher traction among buyers in India, especially in the sub-₹10 lakh category, according to a report.

Considering the fact that 70% of the passenger-vehicle market in India is still accounted for by vehicles costing less than ₹10 lakh, the development augurs well for market leader Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. (MSIL), said the report by HSBC Global Research.

MSIL has about 65% market share in the lessthan-₹10 lakh price category, it added.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Avenue Supermarts Ltd.,

which owns and operates

the retail chain D-Mart, on

Saturday reported a two-

fold increase in consolidat-

ed net profit to ₹417.76

crore for the second quar-

ed a net profit of ₹198.53

crore in the July-Septem-

ber quarter a year earlier,

Avenue Supermarts said in

a filing. Revenue from op-

erations rose 46.8% to

₹7,788.94 crore during the

H1FY22 stood at ₹12,972

crore, as compared with

₹9,189 crore in the same

As of September 30, D-

period last year," it said.

Mart had 246 stores.

"Total revenue for

quarter under review.

The company had post-

ter ended September.

NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank Q2 net profit increases 18%, provisions climb

'Disruptions post outbreak hit loan origination, collections; client defaults rise'

HDFC Bank on Saturday reported an 18% increase in consolidated net profit at ₹9,096 crore for the second quarter ended September, even as there is a marginal increase in bad loans.

Total consolidated income rose to ₹41,436.36 crore from ₹38,438.47 crore, HDFC Bank said in a statement.

Consolidated advances grew 14.7% to ₹12,49,331 crore. Net interest income grew 12.1% to ₹17,684.4 crore. Gross non-performing as-

gross advances compared with 1.08% a year earlier. In absolute value, gross NPAs or bad loans increased

sets (NPAs) rose to 1.35% of

Casting shadow: Fear, as well as curbs, led to financial market volatility and hit economic activity, says the bank. • VIJAY SONEJI to ₹16,346.07 crore from ₹11,304.60 crore at the end of the corresponding period

of the last financial year due

the impact of the

pandemic. Net NPAs rose to 0.4% (₹4,755.09 crore) from 0.17% (₹1,756.08 crore). Provisionand local economic activities, the bank said in the statement.

nificant decrease in global

'Uncertainty continues' Disruptions following the outbreak have impacted loan originations, the sale of third-party products, the use of credit and debit cards by customers and the efficiency in collection efforts, leading to an increase in customer defaults and consequent increase in provisions, it

added. "The extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact the bank's results will depend on ongoing as well as future developments, which are uncer-

Export of gems, jewellery rose 30% in Sept.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gems and jewellery exports rose by 29.67% to ₹23,259.55 crore in September compared with ₹17,936.86 crore in the year-earlier month, according to the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC).

In September 2019, the shipments were worth ₹23,491.20 crore.

For April-September, the shipments surged by 134.55% to ₹1,40,412.94 crore compared with the same period in 2020, said. ₹140,412.94 crore (\$18.98 billion) exports [in] April-September, the sector has... achieved nearly half (46%) of the \$41.66 billion exports target set by the government for the sector" chairman Colin Shah said.



Nirmala Sitharaman

sured. "So funding is continuing to be a question of worry for many countries, as much as even the transfer of technology," she said.

In the run up to the month-end U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, India has come under pressure, especially from the U.S. and U.K, to announce more ambitious emission cuts, beyond what came out of its Paris commitments and to provide a deadline by which it will reach 'Net Zero" emissions. India had said, in 2016, that by 2030 it would cut its emissions by a third relative

to 2005 levels. In return, it has argued that developing countries needed space to grow and developed countries must move to a 'Net Minus' paradigm and meet climate fi-

Debt sustainability issue sustainability and transpa-

"I've definitely raised this

D-Mart Q2 net Time taken for 5G will surges twofold raise preparedness: Dell to ₹418 crore

'India's telecom infra underestimated

MINI TEJASWI BENGALURU

India may be taking time to roll out 5G networks, but that would only enhance the country's preparedness for the 5G play, said Saurabh Tewari, director and chief technology officer (telecom), Dell Technologies, India.

"As 5G technology itself evolves very rapidly, this extra time will prepare telecom service providers, technology and equipment players in the country for the launch of mature technologies for a smoother transition, improved subscriber experience and an efficient network strategy and architecture," Mr. Tewari told The Hindu.

However, he added, In-



Saurabh Tewari

dia's networks were well prepared for 5G roll-outs.

"India's telecom infrastructure has often been underestimated, the reality is that our networks are world class," Mr. Tewari said.

"The scale that we handle compares with countries such as China whose networks also cater to huge added.

Small growers edging out big players, says Tea Association

'Welfare steps making organised sector's output costlier'

ing for bad loans and contin-

gencies rose to ₹3,924.66

as well as restrictions on bu-

siness and individual activi-

ties had led to significant vo-

latility in global and Indian

financial markets and a sig-

The fear of the pandemic

crore ₹3,703.50 crore).

Small tea growers are threatening to push estates in the organised sector out of the competition as they are not burdened with welfare responsibilities, the Tea Association of India (TAI) said.

In its paper titled 'Sustainability of tea industry in India,' the TAI said small tea growers, or STGs, are no longer a minority as they produce more than 50% of India's green-leaf output.

An STG is a person who cultivates tea in an area up to 25 acres. There are more than two lakh STGs in Assam and West Bengal.

STGs are not burdened by welfare activities that the or-



ganised estates provide to their labour force, the TAI

"This creates a dichotomy in the tea industry, with the estates and the small growers having significantly different costs of production, with different welfare responsibilities; yet they compete with each other."

"The low-cost tea available from small growers undercuts the teas from the organised estates that have a much higher cost of production and more stringent regulations to follow. The organised sector cannot remain sustainable in such a scenario," the TAI said. The paper said tea pro-

duction in India increased from 945 million kg in 2005 to 1,255 million kg in 2020, a 33% rise in 15 years.

The production outstripped consumption of tea, leading to stagnant selling prices for tea plantations, the TAI said. Labour costs, that account for 60% of the cost of production for the organised tea estates, has put the estates at a disadvantage, the TAI said.

results:

Baumgartner 51, Geiger 74,

Posch 87) bt Cologne O.

bt Leeds 0.

(Simy 39).

nance obligations.

In response to a question on whether China was discussed in the context of debt rency, Ms. Sitharaman said the topic was discussed but stopped short of mentioning China by name.

issue of looking at sustainable debt funding and it has been in the minds of many countries. So discussions have happened," she said.

Keymer beats Mendonca

CHESS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Leon Mendonca could not maintain his early lead over second-seeded German Vincent Keymer and eventually fell in the second blitz tie-break game of the quarterfinals of the online \$40,000 Challengers Chess Tour Finals on Friday.

Keymer, who lost the second game and won the third before the four rapid games ended 2-2, went on to carve out a 3.5-2.5 victory over the fighting Indian.

In the semifinals, Keymer faces third seed R. Praggnanandhaa.

The other semifinal will be an all-USA affair when Liang Awonder takes on Christopher Yoo.

Semifinal line-up: Vincent Keymer (Ger) vs R. Praggnanandhaa; Liang Awonder (USA) vs Christopher Yoo

HYDERABAD: Trainer Anant Vatsalya's Xfinity should score over

his rivals in the S. Malakonda Reddy Memorial Cup, the feature

GOODWOOD PLATE (Div. I)

(1,400m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o

only (Cat. II) – 12.45 p.m.: 1. Arrowtown (1) Md. Ismail 56, 2.

Grand Duke (4) C.P. Bopanna 56.

3. Magic Mark (2) B. Nikhil 56, 4.

Sye Ra (9) Ajeeth Kumar 56, 5. Amalfitana (8) Nakhat Singh 54.5,

6. Archangels (7) A.A. Vikrant 54.5, 7. Golden Amaris (10) Kuldeep 54.5, 8. Goldrun (6) Aneel

54.5, 9. N R I Sugar (11) Akshay Ku-

mar 54.5, 10. Racing Rani (3) Afroz

Khan 54.5 and 11. Siri (5) B.R. Ku-

1. N R I SUGAR, 2. ARCHANGELS, 3.

INDIAN NAVY ROLLING CHAL-

LENGE TROPHY (1,400m), 5-y-o & upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) —

1.15: 1. Strategist (4) Nakhat Singh 60, 2. British Empress (11) Akshay

Kumar 59.5, 3. Dandy Man (5) Ashad Asbar 57, 4. Full Volume (8)

Ajit Singh 56.5, 5. N R I Elegance

AMALFITANA

event of Sunday's (Oct. 17) races.

India triumphs in style

Chhetri draws level with Messi in goals for country

SAFF C'SHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MALE (MALDIVES)

India crushed Nepal 3-0 to win its eight SAFF Championship title after secondhalf goals from Sunil Chhetri, Suresh Singh and Sahal Abdul Samad in the final here on Saturday. Chhetri scored in the 49th

minute of the match, which put him level with Lionel Messi on 80 international goals, while Suresh Singh doubled the lead in the 50th to pave the way for India's title triumph. Sahal Abdul Samad made it 3-0 when he dribbled past a few defenders in the 90th minute.

Relief for Stimac

This is the Indian football team's first title triumph under head coach Igor Stimac, who has faced criticism in recent times for his side's inability to win enough games.

Xfinity should score in feature event

(3) Gaurav Singh 56, 6. Private Em-

pire (2) Koushik 56, 7. Lockhart (9) Ajeeth Kumar 54, 8. City Of Wis-

dom (7) Mukesh Kumar 53, 9. The

Special One (12) Abhay Singh 52.5,

Once More (1) B.R. Kumar 52,

11. Angel Tesoro (6) G. Naresh 51

and 12. Rapid Fire (10) Surya

1. STRATEGIST, 2. BRITISH EMPRESS, 3. DANDY MAN

3 HALLMARK PLATE (1,400m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 1.45: 1. Due Diligence (4) Surya Prakash 60, 2. Good Connection (7) Gauray

Singh 60, 3. N R I Sport (5) Mukesh Kumar 58.5, 4. Flying Jet (8) Afroz

Khan 57, 5. Moonlight Ruby (10) Kuldeep Singh 57, 6. Top Diamond

(9) Akshay Kumar 56, 7. Top In Class (1) A.A. Vikrant 54, 8. N R I

Blue (3) B. Nikhil 53, 9. Exponent (6) B.R. Kumar 51 and 10. Hur-

1. DUE DILIGENCE, 2. GOOD CON-

Dancer (5) Kiran Naidu 60, 2.

BLUE MAX PLATE (1,600m) 4 BLUE MAX PLATE (1,000m) Maiden, 3-y-o & upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 2.15: 1. Star

ricane (2) Abhay Singh 51.

NECTION, 3. TOP DIAMOND

Prakash 51.



Mid-field action: Md. Yasir fends off Nepal's Suman Lama during the final on Saturday. • TWITTER/INDIANFOOTBALL

However, when it mattered the most in this edition of the regional tournament, Stimac's players delivered the results the team's fans had been waiting for.

Stimac also became the third foreign coach after Jiri

3. N R I Touch (7) Akshay Kumar 57, 4. Nightmare (2) Mukesh Ku-

mar 57, 5, Ashwa Sultan (6) Aiit

Singh 56.5, 6. Special Effort (1) Na-khat Singh 56.5, 7. Reining Queen

(8) Ajeeth Kumar 56, 8. Paladino

(4) N.B. Kuldeep 55.5 and 9. Starwalt (3) Khurshad Alam 54.5.

1. N R I TOUCH, 2. STAR DANCER, 3.

5 FLORINA PLATE (1,600m), 5-y-o & upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 2.45: 1. Star Racer (7) Mukesh Kumar 60, 2. N R I Heights (4) Ro-

hit Kumar 59, 3. Blickfang (5) Afroz Khan 57.5, 4. Miss Marvellous (9)

Akshay Kumar 57.5, 5. Dunkirk (6) Nakhat Singh 56.5, 6. Sun Dancer

(2) N.B. Kuldeep 56.5, 7. Call Of The Blue (3) Gaurav Singh 56, 8.

Sheldon (8) G. Naresh 54 and 9. Story Teller (1) R.S. Jodha 53.5.

1. MISS MARVELLOUS, 2. SHELDON,

6 s. malakonda reddy memorial cup (1,200m), rated

40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 3.15: 1. Sporting Smile (6) C.P. Bopanna 60, 2. Xfin-

ity (9) Akshay Kumar 60, 3. Cos-

SPECIAL EFFORT

3. STAR RACER

Pesek (1993) and Stephen team.

The result: Final: India 3

mic Run (5) Kiran Naidu 59, 4

Mystery (2) G. Naresh 58.5, 5. N R I Vision (10) Koushik 58, 6. City Of

Bliss (3) Mukesh Kumar 57.5, 7.

Kingston (7) Nakhat Singh 56.5, 8.

Amyra (8) Ashad Asbar 56, 9. Sha-

quille (4) Gaurav Singh 56 and 10.

1. XFINITY, 2. KINGSTON, 3. AMYRA

7 GOODWOOD PLATE (Div. II)

(1,400m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II) – 3.45: 1. Cash Re-gister (3) Ashad Asbar 56, 2. I Am

Superman (1) Rafique Sk. 56, 3. Pacific Command (9) Akshay Kumar

56, 4. Tales Of A Legend (2) A.A. Vikrant 56, 6. Good Tidings (7) Md. Ismail 54.5, 7. Isra (6) Aneel 54.5, 8. Kimberley (10) S.S. Tanwar

54.5. 9. Ostentatious (8) Afroz Khan 54.5 and 10. Silk (5) Mukesh

1. CASH REGISTER, 2. PACIFIC COM-

Mini Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 4, 5,

Day's Best: MISS MARVELLOUS

Treble: (i) 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 5, 6 & 7.

Kumar 54.5.

MAND, 3. KIMBERLEY

Tanala: All races.

Jean Laefette (1) R. Aiinkva 55.5.

Constantine (2015) to clinch the title with the Indian

(Chhetri 49, Suresh Singh 50, Sahal Abdul Samad 90) bt Ne-

to win for the third consecutive Premier League game. United led at the King

Greenwood's spectacular strike, but was quickly pegged back by Youri Tielemans' dinked finish beyond David de Gea. A flurry of four goals in

the final 12 minutes then condemned Solskjaer's men to a first defeat on the road since January 2020.

Caglar Soyuncu put Leicester in front before Marcus Rashford equalised.

ited's leaky defence was breached once more as Jamie Vardy smashed home and Patson Daka's first Leicester goal in stoppage time sealed a much-needed win for Brendan Rodgers' men.

Roberto Firmino scored his first hat-trick since 2018 as Liverpool ran riot at Vicarage Road in Claudio Ranieri's first match as Watford boss.

But it was Mohamed Salah, who again took most of the plaudits for another stunning solo goal to take his tally for the season to 10 in as many games.

ulous comeback from 2-0 down with 10 minutes remaining to win 3-2 at Aston

Liverpool sizzles against a clueless Watford

Leicester upstages United in a frantic second-half to heap pressure on Solskjaer

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCIES

Manchester United succumbed to a first away league defeat for 30 games by losing 4-2 at Leicester as Liverpool stormed to the top of the Premier League with a 5-0 demolition of Watford on Saturday

Manchester City moved into second with a 2-0 win over Burnley.

But the focus will fall on United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after his side failed

Power thanks to Mason

Straight from kick-off, Un-

Wolves produced a mirac-



Gung ho: Caglar Soyuncu celebrates after putting Leicester in front against Manchester United. • REUTERS

Respect

Wonder goal: Mohamed Salah caps off a slalom run past Watford's defence for Liverpool's fourth. • REUTERS

Super Kings' redemption and the new heroes

The team had a man for every occasion; Venkatesh, with his bold methods, made a huge impression for Knight Riders

IPL 2021

S. DINAKAR CHENNAI

Great teams have a sense of occasion. Chennai Super Kings has that.

The manner in which CSK effortlessly lifted its game in the IPL final against Kolkata Knight Riders underlined its killer instinct.

These are glory days for CSK, with its talismanic skipper M.S. Dhoni orchestrating a remarkable recovery from last season's debacle.

Finger on the pulse

Few cricketers understand the dynamics of T20 cricket like Dhoni does. He has his finger on the pulse of the game, comprehends the ebb and the flow, and gives cricketers the freedom to express themselves.

'Captain Cool' should be available for CSK for at least one more season. The BCCI is likely to allow two Indians and two foreigners or three Indians and an overseas player per franchise as its retention policy.

With the mega auction consisting of two additional teams coming up in January, CSK will also rebuild for the future as Dhoni hinted.

CSK was not short of champions in this edition. The ethereal Ruturaj Gaikwad, so light on his feet, tormented the bowlers at the top of the order with strokes of rare beauty, charm and timing to bag the Orange Cap with 635 runs.

His opening partner du Plessis, ageless and versatile, disrupted the attack with bold strokeplay, to finish just two runs short of Ruturaj with 633.

Solid platform

Well begun is half done they say, and Ruturaj and du Plessis built a solid platform for



K.L. Rahul (PBKS) Jos Buttler 124 (RR vs SRH, Delhi)

■ Sanju Samson 119 (RR vs PBKS, Mumbai) Devdutt Padikkal 101 n.o. (RCB vs RR,

NOTE: BEST STRIKE RATE (MIN. 200 BALLS) ■ Ruturaj 101 n.o. (CSK vs RR, Abu Dhabi)

Best strike rate: Prithvi Shaw (159.13 - 479 runs, 301 balls, 15 inns), DC Most sixes: K.L. Rahul (30) Longest six: Ruturaj (108m)

136.26

138.20

138.80

50s/100s

4/1

6/0

6/0

Economy

7.37

6.58

6.78

7.50

the CSK seamer

figured in 18

Dhoni is

in 2008

the oldest

skipper to lift

the IPL trophy.

Warne was 38

when he won

games (2013)

TOP WICKET-TAKERS

DOT BALL CHART

Avesh Khan (DC)

Uthappa

(KKR, 2014)

✓ and Ruturai

(CSK, 2021) have

the distinction

of winning the

Orange Cap and

the IPL crown in

the same edition

IPL titles

Dhoni has

won as

11, 18, 21). Rohit

has 5 as skipper

(2013, 15, 17,

19, 20)

captain (2010,

Varun Chakravarthy (KKR)

Mohammed Shami (PBKS)

Mohammed Siraj (RCB)

BOWLING Econ 4W/5W Harshal Patel (RCB) 32 5/27 1/1 24 3/13 7.37 Avesh Khan (DC) 0/0 14 21 3/36 7.45 0/0 Jasprit Bumrah (MI) Shardul Thakur (CSK) 21 3/28 8.80

16

635

101 n.o.

95 n.o.

Best economy rate: Ravi Bishnoi (6.38 - 36 overs, 230 runs conceded, 9 innings), PBKS Hat-trick: Harshal (RCB vs MI, Dubai) Fastest ball: Lockie Ferguson

156

149

147

145

42.62

36.51

47.11

45.88

(153,63 kmph), KKR

366

408

312

316

CSK coach, MI's

I Jayawardene has 3

Fleming's titles as

to bag the

24y 257d when he won the

Cap. Shaun Marsh (KXIP)

was 24y 328d when he

bagged the Cap in 2008

a season. The RCB bowler

played 15 matches while

Orange Cap. Ruturaj was

Ruturaj is the

youngest player

Harshal equals

Bravo's record for

FIELDING



■ Andre Russell 5/15 (KKR vs MI, Chennai)

Arshdeep Singh 5/32 (PBKS vs RR, Dubai)

NOTE: BEST ECONOMY RATE (MIN. 200 BALLS)

■ Harshal 5/27 (RCB vs MI, Chennai)

Jadeja (13), CSK ■ Most dismissals (wicketkeeper):

M.S. Dhoni (13 - Ct 13), CSK

final were game-changing ef-

Uthappa added muscle to the CSK line-up, batted with

refreshing freedom, hit sixes at will.

Same with the smoothstroking Moeen Ali. The left-

hander, such a sweet timer of the ball, hit long balls.

boasting of the accuracy and

movement of Josh Hazlewood, the wicket-taking ability of seamer Shardul Thakur, the swing and seam of Deepak Chahar and the beguiling variety of Dwayne Bravo, stung the opponents. Jadeja's left-arm spin was always handy.

Exciting prospect KKR has unearthed an exciting prospect in the nerveless Venkatesh Iyer.

A brave youngster who cuts and pulls the pacemen, drives them through the gaps and demolishes the spinners, Venkatesh is not intimidated by big names.

He is a handy seamer as well and his bowling will get better as the days progress.

By leaving out the influential Andre Russell in the final, KKR blundered.

IPL, though, is not always about the big names and RCB's Harshal Patel, with exceptional pace variations, took home the Purple Cap with 32 scalps.

Genuine talent

Rajasthan Royals' Kartik Tyagi, a genuine talent, denying Punjab Kings four runs in the dramatic last over was an unforgettable vignette.

So was K.S. Bharat's lastball six that gave RCB a sensational win over the powerful Delhi Capitals.

Breathtaking strokeplay K.L. Rahul was breathtaking with his strokeplay for Punjab Kings. He hit 30 sixes, but

seldom slogged. The lively Avesh Khan bowled a heavy ball and the hard length for Capitals.

And Sunrisers Hyderabad's Umran Malik sent down some of the quickest deliveries of the IPL, one of them clocked as fast as 152.95 kmph

In the IPL, heroes emerge

We were pretty much written off: Fleming

Says the 2018 win was very emotional

S. DIPAK RAGAV

hennai Super Kings **∪**coach Stephen Fleming said that the title win this year was special because the side was written off after a disappointing season in 2020.

"It is very hard to rank them (the titles). I think, the win in 2018, coming back, was very emotional, but there is a lot of hard work in this one," said Fleming.

"I don't think a lot of people had any hopes for us to be able to maintain our competitiveness during this cycle. We were pretty much written off.

"So, there is a little bit of satisfaction around that and a lot of pride in what the players have been able to achieve and maintain the standards over a number of months and that was a challenge for an ageing side," added the former New Zea-

land skipper. Commenting on the team's philosophy, Fleming pointed out the importance of experience, in a format that is widely believed is for youth, as the key behind the team's consistency.

"We have things we be-

lieve in and we pick players who can fill roles. We have got some outstanding leaders and experienced players. People call them old, but I call them experienced and that helps create an environment that is very calm and understands what it is doing," he said.

When asked if it feels like the end of an era with a new auction set to take place with two new teams joining next year, Fleming said, "Well, look, maybe. We don't know. There is emotion around it. Whenever you get to the end of a cycle you're not going to get some players back."

Arriving on Monday

The victorious CSK team is scheduled to arrive in the city in the early hours of Monday. However, unlike the last time the team won the title in 2018, when it received a rousing welcome in the city, this time most players, including skipper M.S. Dhoni, won't be here in the city.

The international players will stay back in the UAE for the ICC World T20, including the captain, the mentor for the Indian team.



Ruling the night: It was the dance of the Yellow brigade

+ 'Venkatesh a big catalyst for our turnaround'

olkata Knight Riders head coach Brendon McCullum credited opening batter Venkatesh Iver for be ing the catalyst for the side's turnaround from a poor start to its IPL campaign.

"Venkatesh is an intelligent man with an enormous future. He was a big catalyst for our turnaround this season," McCullum stated in post-match media conference.

"It was a matter of bringing the Venkatesh Iyer game plan to the table – which is aggressive intent. He plays the game with a cavalier streak. It's very important that he sticks to this method. He will be challenged to change, because he might not be the most consistent batter due to his flamboyance. But I hope he remains the Venkatesh Iyer we've seen so far," McCullum said.

On not picking Andre Russell in the playing XI, McCullum said, "Andre had a hamstring tear earlier in the competition. He worked unbelievably hard to try and



The highlights of IPL 2021 which took place in India and the UAE

HIGHEST TOTAL

LOWEST TOTAL

RR 85

ers could fire.

vs KKR, SHARJAH.

MI 235/9

vs SRH, ABU DHABI. Result: MI won by 42 runs.

Result: KKR won by 86 runs

CSK. A stage from which oth-

kriegs in Qualifier 1 and the

Robin Uthappa's blitz-

get himself available. But there was still a risk there; a risk I felt we couldn't afford to take in a final.

He sympathised with KKR skipper Eoin Morgan, who struggled for form with the bat. "It was a unique situation. Morgan captained KKR as well as any captain I've seen. We tried to slot him in a batting position where he has been so successful - in the last five overs of the innings. Unfortunately, the runs weren't there for him."

Our ultimate goal is to win the World Cup: Kohli

'What we have been able to create in the last five-six years is beyond titles and tournaments'

AMOL KARHADKAR

Ravi Shastri is moving on as the India head coach. Rahul Dravid could come in his place. And Virat Kohli has announced he will give up T20I captaincy at the end of the T20 World Cup. India couldn't have asked for more transition from the Indian Premier League going into the prestigious global event.

Ticking the empty box

Feigning ignorance about the developments on the coaching staff front, captain Kohli minced no words about the desire to tick the empty box of an ICC Trophy that's missing from his otherwise enviable combination with Shastri as the head coach.

"Look, our ultimate goal is to win the World Cup. Honestly, I have no idea exactly what's happening on that front yet. We haven't had any detailed discussions with anyone yet. But winning the World Cup is definitely our goal is like any other team. But what we have been able to create in the last five-six years is beyond titles and tournaments, to be honest,"



Extra motivation: Virat Kohli will be desperate to win the T20 World Cup before stepping down as India captain in the shortest format. • SPORTZPICS/BCCI

Kohli said on Saturday, a day before the T20 World Cup qualifiers begin in Muscat.

honesty, which we hope will "We've been able to create continue to be the case in a culture which is going to be years to come. Winning an lasting a long time... And

we've driven that culture with utmost passion and

ICC tournament will definite-

ly be a wonderful moment for all of us, for him as coach, for me as captain. It'll be an amazing achievement and something that we're ob-

viously motivated for and

we'll give everything we

We are quite

knowing that we have a

into the World Cup

strong side

confident heading

have.' Stressing that India made it to the final and the semifinals in the last two T20 World Cup editions in 2014 and 2016, respectively, Kohli hoped India can go one step further next month.

"We have beaten prominent teams in T20 series in the recent past in very close contests, so we are quite confident heading into the World Cup knowing that we have a strong side," Kohli said, "Potentially we could go deep in the tournament and if we end up being in the knockout stage, maybe go one step further this time.' Kohli added M.S. Dhoni's

new role as mentor will be of a lot of help "especially for

the younger guys". Terming Dhoni as someone "who has always been a mentor for all of us", Kohli hoped the younger generation can pick up cues from Dhoni's wealth of experience.

"Conversations with him around the game, such practical inputs, such intricate details of where the game's going and how we can improve our game by that 1 or 2 per cent which always makes the difference when he is in the leadership role in any team," Kohli said.

Ashwin's return The T20 World Cup will also

mark R. Ashwin's return to India's limited-overs side after four years. "Ashwin has been rewarded for reviving his skills altogether. He was a regular for us back in the day, then he fell off a little bit because the wrist spinners were in demand mostly in that middle period," Kohli

"But now the finger spinners with accuracy have come back into the game, so we also have to evolve as a team with the evolving

Bangladesh starts favourite

T20 WC QUALIFIERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AL AMERAT (OMAN) Bangladesh will start favourite as it opens its T20 World Cup campaign against Scotland here on Sunday.

Bangladesh has been drawn alongside Scotland, Oman and Papua New Guinea in the first round, and going by recent form is expected to top Group B and qualify for the Super 12

Bangladesh comes into the tournament on the back of nine T20I wins, only behind South Africa which has

Skipper Mahmudullah is a seasoned campaigner, while the likes of all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, coming off some good performances for Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL, Mushfiqur Rahim, Soumya Sarkar and pacer Mustafizur Rahman are the key players for Bangladesh.

Mustafizur will lead the bowling attack that also has Shamim Hossain, Shoriful Islam and spinner Nasum Ahmed apart from Shakib.

Dravid favourite to take over from Shastri as India head coach

AMOL KARHADKAR MUMBAI

Former India captain Rahul Dravid has emerged as frontrunner to replace Ravi Shastri as India men's head coach after the latter's tenure expires at the end of the T20

World Cup next month. *The Hindu* understands that Dravid, who is at the helm of cricket activities at the National Cricket Academy in his hometown Bengaluru, has agreed to throw his hat in the ring once the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) initiates the process to appoint the head coach.

Various BCCI dispensations over the last six years have tried in vain to persuade Dravid into taking charge of the senior team. However, Dravid has preferred to concentrate on the developmental aspect, looking after the NCA, India-A and Under-19 boys. BCCI president Sourav

Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah seem to have managed to make it happen this time around. It is understood that during the course of multiple discussions over the last week - telephonic, videoconferencing followed by a meeting in person in Dubai on Friday – the BCCI hierarchy managed to convince Dravid to take over as the head coach at least till the

2023 World Cup. While Dravid is under-



stood to have ended the long meeting on Friday on an affirmative note, the BCCI hopes Dravid will eventually formally apply once it invites

applications for the four coaching staff positions that will fall vacant next month. The BCCI bosses have hence heaved a sigh of relief

after several top coaches – Indian and overseas – had turned down recent approaches. The BCCI is expected to initiate the process next week for appointing the head coach, batting coach, bowling coach and fielding coach. While the Cricket Advisory Committee, which also has a vacancy with Madan Lal having crossed the prescribed age-limit of 70 years, is supposed to appoint the head coach, the national selection committee has to finalise the support staff members. Should Dravid actually en-

ter the fray, Paras Mhambrey – who has been his trusted ally with the Under-19 boys and India-A outfits over the last four years - will be the favourite to take over as bowling coach from B. Arun. The duo had accompa-

nied India's limited-overs squad on its tour of Sri Lanka in July. Vikram Rathour, who came in place of Sanjay Bangar in 2019 as batting coach, is likely to retain his position.

Need for reboot Interestingly, Dravid and

Mhambrey, after their recent reappointments at the NCA, were expected to groom the boys' and girls' squads for next year's Under-19 World Cups. Should both of them be elevated to the senior men's squad, the NCA coaching system will also need to be rebooted.

Saurashtra cricketer Barot passes away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saurashtra batter Avi Barot, a former India Under-19 captain and a member of the Ranji Trophy winning team in the 2019-20 season, has died after suffering a cardiac arrest at the young

age of 29. Barot, who also represented Haryana and Gujarat in his career, died on Friday while being taken to hospital after he felt unwell at his home in Ahmedabad. He is survived by his mother and wife, who is expecting their

first child. Barot, a wicketkeeperbatsman, played 38 First



Class matches (1,547 runs),

38 List-A matches (1,030) and 20 domestic T20 games (717).

Kashish wins, joins Binny's Brigade

Runner-up Prerna will represent Chennai Stallions

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

NEW DELHI Kashish Bhatia won the women's event at the Talent day and will join Yuki Bhambri. Manish Sureshkumar and Peangtarn Plipuech in Delhi Binny's Brigade for the third edition of the Tennis Premier League to be staged at the Celebration Club, Andheri, from Dec. 9 to 14.

The runner-up of the event, Prerna Bhambri, will join Chennai Stallions which has Samantha Murray Sharan as the other woman player.

Live TV coverage

All the leading Indian men's and women's players will be part of the eight-team league which is scheduled to have live television coverage.

More players will be added through the Talent Day competition to ensure five men's and women's players in each team.

"We are excited to have international players this year. The intention is to make tennis win and we are extreme-

IN BRIEF

Acing the event: Aditya Khanna, Yuki Bhambri, Nandan Bal, Ankita Bhambri and Zeeshan Ali, members of the Tennis Premier League. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT ly grateful to the AITA and the MSLTA for their unconditional support," said the

founder of the event, Kunal

Thakkur, in a press confe-

rence here on Saturday. "We are thankful to all our owners and sponsors. We intend to make the league one of its kind in India. The live telecast of all matches will be something very exciting for Indian tennis players and fans, said Mrunal Jain, cofounder of the league.

Yuki, Ankita Bhambri, Nandan Bal, Zeeshan Ali, Rohit Rajpal and Aditya Khanna were also present in the media interaction

The teams: Mumbai Leon Army: Ramkumar Ramanathan, Niki Poonacha, Sofia Shapataya, Delhi Binny's Brigade: Yuki Bhambri, Manish Sureshkumar, Peangtarn Plipuech.

Chennai Stallions: Purav Raja,

Murray Sharan.

Bengaluru Spartans: Jeevan Nedunchezhivan, Sriram Balaii. Sabina Sharipova

Hyderabad Strikers: Arjun Kadhe, Vishnu Vardhan, Ankita Rajasthan Tigers: Prajnesh

Gunneswaran, Aryan Goveas, Diana Marcinkevica. Guiarat Panthers: Divii Sharan.

Vijay Sundar Prashant, Valeriya

Pune Jaguars: Saketh Myneni, Ishaque Iqbal, Rutuja Bhosale.

Nazir Hoosein Memorial drive launched

MOTORSPORTS SPORTS REPORTER

Kremlin Cup in Moscow on

Friday. Medvedev said: "my

World No. 2 Russian lost in

the fourth round of the

Indian Wells Masters to

Saketh loses in

doubles semifinals

Saketh Myneni and Patrik

Niklas-Salminen of Finland,

the No. 1 seed, was beaten

6-3, 7-5 by Julian Cash and

Christian Sigsgaard in the

doubles semifinals of the

\$15,000 ITF men's tennis

body is not 100% ready". The

Grigor Dimitrov this week. AFP

officially launched the Nazir Hoosein Memorial Drive Medvedev to miss (NHMD), a non-competitive Kremlin Cup event that will track the original route of the Himalayan US Open champion Daniil Rally (1981 edition) from No-Medvedev joined fellow New York Grand Slam title winner vember 8. Emma Raducanu in The drive is organised in withdrawing from the

memory of Nazir Hoosein, founder of the Indian Automotive Racing Club (IARC) and former president of the Federation of MotorSport Clubs of India (FMSCI) (1984-85). While his pioneering ad-

Team Firefox on Saturday

ministrative work paved the way for many motorsport enthusiasts in the country, Hoosein is perhaps most fondly remembered for founding the Himalayan Ral-

NHMD will follow the original route from the 1981 edition, with a 100-car field kicking off from Greater Noi-



Nazir Hoosein

da on November 8. The first stop will be Lansdowne (8th), followed by Mussoorie (9th) and Kufri (10th). On the 11th, drivers will tackle the iconic route of the original rally - the Jalori Pass before halting in Manali. The final day will see participants cross over the Rohtang pass before concluding the drive in Manali.

"Once we saw things opening up, some of us decided that we should do a drive, something to hark back the good times," said former secretary-general of

TV PICKS

Men's T20 World Cup: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 3.30 p.m. & 7.30

Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m. & 9

Bundesliga: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7 p.m. & 10 p.m.

Double for Yashaswini

SPORTS BUREAU

India won four of the five titles at stake in the girls' section of the WTT Youth Contender Muscat here. Yashaswini Deepak Ghorpade (u-19 & u-17), Suhana Saini (u-15), and M. R. Hanemerged (u-13) triumphant.

The results (finals):

Girls: u-19: Yashaswini Deepak Ghorpade bt Markhabo Magdieva (Uzb) 11-6, 11-8, 11-4; u-17: Yashaswini Deepak Ghorpade bt Markhabo Magdieva (Uzb) 12-10, 11-3, 11-4; u-15: Suhana Saini bt M.R. Hansini 11-6, 7-11, 11-6, 11-8; u-13: M. R. Hansini bt Se tayesh Iloukhani (Iri) 11-4,

Nordic group opposes biennial WC plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The six-nation Nordic group of European soccer federations has detailed its opposition to FIFA's push to stage the World Cup every two years.

Increasing the number of World Cups would "cannibalise" existing competitions, make European Championships "obsolete" and marginalise women's tournaments, the federations wrote in a co-signed statement.

"It (the FIFA proposal) can fundamentally make it impossible to continue with our current model of national tournaments and national team matches," said the statement, which was released after a meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The Nordic opposition wasn't unexpected with influential officials from the region working at European governing body UE-FA, which has called for "proper consultation" before a decision is made. Karl-Erik Nilsson of Sweden is UEFA's first vice-president and Danish soccer president Jesper Moller is a UEFA executive committee

Outside Europe, the biennial plan has been publicly supported by soccer bodies most loyal to FIFA **Safe & Non-irritant**

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Saranjeet Singh passes away

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Former hockey international Saranjeet Singh passed away here on Thursday. He was 59 and is survived by wife, daughter and a son.

He had been unwell for

the past three months.

The former State Bank of India hockey player who played for Coronation Club in local league, represented Hyderabad juniors and seniors in the late 70s and 80s and also played for the In-

dian team that toured Ger many in 1983.

Olympians Alloysius Edwards, N. Mukesh Kumar, former India junior coach Narinderpal Singh, and others expressed their condo-



Saranjeet Singh.

Karan outguns Aman, takes title

Shruti rallies to beat Suhitha for girls' crown

TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Karan Singh established himself as the best junior in the country outgunning second seed Aman Dahiya 6-4, 6-2 in the boys' final of the National junior tennis championship at the DLTA Complex on Saturday.

Thunderbolts

The last time he played a junior tournament, Karan was beaten in the ITF grade-4 final by Aman in Kathmandu, in February. Thereafter, Karan has been focusing on the men's circuit, and stepped up his game to meet the demands.

There is no doubt that Karan will soon trigger a debate about the fastest server in Indian tennis, as he served thunderbolts to exasperate Aman.

His groundstrokes were razor sharp as he hit clean to race through the match.

Very confident

"I was very confident. I had lost to him last time by the same score in Kathmandu.

"This title is very important for me and the National Tennis Centre. We have been working very hard," said Karan, who trains under Zeeshan Ali in the Capital.

"He played very good," conceded 17-year-old



■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Aman, who trains with Jignesh Rawal at the Altevol Academy in Ahmedabad.

Even though he started the match with a doublefault and Aman in contrast, with an ace, there was no doubt that Karan was the better player this

He gave glimpses of his tremendous potential with an all-court entertaining game.

"Karan has a big game. He is playing the men's level," said coach Zeeshan

In the girls' final, Shruti Ahlawat rallied from a slow start to beat second seed Suhitha Maruri 4-6, 6-0, 6-4 in a long-drawn baseline battle of wits.

Sound temperament The 15-year-old Shruti, the best-ranked Indian girl on

the international circuit, stressed her sound temperament as much as a strong game.

Coach Pundreek Chaturvedi is ready with plans to sharpen Shruti's game for the tough grind ahead.

The results (finals): Under-18 boys: Karan Singh bt Aman Dahiya 6-4, 6-2.

Under-18 girls: Shruti Ahlawat bt Suhitha Maruri 4-6, 6-0,

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We back Gayle to do well: Pollard

The former is 97 runs short of becoming the highest run-scorer in T20 World Cup

CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

West Indies' big-hitting skipper Kieron Pollard is looking forward to join forces with veteran swashbuckler Chris Gayle and lead the team to glory in the T20 World Cup. The tournament will be

held in Oman and United Arab Emirates from Sunday and defending champion West Indies begin its campaign against England on October 23 at the Dubai International Stadium.

Heading into the showpiece, Gayle is just 97 runs short of becoming the highest run-scorer in T20 World Cup, and Pollard said that there are no words to describe what the 'Universe Boss' has done for the country.

Media session

"Again, no words to describe what he has done for us in World Cups, in the T20 World Cups, and T20 cricket around the world as an individual," Pollard said during a captains' media session here on Saturday.

"For him, 97 runs away, but I don't think he will be looking at that. I think the main goal for us and him, is trying to win a World Cup and defend the title. He is looking forward to that. Hopefully, he can come and deliver for us. We back him to do well," Pollard added.



West Indies in World Cups, says Pollard. ■FILE PHOTO

The IPL was "a good experience" despite his franchise Mumbai Indians' failure to make the playoffs, according

"I am sure some interesting sort of stats, comparisons, different sort of trends might have come out of the recently-concluded IPL," Pollard said during the interaction organised by the

"For us, most of our guys got an opportunity to recently play in the IPL in the UAE and we are looking forward to hit the ground running and start on that sort of positive note and get that first two points and see what happens after that," added

West Indies won the 2016 edition of the T20 World Cup after Carlos Braithwaite hammered four successive sixes off Ben Stokes at the iconic Eden Gardens.

ing forward for another opportunity to try to defend this trophy," the 34-year-old said, adding they have lots of powerful players in their line-up.

"We are excited and look-

president Gianni Infantino.