



Telangana withdraws plea in SC on Krishna water sharing

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Union Cabinet approves festival bonus for Railway employees

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SC asks firecracker makers why they stock barium despite ban

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It's CSK-PBKS and KKR-RR in IPL double-header today

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IN BRIEF



Bengal floods: Mamata seeks Modi's intervention

KOLKATA
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the recent floods in West Bengal, emphasising that the annual problem of floods in south Bengal requires short-term and long-term measures.

NEWS PAGE 8

Govt. to SC: set quota norms for promotions

NEW DELHI
The Union government said in the Supreme Court on Wednesday that the time had come for the top court to firm up and draw the basis for reservation in promotions for SC/ST candidates to fill up vacancies in top jobs.

NEWS PAGE 8

Maharashtra Minister sees BJP link in drug case

MUMBAI
Maharashtra Minister for Minority Development Nawab Malik, a Nationalist Congress Party leader, on Wednesday alleged that a private detective facing a cheating case and a BJP leader had brought Aryan Khan and Arbaz Merchant to the Narcotics Control Bureau office and participated in the drug search.

NEWS PAGE 8

SC decides to hear case on U.P. violence today

It takes suo motu cognisance of Lakhimpur Kheri incidents

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

In a significant move, the Supreme Court on Wednesday took suo motu cognisance of the Lakhimpur Kheri violence and deaths, and listed the case for hearing in the next 24 hours.

A three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, will hear the suo motu case on Thursday.

The CJ will be flanked by Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli on the Bench.

Eight people have died, four of whom were reportedly farmers who were mowed down by a vehicle which was part of the convoy of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Ajay Kumar Mishra, in Lakhimpur Kheri in north-central Uttar Pradesh. A journalist was among the eight who died.

The top court rarely takes up issues or incidents on its own motion unless they are of such consequence or seriousness that ignoring them would affect public interest, basic rights and the conscience of the country.

The court's decision to take up the case, now titled 'In re: Violence in Lakhimpur Kheri (U.P.) leading to loss of life' comes just 48 hours after a Bench of the



Offering solace: Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra with the kin of a deceased farmer in Lakhimpur Kheri. PHOTO BY AP/WIDEWORLD

Second autopsy silent on bullet injury: farmer's family

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

With the cremation of Gurvinder Singh on Wednesday, the final rites of the four farmers, who were among the eight people killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, were concluded after a second autopsy of his body

was conducted by a new panel of doctors appointed by the government.

Gurvinder's family on Wednesday rejected his second autopsy report, saying it also did not mention any bullet injury.

FULL REPORT PAGE 9

court lashed out at farmers' bodies, connecting their protests against farm laws to the violence that occurred in Lakhimpur Kheri.

That Bench, led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, had said that "nobody takes responsibility" when incidents like

Lakhimpur Kheri occur. "When such incidents happen, causing deaths, loss to property and damage, nobody takes responsibility," Justice Khanwilkar had observed on October 4.

RELATED REPORTS PAGE 9

Civilian killings cause concern in J&K

Targeted attacks meant to evoke fear, says J&K DGP

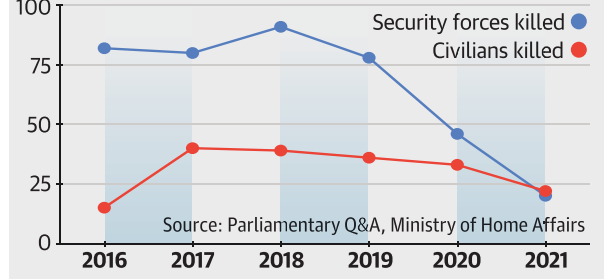
VIJAYTA SINGH
NEW DELHI

More civilians than security forces have been killed this year in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) in various terrorism-related incidents. The targeted killing of civilians, including prominent citizens and non-locals in the Valley, reverses the trend of the past six years, data show.

Till October 5 this year, as many as 22 civilians were killed in the Valley as against 20 security personnel in the same period. In 2020, the

Fatality count

As many as 22 civilians and 20 security personnel died so far this year in Kashmir



Source: Parliamentary Q&A, Ministry of Home Affairs

number of civilians who were killed stood at 33, while the number of security forces who were killed was 46 and in the year 2019, it was 36 civilians and 78 security

personnel, respectively. J&K Director General of Police Dilbag Singh told *The Hindu* that the killings were done "to create a communal situation" and instil a sense

Outrage over civilian's death

Family members of Makhan Lal Bindroo, who was shot dead inside his famous pharmacy here by militants on Tuesday, put up a brave face on Wednesday, saying "the gunmen may have killed a body but not the spirit" of the family. PHOTO BY AP/WIDEWORLD

of fear among the minorities here. He said the killing of civilians was a worrying trend.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

NEET-SS new pattern plan dropped, says govt.

It has been put off to 2022, SC told

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Government on Wednesday turned around to inform the Supreme Court that it has dropped its decision to implement a new pattern for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Super Specialties (NEET-SS) 2021 due in November.

Faced with criticism from the court for the sudden manner in which the new pattern is to be introduced at the last minute this ac-

ademic year, the Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, said the implementation of the new pattern had been postponed to 2022.

The November exam would follow the existing pattern, she submitted. "In deference of your lordship's observations & interest of students, the Centre has decided that the revised scheme will be implemented from 2022," she stated.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

WHO recommends first anti-malarial vaccine

Children in sub-Saharan Africa to get it

RAMYA KANNAN
CHENNAI

In a historic move, the World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday endorsed the first anti-malarial vaccine, as mankind enters a key turning point in a battle waged relentlessly over decades between man and mosquito, the vector.

At a press conference that went live on social media, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: "The long-awaited malaria vaccine for children is

a breakthrough for science, child health and malaria control... Using this vaccine on top of existing tools to prevent malaria could save tens of thousands of young lives each year."

The WHO said that it was recommending the use of the RTS,S/AS01 (RTS,S) malaria vaccine among children in sub-Saharan Africa and in other regions with moderate to high *P. falciparum* malaria transmission.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

U.S. expresses unease over S-400 deal

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

India and the U.S. are on the same page on Afghanistan and the threat to the region from terrorism, said visiting American Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, calling the partnership "indispensable" for both countries and the world.

Striking a discordant note on the impending delivery of the Russian S-400 missile systems to India, however, Ms. Sherman, who

described the deal as "dangerous", expressed the hope that the two sides could "solve" the issue arising from possible U.S. sanctions over the defence purchase.

"We've been quite public about any country that decides to use the S-400. We think that it is dangerous and not in anybody's security interest," Ms. Sherman said in response to a question from *The Hindu* at a roundtable with journalists

on Wednesday.

"That said, we have a strong partnership with India; we want to be very thoughtful about the ways ahead and discussions between our countries try to solve problems," she added, hoping that the talks in the weeks ahead would resolve this issue as well.

According to sources, Ms. Sherman, who met NSA Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday, also "raised"

the S-400 purchase during her talks with Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla.

Her comments come a day after Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal V.R. Chaudhari confirmed that the \$5.43 billion S-400 system deal, signed in 2018, is "on track" and the "first regiment" is expected to be inducted "within this year", or by end-December 2021.

'INDIA, U.S. TO WORK CLOSELY ON AFGHANISTAN' PAGE 8

Chemistry Nobel for work on catalysts

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STOCKHOLM

Germany's Benjamin List and U.S.-based David MacMillan on Wednesday won the Nobel Chemistry Prize for developing a tool to build molecules which has helped make chemistry more environmentally friendly. Their tool can be used to control chemical reactions, exerting a big impact on drugs research.

DETAILS PAGE 12

Judge critical of police probe transferred

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav, who was presiding over several cases related to the north-east Delhi riots at the Karkardooma court, was on Wednesday transferred to the Rouse Avenue court where he will serve as a Special Judge for cases pertaining to the Prevention of Corruption Act.

While hearing the cases, ASJ Yadav had passed scathing orders and pointed out loopholes in probes.

DETAILS PAGE 2

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IN BRIEF

Five members of Sonu Dariyapur gang held

NEW DELHI Five members of Sonu Dariyapur gang were arrested after Delhi Police chief Rakesh Asthana ordered a crackdown on gangs operating in the city...

HC to hear plea against cracker ban on Oct. 22

NEW DELHI The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it would hear on October 22 the plea against complete ban on sale, storage and use of firecrackers in the national capital...

3 foreigners arrested over drug syndicate

NEW DELHI Three foreign nationals were arrested in Dwaraka for allegedly running an international drug syndicate. Around 1 kg heroin worth ₹13 crore was seized...

Delhi govt.'s campaign against dust pollution to start today

Over 30 teams formed to ensure implementation and compliance of rules: Rai

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will run an anti-dust campaign from October 7 to 29 to curb pollution. Over 30 teams have been formed to carry out inspections...

The government also released a list of 14 rules to be followed by all construction sites. Most of these rules are part of the existing guidelines...

“Today, we held a joint meeting with the engineers of the DPCC [Delhi Pollution Control Committee] and the green marshals of the Green War Room. We have decided that dust pollution will be fought on a priority basis...



The government has released a list of 14 rules to be followed by all construction sites.

year too, before the air pollution levels spiked in winter. According to officials, the rules are not new, but the government will put more manpower to implement the campaign and increase compliance...

been formed for this purpose. Of these, 17 teams of DPCC engineers will work across various districts and 14 teams of green marshals will work with mobile vans...

Warned of action He also warned of action against government agencies not following the rules while engaged in construction activities.

any department is not taking suitable action, then a show-cause notice will be issued to them. In case the department is unable to clarify the show-cause notice within two days, they will be penalised...

In case of violations, if a plot is up to 100 square metres, it can be fined ₹10,000. The fine can be ₹20,000 for 100-200 square metres...

Air pollution in the city rises during winter, chiefly due to a combined effect of stubble burning in the neighbouring States and climatic conditions...

Judge critical of police probe in riots cases transferred

A day earlier, ASJ had said police witness was ‘lying on oath’

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav, who was presiding over several cases related to the north-east Delhi riots at the Karkardooma court...

The transfer order issued by the Delhi High Court included seven Metropolitan Magistrates and four Additional Sessions Judges.

In addition to ASJ Yadav, Metropolitan Magistrate Fahad Uddin, who presided over another of the four special courts hearing matters related to the February 2020 riots...

cases, ASJ Yadav had passed several scathing orders and pointed out loopholes in investigations. During one such hearing last month, he had observed that “failure to conduct a proper investigation will torment sentinels of democracy”.

‘Sorry state of affairs’

A day before his transfer, ASJ Yadav had come down heavily on Delhi Police, saying one of its witnesses was “lying on oath” and it was “a very sorry state of affairs”.

He made the observation after Head Constable Sanjay stated on oath in his evidence that he had identified three rioters by their names and professions...

it appeared prima facie that one of the police witnesses in the case was lying on oath and the same was punishable under IPC Section 193 (punishment for false evidence).

The court noted that while the Head Constable had categorically asserted about the accused’s presence at the spot, it was however admitted by the Investigating Officer (IO) “that there is nothing on record to substantiate that matter” and the fact that the three men were ever investigated despite their names being there on record.

“On the contrary, it is stated that the identity of these accused persons could not be established during investigation,” the order read. ASJ Yadav further said there was no material available on record which showed that efforts were made by the IO to apprehend the three men.

Mother, twins die in house fire

Blaze was caused due to leakage in LPG rubber pipe: police

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A 36-year-old woman and her twin children died while another daughter sustained injuries when their house caught fire following a gas leak, in central Delhi’s Anand Parbat on Tuesday morning.

DCP (Central) Shweta Chauhan said the victims were identified as Sushila and her seven-year-old twins — Mohan and Mansi. The injured daughter has been identified as Monika, 10, while another daughter Mehak, 13, escaped unhurt.

Police said that a PCR call was received at 9.02 a.m. regarding fire in a house. When they reached the spot in Punjabi Basti’s Gulshan Chowk, four persons were found with burn injuries and were rushed to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

Sushila’s husband was at his workplace in Lawrence Road at the time of the incident.

Mehak said she was preparing tea for the mother and her siblings when the house suddenly caught fire. “I turned on the stove and it suddenly caught fire. I was close to the door of our room so I managed to escape. But the room is small and my mother and siblings were inside. They couldn’t come out,” she said.

“The fire was caused due to leakage in rubber pipe which connects the cylinder to the burner,” Ms. Chauhan said. Delhi Fire Service said two fire tenders were pressed into service.

DU issues guidelines on inclusion of State board subjects in cut-off calculation

‘Colleges were rejecting applications without proper reason’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

On the third day of DU admissions in various undergraduate programmes under the first cut-off list, around 59,000 applications were received by the university. Over 13,000 applications have been verified, a university spokesperson said.

Responding to the trend of a large number of students from State Education Boards securing admissions into colleges, DU has issued guidelines on inclusion of subjects

from other State boards equivalent to ones taught under the Central Board of Secondary Education in the calculation of cut-off marks.

Many candidates had complained that colleges were rejecting or withholding applications without any substantial reason.

A DU official said that an equivalence committee, set up by the university, held a meeting to decide which subjects from State boards would be equivalent to CBSE subjects and if they could be

included while calculating the “best four” subjects to arrive at the cut-off score. The official said that these guidelines have been shared with colleges after many requests were raised asking if particular subjects that are offered by State boards but not by CBSE could be included.

The Students’ Federation of India said that DU is bound to admit students satisfying all eligibility criteria and that it is a matter of shame that applicants are being discriminated based on their boards.

‘U.P. govt. protecting killers of farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri’

PM should meet victims’ families: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Terming the Lakhimpur Kheri incident a “murder”, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi reach out to the victims’ next of kin to share their sorrow.

Mr. Kejriwal alleged that the Uttar Pradesh government was “protecting” the accused and questioned why “the killers” of farmers were yet to be arrested.

The car that mercilessly mowed down the farmers,

Mr. Kejriwal alleged, had not only crushed them but the very soul and spirit of all the farmers of the country.

“Dear Mr. Prime Minister, throughout the country everyone’s talking about how the entire system is trying to protect the murderers of the innocent farmers who died in Lakhimpur. I want to talk to you, Mr. Prime Minister, on behalf of the people of this country today,” Mr. Kejriwal said during a digital press briefing.

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Eight women among 44 first-time SHOs

NEW DELHI The Delhi police on Wednesday said 44 first-timers, including eight women, have been posted as Station House Officers in stations across the Capital.

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27 oxygen plants set up at govt. hospitals

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A total of 27 Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants with a capacity of 31 metric tonnes and two cryogenic oxygen refilling plants of 12 metric tonnes were inaugurated in Delhi government-run hospitals on Wednesday, authorities said.

“These plants have been made keeping in mind the third wave of COVID-19. Out of these 27 PSA plants, three were started in Lok Nayak Hospital and one at Bhagwan Mahavir Hospital,” Health Minister Satyendar Jain said on Wednesday.

Mr. Kejriwal alleged, had not only crushed them but the very soul and spirit of all the farmers of the country. “Dear Mr. Prime Minister, throughout the country everyone’s talking about how the entire system is trying to protect the murderers of the innocent farmers who died in Lakhimpur. I want to talk to you, Mr. Prime Minister, on behalf of the people of this country today,” Mr. Kejriwal said during a digital press briefing.

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DELHI

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RISE 06:57 SET 18:49

FRIDAY, OCT. 08
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SATURDAY, OCT. 09
RISE 06:19 SET 17:58
RISE 09:13 SET 20:11

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| Safdarjang | 35 | 26 |
| Palam | 35 | 26 |

Delhi Palam Today
36°C The weather will be mostly dry. Day will be very warm and humid with uneasy afternoon. Night will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C A dry weather to prevail. The morning will be hazy. Day will be very warm and humid with uneasy afternoon.

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IN BRIEF

Two teenage girls drown, one missing in Datia

DATIA
Two teenage girls drowned in the Sindh river in Madhya Pradesh's Datia district on Wednesday and another girl is missing, police said. PTI

Telangana withdraws plea in SC on Krishna water

'Union Minister stated that the Centre will consider tribunal'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Telangana on October 6 withdrew its plea in the Supreme Court for "equitable apportionment" of the Krishna River water on the basis of an assurance given by the Centre that it will "consider" constituting a tribunal to resolve the issue.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Telangana, in an application, said the Union Minister, in a meeting, stated that if the State withdrew its case from the Supreme Court, the Centre would "positively" consider forming a tribunal under Inter State River Water Disputes Act of 1956 after taking necessary legal opinion.

'Legal opinion'
Taking "legal opinion" before forming a new tribunal on the issue of Krishna River water sharing was necessary as



Water woes: Telangana had approached the Supreme Court seeking "equitable allocation" of Krishna water.

the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT II) was already seized of the inter-States' issue.

Telangana had come to the Supreme Court complaining that it had been "unjustly denied" an equitable allocation of the water.

It had made the Centre and the riparian States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra respondents.

In its plea, Telangana had

complained to the Supreme Court that it had written a letter to the Centre in 2014 to constitute a tribunal under Section 3 of the Inter State River Water Disputes Act of 1956 to adjudicate the issue.

While the matter was pending with the Supreme Court, Telangana said the Union Minister, during a meeting, put forward the proposition to consider constituting the tribunal provided the State withdrew its case.

Call for law on 'right to health care' revived

The Congress had promised this in its 2018 Assembly election manifesto

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

The demand for the enactment of a legislation on the right to health care, for which the ruling Congress had made a promise in its manifesto for the 2018 Assembly election, has been revived in Rajasthan. Health activists here affirmed that the law would streamline medical services and guarantee the availability of essential facilities to citizens.

'No burden on govt.'

The Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA), a network of civil society organisations, has pointed out that the implementation of a statutory right to health care would not put any immediate financial burden on the State government as a sufficient number of doctors, health service providers, buildings, equipment and medicines are already available. The law, if enacted, is expected to strengthen the monitoring system in the health sector.



The law will ensure availability of essential services to all.

• FILE PHOTO

The JSA, which functions as the Rajasthan chapter of the global non-profit People's Health Movement, had prepared a draft Act on the subject and submitted it to the Health Department authorities shortly after the new government was formed in December 2018. No progress has been made in the enactment of the statute despite the lapse of two-and-a-half years.

Chhaya Pachauli, director of the voluntary group Prayas, said here on Wednesday that the State had gone through the COVID-19 pandemic in this interval, in which several lives had been lost and many patients had to spend huge amounts of money out of their pockets for treatment.

"Had the Act been implemented, many lives could have been saved and the ex-

penditure on treatment reduced," Ms. Pachauli said.

Representatives of health rights groups and public health specialists discussed the issue at a State-level consultation here recently and demanded that the State government bring a Bill on the right to healthcare in the Assembly on the basis of the draft provided by the JSA. The legislation should ensure access for every citizen to basic healthcare services within 3 km of his or her residence.

Ms. Pachauli said the draft Act had laid emphasis on institutional mechanisms, such as social audit and public dialogues, to augment community participation in healthcare planning. A thorough assessment of all the primary health centres operating on the public private partnership (PPP) mode should also be carried out and any centre found below the standards should be immediately withdrawn from the PPP scheme, she said.

6 more held in Telugu Akademi scam

Accused illegally withdrew ₹64.50 crore from 43 FDs

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD

Hyderabad police on Wednesday claimed to have unravelled the Telugu Akademi's Fixed Deposits (FD) fraud. With the arrest of six more persons, including kingpin Chanduri Venkata Koti Sai Kumar (49).

Since December last, the accused persons swindled ₹64.50 crore out of the Akademi's 43 FDs in Karwan and Santosh Nagar branches of Union Bank of India and Canara Bank's Chanda Nagar branch. Surprisingly, police managed to recover only a few lakhs from the accused.

The mastermind behind the fraud, Sai Kumar, a real-

tor from the city was previously involved in similar offences in Andhra Pradesh and Chennai. He withdrew the FDRs of AP Minority Welfare Society in 2012 and the case is being investigated by the Crime Investigation Department (CID). Sai Kumar was also accused in AP Housing Board scam of nearly ₹6 crore and ₹25 crore FDR fraud of Northern Coal Fields in Chennai, both cases are being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The other accused include Akademi's administrative officer and in-charge accounts officer Segoori Ramesh, Canara Bank's Chanda Nagar

branch manager M Sadhana, Nanduri Venkata Ramana from Tanuku in West Godavari district, Venkateshwar Rao, a self-proclaimed registered medical practitioner and a realtor from Sathupallu in Khammam district and Somashekar alias Raj Kumar, a realtor from Dharmavaram.

"Except the bank employees, all other accused are in one way or the other involved in real estate," Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Anjani Kumar said. He said the accused persons have illegally withdrawn the Akademi's money and cleared their debts, invested in real estate and used the money for their pleasure.

Priyanka a 'brave fighter', says Sena

'She has sharpness of Indira in her eyes and voice; continued her fight from jail'

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

In a scathing attack on the BJP for arresting Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi in Uttar Pradesh recently, the Shiv Sena on Wednesday said that Ms. Gandhi, who was as sharp as former Prime Minister and her grandmother Indira Gandhi, did not buckle under pressure of the State Government and continued her fight.

Ms. Vadra was on her way to meet the family members of farmers who died during a protest in Lakhimpur Kheri. Slamming the Union Go-



Priyanka Gandhi.

vernment over the killing of farmers at a time when it was celebrating the Amrut mahotsav of Independence, an editorial in the Sena's mouthpiece *Saamana* asked whether it should be termed as "blood festival" now?

"Priyanka Gandhi may be

targeted for being a political opponent. But those who arrested her illegally should have kept in mind that she is a granddaughter of Indira Gandhi who made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation and avenged Partition by dividing Pakistan into two," it said.

The editorial said that Ms. Vadra was a brave fighter. "She has sharpness of Indira Gandhi in her eyes and voice. She continued her fight from the jail cell of Sitapur," it said.

Attacking the BJP over the killing of farmers, the editorial wondered how the party

would have reacted had a similar incident happened in any non-BJP ruled State. "Had any other woman been manhandled like Priyanka Gandhi, the women's wing of the BJP would have hit the streets. It seems the BJP has come out with new definition of attacks on women and the one on Indira Gandhi's granddaughter is not part of it," it said.

Reminding the BJP how Lala Lajpat Rai was killed by the British and how Babu Genu was mowed down by the car driven by the British, the editorial said that this time it was an Union Minister's son.

Five held in inter-State baby sale case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Karnataka police, while tracking the case of a baby stolen from a civic body-run hospital in Chamarajpet in 2020, have uncovered an inter-State baby selling racket.

Five people, who operated in Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru, have been arrested for allegedly purchasing more than 12 babies and selling them to childless couples.

The police have traced 12 children, and tracked down the biological parents of 11.

IISc medical courses from next year

Planning to start a postgraduate medical school on campus, says director

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, on Wednesday announced that it would start offering medical courses from next year.

At the convocation ceremony held virtually, IISc director Govindan Rangarajan said, "Even though we are called Indian Institute of Science, right from the beginning, we have had both science and engineering equally represented. Twelve years ago, a lot of interdisciplinary departments were created. Now, starting next year, we are planning yet another change. After about 100 years of excellence in science and engineering, we are planning to start a post-graduate medical school on campus."

As many as 110 students were awarded medals during



The IISc campus in Bengaluru. About 2,000 students received their degrees at the online event on Wednesday. • SUDHAKARA JAIN

the online ceremony, while 1,832 PhD and Master's students, and 204 undergraduate students received their degrees.

"Science and technology are driving the world. And business and commerce are an outcome of technology and science changes," said Uday Kotak, Managing Director and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank, who was the chief

guest at the convocation.

Terming it a regret for not having studied science, which reflected the mood of the time, he said, "There was a disproportionate emphasis to commerce, finance and economics. That has completely changed. The pace of change of science is mind-blowing. The base principles of science and maths are at the heart of who we are,

adaptation to the reality of the external world and making it of use to human consumption is the way we need to think about this," he said.

Mr. Kotak said there are three ways of looking at the situation now: new normal, next normal, never normal. "We will have to forget the concept of normalcy. The world will keep changing. How will students deal with this is the true test of fundamentals of what you've learnt," he said, adding that as for AI and ML, in the battle between man and machine, both can win. "Machine learning also coming from a human brain. There will be contrarians. But it is an important lesson that there's no ultimate to change. At best, there is a comma. The constancy of this paradigm changing is what institutions will grapple with," he said.

Kolkata man's passion to fix fountain pens

Dilip Basak, 56, has been in the profession since the age of 11



A narrow rectangular space under a staircase of an old building in Bhabanipur is Dilip Basak's workshop. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

BISHWANATH GHOSH
KOLKATA

"It's my *nesh* and not *pesha* [it's an addiction and not just a profession]," says Dilip Basak, 56, about his livelihood, which happens to be repairing fountain pens. If the Mont Blanc or Waterman on your desk — whether inherited from your grandfather or a new purchase — has developed a snag, Mr. Basak is not only likely to diagnose the problem but also fix it for you.

"I am the only person in whole of India who is still in this profession," Mr. Basak declares, adding, "and I am

member of the several groups on Facebook and WhatsApp formed by connoisseurs of the good, old fountain pen.

Mr. Basak's fame among pen lovers is inversely proportionate to the size of his workplace — a narrow rectangular space under a staircase of an old building in Bhabanipur — which he inherited, along with the profession, from his father Bholanath Basak, who died in 1998.

"I was hardly 11 or 12 when I got into this line, holding my father's hand. I will tell you why I came into the profession this early. I was a good student in school, always stood first or second, but one particular year, they refused to hand me the results because I hadn't paid the fee. My father eventually managed to get the money, but when I had decided I will never

return to school," Mr. Basak says.

Having dropped out of school that early, Mr. Basak himself may not be highly skilled with the written word, but fountain pens repaired by him have presumably scripted important moments in history. Pens he has fixed include those belonging to Satyajit Ray and Jyoti Basu. "They never came to me personally, of course. Their pens were brought to me by dealers or the showroom people, who would tell me, 'Handle this with care, they belong to so-and-so'. For a long time, pens from the Raj Bhavan also came for repair," he recalls.

Fountain pens going out of fashion — combined with Mr. Basak deciding to stick to his profession — has only helped add to his popularity as a restorer.

Kerala govt. abandoned endosulfan victims: UDF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress-led UDF on Wednesday slammed the Kerala government for leaving thousands of endosulfan victims in Kasargod district in the lurch.

Seeking leave of the Assembly for an adjournment motion on the issue, Indian Union Muslim League MLA N.A. Nellikunnu said the "re-mediation cell", which had been tasked with the welfare of those affected by the pesti-

cide, had been inert for over a year. A medical board should re-examine at least 2,700 people diagnosed with signs of pesticide poisoning.

Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan said the government had not included at

least 1,000 people diagnosed with pesticide poisoning on the list of endosulfan beneficiaries. At least 3,000 have not received the compensation ordered by the Supreme Court. Endosulfan victims had no access to proper medical care.

BJP attacks Kumaraswamy over remarks on RSS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A day after JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy accused the RSS of controlling the country and the Karnataka administration, BJP leaders launched a counter-attack on the former Chief Minister.

While BJP national general secretary C.T. Ravi

launched an attack on Tuesday, the party's State president Nalin Kumar Kateel, RDPR Minister K.S. Eshwarappa, and State vice-president B.Y. Vijayendra joined the chorus on Wednesday.

Mr. Ravi suggested that Mr. Kumaraswamy could visit an RSS shakha to understand its purpose.

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THE HINDU. DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY. General Public is hereby informed that an one male person was found dead at Taxi Stand Footpath near Prepaid Booth ODRS dated 04.10.2021. In this regard a DD No. 8A, dated 04.10.2021, has been registered at P.S. Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Unkonwn, S/o: Unkonwn, R/o: Unkonwn, Age: About 40-50 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Sallow, Identification Mark: A Tattoo mark "Annu" on Right Hand, Wearing: White Colour T-shirt and Grey Colour Short. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned. SHO P.S. Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi Ph.: 011-23961522, 8750871302, DP/308/RLY/2021 9968056370

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED. General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Laxmi, D/o Ramesh Chand, R/o H.No. S-109/70, Adarsh Basti, Mohammadpur, New Delhi, Age: 13 years, Height: 4', Complexion: Shallow, Face: Oval, Built: Thin, has been missing/kidnapped from the jurisdiction of PS R.K. Puram, New Delhi. In this regard a FIR No. 09/2021 U/S 363 IPC, dated 07.01.2021 has been registered at P.S. R.K. Puram, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about her please inform undersigned. Website: http://cbi.nic.in E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in Ph: 011-24368639, 24368641 DP/496/SW/21 SHO P.S. R.K. Puram, New Delhi Ph.: 011-26714247, 26185222

पूर्वांतर रेलवे ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा सूचना सं 47/2021 भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से एवं उनके निदेशों के अन्तर्गत पूर्वोक्त रेलवे, इन्डियन रेलवे निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु अनलाईन (ई-टेंडरिंग) के माध्यम से 'खुली' निविदा आमंत्रित करते हैं।

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE E-Tender Notice No. EL-50-DNR-Open-18 & 19-2021-22 The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C. Railway, Danapur for and on behalf of the President of India is inviting online (E-tendering) Open from the reputed contractors working in State/Central Govt. having valid Electrical Contractor license for the required voltage level (as per scope of work) issued by State/Central Govt. licensing board for the following work:

T.N. sets up board for non-resident Tamils

It will have 13 members and an initial corpus of ₹5 crore, says Chief Minister M.K. Stalin

The Tamil Nadu government on Wednesday announced the constitution of a welfare board for non-resident Tamils under the Tamil Nadu Non-Resident Tamils' Welfare Act, 2011. The law was brought in at the fag end of the M. Karunanidhi government of 2006-11. But the AIADMK government (2011-21) did not constitute the board. On Wednesday, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said the board would have 13 members, including officials and representatives of the non-resident Tamils. The Tamil Nadu Non-Resident Tamils' Welfare Fund would be created with an initial corpus of ₹5 crore. A senior official told The Hindu that the board would



In case of the death of emigrants of low-income groups, financial assistance will be given to their children for education and marriage. M.K. STALIN CHIEF MINISTER. focus on the welfare of non-resident Tamils and implement schemes for them. The Commissionerate of Rehabilitation and Welfare of Non-Resident Tamils would be involved in inter-departmental initiatives and those of the Union Government. A database of the non-resident Tamils would be created and those who had registered themselves with the board would be extended life and medical insurance cov-

for extending them loans to become entrepreneurs. "A majority of the non-resident Tamils are keen on depositing their savings in Tamil Nadu. Steps would be taken to sign MoUs to help them deposit [their money] in government and other industries," Mr. Stalin said. Infrastructure scheme Under a scheme, 'My Village', the non-resident Tamils can develop civic infrastructure and schools in their native villages. "They would be invited to help improve schools, hospitals, libraries..." the Chief Minister said. All non-resident Tamils' welfare associations in various countries would be integrated and ₹4 crore would be allocated for cultural exchanges and interactions among them. January 12 would be observed as the Day of Non-Resident Tamils, the Chief Minister said. A sum of ₹6.40 crore would be allotted for constituting the welfare board and fund, ₹8.10 crore for welfare schemes and ₹5.50 crore for promoting art, literature and cultural exchanges. Steps would be taken to impart Tamil lessons to the wards of non-resident Tamils through Tamil Virtual University. Counselling for those intending to emigrate for higher education and employment would be held in Ramanathapuram, Pudukkottai, Kanniyakumari, Thanjavur, Perambalur, Sivaganga and Villupuram districts, in addition to Chennai.

NIA nabs former LTTE intelligence operative

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) nabbed a senior intelligence operative of the defunct Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Chennai on Tuesday. Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect, Satkunam alias Sabesan, 47, a Sri Lankan Tamil and a former member of the LTTE's in-

telligence wing, had transferred huge money to former cadres or sympathisers of the outfit to revive the movement in the island nation. Searches on his premises and other places led to recovery of incriminating material, including details of the money flow from Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka in the recent years, sources in the agency said. NIA investigators were tracking Satkunam following specific inputs on his involvement in arms and drugs trafficking operations from Pakistan to Sri Lanka. The sources said Satkunam was among the trusted lieutenants of LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran. He was also closely associated with the then LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Amman.

'Dalits are people, have lives, wives, children'

Their lives get lost in description: Tully. SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI. When some write about oppressed people, the human being gets lost in a lot of adjectival description, former journalist and author Mark Tully said, adding that he doesn't want to underestimate anyone else's suffering. He was speaking at a discussion organised by the Madras Book Club on his new book, 'Upcountry Tales', with N. Ram, Director, THG Publishing Group Pvt Ltd. "I don't want to underestimate anyone's suffering. I do want people to remember that Dalits are people, individuals, have lives, wives, children... We must have some description, but just as I see, sometimes Dalit lives get lost [in the writing]," he said, speaking about one of the stories in the book about a Dalit defying tradition to build a temple. Mr. Ram said the people Mr. Tully speaks about in the book are not ordinary people but they are also not prominent. "There are serious stories and some light-hearted ones as well. Tully has been engaging in key questions of modern Indian history...the [British] Raj, whether it had any impact, the impact of railways, Gandhi vs Nehru and so on..." he said and asked whether Mr. Tully was raising these questions through his characters. 'Hangover of Raj' "The hangover of the Raj went on for too long. It is going away now but whether it is going away in the right way has to be seen. I don't think India has still yet fully come face to face with the question of 'Asli Hindustan'. If you talk of 'Asli Hindustan', you are immediately deemed a support of Hindutva. India doesn't equal Hindutva," Mr. Tully explained. Mr. Tully said one of the things he had learnt from India was that one must never go overboard over anything and about not seeing everything in just black and white.

झारखंड सरकार स्कूली शिक्षा एवं साक्षरता विभाग :-: प्रेस विज्ञापित :-: प्रेस विज्ञापित संख्या- PR250456 के माध्यम से झारखण्ड शिक्षा न्यायाधिकरण, रॉकी के शिक्षाविद् सदस्य एवं प्रशासनिक सदस्य के रिक्त एक-एक पद पर नियुक्ति हेतु विहित प्रपत्र में आवेदन आमंत्रित किया गया था। प्रशासनिक सदस्य के पद पर नियुक्ति हेतु अपेक्षाकृत बहुत कम आवेदन प्राप्त होने की स्थिति में पुनः प्रेस विज्ञापित प्रकाशित की जा रही है। 2. प्रपत्र के लिए आवेदन प्रपत्र विभागीय वेबसाईट Link: https://schooleducation.jharkhand.gov.in/Apply/uploadDocuments/portlet/PORTLET_DOC_E_20210812_132548.pdf अथवा http://59.145.222.53:8080/hrd/deptmnt.jsp से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। 3. अंतः प्रशासनिक सदस्य के रिक्त पद पर नियुक्ति हेतु आवेदन स्वीकृत / निश्चित डाक द्वारा विभाग में प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि-22.10.2021 (कार्यालय अर्थात्) तक पुनः विस्तारित की जाती है। 4. पूर्व प्रेस विज्ञापित में अंकित अन्य प्रावधान यथावत रहेंगे। (कुमुद सहाय) सरकार के संयुक्त सचिव PR 254463 Human Resource Development(21-22)#D

ENTERPRISE CONNECT

Punjab National Bank Organised Fit India Freedom Run 2.0 on Gandhi Jayanti day To commemorate the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri and to create awareness about the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle, Punjab National Bank (PNB) staff participated in the 'Fit India Freedom Run 2.0'. Today's run is part of an ongoing initiative launched by the Central government called 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. The bank had organized a similar run last month as well, demonstrating its commitment towards fitness. Shri Vijay Dubey, Executive Director at PNB, said, "As exemplified by the slogan, 'FITNESS KI DOSE AADHA GHANTA ROZ', we PNB Parivar should devote at least 30 minutes a day for physical activity to build a healthy and fit organization. Physical and mental well-being is not only crucial to survival in the present uncertain times but also to explore and enjoy life to the fullest." Launched under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the initiative began with the Independence Day this year and is supposed to culminate on Gandhi Jayanti day. It has been a resounding success so far, with millions of people joining in either in the form of an actual run at a particular place or through a virtual run anywhere at any time. Shri Sunil Soni, Chief General Manager at PNB, said, "Physically active people are associated with economic growth and development of the nation. Also, employees health is crucial for the productivity of an organization. With this, we commit ourselves to make fitness an integral part of our daily lives. 'Always ready to contribute to a good cause, Shri Swarn Kumar Saha - Executive Director at PNB, top officials of the bank, PNB Hockey Team and other employees enthusiastically took part in the run that started from the PNB Head Office in Dwarka, while observing Covid-19 protocol. All the PNB zones and the circles also joined the event virtually. It was a fitting tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, who not only realized the importance of physical activity but also made sure that he walked 18 kilometers a day for most of his life. What made the occasion even more remarkable is the fact that the nationwide initiative coincides with 75 years of India's Independence. IndianOil R&D National School Essay Competition: Deadline extended till 31st October 2021 The submission deadline for IndianOil R&D Golden Jubilee National School Essay Competition has been extended to 31st October 2021. IndianOil R&D, founded in 1972, will complete 50 years of its glorious existence on 10th March 2022. The year 2021-22 is unique and is being celebrated by IndianOil R&D as its Golden Jubilee Year. In an attempt to commemorate the year, a National School Essay Competition is being conducted for school students. Kindly their interest in India's energy sector. IndianOil R&D hereby invites school students from classes 6 to 11 to participate in the National School Essay Competition and win attractive prizes. Launching the National School Essay Competition on IndianOil Day 2021, Dr. SSV Ramakumar, Director (R&D and P&BD), IndianOil, said, "The competition is open to Indian school students from classes 6-11 on topics such as 'Today's energy wastage is tomorrow's energy shortage' (class 6-8) and 'Challenges in the future for Oil & Gas sector' (class 9-11). ONGC launches e-tendering portal to digitalize integrated trading of its Group Companies ONGC Group Chairman Subhash Kumar launched the e-tendering portal - an online platform for Integrated Trading Desk (ITD), on 1 October 2021. This digitalization of the integrated trading desk of ONGC group companies is a transformational initiative which will make the high-value sale and procurement of crude oil and petroleum products more efficient and transparent. CMD Subhash Kumar noted that the initiation of the portal is a momentous step and will bring in transparency and fairness in trading system of ONGC group companies. He said that ONGC and its group companies have always believed in leveraging technology to upgrade its operations to move up to the next level of efficiency. "We intend to utilize this portal to bring in additional facilities which are not yet there, like gas marketing. In the future, through this portal, we would also like to expand our horizon to start trading of products of our downstream group companies like ONGC Petro additions Limited (OPAL)," said Mr. Kumar. The design of the portal has been coordinated by ONGC subsidiary MRPL, in collaboration with MSTC Limited - a government-owned e-commerce service provider. Managing Director of MRPL, M Venkatesh said that

the portal is a major improvement in the trading system. He reiterated that this will bring in a matter of accountability and traceability. MSTC Chairman Surinder Kumar Gupta said that the portal will enable complete automation and up-gradation from the manual system. BHEL Procurement through GeM Cross Rs.1,500 Crore in first half of Fiscal 2021-22 As part of Government of India's initiative towards enhanced transparency and ease of doing business, BHEL has been spearheading procurement of goods and Services through the Government e-marketplace (GeM) portal, which is a Unified Public Procurement Portal for goods and services. The company's procurement through GeM has crossed Rs. 1,500 Crore in the first six months of the current fiscal, as against Rs.389 Crore in the entire 2020-21. Major procurements through GeM portal include Steel, Cement, Cables, various sub-assemblies, etc. The company was also ranked No. 1 among top 20 PSUs for procurements from this portal during the first quarter of current year. Significantly, BHEL is not only procuring goods and services through GeM, but is also registered as a 'Seller' for various products on the platform and is receiving orders from the same. By driving procurements through GeM, the company is ensuring transparency and compliance with various Govt directives like General Financial Rules, CVC guidelines, Public Procurement Policy - Make in India, MSE, Startups, etc, thereby increasing ease and efficiency of procurement. These steps are also aimed at the nation's efforts towards an Atmanirbhar Bharat. Notably, the company is streamlining its procurement processes using data analytics, and ensuring substantial cost savings by scaling up procurement through GeM. The goal is to utilize data analytics through a single dashboard by every concerned BHEL employee. This successful transition has been made possible through the collaborative efforts between GeM and BHEL and the company is now utilizing this platform to further drive systemic changes for procurement within the organization. Central Warehousing Corporation holds 59th Annual General Meeting The 59th Annual General Meeting of the Central Warehousing Corporation was held on Tuesday, the 28th September 2021 through video conferencing, keeping the COVID-19 Pandemic in view. The meeting was presided over by Shri Atish Chandra JAS, Chairman of CWC & CMD, FCI and attended by Shri Arun Kumar Shrivastava, Managing Director and Board of Directors of CWC and shareholders of the corporation. The Financial Year 2020-21 ended on an exciting note to see how CWC evolved and thrived in COVID times. The Corporation declared the annual dividend @ 30% of PAT amounting to Rs.131.47 crore, which is 100% of its net-worth capital. The Corporation has achieved the highest turnover of Rs.2168.13 crore, PBT touched all time high of Rs.565.55 crore. During his address Shri Atish Chandra, Chairman complimented the corporation for the measures to protect the employees, communities, to keep the central warehouses operational during the challenging times and the spectacular performance of the corporation during this Pandemic. He also mentioned about the role played by the supportive policies of Government of India in the development of the Logistics sector. Shri Arun Kumar Shrivastava, Managing Director CWC highlighted major initiatives taken by the Corporation and acknowledged the role of encouraging government policies which is pushing growth of the Warehousing sector. Joint Director (Information & Public Relations, Punjab) Dr. Ajit Kanwal Singh Hamdard receives warm farewell on retirement The officers and staff of the Information and Public Relations department, Punjab gave a warm farewell to the Joint Director Dr. Ajit Kanwal Singh Hamdard, who superannuated after around 25 years of service. In an impressive function held here at Punjab Bhawan, the Secretary of department Mr. Kamal Khurshid Yadav, Secretary Food and Civil Supplies Mr. Gurkirat Kirpal Singh and Director Information and Public Relations Mr. Sumeet Jarangal along with others lauded the

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified male namely Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown was found dead on 30.09.2021 at Under Wazirabad Flyover, Timarpur, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 022A dated 30.09.2021 has been lodged at Police Station, Timarpur, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body is as under: Name: Unknown, Age: About 50 Years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Thin, Face: Long, Wearing: Grey Colour Strips Shirt, Grey Pant and Bare Footed. If anyone has any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned. SHO Police Station, Timarpur, Delhi Ph.: 011-23812734, 8750870130

OBITUARY & MEMORANCE

DEATH OBITUARY For enquiries on announcements in this section, please contact our office at the following number between 10a.m. and 8p.m. New Delhi: 011- 43579797 Rate for New Delhi: (Minimum Rs. 320/- 2 Lines Extra Line - Rs.160/-) (B/W Display): Rs.60/Per Sq.cm (Clr Display): Rs.70/Per Sq.cm Log on to www.thehinduads.com For Placing Advertisements Online In memory of your loved ones To dedicate a space in this section, Please contact: 011-43579797 From 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. & For Placing Advertisements Online log on to www.thehinduads.com DONATE EYES-GIFT SIGHT

P.H.V. Eswaran Retd. Flight Operations Manager, Indian Airlines Lived Gloriously From 17/04/1929 - 02/10/2021 A man who taught us that age is just a number. Passed away peacefully at Bangalore. Dearly missed by his loving family. 9176081673 / 9449251942

C.M. ELLAPPAN Retd. DGM (F & A), MMTG of India Ltd DOB: 27.06.1939 - DOB: 06.10.2021 Passed away after a brief illness Mourned by Family & Friends Mob: 077999-00687

छत्तीसगढ़ की अद्वितीय सांस्कृतिक धरोहर

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आराध्य सियाराम
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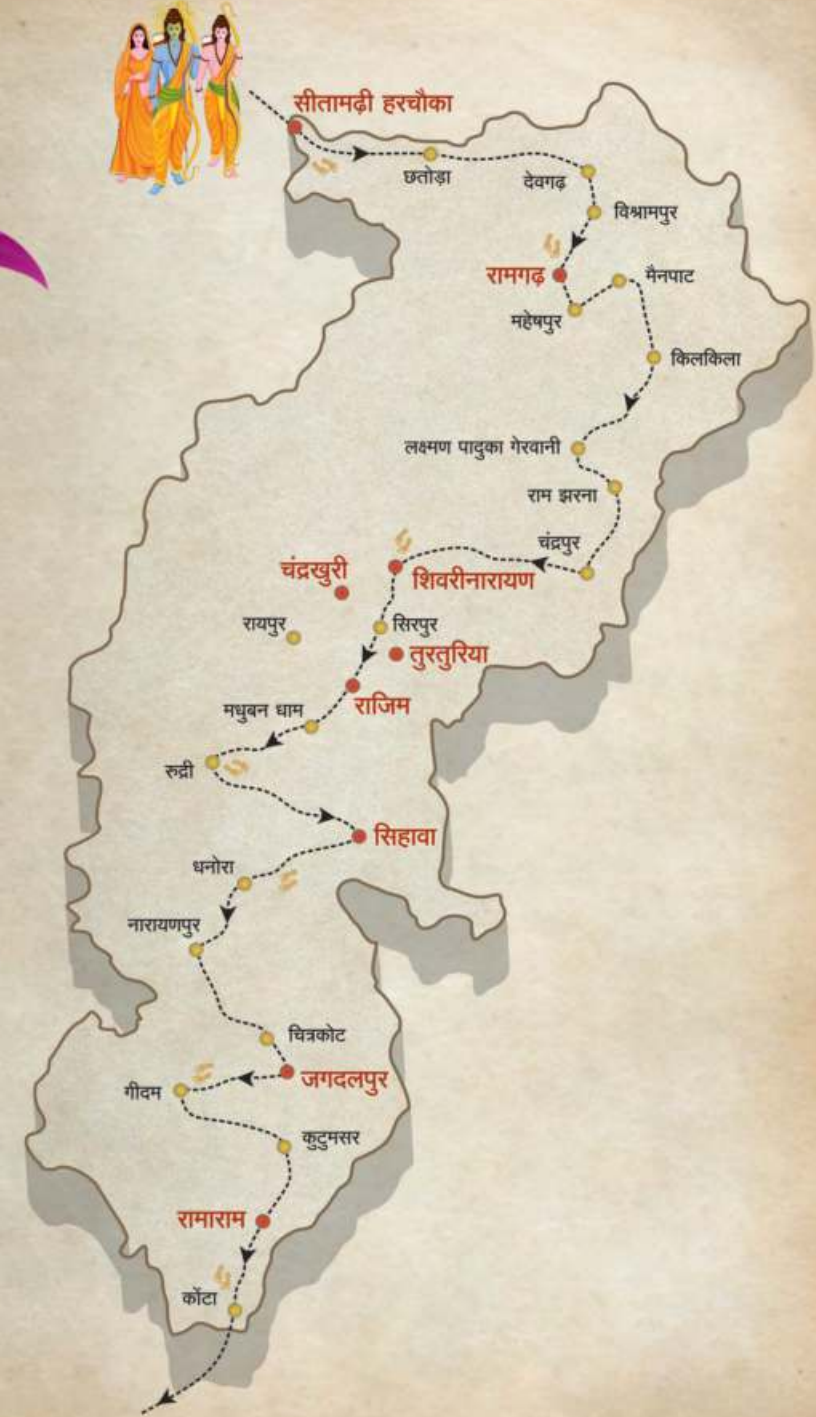
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9 पड़ाव

पौराणिक कथाओं की जीवंतता के केंद्र

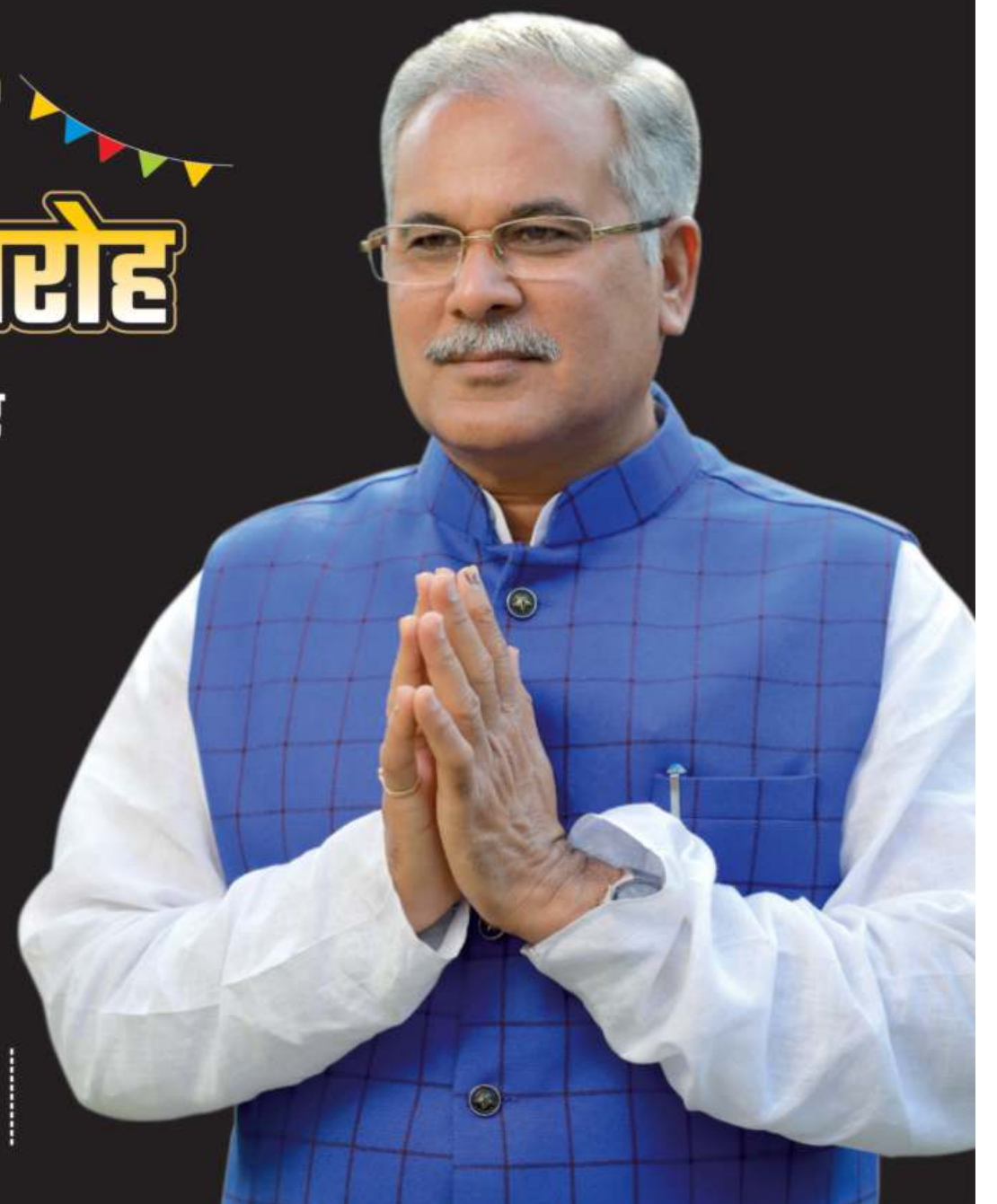


राम वन गमन पर्यटन परिपथ समारोह

7-9 अक्टूबर 2021, चंदखुरी, रायपुर



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Recognising altruism

Good Samaritans can help reduce accident deaths, but road safety needs more work

The initiative of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to award Good Samaritans who save lives of road accident victims with a cash prize is a welcome attempt to reduce India's staggering annual death toll from mishaps. Ranking third among 20 nations that have the highest number of accidents, India fares far worse on an important metric – cases to fatalities ratio – compared to the U.S. and Japan, which have more recorded crashes but fewer deaths. During 2020, even with severely disrupted mobility due to COVID-19, National Crime Records Bureau data show 1,33,715 lives were lost in 1,20,716 cases attributed to negligence relating to road accidents. Under the Motor Vehicles law, a Good Samaritan voluntarily helps an accident victim with no expectation of payment or reward, and has no legal obligation to record his involvement or aid the investigation in the case. In spite of an entire chapter being added to the Motor Vehicles Act last year to sensitise police forces and hospitals on this, altruism is affected by the perception of harassment and legal complications. The Ministry's latest move seeks to overcome reticence by rewarding socially minded individuals who offer immediate assistance and rush a victim with certain kinds of injuries to hospital, with ₹5,000 and a certificate of recognition for saving a life. State governments are responsible for the plan, with the Centre providing an initial grant, but the Union Transport Ministry will give its own award of ₹1 lakh each to the 10 best Good Samaritans in a year.

Achieving a reduction in mortality on India's largely lawless roads warrants determined action on several factors, beginning with scientific road design and standards, and zero tolerance enforcement. It was only on September 3 that the Centre notified the long-pending National Road Safety Board, with a mandate to formulate standards on, among other things, safety and trauma management, to build capacity among traffic police, and put crash investigation on a scientific footing. Yet, on enforcement, State police forces generally appear to favour a populist approach of least engagement; regional transport bureaucracies – compared by Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari in 2015 to looting Chambal dacoits – can also benefit from a shake-up. As a steadily motorising country, the goal must be to reduce accidents and the ratio of deaths and injuries to cases. The Good Samaritan plan can work well if District Committees tasked with awarding these individuals readily recognise their contribution, aided by the police, hospitals and RTOs. Many more people will continue to be impelled by sheer altruism to help road users involved in a crash, and governments should get bureaucratic barriers out of their way.

Sensing heat

Genetic mutations in cellular mechanism of temperature, pain sensation are insightful

This year's Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine – awarded to the researchers, David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian from the University of California, San Francisco and Scripps Research in La Jolla, California, respectively – recognises their seminal work in identifying the gene and understanding the mechanism through which our body perceives temperature and pressure. Our ability to sense touch and temperature – particularly noxious temperature – is essential for our survival and determines how we interact with our internal and external environment; chronic pain results when the pain response goes awry. Dr. Julius utilised capsaicin, a key ingredient in hot chilli peppers that induces a burning sensation, to identify a sensor in the nerve endings of the skin and the cellular mechanism that responds to uncomfortably hot temperatures. The receptor for heat gets activated only above 40°C, which is close to the psychophysical threshold for thermal pain, thus allowing us to react to external heat. In 2002, five years after the heat sensor was discovered, the two laureates, and independently, used menthol to discover the receptor that senses cold temperatures. Recent studies have found that discrimination between warm and cool temperatures is possible only through simultaneous activation of warmth-sensing nerve fibres and inhibition of cold-sensing nerve fibres. Using pressure-sensitive cells, Dr. Patapoutian discovered a novel class of mechanical sensors that responds to pressure on the skin and internal organs, and the perception of touch and proprioception – the ability to feel the position and movement of our body parts. The cellular mechanism that senses touch also regulates important physiological processes. Besides laboratory work, insights have been gained by studying people carrying genetic mutations in the cellular mechanism of temperature, pain, touch and pressure sensation.

The discovery of pain receptors and the cellular mechanism have attracted pharmaceutical companies as these could be targets for novel medicines. Though there are challenges to be addressed before such drugs can be clinically meaningful, the hope is that newer approaches may one day bypass the hurdles. Further research will help in understanding the functions of the receptors in a "variety of physiological processes and to develop treatments for a wide range of disease conditions". This year's Prize once again underscores the great contributions refugees fleeing war-torn countries can make to science and other fields. Dr. Patapoutian, who is of Armenian origin, grew up in Lebanon during the country's prolonged civil war and fled to the U.S. in 1986 as an 18-year-old. From being blissfully unaware about science as a career in Lebanon, he not only "fell in love doing basic research", but has also excelled in it to produce path-breaking discoveries in medicine.

A strategy for India in a world that is adrift

The country's path to power will be affected by the geopolitical and economic centres of gravity now shifting to Asia



SHIVSHANKAR MENON

New situations require fresh thinking. A few of us – Yamini Aiyar, Sunil Khilnani, Prakash Menon, Nitin Pai, Ajit Ranade, Srinath Raghavan, and Shyam Saran – some of whom were authors a decade ago of Non-Alignment 2.0, were prompted by the tectonic shifts in India's internal and external environment to take another look at India's path to power in a world between orders. The outcome of our conversations is a discussion paper hosted on the Centre for Policy Research and Takshashila Institute websites called "India's Path to Power; Strategy in a World Adrift". It is our hope that we will receive comments, suggestions and criticism of the paper and that it will contribute to the national debate on our country's course.

Many power centres

The world is today adrift. We are neither in a bipolar Cold War nor in a multipolar world, though perhaps tending towards a world of several power centres. We are in a world between orders. The lack of a coherent international response to the COVID-19 pandemic is proof of an absence of international order and of the ineffectiveness of multilateral institutions. So is the ineffective international response to climate change and other transnational threats.

Secular stagnation in the global and Indian economies and a re-

treat from globalisation, the regionalisation of trade, a shifting balance of power, the rise of China and others, and structural China-United States strategic rivalry have shifted the geopolitical and economic centres of gravity from the Atlantic to Asia. Inequality between and within states has bred a narrow nationalism and parochialism. We are entering a new polarised information age, and face ecological crises of the Anthropocene, making climate change an existential threat. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated some of these changes and transformed others. All in all, we can no longer take the success of our development model for granted.

Asia as the nucleus

Over the next decade we expect Asia to remain the cockpit of geopolitical rivalries, and that the U.S. remains the most formidable power, though its relative power is declining. China sees a window of opportunity but acts in a hurry, suggesting that she believes that window may close or is already closing due to pushback from the West and others. China's crowded geography constrains her both on land and at sea. We see a slim prospect of Chinese hegemony in Asia, but expect her profile and power to continue expanding, particularly in our periphery. The result is likely continued friction, some cooperation, and quasi-adversarial relations between India and China, which others will take advantage of. As neighbours and in the present situation, a mix of confrontation and cooperation is likely to continue to mark India's relations with China.

Overall, we do not expect con-



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

ventional conflict between the great powers in Asia, though other forms and levels of violence and contention in the international system will rise, with Taiwan a special case.

Challenges, opportunities

The uncertainty and changing geopolitical environment clearly pose considerable challenges to Indian policy but also throw up certain opportunities, enhancing our strategic options and diplomatic space, if we adjust policies internally and externally, particularly in the subcontinent. Increasing security congruence with the U.S. could enable growing cooperation in fields significant for India's transformation: energy, trade, investment, education and health. Other areas in which India and the U.S. could increase cooperation are: climate change and energy, on tech solutions for renewable energy, and on digital cooperation. Several middle powers are now India's natural partners. There is also an increasing possibility of working with partners in the developing world building broader coalitions on issues of common interest. This time of transition between orders is also when new standards and norms are being developed, particularly in the digital space. India can and must be pre-

sent at the creation. There are opportunities in other domains as well. At sea, the balance is today more favourable to us than before, possibly more so than on the continent. We suggest the creation of a Maritime Commission, a Bay of Bengal Initiative with partner countries, and increasing what we do with South East Asia in maritime security, cybersecurity and counter-terrorism. We should aim for multipolarity in Asia.

The way forward that we suggest is based on the core strategic principles in Non-Alignment 2.0 which are still relevant: independent judgement, developing our capacities, and creating an equitable and enabling international order for India's transformation. Today's situation makes India's strategic autonomy all the more essential.

At the same time, we must adjust to changing circumstances. We have no choice but to engage with this uncertain and more volatile world. One productive way to do so would be through issue-based coalitions including different actors, depending on who has an interest and capability.

Revive SAARC

We also suggest initiatives to craft and reinvigorate regional institutions and processes in the neighbourhood, reviving the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) for instance. India could be the primary source of both prosperity and security in the neighbourhood – the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean Region. The over securitisation of policy towards our neighbours has driven trade underground, criminalised our borders, and enabled large-scale entry of Chinese goods

destroying local industry in the northeast. While lessening dependence on China, and seeking external balancing, our primary effort has to concentrate on self-strengthening. If there is one country which in terms of its size, population, economic potential, scientific and technological capabilities can match or even surpass China, it is India.

Self-strength is key

Our paper also suggests several steps that we can take in India to ensure that India's role and influence abroad continue to serve the task of transforming India. Economic policy must match political and strategic engagement. Globalisation has been central to India's growth. A more active regional and international role for India is incompatible with a position on the margins of the global economy. Self-reliance in today's world and technologies can only be realised as part of the global economy. We should not imitate China's claims to being a civilisation state and its adoption of victimhood. Instead we should affirm our own strength and historic national identity.

In sum, we see self-strengthening as an absolutely essential precondition as also safeguarding the foundational sources of India's international influence. We cannot separate our domestic trajectory from the external course we need to pursue to transform India into a strong, secure and prosperous country.

Shivshankar Menon is Visiting Professor at Ashoka University. He is also a former National Security Adviser and Foreign Secretary

The Hindu vote, an emerging ethnocracy

The BJP's success in this is being emulated by its political rivals, as developments in Uttar Pradesh show



INDRAJIT ROY

The forthcoming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh have seen growing competition over the Hindu vote. Political parties across the spectrum are engaging in competitive Hindutva. Not only are the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party competing with the Bharatiya Janata Party to woo the Hindu vote, but even parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party, whose claim to fame has been in advancing the politics of social justice, are appealing to Hindu sentiments. BSP supremo Mayawati was recently filmed carrying a trishul. The SP, whose founder-patron Mulayam Singh Yadav enjoyed the epithet "Mullah Yam Singh Yadav", has been promising to build temples to Parshuram, to Vishnu and other divinities. Such appeals demonstrate India's transition away from a democracy to an ethnocracy. Even as the BJP clamps down on Opposition parties supportive of the farmers' movements, we must not lose sight of our country's transition to

an ethnocracy. What is an ethnocracy? Israeli sociologist Oren Yiftachel defines ethnocracy as the specific expression of nationalism "where a dominant ethnos [people] gains political control and uses the state apparatus to ethnicise the territory and society in question". Ethnocracies – think about Israel, Sri Lanka and Malaysia – rigidify distinctions between people considered the core of the nation and others considered peripheral and external to the nation. To be sure, the dominant groups in ethnocracies value democracy (at least for themselves) and often take pride in their democratic institutions. But a polity based on the structural exclusion of a section of its population cannot reasonably be said to qualify as a democracy.

A transition, since 2014

An ethnocracy has taken root in India since 2014, with Hindus established as the dominant people. Soon after the BJP stormed to power that year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the unprecedented step of celebrating his victory on the banks of the Ganga in the holy town of Varanasi. Varanasi was the parliamentary constituency that elected him, so it was to be expected that he would thank his voters. However, the spectacle of the Prime Minister, accompanied by

senior colleagues who would go on to assume key cabinet portfolios, flaunting his Hindu nationalist credentials was a clear break with the past.

To be sure, India's heads of government – even when personally agnostic – have frequented places of worship on key occasions and regularly greeted the country on religious occasions. But Mr. Modi's political association with religion as an inaugural act was rare. The links were made even more clear when a few weeks further, addressing India's Parliament for the first time, Mr. Modi referred to "1200 years of servitude" that Indians had suffered. This was a not-so-subtle reference to the presence of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent and associated accounts of conquest, plunder, and domination by invaders of the Islamic faith. Mr. Modi's early actions offered a glimpse into his future years in office, in which Hindus would come to be considered the core of the Indian nation.

The principle that a dominant

Hindu ethnos can rule the country and marginalise others has firmly established itself. Images of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal reciting the Hanuman Chalisa, Congress scion Rahul Gandhi emphasising his roots as a *janeu-dhari* Brahmin, and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, reciting the Chandipath as public declarations of their Hinduness suggest that such a principle is being established well beyond the BJP and the Prime Minister.

Indeed, the BJP has been so successful in creating an ethnocracy in India that its rivals are increasingly emulating it. A recent report of tourism development schemes in Uttar Pradesh suggested that an overwhelming majority of legislators from the Opposition SP and BSP, both torchbearers of secularism and social justice in the 1990s, preferred Hindu religious sites over sites of other or no religion. Such performance of Hindu rituals is barely matched by performance of practices associated with other communities.

Fulfilment of imagination

Such developments resonate with the ideological vision of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological fountainhead of the BJP. Established in 1925, the RSS strives to organise society in accordance with and ensure the

protection of the Hindu *dharma*, or way of life. The RSS's commitment to Hindutva, or 'Hindu-ness' at the expense of religious minorities is clear from a reading of its "vision and mission statement" that is publicly available on its website. Invoking the words of its founder Keshav Baliram Hedge-war, the statement declares: "The Hindu culture is the life-breath of Hindusthan. It is therefore clear that if Hindusthan is to be protected, we should first nourish the Hindu culture. If the Hindu culture perishes in Hindusthan itself, and if the Hindu society ceases to exist, it will hardly be appropriate to refer to the mere geographical entity that remains as Hindusthan. Mere geographical lumps do not make a nation. The entire society should be in such a vigilant and organized condition that no one would dare to cast an evil eye on any of our points of honour." 22-Oct-2012, RSS

The RSS's vision and mission statement endorse their founder's reference to India as "Hindusthan", a cultural term to refer to the land of the Hindus. The competitive Hindutva on display in Uttar Pradesh has brought the RSS's vision and mission to fruition.

Indrajit Roy is Senior Lecturer in Global Development Politics at the University of York, United Kingdom

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Lakhimpur Kheri

The Lakhimpur Kheri incident is reprehensible. At the same time, and undoubtedly, the Opposition parties are fishing in troubled waters. Most political leaders would be remotely empathetic and the issue could blow over with time. The irony is that the Yogi Adityanath does not exactly have respect for human rights. The Gandhi siblings are likely to vanish after the so-called clamour. The Opposition should not be selective but consistent (Page 1, "Opposition closes ranks in Lakhimpur Kheri aftermath", October 6).
DEEPAK SINGHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Rural credit

It is distressing to note that the interest rate charged to the ultimate beneficiary through micro finance institutions (MFI) lending ranges between 22% to 26%. The Reserve Bank of India needs to review the methodology presently

followed on the cost of funds (COF) for NBFCs and MFIs. The sole aim of providing credit to the rural population is defeated under the present COF technique. Small finance banks (SFBs), whose objective is to introduce banking activities to the unserved and underserved sections of the population, appear to be expanding their branches in urban and metro cities. Having tasted profits, a few SFBs have even planned to exit the niche banking model and embrace the universal banking model, thus defeating the very purpose for which they were formed. Till the early 2000s, all public sector banks had a differential rate of interest scheme to provide credits to poor families (belonging to the economically weaker sections) for productive endeavours; it had a maximum loan ceiling of ₹15,000 with 4% simple interest. This scheme was a boon for the rural poor. In

2012, the committee under the chairmanship of M.V. Nair, recommended doing away with the differential rate of interest scheme. The reasons: nil margin or thin spread available for banks, a disproportionate ratio between the loan quantum *vis-à-vis* inflationary trend, and the multiplicity of schemes such as the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana. It is time that the credit policy of financing rural credit is strengthened and also regulates the role of private entities (Editorial page, "RBI microfinance proposals that are anti-poor", October 6).
R.V. BASKARAN,
Chennai

Transfer of judges

The transfer of judges from one High Court to another has a debilitating effect. Lawyers accept judgeship on the assumption that they have been appointed to their respective High Courts and will remain and retire from that court. Initially,

when transfers were introduced, it was a great cultural shock to the judges so much so that one judge felt his pride was hurt and promptly resigned. Transfer to another High Court, which was an exception, has now become akin to a service condition of a government servant. Judges have a pride of place in the Constitution and judicial elevations are made from the local bar or from the subordinate judiciary which is very familiar with the local laws and, more importantly, the language of the Court and the local terrain. The elevation was also considered as recognition to the member of the Bar. Now, the present orders of transfer have totally undermined the concept of judges for the respective High Court with their recruitment from the local bar and the subordinate judiciary. With these unwelcome transfers, judges live in a state of uncertainty and fear, which certainly affects their

attitudes. A former judge of the Supreme Court of India, Justice Madan Lokur, recently said that transfers undermine the boldness and independence of the judiciary. A reading of Article 222 of the Constitution clearly explains how cautious, careful and rare the transfer of judges should be because of the different manifestations. The present transfer of judges is not only demoralising but will add to the pendency of cases. It is also experience that if a judge goes through the case files in the local language, there is effective delivery of justice.

N.G.R. PRASAD,
Chennai

Faltering campaign

Seven years ago, on October 2, 2014, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was launched across the country amidst fanfare. But the cleanliness drive is faltering while crores have been poured down the drain, only promoting a

certain political figure and a political party. The drive to ensure cleanliness and sanitation has to be a people's movement and not a political one. Even in tiny Goa it has been a failure as garbage continues to pile up almost everywhere. The capital city Panaji is terrible. The crores squandered on a media blitz for this campaign would have brought smiles to the downtrodden had that money been spent for their uplift.
AIRES RODRIGUES,
Ribandar, Goa

Tiger MDT 23

The Chief Justice of the Madras High Court deserves praise for an animal-friendly decision (Page 1, "Tiger hunt: CJ tells Forest Dept, not to go for the kill", October 6). Animal lovers salute him as thought has gone into the shaping of the order.
SAVITRI C.V.,
Chennai

The recent QES estimates are unreliable

The analysis is fraught with caveats and the interpretation of the survey results calls for caution



RADHICKA KAPOOR & R. NAGARAJ

Last week, the Ministry of Labour and Employment released the results of a new Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) for April-June 2021 for the organised (formal) sector. It represents establishments (or units) employing ten or more workers. The surveyed sectors were manufacturing, construction, trade, transport, education, health, accommodation and restaurant, Information Technology/Business Process Outsourcing (IT/BPO), and financial services. The survey reported the following. First, "It is heartening to note that the estimated total employment in the nine selected sectors from the first round of QES works out as 3 crores and 8 lakhs approximately against a total of 2 crores and 37 lakhs in these sectors taken collectively, as reported in the Sixth Economic Census (2013-14), implying a growth of 29%." Secondly, employment fell from 3.078 crore before the first nationwide lockdown in March 2020 to 2.848 crore post the lockdown on July 1, 2020. Thus, the report showed that 24 lakh jobs lost during the lockdown in 2020 came back by the first quarter of 2021.

The new QES is a welcome step as it will help generate timely employment estimates for the larger units. However, the above analysis is fraught with caveats and the interpretation of the survey results calls for caution.

Limited coverage

As is widely known, establishments with ten or more workers account for a small proportion of all non-agricultural establishments – a mere 1.66% as per the Economic Census (EC) of 2013-14. Also, a disproportionately large share of workers – 81.3% as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS, 2018-19) – worked in the unorganised sector. With its limited coverage, the QES based on data for formal sector enterprises cannot provide a total picture of employment dynamics. Hence, drawing in-



SHISHU KUMAR VERMA

ferences about overall job losses during the lockdown based on this survey is simply misleading.

Data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) showed that during April 2020, 12.1 crore workers lost their jobs. Most of these workers were informally employed – 9.1 crore job losses reportedly occurred amongst small traders and casual labourers. The official PLFS indicated the extent of distress in the labour market during the nationwide lockdown. The unemployment rate by current weekly status (i.e. the activity status during seven days preceding the survey date) in urban areas increased from 9.1% in January-March 2020 (before the lockdown) to 20.8% in April to June 2020.

Significantly, the new QES data suffer from many methodological shortcomings such as an outdated sample frame, non-comparability of employment numbers obtained from the EC-2013 with sample estimates obtained from the QES for only a quarter, and differences in methods used for gathering the information. We elucidate these problems below.

Conducting a scientific sample survey requires a "sample frame", i.e. the list of units (e.g., persons, households, businesses, etc.) in the survey population. Since the basis for sample selection is this list, the frame is of utmost importance for the survey design. To generate a frame for its enterprise surveys, India has been conducting the ECs since 1977, albeit at long and irregu-

lar intervals. The most recent one was in 2013-14, which the QES has used.

The new QES has a sample of approximately 11,000 establishments. The datedness of the frame implies that the QES does not include units set up after 2013. Further, the EC-2013 has based itself on the "enumeration blocks" of the Population Census, 2011 as the primary geographical units. The outdated nature of the sample frame, which has been acknowledged for a while now, renders the new QES employment estimates irrelevant.

To understand the QES's origin, the Labour Bureau (LB) conducted the first such survey in 2009, with a modest sample size of around 2,000 manufacturing units for eight select labour-intensive and export-oriented industries in 11 States. The survey sought to assess the employment effects of the global financial crisis and was conducted till December 2015. In April 2016, the LB replaced this series with another quarterly series, which had a larger sample size and enhanced sectoral coverage. The EC-2013 served as the sampling frame for this survey, too. However, it was soon abandoned as a government-appointed Task Force on Improving Employment Data (2017) recommended doing away with the QES on grounds of its limited coverage and an outdated sample frame.

Given the above background, the rush to produce a new QES that draws its sample from the EC-2013 frame seems baffling. It would have

been more prudent to await the release of a newly updated frame in the EC-2020 and then canvass for the QES. In fact, given the outdated frame, drawing inferences about employment changes even for the organised sector during the lockdown is misleading. It is also worth noting that QES was primarily a telephonic survey and verification of responses of establishments has not been done (as has been the usual practice for the LB's quarterly surveys).

Moreover, the comparison of the employment estimates obtained from the new QES for April to June 2021 with the employment number based on the EC-2013 reported in the first paragraph is confounding. The latter is a census, conducted over an entire year, to provide a frame. The former is a sample survey conducted with a short reference period. The questionnaire of the QES asks establishments about employment details for a specific quarter, in this case, April 1, 2021. In contrast, the EC-2013 questionnaire asks establishments about the number of persons working on the last working day prior to the date of fieldwork in the establishment.

Conceptual problem

In addition, there is a conceptual problem in comparing employment numbers of the EC with the QES. Although the former asks questions about the number of persons working in an enterprise, it is not a good instrument for estimating the size of the workforce or for analysing employment trends as the principal objective of the EC is generating a frame, not estimating employment.

The initiative to produce quarterly employment data for selected industries in the organised sector is desirable. However, in a rush to generate high-frequency estimates, there cannot be a compromise on data quality and its reliability. Hence, the inference drawn using the new survey data, as reported in the opening paragraph, is misleading. The LB's hurried effort has only created (avoidable) confusion and undermined the potential value of the QES.

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Trade multilateralism at risk

The World Trade Organization is facing an existential crisis



PRABHASH RANJAN

The World Trade Organization (WTO) – the global trade body – is facing a serious existential crisis. The upcoming WTO ministerial meeting scheduled for next month in Geneva provides an opportunity to rescue this critical global institution from irrelevance. Created in 1995, during the heyday of neoliberalism, the WTO became a shining example of triumphant free-market capitalism. Critics of neoliberalism chastised the WTO for pushing the American imperialist agenda. Paradoxically, more than two-and-a-half decades later, the United States seems to have lost interest in it. The feeling in Washington is that the WTO hasn't served the American national interest by failing to stem China's rise and regularly indicting the U.S. in several trade disputes. President Joe Biden has continued with the same policy towards the WTO that Donald Trump practised.

The continuation of the U.S. policy on the WTO is most evident in the sustained crippling of the Appellate Body (AB). The AB is part of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism. It is a permanent body with seven members, and acts as an appellate court hearing appeals from the decisions given by WTO panels. However, since December 2019, the AB has stopped functioning due to rising vacancies. Over the years, the U.S. has consistently blocked the appointment of AB members. The U.S. also vetoes proposals to find solutions to this impasse, including stalling the proposal of the European Union to establish an alternative interim appellate arbitration mechanism. The number of pending appeals to the AB has increased sharply to around 20 cases. Countries now have an easy option not to comply with the WTO panel decisions by appealing into the void.

Other challenges

Additionally, there are four other challenges that the WTO faces. First, no solution has been found to the public stockholding for food security purposes despite a clear mandate to do so in the 2015 Nairobi ministerial meeting. This is of paramount concern for countries like India that use Minimum Support Price (MSP)-backed mechanisms to procure foodgrains. The WTO rules allow countries to procure, stock and distribute food. However, if such procurement is done at an administered price such as the MSP that is higher than the external reference price,

then the budgetary support provided shall be considered trade-distorting and is subject to an overall cap. With rising prices and the need to do higher procurement to support farmers and provide food to the poor at subsidised prices, India might breach the cap. Although countries have agreed that legal suits will not be brought if countries breach the cap, it is imperative to find a permanent solution such as not counting MSP-provided budgetary support as trade-distorting.

Second, the WTO member countries continue to disagree on the need of waiving the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement for COVID-19 related medical products. It was exactly a year back when India and South Africa proposed a TRIPS waiver to overcome intellectual property (IP)-related obstacles in increasing accessibility of COVID-19 medical products, including vaccines. The WTO needs to adopt a waiver in the upcoming ministerial meeting.

Third, the WTO is close to signing a deal on regulating irrational subsidies provided for fishing that has led to the overexploitation of marine resources by countries like China, which is the largest catcher and exporter of fish. However, this agreement should strike a balance between conserving ocean resources and the livelihood concerns of millions of marginal fishermen. An effective special and differential treatment provision that accords adequate policy space is what India and other developing countries should insist on. Fourth, the gridlock at the WTO has led to the emergence of mega plurilateral trade agreements like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) – a treaty between 11 countries. Another key trade treaty is the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement between Asian economies and countries down under. These plurilateral agreements not only fragment the global governance on international trade but also push the multilateral order to the margin, converting the WTO to what some call an "institutional zombie".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his recent U.S. visit, rightly pleaded for a rule-based global order. Institutional multilateralism would be the ideal antidote to unilateralism and economic nationalism. Notwithstanding its flaws, the WTO is the only forum where developing countries like India, not party to any mega plurilateral trade agreements, can push for evolving an inclusive global trading order that responds to the systemic imbalances of extant globalisation. What is at stake is the future of trade multilateralism and not just an institution.

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Road accidents can be reduced

Public discourse, improving infrastructure can help

M.P. NATHANAEL

Fifty-one passengers of an overcrowded bus died in an accident on the morning of February 16 when it fell into a canal near Sarda Patan village in Sidhi district, Madhya Pradesh. A *griha pravesh* (house-warming) ceremony for the beneficiaries of one lakh houses constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in Bhopal, which was to be attended virtually by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, was cancelled due to the incident. Two days earlier, fourteen persons were killed when a minivan they were travelling in hit a divider on a National Highway (NH) near Madapur village in Kurmool district, Andhra Pradesh. The van carrying 18 passengers was on its way to Ajmer in Rajasthan from Chittoor, when the driver lost control and hit the divider, tumbling on the other side of the road where a speeding truck crashed into it.

According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, 1,51,113 persons were killed and 4,51,361 injured in road accidents across the country in 2019. NHs and State Highways, which account for about 5% of the total road length, claimed 61% of the deaths related to accidents. Around 35,606 deaths were reported on the NHs, which come under the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI).

Speaking at a webinar organised by the International Road Federation on February 9, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said India topped the fatality figures in road accidents in the world, with 415 deaths each day. While commending Tamil Nadu for taking effective road safety measures that had resulted in the reduction of road accidents by 38% and deaths by 54%, he asked other States to emulate Tamil Nadu.

It is small wonder that he actively pursued the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, with the well-intentioned motive of bringing down the death rate due to road accidents by 50% by 2020. This was agreed to by all participating nations in the United Nations Brasilia Declaration, of which India was a signatory. Though the number of deaths due to accidents declined to 1.20 lakh in 2020 due to COVID-19, Mr. Gadkari shifted

the deadline to 2025.

But the steep hike in the fines imposed for traffic violations in the Act was met with stiff opposition, with some States dismissing it as too harsh and, hence, not willing to implement it. What seems to have been ignored while drafting the law was the fact that a good number of those driving vehicles to earn their livelihood were from economically poor backgrounds. West Bengal decided not to implement the new law and continued with the West Bengal Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989.

The Madras High Court recently struck down the April 6, 2018 notification of the Union Government wherein the speed limit was hiked to 120 and 100 km/hour on expressways and highways, respectively. This was done as 66.7% of accidents was attributed to overspeeding in 2017, 55.73% in 2018 and 64.4% in 2019.

Studies carried out by various organisations have also come out with the causes for accidents and ways to curb them. The Accident Research Cell of the Delhi Traffic Police carried out an analysis of accidents and created a database that facilitates the formulation of policies to prevent accidents. While probing an accident that led to the death of former Union Rural Development Minister Gopinath Munde in New Delhi, the cell concluded that hedges along a road obstructed the visibility of drivers coming from the other direction. After the hedges were pruned, the stretch became free from accidents.

While the strict enforcement of traffic safety laws would go a long way, educating citizens about the impact of accidents on the kin of the victims through public discourse could help in reducing accidents. Improving road infrastructure with coordinated efforts by the police and civic authorities, identification of black spots that are prone to accidents and deploying an adequate number of police personnel, particularly during peak hours, could bring down accident rates. Highway patrols with police personnel trained in first aid and ambulances every 10 km could also help save precious lives.

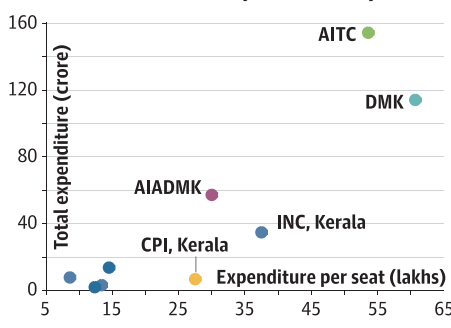
M.P. Nathanael is Inspector-General of Police (retd.), Central Reserve Police Force

DATA POINT

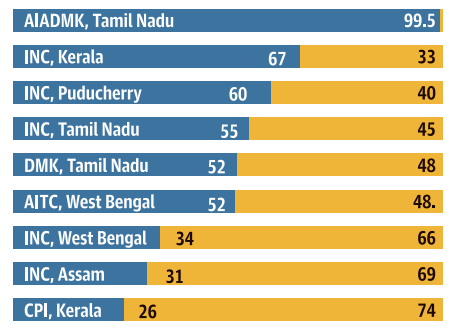
Poll spending

The DMK and the Trinamool Congress (AITC), both winners of State elections in 2021, spent over 265 crore during their election campaigns, according to the reports submitted to the Election Commission of India (ECI). Among all parties, the AIADMK spent the highest share in spreading the party's propaganda (99.5%) and relied only on media and advertisements. The DMK and the AITC, on the other hand, split their expenses half-and-half between their candidates and party propaganda. Interestingly, the INC adopted a unique spending strategy for spreading the party's propaganda in each of the five elections. By Jasmin Nihalani

1. Spending spree | The chart depicts the expenditure incurred by major parties against the spending per contested seat in 2021. The AITC and the DMK, spent the highest amount. The two parties spent over 50 lakh on each Assembly constituency



2. Spending split | The chart shows the money spent on candidates and general party propaganda as a % of the total expenditure. The AIADMK spent 99.5% of its election fund on propaganda. The DMK and the AITC split the share equally between candidate expenditure and propaganda

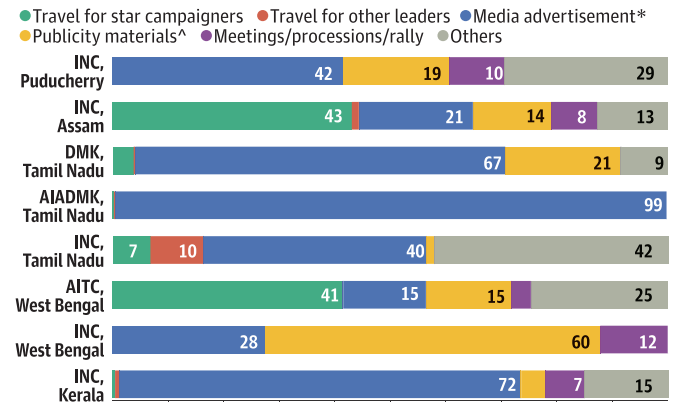


4. Strategy change | The table shows the expenditure strategy adopted by the AIADMK and the DMK in the last two Assembly elections. The AIADMK reduced its election spending, while the DMK's increased. There wasn't any change in the DMK's strategy for furthering party propaganda. However, its expenses on rallies decreased in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions

Source:ECI



3. Spending strategy | The chart depicts the party-wise breakup of expenses incurred towards propaganda. The AIADMK put all its eggs in one basket and allotted 99% to media and advertisement. The AITC spread out its expenses and banked the most on star campaigners for propaganda. The INC relied on its star campaigners while contesting in Assam, but in Kerala, it spent the most on media and advertisements



and were compensated with increased spending on publicity materials. The AIADMK overhauled its strategy and spent only on media and advertisements, a significant change from 2016

| | AIADMK | | DMK | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Parameter | 2021 | 2016 | 2021 | 2016 |
| Expenditure (crore) | 57 | 65 | 114 | 97 |
| Seats contested | 191 | 234 | 188 | 180 |
| Expenditure per seat (crore) | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.54 |
| As a % of total expenditure | | | | |
| General Propaganda | 99.5% | 100% | 52.3% | 53.8% |
| Candidates | 0.5% | 0% | 47.7% | 46.2% |
| % of total expenditure on propaganda | | | | |
| Travel of star campaigners | 0.2% | 0.3% | 3.8% | 0% |
| Travel of others | 0.3% | 14.6% | 0.3% | 2.2% |
| Media advt.* | 99.3% | 76.8% | 66.7% | 63.9% |
| Publicity materials^ | 0.1% | 6.4% | 20.7% | 16.4% |
| Meetings/rally | 0.1% | 1.8% | 0.0% | 17% |
| Others | 0.1% | 0.1% | 8.6% | 0.6% |

*print and electronic, bulk sms, cable, website and TV. ^posters, banners, badges, stickers, arches, cutouts, hoardings, flags

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 7, 1971

Refugee crisis

"A time will come when India will have to tell Pakistan 'thus far and no further', as the burden of refugees from Bangla Desh is becoming too heavy to bear," Mr. R.K. Khadiilkar, Union Minister for Labour and Rehabilitation, told newsmen here to-day. He did not explain the action the Government was contemplating. Mr. Khadiilkar gave a grim picture of the refugee influx. He said that India must be prepared for a steep increase in the refugee influx from Bangla Desh from the present level of 91.46 lakh to over 1.2 crore as a result of the mounting guerrilla activity of the Mukti Bahini and the consequent intensified repression from the West Pakistani army. Refugees were now coming to India at the rate of 41,000 per day. India had already spent Rs.120 crore on the refugees and would have to spend Rs.450 crore by the end of the year and Rs.600 crore by the end of March, 1972, assuming that the number of refugees would not exceed 10 million. Mr. Khadiilkar called upon the international community to realise its responsibility and come forward with more generous aid.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 7, 1921

Disturbed Malabar

The trouble at Codacal on Sunday night happened in this wise. The alleged offence of the Christian population seems to be that they helped the authorities in apprehending some rebels a fortnight previous and as reprisal, Sunday's attack appears to have been planned. At midnight, armed Moplahs were seen near Edacoam railway gate, and approaching the petty bazar close by, shouted for a Christian tailor named Polycarp who they suspected had betrayed them to authorities. Local friendly Moplahs warned Polycarp who slipped away. The loyal Moplahs were caught and threatened that unless Polycarp was found, they would be killed. The gang marched to set fire on the Village Mausif who was absent from home. The Tea Factory was the next scene of attack. They surrounded Sukumaran's tea shop where Jacob and Isaac were sleeping. The rebels clubbed them severely. Yesumatan, schoolmaster and father of five children, was then murdered in cold blood. The whole colony became frightened and took shelter in the fields. Before the factory could be attacked, a siren blew loudly. The rioters thought that military would come from Tirur and so bolted away. Refugees numbering five hundred have migrated to Calicut and Palghat.

FROM PAGE ONE

Civilian killings cause concern in J&K

On Tuesday, Makhan Lal Bindroo, a well-known pharmacist in Srinagar was killed by terrorists when he was in his shop. The Resistance Front (TRF), which the police believe is a front for the Pakistan based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) has claimed responsibility for the killing.

The group said Bindroo was killed as he worked for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Another senior government official said there are inputs to suggest serious attempts to target prominent businessmen in the Valley and Jammu region. At least two such previous attempts have been foiled.

"Innocent people who had nothing to do with any group were killed. This is a terrorist incident, it was done to send a message to minorities who have been staying here peacefully for decades. Mr. Bindroo never left the Valley. The street vendor was killed because they do not want anyone from outside to come and work here... The signal has come from across the border," Mr. Singh said. He added that the taxi owner was killed on suspicion of being a police informer.

A street vendor from Bihar, Virendra Paswan and Mohammad Shafi Lone, the president of the Taxi Asso-

ciation in North Kashmir's Bandipora were also killed on Tuesday. The TRF accused Lone of being a police informer.

Mr. Singh said a pistol was used in all the three killings.

"TRF is run from Karachi. We recently killed Abbas Sheikh, TRF's leader in an operation. Some people associated with TRF who were working as over ground workers became active and resorted to the civilian killings," Mr. Singh said.

He added that as of now no leadership of terrorist groups remained active in the Valley.

'Intolerance' flagged

"All sections of Kashmiri society have condemned the killings. The street vendor's killing reflects the sign of intolerance for non-locals by the terror groups," he said.

Former MP and senior People's Conference leader Nazir Ahmad Laway said the act was an attempt to create communal disharmony in the region.

The killings come at a time when a battery of Union ministers have been visiting the newly created Union Territory as part of government's mega outreach programme. Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to visit later this month.

NIA takes over Mundra port drug haul case

DEVESH K PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the case pertaining to the seizure of about 3,000 kg heroin by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) at the Mundra Port in Gujarat last month, following a directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The NIA has invoked various provisions of the IPC, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act [UAPA] against accused Machavaram Sudhakar, Durga P.V. Govindaraju, Rajkumar P. and others.

The DRI had earlier arrested the three accused apart from six Afghan nationals and an Uzbek woman.

A possible role of Pakistan-based elements in the international drug trafficking racket is also being examined by the agency.

Initial findings suggested that the consignment was meant to be taken to Delhi. However, the probe agencies are yet to determine the identities of the ultimate intended recipients.

Outrage over civilian's killing in Srinagar

The pharmacist, known for a loyal clientele, was one of the few Pandits who stayed back in Kashmir

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Family members of Makhan Lal Bindroo, who was shot dead inside his famous pharmacy, Bindroo Medicate, here by militants on Tuesday, put up a brave face on Wednesday, saying "the gunmen may have killed a body but not the spirit" of the family.

"My father will always be alive in the spirit with which we have been brought up. Mr. [gunman], who shot my father while he was working, if you have the guts, then come have a debate with me. You won't. You merely know how to hurl stones and open fire," Shradha Bindroo, the victim's daughter, said.

Bindroo's son said his father "was a principled man who earned a name by selling genuine medicine. He was respected by all in Kashmir for being helpful and friendly. He motivated me to return [to Kashmir] and serve people here. He had no threat as such. Even if he had, he was brave enough to keep his shop open, as he did since the 1990s."

The Bindroos, residents of Indira Nagar, were among a few Kashmiri Pandit families that decided to stay back in the Valley in the 1990s, when



Tragic loss: The daughter of Makhan Lal Bindroo during his last rites at his residence in Srinagar on Wednesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

militancy broke out. They earned a name by running a leading pharmacy in the Valley. On Tuesday evening, unknown militants barged into the busy pharmacy near the Iqbal Park area and pumped around four bullets into his body, leaving the 68-year-old Bindroo dead.

Public outrage

The killing evoked a public outrage in Kashmir. Scores of neighbours and loyal customers visited the Bindroos in Srinagar to express their condolences to the family.

Many recalled the generosity displayed by the family during tough times faced by neighbours and the customers.

"Many years ago, my mother had gone to Bindroo Medicate and reached out to her purse only to realise it was stolen. Mr. Bindroo, sensing the predicament of my mother, insisted that she not only take the medicine but also gave her ₹50 so as to ensure her travel back home. We have lost a personality who epitomised our shared values and culture," Imran

Gazi, a local man, said. Srinagar Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu said a road in the city "will be named after Bindroo as a tribute to his contributions to society".

Farooq's condolences

National Conference president and former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, who visited the family, said, "Bindroo was an upright man and served the people of the Valley all his life and helped poor people. But beasts killed him too." Peoples Democratic Party

ISJK claims responsibility for vendor's killing

The Islamic State in Jammu and Kashmir (ISJK) released a video on Wednesday, claiming responsibility for the killing of a street vendor from Bihar, one of the three civilians killed on Tuesday in the Kashmir region. The Resistance Front (TRF), a Pakistan-sponsored terror group, has also claimed credit for the vendor's killing, accusing him of being a police informer. In the video released by Amaq, the propaganda and publicity wing of the Islamic State, the attacker who is wearing a body camera is seen chasing and opening fire at Virender Paswan.

president Mehbooba Mufti also condemned the killing.

Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said: "The Hurriyat strongly condemns all killings, which are acts of pure violence against fellow humans and humanity. We appeal to the world community to intervene in putting an end to the daily violence and tragic loss of life in Kashmir by pushing for a resolution of the lingering Kashmir conflict."

Inspector-General of Police Vijay Kumar also visited the family.

Maharashtra Minister sees BJP link in drug case

Malik sees plan to defame Bollywood

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Minister for Minority Development Nawab Malik, a Nationalist Congress Party leader, on Wednesday alleged that a private detective facing a cheating case and a BJP leader had brought Aryan Khan and Arbaz Merchant to the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) office and participated in the drug search.

"K.P. Gosavi claims to be a private detective, while Manish Bhanushali is a BJP leader, who has been seen in photographs with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda, were part of the NCB raid. Visuals of bringing Merchant and Khan to the NCB office show that these two individuals brought them to the office. Who are they? Are private individuals allowed to be a part of drug bust raid? The NCB

must explain this," Mr. Malik said.

He alleged that the entire case of seizure of drugs and *panchanama* was manipulated.

"Ever since the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, the NCB started planting stories about Bollywood and drug connection. The only motive is to defame Bollywood and subsequently Mumbai and Maharashtra to which the BJP is also a party," he said.

The NCB, in its press release, accepted that both Mr. Gosavi and Mr. Bhanushali acted as independent witnesses but termed the allegations baseless.

"Some allegations levelled against the organisation are baseless and seem to be with malice and probable prejudice that may have been harboured in retaliation against earlier legal actions carried out by the NCB," said the statement.

Mamata writes to Modi on floods

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the recent floods in West Bengal, emphasising that the annual problem of floods in south Bengal requires short-term and long-term measures.

In a four-page letter released by the Government of West Bengal on Wednesday, Ms. Banerjee has sought Mr. Modi's "immediate intervention so that the concerned Ministry of the Government of India is requested to engage with Governments of West Bengal and Jharkhand and the authorities of DVC (Damodar Valley Corporation) to help in arriving at a permanent solution to this problem of our State occurring year after year".

Eight districts of the State were affected by the floods last week and about 5 lakh people evacuated.

Govt. asks top court to set quota norms for promotions

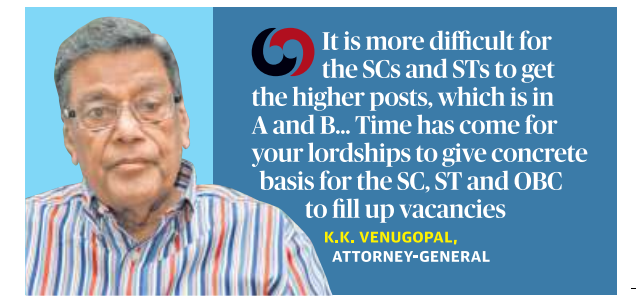
Bench flags low SC/ST representation in Group A jobs

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Seventy-five years of Independence have not been able to bring members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on a par with the forward classes of society, the Government said in the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao, Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal said it was tough for a member of the SC/ST to reach the 'Group A' category jobs. Mr. Venugopal said the time had come for the top court to firm up and draw the basis for reservation in promotions for SC/ST candidates to fill up vacancies in top jobs.

The Bench referred to records filed before it to note that there was low representation of SC/ST category in Group A jobs. Instead of im-



proving the situation in the Group A ranks, the court said, efforts are on to ensure adequate representation in Groups B and C. This was not fair, it remarked.

"We are finding that in Group A, the representation is low. Therefore, by accommodating, instead of improving the representation in Group A, you are ensuring that there is adequate representation in Group B and C. This is not fair. This is the argument of the government," the Bench, including Justices

Sanjiv Khanna and B.R. Gavai, observed.

Mr. Venugopal agreed that it was a "fact of life".

"We are not being able, after 75 years, to bring the SCs and STs to the same level of merit as the forward classes... It is more difficult for the SCs and STs to get the higher post, which is in A and B," he submitted.

"Time has come for your lordships to give concrete basis for the SC, ST and OBC to fill up vacancies," the law officer said.

NEET-SS new pattern plan dropped, says govt.

A Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud expressed its satisfaction with the government's change of mind, and disposed of the case.

Ms. Bhati noted that the decision to revert to the old mode was done in consultation with expert bodies such as the National Board of Examinations and the National Medical Commission, taking into consideration students' interests.

The change of tune comes a day after the court criticised the revision of the exam pattern at the eleventh hour, saying it might have been done to favour private medical colleges.

The new pattern showed questions entirely from the field of general medicine and not from the specialities for which the students wanted admission. General medicine, the court said, was the largest pool from which students could be found to fill the vacant seats in private institutions for super speciality courses.

'A business'

On Tuesday, the court said the tragedy of medical education was that it had become a business in this country. "The impression

we get is medical education has become a business, and medical regulation has also become a business. That is the tragedy of medical education in this country," Justice Chandrachud remarked.

The court had observed that questions under the revised pattern were wholly from general medicine, which was a feeder category. The earlier pattern had 60% of the questions coming from the student's chosen field of speciality and the rest from the feeder category.

"For 12 super specialties, 100% questions are from general medicine. The entire examination is going to be only on general medicine. The logic seems to be, general medicine is the largest pool, and tap them to fill the seats. That seems to be idea," the Bench had noted.

In an earlier hearing, the court had lashed out at the government, saying "young doctors cannot be left at the mercy of insensitive bureaucrats and cannot be treated like football". It had stated, "The interests of students is far higher than those of the institutions".

WHO recommends first anti-malarial vaccine

The WHO's recommendation was based on the results from an ongoing pilot programme in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi.

The development comes at a time when the WHO and its partners have reported a stagnation in the progress against the disease that kills more than 2,60,000 African children under the age of five annually. Malaria remains a primary cause of childhood illness and death in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the WHO.

"For centuries, malaria has stalked sub-Saharan Africa, causing immense personal suffering," said WHO Regional Director for Africa Dr. Matshidiso Moeti. "We have long hoped for an effective malaria vaccine and now for the first time ever, we have such a vaccine recommended for widespread use. Today's recommendation offers a glimmer of hope for the continent



The vaccine was used in a pilot programme in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi.

which shoulders the heaviest burden of the disease and we expect many more African children to be protected from malaria and grow into healthy adults."

The vaccine does significantly reduce life-threatening severe malaria, Dr. Tedros said, but added that, "It's not the only tool. Vaccination against malaria does not replace or reduce the need for other measures, including bed nets [against mosquitoes]."



Ex-diplomat V.M.M. Nair passes away

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Vallilath Madhathil Madhavan Nair, former diplomat of India, passed away here on Wednesday, two days short of his 103rd birthday. He is survived by wife Krishnakumari.

Mr. Nair joined the Indian Civil Service or the ICS in 1942 and was allotted to the Bihar cadre. He was permanently seconded to the Indian Foreign Service on November 1, 1944. His early recruitment into the IFS during the Second World War meant he was present in the foreign affairs team of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru from the very beginning of the new India in 1947.

Mr. Nair was educated in Chennai and went to Oxford for his B.A. (Hons). He did his postgraduation in Cambridge. He was born on October 8, 1919. He retired in the late 1970s.

India, U.S. to work closely on Afghanistan, says Shringla

U.S. Deputy Secretary lauds resumption of vaccine exports

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla on Wednesday held talks with visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, who later said India, U.S. partnership was "indispensable" for both countries and the world.

Describing the partnership during a public address to the U.S. India Business Council (USIBC) India Ideas Summit shortly after the meeting, Mr. Shringla indicated that the future of the Indo-Pacific region, and the situation in Afghanistan were at the top of their discussions.

"Given the fast-paced developments in South Asia, especially in Afghanistan, India and the U.S. will remain closely engaged both on the future of Afghanistan, and on how we can maintain peace and stability in South Asia, and beyond," Mr. Shringla said.

However, Ms. Sherman reiterated U.S. concerns over India's 2018 agreement with Russia for the purchase of S-400 missile systems, which she described as dangerous.

The delivery of the systems to India later this year



Harsh Vardhan Shringla

is expected to trigger sanctions under the U.S.'s CAATSA law, which Washington has already imposed on Turkey and China for buying the S-400.

India and the U.S. are expected to meet for a number of bilateral functions over the next few weeks, including the Defence Policy Dialogue headed by Defence Secretaries in Washington this weekend, the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter Terrorism on October 26th, leading up to the "2+2" meeting of Defence and Foreign Ministers.

A delegation from the office of the U.S. Trade Representative is in Delhi for trade talks this week, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to travel to Washington "soon", said go-

vernment sources.

When asked if the U.S. is discussing the possibility of cooperating on sourcing military bases with India, or with countries like Uzbekistan and Pakistan, which are part of her current tour, Ms. Sherman, speaking at a roundtable with journalists, said the U.S. is discussing its options for airstrikes on Afghanistan through "over the horizon" (OTH) efforts, but did not elaborate further on India's response.

Vaccine partnership

Ms. Sherman and Mr. Shringla also spoke "at length" about the Quad vaccine partnership which will entail manufacturing one billion J&J American vaccines in India by end 2022, said sources, but denied that the issue of indemnity clauses, which India insists on, will be a roadblock to the Quad proposals. Ms. Sherman said she had "applauded" India's decision to resume its vaccine exports that were cancelled during the pandemic's second wave.

M. Sherman will travel to Mumbai on Thursday for meetings with business persons, and will head to Pakistan after that.

Maha Vikas Aghadi leads BJP in local body bypolls

Congress puts up a spirited show

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra, comprising the Shiv Sena, the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), overwhelmed the BJP in the byelections to 85 zilla parishad and 144 panchayat samiti seats announced on Wednesday.

The bypolls were held in six districts - Nagpur, Akola, Washim, Latur, Dhule and Palghar - with 367 candidates in the fray in the ZP polls and 555 for the panchayat samiti seats.

While the three parties together won 46 of the 85 seats in the ZP bypolls, the BJP nevertheless emerged as the single largest party here, winning 23 seats.

However, most significant of all was the Congress's spirited performance, coming off best within the coalition by winning 17 ZP seats and bagging the highest number of seats (35) among all parties (including the BJP) in the panchayat samiti bypolls.

The MVA won a total 73 of the 144 panchayat samiti seats, with the BJP winning 33, second to the Congress tally. The Shiv Sena and the NCP managed to win 12 and 17 ZP seats respectively.

They bagged 22 and 16 panchayat samiti seats respectively.

A jubilant Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) chief Nana Patole, who has been vocal about the party contesting independently in the coming civic body polls, said the results proved that it was on its way to becoming the top party in the State.

"Given the high-handed manner in which the BJP government at the Centre is behaving, be it suppressing farmers in Uttar Pradesh or abusing Central probe agencies, I think people have realised that only the Congress has the wherewithal to rein it in... I thank the public in all these six districts for recognising the Congress as a viable force to counter the BJP," said Mr. Patole, while promising to repair all organisational glitches within the party.

At the same time, he remained non-committal on whether the Congress would fight in alliance with the Sena or the NCP in the crucial civic polls next year, merely remarking that his aim was to build the party's strength. According to observers, the Congress's win would certainly give a major boost to the party rank.

Second autopsy silent on bullet injury

Final rites of four farmers, who were among the eight dead in Lakhimpur Kheri incident, performed

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW
With the cremation of Gurvinder Singh on Wednesday after a second autopsy was conducted by a new panel of doctors appointed by the government, the final rites of the four farmers, who were among the eight people dead in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, were concluded.

Gurvinder's family, however, rejected the second autopsy report too as it did not mention any bullet injury, his family said on Wednesday a day after rejecting the first report.

The police said they would make arrests in the case, in which a Union Minister's son is booked for murder, after collecting evidence and corroborating it.

Similar conclusion

The second report had also given a similar conclusion that Gurvinder died of internal injuries and bleeding after being hit by car, the family alleged. He was cremated in his village in Bahraich district.

Gurvinder was killed in the violent incident involving the convoy of Union Mi-



Long wait: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi along with party leader K.C. Venugopal and Punjab and Chhattisgarh CMs Charanjit Singh Channi and Bhupesh Baghel at the Lucknow airport. •PTI

nister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra in Tikononia. His family had demanded a fresh autopsy after they refused to accept the findings of the first post-mortem report. They alleged, on the basis of eyewitness accusations, that he was shot dead by Ashish Mishra, the Minister's son, after the latter tried

to escape into the fields after "running over farmers". Mr. Ashish Mishra has denied the allegation, saying he was in his ancestral village Banveerpur at the time.

Gurvinder's brother-in-law, Raman Singh, told *The Hindu*, "It [second autopsy] has nothing about the bullet. He has been cremated." Ho-

wever, a copy of the post-mortem report was not yet seen.

Two FIRs

While the first FIR in the case names Mr. Ashish Mishra and 15 to 20 people on charges of murder, criminal conspiracy and death by negligence for allegedly mowing

down farmers, in the second FIR, lodged against unidentified persons for murder and other charges, the complainant, a BJP worker, alleges that farmers threw stones at the vehicle and attacked it with sticks.

Asked if any summons would be issued to Mr. Ashish Mishra for questioning or if he would be arrested, Additional Director-General of Police (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said the investigation would "pace up" now as the police and administration had taken "swift action" to maintain peace in the "sensitive matter". "No guilty will be spared," he told a news agency, adding that both the FIRs would be investigated.

The officer said the police were examining all videos of the incident on October 3, including one showing a vehicle running over farmers, and would include them in the investigation. Apart from the four farmers, local journalist Raman Kashyap, BJP workers Shubham Mishra and Shyam and driver of the vehicle Hari Om Mishra were killed. There is no clarity on how each was killed.

Rahul, Priyanka meet family of Kheri victim

Cong. leaders, CMs stopped at airport till farmers' funerals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

After staging a brief and dramatic sit-in at Lucknow airport, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi along with the Chief Ministers of Punjab and Chhattisgarh — Charanjit Singh Channi and Bhupesh Baghel — and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra reached Palia village in Lakhimpur late on Wednesday where they met the family of Lovepreet Singh, one of the farmers killed on October 3.

Earlier in the afternoon, after landing at the Lucknow airport, Mr. Gandhi and the other senior Congress leaders staged a brief dharna after police told them to use the police vehicle instead of their own to travel to Lakhimpur. Mr. Gandhi, however, insisted that he would travel in his own car.

Mr. Gandhi again hit out at the Yogi Adityanath Government and questioned the reliability of the permission granted to Opposition leaders to visit the affected district after denying them



Congress leader Sachin Pilot was detained by the police on the way to Lakhimpur Kheri on Wednesday. •ANI

entry since Sunday. In a video that emerged from the airport, Mr. Gandhi was seen complaining that he was not being allowed to leave as a group of CRPF personnel were seen preventing his movement, despite permission being granted by the government.

The Congress leaders were allowed to travel to Kheri only after all four farmers out of the eight total dead were cremated and police allowed people to travel there in groups of five.

Mr. Gandhi then drove to Sitapur where Ms. Vadra has

been lodged in detention at the PAC guesthouse since Monday after police prevented her from reaching Lakhimpur Kheri. After Ms. Vadra was released from detention, the two leaders travelled in the same vehicle after meeting Congress workers.

Earlier in the day, before heading for Lucknow, Mr. Gandhi told reporters in Delhi that a "dictatorship" prevails in the country where the farmers are being systematically attacked.

(With inputs from Sandeep Phukan)

AAP protesters detained, released

They sought arrest of Ashish Mishra

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Police resorted to the use of water cannons on Wednesday to disperse agitating workers and leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Punjab unit here as they marched to *gherao* the official residence of the Punjab Governor against the alleged failure of the Uttar Pradesh Government in arresting key accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence and the "indifferent attitude of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) government at the Centre" towards farmers.

As AAP members started their march from the MLA hostel towards the Raj Bhavan, they were stopped at barricades.

The police said water cannons were used to disperse the crowd after the protestors attempted to forcefully break the barri-



Police stopping AAP supporters outside the Raj Bhavan in Chandigarh. •PTI

cades. Many of them were detained by the police and released later.

AAP members were demanding the immediate arrest of Ashish Mishra, the son of Union Minister of State (Home) Ajay Mishra, for his alleged involvement in mowing down farmers protesting against the Centre's three agricultural laws in Lakhimpur Kheri.

BKU leader steered Lakhimpur Kheri narrative

Rakesh Tikait's access and intervention at key events of the protest has, however, led to speculation

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

In the Lakhimpur Kheri stand-off between farmers and the Uttar Pradesh Government, the role of Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait has come under the scanner. While a section is praising his practical approach in preventing a tricky situation from spiralling out of control and keeping the farmers' movement on track, others feel he agreed for too little, too soon and appeared like a BJP agent after the incident that resulted in eight deaths, including that of four Sikh farmers.

However, there is no doubt that post-Sunday, Mr. Tikait has strengthened his image as the sole leader of farmers in the region and that the ruling dispensation is fuelling his ambition. Observers say the BJP government has added a few more metres to the long rope that



In control: BKU leader Rakesh Tikait addressing the media in Lakhimpur on Wednesday. •PTI

it has given to the BKU since January when he broke down in public at the Ghazipur border protest site.

Easy entry

While political leaders like Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Akhilesh Yadav, and Satish Chandra Mishra were either detained or stopped from proceeding to Lakhimpur, the BKU leader was given

free access. Sources in the BKU confirmed that though the Ghaziabad administration was hesitant, verbal orders from Lucknow cleared the path for Mr. Tikait.

Notably, ADG (Law & Order) Prashant Kumar, who addressed the farmers with Mr. Tikait in Tikunia, was serving in Meerut Zone before being promoted.

Observers said the argu-

ment that Mr. Tikait leads a non-political farmer outfit does not hold much weight because another BKU leader, Gurnam Singh Chaduni, head of the Haryana faction and a prominent face of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, was detained in Meerut for violating Section 144. Other prominent leaders of the SKM like Yogendra Yadav and Shiv Kumar Kakkaji chose to continue with their pre-decided programmes.

Observers recall that something similar happened after the Republic Day incident in January this year when the administration and one-upmanship of Mr. Tikait pushed V.M. Singh, a farmer leader from the Terai belt, out of the Ghazipur protest site, leaving his supporters under the BKU umbrella.

"On January 28, when Tikait decided to stay put at the Ghazipur border despite all odds, the Sikh farmers

from the Terai belt in U.P. and Uttarakhand found a new leader in him, somebody who saved their dignity in the hour of crisis," said a senior farmer leader from the Terai belt. "Had he left, a 1984 kind of situation could have unfolded at the Ghazipur border," he said.

By listening to the officers on the ground, the BJP has virtually accepted that the party didn't have a leader in the region whom farmers would listen to during a crisis.

Those who know Mr. Tikait say that like his father he wants to be the sole leader of farmers in the region.

Questioning Mr. Tikait's focus on compensation rather than the arrest of the son of Union Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra, some like Ravindra Singh of Khalsa Aid have described the announced amount of ₹45 lakh as "blood money without seeking full justice."

No word on parliamentary panels

'Delay yet another way to subvert an important parliamentary instrument'

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Nearly a month after the tenure of the parliamentary standing committees ended on September 12, there is no word on reconstitution of these panels, with sources pointing it to bureaucratic delays. Opposition leaders stated that the delay was yet another way to subvert an important parliamentary instrument.

The government has a tardy record in the constitution of the panels. In 2019, the committees were constituted in October, nearly five months late. In 2014, the panels were notified on September 1, less than three months after the process was started. In 2009, during

the UPA term, it was notified on August 31. And in 2004, it was constituted by August 5.

Even though the composition of the committees largely remain the same, yet every year, more than a month is spent in renominating the panels.

Submission of lists

The sources said political parties took a long while in submitting their list of nominees and the BJP was the last to submit the list. Derek O'Brien, floor leader of the Trinamool Congress in the Rajya Sabha, pointed out that the number of Bills scrutinised by the parliamentary panels had declined under the present regime. In the 14th and the 15th Lok Sabha,

during the UPA years, 60% and 71% of the Bills, respectively, were vetted by the standing committees. In comparison to this, the figures for the 16th Lok Sabha was 25% and the current one a dismal 11%. "With these figures do you think Modi-Shah's BJP cares two hoots about the standing committees," he asked.

RJD MP Manoj K. Jha observed that the delay was a textbook example of the government's approach towards Parliament and the instruments attached to it.

Congress Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari alleged that the government had broken several conventions, including the one on leaving the committees on External

Affairs and Finance for the Opposition to lead. "This convention has been in place keeping in view the parliamentary practice of providing checks and balances to the everyday functioning of the government through legislative oversight." The practice of circulating verbatim minutes of the meeting had also been dispensed with, he noted.

Accepting that the delay imposed unnecessary pause on the functioning of the parliamentary panels, BJD MP Bhartruhari Mahtab questioned the limited and indifferent participation in the panel meetings. "How many members actually take part in these deliberations," he asked.

NC Jammu leader Rana meets Abdullahs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Amid speculation of him quitting the party, Devender Singh Rana, top National Conference (NC) leader from the Jammu region, on Wednesday met party president Farooq Abdullah and vice-president Omar Abdullah at their residence in Srinagar. Sources said Mr. Rana, during the meeting, dropped broad hints at leaving the party "to safeguard

and assert Dogra interests" in Jammu.

The NC has remained silent about the meeting. However, Mr. Rana, in a brief interaction with the media after the meeting, said, "As I talk to you, I am still a part of the NC. I will share details with the media when there is anything."

If Mr. Rana decides to exit the NC, it will be a major jolt for the party's poll prospects in Jammu.

Nepali Congress team to arrive in India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A high-level delegation representing the ruling Nepali Congress will arrive here on Thursday. The delegation led by former Foreign Minister of Nepal Prakash Sharan Mahat is expected to interact with leading figures of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and is being viewed as an outreach from Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba towards the Indian govern-

ment. Mr. Mahat will be accompanied by Nepal political leaders Udaya Shumsher Rana and Ajay Chaurasia.

"This is a reciprocal visit aimed at strengthening party-to-party relations," Mr. Mahat told *The Kathmandu Post*. The visit will be keenly observed in both Kathmandu and here as Mr. Deuba's government has hinted that it will not compromise on the territorial dispute of Kalapani.

Cabinet approves festival bonus for Railway employees

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the productivity linked bonus (PLB) equivalent to 78 days wages for Railway employees with estimated financial implication of ₹1,984.73 crore. The decision will benefit about

11.56 lakh non-gazetted Railway employees.

"The Union Cabinet has approved the PLB equivalent to 78 days wages for the financial year 2020-21 for all eligible non-gazetted Railway employees (excluding RPF/RPSF personnel)," the government said in a state-

ment. The government said the wage calculation ceiling prescribed for payment of PLB to the eligible non-gazetted railway employees is ₹7,000 per month.

The maximum amount payable per eligible employee is ₹17,951 for 78 days, it added.

AMTZ Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone Ltd
(An Enterprise of Government of Andhra Pradesh)
AMTZ Campus, Pragati Maidan, VM Steel Project S.O.,
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh-530031, INDIA, Ph : +91 8885092122
Email : info@amtz.in, Website : www.amtz.in

NOTICE INVITING BID
Procurement of Equipment for Additive Manufacturing Facility
(AMTZ/Proc./ATE/2021/002)
Manufacturing, Management, Maintenance and Operation of Dialyser
Hollow Fiber Membrane Extrusion Facility (AMTZ/Proc./ATE/2021/003)
Tender Documents can be downloaded from AMTZ Website
(Link https://www.amtz.in/rfp-tenders/)

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED
Head Office: 10-152/1, Ashoknagar, Bandar Road, Vijayawada-520007.
NATIONAL SHORT TENDER NOTICE
Tender No: PDS 1/35/Sugar Tender/Nov & Dec-2021 Dated: 05.10.2021.
EMANELMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF SUPPLIERS FOR SUPPLY OF SUGAR TO ALL THE MLS POINTS IN ANDHRA PRADESH STATE THROUGH AP E-PROCUREMENT
Andhra Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd. invites National Short Tenders for empanelment and appointment of suppliers for supply of 15334.606 MTs of ISS Grade S-30/S-31 cane sugar in 1/2 Kg packet form with secondary packing in 50 Kg new polypropylene (PP) bags under PDS for the months November 2021 & December 2021 to all the MLS Points of (13) districts in Andhra Pradesh State.
All the interested Sugar Manufacturers/Traders in All Over India may visit www.apscsl.in & www.approcurement.gov.in to view and download tender documents free of cost.
Interested tenders to submit bids should be registered in website www.approcurement.gov.in and should also obtain Digital Signature Certificates from any Certifying Authority in India. The details and procedure for obtaining Digital Signature Certificates are mentioned in the website www.approcurement.gov.in or contact the helpdesk of procurement portal Phone: 08645-246370/71/72/73/74.
Last date for registration and completion of formalities for the e-auction shall be up to 18.10.2021 at 5 p.m and the tentative date of online e-reverse auction through ap e-procurement platform would be 26.10.2021 at 11 a.m onwards.
Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR

Oushadhi
The Pharmaceutical Corporation
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking)
Kuttanellur, Thrissur-14, Kerala
Ph: 0487-2459841, 2459807.
E-mail : purchase@oushadhi.org
P1/12/121-22 Date: 7.10.2021
RE-TENDER NOTICE
Online tenders are invited for the supply of Raw materials for the period 1st November 2021 to 31st March 2022. Tenders can be downloaded from the website www.etenders.kerala.gov.in. For more details, please visit our website www.oushadhi.org or contact our Purchase Division at Kuttanellur. (Sd/-) Managing Director

MISSING
Vishnu, age 30, S/o Venugopalan Nair, Padinjare Veli Veedu, Pallippuram P.O, Pallippuram P/W-04, Alappuzha district has been missing from 30.01.2021 and he has not returned so far. Hence if any information is received about him, please inform to the nearest Police Station or below mentioned phone numbers.
Description
Height: 175 cm, Complexion: Fair, Body Shape: Fat
Contact number:
ISHO Arthunkal Police Station - 9497980267
DySP, Cherthala - 9497990042
District Police Chief, Alappuzha - 94979 96982
(1694/FZ/2021/I&PRD)

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LIMITED
CIN- U40102RJ2000SGC016484 (A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking)
Suratgarh Super Thermal Power Station, Suratgarh-335805
E-Tender Notice: TN-2771 (RVU2122SLOB01053)
E-tenders are invited for Hiring of 04 Nos. 52 Seater AC Buses for plant duty and 01 no. 32 seater Non-AC bus for CISF duty at STPS, Suratgarh. Tender details are available on <http://eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in> (for e-tender), www.energy.rajjasthan.gov.in/rvunl & www.sppp.rajjasthan.gov.in.
Raj.Samwad/C/21/6973 RVUN/PR-3577 Addl. Chief Engineer (O&M)

Office of The Additional Chief Engineer, PHED, Region-Kota
Notice Inviting Bid
Bid for work under JUM are invited for interested bidders upto 25/10/2021 up to 18:00 Hrs. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the <http://www.eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in>, and departmental website detail are following:-
NIT No. Name of work Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lacs) Date & time for online submission of tender
66/21-22 Work of Singola Anicut based Water Supply Project to provide FHTC including 10-year O & M under JUM district - Baran, UBN No. PHE 2122WLOB08089 2812.49 Lacs 04/10/2021 at 10:00 Hrs to 25/10/2021 upto 18:00 Hrs.
(Mahesh Jangid)
Additional Chief Engineer
PHED, Region, Kota
DIPR/C/10196



SC orders probe into corruption at Tihar jail

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed investigation into the alleged acts of collusion of Tihar Jail officials with Unitech's imprisoned ex-promoters Sanjay and Ajay Chandra. A Special Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and M.R. Shah ordered criminal and corruption cases to be registered against the prison officers based on the recommendations made by Delhi Police Commissioner Rajesh Asthana in a sealed cover report. The court also directed the immediate suspension of the prison officers under suspicion in the report.

Bike Bot scam: ED attaches assets

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth ₹112.36 crore of Garvit Innovative Promoters Limited and others in connection with the "Bike Bot" scam, in which a large number of investors in a bike taxi service were cheated. The assets include flats in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra and towers under construction in a few real estate projects. The ED probe is based on the FIRs registered by the Uttar Pradesh police against Garvit Innovative Promoters, its promoter Sanjay Bhati and a few others.

ED attaches ₹26.98 crore assets in Rose Valley scam

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth ₹26.98 crore of the Rose Valley group of companies in connection with a Ponzi scam. The properties include land parcels, hotels, bank balance and demand drafts attributed to the group entities. The money laundering probe being carried out by the agency is based on the cases registered by the West Bengal police against the group and its chairman Gautam Kundu.

Assam model arrested for injuring nine

GUWAHATI
The Assam police on Wednesday arrested a former Miss India finalist who was granted bail within 24 hours of knocking down nine people with her car in Guwahati on October 2. A senior police officer said Rajkanya Baruah was booked under Section 308 of the Indian Penal Code for attempt to commit culpable homicide. The punishment under this section is jail up to seven years or fine or both. The 29-year-old model was arrested within minutes of a medical board of the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital declaring her to be in fine health. She had checked into the intensive care unit of a private hospital, citing poor health after the police summoned her on Tuesday.

SC asks firecracker makers why they stock barium despite ban

Court says it may order seizure of toxic chemicals from the manufacturers

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday wondered why firecracker manufacturers continued to stock huge quantities of toxic barium chemicals even after the court had banned its use in fireworks.

"Have you seen the reply by manufacturers? What they say is very surprising. They say that the huge quantity of barium purchased was to be kept in the godown. It was not for manufacture [of crackers]. Why have they kept them in the godown?" a Bench led by Justice M.R. Shah asked.

The court remarked that it might even order the seizure of the chemicals from the manufacturers.

The court was hearing a



Unhealthy fumes: Barium, which is used to produce green sparks in firecrackers, is a toxic chemical. ■ FILE PHOTO

plea by petitioners, including Delhi-based student Arjun Gopal, about the continued violation of the 2018 Supreme Court ban on the use of barium and other chemicals in firecrackers. The court said "noisy" celebrations are replete with

"joint crackers" even though it was banned.

CBI probe

On September 29, the court had referred to a preliminary inquiry report submitted by the CBI into the firecracker industry, including in Tamil

Nadu, which revealed rampant violation of the top court's ban on the use of toxic ingredients in the products. The court had ordered the Joint Director of the CBI, in Chennai, to conduct a "detailed" probe in an order in March 2020.

The agency had filed a report in a sealed cover in the court. The court said the agency report had shown that chemical analysis on samples of finished and semi-finished firecrackers and raw materials revealed barium content. The court had said that loose quantities of barium were purchased from the market.

"We cannot celebrate at the cost of the lives of others," the court said. It scheduled the next hearing on October 26.

LPG price hiked by ₹15 a cylinder

Petrol cost goes up by 30 paise a litre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) was on Wednesday hiked by ₹15 a cylinder, while petrol and diesel rates saw their steepest increase in recent weeks, pushing prices to record levels across the country.

Rates of both subsidised and non-subsidised LPG were hiked, taking the increase in rates since July to



LPG now costs ₹899.5 per cylinder in Delhi.

₹90 for a 14.2 kg cylinder.

Cooking gas now costs ₹899.50 a cylinder in Delhi and Mumbai and ₹926 in Kolkata, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

A 5-kg LPG cylinder now costs ₹502.

This is the fourth increase in LPG prices since July. Rates were increased by ₹25.5 a cylinder in July, followed by a ₹25 hike each on August 17 and September 1.

Alongside, petrol price was increased by 30 paise a litre and diesel by 35 paise.

Seven-year high

This is the steepest daily increase in recent weeks and follows international oil prices touching a seven-year high.

The petrol price in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level

of ₹102.94 a litre and to ₹108.96 in Mumbai, the notification showed. Diesel rates, too, touched a record high of ₹91.42 a litre in Delhi and ₹99.17 in Mumbai.

Prices differ from State to State depending on the incidence of local taxes.

The relentless increase in fuel prices has been criticised by the Opposition parties which have demanded that the government cut record excise duty on the two fuels to give relief to consumers.

The government has so far not agreed to the demand.

CPI(M) opposes changes proposed to Forest Act

Letter sent to Environment Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Centre's proposal to amend portions of the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) has drawn criticism from the CPI(M). The Environment Ministry has invited comments and suggestions on the proposed amendments which are publicly available as a "consultation paper" on its website.

Brinda Karat, CPI(M) Polit Bureau member, on Wednesday wrote to Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav that the proposed amendments appeared less about conserving forests and addressing environmental concerns and more to "facilitate takeover of forest land and make it cheaper and easier for corporates, intending to take the benefits of privatisation".

The proposals appeared to dilute the rights of the States to notify forests thereby further centralising authority in the Centre, she said. Currently, States have the authority to evolve their own criteria and declare tracts of lands as "deemed forest".

Several States, however, are yet to furnish such criteria.

Tribal rights

The consultation paper, Ms. Karat said, made no mention on protecting the rights of tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers in any of the amendments proposed though the "direction of amendments proposed" would directly impact the rights granted under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

Many items in e-auction find no takers

Saturday is the last day to bid for the gifts given to the Prime Minister

DAMINI NATH NEW DELHI

From Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu's badminton racket priced at ₹80 lakh to a painting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with former United States President Donald Trump priced at ₹3.5 lakh, at least 162 items among the gifts given to Mr. Modi that are on auction had received no bids on the second last day for bidding.

As on Wednesday evening, the auction of 1,348 items at pmmementos.gov.in found no takers for some of the featured items, including some Olympics gear gifted to the Prime Minister. A Culture Ministry official said 1,083 items had already been bid upon as of Monday morning. A search for items with zero bids on the website showed 162 items as of 6 p.m. on Wednesday.



For sale: Mementos given by Olympians are on display at the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi. ■ PTI

A white stole signed by the Indian Tokyo 2020 contingent (₹90 lakh), bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain's boxing gloves (₹80 lakh) and hockey sticks auto-

graphed by the men's and women's hockey teams (₹80 lakh each) were among the items yet to receive any bids. Many stoles and portraits, including one of Mr. Modi

with his mother, have also found no takers yet.

However, many of these items had received bids of multiple crores each during the first week of the e-auction that started on September 17 - Mr. Modi's birthday, but those were found to be disingenuous and removed, another official said.

High bids for javelin

Meanwhile, the javelin used by gold medallist Neeraj Chopra had received two bids, taking its going price from the base of ₹1 crore to ₹1,00,50,000 as on Wednesday evening.

This was the third such auction of gifts given to Mr. Modi and bidding was set to go on till Thursday evening. Proceeds of the auction would go to the Namami Gange Mission, according to the Culture Ministry.



Veteran actor Arvind Trivedi passes away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI

Veteran actor Arvind Trivedi, best known for playing Ravan on the popular 1986 television series *Ramayana*, died late on Tuesday following a heart attack. He was in his early 80s.

According to the actor's nephew, Kaustubh Trivedi, the actor had been unwell for a long time owing to age-related health issues.

The actor also featured in *Vikram Aur Betaal* (1985) and the 1998 Gujarati feature film *Desh Re Joya Dada Pardesh Joya*.

THE CROSSWORD + 13371 Display keystrokes of genius. Type your answers in our online grids: @ <https://qr.go.page.link/jjptn> SCAN TO PLAY

(set by Neyantha)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

- ACROSS**
- His cot length's designed to fit some sleepwear (12)
 - Some eat lantanas to get to the American city (7)
 - Sugar-rich foods get the husband to replace wife's linen (6)
 - Goes to the other side again after making scorers circle the London district (9)
 - Court story from the criminal - one to accept as true in hearing? (5)
 - Umpire's decision possibly linked to the collapse of one of the

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 13370

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Dharma protects

'Dharmo rakshati rakshitah', it is said. That means if we protect dharma, then dharma in turn protects us. There are rules we have to follow in life. It is like adhering to lane traffic on a highway. Violation of lane rules could lead to accidents. Jainavalkya Smriti says that a slip from dharma leads to hardship. We have a dharma for each period in our lives. Our elders have laid down rules for us. It is beneficial to follow these rules, said Kidambi Narayanan, in a discourse.

After all, they would have been witness to the results of non adherence to dharma, and would, therefore, have framed rules accordingly. So, it is best we follow what was codified on the basis of past observation and experience. As we climb the ladder of success, it is good to keep in mind that if we go against dharma, we could fall. The higher we go, the greater the injury, should we fall.

Dharma falls into many categories - sadharana dharma which is common to all. Then there is visesha dharma. This is the dharma a person has to follow because of some high position that he holds. Sometimes it happens that one's sadharana dharma might clash with visesha dharma. In such cases, visesha dharma takes precedence over sadharana dharma. But how do we know what is dharma, and what we have to follow? The god of dharma was born as Yudhishthira, but even Yudhishthira had questions about dharma. To answer these questions, Krishna tells him to go to Bhishma. Bhishma is on his bed of arrows, awaiting death. Although Bhishma was a man with great moral courage and determination, unfortunately, in his old age he had to stand on the side of adharma. He had to be with the Kauravas and had to fight the Pandavas, although the latter's claims were legitimate. Bhishma tells Yudhishthira about dharma.

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MARKET WATCH

| | 06-10-2021 | % CHANGE |
|-----------|------------|----------|
| Sensex | 59,190 | -0.93 |
| US Dollar | 74.98 | -0.72 |
| Gold | 45,618 | -0.32 |
| Brent oil | 81.05 | -2.17 |

NIFTY 50

| | PRICE | CHANGE |
|-------------------|----------|---------|
| Adani Ports | 724.00 | -19.95 |
| Asian Paints | 3213.25 | -42.50 |
| Axis Bank | 778.25 | -3.65 |
| Bajaj Auto | 3770.05 | -93.95 |
| Bajaj Finserv | 17616.60 | -230.90 |
| Bajaj Finance | 7735.15 | 10.95 |
| Bharti Airtel | 691.40 | -7.85 |
| BPL | 447.20 | 3.35 |
| Britannia Ind. | 3938.60 | 56.40 |
| Cipla | 913.45 | -21.10 |
| Coal India | 192.85 | -5.10 |
| Divis Lab | 5136.55 | -81.30 |
| Dr Reddys Lab | 4956.60 | -78.00 |
| Eicher Motors | 2728.95 | -31.15 |
| Grasim Ind. | 1599.00 | -28.00 |
| HCL Tech | 1275.45 | -29.70 |
| HDFC | 2750.95 | 9.50 |
| HDFC Bank | 1614.90 | 19.45 |
| HDFC Life | 725.65 | -7.50 |
| Hero MotoCorp | 2798.15 | -46.40 |
| Hindalco | 475.90 | -19.40 |
| Hind Unilever | 2686.05 | -22.60 |
| ICICI Bank | 689.50 | -7.60 |
| IndusInd Bank | 1131.85 | -36.75 |
| Infosys | 1673.55 | -19.25 |
| Indian Oil Corp. | 130.10 | 0.20 |
| ITC | 231.25 | -3.45 |
| JSW Steel | 659.25 | -20.10 |
| Kotak Bank | 1955.75 | -26.60 |
| L&T | 1695.05 | -21.65 |
| M&M | 834.10 | -8.95 |
| Maruti Suzuki | 7199.25 | -59.00 |
| Nestle India Ltd. | 19157.15 | -238.40 |
| NTPC | 143.30 | -2.10 |
| ONGC | 168.10 | 4.45 |
| PowerGrid Corp. | 187.60 | -2.35 |
| Reliance Ind. | 2559.85 | -49.35 |
| SBI Life | 1212.05 | -49.90 |
| State Bank | 457.20 | -7.50 |
| Shree Cement | 28109.75 | -656.70 |
| Sun Pharma | 800.60 | -19.90 |
| Tata Consumer | 820.65 | 19.20 |
| Tata Motors | 336.05 | -8.90 |
| Tata Steel | 1279.90 | -36.95 |
| TCS | 3810.90 | -22.40 |
| Tech Mahindra | 1385.65 | -27.40 |
| Titan | 2147.65 | -45.00 |
| UltraTech Cement | 7363.00 | -101.00 |
| WIPAC | 727.30 | 12.65 |
| Wipro | 635.75 | -11.10 |

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on October 06

| CURRENCY | TT BUY | TT SELL |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| US Dollar | 74.78 | 75.10 |
| Euro | 86.28 | 86.65 |
| British Pound | 101.42 | 101.86 |
| Japanese Yen (100) | 67.10 | 67.39 |
| Chinese Yuan | 11.60 | 11.65 |
| Swiss Franc | 80.44 | 80.78 |
| Singapore Dollar | 54.90 | 55.14 |
| Canadian Dollar | 59.12 | 59.40 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 17.85 | 17.95 |

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Mercedes-Benz sales almost doubles in Q3

MUMBAI Mercedes-Benz India said its quarterly sales (July-September) increased 99% year-on-year to 4,101 units. "We are cautiously optimistic with our sales outlook for the upcoming months," said Martin Schwenk, MD and CEO.

Good Glamm buys The Moms Co. for ₹500 cr.

NEW DELHI The Good Glamm Group on Wednesday said it has acquired direct-to-consumer (D2C) mother and baby products brand The Moms Co. While the company did not divulge the financial details of the deal, a source told *The Hindu* that the value of the transaction was about ₹500 crore.

Crypto firm CoinSwitch raises \$260 million

BENGALURU CoinSwitch Kuber, a crypto-asset platform, said it closed a \$260 million Series C funding round from Andreessen Horowitz (a16z), Coinbase Ventures and existing investors. This makes it a unicorn, valued at \$1.9 billion in over 14 months of starting operations in India, the company claimed.

Swiggy unveils timelines for ESOP liquidity

BENGALURU Food delivery platform Swiggy said its employees holding ESOP would be allowed to tender shares in two liquidity events in July 2022 and July 2023. The entire exercise would be worth \$35-40 million. Swiggy commissioned its second ESOP liquidity programme via secondary sale in November last year.

Cabinet clears ₹4,445-cr. textile parks

Plan entails establishing 7 Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks over a 5-year period

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE / DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the setting up of seven Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks at an outlay of ₹4,445 crore.

The mega parks scheme will include brownfield and greenfield projects, spread over five years, said Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal.

The parks would be developed by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) owned by the Central and State governments and would get two kinds of support. Develop-



Stitching livelihoods: The parks are expected to generate 7 lakh direct jobs and 14 lakh indirect jobs. •BIJOY GHOSH

ment Capital Support, aimed at helping develop infrastructure, would fund 30% of the project cost with a cap of

₹500 crore for greenfield projects and ₹200 crore for brownfield projects. A separate Competitiveness Incen-

tive Support would be limited to ₹300 crore per park.

'TN, Gujarat interested'

As many as 10 States including Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Gujarat had already shown interest, Textiles Secretary Upendra Prasad Singh told *The Hindu*. States offering the cheapest land (contiguous and encumbrance-free land of minimum 1,000 acres) and facilities such as adequate electricity and water would be selected through a transparent challenge route.

The SPV would select a

Master Developer to set up and maintain the park for a specified period. Of the park's area, 50% would be earmarked for manufacturing activity, 20% for utilities, and 10% set aside for commercial development.

The parks are expected to generate 7 lakh direct jobs and provide indirect jobs to almost 14 lakh people.

Mr. Singh said industries in the parks would comprise four categories - units investing ₹300 crore or more, units investing ₹100-300 crore, investors of less than ₹100 crore and tenant units.

Asian nations asked to eschew trade barriers

UN ESCAP, ADB urge digital processes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Batting for trade openness, the UN ESCAP and the ADB on Wednesday jointly asked Asian nations to refrain from imposing trade restrictions including non-tariff barriers, stressing in a report that the impact of protectionist measures had never been positive for the global economy.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Asian De-

velopment Bank (ADB) also made a case for promoting digital and paperless trade procedures by the Asian nations in view of the supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Countries should refrain from using export restrictions and other non-tariff measures," they said in the biennial report.

If countries quickened implementation of digital trade schemes, average trade costs could drop by more than 13%, they added.

Moody's raises outlook for 18 firms, banks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Wednesday raised the rating outlook for 18 Indian corporates and banks, including Reliance Industries, Infosys, SBI and Axis Bank, to 'stable' from 'negative'.

This follows the upgrade by the U.S.-based rating agency in India's sovereign rating outlook to 'stable' from 'negative' on Tuesday. The agency had affirmed the sovereign rating at 'Baa3'.

IOC to set up ₹3,200-cr. R&D unit: Ramakumar

Headcount to double to 1,000

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOC) will set up a new research and development (R&D) centre entailing in-

vestments to the tune of ₹3,200 crore at Faridabad in Haryana, a top official said.

"The centre will be ready by 2023. It will also have five centres of excellence," said S.S.V. Ramakumar, director, R&D, planning and business development. With this, the total research and development headcount will double

to 1,000. The centre would conduct research into various areas, including renewable energy.

He said IOC's flagship INDMAX Technology, had been successfully licensed to its first overseas client Naftna Industrija Srbije (NIS) at Pancevo Refinery, Serbia, thereby creating history of any PSU becoming a refining-technology exporter. "Discussions are now on with six more refineries in the Asia-Pacific for licensing this technology."

FM downplays risks from Evergrande, Fed moves

'Govt., RBI watching for taper tantrum'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman downplayed fears of global contagion from China's Evergrande crisis and said the central bank and the government were keeping a close watch to cope with any 'taper tantrum' risks arising from the U.S. Federal Reserve's likely shift in policy stance.

Without naming China, she also red-flagged a growing trend of smaller countries being driven into a debt trap that threatened their sovereignty.

"I am sure there will be, but there will be this larger issue of debt sustainability, sovereignty and how smaller countries are facing a very trying and challenging situation when these two extremes are forced upon them," she said at the opening session at ICRIER's annual G20 conference.

Stressing that India and the world had learnt lessons from the 2008 global financial crisis, Ms. Sitharaman said she wasn't sure if the Evergrande crisis would figure in the upcoming G20 summit. "But without specifically referring to the G20 or any one particular country, it can be seen that globally, the sense of worry may be there but the fear that this is certainly going to



Nirmala Sitharaman

hit us, is not there," she said in reply to a query from NITI Aayog vice chairperson Rajiv Kumar on China's real estate sector's challenges spilling over to global markets.

'Debt trap'

"Specifically, not Evergrande, but debt sustainability is an issue. Which I am sure every global forum will have to address and talk about; particularly, debts which are being given, which also bring the sovereignty of a nation into the picture and threatens that; then it is a matter of serious concern and many of the countries are sitting up to say: What is happening around in the world?" Ms. Sitharaman remarked.

Emphasising that India had learnt its lessons from the way it handled the last taper tantrum which made it one of the 'fragile five' economies, she said: "Together with the Reserve Bank of India, we are definitely keeping a watch."

ZEEL moves NCLAT against EGM request

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEEL) on Wednesday approached the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) against the requisition of minority shareholders Invesco and OFI Global China Fund to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to discuss various issues, including removal of managing director Punit Goenka.

The media major has challenged the orders of Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal, which on Tuesday had directed Zee Entertainment to file a reply over the petition filed by its minority shareholders by October 7 (Thursday), the next date of hearing.

3F Oil Palm to invest ₹1,750 cr. in 2 NE States

Firm to raise crop on 62,000 hectares

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Integrated oil palm development firm 3F Oil Palm plans to invest ₹1,750 crore in oil palm cultivation in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Outlining expansion plans for the North East in the backdrop of the Centre announcing National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), it said cultivated area in Arunachal Pradesh would rise from 2,000 hectares to 32,000 hectares over five years.

In the same period, it would be investing up to ₹750 crore and create 3,000 jobs by enhancing the cultivated land.

In Assam, the plan is to add 30,000 hectares of cultivated land and provide employment for 2,000 peo-



Sanjay Goenka

ple with an investment of ₹1,000 crore. Consequently, oil palm area under cultivation in the two States would increase in the next five years by about 31 times to 62,000 hectares, it said.

MD and CEO Sanjay Goenka said, "We are geared up to expand operations in more States that offer immense potential in oil palm cultivation to maintain a leadership position."

Domestic air-passenger traffic rises 2-3% in Sept. from August, says Icra

'High ATF prices, low capacity utilisation to hit performance'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

India's domestic air-passenger traffic grew marginally by 2-3% to about 69 lakh in September as compared with about 67 lakh in August, credit rating agency Icra said on Wednesday.

When compared year-on-year (Y-o-Y), air-passenger traffic growth stood at about 74% in the month under review over September 2020.

Airlines witnessed about 61,100 departures in September as compared with 39,628 in the same month of 2020, it said, adding that on a sequential basis, the number of departures in the month gone by were higher by about 6%, as COVID-19 infections demonstrated a downward trajectory.



More takers: Airlines saw 61,100 departures in September as against 39,628 in the same month of 2020. •S. SIVA SARAVANAN

The average number of passengers per flight during September was 113, against an average of 117 passengers per flight in August.

Icra said that aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices have seen a sharp increase of 78.6% on a Y-o-Y basis till October 2021, this coupled

with low capacity utilisation of aircraft fleet will continue to weigh on financial performance of Indian carriers in FY22.

Furthermore, the credit profile of most Indian carriers continues to be characterised by a weak liquidity position, it added.

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Crisis in the Strait

By sending a record number of military jets towards Taiwan over the last week, China has shown a new intensity and military sophistication as tensions rise around the island

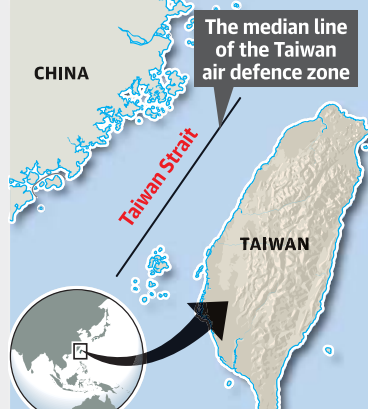
Taiwan's air defence identification zone covers an area including the Taiwan Strait and a large swathe of the Chinese mainland. Taiwan considers jets crossing an unofficial median line between China and the island as an incursion

■ The U.S. called China's latest actions "risky" and "destabilising," while China responded that the U.S. selling weapons to Taiwan and its ships navigating the Taiwan Strait were provocative

■ As China was conducting its most recent flights, 17 ships from six navies — the U.S., Britain, Japan, Netherlands, Canada and New Zealand — including three aircraft carriers and a Japanese helicopter carrier, carried out joint manoeuvres off Japan

Deep divisions

1. China and Taiwan were divided during a civil war in the 1940s, and Beijing insists the self-ruled island will be reunified with the mainland at some point
2. The island has its own Constitution, elected leaders, and about 300,000 active troops
3. Only a few countries have recognised Taiwan. The U.S. has no official ties with the island



Over the past year, the PLA has flown more than 750 sorties of jets near Taiwan

Feb. 1
38 aircraft

Feb. 2
39 aircraft

Feb. 3
16 aircraft

Feb. 4
56 aircraft

SINCE FEBRUARY 1, CHINA HAS FLOWN 149 MILITARY AIRCRAFT INTO TAIWAN'S AIR DEFENCE ZONE

China tensions worst in 40 years: Taiwan

Beijing has the ability to start a war but would weigh various outcomes, says Taiwan Defence Minister

ANANTH KRISHNAN

Days after China's air force sent a record 56 aircraft towards Taiwan, Taiwanese Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng described relations across the Strait as the most strained in 40 years.

"It is the toughest situation I have seen in more than 40 years of my military life," the Defence Minister, also a former General, was quoted as telling the legislature, amid stepped up aerial intrusions from China's air force.

The People's Liberation Army Air Force sent a record 38 aircraft into the Air Defence Identification Zone on Friday, October 1, China's National Day. Another 39 aircraft followed on Saturday, with a record 56 aircraft in two waves on Monday.

The Taiwanese Defence Minister, who was speaking to the legislature as it revised a defence spending budget,

said China had the ability to start a war but would weigh various outcomes, the costs and consequences, before launching one. He said Taiwan had to be able to defend itself rather than rely on others, referring to U.S. commitments to defend the island.

Biden-Xi talk

Separately on Tuesday, U.S. President Joe Biden said he had spoken to Chinese President Xi Jinping on the Taiwan issue and both "agreed to abide by the agreement", ostensibly referring to past U.S.-China understandings on Taiwan.

Mr. Biden also appeared to be referring to their phone call last month.

The U.S. State Department said it was "very concerned" over the air intrusions, which it described as China's "provocative military activity near Taiwan, which is destabilising, risks miscalcula-



Chiu Kuo-cheng

tions, and undermines regional peace and stability."

That statement drew a sharp response from China's Foreign Ministry.

"Taiwan belongs to China and the U.S. is in no position to make irresponsible remarks," spokesperson Hua Chunying said, saying the remarks "send an extremely wrong and irresponsible signal".

Ms. Hua also hit out at U.S. arms sales "including the

launch of a \$750 million arms sale plan to Taiwan, the landing of U.S. military aircraft in Taiwan and frequent sailing of US warships across the Taiwan Strait".

The Taiwan tensions are expected to figure in talks this week between U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and China's top diplomat and Politburo member Yang Jiechi, as they meet in Switzerland.

The March meeting in Alaska between the two, which was the first high-level engagement with China after the Biden administration took office, was marked by an unusual rancorous public exchange of words played out in front of the cameras.

Challenge to continue

In July, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, who is currently on a visit to India, was presented with two lists of demands by

Chinese officials in talks in Tianjin, as relations between both countries continue to remain strained amid differences on a range of issues from trade and technology to Hong Kong and Xinjiang, besides the Taiwan issue.

Speaking to the media in New Delhi on Wednesday, Ms. Sherman said the U.S. will challenge China where it must, compete where there is a level playing field and cooperate where it can.

"We will challenge China where we must, we want to make sure there's a free, open, interconnected Indo-Pacific, as does India," she said.

"And that means that China doesn't get to decide who gets to use those waterways and who doesn't. They have sent sorties of airplanes across Taiwan's path over the last couple of days.... We find that to be a very dangerous action."

SPD to open coalition talks with 'kingmakers'

Socialists, Greens and liberals have a clear mandate: Scholz

REUTERS
BERLIN

The centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) moved a step closer on Wednesday to heading Germany's next government, signing up the Greens and business-friendly Free Democrats (FDP) for coalition talks following an inconclusive national election.

The SPD's candidate for chancellor, Olaf Scholz, said the talks would begin on Thursday following what he called very constructive preliminary discussions. The electorate had given the three parties a mandate to form a government, he added.

The September 26 federal ballot, in which no party



Olaf Scholz

won an overall majority and the SPD narrowly relegated outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives into second place, has kicked off a round of horse-trading.

Both the SPD and the conservatives have courted the two smaller parties to try to secure power in a potentially

drawn-out coalition-building process.

At stake is Germany's political future after 16 years with Ms. Merkel at the helm, and the extent of its willingness to follow her lead on engaging on global issues.

FDP leader Christian Lindner said his party, which has a greater policy overlap with the conservatives, shared with the Greens "a mutual conviction that there must be renewal in this country". The FDP had agreed to talks with the SPD to try to move Germany forwards, he added.

Armin Laschet, the conservative bloc's leader said his party respected that decision but also stood "ready as partners for talks".

ASEAN meet may shun Myanmar junta chief

'Military has backtracked on promises'

REUTERS
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

Southeast Asian countries are discussing not inviting the head of Myanmar's junta to a summit later this month, due to a lack of progress on an agreed roadmap to restore peace in the strife-torn country, a regional envoy said on Wednesday.

The junta's inaction on a five-point plan it agreed in April with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was "tantamount to backtracking", Erywan Yusof, the bloc's special envoy to Myanmar, told a news conference.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since a February 1 coup led by military chief Min Aung Hlaing that ended a decade of tentative democracy and the return of military rule has prompted out-

rage at home and abroad.

Mr. Erywan, the second foreign minister of ASEAN chair Brunei, said the bloc was "deep in discussions" about not inviting the junta to participate in a virtual summit on October 26-28, after the issue was raised by Malaysia and other member countries.

No progress

"Up until today there has been no progress on the implementation of the five-point consensus, and this has raised a concern," Mr. Erywan said.

Myanmar junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun did not respond to calls. Last week he told a news conference that Myanmar was cooperating with ASEAN "without compromising the country's sovereignty".

SPORT

Sarita waltzes into the semis

Anshu also in last four with confident victories

WRESTLING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
OSLO

Sarita Mor shocked defending champion Linda Morais en route to the semifinals while Anshu Malik too advanced to the last-four stage of the wrestling World Championship here on Wednesday.

Sarita, the reigning Asian champion, had a tough opening bout against the 2019 World Champion from Canada but came out trumps with a tactical 8-2 win in the 59kg pre-quarterfinals.

Quick take-down

A quick take-down move, followed by an expose together with some superb defence put Sarita 7-0 ahead by the time first period was over.

Later, the quarterfinal against Germany's Sandra Paruszewski turned out to be



Sarita Mor. FILE PHOTO

a tougher bout, in which the two wrestlers were largely restricted to a standing fight which took a lot out of them. There was only one point-scoring move, a take down effected by Sarita late in the match and that sealed the outcome.

Hardly troubled

In the 57kg, young Anshu lived up to the expectations with confident victories. She

was hardly troubled by Kazakhstan's Nilufar Raimova, whom she beat by technical superiority and later outwitted Mongolia's Davaachimeg Erkhembayar 5-1 in the quarterfinals.

The results: 53kg: Repechage: Luisa Elizabeth Melendres (Ecu) bt Pooja Jatt by fall.

57kg: Quarterfinals: Anshu Malik bt Davaachimeg Erkhembayar (Mon) 5-1; **Pre-quarterfinals:** Anshu bt Nilufar Raimova (Kaz) by technical technical superiority.

59kg: Quarterfinals: Sarita Mor bt Sandra Paruszewski (Ger) 3-1; **Pre-quarterfinals:** Sarita bt Linda Morais (Can) 8-2.

68kg: Qualification: Anastasia Lavrenchuk (Ukr) bt Ritika Malik by fall.

72kg: Quarterfinals: Masako Furuich (Jpn) bt Divya Kakran by technical superiority; **Qualification:** Divya bt Kseniia Burakova (Rus) by fall.

76kg: Repechage: Kiran bt Aysegül Özbege (Tur) 2-0.

India keeps its top spot despite a blank day

SHOOTING

SPORTS BUREAU
LIMA

Vivaan Kapoor shot 116 and missed the trap final by two points in the Junior World Championship shooting in here in Peru.

Scores of 21 and 22 in the second and fourth rounds pulled Vivaan from the top six, as he otherwise had good scores of 25, 24 and 24.

Incidentally, Juan Antonio Garcia of Spain, who made the last entry for the final with 118 went on to win the gold with a three point margin over the qualification topper Erdogan Akkaya of Turkey.

It was a blank day for India in terms of medals, but it continued to stay on top of the medals table comfortably with eight gold, six silver and three bronze. USA followed with four gold, six sil-

ver and four bronze.

India enhanced its chances for more medals as Adarsh Singh (294) and Udhayveer Sidhu (292) stayed on top at the half-way stage of the 25-metre rapid fire pistol event.

The results:

Junior men: Trap: 1. Andres Garcia (Esp) 41 (120); 2. Erdogan Akkaya (Tur) 38 (122); 3. Juan Garcia (Esp) 30 (118); 4. Vivaan Kapoor 116; 9. Aakash Kushwaha 114; 17. Bakhtyaruddin Malek 112; 19. Shardul Vihan 110.

Junior women: 50m rifle 3-position: 1. Julia Canestrelli (Fra) 455.7 (1178); 2. Eszter Meszaros (Hun) 454.3 (1173); 3. Mary Carolyn Tucker (US) 443.8 (1178); 11. Ashi Chouksey 1164; 17. Ayushi Podder 1162; 28. Nischal 1152.

Trap: 1. Oriane Froment (Fra) 41 (116); 2. Ryann Phillips (US) 40 (111); 3. Giorgia Lenticchia (Ita) 30 (113); 16. Kirti Gupta 104; 20. Divya Singh 93; 21. Aadya Tripathi 89.

Duo win Nobel Chemistry Prize for work on catalysts

They created an eco-friendly tool to build molecules

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STOCKHOLM

Germany's Benjamin List and U.S.-based David MacMillan on Wednesday won the Nobel Chemistry Prize for developing a tool to build molecules which has helped make chemistry more environmentally friendly.

Their tool, which they developed independently of each other in 2000, can be used to control and accelerate chemical reactions, exerting a big impact on drugs research.

Prior to their work, scientists believed there were only two types of catalysts — metals and enzymes.

The new technique, which relies on small organic molecules and which is called "asymmetric organocatalysis" is widely used in pharmaceuticals, allowing drug makers to streamline the production of medicines for depression and respira-

tory infections, among others.

Organocatalysts allow several steps in a production process to be performed in an unbroken sequence, considerably reducing waste in chemical manufacturing, the Nobel committee at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

Dr. List and Dr. MacMillan, both 53, will share the 10-million-kronor (\$1.1-million, one-million-euro) prize. "I thought somebody was making a joke. I was sitting at breakfast with my wife," Dr. List told reporters over telephone during a press conference after the prize was announced.

Heads-up note

In past years, he said his wife has joked that he should keep an eye on his phone for a call from Sweden.

"But today we didn't even make the joke," Dr. List said.

"It's hard to describe what you feel in that moment, but it was a very special moment that I will never forget."

Asked about what the prize would mean for his future as a researcher, Dr. List promised he had "a few more plans".

Dr. MacMillan, born in Scotland, is a professor at Princeton University in the U.S., while Dr. List is a director at the Max Planck Institute in Germany.

"This work requires catalysts, which are substances that control and accelerate chemical reactions, without becoming part of the final product," it added.

Since their discovery, developments in the field can "almost be likened to a gold rush," with Dr. List and Dr. MacMillan designing "multitudes of cheap and stable organocatalysts," the science body noted.

UAE claims to have 'overcome' COVID crisis

Fewer than 200 cases this month

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ABU DHABI

The United Arab Emirates declared on Wednesday that it has overcome the COVID crisis, recording its lowest number of infections this month since summer last year.

"I wanted to assure you all that our lives must go back to normal," said Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed in footage published by the official WAM news agency.

"There are some changes in how we work, in our families' studies or our personal lives... but we thank God for everything," said the de facto UAE ruler.

"We also thank God that we have overcome this crisis... safely, in good health and with an experience, for which we paid the price, but we learnt a lot."

The seven emirates of the UAE recorded fewer than 200 new cases of COVID this month — the lowest figure since August last year.

While life in the UAE has largely returned to normal, it retains strict rules on wearing masks and social distancing. Dubai is counting on the six-month Expo 2020 Dubai — which opened on October 1 after a one-year delay — to attract millions of visitors and boost its pandemic-hit economy.

Facebook blames outage on error during maintenance

It triggered a second problem making things worse

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

The global outage that knocked Facebook and its other platforms offline for hours was caused by an error during routine maintenance, the company said.

Santosh Janardhan, Facebook's vice-president of infrastructure, said in a blog post that Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp going dark was "caused not by malicious activity, but an er-

ror of our own making."

The problem occurred as engineers were carrying out day to day work on Facebook's global backbone network — the computers, routers and software in its data centers around the world, along with the fiber-optic cables connecting them.

"During one of these routine maintenance jobs, a command was issued with the intention to assess the availability of global back-

bone capacity, which unintentionally took down all the connections," Mr. Janardhan said.

That change also triggered a second problem that made things worse by making it impossible to reach Facebook's servers even though they were operational. Engineers scrambled to fix the problem on site, but this took time because of the extra layers of security, Mr. Janardhan said.

IN BRIEF

Bengaluru United held by Rajasthan

BENGALURU
FC Bengaluru United was held to a 1-1 draw by Rajasthan United in the 2021 I-League qualifiers here on Wednesday. **The result:** Rajasthan United 1 (Sukhjit Singh 78) drew with FC Bengaluru United 1 (Pedro Javier 42).

SL women's cricket tour of Pakistan postponed

COLOMBO
The hurriedly-arranged Sri Lankan women cricket team's tour of Pakistan scheduled later this month has been indefinitely postponed, head coach Hashan Tillakaratne said on Wednesday. The Sri Lankan team was to leave for Pakistan for the tour on October 15. "It is disappointing that the series didn't come through, it has been cancelled from Pakistan end because they had some logistic issues," Tillakaratne told reporters. PTI

Bhuvneshwar dents RCB's quest for second spot, gives SRH third win

With 13 required in the final over, the seamer outwits de Villiers as Hyderabad edges a thriller; Williamson stars with the bat and on the field; Maxwell's knock in vain

IPL 2021

SPORTS BUREAU

Royal Challengers Bangalore's quest for second spot all but ended with a four-run defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday.

Only a crushing defeat for CSK against PBKS and a thumping win for RCB over DC can take Virat Kohli's side to the second spot.

Chasing 142, RCB needed 13 from the final over with AB de Villiers still at the crease. But Bhuvneshwar Kumar, despite being hit for a six off the fourth ball by the South African, held his nerve to lead SRH to only its third win of the campaign.

RCB lost Kohli early, out leg-before while trying to hit Bhuvneshwar across the line. Dan Christian and K.S. Bharat fell cheaply too. But Maxwell (40, 25b, 3x4, 2x6) took charge, with Devdutt Padikkal (41, 52b, 4x4), playing se-

Next assignment

RCB: Oct. 8 vs DC, Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST
SRH: Oct. 8 vs MI, Abu Dhabi, 7.30 p.m. IST

cond fiddle.

Maxwell hit Rashid Khan out of the attack with two sixes over deep mid-wicket and long-on and a swept four.

But an off-balance Kane Williamson brilliantly ran the Aussie out with a direct hit from the cover region to turn the match on its head.

Padikkal couldn't shift gears and even the best efforts of Shabbaz Ahmed — two fours off Umran Malik in the 18th over — couldn't save the day.

Earlier, after being asked to bat first, Jason Roy top-scored for SRH with 44 (38b, 5x4), with the only bit of support coming from skipper Williamson (31, 29b, 4x4). The partnership was worth 70 runs for the second wicket.

Williamson was all class, hitting beautifully through the cover region, a boundary each off Mohammed Siraj and George Garton catching

the eye. Roy, shaky initially, found some rhythm with a couple of hits to the fence off Shabbaz and Harshal Patel. But from 50 for one after

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Jason Roy c & b Christian 44 (38b, 5x4), Abhishek Sharma c Maxwell b Garton 13 (10b, 1x4, 1x6), Kane Williamson b Harshal 31 (29b, 4x4), Priyam Garg c de Villiers b Christian 15 (11b, 1x6), Abdul Samad lbw b Chahal 1 (3b), Wriddhiman Saha c de Villiers b Harshal 10 (8b, 1x4), Jason Holder c Christian b Harshal 16 (13b, 2x4), Rashid Khan (not out) 7 (9b, 1x4); Extras (w-3, nb-1): 4; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 141.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-14 (Abhishek, 1.5 ov), 2-84 (Williamson, 11.3), 3-105 (Garg, 14.1), 4-107 (Roy, 14.6), 5-107 (Samad, 15.1), 6-124 (Saha, 17.2), 7-141 (Holder, 19.6).

RCB BOWLING
Siraj 3-0-17-0, Garton 2-0-29-1, Shabbaz 4-0-21-0, Harshal 4-0-33-3, Chahal 4-0-27-1, Christian 3-0-14-2.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS
Virat Kohli lbw b Bhuvneshwar 5 (4b, 1x4), Devdutt Padikkal c Samad b Rashid 41 (52b, 4x4), Dan Christian c Williamson b Kaul 1 (4b), K.S. Bharat c Saha b Umran 12 (10b, 1x4, 1x6), Glenn Maxwell run out 40 (25b, 3x4, 2x6), AB de Villiers (not out) 19 (13b, 1x4, 1x6), Shabbaz Ahmed c Williamson b Holder 14 (9b, 2x4), George Garton (not out) 2 (3b); Extras (lb-1, w-2): 3; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 137.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-6 (Kohli, 0.6), 2-18 (Christian, 3.2), 3-38 (Bharat, 6.5), 4-92 (Maxwell, 14.1), 5-109 (Padikkal, 16.5), 6-128 (Shabbaz 18.4).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Bhuvneshwar 4-0-25-1, Holder 4-0-27-1, Kaul 4-1-24-1, Umran 4-0-21-1, Rashid 4-0-39-1.
Toss: RCB; **MoM:** Williamson.
Sunrisers won by four runs.

Innings scan

| SRH | RCB |
|------|------|
| 46 | 52 |
| 14 | 12 |
| 2 | 4 |
| 50/1 | 37/2 |
| 7.05 | 6.85 |

six overs, SRH added just 31 from overs seven to 11.

In the 12th, Harshal got the prized wicket of Williamson, rearranging the Kiwi's stumps with an off-cutter.

Roy chugged along but didn't threaten to go big. Priyam Garg tried, lofting Yuzvendra Chahal for a six, but perished to Christian.

The Aussie then caught and bowled Roy before Chahal trapped Abdul Samad in front.

From 105 for two, SRH was reduced to 107 for five, with Christian (3-0-14-2) and Harshal (4-0-33-3) doing the damage.

But it was Williamson and Co. which had the last laugh.



Turning point: Williamson's superb direct hit caught Maxwell short. •SPORTZPICS/IPL

Super Kings will look to arrest the slump

Punjab Kings faces a must-win situation, needs to get everything right

SPORTS BUREAU

Winning is a lot about momentum. Particularly while entering the climactic phase of a high stakes competition.

After a stupendous run that saw it become the first team to qualify for the playoff, Chennai Super Kings (18 points from 13 matches) has suffered a slump of sorts, going down in its last two games.

Under the circumstances, M.S. Dhoni and his men will attempt to arrest the slide and get back on the highway to glory against Punjab Kings in their last game in Dubai on Thursday.

Punjab Kings (10 from 13) is a team that has discovered ways to lose from winning situations. Set batters have been unable to stay on and finish the job; the side has been consumed by the pressures of the chase.

Punjab Kings not just has to defeat CSK by a huge mar-



Well begun... While du Plessis and Rituraj have fired at the top of the order for CSK, Rahul and Mayank have given PBKS solid starts. •SPORTZPICS/IPL

gin to get its run-rate above that of Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians, but also hope both those sides lose their last matches.

Drakes for Curran
CSK has named West Indies' all-rounder Dominic Drakes as a replacement for Sam Curran, ruled out with a lower-back injury. Drakes is a left-handed batsman and left-arm medium-pacer.

Punjab Kings needs to get

everything right in this clash. Anil Kumble's men have shown some promise without getting all the pieces together.

Young leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh and the hard-hitting Shahrux Khan are all youngsters with talent.

Much focus will be on the in-form openers of both teams — Rituraj Gaikwad and Faf du Plessis and K.L. Rahul and Mayank Agarwal.

Last chance for KKR to seal playoff berth

Royals will be keen to bounce back and sign off with a win

SPORTS BUREAU

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) will look to take a step closer to a playoff berth when it faces Rajasthan Royals (RR) in Sharjah on Thursday. RR's loss against Mumbai Indians on Tuesday means it is pretty much out of the race.

The win against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) took KKR to 12 points and its net run rate to +0.294, the best among the teams eyeing the

POINTS TABLE

| Team | M | W | L | PTS | NRR |
|-------------------------|----|----|----|-----|--------|
| Delhi Capitals (Q) | 13 | 10 | 3 | 20 | 0.526 |
| Chennai Super Kings (Q) | 13 | 9 | 4 | 18 | 0.739 |
| Royal Challengers (Q) | 13 | 8 | 5 | 16 | -0.159 |
| Kolkata Knight Riders | 13 | 6 | 7 | 12 | 0.294 |
| Mumbai Indians | 13 | 6 | 7 | 12 | -0.048 |
| Punjab Kings | 13 | 5 | 8 | 10 | -0.241 |
| Rajasthan Royals | 13 | 5 | 8 | 10 | -0.737 |
| Sunrisers Hyderabad (E) | 13 | 3 | 10 | 6 | -0.422 |

After the RCB-SRH match on Oct. 6 Q: Qualified; E: Eliminated

final playoff berth. A win against RR will likely to ensure it finishes fourth.

However, if it loses, it will have to rely on SRH to beat Mumbai, in which case KKR should go through on NRR.

The Shakib factor

KKR has banked on all-round team effort. Against SRH, playing his first game of the second leg, Shakib Al Hasan made a mark, first by getting out Kane Williamson

with a direct hit and then with figures of one for 20. Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy continue to maintain a stranglehold through the middle overs.

In the UAE, KKR batters have hammered bowling attacks upfront. However, against SRH, Venkatesh Iyer and Rahul Tripathi were out early. KKR would hope that's an aberration.

On Wednesday, a social media post shared by KKR

■ In the UAE, the KKR batters have hammered bowling attacks upfront
■ Rajasthan's meek surrender against Mumbai is the exact opposite of its flashy win against Chennai

showed the injured duo of Andre Russell and Lockie Ferguson sweating it out in the nets. Should they return against the Royals, it will be a boost.

Meanwhile, Rajasthan's meek surrender against Mumbai was the exact opposite of its flashy win against Chennai. On a Sharjah wicket that played low and slow, some RR batters were guilty of playing across the line against length balls as it limped to 90 for nine, its third-lowest total in the IPL. Royals could consider playing an experienced Jaydev Unadkat in place of Kuldeep Yadav.

TODAY'S MATCHES

DUBAI, 3.30 P.M. IST

Head-to-head: CSK 15 | PBKS 9

In 2021: Played 1 | CSK 1 | PBKS 0

SHARJAH, 7.30 P.M. IST

Head-to-head: KKR 12 | RR 11

In 2021: Played 1 | KKR 0 | RR 1

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

Battle for the Caps

The players who are in the race for the coveted caps in IPL 2021:

| ORANGE | M | Runs | HS | SR | 50s/100s |
|-----------------------|----|------|----------|--------|----------|
| K.L. Rahul (PBKS) | 12 | 528 | 91 n.o. | 129.09 | 5/0 |
| Rituraj Gaikwad (CSK) | 13 | 521 | 101 n.o. | 138.93 | 3/1 |
| Shikhar Dhawan (DC) | 13 | 501 | 92 | 128.46 | 3/0 |
| Sanju Samson (RR) | 13 | 483 | 119 | 138.00 | 2/1 |

| PURPLE | M | Wkts | BBI | SR | 4W/5W |
|-----------------------|----|------|------|------|-------|
| Harshal Patel (RCB) | 13 | 29 | 5/27 | 10.0 | 1/1 |
| Avesh Khan (DC) | 13 | 22 | 3/13 | 13.3 | 0/0 |
| Jasprit Bumrah (MI) | 13 | 19 | 3/36 | 16.1 | 0/0 |
| Mohammed Shami (PBKS) | 13 | 18 | 3/21 | 16.2 | 0/0 |

Stats up to the RCB-SRH match on Oct. 6

England to tour Australia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON

The Joe Root-led England team has agreed to tour Australia for the Ashes, a leading daily has reported, ending weeks of speculation on their participation owing to a slew of COVID-19 restrictions in Australia.

The tour headed in the right direction following positive talks between players' representatives, ECB, Cricket Australia and Australian government.

TV PICKS

Australia Women vs India Women: 1st T20I, Sony Ten 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 2 p.m.
IPL 2021: Star Sports 1 & 5S Select 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m. & 7.30 p.m.
SAFF Championships: India vs Sri Lanka, Eurosport (SD & HD), 4.15 p.m.
UEFA Nations League: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Friday).

Abhishek and Jyothi triumph

ARCHERY

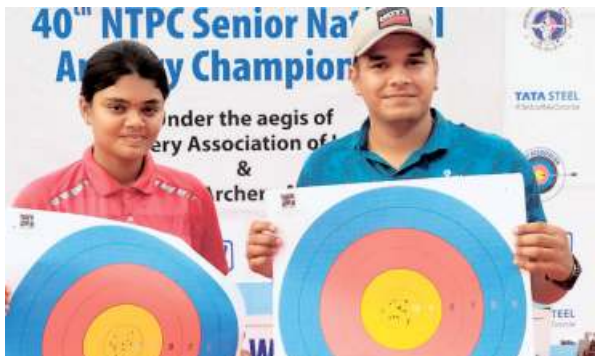
Y.B. SARANGI JAMSHEDPUR

In an unprecedented finish to the compound competitions, Abhishek Verma and V. Jyothi Surekha shot perfect scores of 150 in their respective gold medal matches to emerge as the men's and women's champions respectively at the 40th NTPC National archery championships here on Wednesday.

It was a commendable show from both the archers — who bagged a mixed team silver in the World championships in Yankton, USA, recently — as they overcame fatigue to give their best.

It was Jyothi's first 150 at the Nationals, while it was Abhishek's first on a podium setting at the domestic level.

Jyothi scored 15 consecutive 10s to record a 150-146 win over Muskan Kiran in the women's final. Jyothi maintained her composure to hit



Crack shots: Jyothi and Abhishek with the targets showing their impeccable display. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the yellow zone consistently. "It was tough. I was not able to sleep after coming from the USA. Still, I wanted to do well," said Jyothi.

Muskan had equalled Mexican Linda Ochoa-Anderson's women's World record of hitting 11Xs, including her last nine shots, while scoring 150 in her semifinal match against Raginee Marko.

Abhishek handled the pressure well to post a 150-

141 win over youngster Mohit in the men's summit clash.

The results: Compound: Men: Final: Abhishek Verma (Del) bt Mohit (Har) 150-141; **Third place:** Aman Saini (Del) bt Mohan Bhardwaj (SSCB) 145-143.

Women: Final: V. Jyothi Surekha (PSPB) bt Muskan Kiran (MP) 150-141; **Third place:** Raginee Marko (MP) bt Pragati (Del) 147-147 (Shoot-off: 10-9).

Mixed team: Final: AIP bt Delhi 155-152; **Third place:** Madhya Pradesh bt Maharashtra 157-154.

'We want to win the series at any cost'

Harmanpreet hopes to take momentum from ODIs into shortest format

INDIA IN AUS

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

The momentum is with the women in blue.

They won the final ODI against an Australian side that hadn't tasted defeat in three years, and then held the upper hand right through the Day/Night Test. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur is confident India could win the T20I series, which begins at Carrara on Thursday.

"We got the momentum in the ODI series and we hope to take that into the T20I series," Harmanpreet said at a virtual press conference. "If we could win all the three matches, we could also win the multi-format series. So we will go all out... we want to win the series at any cost."

She feels that such multi-format series benefit the players. "It is a good initiative by the ICC, BCCI and other boards," she said. "We



All set: Meg Lanning and Harmanpreet Kaur pose with the trophy for the T20I series. •TWITTER

could get to play ODIs, T20Is and Tests in the same series."

She could not be part of India's historic Day-Night Test against Australia because of a thumb injury. "It was very disappointing that I had to miss the Test," she said. "If there had been more days between the ODIs and Tests, I would have been able to play."

She admitted it was tough battling injuries one after

another of late, not to mention the problems caused by the pandemic. "I am much better now and am confident about my batting after the sessions at the nets too," she said.

"I can also field well now, which wasn't the case earlier."

The captain hopes the top-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues will be able to carry her great form from The Hundred, in which she was

the second-leading scorer and had a strike-rate of 150.90.

"She played really good cricket in The Hundred," Harmanpreet said. "She played her role perfectly for her side (Northern Superchargers). We hope she does it here too."

The teams (from):

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Yastika Bhatia, Shikha Pandey, Meghna Singh, Pooja Vastrakar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Richa Ghosh, Harleen Deol, Arundhati Reddy, Radha Yadav, and Renuka Singh.

Australia: Meg Lanning (Capt.), Darcie Brown, Maitlan Brown, Stella Campbell, Nicola Carey, Hannah Darlington, Ashleigh Gardner, Alyssa Healy, Tahlia McGrath, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Georgia Redmayne, Molly Strano, Annabel Sutherland, Tayla Vlaeminck, and Georgia Wareham.

Match starts at 2.10 p.m. IST.

India sweeps FIH annual awards, Belgium cries foul

HOCKEY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LAUSANNE

India swept the International Hockey Federation's annual awards on Wednesday, claiming all the top honours based on a voting system which was lambasted as a "failure" by men's Olympic champion Belgium, prompting the FIH to say that it would try to figure some associations did not cast their ballot.

Five Indian players and the head coaches of both the men's and women's teams in



Harmanpreet. •FILE PHOTO

Tokyo claimed the top honours across different categories after fetching the maximum votes. Harmanpreet Singh won the men's 'Player



Gurjit Kaur. •FILE PHOTO

of the Year' award and Gurjit Kaur was recognised as the best player in the women's section. Veteran P.R. Sreejesh and Savita Punia won

the best goalkeeper awards in the men's and women's section, while young striker Sharmila Devi (women) and Vivek Sagar Prasad (men) were adjudged best rising stars.

The drag-flick duo of Harmanpreet and Gurjit were the top-scorers in their respective team's stellar run at the Games. Men's team coach Graham Reid and women's coach Sjoerd Marijne were also voted the best.

Hockey Belgium reacted sharply to the announcement of the winners and questioned the process.

IN BRIEF



Raducanu ready for Indian Wells challenge

CALIFORNIA
US Open champion Emma Raducanu is ready to resume her tennis journey with her debut appearance at Indian Wells this week. She has a first round bye but would need to beat the winner of the match between Maria Camila Osorio Serrano and Aliaksandra Sasnovich in the second round to set up a mouth-watering clash with former World No.1 Simona Halep. AP

DELHI ROUND-UP

Akshay Saini sizzles for M-10 Academy

NEW DELHI
Akshay Saini's unbeaten 88 paved the way for M-10 Academy's seven-wicket victory over Mishra Sports Club in the Swatik Cup.

The scores: Mishra Sports Club 143 in 35.1 overs (Vikas Bidhuri 41, Suyash Sharma 3/12) lost to M-10 Academy 146/3 in 18.2 overs (Akshay Saini 88 n.o.).

Mohammad Shanib and Sameer Khan shine

Mohammad Shanib (5/23) and Sameer Khan (32 not out) helped Ravinder Fagna Academy beat Rohtak Road Gymkhana by eight wickets in the Push Academy (U-13) league.

In another match, Aahil Kachru's 72 was the highlight of Delhi Capitals' 75-run victory over Dream Chasers.

The scores: Rohtak Road Gymkhana 103 in 28.5 overs (Lavya Sekari 30, Mohammed Shanib 5/23) lost to Ravinder Fagna Academy 104/2 in 23.1 overs (Sameer Khan 32 n.o.), Delhi Capitals 205/4 in 40 overs (Aahil Kachru 72, Mohak Kumar 49, Rahul Yadav 3/31) bt Dream Chasers 130 in 39 overs (Agastya Singh Rawat 42).

Rahul Sood sets up West Delhi's win

Rahul Sood (4/23) set up West Delhi's five-wicket triumph over York Club in the 1st A. S. memorial tournament.

The scores: York Club 194 in 37.1 overs (Akki Singh 59, Manjeet 46, Rahul Sood 4/23) lost to West Delhi 195/5 in 37.1 overs (Bhavya Dureja 43, Dhruv Thakur 35).

India looks for first win of tournament

Will be up against lower-ranked Sri Lanka even as coach Stimac faces pressure

SAFF C'SHIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MALE

After the disappointing 1-1 draw against 10-man Bangladesh, India will need to quickly get its act together when it takes on Sri Lanka in its second SAFF Championship football match here on Thursday.

India will look game to register its first win in the tournament, which it won a record seven times.

Head coach Igor Stimac has come under fire for India's failure to win enough matches in the recent past and he will be under the pump on Thursday.

Fancy it chances

India should fancy its chances against the lower ranked Sri Lankans, who have struggled throughout the competition, losing both of their



Training hard: The Indians at a practice session ahead of their game against Sri Lanka. • AIFMEDIA

games so far.

The islanders will have their task cut out if they are to move up from the bottom of the points table.

Skipper Sunil Chhetri will again look to score and add to his tally. Chhetri is just one goal shy of the iconic Pele in terms of international

goals scored and a struggling Sri Lanka will be a great opportunity for him.

After the disappointment against plucky Bangladesh,

Stimac said, "we are ourselves guilty for not winning the match."

"We had everything in control, we dominated the game, and had a one-nil advantage, and even had a one-man advantage."

Unknown reasons

"But despite all of that, for some unknown reasons, we started giving away simple passes, making unnecessary mistakes. And if you boost the confidence of your opponent, that's how it finishes when you give them a chance," Stimac said.

The chief coach is using the tournament as the last opportunity for the players to play international matches before the start of the third round of 2023 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers in February next year.

Match starts at 4.30 p.m. IST.

Jaskaran among ICC nominees for POTM

CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI

Indian-born American Jaskaran Malhotra, who became only the fourth player to hit six sixes in an over in an international match, was on Wednesday named among three nominees for the ICC Men's Player of the Month for September.

The other two men's nominees were Bangladesh spinner Nasum Ahmed and Nepal's leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane.

England captain Heather Knight, her compatriot Charlie Dean and South Africa's Lizelle Lee were nominated for the ICC Women's Player of the Month.

The 31-year-old Malhotra, who was born in Chandigarh and captained Himachal Pradesh at U-19 level, smashed six sixes in an over against Papua New Guinea

| SERIES - USA VS PNG | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| USA | OVERS (150 D:50) |
| 271/9 | RUN RATE: 5.42 |
| | C/O: 6 6 6 6 6 |
| | PARTNERSHIP: 55 R (1) |
| A: 173 (124) | G: TOKA: 86.0 (7.0) |
| L: KAR: 1 (3) | |



Jaskaran Malhotra. • FILE PHOTO

in a World Cup League 2 fixture in Oman on September 9 during a scintillating knock of 173 not out.

Nasum Ahmed was Bangladesh's star performer in its home T20I series against New Zealand, leaving the visitors bamboozled with his accurate line and length.

Key fixtures for Brazil, Argentina

England based players allowed to travel for the games

WC QUALIFIERS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SAO PAULO

Brazil and Argentina will be hoping to avoid any more interruptions when World Cup qualifying resumes on Thursday across South America.

The game between the two rivals in Sao Paulo last month was suspended shortly after kickoff after a Brazilian health official entered the pitch to remove four Argentina players he considered should be in quarantine due to COVID-19 protocols. Both teams then earned victories in their second game of that international window to remain on course for a place in Qatar.

And similar scenes should be avoided when Brazil, which tops the qualifying standings, visits last-place Venezuela and second-place Argentina travels to Asuncion to face Paraguay.

This time, England-based players have been allowed to travel to South America despite Britain's strict COVID-19



Bracing up: Venezuela team members at a training session ahead of their clash against Brazil. • AFP

restrictions. Premier League players will have to show they have been fully vaccinated to avoid a 10-day quarantine after they return to their clubs.

Also on Thursday, third-place Uruguay will host Colombia. Ecuador, in fourth place, will play Bolivia and Peru hosts Chile.

Brazil has 24 points and Argentina has 18 from eight matches. Uruguay (15), Ecuador (13) and Colombia (13) follow, but they've all played

nine matches. The top four teams secure a spot at next year's World Cup in Qatar. The fifth-place team will enter a playoff against a team from a different confederation.

A win in Venezuela would put Brazil on the verge of qualifying for Qatar, but coach Tite might be without a key starter. Midfielder Casemiro is out with an injury, with Liverpool's Fabinho seen as his likely replacement.

Rayan Sajjid knocks out Rethin Pranav

Sana Deshpande puts it past Lakshmi Prabha

TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Rayan Sajjid sustained an intense power game to outwit top seed Rethin Pranav 5-7, 6-0, 6-2 in the under-14 boys' second round of the National sub-junior tennis championship at the DLTA Complex here on Wednesday.

Rethin, however, won his under-16 second round match against Vansh Nandal 6-4, 7-6(4).

In the girls under-16 section, qualifier Sana Deshpande put out top seed Lakshmi Prabha 6-4, 6-4.

The results (second round):

Under-16: Boys (first round): Satav Anshul Vikram 6-3, 6-4; Mayank Sharma bt Anoop Keshavamurthy 6-2, 6-1; Jaishnav Shinde bt Arjun Sutar 6-3, 6-2; Manish Yadav bt Smit Patel 6-1, 6-1; Tejas Ahuja bt Arnab Yadav 6-2, 6-1; Omaansh Choudhary bt Bharat Phulwaria 6-4, 7-6(2); Navya Verma bt Arya Bhattacharya 0-6, 6-3, 6-1; Venkat Batlanki bt Debasis Sahoo 6-3, 6-3; Suresh Keerthivassan bt Arjun Rathi 6-0, 6-3; Shanker Heisnam bt Manan Ku-



Big scalp: Rayan Sajjid who ousted top seed Rethin Pranav in under-14 boys' section. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

mar 6-4, 7-5; Krishi Tyagi bt Shfaat Ali Asghar 6-2, 6-3; Rethin Pranav bt Vansh Nandal 6-4, 7-6(4); Tarun Korwar bt Aditya Rathi 6-1, 3-6, 6-1; Omar Rehan Sumar bt Vaheem Patel 6-4, 6-3; Hitesh Chauhan bt Prajwal Tewari 6-4, 5-7 6-3; Rishul Khosla bt Vatsal Manikantant 7-5, 6-2.

Girls: Sana Deshpande bt Lakshmi Prabha 6-4, 6-4; Riya Sachdeva bt Navya Dabas 6-1, 6-3; Sonal Patil bt Nandini Dixit 6-3, 6-4; Abhaya Vamuri bt

Sukhmani Bhandari 6-3, 4-6, 6-2; Madhurima Sawant bt Sreenidhi Balaji 6-0, 6-4; Meh-

er Mishra bt Samya Siikand 6-1, 7-6(4); Pushti Laddha bt Srivaly Medishetty 6-1, 6-2; Apurva Vamuri bt Tamanna Panwar 6-2, 6-1; Niyati Kukreti bt Samiksha Dabas 6-1, 6-0; Saumya Ronde bt Hitakanya Narwal 6-4, 6-7(4), 6-3; Lakshmi Gowda bt Sakshi Thakkar 6-2, 6-3; Ruma Gaikawari bt Samaira Malik 6-1, 6-1; Thaniya Sarai bt Samiksha Annem 6-3, 6-2; Ta-

manna Takoria bt Asmi Adkar 6-2, 6-4; Ananya SR bt Saily Thakkar 6-2, 6-2; Suhitha Maruri bt Sahira Singh 6-3, 6-1.

Under-14: Boys: Rayan Sajjid bt Rethin Pranav 5-7, 6-0, 6-2; Siddhant Sharma bt Shanker Heisnam 6-0, 6-1; Vraj Gohil bt Dhiraaj Reddy 6-2, 5-7, 7-6(5); Samprith Sharma bt Daksh Kukreti 6-0, 6-3; Jevin Kanani bt Tanush Ghildyal 6-4, 4-6, 7-6(3); Mahalingam Kandhavel bt V. Thurumruga 6-3, 7-5; Dhruv Sachdeva bt Rian Sharma 2-6, 7-6(3), 6-3; Aditya Mor bt Kunshakkur 4-6, 6-1, 3-0 (retired); Tejas Ahuja bt Vedant Bhasin 6-0, 6-2; Venkat Batlanki bt Aarav Chawla 6-1, 6-0; Pratyaksh bt Varchasa Kumari 6-3, 6-2; Saijayani Banerjee bt Prarthana Solanki 6-1, 6-0; Hathashree Venkatesh bt Sai Janvi 7-6(9), 6-3; Manshi Singh bt Pehal Kharadkar 6-1, 7-5; Nemha Kispotta bt Samiksha Dabas 4-6, 6-2, 7-5.

Girls: Janhavi Kaula bt Thaniya Sarai 6-4, 4-6, 7-5; Mahika Khanna bt Vennela Reddy 6-1, 7-6(7); Priyanka Rana bt Anandi Bhutada 2-6, 7-5, 6-1; Ishi Maheshwari bt Shagun Kumari 6-3, 6-2; Saijayani Banerjee bt Prarthana Solanki 6-1, 6-0; Hathashree Venkatesh bt Sai Janvi 7-6(9), 6-3; Manshi Singh bt Pehal Kharadkar 6-1, 7-5; Nemha Kispotta bt Samiksha Dabas 4-6, 6-2, 7-5.

Mentored by Rajat, Priya wants to excel

Say she is capable of winning gold in bigger events

ARCHERY

Y.B. SARANGI
JAMSHEDPUR

Guided by her mentor and idol Rajat Chauhan, 17-year-old compound archer Priya Gurjar has tasted success in quick time and is eager to take her game to the next level.

Year 2021 has been memorable for Priya, who secured gold medals in cadet women's and mixed team events and an individual silver in the World youth championships in Wrocław, Poland, in August and a women's team silver in the World championships in Yankton, USA, in September.

"The World youth medals gave me a lot of confidence. I learned a few things in the World championships. It was windy and I did not understand when to release



Priya Gurjar. • FILE PHOTO

the arrows in such conditions. Still I got good scores. I have to work on this," Priya told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the National archery championships here on Wednesday.

"I also want to shoot better scores in the ranking round," said Priya, who was 10th with 687 points in the individual rankings and lost to eventual champion V. Jyothi Surekha in the quarter-

finals at the Nationals.

Priya has been looking up to Arjuna award-winner Rajat, a World championships silver medalist and an Asian Games team gold medalist, ever since she got into archery in late 2017. "My father was Rajat bhैया's teacher. He persuaded my father to put me in archery. I just follow his advice."

Focusing on my basics

The Jaipur girl, who claimed a team silver on her elite National debut in the 2019 Asian championships, is keen to shine in the Asian Games. "I am focusing on my basics. I am capable of winning gold medals in bigger events. It is the mentality that matters," said Priya.

Rajat wants Priya to mature in her game. "She is going through a process and will take some time to really excel," said Rajat.

Ramkumar falls in first qualifying round

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
INDIAN WELLS

Ramkumar Ramanathan was beaten 4-6, 6-3, 4-6 by Roberto Quiroz of Ecuador in the first qualifying round of the \$9,146,125 ATP tennis tournament in Indian Wells.

In the ITF men's event in Monastir (Tunisia), qualifier Lohithaksha Bathrinath defeated fifth seed Lukas Neumayer 7-5, 1-6, 7-5 in the first round.

Other results: €66,640 Challenger, Mouilleton-le-Captif, France: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Jonathan Eysseric & Quentin Halys (Fra) bt Sriram Balaji & Divij Sharan 6-4, 3-6, [10-6].

€44,820 Challenger, Barcelona, Spain: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Ruben Gonzales (Phi) & Arjun Kadhe bt Bekkhan Atlangieriev (Rus) & Marcel Marlon Sudzum (Ned) 6-1, 6-1.

\$25,000 ITF men, Setubal, Portugal: Singles (first round):

Yusuke Takahashi (Jpn) bt Sasi Kumar Mukund 6-3, 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF men, Naples, US: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Michael Redlicki (US) & Ricardo Rodriguez-Pace (Ven) bt Israel Alexander Ore (US) & Sathi Reddy Chirala 6-3, 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Singles (first round): Niki Poonacha bt Giovanni Oradini (Ita) 7-6(2), 6-4.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Anis Ghorbel (Tun) & Mirko Martinez (Sui) bt Ankit Chopra & Aaditya Tewari 6-2, 6-0; Grigoriy Lomakin (Kaz) & Poonacha bt Daniil Glinka (Est) & Mateo Nicolas Martinez (Arg) 7-6(4), 6-2; Wissam Abderrahman & Youssef Labbene (Tun) bt Lohithaksha Bathrinath & Ajay Pruthvi Nemakal 7-5, 7-6(4).

\$15,000 ITF men, Ithaca, US: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Abraham Asaba (Gha) & William Bushamuka (US) bt Nicholas Reyes (US) & Anshumat Srivastava 6-1, 6-4.

\$15,000 ITF men, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt: Singles (first round): S.D. Prajwal Dev bt Ja-

kub Krosal (Svk) 6-1, 2-6, 6-2; Nitin Kumar Sinha bt Cezar Cretu (Rou) 4-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Prajwal & Nitin bt Adam Bronka (Aus) & Noppadol Noikor (Tha) 6-1, 6-1; Romain Faucon (Bel) & Biagio Gramaticopala (Ita) bt Sai Karteek Reddy & Arjun Mahadevan 6-2, 6-2.

\$15,000 ITF men, Cancun, Mexico: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Seitla Watanabe (Jpn) & Siddhant Bhanthia bt Mora Ederas Martinez & Jorge Alejandro Olaya (Mex) 6-2, 6-4.

\$15,000 ITF men, Doha, Qatar: Singles (first round): Patrik Niklas-Salminen (Fin) bt Muthu Aadhithya Senthilkumar 6-2, 7-6(5); Dev Javia bt Terence Atmane (Fra) 1-6, 7-5, 6-2.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Patrik Niklas-Salminen (Fin) & Saketh Myneni bt Boris Butulija (Srb) & Radu Florin Macovei (Rou) 6-1, 6-0; Mousa Shana Zayed (Qat) & Shabbaz Khan bt Bharath Kumar & Muthu Senthilkumar 7-6(9), 5-7, [10-5]; Liro Vasa (Fin) & Dev Javia bt Aleksandre Bakshi (Geo) & Yanki

Erel (Tur) 4-6, 6-4, [10-6].

\$15,000 ITF men, Platja D'Aro, Spain: Singles (first round): Manish Sureshkumar bt Alex Barrena (Arg) 7-5, 6-4.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Hugo Palomera Castello & Pol Toledo Bague (Esp) bt Maik Steiner (Ger) & Manish Sureshkumar 6-4, 6-7(2), [11-9].

\$25,000 ITF women, Loule, Portugal: Singles (first round): Anna Kubareva (Blr) bt Riya Bhathia 6-3, 6-4.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Akvile Parazinskaitė (Ltu) & Sathwika Sama bt Evgeniya Burdina & Eva Garkusha (Rus) 6-3, 6-3; Francisca Jorge & Matilde Jorge (Por) bt Alba Carrillo Marin (Esp) & Vasanti Shinde 6-4, 6-2.

\$25,000 ITF women, Redding, US: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Laetitia Pulchartova (Cze) & Risa Ushijima (Jpn) bt Katherine Sebov (Can) & Y. Pranjala 6-3, 7-5.

\$15,000 ITF women, Monastir, Tunisia: Singles (first round): Jennifer Luikham bt Noelia Bouzo Zanotti (Esp) 6-3, 6-3; Na-

dine Keller (Sui) bt Sravya Shivvani 7-6(5), 6-0.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Nadine Keller (Sui) & Nina Radovanovic (Fra) bt Honoka Kobayashi (Jpn) & Snehal Mane 1-6, 6-2, [10-6]; Sharmada Balu & Sravya bt Ambre Feder & Marie Villet (Fra) 6-0, 1-6, [10-5]; Laura Boehner (Ger) & Jennifer bt Ferdousa Bahri (Tun) & Vallega Parentini (Ita) 6-4, 7-6(4).

\$15,000 ITF women, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt: Singles (first round): Lena Ruppert (Ger) bt Ashmitha Easwaramurthi 6-1, 6-0.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Rebeka Stolmar (Hun) & Ashmitha bt Silvia Ambrosio (Ger) & Demi Tran 3-6, 6-3, [10-7]; Ekaterina Bychkova (Rus) & Shreya Tatavarthi bt Diana Maria Mahal (Rou) & Maria Patrascu (Can) 6-3, 7-5.

\$15,000 ITF women, Sozopol, Bulgaria: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Martha Matoula (Gre) & Zdena Safarova (Cze) bt Sofia Samavati (Den) & Saumya Vig 6-2, 6-2.

Khalin Joshi takes two-stroke lead

Chikkarangappa and Manu share the second spot with two others

GOLF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Khalin Joshi fired four birdies during his flawless back-nine 32 and moved two shots ahead of the field at the half-way stage of the ₹70-lakh TATA Steel PGTI MP Cup golf tournament here on Wednesday.

In perfect conditions at the Delhi Golf Club Course, Khalin overtook four overnight leaders with a round of six-under 66 to go with this first-round 69 for a tally of 9-

under 135.

S. Chikkarangappa and Manu Gandas, two of the overnight leaders, along with Veer Ahlawat and N. Thangaraja, shared the second spot at 137.

The 'cut' came at two-over 146 and kept 53 players in the hunt over the final two rounds.

There was plenty of action during the closing holes. Khalin stayed in control to birdie three out of the last five holes, including the final one.

Thangaraja also signed off

with a birdie but Manu double-bogeyed to fall back.

Veer Ahlawat, with a day's best bogey-free 65, more than made up for his par round on the first day. Chikkarangappa, too, fired seven birdies but a bogey on the 13th hole and a double-bogey on the second hole slowed him down.

Viraj Madappa, who shot eight birdies, double-bogeyed the 18th for the tied sixth place with Kartik Sharma at 138.

Among the more illustrious names, one of the

overnight leaders Rashid Khan (67, 73) and Shiv Kapur (74, 67) shared the 12th and 15th spots while S.S.P. Chowrasi (73, 72) was tied 34th. Jyoti Randhawa and Ashok Kumar withdrew while Olympian Udayan Mane (75, 79) missed the cut.

The scores: 135 - Khalin Joshi (69, 66); 137 - S. Chikkarangappa (67, 70), Manu Gandas (67, 70), Veer Ahlawat (72, 65), N. Thangaraja (70, 67); 138 - Viraj Madappa (71, 67) and Kartik Sharma (70, 68); 139 - M. Dharma (71, 68), Angad Cheema (71, 68), Sunil Chowrasia (71, 68) and Karandeep Kochar (71, 68).

Spanish NBA great Pau Gasol bids adieu



Long innings ends: Pau Gasol's basketball career lasted more than two decades. • FILE PHOTO

BASKETBALL

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BARCELONA

Wishing his "older brother" Kobe Bryant could be there by his side, Pau Gasol finally put an end to a basketball career that went "way beyond my dreams and expectations."

Gasol announced his retirement from basketball on Tuesday after a career that lasted more than two decades and earned him two NBA titles and a world championship gold with Spain's national team.

Gasol had already announced his farewell from

international basketball in August after Spain lost to the United States in the quarterfinals of the Tokyo Games, which marked his fifth Olympics.

Gasol had been with Spanish club Barcelona since February.

His career had stalled before that because a left-foot injury that lingered and kept him from playing for nearly two years.

Gasol won two NBA titles with the Lakers, in 2009 and 2010, and averaged 17 points and 9.2 rebounds in 1,226 regular-season games with five NBA teams, playing as a centre and power forward.