



64 migrant workers abandoned midway by bus driver from Kerala
 page 5



Spurious liquor claims four more lives in Bihar, five hospitalised
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U.S. Congress passes Biden's \$1.2 trillion infrastructure Bill
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Australia finishes second, enters semifinal along with England
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IN BRIEF



Delhi Govt. extends free ration scheme till May
 NEW DELHI
 Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced that the Delhi Government's free ration scheme to citizens will be extended by six more months, i.e., till May 2022, due to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
CITY • PAGE 2

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AQI 'severe' in Delhi for second consecutive day

NEW DELHI
 The air quality in Delhi improved slightly on Saturday but continued to be in the 'severe' category for the second consecutive day due to unfavourable weather conditions, cracker emissions and rampant stubble burning, according to official data.
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Hospital inferno leaves 11 COVID patients dead

Victims of Ahmednagar blaze were mostly senior citizens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 PUNE

Eleven COVID-19 patients were killed after a major fire broke out in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the district civil hospital in Ahmednagar city of Maharashtra on Saturday, officials said.

The blaze erupted around 11 a.m. in the ICU, where 17 COVID-19 patients, many of them senior citizens and some on ventilator or oxygen support, were undergoing treatment.

Ahmednagar city is located 120 km from Pune and 253 km from Mumbai.

The fire was doused around 1.30 pm, said chief fire officer of the city civic body Shankar Misal, adding that a short circuit was suspected to be the cause though it was yet to be confirmed.

Most of those who died were aged between 65 and 83, according to hospital officials.

A case was registered against unidentified persons under IPC Section 304 (A) (causing death by negligence), said Ahmednagar district superintendent of police Manoj Patil.

After the recent incidents of fire at hospitals treating COVID-19 patients in the State, fire audits had been



Fire fury: The fire-ravaged ICU of the district civil hospital in Ahmednagar of Maharashtra on Saturday. • AFP

ordered. According to Ahmednagar District Collector Rajendra Bhosale, such an audit had been carried out at this hospital too.

According to Mr. Misal, after the fire audit, the hospital had been told to put in place an effective fire-fighting system, including a pipeline and a sprinkler system. But the work was incomplete due to "want of funds" though "they had fire extinguishers", he said.

₹7 lakh aid announced
 Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh to the kin of the deceased while Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat announced an additional aid of ₹2 lakh.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray expressed grief over the tragedy. He sought stern action against those responsible for the negligence. He directed the District Collector to conduct an in-depth probe and submit a report.

A probe committee headed by Mr. Misal would look into what led to the tragedy, the Collector said.

Expressing grief, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "Anguished by the loss of lives due to a fire in a hospital in Ahmednagar. Condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover at the earliest."

CONTINUED ON • PAGE 6

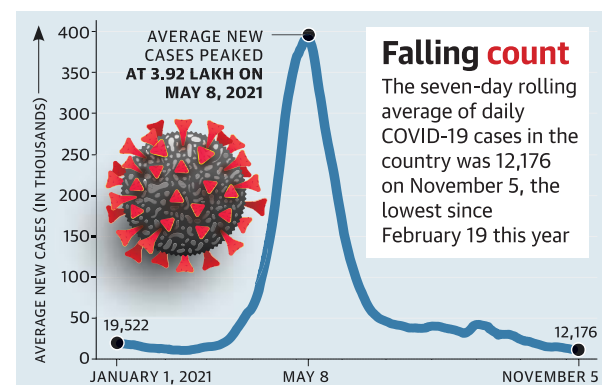
Daily COVID-19 cases hit 9-month low

10,929 new cases; active patients pegged at 1,46,950

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

Daily new coronavirus cases in the country have dipped to a nine-month low, as have active coronavirus cases, according to an update from the Health Ministry on Saturday.

There were 10,929 new cases reported in the last 24 hours as on Saturday morning and the active caseload stood at 1,46,950 cases, which was a 255-day low. The active cases were 0.43% of the total caseload and was the lowest since March 2020,



a Ministry bulletin said.

The last time daily cases slipped below 10,000 was on February 1 and before that on January 25. Currently India's seven-day average, a steadier metric to gauge the pandemic's trajectory stood

at 12,000 cases. This too is the lowest since February.

Saturday's numbers bring the country's overall tally to 3,43,44,683. The top five States that have registered the most new cases are Kerala (6,580), Tamil Nadu (875),

Maharashtra (802), West Bengal (763) and Mizoram (513).

There were 392 deaths reported in the 24 hours, increasing the total toll to 4,60,265. Most casualties were in Kerala (314), followed by Maharashtra 17.

While the numbers may have hit a nadir, they are not evidence that the pandemic has been overcome. In February, with numbers similar to where they are now and even Government-backed experts declaring the pandemic is over, the nation was hit by a catastrophic second wave - fronted by the Delta variant.

CONTINUED ON • PAGE 6

October witnessed highest power shortage in country in over 5 years

Coal stock crunch at thermal plants

VIGNESH RADHAKRISHNAN
 CHENNAI

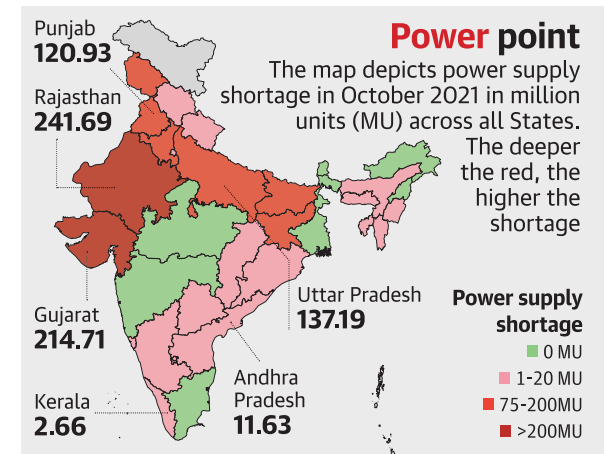
India recorded a power supply shortage of 1,201 million units in October 2021 - the highest in 5.5 years - due to a crunch in coal stocks availability at thermal plants.

The shortage was mostly restricted to Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Punjab and Rajasthan.

In October, Gujarat recorded a power shortage of 215 million units, the highest for any month in more than a decade. With a shortage of 77 million units, Jharkhand too recorded its highest deficit in more than a decade.

Bihar recorded 120 million units of shortage in October, the highest for any month in 8.5 years.

Haryana saw 113 million units of shortage, the highest in about nine years. Punjab's deficit stood at 121 million units, the highest in seven years. Rajasthan witnessed 242 million units of power shortage last month, the highest in over nine years.



Supply shortage was also observed in Uttar Pradesh and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in October, however, they were not an anomaly but were similar to the general trend observed in the regions.

Coal inventory
 The power shortage was primarily due to a supply crunch of coal to 135 thermal plants. As on November 5, the average coal inventory held by the plants would last only seven days.

CONTINUED ON • PAGE 6

'China more active now at Chumbi Valley'

DINAKAR PERI
 NEW DELHI

China is strengthening its connectivity and increasing its depth in the Chumbi Valley, close to India's strategic and vulnerable Siliguri corridor, according to official sources.

In its report to the U.S. Congress on military developments involving the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Department of Defence said despite diplomatic and military dialogues to reduce border tensions, the PRC has "continued taking incremental and tactical actions to press its claims at the Line of Actual Control." An official source said, "China is building an alternative axis in the Chumbi Valley. They are increasing their depth by building roads through Bhutanese territory."

FULL REPORT • PAGE 7

3 dengue deaths go unreported as cases surge

Civic body report did not mention patients who died at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital

MUNEEF KHAN
 NEW DELHI

While Delhi's official death toll due to dengue stands at six, records at Safdarjung Hospital show three more patients succumbed to the vector-borne disease in October. These deaths were not reported by civic authorities.

According to documents of the Centre-run hospital accessed by *The Hindu*, a 14-year-old girl from Okhla died on October 14, while an 18-year-old man from Karawal Nagar and a 43-year-old man from Sangam Vihar died on October 30 and October 31 respectively.

None of the five victims mentioned in the report issued by civic authorities on November 1 had been admitted to Safdarjung Hospital. The report said Delhi recorded 1,196 cases last month.

A senior civic body official and Safdarjung Hospital officials refused to comment on the unreported deaths.

'Insufficient care'
 Family members and guardians of the three victims who died at Safdarjung Hospital have complained of medical negligence. "Despite his condition, he was not given an ICU bed due to unavailability. After hours of waiting, he was put on a ventilator-like system in the early morning hours. He did not get an ICU bed till the end," said the guardian of the 18-year-old victim.

The father of the 14-year-old victim alleged that "doctors did not attend to my child's condition in a proper manner". He said, "Government hospitals have a history of providing insufficient

Throughout October, we received 80-100 cases of suspected and confirmed cases at the hospital every day. There were days when it was as high as 110-120 cases

SOURCE AT LNJP HOSPITAL

care. The doctors only wanted to complete their shift, they were not bothered about the treatment. I ended up raising my voice after a point and guards were sent to restrain me. They behaved in a rude manner."

'Rise in patients'
 According to data provided by civic authorities, Delhi recorded 1,537 cases of dengue as on October 30. However, as per sources, the total

number of cases from just two major Delhi hospitals could be higher than the official figure for the entire city.

"On a 24-hour basis, at least 100 patients come in only for dengue-related cases," said a source at Safdarjung Hospital. "Throughout October, we received about 80-100 cases of suspected and confirmed cases at the hospital every day. There were days when it was as high as 110-120 cases. A majority of these were later confirmed as dengue cases. No death has been reported so far at the hospital," a source at LNJP Hospital said.

Earlier, the Delhi Government had announced that hospitals in the city could use one-third of the beds reserved for treating COVID-19 patients for treating patients of vector-borne diseases.

Tripura slaps UAPA cases against lawyers

FB, Twitter asked to give details of 'provocative' messages

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

The Tripura police have filed criminal cases against more than 70 persons, including Supreme Court lawyers, activists, journalists and religious leaders. Eight persons have been arrested from different districts.

This followed a request from the police to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to provide details of 101 accounts from which "fake and provocative" messages and photos were posted on some reported incidents in Tripura in response to the attack on Hindus in Bangladesh.

"Cases were filed against 71 persons under various provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act



Raising their voice: Students at a protest in New Delhi against the violence in Tripura. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

[UAPA] and the Indian Penal Code [IPC]. Those booked have been asked to appear before the investigating officers on November 10," a senior police officer said.

He said separate letters were sent to the social media platforms, whose authorities have started taking action against the account holders on the Tripura police's radar.

Journalist Shyam Meera Singh confirmed via Twitter that the BJP-led Tripura Go-

vernment had slapped the UAPA against him for writing three words - "Tripura is burning". UAPA notices were also sent to Supreme Court lawyers Ehtesham Hashmi, Amit Srivastava, Ansar Indori and Mukesh Kumar for "provocative" posts on social media. The report claimed that at least 12 mosques, nine shops and three houses belonging to Muslims were vandalised in Tripura during the rallies by groups protesting

the violence against Hindus in Bangladesh during and after Durga Puja in October. The police claimed the incidents were exaggerated by social media users and the security forces acted swiftly to control the situation.

The Tripura High Court had last week directed the State Government to file a detailed report by November 10 on the incidents, if any, involving the religious minorities in Tripura.

Meanwhile, leaders of four Muslim organisations on Saturday demanded an inquiry into the role of the Tripura police and the administration in the violence.

At a joint press conference in Delhi, the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM), the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), the Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadees Hind and the All India Milli Council said 16 mosques were attacked in various parts of Tripura.

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IN BRIEF



Sikhs cheated under Congress rule: Lekhi

NEW DELHI
Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi on Saturday said the "1984 carnage was still alive in the hearts of Sikhs even after 37 years". The Sikh community, Ms. Lekhi said, had "always been cheated" during the Congress rule and were given false assurances in the name of an SIT to probe the riots. "They were forced to await justice till the formation of the Narendra Modi Government."

Water supply likely to be affected in parts of Delhi

NEW DELHI
Water supply is likely to be affected in some parts of Delhi on Sunday due to an increase in the ammonia level in the Yamuna, impacting several treatment plants. The Delhi Jal Board in a statement said pumping from Sonia Vihar, Bhagirathi, Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla water treatment plants have been affected. Water supply in east Delhi, north-east Delhi, south Delhi, parts of areas under the New Delhi Municipal Council and Malviya Nagar PPP areas are likely to be affected.

Man stabbed to death in south Delhi

NEW DELHI
A 38-year-old man was stabbed to death on Saturday in south-east Delhi's Govindpur area, the police said. The deceased has been identified as Rajender Kumar, a resident of Navjivan Camp. The police received a call at 5:15 a.m. regarding the incident. On reaching the spot, Kumar was found injured and rushed to a hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Delhi Govt. extends free ration scheme for poor till May 2022

Kejriwal appeals to PM to do the same across the country, cites high inflation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced that the Delhi Government's free ration scheme to citizens will be extended by six more months, i.e., till May 2022, due to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Kejriwal also wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealing to him to do the same across the country.

Inflation has increased to very high levels and the common man is finding it "difficult to even get two square meals", Mr. Kejriwal wrote to Mr. Modi.

He also pointed out that many youth were unemployed due to the pandemic.

"The Delhi Government is extending its free ration scheme to the poor for six



Arvind Kejriwal

months. I urged the Central Government to also extend its ration scheme for six months by writing a letter to the Prime Minister. People are in a lot of trouble right now. It would not be right to leave their hand at this juncture," Mr. Kejriwal tweeted.

BJP leader hits out

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir

Singh Bidhuri, however, accused Mr. Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia of "telling white lies" regarding the distribution of free ration to the poor as well as VAT on fuel prices.

"As many as 72 lakh ration cardholders in Delhi have been provided free ration under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana since April last year, in addition to ration under the National Food Security Act by the Modi Government. The plan is still ongoing," Mr. Bidhuri said.

"On the other hand, despite the announcement, the Delhi Government is not giving away free ration to 60 lakh people who do not have ration cards. Even the Supreme Court had to direct the Delhi Government to make

necessary arrangements of food and ration for the poor and migrant labourers," he said.

Mr. Bidhuri challenged Mr. Sisodia's statement that the "Centre was responsible" for inflation in fuel prices. He argued that the AAP Government had increased VAT on both petrol and diesel after coming to power.

"When the Aam Aadmi Party came to power in 2015, VAT was charged at 20% on petrol and 12% on diesel. The Delhi Government later increased VAT on petrol to 30%," he alleged.

"Not only this, 30% VAT was charged on diesel during the COVID-19 period. Even now, there is 30% VAT on petrol and 16.75% on diesel, which is the highest in the entire country," he added.

Biryani shop workers threatened on Deepavali, case registered

Video of incident goes viral; police take suo motu cognisance

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Employees at a biryani shop in north Delhi's Burari were abused and threatened by a man on Deepavali for opening the eatery on a "Hindu festival" on Thursday. The police have registered a case and initiated a probe into the matter.

The shop owner, who identified himself as Magroob Ali, said he was away at the time of the incident but his three employees were present at the shop. Mr. Ali said that around 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, a visibly drunk man started abusing them for keeping the shop open on Deepavali. The man had insisted that the shop be "shut immediately because they can't open a shop serving non-vegetarian food on a Hindu festival in a Hindu-dominated area".

I have been running this shop for the last eight years. The shopkeepers around stood with us when the incident took place. That's when the man fled

MAGROOB ALI
Shop owner

took place. That's when the man fled," Mr. Ali said.

He said that both the police and the people stood in their support. "We are not scared by this incident because everyone stands with us. We have never faced anything like this before. I opened the shop on Friday and Saturday both," he said.

A senior police officer said they learnt about the incident when the video went viral on Friday. "After the video came to our notice, we verified the facts and took suo motu cognisance. A case under Section 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered. The man in the video is yet to be identified," the officer said.

A video clip also shows the man making derogatory remarks about a community. One of the employees, apparently overwhelmed, said that they were about to shut the shop.

Mr. Ali said that the employees then shut the shop but other shopkeepers gathered in their support, after which the man fled. "I have been running this shop for the last eight years. The shopkeepers around stood with us when the incident

BJP playing politics over Chhath Puja, says AAP

'Not letting Purvanchalis prepare ghats'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Politics over Chhath Puja in Delhi intensified on Saturday with the Aam Aadmi Party accusing the BJP of not letting "Purvanchalis" prepare 'ghats' required to perform rituals pertaining to the festival.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) urged the BJP to stop playing "dirty politics" over Chhath Puja and let people celebrate the festival in

Delhi.

"And, if they [BJP] continue playing dirty politics over Chhath Puja, Purvanchalis [People who hail from Purvanchal region of Uttar Pradesh] will not forgive them," AAP legislator Sanjeev Jha warned while addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here.

The BJP hit back, accusing the AAP of trying to create tension over the issue.

Probe ordered into collapse of multilevel car parking

Inquiry part of AAP's 'mala fide campaign' against it, says BJP

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has ordered an inquiry into the collapse of a part of a multilevel car parking in Green Park earlier this week and the report will be submitted within 15 days, authorities said. The parking had been constructed by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia alleged that

during the construction of the parking, huge money was collected from nearby shopkeepers in the name of parking conversion charges by the BJP-ruled municipal corporation. The shops of many traders were sealed to make way for the parking space.

Mr. Sisodia said the Arvind Kejriwal Government will take strict action against the culprits and not tolerate wastage of taxpayers' money.

"The multilevel parking of Green Park has fallen prey to the BJP-ruled MCD's corruption," he added.

Responding to the inquiry, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said AAP leaders were "running a vicious campaign against BJP-ruled corporations and the inquiry against the breakdown of SDMC's car parking was part of their "mala fide campaign" against it.

Govt. clears policy for insulated electric cables

2,264 km of bare wires to be changed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Cabinet has approved a policy to convert 11kV bare electrical wires into insulated cables.

Bare electrical wires, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, spoil the beauty of Delhi and pose a threat to life and property.

The CM added that the Delhi Government is also working on undergrounding the electrical wires hanging

over the streets. While proposing the policy, the Power Department said that as the 11 kV bare electric wires passed through large parts of Delhi, all such networks were getting replaced with insulated conductors.

According to the statement from the CM's Office, 2,264 km bare conductor network will be converted into insulated network by TPDDL, BYPL and BRPL under the policy.

COVID positivity rose on Deepavali

0.14% positive cases reported, highest since June 23

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital's COVID-19 positivity rate increased on Deepavali after a continuous decline over the last five months, according to Delhi Government statistics.

In fact, the positivity rate - a metric defined by the number of positive cases emerging out of the total number of COVID tests performed - increased on a daily basis in the run-up to the festival on November 4.



No let-up: Health workers conducting RTPCR tests in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

According to Government statistics, the city's positivity rate on November 1 was 0.07% and 0.08% on the next two days before shooting up to 0.14% on November 4 and decreasing to 0.10% on November 5. The last time a pos-

itivity rate of 0.14% was recorded was on June 23.

A senior Government official, though emphasising that there was no need for alarm, said increasing positivity was certainly a cause for concern and illustrated the need to re-

main cautious and not letting the guard down against a possible COVID outbreak.

According to Delhi Government records, the positivity rate had peaked at an alarming 36.24% on April 21 this year during the devastating second wave of COVID infections in the city.

On Saturday, the city reported no new COVID deaths over 24 hours and the toll stood at 25,091 for the 15th day, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi Government. Thirty-six new cases were reported, taking the total number of cases to 14,40,071. A total of 34,554 tests were done in a day.

Age determination of juvenile offenders shall be completed in 15 days: HC

'IO shall ensure report is filed before JJB'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed that the process of age determination of a juvenile in conflict with law shall be completed within 15 days of filing of documents and ossification test by the Investigating Officer (IO) of a case.

The High Court said the IO shall ensure that the ossification test in relation to the juvenile is completed, a report is obtained and filed before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) within 15 days from the date the test is ordered by the board.

"In all cases pertaining to juveniles in conflict with law, regardless of the nature of offences alleged, the JJB shall ensure that the process of age-determination of the juvenile is completed within 15 days from the filing of documents relating to proof of age/ossification test report by the IO, as the case may be," a Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anup Jairam Bhambhani said.

The High Court issued various directions for further streamlining the process of inquiries relating to juveniles and made it clear that they should be scrupulously



complied with by all the authorities concerned.

The Bench was dealing with various issues pertaining to the interpretation and effective implementation of some provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act.

The court granted four weeks' time to the State to apprise it of the number of cases where inquiries are pending in each JJB here against juveniles for a period between six months to one year, along with the date of institution of the inquiry and the date of the first production in each case.

The court said the information shall preferably include the rehabilitation plan/ individual care plan for each child or juvenile.

It listed the matter for further consideration on December 14.

ANUJ KUMAR

A classical dancer striking a traditional pose before a Rajasthani fort, with a camel sneaking from behind. An android leaping straight out of science fiction. These contrasting images are part of an ongoing online exhibition at the India International Centre, celebrating the bus art of Tamil Nadu to mark the sapphire anniversary of the State.

Shot by multifaceted artist Vijay Jodha, the images are interesting in the context of any discussion about high art versus low art, refined versus kitsch, and where the bus art fits in. Vijay has tried to go beyond simple documentation to capture the interplay between the images and the audience, in this case the driver, conductor and the people travelling in these buses.

"Just as bus art is a legitimate art form in itself and by extension these are akin to galleries on wheels that go to the people rather than the other way round, you have what would be a counterpart to an art gallery visitor," says Vijay, who shot at least 100 buses for the project over almost a decade.

Vijay has had the opportunity of interviewing and doing films with some of the biggest artists India has produced. Some of his work has been displayed at top art venues in India and overseas. "I had a lot of close exposure to so-called high art. Then there is the other non-gallery art that attracts sociologists rather than art critics. Some of them are even called kitsch and dismissed as unworthy of critical attention. The bus art seems to be at the lowest end of that category. Despite being on the margins, it is so vibrant and imaginative. It is that part that attracted me because most of my work has been around marginalised people, marginalised issues and practices."

Hand-painted hoardings culture

Unlike the decorated trucks, cycle rickshaws and other vehicles seen across India, Vijay says, artwork on Tamil Nadu buses are not hand-painted. Even though machine-produced, he finds their presence a tip of the hat to the large hand-painted hoardings culture of Tamil Nadu. "It was a unique and signature public art of modern Tamil Nadu. Sadly, those have been displaced by printed hoardings for years now. Even when they were around, they weren't seen as a worthy art form vis-à-vis the work displayed in the galleries. I think M. F. Husain was the first artist to notice them and he created a whole body of photographs around them back in the 1980s," recounts Vijay.

He hopes that bus art will become a vehicle for creative expression. "The coming of good quality and relatively inexpensive digital printing has democratised the hoarding business. It is no

PHOTOS VIJAY JODHA



Moving images

Vijay Jodha's latest exhibition brings the bus art of Tamil Nadu to the Capital

longer the monopoly of the famous and the powerful such as politicians and film stars. If you were to travel across Tamil Nadu, you will find digitally produced hoardings put up in the smallest of places and for all kind of reasons, including somebody's birthday or wedding. In fact, I recall somebody once sent me a picture of a hoarding put up to publicly congratulate a youngster for getting a visa to study in America," he laughs.

But the downside, he says, is like many other parts of India, these inexpensive and widely accessible printed hoardings have dealt a body blow to the State's traditional hoarding painters' community, which, as you may recall, was one of the most accomplished, producing some of the most spectacular work in the whole country.

Fortunately, he notes, the community of artists has started to make a comeback and is finding new avenues through public art. "I hope the private bus owners or the State transport authorities in Tamil Nadu take a cue and get these artists to work on buses soon. In Delhi, the Metro authorities

have done that with respect to some of the metro stations."

Not only, he adds, would this address their livelihood issues, it would also take their art to the masses across the State and beyond. "That's a deep desire with any artist - that her artwork travels far and wide, gets seen by as many people as possible."

Platform for artistic expression

Having been involved with setting up of a museum of everyday art of traditional India in New Delhi decades ago, Vijay feels, he can say quite authoritatively that the idea of aesthetic concerns and artistic expressions is a non-elitist, close part of daily routine and everyday life intrinsic to Indian civilisation. "Even simple water storage facilities such as our centuries-old stepwells display the most intricate and beautiful carvings. So, this idea of vehicles serving as a platform for artistic expression is probably a yearning rooted in an ancient sensibility. It manifests itself with decorated trucks across India, on the back of cycle rickshaws in Allahabad, on the sides of these buses in Tamil Nadu, to cite three instances," points out Vijay.

One doesn't see why this bus art of Tamil Nadu cannot be replicated in other places. "It is for the transport authorities to give it a push. The way the Delhi Metro has done with some of its stations, for example, and got artists to do these murals. Or somebody can take the lead among the private transport companies. Aircraft used to look pretty dull too, until Richard Branson and his Virgin airlines appeared on the scene."

Vijay hadn't had the opportunity to meet any of the artists behind the striking work but that is the next step in this project. "So far it was only travelling and shooting in bus stands at Chennai, Nagapattinam, Dindigul, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli and Puducherry. The artistic choices and practical issues that lie behind the art are certainly worth exploring. But even without meeting them and having seen and photographed scores of buses across Tamil Nadu, it is apparent to me that they have deliberately stayed away from the staple of billboards in Tamil Nadu - politicians and film stars. It seems almost like that is the turf of the other artists. The bus artist's turf is the rest of the area that begins with architecture and dance from an ancient Indian past to androids from the world of modern, western science fiction."

But even within these very visually pleasing and apolitical graphics, Vijay spotted a political statement in the form of many visuals celebrating Jallikattu - a Tamil tradition that was briefly banned by the courts and continues to attract the ire of certain groups.

(Colours Unlimited: The Bus Art of Tamil Nadu is on view until Nov. 14)

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, BBMP, K.R. Pura Division, Old Madras Road, K.R. Pura, Bengaluru-560036
No.: EE/KRP/CGND/TND/12/2021-22 Date: 04.11.2021

CORRIGENDUM-1

Sub: Corrigendum of Tender Notification No. BBMP/EE/KRP/TEND/12/21-22, Dt.: 21.10.2021

Due to Technical Reasons, for this tender notification, the time schedule is modified & the revised time schedule is as follows:

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the e-procurement portal of GOK from dated: **08.11.2021** onwards. (2) Pre bid meeting will be held on dated: **11.11.2021 at 11:30 a.m.** (3) Last date for submission of tender documents on or before **16.11.2021 upto 4:00 p.m.** (4) Technical bids will be opened on the website **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** in the office of the Executive Engineer, K.R. Pura Division on **18.11.2021 at 4:00 p.m.**

Except for the above said changes there is no change in any of the terms and conditions of the tender notification.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, K.R. Pura Division, BBMP
COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE

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HIMACHAL PARDESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Tel. No. 01704222373 e-mail: ee-pao-hp@nic.in

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer HP PWD Paonta Sahib, Distt. Sirmour HP on behalf of Governor of HP invites the Item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HP PWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Starting Date for downloading Bid	Earliest Date for submission of Bid	Deadline for submission of Bid
1.	AR & M/O Badpur Jammiwala Parturi road km. 00 to 14/500. (SH- Providing and laying RCC Pipe 500 mm dia ub Km. 4/840 to 5040)	Rs. 1,20,286/-	10.11.2021 16:30 HRS	Rs. 14,200/-	17.11.2021 10:30 HRS
2.	Restoration of rain damages to Paonta Puruwala Singhpura Bhagani Gojar Dakpathar road (MDR-54) Km. 00 to 26/500. (SH- Repair to existing 2.00 mtrs. span RCC Slab Culvert at RD. 10/390).	Rs. 3,17,941/-	10.11.2021 16:30 HRS	Rs. 6,400/-	17.11.2021 10:30 HRS
3.	AR & M/O to Rest House building at Paonta Sahib, Tehsil Paonta Sahib. (SH- Repair and maintenance of Quarter No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, meeting hall, 11, 12, 13 and 14.)	Rs. 11,07,983/-	10.11.2021 16:30 HRS	Rs. 22,200/-	17.11.2021 10:30 HRS

The bidders are advised to note other details of Tenders from the department website www.hpndtenders.gov.in.

Executive Engineer
Paonta B&R Division,
HP PWD, Paonta Sahib
Distt. Sirmour, HP
On behalf Governor of Himachal Pradesh
Tel/Fax: 01704-222373
Email: ee-pao-hp@nic.in

HP / 4606/21-22

Timings
DELHI

SUNDAY, NOV. 07
RISE 06:38 SET 17:33
RISE 09:15 SET 19:44

MONDAY, NOV. 08
RISE 06:38 SET 17:32
RISE 10:24 SET 20:45

TUESDAY, NOV. 09
RISE 06:39 SET 17:31
RISE 11:28 SET 21:50

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	28	15
Safdarjang	28	15
Palam	27	16

Delhi Palam Today
29°C A dry weather to continue. Shallow fog and mist will occur during cool morning. Day will be comfortable but polluted.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
30°C The weather will be dry. Moderate pollution level to continue. A cool and misty morning turns comfortable day with mainly clear sky

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THE HINDU
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Fasting MLA admitted to hospital in U.P.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW/BALLIA

Samajwadi Party's Gauriganj MLA Rakesh Pratap Singh, who has sent his resignation to the Speaker over non-construction of roads in his constituency and started a fast in protest, was on Saturday admitted to a hospital by the police due to his worsening health.

The MLA has been sent to the hospital due to ill health as doctors had advised it, Lucknow Police Commissioner D.K. Thakur said. He has been admitted to Lucknow's Civil Hospital, he said.

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly and Samajwadi Party leader Ram Govind Chaudhary on the other hand, alleged that the MLA, sitting on fast before the Gandhi statue, was forcibly sent to hospital in an ambulance.

Panel blames sudden low winds for noxious Delhi air

Expert sub-committee ignored scientific report from CPCB; did not acknowledge role of crackers, stubble burning for the problem

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

"Sudden unforeseeable low winds" were the key cause of the noxious air quality that gripped the Delhi National Capital Region following Deepavali, according to an expert sub-committee that is tasked with recommending pollution control measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) with no acknowledgement of the role of crackers or stubble burning.

A day after Deepavali, the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi, Faridabad, Noida, Gurugram and Ghaziabad shot to over 450 or at the highest level of pollution severity called 'severe.' Though there was a ban on the use of crackers in all these regions, these norms were brazenly flouted and a change in wind direction increased the load of pollutants from Punjab and Haryana from stubble burning.

Ignores report

The committee chose to ignore a scientific report from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD) themselves on November 5, that explicitly holds "... crackers, biomass burning and unfavourable weather conditions that brought AQI to severe." Minutes of all these meetings appear on



Water wash: PWD workers spraying water on roads and trees to curb air pollution in New Delhi on Saturday. *R.V. MOORTHY

This committee met on November 5, a day after Deepavali to take stock of the noxious situation in the National Capital Region that saw air quality dip to 'severe' levels.

"... The AQI was predicted to be within very poor category, however, as informed by the IMD, there were sudden unforeseeable low winds that resulted in Severe Air Quality. V.K. Soni, IMD, confirmed that it might be attributed to sudden calming of winds, which could not be captured by the model," said the minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on November 5.

Before its meeting on November 5, the expert sub-

committee met on November 3, a day before Deepavali. Dr. Soni, meteorologist at the IMD and part of the committee, ruled out the possibility of air quality ever reaching the 'severe' category. "Even with higher emissions, model predictions do not indicate air quality reaching to 'severe' category ... in view of the above, the sub-committee suggests no additional measures except strict implementation of order issued earlier on October 18 and 28."

These are routine orders that State pollution control boards must implement assuming that air quality remains in the 'poor' and 'very

poor' categories.

GRAP provisions
According to the provisions of the GRAP, 'severe' air quality can prompt the sub-committee to order a halt on inbound trucks to Delhi or odd-even restrictions on cars as well as closure of brick kilns, stone crushers. However, following its assessment, the sub-committee has only recommended that government and private offices and other establishments reduce vehicle usage by at least 30% (by working from home, car pooling, and optimising their field activities, etc.) and pollution control implementing agencies to step up their efforts.

The Commission for Air Quality Management, that has been set up by an Act of Parliament to oversee the implementation of pollution control had earlier this week claimed that instances of stubble burning during September to November first week, in Punjab and Haryana, was half that of previous years. However, the CPCB's reports show that stubble burning on November 3, 4, 5 were not significantly lower - and that in Haryana was higher - than last year. A change in the direction of wind from easterly to north-westerly on Deepavali brought much of the carbon towards Delhi NCR.

Slight improvement, but AQI still 'severe'

Improvement expected from today

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The air quality in the city improved slightly on Saturday but continued to be in the 'severe' category for the second consecutive day due to unfavourable weather conditions, firecracker emissions and rampant stubble burning in neighbouring States, according to official data.

Several other cities in the National Capital Region - Gurugram, Faridabad and Noida - as well as towns in north India, such as Bagpat and Bulandshahr, also reported 'severe' air pollution for the second day post-Deepavali.

The contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring States to PM2.5 in Delhi was 41% and the number of active fires was 5,159 on Saturday, both highest this season, said government-run monitoring agency SAFAR.

Delhi's AQI (air quality index) was recorded at 437 on Saturday, down from 462 on Friday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board bulletin. On Friday,

the air quality dropped to its poorest levels for the day after Deepavali in five years, according to official data. It was also the first day with 'severe' air pollution this season.

The AQI of Delhi is expected to improve from Sunday evening because of strong surface winds sweeping through Delhi-NCR.

"Delhi's AQI is likely to improve to the upper end of 'very poor' category as surface winds are becoming stronger, dispersing air pollutants. Strong northwesterly winds enhance transport of emissions from stubble burning. Share of crop residue burning emissions in PM2.5 is 41% (effective fire count 5,159)," said SAFAR.

The fog or smog condition in Delhi-NCR also improved on Saturday. "Fog/smog conditions today [November 6] morning has improved in Delhi NCR as was forecasted. It was shallow fog with visibility 600 to 800 metre range reported at two airports from 5.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m.," IMD said in a statement on Saturday.

Akalis seeks lower tax on fuel

Protesters tried to lay siege to Chief Minister's residence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) held a protest here on Saturday against the Congress government in Punjab demanding a reduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) on fuel.

Led by its chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, the Akali protesters raised slogans against the State government for not giving relief to people in petrol and diesel prices by reducing taxes on fuel.

Chandigarh police caned the protesters, when they tried to lay siege to the residence of Chief Minister

Charanjit Singh Channi. A few Akali workers sustained injuries in the police action, claimed the protesters.

'Govt. has done nothing'
Speaking to reporters, Mr. Badal slammed the Congress-led government for not slashing the tax on fuel. "All States have reduced the prices of fuel. But this government has done nothing so far," he said.

He demanded slashing of the retail prices of fuel by ₹10 per litre. The Akalis also demanded from the govern-

ment an adequate compensation to the farmers whose crop were damaged because of rains and hailstorm.

"Farmers have not received the compensation yet and the Channi government is sleeping. Farmers have suffered a loss of ₹ 50,000 per acre. We came here to awake the State government," Mr. Badal said, asking the Chief Minister to meet the affected growers.

"Farmers are facing a shortage of di-ammonium phosphate needed for sowing of their crops," said Mr. Badal.

Third rake of Vande Bharat Express in March

Chairman of Railway Board inspects progress of work at ICF, appreciates team

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

The Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai plans to roll out the third rake of the Vande Bharat Express in March next year.

Chairman of the Railway Board Suneeet Sharma inspected the ongoing work and expressed satisfaction over progress in the much-awaited project of manufacturing 102 Vande Bharat trains, to be operated across the country.

"The shells of at least five Vande Bharat trains are in the final stages of completion.



Chairman of the Railway Board at the Integral Coach Factory. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Electrics are expected to be fitted in a couple of months. We hope to roll out one rake by March 2022," a senior ICF official said on Saturday.

The first two rakes of Train18, India's first semi high-speed trains rolled out by ICF in 2018, are now being operated as Vande Bharat expresses on the Delhi-Varanasi-Delhi and Delhi-Katra-Delhi routes.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the operation of 75 Vande Bharat trains on the occasion of Independence Day this year, the Ministry of Railways floated tenders for manufacturing 58 rakes, each comprising 16 coaches. Tenders have already been floated for making 44 rakes.

Of the 58 rakes of 16-car composition, 30 will be rolled out from ICF in Chennai, 14 from the Modern Coach Factory in Raebareilly and 14 from the Rail Coach Factory in Kapurthala.

In the latest tenders, the Railways has insisted on compliance to the Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order, 2017, and said there is "sufficient local capacity and competition in the supply of the tendered item in required quantity, and therefore, public procurement of the items is restricted to Class-I Local Suppliers only".

'Delhi Govt. alert to Zika cases in U.P.'

30 more test positive for virus in Kanpur; toll reaches 66

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Amid several cases of Zika virus being reported in the last two weeks in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur district, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday said the city Government was alert and watchful of the developments.

Delhi shares a border with Uttar Pradesh too and many people commute back and forth from the two States, for work or other purposes.

Thirty more people have tested positive for Zika virus in Kanpur, taking the total number of those infected in Kanpur district to 66, including nine IAF personnel, a senior official had said on Friday. Of those infected, 45 are men and 21 women, accord-



Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia. *FILE PHOTO

ing to officials.

The first case in Kanpur was reported on October 23 when an Indian Air Force (IAF) warrant officer had tested positive for Zika virus.

On Saturday, at a press conference in New Delhi, Mr. Sisodia was asked about the situation in Delhi, given the frequent movement of peo-

ple between Delhi and U.P., via Ghaziabad and Noida by road, or train and other means of transportation.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the Delhi Government is alert and watchful of the Zika virus cases reported in Uttar Pradesh.

Zika is a mosquito-borne virus and hence, getting rid of mosquitoes is the safe way out.

However, cases of dengue have been rising rapidly in the national capital in the past few weeks.

Over 1,530 cases of dengue have been reported in Delhi this year till date, out of which nearly 1,200 were logged in October alone, the highest count for the month in the last four years, according to official data.

Three die in U.P. vehicle collision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HAMIRPUR

Three motorcycle-borne men lost their lives after their vehicle was hit by an ambulance here, the police said on Saturday.

Additional Superintendent of Police Anoop Kumar said the accident took place on Friday night in Sajeji area of Kanpur district on the Kanpur-Hamirpur road and the victims were not wearing helmets.

The deceased have been identified as Gyanendra, 28, Akash alias Akku, 18, and Dinesh alias Chhanu, 19, - all residents of Hamirpur.

The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination, the officer said.

IN BRIEF

Bangladeshi cattle lifter lynched in Tripura district

AGARTALA
A Bangladeshi cattle lifter was lynched by villagers at Kamalnagar, a border village in Tripura's Sipahijala district on Saturday, the police said. The cattle lifter was lynched when he along with a group entered the house of a villager at about 1.30 a.m. on Saturday and attacked him when he tried to resist, the police said. PTI

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT

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THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

Silchar to host NE Green Summit from Nov. 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SILCHAR (ASSAM)

Sustainable development and conservation strategies for the Northeast and its contiguous biodiversity zones, a round table of forest ministers of the region, besides green art and green music events are on the agenda of the three-day Northeast Green Summit beginning here from November 16.

The focus area of the sixth edition of the summit is "Greening after Covid: Regional Cooperation, Innovation & Entrepreneurship".

Union Minister of State for Environment Ashwini Chaudhary is expected to attend the summit, where delegates from Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar will also brainstorm on various issues.

Several stalls showcasing sustainable products from across the northeastern region will be part of the summit, which is organised by Vibgyor NE Foundation and supported by the United Nations Environment.

A green cyclothon is being organised on November 8 to create awareness among the public about the rapidly depleting resources.

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- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (inStem)
(An Autonomous Institution of the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India)
GKVK Post, Bellary Road, Bangalore - 560 065.
Ph: 080-23666001/002. Fax: 080-23696662 (www.instem.res.in)

APPLICATIONS/NOMINATIONS ARE INVITED FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR STEM CELL SCIENCE AND REGENERATIVE MEDICINE (inStem) BANGALORE.

Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (DBT-inStem), an Autonomous Institute of the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India was established in 2009 and is located in the GKVK Campus, Bengaluru. The Centre for Stem Cell Research (CSCR) is the clinical translational unit of inStem in partnership with and located at CMC Ve Illore, Tamil Nadu. InStem's core mandate is to establish collaborative research programs tackling major questions in stem cell biology and regeneration with disease relevance and translational emphasis. InStem has established well-defined thematic research structures, comprising teams of investigators to collectively address complex problems of biology in the context of tissue repair following injury and inflammation, brain disorders, cardiac disease, metabolic regulation of cell function and a dedicated programme on chemical approaches aiding discovery injury repair. Today, the institute's-15 research groups (set to grow further), operate in major thematic programs. Commitment to the development of translational capabilities through programmatic partnerships with universities, research institutes, clinicians and industry as well as the establishment of platform technologies and development of sophisticated technical capabilities, enabling endeavours across themes, are major thrusts of our efforts. inStem shares a campus and core facilities with the National Centre of Biological Sciences (NCBS, TIFR) and the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platform (C-CAMP), which together comprise the Bangalore Life Science Cluster. inStem's investigators partner with international collaborators for specific projects of joint interest. Through these partnerships, the Institute has developed a strong research foundation with state-of-the-art facilities to attract investigators to its theme-driven, interconnected network of research programs. Details of inStem are available at <https://instem.res.in>.

The Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, invites applications from eminent scientists having proven scientific record in life or medical sciences with application to disease (not limited to Stem Cell Biology), and possessing research excellent leadership and administrative abilities for the post of **Director on Deputation (including short term contract)/Absorption**.

Scale of Pay and other benefits: The selected incumbent will be placed in the Level-17 (As per 7th CPC) Apex Scale: **Rs. 225000/-** (Fixed). Other benefit s/allowances shall be as per rules of Government of India applicable for appointment on deputation including Short-Term Contract /Absorption basis.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Scientists from Central/State Governments, Research Institutes, Autonomous Bodies, Government funded Research Organizations Institutes, etc.
2. Holding analogous post on regular basis in the parent Department; or
3. With 5 years service in post with Grade Pay of ₹ 10,000/- or 7th CPC level 14 or equivalent in the parent cadre/Department and possesses the qualification & experience as below:-

Essential:

- (i) PhD in any life science discipline/MD/M. Tech or equivalent.
- (ii) Minimum 15 years experience of research in the area of specialization.
- (iii) An outstanding track record of research accomplishments as evidenced by excellent scientific publications, patent and awards.

Desirable:

1. Experience in successfully running large programme. centre, institution.
2. Experience of guiding research activities in the area of specialization.

For more details including additional desirable qualifications login to the website:
www.dbtindia.nic.in or **www.instem.res.in**

Last date for receipt of applications/nominations in Department of Biotechnology is 30 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News for local candidates and 45 days for the candidates residing abroad, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Island, States/Union Territories in the North-Eastern region, Ladakh, region of J & K, Sikkim, Sub division Chamba and Lahaul and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh.



IN BRIEF
Swapna Suresh gets bail, released from prison

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Swapna Suresh, the prime accused in the UAE diplomatic baggage gold smuggling case, was released on bail from the Women's Prison here on Saturday. The gold smuggling case surfaced in July 2020 after the seizure of 30 kg of gold in 'diplomatic air cargo' addressed to the Consulate General, UAE, Thiruvananthapuram.

All spillway shutters of Mullaperiyar dam closed

ALL the spillway shutters of the Mullaperiyar dam were closed on Saturday with a decline in the water inflow to the dam. The water level at 3 p.m. on Saturday was 138.50 ft. Tamil Nadu Public Works Department officials had opened eight shutters on Wednesday when the inflow increased steadily after heavy rainfall.

Kerala student beaten up by seniors hospitalised

KANNUR
A student of Naher Arts and Science College, Kannur, who has been brutally beaten by senior students in an alleged instance of ragging, has been hospitalised. The victim, Anshad, said the attackers had demanded money from him and had objected to his talking to girl students.

Karnataka Govt. to open goshalas in temples

BELAGAVI
The Karnataka Government will open goshalas in around 250 endowment temples. Speaking to journalists after performing 'go pooja' in Kapileshwar temple in Belagavi on Friday, Muzrai Minister Shashikala Jolle said the Government will set up and run the centres and the temples will bear the cost of the cow care centres.

Bus driver takes passengers for a ride

The Kerala-registered private bus was hired by migrant workers to travel to Assam

**B. PRADEEP
JOHN L. PAUL
NALGONDA/KOCHI**
Sixty-four passengers, all of them migrant workers from Assam bound for their homes, were literally taken for a ride after the driver of a private bus on which they were travelling decamped during a lunch halt, on National Highway 65 (Hyderabad-Vijayawada) in the Narketpally police station limits here on Friday.

The Narketpally police, along with several other teams along the highway stretch, could not trace the bus till Saturday evening.

According to the police, the white-coloured bus, with registration number KL-38-D-709 and with the sticker 'Gang Boss Travel Hub' on the wind shield, originated in Kerala and was on its way towards Assam. The bus was



Novel theft: Migrant workers from Assam bound for their homes were duped by a private bus driver and a cleaner. ■NAGARA GOPAL

overloaded with 64 workers, including four women and two children, from Bihar, West Bengal and Assam.

Aggrieved passengers, who have been sheltered at a private hall since Friday evening, said the bus driver

and cleaner had hinted about undertaking repairs. While the travellers were having lunch, the two fled the place. As the bus did not return, the passengers approached the Narketpally police.

"CCTV footage at Pantangi toll plaza showed the bus exited Choutuppal around 12.20 p.m., not long after the passengers got off for lunch at a *dhaba*. However, the bus didn't cross any toll plaza on the Outer Ring Road," an offi-

cial at the station told *The Hindu*. It is suspected that the driver might have taken the service road after the Choutuppal plaza to avoid highway surveillance.

Except for ₹24,000 in cash of one passenger and clothes and bedding, no other passenger reported loss of valuables, the official added.

Meanwhile, the Ernakulam police have received a complaint from a travel agent based in Perumbavoor. The complaint says the bus left Perumbavoor with 45 passengers, after which the bus crew reportedly took 15 more passengers from Coimbatore and made them sit on the floor. This led to an argument between the crew and the passengers. Fearing repercussions when the bus reached their home town in Assam, the crew deboarded them and gave them the slip.

Solution in sight for A.P.-Odisha water dispute

Jagan to meet Patnaik on November 9

**K. SRINIVASA RAO
SRIKAKULAM**

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's scheduled meeting with his Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik on November 9 raises hopes of finding a permanent solution to two vexed issues bothering the neighbouring States - Vamsadhara Phase-II project in Srikakulam district and the dispute over the jurisdiction of Kotia villages in Vizianagaram district.

Though the Vamsadhara Water Disputes Tribunal has passed orders in favour of Andhra Pradesh, acquisition of land within the jurisdiction of Odisha by the construction of Neradi bar-

rage is yet to be made.

About 106 acres of land has to be acquired for the construction of the barrage, the foundation stone for which had been laid in 1962.

With no solution in sight, the then Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy Government had constructed a side weir to help store around 8 tmcft water out of 70 tmcft going waste every year during floods. Construction of the Neradi barrage under Phase-II is crucial to provide irrigation water to nearly 2.5 lakh acres additionally.

"Apart from Srikakulam, the project will also help Odisha farmers," Vamsadhara Project Superintending Engineer D. Tirumala Rao said.

CPI(M) publicly censures veteran leader Sudhakaran

Party terms the reprimand as a corrective action

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

The CPI(M) State committee has publicly censured former Public Works Minister and party veteran G. Sudhakaran. In a press release here on Saturday, the CPI(M) faulted Mr. Sudhakaran for not behaving as expected of a party State committee member during candidate selection and campaign for the 2021 Assembly election. It termed the reprimand a corrective action.

Mr. Sudhakaran evaded the media as he stepped out of AKG Centre here. He then



G. Sudhakaran

went to Cliff House, where he spent an hour with Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The CPI(M)'s decision to form a panel to probe the purported flaws in electioneering in Alappuzha district had stoked speculation that Mr. Sudhakaran was the likely target of a hostile party inquiry. The panel comprised CPI(M) Central committee member Elamaram

Kareem and CPI(M) State secretary member K.J. Thomas, both senior to Mr. Sudhakaran in the party hierarchy. The panel focused on electioneering in the Ambalappuzha constituency. Rumours were rife that Mr. Sudhakaran had stayed off the campaign trail after the CPI(M) nominated A.H. Salam for the seat.

Some party members faulted the CPI(M) district leadership for keeping Mr. Sudhakaran out of the loop during campaigning.

The probe had raised eyebrows because the CPI(M) had not conducted similar inquiries in Kundera and Thripunithara, where party candidates had lost at the hustings.

Judicial commission submits report on Jheeram Ghati massacre

Chhattisgarh CM has alleged the killings were a political conspiracy

**ANUP DUTTA
BHOPAL**

Eight years after the 2013 Jheeram Ghati Naxal attack in which 29 people, including senior leaders of the State unit Congress, were killed, the judicial commission set up to probe the massacre submitted its report to Chhattisgarh Governor Anusuya Uikey on Saturday.

The 10-volume 4,184-page report was submitted by Santosh Kumar Tiwari, secretary of the commission and registrar of the Chhattisgarh High Court to the Governor at the Raj Bhavan, an official said.

The Commission was constituted three days after the incident on May 28, 2013. It was headed by Prashant Kumar Mishra, former Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court. Mr. Mishra is currently Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court.

The Naxals had attacked a convoy of Congress leaders in Jheeram valley in Darbha area of Bastar district, killing 29 people, including then State Congress chief Nand Kumar Patel, his son Dinesh Patel, former leader of Opposition Mahendra Karma. Former Union minister Vidyacharan Shukla was seriously injured in this attack and later died during treatment.

On September 29, 2020, the Supreme Court dismissed a plea of the Chhattisgarh Government against the refusal to examine additional witnesses by the judi-



Due to pressure by the current Central Govt., neither the NIA nor the State Government was allowed to investigate the convoy attack case

**BHUPESH BAGHEL
Chhattisgarh Chief Minister**

cial commission set up to probe the 2013 Jheeram Ghati Naxal attack. On occasions, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has alleged that the massacre was a political conspiracy but the BJP government did not investigate properly.

"Eight years ago, on May 25, several Congress leaders lost their lives after their convoy was attacked by Naxals. It was our Congress government at the Centre in 2013 that had handed over the probe to the National Investigation Agency at that time. However, due to pressure by the current Central Government, neither the NIA nor the State Government was allowed to investigate upon the matter," Mr. Baghel had told reporters in Raipur on May 25 this year.

Former Chhattisgarh Government headed by Dr. Raman Singh had approached for a CBI inquiry into the incident on March 29, 2016, which was declined by the Union Government in December 2016, an official said.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Azad @ Mamu, S/o Amarnath, R/o D-346, Peeragarhi, Relief Camp, Paschim Vihar East, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 541/20 U/s 308/392/324/506 IPC, P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Azad @ Mamu** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Azad @ Mamu** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Azad @ Mamu** accused of **FIR No. 541/20 U/s 308/392/324/506 IPC, P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi** required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **18.12.2021**.

By Order
**Sh. Puneet Nagpal
M.M-07
Room No. 289, 2nd Floor
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi**

DP/1279/OD/2021

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

On line bid on item rate basis are invited by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Vibhag Division Dharampur Bharari on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh. In electronic tendering system in two covers for the under mentioned works from the contractors/ firms of appropriate class enlisted with Himachal Pradesh Jal Shakti Vibhag.

Sr.No.1. Name of Work:- Source strengthening of JMM Schemes in JS Sub Division Dharampur in Tehsil Dharampur District Mandi (HP) (SH)- Providing wire crates and RCC open channel to protect the rising main of various dia crossing along the left bank and right bank of Soan Khad) Estimated Cost:- 1,40,25,853/- Earnest Money:-172759/- Cost of Tender Form :-Rs.1500/- Time limit:-six months.

- KEY DATES-**
- I. Date of online publication. 06.11.2021 at 5.00 P.M.**
- II. Downloading of e-tender documents. 06.11.2021 at 5.00 P.M.**
- III. Last date of submission of e-tender 22.11.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.**
- IV. Last date for Physical submission of Earnest Money and cost of tender documents etc. 23.11.2021 upto 11:00 A.M.**
- V. Date of opening online bids 23.11.2021 at 11:30 A.M.**

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website www.hptenders.gov.in

Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti Division Dharampur Bharari
HP / 4615/21-22

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER

Open E-Tender Notice No. IZN/Elect/OT/12/2021 Dt.05.11.2021

E-Tender are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G)/N.E. Railway / Izzatnagar For & on behalf of the President of India for the following work:-

S.No.1. Description of work:- Strengthening of power supply arrangement including replacement of existing damage underground cabling at different station of Izzatnagar Division and replacement of existing old & damaged L.T. Over head lines by underground cabling at Kasganj Railway Colony. Approximate tender value in Rs. :-53,20,383.35. Earnest money in Rs. :- Nil. Cost of tender paper in Rs. :- Nil. Date & time of closing E-Tender :- 30.11.2021 at 15.00 hrs.. Completion time from the date of issue of letter of Acceptance :- Four months.

S.No.2. Description of work:- Improvement in electrical system including rewiring of platform shelter, stations/service building, LED glow sign board and replacement of damage underground cables at different stations of Izzatnagar Division. Approximate tender value in Rs. :- 27,24,458.75. Earnest money in Rs. :- Nil. Cost of tender paper in Rs. :- Nil. Date & time of closing E-Tender :- 30.11.2021 at 15.00 hrs.. Completion time from the date of issue of letter of Acceptance :- Four months.

S.No.3. Description of work:- Replacement of existing wiring in service building including L.T. over head line by underground cabling and improvement in lighting arrangement in service building including earthing arrangement etc. at different station of Izzatnagar Division. Approximate tender value in Rs. :- 29,84,233.20. Earnest money in Rs. :- Nil. Cost of tender paper in Rs. :- Nil. Date & time of closing E-Tender :- 30.11.2021 at 15.00 hrs.. Completion time from the date of issue of letter of Acceptance :- Four months.

• Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and such manual offer received shall be ignored. • The tender can be viewed at web site <http://www.IREPS.gov.in>
• The tenderer/bidders must have Class-III Digital signature certificate & must have registered on IREPS portal. • Only registered tenderer/bidders can participate in e-tendering. • All relevant papers must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-tendering.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G)/Izzatnagar CPRO/EL - 59

About any passenger amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 09794845955

"Never travel on roof and foot boards."

HIMACHAL PRADESH Jal Shakti Vibhag Notice Inviting Tender

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division, Nagrota Bagwan invites offline tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work through off line tendering process:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Time limit	Cost of Tender form(in Rs.)
1	CAD Work to Flow Irrigation Scheme Kandul Kuhl in Tehsil Nagrota Bagwan and Distt. Kangra. (SH)- Construction of RCC Lining in Branch Kuhl from RD 8450/530/0/160 to 280 = 120 Rmt.)	215016/-	4310/-	3 Months	250/-
2	Construction of Pound in Gram Panchayat Rajiana under "Catch the Rain" Campaign in Tehsil Nagrota Bagwan and Distt. Kangra. (H.P.)	221010/-	4425/-	3 Months	250/-
3	Construction of Pound in Gram Panchayat Patialkar under "Catch the Rain" Campaign in Tehsil Nagrota Bagwan and Distt. Kangra. (H.P.)	169749/-	3395/-	3 Months	250/-
4	A/R & M/O Sewerage Scheme Nagrota Town in Tehsil Nagrota Bagwan and Distt. Kangra. (H.P.) (SH)- Providing and Fixing of Auto Mains Failure Panel for automatic change over of electricity.)	495000/-	9900/-	3 Months	250/-
5	Providing Functional House Hold Tap Connection for Multi Villages Groups of Changer Area in various Gram Panchayats in Tehsil Baroh, Distt. Kangra. (H.P.) (SH)- Providing 56 Nos. House Hold Connection at Villages Sarotri, Chuhghara, Palahachaklu, Sunhi, Chandrot etc. for LWSS Sarotri.) (Under JMM Ph-1st.)	164717/-	3295/-	3 Months	250/-
6	Jandrah and Multi village group piped Water Supply Scheme for Changer Area under Nagrota Bagwan Constituency in Tehsil Baroh, Distt. Kangra. (H.P.) (SH)- Laying, Joining and Testing of G.I. Pipe 15 mm dia to 40 mm dia and other materials etc. at village Sallah, Jandrah, Kharat and Providing 75 Nos. House Hold Connection.)	196317/-	3930/-	3 Months	250/-
7	CAD Work to Flow Irrigation Scheme Kandul Kuhl in Tehsil Nagrota Bagwan and Distt. Kangra. (SH)- Construction of RCC Lining in Branch Kuhl from RD 8450/530/0/640 =110 Rmt and 1 No outlet Chamber)	260473	5210/-	3 Months	250/-
8	CAD Work to Flow Irrigation Scheme Kandul Kuhl in Tehsil Nagrota Bagwan and Distt. Kangra. (SH)- Construction of RCC Head weir at RD 8880)	243421/-	4870/-	3 Months	250/-
9	Providing FHTC by Retrofitting to Multi Village Group of Water Supply Scheme Serathana Rounkhar, Jassour, Sunehar, Mundla,Rajiana Sadarpur,Thanpuri including Imp of 4 Nos WSS in Block Nagrota Bagwan,Distt.Kangra HP (Under JMM Ph-3)(Sub-Head-Providing and installation of functional house hold tap connection including G.I.Fitting material at Panchayat Rajiana)	200275/-	4010/-	3 Months	250/-
10	Providing Water Supply Scheme to HRTC (Workshop (61 Miles) in Tehsil Nagrota Bagwan. (SH)- Drilling, Lowering and Development of Tube Well 110 Mtr. Deep.)	485010/-	9705/-	3 Months	250/-

Last date of submission of tender 12.11.2021 upto to 11:00 A.M and opened on same day at 11:30 A.M

Last date of sale of tender from Divisional office 11.11.2021 upto 3.30 P.M.

The Application for the same may be submitted to this office on or 11.11.2021 at 10:30 A.M.

The tender forms and other details conditions can be downloaded from the website www.hpibp.org or from office of the Executive Engineer JSV Division Nagrota Bagwan up to date specified above.

Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti Division Nagrota Bagwan
HP / 4619/21-22

दिल्ली सरकार
ताप की सरकार

EVERY FAMILY WILL FIGHT THE BATTLE AGAINST DENGUE

10 बजे

10 हफ्ते

10 मिनट

DEFEAT DENGUE EVERY SUNDAY

To be safe from Dengue, we along with our family need to check our home and surrounding areas for any sign of stagnant water. If we do find water, let's drain it, replace it regularly or cover it with a small layer of oil.

Come, let us make Delhi Dengue-free.

Testing and treatment facilities are available free of cost in Delhi Government Hospitals

Department of Health & Family Welfare,
Government of NCT of Delhi

Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi

DP/SHabdarh/01/25/21-22

FROM PAGE ONE

Hospital inferno leaves 11 COVID patients dead



Injured patients being taken for treatment after a fire broke out at the ICU of Civil Hospital in Ahmednagar. •PTI

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, in a message sent from Uttarakhand, said, "I am deeply anguished by the unfortunate incident. I offer my prayers for the departed souls and convey my condolences to the next of the deceased. Also wishing speedy recovery to the injured."

Mr. Thackeray spoke to the District Guardian Minister Hassan Mushrif and Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte and asked them to ensure that other patients admitted at the hospital get proper treatment without any disturbance, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "My condolences to the kin of those who lost their lives. I appeal to Congress workers to assist in the relief work."

BJP leader and former

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis described the incident as "very shocking and disturbing". Condoling the deaths, he sought strict action against those responsible.

Maharashtra Energy Minister Nitin Raut ordered a detailed inquiry into the fire. "The Electricity Department's inspection team has reached the hospital and it will start its probe after the police panchnama (inspection)", he said.

In April this year, 15 COVID-19 patients had died in a blaze at the ICU of a private hospital in Palghar district of Maharashtra.

Another fire in March at Dreams Mall in Mumbai's Bhandup, which housed a COVID-designated hospital, had claimed the lives of nine such patients.

(Inputs from Alok Deshpande in Mumbai)

'Hooch' takes 4 more lives; BJP says prohibition failed in Bihar

Nitish asks officials to monitor implementation of prohibition every alternate day

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

After hooch claimed 39 lives in Gopalganj and West Champaran districts in Bihar, four died of consumption of suspected spurious liquor in Samastipur in the State late on Friday. Five have been admitted in serious condition to different hospitals in the district.

Officials said the deaths were reported in the Rupaali panchayat limits in Patori block, and the cause could be known only after the post-mortem reports came out.

Villagers said the victims consumed spurious liquor a day after Deepavali and their condition deteriorated on Friday evening.

The dead are Shyam Nandan Chaudhury, Birendra Rai, Mohan Kumar and Vinay Singh. Mohan, 27, was in the armed forces. Vinay, 54, was said to be working in the Border Security Force.

Those admitted to hospital are Abhilash Rai, Benga Rai, Suman Kumar, Deepak Kumar and Kundan Kumar.

"They are also said to have attended a function in the village, after which they fell ill," a villager said.

Senior police officer Om Prakash Arun told presspersons, "The cause of their



Bereaved kin: Family members and relatives of the victims of the hooch tragedy in Gopalganj district of Bihar. •PTI

deaths can be ascertained only after seeing the post-mortem reports."

The local administration has arrested a few in Gopalganj district.

Janata Dal(U) president Rajeev Ranjan Singh, aka Lalan Singh, on Saturday told presspersons, "...those who will violate prohibition rules will be punished, but prohibition will continue in the State."

CM's directive
Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday said he would re-

view the deaths on November 16, after the four-day Chhath (sun god) festival. He asked officials to monitor implementation of prohibition every alternate day.

BJP State president Sanjay Jaiswal on Saturday cornered the Government, and said that "prohibition in the State has failed and there is need to review prohibition with all its success and failure after over the five years."

He told presspersons in Patna that "police at local level have nexus with liquor mafia and people are getting

liquor easily".

"During festivals like Holi, Deepavali and Chhath, migrant labourers come to their native places in Bihar in large numbers. They might be drinking with their saved money and becoming victims of spurious liquor," social activist Mahendra Yadav said.

"The social profile of those who died must be brought out by some organisations to wake up the Nitish Kumar Government," senior RJD leader Shivanand Tiwari told *The Hindu*.

Daily COVID-19 cases dip to nine-month low

The second wave saw daily cases climb to as many as 4,00,000 a day and excess deaths in several States, many multiples of what was being reported by the Government.

However, a difference between February and November is vaccination. As of

Saturday, 74 crore first doses have been administered, which translates to 56% of the population. Close to 34 crore second doses have been administered, which works out to a quarter of the population being fully inoculated. So far, 108 crore doses have been administered.

Oct. saw highest power shortage in over 5 years

The average stock position had marginally become better from the levels seen in mid-October when less than four days of supply was available. In comparison, the normative stock required on an average is over 21 days. The last time the average stock was near the requirement level was in mid-June, and since then, it has declined rapidly.

As on November 5, about 32 plants have less than four days of coal stock. Sixty-five plants have between four and nine days of stock. About 35 plants have between 10 and 19 days of stock.

As on November 5, in the inventories of all the 135 plants, only 1.45 lakh tonnes of actual stock of coal is imported. This is a far cry from the 15.43 lakh tonnes of imported coal available in the stock in February 2020. A sharp increase in the international coal price led to a decrease in imports.

On Monday, while ad-

dressing the 47th foundation day of Coal India Ltd, Union Minister for Coal Pralhad Joshi pointed out that international coal price had increased more than three times recently, which resulted in a 38% decrease in imports.

At the same time, electricity demand had gone up by more than 24%, the Minister added.

Mr. Joshi urged Coal India Ltd and its subsidiaries to "make all-out efforts to ensure at least 18 days of coal stock with thermal plants by November end this year."

Historical data were compiled from the Central Electricity Authority, and October 2021 data were compiled from day-wise reports available with the National Load Despatch Centre (NLDC) under the Ministry of Power.

(With inputs from Jasmin Nihalani and Sumant Sen. Data compiled by Pratap Vardhan, Stats of India and Karthik Dhandapani, IIM Trichy)

Tripura Chief Minister receives victory flame

It symbolises India's victory in 1971 war

A CORRESPONDENT
AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb received the Swarnim Vijay Varsh Flame at a ceremonial function organised by the Red Shield Artillery Brigade here on Saturday.

"Swarnim Vijay Mashaal" that symbolises India's victory over Pakistan in 1971 war of liberation of Bangladesh reached Tripura on Friday.

Olympian Dipa Karmakar, a host of dignitaries and military officials attended

commemorative programmes held in the vicinity of the Agartala Military Station.

The ceremonial function held at an auditorium commenced with handing over the victory flame to Chief Minister Deb. Major General Navin Sachdeva, General Officer Commanding of 57 Mountain Division, and Brigadier Nitesh Chowdhary, Commander of 57 mountain artillery brigade, were present. The Chief Minister felicitated Army veterans at the function.

NCB special team takes over cruise drugs case

All documents handed over to SIT

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A special investigation team (SIT) of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has taken over the investigation into the case of seizure of drugs from a few passengers on a cruise ship in Mumbai. Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, is an accused in the case, along with Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha.

All the documents related to the case have been handed over to the SIT, which is supervised by Sanjay Kumar Singh, Deputy Director-General of the NCB headquarters in Delhi.

"A SIT comprising officers from the Operations Branch of the NCB headquarters has been constituted by the NCB Director-General to take over six cases from the NCB Mumbai zonal unit, which have national and international ramifications..." Mr. Singh said on Friday.

He had said the decision was taken to conduct a deeper investigation to find out the forward and backward linkages in these cases.

The move came amid various charges levelled against NCB Mumbai Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede, who was earlier supervising the investigation, by Maharashtra Minister and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Nawab Malik and others.

Mr. Wankhede, who continues to be the NCB's Mumbai Zonal Director, has dismissed the allegations against him as "baseless".

SP chief seeks to defend his Jinnah remark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW/BALLIA

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday sought to defend his widely criticised statement equating Muhammad Ali Jinnah with Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru, saying they helped India get freedom. Uttar Pradesh Minister Anand Swaroop Shukla said Jinnah was responsible for the division of the country and suggested a narco test for Mr. Yadav for "glorifying" the Pakistani leader.

As the row over the SP leader's comments raged, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, without naming Mr. Yadav, described the remarks as "shameful and condemnable" and warned people about political parties which equate Sardar Patel with Jinnah. Mr. Shukla also said those heaping praises on Jinnah should go to Pakistan.

The SP demanded the sacking of Mr. Shukla for accusing Mr. Yadav of getting economic support from Pakistan's spy agency ISI.

Mr. Yadav hit out at his detractors, asking them to read history books again.

Fresh combing operation in Rajouri after tip-off

Villagers said they had spotted heavily armed militants

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

A tip-off about the presence of a group of militants in a forest area in Rajouri on Saturday led to a fresh combing operation by the Army in the Pir Panjal valley, where nine soldiers lost their lives to twin firefights with militants in October.

Official sources said the Army personnel fanned out in a vast area of the Khablan forests "immediately after local villagers tipped them off about the presence of heavily armed militants".

"No contact is established yet. However, the combing operation was carried out during the day," the officials said.

The fresh operation resulted in the closing down of the Thanmandi-Rajouri road for traffic "as a precautionary measure".

Enhanced militancy
The twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch in the Pir Panjal valley saw heightened militancy this year.

Top Army officials in the past 27 days visited the area to augment the anti-terror grid.

BJP leader links NCP man to conspiracy behind drug bust

Nawab Malik alleges attempt to divert attention

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

As Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Mohit Kamboj on Saturday alleged that a worker of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), known as Sunil Patil, was part of the conspiracy in the Aryan Khan drug case, photos of Mr. Patil, along with arrested independent witness in the case, K.P. Gosavi, and BJP leader Manish Bhanushali, taking blessings from Union Home Minister Amit Shah surfaced.

At a press conference, Mr. Kamboj said that Mr. Patil coordinated the whole episode with Sam D'Souza. "He (Patil) sent a WhatsApp message to Sam D'Souza on October 1 and told him that he



Nawab Malik

had leads on 27 people who were going to consume illegal drugs at a cruise party," Mr. Kamboj said, adding that he asked D'Souza to get a person named Kiran Gosavi to coordinate with the NCB for action in the case. He said Mr. Patil was close to Hrishikesh, former Home

Minister of Maharashtra Anil Deshmukh. Mr. Kamboj also claimed that a drug peddler named Chinkoo Pathan had come to the Sahyadri guest house to meet Mr. Deshmukh.

Asked about the claims, NCP leader and State Minister Nawab Malik rubbished them. "A member of Sameer Dawood Wankhede's private army just held a press conference to misguide and divert attention from the truth albeit unsuccessfully. I will reveal the truth tomorrow," he wrote on Twitter.

Maharashtra Congress general secretary Sachin Sawant tweeted a photo of Mr. Patil and Mr. Bhanushali touching the feet of Mr. Shah.

Judicial custody for Anil Deshmukh

ED had sought 9 more days of custody

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Maharashtra's former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh was sent to judicial custody by a holiday Court on Saturday in a case of money laundering and corruption.

Additional Solicitor-General Anil Singh, representing the Enforcement Directorate (ED), appeared before Special Judge P.R. Sire and sought further custody of nine days. However, the court rejected this and Mr. Deshmukh was remanded in judicial custody.

He was arrested by the Central agency on November 1 after being questioned for 12 hours. He was sent to the ED's custody till November 6.

Mr. Deshmukh's counsel on Saturday also filed for an anticipatory bail application on behalf of Hrishikesh Deshmukh, son of Mr. Deshmukh, which will be heard on November 12.

On October 29, the Bombay High Court rejected Mr. Deshmukh's plea, seeking to quash five summons issued by the ED.

Abuse of position

The case dates back to March 20, 2021 when former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh wrote to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray alleging that



Anil Deshmukh

Mr. Deshmukh had abused his position and powers to seek illegal monetary benefits. The letter alleged instances of Mr. Deshmukh directing suspended police officer Sachin Vaze and others to collect ₹100 crore from bars and restaurants over a month.

Soon thereafter, the High Court directed a preliminary inquiry to be held against Mr. Deshmukh by the Central Bureau of Investigation. The ED then stepped in and started a probe into allegations of money laundering against Mr. Deshmukh.

On April 21, an FIR was registered against Mr. Deshmukh under Section 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 7 (public servant taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of an official act) of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Five die while cleaning effluent tank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD

Five workers died after inhaling toxic gas while cleaning an underground tank at a pharmaceutical unit in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district on Saturday.

"The management had decided to clean the tank, which stores the factory's liquid waste before it is sent for treatment. The workers were unaware about the presence of toxic gas inside it," chief fire officer Mahesh Mod said.

One of the workers fainted inside the tank, following which four others entered one after another to rescue him and eventually died because of the toxic fumes, he said.

The factory owners had not provided any safety equipment or masks to the workers, the official said.

Patchy Internet irks netizens in Srinagar

It is impacting students: Tarigami

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Patchy Internet service has irked the local people in Srinagar, with many describing it as "an undeclared Internet curfew". The CPI(M) termed the current Internet situation "a return of painful memories of communication blockade imposed in Kashmir on August 5, 2019".

Students and businessmen living in several pockets of Srinagar are complaining of prolonged Internet shutdowns, especially late in the afternoon and in the evening hours.

Netizens living in Srinagar's Nowhatta, Safakadal and Qamarwari also complained of irregular Internet services. The complaints started pouring in after the recent spike in militant attacks in the city in October, which left seven civilians dead in targeted attacks.

Police sources said the security agencies were regulating the Internet speed and keeping an eye on multiple towers after "heightened activity by suspected Internet users". The measure has been taken as a counter to contain growing militant attacks after sunset in the capital.

CPI(M) leader Moham-

mad Yousuf Tarigami accused the Jammu and Kashmir administration of "shutting down Internet sporadically in several parts of Srinagar and other areas of the Valley".

"It has once again brought back painful memories of communication blockade imposed in Kashmir on August 5, 2019, which was fully lifted after a year and a half. Reportedly Internet access is shut for most of the day in these areas and services resume mostly after 10 p.m. when they are least required. This has hugely impacted students, who are not able to attend their online classes as the Internet remains shut down during day hours," Mr. Tarigami said.

"The 2019 communication blockade led to huge economic losses and unemployment and cost the Kashmiri economy thousands of crores while thousands of people lost their livelihood. The latest curbs on the Internet are bound to aggravate the situation," he added.

The police, so far, have neither rejected the allegations nor issued any statement over the blockade issue.

BJP national executive to meet today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP national executive will meet on Sunday, the first time since 2019, to discuss plans for the upcoming Assembly elections and pass a political resolution, BJP national general secretary Arun Singh said on Saturday.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, Mr. Singh said the party's top decision-making body would meet in Delhi and 124 of the members would attend. The others, including Chief Ministers, would gather at their respective State offices to attend virtually due to the COVID-19 restrictions. BJP national president J.P. Nadda would chair the meeting and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech would conclude the day-long programme.

Among the issues on the agenda, Mr. Singh said, were the upcoming elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Manipur and Punjab in 2022. Only one resolution, a political one, would be passed.

Sidhu derailing steps to ensure justice in sacrilege case, says A-G

A.P.S. Deol says Punjab Cong. chief spreading falsehood to gain political mileage

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Escalating the political crisis in the State, Punjab's Advocate-General (A-G) A.P.S. Deol on Saturday broke his silence to launch a scathing attack on Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Navjot Singh Sidhu, who, in turn, visited the gurdwara in Faridkot from where a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib was stolen in 2015.

Mr. Sidhu has been questioning the Charanjit Singh Channi-led Congress Government on the steps taken for the delivery of justice in sacrilege cases, and also asked the Government to make public the Special Task Force's report in drug cases in the past 50 days.

In a statement released on Saturday, Mr. Deol said Mr. Sidhu's repeated utterances sought to derail the earnest efforts of the State Government to ensure justice in the "drugs matter" and the "sacrilege cases".



Uneasy ties: Punjab PCC president Navjot Singh Sidhu with Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi. •PTI

"Mr. Sidhu is spreading misinformation to gain political advantage over his political colleagues. There is a concerted attempt by vested interests to malign the functioning of the Congress party in view of the coming elections in Punjab for selfish political gain by politicising the constitutional office of the A-G of Punjab," Mr. Deol stated.

Mr. Deol's remarks came a day after Mr. Sidhu withdrew his resignation as Punjab Congress chief, but declared that he would not resume

charge till Mr. Deol was removed as A-G and a panel set up for the appointment of a new Director-General of Police (DGP), replacing Preet Singh Sahota. Mr. Sidhu resigned from the PCC president's post on September 28, after the Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Channi, picked Mr. Deol and Mr. Sahota as A-G and DGP respectively.

Mr. Deol had represented former Punjab DGP Smedh Singh Saini in cases related to the 2015 sacrilege incidents and police firing on protesters, while Mr. Sahota

was the head of the Special Investigation Team formed by the previous Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP Government to probe the sacrilege incidents.

Clear indication

The A-G's statement is a clear indication that Mr. Channi is digging in his heels and does not want to concede any more ground to Mr. Sidhu. Mr. Deol's removal will render Mr. Channi's leadership ineffective, especially so close to the Assembly election.

Equally, Mr. Sidhu's visit to the Faridkot gurdwara indicates that he is in no mood to back down.

Uploading long videos and several pictures from his visit, Mr. Sidhu tweeted, "Ardas at Gurudwara saheb Burj Jawahar Singh wala, Bargari ... Praying for exemplary punishment for those involved in the sacrilege of Guru Granth saheb ji ... should be a deterrent for generations to come!"

'Huzurabad proved BJP is the only alternative to TRS'

Victor Eatala Rajender given a rousing welcome

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD

The Huzurabad bypoll proved that the only alternative to the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi is Bharatiya Janata Party, its charged leaders from the Centre and the State asserted, at the victory celebrations here on Saturday.

"Telangana is being run by anti-Telangana forces now; the Telangana Bhavan too is filled with them. BJP, which fought for the State, is the platform for true activists of Telangana," Minister of Tourism G. Kishan Reddy said. BJP State chief Bandi Sanjay gathered several leaders on Saturday to extend a grand welcome to Huzurabad victor Eatala Rajender to Hyderabad, a first after the bypoll result. Paying floral tributes at the Martyrs' Memorial, the exuberant union of leaders and activists immersed Mr. Rajender in a saffron procession till the party office at Nampally.

For Minister Kishan Red-



BJP's winner from Huzurabad Eatala Rajender, and party State president Bandi Sanjay Kumar participating in a rally from Amaraveerula Sthupam to BJP State office in Hyderabad on Saturday. •RAMAKRISHNA G

dy, people of Huzurabad delivered a historic mandate and their message through the election was: "End KCR's family rule, honour people's rule"

'KCR constitution'

A determined Mr. Rajender dedicating his victory to Huzurabad's people observed that activism was back in Telangana, as its people started feeling ridiculed about their self-esteem.

"It is not B.R. Ambedkar's Constitution in Telangana

that is being implemented, but KCR's constitution. The official machinery in Huzurabad - administration, police and the electoral staff - had openly ridiculed the test of democracy," he said, and added that he would approach the ECI with sufficient evidence to initiate action.

Mr. Rajender expressed confidence that BJP's tally that began in Dubbak, GHMC and Huzurabad polls would continue in 2023, to elect it as the only alternative party to TRS.

PM must withdraw clean chit given to China: Cong.

Party was reacting to Pentagon report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi must immediately withdraw the clean chit given to China and set a deadline for removing the Chinese Army from Indian territories, the Congress said on Saturday, a day after the Pentagon's latest annual report revealed that China has been undertaking "incremental and tactical actions to press its claims".

At a press conference in Delhi, party spokesperson Pawan Khera said that in June 2020, when BJP MP from Arunachal East Tapir Gao wrote letters to Mr. Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh warning them about Chinese forces constructing permanent structures in Indian territory, the Government went into denial. "It has been 17 months since Mr. Modi gave a clean chit to China. That is a dark chapter in Indian history. Emboldened by the clean chit, the Chinese have been claiming to the world that it did not transgress into Indian territory," Mr. Khera stated. The Government



Pawan Khera

had refused to come clean on the situation.

Now, the Pentagon's annual report, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China", had confirmed Mr. Gao's warnings and reports in the Indian media. The report, presented to U.S. Congress, stated that China had constructed a 100-home civilian village inside the disputed territory between the Tibet Autonomous Region and Arunachal Pradesh last year.

"The report points out that it is a 'dual use' village with multi-storey structures. These can be used as a civilian village and also double up as an army cantonment," Mr. Khera noted.

'China strengthening connectivity in Chumbi'

U.S. report says Beijing continues to take incremental and tactical actions to press its claims at LAC

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

China is strengthening connectivity and increasing its depth in Chumbi valley, close to India's strategic and vulnerable Siliguri corridor, also called Chicken's Neck, according to official sources. The area was recently termed "sensitive" by Lieutenant-General Manoj Pande, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Army Command.

In its just-released annual report 2021 to the U.S. Congress on military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Department of Defence (DoD) noted that despite the ongoing diplomatic and military dialogues to reduce border tensions, the PRC has "continued taking incremental and tactical actions to press its claims at the Line of Actual Control [LAC]".

"China is building an alternative axis in the Chumbi valley, which is close to the Siliguri corridor. They are increasing their depth by building roads through Bhutanese territory," an official source said. By this, it was



securing its routes while putting pressure on the Siliguri corridor, which was vital for India, two officials independently stated.

Satellite images that came out last year had shown China building roads along the Torsa river area through Bhutanese territory. In this context, the recent memorandum of understanding (MoU) on a three-step road map between Bhutan and China to speed up their talks for boundary resolution was significant and could have implications for India, a third defence official said.

The Siliguri corridor is a stretch of land bordering Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. At the narrowest, it is about 20-22 km.

In a recent conversation, Lt. Gen. Pande said the geos-

trategic significance of the corridor came about in terms of it being a narrow piece of land that connects the northeast to the rest of the country, through which major national highways, railway lines, pipelines, Off-Shore Cable (OFC) connectivity and the rest pass.

Lt. Gen. Pande said the other aspect was the demography and its dynamics in that area and "related challenges of radicalisation and separatist tendencies whose activities can be inimical to our security interest". "So, yes, the Siliguri corridor is sensitive to us," he said.

On the efforts to address this issue, he said they were looking at a "whole of the nation approach", wherein not only the security forces, the military and certain other

Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), but also the Governments of the States around the Siliguri corridor and Central agencies were all working together in a coordinated manner to "mitigate this threat in normal times, the hybrid threat as and when it manifests as also during conflict conditions".

"Only recently, we have set up a joint coordinating centre under the Army and that has proved to be effective to coordinate actions of all agencies that work there," he said. He said at the national level, there was a thought process to look at alternative means in terms of economic activities, etc., to mitigate this threat to the Siliguri corridor.

PLA recruitment drive

The Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) had conducted a month-long recruitment drive in Chumbi valley of around 400 Tibetan persons in August, according to intelligence inputs. The aim was to recruit at least one Tibetan aged 18-40 an household into the PLA militia, one official said, citing the inputs. "The new recruits from

Phari Dzong and Yatung will undergo one-year training at the PLA facilities in Lhasa," the official disclosed. After the training, they were likely to be deployed on the India-China border, he added.

On China's continued build-up along the LAC, the DoD annual report revealed: "Sometime in 2020, the PRC built a large 100-home civilian village inside disputed territory between the PRC's Tibet Autonomous Region and India's Arunachal Pradesh state in the eastern sector of the LAC." Responding to questions on the Chinese "model villages" close to the LAC, Lt. Gen. Pande noted last month that the concern was the dual use, civil and military, of these villages.

The DoD report said Beijing, asserting that its deployments close to the LAC were in response to Indian provocation, had refused to withdraw any forces until India's forces withdrew behind the PRC's version of the LAC and ceased infrastructure improvements in the area.

As of June 2021, India and China continued to maintain large-scale deployments along the LAC, it stated.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Facing pressure to reduce value-added tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday reiterated his demand that the Centre further slash additional excise duty, special excise duty and cess on fuel for providing relief to common people from the rising inflation.

Several BJP-ruled States have reduced VAT rates after the Centre's decision to cut excise duty on petrol by ₹5 a litre and on diesel by ₹10 a litre on Thursday. However, Mr. Gehlot said the VAT collection of States had automatically reduced in a proportionate manner after the Centre's move. He said the excise duty reduction had led to a loss of ₹1,800 crore per year in VAT revenue to Rajasthan, which was yet to receive the goods and services tax (GST) compensation of ₹5,963 crore from the Centre. He said the Centre had already reduced the share in excise duty that was earlier available to all States.

'Govt. can't be adversary when citizens' rights are under threat'

Court will intervene if denial of information affects right: SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the Pegasus case underlined the principle that the Government cannot take an "adversarial position" when the fundamental rights of citizens are under threat.

The Government cannot decline information to citizens that concern their privacy by simply raising the bogey of national security. The state cannot blame judges of "judicial oligarchy" or acting "the aristocracy in the robe" for seeking information on behalf of citizens. The court would have to certainly intervene if denial of information by the state affected the rights of citizens.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana refused to accept the Government's version that a disclosure whether Pegasus was in play or not would endanger national security.

The apex court, in its Pegasus order, said it had no intention to encroach into the "political thicket", but it also would not cover when the fundamental rights of citizens were at stake. In this context, it referred to the

wisdom of Justice H.R. Khanna's opinion in the *Ke-savananda Bharati* case judgment of 1973.

Primary duty

Justice Khanna had said the primary duty of judges was to "uphold the Constitution and the laws without fear or favour and in doing so, they cannot allow any political ideology or economic theory, which may have caught their fancy, to colour the decision".

The court's resolve to defend constitutional rights in the Pegasus order of October 27 finds resonance with its May 31 judgment in the COVID-19 case.

In that judgment, the court refused to remain a "silent spectator when constitutional rights of citizens are infringed by executive policies". The court had brushed aside the Government's argument that it had no right to interfere in its vaccination policy.

Instead, the court upheld its duty to judicially review Government policies. "Judicial review and soliciting constitutional justification for policies formulated by

the executive is an essential function, which the courts are entrusted to perform," the court had reminded the Government. The Centre had to reverse its dual vaccine pricing policy.

The Pegasus order refers to the court's judgment in *Ram Jethmalani* case of 2011, which advised that rather than stonewall petitioners, the Government should share information and help them "better articulate" their case.

"In the task of upholding fundamental rights, the state cannot be an adversary. The state has the duty, generally, to reveal all the facts and information in its possession to the court, and also provide the same to the petitioners. This is so because the petitioners would then be enabled to bring to light facts and the law that may be relevant for the court in rendering its decision. In proceedings under Article 32 [of the Constitution], both the petitioner and the state have to necessarily be the eyes and ears of the court," the Pegasus order quoted from the 2011 judgment.

Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMC)
In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar-751 001
Tel.: (0674) 2380608; Website: www.osmclnic.in; Email: proc.osmcl.od@nic.in

Assuring Quality, Saving Lives Notification No.9855 / OSMCL/2021 Dt. : 03/11/2021

NOTICE INVITING RE TENDER FOR "SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF RADIOTHERAPY DOSIMETRY & QA EQUIPMENT"

Online Bids through e-Tender portal (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>) are invited from eligible bidders for supply, installation & commissioning of Equipments as per the particulars mentioned below :

Sl.	Bid Reference No.	Item Name	Bid Document Cost inclusive of GST
1.	OSMCL/2021-22/EQP-AHPGIC-RADIOTHERAPY/12	Retender for Supply & Installation of RADIOTHERAPY DOSIMETRY & QA EQUIPMENT	Rs.5,600/-

Sl.No.	Particulars	Date and time
1.	Date & time of release of bid	03/11/2021, 3 PM
2.	Date & time of Pre-bid meeting	09/11/2021, 11.00 AM Venue : Conference Hall, Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd., In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar
3.	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time : 15/11/2021, 3 PM End Date & Time : 30/11/2021, 5 PM
4.	Date & time of online Technical Bid Opening	03/12/2021, 3 PM
5.	Date of opening of Price Bid	To be informed to the qualified bidders

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: www.osmcl.nic.in and <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. The Authority reserves the right to accept/reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Managing Director, OSMC Ltd., Odisha
OJPR-10112/110056/2122
CAD-1711

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (Divyangjan)
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Phone: 044 - 27472846, 27472113, 27472423 Mobile: 9444314716.
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Sl.No.	Name of the Post	No. of Post	Group/Scale of pay	Mode of Recruitment
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2	Associate Professor in Speech Pathology & Audiology	01 (one)	Group-A Faculty Rs. 78,800 - 2,09,200/- Level -12 (7 th CPC)	By Deputation

(*) - In case of Non availability of a suitable candidate belonging to EWS, such post could be filled up with UR.
For detailed advertisement, essential/desirable qualifications, age limit, format of application and the recruitment fee details etc., please visit our website: www.niepmd.nic.in. The last date of receipt of applications with fee and necessary documents is 21 days from the date of publication in employment news.

Sd/- Director

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No: KMP/TS-01/CF/ABC & RS /01/2020-21 Date : 04.11.2021

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER PUBLICATION:

1) Work details : 02 Service Tenders as below. 1. Implementing Animal birth control and ARV in stray dogs and euthanizing the sick, rabid and rogue dogs in a humane manner as per Animal Birth Control (dogs) rules 2001 (Call-05). 2. Rapid Survey in SUH under DAY-NULM Programme Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike. (All 03 Zones) (Call-02). 2) Account head : Corporation Fund & Day Nulm, 3) Class of contractor/Agency : As per Tender Documents, 4) Last date for submission of tender : **15.11.2021 Evening up to 4.30 PM**, 5) Tender opening Date (Technical Bid) : **16.11.2021 Evening 4.35 PM**, 6) Tender opening Date (Financial Bid) : **17.11.2021 Morning 11.30 AM**, 7) Address for communication: Executive Engineer, Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi. 8) Website address: www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in

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NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No.	Description	Due date
212223 001750	Bleached Hardwood Sulphate Pulp for Unit-I & II	13.11.2021
212223 001724	Native Starch (Maize based) for BM#4 for TNPL - Unit-II	20.11.2021
212223 001723	To run Defoamer for Wet end at TNPL Unit-II on package cost basis	20.11.2021

Email: 212223001750-purchase.pulp@tnpl.co.in
212223001724-1723-purchase.u2@tnpl.co.in

Detailed terms and conditions, Quantity, Tender Fee, EMD, etc., are available in tender document at our websites: www.tnpl.com / www.tnplars.nic.in

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Rajpath revamp is on track, says official

Workers faced several challenges, including building underpasses where the water table was high

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The unusual amount of rainfall this monsoon, coupled with flooding due to the high water table, did lead to some delays in the redevelopment of the Central Vista Avenue, but with additional workers deployed now, the project is likely to be completed in time for the Republic Day parade preparations on the Rajpath, Government officials said this week.

Preparations for the parade usually pick up in December, with temporary seating arrangements, sound systems and CCTV cameras and other facilities being installed along the way.

The ongoing redevelopment project includes permanent solutions for utilities



Mega project: Construction work at Rajpath as part of the Central Vista Avenue redevelopment. • FILE PHOTO

and amenities for the public that earlier had been put up for the parade every year, according to the architect of the revamp, Bimal Patel.

With about a month to go, Union Housing and Urban

the project, including increasing the number of workers from 3,600 to 4,000. Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri visited the site on September 21 and later announced the addition of workers to make up for the delays caused by rain.

The official noted that the project included the challenge of construction of underpasses at a site where the water table was high, leading to flooding when the ground was dug up.

The rainfall, which was the highest for a September in 77 years, also led to challenges for compacting the soil.

However, the official said the underpasses, eight amenity blocks, vending

areas and around 10 km of walking paths would be ready before the parade.

Granite pathways

About 1.67 km of granite pathways had been completed, the officer said. For the parade, 30,000 bleachers had been ordered. The canals along the Rajpath would have recycled water, for which a sewage treatment plant (STP) was being constructed.

The project began in February after the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) awarded the contract to Shapoorji Pallonji & Company following a tendering process in 2020. The project was estimated to cost ₹608 crore, according to the CPWD.

Arunachal to showcase 'heroic village' near the China border

Residents of Kaho helped Army in 1962 Chinese attack

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Arunachal Pradesh is planning to make a documentary about one of its most "patriotic destinations" – Kaho, a village on the China border – to mark the 75th year of Independence.

The State's Department of Information, Public Relations and Printing has sent a 12-member team to Kaho in Anjaw district for filming a documentary on the village and its people.

One of seven villages in the Kibithoo block bisected by the Lohit river, Kaho had weathered the Chinese attack in 1962. Its people had assisted the Indian soldiers

who had been outnumbered.

The department's director, Dasher Teshi, said the team left the State capital Itanagar by road on Friday and would reach Kaho on Sunday. The village is 580 km east of Itanagar.

Meyor community

"Kaho is the first village from the China border. We plan to make a documentary on Kaho and its people who belong to the Meyor community. Very few people know about this village and its significance," Mr. Teshi said.

The documentary, sanctioned by the State BJP Government, is a part of the ce-

lebrations of "Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav", the nationwide celebrations for the 75th year of Independence.

Anjaw is one of the 11 districts of Arunachal Pradesh that share their border with China.

According to the 2011 census, Kaho has only 65 residents and a literacy rate of 64.15%.

A similar publicity event was organised at Dipa village in Lower Siang district a month ago.

Several residents of Dipa had taken part in the freedom movement and the national flag was first hoisted at the village on August 15, 1947.

SC turns focus on mental health issues

Court calls for more sensitivity

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Upholding the need for judges to be sensitive to the gravity of mental health issues, the Supreme Court has said the judiciary should not treat the mental health of a person with a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

A Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and B.V. Nagarathna made the observation in a recent judgment based on an appeal filed by Karnataka against a High Court decision to quash a case of abatement of suicide against a Government officer.

The officer's driver died by suicide. A note left by him alleged that he was harassed by the officer, who had used his bank account to transfer ill-gotten wealth and convert black money into white.

HC order set aside

The High Court had dismissed the charges against the officer, terming the driver a "weakling".

The High Court had also disbelieved the version that the dead man was under pressure, reasoning that he had met friends and did not show any signs of being harassed or threatened.

The High Court had said the behaviour of the deceased before his death was not that of a person who was depressed and suffering from mental health issues.

"Behavioural scientists have initiated the discourse on the heterogeneity of every individual and have challenged the traditional notion of 'all humans behave alike'. Individual personality differences manifest as a variation in the behaviour of people," Jus-



Individual personality differences manifest as a variation in the behaviour of people

JUSTICE D.Y. CHANDRACHUD

Chandrachud observed, setting aside the High Court order quashing the case against the officer.

The top court noted that "an individual copes with a threat – both physical and emotional, expressing (or refraining to express) love, loss, sorrow and happiness, varies greatly in view of the multi-faceted nature of the human mind and emotions".

Serious matter

Justice Chandrachud, who wrote the 27-page judgment, said terms such as "weakling" and measuring a person's mental state by his outward conduct, etc, "deeply diminishes" the gravity attached to mental health issues.

"The mental health of a person cannot be compressed into a one-size-fits-all approach," the Supreme Court noted.

Suicide prevention helpline: Delhi – Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-40769002; Chennai – Sneha, 044-24640050.

Portable warmth



Elegant and practical: A vendor of kangri, a traditional Kashmiri heater comprising earthenware in a wicker basket, warms himself during a spell of rain in Srinagar. • NISSAR AHMAD

Srinagar declared a 'major airport'

Move will allow AERA to determine tariff

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The Union Ministry of Civil Aviation on Saturday declared the Srinagar airport a "major airport" under the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority Act, 2008 (AERA).

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (i) of Section 2 of the Airports Economic Authority Act, 2008 (NO. 27 OF 2008), the Central Government hereby declares the airport of Srinagar as major airport," the notification said.

The move will allow the AERA to determine the tariff, including the development fee and passenger service fee, for aeronautical services at the Srinagar airport.

The Centre designates an



Students getting ready for their flights at Srinagar airport. • FILE PHOTO

airport as a major airport if it crosses a particular volume of annual passenger traffic.

Previously, the Airports Authority of India, a body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, would determine the tariff for the Srinagar airport.

Ajit Doval holds strategic dialogue with France

Countries commit to closer ties in the Indo-Pacific

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

India and France committed to closer cooperation in the Indo-Pacific through more intelligence sharing and expanding bilateral exercises in the maritime sphere, as National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval met French President Emmanuel Macron's diplomatic adviser Emmanuel Bonne in Paris for the annual strategic dialogue, the Indian Embassy announced on Saturday.

"[The two sides] agreed to strengthen bilateral defence and security partnership

through enhanced intelligence and information sharing, operational cooperation, bolstering mutual capabilities, expanding bilateral exercises and pursuing new initiatives in maritime, space and cyber domains," said the release, giving details of Mr. Doval's meetings, including his discussions with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and Defence Minister Florence Parly.

The NSA, who is hosting a regional conference on Afghanistan in Delhi on Wednesday, which security officials from Russia, Iran and Central Asian countries are expected to attend, also discussed cooperation with France on the developing situation there.

The two sides also discussed "the continuing challenge of terrorism; and, emerging threats in maritime, cyber and space domains", the release added.

Mr. Doval travelled to France after accompanying Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who travelled to Rome for the G20 summit and Glasgow for the COP26 climate change summit.

Bilateral meet

While Mr. Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met their counterparts during pull-aside meetings at both conferences as well as at the UN General Assembly in September, the NSA's meeting was the first formal bilateral meeting between India and France since the



NSA Ajit Doval with French Defence Minister Florence Parly during his visit to France. • PTI/TWITTER/INDIAEMBFRANCE

blow-up over U.S. President Joe Biden's announcement of a new Indo-Pacific alliance with the U.K. and Australia. The alliance meant that Australia's ongoing discussions with France for submarines was shelved, and the French

President reacted sharply to the "betrayal" by allies, recalling diplomats and issuing demarches over the issue. New Delhi, which was also informed about the new alliance just days before Mr. Modi's visit to the U.S. for the

Quad summit, distanced itself from the alliance, leading to speculation that India would open talks with France for the same submarines.

Readouts on both sides did not refer to the Aukus alliance, but Indo-Pacific strategy formed a large part of the discussion during the strategic dialogue and other meetings in Paris.

"The strategic partnership of France and India is essential to strengthen multilateralism and the defence of an Indo-Pacific space [that is] free, open and based on the excellent conversation worthy of a trusted strategic partnership," said Mr. Drian in a tweet.

(With inputs from Dinakar Peri)

More people need to get vaccinated, say doctors

Coordinated pan-India campaign can prevent a fresh outbreak of COVID-19, experts suggest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The growing COVID-19 vaccination coverage in India is not enough, and if people opt not to get vaccinated, there is the potential of a new outbreak, doctors warn.

"If people decide not to get vaccinated out of hesitancy and doubts, or even if the vaccination is delayed for logistical reasons, the potential of new outbreaks of COVID-19 remains very high. New variants of SARS-CoV-2 are sprouting, which may be more transmissible and resistant to vaccines," Mubashir Ali, senior consultant, internal medicine, Apollo Telehealth, said.

He noted that vaccination in India was still a matter of choice. A coordinated pan-India campaign could reduce the impact of the pandemic. "It's a technically feasible thing, but because of the scale of population to be vaccinated, geography and



Staying safe: The Government has encouraged all adults to take both doses of vaccination. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

terrain and the enormous time being consumed for the process, it can be hampered," he said.

More awareness

Promoting the uptake of vaccines would require understanding whether people are willing to be vaccinated and the reasons they were willing or not. "So, the need of the hour is to speed up the vaccination process and

drives, spread awareness of disease and its effects and making sure there is no vaccine hesitancy by rightly educating the people. The world shares a collective responsibility in fighting this pandemic; therefore, continued research on COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and hesitancy should be a priority," he said.

Citing the example of Germany, doctors said the coun-

try was currently witnessing a "pandemic of the unvaccinated".

Sundari Shrikant, director, internal medicine, QRG Super Speciality Hospital, Faridabad, said there was currently a broad agreement within the global scientific community that the most effective way to defeat the pandemic was through mass vaccination of populations around the world.

"Opting not to get vaccinated puts the person, his family and the community at large at risk of infection and the spread of the disease. Vaccination not only prevents infection but, if infected, the person develops only a mild infection. It also prevents community spread. Besides, it is important to emphasise the continued practice of COVID-19-appropriate behaviour for personal safety and prevention of community transmission," Dr. Shrikant said.

Doctors stressed that people who were unvaccinated have higher chances of getting moderate to severe COVID-19 and undergo hospitalisation.

"Natural immunity on an average stays for three months; post vaccination, it stays much longer in the body and as such can be protective for a longer period, slowing down the transmission of the virus," Ankita Baidya, consultant, infectious diseases, HCMCT Manipal Hospitals, said.

According to a Health Ministry release issued on Saturday, more than 116.54 crore (1,16,54,44,605) vaccine doses had been provided to the States and Union Territories so far through the Central Government (free of cost channel) and through direct State procurement category. More than 15.69 crore (15,69,46,111) balance and unutilised vaccine doses were still available with the States and UTs to be administered.

'Vaze, Singh extorted cricket bookies'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Dismissed Mumbai Police officer Sachin Vaze, along with the then city Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh extorted huge money from cricket bookies by threatening them with arrest, the police told a court here while seeking an extension of Mr. Vaze's custody in an extortion case registered at suburban Goregaon police station.

The Mumbai Police's Crime Branch had taken Mr. Vaze's custody on November 1 based on the complaint filed by builder-hoteller Bimal Agrawal, in which Param Bir Singh is also named as an accused.

Mr. Vaze was produced before a holiday court on Saturday as his remand expired.

The police sought an extension of his custody for seven days for further probe, which was allowed by the court till November 13.

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

House passes Biden's infrastructure Bill

Clean drinking water, broadband access, electric vehicles, and more to come, says the White House

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Democrats rescued President Joe Biden's faltering domestic agenda on Friday, passing a giant infrastructure package that is one of the pillars of his \$3 trillion economic vision after rebel moderates had earlier blocked a vote on his social welfare expansion.

Despite hours of cajoling lawmakers, party leaders had risked seeing Mr. Biden's two-pronged legislative strategy collapse as they failed to unite the party's feuding progressive and moderate factions.

Comfortable majority

But the breakthrough came as lawmakers rubber-stamped the Senate-passed \$1.2 trillion infrastructure Bill on the House floor by a comfortable 228 votes to 206.

The passage of the infrastructure spending marks a legacy-making achievement for Mr. Biden, amid plunging



New avenues: The funding for infrastructure is expected to create millions of high-paying jobs. •AFP

personal approval ratings and a humiliating upset defeat for his Democratic Party in the Virginia gubernatorial election.

His spokeswoman Jen Psaki said the success was "proof that delivering for the American people is worth all the painful sausage making".

"Clean drinking water for kids, broadband access, electric vehicles, biggest in-

vestment in public transit. It's happening. And more to come," she tweeted.

The Democratic party leadership in the House of Representatives began the day aiming to rubber-stamp the infrastructure Bill, the biggest upgrade of roads, bridges and waterways in decades, after sending an even bigger social welfare deal, worth up to \$1.85 trillion, to

the upper chamber.

But six moderate Democrats refused to commit to the "Build Back Better" benefits package, arguing they first needed to see a full accounting of its economic impacts, which won't be available for at least a week.

With a majority of just three votes in the House, Speaker Nancy Pelosi was forced to postpone the vote on the Build Back Better package, which includes major investments in health, education, tackling climate change and expanding social welfare programs.

Olive branch

Progressives initially blocked the infrastructure vote amid suspicion that Senate centrists would reject the Build Back Better Bill as soon as they got their transport upgrades signed into law.

But Ms. Pelosi refused to back down, insisting on the vote before the end of the day and offering an olive branch to the liberals – a

procedural vote on the "rule" to at least get debate started on Build Back Better.

"I am urging all members to vote for both the rule for consideration of the Build Back Better Act and final passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill tonight," Mr. Biden had said in a late evening statement.

"I am confident that during the week of November 15, the House will pass the Build Back Better Act."

The victory will be a salve to Democratic leaders who have spent two days in meetings painstakingly trying to bring aboard holdouts over multiple sticking points in Build Back Better, from prescription drug pricing to immigration provisions.

Passing the infrastructure package into law required some tricky mathematics with several progressives, still smarting over the moderate rebellion, voting no – but Democrats were able to add 13 Republicans to their side of the ledger.

At least eight crushed to death at Texas music fest

17 persons rushed to hospital, 11 of them in 'cardiac arrest'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

A crush caused by a crowd surge killed at least eight persons and wounded several others at rap star Travis Scott's Astroworld music festival in Texas on Friday night, authorities said.

Officials said the crush happened as "the crowd began to compress towards the front of the stage" around 9:00 p.m. when Scott was performing.

There were around 50,000 people in the audience at Houston's NRG Park.

"That caused some panic and it started causing some injuries, people began to fall out, become unconscious and it created additional panic," Houston fire chief Samuel Pena said at a press conference.

"We had at least eight confirmed fatalities tonight and scores of individuals



There were around 50,000 people in the audience at Houston's NRG Park.

that were injured," he said, adding the cause of death could not be confirmed until after medical exams were completed.

Mr. Pena said 17 persons were rushed to hospital, with 11 of them in "cardiac arrest."

Scott was on stage when the incident occurred and stopped his act on several occasions when he saw fans in distress near the stage,

the *Houston Chronicle* reported. Survivors described chaotic scenes of people squeezed up against one another and many struggling to breathe, the *Chronicle* reported.

"We were hanging on to each other to avoid getting separated," one survivor said. "If you let go, you could easily drift apart."

'Extremely tragic night' Senior Harris County official Lina Hidalgo said it was "an extremely tragic night".

"Our hearts are broken, people go to these events to have a good time, to make memories," she added.

Houston police are investigating the cause of the incident and looking at video footage from the arena.

Videos shared on social media showed paramedics resuscitating unconscious fans in the audience as the concert continued.

Four women killed in Afghanistan

Victims include a women's right activist; two suspects arrested, confirm Taliban

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Four women have been found dead in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, a spokesman for Afghanistan's Taliban government said on Saturday, following reports that activists had been killed.

Two suspects have been arrested after the four bodies were found at a house in the city's fifth police district, Interior Ministry spokesman Qari Sayed Khosti said in a video statement.

"The arrested people have admitted in initial interrogation that the women

were invited to the house by them. Further investigations are under way and the case has been referred to court," he said.

Khosti did not identify the victims, but a source in Mazar-i-Sharif said that at least one of the dead was a women's rights activist, whose family does not wish to speak to the media.

Plans to fly out

A report on *BBC Persian*, citing civil society sources, said the four women were friends and colleagues who had hoped to travel to Mazar-i-

Sharif airport for a flight out of the country.

A rights group source said on condition of anonymity that the women received a call that they thought was an invitation to join an evacuation flight and were picked up by a car, only to be found dead later.

The Taliban, who seized power in Afghanistan in August after a 20-year war against the former U.S.-backed government, are a deeply conservative Islamist movement.

Under their last period of rule, women were banned

from public life and since the group's return to government many rights activists have fled the country.

Women's demands

Some women who remained have held street protests in Kabul demanding that their rights be respected and that girls be allowed to attend public high schools.

Taliban fighters have broken up some of the protests, and the government has threatened to arrest any journalists covering unauthorised gatherings in the country.

Tanker blast kills 92 in Sierra Leone

Dozens injured after large crowds gather to collect leaking fuel, say officials

ASSOCIATED PRESS
FREETOWN

An oil tanker exploded near Sierra Leone's capital, killing at least 92 people and severely injuring dozens of others after large crowds gathered to collect leaking fuel, officials and witnesses said on Saturday.

The explosion took place on late Friday after a bus struck the tanker in Wellington, a suburb just to the east of Freetown.

The mortuary at Connaught Hospital reported 92 bodies had been brought in by Saturday morning. About



The explosion took place on late Friday after a bus struck the tanker in Wellington. •AP

30 severely burned victims were not expected to survive, according to Foday Musa, a staff member in the in-

tensive care unit.

Injured people whose clothes had burned off in the fire that followed the explosion lay naked on stretchers as nurses attended to them Saturday.

Fireball in the sky

Hundreds of people milled outside the main gates of the mortuary and near the hospital's main entrance, waiting for word of their loved ones.

It was not immediately known how many people were undergoing treatment for burns because patients

were taken to hospitals and clinics across the metropolitan area.

Video of the explosion's aftermath showed a giant fireball burning in the night sky as some survivors with severe burns cried out in pain.

President Julius Maada Bio, who was in Scotland attending the United Nations climate talks, deplored the "horrendous loss of life." "My profound sympathies with families who have lost loved ones and those who have been maimed as a result," he tweeted.

Analyst part of Trump-Russia dossier charged with lying

He has been accused of making false statements to FBI

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

A Russian analyst who contributed to a dossier of Democratic-funded research into ties between Russia and Donald Trump was arrested on Thursday on charges of lying to the FBI about his sources of information, among them a longtime supporter of Hillary Clinton.

The case against Igor Danchenko is part an investigation into the origins of the FBI's probe into whether Donald Trump's 2016 campaign and Russia had conspired to tip the outcome of that year's presidential campaign.

The indictment is likely to boost complaints from Trump allies that well-con-



Igor Danchenko

nected Democrats worked behind the scenes to advance suspicions about Mr. Trump and Russia that contributed to the FBI's election-year investigation.

The case does not undercut investigators' findings that the Kremlin aided the Trump campaign – conclu-

sions that were not based on the dossier, which was barely mentioned in special counsel Robert Mueller's report. But the indictment does endorse a longstanding concern about the Russia probe: that opposition research the FBI relied on as it surveilled a Trump campaign adviser was marred by unsupported, uncorroborated claims.

The five-count indictment accuses Mr. Danchenko of making multiple false statements to the FBI when interviewed in 2017 about his role in collecting information for Christopher Steele, a former British spy whose research into ties between the Trump campaign and Russia was financed by Democrats.

Lahore High Court acquits 6 JuD leaders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE

The Lahore High Court on Saturday set aside a trial court's conviction and acquitted six senior leaders of Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's banned Jamat-ud-Dawah (JuD) in a terror financing case.

Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the proscribed Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the terror outfit responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

The trial court had found the leaders guilty of terror financing. They had been collecting funds and unlawfully financing LeT. It also ordered the confiscation of assets made from funds collected through terrorism financing.

Chinese Embassy accuses U.S. of expanding military bases

Colombo mission slams report on China's military strategy

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Reacting sharply to a Pentagon report on security developments involving China, flagging the Asian giant's "likely consideration" of overseas military bases in countries such as Sri Lanka, the Chinese Embassy in Colombo accused the United States of widespread military occupation.

"A thief believes everybody steals. Despite the withdrawal of U.S. military bases and troops from Afghanistan, the U.S. continues to maintain about 750 military bases abroad. These bases are costly in a number of ways: financially, politically, socially, and environmentally," the Colombo-based Embassy said on Twitter, res-

ponding to a local journalist's tweet on the U.S. Department of Defense report. The official handle of the Chinese mission also shared a map showing "military bases controlled by the U.S."

Seeking influence

The Chinese Embassy's response comes amid a well-known geopolitical contest between the U.S. and China for greater influence in the strategic Indian Ocean region. The Chinese Embassy's tweet is not the first instance of the China-U.S. clash playing out in Sri Lanka. U.S. Ambassador in Colombo Alaina B. Teplitz, who recently completed her term, has openly criticised Chinese projects. China, in

turn, accused the U.S. Ambassador of "violating diplomatic protocol" and suggested that the U.S. "quit the addiction" to "preaching", and "applying double standards."

While China-backed projects have in the past sparked questions within Sri Lanka on due process and transparency, there is currently mounting resistance to the U.S.'s involvement in a key energy deal in the island nation. Last month, the Ceylon Electricity Board agreed to sell a 40% stake in a power plant in Kerawalapitiya, near Colombo, to U.S. firm New Fortress Energy, and trade unions are resisting the move that they say, gives the U.S. a monopoly over LNG sales to the country.

ELSEWHERE



Three wounded in knife attack on German train

BERLIN
Three persons were wounded in a knife attack on a high-speed train in southern Germany on Saturday, local police said, adding a suspect had been arrested. The motive for the attack was not yet clear. •AFP

Sudan activists reject power sharing with army

KHARTOUM
Sudan's protest movement has rejected internationally backed initiatives to return to a power sharing arrangement with the military after last month's coup, announcing two days of nationwide strikes starting Sunday. The movement called for the establishment of a civilian government to lead a transition to democracy. •AP

THE HINDU GROUP

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Cosmic jet
Scientists studying the galaxy Messier 87 (M87) – which surrounds the only black hole to have been imaged so far – have come up with a theoretical model of the jets of material emanating from M87. The calculated images published in *Nature Astronomy* resemble closely what is observed, and help confirm Einstein's theory of relativity.



Sleep and Alzheimer's
Researchers found that the thalamic reticular nucleus (TRN) – a region that forms a capsule around the thalamus of the brain – played a role in the connection between sleep disturbance and Alzheimer's in mouse models. Reduced TRN activity was found to reduce slow-wave sleep and its activation restored sleep and reduced amyloid plaques in mice.



Key to the future
Developing an accurate record of radiocarbon in the atmosphere from 55,000 years ago is key to understanding Earth's processes, climate change and our future. In an article in *Science*, researchers described this. For example, radiocarbon holds fingerprints of solar storms, which can today destroy much of our communications network.



Sponges and the brain
Despite having not a single neuron to call a brain, sponges perform complicated tasks such as filtering out tens of thousands of litres of water through their bodies to collect food. A recent study published in *Science* found that they use a complex cell communication system to regulate feeding and weed out harmful bacteria. This could be a feature from which the complex nervous systems evolved.

The Sun lights up aurorae in high-latitude countries

Kolkata-based researchers had predicted this 'Solar Deepavali' using a home-grown model and data from NASA's observations

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

A solar flare that occurred on the Sun triggered a magnetic storm which scientists from Center of Excellence in Space Sciences India (CESSI), in Indian Institutes for Science Education and Research, Kolkata, had predicted will arrive at the Earth in the early hours of November 4, and they said that the magnitude of this storm would be such as to trigger spectacular displays of aurora (the coloured bands of light seen in the North and South poles) in the high-latitude and polar regions, just in time for the Deepavali celebrations in India. This prediction, which was based on models built by them and data from NASA's observatories, seems to have come true, as people from several countries were tweeting pictures of aurorae.

Effect on atmosphere
Judging by data from the NASA DSCOVR satellite, the scientists observed a steep jump in transverse magnetic fields, density and speeds of the plasma wind that are tell-tale signatures of the arrival of a coronal mass ejection (CME) shock front, according to Dibyendu Nandi of CESSI Kolkata whose team predicted the event.

"This happened at 1.00 AM IST. We will know whether this is the CME flux based on its evolution as it passes through. These observations are taken at Lagrange Point L1," Prof. Nandi said on November 4, in a message to *The Hindu*.

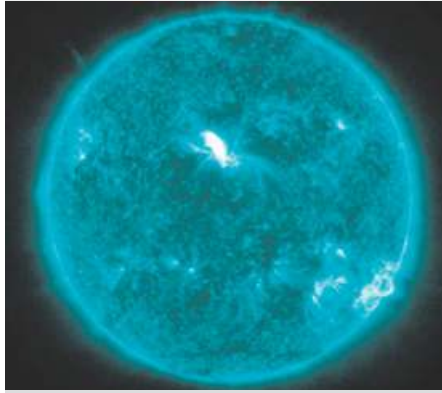
Dipankar Banerjee, a solar physicist and Director of Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) based in Nainital, who was not involved in this work, said about the prediction, "This is quite promising. It appears their predictions are matching the observations."

Sunspots seed storms
The solar magnetic cycle that works in the deep interior of the Sun creates regions that rise to the surface and appear like dark spots. These are the sunspots. Solar flares are highly energetic phenomena that happen inside the sunspots.

In a solar flare, the energy stored in the Sun's magnetic structures is converted into light and heat energy. This causes the emission of high energy x-ray radiation and highly accelerated charged particles to leave the Sun's surface.

Sometimes solar flares also cause hot plasma to be

The Sun's contribution to the festival of lights



Storm seed: Image of the November 2 M-class flare captured using the extreme ultraviolet imaging telescope attached to NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) satellite. The flare brightening is clearly visible, near the disc's centre.

■ A solar flare that occurred on the Sun triggered a magnetic storm which came towards the Earth

■ Scientists from Center of Excellence in Space Sciences India (CESSI), in IISER, Kolkata, predicted that the solar storm would arrive at the Earth at 2.14 a.m. IST on November 4, moving at a speed of 768 km/s

■ The storm arrived at 1 a.m. IST on November 4 and with speeds between 750 km/s and 800 km/s as observed by NASA

■ Very powerful Earth-directed coronal mass ejections can cause failure of power grids and affect oil pipelines and deep-sea cables

■ They also cause spectacular aurorae in the high-latitude and polar countries

■ On November 4, people tweeted that aurorae, or brilliant streaks of light in the sky, have been observed in many countries, coinciding with the arrival of the storm

ejected from the Sun, causing a solar storm, and this is called Coronal Mass Ejection (CME). Coronal Mass Ejections can harbour energies exceeding that of a billion atomic bombs.

The energy, radiation and high-energy particles emitted by the flares can affect Earth-bound objects and life on Earth – it can affect the electronics within satellites and affect astronauts. Very powerful Earth-directed coronal mass ejections can cause failure of power grids and affect oil pipelines and

deep-sea cables. They can also cause spectacular aurorae in the high-latitude and polar countries. The last time a major blackout due to a coronal mass ejection was recorded was in 1989 – a powerful geomagnetic storm that took down the North American power grid, plunging large parts of Canada into darkness and triggering spectacular aurorae beyond the polar regions.

Predicting solar storms
The process of prediction takes place in two steps: First

the researchers analyse the possibility of a strong solar flare from an active region – that is, clusters of sunspots – using a machine learning algorithm which has been developed in CESSI, IISER Kolkata. "This algorithm needs observations of the sunspot magnetic fields, from which we extract various parameters to train the algorithm. We use data from NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory, specifically, the Helioseismic and Magnetic Imager instrument, for this purpose," says Dibyendu Nandi, who, along

Countries' pledges improve odds of thwarting global temperature rise by a third

The findings, while optimistic, come amidst the deliberations underway at Glasgow

JACOB KOSHY

How effective are climate change pledges made by countries in containing global warming? A study published Friday in the journal *Science* finds that the latest Nationally Determined Contributions by 120 countries, as of September 30, improve the odds of global temperature rise staying below 2°C by 34% and below 1.5°C by 1.5%.

By way of comparison, the 2015 pledges made by countries at the Paris Agreement promised only a 8% chance of temperatures staying below 2°C, and zero—or no chance—at 1.5°C.

Reaching net zero
If countries were to follow a more ambitious path beyond 2030, those probabilities rose to 60% and 11% respectively.

The findings while optimistic come amidst the deliberations underway at



Staying cool: The effort is to have most major economies pledge to reach net zero by mid-century. • GETTY IMAGES

Glasgow where the greatest global effort is underway to have countries sign on to an agreement to keep temperatures below 1.5°C and, to this end, have most major economies pledge to reach net zero by mid-century. Net zero is when a country's emissions are offset by having an equivalent amount removed from the atmosphere for zero emissions in balance. While countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union have committed to a 2050 time line, China—the

world's largest polluter—has indicated a 2060 timeline and India—the third largest—a 2070 timeline.

Only 12 countries have enshrined this commitment in law. These are Germany, Sweden, Japan, United Kingdom, France, Canada, South Korea, Spain, Denmark, New Zealand, Hungary, Luxembourg.

"We are so much closer to getting to the 2-degree goal than six years ago when the Paris Agreement was first signed," said corresponding author Haewon McJeon, a re-

search scientist at the U.S. Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) in a statement. "The wave of strengthened climate pledges and net-zero targets significantly increased our chance of staying under 2 degrees Celsius. And we practically ruled out the possibility of the worst climate outcomes of 4 degrees or higher."

However, making the 1.5°C limit more likely will take more ambition, cautioned lead author Yang Ou, a post-doctoral researcher at the Joint Global Change Research Institute, a partnership between PNNL and the University of Maryland.

The researchers relied on a modelling approach and used the Global Change Analysis Model (GCAM) to simulate a spectrum of emissions scenarios. They then evaluated the likely temperature outcomes for those scenarios.

Several factors influenced

near-term emissions trajectories and long-term climate outcomes, the authors noted. These include the global turn away from coal to technological advances that made solar panels and electric vehicles relatively cheap.

Climate change has already caused global temperatures to rise about 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels.

Warming speeded up
In the past, it has taken thousands of years for temperature to rise by a few degrees, and dramatic changes, from unpredictable swings in India's monsoon to accelerated heating of the oceans, are already occurring as a result of a 1.2°C increase.

Scientists are calling for climate change to be limited as much as possible to avoid triggering cascading and compounding "tipping points" that could limit our ability to contain global heating.



Question Corner

Friendly, forceful, brisk and bold

Do animals have personalities?

Among humans, each individual has a unique personality, but so far, scientists have not ascribed personality traits, defined as consistent behaviour over time, to animals. But a recent study (*Animal Behaviour*) has been able to document personality in golden-mantled ground squirrels, which are common across the western U.S. and parts of Canada. They found the squirrels show personality in four main personality traits: boldness, aggressiveness, activity level and sociability. The lead author Jaclyn Aliperti observed and

recorded squirrel responses to four tests: (1) Novel environment: Squirrels were placed in an enclosed box with gridded lines and holes; (2) Mirror: Squirrels are presented with their mirror image, which they do not recognise as their own; (3) Flight initiative: Squirrels were approached slowly in the wild to see how long they wait before running away, and; (4) Behaviour-in-trap: Squirrels were caught, unharmed, in a simple trap and their behaviour briefly observed.

According to a University of California, Davis press release, the study found that bolder squirrels had larger core areas where they concentrated their activity. Bold, active squirrels moved faster. Also, squirrels that were bolder, more aggressive and more active had greater access to perches, such as rocks.

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

'Pandemic far from over', even as global toll crosses five million

Even with large-scale vaccination in many countries, the death rate is witnessing a sudden rise now in Europe and Southeast Asia

R. PRASAD

Nearly 22 months after the first COVID-19 death of a 61-year-old man in Wuhan, China on January 9, 2020, the total number of reported deaths globally has crossed five million on November 1. Each week, more than 50,000 people are continuing to die due to COVID-19. At 0.75 million, the U.S. has reported the greatest number of deaths in the world, followed by Brazil (0.6 million), India (0.45 million), Mexico (0.28 million) and Russia (0.23 million).

Effects of vaccination
The speed at which the virus killed people has decreased a bit since summer this year – it took nearly four months to add another million deaths after the toll crossed four million on July 7. This was despite the Delta variant still being the dominant strain globally. The reason: vaccines were effective in preventing deaths in many countries.

The first million deaths were recorded on September 8, 2020, nearly nine months after the first death, while the two-million mark was

breached three and a half months later, on January 15, this year. Three million deaths were registered in just three months as on April 17, while the four-million mark was crossed on July 7.

Rising trend
Even with large-scale vaccination in many countries, the death rate is witnessing a sudden rise now in Europe and Southeast Asia. In the last week of October, the weekly increase in deaths in European and Southeast Asian regions has been 14% and 13%, respectively, as compared with the previous week; last week, 56 countries from all WHO regions reported an increase in COVID-19 deaths of more than 10%.

"The global number of reported cases and deaths from COVID-19 is now increasing for the first time in two months," the WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on October 28. "It's another reminder that the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over."

The increase in deaths across the world is due to inequitable distribution of vaccines to many low- and middle-income countries and

vaccine hesitancy in those countries where vaccines are available in plenty. According to the WHO chief, 30 times more vaccines have been administered in high-income countries than low-income countries.

"Since the first COVID-19 vaccines were authorised for use, more people have died from COVID-19 than before they were available. That's because Delta is a more formidable foe and because far too many people globally haven't had access to vaccines that could have saved their lives," former Director of CDC Dr. Tom Frieden said in a tweet.

According to a *BMJ News*, "only 1.3% of people in low income countries have received their jabs. Seventy countries have yet to vaccinate 10% of their populations, and 30 countries – including much of Africa – have vaccinated fewer than 2%. In Latin America, only one in four of the population has received a dose of covid vaccine." The reason: despite the WHO extending the moratorium on booster doses till the end of the year, to enable every country to vaccinate at least 40% of its popu-

lation, vaccine inequity continues to persist.

Reacting to five million COVID-19 deaths, WHO's Chief Scientist Dr. Soumya Swaminathan tweeted the gross undercounting of deaths globally: "Grim statistic. WHO estimates the real number of deaths closer to 15 million." The WHO Chief too mentioned about the undercounting of COVID-19 deaths. "More than five million deaths have now been reported, and we know the real number is higher," said Dr. Tedros.

The actual global toll could be twice the reported figure, Dr. Denis Nash, an epidemiologist at the City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy told *The New York Times*.

Two researchers – Ariel Karlinsky from Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel, and Dmitry Kobak from the University of Tübingen, Germany – have compiled the World Mortality Dataset which contains all-cause mortality data from over 100 countries to specifically track excess mortality during the pandemic. Based on data available in



Virus dynamics: The virus' speed has decreased a bit since summer, despite dominance of the Delta variant. • GETTY IMAGES

the World Mortality Dataset, a team of researchers calculated the excess deaths in 103 countries during the pandemic period; the results are published in *eLife*.

Gross underreporting
The authors estimate that several of the worst affected countries such as Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Mexico have excess deaths more than 50% above the expected annual mortality rate. In the case of Nicaragua, Belarus, Egypt and Uzbekistan, the underreporting of deaths is more than 10 times.

In the case of India, the underreporting of COVID-19 deaths is estimated to be

huge. Based on the Civil Registration System (CRS) data from eight States, *The Hindu* has estimated excess deaths during the pandemic to be 8.22 times the recorded COVID-19 deaths toll; in absolute numbers that figure will be 3.78 million excess deaths. All excess deaths may not be due to COVID-19, but during a pandemic, a bulk of them could be due to it. This "figure will rank [India] the highest among nations with the most recorded fatalities due to the virus".

Based on all-cause mortality data from civil registration systems of 12 Indian States comprising around 60% of the national popula-

tion, Murad Banaji from Middlesex University London and Aashish Gupta from Harvard University have estimated the excess deaths in India to be "around 8-10 times" the officially recorded deaths. The results have been posted on a preprint server *medRxiv* on October 1. Preprints are yet to be peer-reviewed.

Antiviral drugs
On November 4, the fight against COVID-19 to reduce the number of deaths got another booster shot with Britain's drug regulator MHRA recommending the drug, molnupiravir, for use in adults with mild to moderate COVID-19 and at least one risk factor for developing severe illness, such as obesity, older age (over 60 years), diabetes, or heart disease. The oral drug can be taken at home as soon as possible following a positive COVID-19 test and within five days of the onset of symptoms.

In addition to entering into agreements with several governments to supply the drug, the company has entered into a licensing agreement with the Medicines Patent Pool to make the drug widely accessible to low- and

middle-income countries (LMIC). It has also entered into non-exclusive voluntary licensing agreements with eight Indian generic manufacturers to accelerate availability of molnupiravir in more than 100 LMICs, the release says.

Meanwhile, on November 5, Pfizer announced via a press release that its oral antiviral PAXLOVID showed 89% efficacy in reducing the risk of hospitalisation or death in non-hospitalised settings in high-risk adults with COVID-19 when treatment was started within three days of symptom onset. In the phase-2/3 trial, through day 28, no deaths were reported in patients who received the drug while 10 deaths were recorded among patients who got a placebo. Similar results were seen when treatment was started within five days of symptom onset. Due to "overwhelming efficacy demonstrated", the trial was stopped midway.

Pfizer "plans to submit the data as part of its ongoing rolling submission to the FDA for emergency use authorization as soon as possible", the release said.



Appeal likely: The court said the Act was unconstitutional because the Assembly had no legislative competence to pass the law on the date of the enactment.

Reservation on quota

Why did the Madras High Court invalidate the separate reservation of 10.5% for the Vanniyar community?

K. VENKATARAMANAN

The story so far: On November 1, the Madras High Court declared unconstitutional a Tamil Nadu government law, enacted in February 2021 when the AIADMK was in power, that reserved 10.5% of jobs in public services and seats in educational institutions for the Vanniyaars, a most backward community. The demand for an exclusive quota for the community has been spearheaded for long by the Pattali Makkal Katchi.

What was the reservation eligibility of Vanniyaars prior to being given a separate quota?

■ The Vanniyaars were in the backward classes list for many years. The community, constituting a significant percentage in the State's northern districts, consists predominantly of agricultural labourers. In 1987, the Vanniyaar Sangham launched an agitation demanding 20% separate reservation. In 1989, the demand was partially conceded. The BC quota was then at 50%. This was sub-divided and a 20% segment was earmarked for 'Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities'. The Vanniyaars were included in the Most Backward Classes list. The expectation was that they would be the principal beneficiaries in this 20% segment, though 109 other castes were in the MBC/DNC category (The number has risen to 116 now). The Vanniyaars have been arguing that they are still not getting enough opportunities in proportion to their population.

How was the separate reservation implemented?

■ On February 26, 2021, the Assembly passed a special Act which divided the 'Most Backward Classes/Denotified Communities' category into three parts. Of the total, the largest share of 10.5% was specified as exclusive to the Vanniyaakula Kshatriya and its various sub-castes. The DNC sub-division was to have 7%, while the remaining 2.5% was meant for the rest of the MBCs. The primary justification for the percentage was that the Second Backward Class Commission had put the Vanniyaar population at 65 lakh in 1983, or 13.01% of the then total population. In 2012, the then chairman of the State Backward Class Commission recommended that based on this figure, reservation of 10.5% would be appropriate for the Vanniyaars. Therefore, it was decided to make this internal reservation within the MBC quota. However, critics say the Commission chairman's opinion was not supported by the other members and was, therefore, not acted upon all these years.

What were the reasons for the court's judgment?

■ The exclusive quota for one community was criticised on the ground that it was done with an eye on the Assembly election. It was also contended that the government acted hastily as it had only a couple of months earlier appointed a commission under a retired High Court judge to compile quantifiable data on all castes so that the State could justify its 69% total reservation, but did not wait for its report. The Bench of Justices M. Duraishwamy and K. Murali Shankar ruled that the Act was unconstitutional mainly on the ground that the Assembly had no legislative competence to pass the law on the date of the enactment. This was because the 102nd Amendment to the Constitution (which created the National Backward Class Commission and empowered the President to notify the backward classes list for each State) was in force in February 2021. The Supreme Court had ruled, again in the Maratha reservation case, that the Amendment took away the power of the States to notify or identify OBCs. Later, the 105th Amendment made it explicit that the States could make changes in their lists.

The other ground was that the separate reservation for one caste amounted to discrimination against all the other castes in the same MBC category. Further, the State had produced no quantifiable data to back its claim that the Vanniyaars were so far behind the other communities in the list that they deserved exclusive treatment. In the absence of such data, it amounted to legislation solely on the ground of caste, and not because members of that caste constituted a separate class.

What are the effects of the verdict?

■ Being a politically sensitive matter involving a restive community, the State government is planning to appeal to the Supreme Court. Whether the same quota will be upheld without quantifiable data is a moot question. The judgment also contains a finding that any law making changes to the distribution of quotas under various categories would require an amendment to the State's 1994 Act protecting the overall reservation level. As that Act contains quotas allotted to the SC, ST, BC and MBC/DNC categories, any change would require an amendment to that law, as well as the President's assent. This may create some complications to the existing internal quotas given to the Backward Class (Muslims), who have 2.5% reservation, and the Arundhatiyars, who have a 3% sub-quota among the Scheduled Castes. Both these categories were created by stand-alone laws that only got the Governor's assent. The High Court had mentioned that these two quotas were backed by census data and valid recommendations, but it did not consider the question whether their introduction without an amendment to the 1994 Act or the President's assent was valid.

Where does India stand on methane emissions?

Why has it stayed away from both the methane pledge and the forest conservation declaration at Glasgow?

JACOB KOSHY

The story so far: At the ongoing UN Climate Change Conference (the 26th Conference of Parties-COP26) in Glasgow, the United States and the European Union have jointly pledged to cut emissions of the greenhouse gas methane by 2030. They plan to cut down emissions by 30% compared with the 2020 levels. At least 90 countries have signed the Global Methane Pledge, with India and China abstaining so far. Separately, 133 countries have signed a Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use – a declaration initiated by the United Kingdom to "halt deforestation" and land degradation by 2030. China, too, is a signatory to this but India has stayed out.

Why is methane potent as a greenhouse gas?

■ Methane accounts for about a fifth of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is about 25 times as potent as carbon dioxide in trapping heat in the atmosphere. In the last two centuries, methane concentrations in the atmosphere have more than doubled, mainly due to human-related activities. Because methane is short-lived, compared with carbon dioxide, but at the same time potent, the logic is that removing it would have a significant positive impact. Methane is emitted from a variety of anthropogenic (human-influenced) and natural sources. The human sources include landfills, oil and natural gas systems, agricultural activities as well as livestock rearing, coal mining, stationary and mobile combustion, wastewater treatment, and certain industrial processes. Sources of methane can be harnessed for energy and in principle reduce dependence on energy sources that emit high carbon dioxide but the lack of incentives and efficient energy markets to realise this is an impediment to curtailing methane emissions.

Why hasn't India signed the pledge?

■ India is the third largest emitter of methane, primarily because of the size of its rural economy and by virtue of having the largest cattle population. India has stated earlier that it plans to deploy technology and capture methane that can be used as a source of energy. In a communication to the United Nations Framework



A milestone: The U.S. and the EU have pledged to cut methane emissions by 30% compared with the 2020 levels. In California, 35,000 oil and gas wells sit idle. Many of them are unplugged and could leak methane. •AFP

Convention on Climate Change, India said approximately 20% of its anthropogenic methane emissions come from agriculture (manure management), coal mines, municipal solid waste, and natural gas and oil systems. To tap into this "potential," the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) claims to have invested heavily in a national strategy to increase biogas production and reduce methane emissions. "The biogas strategy includes many policy initiatives, capacity-building, and public-private partnerships. In addition to promoting biogas development, the strategy supports goals for sustainable development, sanitation improvements, and increased generation of renewable energy," the MNRE notes.

What does the Glasgow Declaration on forest and land use entail?

■ The Glasgow Declaration was signed by 133 countries, which represent 90% of the globe's forested land. The declaration is also backed by a \$19-billion commitment, though whether this translates into legally binding flows remains to be seen. The Glasgow Declaration is a successor to a failed 2014 New York Declaration for Forests – that for a while saw significant global traction – and promised to reduce emissions from deforestation by 15%-20% by 2020 and end it by 2030. However,

deforestation has only increased, and is responsible for about 20% of the total carbon emissions. One of the goals of the pledge, to halt deforestation, is to ensure that natural forests aren't cleared out for commercial plantations. It also aims to halt industrial logging, though several independent estimates say the demand for wood pellets, which stokes deforestation, is only expected to increase. Finally, the declaration seeks to strengthen the rights of indigenous tribes and communities to forestland.

Why hasn't India signed up?

■ There is again no official reason accorded but reports suggest that Indian officials are unhappy with the wording that suggests meeting the obligations under the pledge could also mean restrictions in international trade. That is unacceptable, they say, as trade falls under the ambit of the World Trade Organization, of which India is a member. India is also mulling changes to its forest conservation laws that seek to encourage commercial tree plantation as well as infrastructure development in forestland. India's long-term target is to have a third of its area under forest and tree cover, but it is so far 22%. It also proposes to create a carbon sink, via forests and plantations, to absorb 2.5-3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Why is Delhi holding an NSA meet on Afghanistan?

What are the reasons for Pakistan to reject India's invite to a regional national security advisers' conference?

SUHASINI HAIDAR

The story so far: Nearly three months after the Taliban takeover of Kabul, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval will host a meeting of NSAs in the neighbourhood (including Russia) on November 10 to discuss Afghanistan's future and how to deal with threats to security emanating from developments there. The exercise is to reaffirm the consensus that after the pull-out of the U.S. and NATO troops from Afghanistan, solutions to the crisis in Afghanistan must come from the region itself.

Who all have been invited?

■ Invitations went out to Mr. Doval's counterparts in China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Confirmations have been received from all but China and Pakistan, and while Indian officials are still hopeful of Chinese Minister for State Security Chen Wenqing or another security official attending the conference virtually, Pakistan's NSA Moeed Yusuf has said he will not attend the conference, a decision that government sources have called "unfortunate".

What is on the agenda?

■ The conference, which is part of a format held in Iran in September 2018 and December 2019, is expected to seek a common understanding of how to approach the Taliban regime, especially on seeking an inclusive government in Afghanistan, with rights for women and minorities. While no country has yet recognised the acting Taliban regime headed by "Prime Minister" Hasan Akhund, all of the nations involved, including India, are engaging Taliban officials at different levels. China, Iran, Pakistan and Russia have even kept their embassies in Kabul open, while Central Asian countries have exchanged delegations for official meetings with the Taliban regime. India also hopes to



Hopes dashed: Pakistan's NSA Moeed Yusuf has said he will not attend the conference. •TWITTER

ocus on the triple common threats to neighbours emanating from the Taliban takeover: an uptick in terror groups operating within Afghanistan, an increase in drug-trafficking, and an inflow of refugees due to the humanitarian crisis unfolding there. India has also been involved in projects of connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia, including the Chabahar port project in Iran and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, and the conference will be closely watched for any outcome on taking these projects further with the new regime in Kabul.

Finally, New Delhi wants to establish that despite its opposition to the Taliban regime supplanting the democratically elected Ashraf Ghani government, it remains an important figure in Afghanistan's future as a development, aid and trade partner and a historical builder of connectivity infrastructure. In the past, many discussion formats on Afghanistan have not included India, ostensibly at Pakistan's behest, like the 'Troika Plus' talks of China-Russia-U.S.-Pakistan held over two years, Iran's Neighbourhood Foreign Ministers' track on Afghanistan held on October 27 and regional meetings held by Pakistan's Foreign Minister and NSA in the past few months. The meeting in Delhi

will seek to project India as a necessary part of these dialogues. In doing so, New Delhi also re-enforces its claims as a "boundary neighbour", given that Afghanistan abuts Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Why was Pakistan invited?

■ Relations between New Delhi and Islamabad have been on a downward spiral for some years now, and formal contacts have broken down after 2019 events, including the Pulwama attack, the Balakot strikes and the government's restructuring of Jammu and Kashmir. India has long held that it is Pakistan's "pernicious" influence and support to terror groups that are the real reason for Afghanistan's instability and violence, and at the UNGA in September accused Pakistan of being an "arsonist disguised as a firefighter" in Afghanistan. However, Mr. Doval has reportedly been involved in back-channel talks with Pakistani security and military officials over the past two years, which led to the Line of Control ceasefire in February 2021. It was perhaps thought that a security conference of neighbours on Afghanistan should see Pakistani participation as well. The Narendra Modi government has attended several conferences on regional security and Afghanistan in particular where Pakistani officials have been present, including at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meet, Moscow Format, and Central Asia-South Asia dialogue in Tashkent. Earlier this year, India sent a three-member team to the SCO-Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) meeting in Pakistan.

Rejecting the invitation, Mr. Yusuf accused India of being a "spoiler" in Afghanistan, adding that a "spoiler cannot play peacemaker". However, it is Pakistan that appears to have played spoiler at the NSA conference, according to Indian officials, by rejecting the invitation and refusing to respond to an Indian request to allow humanitarian aid of wheat and medicines by road from Wagah to Torkham to help Afghans in dire need.

How has RBI tweaked Prompt Corrective Action norms for banks?

What will commercial banks under scrutiny need to do to get out of the restrictions imposed by the central bank?

K. BHARAT KUMAR

The story so far: The RBI issued a notification on November 2 revising norms for commercial banks to be placed under the regulator's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework should any of their key metrics fall out of line. The revision takes effect from January 1, 2022.

What is the purpose of the PCA framework?

■ In the RBI's own words, "The objective of the PCA framework is to enable supervisory intervention at appropriate time and require the supervised entity to initiate and implement remedial measures in a timely manner so as to restore its financial health. The PCA framework is also intended to act as a tool for effective market discipline. The PCA framework does not preclude the Reserve Bank of India from taking any other action as it deems fit at any time, in addition to the corrective actions prescribed in the framework". In the last almost two decades – the PCA was first notified in December 2002 – several banks have been placed under the framework, with their operations restricted. In 2021, UCO Bank, IDBI Bank and Indian Overseas Bank exited the framework on improved performance. Only Central Bank of India remains under it now.

What are banks measured on?

■ As per the revised PCA norms issued in 2017, banks were to be evaluated on capital, asset quality, profitability

and leverage. The capital adequacy ratio governs the capital that a bank ought to hold as a percentage of its total assets. If the ratio is prescribed as 11.5%, a bank must bring its own capital of ₹11.50 for every ₹100 it intends to lend. The adequacy measure includes buffers such as the capital conservation buffer (2.5%), which may be used to shore up capital in good times, but which may be relaxed to encourage further lending during economic crises. Asset quality tells us what portion of the loans is unlikely to be paid back, reflected in the net non-performing asset ratio – i.e., the portion of total advances tagged 'non-performing', after the provisioning for bad loans. Return on assets (RoA) measures profitability, derived from net income (profit) as a percentage of total assets. The leverage ratio shows how much a lender has stretched itself in borrowing funds to generate income. The more the leverage, the riskier the turf on which the lender stands.

What curbs do bank face under the PCA?

■ Banks move from risk thresholds 1 through 3 with increasing restrictions if they are unable to arrest deterioration. First, banks face curbs on dividend distribution/remittance of profits. For foreign banks,

promoters are to bring in capital. In the second category, banks additionally face curbs on branch expansion. In the final category, the bank additionally faces restrictions on capital expenditure with some exemptions. The RBI also has the option of discretionary actions across strategy, governance, credit risk, market risk and human resources.

What has changed?

■ The notification has removed return on assets as an indicator to qualify for PCA. Further, the 2017 notification applied to scheduled commercial banks but excluded Regional Rural Banks from its purview, while the 2021 version excludes Small Finance Banks and Payment Banks too. In the latest set of rules, the RBI has clearly spelt out that exit from the PCA would be based on four continuous quarterly results, with one being Audited Annual Financial Statement as per the new framework apart from Supervisory Comfort of RBI, assessment on sustainability of profitability.

The risk threshold 3 has been further refined for capital adequacy conditions. It is unclear why the RBI chose to remove the RoA metric. One view in the financial sector is that RoA ought to have been retained as it indicates business performance. Another view is that the RBI oughtn't to monitor RoA – and that profitability is the bank's and its shareholders' lookout. Controls over capital adequacy indirectly include profitability. After all, retained profits become reserves that help shore up capital.

TPLF

Rise, fall and return of Tigrayan rebels

The paramilitary group from Tigray, which suffered a military setback last year after PM Abiy Ahmed ordered a campaign, has made up lost ground and is preparing to attack Addis Ababa

STANLY JOHNY

When Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered a military operation in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region in November 2020, he promised that it would be a short one. The trigger was a military raid carried out by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), an ethno-nationalist paramilitary group-cum-political party, on a camp of federal soldiers. A year later, the TPLF has not only recaptured Tigray but also moved south, towards Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital that hosts the headquarters of the African Union. On November 5, the TPLF and eight other opposition groups, including the Oromo Liberation Army, formed an alliance, the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederalist Force, to oust Mr. Abiy's government. Under pressure, Mr. Abiy has declared a nationwide state of emergency and asked citizens to take up arms and join the fight against the rebels.

Mr. Abiy seemed to have underestimated the rebels when he launched the war. The TPLF, which fought the military dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s and headed the country's ruling coalition from 1991 to 2018, has been one of the most powerful political forces in Ethiopia. Formed in the mid-1970s, the TPLF rose as a leftist ethno-nationalist group of Ti-

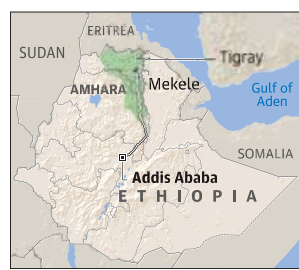
grayans against the Derg, the Marxist military dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam. In the 1970s, the TPLF, aligned with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (Eritrea was then part of Ethiopia), fought against the Derg. Founded by 11 guerillas, the TPLF had some 2,000 fighters by 1978, according to CIA estimates. In the 1980s, with support from the local people, it grew as the most formidable military opponent of the Derg. When Ethiopia fell into a disastrous famine in 1983-85, the TPLF was in the forefront of humanitarian works in Tigray, collaborating with international agencies, while at the same time, turning up the political and military heat on the Derg.

New rulers

When the dictatorship of Mengistu collapsed in 1991, TPLF guerrillas were welcomed in Addis Ababa as heroes. Ever since, the TPLF-led coalition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), ruled the country through a mix of federalism and authoritarianism. Ethiopia is a confederation of 10 provinces, which are largely divided on ethnic lines. The Oromos and the Amharas, who together make up more than 60% of the population, are the country's two largest ethnic groups. The Tigrayans, who constitute the core of the TPLF, are the third-largest group, making up some

7% of Ethiopia's 115 million people.

Under the new system, local parties had some autonomy in the regions. At the federal level, the EPRDF maintained its political monopoly. Meles Zenawi, the charismatic TPLF leader who became Ethiopia's President in 1991 and then Prime Minister in 1994 under the new Constitution, oversaw the



country's transition from the military dictatorship to what he called "ethnic federalism". Under Zenawi's rule, Ethiopia found relative peace with itself and started a trajectory of economic modernisation and growth. This was the period when Africa's second most populous country demonstrated signs of economic transformation and political stability at home, even as it was fighting a brutal border war with Eritrea.

As a leader who founded the EPRDF and led the rebellion that brought down the

military regime, Zenawi enjoyed popularity across regions and commanded loyalty within the ruling coalition. He built a state whose levers were controlled by the TPLF and yet he could keep his coalition intact. After Zenawi's death in 2012, the ethnic and political contradictions started resurfacing. His successor, Hailemariam Desalegn, found himself helpless as ethnic rebellions, especially by Amhara and Oromo groups, intensified, challenging the federal authority. It was against this background that the EPRDF picked Mr. Abiy to lead the government in 2018. An ethnic Oromo, the challenge before Mr. Abiy was to calm the ethnic nerves, ensure unity among the ruling elite and put the country back on the track of growth and stability.

Mr. Abiy was initially welcomed as a reformer. He lifted the state of emergency, granted amnesty to thousands of political prisoners, lifted curbs on the media, legalised banned political outfits and dismissed military and civilian leaders who were facing allegations of corruption and other wrongdoing. He promised to strengthen "Ethiopia's democracy" by holding free and fair elections. PM Abiy also resumed talks with Eri-

trea, ended the war, which began in 1998, and reached a final settlement. His reforms and peace-making earned him international recognition, including the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize.

Domestic angle

But most of Mr. Abiy's reform measures had a domestic political angle. The political prisoners he released had been detained by the TPLF regime. Most of the leaders arrested or sacked were the TPLF's old hands. Eritrea shares a long border with the Tigray region and the TPLF sees Eritrea's ruling party as a sworn enemy. When Mr. Abiy mobilised power in hands through a host of political moves, the TPLF got sidelined. Mr. Abiy's decision to dissolve the EPRDF, the TPLF-led coalition, and float a new party, Prosperity Party, practically ended the TPLF's reign in Addis Ababa. The TPLF leadership, including former Deputy Prime Minister Debrezion Gebremichael, retreated to Tigray. The party has a 12-member executive committee, comprising politicians, ideologues and security czars,

many veterans of the 1980s civil war. All of them are based in Tigray.

When Mr. Abiy decided to postpone elections in September 2020, citing COVID-19, the TPLF called it a coup, and went ahead with regional polls in Tigray, in defiance of the federal government. In November, the TPLF says, the government sent troops to the borders of Tigray for an attack and that the rebels carried out a preemptive raid, following which Mr. Abiy declared his war on Tigray. Later, the federal government labelled the TPLF a terrorist organisation. Clearly, Mr. Abiy wanted to finish the TPLF as a political force.

But it was easier hoped than done. Having been in power for 30 years, the TPLF had built a national defence force with a sizeable number of Tigray men. The war had created fissures in the military. To overcome this internal weakness, Mr. Abiy sought help from ethnic militias as well as the Eritrean army. They ran over Tigray within a month and captured most of the region, including its capital Mekele. On November 28, 2020, Mr. Abiy announced that "major military operations were completed". But the war was far from over.

For the TPLF, the mountainous region of Tigray is its home. The mountains protected them in the 1970s and the 1980s from the wrath of the Derg. Once again, they regrouped in the mountains and struck back. By June, the rebels inflicted a humiliating defeat on the government troops, who had to withdraw from Tigray. And then, the TPLF has moved further south, seizing more territories in neighbouring regions.

Mr. Abiy is now on the back foot. He wanted to crush the TPLF, but in course, he pushed the whole country into a civil war. His troops and military allies, as well as the TPLF, face allegations of war crimes. There are reports of Tigrayans being rounded up by federal police and troops in Addis Ababa and elsewhere. Tigray, whose supplies and economic aid have been cut off by the federal government, is on the brink of a famine. Still, both sides refuse to talk. Already facing a credibility crisis and faced with not many good options, Mr. Abiy says he will "bury this enemy with our blood and bones". The "enemy", on the other side, faces little pressure to hold talks after the recent military victories. A bigger conflict seems to be brewing up in Ethiopia.



In Focus

Formed in the mid-1970s, the TPLF rose as an ethno-nationalist group of Tigrayans against the Derg, the Marxist military dictatorship

In 1991, a TPLF-led coalition toppled the military regime and established a transition government. The coalition would stay in power until the rise of Abiy Ahmed

Now, the TPLF, which controls Tigray, has joined forces with eight other opposition groups to oust the government of Abiy

PENG SHUAI

Breaking the silence

The Chinese tennis star has accused a senior party leader of sexual assault

ANANTH KRISHNAN

For more than a decade, 35-year-old Peng Shuai has been a household name in China.

Ms. Peng is today arguably one of the country's most well-known tennis players of all time, perhaps dwarfed in the fame stakes only by Li Na, the former world number two and winner of two singles Grand Slams.

Ms. Peng became a national icon for her exploits in doubles, becoming the most decorated Chinese athlete in that format. Partnering with Taiwan's Hsieh Su-wei, Ms. Peng's two Grand Slam wins, at Wimbledon in 2013 and at the French Open the following year, were widely celebrated in her home country. (Her compatriots Zheng Jie and Yan Zi have also won two doubles slams.)

Despite all her success on court, Ms. Peng maintained a very low profile off it. Which is why the revelations of this past week shocked her country – at least, until the ruling Communist Party of China's censors began working overtime to delete every morsel of information related to Ms. Peng. On the night of November 2, Ms. Peng sent out a message on Sina Weibo, the Twitter-like social media site used in China, saying she had been sexually assaulted by senior Party leader and former Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli. In an emotional post, she detailed how 10



years ago, when she was 25, Mr. Zhang, then 65, and his wife, had invited her home before he assaulted her. She then narrated how they had subsequently begun a years-long affair, until Mr. Zhang broke it off when he was promoted to the party's top body in 2012, the Politburo Standing Committee. He resumed the affair three years ago, when, Ms. Peng said, he again forced her to have sex, while his wife was guarding the door.

'I will tell the truth'

She said in the message she had no evidence for her claims, but added she was determined to tell the truth. "Even if it is only me, like an egg dashing against a rock or a moth towards the flame seeking self-destruction, I will tell the truth about you." Her note was censored half an hour after it was published, but by the following day, it had become a huge talking point regardless of a mammoth censorship effort

that blocked all searches of Ms. Peng's name (even searches for "tennis" were, for a while, blocked). As the *China Digital Times* noted, the post was "only shared 1,000 times in the 34 minutes that it was uncensored, but after it was deleted, it was searched for 6,749,000 times". Screenshots were shared by Internet users. When those were blocked, inverted screenshots were posted to evade censors.

Born in the south-central province of Hunan, Ms. Peng rose quickly up the ranks of China's youth tennis circuit. Aged 18, she qualified for the U.S. Open for the first time. The following year, she made her first WTA Tour semi-final in an event in Sydney.

In 2011, the year she said she first met Mr. Zhang, Ms. Peng reached a career high world rank of 14 in women's singles. Three years later came her biggest breakthrough, winning the dou-

bles in Wimbledon with Ms. Hsieh from Taiwan, with whom she struck up a successful partnership, winning the French Open the following year. (Ms. Peng would also team up occasionally with India's Sania Mirza. In 2018 came the lowest point in her career when she faced a ban for attempting to dump her Wimbledon partner at the 11th hour to team up with Ms. Mirza. She was accused of breaching anti-corruption rules and "using coercion" by offering money to her already registered partner.)

Lu Pin, a Chinese feminist activist who is editor of *Feminist Voices*, observed on Twitter that Ms. Peng's revelations this week had struck a chord among many young women, an all-too-familiar tale of exploitation by men in power who usually got away with doing so.

As Ms. Lu notes, if Ms. Peng was not explicitly connected with the "Me Too" movement, her decision to speak out will "create a ripple effect" and "powerfully shake up many others in society". This is why the authorities have already sought to silence her.

"This is not about an affair, it is violence," Ms. Lu observed. "It is truly heart-breaking to see that, Peng Shuai, a most outstanding and independent Chinese woman, still has this experience. A lesson for us is rights do not come with your career or economic status. Rights come with us fighting for them."

IMPERIAL HOUSE OF JAPAN

A marriage made on earth

Princess Mako was stripped of her royal status after marrying a commoner

SRINIVASAN RAMANI

If shorn of titles and public standing, the marriage between two thirty-year-olds, Mako and Kei Komuro, would have the fairy tale culmination of a long period of courtship and romance. But in Japan where even if the monarchy is constitutionally "symbolic", Princess Mako's wedding to the "commoner" Komuro was not just any love story. Princess Mako is the eldest daughter of the Crown Prince Akishino and the niece of Emperor Naruhito.

Japan's tryst with modernity and technology has not resulted in substantive gender equality, and patriarchy reigns supreme even in its sophisticated and highly industrialised economy. Symbolising this patriarchal setting is the "reformed monarchy", which is subject to the 1947 Imperial Household Law, which restricts succession to "legitimate-born sons, grandsons and male line descendants of an Emperor" and women in the family who marry commoners are stripped of their royal status.

None of this prevented the now newly christened Mako Komuro from proceeding with her wedding that occurred on October 26, but a controversy almost derailed the marriage. Mr. Komuro's mother had been embroiled in a financial controversy with her former fiancé, with the man claim-



ing that he had financed Mr. Komuro's education while his mother considered it a gift. This brought undue scrutiny over the princess' choice of her fiancé. The princess finally went ahead with her wedding, four years after her engagement, by forgoing a dowry worth ¥152.5 million.

The royal family in Japan is currently headed by Emperor Naruhito, who succeeded his father Akishino who abdicated in 2019. With the law limiting successors only to male descendants, the only two possible successors are Akishino (the Emperor's brother) and his teenage son Prince Hisahito.

Undue pressure

This situation has put undue pressure on the women in the family to bear "male heirs" even as the Japanese Parliament, the Diet, passed a law in 2017 encouraging the possibility of allowing women born in the royal family to retain their imper-

ial status even after marrying.

The drama surrounding the potential succession in the Imperial House is ironically converse to the institution's role in post-War Japan. Under both Emperor Akihito and his son Naruhito, the monarchy sought to undo the excesses of the pre-war and war period and to keenly observe the constitutional mandate of a symbolic institution committed to the unity of Japan. The former emperor Akihito, in particular, sought to promote the values of pacifism, development, internationalism and democracy. Akihito's tenure was marked by a clear indication of the Imperial House seeking to emulate the role of the British monarchy in its political system.

This reform was partly a result of design – an outcome of the new Constitution that was created with American pressure during the Allied occupation of Ja-

pan after its defeat in the Second World War – and partly a result of sui generis reform by the royalty. The outcomes of the war – the devastation of several cities, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki due to the dropping of the nuclear bombs by the U.S. – led to a re-evaluation of the role of the monarchy, which, despite its unpopularity in the immediate post-War period, survived and changed its emphasis to a symbolic sovereign power.

Kenneth Ruoff, a professor of modern Japanese history at Portland State University, told *The Japan Times* that Princess Mako's marriage is a warning sign that could indicate that the imperial system is in a crisis, as it puts undue pressure on the only unmarried male successor, Prince Hisahito. Even the limited symbolism of the Imperial House has had a telling effect on the lives of the Japanese royals as they are forced to live up to the "morality" expected of the institution from the conservatives.

Japan's conservatism is under stress because of an ageing population and a dwindling labour force, indicating the need for reforms to allow for more women to take part in economic life. If Ms. Komuro's articulated concerns are anything to go by, the royalty's younger generation may also seek further reform and the loosening of conservatism in Japanese lives as much as theirs.

Indusind refutes whistleblower claims

Bank says a glitch led to 84,000 loans being given sans client consent in May, rectified it 'expeditiously'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Terming whistleblower allegations of loan evergreening as "grossly inaccurate and baseless", Indusind Bank admitted to having disbursed 84,000 loans without customer consent in May due to a "technical glitch".

Lending without consent was reported by the field staff in two days, and the glitch was rectified expeditiously, the lender said in a clarification on Saturday.

On Friday, a media report cited anonymous whistleblowers writing to the bank management and the RBI about BFIL, the bank's mid-crediting unit allegedly resorting to evergreening of loans, wherein existing borrowers unable to pay dues were given new loans to show the books as clean.

"The bank strongly denies



COVID fallout: Customers faced operational issues and some became intermittent payers, the bank said. ■BIJOY GHOSH

the allegations of 'evergreening'. All the loans originated and managed by BFIL, including during the COVID period which saw the first and second waves ravaging the countryside, are fully compliant with the regulatory guidelines," the lender said in a statement.

"Due to a technical glitch, nearly 84,000 loans were disbursed without the customer consent getting recorded at the time of loan disbursement," it added.

"Operational issues" due to the pandemic's second wave like lockdowns, containment zones, and restric-

tions at the village/panchayat level had necessitated disbursement of some loans in cash, it said.

At the end of September, 26,073 of these 84,000 clients were active with the loans outstanding at ₹34 crore, which is 0.12% of the September-end portfolio, the bank said, adding that it carries necessary provisions.

SOP revised

It also said that the standard operating procedure had since been revised to make biometric authentication compulsory, and that in October, almost 100% of the disbursements were in the customers' bank accounts, as in the pre-COVID time.

During the pandemic, customers faced operational difficulties and some had turned into intermittent payers, though a large num-

ber demonstrated a strong intent to repay on many occasions, the bank said.

It added that help was rendered to such clients, including through additional liquidity support to the extent of 20% of the outstanding as on February 29, 2020, as applicable under the ECLGS, restructuring, and additional loan with a longer tenor and lower EWI (equated weekly instalments) after they cleared their arrears and with their due consent.

Nearly all lenders have reported reverses on microloans since the start of the pandemic. The activity is concentrated in rural areas, where field agents go deep to disburse loans and also collect dues in cash on a weekly basis.

With the easing of curbs, all lenders are reporting an improvement in collections.

INTERVIEW | SATISH MEHTA

'Booster shots, pediatric jabs to keep vaccine demand high'

Phase II, III trials underway for COVID vaccine: Emcure MD

LALATENDU MISHRA

Emcure Pharmaceuticals sees growth opportunities in biologics and vaccines, which it intends to introduce in emerging markets. As the first Indian firm to develop an indigenous mRNA platform, it is in the process of developing an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine via its subsidiary Gennova Biopharmaceuticals. Three other vaccines on the platform are under development, targeted at Zoster, Zika and Rabies, said Satish Mehta, MD and CEO.



We are committed to fulfilling the target of 60 million doses of our mRNA vaccine to GoI

At what stage is your COVID vaccine?

■ In August, the Vaccine Subject Expert Committee (SEC) reviewed the interim Phase I data, and found that our vaccine candidate HGC019 was safe, tolerable, and immunogenic in the participants of the study.

The Drug Controller General of India then approved Phase II and Phase III study protocols for the vaccine, which are currently underway in India. We are committed to fulfilling the target of 60 million doses of our mRNA vaccine to the Government of India (GoI). As we near the final stages of trials for our vaccine, we look forward to positively contributing in the nation's fight against the pandemic.

Most Indians will be vaccinated by the time it is out. Are you not late?

■ We are constantly watching the developments in India and all over the world. Our assessment as well as commentary by various experts indicate there will be a reasonable demand for

booster shots of COVID-19 vaccines in India. There is also likely to be an additional demand from countries where a large part of the population has not yet been vaccinated. There is also expected to be demand for the paediatric category in India.

We will continue to work towards addressing these opportunities where mRNA platform has shown promise (especially given our candidate is stable between 2-80 degrees Celsius).

How is the new drug discovery pipeline at your firm? How and when will they be monetised?

■ We are an R&D driven company and our focus has always been on science first. We have a strong track record in developing portfolios of differentiated products across several platforms, including chiral molecules, complex APIs, biologics and novel drug delivery systems. Our aim is to bring first to market specialty or differentiated generic drugs through

the company's own R&D efforts which we continue to [make], to address the needs in regions where we operate (India, Europe, Canada).

What are your core therapeutic areas?

■ In India, we are present in 19 different therapeutic areas that makes our offerings well diversified. Seven of our brands namely Orofer, Exhep, Metpure, Asomex, Zostum and Bevon are among the top 300 selling brands in India. Our approach has been to develop a customised basket of diverse product offerings which we feel are suitable for the market allowing us to do well in various regions.

We are the largest pharmaceutical company in India in the gynaecology, blood-related and HIV antiviral therapeutic areas. We have also outgrown the Indian pharmaceutical industry in some other key areas like cardiovascular, oncology, vitamins, minerals and nutrients, anti-infectives and anti-diabetics.

We also have a good portfolio of biosimilars where three of our six brands namely Elaxim, Tenectase and Hamsyl, were each ranked first in our domestic market for FY21, in terms of sales in India for their respective molecules.

How much debt do you carry?

■ As on March 31, our net debt stood at ₹1,589 crore. We intend to utilise a majority of the net proceeds from our forthcoming IPO towards repayment or prepayment of all or a portion of the principal amount on certain loans availed by us and the accrued interest.

Suven Pharma Q2 profit rises 31% to ₹97 cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Suven Pharmaceuticals on Saturday posted a 31% increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹97 crore for the second quarter ended September 30.

Revenue from operations rose to ₹301 crore for the quarter under review, as against ₹237 crore in the year-earlier period, Suven Pharmaceuticals said in a regulatory filing.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the business and research in India and its wholly owned subsidiary, Suven Pharma Inc. USA, it noted.

The firm primarily operates in the contract development and manufacturing operations segment.

'Seeing triple-digit growth in mid-market'

SMB programme has picked up immense pace, says SAP's Ananthapadmanabhan

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

German software firm SAP has been witnessing a triple-digit growth quarter-on-quarter in its mid-market segment business for the last about one-and-a-half years, helped by the company's 'Global Bharat' programme for small and medium businesses (SMBs).

"Global Bharat has picked up immense pace," said Subramanian Ananthapadmanabhan, VP, Mid-Market, SAP Indian Subcontinent, SAP India. The programme was unveiled in June 2020 amid the digitalisation push due to the pandemic.

'Tier 2 cities picking up'
"So, we have seen traction from SMBs in adopting SAP as a solution across all our



solution lines. We are also seeing an increased traction in adoption in tier two cities because this program is not restricted to metros only."

The programme is aimed at enabling Indian MSMEs become globally competitive by equipping them with digital technologies.

About 80%, or more than 9,500 of the company's India customers, are in the

mid-market or SMB segment. "The growth numbers that we are seeing have been in triple digits quarter-on-quarter," he added.

"We don't break out the India numbers, but it'll be fair to say that it has been in excess of 100% and in some quarters, even much more than that. We have seen a fantastic rise in our cloud story... in the last four quarters, the cloud business has also been growing exponentially, more than triple digits, in every quarter," he added.

'Wide adoption'

Mr. Ananthapadmanabhan added that in the last about six months, SAP India has been seeing increased traction from industries such as engineering and construction; life sciences, pharma

and chemicals, while manufacturing has always been a strong area for the company.

"If you look at digital natives [start-ups]... there we see demand across the board. So, whether it is an online commerce company or a retail start-up or a real estate start-up... at either various stages of funding or yet to find the first fund, but still want to start off with SAP.

"They are talking to us, and they are adopting SAP," Mr. Ananthapadmanabhan said. He added that while the net new share of business in mid-market has gone up to 65% from 28% a couple of years ago, the percentage increase in the number of SMB clients from 80% to 81% will 'take a lot more net new acquisition' as the base was 'very big'.

Three-in-a-row for Delhi, Hyderabad

Chandigarh captain Vohra's unbeaten 106 goes in vain; Saurashtra posts win

MUSHTAQ ALI

SPORTS BUREAU

Delhi and Hyderabad made it three wins in a row in Group E of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy on Saturday to consolidate their lead over other teams in the points table.

Chandigarh captain Manan Vohra scored his maiden T20 century but couldn't prevent his team from losing to Hyderabad at Sultanpur. Vohra's unbeaten 106 (64b, 9x4, 5x6) accounted for more than 65% of his team's total even as the rest of the top order proved brittle with no other batter scoring more than 19.

In contrast, Hyderabad's top order stood rock solid, Hanuma Vihari (57) and Tilak Varma cracking half-centuries. Tanmay Agarwal, the captain, scored a sprightly 34. Tilak's unbeaten 61 (29b, 3x4, 6x6) took the contest



Vital contribution: Hanuma Vihari scored 57 at the top of the order for Hyderabad. ■ FILE PHOTO

away from Chandigarh as Hyderabad won with an over and two balls to spare.

At Lahli, Delhi profited by inserting the opposition again, restricting Uttar Pradesh to 108 for eight. UP's innings began on a positive note as the openers Abhishek Goswami and Madhav

Kaushik gathered 53 in 8.3 overs.

Seamer Deepak Punia (3/15) started the rot soon after and except Rinku Singh and Akshdeep Nath, who added 25 for fifth wicket, none of the batters provided much resistance.

Delhi chased down its tar-

get in 13.2 overs, Anuj Rawat scoring an attacking 50 (32b, 1x4, 6x6). Dhruv Shorey played the second fiddle, making an unbeaten 38 (39b, 4x5).

The closest clash of the day was in the afternoon between Saurashtra and Uttarakhand in Sultanpur.

Uttarakhand came within two runs of posting its first win, finishing on 144 for five after being set a target of 147. Veteran Robin Bist was the fulcrum of the innings, making an unbeaten 45 (32b, 4x4, 1x6). Swapnil Singh (16 n.o., 6b, 2x4, 1x6) brought the side close after 27 were required to win at the fall of the fifth wicket, in nine deliveries.

Jaydev Unadkat was the pick of the Saurashtra bowlers, taking two for 21. Sheldon Jackson was the team's most successful batter with an unbeaten 62 (50b, 5x4, 3x6). Prerak Mankad contributed 47 (31b, 7x4).

Noted coach Tarak Sinha passes away

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Noted cricket coach and Dronacharya awardee Tarak Sinha passed away at the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute & Research Centre in the early hours of Saturday. He was 71.

A large number of cricketers, coaches, cricket officials were present during his cremation that took place at the Nigambodh Ghat on Saturday afternoon.

For over two months he was battling lung cancer. He was bestowed the Dronacharya Award in 2018 after producing a number of Indian cricketers from the capital's Sonnet Club.

Time and energy

Soon after his marriage, Sinha lost his wife in an accident. Since then, he devoted all his time and energy into spotting and grooming cricketers.

Sinha's more illustrious students included Shikhar Dhawan and Rishabh Pant who followed the footsteps of Ashish Nehra, Manoj



Tarak Sinha. ■ FILE PHOTO

hakar, Bhaskar etc were all part of the PGDAV team.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Prabhakar said, "He brought the best out of me. I remember sessions with him and how I would come out a confident bowler. He was a towering figure when it came to motivation. From my college days to international cricket, I benefited from *Ustadji's* guidance. There won't be another like him."

Bhaskar echoed similar sentiments. "He made a cricketer out of me. Taught me the importance of self-belief and I always backed myself because I remembered *Ustadji* always telling me to do well when the conditions were difficult. He explained things so beautifully that one never could forget them. I will miss his guidance because he was not just a cricket guru. He gave us life lessons."

Several of Sinha's students went on to play for Delhi and other states in First Class and limited-over cricket.

SATURDAY'S SCORES

Elite A (Lucknow): Punjab 197/4 in 20 overs (Shubman Gill 40, Prabhsimran Singh 119 n.o.) bt Goa 116/8 in 20 overs (Suyash Prabhudessai 30, Siddarth Kaul 3/21).

Maharashtra 183/8 in 20 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 81, Kedar Jadhav 55, Debabrata Pradhan 3/37) bt Odisha 156 in 18.5 overs (Anshy Rath 34, Ashay Palkar 3/13, Divyang Himganekar 4/35).

Pondicherry 129/8 in 20 overs (Ramachandran Ragupathy 32, R. Sai Kishore 4/28, incl. a hat-trick) lost to Tamil Nadu 130/2 in 16.1 overs (C. Hari Nishaan 75 n.o.).

Elite B (Guwahati): Karnataka 142/6 in 20 overs (Manish Pandey 51) bt Services 109/8 in 20 overs (Rahul Singh 34, Vijaykumar Vyshak 3/25). Chhattisgarh 94 in 19 overs (Krunal Pandya 4/15, Lukman Meriwala 3/29) lost to Baroda 98/4 in 17.1 overs (Ninad Rathva

33 n.o.). Mumbai 131/7 in 20 overs bt Bengal 121/8 in 20 overs (Kaif Ahmed 31, Ritwik Roy Chowdhury 30, Mohit Avasthi 3/25).

Elite C (Vadodara): Haryana 108 in 19 overs (Parvez Rasool 3/18, Umran Malik 4/22) lost to Jammu & Kashmir 109/3 in 17 overs (Parvez Rasool 34 n.o.). Himachal 136/6 in 20 overs (Prashant Chopra 53) lost to Rajasthan 141/3 in 14.4 overs (Mahipal Lomror 55, Deepak Hooda 70 n.o.).

Andhra 165/4 in 20 overs (Ashwin Hebbar 45, K.S. Bharat 48, Ricky Bhui 34 n.o.) bt Jharkhand 157/9 in 20 overs (Ishank Jaggi 62, Utkarsh Singh 43, C.V. Stephen 3/23, Harishankar Reddy 3/24).

Elite D (New Delhi): Railways 144/6 in 20 overs (Upendra Yadav 39 n.o., Sudheshan Midhun 3/24) bt Kerala 138/6 in 20 overs (Vishnu Vinod 62 n.o., Yuvraj

Singh 3/23). Gujarat 162/3 in 20 overs (Priyank Panchal 79, Het Patel 41 n.o.) bt Madhya Pradesh 112 in 18.3 overs (Venkatesh Iyer 31, Arzan Nagwaswalla 3/25).

Bihar 135/8 in 20 overs (Babul Kumar 82, Rajjakkund Ahmed 3/24) lost to Assam 136/7 in 18.5 overs (Riyann Parag 58).

Elite E (Haryana): Chandigarh 162/5 in 20 overs (Manan Vohra 106 n.o.) lost to Hyderabad 163/2 in 18.4 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 34, Hanuma Vihari 57, Tilak Varma 61 n.o.).

Uttar Pradesh 108/8 in 20 overs (Madhav Kaushik 30, Deepak Punia 3/15) lost to Delhi 109/1 in 13.2 overs (Dhruv Shorey 38 n.o., Anuj Rawat 50). Saurashtra 146/3 in 20 overs (Sheldon Jackson 62 n.o., Prerak Mankad 47) bt Uttarakhand 144/5 in 20 overs (Robin Bist 45 n.o.).

Sunday is a rest day.

Gold for Manu, Javad



Bull's eye: Manu Bhaker and Javad Foroughi took the honours in the mixed air pistol event. ■ ISSF

SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Manu Bhaker, partnering Olympic champion Javad Foroughi of Iran, won the mixed air pistol gold in the

President's Cup shooting championship in Wroclaw, Poland.

The Indo-Iranian team beat Mathilde Lamolle of France and Artem Chernousov of Russia 16-8 in the match for the gold.

Sasikiran is tied-fourth

CHESS

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

K. Sasikiran outplayed Ukraine's Pavel Eljanov in 33 moves and jumped to the tied-fourth spot with nine others after nine rounds of the \$425,000 FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss chess tournament in Riga, Latvia, on Friday.

Sasikiran's brilliant knight-play stood out as he carved out a clinical win to reach six points. Raunak Sadhwani was the only other notable Indian winner after facing Russia's Alexey Dreev.

The results (ninth round): Open: P. Harikrishna (5.5) drew with Samuel Sevian (USA, 6);

K. Sasikiran (6) bt Pavel Eljanov (Ukr, 5); Nihal Sarin (5.5) drew with Bogdan-Daniel Deac (Rou, 5.5); Ivan Saric (Cro, 5) bt R. Praggnanandhaa (4); Arjun Erigaisi (4.5) drew with Temur Kuybokarov (Aus, 4.5); Raunak Sadhwani (5) bt Aleksey Dreev (3.5); S.P. Sethuraman (4) drew with Maxim Matlakov (Rus, 4); Surya Shekhar Ganguly (3.5) lost to Zhou Jianchao (Chn, 4.5); B. Adhian (3) lost to Haik Martirosyan (Arm, 4); D. Gukesh (3.5) lost to Hiorvar Steinn Gretarsson (Isl, 3.5).

Women: Alina Kashlinskaya (Rus, 5) lost to D. Harika (6); Vantika Agrawal (5) drew with Antoaneta Stefanova (Bul, 5); R. Vaishali (5) drew with Pia Cramling (Swe, 5); Meri Arnbizze (Geo, 4) bt Divya Deshmukh (3); Padmini Rout (3.5) drew with Hoang Thanh Trang (Hun, 3).

Warner fires, Australia in semifinals

The eight-wkt. win against WI helps it finish No. 2 behind England on NRR

ICC T20 WC

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ABU DHABI

Opener David Warner smashed an unbeaten 89 (56b, 9x4, 4x6) as Australia hammered West Indies by eight wickets and booked a spot in the semifinals, behind England on Net Run Rate in Group 1, at the ICC T20 World Cup here on Saturday.

Chasing 158 for victory in the Super 12 clash, Australia rode on a 124-run second-wicket stand between Warner and Mitchell Marsh to romp home in 16.2 overs.

Marsh, who hit 53 off 32 balls, got out to Chris Gayle, who celebrated the wicket in what was likely his swansong in West Indies colours.

West Indies failed to give a winning farewell to Dwayne Bravo, who played his last international.

Australia gave Bravo and Gayle a guard of honour after Warner hit the winning runs.

Earlier, Josh Hazlewood took four wickets to keep West Indies down to 157 for seven despite skipper Kieron



On the go: Warner feasted on the WI attack. • GETTY IMAGES

SCOREBOARD

WEST INDIES

Chris Gayle b Cummins 15 (9b, 2x6), Evin Lewis c Smith b Zampa 29 (26b, 5x4), Nicholas Pooran c Marsh b Hazlewood 4 (4b, 1x4), Roston Chase b Hazlewood 0 (2b), Shimron Hetmyer c Wade b Hazlewood 27 (28b, 2x4), Kieron Pollard c Maxwell b Starc 44 (31b, 4x4, 1x6), Dwayne Bravo c Warner b Hazlewood 10 (12b, 1x6), Andre Russell (not out) 18 (7b, 1x4, 2x6), Jason Holder (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-6, w-3): 9; Total (for seven wickets, in 20 overs): 157.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-30 (Gayle, 2.2 overs), 2-35 (Pooran, 3.1), 3-35 (Chase, 3.3), 4-70 (Lewis, 9.3), 5-91 (Hetmyer, 12.5), 6-126 (Bravo, 17.3), 7-143 (Pollard, 19.2).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 4-0-33-1, Hazlewood 4-0-39-4, Cummins 4-0-37-1, Maxwell 1-0-6-0, Marsh 3-0-16-0, Zampa 4-0-20-1.

AUSTRALIA

David Warner (not out) 89 (56b, 9x4, 4x6), Aaron Finch b Akeal 9 (11b, 1x4), Mitchell Marsh c Holder b Gayle 53 (32b, 5x4, 2x6), Glenn Maxwell (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (lb-3, w-6, nb-1): 10; Total (for two wickets, in 16.2 overs): 161.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-33 (Finch, 3.3), 2-157 (Marsh, 15.6).

WEST INDIES BOWLING

Akeal 4-0-29-1, Chase 1.2-0-17-0, Holder 2-0-26-0, Bravo 4-0-36-0, Walsh 2-0-18-0, Russell 2-0-25-0, Gayle 1-0-7-1.

Toss: Australia; MoM: Warner.

Australia won by eight wickets with 22 balls to spare.

South Africa shocks England, but bows out

Despite van der Dussen's knock and Rabada's hat-trick, it misses out on NRR

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SHARJAH

Rassie van der Dussen smashed an unbeaten 94 as South Africa beat England by 10 runs but failed to qualify for the semifinals of the ICC T20 World Cup on Saturday.

Group 1 winner England and runner-up Australia made the final four from the six-team pool.

South Africa posted 189 for two after van der Dussen smashed six sixes in his 60-ball knock but needed to limit England to 131 or fewer to edge out Australia on NRR.

England, which topped the group when it passed 109, finished on 179 for eight after a hat-trick by Kagiso Rabada in the final over. The pacer sent back Chris Woakes, skipper Eoin Morgan and Chris Jordan for the third hat-trick of the tournament. It was England's first loss in five matches.

Van der Dussen and Aiden Markram, who hit 52 off 25 balls, put on an unbeaten partnership of 103 for the third wicket to give their team a challenging total.



Blistering effort: Van der Dussen's unbeaten 60-ball 94 contained six sixes and five fours. • GETTY IMAGES

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA

Reeza Hendricks b Moeen 2 (8b), Quinton de Kock c Roy b Adil Rashid 34 (27b, 4x4), Rassie van der Dussen (not out) 94 (60b, 5x4, 6x6), Aiden Markram (not out) 52 (25b, 2x4, 4x6); Extras (b-1, lb-3, w-3): 7; Total (for two wickets, in 20 overs): 189.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-15 (Hendricks, 2.4 overs), 2-86 (de Kock, 11.2)

ENGLAND BOWLING

Moeen 4-0-27-1, Woakes 4-0-43-0, Adil Rashid 4-0-32-1, Jordan 4-0-36-0, Wood 4-0-47-0.

ENGLAND

Jason Roy ret'd. hurt 20 (15b, 4x4), Jos Buttler c Bavuma b Nortje 26 (15b, 3x4, 1x6), Moeen Ali c Miller b Shamsi 37 (27b, 3x4, 2x6), Jonny Bairstow lbw b Shamsi 1 (3b), Dawid Malan c Rabada b Pretorius 33 (26b, 3x4, 1x6), Liam Livingstone c Miller b Pretorius 28 (17b, 1x4, 3x6); Eoin Morgan c Maharaj b Rabada 17 (12b, 3x4), Chris Woakes c Nortje b Rabada 7 (3b, 1x6), Chris Jordan c Miller b Rabada 0 (1b), Adil Rashid (not out) 2 (2b), Mark Wood (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-2, w-3, nb-2): 7; Total (for eight wickets, in 20 overs): 179.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-58 (Buttler, 5.3), 2-59 (Bairstow, 6.2), 3-110 (Moeen, 12.2), 4-145 (Malan, 16.2), 5-165 (Livingstone, 18.1), 6-176 (Woakes, 19.1), 7-176 (Morgan, 19.2), 8-176 (Jordan, 19.3).

SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING

Maharaj 3-0-23-0, Nortje 4-0-34-1, Rabada 4-0-48-3, Shamsi 4-0-24-2, Markram 2-0-18-0, Pretorius 3-0-30-2.

Toss: England. MoM: van der Dussen. SA won by 10 runs.

Innings scan

WEST INDIES		AUSTRALIA
49	Dots	31
13	Fours	15
6	Sixes	6
50/3	PP	53/1
7.85	RR	9.85

Pollard's 44. Pollard rescued his side from 91 for five with his 31-ball knock and a key partnership of 35 with Bravo.

Bravo scored 10 and walked back to claps and hugs.

Openers Evin Lewis and Gayle started in attacking mode hitting the Australian

pace bowlers to all parts of the ground in an opening stand of 30 off 14 balls.

Gayle hit two sixes, before Pat Cummins got the veteran to chop a delivery on to the stumps.

Gayle walked back to a standing ovation from teammates.

Innings scan

SOUTH AFRICA		ENGLAND
30	Dots	49
11	Fours	17
10	Sixes	8
40/1	PP	59/1
9.44	RR	8.94

In reply, England started well with Jason Roy and Jos Buttler hitting boundaries in the first four overs.

But Roy suffered a calf-injury issue while taking a run with Buttler and had to be helped off the field.

South Africa seized the opportunity and Anrich Nortje

sent back Buttler in the next over. Tabraiz Shamsi then trapped Jonny Bairstow for one.

Moeen, who struck 37 off 27 balls, and Dawid Malan hit back in a partnership of 51 but Shamsi once again put the brakes before Rabada applied the finishing touches.

All Indian eyes on Afghanistan-NZ match

Former needs big win, latter a simple one

AYAN ACHARYA
ABU DHABI

Afghanistan will face New Zealand in a crucial Group 2 Super 12 contest at the ICC T20 World Cup on Sunday. Both these teams, and India, are still in contention for the second semifinal spot. The whole of India will be closely watching this contest.

If Kane Williamson's men win, they will reach eight points and qualify. For Afghanistan to advance, it needs to beat New Zealand and hope for Namibia to shock India.

Afghanistan can also progress even if India beats Namibia, but it has to win big against the Kiwis to dramatically improve its Net Run Rate (NRR). However, India, playing last, has the edge.

India's thrashing of Scot-

TODAY'S MATCHES

New Zealand vs. Afghanistan
ABU DHABI, 3.30 P.M. IST
H2H IN T20IS
FIRST MEETING

Pakistan vs. Scotland
SHARJAH, 7.30 P.M. IST
H2H IN T20IS
Played: 3

Pakistan vs. Scotland
LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD)

India has itself to blame

Men in Blue failed in crunch games against Pakistan, NZ

AMOL KARHADKAR
DUBAI

The fate of the Group of Death (Group 1) of the ICC T20 World Cup was sealed on Saturday. However, due to some surprising results, Group 2 still searches for its second qualifier (Pakistan the first) heading into the last two days of the Super 12 stage.

England and Australia qualified for the semifinals from Group 1, pipping South Africa on Net Run Rate after all three finished with eight points.

In the other group, three teams – at least technically – are in contention for the final berth. Babar's men are set to top the table in Group 2.

While two of these three teams – New Zealand and Afghanistan – will be up against each other, India, the favourite-turned-outsider, will be rooting for Afghanistan sitting in its swanky resort here.

Having been demolished by the two main contenders in the group (Pakistan and New Zealand), Kohli's team got back on track.

India did everything possible in its last two games to stay alive. It revived its fortunes in Abu Dhabi with a run feast against Afghanistan that saw the openers come good and the big-hitters get time in the middle to display their prowess.

The Men in Blue then celebrated captain Virat Kohli's birthday by dismantling



Disappointment writ large: Kohli's team has had an underwhelming campaign in the UAE. • AFP

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
GROUP 1					
England (Q)	5	4	1	8	2.464
Australia (Q)	5	4	1	8	1.216
South Africa	5	4	1	8	0.739
Sri Lanka	5	2	3	4	-0.269
West Indies	5	1	4	2	-1.641
Bangladesh	5	0	5	0	-2.383
GROUP 2					
Pakistan (Q)	4	4	0	8	1.065
New Zealand	4	3	1	6	1.277
India	4	2	2	4	1.619
Afghanistan	4	2	2	4	1.481
Namibia	4	1	3	2	-1.851
Scotland	4	0	4	0	-3.494

After the England-South Africa match on Nov. 6 Q: Qualified

Scotland for 85 and blitzing past the target off just 39 balls.

The mauling helped India better New Zealand and Afghanistan's NRR, a factor that could be decisive should the Kiwis succumb to the Afghans.

No wonder Jadeja, at the end of the post-match press

conference, was matter of fact when asked what will India do if the Black Caps win on Sunday.

"We will pack our bags and go home, what else?" Jadeja said.

If India's campaign ends even before its last game on Monday, it will have no one else to blame.

Riding off into the sunset



DJ, DJ...: Dwayne Bravo receives a guard of honour as he steps out for his final international match, against Australia in the ICC T20 World Cup, in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. • TWITTER

Djokovic to take on Medvedev in final

Serb clinches year-end top ranking for record seventh time

PARIS MASTERS

REUTERS
PARIS

Novak Djokovic made sure he would clinch the year-end World No. 1 spot for a record seventh time by securing his place in the Paris Masters final on Saturday with a 3-6, 6-0, 7-6(5) victory against Poland's Hubert Hurkacz.

The top seeded Serbian overcame a wobbly start at the Bercy arena before racing through the second and handling his nerves in the third.

In the other semifinal, Daniil Medvedev beat Alexander Zverev 6-2, 6-2.

Medvedev was near flaw-



Bouncing back: Novak Djokovic overcame a shaky start to get past Hubert Hurkacz in the semifinals. • GETTY IMAGES

less throughout the contest, saving all three break point opportunities.

The results: Semifinals: Novak Djokovic bt Hubert Hurkacz

3-6, 6-0, 7-6(5); Daniil Medvedev bt Alexander Zverev 6-2, 6-2.

Quarterfinals: Zverev bt Casper Ruud 7-5, 6-4; Medvedev bt Hugo Gaston 7-6(7), 6-4.

Manika bows out in singles

WTT

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Manika Batra fought hard, but Wang Yidi of China, the top seed and World No. 11 emerged stronger to win 11-7, 7-11, 13-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-5 in the women's singles semifinals of the World Table Tennis Contender here on Saturday.

Earlier in the day, Manika, partnering Archana Kamath, reached the women's doubles final with a 11-6, 8-11, 11-6, 5-11, 11-8 win over the Chinese pair of Liu Weishan and Wang Yidi in the last-four contest. The Indians will take on Melanie Diaz and Adriana Diaz of Puerto Rico in the summit clash on Sunday.

Manchester City deepens United's crisis

Barca blows a three-goal advantage on the day Xavi is confirmed as next coach

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANCHESTER

Manchester United suffered another home humiliation as Manchester City cruised to a 2-0 win at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Eric Bailly's own goal and Bernardo Silva's strike on the stroke of half-time was the difference between the sides on the scoreboard.

Chelsea was held to a surprise 1-1 draw by struggling Burnley as Matej Vydra's late equaliser rocked the Premier League leader.

Barcelona threw away a three-goal half-time lead on the day Xavi Hernandez was appointed coach as Celta Vigo scored in the 96th minute



Bundling it in: Bernardo Silva's effort goes in after David de Gea makes a mess of his save. • AP

to complete a stunning comeback in LaLiga. The results: Premier League: Manchester United 0 lost to Manchester City 2 (Bailly 7-og, Silva 45); Brentford 1 (Henry 60) lost to Norwich 2 (Nor-

mann 6, Pukki 29-pen); Chelsea 1 (Havertz 33) drew with Burnley 1 (Vydra 79); Crystal Palace 2 (Zaha 61, Gallagher 78) bt Wolves 0. La Liga: Espanyol 2 (Pedrosa 30, de Tomas 42) bt Granada 0;

Celta de Vigo 3 (Aspas 52, 90+6, Nolito 74) drew with Barcelona 3 (Fati 5, Busquets 18, Depay 34).

Bundesliga: Bayern Munich 2 (Goretzka 30, Lewandowski 75) bt Freiburg 1 (Haberer 90+3); VfL Wolfsburg 1 (Nmecha 14) bt Augsburg 0; VfB Stuttgart 0 lost to Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Okugawa 19); VfL Bochum 2 (Novotny 66, Pantovic 90+7) bt Hoffenheim 0.

Serie A: Spezia (Sala 58) 1 bt Torino 0.

On Friday: Premier League: Southampton 1 (Adam Armstrong 3) bt Aston Villa 0.

La Liga: Athletic Bilbao 0 lost to Cadiz 1 (Ponce 6).

Bundesliga: Mainz 1 (Widmer 76) drew with Borussia M'Gladbach 1 (Neuhaas 38).

Serie A: Empoli 2 (Di Francesco 62, Zurkowski 71) drew with Genoa 2 (Crisotto 13-pen, Bianchi 89).

Srikanth, Lakshya exit in the semifinals

HYLO OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SAARBRUCKEN (GERMANY)

The Indian challenge ended at the Hylo Open Super 500 badminton tournament after both K. Srikanth and Lakshya Sen suffered straight game defeats in their respective semifinals here on Saturday.

After Lakshya, ranked 21 in the world, went down fighting 18-21, 12-21 to 39th ranked Singapore's Loh Kean Yew in 45 minutes, Srikanth suffered a narrow 19-21, 20-22 loss to Malaysian second seed Lee Zii Jia in another semifinal.

Former champion Lakshya matched his opponent in



Lakshya Sen...gallant run ends. • FILE PHOTO

the fast-paced rallies but lacked finishing as he suffered his second loss to Loh in three meetings this year.

In the semifinal clash, Loh showed better discipline and precision to return the favour to the Indian.

Russia triumphs

BILLIE JEAN KING CUP

REUTERS
PRAGUE

Daria Kasatkina and Liudmila Samsonova led Russia to victory in the maiden Billie Jean King Cup after winning their singles matches against Switzerland here on Saturday.

Kasatkina overpowered Jil Teichmann 6-2, 6-4 to put Russia up 1-0 before Samsonova bounced back to get past Olympic champion Belinda Bencic 3-6, 6-3, 6-4. Samsonova had replaced Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova after the top Russian player withdrew with a left knee injury.

Russia was competing as the Russian Tennis Federation due to sanctions.