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Santosh Sathe, who lost his job at a mall in Navi Mumbai, with his mother Sarubai and sister-in-law Anita. Sadaf Modak

The new urban poor: Salaries gone, pawning gold to pay school fees, NGO meals, rents unpaid



ON THE BRINK IN THE CITY

AN EXPRESS SERIES
MUMBAI

MAYURA JANWALKAR & SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

MANY LOCKS in the nation's financial capital are being opened one by one, new Covid numbers are falling but most doors — or windows — to any opportunity to earn are still firmly shut.

For countless in this city, gone is the confidence and dignity that a monthly salary assured until just six months ago. An army of women and men, from domestic workers to store-clerks, staff of small manufacturing and service units to delivery staff and drivers, has been without their fixed income for seven months. Their salaries were too meagre for a savings cushion which is now frayed, if not gone.

These families are on the brink of urban poverty, forced to do what they once thought was impossible — borrowing for their children's school fees, defaulting on EMIs, falling back on rent, cutting down on necessities, pawning their valuables, waiting for meals and dry rations from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), NGOs and charities.

Like Isaque Khan (42). Since he lost his job in March as a tailor in a garment unit at a monthly

salary of Rs 15,000, he knocked on several doors as his family of seven began relying on cooked meals coming to Malad from charities. "I sold grapes, I sold vegetables, I tried whatever I could but it was just not enough. I have five children to provide for," he said.

"I stitched some leggings and palazzos at home and started selling them through pheri, door to door (in his densely populated slum of Ambujwadi). With great difficulty, I make Rs 300-400 on some days," said Khan.

Santosh Sathe (34) from Mankhurd, the city's eastern border, who has studied till the third year of an Arts degree, worked in a mall in Navi Mumbai and was paid half his monthly salary, Rs 6,250, for two months of the lockdown. The malls opened in August but he was asked not to return. "They retained only one in seven staffers saying there is no business," Santosh said.

Each day he tries to find a job as a "helper" at Rs 500 a day. "There is no guarantee that I find work daily," he said.

One of his brothers is an autorickshaw driver, whose earnings, too, have reduced; another brother works at a political party office and one is unemployed.

Anita, Santosh's sister-in-law, says that a year ago, she set up a sewing machine to add to the family income. "That machine lay shut for a few months during the lockdown. Now, very few women come to get dresses or blouses. There is no extra money to be spent on these things anymore," Anita said. Her two children, 5 and 11, are finding it difficult to manage online classes on the single smartphone they have to share.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BECA READY; RAJNATH, JAISHANKAR MEET ESPER, POMPEO

2+2 today, decks cleared for key India-US defence agreement

Deeper defence co-operation, security in Asia (read China) on the talks table



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with US Secretary of Defence Mark T Esper; External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with US Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo in New Delhi on Monday. Tashi Tobgyal, Reuters



SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE STAGE is set for the signing of the crucial Indo-US Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) — which pertains to geo-spatial intelligence, sharing information on maps and satellite images for defence purposes — as US Defence Secretary Mark T Esper and Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo arrived in Delhi Monday.

They started talks with their counterparts, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, in what is being seen as a strong reinforcement of the bilateral re-

BUSINESS AS USUAL



lationship and an unambiguous signal of renewal and continuity a week before the US

Presidential elections.

"Today's discussions will add new vigour to India-US defence relations and mutual cooperation," Singh tweeted after his meeting with Esper which lasted for about an hour in South Block. Esper was received by Singh for the ceremonial tri-services guard of honour. The talks, Singh said, were "aimed at further deepening defence cooperation in a wide range of areas."

The Defence Ministry said that the two ministers "expressed satisfaction that (an) agreement of BECA will be signed during the visit". Once signed, BECA will be one of the three foundational agreements,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED India-US warmth in China chill

THE SIGNING of BECA and the presence of two top United States cabinet ministers — days before the US polls — for an in-person meeting is a strong signal on the value attached by Washington to the India relationship. China's belligerence has reinforced this. At the 2+2, Delhi and Washington will look to evaluate and consolidate these gains.

Dairy Indus...try



Amul
Harappa se har cuppa tak

Stubble burning: SC keeps its order on Lokur panel on hold as Centre assures law

ANANTHAKRISHNAN
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

WITH THE Centre assuring a law on "air quality management" for the National Capital Region, the Supreme Court on Monday kept in abeyance its October 16 order appointing former judge Justice Madan Lokur to act as a one-man monitoring committee to check stubble burning in the region.

Justice Lokur told *The Indian Express* that he had already begun work on what was entrusted to him but added that he did not want to comment on Monday's developments in the apex court.

Appearing before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India S A Bobde, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said, "We found that several ad hoc steps were taken in the past which may and may not give results. Central



Justice Lokur was picked for panel on October 16

Government has taken a holistic view of the matter and is considering bringing a legislation on 'Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas' which will put a permanent body in place with participation from all affected areas."

Termining it a "welcome step", the CJ said "this is something that the government should have acted on... The only issue is people are choking because of pollution and it is something which must be curbed".

Agreeing, Mehta said the issue must be dealt with on a war footing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

UP cow slaughter law is being misused against innocent: Allahabad HC

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 26

EXPRESSING CONCERN over the misuse of UP's Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act "against innocent persons", and questioning the credibility of evidence submitted by police in such cases, the Allahabad High Court said that measures have to be taken to protect abandoned cattle for the law to be implemented in "letter and spirit".

Granting bail to an accused held under the Act in a judgment delivered on October 19 and made available now, Justice Siddharth stated that the "Act is being misused against innocent persons". "Whenever any meat is recovered, it is normally shown as cow meat (beef) without getting it examined or

analysed by the Forensic Laboratory," the order stated.

"...in most of the cases, meat is not sent for analysis. Accused persons continue in jail for an offence that may not have been committed at all and which is triable by Magistrate 1st Class, having maximum sentence up to 7 years... Whenever cows are shown to be recovered, no proper recovery memo is prepared and one does not know where cows go after recovery," it stated.

The order was filed on a plea by Rahmuddin, who was arrested under the Act by police in Shamli and jailed on August 5. Rahmuddin's lawyer had claimed in court that he was not arrested from the spot.

According to UP government data, more than half (76) of the 139 arrests recorded in the state

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Coal block case: Former minister Dilip Ray gets 3 years in jail

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

OBSERVING THAT the arbitrary allocation of a coal block in Giridih, Jharkhand, in 1999 caused huge financial loss to the nation, a Delhi court awarded a three-year prison sentence to former Union minister Dilip Ray.

Besides Ray, who was Minister of State for Coal in the Atal Bihari



Ray was MoS, Coal, in the Vajpayee govt

RISE AND FALL OF A HOTELIER-POLITICIAN

While sentencing Ray, the special CBI court observed that he had "abused his official position" as his decision of "relaxation of policy without any logical or legal basis amounts to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Year after UT status to Ladakh, BJP returns to power in Hill Council, but with reduced numbers

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, OCTOBER 26

A YEAR after Ladakh was granted Union Territory status, the BJP returned to power in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, though with a reduced margin.

The election, which the PDP and the National Conference boycotted, saw the BJP winning only 15 of 26 seats (five short of its tally in the last Council) while the Congress, which had only six members in the last Council, emerged victorious at nine places, wresting Lower and Upper Leh in Leh town from the

GOVT & POLITICS

THREE SENIOR PDP LEADERS QUIT PARTY
PAGE 5

BJP. The remaining two seats were won by Independents.

Once target of mass hunting in Northeast, 'Birds of God' are now rare symbol of hope

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

ESHAROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

EXACTLY EIGHT years ago, reports of around 1 lakh Amur falcons being hunted every day in Nagaland's Wokha district, to be sold for their meat, had created a flutter across the world. The mass harvesting of the bird — with one of the longest migratory routes, from Siberia to Africa — prompted the central and state governments, and wildlife experts, to launch a desperate conservation project.

Today, these falcons symbolise a rare success story, scripted mainly by local communities. The hunting has stopped completely, say experts. So much so, that the Union Environment Ministry has decided to extend the project from Nagaland and Manipur to neighbouring southern Assam, Mizoram and Tripura, where the birds are known to roost.

Dr Suresh Kumar of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), who led the project, says very little was known about the bird before reports of the harvesting made global headlines. "We were taken by surprise. The Environment Ministry asked for the matter to be investigated.



The Amur Falcon, which roosts in the Northeastern states, in Tamenglong district in Manipur. Courtesy: Forest Dept, Manipur

The state government immediately banned the hunting of the bird and said they would not release developmental funds to villages involved," says Kumar.

"But what has made the project a true success was the involvement of the community. There has never been such a quick turnaround to a conservation project in India, where one year a species was being hunted and in the next, it stopped," he says.

From breeding grounds in Siberia and northern China, these falcons migrate west, across the Arabian Sea, to Southern Africa, where they spend the winters. But for a period of about 10 years, during their brief stopover, around

15,000 birds were being harvested every day in Wokha. Sometimes, experts say, the numbers even went up to 1 lakh a day.

According to local residents, the villagers would put up wide nets across bamboo forests on which the falcon would roost. After the hunt, the bird would be sold for Rs 25-30 a piece in markets, with a hunter earning anywhere between Rs 30,000-50,000 in a season.

Jennithing Shitiri, chairman of Pangti village in Wokha, says the falcons would start arriving mid-October and leave by November-end. "They would stay for a short duration, and the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

DECISION 2020
BIHAR
FULL COVERAGE, VISIT WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

CAMPAGNING FOR FIRST PHASE OVER; TEJASHWI SETS PACE
A SUGAR MILL TELLS A STORY
PAGE 6

BJP YOUTH WING CHIEF PRAISES CHIRAG: YOUNG, ENERGETIC
PAGE 7

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PATNA COLLECTORATE: A LINK TO CITY'S PAST AS A DUTCH TRADING POST

A Dutch-era architectural delight has been at the centre of much controversy in Bihar lately. Situated on the banks of the river Ganges, the 12-acre complex of the Patna Collectorate contains within it a precious slice of history from a time when the city used to be a bustling trade centre for Europeans.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



IDEA EXCHANGE: PRAKASH JAVADEKAR

Javadekar on the TRP 'scam', Covid-19 and the Bihar elections

US ELECTIONS



TOUGH FIGHT, SAYS SHALABH KUMAR

Kumar had coined the 'Ab ki baar Trump sarkar' slogan

EXPRESS AUDIO

What we know about India's plans to distribute Covid-19 vaccine

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In today's episode of the '3 Things' podcast, we look at how India is preparing to distribute the Covid-19 vaccine once it's available.

GUJARAT
Surgeon among three detained over nurse's 'suicide', 2 more booked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SURAT, OCTOBER 26

THREE PERSONS, including an incharge civil surgeon of Navsari Civil Hospital, were detained on Monday for abetment to suicide, five days after a 28-year-old nurse allegedly died by suicide at her parents' house in Vejalpore area. The other two detained are the deceased nurse's husband and mother-in-law. They will be arrested after their Covid-19 test turns negative. A first information report (FIR) lodged on October 25, on a complaint filed by Meena Acharya, mother of deceased nurse, Megha Acharya, who was found hanging on October 21, named five persons, including two head matrons of the civil hospital. Megha had left behind a five-page note accusing head matrons Tara Gamit and Vanita Patel, and incharge civil surgeon Dr Avinash Dubey of harassing her "mentally and physically". She also mentioned that her husband Ankit Khambhata and his mother Jayshree Khambhata, residents of Dharampur taluka, were harassing her, demanding a dowry of Rs 5 lakh. Navsari police has booked all five under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 304 (b) (dowry

death), 306 (abetment to suicide), 354 (a) (use criminal force on a woman or abet such act), 498 (a) (Husband or relative of husband of a woman, subjecting her to cruelty) and 114 (more than one accused), as well as Prohibition of Dowry Act section 4 (Penalty for demanding dowry), 6 (Dowry received) and sexual harassment of woman at work place 2013, section 3. Megha had been staying with her mother for the past six months, after her husband and his mother harassed her over Rs 5 lakh dowry. They also wanted Megha to leave her job, police said. After the complaint was filed, Dr Dubey was admitted to New Civil hospital in Surat due to "chest pain". Circle inspector PG Chaudhary of Navsari said, "We have registered case of abetment to suicide against five persons, on the statements by the deceased nurse's mother and the suicide note. We will arrest all the five accused shortly." Sources said that on May 18, 2020, Megha Acharya was felicitated as corona warrior by Navsari post department officials. A video she shared on social media with a message to the public on Covid-19 guidelines had gone viral.

FROM PAGE ONE
Hill Council

Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur and Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijju, besides senior party leaders such as Ram Madhav and Arun Singh, had visited the hill district to campaign among an electorate of less than a lakh. Even senior party leaders from J&K, including general secretary (organisation) Ashok Koul, had stayed in Leh to supervise the campaign. Among the most high-profile losses for the BJP was from Sakti, where Gyal P Wangyal, who was Chief Executive Councillor of the last Hill Council, lost to Congress's Rigzin Tsering. The BJP, however, swept Nubra Valley, winning all five constituencies here. Chushul and Neoma in Eastern Ladakh, where India and China are in a standoff position, went to Independent candidates. As the results came out, senior BJP leaders, including Jamiyang Namgyal, Ladakh's sole MP, went into a huddle. While senior BJP leaders in Leh avoided phone calls, sources in the party and the administration attributed the party's poor performance to the Centre dilly-dallying on granting Constitutional safeguards under the Sixth Schedule to Ladakh — on the lines of the Bodo Territorial Council. The last Hill Council meeting, which was also attended by BJP MP Namgyal, had passed a unanimous resolution seeking "under the 6th Schedule, Article 371 or Domicile Act of the Constitution to protect the rights of indigenous people of the Union Territory". The opposition Congress had walked out of the meeting, alleging that Ladakh UT in its present form was "incomplete". MP Namgyal had, however, welcomed the resolution, saying "selective law and safeguards of any state can't be replicated in Ladakh as it has its unique demography, different socio economic and climatic condition, geo-climatic factors and border aspects". However, as there was no movement after the resolution, local units of all political parties, including the BJP, decided to boycott the LAHDC polls. As the National Conference and PDP had already decided to stay away from the electoral exercise to protest against the abrogation of Article 370, the BJP high command persuaded its local leadership to contest the elections, hoping it would be a cakewalk for them in the absence of the two major regional parties, said a senior official in the UT administration.

Stubble burning

The bench, which also had Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, was hearing a petition by two students — Aditya Dubey and Aman Banka — seeking directions to Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to completely stop stubble burning. As the SG urged the court to keep its October 16 order appointing Justice Lokur in abeyance, Senior Advocate Vikas Singh, who appeared for the petitioners, objected to the request and expressed his apprehension that the law may come into effect only by next year. It was on Singh's suggestion that the court appointed the Lokur panel on October 16. "I don't see why the Union wants the order suspended. Ultimately it is for the benefit of the people of Delhi," said Singh. Mehta sought to dispel his fears and said "this government acts fast" and said the law will be placed before the court in just a few days and will be brought into effect quickly.

The new urban poor: Salaries gone, pawning gold to pay school fees, NGO meals, rents unpaid

Few have a first-hand sense of the distress better than Kishan Singh Rajput who owns a gold shop in the Janu Pada slum in Kandivali East — that's his business. He said he sits on gold jewellery worth Rs 70 lakh pawned with him for cash since the lockdown: as many as 300 people have mortgaged their bangles, chains, earrings and even Mangalsutras. "They take cash in return which they will repay with 2 per cent interest each month. Some said they wanted to pay rent, others had a hospital bill, some others had to pay their kid's school fee. Everyone is helpless," said Rajput. Among the 300 names in his register is that of Prathamesh Khandekar (22), who worked as a driver in a private car renting agency prior to the lockdown and brought home a salary of Rs 18,000 a month. The lockdown took away his job and halved his father's salary from a modest government job. Expenses mounted when his father suffered from pneumonia in April. "We ran out of our savings after the medical expenses. Then I sold two gold chains and mortgaged my mother's Mangalsutra. I raised Rs 8,000 by selling the two chains. We are hoping it will help tide us over until I find another job. I have been trying

very hard," said Khandekar. Khandekar is among many seeking credit with little by way of collateral, falling out of the purview of any government credit scheme. "People who had proper jobs have been without work for months. Some of them have no choice but to borrow from private lenders when they fail to get bank loans," said Bilal Khan of Ghar Bachao, Ghar Banao Andolan that works for housing rights in slum settlements. He said some slum loan sharks who earlier charged 5 per cent interest have upped their interest rates to 10 per cent and, in some places, a brutal 20 per cent. Vanita Pawar (40), a domestic worker from Khairani Road near Saki Naka, had a monthly income of Rs 9,000 from three homes where she worked before the lockdown. She had borrowed over Rs 5 lakh from a credit society and friends and carved out a room and a mezzanine out of her one-room home. She would short-let the space to three tenants at a time, charging a deposit of Rs 20,000, and a monthly rental of Rs 4,000. "I made all this after my husband died six years ago so I could afford education for my children," she said. After the lockdown, she lost her job at all three homes and she has had no tenants. Her son, pursuing a B.Sc (IT)

course in a private institute may now have to skip a year. "I scraped Rs 5,000 to pay my daughter's college fee. The fee for my son's last year is Rs 40,000. I just can't pay," she said. Her unpaid pile is rising. "I have not been able to pay the electricity bill for six months. I have not been able to make the Rs 5,000 monthly repayment towards the loan. I get calls from everyone asking for their dues but I tell them where am I supposed to get it from. People like us need to be accommodated a little longer until we get some work," she said. Her eldest daughter who gave tuitions to school children is also without work. "The students' parents have no money to pay my daughter," she said. Pictures of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Gautam Buddha hang on the wall facing the door to Pawar's home that packs in a tiny kitchenette, a slim attached bathroom, a refrigerator, a wall-mounted TV and a single bed. The Pawars tided over the last few months with dry rations from NGO Jan Samrajya. According to an analysis by the state Finance department submitted earlier this month, the unemployment rate in the entire state spiked to 20.9 in April from 5.8 in March. In August, after the lockdown, it stood at 6.2 — but experts said that doesn't factor in vast sec-

tions of the informal sector where salary payment was in cash. Indeed, an 11-member expert group constituted by the state government to recommend economic revival measures in response to COVID-19, called for "direct" support to "vulnerable groups" via a "web-based social program rolled out using Aadhar, PDS... and Municipal databases." Acknowledging the long road ahead, a senior official said: "After Chhattisgarh, none of the states came up with schemes for cash disbursement because the economy is inflationary. The thinking right now is that it is better to give food security through rations." That may not be enough. Maharashtra like MNREGA, that helped in rural areas, are not feasible in cities since there is little work that is not contractor-based, said Abhay Pethe, professor of Economics at the Mumbai University. "There should be a cash transfer to the most vulnerable. Maharashtra has enough headroom to borrow... Red flags come up when debt servicing goes above a certain percentage of revenue inflows. We have not reached that yet. We have about 7-8 per cent to go. But we have to be bold about it. We can't just wait for the Central government's schemes and aid packages," said Pethe.

Jagan announces industrial policy for SC/ST entrepreneurs

SREENIVAS JANAYALA
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 26

THE ANDHRA Pradesh government on Monday announced a special industrial policy for SC/ST entrepreneurs for 2020-23. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said the policy was another step towards ensuring social justice, and that various incentives would be provided to encourage entrepreneurship among SC and ST communities in the state. "The people of SC and ST communities should not be left out as working class but should emerge as entrepreneurs. I am happy to launch Jagananna YSR Badugu Vikasam, a special industrial policy for SC/ST entrepreneurs on the occasion of Dussehra," Jagan said. The new special policy provides fiscal incentives, besides exemption of stamp duty, investment subsidy, land allotment, power, interest subsidy, net SGST, quality certification or patent registration, seed capital

and any other assistance as required. Reservations in land allotment in industrial zones will also be made, the CM said. Jagan said that 16.2 per cent of developed lands in industrial parks by the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation is reserved for SCs and 6 per cent is reserved for ST entrepreneurs. Social Welfare Minister Pinipe Vishwaroop said many welfare schemes are being implemented in the state to bring changes in the lives of SC, ST, BCs and also poor people of the upper castes. He said 82 per cent of posts in village/ward secretariats were filled up by BC, SC, ST and minorities and the social delivery mechanism works transparently in taking the welfare schemes to the people. Jagan directed the officials to focus on preparing the required information on whom to meet and how to proceed for SC/ST entrepreneurs who wish to set up an industry.

Charred body found inside liquor shop in Alwar, 2 booked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 26

THE CHARRED body of a man in his early twenties was found inside a liquor shop in Alwar district on Sunday, following which an FIR of murder has been registered against two men who used to run the shop, said police on Monday. According to the police, preliminary investigation suggests that the incident happened after Saturday night. "We received information on Sunday morning that a liquor shop which used to be run from a container has been burnt. After reaching the place we found the container completely burnt. Inside, we found in a box the charred body of Kamal Kishore, a man in his early twenties who

used to work at the shop," said Dara Singh, station house officer, Khairthal police station, Bhiwadi police district on Monday. He added that a case has been registered against two people — Rakesh Yadav and Subhash Yadav — who used to run the liquor shop under various sections including 302 (murder), 436 (mischievous by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house, etc), 120B (criminal conspiracy) along with relevant sections of the SC/ST Act. "We have registered the murder FIR on the basis of a report by the family of the deceased. So far nobody has been arrested. A team from the forensic science laboratory is trying to ascertain the exact sequence of events including chances of an accidental death. Further investigation is on in the case," said Singh.

Decks cleared for key India-US defence agreement

signed in the last four years, enabling closer military ties. Singh was accompanied by Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, Army Chief Gen M M Naravane, Air Chief Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria, Navy chief Admiral Karambir Singh, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar and other senior officials. According to a Defence ministry statement, the two ministers reviewed bilateral defence cooperation in a range of areas. "Both the Ministers discussed potential new areas of cooperation, both at Service to Service level and at the joint level. They called for continuation of existing defence dialogue mechanisms during the pandemic, at all levels, particularly the Military Cooperation Group (MCG). They also discussed requirements of expanding deployments of liaison officers," the statement said. Esper welcomed Australia's participation in the exercise MALABAR 2020. India had recently announced Australia's participation in the military training exercise. During the discussions, Singh underlined defence sec-

tor initiatives under Atmanirbhar Bharat and invited US companies to tap into the "liberalised policies" and the "favourable Defence Industry ecosystem in India", the statement said. Esper was accompanied by US Ambassador to India Kenneth Juster and senior officials from the Pentagon. In an apparent reference to China, sources said the Jaishankar-Pompeo meeting in Hyderabad House touched upon the "global situation and its contemporary challenges" and discussed "shared concerns and interests including stability and security in Asia." Sources added that specific issues will be taken up when the four ministers meet again Tuesday for the 3rd Indo-US 2+2 ministerial meeting — a rare in-person meeting when most diplomatic meetings are through video-conferencing. This also assumes significance since India and China are locked in a border standoff in eastern Ladakh for more than five months and soldiers from both sides are looking at deployment along the border in

the harsh winter ahead. The US has been extremely critical of Chinese aggression along the LAC in the last four months with Pompeo leading from the front. The signing of BECA will allow India to use US geospatial intelligence and enhance accuracy of automated systems and weapons like missiles and armed drones. It will give access to topographical and aeronautical data and advanced products which will aid navigation and targeting. This could be key for Air Force-to-Air Force cooperation between India and the US. Sources said that the call between Pompeo and Jaishankar in June — after the June 15 Galwan incident — set the stage and gave a political impetus to the already existing security cooperation apparatus in place. Also, Esper had called up Rajnath Singh in the second week of July. The cooperation includes sharing of high-end satellite images, telephone intercepts, and data exchange on Chinese troops and weapons deployment along the 3,488-km

India-China LAC. MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said Monday that the 2+2 dialogue tomorrow has been "significant in propelling India-US ties forward". The first edition of the dialogue took place in Delhi in September 2018, the last one was in Washington December 2019. After the 2+2 meeting, Esper and Pompeo will jointly call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and have a meeting with NSA Ajit Doval. There will be discussions with other government and business leaders on ways to advance the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. During the 2+2 dialogue, expanding cooperation between the two militaries will be high on agenda. This includes the two navies, which play a critical role in ensuring freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific. In July 2020, the Indian Navy successfully completed a passing exercise with the US Navy as the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group transited through the Indian Ocean Region.

The court said that in view of the assurance, it will hear the matter next on October 29. The court said, "Mr Tushar Mehta, learned Solicitor General of India states that the Union of India has proposed a legislation to tackle the problem which is highlighted in the Public Interest Litigation and that it will be placed before the Court within three to four days. Having regard to the statement, we consider it appropriate that the measures adopted by this Court vide order dated 16.10.2020 be kept in abeyance until further orders." The Centre had, during the October 16 hearing, expressed its reservations on the appointment of the Justice Lokur panel. "There are some reservations with which we do not want to trouble My Lords. I will have to

file an application...", the SG had told the Bench then. **Coal block case** gross abuse of his powers... The case pertains to the allocation of Brahmadaha coal block in Giridih, Jharkhand, to CTL in 1999. Ray was convicted along with five others: CTL; its director Mahendra Kumar Agarwalla; two senior Coal ministry officials Pradip Kumar Banerjee (then additional secretary) and Nitya Nand Gautam (then advisor, projects); and Castron Mining Ltd. The court imposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh on Ray, Rs 2 lakh on Banerjee and Gautam, and Rs 60 lakh on Agarwalla. It also imposed a fine of Rs 60 lakh on CTL and Rs 10 lakh on CML. In response to the defence ar-

gument that no loss was caused to anyone in the matter "since almost the entire amount of extracted coal was surrendered to the government", Special Judge Bharat Parashar, who passed Monday's order, said "non-availability of sufficient raw material such as coal has in fact resulted in the lack of infrastructural/industrial development of the country". The court also observed that had the coal block been allocated to the deserving applicant, it would have added to the industrial development of the country. "...It will be suffice to state that arbitrary allocation of coal blocks as has been seen in the present matter to unscrupulous persons who never intended to establish any end use project in itself has caused huge loss to the nation which is difficult to be com-

putable in monetary terms," the order read. The court said the case involved the commission of white collar crimes by people occupying high positions. "Such white collar crimes are in fact more dangerous to the society than ordinary crimes, firstly, because the financial losses are much higher, and, secondly because of the damages inflicted on public morale," the court said. **Cow slaughter** under the stringent National Security Act (NSA) this year, till August 19, were on charges of cow slaughter. NSA charges apart, 1,716 cases had been registered this year, till August 26, under the UP Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act and over 4,000 people arrested.

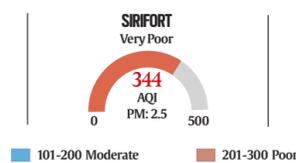
The data show that closure reports were filed in 32 cases after the police failed to gather evidence against the accused. In the order, Justice Siddharth also referred to a range of issues affecting stray cattle in the state — and the effect on society. "Goshalas do not accept the non-milching cows or old cows and they are left to wander on the roads. Similarly, owner of the cows after milking leave the cows to roam on roads, to drink drainage/sewer water and eat garbage, polythene, etc. Moreover, cows and cattle on the road are menace to the traffic and a number of deaths have been reported due to them," the order stated. "In the rural areas, cattle owners, who are unable to feed their live stock, abandon them. They cannot be transported outside the state for fear of locals and police. There are no pastures now. Thus, these animals wander here and there destroying the crops. Earlier, farmers were afraid of Neelgai... now they have to save their crops from stray cows," the order stated. "Whether cows are on roads or on fields, their abandonment adversely affects the society in a big way. Some way out has to be found out to keep them either in cow shelters or with owners, if the UP Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act is to be implemented in letter and spirit," it stated. The UP Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act prohibits the slaughter of cows and their progeny in the state, with punishment of upto ten years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh. **'Birds of God'** villagers would make most of this time. Earlier, it was never in such large numbers. Once the nearby Doyeng reservoir came up, around 2002, the birds started roosting in millions," he says. It was not easy convincing the villagers to stop hunting, says Shithri. "What WII, the government and NGOs did was to convince the Church, the village council and student leaders. We explained the benefits of the project. Then, they started getting international recognition, which spurred them on. Now, there are eco-clubs in every school that talk about conservation and biodiversity. We started receiving domestic and international tourists, and home stays and eateries sprung up," he says. Wokha Forest Officer Zuthunglo Patton says the project was community driven. "In Nagaland, most of the land is owned by individuals or communities — 88.7 per cent of land is privately held and 11.3 per cent is government land. So the government cannot issue a ban without the approval of the village communities," she says. In the far-off Tamenglong district of Manipur, community leader Hemiah Panmei of Azuram village says Amur falcons had been hunted for 40 years. "But our ancestors believed that these were sacred birds. They were called Ra Rui or Birds of God. They believed that whenever they arrived in large numbers, it would portend a good harvest. We reminded our people of our ancestral beliefs, and explained how important the birds were for the biodiversity of the area. The Church pointed out that conservation of wildlife was also mentioned in the Bible," he says. The project was launched in Nagaland in 2013 and extended to Manipur three years later. The WII chipped in with a staggered satellite tagging project, choosing several birds from each area from 2013 to 2016. Some tagged birds have died since, some are still transmitting data. "Once the villagers realised the importance of what was being done, and their involvement in it, they were very excited. Some of them even asked for the tagged birds to be named after them," says Kumar.



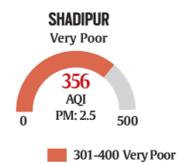
0-50 Good



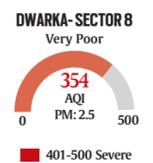
51-100 Satisfactory



101-200 Moderate



201-300 Poor



301-400 Very Poor

401-500 Severe

SALARY DEMAND TO HIT OPD SERVICES

As MCD-Delhi govt fund tussle plays out, doctors across hospitals to protest today

ANANYA TIWARI
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

RESIDENT DOCTORS of several hospitals across the city have decided to hold a protest Tuesday in support of doctors working in North MCD-run hospitals over the issue of pending salaries. OPD functioning in hospitals is expected to be hit.

Five doctors of Hindu Rao hospital have been on a hunger strike since Friday. Dr R Gautam, president of the Municipal Corporation Doctors Association, said doctors in the North MCD-run hospitals will go on an indefinite strike starting Tuesday, unless they are paid. While doctors at Lok Nayak and GTB hospitals, both Covid facilities, will hold a black ribbon protest, resident doctors at Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar, Bhagwan Mahavir, Deen Dayal Upadhyay, ABVIMS Dr RML and Sanjay Gandhi

Memorial hospitals will hold a 'pen-down' protest between 10 am and noon.

Several doctors in hospitals run by the civic body have not been paid in three months and have been protesting for the past two weeks. On Monday, all doctors in these hospitals went on a mass leave as a mark of protest.

By evening, a resolution seemed in sight, with mayors of the three MCDs — north, east and south — meeting Health Minister Satyendar Jain to resolve the issue. Doctors, however, said they will not call off the strike unless there is a permanent solution.

While corporations have alleged in the past that they were not able to pay salaries because the Delhi government owed them money, the latter has denied the charge, saying they were the ones owed money and that they had cleared all dues.

Drama ensued through the day, with the mayors sitting out-



Mayors of the three corporations protest outside the residence of CM Kejriwal, Monday morning. Amit Mehra

side the CM's house, demanding a meeting with him. The CM, however, asked Jain to meet them, who said the mayors had not turned up for the meeting.

A meeting between Jain and the mayors finally took place late evening, after which the health

minister said: "I have told the mayors that the Centre owes them Rs 12,000 crore, which it has not given to local bodies in Delhi for 10 years. The MCDs also owe Rs 6,000 crore to the Delhi government. If they say we owe them some funds, we are ready

to pay that... Shortage of funds in the MCDs is due to corruption but they say there is no corruption..."

The mayors, however, told *The Indian Express* after the meeting that the government had assured them funds would be transferred within 7-10 days. South MCD Mayor Anamika Singh told *The Indian Express* Monday night, "They have told us the government will release funds within 7 days. They have finally understood our pain but kept us waiting for so long. They accuse MCD of theft, forgetting AAP is also part of the municipal corporations." North MCD Mayor Jai Prakash said, "Delhi government has said they will clear the funds in 7-10 days. We are demanding Rs 13,000 crore, but at least they can pay some amount right now, so that the backlog of the salaries can be cleared."

Earlier in the day, Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta said at a press conference the Delhi government

had been reducing the corporation's share in revenue. "In 2012-13, the Congress government gave 17.6% of its share. Now it is 12.5%. During the pandemic, they slashed it further," he alleged. As per recommendations of the Fifth Delhi Finance Commission — which looked at devolution of funds by the Delhi government to civic bodies — the grant to MCDs has been enhanced from 10.5% to 12.5% of the net tax receipts.

Meanwhile, AAP MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak said the corporation should reach out to the Centre for the funds owed to it. "They are supposed to pay Rs 488 per person to respective municipalities as per the 14th Finance Commission. As per Delhi's population, this is Rs 1,150 crore per year, and for last 10 years, the Centre owes around Rs 12,000 crore to Delhi's MCDs. But they have never reached out to the Centre for this," he alleged.

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Man arrested for 'mowing down' cyclist in South Delhi

New Delhi: A 26-year-old man was arrested on Sunday for allegedly mowing down a cyclist in South Delhi's Fatehpur Beri area. The accused, Rohit, runs a food stall. On Saturday night, he ran over the victim, Akhilesh, near Rosewood farms with his Swift Dzire car.

Akhilesh, who worked as a

manager at a relative's furniture workshop, was rushed to the hospital, but he died during the treatment. After the accident, Rohit fled the spot. During investigation, his car was spotted and he was arrested from his residence in Gurgaon. He told police that he had given his car for repair in Faridabad. **ENS**

Calls, messages encrypted, can't access details: WhatsApp to HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

WHATSAPP CANNOT access details of messages and calls on its platform, the Facebook-owned messaging app has told the Delhi High Court in response to a notice issued to it in a drugs case.

In the bail pleas filed by three accused, who are suspected to be major suppliers of "illegal smack" in the national capital, Delhi Police had told the court that WhatsApp was not responding to its queries related to the case registered at New Usmanpur police station after recovery of 25 grams of 'smack' from the main accused. Following the submission, the court had issued a notice to WhatsApp.

The accused are suspected to be part of a drug syndicate and had a WhatsApp group to coordinate the "illegal trade". The contents of the group are unknown and cannot be ascertained unless a transcript of the WhatsApp conversations is obtained, as per the police. A number of WhatsApp calls have also taken place among the accused, the court was told.

While objecting to issuance of notice in a bail matter, WhatsApp through its counsels told the court that it has already given the details available with it, "to the extent possible", to the police but it "cannot access the details of messages and calls on its platform as they are end-to-end encrypted".

The court was told that a similar question regarding the "extent of disclosure that can be directed against" WhatsApp or Facebook is pending before the Supreme Court.

Observing that it has not examined the objection raised by WhatsApp regarding issuance of notice in bail matters and leaves the question open, Justice Prathiba M Singh in the order said the information disclosed or not disclosed by WhatsApp is not subject matter of the petitions. "If the Delhi Police wishes to pursue any other remedies for seeking disclosure of information against WhatsApp Inc. they are permitted to avail of the same, in accordance with law," the court said in the order.

Nigerian national 'stabbed to death' by wife: Police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

A 30-YEAR-OLD Nigerian national was allegedly stabbed to death by his wife on Monday, after she "got to know that he was involved with another woman," police said.

The incident took place early in the morning, when Abigail (30), who is from Ghana, and her husband Emanuel got into an altercation at her house in Outer Delhi. Abigail, who sells snacks from her home, has been arrested, and a case of murder has been registered at Nihal Vihar police station, said Additional DCP (Outer) Sudhanshu Dhama.

He said, "Police received information from DDU Hospital that a man had been brought there by his wife and was declared dead on arrival. When police reached the hospital, it was revealed the deceased had sustained injuries made by a sharp object. Abigail was nowhere to be found."

Her phone was also switched off, but hours later, she was found and questioned, said the Additional DCP.

He said, "The two got married in September 2019, but had been living separately since August 2020. They had a strained relationship. During questioning, the accused revealed that on Sunday, she went to see Emanuel and got to know that he was involved with another woman, following which a scuffle ensued. Early on Monday, Emanuel went to her house, and an altercation again took place. This was when she stabbed him with a knife." Police said the two had been living in India since May 2019.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
Government of India

Ministry of Urban Pradesh

"We have seen the perseverance and the fighting spirit of the street vendors and hawkers during the trying times of Corona. Our government is constantly taking steps to ensure financial support to them."

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi

Prime Minister
Narendra Modi
to hold
Virtual Dialogue
with
Beneficiaries of Uttar Pradesh's PM SVANidhi
Date: 27th October, 2020 | Time: 10:30 A.M.

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in august presence of
Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Ashutosh Tandon 'Gopal Ji'
Minister, Urban Development
Urban Holistic Development, Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation Programme Department, Uttar Pradesh

Mahesh Chandra Gupta
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Urban Development, Urban Holistic Development, Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation Programme Department, Uttar Pradesh

BRIEFLY

JNU to hold first virtual convocation

New Delhi: The Jawaharlal Nehru University will hold its fourth convocation on November 18. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, the event will be held virtually for the first time and degrees will be conferred to PhD students.

Cops probe religious conversion rumours

Ghaziabad: Ghaziabad Police are on the lookout for those who spread rumours of religious conversion during a Dussehra event Sunday. "Buddhist Society of India held a function on the eve of Dussehra. Some elements on social media spread rumours that the event was a religious conversion. The society filed a complaint," said Gyanendra Singh, SP City 2, Ghaziabad. The rumours come days after over 230 Dalits converted to Buddhism in Kharera village.

Pollution isn't a problem of AAP alone: Rai

New Delhi: Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Monday said air pollution was not a problem of just the Aam Aadmi Party or the Delhi government and everyone, irrespective of their party affiliations, should join efforts to tackle it.

Man poses as IAS officer, held

Ghaziabad: A Bihar native, based in Ghaziabad, was arrested for allegedly impersonating an IAS officer to get personal work done.

Man found dead in Burari

New Delhi: A 27-year-old labourer's body was found inside a cabinet in his bed in his house in North Delhi's Burari Saturday, with police saying that he was attacked with bricks and knives. Police are on the lookout for his roommate. **ENS**

Land owning agencies to give space for EV charging stations

New Delhi: A centralised tendering system will be adopted to hire an operator to install, run, maintain and upgrade charging stations for electric vehicles, the Delhi Transport Department said Monday. Land-owning agencies will be required to provide land for the installation of public electric vehicle charging stations, it said. **PTI**

54 COVID DEATHS ON MONDAY, HIGHEST SINCE JULY 7

Nov crucial, docs expect rise in cases in festival season

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

PEOPLE FLOUTING social distancing norms in small gatherings amid festival season, change in weather and no restrictions on border movement — these factors may cause Delhi's Covid cases to shoot up two-three times, health experts said.

For the last three days, Delhi has been reporting over 4,000 cases daily. On Monday, 2,832 people tested positive after authorities conducted 34,411 tests. With 54 deaths in the last 24 hours, the capital also reported the highest casualties since July 7, taking the total toll to 6,312.

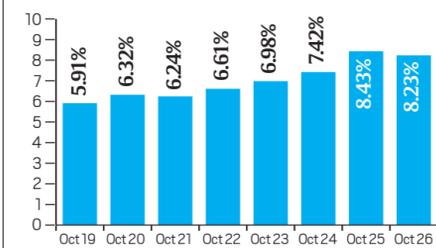
Over the last one week, the daily positivity rate — the percentage of people who test positive for the disease versus those who were tested — has also increased. Monday saw a daily positivity rate of 8.23%.

Experts across the city said the coming months are going to be challenging and people need to be extra cautious.

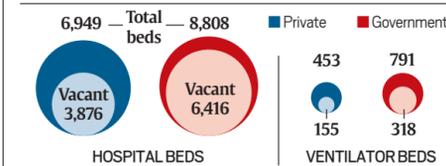
Dr S K Sarin, head of the Institute of Liver and Biliary Science and chief of the first expert committee formed by the Delhi government, said "I can't say it is the second wave because we never saw the first wave subsiding... However, daily numbers will increase in the coming days... may go up to two-three times of what we are seeing right now — from 4,000 daily cases, it can go up to 8,000-10,000 cases per day, especially

ON THE RISE

POSITIVITY RATE



(Positivity rate is the percentage of people who test positive for the disease versus those who were tested)



CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

Date	Daily cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests	HOSPITAL BEDS		VENTILATORS	
					Total	Vacant	Total	Vacant
Oct 25	4,136	3,826	33	49,069	15,757	10,291	1,244	473
Oct 26	2,832	3,736	54	34,411	15,757	10,291	1,244	473
Total	25,786*	3,59,488	6,312	43,98,819				

*Total active cases

in November. We need to stay extra cautious because those exposed in the first week will develop symptoms by the end of

November. Those exposed on Diwali will show symptoms two weeks later. So, the whole of November, we need to stay extra cautious. People should continue wearing masks else the disease will spread."

A revised containment strategy prepared by an expert committee, led by NITI Aayog member Dr V K Paul, has suggested a series of measures for containment zones, testing, management of home isolation cases, contact tracing and overall preparedness of hospitals. It said city hospitals should be prepared for a surge of 15,000 positive cases a day with the change in season and movement of patients from other states.

Dr Sujeet Singh, member of the expert committee and director of the National Centre for Disease Control, said the surge in cases will continue to fluctuate depending on the seasons and activities in each state and district: "There is a possibility of rise in cases, based on what we know from previous experiences and the surge we are witnessing in Europe and other countries. The waves will fluctuate. In the beginning, we were in a controlled atmosphere. As the gradual unlock happened, the percentage of susceptible population increased. Whenever the load of susceptible population gets added, it may lead to a surge. It can be called a second surge or a third surge. The surge will not be across the country but will depend on states and districts."

Elevated U-turn at Shankar Chowk to open in 7-10 days

SAKSHIDAYAL
GURGAON, OCTOBER 26

THE ELEVATED U-turn being constructed at Gurgaon's Shankar Chowk — one of two major infrastructure projects planned to decongest the Delhi-Gurgaon expressway — is likely to be opened to traffic in the next "7 to 10 days".

"Work on the elevated U-turn is nearing completion, and the structure is likely to be opened to commuters in the next week or 10 days," said National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) project director Shashi Bhushan.

The 455-metre-long, three-lane structure will provide a seamless U-turn to commuters travelling from the direction of Cyber City, Ambience Mall, and DLF Phase 3 towards New Delhi, easing the congestion at the junction. Constructed at a cost of Rs 58.96 crore — 75% borne by NHAI and 25% by the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) — the structure is part of a wider plan to decongest the expressway, as part of which a U-turn underpass is also being constructed near Ambience Mall. The entire project is expected to cost Rs 161.90 crore, with the Ambience underpass being built at a cost of Rs 102.94 crore, of which 50% is being shouldered by NHAI, and 25% each by DLF and Ambience. Work on both the Shankar

THE ROAD PLAN

ESTIMATED COST	
₹161.90 cr	
Duration: 18 months	
AMBIENCE U-TURN UNDERPASS	
Cost: ₹102.94 cr	377 metres Length
4 Lanes	377 metres Length
ELEVATED U-TURN	
Cost: ₹58.96 cr	455 metres Length
3 Lanes	455 metres Length

Chowk flyover and the Ambience underpass had started in January last year, with a completion period of 18 months.

"There has been a delay in the completion of the project primarily on account of Covid. Work is still underway on the Ambience underpass. Construction of around three months is still pending, so we expect that it will be completed by mid-January," said the Project Director.

The Ambience underpass U-turn will be a 377-metre-long structure with four lanes, and will provide seamless travel from the direction of Shankar Chowk towards Ambience mall, easing the congestion at the Delhi-Gurgaon border.

Action plans for each police station, based on crime mapping

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

IN A bid to smoothen functioning of the force, Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava has given separate action plans for each police station depending on the crime mapping of the areas. He has also set a few common agendas, such as anti-terrorism measures and women's safety, and has asked DCPs to set time-bound targets as well.

"Some of them have prioritised the security arrangement, while some stations have a history of communal tension. The action plan has been made as per the crime mapping of the area concerned. Now, each station has been asked to work in a time-bound manner to complete tasks such as finishing pending investigation, arresting missing registered criminals of their area, etc," an officer said.

A senior police officer said the decision to implement such an agenda was taken a few weeks ago when the police chief, after interacting with SHOs in a meeting, observed that some of them are not aware of their priorities.

"He first directed all SHOs to start charting their priorities as per their stations and later directed JCP (Southern range)

Devesh Chandra Srivastava to work on this after coordinating with JCPs of other ranges," an officer said.

An official said several presentations were prepared and discussed in the crime review meeting, before it was approved by the police chief.

"The presentation prepared by JCP Srivastava was on agendas. JCP (Western range) Shalini Singh was also asked to work with him to pick common agendas. In the last crime review meeting, the final approved presentation was shown to all DCPs, including some common agendas for all police stations," said the officer.

Few of the agendas are: working on anti-terrorism after conducting verification drive on a regular basis, activating the eye-ears scheme, and conducting security audit of vital installations.

"The force has also been asked to work more on response time and take appropriate actions in a time-bound manner — without harassing complainants. In another direction, it has been asked to take immediate action in cases related to women and children, especially in missing children cases," the officer said.

Following directions from the police chief, all district DCPs coordinated with their SHOs to work on the action plans.

SI arrested for 'molesting' 4 women dismissed from force

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

A SUB-INSPECTOR posted with the Special Cell, who was arrested Saturday for allegedly molesting four women and a minor in Dwarka, has been dismissed from service.

DCP (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav Monday said, "After we came to know about the incident, we have dismissed SI Puneet Grewal (35) from service." He joined the force in 2011, said police.

Grewal allegedly molested the victims in Dwarka on October 17 and 20. Police lodged four separate FIRs under sections of molestation, stalking and the POCSO Act. One of the women refused to lodge a complaint. Police said they will record the



SI Puneet Grewal

statements of the women under CrPC Section 164.

The incident came to light after a woman posted a video on social media alleging that a man driving a grey Baleno flashed her and harassed her while she was cycling in Dwarka on October 17.

In a bid to trace Grewal, police checked over 200 Baleno cars. A senior police officer said, "There was no number plate on the car, which made it difficult to trace it. However, production of the model began in 2017 and ended this year. There are only a few models in Delhi. While scanning CCTV footage, we had to check around 300-500 Baleno cars. Had it been a white Swift Dzire, we would have to check lakhs of cars."

"We scanned CCTV cameras in the area and spotted the grey Baleno. The registration plate was not visible... it was covered with something and the rear windshield was shattered," said the officer.

Police then started looking for the car using CCTV footage and electronic mapping. "We checked over 200 CCTVs in adjoining areas and traced the car's movement on the day of the incident. The car went towards Janakpuri and we found the address of the accused. We went there and arrested Grewal. The car is registered in his wife's name, who's a teacher. He also has a daughter," said police.



INTO THE RIVER

People throw puja offerings into the Yamuna on Monday. Anil Sharma

Court sets aside summons to Gopal Kanda, his aide in abetment to suicide case

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

A MAGISTRATE'S order summoning Haryana MLA Gopal Kanda and his aide Aruna Chadha in connection with the alleged abetment to suicide of a woman has been set aside by a Delhi court, which observed that in the entire record file there is "not even a single complaint or report regarding any threats extended by the petitioners".

The woman's daughter was a former airhostess with Kanda's now defunct MDLR airlines and had committed suicide in 2012. In her suicide note, she had named Kanda and Chadha. The woman too committed suicide six months later and left behind a suicide note, also blaming the MLA and his aide for her death.

On March 18, 2019, an Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate summoned Kanda and Chadha after taking cognizance under IPC section 306 and 34. This order was passed after the woman's husband appeared in court and verbally stated that his wife committed suicide due to "harassment and torture meted out to her" at the behest of Kanda and Chadha.



Gopal Kanda

petitioners or any person on their behalf. The present one is not a case where accused/petitioners had by their acts or omission, or by a continued course of conduct, created such circumstances that the deceased was left with no other option except to commit suicide in which case an instigation may have been inferred."

It also stated the ACMM had taken cognizance of the case based on oral submissions made for the first time by the husband after lapse of significant period of time from the date of incident.

ASJ Gupta, discussing the woman's suicide note, observed, "The picture which emerges from a cumulative reading and assessment of these two suicide notes is this. Presumably because of death of her daughter, who allegedly committed suicide due to certain acts of petitioners, caused distress and the deceased felt disappointed, frustrated and depressed. She was overtaken by a feeling of shortcoming, which she attributed to herself. She was overcome by a forceful feeling generating within her that her death would only bring justice to the death by suicide of her daughter."

Kanda and Chadha are facing trial for abetment to suicide in the airhostess case.

In its order passed on Monday, the court said, "In the entire record file, there is not even a single complaint or report regarding any threats extended by petitioners or any person on their behalf. Even from CDR of deceased, nothing has been found that she was receiving calls or was threatened by

PANDEMIC FALLOUT

Tenants working from home, many PGs in Gurgaon stare at closure

SAKSHIDAYAL
GURGAON, OCTOBER 26

WITH MOST organisations in Gurgaon adopting a work from home policy since March, due to the pandemic, paying guest accommodations in the city are continuing to reel under the impact of the mass exodus of employees back to their hometowns. While several PG owners have reduced rent and deposits, others have closed down or are on the verge of doing so.

"We have reduced rent and deposit at our PG. Charges for

double sharing have reduced from Rs 7,500-8,500 to Rs 6,000-6,500, for triple sharing from Rs 6,000-6,500 to Rs 4,500-5,000, and for single rooms from Rs 12,000-14,000 to Rs 9,000-10,000," said the owner of a PG in DLF Phase 3, who did not want to be named. "We have also reduced the deposit by 50%. Earlier, we used to charge two months' rent as deposit, this has now reduced to one month," he said.

Pankaj Chandna, who owns a PG in Sector 31, which houses "mostly IT companies' employees", said he has also adopted this strategy of reducing charges in

the hope of attracting tenants, but to no avail. "We have 15-20 beds, of which only one or two are filled. The landlord from whom we have rented the building to run the accommodation has been adjusting so far but we are now thinking of just shutting down altogether. There is nobody coming to see the PG also. We are waiting till Diwali, if nothing changes, we will shut down," said Chandna.

"All PGs in the city are facing these issues, and around 50% have already closed. If companies do not open, another 30-40% will have to shut shop... Only those who have their own buildings



Several PG owners have reduced rent and deposit. Archive

will survive, those who are renting buildings cannot manage," he said.

Among those who have closed PGs is Mahipal Dabad, who had rented two buildings in Sector 31 that housed MNC employees. "We had to let them both go around two months ago as the owner wanted the full rent and there was no way we could pay it. There was also no point in incurring costs of staff, electricity and maintenance, when the situation was unlikely to change anytime soon," he said.

Office bearers of the Millennium City Guest House

Association, an umbrella body of PGs and guesthouses in Gurgaon, said this situation is reflected across the "accommodation industry" of the city.

"The accommodation market as such in Gurgaon is suffering hugely with most companies working from home and likely to continue this up to March or July next year. Since most of the Fortune 500 companies are in Gurgaon, and a lot of the people who work in these from all over the country have returned to their hometowns, I would estimate around 80% of the PGs in Gurgaon are currently shut. There is just no

demand and I don't see any respite until offices resume full work from office, even if prices are slashed," said association president Jaideep Ahuja.

"Guest houses are also mostly shut as bulk of the business is due to corporate travel which is close to zero right now. There were some that were dependent on medical tourism but since most people are not coming to India for elective surgeries in the Covid scenario, these places are also suffering. For the hospitality industry, PG industry, co-living industry, this is probably the worst time anyone has seen," he said.

5 GOVT & POLITICS

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

'Hurt patriotic sentiments': 3 PDP leaders quit over Mufti's remarks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCTOBER 26

THREE DAYS after PDP president and former CM Mehbooba Mufti said she will not contest elections or hoist the Tricolour until the constitutional changes enforced on August 5 are rolled back and the separate flag is restored to Jammu and Kashmir, the party on Monday suffered a setback in Jammu with three senior leaders submitting their resignations, saying that Mufti's remarks have "hurt patriotic sentiments".

In their two-page resignation letter to the party president, PDP MP TS Bajwa, founding member and former general secretary Ved Mahajan, and former state secretary Hussain A Waffa wrote that they were "feeling quite uncomfortable over some of her actions and undesirable utterances, especially those which hurt patriotic sentiments".

"Some of the actions and utterances are unpardonable and unforgivable by the people for the party to emerge out and move in a direction of its fundamental approach and identity, besides regaining its image as a political alternative... In view of this, we feel uncomfortable and suffocated in the party, forcing us to take a difficult decision of leaving the party," they wrote.

The three leaders referred to earlier coalitions with the Congress which had been able to restore peace and harmony and ensure equitable political share.

PDP also faced a "bigger challenge" in 2014 when its late president Mufti Mohammed Sayeed took a "difficult decision" of joining hands with the ideologically opposite BJP, they wrote.

"Although he was aware of the difficulties of such a decision, he attempted to convert the chal-



(Left) BJP workers hoist the national flag at the PDP headquarters in Jammu on Monday; (top) At a 'Tiranga Rally' in Srinagar. PTI

LEADING FROM FRONT

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi is throwing his weight behind schemes rolled out to boost the post-lockdown recovery of jobs and businesses. On Tuesday, he is set to interact with street vendors in Uttar Pradesh, who will be given loans under the Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi Yojana (PM SVANidhi) which has received over 24 lakh applications so far. The PM is said to be closely monitoring the roll-out of PM SVANidhi as well as the Gareeb Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyaan for migrants who returned home — he launched the scheme in Khagaria in Bihar months before the elections. Many believe such measures are helping him take critics head-on in defending steps taken by his government during the lockdown.

EYES ON UP

WHILE MOST of the political action has shifted to Bihar, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is not taking her eyes off Uttar Pradesh. On Monday, she connected with weavers from Varanasi, the Prime Minister's Lok Sabha constituency, and those who attended the virtual meeting shared their problems related to the increase in power tariff, party leaders said. Priyanka, the AICC general secretary in-charge of UP, assured them the Congress will stand with them. Those close to her said she is planning to hold more such interactions. Earlier, she held a series of interactions with unemployed youths from the state.

COVID SCARE

THE COVID scare is yet to leave the corridors of power. In the railway ministry, which saw the maximum number of cases among all departments, many of the multi-tasking staff attached to officers have tested positive. Officers have been serving their own lunch and fetching tea and water for themselves.

lenge into new opportunities in furtherance of his vision for a better future and more harmonious relationship between the people of the state within the Indian union," they said.

Mufti, who was among scores of political leaders detained in J&K a night before the Centre abrogated Article 370 and bifurcated the state into two Union territories on August 5 last year, was released this month after a 14-month detention.

She had made the remarks on Friday during her first press conference after her release. The PDP leader is already under attack for her statement in Jammu, with the BJP having approached the Election Commission of India seeking derecognition of her party. Several BJP leaders have called her remarks seditious.

Meanwhile, a group of youths led by a lawyer, Deepak Sharma, on Monday swarmed the PDP office in Jammu and hoisted the Tricolour in the presence of police personnel deployed at the office.

The PDP office has since Saturday seen several attempts by various organisations, including the ABVP, to hoist the national flag at the party office.

-WITHPTIINPUTS

BJP takes out 'Tiranga rally', raises slogans outside Abdullah, Mufti homes

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAMMU, OCT 26

TAKING EXCEPTION to former J&K chief minister Mehbooba Mufti's comments on the national flag and marking 'Accession Day', the Kashmir unit of the BJP held a demonstration against the PDP president by taking out a "Tiranga rally".

October 26 is a public holiday in the Union territory to mark the accession of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir to the Union of India by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1947.

On Monday, BJP workers gathered at the Tagore Hall in Srinagar and proceeded to the Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) led by BJP general secretary and Kashmir in-charge Vibodh Gupta. The party workers raised the Tricolour from vehicles they travelled in and raised slogans outside National Conference president Farooq Abdullah's resi-

dence as well as Mehbooba Mufti's home at Gupkar.

The signatories of the Gupkar declaration on Saturday adopted the erstwhile flag of J&K as the symbol of the People's Alliance.

Gupta termed the response to the rally "a tight slap on those so-called leaders of Kashmir who made seditious statements in the last few days," adding that "this massive rally stands as a testimony to the fact that leaders of the Gupkar Declaration are living in a fool's paradise".

The BJP took out a similar rally in Jammu with BJP's J&K president Ravinder Raina saying that no other flag except the Tricolour will be hoisted on the land of Jammu and Kashmir. Paying tribute at a statue of the last Dogra ruler at Maharaja Hari Singh Park, Raina said that nobody, especially the "Gupkar Gang", shall "dare to create confusion in the minds of others" as "nobody is above the national flag which is the pride of 130 crore people of India".

SUSPENSION OF FREIGHT TRAINS TO PUNJAB

Capt dials Centre, Rly minister seeks assurance on safety

KANCHAN VASDEV & ENS
CHANDIGARH, NEW DELHI,
LUDHIANA, OCTOBER 26

WITH UNION Ministry of Railways suspending freight movement to Punjab till October 29, the state — which is already facing shortage of coal, fertiliser and bardana — now fears that the situation will worsen. Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday sought the personal intervention of Union Railways Minister Piyush Goyal for the immediate restoration of freight movement. Goyal, in turn, sought an assurance from the state's Congress government of the safety of trains and crew members to restore freight services.

The Centre had on Sunday suspended movement of goods trains to Punjab. On Monday, the Centre extended the suspension by four more days.

"We have coal stocks to last only for a day now. It is going to be a problem. Our peak load is 6,000 MW every day. We are purchasing 1,000 MW from outside. This is causing us financial loss and also there is fluctuation in voltage," A Venu Prasad, CMD, PSPCL told The Indian Express.

Amarinder spoke to Goyal and said that Railways' decision to discontinue freight movement in Punjab could further provoke agitated farmers protesting against Centre's farm laws. "Not only Punjab will face serious disruption in economic activities and shortage of essential supplies, but Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Leh & Ladakh will also face serious economic crisis", Amarinder said.

The agitating farmers had allowed goods trains traffic from October 22. But the traffic is suspended since Sunday.

Responding to Amarinder, Goyal wrote: "Railway drivers need to have confidence and security to operate freely. Indian Railways started freight trains and started moving empty coaching rakes to maintenance depots on October 22 and 23 after an assurance was given by the local police that dharna has been lifted." He added that sporadic obstruction of tracks is still continuing.

"They (Railways staff) are asking for assurance from the state government that all train movements (freight and passenger) will be allowed without any obstruction and necessary security will be provided by the state," Goyal said.



Agitating farmers block train tracks in Jandiala Guru area of Amritsar district on Monday. Express

Male govt employees who are single parents can now take child care leave: MoS Jitendra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

MALE GOVERNMENT employees raising a child alone are now entitled to child care leave, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said Monday.

"Single male parent" includes unmarried employees, widowers and divorcees, who may be expected to take up the responsibility



Jitendra Singh

of caring for a child single-handedly, said Singh, who is the Minister of State (Personnel).

Describing it as a path-breaking and progressive reform to bring ease of living for government employees, Singh said or-

ders regarding the decision were issued some time ago but somehow did not get enough traction in the public domain.

Further, the minister said an employee on child care leave may now leave the headquarters with the prior approval of the competent authority, according to an official statement. In addition, Leave Travel Concession (LTC) may be availed by the employee even if he is on child care leave, he added.

Child care leave can be granted at 100 per cent of leave salary for the first 365 days and 80 per cent of leave salary for the next 365 days, Singh said, according to the statement.

Another welfare measure introduced in this regard is that in case of a disabled child, the condition that child care leave can be availed by the parents only till the child is 22 years of age has been removed.

Applications are invited for booking of Management quota (reserved) category apartments in the 'PRIME' affordable group housing project proposed to be developed as per terms and conditions of the policy prescribed by the Town & Country Planning Department, Government of Haryana vide notification no. PF-27/48921 dated 19.08.2013 & amendment thereof (details available at the Department website, i.e. tcepharyana.gov.in).

PROJECT DETAILS

1. Coloniser/Developer	SignatureGlobal (India) Private Limited					
2. Project Approval	Licence No. 69 of 2019 dated 26.06.2019. Building Plan Approved on 11.10.2019 Memo No. ZP-1336/JD(RD)/2019/25351, Haryana RERA Registered No: 68 of 2019 dated 14.11.2019					
3. Location	Sector 63A, Gurugram, Haryana					
4. Provisions Project Area	25 no. of apartments available out of total 714 number of units in the housing scheme spread over 5 acres. As per Policy, 5% of total apartments are available for management quota. Community Facilities: One Community Hall of 2000 sq.ft. and One Anganwadi-cum-creche of 2000 sq.ft.					
5. Apartment Details, Allotment Rates & Payment Terms						
Apartment details						
Category (Type)	No of Units	Carpet Area sqft(approx)	Balcony Area sqft(approx)	Allotment Rate of Apartment (all inclusive)*	With application Booking amount 5%	on allotment 20%
2BHK TYPE -02(MQ)	2	590.664	88.265	24,06,789	1,20,339	4,81,358
3BHK TYPE -05(MQ)	23	645.463	100.525	26,31,852	1,31,593	5,26,370

(ii) Balance 75% of the amount in six equated 6 monthly installment spanning over a period of three years. No interest shall fall due before the due date of payment. Any default in payment will bear penal interest as provided in Rule 15 of the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Rules, 2017.

6. Parking	Two-wheeler parking with each apartment
7. Broad Specifications of the Apartment	• Flooring: Rooms Vitrified Tiles, Kitchen Vitrified / Ceramic Tiles, Toilet Anti-Skid Ceramic Tiles, Balcony Anti-Skid / Matt Finish Ceramic Tiles. • Windows: M.S. Sections as per IS Codes / Aluminium Powder Coated / UPVC • Doors Frame: Red Merandi / Mild Steel / Aluminium Powder Coated / UPVC • Wall Tile: Ceramic Tiles till 4 Feet / 7 feet high & Oil Bound Distemper Above. • Kitchen Counter Top Green Marble / Granite • Wall: Oil Bond Distemper • Sanitary fitting: ISI marked CP Fittings, W.C & Washbasin • Electric Fitting: ISI Marked. Structure: RCC Frames Structure designed for SEISMIC forces as per latest IS code and NBC Recommendations.
8. Applications Timelines	(i) Applications can be procured & submitted at: SignatureGlobal (India) Pvt. Ltd., Corp. Office - Ground Floor, Tower A, Signature Tower, South City -1, Gurugram, Haryana-122001 by paying an application form fee of Rs 1,000/- starting from date 20.10.2020. (ii) Last Date of submission of Applications is 03.11.2020. (iii) The List of Distribution and Collection centers is available on www.signatureglobal.in (iv) Application Forms & Facility of applying Online is also available at www.signatureglobal.in.

Eligibility: 1. The applicant should not be debarred from entering into legally binding contract under any prevailing law.

2. Any person can apply, however, persons which include their spouse or dependent children who do not own any flat/plot in any HUDA developed colony/sector or any licensed colony in any of the Urban areas in Haryana, UT of Chandigarh and NCT Delhi shall be given preference in allotment of flats.

3. An applicant can make only one application. Any successful applicant under this policy shall not be eligible for allotment of any other flat under this policy in any other colony. In case, he/she is successful in more than one colony, he/she will have choice of retaining only one flat.

Allotment Criteria: 1. The allotment of apartments shall be done through draw of lots in the presence of a committee consisting of Deputy Commissioner or his representative (at least of the cadre of Haryana Civil Services), Senior Town Planner (Circle office), DTP of the concerned district and the representative of coloniser concerned.

2. After fixation of date for draw of lots, an advertisement shall be issued by the Developer informing the applicants about the details regarding date/time and venue of the draw of lots in the same newspapers in which the original advertisement was issued.

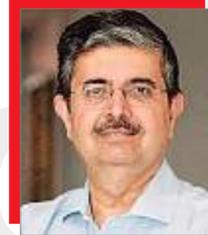
3. For detailed criteria and time-frame to be adopted for scrutiny and allotment, the applicants may also refer to the details in the Affordable Group Housing Policy 2013 vide no. PF-27/48921 dated 19.08.2013 & amendment thereof (available at the Department website, i.e., tcepharyana.gov.in).

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Promoter urges every applicant to inspect the project site and shall not merely rely upon or to be influenced by any architectural impression, plan or sales brochure and therefore, requested to make personal judgment prior to submitting an application for allotment. The images shown here are indicative of design and for illustration purposes only. Further, the actual design may vary in fit and finished from the one displayed above. Project details / specifications can also be accessed at the office of Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority website: https://haryanareg.gov.in/. Journey time shown, if any, is based upon google maps which may vary as per traffic at relevant point of time. *Rate mentioned above does not include GST and other statutory charges, if applicable. T & C Apply, 1 Sq. mt = 10.7639 sq. ft.

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Campaigning for Round 1 ends; Tejashwi sets pace with 13 rallies on last day

DIPANKAR GHOSE
PATNA, OCTOBER 26

CAMPAIGNING FOR 71 seats in the first phase of the high-stakes election for Bihar, being held in the middle of the Covid pandemic, came to an end on Monday, with polling set to take place on Wednesday. The last day saw a spree of election meetings by the major contenders in the election fray, including Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and the BJP's Chirag Paswan, along with senior BJP leaders J.P. Nadda, Ravi Shankar Prasad and Nityanand Rai.

Tejashwi, the chief ministerial candidate of the Mahagathbandhan, left his 10, Circular Road, home in Patna holding a garland of onions, thus adding price rise and inflation to his attacks on the Nitish government. Economic distress was writ large in Bihar with farmers, youth and businessmen struggling to put together food for their families, Tejashwi told reporters. "The BJP once used to roam around wearing these garlands of onions when there was price rise... Many spoke about onion rates when these were Rs 50 a kg, now when they are Rs 80 a kg, they are keeping quiet."

Senior RJD leaders said price rise was not a new issue for them, and that economic downturn, uncertainty and inflation were all linked to each other.

"We found that on the ground, people were talking about these issues — rise in prices of onions and potatoes," said RJD MP Manoj Jha.

Tejashwi maintained his whirlwind pace of rallies, holding 13 across five districts on Monday — including one in Hasanpur from where his brother Tej Pratap

is contesting, as well as Raghupur from where he is seeking re-election.

Nitish addressed rallies in Muzaffarpur and Vaishali districts, where he continued to attack the RJD.

The CM has repeatedly asked voters to recall the "days of jungle raj" under Lalu Prasad, saying that only in the last 15 years under him has the condition of Bihar's roads, health infrastructure and education improved.

PTI reported that a slipper was flung towards the CM as he was leaving after the rally in Sakra, Muzaffarpur. Nitish has faced protests at several of his election meetings, losing his cool at times and admonishing the crowds.

In Purnea, referring to the RJD, Union minister Prasad said, "There are leaders speaking of a 'new Bihar'. But in their posters, the photographs of his (Tejashwi's) parents, who ruled the state for seven-and-a-half years each, are missing. Why are you so ashamed?"

Continuing his attack on Nitish, IJP president Chirag accused the CM of "dreaming of becoming the Prime Minister". Drawing large crowds at each of his seven rallies, he said innocent people were being thrown in jail under the Prohibition law so that they would not speak against the government.

A total of 71 seats across 16 districts will go to polls in Phase 1, with 1,066 candidates in all — 852 of them male.

In the second phase, 94 constituencies in 17 districts will vote on November 3; and the third and final phase of the elections will see voting in 78 constituencies in 15 districts on November 7.

Bihar election results will be declared on November 10.

BODY LANGUAGE

RJD supporters at an election rally at Raghupur in Bihar's Vaishali district on Monday. Tejashwi Yadav is seeking re-election from the seat. ANI

I HEREBY DECLARE



MUKESH SAHANI

Vikasheel Insaan Party, Simri Bakhtiarpur (Saharsa)

TOTAL ASSETS

₹12.11 CRORE (with spouse)

**1.2% rise from 2015 (Rs 11.9 crore)

MOVABLE ASSETS

₹1.26 CRORE

Assets	2015	2020
Cash in hand	57,500	70,500
Bank balance	1.15 lakh	1.27 lakh
Stocks & bonds	73.09 lakh	82.95 lakh
Other investment	16.67 lakh	18.12 lakh
Jewellery	18.75 lakh	18.5 lakh
Vehicle	1.75 lakh	5 lakh
Other	NIL	NIL
TOTAL	1.11 CR	1.26 CR

IMMOVABLE ASSETS

₹10.85 CRORE

Assets	2015	2020
Agri land	NIL	NIL
Non-agri land	20 lakh	20 lakh
Commercial	7.47 crore	7.47 crore
Residential	3.18 crore	3.18 crore
Other	NIL	NIL
TOTAL	10.85 CR	10.85 CR

LIABILITIES ₹3.08 CRORE

(Bank loans, government dues, etc.)

CRIMINAL CASES

Five pending, including under IPC Sections 287 (Negligent conduct with machinery) and 336 (endangering life of others)

BARURAJ

'Aadmi aasha ki taraf hee naa jayega?'

The locks on the premises of Motipur Sugar Mill tell a story of Bihar's struggling industries. For its workers, it is 22 yrs of waiting for dues and a litany of promises

DIPANKAR GHOSE

MOTIPUR (MUZAFFARPUR), OCTOBER 26

THE TWO boards, paint chipping off them, drip with irony. One board reads, "Kaam bandi kisi ke liye hitkar nahin (Stopping work doesn't help anyone)". The other says, "The plant maintains you, you maintain the plant". Inside the once mighty Motipur Sugar Mill, now full of foliage, snakes and rotting equipment, these boards almost mock its erstwhile workers, still waiting for pay. They also tell a story not only of the absence of new industry in Bihar, but the rotting away of the ones standing.

Spread over a 115-acre campus, the Motipur Sugar Mill began as a private enterprise in 1933. In 1980, it was taken over by the Bihar State Sugar Corporation (BSSC), and by 1998, its operations shut for good. In 2011, the mill was leased to Indian Potash Limited, but the matter has been challenged in court.

In the process, says Ram Parvish Rai, secretary of the workers' union who worked at the mill for over two decades, over a thousand of them have been left fighting for their dues for 22 years, clinging to the hope that the mill will reopen. "At least Rs 30-35 crore is owed to the over one thousand seasonal contracted staff, and the 113 permanent staff."

The Motipur Sugar Mill is symptomatic of the failure of Bihar to encourage industry, as well as the collapse of its once thriving sugar mills. Around the time the BSSC took over the Motipur mill, Bihar accounted for 30% of the country's sugar production, and 28 functional sugar mills. It has now come down to less than 5% of the production, and has 10 mills. At the beginning of this Assembly's term, 2015-16, when the industrial sector grew at 7.1%, it contributed only 19% of the Gross State Domestic Product.

This was far below the national average of 30%. While rising since then, the sector's contribution was still only around 20% in 2017-18. At the end of 2016-17, only about 2,900 of Bihar's estimated 3,531 factories were operational, employing on an average 40 people each. The national average is nearly double, 77 workers. The average salary per annum per worker in Bihar then was Rs 1.2 lakh, again less than half of the national average of Rs 2.5 lakh. The Motipur mill falls under Baruraj Assembly seat, currently represented by Nand Kumar Rai, a JD(U) leader who contested on



Dipankar Ghose

Anger with sitting RJD MLA, but also Nitish's unkept promise to revive the mill



RJD symbol as part of the Mahagathbandhan in 2015 and is now standing on an RJD ticket again. On October 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address a rally in the area. The constituency votes in the second phase of polls on November 3.

As they take a round of the deserted mill premises, workers carry sticks, "against snakes, even jackals", says Mohammad Usman. Water is collected in pools with mosquito swarms over them across a narrow gauge rail line running through the premises. Four rail engines that once carried goods in and out have had their metal stolen over the years. "I am owed at least Rs 3 lakh," says Manmohan Bhagat, who used to be a seasonal labourer at the mill, working the rest of the year in his sugarcane field.

With the mill shut, farmers like him have given up sugarcane farming. "I sow paddy, for which I don't earn as much. This factory would process 1,250 quintals a day. When there are floods or drought, like this year, I had money from the mill to fall back on," Bhagat says.

"The entire economy of the region has fallen apart," Rai says, talking of a market that once used to thrive near the mill compound. "Motipur became a nagar panchayat because of the mill. Now there are shops, but nobody

has money to buy anything."

Every poll cycle, there are promises to revive the mills. In 2005, incumbent CM Nitish Kumar made one such promise standing on Motipur mill's grounds. "He said he would get prosperity to Muzaffarpur by reopening the mill. He said he would never ask for votes here again if he didn't. But he hasn't," Bhagat says, adding that MLA Nand Kumar has done nothing other than raise the matter in the Vidhan Sabha twice. "He doesn't even meet us."

So, on election day, apart from a hope for revival of the mill, their vote will be decided on other factors, including caste. The union leader Rai, who belongs to the Yadav community, says, "We thought about voting NOTA, but what is the point of that? I might vote for Tejashwi because he is talking of opening up industries. Aadmi aasha ki taraf hee naa jayega (A person can be drawn only by hope, no?)"

However, a worker who belongs to the Kushwaha community, points out that the factory shut down during Lalu Prasad's time. "Nitish too never gave any money." As the community's tallest leader, Upendra Kushwaha, spearheads a "third front", the worker says, "I will vote for NDA. If I thought Tejashwi would do something, I may have changed my mind." As preparations are made for Modi's visit, Rai points said that they had voted for Modi in the 2014 as well as 2019 Lok Sabha polls. "We thought the son of a poor person would understand us. But in six years, we are still where we were. If he is coming here, with folded hands, we ask him to take up our problems."

Behind him a voice, from under the two boards, says, "No one will do anything. We have no trust left in anyone."

HASHTAG POLITICS

● BJP MP Tejaswi Surya tweeted: "...Bihar's youth need to...ensure that every single vote goes to the BJP, NDA..." He earlier posted a video having lunch in Paliganj, Patna. "Eating dal, chawal, desi ghee and also bhujiya with the party workers wipes away exhaustion," he tweeted.

2.6K LIKES, 433 RETWEETS IN 9 HOURS. (SUNDAY LUNCH VIDEO: 138K VIEWS)

BSP chief Mayawati tweeted: "Preparations for the first phase of the Bihar assembly election began today with the end of the election campaign... I appeal to everyone that they should be careful of the...tactics, wickedness and conspiracies of the opponents and vote and make BSP and RLSP coalition (GDSF) a success."

5.3K LIKES, 746 RETWEETS IN 10 HOURS

Holding a garland of onions, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav posted a photo from a press meet: "...Farmers, labourers, youth and businessmen can't put food on their plate. Small businessmen have been decimated by the BJP government. As inflation rose, these people would roam around wearing onion garlands, now we are handing them this," he tweeted.

15.9K LIKES, 2.6K RETWEETS IN 7 HOURS

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BJP PRESIDENT J.P. NADDA'S NALANDA SPEECH
ASADUDDIN OWAI'S RESPONSE TO RSS CHIEF

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UPENDRA KUSHWAHA IN SIWAN, KUCHAIKOTE, PIPRA

EXPRESS explained.
WHY IS RJD VETERAN SHIVANAND TIWARI SILENT?

'(Article 370) not an issue in Bihar... People are smart. Modiji did same last time, BJP lost'

Bihar Congress chief MADAN MOHAN JHA speaks to MANOJ C G about 'anger' against PM Modi and CM Nitish, Chirag factor, and compromises in seat-sharing

What is your assessment of Grand Alliance's chances?

The people's mandate will be in favour of the Opposition's alliance. The anger is against both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and CM Nitish Kumar... It is unfortunate that the PM is repeating lies. The common people are angry with Nitish for the way he treated people during the pandemic. There is anger against Bihar government over its handling of floods and failure to improve health-care, education, find jobs for migrants who returned, providing security to the people.

How do you see the Chirag Paswan factor



playing out in the elections?

The secret of his father Ram Vilas Paswan's success was that he could calculate which way the wind was blowing. I think Chirag too has read people's minds and taken a stand. It will be his litmus test... If he succeeds, I would say he too, like his father... While staying in the government, taking a stand against it.

But will he end up dividing the anti-Nitish vote?

That is alright. The fire that is going to engulf this government... it (the IJP) has saved itself from it and has opted for a middle path. They will tell the people that we have taken a



decision in your favour... they will try to earn points saying that even while remaining with the (Central) government we fought the elections alone... But the people are very smart. Now they analyse everything and decide.

Three parties left the Grand Alliance even before campaigning had begun...

We were together during the Lok Sabha polls. Back then (in 2019), the delay in seat-sharing and the wrangling that happened... It caused a lot of damage. Be it (RLSP's) Upendra Kushwaha's voter (HAM'S Jitan Ram) Manjhi's voter or (VIP's) Mukesh Sahani's voter... Their workers could not make a combination with us... This time, we wanted things to happen smoothly, but that could not happen. Every leader is free to take their own decisions. But I don't think (their departures) will impact us.

Many people in your party say there is unhappiness among leaders over ticket distribution and selection of candidates.

We are contesting in 70 seats and there

were 1,000 contenders... So 930 people were deprived... Since it is a multi-party alliance, many of my good candidates could not get tickets... I could not field them... It is not a *gad-badi*, it is an adjustment in a way...

The unhappiness is also because the RJD has given the Congress difficult seats.

Everything was done with mutual agreement. Yes, there could be some seats which we both wanted, some seats they may have taken and there are many seats which they wanted to contest... We tried and we got... It was also done in a cordial manner. It is a five-party alliance... so all wishes cannot be fulfilled.

PM Modi has attacked the Congress saying its leaders supported restoration

of Article 370. Will this have an impact?

Modiji always tries to divert attention from issues. This is not an issue in Bihar. Here the issues are development, the pandemic, security, health, education, harassment of women. People have become very smart. Last time also he had done that but Bihar gave a mandate against the BJP. This was when Modiji was at his peak. Voters of Bihar are very intelligent.

Can there be any post-poll arrangement with the IJP?

There is no question of falling short of numbers... We will get a comfortable majority... *Jo baad ki baat hai woh baad main dekha jayega kya mamla hai* (We will see what to do when the situation presents itself).

CPM-Cong tie-up for Bengal polls gets Politburo nod

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

AFTER BIHAR, the CPM and possibly other Left parties are likely to enter a seat-sharing pact with the Congress for the West Bengal Assembly polls next year as the party's Politburo is learnt to have taken a stand in favour of an alliance.

A final decision will be taken by the CPM central committee, which is meeting on October 30 and 31, but the Politburo which met Sunday was in favour of the Bengal unit's proposal for a full-fledged electoral tie-up with the Congress to take on the ruling Trinamool Congress and an aggressive BJP.

Interestingly, the CPM central leadership had in 2016 disapproved of the state unit's tacit tie-up with the Congress -- the tactical electoral understanding could not stop the Trinamool surge. The Congress had won 44 seats and the Left front ended up with just 32 seats.

Reviewing the election results, the CPM Politburo had then concluded that "the electoral tactics evolved in West Bengal was not in consonance with the central committee decision based on the political-tactical line of the party, which states that there shall be no alliance or understanding with the Congress".

The view was endorsed by the central committee which had said that the situation should be rectified.

However, this time, sources said, Politburo members from Kerala too were in favour of a seat-sharing tie-up with the Congress in Bengal as also in Assam and Tamil Nadu, where Assembly polls would be held simultaneously. "There is no other option but to enter into an alliance with the Congress...with all the Kerala leaders have seen reason," a senior CPM leader said.

The CPM and CPI along with the CPI(ML) are contesting the Bihar elections in alliance with the Congress and RJD.

West Bengal Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said he had been pitching for an

Cong MLAs resigned to enable BJP to pass new laws: Rupani

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SURAT, AHMEDABAD,
OCTOBER 26

GUJARAT CHIEF Minister Vijay Rupani on Monday claimed that Congress MLAs are resigning and joining the BJP to help the saffron party get majority in Rajya Sabha and enable it to pass news laws, like the abrogation of Article 370, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the law against triple talaq.

Speaking at a rally in the Dang Assembly constituency, Rupani said, "It is your fate to hit the last nail in the Congress's coffin and bury the Congress by making the BJP candidate victorious."

Rupani said that "corruption and unemployment are something associated with the Congress" and lauded the "sacrifice" of Mangal Gavit -- the former Congress MLA from Dang who defected to the BJP.

Rupani said, "When Mangal Gavit met us, he said, 'Narendrabhai Modi is changing the country making new laws -- abrogation of article 370, pass-

EXPLAINED Behind green signal, reluctant acceptance

THE CPM Politburo's green signal for a seat-sharing pact with the Congress in West Bengal, coming as it does after joining the Congress-RJD opposition alliance in Bihar, is a reluctant acceptance by the party that ideological rigidity cannot come in the way of pragmatic electoral politics. In the high-stakes Bengal battle, the CPM and the Congress have to fight both the ruling TMC and an aggressive BJP, which had made impressive gains in the Lok Sabha elections. For the Bengal Congress and the state CPM, it is a battle for survival.

alliance with the Left. "I would welcome it if the CPM central leadership decides in favour. In 2016... the CPM did not want to continue ties with us...because they felt the alliance damaged them...after that we both went alone...and there was no alliance in the Lok Sabha elections too...Now the Assembly elections are nearing and the workers of both the Congress and the CPM and the state leaders of the two parties too feel we should fight together, he said.

Chowdhury said the Bengal leadership of both the parties are in favour of the alliance. "The CPM central leadership should give it a formal shape...in 2016, the CPM Politburo did not take a decision and there was confusion...had we fought together like a proper alliance...with all the leaders and cadre working together...the outcome would have been better."

He said he has informed the Congress high command about the political situation in Bengal. "I hope the Congress central leadership will give the approval this time too."

ing the bills in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, opening the doors to the Ram Mandir, starting work on it, the Parliament passing the CAA Bill, and a law against triple talaq... to take the country to greater heights, I am quitting the Congress, vacating my seat and joining the BJP..."

"This way, all eight MLAs quit the Congress and came forward to help the BJP," Rupani said.

The Congress is a sinking ship. Rahul Gandhi has proved to be an unsuccessful leader," Rupani said. "In the Lok Sabha elections (in 2019), the Congress did not win even one of the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat. What can be a bigger fiasco than this?" he said, adding that Congress leaders who grew tired of dynastic politics were joining the BJP.

"Recently, Kapil Sibal, Ghulam Nabi Azad and other leaders had raised questions over the leadership of Rahul Gandhi. They were served notices and were sidelined... Congress is breaking and in the coming days, many Congressmen are ready to leave the party," Rupani said.

town Rourkela. Five years later, he was re-elected in the Janata Dal wave, and made a Minister by Biju Patnaik. Considered an introvert in his initial years, Ray's transition from hospitality -- he started with a small hotel in 1982 that has expanded today into the Mayfair Group of Hotels that he heads across five states -- to politics was smooth, largely because of his family links.

"Former Chief Minister Nilamani Routray was his distant relative. His father [who was into business] was also active in local politics. He grew up in a political space. Late Biju Patnaik took him

for him," says a close friend of Ray's. In April 1996, Ray made it to Delhi, getting elected to Rajya Sabha for the first of his two consecutive terms. Barely two months later, he was inducted into the H D Deve Gowda ministry. In the next government, headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Ray was made the Minister of State for Coal in 1999. By this time, he was in the BJD, a regional party formed after Biju Patnaik's death. It was also the time Biju Patnaik's son Naveen Patnaik, a hesitant politician initially, had started asserting him-

self in the party. In 2002, Ray was expelled from the BJD, after a fallout with Naveen -- who had by then taken charge as the Chief Minister. The exit from the BJD may have been a setback for Ray -- but only briefly. That same year, he was re-elected to Rajya Sabha, this time as an Independent, with support from some MLAs from the BJP, an ally of Naveen's BJD. But Ray's search for a party to resurrect his political fortunes continued. He joined the Opposition Congress in 2004, quitting it four years later. In 2009, he joined the BJP, while it was still looking to make gains in the state. In 2014, he was elected to the Assembly on a BJP ticket from Rourkela. But by then, an issue relating to his tenure in the Coal Ministry in 1999 had come under the court's radar. In 2012, the CBI had registered an FIR against Ray on directions from the Supreme Court for alleged irregularities in allotment of a coal block in Jharkhand when he was the Union Minister. In 2018, Ray quit the BJP along with Bijoy Mohapatra, an old colleague from his BJD days

JAISHANKAR, POMPEO DISCUSS BILATERAL, GLOBAL ISSUES

'India has stakes in Afghanistan's stability; cross-border terror completely unacceptable'

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar on Monday told visiting US Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo that India has stakes in Afghanistan's stability, and that decision about the country's future should be made by Afghans without use of force, sources said on Monday.

The two met at Hyderabad House, Delhi on Monday -- a day before the third India-US 2+2 ministerial meeting on Tuesday. Jaishankar also made it clear that cross-border terrorism was "completely unacceptable", sources said.

His statements assume significance in the wake of the increased violence in Afghanistan in recent days, leading to hundreds of casualties among combatants from both sides as well as among Afghan civilians. The US said Monday it had conducted an

airstrike in central Afghanistan, killing at least five Taliban fighters. This has shattered the fragile peace, as talks between Afghan high peace council and the Taliban are underway in Doha. After his meeting with Pompeo, Jaishankar tweeted, "Warm and productive meeting with @SecPompeo. Discussed key bilateral, regional and global issues. Reviewed progress in ties: grown substantially in every domain. Our foreign policy consultations and cooperation have expanded."

"Working closely on plurilateral and multilateral formats. Looking forward to the 2+2 Dialogue tomorrow," he wrote. Pompeo tweeted, "Great discussion with @DrSJaishankar ahead of our third U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue. We agree that the U.S.-India Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership is critical to the security and prosperity of both our countries, the Indo-Pacific region, and the world."

Jaishankar and Pompeo had met in Tokyo early this month, on the sidelines of the Quad foreign ministers' meeting. Sources said on Monday, they followed up on their Tokyo discussions and focussed on key bilateral, regional and global issues. Sources said the two reviewed the progress in bilateral



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at Hyderabad House on Monday. Reuters

ties over last four years and were "satisfied that they have grown in virtually every domain including trade, energy, defence and education, that the "practice of consultations on foreign policy issues has also expanded, including regional and multilateral" and are working more closely in multilateral and plurilateral formats.

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They said Jaishankar conveyed that "an innovation partnership is central to our future", and "our policies must be accordingly supportive". "Education is a special bond between us and both sides should work to expand it further", he is learnt to have told Pompeo.

With an eye on China, they also exchanged views on the current global situation and its contemporary challenges and discussed their shared concerns and interests including stability and security in Asia, and how best that can be ensured, sources said.

In this context, Jaishankar and Pompeo followed up on their Indo-Pacific engagement and the Quad deliberations, and spoke about maritime security, counter-terrorism, open connectivity and resilient supply chains.

During the meeting, sources said Pompeo shared the US administration's thinking on Afghanistan with Jaishankar. At

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at this point, Jaishankar highlighted India's stakes and its continuing concern that decisions should be made by Afghans themselves without use of force.

US State Department's principal deputy spokesperson Cale Brown said Monday, "From addressing the shared challenges of Covid-19 and responding to regional security issues, to collaborating on vaccine development and economic prosperity, the Secretary and the Minister agreed that the U.S.-India Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership is critical to the security and prosperity of both countries, the Indo-Pacific region, and the world."

Secretary Pompeo welcomed India's upcoming term on the UN Security Council and the opportunity for the United States and India to work closely together on issues of mutual and global concern. Both leaders looked forward to additional opportunities to further strengthen the US-India partnership," Brown said.

Chirag energetic leader, puts forth issues with commitment: Tejasvi Surya

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, OCTOBER 26

LJP PRESIDENT Chirag Paswan, who broke away from the NDA in Bihar and has continuously attacked JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar, has come in for praise from BJP Yuva Morcha chief Tejasvi Surya.

Paswan caused a flutter after he walked away from the alliance in Bihar, but has been consistent in his praise for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and in the Bihar polls, is squaring off only against JD(U) candidates.

Campaigning for the BJP in Arrah on Sunday, Surya was asked about Paswan by reporters. "Chirag-ji is a colleague in Parliament. He is a very energetic leader. Even in Parliament, he raises issues of Bihar with a lot of dedication and statistics. He has made his stand very clear," the BJP leader said.

Asked if that meant Paswan could be part of a government with the BJP, Surya said that was a post-poll discussion. "That is a matter for after the elections. He is a well-known leader. He is a young leader and a special friend of mine. I wish him the very best. Whatever the results, we can discuss after the elections," he said.

Surya, however, said that the BJP's agenda was clear and the NDA's chief ministerial candidate continues to be Nitish Kumar.

"In the next government too, Nitish Kumar-ji will be chief minister. The BJP and the NDA will get two-thirds majority and will win the election. And Nitish Kumar will be the CM of the future government," he said.

Responding to the RJD's election manifesto promising 10 lakh jobs, Surya said, "He (RJD leader Tejaswhi Yadav) is only spreading falsehood and false hope. When they had the chance to be in government, why did they not think of 10 lakh jobs... Now they are spreading lies by this 10 lakh lie. 'Princes' who have become politically unemployed after the coming of Narendra Modi are now spreading these lies."



PROPELLING HIS PARTY

BJP MP and Bhojpuri actor Manoj Tiwari after attending a party rally in Bihar's Kaimur district on Monday, ahead of the Assembly elections in the state. PTI

Tejashwi stirs row with 'Babu Saheb' remark; BJP, JD(U) slam 'casteist' slur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, OCTOBER 26

RJD LEADER Tejashwi Yadav courted controversy on Monday when he said the poor used to walk before "Babu Saheb" -- a term used to refer to upper caste Rajputs in Bihar -- with their head held high when Lalu Prasad was in power.

The assertion led TV channels to draw a parallel between his comment and his father Lalu Prasad's hugely-panned "bhura baal saaf karo" remark.

Bhura was considered a crass reference to the upper caste Brahmin, Bhumihar, Rajput and Kayastha communities in a Mandalised Bihar.

Addressing a rally in Rohtas on the last day of campaigning for the first phase of the Assembly polls, Tejashwi said, "When Lalu Yadav was in power, the poor used to walk before 'Babu Saheb' with their head held high. However, we will take everybody along. Employees working honestly will be rewarded and those indulging in wrongdoing punished."

The chief ministerial face of the Grand Alliance, however, quickly made amends, hastening to add he will take everybody along and treat people on merit.

His comments triggered angry reactions from political rivals who slammed him for the "casteist remarks". BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi tweeted a video in which he said, "The RJD has made an objectionable remark against forward castes in its rally at Rohtas. The RJD had also opposed the 10 per cent reservation for upper caste poor."

"Their politics has been about eliminating Bhu-Ra-Ba-L. They again want to divide Bihar on the basis of caste," he alleged. Sushil Modi also claimed veteran socialist leader Raghuvansh Prasad Singh was "humiliated" in Lalu Prasad's party forcing him to quit the RJD before his death last month. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh belonged to the Rajput caste.

JD(U) spokesperson Rajiv Ranjan Prasad also accused Tejashwi Yadav of promoting casteist politics. RJD spokesman and Rajya Sabha member Manoj Jha said Tejashwi was talking about "babus" (officials) in the government departments.



DECISION 2020 BIHAR

'ITEM' REMARK COMPLAINT

Violation of model code, don't use such words: EC to Nath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE ELECTION Commission (EC) Monday said that Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, by referring to BJP leader Imarti Devi as an "item", had violated the Model Code of Conduct and advised him to not use such words during his campaign for the state bypolls.

Defending himself, Nath, in his reply to the Commission, had said there was no malice or intent to disrespect a woman behind his remark. He also said that upholding the dignity of women has been the cornerstone of his public life and is reflected in his actions and public policies. However, the Commission found Nath's remark violative of the MCC.

Earlier this month, addressing a gathering in Dabra in support of Congress candidate Suresh Raje, the former CM had said Raje is a simple man who will carry out development work "unlike her".

"Ye unke jaise nahi hai... kya hai uska naam (He is not like her, what is her name)," Nath asked the crowd which responded with BJP candidate Imarti Devi's name. "You know her better than I do, you people should have warned me beforehand... ye kya item hai... kya item hai," said Nath.

Big burial grounds injustice in villages with small Muslim population: Sakshi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 26

BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj on Monday said the size of Muslim burial grounds in Uttar Pradesh's villages should be proportional to the minority community's population, calling big burial grounds an "injustice" in villages with a small Muslim population.

Maharaj made the remarks at a public meeting in his parliamentary constituency Unnao while campaigning for the BJP



Congress leader Kamal Nath

Soon after the remark, the BJP approached the EC, accusing Nath of insulting women and the SC community. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the comment amounted to insult of a daughter and sister of the Gwalior-Chambal region.

Devi, state WCD minister, was one of the 22 MLAs who resigned in March, bringing down the Kamal Nath-led government in Madhya Pradesh. She subsequently joined the BJP and is now a party candidate for the bypoll in Dabra, a seat reserved for SC candidates.

EC notice to Vijayvargiya, Verma

Meanwhile, the EC on Monday issued notices to BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya and Congress leader Sajjan Singh Verma for violating the code of conduct during their campaign for the MP bypolls. While Verma was served a notice for calling Vijayvargiya "Ravan" on October 15 at a gathering in Indore, Vijayvargiya has to explain himself for calling Kamal Nath "chunnu-munnu" on October 14 at a rally in Indore.



BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj

candidate in the Bangarmau Vidhan Sabha by-election, Shrikant Katiyar. The election will be held next month.

"This is unfortunate. The burial grounds and vijal sites should be in proportion. Even if there is one Muslim in a village, there is a huge burial site. But you people

SC stays MP HC order on political campaigning for Nov 3 bypolls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE SUPREME Court Monday stayed a Madhya Pradesh High Court order that barred physical campaigns for the November 3 bypolls in the state.

The top court bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar also directed the Election Commission to take cognisance of the issues raised in the petitions before the High Court and proceed according to the law.

The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna, was hearing two pleas against the October 20 order that asked parties to campaign digitally for the elections -- one by the EC, which said the verdict trespassed on its authority to conduct elections, and the other by BJP leader and bypoll candidate Pradhan Singh Tomar, who contended that his right to organise election gatherings had been violated.

The bench told the poll body that it could have intervened in the matter at an appropriate stage and asked the authorities to interfere. "You did not and that is why the HC had to interfere," Justice Khanwilkar told senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi.

Justice Khanwilkar added the situation would not have arisen had the parties acted in a proper way and maintained protocol.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

DILIP RAY JAILED FOR 3 YEARS IN CONNECTION WITH COAL BLOCK ALLOCATION 'SCAM'

A resourceful, influential hotelier-politician's steep rise -- and fall

AISHWARYA MOHANTY
BHUBANESWAR, OCTOBER 26

ONCE COUNTED among the most influential politicians in his home state Odisha, Dilip Ray was seen as someone who could move seamlessly in politics. From Janata Dal in the 1990s to the BJD, Congress and a resurgent BJP in recent years, he had friends across the political spectrum, based largely on mutual interests.

Ray, 66, was convicted earlier this month of "abusing his official position" by a special CBI court in New Delhi in connection

with an alleged scam in a two-decade-old coal block allocation case when he was a Union Minister. On Monday, he was sentenced to three years in jail.

Known as a "low-profile but highly resourceful man" in his inner circles, the hotelier-politician's rise in Odisha's political scene had been steep and fast, backed to a certain extent by the late Biju Patnaik, the Janata Dal stalwart.

Ray was elected to the Odisha Assembly in 1985 on a Janata Party ticket, barely months after he stepped into public life as chairman of the notified area council in his home-

town Rourkela. Five years later, he was re-elected in the Janata Dal wave, and made a Minister by Biju Patnaik.

Considered an introvert in his initial years, Ray's transition from hospitality -- he started with a small hotel in 1982 that has expanded today into the Mayfair Group of Hotels that he heads across five states -- to politics was smooth, largely because of his family links.

"Former Chief Minister Nilamani Routray was his distant relative. His father [who was into business] was also active in local politics. He grew up in a political space. Late Biju Patnaik took him



Dilip Ray

along for a Janata Dal meeting from his house and introduced him to his party members. After this, there was no looking back

for him," says a close friend of Ray's.

In April 1996, Ray made it to Delhi, getting elected to Rajya Sabha for the first of his two consecutive terms. Barely two months later, he was inducted into the H D Deve Gowda ministry.

In the next government, headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Ray was made the Minister of State for Coal in 1999. By this time, he was in the BJD, a regional party formed after Biju Patnaik's death. It was also the time Biju Patnaik's son Naveen Patnaik, a hesitant politician initially, had started asserting him-

self in the party. In 2002, Ray was expelled from the BJD, after a fallout with Naveen -- who had by then taken charge as the Chief Minister.

The exit from the BJD may have been a setback for Ray -- but only briefly. That same year, he was re-elected to Rajya Sabha, this time as an Independent, with support from some MLAs from the BJP, an ally of Naveen's BJD.

But Ray's search for a party to resurrect his political fortunes continued. He joined the Opposition Congress in 2004, quitting it four years later. In

2009, he joined the BJP, while it was still looking to make gains in the state.

In 2014, he was elected to the Assembly on a BJP ticket from Rourkela. But by then, an issue relating to his tenure in the Coal Ministry in 1999 had come under the court's radar.

In 2012, the CBI had registered an FIR against Ray on directions from the Supreme Court for alleged irregularities in allotment of a coal block in Jharkhand when he was the Union Minister.

In 2018, Ray quit the BJP along with Bijoy Mohapatra, an old colleague from his BJD days

who had challenged Naveen's leadership, accusing the then BJP leadership of treating them as "furniture".

Ray's exit from the BJP coincided with the growing presence of Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in the party state unit. Incidentally, Ray quit the BJP one year after charges were framed against him in the coal scam case.

Ray also quit active politics, although there was speculation for a brief while of him rejoining the BJD after a visit to Naveen's residence in 2019.

He remains in the hotel business.

BRIEFLY



Deputy CM Nitin Patel

GUJARAT

Police look for man who hurled slipper at Dy CM

Vadodara: The Vadodara District police has launched a hunt to identify a miscreant, who allegedly hurled a slipper at Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel, missing him by a whisker, in Karjan taluka of the district where the BJP leader was campaigning for the November 3 bypolls. Patel, who addressed a gathering and referred to the 2002 Sabarmati train burning incident in his speech, was speaking to reporters when a slipper hit one of the TV microphones, inches away from Patel's face, sending security personnel into a tizzy. **ENS**

TELANGANA

4 Nepalese nationals held for robbery

Hyderabad: Four Nepalese nationals have been arrested for their alleged role in the robbery of Rs 10 lakh and gold ornaments from a businessman's house here, police said on Monday. The four committed the crime on October 19 and were arrested from Lucknow between October 22 and October 25, Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Mahesh M Bhagwat said. Two of them worked as help in the victims's house, he said. The four were arrested and gold ornaments weighing 90 gm and Rs 1.49 lakh in cash were recovered, police said. **PTI**

UTTAR PRADESH
6-year-old girl raped by tutor in Pilibhit

Pilibhit: A 6-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her tutor in a village here on Monday, following which the man was arrested, police said. The girl, a class II student, had gone for her tuition class along with a friend. Her tutor allegedly raped her, Superintendent of Police Jai Prakash said. The incident came to light after the girl returned home crying and her family informed the police, he said. The girl has been admitted to the district hospital, while the accused has been arrested, Prakash said. **PTI**

KERALA

Photographer booked over pic on social media

Kochi: A photographer was booked by police on Monday for posting in the social media, a photograph of a woman dressed as a Hindu goddess "in a disrespectful manner". She withdrew the photograph after facing flak from Hindu outfits and apologised for "hurting sentiments." Dia John was booked on the basis of a complaint filed by the Hindu Aikya Vadi. She has been booked under Section 153 of the IPC, police said. "I'm extremely sorry some sentiments have been inadvertently hurt by a recent photo shoot which I did a few days back," she said. **PTI**

KILLING OF DALIT TEEN IN FIROZABAD

Cops: Father killed girl, filed false complaint against rivals

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, OCTOBER 26

THE FATHER of a 17-year-old Dalit girl, who was shot dead in her house in Firozabad on Friday, has been arrested for her murder with the police claiming that he submitted a false complaint against three men from the same neighbourhood, blaming them for harassing and threatening his daughter before the killing.

According to police, the victim's uncle confessed during questioning that it was the father who allegedly carried out the crime as he objected to the girl's acquaintances, police said. In his complaint, the girl's father alleged, "On October 22, my daughter was heading towards school from home when the accused stopped her on the way. They misbehaved with her and told her they would kill her. We were scared and we didn't approach the police. We tried to reason with them but they didn't listen."

According to police, the persons mentioned in the FIR -- Manish Chaudhary, Gaurav Tak and Saupali Yadav -- are not those who the accused believed her daughter was in touch with, but rather those with whom he had professional rivalries since they were also in the scrap business like him.

As the investigation began, police questioned local residents and neighbours to trace wit-

nesses. Police were told that no one from the victim's family had alerted the neighbourhood and they came to know of the incident only when the police arrived. Police took two of the accused in custody for questioning, analysed CDR records and CCTV footage, and found no evidence of their presence near the crime spot.

"We found that the police were being misled on the facts... The statements of the family were found to be contradicting. When we questioned further, a family member told us that it was her father who shot her out of anger," said IG (Agra) A Satish Ganesh.

"We videographed the statements of the family members so that they could not retract it later... the father was angry about her daughter being in touch with some people. He was convinced that she was talking to them on the phone and had met them too. On the day of the incident, the father confronted her... The conversation enraged him, and he shot her with an unlicensed weapon. And then he created a false story," Ganesh said.

Police claimed the girl's father threatened his family members that he would kill them too if they spoke about the incident.

The two accused who had been taken into custody will be released at the earliest, police said, adding that the girl's father is now in judicial custody.

Mutilated, headless body of woman found in Meerut

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, OCTOBER 26

A MUTILATED body of a woman with missing head was found from the Lisari Gate area of Meerut on Monday. According to police, the woman, aged approximately 35 years, is yet to be identified.

Her body was chopped into at least eight pieces and dumped in sacks.

"We found the woman's body in a dumping area behind a cemetery in Fatehullapur area. The victim was nearly 35 years old. Prima facie it appears that the crime was carried out by a person known to her. We are scanning CCTV footages in the area," said Akhilesh N Singh, SP City Meerut.

According to police and local residents, the body was discovered when stray dogs were seen tugging at the sacks in which the

pieces of the body had been kept. Stench emanated from the sacks when local residents reached the spot, nearly 200 metres from the main road.

The victim was found in only one piece of undergarment. The body also bore signs of burns at points where it had been chopped, said police.

Owing to the severe mutilation, the police are yet to find out if the victim had been sexually assaulted. And with no fresh blood detected on any wound, the police said the woman must have been killed at least two to three days ago.

"We are sending pictures of the body to track missing persons' complaint from different police stations. Our primary effort is to identify the body," said Arvind Kumar, CO Kotwali.

According to sources, the police are investigating a lead from Gorakhpur in connection with the case.



A QUIET GOODBYE

A handful of devotees immerses idols in the Hooghly after Durga Puja, in Kolkata on Monday. The colourful processions, which usually mark the occasion, were largely missing from the streets on account of Covid-19 curbs.

Partha Paul

KERALA GOVT PANEL PROBES SUICIDE AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Numbers high, but no significant rise during lockdown, says report

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
OCTOBER 26

A KERALA government panel has found that 66 children in the state died by suicide between March 25, the beginning of the lockdown, and July 10—lower than the figure of 83 for the corresponding period last year.

The panel, headed by DGP R Sreelekh, was set up by the state after several school-going children died by suicide during the lockdown period. The panel's report found that 158 children ended their life this year till July 31, slightly higher than the 147 who died in the corresponding period in 2019.

Pointing to the suicide numbers during the lockdown and last year's figure during the same period, a panel member said: "This showed that the Covid-19 situation has not caused an increase in the number of child suicides. Lockdown period

might have given protection for children as they could stay with parents."

"However, it is a matter of great concern that more and more children choose to end their lives these days rather than boldly face the challenges in life," said Dr Anil Prabhakaran.

The report found that 91 per cent of the children who died by suicide belong to lower and middle income groups. Fifty children who ended their life were said to be good in studies. Among them, one got an award from the President and another was a Student Police Cadet.

According to the report, the statistics were alarming because the system always focused on vulnerable children. The teachers and parents never addressed the issues of active or smart children—assuming all was well as they excelled in their academic and extra-curricular activities.

Most of the children who died by suicide studied at government schools (48 per cent)

EXPLAINED
POCSO case detection hit by lockdown

ACCORDING to the report by the Kerala government panel, the majority of POCSO cases come to light after regular counselling sessions at schools. The lockdown has hit this checking mechanism badly and the resultant mental pressure on victimised children would be huge and may lead to suicides, with hitherto undetected reasons.

and government-aided schools (30 per cent). A total of 108 children who committed suicide were in the age group of 15-18 years, with 66 per cent of them girls. **FULL REPORT ON** www.indianexpress.com

Ajit Pawar tests positive for Covid, hospitalised

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has tested positive for Covid-19 and has been admitted to Breach Candy hospital in Mumbai. Pawar, who is also the Guardian Minister of Pune district, tweeted on Monday that he has tested positive.

"My test for Corona has come positive. I am in good health but as per the advice of doctors have got admitted in Breach Candy hospital as a precautionary measure," Pawar said.

"I urge all the citizens, leaders of all political parties, office-bearers and workers not to be worried about me as my health is good. I would be back in your service after taking rest for

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

238 DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN
CASES: 79,10,019
RECOVERED: 71,37,288
DEATHS: 1,19,014
TESTS: 10,34,62,778
DOUBLING RATE: 107.92**



KEY STATES TO WATCH	TOTAL CASES	SURGE IN 24 HOURS	7-DAY AVG GROWTH*	DOUBLING TIME**
■ Maharashtra	16,45,020	6,059	0.44%	164.13
■ Karnataka	8,02,817	4,439	0.68%	105.78
■ Andhra	8,07,023	2,997	0.43%	167.36
■ Tamil Nadu	7,09,005	2,869	0.44%	162.50
■ Kerala	3,92,930	6843	2.01%	35.84

* Compounded Daily Growth Rate over last 7 days ** Calculated over 7-day growth

CASE FATALITY RATIO	POSITIVITY RATE	DAILY IN, DAILY OUT
7 DAYS EARLIER: 1.52 NOW: 1.50	7 DAYS EARLIER: 7.94 NOW: 7.65	DETECTED TODAY: 45,208 RECOVERED TODAY: 59,165

Deaths as a ratio of positive cases (in %); indicator of progress in averting deaths
Positives against number tested (in %); indicator of the spread of disease
Becoming sick vs recovering; more recoveries for 14 days may signal the peak

Data as on October 25, released by Union Ministry of Health, ICMR and states. Often daily numbers include data from previous days. As such, trends based on daily numbers are indicative, not definitive

Kochi Biennale put off till Nov 1 next year

VANDANA KALRA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

With a substantial number of coronavirus cases in India and a second surge in Kerala, the fifth edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, which was set to be inaugurated on December 12, has been postponed to November 1 next year.

"We have been constantly assessing the situation in discussion with our partners, and came to the conclusion that it would be best to move the Biennale later. However, the work of culture is critical and we will continue our education programme with adaptations both online and offline," said Bose Krishnamachari, founder member and president of Kochi Biennale Foundation. Commenting on the new

schedule for the exhibition, curated by contemporary artist Shubigi Rao, the KBF stated in a release, "We expect that circumstances by then would be conducive for visitors, artists, staff, and others for a safe and complete Biennale gathering."

One of the biggest art events in India, the Biennale reportedly saw a footfall of 6.2 lakh people during its last edition (2018-19) over a course of three months.

The forthcoming edition is titled "In Our Veins Flow Ink and Fire".

In July, the first list of over 20 artists and five collectives had been released by the Foundation. While "Kochi Biennale Foundation and its programmes will continue to function", one of the segments—Students' Biennale—has been restructured to take place online from February 21 next year.

RT-PCR test to now cost less than Rs 1,000 in Maharashtra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

A Covid-19 test will now cost less than a thousand rupees in Maharashtra. It's a four-fold decrease in the cost of the test since March when people paid as much as Rs 4,500 for it.

The Maharashtra government on Monday slashed Covid testing rates for the fourth time in the last seven months. The reduction in cost is in the Rs 200-220 range.

The real time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test, considered gold standard for Covid-19 detection, will now cost Rs 980 for anyone who walks into a laboratory, Rs 1,400 for samples collected from Covid care centres, hospitals, or dispensaries. And Rs 1,800 if swab is collected from home.

"We are now conducting 70,000 tests per million population. We are focused on increasing the number of tests to beat the virus," said state Health Minister Rajesh Tope.

The last price capping on RT-PCR tests was on September 6 when anyone walking into a laboratory had to pay Rs 1,200, Rs 1,600 if laboratory collected samples from hospital or Covid care centre and Rs 2,000 for home collection.

On May 25, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) removed the price cap for Covid-19 test and wrote to all state governments to fix their own costs after consulting with stakeholders. Until then, private labs were charging Rs 4,500 for each RT-PCR test.

In June, Maharashtra brought down the rates to Rs 2,800 for home collection. The rates have since consistently reduced as more manufacturers produce testing kits and increase its volume.

LIBRARY BUILT UNDER 'PROJECT 37' GETS CM PRAISE

Arunachal officers bring new life to old public buildings

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, OCTOBER 26

MISSING WINDOW panes, door frames sans doors, moss spreading unchecked over its walls, and a ceiling that was in from a storm — for years, the transport office in Khimiyang in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district, had been in a state of disrepair. But last week, the dilapidated building emerged in a new avatar: a library with yellow and pink walls, filled with bookshelves and toys inside — and a queue of excited kids outside.

"They are more interested in the computers and toys now — not the books," laughs Todak Riba, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Khimiyang. Over months, Riba and Dr Prajwal Montri, Medical Officer, Khimiyang PHC, have supervised the renovation of the run-

A dilapidated transport office building which has been refurbished into a library by the group. *Twitter/Pema Khandu*

down building, at times picking up construction tools themselves.

They are backed by Project 37,

money to "repair anything". This involves giving facelifts to old, disused buildings and converting them to schools, libraries; building playgrounds, toilets; repairing roads and signposts across the state. "The library is first in the series. It could even have us funding a promising athlete from a village — basically anything that will help in developing the remotest of outposts in our state," says 33-year-old Riba.

The idea was proposed last year by Rome Mele, Circle Officer, Balijan, Papum Pare district. According to the plan, each batchmate would donate Rs 1,500 on a bi-monthly basis. "The money will be auto-debited from our accounts," says Mele, "There is a random roster, and the 'winner' will get to use the money in his or her circle." The "output" includes "donating to causes, creating micro-infrastructure, building toilets, class-

rooms, furniture etc."

Outpost circles — such as Khimiyang, which is located in the border district of Changlang — will be given preference. "Khimiyang circle is located near the Myanmar border...very remote and with an insurgency problem," says Devansh Yadav, DC, Changlang.

Located 38 km (at least two hours by road) from the district headquarters, Khimiyang — which comprises 12 villages — is marred by poor connectivity, low development indices and is, on account of being located close to the Myanmar forests, a hideout for many insurgent groups. "In fact, the level of opium addiction is also very high here — among teachers too — since there is easy access," says Riba, adding: "No one wants to be posted here. In fact, most officers, despite being posted here, prefer to stay in the district headquarters."

Affected by the bleak surroundings, Riba and his colleague, Dr Montri, set up a tuition hall last year to get the village kids interested in studies. "After the first few days, they stopped coming," he recalls, "Then we started doing weekend documentary sessions, which got a little interest. But soon, that petered out too."

It was then that they thought of the library.

The new library was inaugurated on October 20 — drawing praise from Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Twitter.

Mele said Circle Officers do not usually get funds for projects — impeding development, especially in remote districts. "That got me thinking, why not do it ourselves," says the 36-year-old, "Who knows, others might be inspired too. As for us, we have decided to contribute till we retire."

TRP 'SCAM'

Accused remanded in police custody till Oct 28

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

THE TENTH accused person arrested by the Mumbai Police in connection with the alleged TRP scam was produced before a magistrate's court on Monday and remanded in police custody till October 28.

The police informed the court that they found suspicious transactions between the accused, Abhishek Kolavde, and some TV channels.

The police case is that some TV channels were paying to get their TRP's boosted illegally. The payments were allegedly made to former employees of Hansa research agency contracted to measure TRP's on behalf of Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC).

As per the remand report submitted by the Mumbai crime branch, they wanted to carry out joint questioning of some of the arrested accused in the case for which they sought the custody of Kolavde.

The police further pointed out that there were some transactions between Kolavde and certain channels allegedly involved in boosting TRP's that had to be checked.

The police have named the "owners" of Republic TV, News Nation, Mahomovie, and one Rocky as wanted accused in the case.

The police further informed the court that some of the channels involved in boosting TRP's were free-to-air channels meaning the only source of income they had were from the advertisements of these channels.

"The advertisements in turn were dependent on TRP and hence these were being boosted illegally," the police remand mentioned. The court sent the arrested accused to police custody till October 28.

Meanwhile, the court released Umesh Mishra, one of the accused arrested in the case, on bail. The prosecution did not object to Mishra's bail and said that he will be a witness in the case. He is likely to be made a prosecution witness in the matter.

SC stays contempt proceedings against Pokhriyal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE SUPREME Court Monday stayed contempt proceedings initiated by the Uttarakhand High Court against Union minister Ramesh Pokhriyal for alleged non-compliance of its order asking the state's former chief ministers to pay rent at market rates and other dues related to government facilities occupied by them after demitting office.

A bench headed by Justice R F Nariman stayed the proceedings on a plea by the Union Education Minister.

In May 2019, the High Court had directed the state's former chief ministers, who occupied government accommodation, to pay rent for the period they occupied such premises after leaving office. It also asked the state to compute the dues related to electricity, water, petrol, oil and lubricants provided to the former Chief Ministers within four months on receipt of the order. It asked the former CMs to pay the amount within six months of being informed of the estimated dues.

The HC struck down all government orders from 2001 providing housing and other facilities to the former CMs as illegal and unconstitutional. The HC order came on a plea by Dehradun-based NGO Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra.



Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal

MAHARASHTRA PLEA AGAINST STAY ON ARNAB GOSWAMI PROBE

Nobody above law, but some people targeted with higher intensity: SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

PRESS FREEDOM is crucial but "there has to be responsibility in reporting" and "there are some areas one has to tread with caution", the Supreme Court said Monday while hearing the Maharashtra government's appeal against the Bombay High Court stay on the police probe against Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami over alleged inflammatory remarks during news shows.

The court, however, added that "some people are targeted" by the powers that be "with higher intensity" and "need a higher degree of protection".

"While nobody is above the law, some people are targeted



Two FIRs had been registered against Goswami

with higher intensity. There is a culture these days that some people need a higher degree of protection," Chief Justice of India S A Bobde remarked as Senior Advocate A M Singhvi urged the SC to lift the stay saying the court should see that a message does not go out that some people are above the law.

Turning to Senior Counsel Harish Salve who appeared for Goswami, the CJ, heading a three-judge bench comprising Justices Y Chandrachud and L Nageswara Rao, said, "Keeping

your client aside, while we agree with freedom of press, we don't appreciate the proposition that as a person from the media your client should not be asked any question."

"Our most important concern as a court of law is peace and harmony in the society", the CJ said, adding that "nobody is immune to being questioned".

CJ Bobde told Salve that "we want a sense of assurance from you of responsibility".

Salve replied that society is fragile and he understands that freedom of speech comes with responsibility but urged the court not to take the FIRs in question on face value.

Observing that while there was no need to subscribe to a certain way of reporting and it can be done responsibly, the CJ said,

"You don't have to always go as per the mores of the day.. You can be a little old-fashioned.. Frankly speaking I can't stand it. This is not the kind of public discourse we should have."

The bench asked Goswami and the Maharashtra government to file affidavits giving details of all the cases and FIRs registered against Arnab Goswami and Republic TV and the course of action each proposed to follow.

The court will now hear the matter after two weeks.

Earlier in the hearing, Singhvi wondered how the state can be asked not to investigate a criminal case and cited judgements to back his argument.

The bench responded: "This is purely an intellectual matter related to verbal matter" and "is

not related to the recovery of some arms etc".

"You are entitled to investigate but you cannot harass", it said and asked the state how it would ensure this. Singhvi replied that there would be no arrest and that summons will be issued 48 hours in advance.

Opposing the state's plea, Salve said Goswami has been interrogated for nearly 17 hours by the police and that various employees of the channel have been questioned.

Two FIRs had been filed against Goswami. They relate to the comments made by him on the lynching of two sadhus and their driver in Maharashtra's Palghar, and the gathering of migrant labourers near the Bandra railway station during the Covid-19 lockdown.

MAHARASHTRA

Held for 'offensive' tweets against Uddhav, youth in police custody

VIVEK DESHPANDE
NAGPUR, OCTOBER 26



Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray

A NAGPUR court has remanded a man in police custody for allegedly putting up "offensive posts" against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, and his son and state Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray, as well as for writing "communal and abusive posts" on Twitter.

Nagpur-based businessman Sameet Thakkar, in his mid-20s, was arrested by Nagpur Police from Rajkot two days ago. He was produced before a Judicial Magistrate of First Class (JMFC) court Monday. The court sent him to police custody till October 30.

An FIR was lodged against Thakkar on August 12 on a complaint by Manish Tiwari, said to be an aide of Shiv Sena MLC Dushyant Chaturvedi. He was granted relief by the Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court, which ordered the police on August 28 to refrain from taking coercive action. The court, however, had asked him to report to the police station daily—which Thakkar did not.

The HC then dismissed his petition on October 20, paving the way for his arrest. "Another complaint has been filed against Thakkar at Mumbai, where the HC had directed police to refrain from taking any coercive action," said Thakkar's lawyer in High Court, Rupal Singh Renu. "We are moving the Supreme Court on Tuesday, seeking relief and consolidation of all cases at one place... his Twitter remarks do not constitute any offence and we are going to plead it forcefully before the Supreme Court."

"Thakkar has a huge following on Twitter, including the Prime Minister, several Union and state ministers, and hundreds of MPs and MLAs," he said. In the JMFC court on Monday, Thakkar's lawyers argued that his arrest "smacked of political intolerance".

But Government Pleader Nitin Telgote said Thakkar's "abusive" tweets had the potential to flare up communal tensions as he had over 60,000 followers. Thakkar had allegedly termed the CM "adhunik (modern) Aurangzeb" for his permission to celebrate Eid. He called Aaditya Thackeray a "baby penguin". He also purportedly had "abusive communal exchanges" with members of the minority community on Twitter.

Actor Payal Ghosh joins Athawale party, named women's wing V-P

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

ACTOR PAYAL Ghosh joined Union Minister Ramdas Athawale-led Republican Party of India (RPI) in Mumbai on Monday and was named as the vice president of the party's women's wing.

"I told her RPI(A) is Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's party. It helps all sections of society, be it Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs, villagers, slum dwellers. The RPI will get a good face if you join the party. After I discussed this with her, she was ready to join the party," Athawale said.



Actor Payal Ghosh with RPI chief and Union Minister Ramdas Athawale in Mumbai on Monday. PTI

Mahesh, Mukesh Bhatt move defamation suit against actor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

THE BOMBAY High Court on Monday restrained actor Luviana Lodhi from making any further defamatory comments against filmmaker Mahesh Bhat until further orders in a suit filed by Bhat seeking Rs 1 crore damages over the allegations made by Lodhi on social media.

Apart from damages, the suit filed by Mahesh Bhatt and his brother Mukesh Bhatt also sought taking down of the disputed content from the social media platform and tender an



Mahesh Bhatt

unconditional apology for the same.

A single judge bench of Justice Anil K Menon on Monday, in an urgent hearing on the suit sought by Bhatt's lawyer Ameet Naik, directed Lodhi to file a reply, after her lawyer Prashant Pandey assured the bench that she would not publish or make any such statement against the plaintiffs.

"Applicants (Bhatt) are the

veterans and notable personalities of Indian film industry who have contributed immensely to the development of the Indian film industry over the course of approximately half a century, in their own right."

The bench granted interim relief to Bhatt and restrained Lodhi until further orders from making, publishing, circulating or communicating any defamatory or slanderous comments against Bhatt in whatsoever manner. It also asked her to file a reply to the suit in three weeks, after which it will hear the case.

Approach HC, top court tells petitioner seeking CBI probe in Salian death

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE SUPREME Court Monday told a petitioner seeking a CBI investigation into the "suspicious" death of Disha Salian, the former manager of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, to first approach the Bombay High Court.

"You may or may not be having a case. But why are you not going to the High Court?" asked Chief Justice S A Bobde.

Salian, 28, died on June 8, allegedly after falling off the 14th floor of a residential building in Mumbai.

Six days later, 34-year-old Rajput was found hanging in his home in the city.

The bench, also comprising

Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, said the Bombay High Court was better acquainted with the facts of the matter.

It added that the petitioner could approach the Supreme Court again if not satisfied with the High Court's order.

The counsel for petitioner Puneet Kaur Dhandha then withdrew the plea.

The petition filed by Dhandha had said that Rajput and Salian had died under "suspicious circumstances" and that the "peak of their successful professional career..."

The petition also urged the top court to seek records from the Mumbai Police on the status of the probe into Salian's death.

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जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग गुरुग्राम
PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION, GURUGRAM
New Colony, Madanpuri Road, Opp. Laxmi Bazar PIN-122001
E-mail ID: ee.gurugram@phedharyana.gov.in. Telephone: 0124-4238801
नोटिस
सूचित किया जाता है कि जल जीवन मिशन के तहत गैर सरकारी संस्थाओं का चयन सहायक संस्थाओं (ISA) के तौर पर किया जाना सुनिश्चित किया गया है जो कि जल जीवन मिशन में संबंधित सभी गतिविधियां (IEC & HRD) करेगी। गैर सरकारी संस्थाओं का पंजीकरण दर्पण पोर्टल व नीति आयोग में होना अनिवार्य है। संबंधित संस्थाएं अपने दस्तावेज के साथ जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी मंडल सौहार्दा में आकर नियम एवं शर्तों से संबंधित दस्तावेज प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। आवेदन की अंतिम तिथि 29.10.2020 है।
हस्ता./- कार्यकारी अभियंता
जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी मंडल गुरुग्राम
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EXPRESS Careers

इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ बैंकिंग पर्सनल सेलेक्शन
INSTITUTE OF BANKING PERSONNEL SELECTION
(An autonomous body set up by Reserve Bank of India, Central Financial Institutions and Public Sector Banks)
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COMMON RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR RECRUITMENT OF CLERKS (CRP CLERKS-X), PROBATIONARY OFFICERS/MANAGEMENT TRAINEES (CRP PO/MT-X) IN PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS for Vacancies of 2021-22 and OFFICERS SCALE I AND OFFICE ASSISTANTS (MULTIPURPOSE) IN REGIONAL RURAL BANKS UNDER CRP-RRBs-IX

It has been decided by the competent authority to reopen the registration window and invite applications for online examinations for Clerical cadre and Probationary Officers/ Management Trainees in the Public Sector Banks under CRP-PSB-X and Online Preliminary examination for the post of Officer Scale I and Office Assistants (Multipurpose) in the Regional Rural Banks under CRP-RRBs-IX by releasing this Supplementary Advertisement in continuation to the detailed advertisements dated 01.09.2020, 04.08.2020 and 01.07.2020 respectively. The details regarding supplementary Advertisement is available on authorised website of IBPS. The only change in the eligibility criteria, is the last date of possessing educational qualification. For other terms and conditions, candidates are requested to refer the Detailed Advertisements of CRP CLERKS-X dated 01.09.2020, CRP PO/MT - X dated 04.08.2020 and CRP RRBs - IX dated 01.07.2020. Before registering online, candidates are advised to read the detailed notifications and follow the instructions mentioned therein. Candidates are advised to visit the authorised IBPS website www.ibps.in for details and updates, regularly.
Mumbai Date: 21.10.2020 Director

TORRENT PHARMACEUTICALS LIMITED
Registered Office: Torrent House, Off Ashram Road, Ahmedabad - 380 009, Gujarat, India. Ph : +91 79 26599000 Fax : +91 79 26582100

Extract of Consolidated Financial Results for the Quarter and Half year ended 30-Sep-2020

[₹ in crores except per share data]

Particulars	Quarter Ended 30-Sep-2020	Half Year Ended 30-Sep-2020	Quarter Ended 30-Sep-2019
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited
Total Income from operations (net)	2017	4073	2005
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax and exceptional items	384	786	296
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax and after exceptional items	384	786	296
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax and exceptional items	310	631	244
Total Comprehensive Income (after tax)	372	708	212
Equity Share Capital	84.62	84.62	84.62
Other Equity excluding Revaluation Reserve*			
Earnings per share (of ₹ 5/- each)			
Basic	18.32	37.30	14.48
Diluted	18.32	37.30	14.48

* Other Equity excluding Revaluation Reserve as on 31-Mar-2020 was ₹ 4739 crores.

Notes:
1 Summary details of stand-alone audited financial results of Torrent Pharmaceuticals Limited : [₹ in crores]

Particulars	Quarter Ended 30-Sep-2020	Half Year Ended 30-Sep-2020	Quarter Ended 30-Sep-2019
Net income from operations	1640	3367	1603
Profit before tax	356	726	393
Profit after tax	283	581	328
Total Comprehensive Income (after tax)	341	659	302

2 The above is an extract of the detailed format of Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended 30-Sep-2020 filed with Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the same, along with the notes, are available on www.nseindia.com, www.bseindia.com and on the Company's website www.torrentpharma.com.

Place : Ahmedabad, Gujarat
Date : 26-Oct-2020

NTPC Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)
CIN: L40101DL1975GOI007965
Regd. Office: NTPC Bhawan, SCOPE Complex, 7 Institutional Area, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003 Tel. No. 011-24360100, Fax: 011-24361018, E-mail: csntpc@ntpc.co.in, Website: www.ntpc.co.in
NOTICE OF BOARD MEETING
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held at New Delhi on **Monday, November 2, 2020, to inter-alia, consider, approve and take on record un-audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter and half year ended on September 30, 2020, after these results are reviewed by the Audit Committee of the Board.**
The said Notice may be accessed on the Company's website at www.ntpc.co.in and may also be accessed on the Stock Exchanges' website at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com.
For NTPC Limited Sd/- (Nandini Sarkar) Company Secretary
Place: New Delhi
Dated: 27.10.2020
Leading the Power Sector

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is notified for the information of passengers that the timings of the following Special/Festival Special/Clone Special Trains will be revised as under:-

Train No. 04084 Delhi Jn. - Katihar Special Train

STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 04084			
	Existing time		Revised time	
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
Moradabad	01:55	02:03	02:30	02:38
Bareilly	03:21	03:23	04:03	04:05

Train No. 02226 Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh Superfast Special Train

STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 02226			
	Existing time		Revised time	
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
Lucknow Jn.	03:00	03:20	Same	
Malhaur		03:50		04:00
Shahganj Jn.	08:00	08:25	08:10	08:35
Azamgarh		09:30		09:40

Note : The timings of 02573 at Barabanki Jn. to be revised as 20:30 hrs instead of 20:40 hrs.

The change in Stoppage timings over Lucknow Division for train no 02226 (Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh) special train are as under:-

Train No. 02226 Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh Superfast Special Train

Change Timing	Existing Timing			
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
04:17	04:19	Barabanki Jn.	04:07	04:09
05:12	05:13	Rudauli	05:00	05:01
05:48	05:50	Faizabad Jn.	05:35	05:37
06:08	06:10	Ayodhya	05:55	05:57
06:53	06:55	Akbarpur	06:44	06:46
07:20	07:22	Malipur	07:04	07:06
08:10	08:35	Shahganj Jn.	08:00	08:25

Above change is only for 02226 (Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh) Spl. train not for 12226 (Delhi Jn. - Azamgarh) Kafiyat Express.

Train No. 04059 Varanasi - New Delhi Clone Special Train

STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 04059			
	Existing time		Revised time	
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
Ghaziabad	Pass	06:30	Pass	07:38
New Delhi	07:20	---	08:30	---

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Beware of Touts Always buy your tickets from an authorised railway counter or authorised rail travel agent only.

Note: For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

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The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

BEYOND BIHAR

Local factors dominate the assembly election, but outcome will have a bearing far beyond the state

AS THE campaign winds down for the first phase of the Bihar assembly polls, it is clear that local issues such as jobs are likely to influence voting behaviour in a big way. That isn't surprising, since assembly elections in recent years have become a referendum on the local government and leaders. However, the outcome in Bihar is likely to resonate beyond the state and even impact the course of national politics, especially the shape of political coalitions, for a variety of reasons.

First, Bihar is the first state to go to polls since the coronavirus pandemic struck earlier this year. The Centre-imposed lockdown saw waves of migrants from the state trudging back to their hometowns and villages from the metros. Two, Bihar marks the beginning of an election season that will see big states such as West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam elect new governments in the first half of 2021. Though the political realities of these states are very different, the Bihar outcome will impact the way political parties strategise and build alliances. Three, the ruling coalition is under strain in Bihar, with three major groups, the JD(U), BJP and LJP, seemingly working at cross-purposes. The results will most likely have a bearing on the NDA, which has, since 2014, become overly dominated by the BJP and dependent on the charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At the Centre, the Modi government has just one non-BJP minister after one of its oldest allies, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), withdrew its nominee from the Cabinet, before quitting the alliance itself. The JD(U) is the last of the big regional parties left in the NDA, though its relationship with the BJP has been unsteady all through. For instance, the JD(U), which won 16 seats as part of the NDA in the 2019 general election, declined the offer to join the Modi government after the party was refused the ministerial berths it sought. The LJP's decision to quit the NDA in Bihar over Nitish Kumar's leadership and seek votes in the name of Modi has injected a dose of distrust into the alliance. The BJP will need to repair relations with the JD(U) to dispel the notion that it doesn't value its allies — a charge that the Shiv Sena and SAD hurled at it while quitting the NDA. Fourth, the BJP, while endorsing Nitish Kumar as the coalition's chief ministerial candidate, is seeking votes in the name of Modi. Inadvertently, the party may be putting to test the prime minister's ability to mobilise votes in a state election.

A win in Bihar would be seen as evidence of Modi's enduring popularity and the BJP party machine's ability to buck incumbency. A favourable result would be a big boost for the Opposition as it strains to be heard in Parliament and outside. The Bihar outcome will have a bearing on battles elsewhere in the coming months.

TRUST IN COMPETITION

Case against Google in US flags important concerns. But any state intervention should be carefully thought through

LAST WEEK, THE US Department of Justice launched an anti-trust suit against tech major Google, accusing the company of abusing its dominant market position and indulging in anti-competitive behaviour. Eleven US states have thus far joined the justice department in its case. The DOJ's move comes after the US House of Representatives had, earlier this month, released a report on big tech companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple, accusing them of abusing their dominant positions, "setting and often dictating prices and rules for commerce, search, advertising, social network and publishing". Google's dominance in several digital verticals is not debatable. Apart from its near ubiquitous search engine, its operating system, Android, commands a lion's share of the smartphone market. Similarly, its Chrome browser is also widely used. Allegations of the tech giant abusing its dominance to help its other businesses may well have some merit. And there is, indeed, a strong case for government intervention aimed at curbing monopolies, and abuse of market power — in the US, there appears to be near bipartisan support for this move. But this case raises several contentious issues.

For one, while the case focuses on Google as it "is the gateway to the internet and a search advertising behemoth", and notes that "it has maintained its monopoly power through exclusionary practices that harm competition", it bears mentioning that these "monopolies" are not the outcome of government allocated/auctioned licences as may be the case in telecom, for example. They are driven by network effects. As more and more people board these platforms, the more they grow in strength. This typically leads to market concentration, which has become increasingly common across verticals in the digital/tech space. So while barriers to entry in the conventional sense may not exist, it is rare to find new players enter the market and grab a sizeable market share as it is difficult for multiple networks to coexist. Thus, whether government intervention can achieve hyper-competition in the traditional sense is debatable.

But there are legitimate concerns as well. How should policy ensure that a company is not biased in favour of its own subsidiaries? Will fines act as a deterrent? Would charging access pricing, perhaps adopting the efficient component pricing rule — essentially asking Google to charge its own entities — work? Would facilitating competition in the search space imply having to break up the company? Whatever form the government intervention takes, will it address these competition concerns without making consumers worse off? Ultimately, any policy intervention should be driven by the objective of protecting competition, not competitors.

RUN LOLA RUN

Women across age groups are taking to road races, in the process pulling down a gender barrier

INDIAN WOMEN OF all ages have laced up and hit the tarmacs with gusto. It's a marathon struggle to get started, but the numbers of female road racing competitors in India are increasing exponentially, triggering a silent revolution. Overall marathon registrations has gone up from 30,000 at the start of the century to 2 million over the last 15 years. Of these, 19 per cent — almost 3.8 lakh — are women, making it the most participatory sporting activity for female amateurs. Road races — starting from 5 km runs to cross-country weekend races and going right up to the 42.195 km full-fledged marathon — offer financial incentives in age-group categories. And Indian women, from the Kalimpong hills to rural outskirts of Nashik, are discovering the freedom of uninhibitedly hitting the roads to express their athletic effort.

With marathons mushrooming in every big city, female road runners from Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru are steadily graduating to the longer distance mileage, some even aspiring to ultra-marathons. The battle isn't won at the finishing tape, though. Simply preparing for a road race sees women take time out for themselves from their professional and familial responsibilities and set aside a few hours focusing on their self-growth. A marathon unites the corporate executive and the homemaker. What is most heartening is that these races aren't the stomping ground of solely the teens and the young. Women deep into their 40s and 50s are kick-starting running careers for mental and physical well-being.

Women's sport is breaking its elite confines with the most inclusive of competitive events — the marathon. For the first time, the biggies — London and Boston marathons — are aiming for a 51 per cent female participation, undeterred by the pandemic. While the podium is reserved for Top 3, there's not one woman who doesn't walk tall (though a tad sole-sore) after completing a 42-km run. Leaving male laggards and stragglers behind is a mere bonus.

The ferment next door

Disparate parties come together to take on Pak government. Can coalition overcome its contradictions?



SHYAM SARAN

IT IS STRANGE that the momentous political developments currently unfolding in Pakistan have barely registered here in India. The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) was formed in September by the leader of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Fazal-ur-Rehman, but constituted by 11 political parties, representing virtually the country's entire political spectrum. It has brought together the two mainstream but rival political parties, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Bilawal Bhutto and the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) led by the exiled Nawaz Sharif, but currently headed by his daughter Maryam. More significantly, the PDM has also given a national platform to regional parties and provincial leaders from Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who have been targeted by the Pakistani military for demanding regional autonomy and an end to repression.

This is the first time that the Punjabi heartland was listening to voices from the periphery and connecting with its hitherto marginalised people. This is an important development in itself. The PDM has so far held three massive political rallies, in Pakistani Punjab's Gujranwala on October 18, in Karachi two days later, and in Quetta on October 25. A certain political momentum has been generated and is gathering strength and this could trigger significant changes in the nature of the Pakistani state and how it engages with the outside world, including India.

The political inclusivity that the PDM represents is both its strength and its weakness. It has politically isolated Prime Minister Imran Khan and, therefore, undermined the credibility of his powerful military backers. That he has managed to inspire such disparate parties to come together on the same platform to oppose him, speaks to his incompetence. But in demanding his ouster, the PDM's real target is the powerful military.

In his speech broadcast from London, Nawaz Sharif explicitly accused the Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa and the ISI chief Faiz Hameed as responsible for rigging the

last elections and installing Imran Khan as prime minister. This is a frontal attack on the army and if allowed to snowball, it has the potential of eroding its overpowering influence in the country's politics. In the past, the army has been able to manipulate political parties and leaders, playing off one against the other. If the coalition holds together, this tried-and-tested playbook may not work. But while the PDM has come together to oust Imran Khan, it does not seem to have a game plan for the day after.

How do they propose to bring the military to heel? What kind of federal structure could be put in place to address the deep grievances of smaller provinces and ethnic groups? At what point would the movement consider its mission accomplished and revert to competitive politics, which is the essence of parliamentary democracy? How do the PDM leaders propose to tackle the acute economic crisis that Pakistan is facing, compounded by the pandemic? On all these and other key issues, the disparate nature of the group may preclude even a broad convergence.

The Pakistani Army may believe that given these contradictions within the PDM, it may be best to let it roll on and then dissipate. If that were indeed to happen, then the military would end up even more entrenched than it already is. It is possible that the PDM may continue to gather popular strength and support and this may be seen as an existential threat by the army. It may resort to violent repression and assume power frontally as has happened in the past. This could add to Pakistan's external isolation, particularly if a Democratic administration takes office in Washington. However, China, which has deep and longstanding relations with the Pakistani Army, will continue to provide it political shield and economic support. A weak Pakistani military or one which is forced to return to the barracks does not suit China, even though Pakistani civilian governments have also given priority to the relationship.

As a liberal democracy, India would nor-

mally welcome the emergence of the PDM and its struggle to establish a truly civilian democracy in Pakistan. A diminished political salience of the Pakistani military could only be a positive development from India's point of view. Unfortunately, the PDM leaders had harsh words to say about Prime Minister Narendra Modi and bracketed Imran Khan with him. Imran was accused of complicity in "selling out" Kashmir. Just as Pakistan has become a ploy in India's domestic politics, so is India on the way to performing a similar role in Pakistani politics. Not long ago, we had marvelled at the fact that in the Pakistani elections in 2013, which brought Nawaz Sharif to power, India was barely a factor in the election campaign. This new dynamic will make it difficult for the two countries to deal with each other as they would any other state based on a cold calculus of interests.

In managing India's relations with other states, one must retain the space for constant calibration and adjustment, particularly when the external environment is in constant flux as it is today. India's neighbourhood first policy must include the means to manage the relationship with Pakistan in order to ensure that it does not become an enduring constraint. If any shift in posture is precluded by domestic political compulsions, the calibration required by foreign policy imperatives becomes impossible.

Despite the fraught state of India-Pakistan relations, we should take a keen interest in the exciting political drama unfolding among "the people next door." Whichever direction the movement takes, whether it fails or succeeds, its impact will reverberate outside its borders, affecting our region and beyond. On balance, its success could open the door to a potentially positive re-engagement. And, perhaps, there is a lesson here for India's own fragmented political opposition, struggling to retain its political relevance in a BJP-dominated universe.

The writer is a former foreign secretary and senior fellow CPR, Delhi



SAJJAN KUMAR

WHO'S AFRAID OF NITISH KUMAR?

In Bihar, a vocal desire for change vs the silence of the Mahadalits and EBCs

UBIQUITY OF scarcity and primacy of group identities shape Bihar's political context. Here, one cannot talk about development without invoking identity. In popular parlance, the perspectives on material issues emanate from the vantage point of caste and community. Thus, pitting the politics of development against the politics of identity in Bihar would be a case of both cognitive dissonance and analytical fallacy.

In this backdrop, the fractured electoral narratives we are witnessing in Bihar need to be filtered through the psychologies of various castes and communities. There are certain objective realities that set the background of Bihar's political contestations. One, Bihar voters have minimal expectations from their leadership. The state lacks the kind of competitive welfarism which defines the contours of southern states. Hence, the core support bases of RJD, BJP and JD(U) do not expect something transformative. Two, in a majority of the cases, the preference for material issues are a post-facto justification for *a priori* likes and dislikes of a party/leader. That is, Yadavs and Muslims rallying behind the RJD, upper castes supporting BJP or a section of Paswans endorsing LJP leader Chirag Paswan, are motivated not by the material issues, but a sense of prevailing affinities. Three, Nitish Kumar is facing the challenge of all sections of dominant groups, ranging from upper castes to intermediary castes like Yadavs and Muslims.

When the state is facing the combined

crises of flood, public health, economic hardship, the plight of approximately 3.5 lakh contractual teachers and around 3 million migrants, the anti-incumbency narratives should have emerged from the most vulnerable sections, the EBCs and Mahadalits. What we see, instead, is a concerted anti-Nitish narrative by the dominant castes. The vast majority of the EBCs and Mahadalits are either silent or come out as confused.

In the power dynamics in Bihar, Nitish enjoys a unique position, wherein his centrality signifies the secondary position of the dominant castes and communities. To the Yadavs, he signifies an absolute marginalisation; and to the upper castes, he comes in the way of seeing BJP ruling the state like neighbouring Uttar Pradesh.

It is not the first time that Nitish Kumar is facing a concerted challenge from groups otherwise diametrically opposed to each other. Nor is it on account of his colossal failure on the governance front alone. In 2009, Nitish Kumar attempted to empower the vulnerable groups by implementing the recommendations of the 2007 Vishvamohan Rishi Mohan Commission to identify the Mahadalits; the 2006 Udaykant Chaudhary Commission to identify and outline provisions for the EBCs; and the D Bandopadhyay Commission on land reforms. He hoped to introduce a series of developmental measures that would improve the conditions of the sections. But these pronouncements, in the aftermath of the May 2009 Lok Sabha

elections, proved controversial. The RJD and LJP, along with a section of BJP's upper caste leadership, projected them as politically motivated. This affected the voting pattern in by-polls held in September 2009, with the JD(U)-BJP winning just five of 18 seats. Expectedly, Nitish Kumar had to dilute the provisions pertaining to the EBCs and Mahadalits, while he rejected the recommendations on land reforms to appease the dominant castes.

Now, when we see caste and community-centric parties like RJD and LJP, with an alleged understanding with a section of the state BJP leadership, peddling a developmental narrative, the gap between their speech and actions are colossal. For instance, Tejashwi Yadav is as much concerned about consolidating the Yadav support base by preferring CPI(ML) as he is careful about denying space to Kanhaiya Kumar, the young CNY leader, partly on caste considerations. Chirag Paswan is fielding a large number of upper-caste candidates against JD(U) to cut into the incumbent's support base. In a nutshell, the dominant groups like Yadavs and a section of upper castes are enthused with the vague possibility of dislodging Nitish Kumar. What sustains Nitish Kumar is the silence of his core support base, the EBCs, Mahadalits and Kurmis and a section of women who aren't vocal. In the meantime, all we hear is the restlessness of the dominant castes.

Sajjan Kumar is a political analyst, associated with People's Pulse

OCTOBER 27, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

ZAIL SINGH ON SHEIKH UNION HOME MINISTER Zail Singh said the Centre has no plan to topple any non-Congress (I) state government. In an exclusive interview, he said it was in the interest of the country that all states have stable governments. On recent statements of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah, accusing the Centre of planning to topple his government, Singh pointed out that non-Congress (I) states must understand that they cannot use authority to crush opposition. It was their duty to allow the opposition to function normally. Asked to comment on Sheikh Abdullah's statement that the Centre

is weak, Singh said the Centre was not weak but "gentle though firm and strong".

ASSAM BANDH THE ASSAM GOVERNMENT has ordered troops to stand by to render any assistance in view of the statewide bandh called by the AASU and AAGSP to start a new phase of agitation against foreign nationals. According to Chief Secretary Ramesh Chandra, district authorities have been directed to provide police protection to MLAs from Tuesday in face of threat by agitators to gherao them. Force might also be used to maintain law and order if the need arose.

LAWYERS' UPROAR A PROPOSAL TO switch over to the presidential form of government provoked angry scenes at a session of the All-India Conference of Lawyers in Delhi. Several members protested against a report, which had recommended the same, alleging it did not represent the views of all delegates.

MISSILE KILLS 100 OVER 100 bodies have been recovered in Deezful and many more are still buried under houses destroyed by an Iraqi rocket attack on the West Iranian city, its member of parliament Ahmad Zarhami said in Tehran.



THE IDEAS PAGE

A poll-proof relationship

The 2+2 dialogue comes in the backdrop of a structural shift in great power politics and turbulence in the global economic order. Incentives to advance India-US partnership are stronger than ever before



RAJA MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

COMING AMIDST CHINA'S continuing aggression on the Ladakh frontier, the 2+2 dialogue between the defence and foreign ministers of India and the United States in Delhi this week marks an important moment in bilateral relations. It also takes place amidst a profound structural shift in great power politics as well as turbulence in the international economic order intensified by the coronavirus pandemic.

The four ministers, Rajnath Singh and Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Mike Pompeo and Mark Esper, would want to reflect on and consolidate the wide-ranging progress of the strategic partnership in the last four years. They should also set the stage for the elevation of the partnership to a higher level under the next administration, whether headed by Donald Trump or Joe Biden.

The 2+2 dialogue comes just three weeks after the foreign ministers of the Quad — or the Quadrilateral Security Framework — met in Tokyo. The dialogue follows India's first-ever participation, earlier this month, in a meeting of the exclusive Five Eyes grouping that facilitates intelligence-sharing among the US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand. The Five Eyes meeting in Tokyo was about addressing the tension between the imperatives of law enforcement and the encryption policies of technology companies like Apple and Facebook. A few days ago, Delhi announced the much-awaited expansion of the annual Malabar exercises with the US and Japan to include Australia.

This is not the first time we are seeing an acceleration of the engagement between Delhi and Washington. There was a similar moment in the UPA era; but Delhi's self-doubt and political timidity let the opportunity slip. Recall, for a moment, the few weeks in the spring and summer of 2005.

In March, the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice came to Delhi to explore the outlines of the historic civil nuclear initiative that would end India's prolonged atomic isolation in the world and a broader framework for security cooperation. The visits to Washington by Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee in June and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in July saw the translation of those ideas into concrete frameworks.

Delhi, however, made heavy weather of that extraordinary moment, thanks to the deep divisions within the national security establishment, the Congress leadership and the UPA coalition. In fact, the coalition broke up when the Left parties withdrew support citing opposition to the deepening strategic partnership with the US. The Congress leadership, which was desperate to avoid the rupture with the Left, was prepared to abandon the new possibilities with the US. It was Manmohan Singh's threat to resign that rescued the civil nuclear deal.

The UPA returned to power without the Left, but with little political enthusiasm for deepening ties with the US. The focus was on keeping visible distance from the US in the



CR Sasikumar

name of non-alignment, strategic autonomy, and the quest for a multipolar world. The relationship survived those years, thanks to the US's perseverance.

There is one similarity and many differences when we compare the current moment in India-US relations with that during the UPA years. When Manmohan Singh got the green light from the Congress leadership to wrap up the nuclear deal, there was a rush at the end of 2008 to complete a whole range of formalities in the waning moments of the George W Bush presidency.

Unlike Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi does not have to deal with backseat driving from the party. Like Manmohan Singh, Modi sees the advantages of building a strong partnership and has been able to advance ties at a much faster and deliberate pace than in the UPA years. The quickening diplomatic dance of the last few weeks is also a consequence of the special circumstances that confront India and the US today.

That brings to the three differences that stand out. First is the huge military crisis on the northern borders with China that is well into the sixth month. During the UPA years, Delhi avoided closer security ties with the US in deference to Beijing's sensitivities. In contrast, the Modi government has refused to cede a veto to China over its policy on security cooperation with the US — whether bilateral or in multilateral formats such as the Quad.

Second is the pandemic. The coronavirus has sharpened the US debate on the dangers of excessive economic interdependence on China. Meanwhile, Delhi has begun to reduce its commercial ties to Beijing in response to the PLA's Ladakh aggression. This has created the conditions for a new conversation between India and the US on rearranging global supply chains away from China in the so-called Quad Plus conversations that have variously drawn in Brazil, Israel, New Zealand, South Korea and Vietnam.

Although Delhi and Washington continue to have many differences over bilateral trade, they both see the need for rethinking the current global economic institutions that China has bent to its own advantage.

Third is the focus on critical technologies like artificial intelligence that promise to transform most aspects of modern life — including security, political economy and social order.

The dialogue is taking place three weeks after the foreign ministers of the Quad — or the Quadrilateral Security Framework — met in Tokyo. It follows India's first-ever participation, earlier this month, in a meeting of the exclusive Five Eyes grouping that facilitates intelligence-sharing among the US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand. The Five Eyes meeting in Tokyo was about addressing the tension between the imperatives of law enforcement and the encryption policies of technology companies like Apple and Facebook. A few days ago, Delhi announced the much-awaited expansion of the annual Malabar exercises with the US and Japan to include Australia.

Two decades ago, Delhi and Washington focused on resolving the legacy issues surrounding the mid-20th century technologies relating to nuclear weapons and missiles.

Thanks to the civil nuclear initiative, those issues are behind us. Delhi and Washington are now focused on finding ways to collaborate on the critical technologies of the 21st century and work with their partners in setting new global rules for managing them.

Questions have been raised about the merits of holding the current round of engagement in the last weeks of the Trump Administration's current tenure. An American president is elected for a full four-year term, and he has the power to advance on a broad range of issues until the last day in office.

The real question is not about the calendar but the extent of bipartisan political support that India enjoys. To be sure, there are many issues of contention amidst the current sharp polarisation between the Republicans and Democrats. But the US strategic partnership with India is not one of them. If Joe Biden wins the election, there will certainly be some new issues and new possibilities.

The overarching framework that has emerged across different administrations in the last two decades helps manage potential difficulties and take advantage of new opportunities. Recall, for example, that Senator Barack Obama was among the critics of the India-US nuclear deal but had no hesitation advancing its implementation when he became the president in 2009.

Modi and his advisers have dealt with the Obama-Biden team during 2014-16 and are well placed to deal with a Democratic victory. But, for now, and until the third week of January 2021, Trump's current team is in charge. Delhi needs to stay fully engaged with it.

Both Delhi and Washington have benefited much from the recent political investments in the relationship. As the regional and global order faces multiple transitions, the incentives for Delhi and Washington to sustain and advance India-US partnership are stronger than ever before and will continue into the next administration.

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The final verdict is that the longer the pandemic continues, the more difficult it becomes for the government to treat it as a temporary, though immense, problem. The reality is that the pandemic is reshaping everything."

— THE GUARDIAN

Book of Unfreedom

The movement against 'Manusmriti' must be robustly feminist and unconditionally assert women's autonomy



KAVITA KRISHNAN

IN A WEBINAR on "Periyar and feminism", Thol. Thirumavalavan, president of the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), quoted Periyar on the *Manusmriti*, to say that the "Manu Dharma" demeans women, holding them to be prostitutes by nature. In her newfound avatar as a BJP acolyte, actor Khushbu Sundar claimed Thirumavalavan's words insulted women. On cue, a case was filed against the VCK leader in Chennai.

It is the *Manusmriti* that insults women: Thirumavalavan merely quoted from it. What Khushbu and her party know, but cannot admit, is that they are outraged on behalf of the *Manusmriti* and not on behalf of women. That is why Khushbu claims that the *Manusmriti* has "not a single word that demeans women."

At public functions in India, it is common to hear people sententiously cite the *Manusmriti* to say, "The deities delight in places where women are revered, but where women are not revered all rites are fruitless" (*The Laws of Manu*, 3:58, Doniger and Smith, Penguin Books, 1991). The same *Manusmriti* says, "It is the very nature of women to corrupt men here on earth; for that reason, circumspice men do not get careless and wanton among wanton women." The idea of women as sexual tempters, corrupters or gateways to hell is not unique to Manu. The Christian, Islamic and Buddhist texts also warn against women, portraying them as sexually promiscuous, secretive, sly and out to entrap men.

Saying that the *Manusmriti* "treats women as prostitutes" is misleading. Such a description of the *Manusmriti* implies that the harm it causes is because it refers to women as sexually "loose" and, thus, insults women. But, in fact, the harm of the *Manusmriti* lies in its prescriptions of tight control of women's autonomy. Manu says, "A girl, a young woman, or even an old woman should not do anything independently, even in (her own) house. In childhood a woman should be under her father's control, in youth under her husband's, and when her husband is dead, under her sons."

Our critique of the *Manusmriti* should take care to challenge rather than reinforce the notion that the worst thing one can say of a woman is that she is sexually "loose" or a "prostitute". It is important to recognise that the harm of the *Manusmriti* lies, not in the fact that it asks us to treat women as "prostitutes", but that it asks us to treat women as daughters, wives, mothers who must be tightly controlled by fathers, husbands, sons. In fact, Manu encourages us to see this control as "reverence" and "protection" rather than as repression and oppression.

This obsessive control over women is

needed to prevent a breakdown of caste hierarchies and caste apartheid. The *Manusmriti* lays down the law that a woman who makes love to a man of a higher caste incurs no punishment; a woman who makes love to a man of a "lower" caste than hers must be isolated and kept in confinement. If a man from a subordinate caste makes love to a woman of the highest caste, he must be put to death.

But, some ask, does anyone really read the *Manusmriti* in India, let alone obey it? The facts show that the spirit of Manu's laws continue to inform and shape modern society, as well as modern politics in India. The National Family Health survey 2015-16 (NFHS-4) found that just 41 per cent of Indian women aged between 15 and 49 are allowed to go alone to the market, to the health centre, and outside the community (NFHS-4, table 15.13). Startlingly, 40 per cent of "what is classified as rape...is actually parental criminalisation of consensual sexual relationships, often when it comes to inter-caste and inter-religious couples" (Rukmini S., *The many shades of rape cases in Delhi*, The Hindu, July 29, 2014).

India lies the key to understanding India's obsession with controlling and curbing women's autonomy — and in the *Manusmriti* lies the key to understanding the codes of caste and gender that are hardwired into our societies and selves. In every household where women are surveilled, their movements restricted; in every opposition to inter-caste, inter-faith marriage; in every attack on Dalits' villages after a Dalit man has married a non-Dalit woman, in the Sangh's campaign to brand love between Hindu women and Muslim men as "love jihad" — it is the *Manusmriti* that you see in action.

Today, Khushbu Sundar on behalf of the BJP is leading the pack in attacking Thirumavalavan for his remarks on the *Manusmriti*, which they construe as an insult to Indian womanhood. In 2005, Khushbu herself had been at the receiving end of similar patriarchal moral outrage. She had remarked that pre-marital sex was cool as long as it was safe sex — for this, 22 cases were filed against her accusing her of "defaming Tamil womanhood and chastity". The attack on Khushbu was led by the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), a party now known for its violent campaign against marriages between Dalit men and women of intermediate castes. And at the time, Thol. Thirumavalavan and his organisation, too, had joined the fray, with Thirumavalavan saying that her remarks were "against public order". It would strengthen the movement against the *Manusmriti* today, if he were to acknowledge how his 2005 remarks reinforced the same Brahminical patriarchal notions of female purity and chastity that he, and we, are fighting today.

One cannot be a feminist in India if you are not fighting the *Manusmriti* — and one cannot fight the *Manusmriti* without being robustly feminist, and asserting women's unconditional autonomy.

The writer is secretary, All India Progressive Women's Association and politburo member, CPI(ML)



RISHIKESH BS

Make board exams irrelevant

NEP 2020 has the answer to the question of impossibly high cut-offs

WHEN DELHI UNIVERSITY announced the first list of admission into undergraduate programmes in its 90 colleges earlier this month, the cut-offs reached 100 per cent mark in some courses offered by a few colleges. But this is neither surprising nor unexpected. According to the most recent All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE 2018-19), Delhi's gross enrolment ratio (GER) is 46.3 per cent (the national GER is 26.3 per cent). This means that almost every second youth in Delhi between the age of 18 and 23 is enrolled in a higher education programme. But the aspirations of Delhi's youth are not met by adequate high-quality Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including universities and standalone institutions, leading to unreasonably high cut-offs. In some HEIs, for courses such as computer science or English literature, the cutoff is in the high 90s, even for aspirants from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

What we have been seeing in Delhi for more than a decade is also seen in a few other states, where the GER is close to 50 per cent. Today, it is a handful of states, and tomorrow it will be the entire country. According to India's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030 and the National Education Policy 2020 target, we are aiming to ensure 100 per cent enrollment across our school stages, from pre-primary to the secondary stage. As we move towards this

target, there will be a further rise in applications for higher education programmes for which the NEP 2020 has set a target of 50 per cent by 2035 — which would mean an additional 35 million seats to be created in HEIs across the country. If the cut-off marks are already at unreasonable levels, we can imagine the scenario with a doubling of prospective students. Unless something transformative is done, we are headed towards a rise in the number of unemployed graduates (due to poor quality education) and a generation of disenchanted youth (due to the systemic failure in equipping them with required skill sets).

We have nearly 1,000 universities and almost 40,000 colleges spread across the country. Many of the universities affiliate more than 1,000 colleges. If such large affiliations indicate the unreasonable number of colleges that universities are trying to manage, 16.3 per cent of the colleges have an enrolment of fewer than 100 students.

NEP 2020 recommends moving into a higher education ecosystem that consists of large multi-disciplinary HEIs, offering undergraduate and graduate programmes, one in every, or nearly every district, in the country. These will be multi-disciplinary universities and colleges; with the latter moving away from affiliation into a degree-granting HEI or a constituent college of the university. Each such institute will aim to have 3,000 or more

students. Currently, only 4 per cent colleges have an enrolment over 3,000. By modelling this across the higher education ecosystem, not only will access improve, but it will also make HEIs viable, with all resources in place as is seen in most parts of the developed world. With only half the number of HEIs that currently exist, we will be able to provide access to 70 million students expected in higher education once the country reaches a GER of 50 per cent. This will also allow for closing down of thousands of poor quality HEIs, which snare unsuspecting students, leading to a large number of non-entrepreneurial, unskilled and unemployable graduates.

For the problem of unreasonable cut-offs to be rooted out, the assessment reforms that NEP envisages, for both school-leaving and higher education entrance, is critical. Both of these reforms have to take place simultaneously. In the last decade, when the CBSE experimented on a progressive reform by making Class X board exams optional, very few parents allowed their wards to take that option. Until the school and higher education system are aligned to ensure a paradigm shift, students, parents and the entire country will continue to operate in this vicious cycle.

Using school-leaving marks to create cut-offs is a lazy option employed by the HEIs to reduce the number of applicants, before launching their admission process. School

percentages are not good markers of an individual's readiness to do higher education — and given the serious drawbacks of standardised assessments in our board exams, it is best to get rid of them at the earliest. Instead, school-leaving certificates will have to be based on an array of assessments, including a student's performance across the secondary level — Classes IX to XII. They will factor in class assignments and tests, leading to the development of students' portfolios. Post that, admission to higher education is an entirely different set of activities. It may use the portfolio of school assessments as the base, but the admission process ought to assess whether the prospective student has developed the attributes for pursuing higher education.

NEP 2020 envisages assessment reform at the school level, which would make the board exams redundant, and also a common entrance for the liberal arts-based higher education system, which only assesses an applicant's preparedness to pursue a university education. We need to usher in these reforms at the earliest. If not, the country is at the risk of generating graduates in tens of millions, who will neither have the capacity to generate employment for themselves nor the capability to be employed anywhere.

The writer is associate professor, Azim Premji University

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NOT A PAWN

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The China factor' (IE, October 26). Viewing the India-China equation through the prism of the US president's personality could be misleading. China has challenged the US for the world leadership and a US president is bound to deploy all the weapons available to him in thwarting China. India, by virtue of its geographical location, size, market and military strength, is an ideal weapon for the US in this contest. India needs peace for the next 20 years to achieve her national objectives and must never lose sight of it while playing the American game on China.

B Shubhada, via email

REGAIN CREDIBILITY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Centre's Bureau' (IE, October 24). Maharashtra is the fifth state to withdraw general consent for CBI operations within its territory, after the central agency took over a Lucknow police FIR to investigate alleged TRP manipulations by TV channels when Mumbai police was already probing the matter. CBI should work independently without any interference from the political bosses. This will help in maintaining its credibility and accountability and curtail crime in a neutral manner.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

NOT MEDIA

THIS REFERS TO the editorial,

IDEAS ONLINE

ONLY IN THE EXPRESS

● DECONSTRUCTING THE DECLINE: MILIND SOHONI, NIKHIL TIKEKAR, ALAKHYA DESHMUKH

● WEALTH FROM STUBBLE: DEEPAK GUPTA AND K KRISHNAN

www.indianexpress.com

'FIR reporting the news' (IE, October 26). That the Mumbai Police appears deeply politicised by framing charges against Republic TV is without question. But is the media not politicised too? Channels which call for public trials, label students anti-national and equivocate on lynchings and crimes against Dalits and women have helped destroy many an institution, not least the media. They should not be arrested or prosecuted for their political statements, which often barely flirt with facts. In the selective democracy that we are becoming, they are free to do so. But let's not call them journalists and cite a defence of the press in their defence.

Shantanu Ray, Meerut

KERALA GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

NIA arrests accused on arrival from UAE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday arrested an absconding accused in the Kerala gold smuggling case after he arrived in Kochi from the UAE.



Rabins K Hamed

Ernakulam had earlier issued a non-bailable warrant of arrest against Hamed. "He is also learnt to have arranged for the concealment of gold in electronics or electrical equipment and household items in the UAE, for smuggling the contraband to Thiruvananthapuram, through diplomatic baggage," NIA said in a statement.

The case pertains to the seizure of 30 kg gold on July 5 at the Trivandrum International

Airport by Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Cochin from a diplomatic baggage that arrived from the UAE. The case was later transferred to NIA, which began a probe under terror charges.

Registering the case on July 10, NIA had said: "As the case pertains to smuggling of large quantity of gold into India from offshore locations threatening the economic stability and national security of the country, it amounts to a terrorist act as stated in section 15 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. Further, as the case has national and international linkages and as the initial enquiries have revealed that the proceeds of smuggled gold could be used for financing of terrorism in India, NIA has taken up the investigation of the case."



TOUCHDOWN

The seaplane, which will connect Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad to the Statue of Unity in Kevadia, lands in Gujarat on Monday. *Nirmal Harindran*

Gujarat 'custodial death': Migrant's son draws HC attention to constable's statement on body

SOHINI GHOSH & ADITIRAJA
AHMEDABAD, VADODARA, OCTOBER 26

THE SON of Telangana migrant Babu Sheikh Nisar, who was allegedly tortured to death after being detained for theft at the Fatehgunj police station in Vadodara, drew the attention of the Gujarat high court, through his advocate, to the statement of a police constable's that had indicated that his father's body had been surreptitiously burnt.

Intiyaj Kureshi, the advocate for Nisar's son, Salim, had filed a habeas corpus petition in the HC in June this year, seeking the production of the body of Nisar who went missing in December 2019.

He drew the court's attention to the police official's statement on October 23, during a hearing before a division bench.

According to the police's investigation report, head constable

at Fatehgunj police station Mahesh Rathwa had in a statement before the Vadodara police during its investigation after the FIR in July, submitted that one of the accused, Pankajbhai had taken his car from his residence. As per Rathwa's statement, the next day on December 11, 2019, he went for his duty as usual when he received a call from Pankajbhai who asked Rathwa where he was and told him to come to Chhani Jakat junction. The statement says, "There Pankajbhai was present with my car and he informed me that the car has become muddy and it needs to be serviced...I followed on my motorcycle and at the service station I saw that the plastic packing on the rear side of my backseat was torn and my car was muddy...Maheshbhai said, to tell you the truth the suspect (Nisar) died after we went to Police Bhavan and we kept his body in your car and drove to Mahisgar side and burned it with wood and petrol."

Court in UK rejects Nirav Modi's latest bail application

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, OCTOBER 26

A UK court on Monday rejected the latest bail plea of fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, who has been lodged in a London prison since his arrest on an extradition warrant in March last year.

The application was reportedly made on the basis of "new evidence", but Westminster Magistrates' Court District Judge Samuel Goozee was not convinced to reverse previous bail rejections in Modi's case.

The 49-year-old jeweller, fighting extradition to India on charges of fraud and money laundering in the estimated \$2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, has made around six previous attempts at bail — at the magistrates' court as well as at the High Court level.

However, each of the applications, which came with offers of stringent conditions akin to house arrest and a bail bond security of £4 million, have been rejected each time as he has been deemed to have the financial means and motivation to abscond.

Gujarat HC begins live streaming of proceedings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD, OCTOBER 26

THE GUJARAT High Court on Monday started live streaming of proceedings of its first court on an experimental basis.

Anyone willing to view the live proceedings could access the link of the Youtube channel from the homepage of the Gujarat High Court website, Chief Justice Vikram Nath said in an order.

The order said proceedings of the Division Bench No 1 [First Court] of the High Court will be telecast live, purely on an experimental basis, and the "aspect of continuing with or adapting the modality of live court proceedings will be decided based on the outcome of this trial".

All HC benches have been functioning through video conferencing since March 24 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, in which advocates, parties, victims and corpus etc are made to participate in the video hearing.

"In the Model Video Conferencing Rules as prescribed by the eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India, it has been provided that the public will be allowed to view the court hearing conducted through video conferencing," said the Chief Justice.

The Supreme Court has also directed for live streaming of court proceedings, and Gujarat HC had made observations on working out modalities of live streaming of proceedings for media personnel, he said.

Meanwhile, in the Supreme Court on Monday, Attorney General KK Venugopal raised the issue of live-streaming of the apex court's proceedings and said it has been working well in Madras High Court.

The court said there are a lot of issues that cannot be discussed publicly and it would think over the matter later. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said live-streaming would lead to people filing petitions just for the sake of "being heard all across the country".

RAJYA SABHA ELECTIONS

Hardeep Singh Puri, Neeraj Shekhar among BJP candidates from UP

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 26

THE BJP on Monday nominated Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, MP Neeraj Shekhar and six other candidates for the November 9 Rajya Sabha elections from Uttar Pradesh.

While the party repeated the candidatures of Singh, whose term as an Upper House member from the state is expiring next month, and Shekhar, a Thakur face and son of former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, the name of former state police chief Brijlal surprised many political observers.

The former police officer is one of the party's prominent Scheduled Caste (SC) leaders in the state. Brijlal was once considered close to BSP chief Mayawati, who appointed him Director-General of Police. However, after retirement, he joined the saffron party in 2015. He was appointed the chairperson of the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Uttar Pradesh in 2018. His term ended last year, and since then he has been projected as the party's SC face.

Neeraj Shekhar was earlier a RSPM from the Samajwadi Party. He joined the BJP last year after the Lok Sabha elections, and was re-elected to the Upper House. Two of the candidates are Brahmins. They are senior party leader Haridwar Dubey, and former MLA Seema Dwivedi.

The candidates from the Other Backward Class (OBC) communities are Seema Shalkya, who has held different posts in

NARESH BANSAL TO BE BJP CANDIDATE FROM UTTARAKHAND

Dehradun: The BJP on Monday announced senior party leader Naresh Bansal as candidate for Rajya Sabha election from the state. A former RSS man, Bansal is known as cadre worker who has been associated with the party from over two decades and held key posts in the state organisation. He had taken voluntary retirement from a bank job to enter active politics. Bansal is currently vice-chairman of the state-level 20-point programme implementation committee and he enjoys a cabinet rank in that capacity. **ENS**

the organisation, and senior leader BL Verma. The other candidate is party General Secretary Arun Singh.

Rajya Sabha elections to 10 seats from Uttar Pradesh and one from Uttarakhand will be held on November 9. In Uttarakhand, the BJP fielded state Cabinet minister Naresh Bansal, who is also the vice-chairperson of the Uttarakhand 20-point programme implementation committee.

The BJP's eight nominees from Uttar Pradesh are likely to win as the party has three-fourth majority in the state Assembly. Bansal's victory in Uttarakhand is also expected. If they win, the party's tally in the 245-member Upper House will cross 90.

Wife of key accused says gold being smuggled for Left-backed MLA

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 26

THE WIFE of a key accused in the Kerala gold smuggling case has told Customs officials that she knew the contraband was being smuggled for Independent legislator Karat Razack, who is backed by the ruling CPI(M).

The statement by key accused Sandeep Nair's wife Soumya has emerged in the detention order issued against Sandeep under provisions of the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Act (COFEPOSA). The order was issued by Union Finance Ministry Joint Secretary Ravi Pratap Singh.

Razack is a former Indian Union Muslim League (UML) leader who shifted his loyalties to the CPI(M)-led LDF in 2016. He is the MLA of Koduvally — several key players in gold smuggling and hawala rackets hail from the region, which is said to have developed a strong parallel economy over the years.

The Customs had earlier this month invoked COFEPOSA against Sandeep. During its investigation, the Central agency has found that those involved in the racket, including Swapna Suresh and K T Rameez, had smuggled 168 kg gold 21 times over a period of a year before being busted in July.

Soumya, in her statement to the Customs, said her husband

Sandeep and co-accused Rameez have been smuggling gold for Razack and Left-backed councillor Karat Faisal, and she knew that they were smuggling gangs from Koduvally in Kozhikode.

Responding to the allegation, Razack told the media that he has no links with the smugglers. "There is a political conspiracy against me. I do not know the accused in the case. I came to know about their names only through media," Razack said.

In 2018, Razack had landed in another controversy pertaining to gold smuggling after he petitioned the government, seeking exemption from COFEPOSA for a gold smuggling kingpin Abu Lais, who hails from Koduvally.

कार्यालय मुख्य महाप्रबन्धक, निर्माण विंग
उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम) 403/1, इन्दिरा नगर, देहरादून 248001
दूरभाष एवं फ़ैस सं: 0135-2764075, e-mail: cgmmnirmanwng@yahoo.com, gmmnirmanwng@gmail.com

Government of Uttarakhand "e" procurement Notice (National Competitive Bidding)
Bid Identification no. 2668/Nivida (Garwhal)/405 Dated: 26.10.2020

1. Name of the Works:-	CONSTRUCTION OF EMPANELMENT OF CONSULTANTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL / STRUCTURAL DESIGN OF BUILDINGS PROPOSED AT DIFFERENT PLACES IN UTTARAKHAND / OTHER STATE / U.T.
2. Name and Address of Officer Inviting the Bid :-	General Manager, Construction Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, 403/1, Indira Nagar, Dehradun.
3. Date and Time of Availability of bid Documents in the portal:-	28.10.2020 - 15.00 Hrs.
4. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal :-	19.11.2020 - 17.00 Hrs.
5. Pre bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place :-	05.11.2020 - 12.00 Hrs.

Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website.
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://www.uktenders.gov.in"
General Manager (Garh.)

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय, मध्यप्रदेश भोपाल

क्रमांक - विशा/स्टोर/2020-25 (436) दिनांक 20/10/2020

निविदा सूचना का शुद्धि पत्र (CORRIGENDUM)

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय को निविदा सूचना क्रमांक SB/Store/2020-25 (410), Bhopal Dated 03-10-2020 द्वारा **Workstation** के क्रय हेतु ई-निविदा सूचना जारी की गई थी। निविदा के माध्यम से क्रय किये जाने वाले आइटम के निविदा समय सारणी में "आंशिक संशोधन" (Corrigendum) किया गया है जो **website https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgpc/app** पर तथा विभाग की वेबसाइट **www.mppolice.gov.in** पर उपलब्ध है।

SPECIAL BRANCH, M.P., BHOPAL
Tender Notice No. SB/Store/2020-25 (410), Bhopal, Dated 03-10-2020

CORRIGENDUM

S.N.	Previous	Corrigendum
	Tender Activity	Previous Date & Time
i	Bid Submission Start Date	21/10/2020 at 1000 hrs.
ii	Last date of online e-Tender submission	02/11/2020 up to 1700 hrs.
iii	Bid will be opened on	03/11/2020 up to 1700 hrs.
iv	Demonstration from	11/11/2020 at 1200 hrs.

G-15067/2020

सहायक पुलिस महानिरीक्षक, विशेष शाखा (जी), म.प्र. भोपाल
दूरभाष क्रं. -0755-2443654 E-Mail: sec24-sb@mppolice.gov.in

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय, मध्यप्रदेश भोपाल
क्रमांक - विशा/स्टोर/2020-25 (437) दिनांक 20/10/2020

निविदा सूचना का शुद्धि पत्र / (CORRIGENDUM)

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय को निविदा सूचना क्रमांक SB/Store/2020-25 (399), Bhopal Dated 25-09-2020 द्वारा **Boom Barrier & other 10 items** के क्रय हेतु ई-निविदा सूचना जारी की गई थी। निविदा के माध्यम से क्रय किये जाने वाले आइटम के निविदा समय सारणी में "आंशिक संशोधन" (Corrigendum) किया गया है जो **website https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgpc/app** पर तथा विभाग की वेबसाइट **www.mppolice.gov.in** पर उपलब्ध है।

SPECIAL BRANCH, M.P., BHOPAL
Tender Notice No. SB/Store/2020-25 (399), Bhopal, Dated 25-09-2020

CORRIGENDUM

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iv	Demonstration from	9-11/11/2020 at 1200 hrs.

G-15070/2020

सहायक पुलिस महानिरीक्षक, विशेष शाखा (जी), म.प्र. भोपाल
दूरभाष क्रं. -0755-2443654 E-Mail: sec24-sb@mppolice.gov.in

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय, मध्यप्रदेश भोपाल
क्रमांक - विशा/स्टोर/2020-25 (437) दिनांक 20/10/2020

निविदा सूचना का शुद्धि पत्र / (CORRIGENDUM)

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय को निविदा सूचना क्रमांक SB/Store/2020-25 (399), Bhopal Dated 25-09-2020 द्वारा **Boom Barrier & other 10 items** के क्रय हेतु ई-निविदा सूचना जारी की गई थी। निविदा के माध्यम से क्रय किये जाने वाले आइटम के निविदा समय सारणी में "आंशिक संशोधन" (Corrigendum) किया गया है जो **website https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgpc/app** पर तथा विभाग की वेबसाइट **www.mppolice.gov.in** पर उपलब्ध है।

SPECIAL BRANCH, M.P., BHOPAL
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DELHI SOCIETY FOR PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
Boulevard Road, (Opp. Tis Hazari Court), Delhi-110054
Phones: Office- 23965369, Hospital- 23972805 Email: dspca09@yahoo.in
F. No. DSPCA(III)PUR/2017/41/623 Dated: 20.10.2020

E-Procurement Tender Notice

Delhi Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (DSPCA) is inviting tenders through **E-Procurement** to supply the animal **Feed and Fodder** items from contractor/suppliers for the year 2020-21. Only those bidders can apply who have valid registration with the application service provider of NIC, Delhi State Centre. **Tender Enquiry No. 2020_DSPCA_195820_1.**

Last date/time for downloading of tender through e-procurement solution.	17.11.2020 up to 3.00 p.m.
Last date/time for submission/receipt of tender through e-procurement solution.	17.11.2020 up to 3.00 p.m.
Last date/time for submission tender and Original EMD in physical form in the office of Secretary, Delhi S.P.C.A. Boulevard Road (Tis Hazari) Delhi-110054.	17.11.2020 up to 3.00 p.m.
Last date/time for submission of samples of Feed and Fodder to the Supdt., Delhi S.P.C.A. Boulevard Road (Tis Hazari) Delhi-110054.	17.11.2020 up to 3.00 p.m.
Date and time of opening of Technical bids (online) by the technical committee in the office of Secretary, S.P.C.A. Boulevard Road (Tis Hazari) Delhi-110054.	17.11.2020 up to 4.00 p.m.
Date and time of opening of Financial bid (online) in the office of Secretary, S.P.C.A. Boulevard Road (Tis Hazari) Delhi-110054.	Will be informed later

The details are available on the home page of <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
Sd/- (Dr. Rakesh Singh) Secretary, DSPCA
DIP/SHABDARTH/0385/20-21

UJVN LIMITED
H.O.: "UJJWAL" Maharani, Bagh GMS Road, Dehradun - 248006
Telephone - 0135-2763808, Fax - 0135-2763808
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvnl.com

Letter No.: 673 **Time Extension Notice** Dated: 26.10.2020

Invited tender by Office of the Executive Engineer (M) Tiloth Power House, Uttarkashi is hereby extended as detailed below:
Tender No.: 10/EE(M)/2020-21, Name of work: **Annual repairing and rewinding of different induction motors.** Last date for downloading tender on website: 06.11.2020. Submission date of bid : 07.11.2020 at 16:00 hrs., Opening date of bid : 12.11.2020 at 16:00 hrs., For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website www.ujvnl.com.

Executive Engineer (M)
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-NOTICE INVITING TENDER

For and on behalf of President of India, Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (RSO), Northern Railway, Delhi Division, New Delhi invites "E-Tender" in prescribed tender form for the following work.

1 Name of the work with its location	The washing, cleaning and sanitization of Electric Locomotives at Electric loco Outfits NDLS, DLI, ANVT, GZB & TKD and Loco Sanitization at NDLS, DLI, ANVT, GZB, TKD, HNZM & PNP stations/yard for the period of two years.
2 Approx. Tender value (Rs.)	Rs. 1,34,40,802/- (including GST)
3 E.M.D (Rs)	Rs. 2,17,200/-
4 Date and Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender	15.00 hrs. on 23.11.2020
5 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen:	www.ireps.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No. 230-Elect-RSO-10A-LoCo Dt. 26.10.2020 2354/2020
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

कार्यालय नगर पालिका, फर्सखनगर (गुस्ताम)
E-mail ID: secymcfarrukhnagar@gmail.com, Ph.: 0124-2275387

सार्वजनिक सूचना

सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि नगरपालिका फर्सखनगर द्वारा वार्ड नं. 13 में अंबेडकर पार्क का निर्माण करवाया जाता है। अंबेडकर पार्क में बने हुए खंडर भवन में ईंट, सिरिया, दरवाजें व खिड़कियां (जो भी सामान मौके पर मौजूद है) की खुली बोली की जानी है। जिसकी धरोहर राशि 1,00,00/- रुपए तथा आरक्षित राशि 10,00,00/- रुपए निश्चित की गई है। इच्छुक बोलीदाता दिनांक 29.10.2020 को दोपहर बाद 02.00 बजे नगरपालिका कार्यालय फर्सखनगर में उपस्थित होने का कष्ट करें। बोली से संबंधित शर्तें निश्चित तिथि व समय पर सुनाई जाएगी।

हस्ता/- प्रधान, नगरपालिका, फर्सखनगर। 83396/HRY

हस्ता/- सचिव, नगरपालिका, फर्सखनगर।

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Northern Railway, Moradabad for & on behalf of the President of India, invites sealed tenders:-

SN	Tenders for contract of "Station Ticket Booking Agent" at "E" category railway stations of Moradabad Division for issue of unreserved railway tickets through computerized Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) are invited. Name of stations are as under:-	Completion period	Cost of Tender Form	Address of the office from where the Tender form can be purchased	Date & time for submission of the Tender & opening of Tenders	Website of Terms and Conditions location and STBA form where complete terms and conditions etc. of STBA can be seen
	Clutterbuckganj, Kakori, Rahimabad, Tisua, Dabhatpur, Uchaula, Maseel, Babugarh, Habituwala, Dilwamagar Rasuiya, Bareillycant. Mundhapandeya, Ramkot, Bilpur, karna, Khurja,cty,cty.	3 Years Three Years	Rs.1180/- per tender form for each station	Commercial Branch of the office of the Divisional Railway Manager, Northern Railway, Moradabad Upto 17:00 hrs of Date 26.11.2020 working days	Tenders will be received on 27.11.2020 from 10.00 to 14.00 hrs and will be opened after 15:00 hrs	www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in Notice board is located in the Commercial Branch of the office of the Divisional Railway Manager, Northern Railway, Moradabad

Notice No. 1/STBA/Policy/2016 C Dated : 26.10.2020 2353/2020
Serving Customers With A Smile

ई-जाहीर निविदा
कार्यालयाचे नाव : चिपळूण नगर परिषद, ता. चिपळूण, जि. रत्नागिरी

ई-निविदा मागविणारी सूचना क्र. १०३१ सन २०२०-२१

मुख्याधिकारी, चिपळूण नगर परिषद, जि. रत्नागिरी चिपळूण नगर परिषद हद्दीतील रस्ते डांबरीकरण करण्याची कामे शासनचे विशेष रस्ता अनुदानअंतर्गत १४ वा वित्त आवेगानंतर्गत शासन मान्यताप्राप्त निविदाधारककडून ई-निविदा मागविण्यात येत आहेत.

ई-निविदेचे वेळापत्रक
निविदा प्रक्रियेची तारीख व वेळ

अ.क्र.	निविदा प्रक्रियेचे स्वरूप	दिनांक	वेळ
१	ऑनलाइन टेंडर प्रसिद्धी	२७.१०.२०२०	सका. १०.०० वा.पासून
२	ऑनलाइन निविदा डाउनलोड करण्याचा सुरुवात कालावधी	२७.१०.२०२०	सका. १०.०० वा.पासून
३	ऑनलाइन निविदा भरण्याचा सुरुवात कालावधी	२७.१०.२०२०	सका. १०.०० वा.पासून
४	ऑनलाइन निविदा भरण्याचा समालोच कालावधी	२७.११.२०२०	सां. ५.०० वाजेपर्यंत
५	ऑनलाइन निविदा उघडण्याचा टेक्निकल (पार्ट) कालावधी	०१.१२.२०२०	सां. ५.०० वाजता

सविस्तर ई-निविदा सूचना शासनच्या www.mahatenders.gov.in/ या संकेतस्थळावर उपलब्ध आहे.

जा. क्र./बांधकाम/ई-निविदा/१०३१/२०२०-२१
चिपळूण नगर परिषद कार्यालय,
दिनांक : २६.१०.२०२०

Sd/-xxx (सौ. वैभव विद्यार्थी) मुख्याधिकारी चिपळूण नगर परिषद

Sd/-xxx (सौ. सुरेखा नि. खोर्डे) अध्यक्ष चिपळूण नगर परिषद



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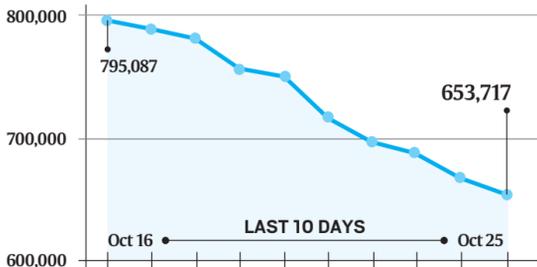
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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

INDIA ACTIVE CASES

653,717



Note: The Oct 25 figure in this graph is based on the government update on Oct 26

INDIA TOTAL CASES
7,910,019

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on Oct 26

WORLD TOTAL CASES
43,215,856

Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11 pm on Oct 26

School closure, work from home, ban on public events — which one works best?

RESTRICTIONS PUT in place by various countries — school and office closure, ban on public events, travel restrictions etc — did help restrict the spread of Covid-19, but combined measures were more effective than any single restriction, a new study published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* has found. University of Edinburgh researchers took data from 131 countries and ranked various non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) for their effectiveness.

How they worked it out

The calculations are based on the R number — which indicates the number of healthy persons to whom an infected individual can transmit the virus within a population group.

The researchers investigated the effect of separate and combined interventions on transmission, by estimating the R number when these interventions are introduced and lifted. "To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to assess the temporal association between changing the status of a range of NPIs and the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, as measured by R, for all countries for which data were available," they wrote.

Daily estimates of R were linked with the measures in place from January to July. A timeline was created for each country, which was divided into individual phases (within any phase, all measures remained unchanged). Using complex modelling, the researchers linked the restrictions in each phase with changes in R.

Single vs package

24% Bans on public events were found to cause the single highest reduction. R dropped 24% within 28 days. Other measures were not found to have a significant effect on their own.

VARIOUS INTERVENTIONS AND THE 'R' NUMBER

Intervention | Day 7 | Day 14 | Day 28

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Introduction | 0.89 | 0.86 | 0.85

Relaxation | 1.05 | 1.18 | 1.24

WORKPLACE CLOSURE

Introduction | 0.89 | 0.89 | 0.87

Relaxation | 1.04 | 1.10 | 1.01

PUBLIC EVENTS BAN

Introduction | 0.90 | 0.83 | 0.76

Relaxation | 1.02 | 1.07 | 1.21

PUBLIC TRANSPORT CLOSURE

Introduction | 0.97 | 0.98 | 0.99

Relaxation | 1.00 | 1.08 | 1.04

REQUIREMENTS TO STAY AT HOME

Introduction | 0.90 | 0.89 | 0.97

Relaxation | 0.97 | 1.02 | 1.11

INTERNAL MOVEMENT LIMITS

Introduction | 0.97 | 0.97 | 0.93

Relaxation | 0.98 | 1.06 | 1.13

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL LIMITS

Introduction | 0.89 | 0.97 | 1.08

Relaxation | 0.95 | 1.02 | 0.98

Source: Li, Campbell et al/*The Lancet Infectious Diseases*

PAPER CLIP

NEW RESEARCH

29% The team modelled four "packages" that combined a number of measures. The least restrictive of these — ban on public events, ban on gatherings of more than 10 — reduced R by 29% on day 28.

52% This was the reduction

caused by a package of school and workplace closure, ban on public events and gatherings of more than ten people, limits on movement and a stay-at-home requirement.

KABIR FIRAQUE

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

The plasma therapy debate

India's largest ever trial has found convalescent plasma therapy ineffective in Covid-19. ICMR is cautious about the option, some states still push it. In what circumstances do experts recommend this therapy?

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, OCTOBER 26

RECENTLY PUBLISHED findings on convalescent plasma therapy on Covid-19 patients have triggered a debate over its efficacy. After the country's largest such trial, known by the acronym PLACID, found that convalescent plasma was ineffective in arresting Covid-19, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has been considering dropping this option from the national guidelines. However, in several states including most-affected Maharashtra and Delhi, health authorities continue to push the option while those running plasma blood banks promote it with anecdotal accounts on social media.

What is this therapy?

Plasma is the liquid part of the blood. Convalescent plasma, extracted from the blood of patients recovering from an infection, is a source of antibodies against the infection. The therapy involves using their plasma to help others recover. For Covid-19, this has been one of the treatment options. The donor would have to be a documented case of Covid-19 and healthy for 28 days since the last symptoms.

What has happened to spark the debate?

An ICMR study has found convalescent plasma was not associated with a reduction in progression to severe Covid-19 or all-cause mortality. The results of the PLACID trial at multiple centres, first out on a pre-print server in September, were published in the peer-reviewed *British Medical Journal* on October 22. At a recent media briefing, ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava had said they were contemplating deleting convalescent plasma as a definitive therapy from the national guidelines for Covid-19 treatment.

What are the trial findings?

While use of convalescent plasma seemed to improve resolution of shortness of breath and fatigue in patients with moderate Covid-19, this did not translate into a reduction in 28-day mortality or progression to severe disease.

PLACID was a randomised controlled trial in 39 hospitals spread across 14 states and



At a plasma donation camp at Dharavi in Mumbai. Ganesh Shirekar/Express Archive

Union Territories and representing 25 cities. It covered 464 adults admitted to hospital (screened April 22 to July 14) with confirmed moderate Covid-19, of whom 235 were assigned to convalescent plasma therapy while 229 were randomised to receive the best standard of care. The group of 235 received two doses of 200 ml convalescent plasma, 24 hours apart.

Progression to severe disease or death at 28 days after enrolment occurred in 44 (19%) of the participants in the intervention arm as compared to 41 (18%) in the control arm. A higher proportion of patients in the intervention arm showed resolution of shortness of breath and fatigue at day 7, whereas resolution of fever and cough did not differ between the two arms. "These are clinically meaningful results," said Dr Aparna Mukherjee, Principal Investigator of the PLACID trial.

Have there been such results elsewhere?

In China, a controlled trial of 103 patients with severe Covid-19 reported no effect of convalescent plasma treatment in terms of time to clinical improvement. In the Netherlands, the ConCOVID trial, prematurely terminated after 86 patients had been enrolled, could not find any effect on mortality at 60 days, hospi-

tal stay, or disease severity at 15 days.

So, who all are still pushing convalescent plasma therapy?

Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain has said convalescent plasma played a big part in his recovery and many lives have been saved. In Maharashtra, the government has been conducting the Platina trial in severely ill patients. It is the brainchild of the Medical Education Department and CM Uddhav Thackeray.

Dr Mohammed Faizal, state coordinator of the Platina Project, said at least 40% of the trial has been completed. "We should be able to complete the trial in another three months. We have recruited 132 patients and the total target is 472," Dr Faizal said.

Officials said that there is no order or letter from ICMR regarding stopping use of convalescent plasma. "However, ours is a scientific research trial and irrespective of the PLACID Trial findings, the PLATINA trial will continue," Dr Faizal said.

What happens if ICMR does remove the therapy from its guidelines?

The ICMR has been cautious because of the trial findings. Experts said, however, that guidelines are not necessarily binding and it is too

early to dismiss convalescent plasma therapy.

But there are other issues. The authorisation of convalescent plasma as treatment for Covid-19 in India has led to questionable practices such as calls for donors on social media, and the sale of convalescent plasma on the black market. Although convalescent plasma is a safe form of treatment when transfused in accordance to the regulations, it involves resource-intensive processes such as plasmapheresis, plasma storage, and measurement of neutralising antibodies. A limited number of institutes in India have the capacity to undertake these procedures in a quality-assured manner, the *BMJ* paper said.

What is the way forward, then?

This is a new virus, and around the world evidence is still emerging on the best therapeutic options. For example, remdesivir has been sanctioned as a drug of choice by the US drug regulator, while the World Health Organization's Solidarity Trial has found it had little or no effect on 28-day Covid mortality. And experts said use of convalescent therapy has saved some lives but concerns have been raised by the PLACID trial.

Dr Shashank Joshi, member of the Maharashtra task force on Covid-19 and Dean, College of Physicians, said that much before the evidence from trials, the task force had introduced some safeguards to check indiscriminate use of drugs such as remdesivir. "Covid care is individualised care. Use of the right drugs in the right patient does work. Some of the therapies can be continued on compassionate grounds," Dr Joshi said. He said there were limitations in the Solidarity trial — it was not placebo controlled. While results of the Platina trial are awaited, Dr Joshi said the results of one or two trials are not going to change the outcome of a recommendation.

Elizabeth Pathak, president, Women's Institute for Independent Social Enquiry, who has written in the *BMJ* on the trial findings, said: "The potential harms of the non-immune components of convalescent plasma should be rigorously investigated, only donor plasma with detectable titers of neutralizing antibodies should be given to trial participants, to ensure that the potential for benefit exists for all intervention arm patients."

What next in Future-Reliance vs Amazon

KHUSHBOO NARAYAN
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

ON SUNDAY, a tribunal in Singapore restrained Future Group and Reliance Industries Limited from proceeding with a Rs 24,713-crore deal signed in August for Future Retail to sell its retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing units to Reliance Retail and Fashionstyle. The emergency order by the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) came on a plea from Amazon, which said the Reliance-Future deal violated the terms of Amazon's agreement with the Future Group.

Why did Amazon approach SIAC?

The arbitral institution administering the arbitration, the applicable rules and the seat of arbitration is decided as per the contractual agreement between the parties. The Amazon and Future Group have under their agreement agreed to refer their disputes to SIAC.

Typically, in a three-member arbitral tribunal, each party appoints one member and the third is jointly appointed by the two nominees or, if they fail to agree, by the arbitral institution. However, under SIAC rules, parties can move SIAC to appoint an emergency arbitrator for urgent interim relief, even as the process of appointment of the main tribunal is under way. On Amazon's request, SIAC appointed an emergency arbitrator, who heard the parties and passed the emergency award.

How can this interim award be enforced on the parties in India?

According to Ashish Kabra, who heads the International Dispute Resolution & Investigations Practice for Nishith Desai Associates in Singapore, currently under Indian law, there is no express mechanism for enforcement of the orders of the Emergency Arbitrator. Typically, the parties voluntarily comply with the Emergency Award. However, if the parties don't comply

with the order voluntarily, then the party which has won the emergency award, in this case Amazon, can move a High Court in India under Section 9 of the Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996, to get similar reliefs as granted by the Emergency Arbitrator. Kabra said that in the past, High Courts in India have passed orders which indirectly enforced the reliefs granted by the emergency arbitrator.

Can Future challenge the interim award?

It cannot challenge that order in India. It may either apply to the emergency arbitrator itself showing cause why the order should be vacated or modified, or await the constitution of the arbitral tribunal and then apply before the main tribunal.

However, if a petition is filed in a High Court in India under Section 9 of the Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996, then the Future Group could put forth its objections on why the reliefs as granted by the emergency arbitrator should not be granted by the High Court.

Why has Singapore become the hub of international arbitration?

Singapore has emerged as the preferred location for international arbitration involving Indian companies as foreign investors typically want to avoid the rigmarole of Indian courts.

"Foreign investors who have invested in India feel that Singapore is neutral ground for dispute resolution. Singapore itself over time has built a stellar reputation as jurisdiction driven by rule of law with international standards and high integrity. This gives comfort to investors that the arbitration process will be quick, fair and just," said Nishith Desai, founder of Nishith Desai Associates and a former board member of SIAC.

India now has its own international arbitration centre in Mumbai. But in context of arbitration, this is a recent development.

According to the 2019 annual report of SIAC, India was the top user of its arbitration seat with 485 cases, followed by Philippines at 122, China at 76 and the United States at 65.

Why a planned biopic of Muralitharan has upset some Tamils in India

SRIRAM VEERA
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

A CONTROVERSY has broken out around Sri Lanka cricketer Muttiah Muralitharan after the Indian actor Vijay Sethupathi tweeted on October 8 about the launch of a biopic, 800, in which he is to portray the legendary spinner.

Tamil nationalist sympathisers in Tamil Nadu have expressed a wish that Sethupathi should not act in the biopic. They have questioned the conduct of Muralitharan, who is a Sri Lankan Tamil, during the civil war that left lakhs of civilians dead and ended with the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009. Anger stemmed from Muralitharan's association with Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and his brother, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. In 2009, Mahinda Rajapaksa was President and Gotabaya was Defence Minister — and both were accused of human rights violations in the final stages of the war.

Amid the uproar, Muralitharan issued a statement that he had asked the actor to withdraw from the project.

What criticism has he faced?

Bharathiraja, a film director with Tamil nationalist sympathies, wrote an open letter to the actor Sethupathi, claiming that

Muralitharan was a traitor of the Tamil race. "Muralitharan had been the voice of his master (Mahinda) Rajapaksa. How will the Tamil people accept him?" AIADMK leader and Fisheries Minister D Jayakumar said.

The film's producers clarified that the film would not show Eelam Tamils in bad light, but that didn't stop criticism including from lyricist Vairamuthu.

Sethupathi found support from the actress Radhika Sarathkumar, who called the critics "jobless".

How has Muralitharan responded?

In his statement on October 19, he said: "There have been many allegations levelled against me that I supported genocide. For instance, when I made a statement in 2019 that 2009 was the best year of my life, it was misconstrued that I was celebrating the genocide of Eelam Tamils. As someone who has constantly spent his life in a conflict zone, the end of the war in 2009 was a welcome change... I have never supported genocide, and I never will. As a minority community living in Sinhalese-majority Sri Lanka, Tamils battled low self-esteem. My parents considered themselves as second-class citizens and it was only natural that I too followed suit..."

What had he said about 2009 being the best year of his life?

He made that statement last September

at the Viyathmaga Annual Convention 2019 for professionals, conducted by an organisation which purportedly supported Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

"I am a Tamil. We lived in this country in fear... In 1977, my father was attacked by a sword, 12 inches, and I can still see the scar on his back..."

"What I am saying is both parties are wrong. At that time, what the government did was wrong, LTTE was also wrong. They had choices; in '87, '88, during the peace accords, and everything..."

"The greatest day I thought in my life was in 2009. I thought in this country we can go without any fear..." he said.

What is Muralitharan's take on the current government?

Last December, Muralitharan had praised Gotabaya as an efficient administrator, and criticised Tamil Nadu politicians for interfering in the affairs of Sri Lankan Tamils.

"Tell me, if there is a problem within your family, do your neighbours interfere? Tamil Nadu politicians do not understand the problems of Sri Lankans. They should allow our government to get on with governance..." Muralitharan had said.

In an interview to *Hindustan Times* in December, he said, "I support President Rajapaksa because he is the right person to lead our country. Over the years before he



Muralitharan has now asked the actor not to take up the film. Express Archive

came to power, there was no progress. The economy was down, nothing was moving. President Rajapaksa is an administrator, a former defence secretary and army man. He is a clever person who will carry out reforms, strike a different path, improve lives and do the right thing."

When did Muralitharan's family migrate to Sri Lanka?

Muralitharan's paternal grandfather Periyasamy Sinasamy migrated in 1920 to work on tea plantations. He eventually returned to Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu but his son Sinasamy Muttiah became a suc-

cessful businessman after starting a biscuit factory in Kandy in the 1950s.

Muralitharan belongs to a section of Tamils that live in the central hills of Sri Lanka. They are recent migrants to the island nation and are called 'Up Country Tamils', 'Hill Country Tamils', 'Indian Origin Tamils' (in Indian official use). The political leadership of this group has always worked with the government or party in power to improve living and working conditions on the tea plantations where the workforce remains almost entirely Tamil.

According to the 2012 census, 'Sri Lankan-Tamils' are 11.2% 'Indian-Tamils' 4.2% of Sri Lanka's population.

What happened in the 1977 attack?

Muralitharan was just five then. Their factory and house were burnt down, his father was hacked on the back with a sword, but they were saved by Sinhalese neighbours, he has said.

"Our factory and our house were burnt down in 1977 and that was painful for a time. We were saved by Sinhalese. They came and stopped the crazy people before they killed us. We never forgot that. We rebuilt them and moved on," he told *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 2010.

He been consistent with this view. In 2004, in an interview to Channel 4, Muralitharan described his philosophy:

"Why we dig the past and make more enemies? I am a Tamil, I got affected in the 1977 riot, I am not thinking about it. You forget, forgive and move on."

Has Muralitharan ever engaged with the LTTE?

In 2004, as an ambassador for the World Food Program, Muralitharan surveyed schools, clinics and farms in LTTE-held areas. The poet and writer Tishani Doshi, who accompanied Muralitharan, wrote that year in *The Hindu* about a luncheon meeting with the deputy head of the political wing of the LTTE, Sudhamaster, in the jungle headquarters in Killinochi.

Sudhamaster told Muralitharan the LTTE were "very happy that you are visiting these areas". Muralitharan asked a lot of serious questions about the culpability for the civil war, and got detailed answers, Doshi wrote.

Has he helped the Tamil region and its people?

Through an NGO, Foundation of Goodness, founded by his manager, Muralitharan helped build 1,024 houses in 24 villages (by 2008) in northern regions of the country affected by the tsunami. He has canvassed the world's attention and raised funds for redevelopment of affected areas.

Longer version on www.indianexpress.com

TOP OF THE WORLD



Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga delivers a policy speech in Parliament on Monday. *Reuters*

ASIA

PM: Japan aims for zero emissions, carbon neutral society by 2050

JAPAN IS aiming to cut greenhouse gases to zero by 2050 and become a carbon-neutral society, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said on Monday as he unveiled a major shift in position on climate change. Japan had previously said it would be carbon neutral as soon as possible in the second half of the century, rather than set an explicit date. "Responding to climate change is no longer a constraint on economic growth," Suga said in his first policy address to parliament since taking office last month. Japan is the fifth-biggest emitter of carbon dioxide. *REUTERS*

WEST BANK

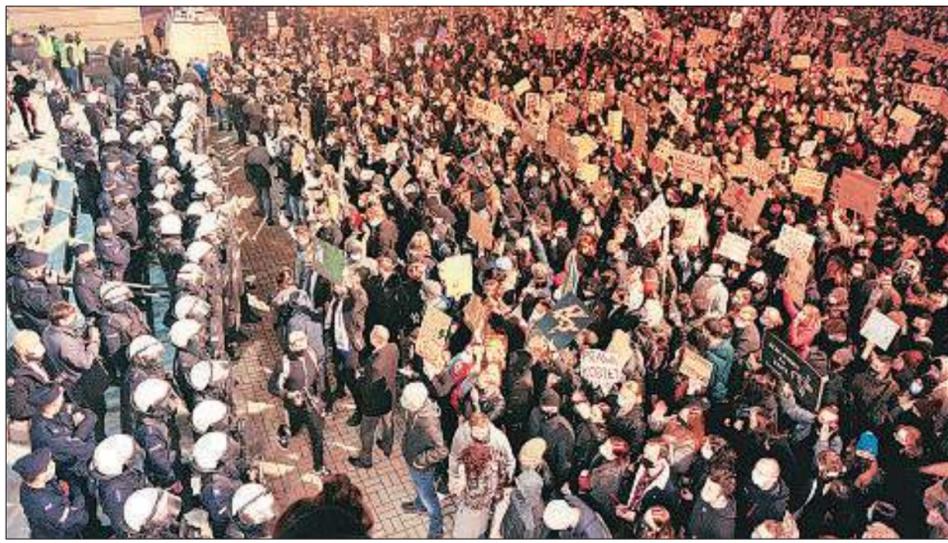
Palestinian teen dies after chase by Israeli army

AN 18-YEAR-OLD Palestinian died early Sunday after being chased by Israeli troops in the West Bank, but the circumstances of his death remain in dispute. Relatives of Amer Snobar said that Israeli troops had beaten him to death, while the Israeli army said the man fell and hit his head while troops were chasing him. The army said it tried to arrest Snobar after receiving reports that Palestinians were throwing stones at vehicles on a West Bank highway near a village north of Ramallah. *AP*

VIETNAM

1.3 million people to be evacuated as typhoon nears

VIETNAM IS preparing to evacuate nearly 1.3 million people as it braces for the impact of typhoon Molave, which lashed the Philippines overnight causing flooding, landslides and leaving at least a dozen fishermen missing. Typhoon Molave, with wind speeds of 125 kilometre per hour and gusts of up to 150 kph, left the main Philippine island of Luzon earlier on Monday, with heavy rain causing seven landslides and floods in 11 areas, the disaster agency said. There were no reports of casualties, but 12 fishermen at sea had not yet returned. *REUTERS*



POLAND SEES MASS PROTESTS OVER ABORTION BAN

A protest in front of the Catholic Cathedral in Katowice, Poland, on Sunday night. Thousands of activists disrupted church services and faced off against police across Poland on Sunday, chanting during mass and spraying slogans on walls to protest against a court ruling that amounts to a near-total ban on abortion. A Constitutional Court decision outlawing abortions due to foetal defects has now triggered four days of demonstrations. The ruling ended the most common of the few legal grounds left for abortion in Poland and set the predominately Catholic country further apart from the European mainstream. *Reuters*

Pak summons French envoy as anger mounts

Protest in Bangladesh; boycott calls in Turkey, Gulf over 'Islamophobia' in France

CHRISTIAN LOWE & GIBRAN NAIYYAR PESHIMAM

PARIS, ISLAMABAD, OCT 26

PAKISTAN SUMMONED the French ambassador in Islamabad on Monday in the latest expression of anger in the Muslim world over France displaying images of the Prophet Mohammad that Muslims consider blasphemous.

In Bangladesh on Monday, protesters unfurled placards with a caricature of French President Emmanuel Macron and the words: "Macron is the



Imran Khan has accused French President Emmanuel Macron of "attacking Islam"

enemy of peace", while over the weekend a group of Kuwaiti retailers removed French products from their shelves.

In Turkey, President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan called for Turks to boycott French goods and urged EU leaders to halt Macron's "anti-Islam" agenda. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have also seen calls for a boycott of French goods.

The row has its roots in a knife attack outside a French school on October 16 in which an 18-year-old man of Chechen origin beheaded Samuel Paty, a 47-year-old school teacher who had shown pupils cartoons of Prophet Mohammad in a civics lesson.

In the days that follows, the caricatures were projected onto the facade of a building in one city and people displayed them at

protests around the country. Macron said he would redouble efforts to stop conservative Islamic beliefs subverting French values.

But the French response to the teacher's killing unleashed outrage in several Muslim-majority countries, where people accused France's rulers of being Islamophobic.

The French ambassador in Islamabad was summoned to the foreign ministry there a day after Pakistani PM Imran Khan accused Macron of "attacking Islam". Khan also called on Facebook to ban Islamophobic content on its platform. *REUTERS*

Moon may hold more frozen water than previously suspected

MARCIA DUNN

CAPE CANAVERAL, OCTOBER 26

THE MOON'S shadowed, frigid nooks and crannies may hold frozen water in more places and in larger quantities than previously suspected, good news for astronauts at future lunar bases who could tap into these resources for drinking and making rocket fuel, scientists reported Monday.

While previous observations have indicated millions of tonnes of ice in the permanently shadowed craters of the moon's poles, a pair of studies in the journal *Nature Astronomy* take the availability of lunar surface water to a new level.

More than 40,000 square kilometres of lunar terrain have the capability to trap water in the form of ice, according to a team led by the University of Colorado's Paul Hayne. That's 20% more area than previous estimates, he said.

These ice-rich areas are near the moon's north and south poles. Temperatures are so low in these so-called cold traps — minus 163 degrees Celsius — that they could hold onto the water for millions or even billions of years.

"We believe this will help ex-



More than 40,000 square km of lunar terrain have the capability to trap water in the form of ice, scientists said.

pand the possible landing sites for future lunar missions seeking water, opening up real estate previously considered 'off limits' for being bone dry," Hayne said in an email to The Associated Press.

Using data from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, the researchers identified cold traps as small as a few metres across and as wide as 30 km and more, and used computer models to get all the way down to micrometres in size. "Since the little ones are too small to see from orbit, despite being vastly more numerous, we can't yet identify ice inside them," Hayne said. "Once we're on the surface, we will do that experiment." *AP*

UK hospital told to prepare for Oxford vaccine in Nov: report

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, OCTOBER 26

A MAJOR London hospital trust has been told to be ready to receive the first batches of the Covid-19 vaccine being trialled by Oxford University and AstraZeneca by early next month, according to a UK news newspaper on Monday.

The Sun newspaper reported that the country's state-funded National Health Service (NHS) is preparing for an initial rollout of the vaccine from the week "commencing November 2".

"The vaccine is still in testing, but a major effort has been ordered to have the world-leading hospital in London ready to go as soon as it is given the green light," the report said. The report claims all other clinical trials at the unnamed hospital have been paused as all resources go toward preparing to vaccinate thousands of doctors, nurses and other frontline staff as soon as the shots are ready.

"The NHS has a tried and tested track record for delivering vaccination programmes and will work with existing partners across the healthcare system to ensure a Covid-19 vaccine can be deployed safely and effectively," a government statement said, without confirming or denying the report. *PTI*

US early vote exceeds 2016; GOP chips away at Dems' advantage



RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

58.6 mn ballots already cast

NICHOLAS RICCARDI & ANGELIKI KASTANIS

OCTOBER 26

WITH EIGHT days before Election Day, more people already have cast ballots in this year's presidential election than voted early or absentee in the 2016 race as the start of in-person early voting in big states led to a surge in turnout in recent days.

The opening of early voting locations in Florida, Texas and elsewhere has piled millions of new votes on top of the mail ballots arriving at election offices as voters try to avoid crowded places on November 3 during the coronavirus pandemic.

The result is a total of 58.6 million ballots cast so far, more than the 58 million that The Associated Press logged as being cast through the mail or at in-person early voting sites in 2016.

Democrats have continued to dominate the initial balloting, but Republicans are narrowing the gap. GOP voters have begun to show up at early in-person voting, a sign that many heeded President Donald Trump's unfounded warnings about mail-voting fraud.

On October 15, Democrats registrants cast 51% of all ballots reported, compared with 25% from Republicans. On Sunday,



At an early voting site in New York. *AP*

RUSSIA SLAMS BIDEN OVER THREAT REMARK

THE KREMLIN said on Monday that US Democratic presidential challenger Joe Biden's assessment of Russia as the biggest threat to US national security was wrong and encouraged hatred of Russia. Biden made the remarks in an interview aired on Sunday. "We absolutely do not agree," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We can only regret that absolute hatred of the Russian Federation is spread in this way." *REUTERS*



Amy Coney Barrett

Barrett's US SC confirmation edges closer after Sunday vote

Washington: The Republican-controlled US Senate moved closer toward a final confirmation vote on President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, on Monday, just over a week before Election Day.

The Senate voted 51-48, largely along party lines, Sunday to limit debate on the nomination, teeing up the final vote expected to take place Monday.

With Republicans controlling the chamber 53-47, Barrett looks almost certain to take up a lifetime appointment on the bench over universal Democratic opposition. Only two Republicans — Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins — opposed limiting debate. But Murkowski said she intends to vote to confirm Barrett. *REUTERS*

Chileans vote by big margin to tear up Pinochet's constitution

AISLINN LAING & FABIAN CAMBERO

SANTIAGO, OCTOBER 26

CHILEANS Poured into the country's main squares on Sunday night after voters gave a ringing endorsement to a plan to tear up the country's Pinochet-era constitution in favour of a new charter drafted by citizens.

In Santiago's Plaza Italia, the focus of the massive protests last year which sparked the demand for a new magna carta, fireworks rose above a crowd of tens of thousands of jubilant people singing in unison as the word "rebirth" was beamed onto a tower above.

More than 78% of voters opted for a new charter. Many have expressed hopes that a new text will temper an unabashedly capitalist ethos.

"This triumph belongs to the people, it's thanks to everyone's efforts that we are at this moment of celebration," Daniel, 37, told Reuters in Santiago's Plaza Nunoa. "What makes me happiest is the



At a celebration of the results in Valparaiso. The sign reads: "Against the wind and Covid, Chile decided to end the legacy of the dictator." *Reuters*

participation of the youth, young people wanting to make changes."

Chile's President Sebastian Pinera said if the country was divided by the debate over whether to approve or reject plans for a new charter, from now on they should unite behind a new text that provided "a home for everyone."

EXPLAINED Hoping to change direction

THE CALL for a new constitution that came up during last year's mass protests was a call for the country to move in a different direction and offer more equal rights to healthcare, education and pensions. The current constitution, drafted under the dictatorship of Pinochet, was widely seen as a charter that blocked substantial change and maintained a link with a grim period in Chile's history.

Four fifths of voters said they wanted the charter to be drafted by a specially-elected body of citizens — made up of an equal number of men and women — over a mixed convention of lawmakers and citizens. Members of the constitutional convention will be voted in by April 2021. *REUTERS*

ALL WOMEN ON AUSTRALIA-BOUND FLIGHT MADE TO UNDERGO INVASIVE EXAMINATION

Qatar airport strip search draws shock and outrage

LIVIA ALBECK-RIPKA & YAN ZHUANG

DARWIN, OCTOBER 26

THE QATAR Airways flight bound for Sydney, Australia, had been mysteriously stalled on the tarmac in Doha for more than three hours when an announcement boomed through the cabin. All female passengers had to take their passports and disembark immediately.

They were marched from the plane and directed to ambulances, where, according to Australian officials and accounts from some women, they were strip-searched and given in-

sive medical exams to see if they had recently given birth because a newborn had been found abandoned in a bathroom at Hamad International Airport.

The episode in Doha sent shock waves through Australia, drawing anger and disbelief. It called into question Qatar's treatment of women and threatened to tarnish diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Among the women who told Australian officials she had been examined while transiting through the Qatari capital on Flight QR908 was a 31-year-old Australian nurse who insisted she be identified only by her first name, Jessica, because of the



Female passengers on the Qatar Airways flight were told to disembark the plane to undergo the examination after a newborn was found in an airport bathroom. *Reuters*

personal nature of the exam.

"I was scared," she said. "We were all, like, Can someone please tell us what is happening?" About

the woman who examined her, she said: "All she said was 'A baby has been found in a bin, and we need to test you.'"

The exam occurred on October 2, but the experience of the women went public only after the Australian news station Channel 7 broke the news this weekend, and it ricocheted around the globe.

On Monday, the Australian government said it was demanding answers from Qatar Airways.

"The Australian government is deeply concerned at the unacceptable treatment of some female passengers on a recent Qatar Airways flight to Doha Airport," the authorities said in a statement. The government called the passengers' treatment "offensive, grossly inappropriate and beyond circumstances in which the women could give

free and informed consent."

The case has been referred to the Australian Federal Police.

Qatar Airways could not be reached for comment. Hamad International Airport said the newborn found abandoned at the airport was being cared for but remained unidentified. As for the medical examinations, the airport said: "Medical professionals expressed concern to officials about the health and welfare of a mother who had just given birth and requested she be located prior to departing HIA Individuals who had access to the specific area of the airport where the newborn infant was found were asked to assist in the query." *NYT*

7 held over tanker 'hijack' after UK commando raid

JILL LAWLESS

LONDON, OCTOBER 26

SEVEN STOWAWAYS seized when British naval special forces stormed an oil tanker in the English Channel have been arrested on suspicion of hijacking, police said Monday.

Police said the men, believed to be from Nigeria, were being held at several police stations.

The 22 crew members of the *Nave Andromeda* were "safe and well" after the raid, which unfolded after darkness fell on Sunday. Special Boat Service commandos were lowered by rope from helicopters onto the tanker. Within minutes, the stowaways were in custody. Navios Tanker Management,



The Nave Andromeda. *AP*

which operates the Liberian-registered vessel which had left Lagos, Nigeria, on Oct. 6, said the ship's master became "concerned" due to the increasingly hostile behaviour of the stowaways. A 10-hour standoff ensued as the tanker circled an area a few miles southeast of the Isle of Wight, south of Southampton. The coast guard scrambled helicopters to the scene, and then the government authorised military action. *AP*



GOLD

₹51,034



RUPEE

₹73.85



OIL

\$40.47



SILVER

₹62,008

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market; gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Brent crude as of 2230 IST

SENSEX: 40,145.50 ▼ 540.00 NIFTY: 11,767.75 ▼ 162.60 NIKKEI: 23,494.34 ▼ 22.25 HANG SENG: 24,918.78 ▲ 132.65 FTSE: 5,844.87 ▼ 15.41 DAX: 12,327.12 ▼ 318.63

International market data till 1900 IST

FUTURE RETAIL HOPEFUL OF GETTING AN EARLY HEARING, WITHIN THE WEEK

Future to move Delhi HC on Singapore tribunal order against Reliance deal

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

FUTURE RETAIL, a unit of Future Group, is likely to move the Delhi High Court seeking directions on going ahead with its Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance Retail Ventures, which has been put on hold by the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), sources told *The Indian Express*.

The petition, which is likely to be filed by Tuesday, is expected to challenge the interim order issued on Sunday by an emergency arbitrator of the SIAC. Future Retail is hopeful of getting an early hearing, within the week, sources said.

Following a plea by e-commerce giant Amazon citing alleged contractual violations, the interim order had asked Future Retail, Future Coupons and the parent company Future Group

"not to take any steps in furtherance to the Board Resolution of August 29".

Legal experts said the interim order does not hold much value under Indian laws, and Future and Amazon will have to approach courts in India to seek directions on the course of action.

"For interim orders, there is no provision as such for enforcement under Indian Laws. They (Amazon) may have to file a proceeding in India and seek enforcement of the award, the interim order. This is a heads-up for them (Future)," Amit Jajoo, partner at IndusLaw, said.

Amazon had objected to the Future-Reliance deal, and subsequently instituted arbitration against Future Coupons, Future Retail and Future Group.

On Sunday, Amazon said it welcomed the interim order but remained committed to the arbitration process. Reliance Retail

AMAZON OBJECTED TO THE DEAL

■ Amazon had objected to the Future-Reliance deal, and subsequently instituted arbitration against Future Coupons, Future Retail and Future Group.

said it intends to "enforce its rights and complete the transaction in terms of the scheme and agreement with Future group without any delay".

On Monday, Future Retail notified the exchanges that it had received communication from the SIAC, and enclosed the interim order. The company also said that all agreements it had with companies were "governed by Indian Law and provi-

sions of the Indian Arbitration Act for all intents and purposes".

"This matter raises several fundamental jurisdictional issues, which go to the root of the matter. Accordingly, this order will have to be tested under the provisions of Indian Arbitration Act in an appropriate forum," the company said in a statement.

On August 29, Future Retail had announced that it would "sell by way of a slump sale the retail and wholesale business" of its supermarket chain Big Bazaar, premium food supply unit Foodhall, and fashion and clothes supermarket Brand Factory's retail and wholesale units, to Reliance Retail, a unit of Mukesh Ambani-owned Reliance Industries.

The deal, however, ran into legal trouble with Amazon, which had last year signed a Rs 2,000-crore deal with Future Retail under which the e-commerce major would acquire 49 per cent stake in Future Coupons, the promoter firm.

Following the Future-Reliance deal, Amazon had also said that its agreement with Future Coupons had given it a "call" option.

This provision, Amazon has claimed, enabled it to exercise the option of acquiring all or part of Future Retail's shareholding in the company, within three to 10 years of the agreement. It said the deal also required Future Group to inform Amazon before entering into any sale agreement with third parties.

The deal, Amazon had further said, was a violation of a non-compete clause and a right-of-first-refusal pact. The Future Group had said that it had not sold any stake in the company, and was merely selling its assets and therefore not violated the contract.

PM: Amid projected fall in global energy demand, India set to nearly double consumption



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the 4th India Energy Forum. PTI

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

INDIA IS set to emerge as a leading energy consumer even as global consumption is set to contract, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday, noting that the country was on track to meet its renewable energy commitments.

Speaking at the India Energy Forum by CERAAWeek, he said that the coronavirus pandemic had led to global energy demand falling by a third. "Leading global bodies project that there will be a contraction in global energy demand over the next few years, but these agencies project India to emerge as a leading energy consumer. India is set to nearly double its energy consumption over the long term," he added.

The Prime Minister also said India would increase its domestic petroleum refining capacity from about 250 million tonnes per annum to about 400 million tonnes per annum by 2025.

Stating that India was committed to meeting green energy commitments to the global community, he said, "We had aimed to increase the renewable energy installed capacity by 175 gigawatts by 2022. We have further extended this goal to 450 gigawatts by 2030." Modi added that though India has among the lowest carbon emissions in the industrialised world, the country would con-

ergy targets, increasing the use of electricity in mobility and moving towards emerging fuels such as hydrogen were key drivers of India's energy future.

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who attended the event, said that consumption of petroleum products in the country was on track to reach pre-COVID levels and that energy security had become a "strategic component in our bilateral engagements with several key global players." India recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the United States to potentially lease space in the US to store strategic reserves.

"Our energy agenda in India is inclusive, market based and climate sensitive," said Pradhan, noting that the government had been working on a "mission mode" to meet the country's rapidly growing energy needs.

NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said India had become a pre-eminent example of a developing country leading a sustainability conversation. "In just about a decade, India has become the top five solar countries in the world," he said, adding that India's 450 GW renewable energy expansion programme was the world's largest and included about 280 GW of solar energy. "To achieve the target of 280 GW of solar (installed capacity), around 25-30 GW solar PV is needed to be installed every year till 2030," said Kant.

CERC to be shut for 4 more weeks as Centre seeks time to fill key seat

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE CENTRAL Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), which has been non-operational for nearly two months now, will continue to remain so for at least four more weeks. This is because two of the regulator's members had been asked by the Supreme Court to go on leave until the appointment of a member-law — a position which the Centre on Monday sought more time to fill.

The longer the CERC remains in a state of paralysis, with just its chairperson RK Pujari to hold the fort, the longer it will take for decisions in high-stake tariff matters to come out, according to a lawyer involved in the ongoing case. The regulator requires at least two members for hearings.

The Supreme Court Monday extended its stay on the functioning of the two members — member-finance Arun Goyal and member-technical Indu Shekhar Jha — who were ap-

SC EXTENDS STAY ON FUNCTIONING OF TWO MEMBERS

■ The Supreme Court Monday extended its stay on the functioning of the two members — member-finance Arun Goyal and member-technical Indu Shekhar Jha — who were appointed in the absence of a member-law.

pointed in the absence of a member-law.

The two were first asked to go on leave following a hearing at the apex court on August 28.

"The Honourable Supreme Court has extended the stay on the functioning of the CERC for another four weeks. The reason being that the central government has stated that the IB report has come to them, but they could not finalise the member-law position because further

processes are remaining — such as approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet's (ACC) meeting and the Selection Committee meeting," said Ravi Sharma, Advocate-on-Record for the petitioner.

"They (Centre) were not sure when they would be able to finalise the member-law position, but tentatively, they said, four weeks would be sufficient this time," he added.

CERC has been "non-functional" for nearly two months, as a result, around 1,014 petitions were pending with the regulator in September, with 173 that had been reserved for orders at the end of the month and 72 petitions that had been reserved for orders for over three months.

"There is a huge financial impact (of the non-functionality). CERC is a very important commission in the power sector where all the high-stake matters like tariff matters, change in law, force majeure claims, damages (that are valued) in crores of rupees are being adjudicated," said Sharma.

COVID-19 IMPACT

'Compound interest waiver to cost ₹7,500 cr; help 75% of borrowers'

Nearly 75% of borrowers will benefit from the interest-on-interest concession for small loans, which will cost the government around Rs 7,500 crore, a Crisil report said

>40% Share of small loans under Rs 2 crore within the total systemic credit

~60% Share of eligible loans that were under moratorium as of end April; same is likely to fall to around 30% as of end-August

Why is it important: From a borrower's perspective, the benefit is relatively higher for those who had availed of higher-yielding loans and thus borrowers of unsecured, micro and gold loans will benefit more than those who had taken home loans

LOAN SEGMENTS ELIGIBLE FOR WAIVER:

- MSMEs
- Education
- Housing
- Credit cards
- Automobile
- Personal
- Professional
- Consumption
- Durables



₹1.5 lakh crore: Impact that a complete interest waiver, including interest-on-interest, for the eligible loans up to Rs 2 crore would have had on the exchequer; could have also posed major challenges to Centre and financial sector

Source: Crisil/PTI

Puri retires, Jagdishan takes over as HDFC Bank MD-CEO

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

ADITYA PURI, who was HDFC Bank managing director and CEO for 26 years, retired on Monday from India's largest private bank. Sashidhar Jagdishan has taken over the charge.

On his last day in office, while addressing his colleagues virtually, Puri, 70, spoke about the journey of building the bank which focused on the centrality of the employees. Puri retired in accordance with the RBI regulations which say a private bank CEO's tenure should not exceed 70 years.

Jagdishan has been part of the bank since 1996, and played a crit-



HDFC Bank's new managing director and CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan. Express file

"The board places on record its deep and sincere appreciation for the exceptional contribution made by Puri, and wishes him the very best for his future endeavours," the bank said in a statement. "As the MD of the bank since its inception in the year 1994, Puri has provided outstanding leadership and has contributed significantly to enable the bank scale phenomenal heights," it said.

HDFC's rival ICICI Bank tweeted, "#ICICIBank thanks you, Mr Aditya Puri, for your contribution to the Indian banking industry. Throughout your illustrious career spanning decades, you have been an inspiration to many. We wish you the very best for your future endeavours."

ITC fraud: One held for trading of fake invoices

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

THE PUNE zonal unit of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has arrested a person for trading of fake invoices involving input tax credit (ITC) of over Rs 50 crore.

The person used to generate fake invoices on commission basis for ITC availment and passed it on to others fraudulently, Finance Ministry officials said.

"He has issued bogus/fake invoices for ITC availment of worth Rs. 32.56 lakh and fake invoices for ITC passed on of worth Rs.19.63 lakh. Total ITC involved is Rs 52.19 crore approximately. Further investigations are under progress," they said.

BRIEFLY

SMS option for composition GST

New Delhi: The GST Network on Monday brought the option to file returns via SMS to composition taxpayers.

Airtel IQ platform launched

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel said Monday it has entered cloud communications with the launch of Airtel IQ platform.

Kotak Mahindra Bank profit rises

Mumbai: Kotak Mahindra Bank has posted a 27 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 2,184 crore for quarter ended September 30, 2020. ENS

Decide on CCI plea, SC asks HC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday asked Karnataka High Court to decide the CCI plea for vacating stay on the probe against Amazon and Flipkart for alleged anti-competitive practices.

UBHL closure: Co plea rejected

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea by United Breweries Holdings Limited of Vijay Malviya against a Karnataka High Court order upholding winding up of the firm for recovery of dues payable by Kingfisher Airlines Ltd. PTI

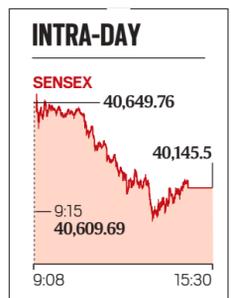
LOCKDOWNS IN EUROPE HIT MARKET SENTIMENT; RE TUMBLES 24 PAISE

Covid cases, fading US stimulus hopes pull down SENSEX; Dow plunges 770 pts

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

STOCK MARKETS on Monday fell by 1.3 per cent as weak global cues, especially concerns over the elusive stimulus deal in the US, and rising Covid cases and fresh lockdowns in Europe hit sentiment. The Sensex plunged by 540 points to 40,145.50 and the Nifty Index shed 163 points to 11,767.75 in the selling wave, even as many countries, including Italy and Spain, announced lockdowns again to tackle the Covid virus.

US stocks fell sharply as surging Covid cases and a stalemate in Washington over the next fiscal aid bill darkened the economic outlook in the run-up to the Presidential election. Dow Jones Index



EXPLAINED Polls in US key

INDICES ARE expected to remain weak in the near term and will be driven by the trend of ongoing Q2 results and developments in the US. All sectoral indices ended in the negative.

fell 2.72 per cent, or 770.03 points, during mid-session. Nasdaq was down 2.01 per cent.

The rupee depreciated by 24 paise to settle at an around four-week low of 73.85 against the US dollar on Monday as muted do-

mestic equities and a strong US dollar weighed on investor sentiment. Brent crude fell 3.11 per cent to \$40.47 a barrel (2:30 pm EDT) on demand concerns.

The sell-off in the equity markets was led by Reliance Industries,

No festive rush for two-wheelers

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

WHILE PASSENGER vehicle (PV) manufacturers seem to have done good business during the Navaratri festival and are looking forward to even better sales during Diwali, business has been dull for two-wheeler players.

Rajiv Bajaj, MD, Bajaj Auto, said in an interview to CNBC TV18 that sales had been disappointing during Navaratri, especially in the entry-level 100 cc segment. "The mass consumer is not coming back in a hurry as this end of the market is under a lot of pressure," he said on Monday. While domes-

tic motorcycle sales were down 3 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y), the 100-cc portfolio of CT100 and Platina motorcycle sales fell by 30 per cent y-o-y, Bajaj indicated. The company has seen a spurt in demand in premium segment, with Pulsar sales rising 28 per cent y-o-y and the KTM and Husqvarna sales going up 25 per cent.

Rough estimates by the Federation of Auto Dealers Association (FADA) see sales of two-wheelers recording a double-digit decline in the current month, on a y-o-y basis, as Navaratri sales were tepid. Typically, there has not been such a divergence between sales of PVs and two-wheelers and, therefore, analysts are still hoping

that two-wheeler sales will pick up during Diwali.

Retail sales of PVs grew about 10 per cent y-o-y in September, while those of two-wheelers reported a 13 per cent decline. Data from the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) on October 16 showed PV sales grew 17.02 per cent y-o-y in the September quarter while sales of two-wheelers remained almost flat at 0.17 per cent.

Analysts attributed several reasons for poor two-wheeler sales even during the festive season, including fewer new launches, low institutional buying and low sales of entry-level two-wheelers. FE

Lenders ask DHFL bidders to sweeten their offers

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 26

THE COMMITTEE of Creditors (CoC), which is supervising the resolution plan of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL), on Monday asked the bidders to sweeten the offers as they found the proposals of the Adani group, Piramal group, US-based Oaktree and Hong Kong-based SC Lowy much below expectations.

Simultaneously, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has allowed the Reserve Bank's plea to extend the corporate insolv-

ency resolution process of DHFL by another 90 days.

Lenders are against handing over the company to a huge haircut of over 70 per cent to the four bidders. Oaktree informed the lenders that it bid for the entire company for Rs 15,800 crore, payable in the next seven years. Oaktree has also offered Rs 12,000 crore, available with company to the lenders. The Adanis offered to pay Rs 750 crore within one year and the balance Rs 1,500 crore will be payable after 8 years. Piramal Enterprises has bid for DHFL's Rs 33,000 crore retail portfolio for only Rs 6,000 crore.

Save Rain Water Create Rain Water Harvesting Structure

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI CITY CORPORATION
Tender Notice No.: 126 / 2020-2021
Rec.No.E1/74322020(Main)
TENDER NOTIFICATION EXTENSION NOTICE Dt. 24.10.2020
Receipt and submission of tenders as per Tender Notice No. 126/2020-2021 is postponed due to administrative reason as detailed below.

Details	Date already notified	Date postponed
Last date for download of Bid documents	27.10.2020 Upto 15.00 Hours.	17.11.2020 Upto 15.00 Hours.
Submission of bids through e-submission	28.10.2020 Upto 15.00 Hours.	18.11.2020 Upto 15.00 Hours.
Tender Opening Date and Time	28.10.2020 Upto 16.00 Hours.	18.11.2020 Upto 16.00 Hours.

Other terms and Conditions remain unchanged.
Commissioner,
Tiruchirappalli City Corporation.
DIPR/4003/TENDER/2020

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD
(A Government of India Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Chief Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Open Tender in Single Packet System through E-Tendering on IREPS portal from eligible contractors for the following work. Name of Work: Metallizing and Protective painting to Bottom Chord, Middle Chord and Top Chord members of Steel Girder spans of Zuari Bridge under SEN/MAO section of KRCL in Goa state. Tender Notice No.: KR/W/09/2020/07. Estimated Cost of the Work : Rs. 100.92 Lakh (Exclusive of GST). Completion Period : Eleven (11) Months including monsoon. Closing Date/Time : 12.11.2020 up to 15:00 hrs for submission of online Offers/Bids. Manual offers shall not be accepted. Please visit www.ireps.gov.in website for details/ participation. Corrigendum / addendum will be hosted in this website only.

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of The Chief Engineer (Kaveri),
5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bangalore - 560009
IFT No:BWSSB/CEKTE/TA-10/30/2020/2524/2020-21 Date :21.10.2020

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER
(Only Through Electronic Tendering)

BWSSB invites tenders in two stage system from eligible tenderers for the work of **Comprehensive Operation & Maintenance of 550 MLD Water Treatment plant at T.K. Halli under Cauvery Water Supply Scheme, Stage-IV, Phase-II for Three years.**
Amount Put to Tender: Rs. 2012.17 Lakhs
EMD Amount: Rs. 30.20 Lakhs

The Last Date and Time for submission of tender document is on **11.12.2020 upto 3.00 pm**. Opening of technical tender is on **14.12.2020 at 4:00 PM**. The details regarding participation in the e-procurement can be obtained by logging on to <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. For further details contact undersigned office during working hours

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Kaveri)

DIPR/DDU/Zen/RD-1453/2020-21

Significance of Pandya's clenched fist salute

Upon reaching his fifty against Rajasthan Royals on Sunday, Hardik Pandya went down on his right knee and raised his right gloved hand.



WHAT DID HARDIK PANDYA DO? Hardik Pandya became the first player in the IPL to take the knee in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter, the anti-racism movement.

When he reached his half century in the 19th over against Rajasthan Royals on Sunday, Pandya went down on his right knee and raised his right gloved hand to give a clenched fist salute. A smiling Pandya looked at his dressing room where Keiron Pollard, the stand-in captain of Mumbai Indians, raised his fist in acknowledgment.

Pandya later tweeted the photo with the caption: #BlackLivesMatter

HAS THERE BEEN AN OFFICIAL STANCE FROM IPL SO FAR?

No, unlike the bilateral series between West Indies and England where all players lined up before the start of the Tests to take the knee, there has been no talk about it in the IPL.

HAS ANY OTHER IPL PLAYER SPOKEN ABOUT BLM?

Jason Holder, West Indies Test captain who plays for Sunrisers Hyderabad, had expressed his

disappointment about the lack of support for the movement in the IPL. "I haven't had one conversation up here (in IPL) around it (BLM). Sometimes it seems it has gone unnoticed, which is a sad thing. I guess it's for us to re-highlight the importance of it, for people to understand what is happening in the world," Holder had told the Cricket Writer's Club.

HAVE ALL CRICKETING TEAMS TAKEN THE KNEE IN EVERY BILATERAL SERIES SO FAR AFTER GEORGE FLOYD'S DEATH IN THE US?

No, only in the series (men's and women's) between West Indies and England. The players didn't do it in the Australia-England series or during the Pakistan-England series. "Personally was a bit disappointed to see how the Pakistan and Australia tours went on after us and they're not showing their solidarity," Holder had said. West Indian legend Michael Holding had also expressed his disappointment about it and Justin Langer, Australia's coach, had acknowledged that his team should have "thought and talked a bit more about it". EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Kings' 5-star comeback

Looking out of reckoning not too long ago, KXIP in playoff spot after thrashing KKR

SYNOPSIS
Universe Boss tees off for Punjab on a night Morgan-Gill partnership was the lone bright spot for KKR

VISHAL MENON
OCTOBER 26

THIS MATCH didn't go into the Super Over, nor did it provide any of the frenzy, thrills and last-minute twists that Kings XI Punjab's fans have been used to in this IPL. What they witnessed instead was a clinical performance from their team to a thumping 8-wicket win over the Kolkata Knight Riders — their fifth on the bounce. As a result, they took over fourth spot in the points table at the expense of Eoin Morgan's side. It seemed highly unlikely a fortnight ago, when KXIP had just a solitary win from their first seven games. After an efficient bowling performance to restrict KKR for 149/9, their batting started slowly before Mandeep Singh's unbeaten 66 and Chris Gayle 29-ball 51 settled matters.

Universe Boss tees off

The match was in the balance when Gayle walked out to bat. The Sharjah pitch was showing signs of wearing down and KKR mystery spinner Varun Chakravarty, buoyed by his maiden call-up to Team India's T20 squad for the upcoming tour to Australia, had conned KL Rahul, the Orange Cap holder, with a vicious googly. With KXIP stuttering at 47/1 after 8 overs, the target of 150, which looked straightforward at the half-way stage, now looked distant. Rahul's opening partner Mandeep was also struggling to hit it past the square.

So, what did Gayle do under these circumstances? He calmly clubbed back-to-back sixes off Chakravarty in the 10th over to soothe the frayed nerves in the KXIP dugout. The first ball was overpitched, and deposited over the long-on fence. The second was bowled from around the wicket and was mistimed, but it cleared the rope with ease. These two shots were all that was needed to get KXIP's chase back on track. Once Morgan brought in the pacers, especially Lockie Ferguson, batting became much easier. Resultantly, Mandeep found his groove and the two registered emphatic fifties to remove all doubt about the result. Kudos to Mandeep, who stayed back in the UAE despite the demise of his father a couple of days ago. The injury to Mayank Agarwal handed him an opportunity, which he accepted with glee.

Morgan-Gill's partnership the lone bright spot for KKR

In the 12 matches so far, KKR openers have not managed a single 50-run partner-



Mandeep Singh and Chris Gayle put on 100 runs for the second wicket. BCCI

POINTS TABLE

Team	Matches	Won	Lost	NR	Points
MI	11	7	4	0	14
DC	11	7	4	0	14
RCB	11	7	4	0	14
KXIP	12	6	6	0	12
KKR	12	6	6	0	12
RR	12	5	7	0	10
SRH	11	4	7	0	8
CSK	12	4	8	0	8

looked to be heading for a score around 200.

Suddenly, Punjab's bowlers were scrambling for cover and altering their plans to counter this onslaught. Morgan's aggression rubbed off on Gill. The youngster targeted the shorter straight boundaries, and kick-started with a brace of sixes — first-up against Shami over long-on and following it up by thumping Murugan Ashwin over the mid-wicket region.

But this onslaught was short-lived as Morgan departed for a 25-ball-40 in the 10th over, playing a slog sweep against Ravi Bishnoi. One could have questioned Morgan's shot selection, but that's his approach in every innings. The 81-run partnership between Morgan and Gill was the highlight of KKR's lacklustre batting effort.

Once the captain departed, Punjab's bowlers pounced on them like hawks. Gill registered his fifty and tried to anchor the innings, but got no support from the other end. Sunil Narine had flayed Delhi Capitals in the previous match, but looked out of depth here. The lack of firepower hurt KKR. From 91/4, they meandered to an underwhelming 149/9.

BRIEF SCORES: KKR 149/9 (S Gill 57 off 45, E Morgan 40 off 25; Md Shami 3/35, R Bishnoi 2/20, C Jordan 2/25) lost to KXIP 150/2 (Mandeep Singh 66* off 56, C Gayle 51 off 29) by 8 wickets

LIVE: MI vs RCB from 7:30pm, Star Sports Network

BRIEFLY

Pogba denies quitting France team over Macron comments

Paris: Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba on Monday denied media reports that said he quit the France national team over comments made by the country's President Emmanuel Macron which were perceived to be against Islam. The French leader this month declared war on "Islamist separatism", which he believes is taking over some Muslim communities in France. The Sun newspaper alleged that Pogba, a practising Muslim, reacted to Macron's comments by quitting the national team. "Unacceptable," the 27-year-old wrote on a Twitter post here along with a "fake news" sticker on a screenshot of the headline from The Sun. "So The Sun did it again," he added here. "Absolutely 100% unfounded news about me are going around, stating things I have never said or thought."

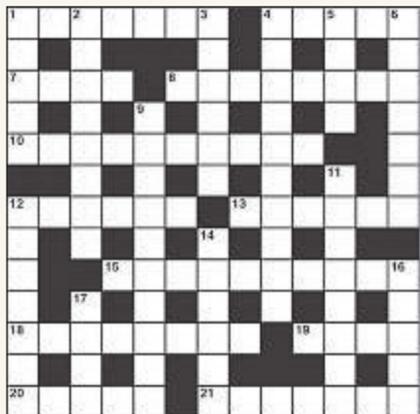
Milan 'keeper tests positive for COVID-19

Milan: AC MILAN goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and winger Jens Petter Hauge have tested positive for COVID-19 along with three members of the team staff, the Serie A leaders said in a statement on Monday. "All are asymptomatic, have been immediately isolated at home and the local health authorities have been informed," said the club in a statement. They will miss the league match at home to AS Roma later on Monday. The remainder of the squad have undergone further tests which were all negative, the club added. Milan forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic tested positive earlier this season but has since recovered. Milan lead the table with 12 points after winning all four league matches so far.

Zverev beats Diego for another Cologne title

Cologne: Alexander Zverev made it back-to-back ATP Tour titles when he beat Diego Schwartzman 6-2, 6-1 in the final of the Cologne Championship. Zverev hit nine aces, saved the only break point he faced and converted five of his own to beat the French Open semifinalist. The first set was over in 38 minutes, the second in just 33. "It's getting better. I'll be back to my best form soon," Zverev said, referring to problems with his hip. It's Zverev's 13th title overall, and the third time the U.S. Open finalist has won back-to-back titles after wins in Washington and Montreal in August 2017, and Munich and Madrid the previous May. AGENCIES

CROSSWORD 4260



- ACROSS**
- Relief for one who's been had, we hear (7)
 - Let in or out (5)
 - Americans may find it a good place for a break (4)
 - Such colourful designs are just a tissue of lies (4,4)
 - No running in race for men only (10)
 - A bad mark for the errant magistrate lacking rebuke (6)
 - In a way my sort is hardly fair (6)
 - Kick up a fuss — like stage designers might (4,1,5)
 - Look amazed (4-4)
 - A case for sewers (4)
 - Law and order (5)
 - Noel's blazer (4,3)
- DOWN**
- What one is not well out of? (5)
 - Pot or tin basin broken (8)
 - Ridicules cooks? (6)
 - An entertaining job for a girl who likes travel (3,7)
 - Engage me with a plea for silence (4)
 - They admit blame for hospital treatment (7)
 - A man of alien intelligence possibly (5,5)
 - Eastern relation perhaps (8)
 - He reformed under the influence of spirits (7)
 - Solely depend on me (6)
 - Examining some barley in granaries (5)
 - Each one a fairy (4)

Solutions Crossword 4259: Across: 1 Educational, 9 Ontario, 10 Allibi, 11 Nods, 12 Opposing, 14 Dotted, 16 Cinema, 18 Sterling, 19 Oust, 22 Uncle, 23 Unifier, 24 Fell through. Down: 2 Dated, 3 Carp, 4 Troops, 5 Oratorio, 6 Asinine, 7 Joined issue, 8 Ringmasters, 13 Well well, 15 Trickle, 17 Enough, 20 Using, 21 Lido.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

- ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)**
If there's any way in which you can develop your social contacts, do so now, while the stars are encouraging friendship. In your eyes, the most attractive people will be those who can take responsibility for you. But, if you rely on others, you'll surrender control. Is that really worth it? Perhaps not.
- TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)**
It's more than likely that career worries could be out of place. Your concerns seem to be based around doubts as to whether you can handle prospective responsibilities. All you have to do is believe in yourself. After all, if you have faith in your own powers you'll exude confidence and attract others.
- GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)**
You are really perfectly justified in feeling quietly optimistic about the future, but make sure that your confidence is firmly founded in plans which are practical as well as original. The best way forward is to concentrate on increasing your skills.
- CANCER (June 22 - July 23)**
There are many indications as to what the combined influence of friends' and family members' demands will be on your private life. The problem is that there are too many. The advantage is that so many doors are now set to open that you can pick and choose.
- LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)**
It still seems somewhat inevitable that you'll have to put others' interests first. There's no reason why this shouldn't be thoroughly enjoyable, if only because it gives you a chance to relax a little. Frankly, you could do with a change of scene.
- VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept 23)**
Your classic qualities of self-sacrifice and service to humanity are straining for recognition. It's important to draw a line between being genuinely helpful to others and allowing them to unfairly exploit you. It's all a matter of being fair, but firm.
- LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)**
There's more than one powerful lunar alignment around the corner, and if you want to prepare for the coming upheaval now, press ahead with all personal plans. Arrange romantic encounters, finalise social ambitions and get your priorities in order.
- SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)**
It's time for optimism and there's no point in worrying that the worst will happen. An unusual amount of helpful planetary activity in your chart gives you every reason to believe that at last your hopes and wishes will be granted. You may put your family first and everything else second.
- SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)**
You should have little trouble making the most of the positive trends that are helping to revitalise your life at the moment. You may talk to others, especially people you live with, about your feelings, and deal with all those feelings of frustration at home.
- CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)**
It's difficult to know just what to do for the best. Personal and family affairs are still soaking up too much of your valuable resources. It's all a question of being disciplined and knowing when to say 'no', including when to say it to yourself.
- AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)**
You still seem to be firmly in the driving seat, and today is an ideal moment to implement sweeping changes at home, hopefully while other people are looking the opposite way. You should care for partners' interests as best you can, especially if they have been good to you in the past.
- PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)**
This period is partly about action, but also about dreams. Could this therefore be a day for fantasy? The answer is 'yes', although you'll have a wonderful way of giving your visions practical form. Actually, as long as you believe in what you're doing, you're a great deal more practical than many people think.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

You will never be alone with a ___ in your ___ - John Adams (4,_,8)

DGEEQ AALSCP

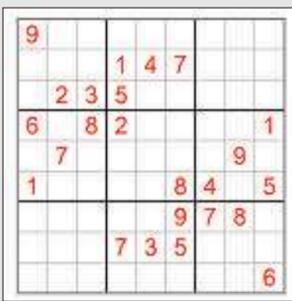
MOOTT ACETKP

SOLUTION: GEODE, PISCAL, PACKET, MOTT. You will never be alone with a pocket in your pocket - John Adams

SUDOKU 4275

Difficulty Level 5s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4274



Survival of the fittest

Selectors refuse to take punt on fitness doubts despite large squads for Australia tour

SANDIP G
OCTOBER 26

ISHANT SHARMA, three shy of a century of Test matches, Hardik Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Rohit Sharma were the notable exclusions from the Indian Test squad to Australia. While Hardik, who is not fit enough to bowl and couldn't bargain a spot with his batting skills alone, and Bhuvneshwar, who sustained a thigh injury, are entirely out of contention, BCCI will monitor the injuries of Ishant and Rohit. The latter has pulled a hamstring while Ishant has a muscle torn near the ribs. They were excluded from the list due to the protocol that injured players can't be named.

Crippling as their absence might seem from a skills-perspective, India could benefit without the injury-prone Bhuvneshwar and Ishant in what could be a draining tour. The first Test, scheduled to begin on December 7, is still nearly a month-and-a-half away, perhaps adequate time for Ishant to recover in time. But the last eventuality the team management would want is a repeat of the episode in New Zealand. A month before the series, Ishant picked an ankle injury during the Ranji Trophy. Initially doubtful for the series, he recovered in miraculous time and reached just in time. He straight-away featured in the first Test, showed little discomfort and grabbed five wickets. But a day before the second Test, his injury aggravated, forcing him to miss the match and disrupt India's plans. Consequently, India were forced to include an off-colour Umesh Yadav than handing out a maiden Test cap to Navdeep Saini.

Hence, carrying a semi-fit Ishant entails considerable risk, more so in these times of bio-bubbles and quarantines which make joining the team at a later date impractical. There have been several incidents in the past of Indian fast bowlers, rushed to fitness before a series, breaking down in the middle of it. Former talisman Zaheer Khan had wilted multiple times during a series. So have Ishant and Bhuvneshwar. The former had fully or partially missed at least one Test on every overseas tour, the West Indies trip aside, in the last three years. In South Africa, he fell ill on the morning of the first Test. In England, he hobbled off after bowling just an over on the fourth day of the fifth Test. Later in Australia, he missed the fourth Test due to discomfort in his ribs, before the ankle injury flared up in Christchurch. Moreover, he has played just one T20 and a Test match this year, which means he is utterly short of match practice.



Ishant Sharma, who played just one match for the Delhi Capitals before being ruled out of the IPL season, failed to make the cut. *Delhi Capitals*

Injury troubles

It's an altogether different case with Bhuvneshwar, who has spent an infinite amount of time suffering, or recovering from, injury during his career. Once the most promising of India's fast-bowling stock, and maturing with every outing, his career has been rudely truncated by injuries. Thigh, groin, hip, hamstring, shoulder, there are few parts of his body unaffected by injuries. As a result, he has not featured in a Test, or even a first-class game, since the Johannesburg match in 2018. His Test career seems destined to remain unfulfilled despite an average of 26 in 21 Tests.

In this background, even if he were completely fit, he would have been an unlikely candidate for the tour. Had the trip been to England or New Zealand, where his swing bowling would have been lethal, he would have been at least considered. But on the hard and bouncy surfaces of Australia, where one needs hit-the-deck merchants with durable constitutions, Bhuvneshwar would have been out of place. He had increased his pace and added other skills to be all-surface compatible, but it's foolish to pick someone who has not bowled with the red ball in nearly three years.

It's unfortunate for Rohit too, as the injury has coincided with the most decisive phase of his Test career, just when he had remodelled

himself into an opener and cracked the consistency code. Even if he regains full fitness, to pick him or not will be a big call for selectors.

Hours after not being named in the squads and a BCCI statement that Rohit's fitness will be monitored, Mumbai Indians tweeted a photograph of him walking out to bat in the nets.

What could hurt India the most would be the absence of Hardik. He is a quality all-rounder that India had unearthed after a long time, but if he can't bowl, he is half the player. So the message this time around from the selectors is loud and clear: Selection of the fittest.

SQUADS Test: Virat Kohli (Capt), Mayank Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw, KL Rahul, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (vc), Hanuma Vihari, Shubman Gill, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Rishabh Pant (wk), Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Shami, Umesh Yadav, Navdeep Saini, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, R. Ashwin, Mohd Siraj; **ODI:** V Kohli (Capt), Shikhar Dhawan, S Gill, KL Rahul (vc & wk), Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, M Agarwal, R Jadeja, Yuzvendra Chahal, K Yadav, J Bumrah, Md Shami, N Saini, Shardul Thakur; **T20I:** V Kohli (Capt), S Dhawan, M Agarwal, KL Rahul (vc & wk), S Iyer, M Pandey, H Pandya, Sanju Samson (wk), R Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Y Chahal, J Bumrah, Md Shami, N Saini, Deepak Chahar, Varun Chakravarthy

India support staff member tests positive

Mumbai: THE INDIAN team management was hit by its first Covid-19 case when a member of the support staff tested positive. He was supposed to travel to Dubai on Sunday but will now quarantine for 14 days. He will fly to Dubai after he tests negative.

The Indian team head coach Ravi Shastri, bowling coach Bharat Arun, batting coach Vikram Rathour, fielding coach R Sridhar and manager Girish Dongre reached Dubai on Sunday to enter the bio-bubble for the upcoming Australian tour.

Two players Cheteshwar Pujara and Hanuma Vihari have also reached there to be part of the bubble.

"The support staff member has been kept under quarantine and only after his test turns negative will he be allowed to join the team in Dubai," a source in the Indian board confirmed.

The Indian team will be on a two-month long tour of Australia and the players will fly Down Under from Dubai on a chartered flight. It will be India's first international assignment during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, a few Indian players have approached the board seeking clarity on whether their families would be allowed to travel to Australia. The board hasn't communicated anything officially yet in this regard. However, it is learnt, many players have decided to call their wives to Dubai during the ongoing IPL. These players' families will undergo six days of quarantine before joining the respective franchises' bio-bubbles.

Australia has one of the toughest quarantine rules in the world, which has complicated matters for Indian cricketers. But because of the long duration of the bubble the players will be in - and considering they have already spent nearly two months in UAE in one - the Indian players wish to travel with families, at least for some time.

DEVENDRA PANDEY

Hamilton races past Schumi, but is he better than the best?

SHASHANK NAIR
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER'S records and the five-year period of dominance with Ferrari is considered as one of the greatest achievements in sport and matching it, let alone overtaking it, has always been considered a mountain too high. But as Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton, who surpassed Schumacher's record of 91 Formula One race wins on Sunday, continues his assault on the German's records, that perception has changed in the last few years.

The times they are a-changin

Schumacher raced with Benetton and Ferrari during the era of F1 cars being able to refuel in the middle of the race. Simply put, this allowed cars at the back of the grid a chance to overtake because a higher load of fuel meant a pit-stop or two less. This strategy was further boosted by the quality of Bridgestone tyres being used back in the day as didn't face the issues of rapid degradation that modern-day F1 cars struggle to cope with.

Today, F1 doesn't allow for refuelling. This essentially gives the qualifier in pole position the best possible chance of winning the race. Hamilton is the greatest driver of his generation because he has qualified in pole position for 97 of his 262 races. Schumacher, on the other hand, has a record of 68 poles in 306 starts. This goes to show that both drivers were obviously the greatest of their generation but were so because they managed to make the best out of the rules and machinery of the day.

Quality of rivals

A different path in different eras also made possible by the quality of their rivalries. The making of Schumacher came through his intense battles with Mika Hakkinen and had it not been for a lifetime of unreliable cars built by McLaren, Schumacher's records could have looked a lot different.

For Hamilton, the what-ifs start and end with Nico Rosberg. Sebastian Vettel did have a four-year hold over the World Championship with Red Bull but it came when McLaren and Hamilton never seemed to have the speed to match them. Rosberg truly challenged Hamilton and one wonders if the Brit would have six titles had Rosberg stuck around.



Hamilton won the Portuguese GP on Sunday to overtake Schumacher's 91 race wins. *Reuters*

The numbers game

The points system in F1 races means that the Top 10 drivers inevitably pick up some gains after a race. What made Schumacher stand out, though, was his ability to find a place among the top three on a consistent basis. Hamilton has won the race 56 times when he has started from pole, as compared to Schumacher's 40. But the German has more victories from second position and more than double Hamilton's victories from third.

Both the greats have their favourite tracks to thank as well: Hamilton has won eight of his 92 races at the Hungaroring while Schumacher's best performances have come at the Canadian GP (seven wins).

Outside track

If there is one aspect where Hamilton clearly edges out Schumacher, it is this - he is a modern-day great who believes that his position in F1, and society in general, allows him to take social justice stands that his German counterpart was never really known for. Hamilton has had the influence to push this era of Formula One to stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Be it the #EndSars t-shirt he wore for a pre-race interview this week or his displeasure at the FIA choosing Vitaly Petrov (Former F1 driver critical of Hamilton's BLM stand) as a race steward - Hamilton has ensured that when posterity looks back at his career, he will be seen on the right side of history, and not just because of his exploits on the racing track.

Gabon Special

ADVERTORIAL

Pink October in Gabon



On 1st October, (right) The First Lady Sylvia Bongo Ondimba and Madam Prime Minister Rose Christiane Ossouka-Raponda in a hospital. *Source: Foundation Sylvia Bongo Ondimba* Photo: Foundation Sylvia Bongo Ondimba and Google

WOMEN ARE urged to get tested for breast cancer and cancer of the cervix throughout the month of October. This is the reason why the choice was made on the colour pink. This event since 2013 mobilises all social layers in our country. In previous editions, the sports world has supported the awareness campaign by organizing marathons and free fitness sessions.

This campaign is organized by the Sylvia Bongo Ondimba Foundation and supported in terms of sponsors by the Government and public and private health structures. The latter provide free equipment dedicated to screening for these diseases.

Speaking of these two female cancers, breast and cervix cancers, the Libreville Institute of Cancerology (ICL) shows that over the period 2013 to 2017, breast cancer is the most common in Gabon then comes cancer of the cervix.

In terms of death rate, * cancer of the cervix is the deadliest with 14.7 / 100,000 women; then breast cancer, the death rate of which is 10.7 / 100,000 women.

Of all these campaigns since 2013, the national cancer early detection program



informs us that from 2014 to 2017, 41,403 women were screened throughout Gabon for breast and cancer of cervix.

We are happy to say here that health in Gabon is an accomplished right. All have access to it, although there is still work to be done. The Gabonese woman and President Ali Bongo Ondimba: this is the story of a child who made a commitment to take good care of her out of recognition of what the mother gave him in terms of kind care during her youth till adulthood and even beyond.

This commitment goes beyond the Atlantic Ocean which borders our Gabon:

On December 21, 2010, under the leadership of the First Lady of Gabon, Sylvia Bongo Ondimba, Gabon will bring to the

United Nations a draft resolution on the widow, a vulnerable person in all societies. Many countries have lent their sponsorship to this initiative which will be adopted and will lead to the institution of the World Widow's Day since June 23, 2011.

Our confetti obtained: in 2010, President Ali Bongo Ondimba offered Gabonese women their National Women's Day. It is celebrated a month after International Women's Day (17th April).

In 2015, the decade of the Gabonese woman (2015-2025) enshrined the republican commitment of President Ali Bongo Ondimba to Gabonese women. This program organizes the stages of the total inclusion of Gabonese women, as "True partners in development, growth, and producers of wealth", in the environment that His Excellency the President of the Republic is trying to build for 10 years today.

On October 13, 2020, 176 votes out of 192 voters gave their confidence to Gabon thus ensuring its election to the United Nations Human Rights Council. These voices will thus get consecrated the President's priesthood for the promotion of well-being for all Gabonese, men, women, children and old people.

INVEST IN GABON

Gabon offers a host of business opportunities. Under the exceptional situation of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, the priority sectors are: health, education, energy, infrastructure, digital. The government encourages diversity and public-private partnerships under the model of contracts obtained through calls for tenders.

Our Embassy in New Delhi transmits the offers, which will have to go through this procedure

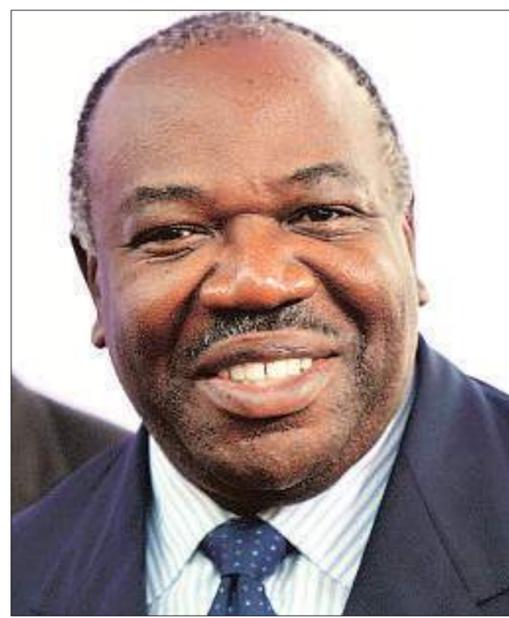
In the past six months, since the tentative start of activities around the world, exports have slowed down, but imports have increased. Agrifood products, equipment (infrastructure, buildings and public works) and products linked to health constitute the peloton of requests.

India is well represented in the foreign investment landscape, in the petroleum, timber, agriculture and education sectors (scholarship offers).

The opportunity to congratulate the Greenply Company, a wood veneer factory, established in Gabon in the ZERP of Nkok since 2016. Greenply has just gone public and is keen to open its share capital to Gabonese investors. The company has helped to raise Gabon to the number one spot for veneer sheet exporters in Africa and second globally.

The success of this Indian company specializing in Gabonese timber processing, as well as its positive involvement in the social development of Gabonese, confirm that the investment conditions are met.

As a reminder, ANPI (National Agency for the Promotion of Investments) facilitates the regis-



Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon



tration and installation of a business in less than 48 hours; we have a politically stable country, and Gabon has demonstrated under covid-19 an economic resilience that prepares it for a better tomorrow.

This optimistic note invites you to discover a Gabonese agri-food product, made by the Gabonese: Leyou cheese from "flavors of

Vouvou"

Gabon would be happy to make you discover it as much as we know and we consume basmati rice or turmeric in Gabon.