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2 BILLS CLEAR RAJYA SABHA AMID PROTESTS



TMC member Derek O'Brien attempts to tear the Rule Book during the ruckus in Rajya Sabha on Sunday. RSTV/PTI

Crucial farm reforms through, trail of anger, discord in House

Prime Minister hails 'watershed moment in history of Indian agriculture', Opp says 'historic for wrong reasons'

MANOJ CG & HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

DISMISSING OPPOSITION objections and pleas, the government pushed through two key farm Bills in Rajya Sabha on Sunday amid unprecedented scenes of chaos, confusion, and ruckus. Agitated Opposition members, protesting the extension of the House sitting beyond the scheduled end at 1 pm, tore copies of the Bills, broke microphones on the

INSIDE

OPP SAYS BILLS ARE DEATH WARRANT FOR FARMERS; BJP SAYS BIG REFORM IN PARLIAMENT, PAGE 5

MAKING SENSE OF THE FARM BILLS EXPLAINED, PAGE 11

Chairman's table, flung a copy of the Rule Book at the presiding officer, and then sat on a

dhama in the House even after it was adjourned for the day.

Never unsure of its numbers in the Upper House, and given that many Opposition members have cited health reasons to stay away, the government, using its numerical strength, rejected the Opposition demand to refer the Bills — The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 —

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Opp submits unprecedented resolution: Dy Chairman has to be removed

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

IN AN unprecedented move, as many as 12 Opposition parties came together on Sunday to submit a no-confidence resolution seeking the removal of Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Hariwansh. The move followed uproar in the House over his decision to extend the session beyond the scheduled 1 pm while overruling Opposition pleas to continue discussions on the contentious farm Bills the next day.

"The Deputy Chairman has violated all the canons of law, procedure, parliamentary procedures, practices and fair play. Today, the Deputy Chairman did not allow points of order to be raised, did not allow large numbers of members of Rajya Sabha from diverse political parties opposing the anti-farmer Bill...even to speak," the resolution stated.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Opp, states see new faultline: Centre usurps powers, weakens federalism

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

SEVERAL HOT-BUTTON issues taken up by the government this week have triggered a debate over the federal character of the polity, with opposition and regional parties accusing the Centre of "transgressing

into the powers of the state government on subjects that are in the concurrent list".

The passage of the farm Bills has come at the cost of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), one of the BJP's oldest allies, walking out of the Union Cabinet — and also threatening an exit from the NDA.

The Telangana Rashtra

Samithi (TRS), which is considered friendly to the BJP, has termed the Centre's proposed Electricity Bill, 2020, as "draconian", and aimed at taking away powers of the state. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababtu Naidu has accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of working "towards complete centralisation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION - PART ONE

In collaboration with International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and BuzzFeed News

One more veil lifts: Suspicious bank transactions of Indians are red-flagged to top US regulator

From steel major to IPL sponsor, diamond merchants to those under ED, CBI scanner, several Indian individuals and entities have been referred in secret reports by banks to US Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network



RITU SARIN, SHYAMLAL YADAV, JAY MAZOOMDAAR, SANDEEP SINGH & KHUSHBOO NARAYAN
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 20

LAYER BY layer, the secrecy that shrouds international money flows involving Indians has been unpeeled — beginning with the Offshore Leaks in 2013, Swiss Leaks in 2015, Panama Papers in 2016, and Paradise Papers in 2017, in a series of investigations by *The Indian Express*. Now comes the FinCEN Files.

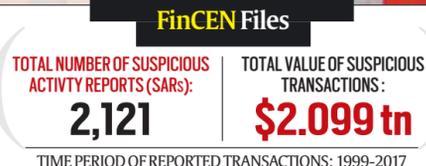
The newspaper's latest, beginning today, examines Indian connections in a cache of over 2000 secret documents — so secret banks aren't even allowed to confirm they exist — which have been red-flagged to the top US financial watchdog, the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) for suspected money laundering, terrorism, drug dealing or financial fraud.

These documents, called



Headquarters of FinCEN, the top US financial watchdog, in Virginia.

Scilla Alecci/ICJ



Key banks and value of transactions they flagged

BANKS	AMOUNT
Deutsche Bank AG	\$1,310 bln
JP Morgan Chase	\$514.2 bln
Standard Chartered Plc	\$166.1 bln
Bank of New York Mellon	\$64.1 bln
Barclays Plc	\$21.6 bln
HSBC Holdings Plc	\$4.48 bln

NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS: MORE THAN 400

88	110
NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	NEWS ORGANISATIONS

Partners include: *Le Monde*, BBC, NBC, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *L'Espresso*

Suspicious Activity Reports or SARs, which constitute the FinCEN Files, are not evidence of illegality. They reflect views by watchdogs within banks, known as compliance officers, reporting past transactions that bore hallmarks of financial crime, or that involved clients with high-risk profiles or past run-ins with the law.

In effect, they are crucial red flags raised by banks that point

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

WELLS FARGO BANK Bank reported fraud, UK link of an IPL team sponsor

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE INDIAN Premier League, with its showpiece auctions and big-ticket sponsors, has surfaced on the US financial regulator's radar too — in a web of transactions that involve a leading US bank, a little-known UK company, a Kolkata-based sponsor of an IPL team, and allegations of fraud and forgery.

These are the central elements of a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) filed with the US Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), according to records investigated by *The Indian Express*.

In 2013, KPH Dream Cricket, which runs Kings XI Punjab, went to court against team sponsor NVD Solar International Ltd for "cheating and duping" them of \$3 million in sponsorship fee. The SAR, filed by San Francisco-based Wells Fargo Bank, offers a clue to what went wrong.

In 2013, the bank had received "a \$2,975,460 SBLC (Standby Letter of Credit) from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

STANDARD CHARTERED BANK, NEW YORK

On US radar: Dawood's financier, his laundering, funding of Lashkar, Jaish

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE FINANCIAL Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), the US regulatory agency for enforcing money laundering laws, has uncovered a web of transactions of a flourishing money laundering network run by Pakistani national Altaf Khanani who is also said to have been a key financier for fugitive terrorist Dawood Ibrahim, reveal Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) filed by

the Standard Chartered Bank, New York, and investigated by *The Indian Express*.

These SARs detail transactions of Khanani's Money Laundering Organisation (MLO) and the Al Zarooni Exchange. For decades, Khanani and his MLO moved an estimated \$14 billion-\$16 billion annually for drug cartels and terror organisations like al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and the Taliban.

On September 11, 2015, Khanani was arrested at the Panama airport following a

trans-continental undercover operation, and put behind bars in a Miami prison. His detention ended in July 2020 and he was to be handed over to US immigration authorities for deportation. It is unclear whether he has been deported to Pakistan or the UAE.

Khanani's relationship with Dawood Ibrahim was documented by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) when it issued the sanctions notice against him after his arrest.

Issued on December 11, 2015, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 10**

DEUTSCHE BANK TRUST COMPANY AMERICAS

Revealed: how Jindal Steel sent funds abroad — and got them in same period

SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THREE DIFFERENT Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) filed by Deutsche Bank Trust Company Americas (DBTCA) regarding funds received and sent by Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) red-flag a transaction pattern where it sent money to companies

based in Mauritius, Germany, and the UK, and received funds from companies based in Dubai and Switzerland within the same set of days, an investigation by *The Indian Express* has revealed.

The SARs show: ■ Between November 24, 2014 and January 28, 2015, JSPL sent \$1.799 million to Mauritius-based Trans Global Minerals and Metals Corporation (TGMM) and

also sent \$1.3 million to Germany-based Oceanwide Services GmbH. During the same period, JSPL received \$1.323 million from Dubai-based Power Plant EPC Ltd.

■ In a similar set of transactions, between April 27, 2015 and June 1, 2015, while JSPL sent \$4.53 million to TGMM and another \$321.209 to Singapore-based Western Bulk Pte Ltd, the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 10**

Investor, author Ruchir Sharma cuts through Covid fog at e-Adda today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

WITH THE Covid-19 pandemic pushing the world economy into its worst recessionary phase since the Great Depression, Ruchir Sharma, Head of Emerging Markets and Chief Global Strategist at Morgan Stanley Investment Management, will be the guest at Express e-Adda on Monday to discuss how countries can negotiate its far-reaching effects.

Global trade and industry have suffered heavily with growth rates in most countries plunging to record lows and



Ruchir Sharma



the finest observers of contemporary Indian politics and economy, will also give new insights into the functioning of the financial markets and socio-political changes.

Sharma's latest book, *The 10 Rules of Successful Nations*, is born of data analysis, on-the-ground research and his deep interest in contemporary politics and current affairs. The book is a wake-up call to economists who failed to foresee every recent crisis, including the cataclysm of 2008, and a slim primer with insights on the political, economic and social habits of successful nations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

India, too, registering a contraction of 23.9 per cent in GDP in April-June 2020. New York-based Sharma, who is one of

How 190-sec intercept helped police join dots in Lankesh, Kalburgi killings

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 20

AN INTERCEPTED phone conversation between two relatives of a key accused in the 2017 murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh in Bengaluru provided a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Karnataka Police with vital evidence of his involve-



Gauri Lankesh was shot dead in 2017

ment in another high-profile case — the 2015 killing of Kannada scholar MM Kalburgi.

According to court records, soon after the July 2018 arrest of Ganesh Miskin, 28, the rider of the motorcycle that took Lankesh's alleged killer Parshu-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Swiss Leaks, Panama Papers, now SARs: bank reports that alert law-enforcement agencies

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

What are the FinCEN Files? The FinCEN Files refer to a set of over 2,100 "Suspicious Activity Reports" (SARs) (see next question) filed by banks with the United States Department of the Treasury's Financial Crime Enforcement Network, the agency that serves as the leading global regulator in the battle against money laundering.

The files identify at least \$2 trillion in transactions between 1999 and 2017 flagged as possible evidence of money laundering or other criminal activity by compliance officers of banks and financial institutions.

So what is a SAR? When are they required to be filed?

SAR or Suspicious Activity Report is a document filed by banks and financial institutions

to report suspicious activity to US authorities, in this case, FinCEN. These are confidential, so secret that banks are not allowed to confirm their existence. Indeed, even the account holder is unaware when an SAR is filed related to a transaction in that account.

SARs are filed with FinCEN in a prescribed format, and are meant to red flag, within 30 days of the transaction's oc-

currence: criminal funds or any form of dirty money; insider trading; potential money laundering; terror financing; any transaction that raises suspicion.

These include round-dollar amounts — for example, \$100,000 — being sent in multiple transactions; transfers where there is no apparent economic connection between the parties (a diamond dealer paying a pizzeria for computer parts); transactions in high-risk jurisdictions **CONTINUED ON PAGE 10**

BUSINESS AS USUAL
By UNNY
What is curtailed - Parliament or the session?

IDEA EXCHANGE
SHASHI THAROOR
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
PAGE 12

NATIONAL NETWORK
LAC FACE-OFF: CORPS COMMANDERS TO MEET AGAIN TODAY
PAGE 7

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WEB EXCLUSIVE



MIRA NAIR'S A SUITABLE BOY IS WORTH YOUR TIME

The book has enough time and more to get into long, languid, eloquent descriptions of locations, characters, situations; in Mira Nair and Andrew Davies' hands, the chop-chop eventually overcomes the chopiness, and becomes its own creature.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



TOLL PLAZA VANDALISED

The mishap took place in Betma in Madhya Pradesh's Indore

EXPLAINED



THE RS 500 'FELUDA TEST' FOR COVID-19

It uses indigenously developed CRISPR gene-editing

EXPRESS AUDIO

Why Yogi Adityanath is talking about 'love jihad' again

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In today's episode of the '3 Things' podcast we look at why Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath has revived his interest in "love jihad" in the state

FROM PAGE ONE

Farm reforms

to a select committee for parliamentary scrutiny.

Already cleared by Lok Sabha, the Bills, passed by voice vote, will now go to the President for assent before becoming law. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a series of tweets after the passage of the Bills in Rajya Sabha, described it as "a watershed moment in the history of Indian agriculture" while BJP members called it "historic... a big reform".

The Opposition hit back, saying it was "historic for all the wrong reasons" given the manner in which the "anti-farmer" Bills were passed.

Fence sitters BJD and TRS too spoke against the Bills. While TRS opposed the Bill, the BJD joined the Opposition in demanding that they be referred to a select committee. The BJD and TRS have a record of taking sides with the government on crucial Bills. The SAD, which broke ranks with the NDA over the Bills, too spoke against the legislation. Opposition members had moved motions disapproving the Bills, demanding that these be referred to a select committee.

The debate, though heated, proceeded smoothly till 1 pm with the Opposition tearing into

the government and the treasury benches launching counter-attacks in defence of the Bills. At 1 pm, Deputy Chairman Harivansh, who was in the Chair, sought permission of the House to extend the time of the sitting till disposal of the Bills. This was when Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar was replying to the discussion. As is customary, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi proposed extension of time, but Opposition members did not agree and asked the Chair to adjourn the House and continue the discussion Monday.

But the Deputy Chairman did not end the proceedings and asked Tomar to continue his speech. Members of the Congress, Trinamool, DMK, AAP and Left protested, saying there was no unanimity on extending the sitting. Sanjay Singh of AAP, Jairam Ramesh of Congress and Dola Sen of TMC came to the Well of the House to protest.

Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad said "if the House is to be extended... it is not done on the basis of numbers, but on the basis of consensus. So the consensus... most of the political parties are saying the time should not be extended today, and tomorrow the minister can

shouting, clapping and jeering by the Opposition, the Deputy Chairman began clause-by-clause consideration of the Bills. The statutory motions, moved by several members, were negated by voice vote. Opposition members sought division on the clauses, but this was turned down by the Deputy Chairman who pointed out that members were not on their designated seats.

Some of the members, AAP's Sanjay Singh and Congress's Rajeev Satav, climbed on the Secretary General's table. DMK's Tiruchi Siva — along with O'Brien, K C Venugopal of Congress and K Ragesh of CPM, he had moved resolutions for sending the Bills to the select committee — tore papers and flung them in the air. Amid the melee, the two Bills were passed by voice vote.

Opposition members led by Azad then sat on a dharna inside the House for another 90 minutes. Lok Sabha, which was to begin its sitting from both chambers at 3 pm, could not start proceedings since Opposition members refused to move out of the Rajya Sabha chamber.

Earlier, in his reply amid the din, Tomar said the minimum price or MSP-based procure-

ment of agriculture crops from farmers will continue and is not related to the farm Bills that seek to give cultivators the freedom to market their produce.

New faultline

of power". Rao said he was in touch with the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Kerala, and Chhattisgarh to work out joint strategy against the move.

"This is unprecedented. Almost every Bill the government is coming up with, has an element of direct violation of federal law. This government believes in centralisation of power and after centralising, they will give it away to corporates," DMK leader and former Union Minister Dayanidhi Maran told *The Indian Express*.

The BSP's Danish Ali said: "When Narendra Modi became Prime Minister everyone expected that he, with his long experience as Chief Minister, would understand and empower states. But the cooperative federalism he had claimed to have championed initially, is going exactly the opposite way."

The perception of overreach by the Centre, along with deepening worries in states over GST compensation, has the potential for a realignment of regional parties at the national stage. Midhun Reddy of the YSRCP said his party would join other regional parties and opposition in their fight for states' share of GST revenues. "We have not come out shouting so far, but we will join other states on this issue," Reddy told *The Indian Express*. Regional parties like the BJD, YSRCP, AIADMK, and TRS have so far not joined the Opposition against the BJP-led central government on any major issue.

Speeches made by MPs in Parliament this week reflected the concerns of the states.

During the debate on the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, Saugata Roy and Kalyan Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress asked the government why it wanted to take away the power of states to regulate trade, including imposing stock limits for various intermediaries. "You are taking away the power of the state governments. This is hitting cooperative federalism..." Banerjee said.

The DMK's Kathir Anand said the "power of the Centre in agriculture management has certainly increased through this Ordinance". The CPI-M's A M Ariff and TDP's Ram Mohan Rao echoed him.

The NCP's Supriya Sule questioned the government over its claims that it had consulted the states before venturing into amending laws that take away states' rights.

The main Opposition Congress was more vocal on the point in the Bill that amended banking regulations, bringing cooperative banks under the RBI.

"State governments are more than competent to discharge their functions and in a federal polity, this Ordinance, and the Bill which seeks to replace it, is a frontal assault on the federal structure of the Constitution. This will have long-term implications on the democratic polity of India," warned Manish Tewari, MP from Anandpur Sahib.

Another Congress leader, Tiruvallur MP Jayakumar, said: "In the last six years, we are seeing that this Government is bent upon bringing Bills and amendments simply to divest state governments of powers. It is bent upon converting state governments into a Tehsildar's office, where this (central) government will remain like a Collector and the Tehsildar has to do everything with folded hands."

Kollam MP N K Premachandran of the RSP, one of the most vocal in Lower House on constitutional and legal issues, said the amendments were "encroaching into the powers of the state government in general and the cooperative sector in particular".

Pinaki Mishra of the BJD said the Constitution is clear about the State and Central Lists when it comes to powers. "There has always been this sort of duality of control. Unfortunately, this duality of control seems to obtain even under the new (BJP-led) regime."

The BJD's Anubhav Mohanty and TDP's Ram Mohan Rao too questioned the legislative competence of Parliament to make these laws, as "agriculture and markets, and fairs are State subjects; trade and commerce of foodstuffs, raw cotton, raw jute etc., is in the Concurrent List; and inter-state trade and commerce is in the Union List".

Dy Chairman

It said that the Opposition parties have "no confidence" in the Deputy Chairman, "herby move this motion for his removal", and that he cannot "preside over the House" till a decision on their motion is taken. Among the parties that backed the resolution, which was drafted by lawyer-MPs Abhishek Singhvi and K T S Tuls, were the Congress, TMC, DMK, CPM, CPI, RJD, AAP, TRS, SP, IUML and Kerala Congress (M).

Addressing a press conference later, Congress MP KC Venugopal alleged that BJP MPs were seen "whispering in the ears" of the Deputy Chairman and demanded to know what "conspiracy" had transpired.

The rules say that "a member holding office as Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha may be removed from his office by a resolution of the Rajya Sabha passed by a majority of all the then members of the Rajya Sabha; but the resolution can be moved only when at least fourteen days' notice has been given of the intention of moving".

The Opposition move was de-

scribed as "unprecedented" by Parliament veterans. "As far as I can remember, there has been no instance of a no-confidence motion against the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha," PDT Achari, former Secretary General of the Lok Sabha, told *The Indian Express*.

The Opposition motion said: "Appropriate precedents in this regard are available in several treatises, including the *Practice and Procedure of Parliament* by M N Kaul and S L Shaktiher seventh edition... and Article 90 of the Constitution."

The precedents cited from the book by the Opposition include resolutions moved against the first Lok Sabha Speaker G V Mavalankar in 1951, Speaker Sardar Hukam Singh in 1966 and Speaker Balram Jakhar in 1987. It says "at the sitting of Lok Sabha, while any resolution for the removal of the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker from his office is under consideration, the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker, as the case may be, cannot preside even though he is present in the House".

Incidentally, the resolution against Mavalankar came up for discussion in 1954 and was negated by the House after a discussion. The other two resolutions were also discussed and negated by the House.

Article 90 deals with "vacation and resignation of, and removal from, the office of Deputy Chairman a member holding office as Deputy Chairman of the Council of States".

Meanwhile, Congress leader Venugopal said, "Without taking the sense of the House, the Deputy Chairman went for passing the Bills. We haven't seen such a practice before... The Treasury benches came with a pre-fixed mind. They were not ready to listen to the agony of the farmer, the Opposition voice, they were not ready to have a division (of votes)."

190-sec intercept

took place at 11.51 am on July 22, 2018, the brother allegedly said that Miskin and his associates were involved "in one murder over there and another murder", according to the transcript.

"So they are involved in two murders, is it?" asked the "uncle" in response to which the brother allegedly replied, "yes", the transcript shows.

The call took place on the day the SIT picked up Miskin and his friend Amit Baddi in Hubli for the Lankesh murder, according to records. As part of the evidence in the Kalburgi case, the SIT obtained and compared voice samples of the two relatives of Miskin to provide technical confirmation of the legally intercepted phone conversation.

A ballistics report from the Karnataka State Forensic Science Laboratory — days after the murder of Lankesh, 55, on September 5, 2017 — stated that the murder was linked to the killing of Kalburgi, 77, at his home in Dharwad on August 30, 2015. Yet, it was the intercepted conversation that provided the SIT with new evidence of the linkages.

The SIT's investigations in the Lankesh and Kalburgi cases resulted in the filing of chargesheets against a group of activists linked to Sanatan Sanstha, a radical Hindutva group. The start of the trial process in both cases has been delayed by the Covid crisis that began in March this year.

As many as 18 persons were named by the SIT in the Lankesh murder, including Miskin and others linked to the Sanstha and other radical groups, in a charge-sheet filed in November 2018.

Six persons have been accused in the Kalburgi case, which was taken up for investigation by the SIT in 2019 on the orders of the Supreme Court following a plea by the scholar's widow Umadevi.

A chargesheet filed in August 2019 names Miskin as the alleged shooter and Praveen Prakash Chatur, 27, a Belagavi resident, as the rider of the motorcycle that took him to Kalburgi's home.

According to the SIT, Amol Kale, a key leader of youths linked to the Sanstha, plotted and executed the murder of Kalburgi in August 2015. The youths were allegedly inspired by a book called *Kshatra Dharma Sadhana*, published by the Sanstha, which calls for the killing of "Hindu infidels", the SIT found.

"Between January and May 2015, Amol Kale, Ganesh Miskin and Praveen Chatur met several times near the Indira Gandhi glasshouse, Hubli, and planned the assassination of Dr M M Kalburgi. Ganesh Miskin was tasked to shoot and kill Dr Kalburgi. Praveen Chatur was tasked with riding a bike and taking Miskin to and from Dr Kalburgi's residence," the SIT said.

The SIT also found that a training camp was held for the alleged killers of Kalburgi, and others, at a rubber plantation near Dharmasthala in the Dakshina Kannada region in early August 2015 with two "guest trainers".

The investigations in the Lankesh and Kalburgi cases also led to the unravelling of the murders of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar, 69, in Pune on August 20, 2013, and Leftist thinker Govind Pansare, 81, in Kolhapur on February 16, 2015.

e-Adda today

While the economy has suffered, markets across the world, including India, have rebounded even as the pandemic rages on in most countries, including India. At the E-Adda, Sharma, who will be in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, *The Indian Express*, and P Vaidyanathan Iyer, Executive Editor for National Affairs, *The Indian Express*, will navigate the audience through the fog created by the pandemic and domestic and international politics.

With a quarter century of travelling the world as a writer and investor, Sharma's rules challenge conventional textbook thinking on what matters — and what doesn't — for a strong economy. The book explains why successful nations embrace robots and immigrants, prefer democratic leaders to autocrats, elect charismatic reformers over technocrats, and pay no mind to the debate about big versus small government.

Sharma's book also explains why rising stock prices matter as much or more than food prices, and the measure of debt is the best predictor of economic crises, and why no one number can accurately capture the value of currencies.

His earlier books include *Democracy on the Road* (2019), *The Rise and Fall of Nations: Forces of Change in a Post-Crisis World* (2016) and *Breakout Nations* (2012). Sharma was selected one of the "top global thinkers" by *Foreign Policy* magazine in 2012 and was named as one of the Most Influential people in the world in 2015 by Bloomberg Markets.

Sharma, who started writing at 17, has been a writer longer than he has been an investor. He's a regular contributor to several international publications. He is passionate about politics and has covered every national election in India, and many major state contests, going back to 1998. Sharma's other interests include athletics and he continues to train for the 100 and 200 meters sprints. He has a keen interest in wildlife and in international cinema and attends major film festivals.

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China and a New Age of Global Conflict



with

Shyam Saran

Former Indian Foreign Secretary

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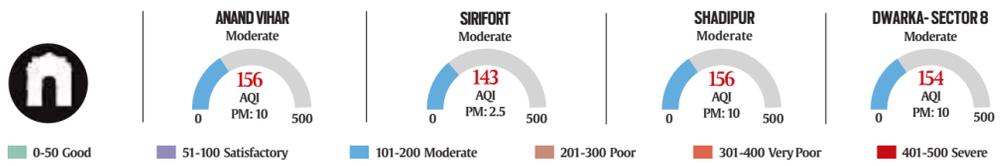
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3 THE CITY



BRIEFLY

Bikers perform stunts, 5 held

New Delhi: In a 30-second video that went viral on social media, a group of bikers were seen performing dangerous stunts on a busy road in Vikas Marg at East Delhi's Shakarpur Sunday. Some bikers were seen standing on moving bikes while others were performing different stunts while speeding near other two-wheelers on the road. None of the bikers were wearing helmets or any protective gear other than face masks. Late on Sunday evening, police arrested five of the men.

70-year-old woman 'killed' by her son

Ghaziabad: A 70-year-old woman was allegedly shot dead by her own son after she included her daughter in the property inheritance Friday night. The accused Harendra Tyagi shot his mother Savitri after a quarrel over property in their Modinagar residence. One accused is currently absconding while Harendra has been arrested, police said.

Woman jumps to death

Noida: A 50-year-old woman allegedly jumped to her death from a high-rise building at a residential society in Greater Noida on Sunday. Police said the woman suffered from depression. **ENS**

Taxi driver injured after car catches fire

New Delhi: A taxi driver suffered burns after his vehicle caught fire on a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) track in South Delhi's Madangir area Sunday, police said. The driver, Deepak, a resident of Sangam Vihar, was taken to a nearby hospital by the PCR van. He suffered minor burns. **PTI**

3,812 CASES, 37 DEATHS ON SUNDAY

Covid deaths fluctuate since June, but fatality rate sees steady dip

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

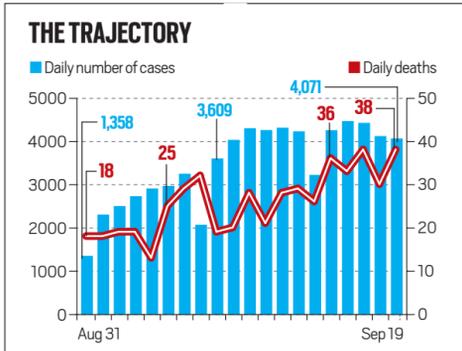
OVER THE past months in Delhi, the number of cases and deaths has fluctuated considerably - from close to 100 deaths in a few weeks in June to 14 deaths a day in the first two weeks in August to 30 deaths on an average now. The case fatality ratio, however, has declined steadily month on month between July and September.

While the mortality rate in July was 3.12%, it had fallen to 2.54% by the end of August. As of now, it stands at 2.04%.

Over the last one week, Delhi has been reporting 30-40 Covid deaths per day and close to 4,000 cases a day.

According to experts, shift in admission criteria, aggressive testing, creation of more health facilities and advancement in treatment are some of the factors behind the drop in fatality rate over the last two months.

Several health experts explained the correlation between active cases and the number of deaths. "Management of patients has improved significantly; health-care professionals are using several new drugs during treatment. Cases where patients



CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

	TOTAL CASES	HOSPITAL BEDS	Total	Vacant
	2,46,711	VENTILATORS	1,264	488
	Daily cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Sep 19	4,071	4,219	38	61,973
Sep 20	3,812	3,742	37	52,405
Total	32,097*	2,09,632	4,982	25,55,007

*Total active cases

would die suddenly have gone down considerably. If the infection is detected on time, patients isolated early and administered treatment at the right

time, the mortality rate will be reduced overall. In Delhi, most homes now have a pulse oximeter which has played an important role in the management of

the disease. People are monitoring their oxygen levels at home and are approaching hospitals for treatment, if required," said Dr Sujeet Kumar Singh, director, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

Testing capacity in Delhi has also increased manifold. On Sunday, Delhi saw 3,812 new cases, taking the tally to 2,46,711. The death toll mounted to 4,982 with 37 new deaths recorded in the last 24 hours. Over 52,000 tests were conducted in a day. "It is good that the death rate is less than 1% lately; it used to be above 3.5-4% for a month earlier," Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain had said on Friday.

In the first week of June, a strategy document was prepared by a team of experts - AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria, NITI Aayog member Dr V K Paul, ICMR chief Dr Balram Bhargava and Dr Sujeet Kumar Singh from NCDC - for containment of Covid-19 in the capital. A top official from the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare explained the rationale behind the trend.

"Presently, we do not have any evidence to say it is because of the natural cycle of the virus. Therefore, it has to be attributed to proactive steps. A strategy laid

down for the Delhi government by the expert team had three broad parts. The first focused on steps to be taken in containment, surveillance, and contact tracing; the second part dealt with how to ensure monitoring of people under home isolation and if need be, shift them to hospitals; the third part was how hospitalised patients should be tackled. These three parts then had various specific instructions and the whole document was based on the assumption that all efforts within a district would be led by the district magistrates. The implementation of this strategy has resulted in a lower mortality rate."

AIIMS medical superintendent, DK Sharma, meanwhile, said that one theory is that more people with no co-morbid conditions are testing positive now, as opposed to earlier.

"Covid-19 is known to aggravate the condition in those with pre-existing illnesses. Those suffering from serious ailments were the first to get affected by the disease... now, relatively healthier people are testing positive and are able to fight the virus. This is one theory. As we still do not have a definite treatment, we cannot say what has helped patients recover just yet," he said.

Be cautious of both Covid and dengue: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal Sunday asked Delhi residents to be cautious of both dengue and Covid, and spread awareness about measures to prevent the vector-borne disease. While inspecting his residence at 10 am, Kejriwal said collective efforts will help Delhi defeat dengue like last year.

The government's dengue awareness campaign, *10 Hafte 10 Baj* 10 Minute, entered its third week on Sunday. "Right now, we are dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, but it is also the season when dengue cases increase significantly. We have to be conscious about both dengue and coronavirus," he said.

Police to work with Defence Ministry, ED to probe 'espionage' case against journo

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE DELHI Police will seek help from the Defence Ministry and Enforcement Directorate for assistance in investigation of the alleged espionage racket, where three people, including a 61-year-old strategic affairs analyst and author and his two associates, have been arrested.

On Saturday, the Special Cell claimed that analyst and author Rajeev Sharma was passing information about Indian troops on the Nepal and China borders to Chinese Intelligence. Police said his associates - a Chinese woman Qing Shi (30) and Nepalese national Sher Singh - were "supplying him a huge amount of money through shell



Rajeev Sharma was arrested on September 14. **PTI**

from Sharma's home on September 14. "We need to ascertain the source and verify the authenticity of the defence-related documents we found in Sharma's possession. All these documents were saved in his email as PDFs and other formats. We need to check who gave them to him. We will also ask the Ministry to give us details about the documents to know Sharma's connections," said a senior police officer.

The investigating team will also be writing to the Enforcement Directorate to probe the alleged illegal financial transactions made by the accused persons.

On Saturday, Sanjeev Kumar Yadav, DCP (Special Cell), said between January 2019 and September 2020, Sharma received more than Rs 30 lakh from

a man named George. Police said that in his confession, Sharma said George lives in Kunming, China, and is the general manager of a Chinese media company. He offered Sharma USD 500 per article or for information on Dalai Lama related issues in India. The money was sent through Qing and Singh's shell companies, MZ Pharmacy and MZ Malls, police alleged. The Special Cell is also checking social media accounts of the accused to examine information that was passed onto Chinese Intelligence.

Advocate Dr Adish Aggarwal, who is representing Sharma, questioned the charges against him: "He is a reputed journalist... Any journalist can be hired by foreign news agencies. He was writing for Global Times... It's an accredited news agency."

Private jet terminal begins ops at IGIA

New Delhi: The first of its kind in the country, the private jet terminal at IGI Airport began functioning on Sunday afternoon. A private jet by VRL Logistics, flying from Vadodra to Delhi, was the first chartered flight to land in the new terminal at 2:40 pm. A private jet by Orbit Aviation, flying to Chennai was the first to depart from Delhi at 6 in the evening.

An official of the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) said, "It was inaugurated Thursday. The terminal was sanitised on Friday and Saturday. The terminal has been designed keeping social distance in mind and regular sanitisation is taking place." The terminal sprawls over an area of 8 lakh square feet. It can handle over 50 passengers every hour and can cater to 150 private jets in a day. **ENS**

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - III, DELHI 4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi; 110 001			
Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.			
In the matter of O.A. NO. 866/2019 AXIS BANK LTD.Applicant		VS MR. AJAY DHINGRA & ORS.Defendants	
D-1 Mr. Ajay Dhirgira, S/O Mr. Harish Dhirgira Proprietor of M/s Sri Ganesh Impex Ground Floor, 5066, Ravi Mandi Sadar Bazar, Central Delhi, Delhi-110006. Also At:- 5071-5072, Ground Floor, Ravi Mandi, Sadar Bazar, Central Delhi, Delhi-110006. D-2 Ms. G-83/A, Mother Dairy, Sector 9, Ghazabad, Uttar Pradesh. D-3 Ms. Lata Dhirgira W/o Mr. Harish Dhirgira, G-83/A, Mother Dairy, Sector 9, Ghazabad, Uttar Pradesh. Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal on 19.11.2020 at 10.30 A.M. Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned date before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence. Due to ongoing Pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:- (i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the Cisco Webex application/software; (ii) Meeting ID and Password for the next date of hearing case to be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer-Land Recovery Official shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. drt.gov.in under the Public Notice Head. (iii) In any exigency you can contact the concerned official at Ph.No.23748469. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 08TH day of Sept., 2020. By Order of the Tribunal Assistant Registrar, DRT-III, New Delhi			

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL AHMEDABAD BENCH CA (CAA) NO. 55 OF 2020	
In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013; AND In the matter of Sections 230 to 232 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013; AND In the matter of Scheme of Amalgamation of Trion Chemicals Private Limited with Bodal Chemicals Limited.	
Trion Chemicals Private Limited. (CIN : U51900GJ2009PT0056781) a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office at Plot No. 123-124, Phase-1, GIDC Estate, Vatva, Ahmedabad 382 445 in the state of Gujarat..... Applicant Company ("Transferor Company")	
ADVERTISEMENT OF NOTICE OF MEETINGS OF UNSECURED CREDITORS OF TRION CHEMICALS PRIVATE LIMITED	
NOTICE is hereby given that by an order dated 8th September 2020 and the provisions of Section 230(4) read with Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013, the business as set out in aforesaid notice is to be transacted by the unsecured creditors through voting by means of remote e-voting facility and by way of e-voting at the time of the Meeting. The Company is providing facility for remote e-voting by electronic means through e-voting platform of Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL). The necessary instructions for remote e-voting have been set out in the said notice dated 16th September 2020.	
2) The voting right of the respective creditors shall be in proportion to the value of debt as on 15th October 2020	
3) The Company has sent by an email dated 19th September 2020 the Notice of NCLT Convened Meeting to all the Unsecured Creditors whose email addresses were available with the Company and completed dispatch of the physical copy of the Notice at their registered address as on 19th September 2020 to those Creditors who have not registered their email addresses.	
4) The remote e-voting commences on Monday, 19th October 2020 at 9.00 a.m. and it will end as on Wednesday, 21st October 2020 at 5.00 p.m. During the voting period, creditors of the Company as on cut-off date may cast their vote through remote e-voting. The Voting through remote e-voting will not be allowed beyond 5:00 p.m. IST on 21st October 2020. The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by CDSL for voting thereafter.	
5) Any person who becomes a creditor of the Company after dispatch of the Notice and has an outstanding debt as on the cut-off date i.e. 15th October 2020 may obtain the Login details by writing to the Company's E-mail Ids: secretariat@bdal.com.	
6) A creditor may attend the Meeting even after exercising his right through remote e-voting but cannot vote again at the time of the Meeting.	
7) NCLT Convened Meeting notice dated 16th September 2020 is available on Company's website www.trionpl.com	
8) The Scrutinizer shall submit a consolidated Scrutinizer's Report of the total votes cast in favour of or against, if any, after the conclusion of the meeting to the Chairman of the Meeting or a person authorised by him. The results would be displayed at the Registered Office of the Applicant Transferor Company, intimated to the stock exchange where the Applicant Transferor Company's securities are listed and displayed along with the scrutinizer's report on the Applicant Transferee and transferor Company's website www.bodal.com and www.trionpl.com	
9) In case of any grievance connected with remote e-voting, the Members may contact Mr. Rakesh Dahli at designated E-mail ID helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or at telephone no. 022-23058542/8543. Further in case of any query or issue regarding remote e-voting, the shareholders may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and E-voting manual available at www.evotingindia.com under help section or write an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com.	
10) As directed by NCLT, Shri Gajendra Shah, Practicing Company Secretary, has been appointed as the Scrutinizer to scrutinize the voting of unsecured creditors by remote e-voting as well as by the e-voting at the time of the meeting.	
Date : 21st September 2020 Place : Ahmedabad	Firoj Gaffarhai Bodla Chairman appointed for the Meetings

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL AHMEDABAD BENCH CA (CAA) NO. 55 OF 2020	
In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013; AND In the matter of Sections 230 to 232 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013; AND In the matter of Scheme of Amalgamation of Trion Chemicals Private Limited with Bodal Chemicals Limited.	
Bodal Chemicals Limited. (CIN : L24110GJ1986PLC009003) a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office at Plot No. 123-124, Phase-1, GIDC Estate, Vatva, Ahmedabad 382 445 in the state of Gujarat..... Applicant Company ("Transferee Company")	
ADVERTISEMENT OF NOTICE OF MEETINGS OF SECURED CREDITORS AND UNSECURED CREDITORS OF BODAL CHEMICALS LIMITED	
NOTICE is hereby given that by an order dated 08th September 2020, the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Ahmedabad Bench ("NCLT") has directed separate meetings of the Secured Creditors and unsecured creditors of Bodal Chemicals Limited ("Applicant Transferee Company"), for the purpose of considering, and if thought fit, approving, with or without modification(s), the said Scheme of amalgamation of Trion Chemicals Private Limited ("Transferor Company") with Bodal Chemicals Limited ("Transferee Company").	
In pursuance of the said order read with recent circulars of Ministry of Corporate Affairs viz. Circular No. 14 of 2020 dated 8th April 2020, Circular No. 17 of 2020 dated 13th April 2020 and Circular No. 20 of 2020 dated 5th May 2020 and as directed therein, further notice is hereby given that separate meetings of Secured Creditors and Unsecured Creditors of the Applicant Transferee Company will be held on Thursday, 22nd day of October 2020 respectively at 11.30 a.m., and 12.15 noon, through Video Conferencing (VC) or Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM) without physical presence. The Secured Creditors and unsecured creditors are requested to attend the same as per the details for the same provided herein below.	
Copies of the said Scheme of Amalgamation, Explanatory Statement under section 230 of the Companies Act, 2013 can be obtained free of charge at the registered office of the Applicant Transferee Company and/or at the office of the Advocate Mrs. Swati Saurabh Soparkar at 301, Shivalki-10, Opp. SBI Zonal Office, S. M. Road, Ahmedabad 380 015, Gujarat. In view of the meetings being convened through Video Conferencing (VC) or Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM), proxies are not permitted to attend or vote at the meeting.	
NCLT has appointed Shri Firoj Gaffarhai Bodla, an independent practicing Chartered Accountant and failing him, Shri Rabeel Sanjeev Patel, an independent practicing Advocate and failing him, Shri Sunil Mehta, an independent director of BODAL, to act as the Chairman of the said meetings including an adjournment thereof.	
The Scheme of Amalgamation, if approved in the aforesaid meetings, will be subject to the subsequent approval of other regulatory authorities and sanction by NCLT.	
FURTHER NOTICE is hereby given to the creditors of the Applicant Transferee Company that: 1) Pursuant to the directions issued by NCLT by the order dated 8th September 2020 and the provisions of Section 230(4) read with Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013, the business as set out in aforesaid notice is to be transacted by the secured and unsecured creditors through voting by means of remote e-voting facility and by way of e-voting at the time of the Meeting. The Company is providing facility for remote e-voting by electronic means through e-voting platform of Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL). The necessary instructions for remote e-voting have been set out in the said notice dated 16th September 2020.	
2) The voting right of the respective creditors shall be in proportion to the value of debt as on 15th October 2020	
3) The Company has sent by an email dated 19th September 2020 the Notice of NCLT Convened Meetings to all the Secured Creditors and Unsecured Creditors whose email addresses were available with the Company and completed dispatch of the physical copy of the Notice at their registered address as on 19th September 2020 to those Creditors who have not registered their email addresses.	
4) The remote e-voting commences on Monday, 19th October 2020 at 9.00 a.m. and it will end as on Wednesday, 21st October 2020 at 5.00 p.m. During the voting period, creditors of the Company as on cut-off date may cast their vote through remote e-voting. The Voting through remote e-voting will not be allowed beyond 5:00 p.m. IST on 21st October 2020. The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by CDSL for voting thereafter.	
5) Any person who becomes a creditor of the Company after dispatch of the Notice and has an outstanding debt as on the cut-off date i.e. 15th October 2020 may obtain the Login details by writing to the Company's E-mail Id: secretariat@bdal.com.	
6) A creditor may attend the Meeting even after exercising his right through remote e-voting but cannot vote again at the time of the Meeting.	
7) NCLT Convened Meeting notice dated 16th September 2020 is available on Company's website www.bodal.com	
8) The Scrutinizer shall submit a consolidated Scrutinizer's Report of the total votes cast in favour of or against, if any, after the conclusion of the meeting to the Chairman of the Meeting or a person authorised by him. The results would be displayed at the Registered Office of the Applicant Transferee Company, intimated to the stock exchange where the Applicant Transferee Company's securities are listed and displayed along with the scrutinizer's report on the Applicant Transferee Company's website www.bodal.com	
9) In case of any grievance connected with remote e-voting, the Members may contact Mr. Rakesh Dahli, Manager at CDSL at designated email ids: helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or at telephone no. 022-23058542/8543. Further in case of any query or issue regarding remote e-voting, the shareholders may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and E-voting manual available at www.evotingindia.com under help section or write an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com.	
10) As directed by NCLT, Shri Tapan Shah, Practicing Company Secretary, has been appointed as the Scrutinizer to scrutinize the voting of secured and unsecured creditors by remote e-voting as well as by the e-voting at the time of the meeting.	
Date : 21st September 2020 Place : Ahmedabad	Firoj Gaffarhai Bodla Chairman appointed for the Meetings

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पत्रांक: कारुसिलिंग/यू.टी.यू./2020 दिनांक: 20 सितम्बर, 2020

ऑनलाइन प्रवेश प्रक्रिया (कारुसिलिंग) वर्ष 2020-21 की सूचना
उत्तराखण्ड तकनीकी विश्वविद्यालय के संघटक एवं समस्त स्वायत्तशासी/निजी इंजीनियरिंग कालेजों में शैक्षिक सत्र 2020-21 हेतु विभिन्न पाठ्यक्रमों में (B. Tech 1st & 2nd Year (Lateral Entry), B. Pharm 1st & 2nd Year (Lateral Entry), B. Arch., BHMCT, B. Design, M. Tech, M.Pharm, MBA, MHM & MCA) प्रवेश हेतु ऑनलाइन प्रवेश प्रक्रिया (कारुसिलिंग) का निम्नवत् विवरण के अनुसार आयोजन किया जा रहा है:-

क्र.सं.	प्रवेश प्रक्रिया का विवरण	तिथि एवं अवधि	अभिव्यक्ति /टिप्पणी
1	पंजीकरण व आवेदन पत्र भरने की तिथि	21.09.2020 से 28.09.2020	इस प्रक्रिया के उपरान्त रिक्त सीटों को
2	ऑनलाइन Choice Filling की तिथि	30.09.2020 से 03.10.2020	On Spot Counselling के माध्यम से
3	सीट आवंटन	07.10.2020	संस्थान स्तर पर पारदर्शी तरीके से
4	आवृत्ति संस्थान में प्रवेश हेतु Reporting की तिथि	08.10.2020 से 14.10.2020	विज्ञापित कर मेरिट के आधार भरा जायेगा।

कारुसिलिंग हेतु आवश्यक दिशा निर्देश

- प्रवेश प्रक्रिया अभाविष्य (ACTE) नई दिल्ली के मानकों के अनुसार तत्त्व: संपादित की जायेगी, जिसमें कोविड-19 सद्य परिस्थिति अनुसार आवश्यक बदलाव किया जा रहा है। बी.टेक/बी. फार्म/बी.आर्क प्रथम वर्ष में प्रवेश JEE Main की रैंक या 12वीं परीक्षा में अभाविष्य के मानकों के अनुसार (जैसे कि-Maths, Physics एवं अन्य ACTE Listed विषयों में से एक विषय) प्राप्तियों का प्रतिशत अंकों के आधार पर किया जायेगा। JEE Main के रैंक के अभाव में सीट आवंटन प्रक्रिया में सटीकता प्रदान की जायेगी।
- बी.एच.एच.सी.टी.एच.बी.डिजायन की सीटें 12वीं (उच्च माध्यमिक परीक्षा) में प्राप्त प्राप्तियों के आधार पर मेरिट अनुसार भरी जायेंगी।
- उपरोक्त अन्य द्वितीय वर्ष (Lateral Entry), तथा स्नातकोत्तर पाठ्यक्रमों की सीटें निर्धारित डिप्लोमा/डिग्री में उत्तीर्ण प्राप्तियों के अभाव प्रथम वर्ष से अंतिम वर्ष के पंचम/सप्तम सेमेस्टर में प्राप्त प्राप्तियों के अनुसार अनुसंधान मेरिट आधार पर भरी जायेंगी जिसमें All India Level परीक्षा जैसे की GATE/GPAT में Qualified छात्रों को वरीयता प्रदान की जायेगी। इस सम्पूर्ण प्रक्रिया में respective विधिवक मंडलों जैसे ACTE/PCI के निर्देशों का पालन सुनिश्चित किया जायेगा।
- अभ्यर्थी द्वारा प्रवेश प्रक्रिया शुरू कर, 2000 जमा करना अनिवार्य है।

प्रवेश प्रक्रिया हेतु अद्यतन एवं विस्तृत जानकारी विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट www.uktech.ac.in पर प्राप्त की जा सकती है। अभ्यर्थी अन्य किसी भी प्रकार की समस्या के समाधान हेतु विश्वविद्यालय के हेल्पलाइन नं. 8865004876, 0135-2774067 या counseling@uktech.ac.in पर दिनांक 21 सितम्बर 2020 से दिनांक: 10:00 बजे से सांय 6.00 बजे तक सम्पर्क कर सकते हैं।

प्रो. (डॉ.) अम्बरीष एच. विद्यार्थी
नोडल अधिकारी, कारुसिलिंग 2020

'FEWER RAINY DAYS, DRY WIND'

At 36.1°C, hottest September in 5 yrs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

TEMPERATURE IN the capital has been soaring this month due to fewer rainy days and dry winds, making the average maximum temperature in September so far the highest in five years.

On Sunday, the daytime temperature in the city was 36.8 degrees Celsius, which was two degrees above normal for the month.

The average maximum temperature for 20 days so far this month has been 36.1 degrees and the number of rainy days were three, as per data from the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Safdarjung observatory, which is representative of the city.

In previous years, September has recorded higher rainy days and lower average temperatures.

Last year, the average was 35.1 degrees Celsius with six days of rain. In September 2018, the average was 32.7 degrees Celsius with 14 days of rain. In 2017, with seven rainy days, the average temperature was 34.5 degrees Celsius, and in 2016, it was 35 degrees Celsius with three days of rain.

Only in September 2015 did

Not paid dues, man leaves twins at DDMA office

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

A 35-YEAR-OLD man left his 11-month-old twin boys at the DDMA office in Civil Lines Friday, saying he couldn't take care of them anymore as he had not been paid for three months. The man, Naresh, is a clerk at a cooperative housing society, whose temporary administrator is a senior DDMA official. He claimed he approached the administrator at the DDMA office for help with his pay.

A video of the twins crawling on the footpath as vehicles passed by surfaced on social media on Sunday. Police said the twins were sitting on the road alone for 10 minutes. "A woman constable gave them milk and water. We traced the family and sent the children back. We are conducting an enquiry," said a senior officer.

Naresh claimed: "I have been working for months but have not received my salary. I have three other children as well, aged 12, 7 and 5. I went to the DDMA office on Friday but the officers didn't talk to me. So, I left my children outside their office, not on the road... Someone put my children there," he claimed.

The senior DDMA official said, "There are conflicts at the cooperative society so his salary was delayed by a month. We have been trying to help... On Friday, he left his children on the road. Guards spotted them and told police. He didn't come to my office in the morning." He said he was appointed by the cooperative society as an administrator till elections.

PUNJABI BAGH

Soon, spot replicas of Mysore Palace, Charminar at SDMC park

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

WITH REPLICAS of 17 popular monuments from across the country including Mysore Palace, Charminar and Khajuraho Temple built from scrap material, the Bharat Darshan Park in Punjabi Bagh is set to be completed this year. Spread over 8.5 acres and built at a cost of Rs 14 crore, the park will be open to visitors from 2021, said mayor of South MCD Anamika Mithlesh.

The mayor said though the South MCD is facing fund con-



There have been only 3 rainy days this month

THE WEEK AHEAD

Date	Minimum	Maximum	Conditions
Sep 21	26°C	37°C	Partly cloudy sky
Sep 22	28°C	36°C	Generally cloudy sky with light rain
Sep 23	27°C	35°C	Generally cloudy sky with light rain
Sep 24	26°C	36°C	Generally cloudy sky with light rain or drizzle
Sep 25	26°C	37°C	Partly cloudy sky
Sep 26	28°C	37°C	Partly cloudy sky

the city get as warm as it is at present, when the average temperature touched 36.1 degrees Celsius with two days of rain.

Moreover, the average reading of 36.1 degrees Celsius is the highest mark the mercury has reached for the month of September since 2011.

Kuldeep Srivastava, head of the IMD's regional weather fore-

casting centre in Delhi, said there would be some relief around September 22-23 when light rainfall could bring the mercury down by a degree or two, but after that it would soar again.

"Presently, we have dry winds from Northwest India, no rainfall and clear skies. All of this is causing a rise in temperature," he said.

40-yr-old commits suicide in lock-up, constable suspended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

A 40-YEAR-OLD murder convict allegedly committed suicide inside the Samaypur Badli police station lockup. Police said a constable has been suspended for negligence following the incident.

While Dharmendra's family alleged he was being beaten up in custody the last time they saw him, senior police officers denied the allegations.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer North) Gaurav Sharma said, "We have suspended constable Yashveer, who was posted on sentry duty at Samaypur Badli police station for his negligence."

According to police, Dharmendra was arrested in 2005 in a case of robbery and murder, and later convicted in the case. He got parole in March this year, which was later extended due to the lockdown.

On Saturday, he was arrested for allegedly raping a 14-

Tourist guide 'gangraped'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 21

A TOURIST guide was allegedly gangraped inside a hotel in New Delhi district on Friday night.

straints, money for the project had been allocated before the Covid crisis. "The civic body will be able to complete the project on time," she said.

Other replicas of monuments include Gateway of India, Konark Temple, Nalanda ruins, Golden Temple, Meenakshi Temple, Hawa Mahal, Hampi ruins, Victoria Memorial, Sanchi Stupa, Gol Gumbaz, Ajanta and Ellora Caves, and Junagarh Fort.

The replicas are being built using parts of vehicles, fans, rods, iron sheets, nut-bolts, etc, which were gathering dust in municipal stores, said leader of the house, South MCD, Narendra Chawla.



Replicas of Mysore Palace (L) and Hampi's ruins at the Bharat Darshan Park. Express

HC ruling on net, gadgets for EWS students poses new challenge for small pvt schools

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

WHILE CHILDREN across the city stand to benefit from the Delhi High Court's recent ruling that private schools must provide gadgets and internet packages free of cost to students belonging to economically weaker section (EWS) and disadvantaged groups (DG) categories, there is not much of a financial gap between them and fee-paying students in many smaller private schools.

On Friday, the HC had ordered private schools and government schools like Kendriya Vidyalayas to provide free gadgets and internet packages to EWS/DG students to address the intra-class gap between them and fee-paying students, and "to ensure level playing field, and to remedy this digital divide".

At Sant Gyaneshwar Public



The financial gap between EWS students and fee-paying students in many smaller private schools are narrow. Archive

school in Khampur, for instance, around 15% of students are not attending online classes held via the Zoom app. According to school manager Mukesh Kumar Bhatia, these students are from both EWS and fee-paying categories. With a monthly fee starting from Rs 1,000 and going up to Rs 1,600, most of the fee-pay-

ing and EWS students are from similar backgrounds - farming families, residents of resettlement colonies and JJ clusters. "The ones who are not attending are from families that do not have gadgets. We have been trying to reach out to them as well; if there are other students who live close to them, we are

sending videos to those children and asking them to share the device for some time with the children missing out," he said.

Sushil Dhankar, who runs Hari Vidya Bhawan School in Sangam Vihar, said the average monthly family income of most students in his school is between Rs 15,000 and Rs 20,000.

"In an area like ours, the difference between EWS and fee-paying students is who has the necessary documents in place and got through the draw of lots. We have around 10% students across both categories who don't have smartphones at all. Another problem among most students is that families have just one smartphone. So in most cases, classes of the younger children are being compromised, which is why we are sending videos of the classes to them so they can watch those later. In a school like ours, I feel like it might be better to look at all families below a cer-

tain income level as beneficiaries," he said.

At White Leaf Public School, Pooth Khurd, principal Sunil Sharma said only 50-60% students are attending online classes due to a similar situation.

These schools also raised concerns on the process of reimbursement by the state government for the purchase of devices. "I certainly hope there will be a strict enforcement of a deadline by when schools can expect to be reimbursed. We already deal with long delays in the basic EWS/DG reimbursement every year. With the general lack of fee collection this year - less than 10 students have paid fees in my school this month - it will be too large a burden for small schools to bear," said Hari Prakash Sharma, owner of New Happy Public School, which starts with a fee of Rs 800.

The director of education did not respond to queries from The Indian Express.

'Appear or face action': Assembly panel summons Facebook V-P

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE DELHI Assembly Peace and Harmony Committee, which is looking into the role of several factors in the Northeast Delhi riots, has summoned Facebook India vice-president and managing director Ajit Mohan again on September 23.

This is the second time that Mohan was summoned as he did not appear before the panel, headed by MLA Raghav Chadha, previously. Failure to appear, the notice said, will be counted as breach of privilege of the committee and action will be taken.

The committee, formed on March 2, earlier said it had "prima facie found Facebook complicit in the Delhi riots of February 2020 on the premise of incriminatory material produced on record by the witnesses as well as their scathing depositions before the Committee".

Facebook's trust and safety director Vikram Langoth sent a letter to Chadha last week, objecting to the notice and asked that it be recalled. He had said that regulation of intermediaries such as Facebook was the right of the Union government, that the Parliament's Standing Committee on Information Technology was already examining the issues raised, and that law and order in Delhi comes under the purview of the Centre and not the state government.

In a meeting held in July, the secretary of Department of Water Resources noted that the Interceptor Sewer Project (ISP) and establishment of STPs at Coronation Pillar, previously expected to be completed by 2017-18, have now been revised to 2021.

"Member Drainage, DJB informed that 99% progress had been achieved and only minor works are remaining in ISP, which they are finding difficult to complete in the absence of lack of manpower due to the pandemic. Similarly, for Coronation Pillar, delay is due to limited manpower and funding issues," the committee report states.

He also claimed that the 11 industrial clusters in Delhi that do not have any CETPs installed. The findings from Delhi and numerous other states were submitted to the NGT in the second quarterly report of the committee.

"ED (Tech), NMCG informed that the issue of CETP is going on since past two years. DPCC had informed that for upgradation of the CETPs and to increase the utilisation capacity of the CETPs, NEERI had been engaged for providing consultancy, and studies are going on. However, no progress has been reported in this regard," the committee's report states.

It said, "Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti, raised concern over the poor management of industrial pollution in Delhi even after construction of CETPs of 213 MLD and poor utilisation of the existing CETP infrastructure."

An official from the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC) said the reason behind low utilisation of CETPs was that many industries in Delhi were producing relatively less wet waste than before.

He also claimed that the 11 industrial clusters in Delhi which do not have any CETPs installed.

The project was inspired by an earlier project of the South MCD called the 'Waste to Wonder' park in Sarai Kale Khan, which has replicas of seven iconic monuments from across the world and opened to the public last February. In just one year, the civic body had recovered the cost of the project by earning more than Rs 8 crore through tickets. Around 16 lakh people visited this park last year, with an average daily footfall of 4,000 to 5,000, which doubles to 10,000 on weekends and public holidays.

Niten Mehta, an architect involved with the new project, said it is more difficult than the Sarai Kale Khan one as replicating temple architecture using iron rods is challenging. He said the reason SDMC's earlier project was so successful was because Delhi, being a landlocked place, lacks open spaces where people can walk.

He said, "Most people are not able to visit many monuments in their lifetime, so we are hopeful that this too will attract similar crowds."



Facebook's trust and safety director Vikram Langoth had sent a letter to panel chief Raghav Chadha last week, objecting to the notice

in enabling the committee to ascertain the genuineness of the allegation put out against it. He (Chadha) had insisted that Facebook must honour the proceedings taking place under Delhi's state legislature in the same manner as they did for a parliamentary standing committee."

The assembly committee said that as per a 2018 judgment of the Supreme Court Constitution Bench, the Delhi Legislative Assembly has legislative powers, and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Legislative Assembly provides the committee powers to summon and ensure the presence of witnesses.

"It has been further decided that in the event of subsequent default in complying with the orders of the committee, it shall be constrained to proceed against Facebook India for committing breach of committee's privilege, which shall follow consequent penal jurisdiction of the house under the relevant laws and rules and regulation," the statement said.

Delhi zoo to get 12 new species

New Delhi: In an exchange programme with the Chhatbir Zoo in Punjab, Delhi's National Zoological Park would get 12 new species of animals and birds this year, including two chinkaras, one jungle cat and five diamond doves.

In return, the Delhi zoo would give seven animal species to the Chhatbir zoo, including four palm civets, two Indian foxes and two golden pheasants.

The approval for the exchange was given by the Central Zoo Authority's (CZA) technical committee in October last year and communicated to the Delhi zoo director in a letter in July. ENS

RAJYA SABHA DEBATES FARM LEGISLATION

Oppn says farm Bills death warrants for farmers, BJP calls them big reform

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

RAJYASABHA on Sunday saw the treasury and Opposition benches exchange heated arguments during the debate on the two farm Bills.

The Opposition termed The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 "death warrants" for farmers and asked the government to refer them to a select committee.

Opening the debate, Congress member Partap Singh Bajwa said the Bills are "completely ill-conceived" and "ill-timed". "These Bills are against the farmers of India, particularly Punjab, Haryana and Western UP. Being a son of a farmer, I want to say we will not sign the farmers' death warrants in any condition."

Defending the legislation, BJP MP Bhupender Yadav said, "The Opposition should stop doing politics and misleading the farmers on this issue as the government has brought a big reform to improve the rural economy."

"We are in the government till 2024, the MSP is going to be announced at least 8 times for the rabi and kharif crops. Each time your falsehood will be exposed," he said.

TMC's Derek O'Brien demanded that the legislation be sent to the select committee.

SP member Ram Gopal Yadav said there is a compulsion due to which the ruling party does not want to debate and discuss. "They are rushing through the Bills," he said.

YSR Congress MP V Vijayasai Reddy referred to the Congress's promise to repeal APMC act in its manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and said the "hypocrisy" should be exposed.

Supporting the Bills, JDU member Ram Chandra Prasad Singh said the legislation will benefit agriculture.

CPM member KK Ragesh said there should be a provision in the legislation for declaring



Protesting opposition members in the well of the House on Sunday. PTI

MSP for all agricultural produce.

RJD member Manoj Jha said if the House passes these Bills, it will be writing the "obituary of Indian farmers". "Farmers have issued a whip. It is not going to stop in Punjab and Haryana. It will go till Bihar," Jha said, referring to farmers' protests against the legislation.

The BJP's Amar Patnaik asked whether the legislation is only for big traders.

Shiromani Akali Dal MP Naresh Gajral demanded that the Bill be sent to the select committee. Harsimrat Kaur Badal, has resigned as the lone minister from SAD in the NDA government to protest the Bills.

Tamil Maanila Congress leader G K Vasani supported the Bills but asked the government to clear apprehensions about some provisions.

Expressing concerns about provisions of the Bills, TDP member Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar said, "As per the Bill, without paying the market fee, the corporate sec-

tor will purchase agriculture produce outside the market through brokers according to the price fixed by them and required quantity... Farmers will have to depend on the mercy of the corporate sector."

NCP member Patel said that it would have been better if the government had brought these Bills after discussion with farmers' leaders such as Sharad Pawar.

BSP member Satish Chandra Misra wondered that if the Bills are historic, why are farmers protesting against them.

Shiv Sena member Sanjay Raut sought a clarification on the continuation of MSP system. AAP's Sanjay Singh alleged that the government has always tried to snatch powers from states.

Republican Party of India leader and Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment Ramdas Athawale said his party supports the legislation.

What happened in RS shameful, says Rajnath

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

FOLLOWING THE Opposition's uproar in Parliament on Sunday accusing the Centre of being "anti-farmer" for its move to push contentious farm Bills, the government and the ruling BJP asserted that the Bills would "increase the income of farmers and free them from the clutches of middlemen".

The government also reiterated that Minimum Support Price (MSP) and APMC yards would remain in place.

While Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addressed a press conference, along with six of his Cabinet colleagues, to reassure farmers, BJP president J P Nadda criticised the Congress and other Opposition parties and said the new legislation would "double farmers' incomes".

Condemning the stir, Singh said, "What happened in the Rajya Sabha today (Sunday) is unfortunate, saddening and shameful." He added, "Opposition is trying to mislead farmers and there is a misinformation campaign which is not a good sign of healthy democracy."

Earlier, BJP Chief Nadda said: "The MSP was offered to farmers before, is in force now and will remain in force. Procurement will continue. These pieces of legislation will play a crucial role in fulfilling PM Modi's vision to double farmers' incomes."

He hit out at the Congress saying "It neither had the time, nor the will, to help farmers. Misleading farmers and the poor is an age-old habit of the Congress. Farmers are aware of its duplicity and will not be swayed..."

FROM THE DEBATE

AGAINST



"If they are really concerned about farmers, they should send these Bills... for scrutiny."

AHMED PATEL, CONGRESS



"I request the Minister, if statement about the MSP is true...he should move an official amendment..."

BINOY VISWAM, CPI



"This Bill... said to be intended to save farmers is to sell farmers"

TIRUCHI SIVA, DMK



"They are rushing through the bills."

RAM GOPAL YADAV, SAMAJWADI PARTY



"It is not going to stop in Punjab and Haryana. It will go till Bihar."

MANOJ JHA, RJD

FOR



"We have introduced new age agriculture Bills for new generation farmers."

BHUPENDER YADAV, BJP



"Farmers will get benefits from these Bills. There should be no politics..."

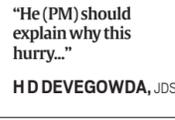
RAMDAS ATHAWALE, RPI



"Bihar was the first state to end APMC system... it was a den of corruption."

RAM CHANDRA PRASAD SINGH, JDU

SEEKING CLARITY



"He (PM) should explain why this hurry..."

H D DEVEGOWDA, JDS



"There is a huge miscommunication in the field..."

AMAR PATNAIK, BJD



"Did an Akali Dal Minister resign on the basis of rumours?"

SANJAY RAUT, SHIVSENA

HOUSE DIARIES

THE PANDEMIC EFFECT

■ Former PM H D Deve Gowda, who took oath as a member of Rajya Sabha Sunday, was going to speak without a mask. While participating in the debate on the farm Bills, Deputy Chairman Harivansh requested him to put on a mask before speaking. Earlier, when he took oath, Chairman Venkaiah Naidu welcomed him saying, "A good addition to our House."

NO QUESTION HOUR: MY QUESTIONS



■ PM Modi laid the foundation stone for AIIMS at Thoppur in February 2019 but no work happened after 18 months, when will it start functioning?

MANICKAM TAGORE, CONGRESS

If govt had the numbers, why didn't they allow the vote to happen: Derek

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

HOURS AFTER the government pushed through the farm bills in Rajya Sabha amid fierce protests by the Opposition, Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien, who was among those who led the charge, said the government "bulldozed" the Bills probably because it did not have the numbers as parties like the BJD, TRS and the Shiromani Akali Dal had come out to oppose the legislation.

O'Brien said he did not tear the rule book as is being said but added, "I wish I had torn the rule book because there are no rules."

He said the right of members to seek voting was "taken away" today.

The government and the Opposition had been holding back-channel talks for some days on the Bills. The Opposition, including the Congress and TMC, wanted the Bills to be referred to a select committee. The Opposition had conveyed to the government that it will seek voting on statutory resolutions moved by MPs disapproving the Bills and the motions moved by O'Brien and DMK's Tiruchi Siva to send the Bills to the select committee.

Speaking to The Indian Express, O'Brien said the Opposition wanted the discussion to be continued on Monday because it wanted division, in other words voting, on the statutory resolutions and motions for reference of the Bills to the select committee.

"We were going to ask for a vote on each one of them. And voting on each one of them



TMC MP Derek O'Brien in Parliament on Sunday. PTI

would have taken at least half an hour. Because the MPs are sitting in three different places...there are people sitting in Lok Sabha chamber, Rajya Sabha chamber and Rajya Sabha galleries. It would have taken a minimum two hours," he said.

"Any member has a right to ask for a division. Just a voice vote wouldn't do. Unfortunately, that right was taken away and as much as we tried and tried...they just kept bulldozing and bulldozing. A senior member like DMK's Tiruchi Siva had to stand on his feet to try and say that I am here and I am asking for a division," O'Brien said.

"We had moved the resolutions to send the Bill to a select committee. All we asked was allow us our right to have our vote. Win the

vote if you have the numbers," he said.

"Did the government actually have the numbers? If they had the numbers, they could have done the vote... I don't believe the government had the numbers. If they had the numbers why did they have to put a knife into the stomach of parliamentary democracy? This is to send the Bill to a select committee. If the government had the numbers why didn't they allow the vote to happen?" he asked.

O'Brien said it is being said that he tore the rule book. "I did not tear the rule book. There is no footage. If anyone can show me the footage, I will resign immediately as an MP. However, I wish I had torn the rule book because there are no rules. But I did not tear the rule book," he said.

With govt on key past Bills, TRS, BJD spring a surprise

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE TRS and the BJD, which have often sided with the government and backed it on crucial bills, sprang a surprise on Sunday.

While the TRS opposed the farm Bills, calling them a "direct brutal assault" on the rights of states and the Constitution, the BJD demanded that they be sent to a select committee. YSRC, another party which has backed the government on key legislation earlier, backed the Bills.

TRS MP K Keshava Rao accused the government of having changed the "very character" of the country. "A country whose culture is agriculture is now being sold to a corporate... you are saying that freedom to sell is given to farmers. The freedom to sell is given, freedom to fix the price is not given to farmers... Do you think that he will go and sit with traders on equal terms and will have the same level-playing field as corporate in fixing up the prices?"

"I would treat this Bill as a direct brutal assault on the rights of States and the Constitution as such," he said.

BJD's Amar Patnaik said there are structural issues in Indian agriculture where about 63 per cent farmers are small and marginal and 86 per of the landholdings are with small and marginal farmers. Arguing that buyers are key to the agricultural market, he said "...I am not sure if the Bill is going to bring buyers into the market which anyway is not happening and therefore,

there is a possibility of cartelisation."

"The small and marginal farmers do not even have the opportunity to get a minimum support price. So, is the Bill only for the big traders? It is a commerce and trade oriented Bill?... There is a huge miscommunication in the field, particularly in the farmer's procurement areas. So, I would strongly urge the Government to consider sending these two Bills to the Select Committee..." he said.

YSRCP's V Vijayasai Reddy backed the Bill. He said by allowing contract farming, the farmer is assured of the sale price for his produce at a predetermined rate.

"Secondly, the Bill frees farmers from the coercion of the licensed middlemen as the farmers could till now sell only to the licensed middlemen and the middlemen found it easy to form cartels and control these markets and offer low prices to the farmers... This ends the monopoly of the APMC system," he said.

Hitting out at the Congress, he said the "hypocrisy" of the Congress is clear as its manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections had promised that if voted to power, it would repeal the Agricultural Produce Market Committees Act.

"This is what exactly the Government is doing now. What is this hypocrisy? Why are they opposing this Bill? There is no reason for the Congress Party to oppose this Bill. Their objective is only one...to ally all those who support the Bills are pro-farmers and those against it are pro-middlemen. They are pro-middlemen," he said.

COVID-19 DEBATE IN LOK SABHA: OPPN TARGETS GOVT FOR 'ABRUPT ANNOUNCEMENT'

PM prepared the nation for lockdown through Janata Curfew: Minister

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY,
LIZ MATHEW & RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

HEALTH MINISTER Harsh Vardhan on Sunday told Lok Sabha that the announcement of lockdown was not sudden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had prepared the nation for it through the Janata Curfew on March 22.

"Between March 16 and 23, several states had imposed lockdown. PM prepared the country for lockdown through the Janata Curfew. Five different studies have spoken about how many lives were saved due to the lockdown," he said in reply to a debate on the pandemic.

He also informed Lok Sabha that while the world was working on 145 vaccines for Covid, three vaccines in India were at an advanced stage and that the government was already working on a detailed strategy of distributing and administering the vaccine once it is out.

"There are 145 vaccine candidates in the world of which 35 are under clinical trial. In



Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in Lok Sabha on Sunday. PTI

India, three vaccines are in the advanced stage. Detailed strategy of how it is going to be administered and who will get it first is also being worked. We are also studying viruses. We have already done genome sequencing of 2,000 viruses. We are coordinating with the WHO in all our efforts and future planning."

On criticism of the government over a sudden lockdown and mismanagement of the situation, the minister said, "If the lock-

down was not used properly and things were not monitored, the dedicated 17,000 covid facilities would not have come up. Today there are 1,773 labs. There is a lab every three km in the country today. We have conducted 6.37 crore tests and only yesterday we have done 12 lakh tests. We have achieved our targets before time."

He said the government started working from January 8 and advisories had been sent to all states by January 17. He said doctors and paramedics had to be trained while the pandemic was on and when reports of them being attacked came, the government brought in an ordinance to protect them.

He said the Centre had provided 1.5 crore PPEs, 3.5 crore N95 masks, 30,000 ventilators and 1 lakh oxygen cylinders to states. He said PM Cares Fund had given Rs 893 crore for ventilators and 64 lakh migrant workers had been helped through train and bus services to reach their homes during the lockdown.

During the debate, the Opposition came down heavily on the government for its "failure to adequately recognise the scale and complexity of the problem" and "the abrupt announcement of the lockdown".

"Instead of mature and proactive governance, we have collectively witnessed a fundamental breakdown in government machinery these past few months, instead of clearly communicated protocols and comprehensive strategies, we have collectively witnessed an alarming lack of clarity, readiness and preparedness to tackle the virus," Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said.

Congress leader in the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said, "No country has lost as many doctors or health workers as India. The government is not ready to accept that there is community transmission. If there was a well laid-out strategy, we would not see this day."

Quoting from Thirukkural, DMK's Dayanidhi Maran said the King should always have good advisers. "You should have stopped him... But no one had the courage to tell him what he was doing was not right," he said.

BJP's Kirit Solanki, however, questioned Tharoor why Rahul Gandhi did not stay in India for taking up issues in Parliament.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Oppn praise for Speaker Birla

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

LOK SABHA Speaker Om Birla was in for some unexpected praise from the Opposition on Sunday after he obliged to its demand for adjournment of the House. The request was made as several Opposition members were on a sit-in protest in Rajya Sabha, which would have meant that MPs allocated seats there on account of social distancing protocol would not have been able to take their places.

"You could have rejected our demand. But you obliged to it which shows your respect for the Opposition and your attempts to run this house taking everyone along. It will be recorded in the history of this house," Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said.

Birla adjourned the House for an hour until 4 pm due to unavailability of seating for all MPs amid the Rajya Sabha ruckus, even after the Upper House was adjourned at around 1.30

pm after the passage of controversial farm bills. Some of the Rajya Sabha MPs from the opposition were sitting inside the House in protest against deputy chairman Harivansh's decision to extend the house, which they said, was made without taking the "sense of the House".

The request from Chowdhury added to several firsts in the historic Monsoon session being held amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Either House does not discuss the developments that take place in the other. But now, Lok Sabha MPs are being seated in the chamber of the Rajya Sabha for the first time in order to maintain social distance.

When the Lok Sabha met at 3 pm, Congress MPs stood up and Chowdhury asked the Speaker to adjourn the proceedings till the "stalemate" in the Rajya Sabha is ended. Birla initially said he would adjourn the proceedings if both the chamber and the galleries of the Lok Sabha are full. But upon Chowdhury's insistence, he adjourned proceedings till 4 pm.

2G no bar to e-learning in J&K: Govt to Lok Sabha

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 21

THE CENTRE Sunday told Lok Sabha that the absence of 4G network in Kashmir was not an impediment to e-learning as all such apps of the government were accessible on 2G network. Minister of State (Home) G Kishan Reddy said in a written reply: "The 2G mobile internet speed is not an impediment in covid control measures including dissemination of information to the general public as well as health workers. Also, e-learning apps and education/e-learning websites of the Government of India/ Government of J&K are accessible over 2G internet for downloading e-books and other study material."

Reddy also said the lack of high-speed internet was not an obstacle in the administration of justice.

Domicile certificates
In a reply to another question, Reddy said a total of 21,13,879 people have applied for domicile certificates in J&K of whom 16,79,520 have already been granted the same.

Classifieds
PERSONAL

I,Atika Begum is legally wedded spouse of No:- 12984411F, NK Mohd Sadiq Gujjar presently residing at Batpora, District Kupwara. I have changed my name from Rafiqe Akhter to Atika Begum (D o B- 12-01-1988) due to correction for all purposes. 0020411240-1

I, Sonu S/O Chetram, R/O 4 Rampura Jhajjar, 123103 Haryana, have changed my name to Aditya Yadav for all purposes. 0130016963-1

I, HARMET SINGH SETHI S/O HARDEV SINGH SETHI R/O H.NO-WZ-546, Ground Floor, Gali No-21, Shiv Nagar, Near Jail Road, Janakpuri B-1, West Delhi, Delhi-110058 have changed the name of my minor daughter JANISHA SETHI aged 17 years and she shall hereafter be known as JANISHA KAUR SETHI. 0040549175-11

I, Rakesh Kumar, S/O-Deep Ram, R/O-C-124, First Floor, Millennium Apartment, Sector-18, Rohini, Delhi-110089, have changed my name to Rakesh Kukreti S/O Deep Ram Kukreti. 0040549205-1

I, Purnan Singh Service No.- 2990456L Rank NAIK S/O-Sh. Kavar Singh R/o-Village, Post-Bhatara, Tehsil/Distt.-Jhajjar (Haryana), have declare that, in my service-record my daughter name wrongly mention as Tanu instead of her correct name Tannu. In future she will known as Tannu for all purposes. 0040549169-3

I, Manveer Singh S/O Govind Singh, R/O B-267, Street No 8-C, Turkmirpur Ext Delhi-110094 have changed my name to Balbir Singh for all purposes. 0040548991-1

I, Janki Devi W/o Ravinder Gupta R/O Flat Number B-6, Plot Number B-115, Shalimar Garden Ext-II, Ghaziabad, UP-201005, have changed my name to Janki Gupta. 0070714728-1

LOST & FOUND
It is notified for the information that my Original Grade sheet cum certificate of performance of main Secondary school Examination of year 2012 and Roll no. 5119435 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name: SANA UR RAHMAN Address: B-149, First floor, ZAIDI GALLI, GALI NO. 9, MANDAWALI FAZALPUR, DELHI-110092. Mobile: 0040549138-1 0040549137-1

It is notified that my Original School Marksheet and All Passing Certificate of Poorv Madhyama Dvitiya Varsh, 2006 Roll No. 300808 and Uttar Madhyama Dvitiya Varsh, 2008 Roll No. 560762 issued by UPMSPP has been lost. Raj Singh Rajput, FIR No. 584628/2020 Address -C-2/6, Sector-16, Rohini, Delhi-110089, return if found. 0040549173-1

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, TANVI VIJ daughter of MR. SHASHI BHUSHAN VIJ, born on 21 August 1996, residing at 14A/70 GROUND FLOOR, W.E.A. KAROL BAGH, NEW DELHI - 110005, INDIA hereby undertake that I want to change my name to TANAVI VIJ. I, TANVI VIJ henceforth be known as TANAVI VIJ daughter of MR. SHASHI BHUSHAN VIJ. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirement in this connection.

Bill to amend FCRA is an attempt by government to target critics: Oppn

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE OPPOSITION on Sunday opposed the Foreign Contribution Regulation (Amendment) (FCRA) Bill to incorporate more stringent measures for receiving foreign funds, alleging that it is part of the government's "attempts to target its critics".

The government, which introduced the Bill in Lok Sabha on Sunday, maintained that the proposed changes in the legislation were not to take anyone's rights.

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and his party colleague Manish Tewari said Bill would give more powers to the government to "muzzle the voices of dissent". Alleging that the treasury benches were trying to malign first Prime Minister Jawaharal Nehru, Chowdhury said, "If you can prove that Nehru had done any financial irregularities with the PM Relief Fund, I am ready to give up my post."

Opposing the clause in Bill that makes Aadhaar mandatory, he cited a Supreme Court judg-

EXPLAINED Consistent crackdown on 'erring' NGOs

THE FCRA (Amendment) Bill seeking to make the Act more stringent is in line with the government's consistent crackdown on "erring" NGOs. In its first term, a report by the Intelligence Bureau had said that actions of NGOs had led to a loss of 3 per cent of GDP. Since then, there have been actions initiated by the government against several NGOs, including top international NGOs such as Ford Foundation and Amnesty International.

ment that prevents the government from doing so.

According to Tewari, the situation in which the Act was made in 2011 has changed. "Now we have seen the provisions... (have) increasingly been used against those who speak against the government," he said.

TMC's Sougata Ray termed the Bill as the "Big Brother watching" and said the government is trying to block foreign contributions to a number of social organisations, including those who work in tribal and rural areas.

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said clauses in the Bill were not in

violation of the Supreme Court judgment.

The Bill to amend the FCRA proposes to include "public servants" in the prohibited category for accepting foreign contribution, decrease administrative expenses through foreign funds by an organisation to 20 per cent from 50% earlier, make Aadhaar mandatory for registration and give government powers to stop utilisation of foreign funds by an organisation through a "summary enquiry".

The Foreign Contribution Regulation (Amendment) Bill 2020 says the need to strengthen the Act has arisen due to several organisations misutilising or

OTHER BILLS PASSED IN LOK SABHA

■ The Lok Sabha Sunday passed the Rashtriya Raksha University Bill, 2020 which proposes to establish a multidisciplinary university to enhance the capability of the security establishment. Announced earlier by Home Minister Amit Shah, the university will come up in Gujarat.

■ It also passed a bill to amend the Factoring Regulation Act, seeking to help micro, small and medium enterprises by providing additional avenues for getting credit facility.

misappropriating the funds.

"The annual inflow of foreign contribution has almost doubled between the years 2010 and 2019, but many recipients of foreign contribution have not utilised the same for the purpose for which they were registered or granted prior permission under the said Act. Many of them were also found wanting in ensuring ba-

sic statutory compliances such as submission of annual returns and maintenance of proper accounts. This has led to a situation where the Central Government had to cancel certificates of registration of more than 19,000 recipient organisations, including non-Governmental organisations, during the period between 2011 and 2019," says the Bill's statement of objects and reasons.

"The criminal investigations also had to be initiated against dozens of such non-Governmental organisations which indulged in outright misappropriation or mis-utilisation of foreign contribution," it adds.

The government has said there is a need to streamline the provisions of the Act by "strengthening the compliance mechanism, enhancing transparency and accountability in the receipt and utilisation of foreign contribution worth thousands of crores of rupees every year and facilitating genuine non-Governmental organisations or associations who are working for the welfare of the society". **FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com**



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

CONDOLENCE NOTES
AS EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Saturday informed that his mother Sulochana Subrahmanyam had passed away, condolence messages poured in from all over the world. Prominent among them were from Iranian Foreign minister Javad Zarif, Afghanistan leader Abdullah Abdullah and Sri Lankan Sports and Youth Affairs minister Namal Rajapaksa among others.

CAUGHT UNAWARES

AMID THE unruly scenes in Rajya Sabha, the audio feed on the live telecast snapped. While the video feed was on, the cameras were showing only Deputy Chairman Hariwansh. Some of the MPs - at least two from the TMC - realised that and did the unthinkable. They took out their phones and started video recording. So by the end of the day, there were many video clips of what transpired. One showed marshals lifting AAP's Sanjay Singh, presumably after he climbed on the Secretary General's Table. One clip showed an MP pushing a parliamentary security staff and TMC's Derek O'Brien stopping him and one showed how the security staff created a human wall between the opposition and the Chairman's podium.

VISA DENIED

PAKISTAN HAS denied visa to Indian diplomat Jayant Khobragade, who was proposed as the next acting head of the Indian mission in Islamabad, on the ground that he is too senior for the post. Khobragade has earlier served in Islamabad as a political counsellor. This refusal is seen as a new flashpoint between the two countries.

India extends grant of \$250-million to Covid-hit Maldives

INDIA HAS provided a \$250-million grant to the Maldives to help it mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic's devastating effect on its tourism-based economy. The sum, around Rs 1,825 crore as per the current exchange rate, was provided via Treasury Bond sale to State Bank of India (SBI), Male with a tenure of 10 years for repayment, the Indian embassy in Male said Sunday.

This came after a request by Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The India-Maldives partnership is unique and the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted this. India will continue to stand by the people and Government of Maldives during these difficult times," the embassy said in a statement. A handover ceremony was held at the Maldives Foreign Ministry on Sunday.

India had provided substantial assistance to the Maldives during the pandemic. A team of doctors and specialists visited the country in March to assist in Covid-19 preparedness. A consignment of 5.5 tonnes of essential medicines was donated in April, another consignment of 6.2 tonnes of medicines was airlifted from four Indian cities to Male, and

580 tonnes of food aid was provided in May. India also lifted export restrictions on medical consumables, respiratory apparatus, and testing kits and reagents throughout the pandemic to assist Maldives in its battle against Covid-19.

On the request of the Maldives government, India will also send doctors and nurses recruited on short-term contracts to reinforce its health system. Neeza Imad, Minister of State for Economic Development of Maldives, has said that Covid-19 has had a "devastating impact" on the country's economy, particularly to SMEs that account for most of the tourism-related employment. Tourism constitutes a third of the Maldives' national revenue. The International Monetary Fund has projected that the country's economy will contract by 8.1 per cent in 2020.

Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid, Finance Minister Ibrahim Ameer, High Commissioner Sunjay Sudhir and CEO, SBI, Male Bharat Mishra were present at the handover ceremony.

PROTESTS AGAINST FARM BILLS

Don't sign farm Bills, Sukhbir tells President

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 20

THE SHIROMANI Akal Dal, a constituent of the NDA, Sunday urged President Ram Nath Kovind not to give his assent to the farm Bills passed by Rajya Sabha, asking him to return them to Parliament for reconsideration.

"Democracy is not about majoritarian oppression but about consultation, conciliation and consensus. All three democratic virtues were ignored in today's proceedings. This distortion can only be corrected with a Presidential intervention," SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal said in a plea to the President.

"Please stand by the beleaguered and toiling farmers, farm labour, mandi labour and Dalits in their hour of need. They are facing exploitation and look up to you to exercise your discretion as the highest executive in the country and come to their rescue by not signing these Bills so that they do not acquire the finality of an Act," he said.



Sukhbir Badal

Badal added that "failing this, the poor and the beleaguered classes and their future generations will never forgive us".

Will take BJP, allies to court: Amarinder

The Punjab government will take the BJP and its allies, including the Shiromani Akali Dal, to the court over the "unconstitutional, undemocratic and anti-farmer" laws of the Centre, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh Sunday said and vowed "to fight till his last breath to protect the interests of the state's farmers".

"We will move the court and fight the draconian legislations as soon as they get the presidential nod and become the law of the land," the Chief Minister said. Amarinder expressed shock at the way the BJP-led Union government "brute-forced" the Bills through the House.



A tractor rally by protesting farmers at the Punjab-Haryana border near Ambala on Sunday. Jasbir Malhi

Haryana roads blocked, effigies burnt in Punjab

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, SEPT 20

Protesting against the agri Bills, farmers Sunday blocked roads and highways in Haryana and burnt effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Punjab.

On a call from 17 farm unions in Haryana, farmers blocked portions of roads and highways at several places between 12 and 3 pm. Arhtiyas (commission

agents at mandis) too joined in. Heavy police force was deployed on the highways. There was no blockade on the Ambala-Delhi road. In Ambala, Haryana Police used a water cannon at the border to stop Punjab Youth Congress workers from entering the district and travelling to Delhi as part of a "tractor rally".

Farmers at several places in Punjab burnt effigies and copies of the Bills, claiming the laws will destroy their livelihood.

Black day for democracy, will hit streets across nation: Congress

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

DESCRIBING THE farm Bills passed in Rajya Sabha as "anti-farmer", Congress said Sunday would be remembered as a black day for democracy. The party is now planning to launch protests across the country.

A high-level committee will meet all AICC general secretaries and state in-charges on Monday to finalize the plan for a nationwide agitation. Party chief Sonia Gandhi is now abroad for a medical check-up.

The Congress hit out at the government for pushing through the Bills amid stormy scenes. "Today's entire episode was a conspiracy built by the BJP leadership. They wanted to bulldoze these anti-farmer laws without any delay. The Congress and the other opposition parties are not going to leave this issue," said AICC general secretary in charge of organization K C Venugopal.

U.P. RAJKIYA NIRMAN NIGAM LTD.
(ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company)
Visheshwariya Bhawan, Vibhuli Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010
Notice No.: 402/APM (GKP, UNIT)/NVIDA/R/N/2020-21 Dated: 19.09.2020
NOTICE INVITING E-PROCUREMENT
The Project Manager Gorakhpur Unit, Gorakhpur invites E-Procurement for Office & Hospital Furniture on behalf of Managing Director U.P.R.N.N. in two bid system for following work:
1. Supply/Procurement of Office Furniture for 500 Bedded Paediatric Medical Institute at BRD Medical College Gorakhpur
2. Supply/Procurement of Hospital Furniture for 500 Bedded Paediatric Medical Institute at BRD Medical College Gorakhpur
The tender can be obtained/downloaded from the website www.etenders.up.nic.in during the period 19.09.2020 to 03.10.2020. The tender should be submitted upto 03:00 P.M. on or before 03.10.2020. The technical bid shall be opened on 03.10.2020 at 03:30 P.M. any amendment should regularly be watched on website. Undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the procurements without assigning any reason. NOTE:- Chinese associated company/Chinese furniture manufacturer will not be allowed to participate in this E-Procurement.
Addl. PROJECT MANAGER (Gorakhpur Unit)

CORRIGENDUM Public Auction Notice

It is for the information of general public that the vehicle bearing registration no. DL01LP5775 belongs to Sh. Mahesh Chand S/o Sh. Bharat Singh H.No. 202/3 Nurses Complex, Shri Niwaspuri, New Delhi and goods loaded in it i.e. Mens round neck cotton T-shirt, Quantity-19200 will be put to public auction on 29.09.2020, Tuesday at 12 PM in the O/o Dy. Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Bikriker Bhawan (Excise & Taxation Office), Near Sports Complex, Faridabad by the order of the Collector-Cum-Dy. Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Faridabad (West) u/s 79 of the Goods and Service Tax Act 2017. The details of conveyance and goods are as mentioned below:-

- 1. Conveyance-** Registration No. DL01LP5775 Closed body Eicher Centar Mfg. Eicher Motors Limited Engine No. E483CDD531890 Chassis No. MC 263ERCOBE224407 Model-2011
- 2. Goods-** Mens round neck cotton T-shirt HSN Code-61091000 Quantity-19200 Pieces Value of Goods- 19682880

You all are cordially invited in the auction.
Terms & Conditions:-
The successful bidder has to deposit 25% on the spot on acceptance and remaining amount i.e. 75% in seven days.
After total payment the ownership will be transferred by the competent authority and the necessary certificate will be issued.

Sd/-
Proper Officer (GST)-Cum-Excise & Taxation Officer, Faridabad (West)

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR STATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES Sector -56 Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (Mohali), Punjab RECRUITMENT NOTICE WALK-IN INTERVIEW
No. AIMS/2020/ Dated:
Online applications in the prescribed Proforma are invited for hiring Faculty (with new selection criteria) for the following posts:
1. Retired Professors as Professors (04 posts) on Re-employed basis.
2. Associate Professors (16 posts) on deputation/ Re-employed basis.
3. Assistant Professor (23 posts) on deputation basis.
The details of Application Form and selection criteria etc. are available on the website www.punjabmedicaleducation.org./Mohali
1. Last Date of applying 24.09.2020 till 12:00 Midnight.
2. Walk-in interview will be on 26.09.2020 at 1:30 PM.
Sd/- (Dr. Manjit Kaur Mohi) Director-Principal
AIMS Medical College & Hospital, Mohali, Punjab
Mob. 9878098181, 9855200011 email- aimsmohali@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, ALIGARH CIRCLE ALIGARH. PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) Address :- DHANIPUR BLOCK ROAD NEAR CANARA BANK TRAINING CENTER, DHANIPUR, ALIGARH.
Letter NO: 528 /RED/Tender/PIU-Etah /File No Lekha- 03/ Bond Clerk/2020-21 dated:16-09-2020
E-Procurement Notice-2
1. The Superintending Engineer, Rural Engineering Department, Circle, Aligarh on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the **Percentage rate** bids in electronic tendering system for Renewal of roads constructed under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the district of Etah for Groups No. UP 21/06R, including their after maintenance for five years. The eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP PWD/UP RED, in appropriate class (A or B as per limit) or equivalent category in CPWD/ MES/ P&T/ Railways and other State Govt. and Central Govt. Departments.
2. **Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement 22/09/2020**
3. **Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission:**
a. The bid document shall be available online from 22/09/2020 to 13/10/2020 and should be submitted online in <http://pmgsytendersup.gov.in>
b. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities.
c. The bidders are required to submit:
(1) Original demand draft towards the cost of bid document,
(2) Original bid security in approved form and
(3) Original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with Superintending Engineer, Rural Engineering Department, Circle, Aligarh, on a date **not later than a working day after the last date and time for receipt of bids through e-procurement** of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. Bidder shall write only the bid-id-number (generated through e-tendering web site on submission of bid on-line) on the envelop containing the documents mentioned above in para 3-c and the package number for which they have bid. Bidder SHALL NOT WRITE their own names or name of their firm on this envelop in order to ensure confidentiality of the bid.
d. **Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement:** 13/10/2020 upto 12:00 Noon and the technical qualification part of the bid shall be opened the same day from 1:00 PM in the Office of Superintending Engineer, Rural Engineering Department, Circle, Aligarh. For further details please log on to <http://pmgsytendersup.gov.in>
Sd/-
Superintending Engineer, Rural Engineering Department, Aligarh, Circle, Aligarh

EC webinar on polls amid Covid

New Delhi: The Election Commission will host an international webinar on Monday on the challenges of conducting elections amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The webinar is expected to be attended by 121 delegates from 45 countries. EC is hosting the event on the completion of its one-year chairmanship of the Association of World Election Bodies. Presentations will be made by Fiji, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, South Africa, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Malawi, besides India. **ENS**

GUJARAT 4 MLAs test positive on eve of session

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GANDHINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 20

ON THE eve of the five-day monsoon session of the Gujarat Assembly, four MLAs - one of the ruling BJP and three of the Opposition Congress - tested positive for Covid-19 during the mandatory testing for the session on Sunday. Following this, the four MLAs will not be able to attend the session that is being held with several precautionary measures put in place by the Speaker. According to the Chief Whip of Congress Legislative Party, Ashwin Kotwal, the three Congress MLAs who tested positive for Covid-19 are Nathabhai Patel from Dhanera, Punabhai Gamit from Vyara and Virji Thummar from Lathi. Kotwal added that two other Congress MLAs - Jashubhai Patel from Bayad and Kalubhai Dabhi from Kapadvanj - had also recently tested Covid-19 positive in their respective constituencies, following which they, too, will not be able to attend the monsoon session. BJP MLAs Kanu Patel from Sanand constituency also tested positive for coronavirus on Sunday, said BJP Chief Whip Pankaj Desai

UTTARAKHAND Assembly session duration reduced, Question Hour out

LALMANI VERMA
DEHRADUN, SEPTEMBER 20

THE UTTARAKHAND Assembly's Business Advisory Committee Sunday decided to cut down the duration of the forthcoming Monsoon Session to one day and remove the Question Hour. This came as several MLAs, including the Speaker and Leader of Opposition, tested positive for Covid-19. Speaker Prem Chand Aggarwal tested positive just hours before the BAC and all-party meetings on Sunday. He has isolated himself. The state cabinet had earlier proposed a three-day session from September 23. Leader of Opposition Indira Hridayesh tested positive on Saturday. Congress MLA Harish Singh, too, has tested positive.

Sexual misconduct charge: Kashyap says may take legal remedies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 20



Anurag Kashyap

ADAY after an actor accused filmmaker Anurag Kashyap of sexual misconduct, the 48-year-old director on social media shared a press statement by his lawyer which said he has been "fully advised of his rights and remedies in law and intends to pursue them to the fullest extent". Earlier during the day on Sunday, Kashyap in a series of tweets has denied the charge, terming it "baseless" and calling it an attempt to "silence" him.

Priyanka Khimani, Kashyap's lawyer, in her statement said: "My client has been deeply pained by the false allegations of sexual misconduct that have been surfaced against him. The allegations are completely false, malicious, and dishonest."

Actor Payal Ghosh, in a tweet on Saturday, said Kashyap "forced himself" on her and "extremely badly". She tagged the Prime Minister and his office in her tweet, requesting them to take action against him.

In a separate video interview, Ghosh — who has acted in a few Telugu films, made her Hindi film debut with *Patel Ki Punjabi Shaadi* (2017) — said that the incident took place in 2014-2015 when she had gone to meet Kashyap for work. She added that after speaking out, she has requested Mumbai's Commissioner of Police and the Centre and state governments for protection.

Hours later, Kashyap responded in a series of tweets in Hindi saying her allegations were an attempt to "silence him".

"Such a long time was in trying to silence me. Never mind. (But) While shutting me up, you lied so much that in spite of you being a woman, you dragged other women also into it. Please maintain some dignity, madam. All I will say is that all your allegations are baseless," Kashyap tweeted. "...I have never behaved like this, nor do I tolerate such a behaviour at any cost," the director added.

Taking note of Ghosh's accusations, National Commission for Women chairperson Rekha Sharma sought a detailed complaint from Ghosh and assured the 30-year-old actor that she would look into it.

A number of film personalities such as actors Swara Bhasker, Tisca Chopra, Taapsee Pannu, Mohd Zeeshan Ayub came out in support of Kashyap.

Will abide by all laws, says Sudarshan TV Editor-in-chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

SUDARSHAN NEWS, the channel whose "UPSC jihad" show was stayed by the Supreme Court Sunday, said it will abide by all the laws while airing the rest of the episodes and pointed out that a TV channel had in the past aired shows on "Hindu terror".

In an additional affidavit filed in the top court, the channel's Editor-In-Chief Suresh Chavhanke said, "I will strictly comply with all laws while airing the remaining episodes of 'Bindas Bol' program series on the subject of UPSC Jihad. In the affidavit, Chavhanke further stated that he will abide and comply by the programming code and directions of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting strictly.

The Supreme Court on September 15 stayed the broadcast of the remaining episodes of the show saying, "prima facie, it appears...that the object, intent and purpose of the programme is to vilify the Muslim community."

The court is scheduled to hear the matter again on Monday.

Caught for Covid curbs violation, student booked under OSA

SAGAR RAJPUT
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 20

A SECOND-YEAR LLB student, caught at a police nakabandi in Wadala for not wearing a mask, was booked for "spying" under the Official Secrets Act after he tried to videograph the police station on his mobile phone, police said.

Constable Shantaram Khade, a complainant in the case, in his statement to police, said a blockade had been put up at Wadala bridge to check traffic violators and those driving without a mask on September 17. Around 4 pm, one Mukesh Singh (31), who was riding a motorcycle with Manoj Shukla (30) as pillion, was stopped at the nakabandi for not wearing a face mask. Singh was also found driving without a license on him, police said.

Singh allegedly misbehaved with the on-duty police personnel at the nakabandi and was taken to Wadala police station for registration of a case on charges of flouting lockdown norms, police said. At the Wadala police station, police added, Singh tried to videograph the station house and the police personnel on his mobile phone.

Senior Inspector Shahaji Shinde of Wadala police station said as Singh was caught shooting a video and his cell phone was seized and a section of Official Secrets Act was added to the FIR.

More persons involved in al Qaeda conspiracy: NIA

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPTEMBER 20

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency, which arrested nine suspected al Qaeda operatives from West Bengal and Kerala, Sunday told a court that others too are also involved in the alleged conspiracy to carry out terror strikes across the country.

The three persons arrested from Kerala's Ernakulam were produced before a magistrate court in the town, which remanded them in the custody of NIA.

The probe agency has to produce them before the special NIA court in New Delhi on September 22.

All three arrested from Kerala—Murshid Hassan, Iyakub Biswas and Mosaraf Hossein—are migrant workers from Murshidabad.

Hassan had been living with six other migrants at suburban Eloor near Kochi while other two were residing at Perumbavoor, a major hub of migrant workers. Hossein has been living with his family for the last seven years.

LAC STANDOFF

Corps Commanders meet today, MEA official in India team

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

MORE THAN a week after Indian and Chinese foreign ministers reached an agreement in Moscow on a five-point approach to resolve the military standoff in eastern Ladakh, the sixth round of the Corps Commander-level talks will be held on Monday morning.

Sources in the defence establishment confirmed that the delegation will, for the first time since May, include a joint secretary-level officer from the Ministry of External Affairs, as reported by *The Indian Express* on September 17.

A senior government official

This will be the sixth sound of Corps Commander-level discussions. The last two sessions, since mid-July, had failed to achieve a breakthrough.

had told *The Indian Express* last week that the decision to include an official from the MEA was being considered by the top brass.

The last two meetings, since mid-July, had failed to achieve any breakthrough in resolving the situation.

The two sides have been

stuck in a stalemate since early July when troops from both sides had moved back from the friction points in the region. While Chinese troops had moved back to their side of the LAC from Patrolling Point 14 (PP14) in Galwan Valley, a small group continued to remain on the Indian side of the LAC at PP15 in Hot Springs and PP17A in Gogra Post area.

Also, though the Chinese troops had moved from the base of Finger 4 to Finger 5 on the north bank of Pangong Tso, they did not vacate the Finger 4 ridge-line, which is 8 km west of Finger 8, the feature that marks the LAC according to India.

Talks between XIV Corps Commander Lieutenant

General Harinder Singh and his counterpart Major General Liu Lin, Commander of the South Xinjiang Military Region, failed to achieve a breakthrough in July.

Senior sources in the security establishment said there was realisation earlier that the Chinese was trying to delay discussions in the situation, but that changed towards the end of August when Indian troops outmanoeuvred Chinese soldiers to occupy key heights in the Chushul sub-sector in eastern Ladakh.

The new Indian positions on the heights allow them to dominate the area, offering them a clear view of the strategically-important Spanggur Gap and the Chinese garrison at Moldo.

Ten Chhattisgarh districts to go under lockdown from today

Raipur: With a jump of over 20,000 Covid-19 cases over the past week in the state, several districts including Raipur have announced a week-long lockdown from Monday. The state capital has also been declared a containment zone till September 28.

The number of cases in the state rose from around 63,000 on Sept 13 to over 86,000 on Sept 20. In view of the sharp rise in

cases, Collectors of Raipur, Bilaspur, Durg, Raigarh, and 6 other districts decided to impose a complete lockdown. Few districts like Jangir-Champa have declared partial lockdowns. According to an order passed for Raipur, vehicles of those found violating the lockdown will be confiscated. Only pharmacies will be allowed to stay open. Stores selling milk can operate for two hours. **ENS**

Rajasthan imposes Section 144 in 11 district HQs including Jaipur

Jaipur: Amid rising cases of coronavirus, the Rajasthan government has imposed prohibitory orders under CrPc 144 in 11 district headquarters, including state capital Jaipur.

The decision was taken at a Covid review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot late on Saturday. As per the orders, a gathering of more than five persons has been restricted at public

places in district headquarters of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Ajmer, Alwar, Bhilwara, Bhilwara, Udaipur, Sikar, Pali and Nagaur. The concerned district collectors were directed to issue orders in this regard.

In the meeting, it was also decided to prohibit social/political/sports/entertainment/academic/cultural and religious functions and congregations till October 31. **ENS**

DEVAS-ANTRIX CASE

US court lifts stay on Devas plea for compensation for cancelling deal

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, SEPT 20

A US court has lifted a stay imposed last July on proceedings in a case where Bengaluru-based start-up Devas Multimedia Ltd sought compensation to the tune of \$1.1 billion from the ISRO's commercial arm Antrix Corporation for cancelling a satellite deal in 2011.

In the September 17 order, the federal court for the Western District of Washington has cited lack of progress in the resolution of disputes pending in Indian courts as a reason for lifting the stay imposed on July 10, 2019 on Devas's demand for confirmation of the compensation award.

In its petition in the US court, Devas has sought to enforce a compensation award of \$563.4 million and interest made by an International Chamber of Commerce arbitration court in 2015 for cancellation of the satellite deal inked in 2005. The US court decided to proceed with hearing the plea after observing that "since the stay was entered more than one year ago, there have been no new developments in the Indian courts on the jurisdictional issue or on the merits of the proceedings".

In its July 10, 2019 stay order, imposed till April 15, 2020 to allow legal proceedings to conclude in India, the US court had exempted Antrix from depositing the compensation but observed that it is liable under US laws to face the compensation confirmation case.

In its September 17 order, the US court has said it "gives considerable weight to the protracted nature of this case — that more than five years have passed since the Award was issued, and nearly ten years have passed since the contract dispute arose". It has noted that proceedings related to Devas

EXPLAINED

What was the deal?

UNDER THE 2005 deal, ISRO was supposed to lease two communication satellites for 12 years at a cost of Rs 167 crore to Devas Multimedia Ltd. The start-up was to provide multimedia services to mobile platforms in India using the space band or S-band spectrum transponders on ISRO's GSAT 6 and 6A satellites built for Rs 766 crore.

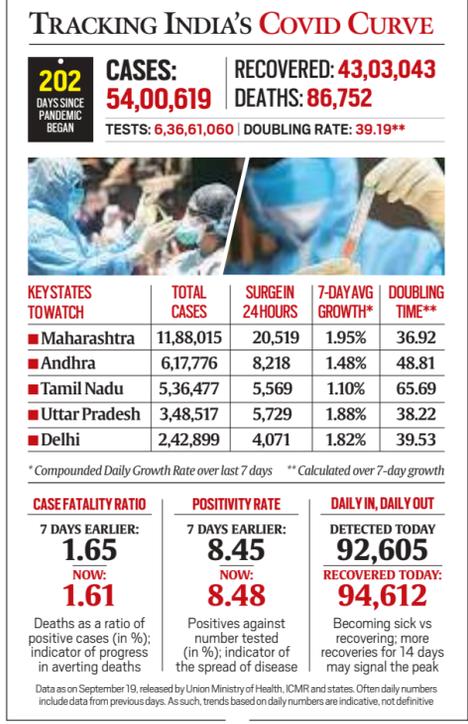
Multimedia versus Antrix Corporation compensation dispute have proceeded in France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom "despite the ongoing jurisdictional dispute in India".

US district judge Thomas S Zilly has posted the case for October 14 to hear arguments.

Devas has been trying to get Antrix Corporation to pay the compensation plus interest awarded by an ICC tribunal by getting the tribunal's orders confirmed in international courts like the US federal court. The case in the US has proceeded even as CBI and ED are pursuing cases against Devas and former ISRO officials in India over alleged irregularities in the 2005 deal.

The agreement between Devas and Antrix Corporation was annulled by the UPA government in 2011 against the backdrop of the 2G case and allegations of a sweetheart deal in the allocation of S-band spectrum to Devas. After the NDA came to power, the CBI was asked to probe the 2005 deal.

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Caught for Covid curbs violation, student booked under OSA

SAGAR RAJPUT
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 20

A SECOND-YEAR LLB student, caught at a police nakabandi in Wadala for not wearing a mask, was booked for "spying" under the Official Secrets Act after he tried to videograph the police station on his mobile phone, police said.

Constable Shantaram Khade, a complainant in the case, in his statement to police, said a blockade had been put up at Wadala bridge to check traffic violators and those driving without a mask on September 17. Around 4 pm, one Mukesh Singh (31), who was riding a motorcycle with Manoj Shukla (30) as pillion, was stopped at the nakabandi for not wearing a face mask. Singh was also found driving without a license on him, police said.

Singh allegedly misbehaved with the on-duty police personnel at the nakabandi and was taken to Wadala police station for registration of a case on charges of flouting lockdown norms, police said. At the Wadala police station, police added, Singh tried to videograph the station house and the police personnel on his mobile phone.

Senior Inspector Shahaji Shinde of Wadala police station said as Singh was caught shooting a video and his cell phone was seized and a section of Official Secrets Act was added to the FIR.

More persons involved in al Qaeda conspiracy: NIA

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPTEMBER 20

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency, which arrested nine suspected al Qaeda operatives from West Bengal and Kerala, Sunday told a court that others too are also involved in the alleged conspiracy to carry out terror strikes across the country.

The three persons arrested from Kerala's Ernakulam were produced before a magistrate court in the town, which remanded them in the custody of NIA.

The probe agency has to produce them before the special NIA court in New Delhi on September 22.

All three arrested from Kerala—Murshid Hassan, Iyakub Biswas and Mosaraf Hossein—are migrant workers from Murshidabad.

Hassan had been living with six other migrants at suburban Eloor near Kochi while other two were residing at Perumbavoor, a major hub of migrant workers. Hossein has been living with his family for the last seven years.

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR
LOK NAYAK HOSPITAL: NEW DELHI-110002
ESTABLISHMENT-III

No. F.40/E-III/LNH/2222-25 Dated: 02.09.2020

ORDER

Whereas, Smt. Swati Singh (Roll.No 02025756), Staff Nurse/Nursing Officer has joined this Department on 02.07.2019 (F/N) and after that she was unauthorizedly absent from her duty w.e.f 05.07.2019. Show Cause Notice & final Notice was issued to the official to join duty immediately vide no. F.40/E-III/LNH/3119 dated 29.08.2019 and F.40/E-III/LNH/4769-70 dated 20.11.2019 respectively.

Whereas, Smt. Swati Singh was initially appointed on 02.07.2019 and was on probation period from 02.07.2019 to 01.07.2021 and was governed by C.C.S (TS) Rules. However, she did not complete her probation period.

Whereas, Show cause notice dated 29.08.2019 & final Notice dated 20.11.2019 for unauthorized absence w.e.f 05.07.2019 after working about three days, she has neither joined her duty nor gave any correspondence/information to the department.

Whereas, advertisements also published in four newspapers (two in english & two in hindi) on dated 04/08/2020 i.e The Hindu & The Indian Express in English and Rashtriya Sahara & Amar Ujala in Hindi and directing her to join duty within 15 days from the publication date of advertisements but she neither joined nor made any correspondence till date.

Whereas, on account of the above said facts & circumstances, it is apparent that Smt. Swati Singh had remained unauthorized absent from duty during the period of her probation when Central Civil Services (Temporary Services) Rule 1965 had been in force. Now, therefore taking into account all the facts and circumstances of the case I, Dr. Suresh Kumar, Medical Director, Lok Nayak Hospital after having consciously gone through the all the records and reaches the conclusion that temporary service of Smt. Swati Singh (Roll.No. 02025756), Staff Nurse/Nursing Officer to be terminated.

In pursuance of sub-rule (1) of rule 5 of the Central Civil Services (Temporary Services) Rule 1965, I, Dr. Suresh Kumar, Medical Director, LNH hereby give notice to Smt. Swati Singh (Roll. No. 02025756) that her services shall be stand terminated with effect from date of expiry of a period of one month from the dated on which this notice is served on or, as the case may be tendered to her.

Sd/-(Dr. Suresh Kumar)
DIP/Shabdharth/0307/20-21 Medical Director, LNH Hospital

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR
LOK NAYAK HOSPITAL: NEW DELHI-110002
ESTABLISHMENT-III

No. F.40/4704/E-III/LNH/2014 2226-29 Dated: 02.09.2020

ORDER

Whereas, Ms.Komal Bhagat (Roll.No 02002196), Staff Nurse/Nursing Officer, ID.NO 151116, has joined this Department on 01.7.2014 (F/N) and after that she was unauthorizedly absent from his duty w.e.f 06.8.2014. Memo was issued to the official to join duty immediately vide no. F.40/4704/E-III/LNH/128-29 dated 8.1.2016 and Show Cause Notice F.40/4704/E-III/LNH/2558 dated 01.6.2016 respectively.

Whereas, Ms.Komal Bhagat (Roll.No 02002196) was initially appointed on 01.7.2014 and was on probation period from 01.7.2014 to 30.6.2016. And was governed by C.C.S (TS) Rules. However, she did not complete her probation period.

Whereas, Memos dated 8.1.2016 & S.C.N dated 01.6.2016 for unauthorized absence w.e.f 6.8.2014 after working about one month, she has neither joined her duty nor gave any correspondence/information to the department.

Whereas, advertisements also published in four newspapers (two in english & two in hindi) on dated 04/8/2020 i.e The Hindu & The Indian Express in English and Rashtriya Sahara & Amar Ujala in Hindi and directing her to join duty within 15 days from the publication date of advertisements but she neither joined nor made any correspondence till date.

Whereas, on account of the above said facts & circumstances, it is apparent that Ms.Komal Bhagat (Roll. No 02002196) had remained unauthorized absent from duty during the period of her probation when Central Civil Services (Temporary Services) Rule 1965 had been in force. Now, therefore taking into account all the facts and circumstances of the case, I, Dr. Suresh Kumar, Medical Director, Lok Nayak Hospital after having consciously gone through the all the records and reaches the conclusion that temporary service of Ms.Komal bhagat (Roll. No 02002196), Staff Nurse/Nursing Officer to be terminated.

In pursuance of sub-rule (1) of rule 5 of the Central Civil Services (Temporary Services) Rule 1965, I, Dr. Suresh Kumar, Medical Director, LNH hereby give notice to Ms.Komal Bhagat (Roll.No 02002196), ID.NO 151116, that her services shall be stand terminated with effect from date of expiry of a period of one month from the dated on which this notice is served on or, as the case may be tendered to her.

Sd/-(Dr. Suresh Kumar)
DIP/Shabdharth/0308/20-21 Medical Director, LNH Hospital

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BULLY & PULPIT

Farm bills usher in needed reform but by bulldozing Opposition, government does disservice to reform and Parliament

ASTWO OF THREE important farm bills that seek to deregulate the sale of agricultural produce were passed in Rajya Sabha on Sunday, after all three were cleared by Lok Sabha earlier in the week, the story so far: Scenes of uproar and chaos amid an Opposition protest inside the Upper House, street agitations by farmers who are defying restrictions imposed by the pandemic in Punjab and Haryana, a walkout by the sole minister of one of the BJP's oldest partners, SAD, from the NDA ministry. What should have been a moment to pause and prepare for moving towards a much-promised reform, is now one that ranges the intended beneficiaries against it, alongside the government's political opponents and an ally. And for this disfigured and disfiguring moment, the government cannot blame the Opposition alone. While the opposition parties may be seizing the visible unrest in sections of the farmers to score a political point, the fact is that the government has wielded a bludgeon when it could have used the subtle powers of Parliament. In fact, the forcible ramming through of the farm bills, the stubborn refusal to concede any elbow room to the Opposition, be it a discussion, a division of votes or a reference to a select committee, underlines a sobering message — this government may be in its second term, but it does not appear to have as yet understood the importance of Parliament, and of playing by its rules.

In Parliament, and outside it too, it often seems that the government believes that the winner takes all. In a constitutional democracy, however, there are, there must be, checks and balances, spaces for the political opponent and respect for the minority. There must be an attempt to moderate differences and forge common ground — and the greater onus for this is on the government. Already, amid the pandemic, parliamentary schedules have been truncated. But if the government uses the abbreviated time only to push through legislation — be it the consequential and crucial farm bills or The Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2020, which could water down the rights and protections of workers in small establishments — giving short shrift to the need to listen to the suggestions of the people's representatives or answer the Opposition's questions, it would be reducing the nation's highest deliberative forum to a mere clearing house. In an unprecedented pandemic, amid an economic downturn like no other, and with a grave face-off with China on the border, this short-circuiting of debate, and denial of the opportunity for MPs and Opposition to have their say, shrinks the possibilities of democracy to find a way out.

Of course, the farm bills do not merit the fears they appear to have stoked. Only the monopoly of the APMCs is sought to be dismantled, not the MSP regime. In any case, amid the pandemic, government will continue to be top procurer of agricultural produce, the bills will only put in place an enabling architecture for a later much-needed reform. This simple message needs to be communicated. But for it to be heard out, the government will first have to show that it is willing to listen.

TOWARDS TOLERANCE

There is a slow but certain shift in the Arab Gulf. South Asia must recognise and support it

AS THE WORLD'S Jewish communities celebrated Rosh Hashanah, the traditional New Year, over the weekend, greetings came from an unexpected quarter — the Arab Gulf. The foreign ministers of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain — which recently normalised ties with Israel under the so-called Abraham Accords — tweeted their best wishes in Hebrew and English. This simple gesture marks an important moment in the Middle East. The region's tolerance of non-Islamic faiths has seen a sharp decline in recent decades amidst the rise of radical political Islam that threatened the Arab Gulf kingdoms. Many Gulf rulers appealed the Islamists by adopting part of their agenda at home, letting them export extremist ideology to the rest of the world, adopting an uncompromising attitude towards Israel and lending a religious dimension to conflicts around the world involving Muslims.

The Arab Gulf, however, has begun to send a very different message. Since the signing of the Abraham Accords last week in Washington, official Gulf media has been recalling the history of peaceful coexistence through the millennia between the Arabs and Jews. One of the most significant recent statements on religious tolerance came from the Imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Earlier this month, Imam Abdul Rahman al-Sudais offered a discourse on the Islamic teachings that emphasised respect towards non-Muslims and dwelt on Prophet Mohammed's positive engagement with the Jews. Many have read this sermon as signalling Saudi rethink on ties with Israel. Restrictions on religious freedom are the strongest in Saudi Arabia. A definitive change in Saudi Arabia may be some distance away, but the signs are more hopeful than at any time in recent memory.

The slow but certain shift towards religious tolerance had indeed preceded the Abraham Accords. Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, for example, has taken small steps at home to reduce the hold of religious orthodoxy. The most visible expression of the new thinking was in the UAE, where promoting religious tolerance has become an active state policy. It has allowed the construction of a Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi, hosted the Pope, and is now letting the Jews practise their culture and faith. The UAE is constructing a complex in Abu Dhabi called the House of Abraham that will host a synagogue along with a church and a mosque. In recent decades, few regions have been as damaged by the extremist ideologies emanating out of Arabia as the Subcontinent. Once the exemplar of peaceful religious coexistence, the Subcontinent is now itself torn by religious and sectarian intolerance. Supporting the Arab turn to tolerance will hopefully help South Asia to reclaim its own tradition of religious coexistence and harmony.

FREEZE FRAME

EP UNNY



VIVEK KATJU

THE ENORMITY of the challenges confronting intra-Afghan talks that commenced in Doha on August 12 can only be appreciated if they are placed in the context of the turmoil that has continued in Afghanistan for over four and a half decades. For the first time, far-reaching changes involving the polity are being attempted through dialogue without the gun being the sole arbiter.

The country has witnessed the overthrow of the monarchy, a nationalist dictatorship, communist rule, the mujahideen era, the Taliban's Islamic Emirate and the current Islamic Republic. It has also experienced almost three decades of the presence of foreign forces and outside interference, especially from Pakistan. The balance of Afghan society and polity, shaken in 1973 with the monarchy's departure, has never been restored. Instead, sharpening ethnic divides, extremist ideologies and theologies, large migration to foreign lands, internal displacement, spread of narcotics and violence have become endemic. At the same time, over the past 15 years, a section of Afghan urban youth linked to the world through the social media wants more open systems within an Islamic framework.

Negotiators representing the Taliban and the rest of the Afghan political establishment and their masters bear in large or small measure the psychological and, in some cases, physical scars of this painful history. Hence, the search for durable peace and stability will not succeed unless all parties and, in some cases their foreign patrons, especially Pakistan, are willing to substantially relinquish entrenched thinking. If they fail to do so, the talks will fail too. This may result in a collapse of existing political structures, splintering of the Afghan armed forces and higher levels of violence and criminality.

As the talks begin, the Taliban is in a position of strength. If the Kabul-based Afghan political class had succeeded in consolidating the republic and had kept the Taliban confined to a small area, it would have had the upper hand. That has not been so. Indeed, the Taliban with Pakistani support has shown remarkable resilience and has gained great confidence. It has inflicted a strategic defeat on the world's pre-eminent power. To effectively tackle them, American troops would have had to enter Pakistan territory and carry out a sustained

The opening in Doha

Search for durable peace in Afghanistan will not succeed unless all parties relinquish entrenched thinking

As the talks begin, the Taliban is in a position of strength. If the Kabul-based Afghan political class had succeeded in consolidating the republic and had kept the Taliban confined to a small area, it would have had the upper hand. That has not been so. Indeed, the Taliban with Pakistani support has shown remarkable resilience and has gained great confidence. It has inflicted a strategic defeat on the world's pre-eminent power. To effectively tackle them, American troops would have had to enter Pakistan territory and carry out a sustained operation. That, none of the three presidents who had to deal with the Taliban after 9/11 were willing to do.

While the Taliban is largely cohesive, the Kabul political class is not. The 2019 presidential election was deeply flawed. The declaration of the incumbent president, Ashraf Ghani, as victor was dubious. Ghani was forced to accept his rival Dr Abdullah as the head of the Peace and Reconciliation Council, implying that he would have to share authority in decision-making in the peace negotiations. Also, other members of the Kabul team represent civil society and other political forces including the Hizb-e-Islami. This will give opportunities to the Taliban and others to create disunity in their ranks.

The most significant issue in these negotiations will relate to the nature of Islam in Afghanistan. The constitution of the Islamic Republic, adopted in 2004, begins with the Islamic shahada and commits the state to the "Holy religion of Islam". It also seeks to uphold the universal declaration of human rights. The Taliban accept Hanafi jurisprudence like the majority of Afghans but believe that the Islamic sharia in its extreme Deobandi interpretation along with distorted Pashtun social codes must be uncompromisingly followed. That manifests itself in the approach to other faiths, other Islamic mazhabs, gender issues, social conduct and apparel and even facial hair.

It is almost impossible to predict how common ground can be found to accommodate fiercely held beliefs on all sides on the issues of religious interpretation and social codes. Goodwill among the negotiators and leaders buttressed with creative Islamic jurisprudence and scholarship would be needed. At the same time the Taliban leadership and Pakistan would be aware that despite its strategic defeat and desperation to withdraw, the US retains the capacity to deny them the fruits of "victory". Also, the third decade of this century in not the last decade of the last millennium; the world has been transformed. To what extent will all this make the Taliban flexible is an imponderable. The Kabul elite would also have to make concessions on political issues and social codes.

However laudable it may be, it would be unrealistic to expect the Taliban to agree to a

ceasefire though they may calibrate violence as the talks progress. The Taliban would fear that if cadres are not used, they may just fritter away. Also, Kabul would not take them seriously if it lost the ability to inflict damage. For the movement, power sharing, especially at the Centre, while significant, may not be as important as gaining charge of some provinces, a prospect Kabul will be chary about, irrespective of the facts on the ground.

At its core the Taliban is Pushtun. Its treatment of non-Pushtun Afghan ethnicities during its rule generated hatred and fear among them. Since then it has tried to put forward a pan-Afghan image and has succeeded in making some headway in a few non-Pushtun areas. However, old fears remain strong among many non-Pushtun especially in the cities. It will have to address these concerns.

How is India placed in Afghanistan as this dialogue begins? Clearly, Indian policy-makers refused to modify their Afghan approaches even as it became increasingly evident that the Taliban had gained ground in the country and was getting international legitimacy. Even while the Kabul authorities were trying to persuade the Taliban to the negotiating table, India continued to shun it. It saw the situation in black and white terms because of the Taliban connection and dependence on Pakistan. This resulted in India putting itself into a corner. It could have continued to strengthen its ties with Kabul and at the same time opened links with the Taliban. Diplomatic contradictions have to be managed. All other major powers were doing so. In India's case, this was especially needed because the Taliban was signalling that it was not a Pakistani proxy. That assertion should have been tested.

External Affairs Minister Jaishankar correctly emphasised that the talks should be Afghan owned and led. In addition, India should also stress that in the interests of Afghanistan and the region the talks must succeed, that their failure would be catastrophic for the Afghan people and the region. Finally, that India would continue with its traditional policy of fostering close ties with any legitimate Afghan government.

The writer is former Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan



LEELA SAMSON

THE DIVIDE BETWEEN scholarship in the arts and the practice itself, runs deep. I imagine that it isn't just an Indian phenomenon. But it can easily tip over in a country like ours because of the existence of a large number of ancient texts on every subject under the sun including dramaturgy; because practice continues to this day in various forms and is living proof of the survival of these ancient practices, be they religious, artistic, craft or customs; and because of our diversity, which allows for opposite and contrary ways of practising the forms. Many artists who fancifully tried to straddle these two worlds have found themselves ostracised by both scholars and gurus. In India, a local motor-mechanic who is perhaps formally uneducated is called *ustad* or *dada* for his understanding of the heartbeat of an engine and is given all the respect awarded to a guru. Such is the respect for a practitioner.

Kapilaji Vatsyayan straddled both these worlds and sought them out with an equal passion and vigour. In the last few decades, she included an even wider discourse in the social sciences and art — in social, political and economic theories, as they influenced societies and the relationship between individuals. Anthropology, archaeology, iconography, human geography, linguistics and social history — she saw how these roads met and linked them in a way few can. The building and subsequent support of art institutions was a cause she believed in. She thought of

SCHOLAR AND ARTIST

Kapila Vatsyayan sought the worlds of scholarship and practice with equal passion

herself as an artist, a dancer.

Unfortunately, when you live a long and fruitful life as she did, your disappointment in men and matters increases with each passing year. And that is not merely because your eyesight or hearing is failing you, especially in the auditoria of our time when the music can be loud and jarring. It is because you have, in your youth, been fortunate to have seen the great gurus perform in the remotest corners of India, in the humble, yet aesthetic surroundings of their thatched homes, local temples, gurukulas, courtyards, in monasteries, in forests and on the sand-dunes. That is art of another hue. One that is not self-conscious. One that is given freely, not to an audience, though there may be one, but because it is an offering to the highest senses.

Kapilaji was a tall person and she frowned quite a bit. You knew that she was caught up in a world of thought and philosophy. She had little time for the mundane. Yet she was gentle when she thought you needed her good counsel. Then she looked you straight in the eye and asked pertinent questions. She usually knew what was worrying you. She had seen the offices and corridors of the Ministry of Culture. She had worked under Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay in the Sangeet Natak Akademi. She had seen the great museums in the West, visited the monuments of art across the Subcontinent and most of all, interacted with the sharpest intellects and philosophers across the globe. If she had not

met them, she knew of their writings and had absorbed their theories.

Young artists like me, who had been trained in the old gurukulas or with the stalwart gurus of the early decades after Independence, but had started our performing lives in Delhi, often met her scrupulous eye. Her lectures were riveting, but also went over our heads. She was seen at functions and performances, but despised "the front row syndrome" of Delhi. Instead, even at the India International Centre, she would slip into a seat at the back row and leave at will. It was always a privilege to have her drop you a comment or criticism, later, in private.

Once at a Natya Kala Conference in Chennai, Sadanam Balakrishnan, a great Kathakali exponent, had demonstrated a story in abhinaya. People were deeply moved, she amongst them. She came on stage and asked the audience whether they understood how he had produced the *rasa*. The obvious reaction was he performed abhinaya or facial expression, augmented by an elaborate use of *hastha mudras* and thus told the story. She disagreed. She said that to produce the *rasa* he had used his breath and that he had brought colour and expression to his face through his very breath. And that is what an audience must appreciate. Such a sharp and sensitive mind is unlikely to be seen for generations to come.

The writer is former director, Kalakshetra, and chairperson, Sangeet Natak Akademi



SEPTEMBER 21, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

ASSAM TALKS LIMBO
The Union government is hopeful of a package solution to the problem of foreign nationals incorporating some of the points suggested by the home ministry and others mooted by the Assam agitation leaders during the four-day talks. The minister of state of home affairs, Yogendra Makwana said that there will be a package deal "acceptable to them and involving give and take on both sides". But the Assam groups do no share this optimism. Both the AASU and the AAGSP continue to maintain that the NRC and the 1952 electoral rolls should form the basis of determining nationality. The home minister, however, suggested

that all electoral rolls since 1952 and all Census reports should be taken into account.

POLISH WORRIES FOR US
THE US SECRETARY of State, Edmund Muskie said that the USA is monitoring the situation regarding the movement of Soviet troops in the western parts of the Soviet Union and East Germany. Washington is plainly nervous about possible Soviet moves into Poland. Any such incursion would evoke sharp reaction from the US which has not recovered from the Soviet move into Afghanistan. Though the Soviets have always had more of a presence

in Poland as compared to Afghanistan, the current situation in Warsaw is different given that the Polish trade union leader Lech Walesa shared a platform with the Republican leader Ronald Reagan.

CHAPPALS FOR RAO
CHAPPALS WERE HURLED at Karnataka Chief Minister R Gundu Rao as he arrived to inaugurate a community hall in Gadag in Hubli district. One of the missiles hit the chief minister. The Janata Party had organised a black flag demonstration against rising prices and inadequate water supply in the region of Gadag.

Emerging from the abyss

India will have to swim against the tide to capture the shrinking pie of global trade. This requires fast-tracking reforms to improve the investment climate and attract investments



DHARMAKIRTI JOSHI

GOING BY THE flurry of revisions in forecasts since the National Statistical Office (NSO) announced that gross domestic product (GDP) in the April-June period had shrunk by 24 per cent, a much deeper hit to Indian economy this fiscal appears certain now.

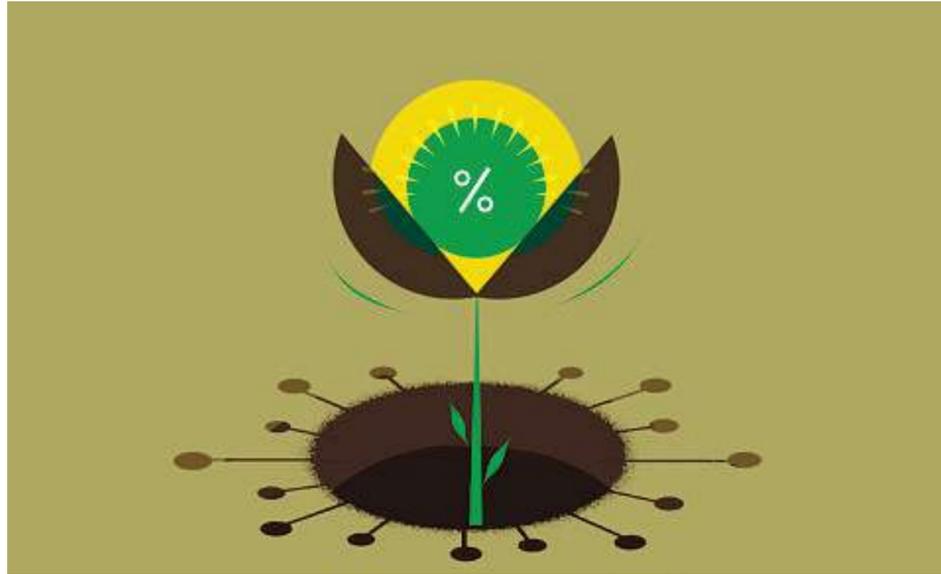
We, for one, have revised our real GDP growth forecast for India this fiscal to (-)9 per cent from (-)5 per cent projected earlier in May. This revision, however, is not premised on first quarter data — our projection at (-)25 per cent was anyway close to NSO's estimate — as much as on the unfettered spread of the COVID-19 infections and the inadequate fiscal stimulus convulsing the economy. Besides, unless inflation climbs down below 6 per cent, the Reserve Bank of India would be constrained from cutting rates.

As things stand, till the time a vaccine is found and mass distributed, forecasting the economic environment, and as a consequence, decision-making, will be dominated by what John Kay and Mervin King, in their recent book, refer to as "radical uncertainty" — a situation in which we know something but not enough to act with confidence. And that too when the stakes are high. If the experience of the last few months is any guide, it will indeed be a very complicated transition to what we regard as normal.

High-frequency economic indicators till August-end show a recovery vis-à-vis the first quarter. But they remain in contractionary phase, indicating that the economic contraction will continue in the second quarter, though not as severe. We expect the economy to contract by 12 per cent in the second quarter. If the pandemic were to peak out by October, GDP growth could move into mildly positive territory towards the end of this fiscal.

As was the case in the deep downturns in the past, 2021-22 could see a sharp mechanical lift from the deep trough this fiscal. Milton Friedman's "Plucking Model" could be used to explain if such a recovery does take place next fiscal in the absence of a notable fiscal push. Friedman compares an economy to a string instrument — while recessions pluck the string down, it bounces back thereafter. This has been used to explain the economic recovery in parts of Europe post the global financial crisis ("The Plucking Model" of recessions and recoveries" by Gregory Claeys and Thomas Walsh).

Quite in sync, we see India's growth rebounding to 10 per cent in 2021-22, on a very weak base and with some help from the rising global tide that will lift all boats. The key assumption here is the availability of vaccine in early 2021, in the absence of which, all bets are off. Even so, real GDP will merely catch up to the 2019-20 level in 2021-22. The economy will suffer a permanent loss of 13 per cent of GDP which works out to Rs 30 lakh crore in nominal terms. So a sharp recovery in 2021-22 can be highly misleading.



C.R. Sasikumar

The manufacturing sector is likely to recover faster than services with face-to-face contact (tourism, hospitality, and sports), which continue to be restrained by regulatory restrictions and a likely persistence of risk-averse behaviour of consumers till a vaccine is mass distributed. Countries such as China, which have already emerged from the pandemic, bear this out — demand for such services there is tepid even after opening up. This is also reflected in India's manufacturing PMI rising faster than services in August.

The rural economy, representing almost half of the Indian economy, appears to have held up somewhat better than its urban counterpart largely because of normal agricultural performance and the rural tilt of government's support. This shows up in demand for products with rural footprints such as tractors, motorcycles and fast moving consumer goods. But rural wages remain depressed and remittances are likely to have been hit due to reverse-migration. Moreover, the pandemic's rapid spread to rural areas can challenge the rural story.

The critical question now is what happens to medium-term growth prospects after the next fiscal.

Data till the 1990s shows that in most instances, growth in India has rebounded, and that the medium-term average growth has not gone majorly off-track even after a deep hit to the economy. During the global financial crisis, however, medium-term growth did slip to 6.7 per cent per year from 7.9 per cent in the preceding five years. But, world GDP growth also slowed by a similar magnitude to 3.7 per cent from the pre-crisis rate of 4.9 per cent. The pre-crisis phase was an indeed an abnormal one for the world economy and the excessive leverage-driven fillip to growth could not be sustained with many economies expanding at half the pace post the crisis.

The current crisis, however, has no parallel and brings with it massive uncertainty and lingering behavioural shifts not experienced in independent India. India is facing this crisis on a weak wicket, with growth slowing,

In the post-pandemic world order, relentless pursuit of efficiency will take a back seat as other considerations such as resilience and reliability take precedence. And this, along with the accelerating trend of de-globalisation, could reduce reliance on supply chains in the current form. For developing countries such as India, the hit to global supply chains may limit the opportunity of industrialising through this route.

investments falling, and a stressed financial sector — it has been hit the hardest among its contemporary.

The manufacturing sector has been in recession since the second quarter of the last fiscal, long before the pandemic struck. Consequently, the share of manufacturing in gross value added fell from 18.1 per cent 2018-19 to 17.4 per cent in 2019-20. Given that investments are likely to take a substantial hit, with the government's ability and the private sector's willingness and ability to invest impaired, medium-term growth potential is likely to trend lower in the base case scenario. That said, India's medium-term growth trajectory will be largely influenced by domestic factors as the global environment will be less favourable.

The received wisdom is that in the post-pandemic world order, relentless pursuit of efficiency will take a back seat as other considerations such as resilience and reliability take precedence. And this, along with the accelerating trend of de-globalisation, could reduce reliance on supply chains in the current form. For developing countries such as India, the hit to global supply chains may limit the opportunity of industrialising through this route.

Policymakers will need to take more steps to address the current pain by raising spending to support vulnerable households and small businesses and services that have been debilitated by the pandemic. This will strengthen the recovery process and may also help contain the damage to the productive capacity of the economy. Together with accelerated efficiency enhancing reforms, this can create conditions for a sustainable push to growth over the medium run. Fingers crossed.

The writer is chief economist, CRISIL Limited

A slippery slope

Freedoms exercised by all mediums disseminating news are the cornerstone of our republic. They have onerous responsibilities to discharge



KAPIL SIBAL

AT LAST, A ray of hope. On September 16, the Supreme Court granted interim stay, preventing Sudarshan TV from further telecasting the programme "UPSC Jihad". As the matter is sub-judice, it would not be fair to comment either on the content or the quality of the programme. The Court analysed the programme in the context of our constitutional edifice founded on values of co-existence of communities, India being a melting pot of diverse civilisations and cultures. The petition, seeking to prohibit its broadcast, was moved by five distinguished citizens who also hoped to persuade the court to draw up standards for programmes in the electronic media. This ray of hope will be realised if the Supreme Court mandates the setting-up of Citizens' Panel for TV channels to ascertain whether the programmes being viewed conform to the standards that the court may prescribe and evolve in the context of our constitutional values. The road ahead is a slippery slope. While we cherish the freedom of speech as a constitutional right, those who exercise it, have also to conform to their constitutional responsibilities. The parameters for such standards which deal with the right to free speech and the responsibilities involved in exercising it have to be carefully engrafted, ensuring that one is not eclipsed by the other.

The government's submissions in this regard were telling. It was contended that any guidelines framed would affect the freedom of the press, leading to disastrous consequences, amounting to exercising control over the media. For this government to espouse the cause of freedom of the press and pretend to be its votary is ironic, given the perception that the present establishment has sought to silence and control the media far too often, and that too unabashedly.

We know that mainstream electronic media can be controlled, disregarding existing statutory guidelines. The fourth estate was conceived to act as a watchdog of the three organs of the state. In recent years, significant players in mainstream electronic media, instead of discharging their responsibilities as watchdogs, have passed the test of being lap dogs with flying colours. If the fourth estate functions in tandem with the ideology of the ruling class, extolling virtues of its policies and taking forward its agenda through slanging matches on screen, where the anchor acts as a votary of the ruling establishment's policies and positions, such an outcome has certain unsavoury consequences. First, the voice of dissent is not allowed any space in mainstream electronic media. It is silenced whenever a contrary point of view is expressed. Second, the shouting brigade, singing the tune of the anchor, is given undue space and time which leads to a biased outcome. Third, the blood-bath on such channels, leads to an increase in TRPs, enriching the business houses fund-

ing these channels. Fourth, is the reach of such mainstream media whose salacious appetites are whetted by display of diatribes polluting minds, thereby serving the cause of a particular ideological mindset. Fifth, the increase in TRPs results in increased advertisement revenues, which again fuels such bloodbaths for yet another encounter. Opposition to setting standards for programmes in the electronic media as that will impact "freedom of the press", in fact, means that the government does not wish the Court to regulate the war-cries of ideological mindsets polluting young minds and serving desired political objectives.

Democratic freedoms exercised by all mediums disseminating news are the cornerstone of our republic. However, such mediums have onerous responsibilities to discharge towards the following outcomes. First, they ensure that all points of views are heard for the public to be informed — the essence of freedom of speech. Second, it saves young minds from being polluted. Third, no ideological mindset is wantonly served through the media. Fourth, anchors do not fuel agendas, which strike at the root of our democratic values.

That apart, it is imperative that the structure of media, which allows for such outcomes is also looked at in the context of our constitutional freedoms. Perhaps, free speech is not always "free" since it is fuelled by commercial interests. Free speech is tainted if business houses who wish to protect their empires are willing to compromise with governments. We have moved far beyond the age when print media would fund itself through contributions so that independent opinions could be shared. Our national leaders would write editorials to ensure that independent voices of those seeking freedom are heard. But in the 21st century, often the voices of those seeking to silence free speech, particularly in the electronic media are heard.

The shift has taken place because to run a TV channel requires enormous resources. While the voices that pollute are part of a significant section of mainstream media, those who have no platform for exercising free speech are now part of the social media. That is yet another problem which the Court will have to deal with in the near future. The nature of social media is such that even there, armies are employed to serve partisan ends: Independent voices are sought to be silenced. But social media is perhaps even more powerful because content is transmitted at breakneck speed. Fake news, images that churn stomachs, have resulted in mayhem in the digital world. While the print media is regulated by law, social media platforms epitomise lawlessness. They cannot be regulated as many operate under the mask of anonymity. Global players make money while the victims of social media have no recourse to law.

It is time for the state to ensure that our republic is not defaced and damaged by shrill voices and agendas masquerading in the name of free speech. It is time for the courts to stand up and hold the scales of justice, making sure that they are balanced evenly. Otherwise, the tilt may endanger freedom itself.

The writer, a senior Congress leader, is a former Union minister



DURGA SHAKTI NAGPAL

Self-reliance for self-esteem

Action plans should be prepared to ensure success of Atmanirbhar Bharat project

COVID-19 took very little time to spread across the world economy. International trade has been constricted and global supply chains have, by and large, been disrupted. Each nation has been left to fend for itself. India's dependence on other countries has been exposed in several areas. The country should now refocus on manufacturing, and be self-reliant.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a call to fellow Indians to be "Vocal for Local" in May. This essentially means, as PM Modi explained, not only to buy and use local products, but to also take pride in promoting them. The Centre announced a well-considered programme, the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (ANBA), as part of the post-pandemic economic revival package. Rs 20 lakh crore (10 per cent of India's GDP) was earmarked for the purpose.

I see self-reliance as a synonym for self-esteem. Only a self-reliant nation can serve the diverse needs of its population and provide them with choices. A content nation can also contribute to the welfare of other countries with a sense of self-pride. The COVID-related pressures and the unfortunate border tensions with its largest import partner, China, present a rare opportunity for India to reinvent itself, economically.

There are, however, serious apprehensions keeping in view the country's \$65 billion worth of imports from China alone. Most of these imports are of essential items — raw materials, components and intermediates required in producing finished goods by a large number of enterprises across several sectors,

including MSMEs. For example, the pharmaceuticals sector imports nearly 70 per cent of its raw material and drug intermediates.

There is thus the justifiable question: Is the thought of reviving the local born out of unrealistic enthusiasm? Of course, it may not be feasible to replace all Chinese imports in the near future. It may also be debatable if the end goal is to replace the entire chain of imports from a country. Moreover, as some economists apprehend, a populist demand for dumping all that is of Chinese origin, may be forgotten soon. Nevertheless, experts and industrialists do assert that the ANBA is an excellent initiative and gives India the opportunity to embark on the self-reliance drive.

A major part of the Vocal for Local mission rests on the MSMEs. These enterprises have, by and large, been seen as struggling for survival. But the reforms announced as part of the ANBA — collateral free credit, expanding the scope of the sector, an online market place exclusively for it, the proposal that governments will pick up equity stakes in enterprises that show growth potential — should put them on a stronger footing.

One immediate fallout of these measures will be creation of large scale employment opportunities for both the skilled and unskilled workforce. A stronger manufacturing base will also lead to positive spinoffs related to the supply-purchase of local raw material and capacity building of allied manufacturing units.

There are many other things going for the ANBA. It has a well-defined charter. The scheme has met with little criticism. Indeed,

a number of Opposition leaders including chief ministers of a few states have supported it. There seems to be no shortage of political will to execute the mission. Even, then implementing the reforms would require innovative ways to overcome day to day obstacles and challenges.

Here I offer a few broad suggestions to take the mission forward systematically, and in a spirit of accountability. First, an umbrella action plan should be drawn by the Niti Aayog listing all possible categories of targets under the ANBA and the Vocal for Local Mission. A monitoring agency will review and suggest course correction to ensure that no delay is allowed to build.

Second, each state/UT will develop an action plan in consonance with the umbrella plan — with a similar agenda and a robust mechanism. A separate organisation created by each state will be responsible for the implementation of the action plan, as well as running all related operations on a day-to-day basis. It will also conduct regular studies to identify local and global market trends and invite competitive solutions to meet market demands. Third, each district (or a group of districts) will work out a more detailed action plan, and charter of responsibilities for ground level officers and departments.

The district action plan should incorporate the setting up of certain bodies/groups. First, an autonomous authority to be headed by an additional DM or a technocrat to manage and pilot the implementation of the listed measures on ground, and be solely ac-

countable for timely delivery. Its other important targets will include scaling up and setting up of a certain number of companies/industries/manufacturing units over a fixed time period. The authority will also set up a 24x7 facilitation centre to help the existing and the newcomer companies and resolve their doubts and disputes. This agency will also be responsible for creating public awareness amongst all stakeholders.

Another group in the district authority will be tasked to lay out detailed norms and guidelines on safe working conditions in each sector. It will be responsible for matters related to workers' families welfare, particularly in respect of health, education, and decent civic conditions.

The state/UT and district authorities should be headed by a few hand-picked officers. This can also be done by inviting volunteers from amongst the eligible officers. The state government will facilitate regular interactions amongst district authorities and help develop sector-speci strategies.

The ANBA is a mission to empower the people of India. It is like a "yagya", to be performed in that spirit of purity, not only by the executive machinery but also by the people in placing their faith in the spirit and mandate of this mission. It will in all likelihood become a benchmark of how governments and their various organisations can work in a mission mode.

The writer is an IAS officer. Views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ANGRY FARMERS

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Harsimrat will quit ministry to protest farm Bills, Sukhbir tells Lok Sabha' (IE, September 18). Union Minister Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal's resignation is clearly due to pressure from farmers from the state of Punjab. This will be the first chink in the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government's armour vis-à-vis the ongoing protests over its three agriculture-related bills. This chink will surely widen further if the top Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leadership refuses to come down off its high horse to find an amicable solution to farmers' anger. This is because farmers from other states including Haryana are also up in arms over these bills. They all feel that the proposed laws will leave them at the mercy of unscrupulous traders.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

LAW FOR DATA

THIS REFERS TO editorial, 'Data Insecurity' (IE, September 18). The formation of a committee to probe the monitoring of over 10,000 Indian individuals by a Shenzhen-based information technology firm is a step worth applauding. But the news of the monitoring of Indian citizens is disturbing. The action by the big-data Chinese firm further underlines the need for a strong Personal Data Protection Bill in India. As digitalisation is touching new heights each day, it becomes essential to preserve and

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protect the data of Indian citizens. A large percentage of people in India are not even aware of digital and cybersecurity and how to protect themselves. A proactive approach by introducing a strong Data Protection Bill is needed.

Ayushi Singh, Agra

REGULATING TECH

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Faith in the machine' (IE, September 18). As the importance of technology has been on the rise, we must be vigilant — it can be biased and harmful if not monitored effectively. With such a tremendous rise in technology, we will need effective laws to curtail and prevent any possible misuse or manipulation by any individual or organisation.

Daksh Solanki, via email

10 INVESTIGATION



FINCEN FILES

IN COLLABORATION WITH INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS AND BUZZFEED NEWS

Suspicious transactions of Indians are red-flagged to US regulator

FROM PAGE 1

law-enforcement agencies to further investigation. (See Explained, right). Indeed, the Department of Justice in the US has launched investigations and secured convictions in cases that are related to SARs.

The Indian Express, along with 109 media organisations in 88 countries, including *Le Monde* (France), *Asahi Shimbun* (Japan), *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany), *Aftenposten* (Norway), NBC (United States), the BBC, and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, teamed up with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and BuzzFeed News to trace the Indian entities and banks named in these SARs filed with FinCEN between 1999 and 2017.

More than eight of every 10 of these SARs were filed by Deutsche Bank, Bank of New York Mellon (BNYM), Standard Chartered Bank, Citibank, and JP Morgan Chase. The total value of transactions covered in these SARs: \$2 trillion.

The SARs provide a rare peek into how businessmen, politicians and their companies utilise banking channels around the world to move their wealth across borders or to tax havens to avoid taxation or detection.

Over three months, *The Indian Express* investigated all the SARs with an India trail, further looking into those already under scrutiny in India for alleged financial irregularities. Indeed, a key finding is that in many cases the very fact that individuals and companies are being probed by Indian agencies is part of the SAR flagged to FinCEN.

Thus, transactions of Indian entities named in scams such as the 2G scam, the AgustaWestland scandal, the Rolls Royce bribery case, and the Aircel-Maxis case besides those involved in other corruption and duty-evasion cases have all been hot-listed with the FinCEN.

Significantly, these cases are also being investigated by agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Enforcement Directorate, and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.

The Indian Express investigation has revealed transactions of a range of individuals and companies: a jailed art and antique smuggler, a global diamond firm owned by Indian-born citizens named in several offshore leaks, a premier healthcare and hospitality group, a bankrupt steel firm, a luxury car dealer who allegedly duped several high net worth individuals, a multinational Indian conglomerate, a sponsor of an Indian Premier League (IPL) team, an alleged hawala dealer who became the reason for a massive fight within the Enforcement Directorate (ED), and a key financier of an Indian underworld don, among others.

In the majority of cases, domestic branches of Indian banks have been utilised to receive or remit the funds; in some cases, bank accounts with foreign branches of Indian banks have been used to carry out these transactions.

As many as 44 Indian banks figure in the FinCEN Files primarily because they are "correspondent banks" to the foreign banks which have filed these SARs. Key in this list are Punjab National Bank, Kotak Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Canara Bank, IndusInd Bank and Bank of Baroda, among others.

There are a total of 3,201 transactions which have been listed as "suspicious" in nature and these add to \$1.53 billion — but this is only those where complete Indian addresses linked to different entities (senders, banks, beneficiaries) are available. These are attached as spreadsheets in each SAR.

Over and above are thousands of other transactions, also linked to Indian entities, where senders or beneficiaries have addresses in foreign jurisdictions. These are contained in the SARs themselves.

Among the major global revelations, the investigation traced a Rhode Island drug dealer's dollars to a chemist's lab in Wuhan, China; explored scandals that crippled economies in Africa and Eastern Europe; tracked tomb raiders who looted ancient Buddhist artefacts that were sold to New York galleries; surveyed Venezuelan tycoons who siphoned money from public housing and hospitals; and scrutinized the Middle East's largest gold refinery, the subject of a sprawling, never-revealed, US money-laundering probe.

Dozens of political figures who feature in the documents include Paul Manafort, the former Donald Trump campaign manager who was convicted of fraud and tax evasion.

JPMorgan processed more than \$50 million over a decade between Manafort and his associates' shell companies — at least \$6.5 million of that over 14 months after he resigned from the campaign amid charges of money laundering spawning from his ties to Russian-connected Ukrainian officials.

Earlier this month, anticipating this investigative series, FinCEN issued a statement in New York that "the unauthorized disclosure of SARs is a crime that can impact the national security of the United States, compromise law enforcement investigations, and threaten the safety and security of the institutions and individuals who file such reports". FinCEN said it had referred this to the US Department of Justice and the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Inspector General.

Responding to this, ICIJ said the reporting for the FinCEN Files is lawful and appropriate. "Our reporting exposes how banks and regulators have failed the public by allowing the flow of dirty money to go unchecked despite a system that is supposed to prevent it."

After Swiss Leaks, Panama Papers, comes SARs

FROM PAGE 1

(offshore havens, conflict zones); transactions to/by PEPs (politically exposed persons) and, finally, adverse media reports on the parties.

Who can file SARs?

Banks, of course, but now that list has been expanded to include money exchanges, securities brokers, casinos. Non-filing of SARs can trigger hefty penalties. In recent years, Deutsche Bank, HSBC and Standard Chartered Bank, among others, have been slapped with huge fines for improper oversight. Credit card systems are not required to file SARs and all filers are required to keep records of SARs for five years.

But is SAR evidence of criminality, illegality? If not, what's its significance?

An SAR is not an accusation, it is a way to alert regulators and law enforcement to possible irregular activity and crimes. FinCEN shares SARs with law-enforcement authorities including FBI, US Immigration and

Customs; they are used to detect crime, but cannot be used as direct evidence to prove legal cases. In the world of international finance where money moves under several layers to escape or avoid taxation, SARs are the first red flags.

Is there an equivalent of the SAR in India?

Yes. The Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) performs the same functions as FinCEN in the US. Under the Finance Ministry, this was set up in 2004 as the nodal agency for receiving, analyzing and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions.

The agency is authorised to obtain cash transaction reports (CTRs) and suspicious transaction reports (STRs) and cross-border wire transfer reports from private and public sector banks every month under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). It is mandatory for banks in India to furnish a monthly CTR to the FIU on all transactions

over Rs 10 lakh or its equivalent in foreign currency or a series of integrally connected transactions that add up to more than Rs 10 lakh or its equivalent in foreign currency.

The STRs and CTRs are analysed by FIU and suspicious or doubtful transactions are shared with agencies like the Enforcement Directorate, the Central Bureau of Investigation, and Income Tax.

How does FinCEN Files build on Panama Papers, Paradise Papers and the series of offshore leaks?

Countries keep their bank transaction alerts within their borders. FinCEN Files signals that after the series of disclosures and leaks of offshore holdings in tax havens, the veil of confidentiality can be lifted even from bank and wire transfers.

One benchmark was the publication of the Panama Papers in 2016 and as the ICIJ calculated last year, the total tax collected following the global media investigation was \$

1.2 billion.

In India, figures given by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is not for tax collected but undeclared tax collected, which till mid-2019 stood at Rs 1,564 crore.

What leads could FinCEN files give investigators in India?

The clear message for agencies in India is that their cases of financial fraud and corruption are being flagged by the world's most powerful regulator. For, the FinCEN Files contain SAR which, in many cases of Indian entities and individuals, mention their financial history of alleged irregularities. There are details of banking transactions that indicate round-tripping, money laundering, or dealings with shell-like entities. For the Indian banking sector, the FinCEN Files highlight the dangers correspondent banking pose, and raise the question: were the thousands of transactions red-flagged by FinCEN also red-flagged by banks to the FIU here, especially since 44 Indian banks have been named in

the secret data?

How did these files come to ICIJ and The Indian Express?

These records were gathered by Congressional committees investigating Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election. BuzzFeed News obtained these records and shared them with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. ICIJ has partnered with a team of news organisations to investigate the secret world of banks and money laundering. *The Indian Express* is its partner in India.

BuzzFeed News referred to these SARs in 2018 to reveal secret payments to shell companies controlled by Paul Manafort, who is now serving a federal prison sentence at home in a case based largely on these transactions. A former US Treasury Department official, Natalie Mayflower Sours Edwards, has been charged with conspiring to unlawfully disclose documents to BuzzFeed. BuzzFeed has not commented on its source.

EXPLAINED



US bank flagged fraud and forgery, UK link of an IPL team sponsor

FROM PAGE 1

Deutsche Bank AG in London" with KPH Dream Cricket as the beneficiary. The SBLC for nearly \$3 million was sought by Aerocom UK Ltd, an air tubes manufacturer, with no apparent links to the team or the sponsor.

The SBLC said that "in case of failure of the obligator, NVD Solar International Ltd of Dhaka, Bangladesh, was to pay the amount due as per the terms of the contract".

However, according to the SAR filed by Wells Fargo, the SBLC turned out to be "fraudulent" and was "declined".

Wells Fargo's SBLC unit found that none of the companies named in the request — applicant Aerocom UK, beneficiary KPH Dream Cricket, warrantor NVD Solar — were on the bank's customer rolls. It concluded that the "SBLC is believed to be bogus, as a search of Wells Fargo electronic messaging system does not show receipt of this transaction", according to the SAR.

Meanwhile, an investigation by Wells Fargo's Trade Finance Investigations unit con-

cluded that a signature of one of its officers on the electronic copy of the SBLC was forged, according to the SAR.

It also found that an email sent to the bank's International Wholesale Banking unit, using a Wells Fargo employee's internal address, was fraudulent and that no business purpose could be established to substantiate the request.

The owner of Aerocom (UK) Ltd, John Hughes, did not respond to multiple calls and emails from *The Indian Express* seeking comment on his links to NVD Solar. Incorporated in 2000, Aerocom is a pneumatic engineering company that deals in air tube systems and carriers. In 2013, the Nottingham-based company declared a net asset of GBP 0.6 million.

NVD Solar did not respond to multiple emails from *The Indian Express* seeking comment. In August 2019, a Calcutta High Court order on a case related to the company noted that NVD Solar's directors "could not be found".

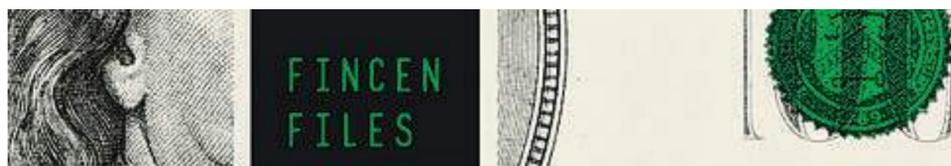
Set up in Kolkata in 2003, NVD Solar Ltd launched operations in Bangladesh in 2012. In 2015, regulator Sebi ordered the attachment

of NVD Solar's bank accounts for recovery of Rs 1,000 crore after the company missed the deadline to refund Rs 594 crore it had allegedly raised illegally from the public. The company is in liquidation.

KPH Dream Cricket declined to comment. But company sources told *The Indian Express* that the dues from NVD Solar are yet to be recovered.

According to a PTI report in October 2013, KXIP co-owner Ness Wadia had alleged that the team received only Rs 42 lakh from the sponsorship deal for Rs 143 crore and that NVD Solar gave "fake accounts of Deutsche Bank London, Wells Fargo Bank New York, Common Suisse Bank Limited, fake Swift message, fake names of officials, even sent us mails from fake IP addresses".

When contacted, a Wells Fargo spokesperson said: "Wells Fargo has robust anti-money laundering policies and procedures in place, and we follow all applicable financial crimes-related laws and regulations. We are unable to provide any further comment."



STANDARD CHARTERED BANK, NEW YORK

Dawood's financier, laundering, funding of Lashkar, Jaish

FROM PAGE 1

the notice stated: "The Khanani MLO exploits its relationships with financial institutions to funnel billions of dollars across the globe on behalf of terrorists, drug traffickers and criminal organisations... Altaf Khanani, the head of the Khanani MLO, and Al Zarooni Exchange have been involved in the movement of funds for the Taliban, and Altaf Khanani is known to have had relationships with Lashkar-e-Taiba, Dawood Ibrahim, al-Qaida and Jaish-e-Mohammed."

The arrest of Khanani was seen as a breakthrough by Indian intelligence agencies given the Dawood Ibrahim connection and the fact that Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed had been specifically mentioned by the OFAC as terror organisations funded by him.

Incidentally, a year after the original sanction notice, the OFAC, on October 10, 2016, sanctioned another list of individuals and entities for their links to the Khanani MLO. The individuals included members of Khanani's family, mostly operating out of Pakistan, and several entities "supporting" the money laundering network.

The list of entities is led by Mazaka General Trading LLC, based in Dubai, and four years after the sanctions were imposed, the

FinCEN Files expose the extent of financial infiltration of the Khanani MLO via this company as well as others linked to what is referred to as "Moscow Mirror Network".

Mirror trading is an "informal value transfer mechanism through which an individual or business purchases securities in one jurisdiction and sells them in another with no economic gain, thereby concealing the funds original source and final destination".

The FinCEN Files contain a 20-page "intelligence assessment" on the mirror network and list 54 shell companies which, they say, moved billions of dollars annually from Russia through European securities markets to other jurisdictions beginning as early as 2011.

FinCEN's intelligence report says Mazaka General Trading LLC received \$49.78 million from five Moscow Mirror Network entities between March 2013 and October 2016. Mazaka also received funds from Singapore-based Ask Trading PTE through the mirror trades.

Significantly, Mazaka was sanctioned by OFAC for having "materially assisted, sponsored, or supported the Khanani Money Laundering Organisation, which launders illicit funds for terrorists, drug traffickers and criminal organisations..."

This is also where Indian links emerged in the functioning of the Altaf Khanani laundering operation. Besides JP Morgan Chase Bank (New York) and United Overseas Bank (Singapore), records show, the Dubai branch of Bank of Baroda was being used by Mazaka General Trading LLC for transactions with Ask Trading PTE.

Besides this, a scrutiny of transactions of Mazaka General Trading show it traded with a New Delhi-based company, Rangoli International Pvt Limited. This company, dealing in wholesale trade and garment exports, was set up in 2009.

The FinCEN Files have around 70 transactions listed for Rangoli International, mostly with UAE-based entities with the remittances being routed through several Indian banks: the Punjab National Bank, Central Bank of India, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Corporation Bank, Vijaya Bank and Bank of Maharashtra.

There are 17 originators of these transactions totalling \$10.65 million. Among them is a transaction dated June 18, 2014 with Mazaka General Trading for \$136,254 sent via the Punjab National Bank.

Records of the Registrar of Companies (RoC) show that Rangoli International witnessed a sharp deterioration and decline in

profitability in the year ending March 2014 and incurred a loss of Rs 74.87 crore over a sales revenue of Rs 339.19 crore. The company has not held an annual shareholders' meeting since 2015, the year it filed its last balance sheet.

Several banks have put out alerts on Rangoli's default. The Bank of Maharashtra listed Rangoli as wilful defaulter as recently as February 2020. The Union Bank of India put out a notice for e-auction of immovable assets in July 2020 for part recovery of debts. The Corporation Bank put out a public notice for auction of the company's immovable property for loan recoveries in October 2019. The Punjab National Bank listed the company for e-auctions of mortgaged properties in November 2019 and April 2016. The Allahabad Bank listed the company as among their top 50 NPAs (non-performing assets) in March 2015.

When contacted, Mel Black, lawyer for Altaf Khanani, told ICIJ media partner *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "Mr Khanani has pled guilty and served a lengthy sentence, during which his brother died and he was separated from his family. He is in bad health. He is financially destitute and his ability to earn money is destroyed by his being blocked by an OFAC designation and the freezing of his

accounts. He has not been involved in any business activities of any kind for five years. He looks forward to moving ahead in a simple law-abiding life."

Contacted, Luv Bhardwaj, Managing Director of Rangoli International, said:

"We have been in the business of export of readymade garments and receiving payments towards the proceeds of the sale of our exported goods as is routine as it can get...On your specific query of a 18th June 2014 receipt in our Punjab National Bank account, we would like to formally confirm our bank account (more specifically, the one with Punjab National Bank) has no receipts on the said date that you mention...However, we have received a remittance of USD 1,36,280 on 20th June 2014 and that pertains to our invoice...to M/S Mideast Star Impex FZE. The consignment containing readymade garments was shipped out after customs clearance on 17/9/13. Our bank has received this remittance; to which it has acknowledged Value Date as 16th June 2014. After adjusting with our LC limit, it credited the balance to our account on 20th June 2014," Bhardwaj said.

"We have no business operations or relations with the said M/s Mazaka General Trading and/or Mr Altaf Khanani, nor are we acquainted," he said.



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CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

COVID-19 VACCINE TRACKER

After Moderna, Pfizer releases detailed information on trials

AFTER MODERNA released a 135-page document on Thursday giving details about ongoing phase-3 trials of its coronavirus vaccine candidate, Pfizer has now come out with similar information, releasing the full roadmap of how the trials are being conducted.

The two documents contain information about the criteria used for selecting trial participants, how they are being monitored and the evidence that will be used to assess whether the vaccine is effective.

Such information is usually shared by companies only after trials are over,

but the move by these two developers seem to have been prompted by a persistent scepticism about coronavirus vaccines because of the speed with which they are being developed.

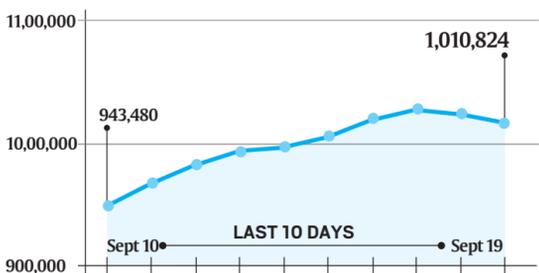
In its document, Moderna has said it expected to know about the effectiveness of its vaccine by December. Pfizer has earlier said that it expects effectiveness data to be available by the end of October.

Both vaccines are undergoing phase-3 trials in the United States right now, and are expected to be among the first vaccines to be ready and made available for public use.



INDIA ACTIVE CASES

1,010,824



Note: The Sept 19 figure in this graph is based on the government update on Sept 20

INDIA TOTAL CASES
5,400,619

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on Sept 20

WORLD TOTAL CASES
30,859,069

Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11 pm on Sept 20

In stroke patients, outcomes for those with/without Covid

NEW RESEARCH has compared health outcomes between stroke patients who also have Covid-19 and those who do not. It found that stroke patients who also have Covid-19 showed increased systemic inflammation, a more serious stroke severity and a much higher rate of death. The research, from University of Alabama at Birmingham, is published in the journal *Brain, Behavior & Immunity - Health*.

It was a retrospective, observational study of 60 ischemic stroke pa-



PAPER CLIP

NEW RESEARCH

tients admitted to UAB Hospital between late March and early May 2020. All patients were tested for Covid-19 at admission.

The researchers mined medical records for data on the patients' age, gender and race; clinical variables; laboratory data, including complete blood counts, blood chemistry and coagulation tests; and outcomes, including death, length of hospital stay and condition at discharge.

Source: University of Alabama at Birmingham

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Making sense of the farm Bills

Two of the three contentious farm Bills have been passed. What do they seek to achieve on paper, and what are the fears of those protesting? A look at differing perspectives, and where this could lead to

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

ON SUNDAY, Rajya Sabha passed two of the three farm reforms Bills that have seen widespread protests in recent weeks, particularly in Haryana and Punjab, where the ruling BJP has lost its ally Shiromani Akali Dal. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reiterated that farmers will benefit from the changes, first mentioned as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package. The Bills replaced three ordinances promulgated earlier.

What do the Bills do?

The first thing to do is to simplify the names of these ordinances as agriculture economist Sudha Narayanan (of the IGDR) has done.

So, think of "The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020" as the APMC Bypass Ordinance. Treat "The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020" as "The Freedom of Food Stocking by Agribusinesses Ordinance", and "The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, 2020" as the Contract Farming Ordinance.

On paper, what the first one attempts to do is allow farmers to sell their produce at places other than the APMC-regulated *mandis*. It is crucial to note that the idea is not to shut down APMCs but to expand a farmer's choices. So, if a farmer believes a better deal is possible with some other private buyer then he can take that option instead of selling in the APMC *mandi*.

The second Bill proposes to allow economic agents to stock food articles freely without the fear of being prosecuted for hoarding.

The third Bill provides a framework for farmers to enter into contract farming — that is signing a written contract with a company to produce what the company wants in return of a healthy remuneration.

The idea with all three Bills is to liberalise the farm markets in the hope that doing so will make the system more efficient and allow for better price realisations for all concerned, especially the farmers. The central concern, presumably, is to make Indian farming a more re-



Source: Agricultural Censuses

munerative enterprise than it is right now.

How have they been received?

There are two diametrically opposite ways to look at these changes.

One is to believe that the plan on paper will operationalise perfectly in real life. This would mean farmers will get out of the clutches of the monopoly of APMC *mandis* and evade the rent-seeking behaviour of the traditional intermediaries (called *arhatiyas*). A farmer would be able to pick and choose who to sell to, and at what price, after making an informed decision. And that, most crucially, when he does this, more often than not, he will end up earning more than what he typically did in the past when he sold his produce through the "exploitative" *arhatiyas* in the APMC *mandis*.

The polar opposite viewpoint, from the protesters, is that this move towards greater play of free markets is a ploy by the government to get away from its traditional role of being the guarantor of minimum support prices (MSPs). To be sure, MSPs work in the formally regulated APMC *mandis*, and not in private deals.

Farmers, especially in Punjab and Haryana

where MSPs are more prominently employed, are suspicious of what the markets will offer and how the "big companies" will treat them. Farmers can influence the most powerful governments through the electoral process but vis-à-vis big companies, they are exposed as minor players, incapable of bargaining effectively.

Which view is correct?

There are no easy answers apart from saying that while both have some valid points, neither view is fully correct.

For instance, the new laws are not shutting down APMC *mandis*, nor are they implying that MSPs will not be functional. Moreover, it is true that — across several sectors of the economy — liberalisation has expanded the size of the pie and improved wellbeing across the board.

Why should a farmer not have more choices? If the private deal is not distinctly better, a farmer can carry on as before. If corporate farming does manage to weaken the APMC *mandi* system, it would only be because hordes of farmers chose corporate farming or selling outside existing *mandis*. Could it be the

case that the *arhatiyas* and existing elites are the ones who are threatened by this reform?

Moreover, there is an unwarranted fascination with MSPs in India. The last Agriculture Census (2015-16) showed that 86% of all land holdings were small and marginal (less than 2 hectares); see *Chart*. These are such small plots that most farmers depend on them as net buyers of food. As such, when MSPs are raised they tend to hurt the farmers the most.

This is notwithstanding the data that shows more and more farm produce is being sold to private players — instead of the government via MSPs — already.

On the other hand, one can understand why farmers are so sceptical about markets. A good example is what happened when the government enforced a ban on onion exports. In doing so, the government prioritised the interests of the consumers over the interest of the farmers (the producers).

This is not the first time. There are innumerable past examples when the government's decision to protect the consumers from higher prices have resulted in farmers being robbed of the higher prices a free market could have provided them. In fact, the MSP, it can be argued, is the embodiment of this distrust.

Another underlying structural problem is the lack of information with farmers, which inhibits their ability to make the best decision for themselves. For instance, how will an average farmer figure out the right price for his or her produce?

Similarly, in the absence of adequate infrastructure to store their produce, farmers may not have the capacity to bargain effectively even if they knew the right price.

Where is all this heading to?

In the end, what will determine the results of this latest set of reforms will be their implementation.

If farmers feel robbed and exploited when they participate more fully in the market, they will blame the political masters. But, if they taste success via better returns on a sustained basis — higher profits that allow them to afford better standards of living — then several longstanding doubts and misgivings about markets and these reforms will melt.

Bill on farm trade: actual text vs perception

HARISH DAMODARAN

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

ON MANY occasions, it isn't the law but what it appears to convey and the context in which it is framed that holds relevance. This certainly is the case with the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill that is set to become law with its passage in both Houses of Parliament.

This law nowhere states that the current system of minimum support price (MSP)-based procurement of foodgrains (essentially wheat and paddy) by government agencies would end. A plain reading of the Bill suggests that such purchases in state-regulated APMC (agricultural produce market committee) *mandis* will continue as before. The APMCs wouldn't stop functioning either; nothing prevents farmers from selling their produce or traders and processors from buying in these *mandis*.

All the law does is provide farmers an alternative platform to sell. This could be a factory premise/processing plant, produce collection centre, cold storage, warehouse, silo or even the farmgate. Transactions in such "trade areas" will not be charged APMC market fee or cess. These levies shall apply only in trades that take place within the boundaries of the regulated market yards or *mandis* set up under the

respective state APMC acts.

Farmers' perception

Yet, that's not how farmers — especially in Punjab and Haryana and probably also MP and Chhattisgarh — perceive the new law. The government has sought to project the legislation as "creating an ecosystem" where farmers will enjoy the "freedom of choice" to sell to anyone, anywhere in the country. Neither farmers nor traders, processors, retailers and exporters will henceforth be forced to sell or buy on the physical premises of APMC *mandis*.

But the farmers, at least from the said states, seem least interested in the promised freedom. For them, the threat to the existing system, which has worked reasonably well with all its limitations, is what matters.

In 2019-20 alone, government agencies procured 201.14 lakh tonnes (lt) of wheat and 226.56 lt of paddy from Punjab and Haryana. That, at their respective MSPs of Rs 1,925 and Rs 1,835 per quintal, would have been worth Rs 80,293.21 crore. And all these purchases were done in the *mandis*.

The present "ecosystem" benefits not just farmers. Government agencies procure through *arhatiyas* or commission agents. The grain brought to the *mandis* is unloaded and cleaned at the platforms in front of their shops, before being auctioned, weighed, bagged and

loaded onto rail rakes or trucks. For all these services, they charge a 2.5% *damu* or commission fee on top of the MSP. The *arhatiyas* also make money by financing farmers, who in turn, sell their produce through them.

For farmers, *arhatiyas* (many of them bigger farmers) and labourers in the *mandis*, the gains from "freedom" are theoretical. The losses from APMCs being rendered unviable — which can happen if trade moves outside and the government stops buying gradually — are practical and real. What if the neighbouring *mandi* does not earn enough market fee and turns into a BSNL *vis-a-vis* a Jio or Airtel?

"For corporates, the first year is *chatti* (loss making), the second year is *khatti* (break-even) and the third year is *hatti* (profit making). If allowed to buy directly, they will first ensure that the *mandis* close down without the government doing it," said Pritam Singh Hanjira, a farmer from Urlana Khurd village in Panipat.

What next

But the questions to ask is: Will the dismantling of APMC monopoly actually lead to their becoming redundant? Secondly, would they result in corporate agri-businesses establishing direct connection with farmers and eliminating market intermediaries?

A clue to the answer to the first question lies in Bihar. The state repealed its APMC Act in

2006, yet the Gulab Bagh *mandi* in Purnea district handles an estimated 5-6 lt of maize arrivals annually. That makes it almost as big as the more famous Khanna or Rajpura APMC of Punjab. Even today, the bulk of Bihar's 30-40 lt maize production is bought through traders/aggregators doing business for multinational commodity firms and feed mills.

There are further established APMCs in specific commodities — Unjha in Gujarat for *jeera*, Guntur Mirchi Yard in Andhra for chilli, Lasalgaon and Narayangaon for onions and tomatoes in Maharashtra — that are unlikely to face any existential threat in the near future. The simple reason is that they are patronised equally by farmers and buyers. For them, creating parallel marketing infrastructure for produce is not easy.

As regards the second question, milk is a produce neither traded in *mandis* nor covered under APMC laws. Yet, most organised private dairies procure it through bulk vendors rather than directly from farmers. Aggregators and intermediaries will remain in the farm marketing landscape even if APMCs cease to exist. Even big corporates will prefer to procure through them and not deal directly with farmers.

For farmers in Punjab and Haryana, though, the struggle is for both APMCs and government procurement to remain. And that is worth even bartering one's freedom.

Select Committees and other parliamentary panels: role, limitations

EXPERT EXPLAINS

CHAKSHU ROY

From The Indian Express panel of specialists, exclusive insight



spent debating the bills can vary. They can be passed in a matter of minutes, or debate and voting on them can run late into the night. Since Parliament meets for 70 to 80 days in a year, there is not enough time to discuss every Bill in detail on the floor of the House. Plus debate in the house is mostly political and does not go into the technical details of a legislative proposal.

The second mechanism is by referring a Bill to a parliamentary committee. It takes care of the legislative infirmity of debate on the floor of the House. Woodrow Wilson, before he became US President in 1885: "... it is not far from the truth to say that Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition, whilst Congress in its committee rooms is Congress at work". But referring of Bills to parliamentary committees is not mandatory.

And what is a Select Committee?

India's Parliament has multiple types of committees. They can be differentiated on the basis of their work, their membership and the length of their tenure. First are committees that examine bills, budgets and policies of ministries. These are called de-

partmentally related Standing Committees. There are 24 such committees and between them, they focus on the working of different ministries. Each committee has 31 MPs, 21 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha.

When they were being set up in 1993, Vice President K R Narayanan said, "... the main purpose, of course, is to ensure the accountability of Government to Parliament through more detailed consideration of measures in these committees. The purpose is not to weaken or criticise the administration but to strengthen by investing in with more meaningful parliamentary support."

Departmentally related Standing Committees have a tenure of one year, then they are reconstituted and their work continues throughout the term of a Lok Sabha. Ministers are not members; key committees like those related to Finance, Defence, Home etc are usually chaired by Opposition MPs.

Then there are committees constituted for a specific purpose, with MPs from both Houses. The specific purpose could be detailed scrutiny of a subject matter or a Bill. These are Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPC). In 2011 the issue of telecom licences

and spectrum was examined by a JPC headed by Congress MPP C Chacko. In 2016, the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was sent to a JPC chaired by BJP MP Rajendra Agarwal.

And finally, there is a Select Committee on a Bill. This is formed for examining a particular Bill and its membership is limited to MPs from one House. Last year Rajya Sabha referred the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 to a Select Committee of 23 of its MPs from different parties. The committee was headed by BJP MP Bhupender Yadav. Since both the JPCs and Select Committees are constituted for a specific purpose, they are disbanded after their report. Both these types of committees are chaired by MPs from the ruling party.

When does a committee examine a Bill?

Bills are not automatically sent to committees for examination. There are three broad paths by which a Bill can reach a committee. The first is when the minister piloting the Bill recommends to the House that his Bill be examined by a Select Committee of the House or a joint committee of both Houses. Last year Electronics and IT Minister

Ravi Shankar Prasad moved a motion in Lok Sabha referring the Personal Data Protection Bill to a Joint Committee. If the minister makes no such motion, it is up to the presiding officer of the House to decide whether to send a Bill to a departmentally related Standing Committee. During the last Lok Sabha, Venkaiah Naidu as Chairman of Rajya Sabha sent eight Bills to departmentally related Standing Committees. And finally, a Bill passed by one House can be sent by the other House to its Select Committee. In 2011, the Lokpal Bill passed by Lok Sabha was sent by Rajya Sabha to its Select Committee. In the last Lok Sabha, multiple Bills were sent to Rajya Sabha select committees.

Sending a Bill to any committee results in two things. First, the committee undertakes a detailed examination of the Bill. It invites comments and suggestions from experts, stakeholders and citizens. The government also appears before the committee to present its viewpoint. All this results in a report that makes suggestions for strengthening the Bill. While the committee is deliberating on a Bill, there is a pause in its legislative journey. It can only progress in

Parliament after the committee has submitted its report. Usually, parliamentary committees are supposed to submit their reports in three months, but sometimes it can take longer.

What happens after the report?

The report of the committee is of a recommendatory nature. The government can choose to accept or reject its recommendations. Very often the government incorporates suggestions made by committees. Select Committees and JPCs have an added advantage. In their report, they can also include their version of the Bill. If they do so, the minister in charge of that particular Bill can move for the committee's version of the Bill to be discussed and passed in the House.

In the current Lok Sabha, 17 Bills have been referred to committees. In the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19), 25% of the Bills were referred to committees, which was much lower than the 71% and 60% in the 15th and 14th Lok Sabha respectively.

(Chakshu Roy is the Head of Legislative and Civic Engagement at PRS Legislative Research)

12 IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

SHASHI THAROOR, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

BJP using media as weapon of mass distraction, shifting eyeballs from Covid, China, economy..

The Congress leader says abolition of Question Hour is a "serious irritation", calls "politicisation" of workings of House panels "unfortunate", says social media requires self-regulation but via "consultative process", and asserts Cong is the only viable alternative to BJP. The session was moderated by Deputy Associate Editor Manoj CG

MANOJ CG: Parliament is in session in the middle of a pandemic. What has the experience been like?

All the MPs are facing a tremendous number of challenges... The abolition of Question Hour has been a serious irritation and setback because that was the only real occasion where you could elicit unscripted responses from ministers... Another constraint, which is a little more surprising, is the unwillingness of the government so far to discuss very serious issues. The obvious example being the China conflict... Back in 1962, while the China war was raging, Atal Bihari Vajpayee had asked for a Parliament session and got it, and the government was hauled over the coals while the war was actually going on. It was an extraordinary phenomenon... But sadly, now we are finding that Indian democracy has actually become a step-child of the government's unwillingness to confront the matter.

LIZ MATHEW: We have seen a lot of conflict in Parliamentary committees recently. How do you view these developments?

It is a disturbing evolution in our practice. From my own experience, it started with the BJP's unprecedented decision to take the External Affairs Committee chairmanship for itself... I am sorry to say that the government has put more importance on limiting the discussion... Despite the China crisis, the present chairman has told the External Affairs Committee that it cannot be discussed because it pertains to national security. Well, you may as well wind up the External Affairs Committee if you can't discuss national security. I find this attitude rather perplexing.

When it comes to the Standing Committee for Information Technology, we are currently in a hiatus so I don't know whether I will be chairman tomorrow. I have not been told officially what my fate is... but even the Speaker has concurred that I was fully within my rights in indicating that an agenda relevant to the Facebook issue had already been adopted by the IT committee at the beginning of the parliamentary year — we were appointed in September and in that very month in 2019, we adopted the agenda unanimously... In that, we had adopted an item about the misuse of social media, cyber security... In fact, the agenda item had actually been carried on from the previous committee, chaired by the BJP's Anurag Thakur, who had summoned a number of social media firms including Facebook and Twitter under that very agenda. So... since we had such an agenda, I thought the committee would undoubtedly want to hear from Facebook, and then to send an invitation was entirely appropriate. The objection from one particular member, rather obstreperously brandished on social media, that I had exceeded my authority, was completely out of line. (The Committee headed by Tharoor had called representatives of Facebook to hear their views "on the subject of safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms").

The politicisation of the committee's workings is extremely unfortunate... You would all remember that when the question of televising Parliament came up under Somnath Chatterjee, an explicit decision was made not to televise committee meetings, not only to preserve confidentiality but also to prevent the kind of grandstanding for the cameras that politicians feel obliged to do... They wanted it to be a constructive, focussed exercise of committee deliberations, and that was the reason for keeping cameras out. If the ruling party were to respect that spirit through which the committee system was devised... then there would be no cause for complaint and controversy. A lot of these controversies could have been avoided.

SANTANU CHOWDHURY: What is the Congress's position on the government's response in Parliament that it does not have data on deaths of migrant workers caused due to the lockdown?

The Congress party has raised the migrants' issue since the beginning, when it was massively apparent that one consequence of the lockdown decision would be the fact that the government did not leave people any time to make any sort of alternative arrangements... (It) was an act of great irresponsibility conducted out of the same fondness for shock and awe that gave us the disastrously ill-considered demonetisation decision, and the very botched



WHY
SHASHI THAROOR

Writer, diplomat and MP, Tharoor was among the 23 leaders who recently sought changes within the Congress. Earlier this month, as head of the Standing Committee on IT, he summoned Facebook, which resulted in a clash with a BJP member on the panel. More recently, he has written *Tharoorosaurus*, a book with unusual words from every letter of the alphabet

Illustration: Suvajit Dey

and hasty roll-out of the GST for which the entire system was unprepared... This is a government that has boasted about digital India, this is a government whose intrusive entry into the lives of Indian citizens has been rightly commented upon by those who fear the onset of a surveillance State. More and more we are being obliged to download apps that give the government all sorts of access to our information, our location, our address and more. With

the government having such data at its disposal, what is the problem in being able to account for them (the migrants). I find this puzzling and perhaps more an indication that the government is unwilling to confront reality.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: How did you decide on writing the letter seeking sweeping changes in the Congress? Secondly, after the letter became public, why was there a studied silence on your part?

(On the letter) This is not an issue I want to engage on very much now. I think it is widely known that the letter was written very much in the spirit of strengthening the Indian National Congress, not dividing it... Unfortunately, the way in which this entire exercise played out at the Working Committee and beyond... I thought exacerbating the issue through additional comments would serve no purpose. The president of the party has taken it upon herself at the Working Committee to find ways to move forward... There is talk of the AICC session in the first quarter of next year... All of us concerned about the party just want

to see some constructive movement and we will wait for that.

We know that the BJP has been thriving on using the media as a weapon of mass distraction. It's having eyeballs shifting away from unemployment, from economic failure, from the China crisis, mismanagement of Covid-19, towards things like Sushant Singh Rajput and Kangana Ranaut's office demolition... I didn't feel as a committed Congress worker and MP that I should contribute to distracting the media further away from the BJP's astonishing failings of this time by spending all my energy talking about my party. When the time comes, and I judge it appropriate, I will speak. But right now, to speak openly on this issue would be playing into the BJP's distraction agenda and the BJP will not find me obliging them.

MANOJ CG: If Rahul Gandhi stands for the post of president at the next AICC session, will somebody challenge him?

I don't want to comment on that... In any case, all our concerns are for the future of the party and whoever is able to make a contribution to be a part of that future has to be embraced. Let's be honest, this party is the only viable alternative to the misgovernance the country is suffering now.

VANDITA MISHRA: In the past, some of your statements have been construed as being in praise of Mr Modi. Your response has been that, one, if you don't praise him when he needs to be praised, your criticism will also not be heard. The second point you made is that the Congress needs to understand why the people voted for Mr Modi. Why do you think people voted for PM Modi, not once but twice?

There are a number of factors. One is

perception. The perception about Mr Modi is that he is a selfless figure with no family to make money for and no agenda other than the nation's betterment. That image has managed to appeal to a lot of people who are not even ideologically committed to the BJP to think of him as a good person.

Secondly, people have also voted for (Modi), on different occasions, because of circumstances of that time. Certainly, for example, we in the South underestimated the impact of Pulwama and Balakot on the sensibilities of the North Indian voters in 2019. Similarly, we failed to realise the impact of building toilets without running water... What's interesting is that we assumed that voters would say that this is just for appearances and it has made no practical difference to our lives, but instead, people said at least he has done something for us. This kind of perception management was also brilliantly executed by the BJP on their social media, on television debates, on WhatsApp... The Indian voter chose to vote on the basis of their perception of Mr Modi, rather than in their own economic self-interest. That is a very paradoxical issue which no doubt psephologists will study for some time.

PRANAV MUKUL: In handing over the operation of the Thiruvananthapuram airport to the Adani group, are there concerns that a company without any experience of running an airport could be problematic, especially when the state government is offering to run it?

When the Central government announced that it was planning and proposing to tender licensing of these airports, six airports by name, the state government could at that point have decided that they did not want Trivandrum airport included in that exercise... Kerala chose to participate in the tender. Not the Kerala government per se but as an SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) set up by the Kerala government which the Kerala State Industrial

Development Corporation was supposed to front. The bizarre thing is that the KSIDC has never run an airport either... Whatever it may be, they negotiated with the Central government that if their bid was within 10 per cent of the winning bid, they will have the right to match the winning bid and take the airport for their SPV. The Central government, in a remarkable show of flexibility, said yes. But they came in with a bid which was something like 19% lower than the winning bid, which happened to be by Mr Adani. Now, the tender terms were publicly known, they did not require you to have prior airport experience... We already know that for the other airports Mr Adani has won he has signed an operating contract with some European air-

Many don't like firm (Adani group) that won bid for Trivandrum airport. I am agnostic on that. I would have taken same stand had it been any other company

stakeholders, who are not only the government. We must create mechanisms where ordinary Internet users, journalists, politicians, government officials and others, including perhaps retired judges, could collectively constitute the stakeholders who would be officially empowered, perhaps by legislation, to work as an independent, neutral, non-government dominated body to engage with these platforms. And, like many of the broadcasting standards authorities around the world, be in a position to issue advisories and even criticisms but without the power to actually enforce laws against them. Because once you give some institution the power to regulate and take enforcement action, you are opening up the space to government control of freedom of expression.

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN: How do you view perceptions of you being a soft-Hindutva person who is constantly trying to prepare for the eventuality that you may have to join the BJP? And what does it do to your own standing within the Congress?

On the question of soft Hindutva as political positioning, I am the one who has said that if you go for Hindutva lite, like Coke lite or Pepsi zero, you will end up with Congress zero. And my entire argument goes back to my study of American politics when Harry Truman famously told the Democrats, "If you offer voters the choice between the Republican Party and a pale imitation of the Republican party, they will go for the real thing every time." It's exactly the same logic I have consistently argued in India. I have been a sustained voice against soft Hindutva inside the Congress party... I have said that when Rahul Gandhi goes to a temple, he is actually advertising his respect for his own faith and his own belief. He is not making a statement against anyone else. And in Thiruvananthapuram, I go with equal respect to mosques and churches as I do to temples.

AAKASH JOSHI: Has foreign policy becoming a part of domestic political rhetoric affected our ties with our neighbours?

What has sadly happened with this present government is that a pandering to domestic constituencies has unfortunately taken precedence over the sensitivities of our neighbours. We saw this with Nepal on the entire business of the Madhesis... The BJP's policies have successfully alienated much of the Nepali political establishment. On Bangladesh, we have seen this business of the Home Minister talking about Bangladeshi migrants as termites and threatening to throw them all back... On Pakistan, the less said the better. Undoubtedly, there is blame to go on the Pakistani side. And then, we had the Prime Minister saying, again for domestic consumption, that China has essentially not transgressed, whereas all the evidence and the statements of the Defence Minister and the Army suggested otherwise. So the question of domestic politics above all is rather frustrating for those whose principal concern is India's international relations, its international cooperation and diplomacy. Out of control rhetoric, targeting domestic audiences has made the job of our diplomats so much harder than it should be.

KRISHN KAUSHIK: How do you see the current standoff with China? Did we fail to read China's intention over the years or in the recent past?

If I were to look at the specific actions of the last few months, my impression seems to be that they have advanced their position along the areas of the LAC that they covet. They seem to be eyeing constructions on our side. They want to be in a position to threaten when they want to... All of these things worry me very greatly, particularly in the context of the long-term strategy of China. You all know that Beijing keeps saying that the border should be left to future generations to settle... They will consolidate the LAC where they want and when they are ready for an eventual border settlement, may be 20 years from now, it has to take these new realities into account. Border incidents occur to keep the Indians off balance. Beijing is demonstrating to the world that India is not capable of challenging China, let alone offering security to other nations. What they have done is absolutely beyond a shadow of a doubt an extremely clever and hostile strategy, which is designed to cut India down to size and put us in our place.

port operator who is going to come in as his partner and do it. We also know, because there is no secret about it, that the Kerala government's formula was intended to be to hand over a decent chunk of the SPV to a favoured capitalist who they would deal with. So it was not that the government was going to run the airport. So the ideological objection also seemed, to be putting it bluntly, opaque...

Many in the Congress party and those on the left hand side of the spectrum don't like the company that happened to win it. I am completely agnostic that I can tell you that I would have taken the same stand on Kerala government if instead of Mr Adani it had been Mr Yusuf Ali or Mr Ravi Pillai or for that matter a GMR or GVK or any of these other companies if they had the winning bid, but they didn't. It happened to be Mr Adani.

DIPANKAR GHOSE: Given that there is a growing intersection between the digital space and politics, if you were in government today, how would you approach or regulate it?

...The process I would wish to embark upon if I were in Ravi Shankar Prasad's job, would be to encourage these so called social media intermediaries like Facebook not to shelter purely behind the term intermediary... They are more like a publisher who has to stand by the content of what they have published... Now, how do we strike a balance? I think this is where we can require self-regulation but through a consultative process that takes into account the...

TOP OF THE WORLD



Police detain a protester in Minsk. AP

BELARUS

Hackers leak personal data of 1,000 cops amid protests

ANONYMOUS HACKERS leaked the personal data of 1,000 Belarusian police officers in retaliation for a crackdown on street demonstrations against veteran President Alexander Lukashenko, as protesters geared up for another mass rally on Sunday. "As the arrests continue, we will continue to publish data on a massive scale," said a statement that was distributed by the opposition news channel Nexta Live on the messaging app Telegram. "No one will remain anonymous even under a balaclava." The government said it would find and punish those responsible.

ITALY

Italians vote in regional contests shaped by Covid

ITALIANS IN seven regions headed to the polls Sunday for two days of voting shaped by the Covid-19 pandemic. Voters were required to wear masks and maintain social distancing as they cast ballots in regional contests originally scheduled for the spring but delayed due to the pandemic. Italy's outbreak has claimed more than 35,600 lives and stricken 296,500 people since February. For the first time, voters over 65 will have preferential access and will be guided to the front of any line by volunteers from Italy's civil protection agency.

GERMANY

Public sector workers set to go on strike

PUBLIC SECTOR workers in Germany will start staging strikes after the latest round of wage negotiations failed to produce an agreement, their union said Sunday. The Verdi union, which represents around 2.3 million federal and local employees, said strikes will start Tuesday. It didn't announce where and said it would provide more information Monday. The union didn't rule out kindergarten teachers taking part in the strike, which could cause difficulties for parents.

RULES FOR NEGOTIATIONS OVER CONTENTIOUS ISSUES NOT YET FINALISED

Violent attacks plague Afghanistan as peace talks with Taliban slow down

MUJIB MASHAL, FATIMA FAIZI & THOMAS GIBBONS-NEFF
DOHA, SEPTEMBER 20

VIOLENCE CONTINUED unabated across Afghanistan on Saturday as negotiators from the warring sides remained bogged down by disagreements over a framework for talks a week after historic negotiations began in Doha, Qatar.

More than a dozen civilians were feared dead in one airstrike by Afghan forces in the North. The deaths came as a week of discussions still had not finalised the rules for negotiations over contentious issues, like a cease-fire and the form of a future government. The slow pace highlighted



Taliban delegates at the start of the talks in Doha on Sept 12. AP

how complicated the effort to end the Afghan war will likely be.

Officials from both sides said that while they had resolved most issues on how the negotiations should be conducted, they were stuck on which school of Islamic

thought should be used for resolving disputes in a way that respects minority sects in Afghanistan.

Citing United Nations figures, Roland Kobia, European Union special envoy for Afghanistan, said the violence levels over the

past five weeks had been "the highest in the last five years".

The bloodiest attack Saturday occurred in the Khanabad district of northern Kunduz province. Local residents said the Afghan forces had carried out an airstrike targeting a Taliban gathering, with few initial casualties. But when local residents gathered to extinguish the resulting fire at a nearby house, the aircraft returned for another strike that killed more than a dozen civilians.

Also Saturday, in southeastern Paktika province, a deputy police chief was killed in an explosion while delivering support to his forces. And in the same province, a wedding convoy struck a roadside bomb, wounding 19 people, including the bride. **NYT**

German woman dies in 1st known fatality from a cyber attack

MELISSA EDDY & NICOLE PERLROTH
BERLIN, SEPTEMBER 20

THE FIRST known death from a cyber attack was reported last week after cybercriminals hit a hospital in Düsseldorf, Germany, with so-called ransomware, in which hackers encrypt data and hold it hostage until the victim pays a ransom.

The ransomware invaded 30 servers at University Hospital Düsseldorf last week, crashing systems and forcing the hospital to turn away emergency patients. As a result, German authorities said, a woman in a life-threatening condition was sent to a hospital 20 miles away in Wuppertal and died from treatment delays.

The attack is the first reported death from a cyber attack. Hospitals have been a frequent target for cybercriminals, particularly ransomware attacks, because the need to access health records and computer systems creates urgency that increases the likelihood that victims will pay their extortionists.

The most aggressive reported attack on hospitals is North Korea's 2017 "WannaCry" ransomware attack, which froze British hospitals and forced doctors to cancel surgeries and turn patients away. **NYT**



Pro-democracy protesters link arms during a mass rally, in Bangkok on Sunday, to call for reforms in the monarchy. Reuters

Protests in Thailand escalate as thousands challenge monarchy

REUTERS
BANGKOK, SEPTEMBER 20

OPENLY CHALLENGING the monarchy of Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn, thousands of protesters marched in Bangkok on Sunday to present demands that include a call for reforms to curb his powers.

Protesters have grown ever bolder during two months of demonstrations against Thailand's palace and military-dominated establishment, break-

ing a longstanding taboo on criticising the monarchy — which is illegal under *lese majeste* laws.

The king, who spends a lot of time in Europe, is not in Thailand.

The marchers were blocked by hundreds of unarmed police manning crowd control barriers.

Protest leaders declared victory after handing police a letter detailing their demands. Phakphong Phongphetra, head of the Metropolitan Police Bureau, said in a video broadcast from the scene that the letter would be handed to police headquarters to

decide how to proceed.

At the biggest demonstration in years, tens of thousands of protesters on Saturday cheered calls for reform of the monarchy as well as for the removal of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader, and a new constitution and elections.

Protesters cemented a plaque near the Grand Palace in Bangkok. It reads, "At this place the people have expressed their will: that this country belongs to the people and is not the property of the monarch as they have deceived us."

Nawaz Sharif addresses Pak Opp meet, launches scathing attack on Army, govt Says 'parallel government' in Pakistan is root cause of problems

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, SEPTEMBER 20

FORMER PAKISTAN prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Sunday staged a political comeback by criticising the powerful Army and said the Opposition was not against PM Imran Khan, but against those who brought an "inefficient" man to power.

He was addressing the All-Parties Conference (APC) hosted by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) via a video link aimed at launching a protest movement against the Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. Sharif, 70, the Pakistan



Nawaz Sharif

Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo, has been living in London since last November after the Lahore High Court granted him permission to go abroad for four weeks for treatment.

Addressing the APC, Sharif criticised the Pakistan's powerful establishment for allegedly supporting Khan. "Our struggle is not against Imran Khan. Today, our struggle is against those who installed Imran Khan and who ma-

nipulated elections to bring an inefficient man like him into power and thus destroyed the country," he said. Sharif said that the foremost priority should be to remove "this selected government and this system", adding that "if the change is not brought, it will bring irreversible loss to this country".

He called on the powerful Army to stay away from politics. Sharif pointed out that former PM Yusuf Raza Gilani once said there was "a state within a state" in Pakistan. "It is saddening that the situation has escalated to a state above the state. This parallel government illness is the root-cause of our problems," he added. **PTI**

UK is at Covid tipping point: health minister

Fines of up to £10,000 for those breaking self-isolation rules

REUTERS
LONDON, SEPTEMBER 20

BRITAIN IS at a tipping point on Covid-19, health minister Matt Hancock said on Sunday, warning that a second national lockdown could be imposed if people don't follow government rules designed to stop the spread of the virus.

Covid-19 cases have risen sharply in recent weeks to more than 4,000 per day. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has called it a second wave and stricter lockdown measures have been introduced in areas across the country — with London possibly next in line.

"The nation faces a tipping point and we have a choice," Hancock told Sky News. "The



Matt Hancock warned that a second national lockdown could be imposed in Britain

choice is either that everybody follows the rules... or we will have to take more measures."

Hancock later told the BBC that a second national lockdown was possible option.

"I don't rule it out, I don't want to see it," he said.

Johnson announced fines of up to £10,000 (\$12,900) on Saturday for people in England who break new rules requiring them to self-isolate if they have been in contact with someone infected with Covid-19.

In addition to tighter rules on social gatherings across the country, several cities and regions in Britain have had 'local lockdowns' imposed, limiting even more strictly when, where and how many people can meet up socially.

Hancock was asked on Times Radio about the possibility of Londoners being told to work from home, and said: "Well, I wouldn't rule it out." Opposition leader Keir Starmer said he would support whatever measures the government brings forward.

US sets record with 1 million tests in a day

THE UNITED STATES set a one-day record with over 1 million coronavirus diagnostic tests being performed, but the country needs 6 million to 10 million a day to bring outbreaks under control, according to various experts. The country performed 1,061,411 tests on Saturday, according to data from The Covid Tracking Project, a volunteer-run effort to track the outbreak. The record comes after testing had fallen for several weeks. The US tested on average 650,000 people a day in the week ended Sept. 13, down from a peak in late July of over 800,000 people a day. **REUTERS**

Political battle heats up over new vacancy in US Supreme Court

Trump says will pick a woman, GOP seeks quick confirmation; Biden to focus on Covid, link future of health care with SC seat

NEW YORK TIMES
SEPTEMBER 20

EVEN AS Americans continued to gather to pay tribute to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg — with stirring eulogies often followed by strident calls to preserve her legacy — US President Donald Trump and his rival, Joe Biden, planned how their campaigns would navigate the emergence of a Supreme Court vacancy so close to the presidential election on November 3.

"I will be putting forth the nominee next week; it will be a woman," Trump said at a rally at an airport in Fayetteville, North Carolina. "I actually like women much more than I like men."

Republicans have been trying to shore up support after their slim margin in the Senate (which they control 53-47) appeared to narrow, with Senators Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins saying they were opposed to voting on a nominee before the election.

But Trump's push to move quickly has received pledges of support from Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, and Senator Lindsey Graham, who contradicted remarks he made in 2016 when he said he would oppose any effort to fill a Supreme Court vacancy in an election year.

While Democrats have few tools at their disposal to block a vote on a Supreme Court nomination, they warned Republicans that nothing would be off the table if the confirmation went ahead.

The Biden campaign's plan on addressing the issue of the vacancy will focus on health care.

Biden has spent months condemning Trump as a failed steward of the nation's well-being, framing the election as a vote on the his handling of Covid-19.

Now, confronted with a moment that many believe will upend the 2020 election, the Biden campaign is sticking to what it believes is a winning strategy. Campaign aides said they would seek to link the Supreme Court vacancy to the health emergency gripping the country and the future of health care in America.



Trump at a campaign rally at Fayetteville, North Carolina, on Saturday. The President took the stage to his supporters' chants of "fill that seat", a reference to the vacancy in the US Supreme Court after the death Justice Ginsburg. AP

RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

A question of numbers

CONFIRMING A nominee for the Supreme Court requires just a simple majority in the Senate, and the GOP currently holds 53 of the 100 Senate seats. But two GOP senators have already said they won't back a nominee before the Nov 3 election, and more could follow, making the decision of when to hold a confirmation vote a hard one for GOP leaders. In such a situation, it is possible that the party begins the process of confirming Trump's nominee in order to get conservatives excited ahead of the election, and then hold a vote after the election when Congress usually convenes to wrap up unfinished business.

Envelope with deadly poison ricin addressed to White House intercepted

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, OTTAWA, SEPTEMBER 20

AN ENVELOPE addressed to the White House and intercepted by US authorities contained a substance identified as ricin, a deadly poison that appeared to have been sent from Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said on Saturday.

An RCMP spokesman confirmed "it has received a request for assistance from the FBI in connection with a suspicious letter sent to the White House."

The RCMP added "the FBI conducted an analysis on the substance found in the envelope. This report indicated the presence of ricin, a toxic substance." RCMP said it working with the FBI but declined to discuss further details. The envelope was intercepted at a government mail centre before it arrived at the White House.

Ricin can cause death within 36 to 72 hours from exposure to an amount as small as a pinhead. No known antidote exists.

THE ENGINEERING AND LAND-MANAGEMENT THAT ENABLED THE STATE'S GROWTH HAVE LEFT IT VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE SHOCKS

How California has become Ground Zero for climate disasters in US

CHRISTOPHER FLAVELLE
SEPTEMBER 20

CALIFORNIA IS one of America's marvels. By moving vast quantities of water and suppressing wildfires for decades, the state has transformed its arid and mountainous landscape into the richest, most populous and bounteous place in the nation.

But now, those same feats have given California a new and unwelcome category of superlatives.

This year is the state's worst wildfire season on record. That follows its hottest August on record; a punishing drought that lasted from 2011 to last year; and one of

its worst flood emergencies on record three years ago, when heavy rains caused the state's highest dam to nearly fail, forcing more than 180,000 people to flee.

The same manufactured landscapes that have enabled California's tremendous growth, building the state into a \$3 trillion economy that is home to one in 10 Americans, have also left it more exposed to climate shocks, experts say.

And those shocks will only get worse.

"There's sort of this sense that we can bend the world to our will," said Kristina Dahl, a senior climate scientist in San Francisco for the Union of Concerned

Scientists. "Climate change is exposing the vulnerabilities in the systems that we've engineered."

Those systems include some of the greatest accomplishments in American public infrastructure: Transporting huge amounts of water from the mountains to the coast and from north to south. Creating almost 1,500 reservoirs to store that water until it's needed. Subduing the fires that are part of forest ecosystems, making more land livable for millions but stocking those forests with fuel in the process. Building dense cities along a shoreline susceptible to erosion and flooding.

Those accomplishments reflect the optimism that defines



This year is California's worst wildfire season on record. Reuters

California, according to R.J. Sung Park, an assistant professor of public policy at the University

of California, Los Angeles. But like so much that underpins modern American life, they

weren't designed to accommodate the increasingly harsh extremes of climate change. "The shocks are outside the range, in many cases, of historical experience," Park said.

Park, like other experts interviewed, noted that California's engineered landscapes are not the only factor behind its high-impact disasters. The state's size and geographic diversity expose it to an unusually wide range of extreme climate events. And its large population means that when disasters do strike, they are very likely to affect large numbers of people.

Still, the manufactured systems that support the state's population and economy have left the

state especially vulnerable. The wildfires are only the latest example of how climate change can cause engineered landscapes to go awry. Those blazes are partly the result of hotter temperatures and drier conditions, scientists say, which have made it easier for vegetation to ignite, causing fires to become bigger and more intense.

But the intensity of those fires also reflects decades of policy decisions that altered those forests, according to Robert Bonnie, who oversaw the US Forest Service under President Barack Obama. And the cost of those decisions is now coming due.

In an effort to protect homes and encourage new building gov-

ernments for decades focused on suppressing fires that occurred naturally, allowing the buildup of vegetation that would provide fuel for future blazes. Officials remained reluctant to reduce that vegetation through prescribed burns, wary of upsetting residents with smoke or starting a fire that might burn out of control.

That approach made California's forests more comfortable for the estimated 11 million people who now live in and around them. But it has also made them more susceptible to catastrophic fires. "We've sort of built up this fire debt," Bonnie said. "People are going to have to tolerate smoke and risk." **NYT**

14 ECONOMY

SOME STATES YET TO MAKE THEIR CHOICE AHEAD OF GST COUNCIL MEET

FY21 GST compensation deficit: 21 states & UTs on board ₹97,000-cr borrowing option

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

AHEAD OF the 42nd meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on October 5, 21 states have opted for Option 1 — borrowing of Rs 97,000 crore through an RBI-facilitated special window to meet this year's compensation deficit of Rs 2.35 lakh crore. This, as per Finance Ministry officials, is a count more than the required number of 20 states and union territories in case the issue goes in for a voting in the GST Council.

While 21 states/union territories, namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland,

Odisha, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh have opted for option 1, Opposition-ruled states/union territories such as Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, and West Bengal, as well as Tamil Nadu are yet to detail their choice to the central government, Finance Ministry officials said.

The officials said that if other states do not submit their options before October 5, the date of the next meeting of the GST Council, then they will have to wait till June 2022 to get their compensation dues subject to the condition that the Council extends the cess collection period beyond 2022.

Around 15 states had submitted their choice for Option 1 by September 15. Manipur, which had earlier opted for Option 2 —

Officials said that if states do not submit their options before October 5, they will have to wait till June 2022 to get their compensation dues subject to the condition that the Council extends the cess collection period beyond 2022

which involves borrowing the entire compensation deficit from the market — has now shifted its choice to Option 1.

Several non-BJP ruled states have been at loggerheads with the Centre for asking them to borrow to bridge the compensation

deficit. Chief ministers of non-BJP ruled states of West Bengal, Kerala, Delhi, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu have written to the Centre opposing the options which require states to borrow to meet shortfall and have instead asked the Centre to borrow. States have also raised concerns that the distinction of revenue loss for GST implementation and Covid-19 pandemic was unconstitutional.

The Centre has, however, stated that it is unlikely to borrow given the impact it would have on yields of its government securities and also indicated that since the repayment has to be made from compensation cess receipts, it cannot borrow since cess is a resource dedicated to states. Compensation payments to states had started getting delayed since October last as GST revenues be-

gan to slow down, a gap which has widened due to the pandemic.

GST compensation payments to states have been pending since April, with the pending amount for April-July estimated at Rs 1.5 lakh crore. The GST compensation requirement is estimated to be around Rs 3 lakh crore this year, while the cess collection is expected to be around Rs 65,000 crore — an estimated compensation shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore.

In the last GST council meeting on August 27, the Centre had proposed two options to states; to either borrow Rs 97,000 crore (shortfall only on account of GST implementation) from a special window facilitated by the RBI or the complete shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore (including Rs 1.38 lakh crore shortfall due to Covid-19 pandemic) from the market.

LOWERING OF USOF COMPONENT TO 3% MAY, HOWEVER, BE CONSIDERED

DoT unlikely to agree on lower licence fee recommended by Trai, alter AGR definition

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE DEPARTMENT of Telecommunications (DoT) is unlikely to accept the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) recommendations on lowering the licence fee of telcos from 8 per cent to 6, according to sources in the department.

The DoT may, however, consider lowering the component of universal service obligation fund (USOF) to 3 per cent from 5 per cent of revenue, sources said. The lowering of USOF funds is possible as the funds collected by the telecom operators have been lying idle for quite some time now, an official said.

"Close to Rs 50,000 crore is lying idle in that (USOF). Most of it is used for improving services in the rural areas, which have either stopped or are going slow for one reason or other," the official said, asking not to be named.

In its recommendations in 2015, the telecom regulator had suggested lowering the licence fee of telcos to 6 per cent from the current 8 and suggested changing the definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR).

Trai had then said that income from non-telecom sources should not be considered to de-

EXPLAINED
Not all may be bad for telcos

THE DOT'S reluctance to lower licence fee and alter AGR definition could arise from the government's unwillingness to lower its finances. Analysts indicate that despite all the challenges, most telcos have managed to raise the funds to make AGR payments, which has sent a signal to the government that things may not be as bad as the companies had projected it to be.

fine AGR of telcos.

The DoT, however, may not alter the definition of AGR as demanded by the telcos after the Supreme Court verdict, another official said.

In June, the then Cellular Operators Association of India director general Rajan Mathews had said that the DoT should revise the definition of AGR for all future purposes to avoid any further burden on the sector.

The definition of AGR, now settled by a Supreme Court ver-

dict, had been the biggest bone of contention between regulators and telcos. All telecom companies that operate in India pay a part of their revenues as licence fee and spectrum charges to the DoT for using the spectrum owned by the Centre.

In its definition of AGR, the DoT had said that telcos must cover all the revenue earned by them, including from non-telecom sources such as deposit interests and sale of assets. The telcos were opposed to this and had challenged this definition in several forums, including the Supreme Court.

On October 24, 2019, the apex court upheld the DoT's definition of AGR and said since the licensee had agreed to the migration packages, they were liable to pay the dues, the penalty on dues, and the interest on penalty due to delay in payments. This month, the top court asked the telcos to pay the AGR dues in the next ten years.

These yearly instalments will have to be made by March 31 of every succeeding financial year and a compliance report by the companies as well as the DoT has to be filed by April 7 of that year, a three-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra had said in its judgment, bringing a close to the nearly 20-year old issue.

Paytm alleges arm-twisting by Google

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

DIGITAL FINANCIAL services firm Paytm on Sunday charged internet giant Google of "arm-twisting" and forcing it to roll back a UPI cashback campaign which is legal in India.

Google said that offering cashbacks and vouchers alone do not constitute a violation of Google Play gambling policies and in case of repeat violation its may even terminate Google Play developer accounts.

Paytm in a blog alleged that Google Pay has been running similar cricket-based promotions "but a different set of rules apply to Google's own apps".

Google had blocked Paytm on its play store following a policy update on September 18, ahead of the IPL cricket tournament, to disallow apps that support any unregulated gambling but restored the mobile app after a few hours after it rolled back the campaign.

Paytm said that it was forced to comply with Google's mandate to remove the UPI cashback and scratch cards campaign to get re-listed on the Android Play Store.

"Offering both is legal in India, and cashback was being given following all rules and regulations set by the government," Paytm said.

When contacted, a Google spokesperson said that offering cashbacks and vouchers alone do not constitute a violation of our Google Play gambling policies.

From Oct 1, 5% duty on import of key part for making TVs

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

WITH THE end of Customs duty exemption on open cell — a key component in TV panel manufacturing — from October 1, TV manufacturers are expected to start making the product in India leading to a reduction in imports of tel-

evision parts that are Rs 7,500 crore a year, Finance Ministry sources said. The open cell will attract 5 per cent from next month.

This exemption was given a year ago to the industry as it had sought time to build domestic capacity for open cell. However, TV makers have said that domestic manufacturing capacity isn't adequate yet to curb all imports, and

the prices of TVs is likely to rise with the 5 per cent customs duty.

While the industry has estimated price escalation by Rs 600-Rs 1,200 per unit depending on the size, sources in the government have said that the impact wouldn't be more than Rs 200 for a TV set. The sources also said that domestic TV manufacturers were using the 5 per cent customs duty

on open cells as an excuse to revise prices upwards by claiming that manufacturing capacity is still not available within the country.

Government sources have also argued that such exemptions can't continue when domestic manufacturers are already provided adequate protection of import with 20 per cent Customs duty on TVs since December 2017. **FE**

ByteDance gets Trump nod to avoid TikTok shutdown

REUTERS
WASHINGTON/NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 20

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump said on Saturday he supported a deal in principle that would allow TikTok to continue to operate in the United States, even as it appeared to conflict with his earlier order for China's ByteDance to divest the video app.

ByteDance was racing to avoid a crackdown on TikTok after the US Commerce Department said on Friday it would block new downloads and updates to the app come Sunday.

US officials had expressed concern that the personal data of as many as 100 million Americans that use the app was being passed on to China's Communist Party government.

Trump signed an executive order on August 14 giving ByteDance 90 days to sell TikTok. The deal announced on Saturday, however, is structured as a partnership rather than a divestment.

TikTok will be owned by a new company called TikTok Global and headquartered in the



US President Donald Trump during a campaign event in Fayetteville, North Carolina, on Saturday. **Reuters**

United States, possibly in Texas, the US President said.

Oracle Corp will take a 12.5 per cent stake in TikTok Global and store all its US user data on its cloud to comply with US national security requirements, the companies said. Retail giant Walmart Inc said it would take a 7.5 per cent stake in TikTok Global. The implied valuation for TikTok Global as a result of these investments could not be learned.

While Oracle and Walmart said that TikTok Global will be majority-owned by US investors, this is the case only if ByteDance's

investor base is taken into account, according to a source familiar with the matter who requested anonymity to discuss the deal's structure. This is because ByteDance will own 80 per cent of TikTok Global, the source said.

Given that US investors currently own about 40 per cent of ByteDance, the White House will count that towards how much of TikTok Global is owned by US parties, the source added. As a result, Oracle, Walmart, and ByteDance's US investors will own, directly or indirectly, about 53 per cent of TikTok Global, a

Not aware of \$5 bn education fund in TikTok deal: ByteDance

Ningbo (China): TikTok owner ByteDance said in a social media post Sunday that it was the first time it had heard in the news it was setting up a \$5 billion education fund in the US. US President Donald Trump said he had approved a deal, which included a \$5 billion education fund, to allow TikTok to continue to operate

in the United States.

"The company has been committed to investing in the education field, and plans to work with partners and global shareholders to launch online classroom projects based on AI and video technology for students around the world," ByteDance said in its official account on Toutiao. **REUTERS**

second source said.

Beijing-based ByteDance did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Walmart and Oracle also did not offer more information on TikTok Global's ownership structure.

It was not immediately clear what spurred the White House to compromise on its push for an outright sale of TikTok. However, the deal comes with pledges that cater to Trump's "America First" policy agenda. It also avoids alienating TikTok's young users ahead of the Nov. 3 US election.

ByteDance agreed to create

25,000 new US jobs at TikTok, up from a little over 1,000 now. Trump, who had previously called on companies such as Oracle and Walmart to pay the United States a "fee" to participate in the TikTok deal, said there would also be a \$5 billion US education fund as part of the deal.

"I said, you know, do me a favor, could you put up \$5 billion into a fund for education so we can educate people as to the real history of our country, not the fake history," Trump told a rally of supporters in Fayetteville, North Carolina on Saturday.

US judge halts Commerce Dept order to remove WeChat from app stores

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 20

A US judge early Sunday blocked the Trump administration from requiring Apple Inc and Alphabet Inc's Google to remove Chinese-owned messaging app WeChat for downloads by late Sunday.

US Magistrate Judge Laurel Beeler in San Francisco said in an order that WeChat users who filed a lawsuit "have shown serious questions going to the merits of the First Amendment claim, the balance of hardships tips in the plaintiffs' favor." Her 22-page order added the prohibitions "burden substantially more speech than is necessary to serve the government's significant interest in national security, especially given the lack of substitute channels for communication."

Last Friday, the US Commerce Department had issued a order citing national security grounds to block the app from US app stores

owned by Tencent Holding's and the Justice Department had urged Beeler not to block the order. Tencent and the Justice Department did not immediately comment.

Beeler's preliminary injunction also blocked the Commerce order that would have barred other transactions with WeChat in the US that could have dramatically degraded the site's usability for current US users or potentially made it unusable. The US Commerce Department did not immediately comment.

WeChat has had an average of 19 million daily active users in the United States, analytics firms Appopia said in early August.

It is popular among Chinese students, Americans living in China and some Americans who have personal or business relationships in China.

The Justice Department said blocking the order would "frustrate and displace the president's determination of how best to address threats to national security."

BRIEFLY

'India Inc's biz sentiment recovers'

New Delhi: India Inc's business sentiment has improved during July-September quarter as the government gradually unlocked the economy and business activity resumed, according to the latest CII Business Confidence Index.

No employee laid off, says Vistara CEO

New Delhi: Vistara, which has implemented various cost-saving measures amid the coronavirus pandemic, will review salary cuts in January but has not laid off any of its nearly 4,000 employees, according to the airline's chief executive officer Leslie Thng.

8.45 lakh new enrolments in July: EPFO

New Delhi: Net new enrolments with retirement fund body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) rose to 8.45 lakh in July from 4.82 lakh in June 2020, as per its latest payroll data. **PTI**

432 infra projects show cost overruns of ₹4.29 lakh crore

As many as 432 infrastructure projects have been hit by cost overruns of over Rs 4.29 lakh crore owing to delays and other reasons, the MoSPI report for July 2020 said

₹20,58,193.26 crore: Total original cost of implementation of the 1,683 projects

₹24,87,361.54 crore: Anticipated cost of implementation of all projects

₹11,51,222.81 crore: Expenditure incurred on all projects till June 2020, 46.28 per cent of anticipated cost

505 Number of projects that reported time escalation, of which:

- 120: delayed by one to 12 months
- 118: delayed by 13 to 24 months
- 157: delayed by 25 to 60 months
- 110: delayed by 61 months and above
- 43.49 months: Average time overrun of all projects

1,670: TOTAL PROJECTS WORTH RS 150 CRORE AND ABOVE MONITORED BY THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (MoSPI)

945: PROJECTS WHOSE NEITHER YEAR OF COMMISSIONING NOR TENTATIVE GESTATION PERIOD HAS BEEN REPORTED



Reasons for time overruns, as reported by implementing agencies:

- Delays in land acquisition, forest clearance and supply of equipment
- Geological surprises
- Shortage of labour
- Fund constraints
- Geo-mining conditions
- Inadequate mobilisation by contractor
- Slow progress in civil works
- ROU/ROW (right of use/right of way) problems

Source: MoSPI/PTI

BBB recommends 13 names for appointment as executive directors in state-run banks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE BANKS Board Bureau (BBB) has recommended to the government names of 13 general managers of various public sector banks (PSBs) for appointment as executive directors.

BBB, the headhunter for state-run banks and financial institutions, interviewed 28 candi-

dates over a period of two days for vacancies of executive directors. The list of selected candidates would be sent to the Department of Financial Services to get the Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) approval.

"The Banks Board Bureau interfaced with 28 candidates from various public sector banks for 13 clear vacancies of Executive Directors in PSBs," the

Bureau said in a notification on Sunday.

The Bureau recommended the names of Swarup Kumar Saha, Debadatta Chand, K Satyanarayana Raju, Nitesh Ranjan, Sangram Keshari Mohapatra, Monika Kalita, Swarup Dasgupta and Karthikeyan M, Ishraq Ali Khan, Vivek Wahi, S Srimathy, B Vijayakumar A and Raghavendra V Kollegal.

'European Union seeks new powers to penalise tech giants'

REUTERS
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 20

THE EUROPEAN Union wants to arm itself with new powers to penalise big technology companies, the *Financial Times* reported on Sunday. The proposed plan includes forcing tech giants to break up or sell some of their European operations if their market dominance is deemed to threaten the interests of customers and smaller rivals, the newspaper said.

As per a Financial Times report, the proposed plan will force tech giants to break up or sell some of their European operations if their market dominance could threaten interests of customers

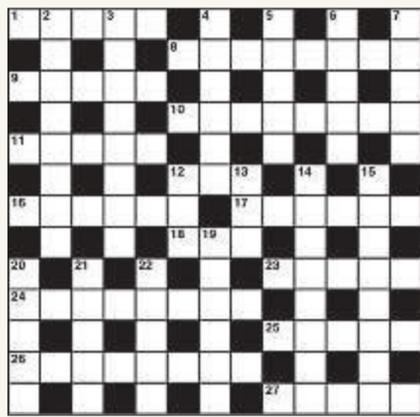
The commission is set to propose new rules called the Digital Services Act by the end of the year, which will increase social media's responsibilities and liability for content on their platforms. EU Internal Market

Commissioner Thierry Breton, in an interview with the *Financial Times*, said the proposed remedies, which would only be used in extreme circumstances, also include the ability to exclude large tech groups from the single mar-

ket altogether. Brussels is also considering a rating system that would allow the public and shareholders to assess companies' behaviour in areas such as tax compliance and the speed with which they take down illegal content, the *Financial Times* said.

Breton was quoted as saying activities such as companies preventing users from switching platforms or forcing customers to use only one service could lead to tougher sanctions.

CROSSWORD 4229



- ACROSS**
- Sort of views monks aren't allowed to have (5)
 - Again, but for the last time presumably (4,4)
 - Strange tales about what may be on the roof (5)
 - Surprised even though of broad vision (4-4)
 - Good person to censure corporal punishment (5)
 - Agree it's put on back to front (3)
 - Gardening accessory that's old hat (6)
 - Rent free (6)
 - First person Gregory takes to heart (3)
 - Act as a paid informer (5)
 - Why a note goes astray in transit (2,3,3)
 - Waiter drops one drink (5)
 - Giving no rash diagnosis? (8)
 - Let out as the minimum (5)
- DOWN**
- The converse of indolence (4,4)
 - Be charming coming in (8)
 - Colour I associate with wrongdoing (6)
 - The umpire is hesitant to pass the matter on (5)
 - Youth leader took out foreign capital (5)
 - Just one side of the coin (5)
 - Born and even briefly raised (3)
 - An act of duplicity? (3)
 - In the main it's the cheapest way to travel (8)
 - Nuts go well with cheese (8)
 - Greek centre replaced by French in Polish port (6)
 - Small creature with nothing to think about (5)
 - A bench to put in the sun (5)
 - Give everyone a hand (5)

Solutions Crossword 4228: Across: 1 Stalagmite, 6 Four, 10 Saved, 11 Rolling up, 12 One or two, 13 Actor, 15 Dead end, 17 Florist, 19 Feeling, 21 Maestro, 22 Lifts, 24 Artistic, 27 Outhouses, 28 Idaho, 29 Saps, 30 Assessment. Down: 1 Sash, 2 Advantage, 3 Audio, 4 Merited, 5 Tell off, 7 Ought, 8 Reparation, 9 Pinafore, 14 Oddfellows, 16 Emission, 18 Intricate, 20 Glasses, 21 Matisse, 23 Lit up, 25 Slips, 26 Port.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



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 clue.

DREAR **FILTPU**

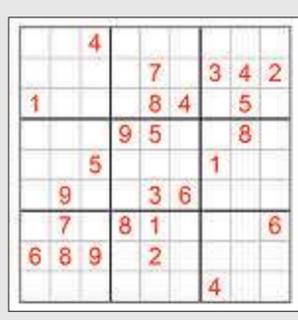
CDIOS **EEKRP**

Answer: DANGER DISCO, UPIRF, KEPER, SOLUTION: The jumbled words are DANGER, DISCO, UPIRF, KEPER.

SUDOKU 4238

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 4237



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
The beginning of the week is bound to be dominated by questions of money, and what you can and can't afford will be the overriding issue of the times. Don't expect everything to be completed today, for there are further changes waiting in the wings.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
There is still a great deal to be gained from being as generous as possible. Remember all those wise sayings about not living by bread alone, and realise that money is there to be used, not hoarded away. Your high hopes will come to nothing unless you actually get on and do something about them.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
A build-up of lively lunar alignments is already sending emotional ripples in your direction. The waters of life may soon be a little choppy than you would like, but you may use any changes in your routine as an opportunity for self-reflection.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
This is a fairly powerful period emotionally, but in many ways less intense than you have come to expect at such moments. The cause celebre of the day could be money, and if you're wondering just what is going on, give yourself a little more time.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You may be concerned first with how to put your ideas into practice, and secondly with how to prevent certain other people from knowing exactly what you're planning. Take trusted individuals into your confidence sooner rather than later, and you'll stand a better chance of getting your way.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
Get off to an efficient and organised start today. There is no time for early morning blues. Given that there may soon be a brief, stormy period at work, it's in your interests to be fully prepared. In fact, you'd be advised to steal a march on people at home as well.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Think ahead. You may be concerned with the need to fulfil immediate responsibilities, but your day will be all the more successful if you have a long-term strategy. This, you see, will enable you to identify the underlying patterns in your affairs.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
It may be an overstatement to say that this is a moment for unrestrained pleasure, but it is certainly a fine time to give the highest priority to your personal creativity and desire for self-expression. And don't let someone dent your enthusiasm, however hard they try.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
The heart of all current questions concerns your ambitious desire to 'be somebody'. If you fail to make any effort in this direction you will bring frustration upon yourself. Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether you succeed or fail, just as long as you try.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Get back to basics today. For some of you this could mean that home and family affairs take up so much time that you never actually get going on anything else. At work, try as best you can to create a cosy atmosphere. Make sure that colleagues know they can rely on you.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
You are very certain of your plans, but less sure about which of them should take priority. It is strange indeed how you can at once be so sure of the future, yet so typically undecided. A useful start would be to check out what you can actually afford.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
At home and in your private life you should expect a fair degree of confusion. This is to be welcomed as a sign that change is being forced upon you, giving you the opportunity to make whatever improvements you feel are necessary. Try to ensure that everyone shares in the benefits.

MADHYA PRADESH TOURISM BOARD
LILY TRADE WING, 6TH FLOOR, JEHANGIRABAD, BHOPAL - 462008
Phone : 0755-2780600, E-mail : jdip.mptb@mp.gov.in
TENDER No. : 933/168/IP/MPTB/2020 Dated : 16.09.2020

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Unique opportunity for investment in Tourism Sector

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is pleased to offer the following Lands to the potential investors on unique locations to set up tourism project as mentioned below on DBFOT basis :

District	Land Details and Area
Sheopur (Tah.-Karahal)	1. Resort at Tikoli Near Palpur Kuno wild life area (4.734 Hect.)
Mandasaur (Tah.-Bhanpura)	Resort/Hoteland other tourism project at Gandhi sagar Near Gandhi sagar dam 1. Block No. 03 Halka No. 01 (0.910 Hect.) 2. Block No. 03 Halka No. 01 (1.390 Hect.) 3. Block No. 03 Halka No. 01 (2.200 Hect.)
Umariya (Tah.-Manpur)	1. Resort at Tala Near Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (3.642 Hect.) 2. Resort at Tala Near Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (4.07 Hect.)
Alirajpur (Tah.-Sondwa, Katthiwada)	1. Resortand Adventure Activities at Jhandana Narmada River area (2.432 Hect.) 2. Resortand Adventure Activities at Indalavat Narmada River area (4.680 Hect.)
Burhanpur (Tah.-Burhanpur)	1. Resort/Hotel at Rahipura Near Burhanpur, A Heritage City (5.000 Hect.) 2. Resort/Hotel at Fatehpur Near Burhanpur, A Heritage City (4.790 Hect.)
Betul (Tah.-Shahpur, Multai)	1. Resort at Gurgunda Near Satpura National Park Range (7.932 Hect.) 2. Resort/Wellness Centre/Fixed Tenting Units at Khapa on bank of Sapna Dam (01.00 Hect.)
Jabalpur (Tah.-Jabalpur)	1. Resort/Hotel/Wellness Centre at Nanhakheda Near Bargi Dam (4.840 Hect.) 2. Resort/Hotel at Nanhakheda Near Bargi Dam (0.405 Hect.) 3. Hotel Cum Convention Centre or 4-5 Star Hotel at Mehgavan Near Jabalpur airport (4.510 Hect.)
Hoshangabad (Tah.-Pipariya)	1. Resort at Chirrai Near Pachmarhi (6.098 Hect.) 2. Resort at Chakar Near Pachmarhi (2.230 Hect.) 3. Resort at Chakar Near Pachmarhi (7.859 Hect.)
Sidhi (Tah.-Majholi)	1. Resort/Camping at Chamaradol Near Sanjay Dubari National Park (1.290 Hect.) 2. Resort/Camping at Chamaradol Near Sanjay Dubari National Park (1.200 Hect.) 3. Resort/Camping at Budaritola Near Sanjay Dubari National Park (2.400 Hect.) 4. Resort at Parsili Near Sanjay Dubari National Park (3.420 Hect.)
Satna (Tah.-Ramanagar)	1. Resort at Kolgadh On bank of Bansagar Dam (4.338 Hect.)
Chhindawada (Tah.-Chand, Bichhua, chorai)	1. Resort at Jamatara Near Pench National Park (4.048 Hect.) 2. Resort at Thotamal Near Pench National Park (5.000 Hect.) 3. Resort/Camping at Jamatara Near Pench National Park (2.971 Hect.) 4. Hotel/Water Sport Activities at Palatawada Near Pench National Park (4.779 Hect.) 5. Hotel/Water Sport Activities at Sihora Bissala Near Pench National Park (1.315 Hect.)
Damoh (Tah.-Damoh)	1. Resort/Hotel at Bandakpur Near famous temple of Lord Shiva (5.669 Hect.)
Indore (Tah.-Choral, Bhichouli Hapsi)	1. Resort/Adventure Project and Water sports at Rampuriya Near Choral Dam (5.000 Hect.) 2. Wellness Centre at Mundladostdar Near Indore city (2.540 Hect.)

The RFP documents can be downloaded from website www.mptenders.gov.in RFP documents can also be seen at www.tourism.mp.gov.in.
M.P. Madhyam/98481/2020 **MANAGING DIRECTOR**

MADHYA PRADESH TOURISM BOARD
LILY TRADE WING, 6TH FLOOR, JEHANGIRABAD, BHOPAL - 462008
Phone : 0755-2780600, E-mail : jdip.mptb@mp.gov.in
TENDER No. : 935/168/IP/MPTB/2020 Dated : 16.09.2020

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Unique opportunity to develop Heritage Hotels

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is pleased to offer the following unique Heritage Building Situated near tourist destinations to the potential investor to develop Heritage Hotels on DBFOT basis :

S.No.	Village	Tehsil	District	Area in Hect.
1.	Kyoti Fort (Near Kyoti waterfall)	Rewa	Rewa	2.213
2.	Singhpur Mahal (Near Chanderi)	Chanderi	Ashoknagar	0.805
3.	Baldevgarh Fort (Near Orchha)	Gwalsagar	Tikamgarh	5.204
4.	Vijayraghavgarh Fort (Near Katni)	Katni	Katni	3.246
5.	Benazir Palace (In Bhopal)	Bhopal	Bhopal	0.798+0.694

The RFP documents can be downloaded from website www.mptenders.gov.in RFP documents can also be seen at www.tourism.mp.gov.in
M.P. Madhyam/98480/2020 **MANAGING DIRECTOR**

Government of India
Department of Atomic Energy
Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology
ENGINEERING GROUP
Vashi Complex, Navi Mumbai 400703
21.09.2020

TENDER NOTICE NO. BRIT/ES/2020-2021/02

Chief Executive, BRIT, Vashi Complex, behind APMC Fruit Market, near Govt. Ware House, Turbhe, Navi Mumbai - 400703, for and on behalf of The President Of India hereby invites sealed tenders from eligible contractors on the approved list of Central/State PWD, MES, Railway and others for the following work.

Description : Annual Contract - Shifting, Loading and Unloading of materials, handling of scrap etc. at Vashi Complex for the year 2020 - 2021.

Estimated cost : Rs. 48,00,000 (Including 18% GST)

Earnest money : Rs. 96,00,000 (This deposit should be either in the form of Demand Draft or deposit at call Receipt issued in favour of Pay &Accounts Officer, BRIT)

Completion Period : Twelve Months (One Year).

Security Deposit : 5% Performance Guarantee + 2.5% Security Deposit

Tender documents will be available at the office of the Assistant Personnel Officer, BRIT, Vashi Complex, behind APMC Fruit Market, near Govt. Ware House, Turbhe, Navi Mumbai-400703, and can be purchased on any working day between 10.00 hrs. To 15.00 hrs. (excluding Sundays, Mondays and public holidays) from 22.09.2020 to 03.10.2020 on payment of Rs. 1000 + G.S.T @ 18% = 1180/- (Total rupees One thousand one hundred eighty only) per set in cash (non-refundable) against written application and on production of (a) Bank solvency certificate of minimum value Rs.19.20 Lakhs (b) Latest income tax clearance certificate (Last 3 years), (c) List with evidence of similar works (Shifting, Loading and Unloading of materials, handling of scrap etc) in hand and completed in last seven years indicating agency for whom the work has been carried out, Value of work, stipulated and actual completion period, Present status.(The cost of work 40% of 3 similar works, 60% of 2 similar works or 80% of 1 similar work) (d) Performance / completion certificates,(e) List of Technical staff and administrative staff available(f) Annual Turnover during last five years (g) Proof of GST registration and (h) PAN Card.

After examining these documents, blank tender forms shall be issued only to the firm prima facie found competent to carry out the tender job. Sale of tender/ opening of tender do not imply acceptance/ approval. Tenders will not be sent by post. The tenders will be issued only after the verification of certificates with the originals.

Tenders duly filled in should be placed in sealed cover, prescribed with the name of work, should be deposited in the box provided at Security cover, Vashi Complex, behind APMC Fruit Market, near Govt. Ware House, Turbhe, Navi Mumbai-400 703, upto 14.00 hrs. On 06.10.2020 and will be opened by Senior Manager (Engineering Support), BRIT, in his office at 15.00 hrs. On 06.10.2020 in the presence of such contractors who desires to attend.

Acceptance of tenders will rest with the Chief Executive, BRIT, Vashi Complex, who does not bind himself to accept the lowest or any other offer and reserves to him the right to reject any or the entire offer received without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Offers which do not fulfill all or any of the above conditions and incomplete in any respect are liable to be summarily rejected.

For further details regarding eligibility of contractors, conditions please visit www.britatom.gov.in
Senior Manager (Engineering Support)
For and on behalf of The President Of India

MDI Gurgaon
Mehrauli Road, Sukhrali
Gurugram-122001
Tel: 0124-4560000
Fax: 0124-4560456

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Management Development Institute (MDI), one of the premier Business School in India, invites tender for :-

- Supply of Wooden furniture for New PGM Hostel.

The tender details can be obtained from the MDI website www.mdi.ac.in Corrigendum / Addendum to this publication if any, would appear only on the said website and not be published.
CAO (Administration)

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice
No. SA/ARS/ED/OT/20-21/8,
Date: 18/09/2020.

The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, Rolling Stock, Southern Railway, Electric Loco Shed, Erode acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites online E-tender for the under mentioned work.

Name of the work: Works contract for Up-gradation of Smoothing Reactor type SL-30 of Electric Locomotives available at Electric Loco Shed, Southern Railway, Salem Division, Erode. Tender Value: ₹27,83,970/- Earnest Money Deposit: ₹55,700/- Cost of tender document: ₹3,360/- Completion Period: 6 months. Closing Date & Time: 09/10/2020 @ 11.00 hrs

For further details interested persons may kindly log on to <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

Railway reserves the right to issue any corrigendum to the tender till ten days prior to the opening of the tender. Tenderers are advised to check the web site before submitting their offer whether any such corrigendum to the tender has been issued or not.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, Rolling Stock, Southern Railway, Electric Loco Shed, Erode.
Follow us on : [Twitter](https://twitter.com/GMSRailway) / [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GMSRailway)

BHARATIYA RESERVE BANK NOTE MUDRAN (P) LIMITED
(Wholly owned subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India)
P.O.: RBNML, Salboni - 721132, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal.
Phone No.: 03227-280176 / 280317; Fax No.: 03227-280744 / 280222

National Competitive Bidding (NCB)

Tenders under two part bidding system are invited from experienced, resourceful, reputed & bonafide Suppliers/Service Providers/Agencies/Contractors (as applicable) for the following:-

- Operation & Maintenance of Utility Equipment including Housekeeping, Sanitation and other related works at Press Area as well as Township and other allied areas at BRBNMPL Salboni, Tender No. 017/SAL/PUR/2020-21 [Estimated Cost - ₹ 145.20 Lakh Per Annum]
- Supply of Medicines & Medical items for Plant Hospital through Annual Contract Basis at BRBNMPL, Salboni Tender No. 018/SAL/PUR/2020-21 [Estimated Cost - ₹ 60.00 Lakh Per Annum]

The last date for submission of duly filled-in both the tender documents is 20/10/2020 at 11:30 hrs. For further details including amendments, if any, as well as downloading the tender documents, please visit our website <https://www.brbnmpl.co.in>
Deputy General Manager & O-I-C

Government of India
Department of Atomic Energy
Board of Radiation & Isotope Technology

Chief Executive, BRIT/Senior General Manager, Engg & CP, BRIT, Vashi Complex, Sector 20, Vashi, Navi Mumbai-400703, hereby invites sealed tenders on behalf of the President of India for item rate tender for following work.

Tender Notice No.	BRIT/CNM/ENGG/WC/2020/0827/01
Name of Work	Supply, installation, commissioning and training of the Video Conferencing (VC) facility with 3-year onsite comprehensive warranty at Board Room, BRIT Vashi complex, Navi Mumbai as per cable layout and system architecture given in Annexure-II.
Estimated cost (Incl. GST)	Rs. 12,60,000/- (Rupees Twelve lakh Sixty Thousand only) including GST.
Earnest money deposit	Rs. 25,200/- (Rs Twenty Five thousand two hundred only) (This deposit should be either in the form of deposited on call receipt or Demand Draft issued in favour of Pay and Accounts Officer, BRIT payable at Trombay or the amount paid to the Reserve Bank of India and receipted Challans. (The same should be enclosed separately in a sealed envelope to be submitted with the tenders technical and Price bid).
Completion Period	Two Months
Security Deposit	5% Performance Guarantee + 2.5% Security Deposit
Cost of Tender documents	Rs. 590/- (Rupees Five Hundred & Ninety only) including 18% GST
Date of Tender documents	22-09-2020 to 06-10-2020
Date of submission & opening of tender	Up to 14:00 hrs or before on 13/10/2020 and will be opened by him/hers in his/his office at 15:00 Hrs. on 13/10/2020.

For detail NIT, kindly visit website <https://www.britatom.gov.in>
Manager, CNM, BRIT

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MANE'S TWIN STRIKES SINK CHELSEA

Two goals from Sadio Mane just after halftime eased champions Liverpool to a 2-0 win over 10-man Chelsea in the Premier League season's first heavyweight clash at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

REUTERS

It's all happening in Dubai

Collapses, surges, momentum swings, a short run, tied scores and Super Over later, Delhi beat Punjab in a textbook T20 match

SANDIP G
SEPTEMBER 21

SYNOPSIS: Iceman Stoinis ends Agarwal's night on tragic note

Helter-skelter end

THE INDIAN Premier League might have begun on Saturday, but it hit the ground running only on Sunday with a textbook T20 match that drained the full range of emotions. It was a strange slow-burning match that exploded towards the final stretch. Then it was all a blur, twists and turns springing from every corner.

Delhi had the match in their grasp until Mayank Agarwal cut loose. But just when he seemed to steer Punjab to a famous win, he held out tiresomely, eventually taking the match to super-over, which turned out to be a non-event. Punjab made the lowest score in a powerplay, which Delhi surpassed without fuss. Add to the intrigue a run that was called short — the third ball of the 19th over in Punjab's innings. It was helter-skelter, exhaustive stuff by the time Rishabh Pant seized victory off the third ball of the Super Over. But the real story is how it reached the Super Over.

Iceman Stoinis

On a topsy-turvy night, it was Marcus Stoinis who imparted the decisive twist to the match. Defending 13 off the last over, he conceded 12 off his first three, but then managed a dot ball with a wide short delivery, before taking out Agarwal and Chris Jordan off the last two balls. Both of them were arguably boundary balls, but Stoinis could do no wrong on the night. And how Stoinis trusted himself and had fun.

Whenever Stoinis strides out to the field, he hears his father's voice inside his head: "Have fun, trust yourself." It was his late father's advice on the morning of his T20 debut five years ago. The advice is more sentimental to him these days, as his father died in 2018 after a long battle with cancer.

But living his father's words on the field in international cricket has not been as straightforward. For every time he walks onto a field, it seems as if an unbearable burden is thrust on his square shoulders. Too many thoughts churning and spinning inside his head perhaps, drowning out his father's voice. As a consequence, his Australia career has so far swung between uncertainty and instability. So have been his IPL stints, into his fifth year with negligible credentials. "I don't know what goes wrong," he once confessed to *australia.com.au*.

Then he began listening to the podcasts of feted industrial designer Elon Musk and American marathon runner David Goggins, besides consulting a noted Sydney-based sports psychologist Dave Diggle. Soon he realised: "It's more about mindset. It's more about the energy you've got to get ready to perform, it's about following the process and keeping a clear mind, more so than taking a big front step forward."

Gradually, he detoxed his mind, and as his father had counselled, he began to trust himself and have more fun. As he did on Sunday, single-handedly lifting his side to a competitive total with a whirlwind 21-ball 53. An on-side favoured player, he began his carnage by smearing Jordan's off-cutter over long, just waiting on his back-foot and bludgeoning the delivery. A stroke that was all muscle and bottom hand. Soon he began shuffling in the crease to dishevel the bowlers' lengths, a recent improvisation to his game that resulted in a jackpot BBL — he registered a record 705 runs from 17 matches at a phenomenal average of 54.23.



After a stellar rescue act with the bat, Delhi Capitals' all-rounder Marcus Stoinis struck in the final two deliveries of the KXII innings to send the match into the Super Over. BCCI

"I was more willing to move around the crease a little bit (during the BBL) and create a few options and change the dynamic of the game," Stoinis told reporters in England.

But even when he's moving, his head is still and the body supremely balanced, so that he can make late adjustments like when he realised that a Jordan delivery was shorter than he had anticipated. He was already bending down for the ramp, but he froze in his movement, waited for the delivery and glided it over fine-leg with nuclear-tipped precision. His batting was a perfect storm of power and ingenuity. Poor Jordan, who was at his wits' end in containing him, especially in the last over where he plundered 24 runs off his first five deliveries, toying with his lengths as if he were first-term rookie and not an experienced T20 speed merchant. The 57 runs that Delhi amassed in the last three overs turned out to be the difference in the end. And 36 came off 11 balls Stoinis faced.

Tragic hero Mayank

If IPL was the one unticked box off his career — the last two years have been about proving himself in the longest format — Mayank Agarwal demonstrated with a knock of utter callousness that this might be the edition that would see his emergence as a T20 player.

As remarkable as his stroke-play was his serenity. Kings XI Punjab was in strife from

THE SUPER OVER

KINGS XI: 2/2

0.1: Rabada strays onto Rahul's pads; flicked to deep square-leg for a brace.

0.2: Rahul slices a short-pitched Rabada delivery to Axar at deep square-leg.

0.3: Pooran's stumps are dismantled by a fiery Rabada yorker.

DELHI CAPITALS: 3/0

0.1: Pant goes for a mighty slog, misses a wishy delivery from Shami; no run.

0.2: Shami bowls it down the leg-side; wide signalled.

0.3: Pant works it to fine-leg for a yorke.

RESULT: DC win the 1 over eliminator.

time to time, the required run-rate was shooting over the roof, the support batsmen were running, his own strike-rate was middling, but he remained unflustered, egging himself on be-

tween every delivery and wiping the thick beads of sweat dripping down his brows. His knock was almost MS Dhoni like in rendition — scoring just above run-a-ball, biding his time, assessing his bowlers, surveying the gaps and weighing up his options. He was 38 off 39 at the 16th over, Delhi requiring 53 off 24 deliveries, with just lower-order for company.

And then he embraced beast mode, spanking Andre Nortje for a brace of delicious boundaries, first a chip over mid-off and then a slap behind point, two of his most staple strokes. Next was Mohit Sharma's turn to bear the furious brunt of his batting. Agarwal probably sensed a weak-link in him and went full pelt, massacring 17 runs. Rabada's next over yielded 12 runs and Kings were sniffing the victory before a manic last over. Agarwal smacked 12 off the first three balls, but perished on the penultimate delivery with his side just a run away from the target. The tie took the match to the Super Over, which Delhi Capital won. A disconsolate Mayank would be wondering how a single run turned him from a potential hero to a tragic hero.

BRIEF SCORES: Delhi Capitals: 157/8 and 3/0 (Marcus Stoinis 53, Shreyas Iyer 39, Mohammad Shami 3/15; Sheldon Cottrell 2/24) defeat Kings XI Punjab: 157/8 and 2/2 (Mayank Agarwal 89; Ravi Ashwin 2/1; Marcus Stoinis 2/29) in the Super Over.

EMOTIONAL ROLLER COASTER

Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game.

Ashwin's cry of pain and ruffle of comfort

A MAGICAL over where he grabbed two wickets to spin the game his team's way ended in pain and tears for R Ashwin. The medical prognosis is awaited but the fear is the DC bowler might have dislocated his shoulder as he fell, trying to stop the ball that was rolling away at quite a distance to his right.

Almost immediately, he clutched his left shoulder and grimaced in severe pain. And by the time the physio rushed to the ground, Ashwin was in tears. Dean Jones reckoned that he might be out of action for at least a month in a worst case scenario. Not to mention it cost him three overs today as the match was tied.

What a contrast it was to the sheer joy he had experienced in the first five balls against his old team Kings XI Punjab. His stint as a captain last year with that team wasn't all that pleasant and he struck with his first delivery when he foxed Karun Nair into top-edging a forceful swat. A classic Ashwin moment came up in the fifth ball.

It was the ball that he releases as if he is turning the door-knob and slips it through his thumb and index finger and the ball skids on straight with the angle from round the stumps. The left-handed Nicholas Pooran has a reputation of being good against spin but was clueless here, pushing outside the line, playing for the spin, and losing his stumps.

Now, Ashwin was against his old rival Glenn Maxwell; both have been going at each other for a few years now. We will perhaps not know whether it was the scent of the battle against the old rival that propelled him to run after a ball that was at a fair distance from him or was it just the adrenalin after taking two wickets but he shuffled across and threw in a fairly innocuous dive that had no chance of stopping the ball. As he fell, something jarred in his shoulder. The experienced



R Ashwin's immediate future with the Delhi Capitals was put in doubt after he left the field with a shoulder injury.

physio Patrick Farhat, who worked with the Indian team for years until the last world cup, had one look at the injury and immediately decided the best course of action was to get his man out of there. There was one moment of tenderness in this pensive moment. As a teary eyed Ashwin walked off, the coach Ricky Ponting walked over to ruffle his hair. Ponting must have realised the pathos of the moment.

For months now, the cricket tragic Ashwin has been talking on the game on twitter and YouTube. He has spoken with cricketers to performance analysts about various intricate aspects of the game, and even posed a few tough questions to Ponting about his views on mankading. Just six balls into the tournament, five of which provided him unadulterated elation, his dream was threatening to turn into a nightmare.

Rishabh Pant's stubbornness

IT'S NOT that Rishabh Pant doesn't want to learn but he is a man who is confident he doesn't need to change his game. The teenaged IPL debutant Ravi Bishnoi wouldn't have minded Pant's bull-headedness frankly. Bishnoi kept sliding the ball across the left-hander who kept trying to drag it to the outside. Bishnoi seemed to harness Rashid Khan in his style and Pant was just being Pant. Heave and miss. Pant would then tell his partner that it was a googly. Of course it was; not that he changed his shot as he yet again tried to slog against the spin. Not once did he try to go with the turn. Finally, a googly ricocheted off an inside edge of an attempted slog and fell on the stumps, triggering a wondrous scream of joy from the youngster for his first wicket on the big stage.



SRIRAM VEERA

Chris Jordan's emptiness

HOW BADLY can a game of cricket turn out for you? Don't tweet out that question to Chris Jordan. He was looted for 30 runs by Marcus Stoinis and co. in the final over that pushed Delhi Capitals past 150, a total that looked hardly possible at one stage. Were the cricketing gods done with him yet? Nope. The poor man had go through more trauma. He was deemed to have run a run short in the 19th over by the umpire though replays suggested his bat was inside the line. He was left to face the final ball of the chase. He needed just a run and Stoinis actually repaid his earlier largesse with a full toss on the legs but his nightmare refused to go away. He scooped it straight to square-leg, dragging the match into Super Over where his team tamely surrendered.

PADDY UPTON ON IMPACT OF ISOLATION ON PLAYERS

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 20

THE MIND guru who helped India win the 2011 cricket World Cup, South African Paddy Upton, is worried about the mental health of players dealing with long-spells of isolation in the bio-bubble and fluctuations in their performances on the field during the ongoing Indian Premier League being played in the time of the pandemic.

With the experience of coaching five teams in IPL, Australia's Big Bash and Pakistan Super League behind him, Upton says that following the restrictive COVID-19 protocols for more than two months in an alien land can get "mentally exhausting". This fragile mental state, the Masters in Sports Science infers, can further result in players pulling out of the tournament or allowing the trauma to take a "toll on their mental health". Raising a red flag, Upton gives a subtle but serious warning by saying "it remains to be seen how hard it is going to get".

The most vulnerable group, according to him, are those who can't afford to walk out of this multi-million league and miss out on a hefty pay cheque. "I feel most sorry for those players who are not financially well off. They have to dig deep and realise that 'I have to be here to make money' and it will take a toll on their men-

tal health," he says.

Painting a depressing picture of a player finding it difficult to cope with isolation without the option of flying out home, Upton says nothing could have prepared the cricketers for this unprecedented situation.

"There will be those who wouldn't be able to manage the situation very well. They can lose motivation, self-discipline and stop exercising. They can overeat, get up late and put on weight. It also can be too much internet, TV, or social media in an effort to numb themselves and try to run away from the experience."

He says only a "lucky" few can eject out of the bio-bubble. "As for the few lucky players who will have the financial reserves, they can afford to say that this is really not working, 'I want to get out of here and return to a little bit of normality,'" he says. Upton says some pull-outs have already taken place and more will follow. "You will see more players going home and just saying 'I can't handle this and it is getting too uncomfortable. And it is affecting my mental health.'"

The one-time Rajasthan Royals coach says this season could turn out to be "extremely difficult" for foreign players and those who don't find a place in the playing XI. "For players who are not in the playing XI, IPL is very difficult even when it is being played in India because they don't get playing time for two-and-a-half



Sports psychologist Paddy Upton explains the 'mental exhaustion' from staying in a bio-bubble for a long time. Express

months. The foreign internationals when not playing in the past years when in India, they would go and see their friends in other teams. Now, they cannot socialise, it is going to be a very long and tiring and mentally exhausting IPL for them."

But virtually every player is in the same boat, Upton quickly adds. "Most of these players (Indians) have already been in lengthy isolation at home during the domestic lockdown experience. And some

players like the Australians and the English have been in bio-bubbles during their series in England. So, these players have already gone through isolation fatigue and it is only going to get worse in the IPL because everyone is in a foreign country. No one is at home. Even the television channels are unfamiliar, so I think it is going to be very difficult."

Fresh from the success of his best-selling biography-cum-self-help book, *Barefoot Coach*,

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PADDY UPTON

Upton has some remedies that can help players deal with the tedium of staring at the same roof lying in bed for close to 80 days.

He suggests that in case the cricketers want to take their minds away from the failure on field or the claustrophobic feeling of being indoors for long hours, they "need to have a productive, proactive building block in their life that is away from cricket." He suggests learning a new skill, taking up an online course, or even something as simple as "putting on the video to learn dancing".

Though, he does add a disclaimer: "What is so important is they find activities away from cricket where they can get a good experience. It could be some success or learn-

ing. But by it, I don't mean getting good at Playstation and Xbox or spending more time on social media."

There are a couple of aspects about the bio-bubble that puzzle Upton. For one, he can't understand why players aren't allowed to invite teammates to their rooms. This, he says, is a rule that throws up more problems than solutions. And secondly, he can't get the logic of teams who have opted to stay in high-rise hotels in city centres and not some resort with a private beach.

"I find it quite remarkable that some teams have actually known that they are going to a bio-bubble but have procured a high-rise in the middle of a city. It is certainly going to work against their players and teams at the back end of the tournament. Some teams have booked themselves in resort-type hotels that have their own beaches where a person can go and swim. I know it is hot there so they can't spend much time out but it is going to get cooler. The teams that have got outdoor facilities will manage a lot better and longer than the teams in high rises or a city centre with no open spaces," Upton says.

Anything he would do in case he was coaching an IPL team this time? "I would start talking to the England and Australia players who have been in a bio-bubble for a long time. Those experiences can be translated immediately. Those learnings can be brought into the IPL."