

Facebook fuelled hate speech and fake news in India, its staff found

Social media platform didn't have resources in country, say documents

SHEERA FRENKEL & DAVEY ALBA
OCTOBER 24

ON FEBRUARY 4, 2019, a Facebook researcher created a new user account to see what it was like to experience the social media site as a person living in Kerala. For the next three weeks, the account operated by a simple rule: Follow all the recommendations generated by Facebook's algorithms to join groups, watch videos and explore new pages on the site.

The result was an inundation of hate speech, misinformation and celebrations of violence, which were documented in an internal Facebook report published later that month. "Following this test user's News Feed, I've seen more images of dead people in the past three weeks than I've seen in my entire life total," the Facebook researcher wrote.

The report was one of dozens of studies and memos written by Facebook employees grappling

LED TO ANALYSIS, SAYS FACEBOOK

The findings of the Facebook researcher in Kerala led the company to undertake a "deeper, more rigorous analysis" of its recommendation systems in India and make product changes, Facebook said. [PAGE 6](#)

EXPLAINED

E Blowing the whistle

THE FINDINGS are based on documents collected by Frances Haugen, a 37-year-old engineer who worked at Facebook for nearly two years. Her job was to track the spread of misinformation and ensure that the platform was not used to destabilise democracy.

IDEA EXCHANGE

'What's happening with intermediaries in US is why IT rules are important... they create accountability'



PAKISTAN WINS BIG

India captain Virat Kohli congratulates Mohammad Rizwan after Pakistan won the Twenty20 World Cup match in Dubai on Sunday. Pakistan's Rizwan and Babar Azam (left) chased down India's 151 with 10 wickets to spare. *AP*

NEW ALLEGATION IN ARYAN KHAN CASE

Signed blank sheets for NCB, heard Gosavi discuss Rs 8 cr bribe for top officer: witness

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

A WITNESS in the alleged drugs case involving actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan has claimed that investigators made him sign on 10 sheets of blank paper at the office of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on the day of their raid on the cruise ship.

The witness, Prabhakar Sail, also claimed on Sunday that he had heard KP Gosavi, the alleged private investigator who accompanied NCB officials on the raid, say that Rs 8 crore would have to



Witness says when Aryan was taken to NCB office, he went too

be given to the NCB's Mumbai-based Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede.

Gosavi, who too is an NCB witness in the case against Aryan and others, is absconding. There are several cases of cheating against him.

Sail said that he feared he would be killed by the NCB. The

NCB denied his allegations.

In a statement, the Bureau said the matter was being referred to higher authorities for necessary action. NCB officer Wankhede complained to Mumbai Police that attempts were being made to frame him in a false case.

Sail, a resident of Andheri in Mumbai who offers personal bodyguard services, has said that he was employed by Gosavi on July 22.

On the morning of October 2, Gosavi had asked him to come to the NCB office in Mumbai, Sail

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

POONCH HUNT FOR MILITANTS

Jailed Pak terrorist used to track hideout killed; 2 J&K cops, soldier injured

Held 18 yrs ago, Mustafa was shifted to Jammu jail this year

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

IN WHAT appears to be a gambit gone awry, a jailed Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorist, who had been deployed to lead security forces to the hideout of a group of militants in the forested heights of Poonch, was killed, and two J&K policemen and an Army soldier injured, in an encounter with the men being hunted.

Officials identified the terrorist killed as Zia Mustafa, a Pakistani national who was ar-

rested in 2003 as the mastermind of the Nadimarg massacre in Pulwama district in South Kashmir in which 24 Kashmiri Pandits were killed.

The three injured were taken to the nearest medical facility. Sources said their injuries are not severe, and that there has been no further exchange of fire with the militants.

Mustafa was taken by J&K police to the encounter site in Mendhar from the high-security Kot Bhalwal Jail in Jammu on Saturday to track the group that has been evading a massive

combing operation in the Bhata Durian forests.

The operation was launched 14 days ago after five Army personnel were killed by militants in Chamrel, a forested area in the heights overlooking the Bhimber Gali-Suranakote-Poonch National Highway. Three days later, four more Army personnel were killed in Bhata Durian, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

NADIMARG CASE MAY NOW BE SHUT
[PAGE 7](#)

Both Jammu, Kashmir will grow, '3 families' now powerless: Shah

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY

Did you relax and watch some cricket? Internet was good.



ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

HOME MINISTER Amit Shah on Sunday promised equitable development of both the Jammu and Kashmir regions, and said "no one" would be allowed to disrupt the process of development initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Union Territory.

"From this land of temples and of Mata Vaishno Devi, which is also the birthplace of Pandit Prem Nath Dogra and the martyrdom of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, I want to say that



Shah, L-G Sinha in Jammu. *PTI*

those bent upon disrupting this era of development are causing disruptions, but rest assured no one will be able to disrupt and stop the pace of development in **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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TOTAL CASES
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| | Total | Vacant |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| HOSPITAL BEDS | 15,690 | 15,475 |
| ICU BEDS | 3,341 | 3,283 |

| | Cases | Recoveries | Deaths | Tests |
|--------|-------|------------|--------|-------------|
| Oct 23 | 40 | 46 | 0 | 61,152 |
| Oct 24 | 37 | 51 | 0 | 60,704 |
| Total | 320* | 14,14,192 | 25,091 | 2,90,32,667 |

*Total active cases

Eye on polls, Delhi BJP pitches unified MCD

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE DELHI BJP is in favour of unification of the three municipal corporations and is advocating for the merger with the central leadership, it is learnt. The Centre has not taken a decision yet.

Sources said state unit president Adesh Gupta wants the three MCDs — East, North and South — to be unified ahead of the civic body polls due in April and is pitching for it, said sources. Gupta, however refused to comment on the issue.

The BJP, which has been ruling all three MCDs for the past 15 years, is up against a buoyant AAP trying to come into power in the civic bodies.

A senior BJP leader said party



The trifurcation is at the heart of the financial crisis in the civic bodies, leading to salary delays and strike by employees. Archive

leaders have communicated to the senior leadership that a merger would solve the financial crisis, faced

by the North and East MCDs especially, to an extent.

The trifurcation, which divided

resources unequally, is at the heart of the financial crisis in the civic bodies. While the move was aimed at decentralising municipal governance in Delhi, officials said it only "tripled the number of officers, increased costs and resulted in unequal distribution of assets and liabilities".

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had been trifurcated by the Sheila Dikshit government in April 2012. In later years, it was seen that while the South body has more posh colonies and was financially better placed, North faced acute financial crisis leading to a budget deficit, salary delays and frequent strikes by staff. The East MCD, placed between South and North financially, too has a budget deficit and mounting loans.

Sources in the party, however,

said that advocating for a merger also has political connotations as the MCDs have constantly claimed they are devoid of funds because the AAP-led Delhi government is blocking it.

"This would also help the party send out a message to the public of how they plan to fix the fund crisis if voted to power again," said a leader, adding that there has been no decision by the Centre yet.

The AAP, however, claims that mismanagement and corruption in the MCDs is responsible for the fund crisis.

The demand from the Delhi BJP to merge the corporations is not new. It was raised in 2014 and 2017, when former union minister Vijay Goel had batted in favour of unification saying it would lead to better functioning.

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Puzzle car park opens at Adhchini



It has space for 56 cars

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE SOUTH Delhi Municipal Corporation Sunday inaugurated an automated multi-level puzzle car parking in Adhchini village, which has a capacity to accommodate 56 vehicles.

Mayor Mukesh Suryan said the move will facilitate parking for people in both rural and urban parts as it has been constructed on lesser space than traditional parking lots. Its total plot area is 467.83 sqm and a total of 56 vehicles can be parked at a time.

A senior SDMC official said average retrieval time for each car will be 150 seconds, while it takes nearly 15 minutes in traditional parking lots. The parking lot has two modules, with six levels in each module. Thirty-one cars can be parked in one module and 25 in the second module, said the senior official.

There will be no manual interference at this automated parking facility after parking the vehicle at ground level. The official said the modular design has been made of steel. "It's a pollution free structure where response time will be very less. Fire-fighting and other arrangements have also been made."

Work on two similar parking lots at Punjabi Bagh and M Block Market in Greater Kailash II would also start this month, he said.

5-year-old Dalit girl raped and killed in Gurgaon

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
GURGAON, OCTOBER 24

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD Dalit girl was allegedly raped and murdered in a Gurgaon village on Sunday morning. Police have detained her neighbour, a 22-year-old labourer from Bihar, for the crime. Police said that during preliminary questioning, he allegedly sexually assaulted her before killing her.

DCP (South) Dheeraj Setia said, "The girl had injuries on her private parts and neck. The cause of death will be known after a post-mortem, which will be conducted by a medical board on Monday. The accused is a neighbour and was a frequent visitor to their house. He admitted he was drunk at the time."

The DCP confirmed that

that the accused be handed over to them to 'deliver swift justice'.

Police said the incident took place around 10 am when the accused took the girl out on the pretext of taking her to a shop to eat. Instead, he took her into the bushes behind her house and allegedly sexually assaulted her before killing her.

DCP (South) Dheeraj Setia said, "The girl had injuries on her private parts and neck. The cause of death will be known after a post-mortem, which will be conducted by a medical board on Monday. The accused is a neighbour and was a frequent visitor to their house. He admitted he was drunk at the time."

The DCP confirmed that

Police have detained her neighbour, a labourer from Bihar, for the crime. A group of locals beat up the accused and prevented police from taking him into custody

some locals pelted stones at police and tried to obstruct officers from arresting the accused. "We rescued him and took him to another location. There was some anger among locals. But people should not take the law into their

Class divide a factor in decision to not reopen schools: Atishi



Atishi was speaking at a panel discussion, Saturday

there is almost 80% attendance. Children are coming into schools because for them that is the more effective learning space. But if you look at private schools, attendance is 10%, 15%, 20%."

Dr Vandana Prasad, convener at Public Health Resource Network, said the move could have come earlier. "Not just schools but anganwadis, child-care services, nutrition rehabili-

tation centres, everything is at a standstill and I don't know why we have delayed things so far. Communities are also not entirely ready, there is that. Parents are also not entirely ready, but we have seen that when we work with the community everybody recognises the need of these services and they will be very happy to send their children back."

While Special Secretary of the Women and Child Development department Dr Rashmi Singh said the anganwadi centre had never stopped working even though the centres continue to remain closed, she said they still need to fully reopen, especially for the mothers.

"Not only because we want children to have that experience of learning, but also because there is the dimension of gender... Women who need to go to work feel that their children are safer when somebody else is taking care of them," she said.

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प्रेस विज्ञप्ति

नौएडा प्राधिकरण द्वारा आवासीय भूखण्डों के आवंटन हेतु आवासीय भूखण्ड योजना 2021 (II) का प्रकाशन दिनांक 14.10.2021 को विभिन्न राष्ट्रीय समाचार पत्रों में किया गया है। इस योजना के अन्तर्गत 50% भूखण्ड सामान्य वर्ग हेतु एवं 50% आरक्षित श्रेणी हेतु आवंटन किये जायेंगे। भूखण्डों का आवंटन ई-ऑक्शन के माध्यम से किया जायेगा।

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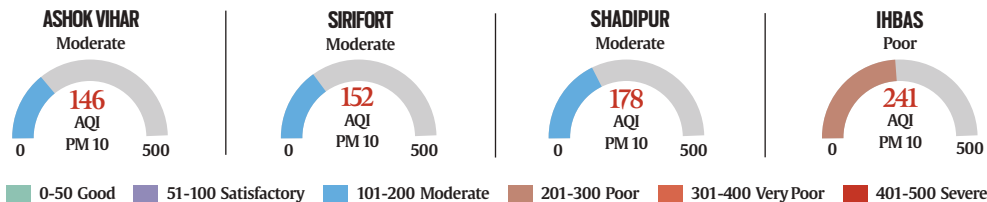
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S K Y W A T C H

FORECAST: Oct 25
Partly cloudy/sky

MAX: 31 | **MIN: 18**
0.7°C below normal | 1.3°C above normal

With winter round the corner in the capital, extended rainfall has meant relatively cleaner air so far. But this relief could be shortlived

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND & ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
NEW DELHI/LUDHIANA, OCTOBER 24

EVERY WINTER, the national capital and surrounding NCR areas grapple with severe air pollution from multiple internal sources such as dust and vehicular emissions as well as meteorological conditions like low wind speed, temperature, and humidity. Add stubble burning to this cocktail and Delhi is enveloped in a grey haze for the entirety of winter.

While Delhi has enjoyed a relatively cleaner pre-winter period (September 1-October 15) this year compared to previous years, as per an analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment, experts attributed this to the extended rainfall as well as a delayed paddy harvest in Punjab and Haryana. With paddy stubble burning expected to rise in the next few days, pollution too is expected to go up.

The harvest and the consequent paddy stubble burning are just starting off in Punjab. The delay this year is because of the monsoon, which withdrew later than usual. Around 28% paddy has been harvested in the state till October 22 against 41% last year on the same date.

Fire starts

Between September 1 and October 22, Punjab's fire count was 5,772 – lower than the fire count of 11,664 till October 22 last year, the highest figure since 2016. But this year's count is higher than that of 2019 (4,042) and 2018 (3,502). Haryana's fire count till October 22 was 2,413, up from 2,121 last year. In 2019, the figure for the same time frame was 2,755, while it stood at 2,503 in 2018.

This is as per figures provided by Pawan Gupta, senior scientist, Earth Sciences at the Universities Space Research Association, NASA Marshall Space Flight Centre, USA, of data from the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS), an instrument on board NASA's Suomi National Polar-Orbiting Partnership satellite.

According to the Punjab Remote Sensing Centre (PRSC) at Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana, which records farm fires through satellite images, the incidence of stubble burning till October 21 are 4,327 – 3,402 took place in just nine days from October 13 to 21.

District-wise cumulative fire



counts in Punjab between September 1 and October 22 indicates that Amritsar and Tarn Taran have the highest, in the range above 850. In Haryana, the districts of Kaithal and Karnal show the highest counts (over 460), maps that Gupta provided show.

"The fire count is lower this year but comparing it to last year's figures might not work. Last year, due to the labour scarcity induced by the pandemic, more farmers adopted the 'direct seeder' technique which resulted in an early harvest and early burning," said L S Kurinji, programme associate at the research institution, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

Farm fires usually begin in the last week of September, but this year the rains have delayed the harvest in Amritsar and Tarn Taran where the early maturing rice varieties are grown, Kurinji said. These districts are usually where the burning begins, she added.

The contribution of stubble burning to PM 2.5 levels in Delhi hit a high of 14% on October 16 this year, having remained below 5% till then. "The fire counts are taken and the area where these counts are is determined before we develop an emission inventory due to these fire counts. Then we run the model

to figure out what the contribution from the fire counts is," said Gufran Beig, founder project director, SAFAR.

Alternatives

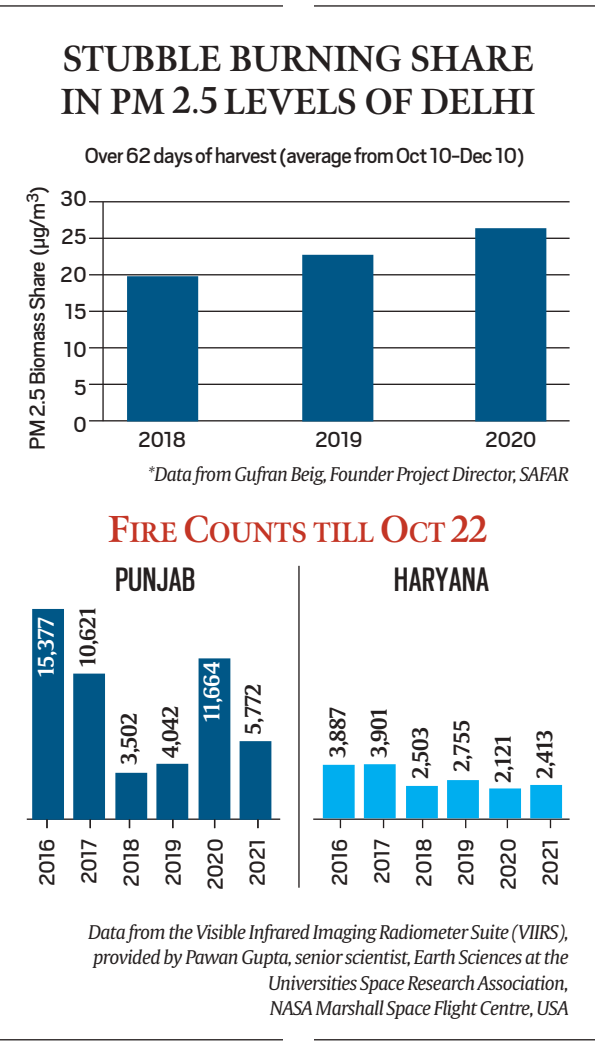
Efforts are on to help farmers switch to the Pusa bio-decomposer, developed by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) to aid the decomposition of crop residue, which is being touted as a cleaner alternative than setting fire to fields.

The Delhi government has begun spraying the solution on harvested paddy fields, covering 4,000 acres out of a total of nearly 14,000 acres under paddy cultivation.

Indramani Mishra, head of the Agricultural Engineering Department, IARI, said the Punjab government has procured the decomposer through a licensee to cover around 3,000 hectares while the Haryana government will be covering around 1 lakh acres. The UP government has also procured from a licensee for 10 lakh acres.

A licensed private company also plans on providing the decomposer for 3 lakh acres in Haryana and 2 lakh acres in Punjab for free as part of their CSR activity, Mishra said.

Going by data available on the website of the Government of Punjab's Department of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare,



an estimated area of 31.49 lakh hectares was cultivated with paddy in 2020-21.

However, only a small section of farmers will be using the decomposer, said Harinder Singh Lakhowal, General Secretary, Bharatiya Kisan Union, Punjab.

"There isn't enough time to spray the decomposer and wait for it to work," Lakhowal said, explaining why farmers were unlikely to use it. Some farmers might want to grow vegetables between paddy and wheat, he pointed out. Besides, the predominant variety of rice being grown in Punjab is PUSA-44 – this one has a higher yield, he said, but it is also the 'late' variety, which is harvested later.

Alternatives to both the decomposer and burning include a 'happy seeder,' which cuts the straw and sows the seeds for the rabi crop at the same time. Even with the subsidy, it remains out of reach for many farmers, Lakhowal said.

Manmohan Kalia Joint Director, Farm Machinery Wing, Punjab Agriculture Department and Nodal Officer, Stubble Management, Punjab, said, "Punjab is going to have over 1 lakh machines in the state by this paddy harvesting season. At present, 86,000 machines are available which are sufficient for stubble management machinery because this is not the peak

season, which starts in the beginning of November. Farmers, however, are not availing these machines because of increasing diesel costs and other factors."

'Burning stubble easier'

Despite spending over Rs 1,000 crore on subsidised machinery to manage stubble in Punjab – which produces around 20 million paddy stubble every year – burning straw across the state continues, with the Majha region on top of the chart currently. In Tarn Taran and Amritsar, which fall in the region, burning fields can be spotted every few 100 metres in around half a dozen blocks. The two districts are also responsible for 43.4% of the total stubble burning in the state till October 21.

Farmers here sow short duration varieties of paddy (non-basmati) and basmati rice crops. These were harvested between September 10 and October 20. For them, stubble burning is convenient and cost effective.

In Jandiala Guru, Tarsikka, Majitha and Ajnala blocks in Amritsar and Khadur Sahib, and Chohla Sahib blocks in Tarn Taran, farmers sow vegetables like *matar* (green peas) and table potatoes after harvesting paddy. Peas and potatoes are sown between October 1-20 in these blocks.

EXPLAINED

E.

WHY FOCUS ON STUBBLE BURNING

In 2009, the Punjab Preservation of Sub Soil Act was enacted to arrest declining groundwater levels. This delayed the sowing date to match it with the monsoon onset to reduce the burden on ground water for irrigation. Consequently, the harvest was delayed, also reducing the time needed to manage the stubble and prepare for the next crop, said L S Kurinji, programme associate at the research institution, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

This then synchronised with the shift in wind direction in October and November which favour the carrying of smoke towards Delhi. Farm fires in the month of September don't affect Delhi as much since the wind direction then is mostly south westerly, she said.

A farmer setting stubble on fire in his field in Jalandhar.
Express

Jeet Singh, a farmer from Tarn Taran, said, "I harvested the short-duration variety of paddy last week on 5 acres of land. I now have to sow the pea crop; sowing time was up to October 20 which I cannot delay. I was left with just 5-6 days to clear my fields because for sowing vegetables, you need a clean field. It is not like wheat which can be sown in standing stubble with happy seeder or super seeder. It takes at least 5-6 rounds to clear the stubble and the high cost of diesel means machines are out of reach for small, marginal, and semi-medium farmers. We are left with no option but to set our fields on fire, even though it harms the soil and creates air pollution."

Peas are a 65-day crop, which is harvested by the second week of December. Farmers then sow another crop with a late variety of wheat or Rabi season crops.

Assembly elections and ongoing protests against the three farm laws also mean that action against farmers who set their fields on fire will be elusive. A senior administrative officer in Amritsar said, "With elections due in a few months, they cannot take any stringent action against farmers."

Till October 21, environmental compensation to the tune of Rs 16.46 lakh was imposed, of which only Rs 7,500 could be recovered. No FIRs are being registered this year.

BRIEFLY

AAP to kick off MCD poll campaign after Diwali

New Delhi: Asserting that people want a change in the MCDs, the AAP announced that it will launch a massive campaign after Diwali to oust the BJP in the 2022 civic polls. "People want a change this time as the BJP-ruled municipal corporations have completely failed in fulfilling their responsibility," said senior AAP leader Gopal Rai during a press conference. The Delhi BJP hit back, saying AAP is free to make claims but people have seen how the Kejriwal government failed them during the pandemic and the Centre came to their aid. **PTI**

Couple found dead at home

New Delhi: A 40-year-old man and his wife were found dead inside their home in New Ashok Nagar Saturday. Police suspect the man allegedly killed his wife and later committed suicide. **ENS**

Threatened to stop namaz in Gurgaon, says maulvi, 2 booked

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
GURGAON, OCTOBER 24

TWO MEN were booked for allegedly threatening a maulvi to stop conducting the Friday namaz and forcing him to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' after confronting him in Sector 39 on Friday night. Police said the allegations are yet to be verified. Earlier, on the same day, a group of people had disrupted namaz in Sector 12.

ACP (Sadar) Aman Yadav said, "An FIR has been registered and a probe has been initiated."

Police said the accused were booked under IPC sections 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 253-A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), 34 (common intention), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 506 (criminal intimidation) at Sadar police station Saturday night.

According to police, the incident took place at 11 pm on October 22, when the complainant, who conducts Friday namaz in Sector 40, was going home after running errands.

Police said he alleged that two men, one of whom is a local from the neighbourhood, started following him and confronted him in front of a house in Sector 39.

In the FIR, the complainant claimed, "The accused threatened me and told me to stop conducting the Friday namaz. Both [accused] threatened me with dire consequences if I didn't heed their warning of putting a stop to the Friday namaz. I pleaded with them that we have to live peacefully and we should not spread hate, but they kept abusing and asked me to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'." The complainant said he repeated the chant a few times as "he feared for his life".

Speaking to *The Indian Express* Sunday, the maulvi alleged, "They let me go but kept following me home. They also circled the area around my house on a motorcycle thrice. I, my family, and others in the area are extremely afraid and feel threatened. The entire experience has shaken us up and we don't know when they [accused] can reappear and attack us."

A police officer, privy to the probe, requesting anonymity, said, "The allegations are yet to be verified. One accused has been named in the FIR. He has a prior case of assault registered against him."

Rain, hail lash parts of city, AQI settles at 'moderate'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

PARTS OF Delhi witnessed rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, beginning Sunday evening and continuing into the night. The IMD's Safdarjung observatory recorded 27 mm of rainfall on Sunday. Of this, around 26.4 mm was recorded between 5.30 pm and 8.30 pm.

The Palam observatory recorded 4.9 mm of rain during the evening. Hailstorms may have occurred over parts of Northwest Delhi and Haryana in the evening, according to IMD scientists. Wind speed also picked up Sunday evening, reaching 30 to 50 kmph in parts of the city.

At 8.30 pm on Sunday, the temperature recorded was 19 degrees Celsius. The maximum temperature was 31.5 degree Celsius and the minimum, till 8.30 pm, was 19 degrees Celsius.

A western disturbance persists as a cyclonic circulation over North Pakistan. Another cyclonic circulation, induced by the western disturbance also exists over parts of central Pakistan, and adjoining areas of Punjab and Northwest Rajasthan, according to an update from the IMD in the evening. Western disturbances usually refer to clouds that move in from the Mediterranean region,



The Safdarjung observatory recorded 27 mm of rainfall, Sunday. *Abhinav Saha*

and bring rainfall in winter over the northern parts of the country. IMD officials said, in an update around 9 pm, that light to moderate rainfall with thunderstorms could continue at isolated places in Delhi over the next three hours.

The rest of the week is likely to remain dry, with the maximum temperature hovering at 31 or 32 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature is likely to dip to around 15 degrees Celsius by the end of the week.

The Air Quality Index was in the moderate category Sunday, with the 24-hour average standing at 160, as per the Central

Pollution Control Board bulletin at 4 pm. The SAFAR forecasting system indicated on Sunday that AQI could improve slightly with the rain, but would, once again, degrade to 'moderate.' A change in wind direction from south westerly to north westerly is also predicted, and could cause the AQI to dip, the SAFAR forecast said. The contribution of stubble burning to PM 2.5 levels on Sunday was 2%.

This year, October has already recorded 7 days of rainfall – the highest number of rainy days for the month since at least 2011. The rainfall last week had already ensured that October this year is the wettest since 1956.

Man held for raping minor has history of sexual assault: Police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

SEVEN MONTHS after he was held for allegedly molesting a minor girl and later released on bail, police have arrested a 20-year-old man from Haryana's Kalanaur for allegedly abducting and raping a seven-year-old girl.

DCP (Central district) Shweta Chauhan said, "The accused has been identified as Suraj Shah. He was arrested by the operations teams of central district from Kalanaur in Rohtak. He was earlier arrested on charges of molestation."

A police officer added, "He was arrested in March for allegedly molesting a minor and sent to Tihar. He was released on bail four months ago during the pandemic. He came to Delhi on October 22 for a court hearing, but found it had been postponed. He was in the Central range when he found the girl and allegedly raped her."

Police said the incident took place Friday when the girl was playing outside her home and was approached by the accused, who offered to buy her sweets. "We found CCTV footage from nearby which showed him walking next the child and talking to her. He took the girl to an

isolated place where he allegedly raped her. He threatened her to not tell anyone and dropped her near her home. The girl told her mother, who told her husband," a senior officer said.

Police said footage also shows he had first followed two more children from the same locality, but they went home.

After scanning over 100 CCTVs, police found footage of the accused and started door-to-door verification. "In one footage, he was seen near a Metro station. We suspected he was a resident of West district and checked criminal dossiers of all accused in the area who were arrested for sexually harassing minor girls. Police found the accused resembled someone who was arrested earlier from the district. A team was sent to the local police station and they scanned his case file. They traced his relative, who gave vital clues about him," the officer said.

Chauhan said, "It was a blind case – the accused and victim were not related, he was not a resident of the area, there was no phone number, vehicle, or ID to identify him. We scanned hundreds of CCTVs and got his photo in 36 hours. When he realised personnel from central district were onto him, he tried to escape. We detained him from Kalanaur."



Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals
Government of India

10th AGROCHEMICALS CONFERENCE 2021

Organized on Thursday, 23 September 2021 |
1000 – 1730 Hrs IST, Hotel Le Meridien, Janpath, New Delhi



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THEME: INDIA@75: EXPEDITING THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF AGROCHEMICALS INDUSTRY FOR SELF-RELIANT INDIA



Shri Narendra Singh Tomar
Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture
& Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India

India ranks 2nd in farm outputs and 7th largest agricultural exporter worldwide and continuous effort should be made in increasing the agriculture export for the benefit of Indian farmers. He also appreciated FICCI for its continuous support towards the development of the country.



Shri Kailash Choudhary
Hon'ble Minister of State for
Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare,
Govt. of India

Ministry is providing soil health card for every farmers for better nutrient management. He suggested that farmers should do the seed treatment for better plant health. He also mentioned that Government has launched 10,000 FPOs to form direct link with farmers and is working for value chain development for the sector. He also communicated that Government will take strict action against spurious/fake/counterfeit pesticide manufacturers.



Shri Bhagwanth Khuba
Hon'ble Minister of State for
Chemicals and Fertilizers and
New and Renewable Energy,
Govt. of India

It is our responsibility to focus on judicious use of agrochemicals and reducing residue level. Research and development in the agrochemical sector should be strengthened and it is the need of the hour.



Prof. Ramesh Chand
Member, NITI Aayog
Govt. of India

Agrochemical and biochemical plays an important role to increase production efficiency. We need to focus on 'waste to wealth' from 'waste to burning'.



Mr. Simon Wiebusch
Chief Operating Officer,
Crop Science Division of Bayer for India,
Bangladesh & Sri Lanka, Senior Bayer
Representative, South Asia

80% of India's farmers are smallholders, farming on less than two hectares of land. Helping them leverage their full farm potential is critical to safeguarding food security and driving the future of Indian agriculture. To help smallholder farmers lead better lives and have sustained livelihoods, Bayer CropScience Limited has driven several long-term capacity building initiatives, enhancing their yields and incomes sustainably, while advancing and digitalizing agriculture.



Shri Amber Dubey
Joint Secretary, Ministry of
Civil Aviation, Govt. of India

We have to make manual spray a history and focus on drones. The PLI scheme will help the drones sector in India to grow. To make life easier for the common people India is focusing on drone technology in the agriculture sector, he added.



Professor Amitabh Kundu
Research and Information System
for Developing Countries

Sustainable agriculture, ensuring decent income to the farming community, necessitates the cropping pattern to be linked to national and global market, supported by frontier technology and a segment of workers shifted to modern agro-value chain linked industries. This would mitigate outmigration from the backward regions as many would get absorbed within the expanded agrarian system.



Mr. Parikshit Mundhra
MD, Willowood Chemicals Pvt Ltd.

The focus of Government of India on research and innovation and its emphasis on Make in India and Vocal for Local can help in providing novel inputs to farmers to enhance agriculture productivity along with doubling of farmer's income.



Mr. Ravi Annavarapu
President, FMC India

Leaders in crop protection industry need to address three areas a) Growing concerns around crops lost to pests b) Consumer concerns around safer food chains and c) Increasing the sustainability profile of agricultural inputs. FMC, a leader in agricultural science, through its research driven portfolio of innovative chemistries, biological solutions and precision agriculture tools is committed to supporting growers around the world in addressing their most difficult challenges sustainably. This will enable us all to grow well together!



Dr. S. P. Mohanty
CMD, HIL (India) Limited

India is the 2nd largest agricultural producer in the world in variety & volume. The country, in last few years, has registered good growth in food grain production & horticulture & it is currently in food surplus situation. However, low productivity per hectare, lack of awareness for proper agrochemical use, high monsoon dependency, unpredictable weather patterns & high post-harvest losses are key challenges faced by agriculture. In order to achieve the ambitious goal of doubling the farmers' income by 2022, it is necessary to address above challenges along with ensuring availability of quality Agri-inputs like agrochemical, seeds & fertilizers at reasonable pricing to the farming community of the country. Agrochemicals are one of the key inputs required for crop protection & better yield during both pre & post-harvest stages.



Launching Knowledge Book by Shri R G Agarwal (Left), Prof. Ramesh Chand (Centre) and Shri Bhagwanth Khuba (Right)



Shri R G Agarwal,
Addressing Physically



Shri Narendra Singh Tomar,
Addressing Virtually



Shri Kailash Choudhary,
Addressing Virtually



Shri R G Agarwal Presenting Green Certificate to Prof. Ramesh Chand



Shri R G Agarwal Presenting Green Certificate to Shri Bhagwanth Khuba



Mr. M K Dhanuka
Managing Director, Dhanuka Agritech Limited

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is an initiative of the Govt. of India to celebrate the 75 years of independence of progressive India & the glorious history of its people, culture & achievements. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji said that "During Covid-19, we have seen the strength & commitment of our scientists, & the time has come to bring forth the ideas & suggestions of our scientists to transform the agriculture sector."



Shri Uday Shankar
President FICCI

Agriculture sector plays a significant role in the strong and steady expansion of the economies. The structure of agriculture has undergone substantial transformation over the last 100 years and become more science-based. Agrochemicals has a critical role in increasing agricultural production. Through preventing crop losses and improving yields, Agrochemicals could act as a catalyst towards realizing the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. Therefore, the judicious and scientific usage of agrochemical solutions within the confines of a regulatory framework is the need of the hour.

We are pleased to see that the Government of India has undertaken various key initiatives in terms of foreign direct investment, trade & connectivity of

agro-based supply chains and recognized the Agrochemicals Sector as a 'Champion Sector'. These policy initiatives will surely benefit the farmers and the entire agriculture sector of the Country. Congratulations on a very successful conference.



Shri R G Agarwal
Chairman, FICCI Committee on
Crop Protection and
Chairman, Dhanuka Group

Agrochemicals industry has always been an integral part of mainstream farming which not only facilitates the sustainable development, but also plays an important role with its noticeable share in a healthy economy.

Food, nutrition, health, wealth and environment security are the main pillars of a developing nation. India, one of the fastest emerging country has a huge potential as 58% of its total population is directly or indirectly involved in agriculture and allied industry sectors.

India is a net forex earner from this sector.

Agrochemical industry acts as a backbone to our farmers and assures them a high yield with better quality with an insurance of mitigating crop losses. Judicious usage of crop protection chemicals provides them an extra edge in the competitive world, and this also leads to economic benefits to our farmers.

With emphasis on agriculture, we request the leadership to make such policies which benefits small & marginal farmers, reduce GST on crop protection chemicals from 18% to 5% and reforms in laws which will help to attract more foreign investment in agrochemical sector.

We appreciate the Government's policies of 'Ease of Doing Business' and 'Less Government, More Governance'. FICCI organized the 10th Agrochemicals Conference with the support of the Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Govt. of India and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Govt. of India with the theme "India@75: Expediting the Sustainable Growth of Agrochemicals Industry for Self-Reliant India". I am sure that the rich deliberations in this Conference will be very useful for the overall industry and the policy environment.



Dr. C.D. Mayee
Formerly, Agriculture
Commissioner, Govt. of
India & Chairman,
Agricultural Scientists
Recruitment Board

India is the fourth largest producer of agrochemicals globally, after United States, Japan and China. The use of pesticides in agriculture is practiced worldwide as the common method of controlling pests. It is difficult to completely imagine the level and security of today's yields without the use of pesticides. Pesticides are mainly used for plant protection and improving crop yields. Every year, nearly 30% of the

potential of food production are lost due to insects, pests, plant pathogens & weeds.

Consumption of agrochemicals in India is still one of the lowest in the world. Currently per hectare usage of agrochemical formulations in India is only 0.34 kg/ha against China (13.07 kg/ha), Japan (11.84 kg/ha), Brazil (5.94 kg/ha) as per FAOSTAT 2018.

Out of a total 1175 number of pesticides registered world over, China has 950+, USA has 1057+, Pakistan and Vietnam have 450+, whereas, India has only 294 molecules registered since independence. The slow pace of registration has always been blamed on the lax process of registration and inordinate delay in decision making.

Regulatory Framework: Stringency in regulating the use of pesticides across the Nation is increasing the cost of developing



Dr. Ravi Prakash
Plant Protection Advisor.

Agrochemicals are very important for maintaining & improving the food security and sustainable development in agriculture of the country. It contributes to enhance the wealth security of our small and marginal farmers. We from the regulatory side of the Government are ensuring that full support is given to this industry to realize its true potential not only for domestic Indian market to serve the farming community but also to develop this sector as a Champion sector as an export hub.



Dr. A K Dikshit
Former Emeritus Scientist/
Professor Former Head and Professor,
Division of Agricultural Chemicals,
IARI, New Delhi Ex-President and
Gen. Secretary, Society of Pesticide
Science, India

Pesticides Management Bill 2020: Expectations of the Stakeholders By Dr. A K Dikshit

Pesticides in India are governed under the Insecticides Act 1968, & Rules 71 to address the challenges of a food deficient India that has outlived its utility with India becoming self-reliant in food & having aspirations to address local & global markets with its agricultural produce. The Insecticides Act didn't address the challenges presented by the present & future agriculture. To address this, Govt. of India formulated the Pesticides Management Bill 2008, which was further refined & presented before Rajya Sabha as Pesticides Management Bill 2020 in March 2020 as a reform measure.

Below major refinements in PMB 2020 are a must for a Value-added Agriculture:

1. Encourage New Molecule introduction in India to broad base the narrow product options available to farmers:

India doesn't invest significantly in R&D to discover newer molecules, and it takes an investment of US\$ 300 Million over a period of 10 to 11 years to bring one molecule to the market (as per CropLife International Data), so Indian farmers must be supported with newer technologies with imports to minimise their risk. Data submitted to register a should be provided

exclusivity (for the data new product with CIB&RC) for minimum 5 years from the date of registration in respect of confidential data submitted for registration by innovator or first-time registrant in the Country. It'll facilitate innovators to introduce newer technologies & create newer, better choices for farmers.

2. Enhance Ease of Doing Business:

i. Decriminalize the various violations identified in the PMB 2020 in line with the national priority to support growth of the industry without compromising the accountability for the industry.

ii. Address misuse of powers by Pesticide Inspectors: implement certain recommendations of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2008) to enforce accountability.

iii. Address the Quality Control effectively: Mandate requisite quality infrastructure across the Country & none of the Govt. Laboratory should be allowed to test any statutory sample of pesticide in line with FSSAI Act, where no laboratory is allowed to test without NABL accreditation.

iv. Grant of registrations/ licenses should be made contingent on verifiable capacity and infrastructure to manufacture.

Above suggestions/ measures would not only promote the flagship policies of the Govt. of India, viz. 'Make in India', 'Ease of Doing Business' & 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance', but would also aid the Govt's objective of making India a US\$ 5 Trillion economy & bolstering food security & help in making India a major exporter, not only pesticides but also for food products.



Mr. Parikshit Jhaver
Director, Tagros Chemicals

Agrochemical manufacturing in India is at its cusp. With the right governmental policies, this industry can become a large foreign exchange earner for the country. At this point the industry is plagued with a huge shortage of containers. India doesn't have a shipping line of its own to speak about, which is adding to the woes of the exports. We are hoping for a timely intervention from the government – both short term & long term strategies to tide over this crisis."



Mr. Peter Ford
President Asia Pacific, Corteva Agriscience

India holds a prominent position in the world as it ranks 4th globally with the world's largest arable land. He mentioned that Corteva focuses on sustainable commitment and sustainable footprint in Indian agriculture.



Mr. Bhavesh Shah
Joint Managing Director,
GSP Crop Science Pvt Ltd.

Erratic raw material supplies out of China triggers the very need of expediting the sustainable growth of Agrochemicals Industry for Self-Reliant India."



2nd Edition
SUMMIT ON GLOBAL CHEMICALS AND PETROCHEMICALS MANUFACTURING HUBS IN INDIA
25TH - 26TH NOVEMBER 2021 | HOTEL LE MERIDIEN, NEW DELHI | PHYGITAL (PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL)

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* "THE PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION DOES NOT PURPORT TO BE THE POLITICAL MAP OF INDIA."

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KRISHA Kisan Resource & Information Society of India

MOL MEGHANI ORGANIC LIMITED

6 GOVT & POLITICS



GOA FOCUS

AHEAD OF West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee's visit to Goa, her party will release a "chargesheet" against the "misrule" of past governments in the state. Before the Tamil Nadu state elections, the DMK had launched a similar "chargesheet" against the AIADMK. Like in the DMK's case, I-PAC is also managing the TMC campaign. Apart from its Lok Sabha MPs, Saugata Roy and Mahua Moitra, former Union minister Babul Supriyo, who recently joined the TMC, will attend the release event at Panaji's Azad Maidan on Monday.

THE LEAK

AT THE meeting of the Congress Working Committee last week, all the members were asked to leave their mobile phones outside the meeting room. They were asked to do so because in the past details of the discussion were reported real time by the media. But even after asking the members not to carry their phones inside, the schedule of the organisational elections leaked out even before the meeting got over. Even the communication department of the party got to know about the schedule much later. Leaders are now wondering how did it happen.

QUESTION OF HEALTH

KUNWAR DANISH Ali, BSP MP from Amroha, who had earlier written a letter to the Prime Minister demanding restoration of MPLAD scheme for MPs to take care of people's healthcare needs during the Covid-19 pandemic, on Sunday took a jibe at the government over the 100-crore vaccination achievement. Talking to Twitter, he said the PM may try to take electoral advantage of the 100-crore vaccination milestone, but the ground reality is different. He cited an example of non-availability of medicines at the district hospital in his constituency. Insulin injection is not available in Amroha district hospital since past one year, he said, tagging a picture of a letter written by the district health officials to the UP government.

10 addl judges of Punjab and Haryana HC made permanent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

TEN ADDITIONAL judges of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, including three women, were on Sunday elevated to permanent judges, the law ministry said.

The Department of Justice in the ministry issued a list of additional judges elevated as judges. Normally, additional judges are appointed for a period of two years before being made judges.

According to October 1, 2021, figures available on the law ministry website, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has a sanctioned strength of 85 judges, but is functioning with 45 judges.

The 10 additional judges

whose names have been notified are Justices Suvir Sehgal, Alka Sarin, Jasgurpreet Singh Puri, Ashok Kumar Verma, Sant Parkash, Meenakshi I Mehta, Karamjit Singh, Vivek Puri, Archana Puri and Rajesh Bhardwaj.

The Supreme Court collegium, in its meeting held on October 7, had approved the proposal for the appointment of the additional judges.

Chief Justice NV Ramana, has repeatedly spoken about the significance of filling up judicial vacancies to address the issue of pendency of cases. According to the Department of Justice, a total of 420 vacancies in High Courts existed on May 1, 2021. As of October 1, there are 471 vacancies in the HCs.

Capt aide asks PM to scrap farm laws

Chandigarh: As former Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh prepares to float a new outfit, his closest aide and former Cabinet minister Rana Gurmit Singh Sodhi Sunday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to withdraw the farm laws.

Sodhi, in a statement, also requested the PM to re-initiate talks with farmers and withdraw the bills so that farmers can return to their homes before the onset of the harsh winter.

Sources said Amarinder may formally launch his party on Wednesday. Patiala MP Preet Kaur, who is also his wife, may also resign from Congress to join his party.

Amarinder's aides, it is learnt, have been calling up several leaders inviting them to join his party. Those who fear they may be ignored by Congress during distribution of tickets, may also look towards Amarinder's party eventually. **ENS**

Manipur journalist assaulted by 'Congress workers'

Imphal: A correspondent of a local newspaper was injured in an assault by a group of people alleged to be Heirok block Congress workers on Sunday in Manipur's Thoubal district.

As per the complaint filed by the victim's brother, around 20 masked men assaulted Elangbam Rameshwar, who is now in a hospital. The brother named 13 people and the police registered an FIR against them.

The Kakching District (formerly part of Thoubal district) Journalists Association condemned the incident on Sunday and alleged that local Congress workers were behind the attack.

The district Congress was not available for comment. **ENS**

Need probe into all deals under Malik's tenure as J&K Governor: Ram Madhav

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAJKOT, OCTOBER 24

RSS LEADER Ram Madhav on Sunday called for an investigation into files cleared and "deals" made during the tenure of Satya Pal Malik as Governor of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Madhav's remarks come in the backdrop of Malik's allegations on October 17 of being offered a bribe to clear files belonging to "Ambani" and a senior "RSS functionary" during his tenure — August 2018-October 2019. Malik is currently serving as the Governor of Meghalaya.

Afghanistan, climate change in PM's agenda for G20, COP26 meets

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi is likely to pitch for a united global approach in dealing with the situation in Afghanistan and combating challenges of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic at the two-day G20 Summit in Italy beginning October 30, it is learnt.

PM Modi is scheduled to visit Rome and Glasgow from October 29 to November 2 to attend the 16th edition of the G20 Summit as well as the World Leaders' Summit of the COP26 respectively, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement Sunday.

According to the statement, the Prime Minister will be participating in the G20 Summit in Rome from October 30-31 at the invitation of Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi. Italy has been holding the presidency of the G20 since December 2020.

The G20 is a global forum whose members account for more than 80 per cent of the global GDP, 75 per cent of global trade and 60 per cent population. The forum has met every year since 1999 and includes, since 2008, a yearly summit, with the participation of the re-



PM to visit Rome and Glasgow from Oct 29 to Nov 2

spective heads of state and government.

This year, G20 leaders are expected to deliberate on a number of key challenges such as recovering from the coronavirus pandemic, addressing climate change and overcoming poverty and inequality in various parts of the world.

The situation in Afghanistan is expected to figure prominently at the summit, according to sources.

Prime Minister Modi is also set to hold several bilateral meetings, including with Draghi.

From Rome, the PM will travel to Glasgow to attend the World Leader's summit of the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the MEA said. Prime Minister Modi will be attending the climate summit at the invitation of his British counterpart Boris Johnson. COP-26 is scheduled to be held from October 31 to November 12 under UK's presidency of the UK.

According to the MEA statement, the World Leaders' Summit will be held on November 1-2 and will be attended by heads of state and government of more than 120 countries.

"The UNFCCC embodies the global will and vision to combat climate change. The periodic Conference of Parties to this Convention have emerged as global climate summits, providing an opportunity for stocktaking and for charting the way forward," the External Affairs Ministry said.

The prime minister last attended COP21 in Paris in 2015, when the Paris Agreement was concluded, -- the implementation of which, commences this year.

"At COP26, parties will work to achieve the completion of Paris Agreement implementation guidelines; the mobilisation of climate finance; actions to strengthen climate adaptation, technology development and transfer; and keeping in reach the Paris Agreement goals of limiting the rise in global temperatures," the MEA statement said.

According to the statement, PM Modi will also hold numerous bilateral meetings on the sidelines.

BIHAR ASSEMBLY BYPOLLS

Opp rift widens as Lalu mocks Cong candidates

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

AHEAD OF the bypolls to two Assembly seats in Bihar, the rift in the Opposition widened Sunday, with RJD chief Lalu Prasad claiming that the Congress candidates would lose their deposit in the elections.

The Kusheshwar Asthan and Tarapur seats are scheduled to go to bypolls on October 30. The seats fell vacant after the death of the sitting MLAs — both from the JD(U).

The RJD and the Congress had fought the 2020 Bihar polls as part of an alliance, and as part of the seat-sharing agreement, the Congress had contested from Kusheshwar Asthan — a seat it lost by 7,200 votes.

However, this time around, the RJD has refused to allow the Congress to contest either bypoll, straining relations between both parties.

On Sunday, Lalu told reporters, "Why should we give the seat to Congress? So that they would lose? So they would lose their deposit?" The RJD chief was responding to a question on a statement by Congress Bihar in-charge Bhakta Charan Das, who had earlier said that the alliance between the two parties would have remained intact had the RJD spared one seat for the Congress.

Earlier in the week, RJD's Manoj Jha had said that Das was "lecturing from his drawing room", drawing a sharp response from newly-inducted



Rashtriya Janata Dal supremo Lalu Prasad is welcomed by supporters on his arrival at Jai Prakash Narayan airport in Patna on Sunday. PTI

Congress leader Kanhaiya Kumar on Friday.

"Had people like him (Das) not been in the party, Jignesh (Mevani) and I could not have gathered the courage to join Congress. Do ask your masters in the drawing room who Bhakta Charan Das is," Kanhaiya had said.

After meeting Congress leader R P Singh on Saturday, Jan Adhikar Party chief Pappu Yadav too had hit out at Lalu, terming the RJD "BJP's B-team".

However, Lalu on Sunday scoffed at the suggestions that the RJD is colluding with the BJP. He also revealed that he plans to spend a month in Patna, and downplayed reports of disagreements between his sons Tejashwi Yadav and Tej Pratap Yadav, saying, "There is no anger. Both are my sons."

EXPLAINED United front remains a challenge

The RJD-Congress spat in Bihar is a reminder that a united front against the BJP remains a challenge because of regional politics. It also signals a churn in Bihar politics amid the induction of leaders like Kanhaiya Kumar in the Congress. Significantly, the spat comes at a time when parties like the TMC and AAP are trying to expand their footprint in states like Goa, where the Congress has traditionally been the BJP's rival.

PM to launch key healthcare scheme from Varanasi today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 24

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will visit on Monday Uttar Pradesh's Siddharthnagar district and his parliamentary constituency Varanasi, where he will launch the Pradhan Mantri Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana (PMASBY) along with other development projects worth Rs 52,00 crore.

The PM's visit to Uttar Pradesh — which will also involve public meetings in both the districts -- comes just months ahead of Assembly elections in the politically crucial state. UP goes to the polls early next year.

Leaders of the ruling party have stepped up preparations, with state BJP leaders meeting the central leadership in Delhi to discuss a roadmap earlier this month. Analysts say the BJP's popularity in some areas of the state may have been dented due to the ongoing farmers' agitation against the three controversial agricultural laws.

A press release said the PM will inaugurate projects in Siddharthnagar around 10:30am and reach Varanasi by 1:45pm.

From there, he will launch PMASBY — a pan-India scheme aimed at strengthening health care infrastructure across rural and urban areas of the country.

Under the initiative, critical care services will be made available in all districts that have a population of over 5 lakh. It also envisions the setting up of integrated public health laboratories in all districts of the country, along with providing support for 17,788 rural health centres in 10 states.

Findings led to deeper analysis, says Facebook

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE USER account created by a Facebook researcher in Kerala two years ago that encountered several instances of hate speech and misinformation on the basis of algorithmic recommendations led the company to undertake a "deeper, more rigorous analysis" of its recommendation systems in India, the social media platform said.

Facebook was responding to queries from *The Indian Express* on *The New York Times* report about the effects of the social media platform in India, especially in the run-up to the 2019 general elections.

"This exploratory effort of one hypothetical test account inspired deeper, more rigorous analysis of our recommendation systems, and contributed to product changes to improve them. Product changes from subsequent, more rigorous research included things like the removal of borderline content and civic and political Groups from our recommendation systems," a Facebook spokesperson said.

"Separately, our work on curbing hate speech continues and we have further strengthened our hate classifiers, to include 4 Indian languages," the spokesperson said.

The New York Times reported that the researcher's report was one of dozens of studies and memos written by Facebook employees grappling with the effects of the platform on India.

"The internal documents, ob-

tained by a consortium of news organisations that included The New York Times, are part of a larger cache of material called The Facebook Papers. They were collected by Frances Haugen, a former Facebook product manager who became a whistleblower and recently testified before a Senate subcommittee about the company and its social media platforms," it said.

"References to India were scattered among documents filed by Haugen to the Securities and Exchange Commission in a complaint earlier this month," it said.

Facebook's changes build on restrictions the company claims to have made to recommendations, like removing health groups from these surfaces, as well as groups that repeatedly share misinformation.

Specifically for groups sharing misinformation, the company has started ranking all content from such groups lower in the News Feed and limiting notifications with an aim that fewer members see their posts.

The platform also said it witnessed "new types of abuse on Facebook" in the context of Covid, and updated its policies to reflect the changes.

For example, the company said, it now removes content that states that people who share a protected characteristic such as race or religion have the virus, created the virus or are spreading the virus. As part of enforcing this policy, the company claims to have blocked several hashtags that were primarily being used to target the Muslim community in the context of Covid.

Goa: TMC reaches out to GFP chief as BJP ex-ally weighs options

MAYURA JANWALKAR
PANAJI, OCTOBER 24

AMID POLITICAL poaching in Goa and talks of a pre-poll alliance, the TMC has been keen on getting Goa Forward Party (GFP) president Vijai Sardesai on board in time for the Assembly polls scheduled for early next year, it is learnt.

The TMC announced its arrival in Goa in September, when former chief minister and Congress veteran Luizinho Faleiro joined the party. In the following weeks, Independent legislator Prasad Gaonkar pledged support to the TMC, and several workers of the Congress, Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party and Shiv Sena as well as members of civil society joined the party.

It is learnt that the TMC is now looking to capitalise on the flutter it has created by getting Sardesai on board.

Sardesai, formerly with the Congress, is an estranged ally of the BJP. His party has three MLAs in the 40-member Assembly.

In July, Sardesai had said that the Congress had agreed to an "in-principle" alliance with the GFP, but has since been kept hanging. Earlier this month, he referred to that, saying, "If the principal opposition does not want to do it (bring opposition



Goa Forward Party president Vijai Sardesai

parties together), we will take the lead..." In an indication that the GFP may be looking towards the TMC for a possible alliance, Sardesai had said, "Women's participation can really take the state and the country forward. This is seen in Kolkata. But for this, we need street-fighters."

Sardesai recently had a meeting with political strategist Prashant Kishor, and sources said he may be offered the position of TMC's Goa president and possibly even be the chief ministerial candidate.

TMC chief Mamata Banerjee is expected to arrive in Goa on October 28. Sardesai, sources said, is still deliberating over the possibilities and is likely to take a decision in the coming week. So far, no meeting has been planned between him and Banerjee.

The decision, however, may not be an easy one for Sardesai. Sources said the GFP cadre is not comfortable with the idea of the party's "merger" with the TMC and have voiced concern over it feeling like an "acquisition" of the party, which may not sit well with their voters.

MP: Blow to Cong as another MLA joins BJP ahead of bypolls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, OCTOBER 24

AHEAD OF the October 30 bypolls to Khandwa Lok Sabha seat and three Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh, a Congress MLA joined the BJP on Sunday.

Sachin Birla, the MLA from Barwaha, which is part of the Khandwa Lok Sabha constituency, joined the BJP at an event in Bendiya in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Birla is the 27th Congress MLA to have joined the BJP since March last year, when 22 Congress MLAs

had defected to the BJP, leading to the collapse of the 15-month-long Kamal Nath-led Congress government. Four other Congress MLAs joined the BJP later.

Addressing the gathering, Chouhan welcomed Birla into BJP fold and said, "Congress party which is responsible for ruining the country as well as the state is on the way to destruction." He accused former chief minister Kamal Nath for stopping all public welfare schemes in the 15 months of his rule in the state.

Addressing the rally, Birla, who has a following among Gujjar voters, said, "I was feeling suffocated within the Congress so I switched over to the BJP."

Hitting back at the BJP, Kamal Nath said, "The BJP... returned to power after buying MLAs as people of MP had voted them out. And sensing the outcome of the upcoming by polls in three assemblies and one Parliamentary seat, the BJP is again poaching MLAs to remain in power."

Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said: "Jo bikau maal hai woh bikega, jo tikau maal hai woh tikega (saleable goods will be sold while durable goods will last)."

The development comes weeks after former Congress MLA Sulochana Rawat joined the BJP along with her son Vishal Rawat.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I Alpha W/O. Abhimanyu Tuteja R/o WZ-1968/2,Rani Bagh,Delhi-110034. have changed my name to Alpna Tuteja for all purposes 0040589050-1

I Anil Kumar Nagar S/o Late Nafe Singh R/o B-5/3B Dhawalgiri Aptt Sector 34 Noida 201301 have changed my name to Anil Kumar for all purpose 0050185731-1

I,Zameel Ahmad,S/o Rafi Ahmad R/o,H-250,Gali.no-3, Shaheed-Nagar, Chikamberpur, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201006, have changed my name to Jamil Ahmad,for all future purposes. 0040589069-5

I,Nasheem W/o-Jamil Ahmed,R/o,H-250, Gali.no-3, Shaheed-Nagar, Chikamberpur, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201006, have changed my name to Umme Hani,for all future purposes. 0040589069-6

I, Mr. Patil Pandit Tuharam No. 2782161 L, Rank -Ex. HAV, A/P- Titave, Tal-Radhanagari, Dist-Kolhapur. have change my son name from 'Prashant' in service document to Patil Prashant Pandit as his education certificate 8975766339. 0040589036-1

I Ashutosh Kumar Gupta R/O Flat No. 313 Nirman Apartment Mayur Vihar Phase-1 Extn. ND-91 have changed my minor daughter's name from Anvi Gupta to Anvi Kashyap for all purposes. 0050185732-1

I Rajender Singh S/O, Bahar Singh R/O L-74-B Malviya Nagar New Delhi-10017 have changed my name to Rajinder Singh 0040589039-1

I Ragbubhubir Kaur W/O, Hazoor Singh R/o 357/7, Bagh Kare Khan, Kishan Ganj, Delhi-110007 have changed my name to Raghuveer Kaur for all purposes. 0040589045-1

I No 15413199L Hav NA Birju Mahto, have changed my wife's name from Lalitha Mahto to Lalita Mahto for all purpose. 0050185607-1

I Hajur Singh S/O, Gurdial Singh R/o 357/7, Bagh Kare Khan Kishan Ganj, Delhi-110007 have changed my name to Hazoor Singh for all purposes. 0040589046-1

I Gurinder S/O, Surinder Pal Singh R/o 2654, Gf, Sector-46, Gurugram, Haryana have changed my name to Gurinder Singh for all purposes. 0040589043-1

I Ashutosh Kumar Gupta R/O Flat No. 313 Nirman Apartment Mayur Vihar Phase-1 Extn. ND-91 have changed my minor daughter's name from Niyati Gupta to Niyati Kashyap for all purposes. 0050185733-1

I Renu Khurana W/O, Rakesh R/o B-1417, Block-B, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110052 have changed my name to Renu for all purposes. 0040589051-1

This is to inform general public that I, Sh Anil Kumar Gupta S/o Late Sh I.M.Gupta and Urmila Gupta W/o of Sh Anil Kumar Gupta, am owner of the property No. IA-10C, DDA Flat measuring area 88 Sqmts, situated at Ashok Vihar Delhi-110052 purchased from Usha Sahni W/o of Sh J.N Sahni on 16.02.2015. I have lost the original Property document, Demand letter, Allotment letter, Possession letter & NOC for electricity and water meter issued by DDA while coming from ITO, Vikas Minar, DDA office on 16.10.2021 around 11:30 Hrs. If anyone finds these documents, kindly return the same at below address: Anil Kumar Gupta S/o Late Sh I.M. Gupta, R/o M-122 Gali No-8, Shastri Nagar Delhi 110052, Mobile No: 8283835049

LOST & FOUND

I Manish Sagar lost my marksheet & pass certificate of Class Xth(Passing Year 2016, IndexNumber 1162565/078) and of XIth(2018 IndexNumber 2187434/028) from Modern Public School Farrukhabad. If Found Please contact 8851359965. 0050185765-1

LOST & FOUND
This is to inform general public that I, Sh Anil Kumar Gupta S/o Late Sh I.M.Gupta and Urmila Gupta W/o of Sh Anil Kumar Gupta, am owner of the property No. IA-10C,DDA Flat measuring area 88 Sqmts, situated at Ashok Vihar Delhi-110052 purchased from Usha Sahni W/o of Sh J.N Sahni on 16.02.2015. I have lost the original Property document, Demand letter, Allotment letter, Possession letter & NOC for electricity and water meter issued by DDA while coming from ITO, Vikas Minar, DDA office on 16.10.2021 around 11:30 Hrs. If anyone finds those documents, kindly return the same at below address: Anil Kumar Gupta S/o Late Sh I.M. Gupta, R/o M-122 Gali No-8, Shastri Nagar, Delhi - 110052. Mobile No:8283835049

PROPERTY FOR SALE

Builder Floors DLF, Sushant Lok,Anantraj,Ansai Essencia, Suncity,Sectors Gurgaon 981141172 VOHRA ESTATE RERA REGISTERED.

0050185482-2

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known that my client Sh. Sarv Parkash Mehra s/o Late Sh. Karam Chand Mehra R/o BB-1, Greater Kailash Enclave-II, intends to get registered the will dated 26.10.11 of Late Sh. O. P. Mehra S/o Late Sh. Karam Chand Mehra who expired on 09.01.2012 at his residence BB-1, Greater Kailash Enclave - II, Sh. O. P. Mehra made his will dated 26.10.11 in perfect state of mind with unimpaired faculties. Sh. O. P. Mehra was not suffering from any mental infirmity and was possessing sound disposing state of mind and he executed his said will dated 26.10.11 in favour of my client Sh. Sarv Parkash Mehra without any pressure, coercion, force or fraud from any corner, whereby he bequeathed his moveable and immovable properties over my client.
Any person having any objection to the registration of said will of said Late Sh. O. P. Mehra, may put forth his objection to the undersigned with in 7 days from publication of this notice and thereafter no objection shall be entertained.
SHEETESH KHANNA - ADVOCATE
1-1, LGF, Lajpat Nagar-II, Delhi

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

Martyr on CISF 25th October



S/EXE S. K. SAMAL
CISF UNIT, BIOM BACHELI
25-10-2009

CT/GD RAHUL GAHLAUT
CISF UNIT, BIOM BACHELI
25-10-2009

HC/GD SATYAPAL SINGH
CISF UNIT, BIOM BACHELI
25-10-2009

CT/DVR VIRENDER
CISF UNIT, BIOM BACHELI
25-10-2009,

CISF proudly remembers the supreme sacrifice of these brave-hearts. On 25-10-2009, they laid down their lives at the altar of duty while fighting with the LWE outfits. Their courage and bravery would remain an abiding source of inspiration for the force. The force will remain eternally indebted to them for their noble deed.

23 ASSAM RIFLES, 25TH OCTOBER 2021



The Tagra Teyees family proudly remembers the above Martyrs who in the true traditions of the Assam Rifles made supreme sacrifice while bravely combating terrorist in Rolling Top, Tirap District (Arunachal Pradesh) on 25 Oct 2007. May the Almighty grant eternal peace to their soul. Their gallant action will continue to inspire us all.

DEEPLY REMEMBERED BY
COMMANDANT & ALL RANKS
23 ASSAM RIFLES 'TAGRA TEYEES'

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
MECHANICAL DIVISION SRINAGAR (MED).
Fax No: 0194-2497053 | email: xenmds@gmail.com | website: www.medkashmir.org |
Date Extension Notice-I
Subject: Fabrication/customisation of “TATA” make LPT 712 Trucks as Mobile Veterinary Clinics (MVCs) for Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir, Srinagar.
Reference: 1. This office eNIT No: MDS/TS/2021-22/ 110 /tendering Dated: 06.10.2021
2. Tender Id: 2021_PWDJK_142923_1
In view of request by the intending bidders, the critical dates of the above referred eNIT are extended as under:

| | Extended Dates |
|---|---------------------------|
| Last date of submission of technical bids | 30.10.2021 upto 18.55 Hrs |
| Date of opening of technical bids online | 01.11.2021 at 14.00 Hrs |

All other terms, conditions and technical specifications of the NIT/corrigendum shall remain same.

Sd/-
(Er. Rajesh Sharma)
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Division, Srinagar

No: MDS /TS/ 6139-42 Dated: 23.10.2021 DIPPK-11219

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
PROCUREMENT CIRCLE, KPDCAL KASHMIR 190018
Web Site: www.pmmddjic.org, Tele/Fax: 0194-2493881, email: epc2ndsrinagar@gmail.com
e-TENDER ABBREVIATED NOTICE
e-NIT No: SE/Proc/16/2021-22
For and on behalf of the Managing Director, KPDCAL Kashmir, Superintending Engineer, Procurement Circle, KPDCAL Kashmir invites online e-bids from Govt. registered original equipment manufacturers for Purchase of Outdoor Type Three Phase oil immersed 11KV/433-250 V/50 Hz, Copper Wound, Distribution Transformer of energy efficiency level-2 as per IS:1180 (Part-1): as detailed below for the requirement of KPDCAL as under:

| S. No | Material Description | FOR ECSD Srinagar (No's) |
|-------|---|--------------------------|
| v | Outdoor Type Three Phase Oil Immersed 11KV/433 V, 50 HZ, 250 Distribution Transformer of Energy Efficiency Level-2 as per IS-1180(Part-1):2014. | |
| 1. | 250 KV/A Copper Wound | 134 |

The complete tender document is available at website <http://ktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidder/tenderers may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below. Bidding Documents contain Qualifying Criteria for Bidders, Specifications, Bill of Quantities, Terms and Conditions of Contract and other details.

| | Date and Time of downloading/Sale (Start) of Tender Document |
|-------|--|
| i) | 16.10.2021; 10:00 Hrs |
| | Date & Time of Download/Sale (End) of Tender Document |
| ii) | 06.11.2021; 14:00 Hrs |
| | Date & Time of Bidding Quenies/Clarifications |
| iii) | 18.10.2021; 10:00 Hrs to 21.10.2021; 16:00 Hrs |
| | Date & Time of Bid Uploading (Start)/End |
| iv) | 16.10.2021; 11:00 Hrs to 06.11.2021; 16:00 Hrs |
| | Submission of Hard Copy (soft) Date & Time |
| v) | 08.11.2021 in the office of Chief Engineer Planning and Procurement, Buzina, Srinagar. |
| | Commercial/Technical Bid Opening Date & Time |
| vi) | 08.11.2021; 14:00 Hrs. |
| | Financial Bid Opening |
| vii) | Shall be declared later on for the technically qualified bidders |
| | Venue of Commercial/ Technical Bid Opening |
| viii) | Soft Copy Electronically |

(a) Cost of e-bid document: Rs.30000 (Rupees Five Hundred only) for local firms of J&K and Rs.30000 (Rupees Five Thousand Only) for firms outside J&K (Non-refundable)
(b) Bid Declaration form (as per SED). The Bid Security shall be 20% (Rs. 60,000/-) dated 22.12.2020, as per D.O No. 09/04/2020/PPD dated 12.11.2020 of Govt of India endorsed by Govt. CHUT of J&K India New A/Mile
Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Procurement (KPDCAL)

E-TENDERING PRESS NOTICE
The Executive Engineer, Civil Division No. V, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi Near Paryavaran Complex, Saidulajab New Delhi 110030 invites on behalf of President of India, on line percentage rate tender from approved and eligible contractors registered with Irrigation and Flood Control Department up to 3:00 P.M on dates mentioned as below.
1. **NIT No. 47/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209794_1)** (Percentage rate) **H.O.A:-** 8443 Deposit under MLALAD Fund **N.O.W:-** Providing and fixing of 200 signage board and refixing of retro reflective sheet of existing signage boards at ward No. 89, 90, 91 in Kalkaji Constituency AC-51. **E.C. Rs. 88,49,453/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 60 Days (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
2. **NIT 48/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209798_1)** (Percentage rate) **H.O.A:-** 8443 Deposit under MLALAD Fund. **N.O.W:-** Providing and fixing 25 Boom barrier at various places in Kalkaji Constituency AC-51 **E.C. Rs. 43,77,707/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 60 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
3. **NIT 49/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209811_1)** (Percentage rate) **H.O.A:-** 8443 Deposit under MLALAD Fund. **N.O.W:-** Providing and fixing of 100 victorian benches at various places in Kalkaji Constituency AC-51. **E.C. Rs. 14,96,620/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 60 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
4. **NIT 50/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209827_1)** (Percentage rate) **H.O.A:-** Part-III. **N.O.W:-** Demolishing and reconstruction of chappal at village Adchini New Delhi AC-43 (Balance Work). **E.C. Rs. 28,44,753/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 90 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
5. **NIT 51/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209813_1)** (Percentage rate) **H.O.A:-** 8443 Deposit under MLALAD Fund. **N.O.W:-** Providing and fixing of 70 victorian benches at various place in public park of Pushp Vihar, Ambekar Nagar Constituency AC-48. **E.C. Rs. 10,07,363/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 90 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
6. **NIT 52/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209796_1)** (Percentage rate) **H.O.A:-** 8443 Deposit under MLALAD Fund. **N.O.W:-** Construction of boundary wall and wire fencing in Sector 1, 3, 5 Pushp Vihar colony. Ambekar Nagar Constituency AC-48. **E.C. Rs. 34,27,196/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 90 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
7. **NIT 53/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209810_1)** (Percentage rate) **H.O.A:-** 4225 (SC/ST). **N.O.W:-** Repair and maintenance of Ravidas Chappal in Greater Kailash Constituency AC-50. **E.C. Rs. 25,92,442/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 120 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
8. **NIT 54/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209811_1)** (Percentage rate) **H.O.A:-** 8443 Deposit under MLALAD Fund. **N.O.W:-** Construction of boundary wall and wire fencing in Sector 4 and 7 Pushp Vihar colony, Ambekar Nagar Constituency AC-48. **E.C. Rs. 54,03,804/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 150 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
9. **NIT 55/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209808_1)** (Percentage rate). **H.O.A:-** 8443 Deposit under MLALAD Fund. **N.O.W:-** Providing and fixing of 60 nos. of security gate at various places in Ambekar Nagar Constituency AC-48. **E.C. Rs. 66,37,663/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 120 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
10. **NIT 57/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209836_1)** (Percentage rate). **H.O.A:-** 4225 (SC/ST). **N.O.W:-** Demolishing and reconstruction of road of Nai Basti and its approach road in Devil Assembly Constituency AC-47. **E.C. Rs. 91,80,375/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 180 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
11. **NIT 58/2021-22/EE/CD-V/Acs/(ID No. 2021_IFC_209837_1)** (Percentage rate). **H.O.A:-** 4515 (DVB/D). **N.O.W:-** Development of water body / pond at village Dera Mandi in Kh. No. 93/2 in Mehrauli Block. **E.C. Rs. 44,95,185/- Earnest Money- Nil. Period of Completion** 120 Days. (Date of opening 28.10.2021).
Note:-
1) The enlistment of the contractors should be valid on the last date of opening of tenders. In case the last date of opening of tender is extended the enlistment of contractor should be valid on the original date of opening of tenders.
2) Details of above mentioned work can be seen and downloaded from website <http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
3) Tender submitted through e-procurement portal shall be accepted only.
4) Corrigendum, if any will be published on e-procurement web site only.
DIP/SHABDARTH/0371/21-22

PM in Mann Ki Baat: Vaccine achievement shows India’s capability

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Sunday lauded India's crossing the 100-crore vaccine doses milestone, and said that the achievement shows that the success of any scheme can be achieved with everyone's effort. Speaking during his Mann Ki Baat radio programme, Modi said, "The success of our vaccine programme displays the capability of India... (and) manifests the might of our collective endeavour... Our health workers, through their tireless efforts and resolve, set a new example... They established a new benchmark in service to humanity through innovation and sheer determination."

The PM interacted with Poonam Nautiyal, an ANM health-care worker from Uttarakhand. He praised Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh for being two of the first states to achieve 100 per cent vaccination of the first dose, despite the difficult terrain. Further, the Prime Minister said October 31 – Sardar Patel's birth anniversary which is observed as National Unity Day –

will be marked by the government with three competitions run by the Culture Ministry for writing patriotic songs, for writing loris (lullabies) and to make rangolis. He said bike rallies in different states have already been taken out to mark the occasion – by the Gujarat Police from Lakhpat Fort in Kutch to the Statue of Unity, by the Tripura Police, and by the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

Recognising that Sunday was United Nations Day, Modi said that not only did India sign the UN Charter in 1945 – prior to independence – but that Indian women have played an important part in UN activities.

"India has always strove for world peace. We are proud of the fact that India has been a part of UN peacekeeping missions continuously since the 1950s. India is also playing a leading role in addressing issues related to poverty alleviation, climate change and workers," he said.

The Prime Minister further spoke of India's new drone policy and said that since the policy was introduced in August, many foreign and domestic investors have started investing in drone start-ups.

Pinarayi urges Stalin to draw water from Mullaperiyar dam as levels rise

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 24

KERALA CHIEF Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wrote to his Tamil Nadu counterpart M K Stalin, urging his government to draw maximum quantities of water from the Mullaperiyar dam as reservoir levels inched closer to the 142-foot mark after heavy rain pounded the area.

Vijayan made the appeal as water levels in the dam, situated on the banks of Periyar river in Kerala's Idukki district but managed by Tamil Nadu, crossed 137.05 feet on Sunday night.

"With the current inflow it is feared that the reservoir level may reach 142 ft once the torrential rain intensifies. Hence, there would arise an urgent need for the gradual release of water from Mullaperiyar dam through the tunnel to Tamil Nadu," Vijayan said in his letter.

Sources at Kerala Hindu Aikyaedi, an umbrella outfit of various Hindu organisations, said the KDS has the backing of the Sangh Parishad.

Namboodiri said, "The sabha would have deliberations on all issues affecting the Hindu community, including issues related

TRACKING THE SECOND SURGE

NEW CASES: 14,159
ACTIVE CASES: 1,68,658
VACCINATIONS: 10,21,043,258

DAILY DEATHS 442 TOTAL DEATHS 4,54,711 WEEKLY CFR 1.77% OVERALL CFR 1.34%



TESTS TODAY: 12,72,335 | TOTAL TESTS: 60,10,43,655
WEEKLY POSITIVITY: 5.69% | OVERALL POSITIVITY: 1.19%

STATES REPORTING MOST CASES

| STATE | NEW CASES | ACTIVE CASES | WEEKLY POSITIVITY | TOTAL VACCINATION |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| ■ Kerala | 8,538 | 77,964 | 10.57% | 3,80,44,907 |
| ■ Maharashtra | 1,410 | 23,894 | 1.29% | 9,51,65,513 |
| ■ Tamil Nadu | 1,127 | 13,034 | 0.91% | 5,62,87,299 |
| ■ West Bengal | 989 | 7,882 | 2.36% | 7,18,03,863 |
| ■ Mizoram | 572 | 8,143 | 11.03% | 12,07,996 |

STATES REPORTING MOST DEATHS

| STATE | TODAY'S DEATHS | TOTAL DEATHS | WEEKLY CFR | OVERALL CFR |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ■ Kerala | 363 | 28,592 | 2.21% | 0.60% |
| ■ Maharashtra | 18 | 1,43,628 | 1.30% | 2.18% |
| ■ Tamil Nadu | 15 | 36,019 | 1.23% | 1.34% |
| ■ Andhra Pradesh | 10 | 19,055 | 1.53% | 1.21% |
| ■ Odisha | 6 | 5,973 | 1.11% | 0.99% |

Note: Data as on Oct 24; vaccination numbers as of Oct 8. Deaths include those from previous days. Kerala added nearly 300 previously uncounted deaths as part of a data cleaning exercise.

Kerala Hindu leaders form body for issues confronting community

EXPLAINED **E** Lessons from the past

THE IDEA of a forum to deliberate on the issues facing the Hindu community in Kerala stems from the lessons of the controversy sparked by the entry of young women at the Sabarimala temple. The KDS wants to have the final word on religious, moral and cultural issues confronting the community and wants to respect and retain heterogeneity, even as it maintains a milieu of unity among Hindus.

to temple rituals, and would have a unified view on them. When issues like the entry of young women at Sabarimala emerges, there should not be different opinions from Hindu acharyas. We have representatives from all leading ashrams and scores of

Uttarakhand disaster toll climbs to 77

Dehradun: The bodies of five out of six trekkers feared dead on Suderhunga trek in Bageshwar district were found on Sunday as the cumulative death toll in rain-related incidents in Uttarakhand rose to 77.

A search is still on for another trekker in the area, SDRF sources here said. Meanwhile, 19 people stranded in Kafni glacier were brought to their village and 33 stuck in Pindari glacier were evacuated to safety, they said.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday visited the damaged Gaula bridge in Haldwani and said work on war footing will be done to restore traffic movement. PTI

SBI
Core Banking Technical Operations Department, State Bank of India, Global IT Centre, Sector-11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400614
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
RFP NO: SBI/GITC/Core Banking-Tech Operation/2021/2022/799 DATED: 20.10.2021
Bids are invited by State Bank of India from the eligible bidders for Procurement of Videowall processor, Pro-control processor, touch panel and procurement of AMC, FMS for operation and maintenance of video walls and other related equipment installed at GITC CBD Belapur. For details, please visit 'Procurement News' at <https://www.sbi.co.in> and e-Procurement agency portal <https://etender.sbi/SBI/>
Commencement of download of RFP: From 25.10.2021.
Last date and time for submission of bids: 15.11.2021 up to 15:00 hrs.
CB - Tech Operations Department

DELHI URBAN SHELTER IMPROVEMENT BOARD
GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, C-7
RANA PRATAP BAGH, DELHI-110007
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Executive Engineer, C-7, DUSIB, R. P. Bagh Delhi-110007 invites on behalf of Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, percentage rate bid (On Line) on two bid system for the following work.
NIT No: 347/EEC-7/DUSIB/2020-21
NAME OF WORK:- Renovation/Up-gradation of Community Hall at Mukteen Pura for setting up of Light House by DSEU with Co-ordination of Light House Communities Foundation as Deposit work (PID No- 13755). **Esstt. Cost:-** Rs. 38,22,980.00 **Earnest Money:-** Rs. 76,500.00 **Tender Cost:-** Rs. 500.00 **Period of completion:-** 90 Days **Last Time & Date of Submission of Bid:-** 01.11.2021 upto 15:00 Hours **Date of Opening Technical Bid:-** 01.11.2021 after 15:30 Hours
The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website <http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in/>
All the corrigendum (if required) will be uploaded on portal and will not be published in News Paper.
Sd/-
(RAJINDER BANSAL)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, C-7(DUSIB)

Ink thrown at Prakash Jha by Bajrang Dal activists

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, OCTOBER 24

FILM DIRECTOR Prakash Jha was smeared with ink by Bajrang Dal activists in Bhopal on Sunday, who objected to the name of his web series *Aashram*, alleging an "assault" on Hinduism.

The incident occurred when Jha was shooting scenes for the third season of the series, which stars Bobby Deol, in Bhopal's old jail premises. In a video of the incident that emerged on social media, Bajrang Dal activists can be seen vandalising the set and assaulting a crew member.

Police said the activists also smeared ink on Jha and broke the windshield of at least three buses before they intervened and got the situation under control.

Bhopal DIG Irshad Wali said no FIR has been registered and no complaint was made by Jha or the crew member who was assaulted. "We are identifying those involved based on the videos available and action will be taken against all those involved," said Wali.

Officials said four people have been detained in the incident.

Sushil Sudele, VHP convenor for central India, said, "Madhya Pradesh government has given them permission to shoot with a view to promote tourism but they were not granted permission to defame the Hindu religion. We have been assured that the title of the web series will be changed and based on it we will review our stand."

He added, "Bobby Deol should learn from his brother Sunny Deol, who has made such patriotic movies."

UP man dies after mistakenly operated on, say officials

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

A 45-YEAR-OLD man died after authorities at a Bulandshahr medical facility allegedly operated on him after mistaking him for another patient, district officials said on Sunday. The victim's family alleged the incident was an attempt to illegally harvest organs but authorities have refuted the accusation.

According to officials, Yusuf Saifi, a resident of Kiriyawali village in Bulandshahr, was admitted to Sudhir Nursing Home late on Wednesday with dengue symptoms such as high fever and low platelet count. Another patient, with a similar name, is believed to have been admitted at the facility with severe kidney issues.

"It appears there was some confusion regarding the name and an operation was carried out, which resulted in his death," said Dr Vinay Kumar Singh, Bulandshahr Chief Medical Officer.

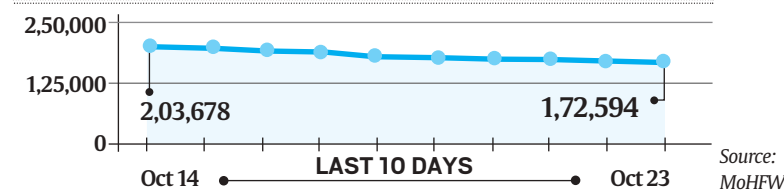
The district administration has ordered a probe, and a case has been filed against a doctor and two staff members. The three accused are on the run.

Saifi's family staged a protest in the district on Thursday and Friday and alleged the incident was an attempt to steal organs.

Although the case has been registered under sections of Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994, district officials denied the charges. "So far there is no evidence of any action related to organ harvesting," said Kumar.
"As per the post-mortem report, the gall bladder of the victim was missing. The family had alleged an organ had been harvested.... More clarity will be obtained once further probe is done," said Shashank Singh, ASP Bulandshahr

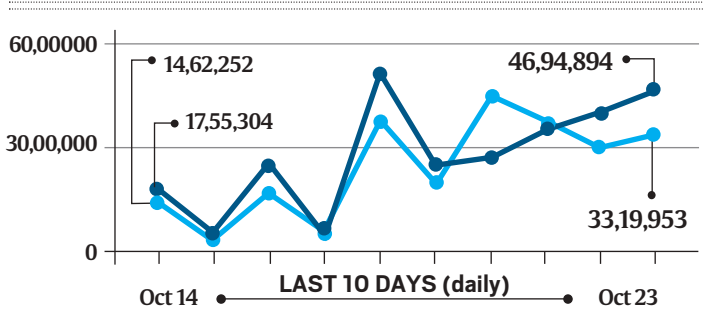
"IMPORTANT"

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CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

TOTAL VACCINATED IN INDIA (at least one dose)
71,57,33,309



TOTAL DOSES
102,10,43,258

(Sputnik V's 10.6 LAKH doses not represented in pie)

COVISHIELD 88.5%

COVAXIN 11.4%

DOSES ON OCT 23 80,14,847

OCT 22: 71,23,831 (1st dose: 30,26,552; 2nd: 40,97,279)

17,81,502

Number of doses administered in Tamil Nadu on October 23, the highest for any state.

12,41,890

West Bengal

9,62,515

Uttar Pradesh

5,83,844

Maharashtra

4,35,480

Madhya Pradesh

Note: The October 23 figures in these graphs are based on the government updates on Oct 24
Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on Oct 24

TELLING NUMBERS

Among the vaccinated, even non-Covid mortality found lower than among unvaccinated

THE FACT that Covid-19 vaccines reduce severe disease and deaths from the disease has often been stressed. But do they also impact mortality from causes other than Covid-19? At a time when vaccine hesitancy persists in several parts of the world, a new study has addressed the question — and found that death rates from non-Covid causes were lower among those vaccinated than among those who were not.

The research, by Kaiser Permanente, has been published in the 'Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report' of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Researchers evaluated the electronic health records of 6.4 million vaccine recipients in the US, compared to 4.6 million unvaccinated people with similar demographics and geographic locations from December 14, 2020 to July 31, 2021. The study looked at only non-Covid-related deaths.

The vaccines in use in the US are those from Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. The Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines require 2 doses for full vaccination, while the

DEATH RATES PER 1,000 (after excluding Covid deaths)

| Vaccine | After first dose | After two doses | Unvaccinated comparison group |
|---------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Moderna | 3.7 | 3.4 | 11.1 |
| Pfizer | 4.2 | 3.5 | 11.1 |
| J&J | 8.4 | — | 14.7 |

Johnson & Johnson adenoviral vector vaccine requires only one dose.

■ Pfizer vaccine recipients were found to have a mortality rate of 4.2 deaths per 1,000 vaccinated people per year after the first dose, and 3.5 after the second dose, compared to 11.1 in the unvaccinated comparison group (See table).

■ Moderna vaccine recipients had 3.7 deaths per 1,000 people per year after the first dose, and 3.4 after the second; the unvaccinated comparison group had a mortality rate of 11.1 per 1,000 people per year.

■ The J&J recipients had 8.4 deaths per 1,000 people per year, compared to 14.7 in the unvaccinated group.

Express News Service

The COP meetings

The annual climate change meetings are part of a UN-backed process initiated in the early 1990s after the world realised that greenhouse gas emissions were powering a rise in temperature that would slowly make the Earth uncomfortable to live in. Over the years, these meetings have had remarkable success in bringing climate change to the top of the global agenda, and ensuring that every country has an action plan to tackle climate change. This process has also delivered two international agreements — Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and Paris Agreement in 2015 — aimed at cutting down global emissions (see box).

The outcomes of these meetings, however, have not matched the scale of the response required. The original objectives, in terms of the amount of emission reductions and the principles that would govern the international climate architecture, have been diluted severely. Most industrialised countries have failed to deliver on their initial promises, not just on emission reductions but also on their commitments to help with finance and technology. As a result, the climate crisis has worsened in the last 20 years, manifesting itself in more frequent and intense extreme weather events.

Despite the shortcomings, however, these meetings remain the best bet to put the world on a path away from climate disasters.

Carbon markets

The rules and procedures of the landmark Paris Agreement of 2015 are still hanging because countries are yet to agree on some of the provisions related to creation of new carbon markets. Carbon markets are an important instrument to facilitate emissions reductions, and were an integral part of the Kyoto Protocol that has now given way to Paris Agreement.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, a set of rich and industrialised countries were allotted specific emission reduction targets. One of the indirect ways to achieve these was to let countries buy carbon credits from developing countries. The latter had no obligations under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce their emissions, but if they were able to do so, they could earn carbon credits. Developed countries could buy these credits and count them towards achieving their targets. Developing countries did not lose anything, and instead received payment to finance their switch to cleaner technologies.

Because emission reductions anywhere helped the entire globe, this was seen as a win-win situation for everyone. There were a couple of other methods through which carbon

SIMPLY PUT

The agenda for Glasgow

COP26, which begins next week in Glasgow after a year's delay, will seek to finalise the rules for the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate. Why is this important, and what else in on the agenda?

CLIMATE ON THE GLOBAL TABLE

1992: EARTH SUMMIT, RIO DE JANEIRO

The meeting that set up the architecture for negotiations on an international climate change agreement. It finalised the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the mother agreement that lays down the objectives and principles on which climate action by countries are to be based. It acknowledged that developing countries had fewer obligations and capabilities to bring down emissions. Developed countries agreed to a non-binding commitment to take measures aimed at returning to their 1990 emissions levels by 2000.



2009: COP15, COPENHAGEN



The White House

Attempt to finalise a new agreement to ended in failure. Over 110 heads of nations assembled, but differences were too deep to be bridged. Countries agreed to try again a few years later. Developed countries committed to mobilising \$100 billion every year in climate finance for developing countries from 2020.



2021: COP26, GLASGOW

Was supposed to be held last year but postponed because of Covid. The rulebook for implementation of Paris Agreement is still to be finalised. The main remaining hurdle is an agreement over creation of future carbon markets, and the transition of pending carbon credits with some developing countries to that new market.

1997: COP3, KYOTO



Delivered the Kyoto Protocol, precursor to Paris Agreement. The Protocol assigned specific emission reduction targets for a set of developed countries, to be achieved by 2012. Others were supposed to take voluntary actions to reduce emissions. The Kyoto Protocol expired last year as Paris Agreement took its place.

2007: COP13, BALI



It reaffirmed the principles of CBDR in the efforts to find a replacement to the Kyoto Protocol, which developed nations were getting increasingly uncomfortable with, especially after the emergence of China as the world's leading emitter. Developed countries want emission reduction targets for everyone, or for nobody, their argument being that without stringent action from China and India, the success of any climate action would not be possible.

2015: COP21, PARIS

The successor agreement was finally delivered. The Paris Agreement does not assign emission reduction targets to any country. Instead, it asks all to do the best they can. But the targets they set for themselves must be reported and verified. The objective is to limit the global rise in temperatures to within 2°C from pre-industrial times.



PMO

credits were traded, for money, both within and between countries.

Over the years, developing countries like China, India, and Brazil accumulated large numbers of carbon credits, which at one point, were in great demand as developed countries had to achieve their targets, and this was often a cheaper way than to reduce emissions by upgrading their own industrial facilities.

However, as the clamour grew for a new agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which rich industrialised countries found constraining, the motivation of the developed countries to move towards their targets reduced. Countries realised that non-achievement of their targets did not carry any penalty. So, most never met their targets. Several others even walked out of the Kyoto Protocol. The result was a big drop in demand for carbon credits, and a consequent fall in the price of carbon.

But countries such as India, China and Brazil continued to earn carbon credits in the hope that demand would return, once a successor pact to the Kyoto Protocol was in place. That happened with the Paris Agreement.

Carbon markets are envisioned in the Paris Agreement as well, but a new problem arose. Developed countries said they would not allow the transition of the earlier carbon credits to the new market mechanism, claiming many of these were dubious and did not accurately represent emission reductions. They sought more robust methods to grant carbon credits.

The developing countries are insisting that their accumulated carbon credits, worth billions, remain valid in the new market.

This remains the last stumbling block in the finalisation of the rules and procedures of Paris Agreement. Most other issues were negotiated at the previous meeting in Madrid in 2019. Settling this is one of the main objectives of the Glasgow meeting.

Net zero

An agreement on carbon markets would involve intricate negotiations. The discussion on net-zero targets, in the meanwhile, is much more attention grabbing. Incidentally, the issue of net-zero, or carbon neutrality, does not find a mention in the Paris Agreement, and therefore, does not form part of the process. But this is not the first time that an issue that has not grown organically from the COP meetings has come to dominate a session.

More than 50 countries have pledged to carbon-neutrality by middle of the century. China has said it would achieve this status by 2060; Germany has announced a target of 2045. India is the largest emitter that still does not have a net-zero commitment, and has said it does not intend to commit immediately. Several other developing countries have also been resisting such targets, arguing it is the developed world's way of shifting their own burden of reducing emissions on to everyone else.

Last week, in a virtual meeting, ministers

of 24 nations, which call themselves 'Like Minded Developing Countries', or LMDCs, denounced the efforts to force a net-zero target on everyone, saying it went against 'equity' and 'climate justice'. India is a part of LMDC, and interestingly, so is China. Other members include Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Reminding the developed world that the COP meetings were a history of their "broken promises", the LMDC said it was lack of adequate action on the part of rich nations that had led to worsening of the climate crisis.

"Despite their lack of ambition shown in the pre-2020 period, as well as in their Paris Agreement NDCs (nationally-determined contributions), major developed countries are now pushing to shift the goal posts of the Paris Agreement from what have already been agreed by calling for all countries to adopt Net Zero targets by 2050. This new 'goal' which is being advanced runs counter to the Paris Agreement and is anti-equity and against climate justice," the ministerial statement said.

"Demands for 'Net zero' emissions for all countries by 2050 will exacerbate further the existing inequities between developed and developing countries," it said.

It is clear that discussions on net-zero are also likely to lead to fireworks at Glasgow.

TOMORROW
PROGRESS ON EMISSIONS SO FAR

How YouTube works out which videos to recommend to which viewer

NANDAGOPAL RAJAN

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

IT IS quite hard for users to come out of YouTube watching just one video. YouTube's recommendation engine suggests what users should watch in the first place and what they should watch next.

"Today, recommendations drive a significant amount of the overall viewership on YouTube, even more than channel subscriptions or search. And, we are thinking about it in a responsible way. Our goal is to help connect viewers to high-quality information by minimising the chances of them seeing problematic content," said Cristos Goodrow, VP Engineering, YouTube in a recent call. He said YouTube's goal was to have views of borderline content from recommendations kept below 0.5% of overall views on YouTube.

So, how does YouTube's recommendations engine work?

Recommendations were originally built

on the simple principle that it should help people find the videos they want to watch. Users now encounter recommendations at two places — one on the homepage as they enter YouTube, which is a mix of content based on past viewing and subscriptions as well as latest news, and then on the "Up Next" panel as they are watching a video.

How does the algorithm decide what appears on recommendations?

YouTube tries to predict what a user would like to see next based on what they usually watch. It does not use connections from the social network to recommend what to watch next. YouTube takes signals from a mix of user behaviours that strongly indicate the user likes a video. So, clicks on videos, watchtime and shares are taken as good cues. YouTube also measures "valued watchtime" using user surveys that ask them to rate a watched video on a scale of one to five.

Can recommendations be switched off?

Yes, when users delete their watch his-

THE EVOLUTION OF YOUTUBE RECOMMENDATIONS

2008: YouTube launched Recommendations system, ranking videos based on popularity



augment for personalisation

2011: Built classifiers to identify videos that were racy or violent, prevented them from being recommended

2015: Demoted sensationalistic tabloid content on homepages

2012: Incorporated watchtime into Recommendations to

2016: Began measuring 'valued watchtime' to make sure viewers are

satisfied with their time on YouTube; also, started to predict the likelihood of a video to include minors in risky situations and removed them from Recommendations

2017: Began raising up authoritative content for news and information

2019: Began demoting borderline content

What is borderline content? How does YouTube keep it off recommendations?

Since 2011, YouTube has limited low-quality content from being widely viewed via recommendations. In 2015, it started tak-

ing steps to demote "sensationalistic tabloid content" on the homepage. Within a year, YouTube was able to predict "the likelihood of a video to include minors in risky situations" and started removing those from recommendations.

In recent years, YouTube has been keeping "problematic misinformation and borderline content — that is content that comes close to, but doesn't quite violate our Community Guidelines" out of recommendations. The platform does this by using classifiers to identify whether a video is "authoritative" or "borderline" with the help of human evaluators placed across the world.

How does YouTube factor in languages while recommending videos?

Goodrow told *The Indian Express* that "the recommendation system in general doesn't have a notion of language". "Most of the recommendations start or are based on what we call code, watching videos that get watched again. This tends to ensure that videos of the same language get recommended together.

Or if people speak only one language, they mostly only get videos in that language." This means nothing in particular is done to sort of filter or determine the languages a particular user speaks with respect to recommendations. "It's really due to just the frequency of two videos being watched together."

How does YouTube recommend videos when a user is in incognito mode?

Goodrow says in such a situation, they "usually don't have much information to go on". In such a case they base recommendations based on the devices and what is popular in your location. "At that time we try to ensure that there is some diversity."

How does YouTube handle recommendations for search queries?

When users are searching for a news event, YouTube uses the top shelf to show-case news from authoritative and trustworthy sources. This also means content from untrustworthy sources are demoted and further down in the results.

THE IDEAS PAGE

Time to seed a transition

Shifting to maize from rice, diversifying to fruits and vegetables, will help farmers in Punjab augment their earnings, prove beneficial for environment



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH

By ASHOK GULATI AND
RANJANA ROY

AS PER THE latest Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of agricultural households conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO), an average Indian farmer earned Rs 10,218 per month in 2018-19 (July-June). Across states, the highest income was received by a farming household in Meghalaya (Rs 29,348) followed by Punjab (Rs 26,701), Haryana (Rs 22,841), Arunachal Pradesh (Rs 19,225) and Jammu and Kashmir (Rs 18,918) while the lowest income levels were in West Bengal (Rs 6,762), Odisha (Rs 5,112) and Jharkhand (Rs 4,895). But this is not a fair comparison as holding sizes vary widely across states. The moment one normalises these incomes of agri-households by their holding sizes, as in the SAS, Punjab's ranking on per hectare income falls from 2nd to 11th and Haryana goes down from 3rd to 15th (see figure). The states that would do well on this score are Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh where people earn their income from cultivating fruits and vegetables, spices, and livestock. These are high value in nature, not linked to MSPs, and market and demand-driven. There is a lesson here for Punjab and Haryana farmers on augmenting their incomes on a per hectare basis, and also doing farming more sustainably.

The average landholding data is collected by both the SAS and Agriculture Census (latest 2015-16) but there is a big variation between the two data sources, especially for states like Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat. This anomaly needs to be corrected. As per the SAS, the average operated area per holding for Punjab is 1.44 ha (we have used that in the figure), but the Census gives a much higher value of 3.62 ha of average operational holding. If we normalise incomes of agri-households using Census values of average holding sizes, Punjab's rank would go further down to 21st (household monthly income Rs 7,376) out of 28 states. Even Bihar (household monthly income Rs 19,338) will do much better than Punjab on this criteria — it will rank 5th. This implies that farmers in Punjab and Haryana are earning higher incomes primarily because the size of their landholding is greater compared to their counterparts from other states.

How can farmers in Punjab and Haryana augment their incomes with more sustainable agriculture? Everyone, from the top policymaker to the farmer, in Punjab realises that rice cultivation is depleting the state's water table, emitting methane and other greenhouse gases that damage the environment and stubble burning is choking millions. Punjab's former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had approached the Centre with an idea to create a fund of around Rs 25,000 crore to help farmers switch from paddy to maize. We feel that the Centre should give this idea a serious thought with the following modifications:

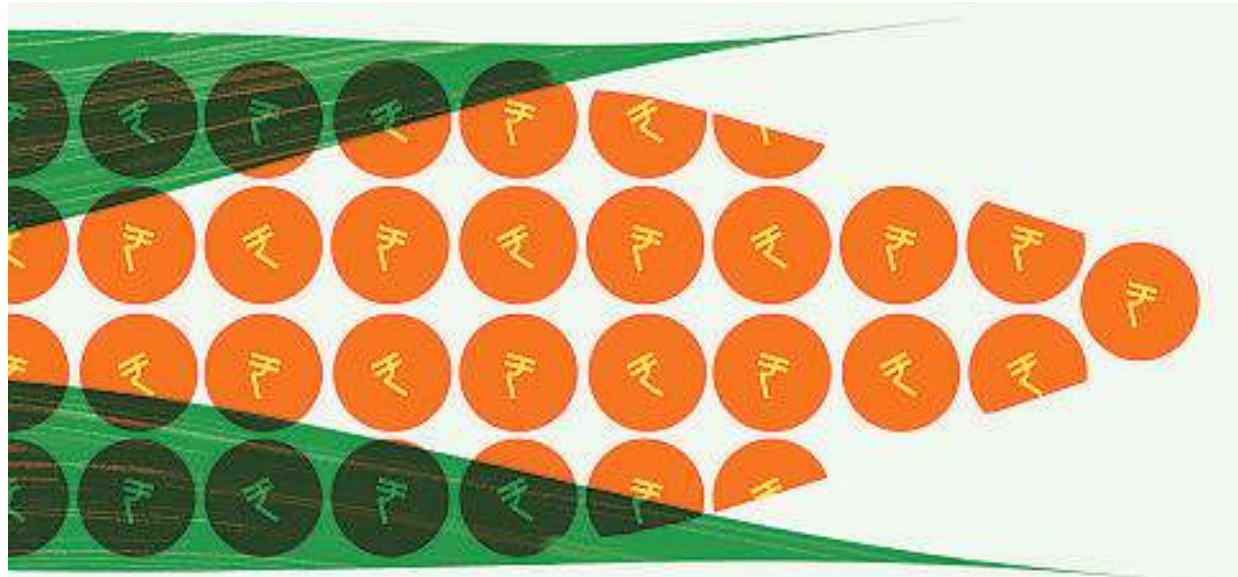


Figure 1: INCOME PER HA OF AVERAGE OPERATED AREA PER HOLDING

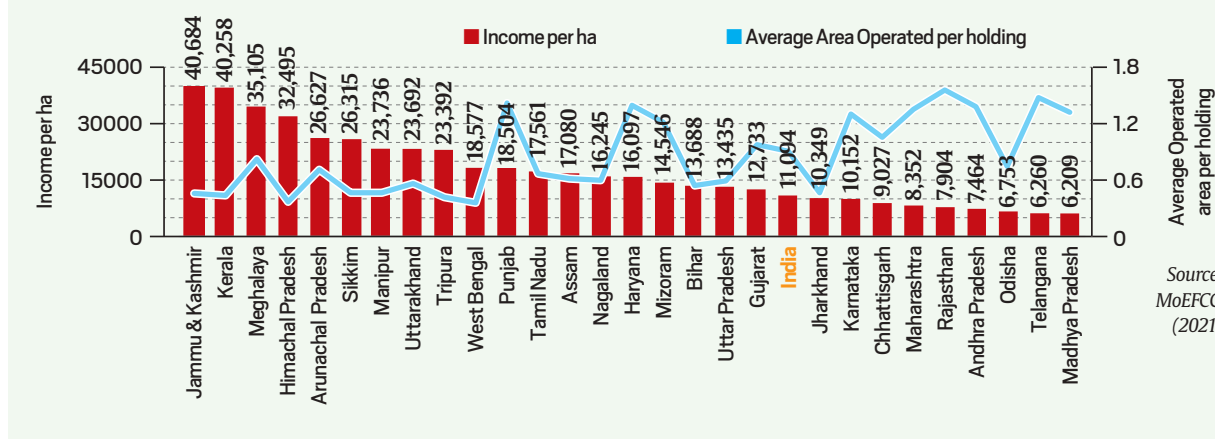
Source:
MoEFCC,
(2021)

Illustration: C R Sasikumar, Graphic: Ritesh Kumar

—farmers, the Government of Punjab and the country — as there will be lesser methane emissions and less stubble burning. Moreover, ethanol will also reduce GHG emissions in vehicular pollution.

Other parts of the diversification strategy have to be along the lines of increasing the area under fruits and vegetables, and a more focused policy to build efficient value chains in not just fruits and vegetables but also livestock and fisheries. They are more nutritious and the SAS data shows that their profitability is much higher in these enterprises than in crop cultivation, especially cereals. The sector needs to be backed by proper processing, grading and packaging infrastructure to tap its full potential. Can the Punjab government and the Centre come together on this important issue? Punjab was at the forefront of providing food security to the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s but today, the Punjabi farmer is languishing in a low-level equilibrium trap of the rice-wheat cycle with the open-ended procurement system of the government. Their income on a per hectare basis needs to increase more sustainably, protecting the state's land, water and air from further degradation, and producing more nutritious food. Punjab can then shine again on the nutritional security front with sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture.

Gulati is Infosys Chair Professor for
Agriculture and Roy is Fellow, at ICRIER

A faster track to growth

PM Gati Shakti will synergise infrastructure projects under one masterplan



HARDEEP S PURI

HISTORY PROVIDES ELOQUENT testimony — if any was needed — that empires rise, flourish and flounder and that connectivity and logistics invariably provide part, if not all, of the explanation, for the same. Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka built highways along an ancient route called Uttarapatha in the 3rd century BC. Sher Shah Suri expanded on this network in the 16th century and rebuilt this ancient path of commerce.

The 190 years of British colonial domination has its own story. Yes, they did build railways, ports and bridges, but mainly to mine out wealth from India and ship it to England or export raw cotton and import cloth made in the mills of Lancashire and Manchester. The British left behind a disorganised patchwork of bureaucratic silos, the rail system built by them providing a good example. Their organisations were designed to be commandeered for the imperial exploitation of India rather than synergetic nation-building.

Under Congress rule, this fractionated style of policy-making and execution would hold back the economic development of India, leading to unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities. New infrastructure development was less than comprehensive, and even then chaotically executed. We became used to signboards saying "work in progress, go slow", as different government departments would work without coordination — for example, digging up newly laid roads for laying utility and optical fibre cables.

The Prime Minister's Gati Shakti plan is a

bold step in changing the status of the progress of the nation from "go slow" to "go fast". Over the past seven years, our government has taken giant strides in simplifying and integrating disparate policies and procedures to accelerate development.

GST simplified the taxation of goods and services while Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mudra brought in instant Direct Benefit Transfer into bank accounts. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, UDAN, Jal Marg Vikas, industrial and freight corridors, the Bharatmala and Sagarmala projects have given a big boost to the infrastructure and industrial prowess of the country.

Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, we rolled out One Nation One Ration Card, the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and Aatmanirbhar Bharat mission. We have been able to formulate, mass-produce, transport, administer and follow-up 1 billion doses of a temperature-sensitive novel vaccine.

Indian consumers today enjoy same-day or next-day deliveries on e-commerce platforms and the time has come for the government to deliver to these standards. The Indian logistics sector, already a \$200 billion market, is set to grow at over 10 per cent CAGR in the next five years to reach around \$330 billion and power a \$-5 trillion economy. However, the cost of Indian logistics remains high at 13-14 per cent of GDP compared to developed nations where they are 8-10 per cent.

India's modal mix is heavily skewed towards roads, with 60-65 per cent of transport

happening via road compared to 25-30 per cent in developed countries, prompting higher costs. The rail freight business depends excessively on coal and domestic waterways face numerous challenges due to high first- and last-mile costs, unavailability of return load in most cases, high voyage costs for specialised vessels and high repositioning costs of domestic containers, among others.

The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan will herald a new era of infrastructure development and multi-modal logistics. We will synergise infrastructure development projects from multiple ministries under one masterplan. We will be able to optimise different modes of logistics to reduce freight costs and increase competitiveness, drive investment and create millions of jobs. We will leverage technology and geospatial mapping to create an online dashboard, which will let central and state agencies, departments and PSUs as well as private players have a bird's eye view of each other's planned development throughout the country.

We have come a long way in seven years. Highway construction per day in India increased almost 300 per cent from 12 km/day in 2014-15 to 33.7 km/day in 2020-21. With the PM Gati Shakti Masterplan, we will increase India's highway network to 2 lakh km and provision utility corridors for laying adjoining power and optical fibre cables, which will be a life-saver in times of natural disasters.

Under the NDA government, India embarked on an unprecedented scale of infra-

structure development spending almost Rs 11.5 lakh crore in the seven years compared to just 1.5 lakh crore spent in the 10 years between 2004 and 2014. The metro rail network has been expanded up to 721 km of metro lines in 18 cities from 250 km in 2014, and a network of 1,058 km is under construction in 27 cities. The Masterplan will further augment urban infrastructure development by streamlining planning and approvals, and integrating civic amenities.

We have been working hard to increase the share of natural gas in the country's energy mix to 15 per cent from the current 7 per cent, as natural gas is not only a cleaner source of energy but is also efficiently transported through pipelines. Since 2014, India has increased the length of its gas pipeline network from 14,700 km to 18,500 km, supplying 29 mmscmd gas to thermal and steel plants, and 44 mmscmd gas to fertiliser plants. Under PM Gati Shakti, an additional 15,000 km of gas pipelines will be integrated.

It is difficult to fully visualise the sheer scale of development and investments planned under the PM Gati Shakti Masterplan. It will be an inflection point in the history of our nation. It will transform Indian infrastructure and logistics to compete with the world's leading economies. Future generations will look back and remark at an India before PM Gati Shakti Masterplan and an India after it.

The writer is Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas, and Housing & Urban Affairs

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The only way to bring an end to communal attacks is to match what politicians promise following such attacks with actions. Every time such attacks occur, we hear our politicians claim that they stand by the victims. But do they, really?"

—DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH

Outside the propaganda

Modi government's bungling during Covid second wave won't be forgotten. Another premature declaration of victory can put us at risk

RANDEEP SINGH
SURJEWALA

IT IS A sign of a leader losing his grip on electoral reality when he starts buying into the myths of his own creation. However, when that propaganda seeks to whitewash the deaths of lakhs of fellow citizens, it is unforgivable and even criminal. Especially when a large number of those deaths were avoidable and caused as a direct result of the government's incompetence and negligence.

The Modi government is back to doing what it does best. In its latest propaganda blitzkrieg, it is attempting to rewrite the narrative of the horrifying devastation during the first and second waves of the Covid-19 pandemic by seeking to direct attention towards the vaccine drive. This attempt is condemned to failure. Let us explain to the Prime Minister why.

Every Indian lost someone they know. Every single person remembers the utter collapse of the healthcare machinery as they struggled to get hospital beds, ventilators and medicines for their loved ones, friends and acquaintances. Friends and family members infected with the coronavirus were gasping for breath as procuring an oxygen cylinder became a near-impossible task. The scars of that time are so deep that they can perhaps never heal.

Why is the Modi government to blame? Because it was Prime Minister Modi who prematurely declared victory over Covid-19. It was also Prime Minister Modi who bragged about exporting remdesivir and life-saving vaccines abroad. It was PM Modi who placed electoral campaigns above the public good and addressed dozens of rallies, despite the warnings from experts. Above all, when the second wave ravaged the country, the Prime Minister simply did not come forward to lead. Forget the average citizen, supporters of the ruling party begged desperately for its intervention as their loved ones died due to lack of medical care. All pleas fell on deaf ears and the government remained missing in action.

What the government and the Prime Minister's acolytes chose to do instead was to go after spirited individuals, opposition leaders and Youth Congress workers, who attempted to fill the massive gaps of administrative failure by providing assistance to anyone who needed it. The BJP government's invisible hand was apparent in the police enquiries on those who were procuring supplies and distributing them for free. The individuals and organisations marshalling their resources in the service of the

nation were raided instead of being applauded. When government representatives finally did emerge, it was to place the blame on the states. No one was convinced.

The Modi government will also be remembered for attempting, at first, to argue that the Covid-19 pandemic did not constitute a "disaster" that would attract provisions of the National Disaster Management Act. And when it was chastised by the Supreme Court and compelled to take action after numerous delays, it announced a paltry sum of Rs 50,000 per Covid-19 death as compensation. In which country of the world is a human life valued at Rs 50,000? Not surprisingly, even this has not been paid. This is what India remembers.

And this is to say nothing of the economic devastation that the pandemic wrought. According to one study, 59 per cent of MSMEs and startups were expected to either shut down or scale down. Across the nation, Indians saw their salaries slashed, livelihoods were lost, savings were eroded by medical costs. Their woes were compounded by galloping food inflation and retail inflation. All the while, the Modi government continuously raised petrol, diesel and cooking gas prices to unheard of levels. It now appears that cruelty and fleeing the citizens have become a state policy.

There is another pattern on display here. Prime Minister Modi is yet again declaring victory prematurely. Only 21 per cent of Indians are fully vaccinated (putting India in the 19th position in the world). To put this in perspective, the government must administer 106 crore doses in less than 70 days in order to fully vaccinate the entire 93 crore adult population by December 31. This would require them to administer 151 lakh doses daily as against the average 35 lakh doses being administered. The strategy and the way forward are unknown to even those in the government.

There are other equally important questions which remain unattended and unanswered by this callous government. There is no plan in place to vaccinate the nearly 30 crore children between the ages of 4 and 17 years. There is also no clarity on booster shots for senior citizens, doctors, nurses, healthcare professionals, police personnel, sanitation workers and others engaged in crowd management interactions or duties. Is there even a policy on booster shots for vulnerable sections?

No matter how invincible the Prime Minister seems now, his government's tenure is guaranteed to be remembered as a cautionary tale, not least of the risks of electing demagogues. And he knows this. This desperate barrage of propaganda cannot salvage his legacy, nor will it get him the exoneration he so desperately craves.

The writer is the communications in-charge and general secretary, Indian National Congress

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ASK QUESTIONS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Jabs against cynicism, for hope' (IE, October 23). While it is important to laud the efforts of our scientists in the Covid vaccination drive, it is a fact that the vaccine remains out of reach to a sizable section of our population. The Aarogya Setu app and CoWIN platform apart from privacy concerns, presumed access to the internet and English literacy — thereby prioritising some over others. The Centre has faced accusations of exporting vaccines even as citizens faced shortages. It is also a shameful fact that many citizens had to pay for their vaccines while the Centre looked the other way. Demanding accountability from the government is the need of the hour, not celebration.

Ila Railkar, Mumbai

POOR JUSTIFICATIONS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Will South Asia go blind?' (IE, October 24). After the recent anti-Hindu violence in Bangladesh, many people, instead of condemning the violence or expressing sympathy for the victims, have focused on holding the happenings in India responsible. They conveniently forget that many serious incidents of violence against Hindus and their places of worship were reported in Bangladesh, even before the CAA-NRC issue emerged in 2019. Mistreatment of Hindus in Pakistan is not a justification for an act of violence against a Muslim in India. But this also cuts the other way.

Umang Phogat, Hisar

FALSE HOPE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The good fight at DU' (IE, October 23). The hope

IDEAS
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SUBIMAL BHATTACHARJEE
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that Delhi University's new VC will be able to restore the spaces for freedom in the campus is, likely, going to be belied for two reasons. First, the issues plaguing India's universities do not emanate from the actions of individuals — though they do play a role. The lack of academic freedom at universities is a structural matter, which emanates first of all from top-down curriculum setting. Second, there is such a thing as inductive logic: We do not know as a logical certainty that the sun will rise tomorrow, but it probably will. Similarly, a BJP government appointee could conceivable crackdown on ABVP, encourage debate and dissent. It isn't likely, though.

Radhika Yadav, via email

REMARKABLE FEAT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, '100 crore & counting' (IE, October 22). It is a spectacular and remarkable achievement that India has crossed the one-billion Covid-19 vaccine doses. It is a feather in the cap of the Indian government, scientists, health workers and the citizens of India.

SS Paul, Nadia

12

IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR, MoS, MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS & IT, SKILL DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“What’s happening with social media intermediaries in US is why IT rules are important... they create accountability”

Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar says the IT rules are aimed at “keeping the Internet open” and explains why any law that governs the Internet has to take into account the “evolving jurisprudence” around cyberspace. This session was moderated by Deputy Political Editor LIZ MATHEW & Principal Correspondent AASHISH ARYAN

AASHISH ARYAN: Over the past six-eight months, there had been a sort of tussle between the IT Ministry and social media intermediaries due to the new IT rules. There has been a marked shift since the new minister (Ashwani Vaishnaw) came in, the escalations have come down remarkably. Is there a conscious effort to do this?

I don't want to compare with any particular incident that happened in the past, but the government is very clear about what our objectives are regarding any legislation, public policy, rules, and are making a conscious effort to convey it to the public. The IT rules are aimed at essentially keeping the Internet open, making it trusted and safe, and ensuring that the intermediaries are accountable to the user. There is very little about the government in the entire construct. It is, as you would agree, the remit of the government — in this case, MeITy (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) — to ensure that user issues and user grievances are addressed, whether it is having a consumer forum, or in the Internet sense, having a grievance or compliance official. It is a question of understanding our role and our expectations, and it has been made clear to all intermediaries, whether big or small, that we have no intention of interfering in their functions as long as they respect the users who are on their platforms and they comply with the laws that have been laid down.

To one social media intermediary, I said that as part of MeITy, we have many different things to do, for the country and the digital economy. Managing or regulating social media intermediaries is not really high on the priority of things given all of the heavy-lifting that the government wants and has to do. It is simply about laying out our expectations, our role and people understanding it. I have also promised that wherever there are grey areas or interpretation issues, the ministry will time to time introduce FAQs and SOPs. We will create the necessary framework for everybody to do business, make investments, run a successful business model subject to basic requirements of user accountability, following the law.

AASHISH ARYAN: Would you say you are satisfied with the way intermediaries have accepted these new rules, barring the legal challenges that continue?

Everybody who is a responsible stakeholder in the Internet right now understands that the jurisprudence around the cyber space is evolving. What was not there yesterday is there today, and what is not there today, will be there tomorrow. Eight-nine years ago, this cyber space did not even exist and we did not even anticipate some of the user harm and the user issues that are now surfacing. I come from a school in the late '80s-early '90s where Internet was this big, beautiful Utopia. Of course we now realise that the Internet is about big business interests, user harm, about all good things and there are many bad things. So the jurisprudence around this will evolve, but we are committed to ensuring there is transparency, public consultation as this happens. I think that this confidence the industry and stakeholders are getting from us. I have been asked this question many times and I have repeated that in it is in our DNA to consult the stakeholders, including consumers, before we do anything. But we must be reasonable and expect that there will be judicial and jurisprudential evolution.

PRANAV MUKUL: A Facebook whistleblower has revealed how the company prioritised its profits over dealing with hate speech or misinformation. Has the government taken note of this, or taken measures to check this in India? Do you think our current IT rules can prevent this?

What's happening with social media intermediaries in the US is precisely why I think the IT rules are very important because they create an accountability relationship between them and the user. There is an absolute relationship between the user who feels the intermediary is being unfair, biased and prejudicial. The consumer has the right to raise that grievance, and the intermediary is obliged to respond to it... I don't see any role for the government there. It's really



WHY
RAJEEV
CHANDRASEKHAR

The Ministry of Electronics & IT has a domain expert in Rajeev Chandrasekhar, an entrepreneur who spent his early years as a semiconductor design engineer in Silicon Valley. He is also MoS, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship. With the IT rules facing legal challenges, Chandrasekhar, a Rajya Sabha member representing Karnataka, has been a prominent voice for the govt

about accountability to the users, accountability of the intermediaries to ensure that they are non-discriminatory, that they respect Articles 14, 19, 21 of the Constitution, vis-a-vis every one of our consumers.

On the issue of the IT rules, we have to get used to the fact that the jurisprudence and the legal framework around cyberspace and all things Internet will continuously evolve.

PRANAV MUKUL: Lot of mobile phone companies have come to India and we have also seen a lot of the high-value components being manufactured in India. But despite efforts of the UPA and NDA governments, we have not been able

to crack chip manufacturing? Where do you think the gaps are?

There is a whole eco-system that needs to be built for the electronics industry manufacturing to grow. We are today at about \$75 billion of electronics production. After petroleum, electronics is the second-largest traded commodity in the world — \$1.5 trillion is the world market, China alone accounts for about \$650 billion. That is the opportunity. Post-Covid realities, supply chain diversifications and how electronics is growing, a significant part I believe will move out of China and look for large markets. India has a huge opportunity to become

an electronics player, not just in mobiles but IT, automotive industry, servers... We want to broaden the electronics manufactured in India, also deepen the components base and the value added in this country. So naturally, one needs to look at semiconductor design, semiconductor manufacturing and semiconductor packaging and testing. The reason why we have not been successful in India in this is partly due to a flawed approach of putting the cart before the horse — you can't manufacture chips when you don't have an electronics ecosystem, when you don't have demand for chips in the country. So, the vision of our honorable Prime Minister is to create a vibrant, robust electronics ecosystem, and then explore the semiconductor opportunity. I want to add that in the next five years, out of the 100 times increase in computing power, 90X will come from semiconductor design innovation and electronics system design innovation and software. India is in a very sweet spot in the post-Covid world... to build on the \$75 billion of electronics manufacturing that we do today.

LIZ MATHEW: The biggest issue during the last Parliament session was Pegasus. You called it a bogus, hoax narrative when the Opposition raised the issue. But the Supreme Court said it wants to set up a committee. Does the government still maintain its stand that it did not buy or use the spyware?

I think it's improper for me to comment when the matter is in the Supreme Court. The government and my Cabinet colleagues have said what they had to say. I don't want to add to that. The SC is setting up a committee, the government

should be ok with that. My view is that these are claims that are easy to fling around. Unless today somebody produces a hacked phone with evidence that it has been hacked by the State, to make the claim that a particular software has been used to hack into phones is just that — a claim.

LIZ MATHEW: You were Vice-Chairman of the NDA in Kerala. The state unit of the BJP hasn't managed to set its house in order and make any inroads in the state. How do you see the situation there?

I was vice-chairman of the NDA in 2016, when I was an Independent MP. Much water has flown under the bridge since then. I am a BJP karyakarta, a Keralite, and so I am heavily invested in the success of the BJP in Kerala. What and why it has happened is something I haven't studied in deep. But in Kerala, the choice that the people of Kerala have is between a very, very Left Marxist government and a Congress Left that's competing with the Left for how Left they are. So the space is open for development, a Centre-Right narrative, economic prosperity and entrepreneurship. It's something I want to work for and the BJP in Kerala has tremendous opportunity. I am confident we will do well. I think Pinarayi Vijayan built this sophisticated narrative of how great a job he had done during Covid, but

facts thereafter proved him wrong.

AANCHAL MAGAZINE: How are the programmes of the Skill Development Ministry being tailored to the post-Covid situation?

Covid has been a big hit on skilling because over the last five years, the entire skilling ecosystem was built around training centres and physical skilling. There are 70+ Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs), 14,000-odd training centres, 14,000-odd ITIs that make up a large part of the skilling network that has been built over the last five years. But Covid put a deep brake on that vibrant skilling momentum. But

I told a social media intermediary that at MeITy, we have many things to do... Regulating social media intermediaries is not high on priority of things to do

ment side, who contract out these large complex, multi-locational contracts to be much more effective at programme management and contracting.

HARIKISHAN SHARMA: Given the recent incidents in Uttar Pradesh — Lakhimpur Kheri, farmer protests etc — what is your assessment of the BJP's prospects in UP?

When the Chief Minister of UP has delivered on many of his promises — on better law and order, addressing issues of Covid, the economy, giving corruption-free governance — I can't believe any sane voter who would compare this government with what they have experienced in the past... rampant nepotism, corruption... would hesitate to vote for the BJP under Yogi ji. This is my view, not as a political expert, but as a person with a highly developed sense of common sense. On Lakhimpur, our party president has said emphatically and repeatedly that whoever has violated the law will feel the full force of the law and it doesn't matter who that person is. This atmosphere of baiting and bullying and ratcheting up the rhetoric is not doing anyone any service. You may think you are scoring big political points by drumming up hysteria and hate, but at the end of the day, it doesn't pay.

AASHISH ARYAN: Since the IT rules came out, there have been legal challenges from the stakeholders with the HCs also observing that the rules go beyond the mandate of the IT Act. There has also been talk of the IT Act being updated. So what happens to the rules once the new IT Act is in place?

The IT act dates back to 2000 vintage — it's 21 years old and in Internet time, that's about four centuries. What will be the next avatar of the IT Act? That's too early for us to discuss but it is commonsensical to conclude that there should be modern legislation that governs investment and activities around the Internet. I don't know what shape and form that will be. We must as those who observe cyberspace get used to this jurisprudence that will evolve. It's quite clear that challenges from Artificial Intelligence, 5G, Internet of Things... are something nobody can predict. Nobody still understands how you are going to regulate ethical AI. So to try and legislate all those things now is just meaningless. It means that two years from now, when those problems arise, we need to find new jurisprudence for it. On data protection, I hope the parliamentary committee completes its deliberations and the Act is returned to Parliament. Then maybe we can have a debate on that.

AASHISH ARYAN: On the data protection Bill, we are getting to know that the government is in favour of a strict age-gating policy to make it difficult for children below 18 to be on social media sites. Isn't that a very moralistic stand?

On age-gating as an idea, it is not a binary between nothing and putting them in a cage or clamping down on freedom for the youth. There was a parliamentary committee of the Rajya Sabha that was chaired by Jairam Ramesh that went into child safety online and came to the conclusion that some sort of gating is required. What is the nature of the gating — should it be hard and fast or more dynamic... that is something we have to discuss once the Bill comes out.

PRANAV MUKUL: India has not been very successful at reigning in big-tech companies whenever there have been anti-trust issues. Would you call for some kind of policy intervention on this?

The PM's vision has been that the Internet should be open, safe, trusted and accountable. Openness means it is not under any state or government but also means it is not dominated by a few platforms or companies. There is a real risk of that happening with big-tech platforms. It's a genuine concern that governments all over the world are grappling with. According to me, the Competition law suffers from an infirmity — that it can't suo motu intervene if it detects anti-competitive behaviour. It's something that's missing today in the basket of policy options that the Government of India has to regulate big tech or to make big tech domination a thing that's not anti-consumer. It's something that we should think about and discuss.



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

The Competition law can't suo motu intervene if it detects anti-competitive behaviour. It's something that's missing today in the basket of policy options that the govt has to regulate big tech

over the last few months, the ministry has discovered digital skilling and wherever it is possible to do skilling online, we have moved to blended courses or pure digital courses. But it is clear that in a post-Covid world, a lot of our skilling programmes will now move to digital skilling — with our own platform and use of social media platforms like YouTube etc. This gives us a tremendous advantage as government because it increases our reach that much more. That's going to be the new normal — a great deal of blended learning...

AANCHAL MAGAZINE: The IT structures for many crucial government platforms like the Income Tax portal and the GST platform were found wanting. You took to Twitter to ask IT firms to see such projects as special responsibility and deploy their best teams.

I did that tweet to alert Indian companies who may have developed a tendency... because government bids are (seen as) maybe less profitable than an overseas project for a corporate client. So there is a tendency to put their lower-level talent on a government project... My tweet was to say that look, at the end of the day, don't forget that you are doing people's work. Having said that, there is a need for those on the govern-

TOPOF THE
WORLD

The Bonanza Creek Film Ranch in Santa Fe, New Mexico. AP

USA

Film crew voiced complaints before fatal on-set shooting

HOURS BEFORE actor Alec Baldwin fired a fatal gunshot from a prop gun that he had been told was safe, a camera crew for the movie he was filming walked off the job to protest conditions and production issues that included safety concerns. Disputes in the production of the Western film *Rust* began almost from the start in early Oct and culminated with seven crew members walking off several hours before cinematographer Halyna Hutchins was killed. The crew members had expressed discontent with matters that ranged from safety procedures to their housing accommodations, according to one of those who left. AP

GERMANY

Police stop far-right vigilantes patrolling border

GERMAN POLICE said on Sunday they had stopped more than 50 far-right vigilantes armed with pepper spray, a bayonet, a machete and batons who were trying to patrol the Polish border to stop migrants from entering the country. The vigilantes were following a call by the Third Way, a far right-party with suspected links to neo-Nazi groups, for its members to stop illegal crossings near the town of Guben on the German-Polish border. Police seized the weapons carried by the 50 suspects and made them leave the Guben area late on Saturday and in the early hours of Sunday. REUTERS

UGANDA

Deadly blast likely terror act: President

AN EXPLOSION at an eatery in Uganda's capital was an apparent terrorist act, President Yoweri Museveni said on Sunday. Museveni said three people entered the eatery in a suburb of Kampala on Saturday evening and left a plastic bag whose contents later exploded. He provided no more details in a series of Twitter posts but vowed to "get the perpetrators." Police said in a statement that at least one person had died and seven others were injured in the blast. AP



ANOTHER MIGRANT CARAVAN HEADS TO US

A caravan of migrants head north along a coastal highway just outside of Huehuetan at Chiapas State, Mexico, on Sunday. Over 2,000 migrants, mainly Central Americans, began walking out of a city in southern Mexico on Saturday where they have essentially been trapped. There were minor scuffles and a small child suffered a slight head wound as the migrants pushed past a line of state police who were trying to stop them. Tens of thousands of migrants have been waiting in the city of Tapachula for asylum papers that might allow them to travel, but have grown tired of delays in the process. AP

Colombia's most wanted drug lord captured in jungle raid

ASTRID SUAREZ & JOSHUA GOODMAN
BOGOTA, OCTOBER 24

COLOMBIAN SECURITY forces have captured the country's most wanted drug trafficker, a rural warlord who stayed on the run for more than a decade by corrupting state officials and aligning himself with combatants on the left and right.

President Iván Duque likened the arrest Saturday of Dairo Antonio Úsuga to the capture three decades ago of Pablo Escobar.

Colombia's military presented Úsuga to the media in handcuffs and wearing rubber boots preferred by rural farmers. Úsuga, better known by his alias Otoniel, is the alleged head of the much-feared Gulf Clan, whose army of assassins has terrorised much of northern Colombia to gain control of major cocaine smuggling routes through thick jungles north to Central America and onto the US.

He's long been a fixture on the US Drug Enforcement Administration's most-wanted



Dairo Antonio Usuga, leader of the violent Clan del Golfo cartel, after his arrest. AP

fugitives list, for whose capture it had been offering a \$5 million reward. He was first indicted in 2009, in Manhattan federal court, on narcotics charges and for allegedly providing assistance to a far-right paramilitary group designated a terrorist organisation by the US government. Later indictments in Brooklyn and Miami federal courts accused him of importing into the US at least 73 metric tonnes of cocaine between 2003 and 2014 through countries including Venezuela, Guatemala,

EXPLAINED
Operating under the radar

DAIRO ANTONIO Úsuga flew under the radar of authorities for many years by refusing to become high profile like more famous Colombian drug lords. Úsuga started his violent career as a gunman for armed militias that represented both extremes of the political spectrum. Later, he delved deeper into the criminal underworld and began operating out of the Gulf of Uraba region, a major drug corridor. From there, he led brutal operations that made him Colombia's most wanted drug lord.

Mexico, Panama, and Honduras.

Authorities said intelligence provided by the US and UK led more than 500 soldiers and members of Colombia's special forces to Úsuga's jungle hideout, which was protected by an eight rings of security. AP

Hasina: Certain quarters with vested interests tarnishing Bangladesh's image

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DHAKA, OCTOBER 24

BANGLADESH PRIME Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Sunday that certain quarters with vested interests were disseminating propaganda to create communal divide and tarnish the image of the country, as it recovers from a slew of violence against minorities and mob attacks on temples during Durga Puja festivities, according to a media report.

Attacks on Hindu temples intensified in Bangladesh since October 13 after an alleged blasphemous post surfaced on social media during the Durga Puja celebrations. On the night of October 17, a mob damaged 66 houses and set on fire at least 20 homes of Hindus in Bangladesh.

"No one can make Bangladesh go backwards. Some



Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

of the incidents that we occasionally see are orchestrated. It is being done intentionally so that Bangladesh's image is damaged," Hasina was quoted as saying by bdnews24.com.

Speaking during the inauguration of the Payra Bridge in southern Bangladesh, Hasina said that "certain quarters with vested interests are disseminating propaganda aimed at creat-

ing a communal divide". She, however, did not name anyone.

"No matter how much good work we do, there is a quarter that is occupied with discrediting Bangladesh. What do they want? They don't want the normal democratic process to continue in this country," she said, urging people to be wary of the attempts to destabilise the country.

Eight people died as communal violence spread to several other districts amid the festivities, the report said.

Bangladesh's security agencies on Saturday arrested Shaikat Mandal, who is believed to be the second key suspect behind the recent violence. His arrest came a day after police had nabbed Iqbal Hossain, 35, the key suspect from Cox Bazar area. So far, police have arrested nearly 600 people from various parts of the country for inciting violence.



MEANWHILE

ED SHEERAN TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

British pop star Ed Sheeran said Sunday he has tested positive for Covid-19 and will do interviews and performances from his house while he self-isolates. Sheeran, 30, broke the news on social media days before his new studio album is due out. The four-time Grammy winner's new studio album is called "=", which is pronounced "Equals."

China passes new land border law amid military standoff with India

REUTERS & PTI
BEIJING, OCTOBER 24

CHINA PASSED a law on Saturday to strengthen border protection amid a protracted standoff with India, worries about spillover effects from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and the spread of Covid-19 from Southeast Asia.

The Land Borders Law will not necessarily change how border security is handled when the measure takes effect on January 1, but it reflects China's growing confidence in its capability to manage its frontiers.

China has been closely watching neighbouring Afghanistan, where the Taliban returned to power in August, to guard against a possible inflow of refugees or Islamic extremists crossing over to link up with the Muslim Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang region.

At its Himalayan frontier, Chinese soldiers have been in a standoff with Indian troops.

China has also taken great pains to keep the Covid-19 virus outside of its borders, after illegal crossings from Myanmar and Vietnam contributed this year to a surge in cases in its southern provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi respectively.

This is the first time that the People's Republic of China, founded 72 years ago, has a dedicated law specifying how it governs and guards its 22,000-km

AMID ALLEGATIONS

Nepal's Chief Justice says will stop allocating cases to benches at his discretion

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, OCTOBER 24

CHIEF JUSTICE of Nepal's Supreme Court, Cholendra Shumsher Rana, announced on Sunday that he would give up the discretionary practice of allocating cases to benches "at will".

Rana is likely to face an impeachment motion in parliament amid controversy regarding his interactions with politicians and allegations that he pushed for a family member to be on Nepal's council of ministers.

He agreed to end the practice of allocating cases to the benches of his choice from Tuesday, and to instate a system to select benches at random, during a meeting with a delegation of the Nepal Bar Association. Rana also told the delegation that he had no role in having his brother-in-law Gajendra Hamal inducted in the council of ministers on October 8, asserting it was just a coincidence that they were related. Hamal resigned less than 72 hours after taking office amid allegations about Rana's involvement in his induction into the government.

Meanwhile, an informal meeting of some Supreme Court judges that took place on Sunday is believed to have resulted in those judges deciding not to attend the "full court" meeting called by Rana on Monday, where he is expected to reiterate his rejection of the allegations.

A Supreme Court judge told *The Indian Express* that the Chief Justice had twice gone back on his word on the issue of ending the discretion-guided system of allocating cases to benches of his choice.

A high-level committee headed by Supreme Court judge Harikrishna Karki had recommended replacing the existing discretionary system with an automated mechanism.

Rana has faced allegations of misusing his discretionary powers in allocation of cases, especially those of a political nature.



The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress approved the law at the closing meeting of a legislative session

land border shared with 14 countries, including former superpower Russia and nuclear-capable North Korea.

The country will "take effective measures to resolutely protect territorial sovereignty and land border security", the law says.

Chinese military and military police — the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force — are responsible for guarding the border against any "invasion, encroachment, infiltration, provocation".

The law stipulates that China can close its border if a war or other armed conflict nearby threatens border security.

According to a report in the state-run Xinhua news agency, the law also stipulates that the state shall take measures to support economic and social development as well as opening-up in border areas, improve public

China says over 75% of its population is fully vaccinated

Beijing warns of further spread in latest coronavirus flare-up

REUTERS
BEIJING, OCTOBER 24

CHINA'S LATEST Covid-19 outbreak is increasingly likely to spread further, a health official said on Sunday, as authorities urged all regions to step up monitoring and called for a reduction in travel across provinces.

China has largely contained the virus but it is determined to stamp out any sporadic local outbreaks, particularly in the run-up to the 2022 Winter Olympics in February.

More than 100 locally transmitted cases have been confirmed over the last week across 11 provincial areas, with most linked to 13 different tour groups.

There is increasing risk that the outbreak might spread further, helped by "seasonal factors", Mi Feng, spokesman at the National Health Commission, told reporters on Sunday.

Health authorities also said on Sunday that about 75.6% of China's population had received complete vaccine doses as of Oct. 23, or some 1.068 billion people.

China is giving booster shots to adults whose last dose was at least six months earlier, with priority groups including essential workers, older people and those with



Staff members wait outside booths at a vaccination centre in Beijing. Reuters

weaker immune systems. Data showed antibodies elicited by vaccines, including the most-used shots from Sinovac and Sino-pharm, declined within months.

The Delta variant causing the latest outbreak is highly transmissible, said National Health Commission deputy director Wu Liangyou, adding that sequencing showed it to be different from the source of an earlier outbreak, and suggesting that the new cases came from a new source from abroad.

Authorities have banned travel agencies from arranging cross-provincial tours that involve regions deemed of higher virus risk, and has imposed nationwide suspension on some travel services linking multiple tourist attractions.

services and infrastructure in such areas, encourage and support people's life and work there, and promote coordination between border defence as well as social and economic development in border areas.

A significant aspect of the new law includes state support for the construction of border towns, improving their functioning and strengthening supporting capacity for the construction.

China in recent years has been strengthening the border infrastructure including the establishment of air, rail and road networks. It also launched a bullet train in Tibet which extends up to Nyingchi, the border town close to Arunachal Pradesh.

Besides that, China also began constructing a number of villages close to the border with proper infrastructure in Tibet which have become an essential and effective part of border defence, state-run Global Times reported on October 19.

India and Bhutan are the two countries with which China is yet to finalise border agreements, while Beijing resolved boundary disputes with 12 other neighbours.

Last week, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the developments along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh have "seriously disturbed" the peace and tranquility in border areas, and this has obviously had an impact on the broader relationship too.

TLP suspends march under agreement with Pakistan govt

BABAR DOGAR
LAHORE, OCTOBER 24

A RADICAL Islamist party agreed Sunday to suspend for three days its march of thousands toward the capital Islamabad after Pakistan agreed to drop pending charges against the party's leader.

Party supporters Saturday departed the eastern city of Lahore, clashing for a second straight day with police who lobbed teargas into the crowd. The group began its journey a day earlier with the goal of reaching Islamabad to pressure the government to release Saad Rizvi, head of the Islamist Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) party. Rizvi was arrested last year amid demonstrations against France over the publication of "blasphemous" caricatures.

Raja Basharat, provincial law minister, told The Associated Press that under the agreement, Pakistan's Punjab province will withdraw charges against Rizvi and release all those detained during the protest march by Tuesday.

Rizvi had been detained preemptively on a charge of inciting people to assemble unlawfully. It was unclear when he would be released.

Basharat also said the agreement stipulates that the federal government will honour a previous agreement with the TLP to address diplomatic ties with France over the publication of the caricatures. AP

CHINESE ASTRONAUT'S 6-MONTH STAY ABOARD THE COUNTRY'S SPACE STATION REVEALS CONFLICTED CULTURAL VALUES TOWARD GENDER

She is breaking glass ceilings in space, but facing sexism on Earth

STEVEN LEE MYERS
OCTOBER 24

COLONEL WANG Yaping is a pilot in the People's Liberation Army's Air Force. She is a space veteran, now making her second trip into orbit. She is set in the coming weeks to be the first Chinese woman to walk in space as China's space station glides around Earth at 17,100 mph.

And yet, as she began a six-month mission last week at the core of China's ambitious space programme, official and news media attention fixated as much on the comparative physiology of men and women, menstruation

cycles, and the five-year-old daughter she has left behind, as they did on her accomplishments. (No one asked about the children of her two male colleagues.)

Shortly before the launch, Pang Zhihao, an official with the China National Space Administration, let it be known that a cargo capsule had supplied the orbiting space station with sanitary napkins and cosmetics.

"Female astronauts may be in better condition after putting on makeup," he said in remarks shown on state-run CCTV.

At 41, Wang is a model of gender equality in a country where Mao Zedong famously said that "women hold up half the sky,"

and the object of an undercurrent of sexism and condescension that courses through Chinese society, business and politics.

The 25-member Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party, the country's ruling political body, includes only one woman, Sun Chunlan. Discrimination remains rampant in the workplace, where women are recruited for their looks and dismissed or demoted when they become pregnant.

A nascent #MeToo movement in China has faced pushback in the courts and from state censors online. A Chinese gold medalist in the shot put at the Tokyo Olympics in August was harangued on air for her "mascu-



Astronauts Ye Guangfu, Wang Yaping and Zhai Zhigang ahead of their trip to the space station. Reuters

line" appearance, as well as her plans for marriage and family.

"A major power like China gives women the chance to go to

space," said Lu Pin, an activist who founded an online forum in China, Feminist Voices, that has since been purged from the internet by

the authorities. "On the other hand, it still tells everyone that, even if you are a woman who has become an astronaut, you still have to play a traditional female role."

In China today, it is rare for women outside the entertainment industry to reach such public prominence as Wang.

When they do manage to break barriers, their accomplishments are often viewed through the prism of gender.

Wang's mission has been treated in official statements and state media as a novelty, even though China sent its first women into space nearly a decade ago. The Soviet Union sent the first woman into orbit in 1963;

Valentina Tereshkova, who spent three days in space and remains the only woman to fly solo. The first American woman, Sally Ride, went up in 1983.

The reaction in China echoes what those earlier trailblazers faced. Ride fielded condescending questions about menstruation, motherhood and whether she intended to wear a bra in orbit. "It's too bad our society isn't further along," she said then.

In a short television report showing her training for the upcoming spacewalk, Wang exuded similar confidence, saying she hoped the mission aboard the new space station, called Tiangong, would be "more brilliant because

of me." She also hinted at the hurdles she had to overcome.

"For me, being an astronaut is not a profession, but a career, and it is such a career that I have an ardent love for," she said. "This love is enough for me to overcome all difficulties, to overcome all barriers and even to sacrifice my own life."

Wang was a backup on the mission in 2012 that carried the first Chinese woman in space, Col. Liu Yang, another military pilot. Liu was part of a crew aboard the spacecraft Shenzhou 9, which spent 20 days in orbit, docking with a prototype of the current space station. A year later, Wang got her chance, riding aboard Shenzhou 10. NYT

14 ECONOMY

NEW LIBERAL REGULATORY REGIME

GIFT City a reinsurance hub in the making: IFSCA allows more players

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

THE COUNTRY is set to become a reinsurance hub with the International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA), India's first single regulator for the Gujarat-based international financial services centre (IFSC), announcing a new liberal regulatory regime for facilitating the formation of various international and Indian insurance businesses in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City).

The regulations for setting up IFSC Insurance Offices (IIOs) and IFSC Insurance Intermediaries Offices (IIOs) were notified by the IFSCA on October 22. The new facilities will help India to develop a global reinsurance hub in the country, competing with offshore financial centres like Singapore,

Health cover premium income rises 29%

Mumbai: With people opting for health policy cover in large numbers in the wake of Covid pandemic, general insurers and standalone health insurance firms have reported a 29.22 per cent increase in health insurance premium to Rs 37,108 crore for the six months ended September 2021, as against Rs 28,716

crore a year ago.

Total non-life industry premium collection for the six months amounted to Rs 1,08,705 crore, up 12.78 per cent from Rs 96,390 crore last year. Motor premium rose by just 4.92 per cent to Rs 29,339 crore from Rs 27,964 crore in the six-month period of last year. **ENS**

ers can procure business from the region around India by setting up an operation in the GIFT City, said an insurance analyst.

Under the new regulations, foreign insurers and reinsurers can set up branch offices as IIOs to undertake insurance or reinsurance business from IFSC either by setting up branches or subsidiaries. Even Indian insurance and reinsurance companies including foreign reinsurance branches (FRBs) registered with Irdai can also set up branch offices to undertake insurance or reinsurance business from IFSC.

In the case of a branch, a player doesn't have to bring in any capital and with regard to subsidiaries, new insurance or reinsurance companies will require a paid-up capital (as per Insurance Act, 1938) of Rs 100 crore for insurance and Rs 200 crore for reinsurance.

The new rules specify that no

onshore assigned capital will be required for foreign insurers or foreign reinsurers setting up IIOs as branches. The assigned capital of \$1.5 million can be maintained in home jurisdictions. Further, there's no onshore solvency requirement for IIO in the IFSC. Also, assigned capital solvency margin will have to be maintained in the home jurisdiction.

"The new regulations have the potential of unlocking opportunities for global insurers and reinsurers. The regulatory framework is very friendly and addresses the aspirations and expectations of the players," said Satyendra Shrivastava, senior partner, Consortia Legal. The new regulations also, for the first time, allow managing general agents under a binding agreement while a delegated authority from foreign insurers or foreign reinsurers will also be able to set up an IIO.

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

FOREIGN PORTFOLIO investors (FPIs) have turned net sellers in Indian market by pulling out Rs 3,825 crore in October so far.

In the past two months, huge buying was witnessed in the debt segment when FPIs had put Rs 13,363 crore in September and Rs 14,376.2 crore in August.

However, so far in October, FPIs have pulled out Rs 1,494 crore, depositors' data showed. From equities, FPIs took out Rs 2,331 crore.

The total net outflow stood at Rs 3,825 crore during October 1-22. V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said, "FPIs have sold software stocks worth Rs 5,406 cr in the first half of October even though the second quarter (Q2) results of software companies were good. So, this is



The BSE in Mumbai. *File*

a clear case of profit booking. FPIs have been buyers in financial services."

Himanshu Srivastava, associate director (manager research) of Morningstar India, said FPIs have preferred to stay on the sidelines, adopt a wait-and-watch approach and continue to book profits along the way.

He further added that there continues to be a concern among FPIs with respect to the tapering

of easy liquidity after the US Federal Reserve hinted of a rate hike sooner than expected.

Also, concerns such as rising oil prices, US bond yields and challenges to the Chinese economy have been on their radar, thus keeping them on tenterhook and preventing them from substantially investing in domestic equities.

"FPI flows October till date was mixed," said Shrikant Chouhan, head (equity research-retail) at Kotak Securities.

Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand reported FPI inflows of \$617 million, \$38 million and \$679 million, respectively. On the other hand, Taiwan and South Korea reported FPI outflows of \$2,956 million and \$2,472 million, respectively, he added.

"Driven by sharp increase in energy prices globally, which can be a key headwinds for the developed and emerging markets," Chouhan said. **WITH PTI**

COVID WATCH TRAVEL

Singapore lifts curbs with a caveat: What are the latest rules?

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE CITY-STATE of Singapore has lifted its ban on travel of its citizens and permanent residents from India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka effective October 26, meaning that people who have been in these countries in the prior 14 days will be allowed to enter Singapore. However, the Singapore government has said the travellers from these countries will be subject to its Category IV border measures.

Singapore from 26 October 2021, 2359 hours. These travellers will be subject to Category IV border measures".

Does Singapore allow travellers from other countries?

Yes, the city-state had allowed people to come in from other countries where Covid was under control. To beat the ban on travellers from India, those wanting to return to Singapore from India were spending 14 days in a third country before flying. In August, Singapore introduced vaccinated travel lane (VTL)

EXPLAINED

What are Category IV border measures and what it means for Indian travellers?

Under this category, which is the strictest of the four restriction levels Singapore has for places without a complete ban, only Singapore citizens, permanent residents and travellers under the Death and Critical Illness Emergency Visits Lane are allowed entry. All other travellers are disallowed entry, including travellers who have received prior entry approvals. Further, eligible travellers will have to take a Covid PCR test 48 hours within departure, take another test upon arrival in Singapore and serve a 10-day quarantine at a dedicated facility.

Why has Singapore made these relaxations now?

The Singapore Ministry of Health said: "... We have reviewed the Covid situation in these countries, and all travellers with a 14-day travel history to Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka prior to departure to Singapore will be allowed to enter and transit through

with Germany and Brunei Darussalam. VTLs are basically extension of travel corridors albeit only for travellers who have been fully vaccinated. VTLs have now been extended to Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the UK, Canada, the US, and South Korea.

Which other countries are allowing travel from India?

A number of other countries including the UAE, Germany, Spain, Maldives, Turkey, and Thailand are allowing Indian travellers to some extent. Last month, Turkish Embassy in New Delhi announced that travellers flying to Turkey from India will no longer have to undergo the mandatory 14-day quarantine upon arrival as long as they are fully vaccinated. In August, Germany reclassified India to "high (Covid) incidence areas", down from the higher travel restriction level of "virus variant areas". With this, it removed the entry ban for travellers from India. Spain is also allowing fully-vaccinated tourists from India.

'Rising auto fuel prices make households budget conscious'

A majority of households (around 60%) in top 10 cities are spending during the ongoing festive season, but the rising prices of petrol and diesel and increased prices of essentials have made them more budget conscious, as per a LocalCircles survey



Most households from these top 10 cities have been sharing in the past 30 days the concerns related to rising prices of fuel and essentials

and their focus on budget when shopping during this festive season in the various online communities on the LocalCircles platform

Methodology: LocalCircles' 'Mood of the Consumer' national survey covered over 61,000 households across top 10 cities — Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Pune, Gurugram, and Noida

Percentage of households planning to spend during festive season 2021 jumped from 30 % in May 2021 to 60 per cent in September 2021, as COVID-19 cases drastically reduced and economic certainty improved in these four months

Residents of seven of the top-10 cities rated budget as their top shopping criteria

Budget is the top criteria for households of Bengaluru, Chennai, Gurugram, Kolkata, Pune and Ahmedabad; while for households in Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai and Noida 'Safety' is more important

Convenience is also quite an important criterion for Noida, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad households

Source: LocalCircles /PTI

16,570 new cos registered in Sept

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

AS MANY as 16,570 new companies were registered in the country in September, taking the total number of active companies to more than 14.14 lakh, according to official data.

Data from the corporate affairs ministry showed that a total of 22,32,699 companies were registered in the country as on September 30.

Of them, 7,73,070 companies were closed, 2,298 were assigned dormant status as per the Companies Act, 2013, 6,944 were under liquidation and 36,110 were in the process of being struck-off.

As per the ministry's monthly information bulletin for the corporate sector, there were 14,14,277 active companies as of September 30.

Citing an analysis registration of new companies during September 2019 to September 2021 period, the ministry said the

Total number of active companies at over 14.14 lakh, as per data from the Corporate Affairs Ministry

data indicates that monthly registration of companies has increased after hitting lowest of 3,209 in April 2020.

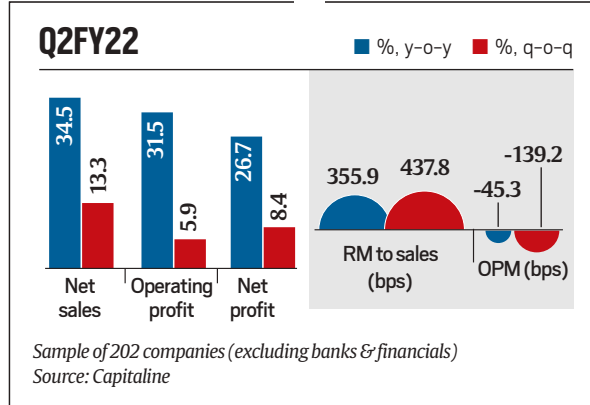
"A total of 16,570 companies were registered in September 2021 as compared to 16,641 in September 2020. An increase (24.68 per cent) in registration of companies has been witnessed in September 2021 over the previous month... A total of 4,535 LLPs were registered in September 2021 as compared to 4,016 LLPs in September 2020," the ministry said. Of 14,14,277 active companies, the ministry said 14,05,098 were limited by shares, 8,872 were limited by guarantee and 307 were unlimited companies. **WITH PTI**

Sales rise; input costs hurt India Inc profit margins in Q2

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

WITH DEMAND coming back across markets, rural and urban, the September quarter saw corporate sales regain momentum. Larger players continued to take away market share from unorganised units. However, inflation in inputs weighed on profits keeping margins in check; some firms took price hikes and cut back on non-essential expenses to protect their margins. Management commentary is reassuring with most expecting demand to look up further in the months ahead. At UltraTech, for instance, the management is confident of strong demand recovery of about 6-8 per cent y-o-y in H2FY22, post the monsoons.

The quarter reflected a resurgence in demand across businesses, albeit on the subdued base of Q2FY21. Revenues at Jubilant Foodworks were up 39 per cent y-o-y while at TVS Motor, they rose 22 per cent y-o-y, led by a 16 per cent increase in the average sales



price. Asian Paints reported a stand-alone revenue growth in decoratives of a smart 36 per cent y-o-y, on the back of a 34 per cent jump in volumes while JSW Steel posted an increase in consolidated sales of 71 per cent y-o-y, as steel prices stayed elevated.

Sales, which were up 35 per cent y-o-y, for a sample of 202 companies (excluding banks and financials), were driven by good realisations and price increases. It must be mentioned, though, that

the sample is skewed by Reliance Industries, whose sales were up 50 per cent y-o-y. Not all companies were able to pass on the rising input costs. At Havells, the price hikes did not match the sharp rise in prices of raw materials resulting in lower gross margins. At Hindustan Unilever, gross margins contracted 140 bps y-o-y while ebitda margins fell 45 bps y-o-y. The ratio of raw materials to sales was up 355 basis points, in the three months to September. **FE**

nouncements, rating downgrades and slumping corporate bonds.

Its debt crisis is also being widely watched by global financial markets concerned about broader contagion.

Facing a deadline on Saturday to pay interest on a US dollar bond, Evergrande sent \$83.5 million to a Citibank trustee account on Thursday, the person with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

That brought relief for investors and regulators worried about fallout for global markets and added to reassurances from Chinese officials that creditors would be protected.

ern city of Guangzhou was proceeding as planned.

Last week's move to pay \$83.5 million in interest on a US dollar bond has bought Evergrande another week to wrestle with a debt crisis looming over the world's second-biggest economy.

Highlighting the stresses on its core business, Evergrande also announced on Friday plans to give future priority to its electric vehicles business over real estate.

Evergrande's woes have reverberated across the \$5 trillion Chinese property sector, which accounts for a quarter of the economy by some metrics, with a string of default an-

Govt proposal at WTO: Fishery subsidies if stocks kept at sustainable level

New Delhi: A member country of the World Trade Organization (WTO) can provide subsidies to its fishermen if it maintains stocks at a biologically sustainable level, according to a proposal submitted by India last month.

India has also proposed that a country engaged in distant water fishing (fishing beyond 200 nautical miles from its sea shores) cannot provide fishery subsidies for 25 years from the date of entry into force of the fisheries subsidies agreement, an official said.

Fishing in distant waters or in some other country's territory is a major problem when it comes to maintaining fish stocks at sustainable levels. Such activities lead to depletion of fish stocks in the oceans and this happens because of use of highly mechanised vessels or boats for industrial fishing.

This agreement is under discussion among the 164 WTO members in Geneva.

The aim of these negotiations is to discipline subsidies with the overall objective to have sustainable fishing and to eliminate IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing subsidies and prohibit subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing.

There are primarily three areas of fishing — territorial waters (12 nautical miles from the sea shore), EEZ (exclusive economic zones — 200 nautical miles), and high seas.

"The present text is unbalanced and only when Indian suggestions (from its proposal) are considered and incorporated suitably, then only it will be a balanced text for negotiations. The present text cannot form the basis of negotiations because it is not balanced. Only when these suggestions are discussed, deliberated and in some manner incorporated in the revised text, then India can start the text-based negotiations," the official said. **PTI**

BRIEFLY CSC, vehicles

New Delhi: CSC E-Governance India said it has been authorised to provide the no-objection certificate for sale of used vehicles. CSC has partnered with National Crime Records Bureau to make this service available.

ICAI-Hindi use

New Delhi: ICAI president Nihar N Jambusaria asked members to promote Hindi and adopt it in their interactions with stakeholders, eliciting criticism from some quarters where concerns were raised about overtones to impose the language. **PTI**



Residential buildings at the construction site of Evergrande Cultural Tourism City, in Jiangsu province, China. *Reuters file*

payment to suppliers and contractors and it was negotiating

to resume building. On Sunday, it said in a post

EMOTIONAL
ROLLERCOASTER

Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game

Cricket meets WWE



First charged the batsman; then charged the bowler. Liton Das sashayed down the track and lofted-drove Lahiru Kumara into the hands of Dasun Shanaka at mid-off. Kumara took off towards the direction of Shanaka, then stopped and charged back towards Das, as though he remembered something he had forgotten to tell the batsman. There were no clear triggers. Fast bowlers hate batsmen charging, maybe it provoked Kumara, who whispered something into Das's ears. Whatever he

told him angered Das, who shoulder-barged Kumara. He was no physical match, though. Das, short and lithe, Kumara barrel-chested and bouncer-like in his luxuriant beard. Kumara pushed him back, and charged forth with bloodshot eyes, as if he was going to KO him, before being dragged back. Das, though, was not in a mood to leave the ground, before some of his teammates came sprinting to take him away to prevent a full-scale fracas. The umpires nearly officiated a wrestling match.

Shrillmaster Rizwan



Pakistan wicket keepers have been a thorn in the flesh of the opposition over the years... think Rasheed Latif, Moin Khan, Sarfaraz Ahmed. Not the most classy, but clever batsmen who possessed a get

out of jail shot to complement their pushes, nudges and sweeps. And they come as ready-made busy bodies. The latest avatar being Mohammad Rizwan, unorthodox with the bat. Rizwan was in the thick of things, taking two sharp diving catches and milking the leg-side as an opener in the chase and running like a hare when he chose to. When he didn't want to run, he was like a drill-master. His shrill 'no' is one of the loudest in the game. It was like he was admonishing his captain and opening partner Babar Azam. Pakistan's best batsman trusted his 'keeper's judgement just like he placed faith in him during a productive opening partnership.

ICC
T20 WORLD CUP
2021



Babar, Captain Cool

How do you celebrate your game-changing 50 in an India-Pakistan game? If you are Babar Azam you barely lift your bat and try to hide behind your batting partner. Unlike any of Pakistan's captains, Babar has a subtle and nuanced approach to his batting and also his captaincy. He is measured in his batting and also in his communication with the players. When Shaheen Shah Afridi was having a horror of a last over, he didn't throw up his arms or shout at him for the totally uncalled-for overthrow. Babar is from the Kane Williamson and Eoin Morgan school of leadership, he has a restrained aggression, such a rare gift. While his opening partner Rizwan would get frustrated on missing out the countless short balls that the Indian bowlers bowled, Babar would walk down and talk to his junior. On one occasion, he actually hit a ball over the fence as if to show Rizwan, how it was done. Considering how important the game has been for Pakistan, Babar gave a template to his team how they should approach these pressure situations.



Virat's throwback

However hard this slam bang format tries to keep conventional strokes out of the game, Virat Kohli keeps them relevant. Playing text book cricket deep in the T20 innings as Indian fans wanted him to smash the ball out of the ground. In the 16th over Hassan Ali kept him in the crease by bowling short. Kohli's run flow wasn't curtailed. Of his two boundaries, the second had Test cricket followers drooling. Kohli leaned into the ball and placed it between extra cover and mid off. Both were fooled in thinking they had a chance to stop the ball, such was the perfect placement. The bat didn't flow down with force but was just placed with such precision that the ball hit it in the middle as it was coming down. Kohli showed you didn't need to be a slogger to be relevant in T20 cricket.

Learnt, forgotten

Virat Kohli and Hasan Ali were locked in a duel for the majority of the Pakistani pacer's spell, with the Indian captain taking the bragging rights. Kohli, who scored four of his five boundaries off Ali, was reading the bowler like a book. Understandably then, he chose to share some of the knowledge with partner Ravindra Jadeja. After crossing over for a single, Kohli turned towards Jadeja and rolled his fingers across an imaginary ball, gesturing for an incoming slower ball. The next delivery was perhaps a blip. Ali fired it in short and down the leg side, and Jadeja gleefully helped it over the short fine leg. Buoyed by the boundary, Jadeja forgot Kohli's lesson. Ali then bowled it full and slow, fooling Jadeja with the change of pace, who was early on the shot and holed out to deep midwicket.

Salah leads Liverpool's
rou t at Old Trafford;
Real win Clasico 2-1

AFP/REUTERS
MANCHESTER, OCTOBER 24

FOR THE first time in Premier League history, United trailed 4-0 at half-time and failed to score in a hopelessly one-sided contest. The Red Devils have now taken a run of one point from a possible 12 in the league.

Naby Keita started the rout before Diogo Jota doubled Liverpool's lead inside 15 minutes. Mohamed Salah then took centre stage to take his tally for the season to 15 goals in 12 appearances and become the top-scoring African player in Premier League history in the process. To round off a miserable day for United, Paul Pogba lasted less than 15 minutes as a second-half substitute as he was shown a straight red card for a reckless lunge that forced Keita to leave the pitch on a stretcher.

Liverpool's first victory in front of a crowd at Old Trafford under Jurgen Klopp moves them back above Manchester City into second, just a point behind leaders Chelsea.

By contrast, United's hopes of a first league title since 2013 already look over as they remain eight points off the leaders.

That gap is likely to grow in the coming weeks with Tottenham and City to come in the next fortnight before an international break.

Whether Solskjaer will still be in charge come November is now in serious doubt as he has completely failed to form a balanced team from a talented collection of star players.

Salah teed up Keita to open the floodgates after just five minutes with a composed low finish past David de Gea. United came from 2-0 down at the break to beat Atalanta 3-2 in the Champions League on Wednesday.

But former midfielder Paul Scholes' warning after that match that Liverpool would be 4-0 up in 45 minutes if handed the same space to attack into came to fruition. Jota justified his selection ahead of Sadio Mane as he stretched to turn in Trent Alexander-Arnold's cross to double Liverpool's advantage. Salah has now scored in 10 consecutive games and overtook Didier Drogba with his 105th Premier League goal when the Egyptian turned home Keita's cut-back with the United defence all at sea.

Cristiano Ronaldo was lucky to avoid a red card as United's frustrations bubbled over in first-half stoppage time when he was booked for lashing out at Curtis Jones in a sign of what was to come as the home side lost their discipline. Liverpool inflicted further punishment before the break when Salah smashed home his 14th goal in 12 games this season at De Gea's near post. Salah then completed his hat-trick five minutes into the second-half.

Ronaldo thought he had pulled a goal back only for a VAR review to catch him in an offside position. Another VAR check saw the end of



Mohamed Salah has now scored in 10 consecutive games. Reuters

| SCORELINE | |
|------------|-------------------------|
| Man United | 0 Liverpool |
| | 5 |
| | N Keita 5' |
| | D Jota 13' |
| | M Salah 38', 45+5', 50' |

Pogba's brief cameo for a studs-up challenge on Keita that forced the Guinean off.

Alaba strike on Clasico debut

Barcelona: Real Madrid beat Barcelona 2-1 in the first Clasico of the season in front of 86,422 fans at the Camp Nou on Sunday after a sensational strike from defender David Alaba and a late goal from Lucas Vazquez gave Carlo Ancelotti's side three points.

Barcelona controlled possession in the first half but Real was lethal on the counter-attack, taking the lead when Alaba started a flowing move with a tackle and finished it at the other end with a left-footed drive from the edge of the box. Barcelona manager Ronald Koeman brought on Philippe Coutinho at half-time while strikers Sergio Aguero and Luuk de Jong were also thrown on in the second half as they searched for an equaliser.

With seven minutes of injury time added on, Real doubled its lead when Marc-Andre ter Stegen saved a shot from Marco Asensio from another counter-attack but Vazquez was quicker than Gerard Pique to pounce on the rebound to score.

The home side got a goal back in the 97th minute when Sergino Dest crossed to the Aguero in the six-yard box and the Argentine tapped in for his first goal in a Barcelona shirt.

BRIEFLY

Boxing: New-look
India eye strong show

Belgrade: With a largely fresh-faced squad, the Indian men's boxing team would be in for a challenging time at the AIBA world championships starting here on Monday, up against a top-notch field but nonetheless hopeful of equalling or bettering the two medals secured in the previous edition. World no.1 Amit Panghal, who claimed the country's maiden silver at the event's 2019 edition, and Manish Kaushik, a bronze-winner from the same year, are absent from the squad as they recover from an underwhelming Olympic campaign. Asian medal-winners Deepak Kumar (51 kg), Shiva Thapa (63.5 kg), and Sanjeet (92 kg) form the experienced core of the new-look that flew off to the Serbian capital on October 20.

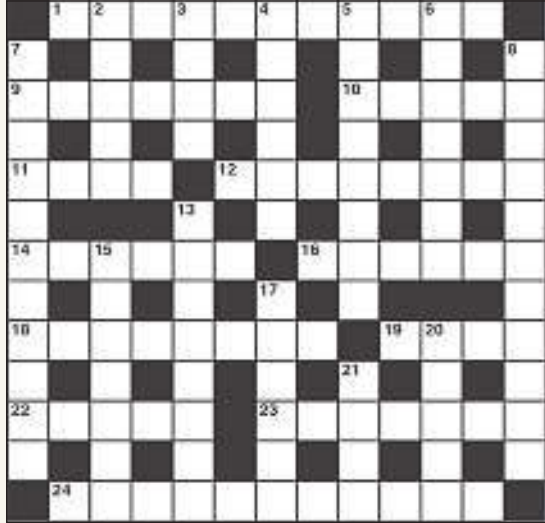
Jamil to be first Indian
head coach of ISL club

Guwahati: Khalid Jamil has become the first full-time Indian head coach in the history of the Indian Super League with NorthEast United FC offering him the top job ahead of the upcoming season. Jamil, 44, guided the Highlanders to the semi-finals after taking over in an interim capacity from Gerard Nus last season. Jamil oversaw a remarkable reversal of fortunes last season as the team, after a spate of defeats, made the last four following an unbeaten nine-match run. A former midfielder, Jamil is an experienced campaigner in Indian football having coached the likes of Mohun Bagan and East Bengal. His biggest success story though came at Aizawl FC, guiding the Mizoram club to a stunning I-League triumph in 2017.

Hockey: Roundglass
Punjab defeat
SAI-Academy Kolkata

Bhopal: Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy, Raja Karan Hockey Academy, Namdhari XI and Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy stormed into the semi-finals of the 1st Hockey India junior men academy national championship on Sunday. In the first quarter-final, Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy completed a 4-3 win in the shootout against SAI-Academy (Kolkata), following a 2-2 draw in the regulation time. Despite taking the lead with goals from Gursharanpreet Singh (29') and Savraj Singh (30'), Roundglass Punjab were pegged back through goals from Manish Yadav (33') and Suresh Mahto (41'). PTI

CROSSWORD 4569



ACROSS

- 1 Band leader waves at customers (11)
- 9 Screen has red centre and unusual rose edging (7)
- 10 Stray around in the woods perhaps (5)
- 11 A unit in the Salvation Army East of Suez (4)
- 12 Makes a shambles of a Schubert variation (8)
- 14 Points to one of several contemporary children as being bright (6)
- 16 Squirm and turn whiter (6)
- 18 Things one eats or wastes (8)
- 19 Tail cut to a point (4)
- 22 Alert for a change in the future (5)
- 23 I adopt a Latin form of language (7)
- 24 A direct route provided immediately (11)

DOWN

- 2 Choice of two keys I found in the kennel (5)
- 3 Prepare for take-off? (4)
- 4 Sound cover for some old entertainment (6)
- 5 It helps if you require a frame up (4,4)
- 6 Beg for an adjustment in net rate (7)
- 7 Lets one down lightly (6,1,4)
- 8 Looking for golden opportunities? (11)
- 13 I go after the winner with a very long ruler (8)
- 15 Five players still not inwardly disheartened (7)
- 17 Intentionally exasperating? (6)
- 20 Feature on a foreign land (5)
- 21 The ultimate in salt shakers (4)

Solutions Crossword 4568: Across: 1 Friend, 4 Sporadic, 9 Rating, 10 Profound, 12 Eyed, 13 Stick, 14 Plot, 17 Trade returns, 20 Brilliantine, 23 Oath, 24 Acute, 25 Lava, 28 Stay away, 29 Spoils, 30 Leavened, 31 Pranks. Down: 1 Forfeits, 2 In the bag, 3 Nuns, 5 Parachutists, 6 Rifle, 7 Double, 8 Cadets, 11 Steeplechase, 15 Yearn, 16 Inane, 18 Citation, 19 Relapses, 21 Tonsil, 22 Strata, 26 Game, 27 Spar.

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 quip.
All the people like us are ____, and everyone else is ____ - Rudyard Kipling (2...4)

CFNEE



CHITY



CGILTH



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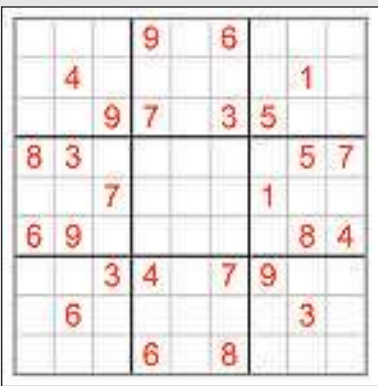


SOLUTION: FENCE, TITCH, LUTCH, AWINGH

SUDOKU 4635

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 4634



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
Another week, another Monday, and what this means for you is a sensible, efficient and organised beginning. Underneath it all, the Moon is in a supportive mood, so everything needs to be taken one step at a time. Yet you can count on getting your own way at home.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
Six out of a possible ten planets are in directly supportive positions, backing your interests. That's not a bad tally! You should be able to take life at your own pace today, so anyone who tries to pressurise you could be out of luck. Make the most of any passing good fortune.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Home and domestic matters are bound to take up a fair bit of your time and, even if you're at work, the best way to get on with colleagues will be to imagine you're all part of one big family. Not a perfectly happy one necessarily, but a family nonetheless.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Make serious plans and take practical decisions. It has never been more important to look only at the significant details and put all your hopes, wishes and fantasies to one side. Don't be perturbed by delays. But do keep a very close watch on every detail concerning cash.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Although you may be preoccupied with the trivia of material survival, dwelling over questions such as how to save the odd bit of cash here and there, this is in fact a somewhat optimistic and adventurous time. All that is asked of you is that you take the right decisions.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept 23)
The Moon is well situated, strong, supportive and sympathetic. This is a welcome symbolic indication that you can have it all your own way at home, but only if you face up to hidden problems and deep undercurrents. People who think differently should soon be made to apologise for their errors.

LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)
Something secret could be bothering you today. Just what this could be is far from clear, but it could be connected with regret for affairs which didn't work out. Stop being such a perfectionist and realise that you can't relive the past, at least, not now.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)
Social influences are looking very pronounced today, if a little serious. What you need from friends now seems to be a sense that they're going to look after you, or provide emotional security. I know this may be asking too much, but I'm sure you can cope.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)
Career and professional affairs now require their fair share of attention, all the more so if you are laying your own ideas on the line. With just a little shove in the right direction it looks as if your past efforts could be about to bring the desired rewards.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
After last week's energetic stars, this week's point to a shift of gear. You may therefore feel that you have a right to sit down and put your feet up, but any spare time is likely to be disrupted by the need to swing straight back into action.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
You still seem to imagine nobody else understands you. The key is to listen very carefully to what your imagination is trying to tell you rather than always trying to ignore it. There's just no time to stick your head in the sand, so don't.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
You always find criticism difficult, for you allow it to undermine your confidence. However, nothing would do you more good at the present time than a little friendly advice. Romantically, by the way, you could soon be on to a total winner.



PLAYING TODAY

7.30pm: Afghanistan vs Scotland

Live on Star Sports Network

India take the knee, Pak have hands on heart before showdown



India took the knee in support of the BLM movement for the first time. Reuters

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
DUBAI, OCTOBER 24

ON THE world stage, India took the knee. After they were asked to bat after Pakistan won the toss, the Indian players did it to lend support to the Black Lives Matter movement. Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul took the knee inside the playing area, while the other players did it outside the boundary rope, near the dug-out.

Before the first ball was bowled, Rohit had a chat with Pakistan captain Babar Azam followed by the gesture to support the movement against racism and any sort of discrimination. Pakistan players had hands on heart, as the two Asian giants ensured that on a grand stage, their voices were heard.

Captain Virat Kohli said the decision was communicated to them by the team management. "That was communicated to us by the management. The Pakistan team agreed to pay their tribute to the same cause. We accepted our side of things and that was how it was decided," Kohli said after the match.

Was this a one-off gesture or will India continue to take the knee going ahead? "We have done it for now. Will see in the future," a team source told *The Indian Express*. The idea was to send out India's anti-racism stance. England and West Indies also took the knee on Saturday, before their Super 12 opener.

The practice of taking the knee has become widespread in sport, mostly football, since 2020 after the death of George Floyd in the United States. The English Premier League led the way and also the England football team. The gesture, though, originally came from American footballer Colin Kaepernick taking the knee during the US national anthem ahead of an NFL game in 2016.

Before the Euros this year, England manager Gareth Southgate had confirmed that his players would take the knee in every game. Harry Kane and company walked the talk, in some cases, ignoring boos from a section of fans.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), however, had initially banned the participants at this year's Olympics from taking the knee, citing Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter that prohibits any kind of 'demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda'. Later, the ban was lifted and the Great Britain women's football team took the knee before every game.

The England men's football team performing the gesture during the Euros had invited criticism from certain politicians. UK Home Secretary Priti Patel called it "gesture politics" but was called out by England centre-half Tyrone Mings, while Marcus Rashford, Bukayo Saka and Jadon Sancho suffered racist abuse following England's defeat in the final.

"You don't get to stoke the fire at the beginning of the tournament by labelling our anti-racism message as 'Gesture Politics' & then pretend to be disgusted when the very thing we're campaigning against, happens," Mings had tweeted, replying to a post from Patel.

Lone ranger Kohli helps India avoid total capitulation after early wickets

SANDIP G
OCTOBER 24

IT WAS as if a switch had been flicked. Virat Kohli jaunted down the pitch and blasted Shaheen Shah Afridi over long-on in the fifth over.

The shot was not unusual, but the situation was. India had lost both their openers in the most high-pressure game of the tournament, and one wouldn't expect the captain to unfurl a stroke so fraught with risk. But the shot stoked imagination and possibilities, and as always when Kohli bats, a rush of spontaneous hope. Was it a counterpunch? Or was it his new batting template? A bristling new avatar in his T20 captaincy farewell.

The thrill the stroke instigated was spontaneous — the crowd went rapturous, it surged, the energy crackled; Afridi suddenly looked bedevilled; Pakistan captain Babar Azam looked ponderous, even as the broadcasters began replaying the shot on a loop. Anticipation and excitement brimmed and the audience could sniff something special set to unfold. A sequel to the only Desert Storm in the history of the game? Or maybe, even better? Or maybe, an end to Kohli's

EXPRESS AT T20 WORLD CUP



SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
DUBAI, OCTOBER 24

PAKISTAN'S WIN was so convincing that even their die-hard fans went momentarily speechless before going full throttle in their celebration. By then, as Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan made a mockery of Indian bowling, Indian fans had already started to leave the stadium. Before this game, Pakistan had never beaten India in a World Cup. When eventually they turned the tables, they won by 10 wickets, with 13 balls to spare.

The evening dew in Dubai made the job difficult for the Indian bowlers. Also, they were defending a pretty modest 151/7. And yet, India were completely outplayed on the night. The reaction from the Pakistan openers after the victory suggested that they meant business. Rizwan restricted his celebration to a fist pump. Azam offered a silent prayer before the whole squad joined for a team huddle. Early days in the T20 World Cup, but it looked like Pakistan have come here to make a statement.

On Sunday, Shaheen Shah Afridi's bowling would have made even Wasim Akram proud. The arrogance that Azam and Rizwan oozed in chasing down the target offered a throwback to Javed Miandad's dominance over India in the 1980s. But even in their halcyon days, Pakistan never beat India by 10 wickets. This was their crowning glory and India's lowest point in this rivalry.

On match eve, Azam had spoken about how records were meant to be broken. Pakistan's intensity in their pre-match warm-up served as an indication about their resolve. Then, Afridi arrived, firing on all cylinders.

Fast and straight, and some late movement into the right-handers. This has been Afridi's template with the new ball in limited-overs cricket. An ESPN*CricInfo* stat says that since making his T20I debut in 2018, the left-arm quick took a wicket in the first over 20 times in 61 innings before this game. On Sunday, he got his 21st, removing Rohit Sharma for a golden duck. It was almost an unplayable delivery for an opener, facing his first ball.

KL Rahul was done in by another in-docker, once again the ball shaping in and going through the gate. Such a frontal assault was always going to force India on the back foot. Virat Kohli's fine half-century and Rishabh Pant's 39 off 30 balls saved India from more humiliation.

This was a game for Afridi to treasure, returning with the wickets of Rohit, Rahul and Kohli. He was the showstopper, aided by a collective bowling performance; from Haris Rauf to Shadab Khan in the middle overs.

The only solace for the Indian fans here would be Kohli's innings, how he weathered the storm and gradually returned to form, staying true to his conventional stroke-play. But early wickets restricted him in terms of upping the ante. A Kohli half-century with a strike rate of 116 is uncommon. But the India captain had to take the game deep.

Also, not often does Kohli get overshadowed by opposition batsmen in limited-overs cricket after scoring a half-century. Once again, this game was different.

Pakistan's innings was a heady mixture of Azam's class and Rizwan's smash. In stark contrast to Afridi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar's first over was pedestrian. Rizwan took a four and a six off the medium pacer to get going.

century drought? Or the greatest T20 knock off all time?

Alas, it was not to be. Alas, it was never meant to be. Kohli reverted to characteristic Kohli mode, the swift-running, the field-manipulating, the gap-piercing, classical genius. It could have been easy to get carried away and let the rushing adrenaline dictate him and attempt more macho strokes. But Kohli never makes an attempt at pretence. In any format.

He cannot morph into an eye-blinking hitter like Kieron Pollard or a head-turning six-hitter like Rohit Sharma. Just as he cannot stonewall like Cheteshwar Pujara or Rahul Dravid. Certainly, in the course of a career, great batsmen end up fiddling with different roles. But the primary nature, the instinct remains the same, which for Kohli is batting sensibly, finding solutions and answers.

The cure to India's feverish start was some stability, more so after they lost Suryakumar Yadav to a rather loose stroke. The next three batsmen are more power-hitters than stabilisers. But before they could take off, if at all the circumstances afforded them that freedom, they required a platform, an axis on which they could revolve. Kohli was that axis. Without that un-



Pakistan pacer Shaheen Afridi clean bowled India opener KL Rahul in the third over of the match. Reuters

Mohammed Shami bowled the next over, landed one on good length, but Azam stood tall and unleashed a gorgeous cover drive. Kohli was quick to bring Jasprit Bumrah into the attack. Varun Chakravarthy, too, came with his mystery. They stemmed the run-flow to start with, but Shami had a bad day at the office. Pakistan's Powerplay score was 43 for no loss vis-à-vis India's 36/3. That's where basically the game was won and lost.

Class personified

Rizwan strong-armed to an unbeaten 79 off 55 balls. Azam was class personified in his 68 not out off 52 balls. And yet again, India missed a sixth bowler. Hardik Pandya was never going to bowl, and now there's a question mark over his further participation in the tournament after being hit on the right shoulder while batting. Ishan Kishan fielded for him and in hindsight, the Indian team management might have missed a trick by not including him in the playing eleven at the expense of Suryakumar Yadav. On the heels of three consecutive T20 half-centuries, Kishan was probably well placed to make his good form count.

Also, as the two Pakistan openers gradually figured out Varun, and Ravindra Jadeja didn't look potent in this game, Yuzvendra Chahal's leg-spin was missed. India made a U-turn by completely ditching wrist spin against Pakistan.

As he was leaving the stadium, Zaheer Abbas preferred to keep emotions at arm's length. "This is cricket and today was Pakistan's day. They put India under pressure from the outset and never released it," the former Pakistan captain told *The Indian Express*.

India lost the battle all right, but the war (read, the tournament) is still to be won. At the post-match presentation, Kohli admitted that they were outplayed by Pakistan. But his team is good at making comebacks.



Virat Kohli's gritty 57 helped India put up a respectable total. AP

flinching axis of assurance, India could have crumbled embarrassingly like the West Indies the other night. The night ended in blushes, but without Kohli it could have been catastrophic.

Flexible wrists, supple shoulder and stout heart, Afridi's body of work

SRIRAM VEERA
OCTOBER 24

"SHAHEEN, *KABHI toh has ley tu!*" (Laugh sometimes!) Shaheen Afridi's coach Ayaz Akbar Yousafzai would often tell the pacer when he was about 14-15. On Sunday, Shaheen would almost let out a smile, as he stood feet wide apart and air-kissed in his signature style after knocking out Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul in the space of 10 balls. If not for Virat Kohli, it might well have been the end of India as that was a Thank you, come again, kind of special spell.

The big jaw, the big forehead, and that centre-parting hair buffed up on top make for easy gifs and jokes but Yousafzai has always focussed on Afridi's limbs. "The shoulders, hands, and the wrist," Yousafzai had told *The Indian Express*. "It's that flexibility I am talking about." It's quite something to watch. The wrist flexes at the last instant, as if he is doing it in a slow motion demonstration, as if it's a separate piece of arm, attached as an add-on feature in a toy. The wrists take over in the final moment and give it a quite fierce whip. The wrist snaps and the ball swings.

Rohit Sharma would know now. There was no surprise that the first ball was the full in-swing, almost on a yorker length. Anyone who has followed even the highlights of his wickets package in the recent Pakistan T20 domestic would know that's what he does. Knowing is one thing and tackling another altogether. The wrist snap seems to have the batsmen confused about the length, if not the direction itself. And Sharma stumbled to his exit, just about taking the

UNPLAYABLE

50 Number of wickets Shaheen Shah Afridi has taken in Powerplays in the last three years, more than any other player during this period.

This is the first time we've beaten India and I feel very proud. I knew it would be good for us if I got early wickets and that worked out. My plan was to get as much swing as possible. Generally, it doesn't swing a lot here (in Dubai) so, I had tried it during nets yesterday (Saturday).

SHAHEEN SHAH AFRIDI

front leg out of the way but unable to put any wood in the path of the leather. In the last couple or so years, Sharma has overhauled his batting to ensure that he doesn't lose balance by pressing that front foot too far across as he used to do earlier. And to quite this Sharma 2.0 with that nipbacker is quite an achievement.

"He was a natural like that. He had almost everything else apart from a smooth run-up. Inswinging, outswinging, hitting the deck ... he had it all."

Then that ball to Rahul. More than the in-

swing, it was the seam movement that did in Rahul. "His wrist-snap can allow the ball to swing and seam off the surface," Yousafzai would say. Rahul also must have known by then what Afridi can do. Yet, he couldn't do much after thrusting his foot too far across. From there he contorted his body and wrists to try to get the bat in the way but the ball too contorted and squeezed in to hit the balls.

"Watch out for the flexible shoulder, also," Yousafzai would say. "He can use it a lot more when he wants to hit the deck." We saw that with the wicket of Kohli in the 19th over. The ball leaped off the back of length and Kohli couldn't get on top of the bounce with his pull. Rarely do left-arm fast bowlers be effective hit-the-deckers. South Africa's Brett Shultz was one but he didn't last long. Usually, the lefties are more slinky, swingy, curlers. Afridi can, if he desires, operate as an effective hit-the-deck er.

Young Afridi had just one problem. With his run-up. "Thak jaata that (get tired) with his run-up. For a tall boy, the strides were important. For any bowler, but for someone tall, it becomes that more crucial — and can upset rhythm if it's too long or too short a stride. We worked a lot on it," the coach says.

"Ayaz bhai, I will play for Pakistan" Afridi had stunned the coach as a 15-year old. As the then head coach at Pakistan's age-group camps held for teenagers, Yousafzai remembers the confidence. "He said it matter-of-factly. Sometimes, kids say na, I want to play for Pakistan — this wasn't like that. He wasn't telling me his wish. He was confident." He is not only playing for Pakistan but threatening to win games for them on his own and carrying the great romantic tradition of Pakistan's left-arm swingers.

hands defanged the detonating hand-grenades. There seemed to be a Test match within a T20 game.

It was only after Rishabh Pant's exit that Kohli changed gears. He picked the perfect bowler too — Hasan Ali with his medium pace all-sorts. Change of pace and scrambled seam cutters are never going to torment Kohli. Even here, his aggression was restrained. He waited for semi-ordinary balls. Like a leg-side ball that he whipped through fine-leg; or a ball later, a classical cover drive off a fuller ball. In his next over, he pilaged Ali through extra cover, his last four before his departure.

Nit-pickers and fair-weather fans would quip at his strike rate (116), an invariable outcome of a prolonged

quiet period in the middle overs. The dearth of boundaries, the seeming lack of 'intent' and calculated risk-taking. But Kohli was just being Kohli, figuring out a solution to the problem that had unfolded in front of him. The problems his teammates failed to solve, though his best efforts turned out to be inadequate, an act of defiance gone waste. The six turned out to be all but an anti-climax.

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