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named in Pandora
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Axar, Dhawan and
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IN BRIEF



Govt. announces plan to
tackle pollution in winter

NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced a 10-point action plan to combat pollution during winter when the Capital's air quality reaches hazardous levels every year. Mr. Kejriwal, however, accused the Centre and governments of neighbouring States of not having done anything to stop stubble burning.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

No State can deny ₹50,000 ex gratia: SC

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Monday said the State governments should not deny the ex gratia of ₹50,000 each to the families of persons who died of COVID-19 merely on the grounds that their death certificates did not show the virus as the cause of death. The court underscored this point while approving the guidelines proposed by the NDMA for grant of ex gratia.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

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Farmers raise pitch, protest with bodies

Tension eases in Tikonia only after BKU leader convinces them about Govt. action against the accused

OMAR RASHID

LAKHIMPUR KHERI

A day after four farmers were mowed to death in a violent incident involving vehicles in the convoy of a Union Minister, hundreds of farmers predominantly from the Sikh community gathered at the site of the incident in Tikonia.

For several hours, the farmers parked a tractor next to the ground where the incident took place, and kept the bodies of the four farmers on display in freezer caskets. Farmers said they would not move from the site and would not carry out the last rites till their demands of action against Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Kumar Mishra and his son Ashish were met. Religious slogans and chants resonated at the site.

"The Minister and his son will not be spared... He will lose his ministerial post," Mr. Tikit assured the protesters.

The BKU leader also said that an ultimatum had been issued to the government that if it did not take satisfactory action till the funeral rituals of the dead were completed in 10 to 12 days, a mahapanchayat would be called.

Following his assurances, officials of the district administration arrived at the site and moved the bodies into ambulances to take them to the district hospital for autopsy and the farmers and

their leaders dispersed.

An FIR under Sections 302 and 304-A of the Indian Penal Code has been lodged against the Minister's son, who the farmers alleged was in one of the vehicles that ploughed into the waiting farmers, and 10 to 15 unknown persons.

Distraught kin

Among the dead, wrapped in a BKU flag, was the body of Lovepreet Singh, 20, a resident of Chaukhat Farm in Lakhimpur Kheri. His mother, Sukhwinder Kaur, was inconsolable, weeping and kissing the glass casket inside which the body lay.

Lovepreet, a farmer like most other Sikhs in the fertile Terai belt of U.P., was the only son of his parents. His brother-in-law Makkan Singh questioned the narrative of Union Minister Mishra that



Escalating tensions: Farmers mourning the death of fellow farmers at Tikonia village in Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh, on Monday. ▪AP

Opposition slams U.P. govt.

The Opposition parties on Monday accused the Yogi Adityanath government of 'throttling democracy' by preventing their leaders from visiting Lakhimpur Kheri. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, SP president Akhilesh Yadav, BSP leader Satish Chandra Mishra, AAP's Sanjay Singh, were stopped from visiting the site. Chhattisgarh and Punjab CMs Bhupesh Baghel and Charanjit Singh Channi were barred from landing at the Lucknow airport. ▶ PAGE 9

BJP's guarded response

The BJP did not respond officially to Lakhimpur Kheri incident, allowing the State unit and Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra to speak instead. The party's MP Varun Gandhi called for restraint and patience, in a letter to Chief Minister. The RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh said in a statement, "We condemn the incident and want a fair, independent inquiry and suitable punishment to those who are guilty." ▶ PAGE 9

...Why are there protests when the laws have been kept in abeyance? It is intriguing, there is no Act in place at the moment. The Act is stayed. The govt. has assured it will not give effect to it... So what is this protest for?
SUPREME COURT BENCH

has assured it will not give effect to it... So what is this protest for?" Justice Khanwilkar, flanked by Justice C.T. Ravikumar on the Bench, asked Kisan Mahapanchayat, a farmers' organisation.

The farmers' body wanted to sit on a 'satyagraha' at the Jantar Mantar.

Justice Khanwilkar said the farm laws were passed by Parliament. "The government is also bound by the laws passed by Parliament..." We are on principle here, once you go to court, how can the same party say that matter is before court, nevertheless I will still protest," the judge observed.

The court, in its order, decided to frame legal questions in the issue. The Bench said it would first decide whether the right to protest was an "absolute right".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

SC lashes out at farmers' groups

'No accountability when stir turns violent'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday lashed out at farmers' organisations for continuing the protests against the Centre's new farm laws, saying when the agitation snowballed into violence as in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri, where eight people were killed, "nobody takes responsibility".

"When such incidents happen, causing deaths, loss to property and damage, nobody takes responsibility," Justice A.M. Khanwilkar observed.

Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal described the violence on Sunday as an "unfortunate incident". The top law officer for the government said the court should make it very clear that protests should not continue when the challenge against the farm laws were in the highest court of the country.

"No more unfortunate incidents like this should take place... The protests must stop," Mr. Venugopal, supported by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, submitted.

"But how can there be protests when the matter is sub judice here? Why are there protests when the laws have been kept in abeyance? It is intriguing, there is no Act in place at the moment. The Act is stayed. The Government

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Govt. moots changes to Forest Conservation Act

Amendment proposed to absolve agencies involved in national security and border infra projects

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The Union Government has proposed absolving agencies involved in national security projects and border infrastructure projects from obtaining prior forest clearance from the Centre as part of amendments to the existing Forest Conservation Act (FCA). The FCA, which first came in 1980 and was amended in 1988, requires such permission.

The proposed amendment is part of a larger rationalising of existing forest laws, the go-



Green nod: There is also a plan to exempt land acquired before 1980 by public sector bodies. ▪RITU RAJ KONWAR

vernment has said. The document is open to public discussion for 15 days after which it could be readied for Cabinet

and parliamentary approval.

There is also a plan in the

document that is now available

on the Environment Mi-

nistry's website, to exempt land acquired before 1980 – before the FCA came into effect – by public sector bodies such as the Railways. Currently, the document notes, there was "strong resentment" among several Ministries on how the Act was being interpreted over the right of way of railways, highways.

As of today, a landholding agency (Rail, NHAI, PWD, etc.) is required to take approval under the Act and pay stipulated compensatory levies such as Net Present Value (NPV), Compensatory Af-

orestation (CA), etc. for use of such land which was originally been acquired for non-forest purposes.

The Environment Ministry also proposes adding a clause to make offences under the modified Act punishable with simple imprisonment for a period which may extend to one year and make it cognisable and non-bailable. They also propose provisions for penal compensation to make good for the damage already done.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

SC seeks model pact between builder, buyer

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on October 4 stepped in to protect homebuyers from exploitation by builders who delay transfer of possession and often re-draft delivery schedules. A Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and B.V. Nagarathna issued notice on a petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay on the lack of a "uniform or model" form for agreements.

DETAILS ▶ PAGE 10

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Stalin writes to CMs of 12 States on NEET

'States have primacy in education'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Mustering support for his government's fight against the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday wrote to his counterparts in 12 States, calling for united efforts to restore the primacy of the States in administering the education sector as originally envisaged in the Constitution.

His letter was addressed to the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana and West Bengal. "Our considered position

has always been that the Union government's decision to introduce the NEET goes against the very spirit of federalism and violates the constitutional balance of power by curbing the rights of the State governments to decide on the method of admission to the medical institutions founded, established and run by them," Mr. Stalin said in the letter, a copy of which was circulated to the media.

In this regard, we consider that the State governments need to assert their constitutional right and position in deciding the method of admission to their higher educational institutions," he said.

IN BRIEF

Eight children forced into begging rescued

NEW DELHI
Eight children — who were forced into begging — were rescued from Bhikaji Cama Place, said Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights. "Seven kids were aged between 6 and 17 years and one was 1.5 years old. They were given medical care and COVID testing at the office of SDM Vasant Vihar," a statement read.

Jain inspects ongoing road reconstruction drive

NEW DELHI
Public Works Department Minister Satyendar Jain conducted a surprise inspection to take stock of the ongoing road reconstruction drive being carried out by the Delhi government on Monday. He told officials to fill all potholes by October 20.

Banks told to integrate services with VAHAN

NEW DELHI
The Transport Department on Monday issued a circular instructing vehicle loan provider banks, financial institutions and Non-Banking Financial Companies to integrate their services with the VAHAN portal latest by October 31.

AAP govt. announces winter action plan to tackle pollution

Kejriwal appeals to Centre to combat stubble burning, convert vehicles to CNG

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced a 10-point action plan to combat pollution during winters when the Capital's air quality reaches hazardous levels every year.

Mr. Kejriwal, however, accused the Centre and governments of neighbouring States of not having done anything to stop stubble burning.

From appealing that stubble burning be combatted, he also demanded that the Centre and States ensure that vehicles coming to Delhi should be converted to CNG and industries operating in the NCR run on PNG.

Measures taken

The AAP government had, since coming to power, started supplying electricity 24x7 which had eliminated the use of generator sets, taken concrete steps against dust pollution and shut down two thermal plants operating in



Workers burn stubble on the banks of the Yamuna on Monday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

the city.

"The Delhi government found a solution to stop stubble burning in the form of bio-decomposer. To prevent stubble burning, the bio-decomposer solution will be sprayed throughout Delhi for free by us. If the governments of Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh also use this solution properly, then stubble burning pollution can be eliminated," he said.

India's first smog tower, the Chief Minister said, had been set up in Delhi and was

showing successful results which would be monitored for a few more days following which a decision on installing more would be taken. Pollution hotspots were being monitored through green war room round the clock while 50 new environment engineers had also been recruited for it.

To control vehicular pollution, 64 roads have been identified where traffic jams are frequently experienced and 500 teams have been set up to check PUC certificates. Petrol-driven vehicles of more than 10 years and diesel-driven vehicles of more than 15 years will be scrapped off," he said.

BJP calls it 'lies'

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta alleged that the action plan by the government was a "bundle of lies". A similar plan announced by the government in 2018, Mr. Gupta argued, was yet to have any visible impact on the ground.

Similarly, the number of water sprinklers is to be increased to 372 from 328.

The air pollution in the city spikes during the winter, chiefly due to a combined effect of stubble burning in the neighbouring States and climatic conditions, which lowers wind speed and mixing height and in turn traps pollutants. The use of sprinklers and MRS machines peaks during the winter in the city and falls after February, as per government data. Both these measures are aimed at reducing road dust, which is one of the major local air pollutants in the city.

More machines to sweep city roads clean

Number of sprinklers also increased

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government and other agencies have planned to increase the average length of road swept per day by mechanical sweepers to 2,200 km this winter compared to 1,895 km last year. For this purpose, the number of mechanical road sweepers (MRS) machines is planned to be increased to 69 from 58 last winter.

Also, as part of the action plan, more teams will be involved in implementing different measures to control air pollution this winter.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced that an eco-park is being built to process e-waste, however, the project is yet to be approved and is expected to be completed only by mid-2023, officials said.

The country's first e-waste eco-park is being built in Delhi on 20 acres. We are setting this up to curb pollution caused by e-waste," the Chief Minister's office said in a statement.

The eco-park is part of a Central government policy and is to be done in other

BJP ready to kill farmers, alleges AAP

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party leaders on Monday staged a protest at Jantar Mantar, demanding the arrest of people who "murdered farmers," referring to the Lakhimpur Kheri incident in Uttar Pradesh where four farmers died.

"There is an emergency-like situation. No one can talk about anything. You kill someone and no one can even raise their voice. But in a democracy, you have this right... If action is not taken, then the AAP will take this fight for farmers," AAP Delhi in-charge Gopal Rai said.

"The incident in U.P. shows that the BJP is not only unwilling to listen to farmers, but also is ready to kill them...," the AAP leader said. The AAP chief spokesperson said MP Sanjay Singh was detained by the Uttar Pradesh police.

The party demanded that Union Minister Ajay Mishra be immediately sacked from the Cabinet and his son be arrested and sent to jail.

Plumber kills woman over 'smoking'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 45-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing a woman for telling him not to smoke near her shop in Dabri on Sunday, the police said.

The accused has been identified as Deepak, a plumber. DCP (Dwarka)

they received a call around 10 p.m. on Sunday that a woman, Vibha, 30, was lying in a pool of blood near her shop.

Following this, a team rushed to the spot and took her to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital where she was declared dead.

The accused was inebriated at that time. The in-

cident occurred when he went to the woman's shop and started smoking. She told him not to smoke, at which Deepak took a plumbing tool and slit her throat," an officer said.

He then fled the spot but was held soon. A case under IPC Section 302 (murder) has been lodged against him.

Wrestler Sushil Kumar seeks bail in Chhatrasal Stadium murder case

Police have withheld witnesses' statements to build false case'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Olympic medalist wrestler Sushil Kumar on Monday moved a Delhi court seeking bail in the Chhatrasal Stadium murder case.

In his bail application filed by advocate Pradeep Rana, the wrestler stated that he has been falsely implicated and incarcerated in jail since June 2.

Vested interest

Mr. Kumar's lawyer stated that the "demise of a budding wrestler has been sensationalised and the same is being exploited against the present applicant by parties with vested interest".

The application further said that "the police left no stone unturned" to present

The police have 'left no stone unturned' to present a 'false and guilty image' of Sushil Kumar and fed false information to the media

BAIL APPLICATION

the application stated.

The application alleged that the investigating agency, "to build a false case", has withheld the statements of witnesses. It also said that the video footage, the police have relied on, has been taken on a phone whose "ownership is a big mystery". Mr. Kumar, along with others had allegedly assaulted former junior national wrestling champion Sagar Dhankar and his friends at the stadium in May over an alleged property dispute. Dhankar later succumbed to the injuries.

The Delhi police had filed an FIR against the accused.

Additional Sessions Judge Shivaji Anand will hear the bail application on Tuesday.

Delhi govt. issues show-cause notice to Ganga Ram Hospital

City sees 34 fresh COVID-19 infections

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government sent a show-cause notice to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on complaints of the hospital allegedly not treating people from the EWS category.

When contacted, a hospital official said, "The allegations in the notice are not true. The authorities are replying to the issues raised and hope the misunderstanding if any should be resolved soon."

Meanwhile, the city reported 34 new cases and zero COVID-19 death in the last 24 hours, said a bulletin released by the Delhi government on Monday.

The total number of deaths stood at 25,088 and cases at 14,39,000.

A total of 34,038 tests were done in a day and that the test positivity rate was 0.10%. Of the total cases, 14,13,514 people have recovered and there are only 398 active cases.

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3	Providing amenities to Driver camp at Sarpanch Bhavan and Akar Building No.12 and 13 Nagpur for Winter RAC Session-2021, Nagpur.	17.70	560/-	1 (One Month)
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5	Repairs to Rajbhavan main building including general repairs and painting for winter RAC Session-2021 at Nagpur.	17.70	560/-	1 (One Month)
6	Repairs to Rajbhavan servant Qtrs. Building including general repairs and painting for winter. RAC Session-2021 at Nagpur.	17.70	560/-	1 (One Month)
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9	Repairs to water supply sanitary, flooring and painting of Mess Building, NIT Hall & other repairs for RAC Session -2021 at Police Line Takali, Nagpur.	17.00	560/-	1 (One Month)

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Robber held with huge cache of arms

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man, involved in several cases of robberies, has been arrested with a huge cache of arms by the Delhi police after an exchange of fire in Dwarka in the early hours of Monday.

DCP (Dwarka) Shankar Choudhary said the accused, identified as Deepak, used to supply weapons to several gangs, including the dreaded Sadam Gauri and Vicky gang, in the Capital.

The police said that four highly

sophisticated pistols and two

countrymade pistols with

104 live rounds were seized

from the accused and that

he had brought the same

from Meerut.

Boy abducted by relatives rescued after four days

The accused wanted to take revenge

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

There was no word from the kidnappers, the police said.

On Sunday night, police officers spotted Monu and Ashok with a countrymade pistol and a live round, Mr. Yadav said, adding that the two were taken for interrogation.

Around the same time, the police received a call from a man stating that a boy was held in captivity at a house.

"The caller was a passerby who had heard the boy's cries for help. The locals helped the boy free himself," Mr. Yadav said.

DCP (Outer North) Brijendra Yadav said that the accused have been identified as Monu, 20, and Ashok, 23.

On October 1, the police received a complaint from the victim's father that his son, a Class VIII student, had gone missing. A kidnapping case was registered and a team was formed to nab the accused. However, no ransom call was made and there

was no word from the kidnappers, the police said.

The victim revealed the names of the abductors. "The police realised that the two accused were the same people who were caught earlier," Mr. Yadav said.

Youth beaten to death over theft suspicion

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 20-year-old youth died after he was allegedly beaten by the public on suspicion of theft in Outer Delhi's Sultanpur on Monday. The police are awaiting the post-mortem report for legal action.

DCP (Outer North) Parvinder Singh said that the deceased has been identified as Vishal Singh.

A PCR call was made by Sumit, 33, a resident of Aman Vihar, stating that a thief was caught after he entered their house. When the police reached the spot, the man was lying unconscious.

"He was taken to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital where he was declared dead," an officer said.

Timings**DELHI**

TUESDAY, OCT. 05
RISE 06:16 SET 18:03
RISE 04:49 SET 17:39
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 06
RISE 06:17 SET 18:02
RISE 05:52 SET 18:13
THURSDAY, OCT. 07
RISE 06:17 SET 18:01
RISE 06:57 SET 18:49

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	36	26
Safdarjung	36	26
Palam	36	27

Delhi Palam Today
35°C Passing rain or thunderstorm may be a chance with light winds at few places. Slight warm and humid day prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
35°C Dry westerly winds are expected. Weather will be warm and dry. Night will be comfortable.

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Schools reopen in Maharashtra

Schools reopened across Maharashtra on Monday for students of Class V to XII in rural areas and VIII to XII in urban pockets. CM Uddhav Thackeray said the decision was tough and urged parents to take care of their children's health.

Cong., BJP face internal strife over candidates' selection in Rajasthan

By-elections for two Assembly seats in the State scheduled for October 30

MOHAMMED IQBAL**JAIPUR**

Internal rivalries, influence of local leaders and political interference by the dominant communities are some of the factors facing both the ruling Congress and the Opposition BJP during the exercise to select candidates for the upcoming by-elections to two Assembly seats in Rajasthan.

The voting for bypolls in Udaipur district's Vallabh Nagar and Pratapgarh district's Dhariawad constituency will be held on October 30. Election was necessitated after the death of Congress MLA from Vallabh Nagar Gajendra Singh Shaktawat on January 20 and BJP legislator from Dhariawad Gautam Lal Meena on May 19. Both of them died of COVID-19 infection.

Two-time MLA Mr. Shaktawat was a loyalist of former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot. At least two of his family members have staked their claim to get the party ticket.

The Congress may nominate Mr. Shaktawat's wife Preeta in an attempt to get sympathy votes at the seat, which has traditionally been the party's stronghold. However, Mr. Shaktawat's brother Devendra Shaktawat, who is also a strong claimant, may oppose her candidature and try to mobilise

the Congress workers in his own support.

Tough choice

The BJP faces a tough choice in Vallabh Nagar, as the proposed move to bring the popular leader and former MLA Randhir Singh Bhindar back to the party fold is being opposed by an influential section. After his victory on the BJP ticket in 2003, Mr. Bhindar had left the party and won the 2013 Assembly election as an independent

candidate.

Leader of Opposition Gu lab Chand Kataria, considered the BJP's seniormost leader in the Mewar region, is reportedly against any move to re-induct Mr. Bhindar into the party. Mr. Bhindar had formed an outfit, Janata Sena, while contesting the two previous polls and ensured the defeat of BJP candidates, who had finished third both the times.

In the Dhariawad constituency, the BJP may field either the late Mr. Meena's son Kanhaiya Lal or an influential local leader, Khet Singh Meena, as its candidate. The Congress is considering the names of Zila Pramukh Indira Meena, wife of Pratapgarh MLA Ramilal Meena, and Nagraj Meena, who has contested the Assembly election five times in the past.



Intense deliberations: Rajasthan BJP president Satish Punia, former CM Vasundhara Raje and others. ■ FILE PHOTO

Bengal violence: CBI, SIT submit probe reports before High Court

CBI has registered 40 FIRs and filed chargesheets in 7 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing post-poll violence in West Bengal, submitted their reports to the Calcutta High Court on Monday.

A Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Rajarshi Bharadwaj said that the CBI has registered 40 FIRs so far and filed chargesheets in seven cases. "Status report has also been filed by CBI in a sealed cover. It was opened. Briefly it men-

tions that total 40 FIRs were registered. After investigation chargesheets have been filed in seven cases," the order read. A five-judge Bench of the High Court on August 19 had directed CBI and SIT to investigate the post-poll violence in West Bengal.

'Not consulted'
The High Court, however, pointed out that the SIT has not consulted retired Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court Manjula Chellur who was appointed by the Court to oversee functioning of the

Telangana opposes A.P.'s water project plan

Urges river board to stop work on new reservoir as part of HNSS-II

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**HYDERABAD**

The Telangana government has raised its concern over the plan of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh to enhance the scope of Handri-Neela Sujala Sravanthi (HNSS-lift irrigation) project, a surplus water-based project taken up outside the Krishna Basin, by building a new reservoir with irrigation potential of 23,000 acres as part of the HNSS phase-two.

It has addressed a letter to the Krishna River Manage-

ment Board on Monday requesting the latter to restrain Andhra Pradesh from constructing the new reservoir at Jilledubanda near Dharmavaram in Anantapur district with a storage capacity of 2.41 tmc ft water drawn from Srisailam, in violation of the A.P. Reorganisation Act.

Engineer-in-Chief (General-Irrigation) of Telangana C. Muralidhar wrote to KRMB Chairman M.P. Singh that the Jilledubanda reservoir is one of the new schemes taken up after bifurcation of combined Andhra Pradesh with a cost of ₹47,776 crore in violation of the APRA, without the appraisal of the river board and without the approval of the Apex Council.

Mr. Muralidhar has brought to the notice of Mr. Singh that Telangana has already written several letters to the river board highlighting Andhra Pradesh's plans with a plea to stop that State from carrying the works.

Stalin launches software to aid in police probes

It will help track down accused with data from CCTNS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**CHENNAI**

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday launched a face recognition software to aid the police in investigations.

The software will help compare the photos of suspects with a database of over 5.30 lakh photos uploaded in the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS).

Sharing of information

The software is expected to help track down accused persons, suspects, missing persons and unidentified corpses with the data sourced from the CCTNS, an official release said.

If an accused person or a suspect is involved in another offence being probed by another police station, the information about him/her would be shared between



New tech: Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin launching the face recognition software in Chennai on Monday.

them. It will also help in checking whether there is a history-sheet behind a person or any warrant has been pending.

The software can be installed in the work stations of police stations as well as in the smartphones of police personnel on the field, the release said.

There is a plan to improve the software to identify faces in CCTV footage. This will

help in locating those who the police search for and missing persons at bus, railway or air termini or at the venues of festivals.

Chief Secretary V. Irai Anbu, Home Secretary S.K. Prabakar, Director-General of Police S. Sylendra Babu, Additional Director-General of Police Vinit Dev Wankhede (State Crime Records Bureau) and senior officials were present.

University scholar held for 'links with Maoists'

'He encouraged people to join outfit'

STAFF REPORTER**HYDERABAD**

A Ph.D scholar of the Osmania University, who was the State president of the Telangana Vidyarthi Sangam (TVS), was arrested by the L.B. Nagar police of the Ra chakonda Commissionerate for his alleged links with the outlawed CPI (Maoist) party, and for "encouraging" people to join the outfit.

He was arrested in a two-year-old Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) case.

Kota Srinivas Goud, 38, a resident of Baudhanagar, Warasiguda, hails from Appanapet of Peddapalli district.

According to L.B. Nagar inspector V. Ashok Reddy, Mr. Goud possessed Maoist literature and was conspiring with persons belonging to the banned Maoist party, besides inciting people to become members.

"As a result, he was involved in the terrorist act as defined under the UA (P) Act of 1967. He also supported terrorist organisations to further their activity by encouraging support for the said banned organisation," the inspector said.

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If any person(s) having objection regarding ownership or regarding mortgage of the said property is/are requested to intimate in writing to undersigned within 15 days from the date of issue of this notice at below address. In the event no information is received within 15 days from date hereof, our Client i.e. Axis Bank Ltd will proceed with the mortgage process.

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BETWEEN:

Plaintiff: PEPPERL & FUCHS (India) Pvt Ltd, Ground Floor, 546/1, 7th Main, IV Phase, Peenya Industrial Estate, Bangalore-560 058, Represented by Kishore Kumar General Manager, Commercial.

Defendants: DYNAMIC ENGINEERS LIMITED,

SUIT SUMMONS TO DEFENDANTS BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION

1. DYNAMIC ENGINEERS LIMITED, No. D-44, Ground Floor, Sector-63, G.B Nagar District, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201 301.

2. MR. SANJAY BHATIA, Director of Dynamic Engineers Limited, No. D-84, Ground Floor, Sector-63, G.B Nagar District, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201 301.

3. MR. A.K. SEHGAL, Director of Dynamic Engineers Limited, No. D-84, Ground Floor, Sector-63, G.B Nagar District, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201 301.

Whereas, the above suit is filed by the plaintiff under Order 11 Rule 1 read with Order 29 of Civil Procedure Code of India in the sum of Rs. 45,211/- (Rupees Sixty Five Nine Thousand Two Hundred and Eleven Only) with 1% interest against you. You are hereby summoned to appear in this court in person or through an Advocate duly instructed or through some one authorized by law to act for you in this case at 11.00 AM in the forenoon on 30.10.2021. If you fail to so appear on the said date as directed by the court, without any further notice, the suit will be dealt with, heard and decided on merits in your absence. Issued under my hand and the seal of this court on 4th of October 2021.

By order of the Court, Sherister, Civil City Court, Bengaluru.

Advocate for Plaintiff: A. Devaraja No. 214, 2nd Cross, Cubbonpet, Bangalore-560 002.

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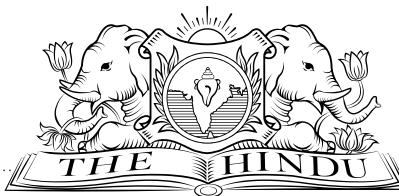
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Needless escalation

Violence in Lakhimpur Kheri will increase trust deficit between farmers and Government

The deaths of eight people, four of whom were mowed down by a vehicle that was part of the convoy of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs and BJP MP Ajay Kumar Mishra, in Lakhimpur Kheri in north-central Uttar Pradesh, marks an escalation of violence in a movement that has tried to remain peaceful. While the agitators and the BJP have traded charges on who is responsible, the incident has also worsened chances of a rapprochement between the farmers protesting against farm laws introduced last year and the Union government. There has been little headway since January this year, when the Government agreed to a few demands and also promised to keep the farm laws in abeyance, and after the Supreme Court stayed their implementation. But the distrust between the unions representing the agitators and the Government has remained high, with the farmers refusing to budge from their maximalist position seeking a repeal of the three laws passed last year – the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act.

The farmers are also willing to continue the protest indefinitely, with its intensity increasing after the harvest season even as their methods have come to the unfavourable notice of Supreme Court judges. A Court-appointed committee to facilitate dialogue with the farmers submitted its report on the laws in March but it is yet to be made public. The experience of the economic reforms since 1991 has shown that rushing them through without political consensus – even if they have merits – by ignoring crucial stakeholders creates severe discontent. Farming in much of India has largely been dependent upon State subsidies, procurement and support pricing – and any sudden change in these inputs may jolt the sector, which has been prone to crises in the last few decades, even if the Government claims that liberalising the farm sector will enhance agricultural incomes. It is true that the protesting farmer unions are concentrated in Punjab, Haryana and western U.P., where the involvement of the State in agricultural procurement, awareness of minimum support prices and the presence of *mandis* is more robust. But it is also true that institutional redress mechanisms to take into account farmers' concerns have not been put in place. After all, the laws were passed without sufficient deliberation through parliamentary committees and public hearings even as the Bills were rushed, by voice votes, in the Upper House of Parliament. This, no doubt, is the reason for the lingering trust deficit. The U.P. government must impartially investigate the incident in Lakhimpur Kheri but it is also imperative for the BJP-led Union government to restore mechanisms of procedural democracy to bridge the trust deficit. Restarting talks with the unions will be a good beginning.

Mamata's march

The West Bengal Chief Minister has reinforced her image as a leader willing to take on the BJP

The victory of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the Bhabanipur by-poll in West Bengal has come as no surprise but the margin of the victory and the little resistance put up by the Opposition parties including the Bharatiya Janata Party have come as a shot in the arm for the ruling Trinamool Congress. Ms Banerjee's record winning margin of 58,832 votes is more than twice the margin of victory secured by the TMC candidate at the same constituency, located in the heart of Kolkata, five months ago in the State's Assembly polls. The ruling party won all the three seats that went to the polls on September 30 in the State. In Jangipur, the margin of victory for the TMC candidate was over 92,000 votes and at Samserganj, the Trinamool Congress nominee won by over 26,000 votes. In two out of three seats, the BJP was the main opposition to the TMC but in Samserganj, the Congress nominee secured about 70,000 votes, pushing the BJP to the third position. Though Ms. Banerjee could not win the Nandigram seat in the Assembly election early this year, her decision to contest that seat considerably boosted her party. With her election as an MLA just in time to meet the six month deadline, Ms. Banerjee has capped her party's impressive victory in May.

The outcomes also reinforce her positioning as a leader who has the gumption to confront the BJP that had left no stone unturned in its attempt to unseat her. The BJP stands further tamed after the by-poll outcomes. It put up a political greenhorn, Priyanka Tibrewal, to contest against the charismatic and popular Ms. Banerjee. The West Bengal BJP, which found it difficult to get the right candidates to contest against TMC nominees in the Assembly polls, continues to grapple with the same challenge five months later. The BJP central leadership stayed away from the campaign unlike earlier this year. The State leaders of the party were no match to the Trinamool Congress, in strategy or popularity. The State unit of the BJP was hoping that the Election Commission of India (ECI) may not announce the polls within the six-month deadline that the Chief Minister had to meet. Apparently taken by surprise, they spent time challenging the ECI decision in the courts rather than campaigning on the ground. The TMC government's focus on cash transfer and other welfare schemes continues to draw the support of the electorate, while the issues of violence and corruption raised by the BJP did not strike a chord with them. The results also point to the continuing resistance to the BJP's polarising tactics in West Bengal, and the party's difficulty in tailoring a politics that is suitable for the region.

An alphabet soup New Delhi needs to sift through

India needs to reconsider the plethora of alliances it is in and rationalise them after a reality check



T.P. SREENIVASAN

The current ruckus over AUKUS – the trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, which was announced on September 15, 2021 – has revealed the hazards of group diplomacy, which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had anticipated when President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh proposed a regional organisation for South Asia.

The SAARC years

Apart from its reservations about the reference to security in the draft charter for SAARC, or the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, India was in a dilemma – that not joining the forum would look as though India was against regional cooperation. And if it joined, it faced the possibility of its neighbours ganging up and using the SAARC institutions to pressure India on various regional issues. One other concern was that the proposer of such a group would be suspected of aspiring to the leadership of a region.

On balance, India joined the Association with a number of conditionalities such as the exclusion of bilateral issues, decision-making by voting, and holding of meetings without all members being present. But despite the imperative for cooperation in vital fields, SAARC became an arena for India bashing, particularly by Pakistan. It was bilateral diplomacy in the guise of multilateralism and it became moribund as India did not attend the last summit. SAARC became a liability as it was clear that the region was not mature enough to have a regional instrumentality.

Today, the world has a whole spectrum of groups – from the European Union at one end to the

African Union at the other – with varying shades of cooperation. Groups with acronyms such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and numerical groups from a national G-2 to a real G-77 which has more than a 100 members, exist.

Many of them do not have regional, ideological or thematic homogeneity to lend them a reason for forming a group. The time, the money and the energy spent on convening not only summits but also a whole paraphernalia of ministerial, official and expert level meetings do not seem justified. Bureaucracies, with United Nations salaries and perks, grow around these bodies, developing vested interests to perpetuate them. Such groups which do not have "sunset" clauses continue even after they diminish in importance.

Searching for an agenda

Finding the agenda for these organisations and groups is another difficult exercise. The growing agenda of the United Nations includes everything from peace on earth to celestial bodies and even UFOs. When India decided to remain in the Commonwealth even as an independent country, the nature of the affinity to the British Crown changed and its agenda expanded beyond the concerns of the former British colonies. The only way it could survive, after Zimbabwe became independent and apartheid disappeared in South Africa, was by duplicating the agenda of the United Nations and repeating pronouncements of member-states made in other organisations. The role of the Commonwealth was reviewed, but the members reached the conclusion that it had continuing relevance.

The rationale of some of the other new groups was unclear even when they were formed. A Goldman Sachs economist found similarities among fast growing economies such as China, Russia, India and Brazil and recommended



ed massive western investments in these countries. The countries concerned formed an intergovernmental group called BRIC and later BRICS, with South Africa added as a representative of the African continent. At that time, it was feared that, with the presence of China and Russia in it, it would be construed as an anti-American group. As expected, China quickly assumed the leadership of BRICS and tried to seek changes in the international economic system by establishing a bank, with the possibility of credit for its members. The result of this development was undermining the relevance of another, less ambitious, group of India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA), which had several common interests. As candidates for permanent membership of the Security Council, they had specific ideas on UN reform and on South-South cooperation.

On Afghanistan

The recent BRICS summit had Afghanistan on its agenda and the diverse group was able to reach a conclusion only with different caveats. Russia and China were more sympathetic to the Taliban than the others. At the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, delegations found some common elements of concern with dramatically different approaches. The SCO started off as a friendly group of China and some of the former Republics of the Soviet Union, but with the addition of India, Pakistan and Iran, it became a diverse group and it could not reach agreement. Pakistan naturally

sounded triumphant, but even Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan could not gloat over the unshackling of the Taliban in the face of a looming humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan. Whether the Chinese presence in these summits and the meetings between Wang Yi and S. Jaishankar (the Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister and India's External Affairs Minister, respectively) made any difference to the stand-off in Ladakh is yet to be seen. But we know that frequent meetings with the leaders of China do not necessarily mean a meeting of minds as Beijing's trajectory of thoughts and actions are highly unpredictable. Those who saw China's President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in conversation in Mamallapuram (near Chennai), at the second informal summit between India and China, in October 2019, would never have thought that they would ever be in an armed conflict.

India and other groupings

India has also had experience of taking initiatives to encourage groups without the participation of Pakistan, knowing well that Pakistan's presence is a sure recipe for trouble. One of them is the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), an international organisation of seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations which are dependent on the Bay of Bengal: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand. The group remained dormant for many years till it was revived a few years ago as an alternative to SAARC. Though it has an ambitious agenda for sectoral cooperation, it has not gained much momentum.

Another group which India has championed is the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). The organisation was first established as the Indian Ocean Initiative in Mauritius in March 1995 and formally launched on March 6-7 1997

(then known as the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation). It also drags on without any significant progress.

On the other hand, the two active groups, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), have eluded us even though we have major stakes in them. We campaigned actively for membership of these two bodies, but gave up when we made no headway. In the process of working with the U.S. on a bouquet of groups such as Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), NSG, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group, we ended up with membership of Wassenaar and the Australia Group, in which we were not interested.

The Quad and AUKUS

The Quad had a chequered history of India flirting with it for years till the Chinese threat became real in 2020, but New Delhi's reluctance to call a spade a spade has driven the U.S. to new alliances such as a second Quad and then AUKUS as the U.S. wanted to fortify itself with allies against China. But the reaction of France to AUKUS has raised the issue of loyalty among allies even though AUKUS has made it clear that it was meant only to enable the U.S. to transfer nuclear propelled submarine technology to Australia.

The proliferation of alliances and groups will be a matter of close scrutiny by many countries in the light of the new trend initiated by the U.S. Collective bargaining is the strength of group diplomacy but it cannot be effective without commitment to a common cause. It stands to reason that India should also reconsider the plethora of groups we are in and rationalise them after a reality check.

T.P. Sreenivasan is a former Ambassador of India to several multilateral bodies, and is presently Director-General of the Kerala International Centre, Thiruvananthapuram

Taproots to help restore India's fading green cover

In forest restoration, the participation of local communities and adequate financing and incentives are essential



MOHAN CHANDRA PARGAIEN

Covering nearly 30% land surface of the earth, forests around the globe provide a wide variety of ecosystem services and support countless and diverse species. They also stabilise the climate, sequester carbon and regulate the water regime. The State of the World's Forests report 2020, says that since 1990, around 420 million hectares of forest have been lost through deforestation, conversion and land degradation. Nearly 178 million hectares have decreased globally due to deforestation (1990-2020). India lost 4.69 MHA of its forests for various land uses between 1951 to 1995.

Despite various international conventions and national policies in place to improve green cover, there is a decline in global forest cover. This is the prime reason for forest restoration activities including tree planting to become increasingly popular and declaring 2021-2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration for improving environmental conditions and enhancing human communities.

Restoration in laymen's terms is bringing back the degraded or deforested landscape to its original state by various interventions to enable them to deliver all the benefits. Building and maintaining activities help to improve ecological functions, productivity and create resilient forests with multifarious capabilities. India's varied

edaphic, climatic and topographic conditions are spread over 10 biogeographical regions and four biodiversity hotspots, sheltering 8% of the world's known flora and fauna.

However, dependence on forests by nearly 18% of the global human population has put immense pressure on ecosystems; in India, this has resulted in the degradation of 41% of its forests. To combat this, India joined the Bonn Challenge with a pledge to restore 21 MHA of degraded and deforested land which was later revised to 26 MHA to be restored by 2030. The first-ever country progress report under the Bonn Challenge submitted by India by bringing 9.8 million hectares since 2011 under restoration is an achievement. However, continued degradation and deforestation need to be tackled effectively to achieve the remaining target of restoration by addressing various challenges.

Key challenges

Local ecology with a research base; forest restoration and tree planting are leading strategies to fight global warming by way of carbon sequestration. However, planting without considering the local ecology can result in more damage. Similarly, planting a forest in the wrong places such as savannah grasslands could be disastrous for local biodiversity. Luckily recent research has shown that naturally regenerated forests tend to have more secure carbon storage. Being less tech-sensitive, cost-effective and conserving more biodiversity, natural forest restoration is becoming more widely accepted. However, it is fundamental to consider the local eco-



logy before implementing any restoration efforts to retain their biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

Restoration, being a scientific activity, needs research support for its success. Whether one goes for active restoration which includes planting or passive restoration with more focus on halting environmental stressors or adopting an intermediate approach of aided natural regeneration, it needs critical examination before putting restoration interventions into practice.

Situation in India

Nearly 5.03% of Indian forests are under protection area (PA) management needing specific restoration strategies. The remaining areas witness a range of disturbances including grazing, encroachment, fire, and climate change impacts that need area-specific considerations. Further, much of the research done so far on restoration is not fully compatible with India's diverse ecological habitats hence warranting due consideration of local factors. So, the relevance of local research duly considering ecological aspects, local disturbances and forest-dependent communities is vital to locally formulate guidelines for locally suitable interventions and to meet

India's global commitment.

Though India's increasing economic growth is helping to eliminate poverty, there is continued degradation and a growing scarcity of natural resources. The intricate link between poverty and environmental degradation was first highlighted by India at the first UN global conference on the human environment in Stockholm. Out of its 21.9% population living under the poverty line, nearly 275 million people including local tribals depend on the forest for subsistence.

Fundamental to the strategy

Further, encroachment of nearly 1.48 MHA of forest and grazing in nearly 75% of forest area is also linked to the livelihood of local communities. Linked with the degradation of forests, this dependency, along with various social-political and economic factors, complicates the issue manifold. The participation of local communities with finances for incentives and rewards is essential to resolve this complex riddle.

There have been remarkable initiatives to involve local people in the protection and development of forests by forming joint forest management committees (JFMC). More than 1,18,213 JFMCs involving around 20 million people manage over 25 MHA of forest area.

However, a review of their functionality and performance is essential to make them more dynamic and effective to scale up their involvement.

Therefore, negotiations with a wide range of stakeholders including these committees for resolving conflicts and fulfilling restoration objectives are a must and a challenge.

lenging feat to reach a suitable trade-off.

Adequate financing is one of the major concerns for the success of any interventions including restoration. The active approach of restoration which includes tree planting and the involvement of communities seeks incentives and rewards and make the whole affair quite cost-intensive. The contribution of corporates in restoration efforts so far has been limited to 2% of the total achievement. Hence, alternate ways of financing such as involving corporates and dovetailing restoration activities with ongoing land-based programmes of various departments can help to make it easy for operation.

Apart from these specific challenges, the common barriers to restoration as identified globally also need critical review before placing the required methodologies and area-specific strategies in place. The involvement of multiple stakeholders in forest restoration is bound to cause a conflict of interests among different stakeholders; along with low priority and insufficient funding, it becomes even more challenging.

Active engagement of stakeholders including non-governmental organisations, awareness and capacity building of stakeholders with enabling policy interventions and finance can help a lot to achieve the remaining 16 MHA restoration objectives for India. The need of the hour is an inclusive approach encompassing these concerns with the required wherewithal.

Mohan Chandra Pargaien is a senior IFS officer in Hyderabad, Telangana. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

No common ground

It is quite distressing that the deadlock between the Union Government and the protesting farmers is nowhere near any sort of resolution; matters seem to be worsening every day (Page 1, "Four farmers killed as car in Minister's convoy runs amok", October 4). No amount of compensation will bring back the lives lost and animosities could only rise further.

Unfortunately, the silence of the judiciary is also quite baffling. The political class has collectively failed the nation as it only pursues vote bank politics. The loss of man hours due to the prolonged agitations does not seem to concern governments. While farmers' leaders are also expected to act with responsibility in handling the agitation, the Government cannot

abdicate its responsibility in settling the issue amicably. It is too late already.

BRUJ B. GOYAL,
Ludhiana, Punjab

The narcotics trail
The Narcotics Control Bureau may have uncovered another case of drug peddling and consumption, but this may not have the desired results unless it is able to strike at the source from where the narcotic products come.

They are grown in farms, produced in labs or sourced from outside the country. The activities of the rich and the famous may make headlines (Page 1, "8 held after drug raid on cruise ship", October 4), but one also expects stringent action in other cases such

as Mundra (Inside pages, "DRI pursuing leads on heroin seizure", October 4).

KAIZAD B. IRANI,
Pune

■ The ship raid and the Mundra port seizure only show the unchecked flow of narcotics into the hands of

those who want it. The NCB

should track the sources and suppliers. Leaders, teachers and parents have a key role to play in curbing India's growing drug menace.

M. PRADYU,
Thalikavu, Kannur, Kerala

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:
A front-page (October 2, 2021, some editions) standalone picture caption had an erroneous reference to World Senior Citizen's Day. It was actually International Day of Older Persons, observed annually on October 1 to address the issues and challenges that elderly people face (<https://bit.ly/3otQw31>). World Senior Citizen's Day is celebrated on August 21.

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The dystopic reality of a Hindutva state

The Yogi Adityanath administration is untrammelled by constitutional morality



HARSH MANDER

In a recent taunt against Muslims, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath railed against "people who say *abba jaan*", falsely claiming that earlier governments provided them alone with subsidised rations while depriving others of the same. He wears his hatred of Muslims, his bigotry, intolerance of dissent, and impatience with constitutional niceties as badges of honour. The State he helms has veered dangerously far from the inclusive, free and egalitarian guarantees of the Constitution. He also raged about alleged "shameless" sympathisers of the Taliban in India. The irony – surely unintended – is that his administration mirrors some of the religious intolerance and encouragement of violence that are hallmarks of the Taliban.

Priorities of the administration
Years before he became Chief Minister, Mr. Adityanath founded a hardline Hindu youth militia, the Hindu Yuva Vahini. There is in his administration a blurring of the lines between militant Hindutva groups and the U.P. police as vigilantes are appointed "police *mitr*" or friends of the police. This endows them with social authority and legitimacy and enables the police to function officially with vigilante groups. This works in both directions: vigilantes devoted to cow protection and preventing 'love jihad' believe they enjoy impunity for their violent attacks and the police are routinely deluged with toxic anti-Muslim propaganda.

Cow slaughter, or allegedly trading in beef, has been elevated to high treason against the nation. The U.P. government has frequently used the National Security Act (NSA) for 'cow slaughter': out of 139 people jailed under the NSA in 2020, 76 were charged with cow slaughter. Even if their engagement in the beef trade is proved, it is hard to understand how this attracts a law empowering the government to detain those who threaten the security of the country.

The U.P. police proudly reported



to the media its peerless "achievement" over three years, of 6,476 "encounters" or extra-judicial shootouts against alleged criminals, mostly maiming them for life. The majority were petty criminals if not innocents; and many were charged with the crime of 'cow slaughter'.

Another major 'crime' high on the priorities of the U.P. administration is inter-faith marriages between Muslim men and Hindu women, alleged to be 'love jihad'. Mr. Adityanath directed senior police officials to investigate these alliances, and in November 2020, the cabinet passed an ordinance against what it described as an "unlawful conversion from one religion to another". The Assembly later passed a Bill prohibiting conversion by misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement, fraud or marriage. But loose terms enable loose interpretation, allowing the police and vigilante groups to threaten and target Muslim men who are in consensual relationships with Hindu women. Within just a month of the ordinance, 86 people were booked in 16 cases involving allegations of conversion for love or marriage of Hindu women to Muslim men. But there have been no attempts to criminalise Hindu men who marry Muslim women; this does not fit the narrative of 'love jihad'.

The U.P. administration does not hide its hostility to its Muslim citizens – "people who say *abba jaan*". In recent months in the run-up to the State elections early next year, the temperatures of campaigns – official and social – targeting Muslim citizens, and indeed sundry subalterns and dissenters, have risen dangerously. Muslim families "voluntarily" agreed to give up their homes in the

periphery of the Gorakhnath Temple ostensibly to help enhance its security. Incidentally, the head priest of the temple is the Chief Minister of the State. The next month, the anti-terror squad of the State claimed to have busted a conversion racket in which more than 1,000 people had been forced to convert to Islam. This was shrilly reported by television channels and Hindi newspapers. But many people who were contacted by independent journalists affirmed that they had converted to Islam voluntarily. The sale of meat and liquor has been completely banned in Mathura. Lynching has risen, mostly with the tacit protection of the police.

It is not just Muslims who are threatened by the strong arm of the U.P. state. People who speak of or report uncomfortable truths, who peacefully protest, Dalits, and survivors of sexual violence face the ire of such power. But in times of calamity, like the COVID-19 tragedy, all citizens are left abandoned by the hubris of an uncaring state.

Smelling conspiracies

The shameful rape of impoverished and Dalit girls is not new in U.P., but the open exertions of the police to terrorise the victims and protect the socially and politically influential rapists stand out. Unnao and Hathras

have become part of the disgraceful lexicon of state indifference to sexual crimes against disadvantaged castes. In Unnao, it took the threat of the rape survivor to immolate herself outside the Chief Minister's home for the police to act against the BJP MLA she charged with her rape, but the police thrashed in custody her father, who died. And in Hathras, after a

teenaged Dalit girl was gang-raped, allegedly by 'upper-caste' men, and died, police investigations seemed geared to prove she was not raped, and her body was hastily cremated at night. The administration alleged an "international conspiracy" to defame the government and provoke caste-riots and arrested under anti-terror laws a journalist who had travelled from Kerala to report the case.

Speaking, writing or organising people against state actions has also become dangerous in U.P. The mostly peaceful protesters against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act were slammed in U.P. with 10,900 FIRs. Twenty-two people were killed in police firings, 41 minors were arrested, 500 notices were slapped for recovery from those alleged to have damaged public property, and hoardings displaying photographs of activists and civil society members accused of instigating violence and damaging public property were put up. My colleagues and I visited several towns at that time and found that the police had ransacked and looted like rioters hundreds of homes of Muslims, and their places of worship.

Infamously, as reports emerged during the second COVID-19 wave in the State of lack of oxygen, testing and hospital beds, the Chief Minister once again saw only a sinister conspiracy to defame his government, and threatened to detain under the NSA and seize the properties of those who "spread rumours" of shortages on health provisioning. He even angrily dismissed the stories about floating bodies in the Ganga, claiming that it is customary for certain communities to throw corpses of their loved ones into rivers. He refused to postpone the U.P. panchayat elections, and at least 1,600 teachers who were on poll duty died because of exposure to the virus. Once again, their grieving families were offered no regret, only angry denials.

There are ominous signs that this model of Hindutva machismo is being emulated by Chief Ministers of other States such as Assam, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh. Meanwhile, U.P. has evolved into the dystopic reality of a Hindutva state, untrammelled by constitutional morality.

Harsh Mander is a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow and peace and human rights worker, writer and teacher

Cities are taking climate action

Climate resilience plans in Indian cities focus on isolated risks rather than preparing for multiple, intersecting risks



CHANDNI SINGH & MYTHILI MADHAVAN

tions (for example, painting roofs white) and behavioural aspects (building public awareness on managing heat), the model has now been scaled up to 17 cities across the country.

Nature-based solutions such as mangrove restoration in coastal Tamil Nadu and urban wetland management in Bengaluru have demonstrated how restoring ecosystem health can sustain human systems as well. For example, urban parks provide cooling benefits and wetlands regulate urban floods.

Bottlenecks and ways forward

Many have identified how inadequate finances and political will at city scales constrain developing sustainable Indian cities. However, what is less discussed is inadequate institutional capacity in existing government departments to reorient ways of working. This would entail moving away from looking at risks in isolation and planning for multiple, intersecting risks. This would mean transforming the ways our cities operate and expand. Undertaking long-term planning needs resilience planners in every line department as well as communication channels across departments to enable vertical and horizontal knowledge sharing.

Another key aspect inherent in transforming cities is focusing on changing behaviours and lifestyles. This is tougher and less understood because the norms we adhere to, the values we cherish, and the systems we are familiar with tend to stymie change. One emerging example of slow but steady behavioural change is bottom-up sustainable practices such as urban farming where citizens are interpreting sustainability at a local and personal scale. This can mean growing one's own food on terraces and simultaneously enhancing local biodiversity; composting organic waste and reducing landfill pressure; sharing farm produce with a neighbour, bringing communities closer and creating awareness about food growing.

India is becoming increasingly urban. Its cities or city-like villages are sites where the twin challenges of climate change and inclusive development will be won or lost. Pledges like Maharashtra's are a welcome addition to ongoing climate plans. It remains to be seen how they translate into action. While gloom and doom dominate climate reportage, a range of solutions with co-benefits for climate action and development exists. How to leverage these solutions and equip our city planners and citizens to implement them is what we should focus on.

Chandni Singh is a senior researcher and faculty member at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), Bengaluru; Mythili Madhavan is a research associate at IIHS

Science over smog towers

Proven solutions rooted in science, not unproven technological fixes, will reduce air pollution

TANUSHREE GANGULY & MIHIR SHAH

Two new smog towers have been recently inaugurated in Delhi. Bengaluru and Chandigarh also installed smog towers this year. Mumbai's clean air plan indicates a financial requirement of ₹25 crore for installing air filtration units at major traffic intersections in the city. While these efforts indicate that governments are taking cognisance of air pollution, the deployments are often driven by symbolism rather than science. For example, the Delhi government claims that the newly installed smog tower in Connaught Place could reduce air pollution levels by 80%. But there is no scientific evidence of smog towers or any other outdoor air filtration units improving air quality in cities. The smog tower installed in China's Xi'an and another one installed in Beijing did not prove to be effective and were not scaled up.

Smog towers create an illusion of progress towards clean air while diverting crores of public money away from proven solutions. Moreover, they misdirect policymakers and citizens by deflecting attention from areas that call for urgent action. Therefore, governments looking at investing in outdoor filtration systems should defer their deployment plans.

Further, the data on the effectiveness of the newly installed smog towers should be made available publicly for independent evaluation. Until there is scientific consensus on their effectiveness, every new tower installed is just a violation of taxpayers' money and citizens' trust.

What we can do
Meanwhile, governments must ramp up investments in proven solutions to reduce air pollution. First, policymakers should expand air pollution monitoring in areas with limited or no air quality monitoring and strengthen forecasting capacity across cities. Of the 132 cities in the country that currently don't meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, 75 do not have a single real-time monitoring station. For areas with no monitoring infrastructure, alternatives like low-cost air quality monitors in combination with satellite observations should be explored to plug

the existing data gaps. Simultaneously, cities should strengthen their air quality forecasting systems by collaborating with scientific institutions that are transparent about their approach and findings. These forecasts should be used in rolling out preventive measures such as travel restrictions, pausing commercial activities or encouraging working from home, on anticipated high pollution days.

Second, city-level emission inventories must be updated periodically. Until last year, over 75% of our city clean air plans did not contain vital information on emissions from different polluting sources. These data are critical to identify key sources of air pollution and design effective clean air plans as per the local context. While several academic institutions carry out emission inventory and source apportionment studies, these studies should not become a one-time exercise.

Third, targeted efforts must be made to improve air quality for urban slum dwellers who have no access to clean cooking energy. In a recent study, we found that nearly half the urban slum households in six States still rely on biomass and other polluting fuels for their cooking needs. Also, household emissions increase during winter, especially when fuel requirement for non-cooking tasks like space heating increases. This increases exposure to indoor air pollution and poses health risks. Hence, policymakers must focus on providing LPG connections to these households along with ensuring sustained usage of LPG as the primary fuel.

Finally, and most importantly, cities should strengthen their enforcement capacity by investing in people and systems that can keep a round-the-clock watch on both egregious and episodic polluters. India is witnessing a rising democratic demand for clean air. But this cannot be met by unproven technological fixes. Instead, we must vigorously pursue solutions that are rooted in science to bring back blue skies.

Tanushree Ganguly is Programme Lead and Mihir Shah is Strategic Communications Lead at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water

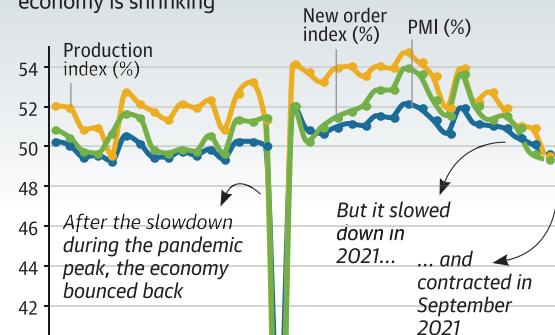
DATA POINT

Power crisis in China

Despite China having relatively fewer COVID-19 cases and fewer movement restrictions, its economy has slowed down in 2021. Moreover, the pace of contraction quickened over the last two months. The major reason for this downturn seems to be the incessant power cuts and blackouts that have significantly impacted the output of manufacturing units. The power crisis was due to issues in both demand and supply. As economies opened up, the demand for finished goods surged, pushing China's factories to produce more. This increased the demand for electricity, which China was not able to meet. Also, as coal prices surged, thermal power plants in China could not operate sustainably and reduced their supply. Moreover, due to tight emission norms following a resolve to reduce greenhouse gases, mining output has been restricted and factories have been asked to scale back to achieve targets. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan and Jasmin Nihalani

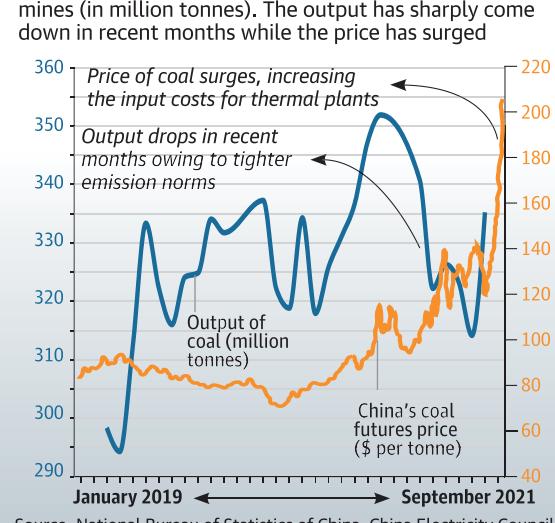
1. Downturn

The graph shows the manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) of China. A PMI that is above 50% shows that the manufacturing economy is expanding; if it is less than 50%, it shows that the manufacturing economy is shrinking



3. Steep decline

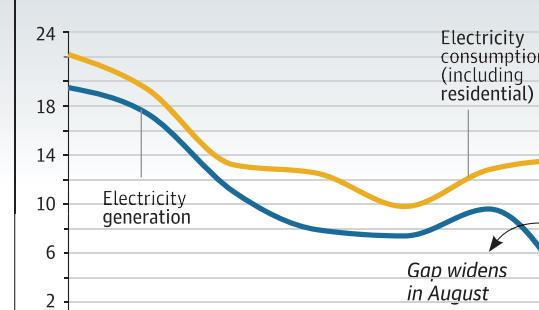
The graph shows China's coal futures price (\$ per tonnes) on the right axis and the output of coal from China's mines (in million tonnes). The output has sharply come down in recent months while the price has surged



In the dark: People eat breakfast by flashlight in Shenyang, Liaoning Province in China as power cuts were imposed to meet official conservation goals. ■ AP

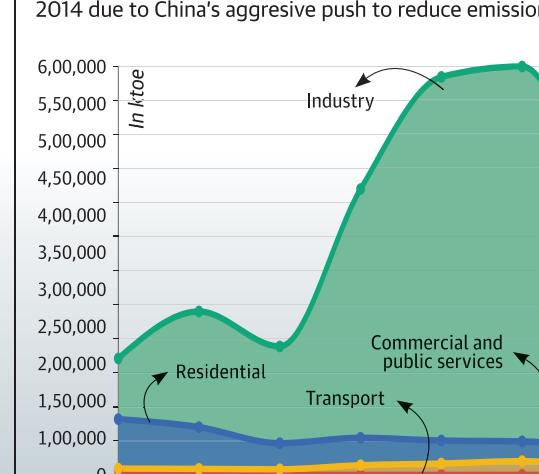
2. Demand vs supply

The graph shows the y-o-y change in consumption and generation of electricity in China in 2021. In August 2021, the gap between the growth in generation and consumption widened considerably. The demand and consumption of electricity is depicted in terawatt-hour



Tighter green norms

The graph shows the sector-wise consumption of coal in China. Consumption by the industry sector reduced from 2014 due to China's aggressive push to reduce emissions



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 5, 1971

Two-rupee fake notes case

Coimbatore, Oct. 4: In the "Pogalur two-rupee counterfeit notes case", all except one of the 20 accused were convicted and sentenced to day to varying terms of rigorous imprisonment ranging from three to seven years on charges of criminal conspiracy and printing of counterfeit notes. The sentences are to run concurrently. Mr. V. Sethusolayar, Sub-Judge, Coimbatore, who delivered the judgment, held that the charges against M. Ramiah Chettiar, accused 17, had not been proved beyond reasonable doubt and acquitted him. The prosecution case was that between December 1965 and March 1969, the accused T. Arunmuga Gowder and 19 others belonging to Tamil Nadu and Kerala entered into a criminal conspiracy and printed two-rupee currency notes to the value of Rs. 838,400 in a ginning factory belonging to the first accused in Pogalur near Mettupalayam.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 5, 1921

Dacoit's escape

Tinnevelly, October 4: The following are the details furnished by an eye-witness of the escape from police custody of Jambulinga Nadar and his associates. Shortly after 3 P.M. on Sunday while Jambulinga and his friends were taken to Manjeri for a Magisterial enquiry escorted by three constables the party made a halt at Moontudappu for taking refreshments. Jambulingam sought the permission of the escort for the release of one hand from his handcuffs which request was granted. Secure in the feeling that they had the key of the handcuffs in their possession the constables left the bandy temporarily for a drink. The prisoners held a hurried conference and quick as though decided to make a bold bid for liberty. Jambulingam possessing himself of a carbine and a round of ammunition left the bandy and made a rush at a Mahomedan constable who stood nearest to him and felled him to the ground. The disposal of the other two men and freeing his comrades was the work of an instant. The constables who were simply flabbergasted flew for their lives and the escaped prisoners marched triumphantly away. When my informant saw them Jambulingam was shouldering a gun while his associates had their handcuffs on and were not in the least perturbed. The escape of Jambulingam is the one topic discussed everywhere and though he is a terror his daring and coolness command admiration.

FROM PAGE ONE

Farmers raise pitch, protest with bodies

With the rest of his family, Mandeep sat in silent grief, as his mother was being consoled by relatives. Mandeep, too, blamed the administration and repeated the allegation made by the local people that the police had saved Ashish. "What was the police doing there? Why could they not secure the area?" he asked.

Anger against the Union Minister has been simmering ever since his speech on September 25 when he asked the protesting farmers to "mend themselves" or else he would not take "more than two minutes" in clashes to do it himself if they faced him. He had also reminded the people of his record before he was elected a public representative.

The Sikh community, which has been at the forefront of the farm protest in Terai, where they own and farm large tracts of land in Kheri and Pilibhit and adjoining districts, perceived it as threat.

Vijay Dhull, Superintendent of Police (SP), Kheri, said the bodies of the four persons who died in clashes after the vehicles ran over the farmers had been sent for post-mortem and now those of the farmers would follow.

The officer, however, said he was not sure how the other four persons were killed, amid allegations that some were lynched by the angry farmers after the cars ran amok. "Some say they were beaten up, some say the cars they were in overturned. Only a post-mortem examination will tell," he said. Asked if they were lynched, Mr. Dhull said there were multiple versions and it was not yet clear.

At the site, two vehicles belonging to the convoy of the Union Minister were set on fire and on Monday they were sites of intrigue for all visitors.

Eyewitnesses in Tikonia said the three vehicles raced towards them and mowed down the farmers without a warning. The farmers said they had earlier shown black flags to a block pramukh and the Union Minis-

ter's brother-in-law. They also claimed that they had allowed several other cars to pass through before the incident.

Sher Singh, a farmer, alleged that Ashish had tried to flee after the vehicle he was in overturned. Mr. Singh also alleged that the Union Minister's son shot dead one of the farmers who tried to catch him as he tried to escape the crowd. After this, he fired several shots in the air to keep the farmers away before police rescued him, alleged Mr. Singh.

Not at site: Ashish
However, Ashish has denied the allegations and told a news agency that he had been at an ancestral event at his village in Banveerpur from 9 a.m. till the end of the programme. "I was not at the incident site," he said.

Farmers, however, claimed they saw him in a vehicle brandishing a pistol. "He had come to the site deliberately to show his might, and scare the farmer," said Harpal Singh, another farmer.

Gurjant Singh, another local, alleged that the police helped Ashish escape from the site.

Among the eight who died was Raman Kashyap, a local journalist who was covering the protests. How he died remained unresolved, especially for his family.

His father, Ram Dulare, while returning after his cremation, said he suspected his son died after being crushed by the cars. "The farmers did not run the car over anyone. Whoever drove it must be from the BJP or someone close to the Union Minister's son," he said. Mr. Dulare submitted a police complaint naming both sides, but said he was sure that it was a car that took his son's life and that he was not lynched.

"Gadi se hi mera beta mara hain. Ab chahe kiski gadi ho," he said, describing the wounds on his son's body, which included a head injury. Mr. Dulare wanted a government job for his daughter-in-law and a ₹50 lakh compensation.

Supreme Court lashes out at farmers' groups

The court said it would decide whether farmers' bodies could resort to protests on a subject – the legality of three farm laws – which was already *sub judice*. "First, we will decide these legal questions and then we will examine your question [whether permission can be granted to sit on 'satyagraha' at the Jantar Mantar]," Justice Khanwilkar told the Kisan Mahapanchayat.

The Supreme Court fixed the case for final hearing on the two legal questions on October 21. It ordered the transfer of a case filed by Kisan Mahapanchayat in Rajasthan High Court on the same issue to itself.

The Bench asked the Centre to file a consolidated counter-affidavit.

On October 1, the Supreme Court had accused

farmers of strangling the city with their protest against agricultural laws.

"On one hand you have been strangulating the entire city and blocked highways... Now you want to enter the city and protest here?" Justice Khanwilkar had lashed out at the farmers' body.

Justice Khanwilkar had even asked the farmers whether they had taken the permission of the citizens who live near their protest sites on the national highways and public roads. "Have you taken permission of the citizens living nearby? There is a right to protest, but there is a right to use public roads and free movement... There is no point in continuing to protest once you have come to the court," he said.

Govt. moots changes to Forest Act

The document also proposes removing zoos, safaris, Forest Training infrastructures from the definition of "non-forestry" activities. The current definition restricts the way money collected as part of compensatory cess can be spent towards forest conservation purposes.

Previous attempts to amend acts linked to forest laws have been controversial. There was a plan to amend the Indian Forest

Act, 1927, that deals with the rights of forest dwellers, in an attempt to address contemporary challenges to the country's forests. The draft law had been sent to key forest officers in the States for soliciting comments and objections.

It drew flak from activists as well as tribal welfare organisations. The government withdrew the draft and has said that a newer updated version was on the anvil.

The Bench, also comprising Justice B.R. Gavai, refused to budge, adding that

'Hold Sri Lanka provincial polls'

Foreign Secretary urges Colombo to fully implement the 13th Amendment

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

India has urged Sri Lanka to hold elections to its provincial councils without further delay, according to the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) whose delegation met visiting Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Monday.

Also India does not appreciate any "third party presence" in the Tamil-majority north and east, where New Delhi had "invested heavily", the Foreign Secretary told the TNA, which is the largest grouping representing Tamils of the north and east in the 225-member Parliament, with 10 MPs.

"Foreign Secretary Shringla told us that he has conveyed to the Sri Lankan leadership that provincial polls be held immediately, along with the full implementation of the 13th Amendment," TNA spokesperson and Jaffna legislator M.A. Sumanthiran, who was part of the delegation led by veteran Tamil leader R. Sampanthan, told *The Hindu*.

"The government had raised some legal challenges in holding the elections, but I pointed out to the Foreign Secretary that even the Attorney-General had cleared the holding of polls with a simple amendment," Mr. Su-



All ears: The Tamil National Alliance delegation with Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

manthiran, a senior constitutional lawyer, said.

"The Foreign Secretary reiterated India's continued support for the full implementation of the 13th Amendment and going beyond it to achieve meaningful devolution," the Tamil MP said, referring to the only constitutional guarantee thus far on a measure of power devolution to the provinces. Key members within the Rajapaksa government had sought the repeal of the Amendment, and the abolition of the provincial council system.

The five-year terms of the provincial councils – born out of the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 as a step to devolve political power to all the provinces – last expired in 2018 and 2019, during the time of the former Maithripala Sirisena-Ranil Wickre-

mesinghe government. Despite the then oppositional Rajapaksa camp demanding that the polls be held to the nine provinces, the Sirisena administration, which amended the Provincial Councils Elections Act in 2017, postponed holding the elections, as it grew increasingly unpopular amid internal rifts.

"On Mr. Shringla's concerns about any third-party presence in the north and east, we told him that we do not want our country to become a Chinese colony. We said that since the north and east have historic, cultural and linguistic ties with India, we do not want any other force to change that," Mr. Sumanthiran said.

Earlier this year, the TNA had opposed a Chinese energy project in Delft island off Jaffna peninsula, citing "se-

curity threats" to the Tamil people and India. New Delhi, too, voiced concern and offered an alternative grant to Colombo to pursue the project.

Malaiyaha Tamils

Mr. Shringla also met prominent leaders representing the Malaiyaha (hill country) Tamils, including the Tamil Progressive Alliance (TPA), in Opposition, and the Ceylon Workers' Congress – part of the Rajapaksa government.

In his delegation's meeting, TPA Leader and MP Mano Ganesan underscored the importance of the 16th Amendment, along with the 13th Amendment, that ensured language rights to Tamils. "We urged India to give equal importance to both while raising our concerns with the government," Mr. Ganesan told *The Hindu*.

The TPA flagged proposed electoral reforms that they fear would reduce the political representation of the Malaiyaha Tamils (some of whom identify as Indian-origin Tamils). "We also sought greater support of the Indian government to the plantation Tamil community that has been neglected for generations, through suitable socio-economic projects," he said.

Shringla pushes projects, connectivity in Sri Lanka

Both nations attempting to reset ties

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

India on Monday underscored the need for early conclusion of bilateral projects in Sri Lanka, and the enhancement of connectivity by air and sea between the neighbouring countries, which are seeking to reset ties amid a strain in ties.

Visiting Sri Lanka on a four-day visit beginning October 2, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Monday held talks with Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa, Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris and Foreign Secretary Admiral Jayanath Colombage (retd.),

discussing key bilateral issues, while focusing on recovery from the pandemic through enhanced cooperation in tourism and development partnership, according to tweets from the Indian High Commission in Colombo.

In his remarks at the Temple Trees, the official residence of the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Mr. Shringla said: "With the easing of the situation in Sri Lanka, it may be opportune for us to work on connectivity initiatives like the Jaffna to Chennai flight, ferry services between Karaikal and Kanke-

santhurai, and Dhanushkodi and Talaimaran and the Buddhist corridor with the new international airport at Kushneragar," referring to halted, or delayed projects awaiting a push for revival or completion.

A media release issued by the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's office following his meeting with Mr. Shringla said India was looking forward to receiving the first pilgrims' flight from Sri Lanka to Kushneragar airport in Uttar Pradesh – a popular destination for Buddhist pilgrims – that was now upgraded to an international airport.

During his virtual bilateral summit with Mr. Mahinda last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a \$15 million grant for the promotion of Buddhist ties, aimed at deepening "people-to-people linkages" between the two countries. "Prime Minister Rajapaksa appreciated Prime Minister Modi's initiative to promote Buddhist ties. Secretary Shringla said it was a priority area of Prime Minister Modi," the release said.

The visiting Foreign Secretary also virtually launched a few India-backed projects from Colombo.

'Survey on water supply in 500 cities'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A survey on household water supply and the condition of waterbodies in 500 cities will be carried out in 2022, officials of the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said.

Many of the persons whose names figure on the list had rejected financial misdoings. Among others, Ms. Mazumdar-Shaw, Biocon chief, on Monday said her husband's offshore trust was bona fide and legitimate.

"Media stories reporting on Pandora Papers wrongly implicate my husband's offshore trust, which is a bona fide, legitimate trust and is managed by Independent Trustees. No Indian resident holds the 'key' to the trust as alleged in these stories," Ms. Mazumdar-Shaw said in a tweet.

(With inputs from PTI)

Stating that only a few Indians were named, Ministry says multi-agency group will track disclosures

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Government has promised an investigation into the revelations in the Pandora Papers, and assured appropriate action in such cases as per law, the Finance Ministry said in a statement on Monday evening.

Stating that only "a few Indians" had been named in the papers so far, the Ministry said investigations in cases of the Pandora Papers leaks appearing in the media would be monitored through a multi-agency group.

Anil Ambani, Vinod Adani, Jackie Shroff, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Niira Radia, Sachin Tendulkar and Satish Sharma were among the 300 Indians mentioned in the list so far.

"The government will also proactively engage with foreign jurisdictions for obtaining information in re-

spect of relevant taxpayers and entities," the Ministry said, adding that India was part of an Inter-Governmental Group that ensured "collaboration and experience sharing to effectively address tax risks associated with such leaks".

Keep a tab'
The multi-agency group headed by the Central Board of Direct Taxes Chairman, with representatives from the Enforcement Directorate, the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Reserve Bank of India, would keep a tab of the phased disclosures from the Pandora Papers indicated by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) website, the Ministry said.

The ICIJ website suggests that information will be released in phases and structured data connected to the

curb black money, or undisclosed foreign assets and income by imposing suitable tax and penalty on such income," the Ministry pointed out.

Undisclosed credits of approximately ₹20,352 crore had been detected in the investigations carried out in the Panama and Paradise Papers by September 15.

Rights group Oxfam India called for immediate action by authorities and abolishing tax havens following the expose of the Pandora Papers.

"Tax havens cost governments around the world \$427 billion each year. Developing countries are being hardest hit, proportionately. Corporations and the wealthiest individuals that use tax havens are outcompeting those who don't. Tax havens also help crime and corruption to flourish," Oxfam India CEO Amitabh Behar said.

Abolishing tax havens could go a long way towards ensuring that governments actually had the access to tax revenue they need to fund quality public expenditure, he added.

Many of the persons whose names figure on the list had rejected financial misdoings. Among others, Ms. Mazumdar-Shaw, Biocon chief, on Monday said her husband's offshore trust was bona fide and legitimate.

"Media stories reporting on Pandora Papers wrongly implicate my husband's offshore trust, which is a bona fide, legitimate trust and is managed by Independent Trustees. No Indian resident holds the 'key' to the trust as alleged in these stories," Ms. Mazumdar-Shaw said in a tweet.

(With inputs from PTI)

SC dismisses petition on cancellation of NEET-UG

Examination was held on Sept. 12

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a petition filed by several aspirants seeking the cancellation of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-UG 2021 examination held on September 12 due to alleged paper leak and malpractices.

"What sort of writ petition have you filed? Lakhs of people have taken the exam. When one person comes to you, you will file a petition like this. You want us to cancel the exam? Over seven lakh students have attended it... Do you want to make them suffer?" Justice L. Nageswara Rao asked advocate Ninad Dogra, the lawyer for the petitioners.

Open to complaints'
Mr. Dogra submitted that the court had itself stated that it was open to receiving complaints, even if it was just done to just one candidate.

He argued that multiple first information reports (FIRs) had been filed alleging cheating and other malpractices in the exam. Answers were leaked on WhatsApp.

The Bench, also comprising Justice B.R. Gavai, refused to budge, adding that

it would not intervene in an exam where 7.5 lakh students had appeared.

Dismissing the petition, the court threatened to impose ₹5 lakh in costs. "You know that the court will not cancel the exam in which 7.5 lakh people have taken the exam. This exam was conducted nationally and not locally," Justice Rao addressed Mr. Dogra.

The petitioners had sought a stay of the declaration of the NEET results during pendency, fresh exams and a direction to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and the Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh police chiefs to file probe reports in the case in a week.

They had urged the court to direct the CBI and the police chiefs of both States to file fact-finding reports on the alleged malpractices in NEET-UG 2021.

The petitioners had asked the Supreme Court to direct the government, the National Testing Agency and the National Medical Commission to enhance the standard of security protocols. This would include biometric verification of candidates and use of jammers. The petition said this would help the exams to be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

Defence counsel says nothing was recovered from him

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A magistrate court in Mumbai on Monday extended the Narcotics Control Bureau's custody of actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan, Arbaaz Merchant and Mumun Dhamcha till October 7.

The court also sent five others arrested in the alleged drug racket busted on a cruise to NCB custody till October 7. Mr. Khan, 23, Mr. Merchant, 26 and Ms. Dhamcha, 39, were arrested on October 3 and produced in court.

The Additional Solicitor-General appearing for the NCB argued that the Central agency had seized 13 grams of cocaine, five grams of MD (mephedrone), 21 grams of

charas, 22 pills of MDMA (ecstasy) and ₹1,33,000 in cash at the International Cruise Terminal, Mumbai.

He said the investigation revealed connections of the accused with the suppliers. He sought their custody till October 11. However, advocates for all these accused said the allegations were vague. The court remanded them to NCB custody till October 7.

Rajnath releases two new DRDO policies

Tensions break out at Lakhimpur Kheri as U.P. blocks leaders

Priyanka, Akhilesh, Charanjit Singh Channi among those stopped from going to the spot; Bhupesh Baghel asks if one requires a passport or visa to visit the State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties on Monday closed ranks in accusing the Yogi Adityanath Government in Uttar Pradesh of "throttling democracy" by preventing their leaders from visiting Lakhimpur Kheri, where eight people including four farmers were killed during a protest on Sunday.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Satish Chandra Mishra and Sanjay Singh of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) were among those leaders who were not allowed to go to the trouble spot, citing the imposition of Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code that prohibits a large gathering of people.

Chhattisgarh and Punjab Chief Ministers Bhupesh

Baghel and Charanjit Singh Channi and the latter's deputy Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa were also barred from landing at the Lucknow airport as the U.P. Government denied them permission to visit the State.

The State Government's move prompted Mr. Baghel to ask, "Does one require a passport or visa to visit Uttar Pradesh?" He also asked why he was not allowed to land in Lucknow since Section 144 was imposed in Lakhimpur Kheri.

The SP president was stopped just outside his Lucknow residence in the morning and the BSP's Mr. Mishra was placed under house arrest late on Sunday night.

But it was the arrest of Ms. Vadra that witnessed dramatic scenes. The Congress general secretary in charge



Raging protest: Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at Lakhimpur Kheri on Monday; and Youth Congress activists staging a protest in front of



Uttar Pradesh Bhavan in New Delhi. ■PTI

of U.P., accompanied by her colleague and Rajya Sabha member Deepender Hooda, started for Lakhimpur Kheri on Sunday night after arriving in Lucknow.

After being briefly

stopped outside Lucknow, the Congress leaders reportedly took a different route to avoid heavy police deployment along the main route but were finally stopped at Sitapur, about an hour's

drive to the violence-hit region of Tikonia in Lakhimpur Kheri district. Policemen were deployed at all entry points of the district to stop the entry of people.

Ms. Vadra's video of argu-

ment is trying to crush and finish off the farmers," Ms. Vadra said in a video posted on Twitter handle.

In Lucknow, Mr. Yadav sat on a dharna, along with party workers, after being denied permission to travel.

BSP chief Mayawati too reiterated her party's demand for a judicial inquiry.

"The BJP and Modi Government have no business not to allow political parties to reach victims of the barbarism inflicted on farmers yesterday [Sunday]. Strongly condemn this draconian throttling of democracy," CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury tweeted.

"The voice of the farmers cannot be silenced now. Blood of the bread-winners of the country was spilled on the streets. This cannot go unanswered. The Government will have to repeal the farm laws," CPI general secretary D. Raja said.

IN BRIEF

'Dismiss Union Minister'

Bhubaneswar
Social activist and Jai Kisan Andolan founder Yogendra Yadav on Monday demanded immediate dismissal of Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra from the Union Cabinet and a probe by Supreme Court-monitored Special Investigation Team into Sunday's violence in Lakhimpur district of Uttar Pradesh. "We have seen how the ruling party has resorted to violence, terrified by the farmer stir in Lakhimpur where son of MoS of Home ran over farmers," he said.

'Killing Raj,' says Mamata

Kolkata
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday targeted the BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh over the death of farmers during a protest, saying it was "Killing Raj" not "Ram Rajya" in that State. The Trinamool

Congress chairperson also attacked the BJP government at the Centre alleging that what was going in the country was not democracy but autocracy. "They call it Ram Rajya. What kind of Rajya is it?

It is 'Killing Raj,'" Ms. Banerjee told presspersons after visiting a gurdwara at Bhabanipur in her constituency.

A video that went viral

New Delhi
A short video of Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra fiercely arguing with Uttar Pradesh police officials, moments after she

was detained at Sitapur while on her way to Lakhimpur Kheri early on Monday, has not only gone viral but has become a rallying point for party colleagues. The angry avatar of Ms. Vadra has led party colleagues and social media users to compare her to grandmother Indira

Gandhi's arrest 44 years ago to this day. In the video, she is seen questioning the police

officials under what authority they were trying to push her into a police vehicle.

Response to violence reflects BJP's dilemma

Growing discomfort over a long stir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

BJP MP Varun Gandhi on Monday called for restraint and patience in dealing with protesting farmers a day after eight people died in violence in Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh.

In a letter to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Mr. Gandhi said a murder case under Section 302 of the IPC should be lodged against those involved in the death of farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri and a CBI inquiry instituted. The MP for Pilibhit also demanded a compensation of ₹1 crore each for the families of the dead.

Mr. Gandhi, who has written earlier too on the various issues affecting farmers, said, "Agitating farmer-brothers are our own citizens," and urged the Government to deal with them with great restraint and patience.

"In any case, we should treat our farmers with sensitivity and only in Gandhian and democratic ways within the ambit of the law," he said.

Not law and order issue
In a similar vein, former BJP ideologue K.N. Govindacharya too counselled that the Uttar Pradesh Government should not treat the issue and the events in Lakhimpur Kheri as just a "law and order" problem but acknowledge the scope and complication of the issue of a long-running movement by farmers' groups and look for a solution that can satisfy all.

The attempt of leaders of various political parties to reach Lakhimpur Kheri and the local administration's



Yogi Adityanath

actions in actively preventing them from reaching there also displayed the dilemma within the BJP response to the situation.

The party did not respond officially to the events in Lakhimpur Kheri, allowing the State unit and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Akay Kumar Mishra to speak instead.

However, the RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) did put out a statement that reflected some of the concerns within the RSS's ideological universe. The BKS statement said those who were involved in the incident "were not farmers, they were from various political parties, and deployed ways of Leftist parties in this situation."

"We condemn the incident and want a fair, independent inquiry and suitable punishment to those who are guilty," said the statement. All of this points to the fact that the long duration of the protests against the three farm laws (11 months) is not something that is desired by the BJP. Sources in the party said incidents like what had happened in Lakhimpur Kheri would not have been possible if the protests had not been allowed to linger and cross State borders.

Unions demand SC probe

Farmers stage protest in various parts of the country

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Farm unions protested in various parts of the country on Monday demanding a Supreme Court investigation into the deaths of farmers allegedly run over by vehicles in a Union Minister's convoy in Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh the previous afternoon.

At the same time, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha platform of the protesting unions responded to the comments made in the court on Monday, defending its right to protest against the farm reform laws even while the issue is in the court.

Protests began overnight, with candlelight vigils and highways being jammed at several locations such as Ambala, Kurukshetra, Chandigarh and Puranpur, accord-



A candlelight vigil in Ahmedabad on Monday.

ing to the SKM. Farmers also poured into Tikonia, the town where the bodies of the dead farmers were kept.

Later in the day, farm unions and political workers protested in front of the offices of District Collectors in a number of States, submitting copies of a memorandum addressed to President Ram Nath Kovind to district officials with the demand that Minister of State for

Home Affairs Ajay Kumar Mishra be immediately dismissed from his post and a case filed against him for inciting violence and spreading communal hatred.

They also urged that Mr. Mishra's son and others associated with the attack not only be booked under Section 302 (murder) but also arrested immediately, calling for the case to be handled by a Special Investigation Team under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

In Delhi, an agitation was held in front of Uttar Pradesh Bhavan by the youth and women's wings of the Congress, as well as farm unions and workers affiliated to Leftist parties. Protesters were detained by the police and then released in the evening.

SC notice to 43 groups on right to move freely

Noida resident has filed the petition

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked 43 farmers' organisations and leaders listed by the Haryana Government to respond to a petition filed by a Noida resident who claims her right to free movement on public roads has been choked by their protests to repeal three controversial farm laws.

A Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and M.M. Sundresh issued notice to 43 individuals and entities, including farmers' leaders such as Rakesh Tikait, Yogendra Yadav, Darshan Pal, and Gurnam Singh.

The Haryana and Uttar Pradesh Governments had earlier told the court that farmers' leaders and organi-

sations, on protest now for nearly a year, did not respond to invites for talks by the authorities. The State Governments had turned to the court for help.

The court, in the previous hearing, asked Haryana to file an application identifying farmers' entities involved in the protest to make them parties in the case. The State filed an application naming 43 entities and individuals, and urged the court to make them respondents in the case.

"Let notice be issued by the court to them so they do not have an excuse not to come," Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for Haryana, said.

While issuing notice, the court scheduled a hearing on October 20.

GUJARAT METRO RAIL CORPORATION (GMRC) LIMITED
(SPV of Govt. of India and Govt. of Gujarat)
Block No.1, First Floor, Karnavati Bhavan, Behind Nirman Bhavan,
Sector 10/A, Gandhinagar - 382010, Gujarat, India
(CIN): U60200GJ2010SC059407

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO.: GMRC/S/T/PHASE-1/BS-1/2021
Date: 05-10-2021

E-Tenders are invited from reputed and experienced Agencies for the following tender:

Tender Name	Tender Fees
Licensing of Space for In-building Solutions (IBS) for Providing Shared Mobile (Cellular) Coverage (2G/3G/4G) in Tunnels Section and Underground Stations of: Kankaria East, Kalupur Railway Station, Gheecha Kanta and Shahpur of East-West Corridor of Gujarat Metro Rail Phase-I Network.	INR 25,000/-

Interested bidders are requested to visit <https://gmrc.nprocure.com> for eligibility criteria, applying/ downloading the tender document. Last date and time for Bid Submissions is 15:00 Hrs on 03-11-2021. Any alterations in Eligibility Criteria cum Qualification Requirements, and terms of the Tender Document, or any amendment to the Tender Document, etc, will be uploaded on <https://gmrc.nprocure.com> and GMRC's Website www.gujaratmetrorail.com without any obligation or press notification or other proclamation.

Sd/- Managing Director, GMRC, Gandhinagar

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS:TIRUPATI "TENDER-CUM-AUCTION NOTICE"

Tenders are invited to participate in Tender-Cum-Auction for leasing out TTD Duplex House Building, located at the property bearing D.No.P-177, 8th Main, 10th Cross Sector X, Jeevan Bhima Nagar, HAL III Stage, OPP, to Jeevan Bhima Nagar Post Office, Bengaluru - 560 075 & Flat No.307, Opal Apartment, J.P.Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka, State for Residential / Commercial purposes on lease basis for a period of one (01) year and it is extendable for further two (02) years subject to satisfaction and discretion of the Executive Officer, TTD. The details of Duplex House / Opal Apartment are as detailed below:

Sl. No.	Details of the Property	Extent & Boundaries (SFt)
(1)	(2)	(3)
(1)	D.No.P-177, 8th Main, 10th Cross, Sector X, Jeevanbhima Nagar, HAL III Stage, OPP, to Jeevan Bhima Nagar Post Office, Bengaluru - 560 075.	Plinth area of 893.00 Sft of RCC Building, East by: House No.P-178, Sector-X, West by: House No.P-176 Sector-X, North by: House No.P-128 Sector-X, South by: Road.
(2)	Flat No.307, D.No.49, Raj Opal Apartments, 3rd Floor, 5th Phase, 24th Main, J.P.Nagar, Bangalore-500-078, Karnataka State.	Measuring an extent of 1300 Sft. with reserve Car parking facility No.307 at basement floor.

The Tender-cum-Auction Schedule (1) can be downloaded from the TTD Official Website i.e., www.tirumala.org (2) Obtained at TTD Information Centre, Bangalore from the date of publication of Tender-cum-Auction Notice up to one day before conducting of Tender-cum-Auction i.e., on 20-10-2021 & 21-10-2021 during office hours on working days.

The Auction will be conducted at D.No.P-177, 8th Main, 10th Cross, Sector X, Jeevan Bhima Nagar, HAL II Stage, Opp, to Jeevan Bhima Nagar Post Office, Bengaluru - 560 078 and Flat No.307, Opal Apartment, J.P.Nagar, Bangalore-500-078, Karnataka State.

The cost of Tender-cum-Auction schedule can be obtained by any of the above modes by submitting a Demand Draft for Rs.500/- (Rupees five hundred and sixty only) towards cost of Tender-cum-Auction Schedule-GST @ 12% i.e., Rs.500/- + Rs.60/-.

The cost of tender schedule is not refundable. Submission of tender documents received after the due date and time will be rejected. The Executive Officer, TTD, Tirupati, reserves all rights to cancel or postpone the tender at any stage without assigning any reason.

Ro.C.No.PRA/13935/Adv.No.184/PRO/2021/Dated:04-10-2021 **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS:TIRUPATI "TENDER-CUM-AUCTION NOTICE"

Tenders are invited for leasing out the following Flats located at Panruti 'B' Village, Sri Perumbudur Taluk, Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu State for Residential / Commercial purposes on licence basis for a period of One (01) year and it is extendable for further two (02) years subject to satisfaction and discretion of Executive Officer, TTD.

Sl. No.	Details of the Property	Extent (Sft.)	Date, Time and Place
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1)	'B' Block 2nd Floor No.208 (03) Bedded Flat, Raga Apartments, Panruti 'B' Village, Sri Perumbudur Taluk, Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu.	953 Sq.Ft.	19-10-2021 at 11.00 a.m. in the premises of the said apartment.
(2)	'B' Block 4th Floor No.408 (03) Bedded Flat, Raga Apartments, Panruti 'B' Village, Sri Perumbudur Taluk, Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu.	953 Sq.Ft.	19-10-2021 at 11.00 a.m. in the premises of the said apartment.
(3)	'C' Block 4th Floor No.407 (02) Bedded Flat, Raga Apartments, Panruti 'B' Village, Sri Perumbudur Taluk, Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu.	911 Sq.Ft.	19-10-2021 at 11.00 a.m. in the premises of the said apartment.
(4)	'D' Block 4th Floor No.403 (02) Bedded Flat, Raga Apartments, Panruti 'B' Village, Sri Perumbudur Taluk, Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu.	903 Sq.Ft.	

IN BRIEF



Sachin Pilot for probe into drugs seizure

MUMBAI
Rajasthan Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Monday demanded a probe headed by a sitting Supreme Court judge in the seizure of drugs worth ₹21,000 crore at the Mundra port alleging that the BJP government in Gujarat was trying to suppress the issue. "This is an anti-national activity of infecting the youth with poison," said Mr. Pilot.

Tougher penalty likely for animal cruelty

NEW DELHI
The Union Government is planning to introduce a higher penalty and jail term for persons perpetrating cruelty against animals and a draft Bill to amend the existing law is likely to come up in the next Parliament session. "We are ready with the draft amendment Bill. We are in the process of getting the Cabinet approval," Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Poultry Minister Parshotam Rupala said on Monday. PTI

Pappu Yadav gets bail in 32-year-old kidnap case

PATNA
Former MP from Madhepura and president of the Jan Adhikar Party (JAP) Rajesh Ranjan, alias Pappu Yadav, got bail on Monday in a 32-year-old kidnapping case. Mr. Yadav has been in jail since May 11, 2021. Additional District Judge of Madhepura Civil Court Nishikant Thakur granted bail to Mr. Yadav for lack of evidence in the kidnapping case registered against him in 1989 at the Murliganj police station in Madhepura district.

Navy to host its largest exercise in February

NEW DELHI
India is set to host its largest naval exercise early next year for which 46 countries have been invited, a senior Defence official said. "Exercise Milan is being planned for February 2022 and invitations have been sent to 46 countries. Several of them have already confirmed their participation," the official said. The exercise will see the participation of all Quad countries. Milan has so far been held at Port Blair but is now being shifted to Visakhapatnam, which offers more space and facilities.

Former bureaucrat Shakti Sinha passes away

NEW DELHI
Shakti Sinha, former bureaucrat and an academician who had served as the Private Secretary to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, passed away on Monday. He was 64. Sinha, a 1979-batch IAS officer, was also former Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML). He had worked closely with Vajpayee between 1996 and 1999, and had written a memoir titled *Vajpayee: The Years That Changed India*. PTI

No State can deny ₹50,000 ex gratia: SC

Claims should be settled within 30 days of submission of documents, say guidelines

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said the State Governments should not deny the ex gratia of ₹50,000 each to the families of persons who died of COVID-19 merely on the grounds that their death certificates did not show the virus as the cause of death.

A Bench led by Justice M.R. Shah underscored this point while approving the guidelines proposed by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) under the Disaster Management Act for grant of ex gratia to the kin of people who died of COVID-19.

SDRF funds

The guidelines, part of an affidavit filed by the Home Ministry, has tasked the States with providing the relief from their States Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). The District Disaster Manage-



Hard blow: During the second wave of COVID in April 2021, families faced long waits for cremation. ■ FILE PHOTO

ment Authorities would make the disbursements. Claims would be settled within 30 days of submission of documents. The disbursement would be made via Aadhaar-linked direct bank transfers.

District-level committees

would deal with grievances regarding certification of death and issue amended documents.

The court said these committees should be able to access hospital medical records directly to ascertain claims.

The court said such a move would help resolve cases in which families claim ex gratia but do not have medical records of COVID treatment to show.

The committees would have to record the reasons for rejecting claims.

The payment would continue for future COVID deaths until further notification. The guidelines have said families of those who committed suicide within 30 days of a COVID-positive diagnosis would also be eligible for ex gratia.

'Issue guidelines'

The court directed the NDMA and the Ministry of Health to issue the guidelines to have them implemented by the States.

On June 30, the court, in a judgment based on a petition filed by advocate Gaurav Bansal, ordered the NDMA to frame uniform guidelines for

payment of ex gratia. The Government has fortified itself against the likelihood of future criticism about disbursing ₹50,000 and not more by saying "it is not possible to ascertain the total financial burden emanating from the ex gratia assistance. Financial prudence demands that we plan in a manner that assistance can be provided to a large number of people, should the number of deaths rise".

The NDMA guidelines had noted that States had already been incurring large expenditure from the SDRF on various aspects of COVID-19 prevention, management and response.

The Centre too had, from the national budget, announced several measures to curb the spread of the virus, including the vaccination drive and providing for the welfare and support of those affected.

70% of adult population has got first dose: Centre

5.67 cr. doses available with States, UTs

tionwide anti-coronavirus inoculation drive crossed 91 crore on Monday.

More than 5.67 crore (5,67,37,905) balance and unutilised vaccine doses were still available with the States and Union Territories.

Monthly doses up

According to government data, the average daily doses administered in a month increased from 19.69 lakh in May to 39.89 lakh in June, then further to 43.41 lakh in July and to 59.19 lakh in August. The average daily vaccination in September has been 79.08 lakh per day.

The vaccination exercise as a tool to protect the most vulnerable population groups in the country from COVID-19 continues to be regularly reviewed and monitored at the highest level, the Ministry said.

SC adjourns hearing of West Bengal's suit

No representation from the Centre

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday adjourned the hearing of a suit filed by West Bengal alleging that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was probing several cases and registering first information reports (FIRs) without taking prior consent from the State Government.

A Bench of Justices L.Nageswara Rao and B.R. Gavai had to reschedule the case to October 22, post the Dussehra holidays, on finding that there was no representation in the court from the Centre's side.

"There will be no more adjournments... There is no

appearance for the Union of India today," Justice Rao noted.

The West Bengal government, in its original civil suit under Article 131 of the Constitution, had referred to the provisions of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, and said that the Central agency had been proceeding with investigations and filing FIRs without getting the nod from the State government as mandated under the statute.

The CBI has lodged multiple FIRs in cases of post-poll violence in West Bengal. The Supreme Court had issued notice in the suit in early September.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya launched the ICMR's drone response and outreach in the north-east (i-Drone) here on Monday. The delivery model is aimed at ensuring that life-saving vaccines reach everyone.

"This is for the first time that a 'Make in India' drone has been used in South Asia to transport COVID vaccine over an aerial distance of 15 km in 12-15 minutes from the Bishnupur district hospital to Loktak lake, Karang island in Manipur for administration at the primary health centre. The actual road distance between these locations is 26 km. Today, 10 beneficiaries will receive the

Technology may prove a game changer in addressing challenges in health care: Health Minister



Zooming in: The unmanned aerial vehicle used to make vaccine deliveries on Monday. ■ TWITTER/@MANSUKHMANDVIYA

first dose and eight will receive the second dose at the primary health centre," said the Minister.

"India is home to geographical diversities and

can also be used in critical situations. It may prove a game changer in addressing the challenges in health care delivery, particularly health supplies, in difficult areas."

Tough terrain

Launching the initiative which would facilitate vaccine delivery to tough and hard-to-reach terrains, the Health Minister said incorporating such technologies into the national programmes would help deliver other vaccines and medical supplies too as quickly as possible.

The delivery model would serve remote areas and hard to reach terrains. Currently, the drone-based delivery project has been

granted permission for implementation in Manipur and Nagaland, as well as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The ICMR conducted an initial study in collaboration with the IIT Kanpur to test the capacity of the drones to carry and transfer vaccines safely.

The study was conducted in Manipur, Nagaland and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

These studies provided promising results on the basis of which the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and other regulatory authorities have granted permission to fly drones beyond the visual line of sight.

Drone-based vaccine delivery model launched

Technology may prove a game changer in addressing challenges in health care: Health Minister

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

WeMakeScholars and *The Hindu* launched the 'USA Education Loan Festival 2022' for aspirants planning to study in the USA, and following the huge response to the event, more than 3,000 applications have been received so far.

The USA Education Loan Festival, which began on October 2, is scheduled to go on till October 17 and has more than 10 public banks and private lenders taking part.

Students participating in this event will be offered several benefits which include



cessing fee for non-collateral loans. They will also benefit from faster processing of education loans – the timeline for sanction of non-collateral and collateral loans are four or five and 15 to 18 working days, respectively, a release said.

As part of the loan festival, a YouTube Live event is being conducted on October 9 via the WeMakeScholars Channel. A detailed question-and-answer session will be held at the end of the event. Those interested can contact or WhatsApp the WeMakeScholars team at +91 9393344424, or can register at bit.ly/StudyUSA2022

USA education loan festival attracts 3,000 applications

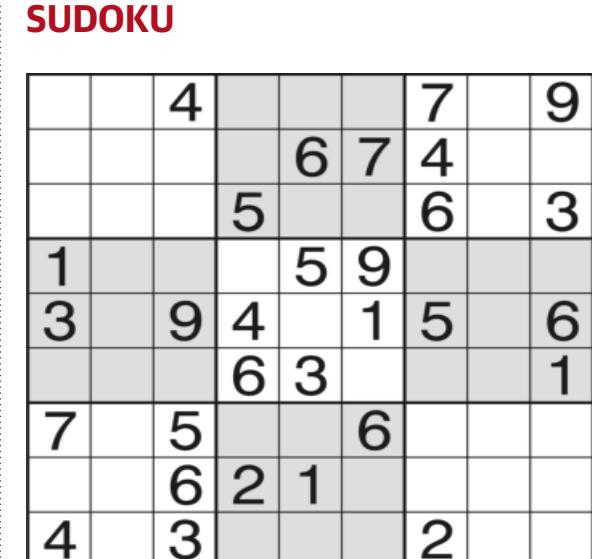
STAFF REPORTER
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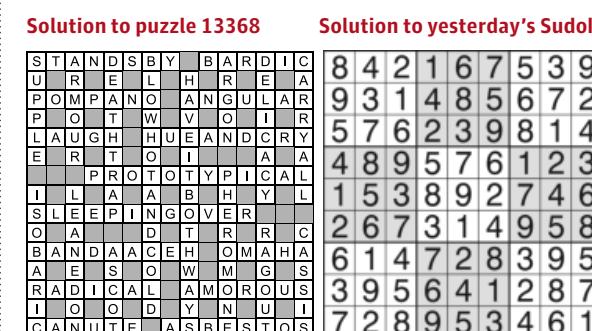
Students participating in this event will be offered several benefits which include

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13368



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

In his Thirumandiram, Thirumoolar talks of the greatness of the Vedas, said R. Narayanan in a discourse. Thirumoolar says some talk of righteous things, not mentioned in the Vedas. But, according to Thirumoolar, there are no dharmas that are not spoken of in the Vedas. Good scholars shun debates, which do not refer to the Vedas, says Thirumoolar. The Supreme Brahman is shown by the Vedas. There are some who study the Vedas, but their focus is on the Karma Kanda portion, which deals with rituals. They learn the relevant mantras required for rituals, but ignore the Jnana Kanda. The Jnana Kanda shows us the Supreme One, who is the embodiment of jnana. He who does not study the Jnana Kanda section, but merely recites mantras, will never realise the nature of Brahman. His external appearance may suggest a life of piety and learning, but it will not take him close to Brahman. One should meditate on Lord Siva, and think beyond the world of cit (sentient) and acit (non sentient). One should immerse oneself in Siva bhakti. There are those who worship the devas seeking boons of various kinds. Seldom do they praise Siva. This is due to their karma.

Thirumoolar says the Vedas have six angas. These are – Siksa (phonetics); Vyakarana (grammar); Nirukta (etymology); Kalpa (rules regarding rituals); Chandas (prosody); Jyotisha (astronomy and astrology). Some study all these aspects of the Vedas well, and yet do not reap the benefits of such study, because they fail to worship Siva, says Thirumoolar. Literature, music and dance impart good qualities to people. But some people use their skills in the fine arts to make money. Similarly, some who study the Vedas use their knowledge to earn money. The purpose of Vedic study is the realisation of Siva, says Thirumoolar.

FAITH

Greatness of the Vedas

TH CROSSWORD (set by Dr. X) **13369**

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

ACROSS

- Character in cool gamble captures spade queen legitimately (4,3,6)
- Criticise about suppressing current civil rights organisation in US (5)
- Arrange restorative containing dash of gin (9)
- Starts to cut rope using scissors in a pattern of intersecting lines (10)
- Wound primarily covered for bit of time gets protective crust (4)
- Lieutenant protected by fine shield (7)

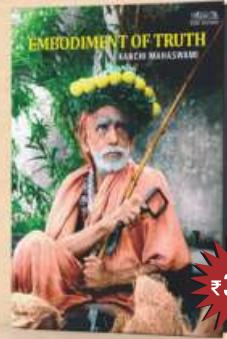
DOWN

- One who tries to speak, interrupting seer stupidly (7)
- Stopgap director leaves impression by reversing mess (7)
- Turned round to meet fine Greek character in lustrous silk fabric (7)
- Europeans perhaps avoid noisy bars (4)
- Helps to restrain Republican fool by beginning to telecast hard facts (5,5)
- Mask enables millions perhaps to tackle onset of Covid-19 (9)
- Separated and cut crust of pudding easily (5)
- What artist adding a slightly different colour will do to outshine? (3,2,3,5)
- Greed is a sin involving endless deceit (7)
- Espy trio slyly stealing gold in vault (10)
- More refined diamonds acquired by neighbour on vacation (5)
- Growing old, mixing up sentences (9)
- Piece of meat in upma? Revolting (4)
- Steamy union in farm yard (7)
- Wants tapes after scene is shot (11)
- Shamefaced English maiden, restrained after consuming dope (11)
- What romantic lover might appreciate in a person who lends money easily (1,4,5)
- Famous painter's class in fresh term (9)
- Ornithologist in a mountain provides shelter for a bird (7)
- Scrambled eggs at first followed by fish in retro joint (7)
- One overwhelmed by split runs out in strain (5)
- Race created by H.G. Wells in tale, loitering (4)

Feeling down in lockdown?
Get across to our Crossword site.
<https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCAN TO PLAY

CM YK



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MARKET WATCH

	04-10-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	59,299	0.91
US Dollar	74.31	-0.25
Gold	45,539	0.14
Brent oil	81.54	

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	744.20	9.25
Asian Paints	3201.60	23.75
Axis Bank	779.00	10.85
Bajaj Auto	3825.95	-26.65
Bajaj Finserv	17806.20	628.40
Bajaj Finance	7695.05	172.30
Bharti Airtel	681.40	5.50
BPLC	435.85	2.80
Britannia Ind	3892.90	-28.20
Cipla	957.50	-28.70
Coal India	189.95	1.25
Divis Lab	5220.70	388.40
Dr Reddy's Lab	5042.70	86.85
Eicher Motors	2745.90	-26.55
Gasim Ind	1641.15	-36.00
HCL Tech.	1278.65	4.90
HDPC	2725.20	13.55
HDPC Bank	1585.75	3.05
HDPC Life	726.65	-2.80
Hero MotoCorp	2855.55	7.60
Hindalco	505.70	21.35
Hind Unilever	2686.20	-17.85
ICICI Bank	700.20	7.85
IndusInd Bank	1119.80	15.75
Infosys	1678.75	13.60
Indian Oil Corp	126.25	-1.15
ITC	236.60	1.25
JSW Steel	681.15	6.90
Kotak Bank	1990.95	-2.60
L&T	1715.25	18.35
Maruti Suzuki	7170.30	8.00
Nestle India Ltd.	19492.95	-57.00
NTPC	145.55	5.65
ONGC	147.60	1.35
PowerGrid Corp	191.65	-0.20
Reliance Ind	2556.15	32.45
SBI Life	1230.85	21.80
State Bank	463.15	11.50
Shree Cement	29289.30	189.75
Sun Pharma	832.00	5.40
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	814.30	13.05
Tata Motors	342.00	8.70
Tata Steel	1324.15	26.30
TCS	3773.30	43.10
Tech Mahindra	1399.05	27.80
Titan	2155.30	-8.45
UltraTech Cement	7515.60	32.05
UPL	702.95	-9.70
Wipro	641.05	4.80

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on October 04		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.11	74.43
Euro	86.08	86.47
British Pound	100.66	101.14
Japanese Yen (100)	66.61	66.90
Chinese Yuan	11.49	11.55
Swiss Franc	79.83	80.18
Singapore Dollar	54.58	54.84
Canadian Dollar	58.67	58.95
Malaysian Ringgit	17.75	17.84

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Tata Motors unveils sub-compact SUV Punch

MUMBAI
Tata Motors on Monday unveiled Tata Punch, its first sub-compact SUV, and the latest addition to the 'New Forever' range of cars and SUVs. The price will be announced on October 20, 2021. Bookings are open at more than 1,000 showrooms for the Punch for ₹21,000.

Byju's raises ₹2,200 cr. from Oxshott, others

BENGALURU
Edtech start-up Byju's has raised ₹2,200 crore in a new funding round that values the firm at \$18 billion, according to data released by research firm Tofler. Stock market investor and advisory firms Edelweiss and IIFL, and venture funds such as Oxshott Venture Fund and XN Exponent Holdings were among the investors.

Icra raises outlook for power demand growth

NEW DELHI
Rating agency Icra revised its energy demand growth outlook for 2021-22 upwards from 6% to 8.5%.

Girishkumar Kadam, senior VP, Icra, said, "electricity demand growth outlook for FY22 is revised upwards to 8.5%, supported by low base effect in FY21 and faster-than-expected recovery in demand post COVID second wave."

Housing sales in 8 cities exceed pre-COVID levels'

NEW DELHI
Housing demand has breached pre-COVID levels with 92% year-on-year growth in sales during the July-September period across eight major cities, mainly on the back of stable prices and very low mortgage rates, property consultant Knight Frank India said on Monday.

Need to double infra spending: Seth

DEA Secretary calls for private sector partnership; asserts economy on 'very fast' recovery path

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India needs to double its infrastructure spending and the private sector must step up and partner with the government, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said on Monday, adding that the ministry was actively working on the Gati Shakti vision outlined by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Seth said that work was apace on operationalising the ₹11 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline supplemented by the National Monetisation Plan that aims to raise ₹6 lakh crore. The two programmes,



Miles to go: Doubling current infrastructure spending of 5%-6% of GDP is an imperative, says Seth. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

he said, were being coupled with the Gati Shakti vision so that there could be 'seamless movement of goods, services

and job opportunities'. "That is one area we are particularly working on... with other ministries and

States – how do we implement on the ground these two major plans with the overall vision of Gati Shakti," Mr. Seth said at a meeting hosted by FICCI.

Asserting that the heightened pace of reforms during the last 18 months was aimed at spurring a bounceback in the economy, Mr. Seth said: "Now, we are really on the path of very fast recovery".

Urging industry to partner on ideas for further reforms, particularly in infrastructure development, he said doubling the current infrastructure spending of 5%-6% of GDP was an imperative that

could only be met through public-private partnerships.

Credit concerns

Although the government had taken up 'strong' banking sector reforms and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code had yielded about ₹2.4 lakh crore of recoveries on bad loans, Mr. Seth expressed concern about tepid credit offtake trends.

"In the past 18 months, due to lack of private demand and investment demand, the credit offtake has been rather moderate. That's an area that needs work," the Secretary added.



Nirmala Sitharaman

Compliance lapses led to corporate scandals: FM

'Simpler norms need of the hour'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Most big scandals and corporate failures in India in recent years happened for 'want of matured compliance', Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday, adding that the government was committed to making compliance norms simpler for businesses.

Addressing the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) on their 53rd foundation day, Ms. Sitharaman urged them to recommend ways to simplify compliance requirements.

'Lacking in maturity'

"In the last few years, compliance-related issues have been the main cause for companies to fail to live up to the expectations of their investors... Most often, big scandals have come out for want of mature compliance," she said.

"The greater simplicity we can bring into the system, the finer things would work... We are trying to remove the archaic laws, bring in only amendments that can further simplify the system and reduce penal provisions."

"Unless international prices relent, oil companies will have no option but to continue passing on the increase to consumers," another official said.

Though India embarked on economic reforms in 1991, the Minister said, a lot was left to be done. "What was envisaged in 1991 itself hadn't happened, for very many reasons, the pace at which the opening up had to happen, the pace at which companies had to be liberated from the licence quota raj, hadn't happened.

"That actually is rapidly opening up the doors for companies... more in the last 7-8 years," she said.

Finance Secretary T.V. Soomanathan acknowledged that while the Centre had been easing the compliance burden on firms, there was room for further relaxation.

He requested the ICSI to help identify redundant and cumbersome norms that could be done away with.

RBI removes Srei Infra, SEFL boards

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has superseded the boards of Srei Infrastructure Finance Ltd. (SIFL) and Srei Equipment Finance Ltd. (SEFL) owing to governance concerns and defaults in meeting payment obligations.

The Reserve Bank on Monday superseded the board of directors of SIFL and SEFL, owing to governance concerns and defaults by the companies in meeting various payment obligations," the RBI said.

However, with the government's focus on infrastructure, the demand for infrastructure credit is likely to improve over the medium term, it said.

"Given the disruption caused by the second wave of the pandemic, total infrastructure credit (banks and NBFC-IFCs) remained sluggish in Q1 FY2022, with infrastructure-focused loan books remaining flat on



quarter-on-quarter (q-o-q) basis for both NBFC-IFCs as well as banks," Icra said in the report.

The total infrastructure credit by banks and NBFC-IFCs is estimated at ₹24.7 lakh crore as on March 31, registering a sluggish growth of 10%, it said, adding given the disruption caused by the second wave of the pandemic, it has remained stable as on June 30.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that three boys Namely, (1) Vishnu S/o Laxman Prasad R/o Balaji Gali, Gandhi Nagar, PS Shuklaganj, Distt. Unnao UP (2) Vaju Paswan S/o Laxmi Paswan R/o Dekha, PS-Sakri, Distt- Madhubani, Bihar (3) Prince S/o Vijay Kumar R/o Vill. Rajpur, Post Gauri, PS Lauli, Fathepur, UP have been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS Paharganj, Delhi since 25.09.2021. In this regard, a case FIR No. 384/21, dated 25.09.2021 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Paharganj, Delhi. The description of the missing boys are as under:



(1) Vishnu, Age: 13 Years, Height: 5'1", Complexion: Fair, Built: Thin, Wearing: White Colour T-Shirt & Black Colour Pant. (2) Vaju Paswan, Age: 16 Years Height: 5'2" Complexion: Shallow Built: Thin, Wearing: White Colour T-Shirt and black Colour Pant. (3) Prince, Age: 14 Years, Height: 5'1", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Thin, Wearing: Blue colour Shirt and Pant. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing boys but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing boys then please inform at following Tel. No./e-mail: cib@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in, providing clue about the person.

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- SHO
Paharganj Delhi

DP/1017/CD/2021

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 40-45 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 5 feet 6 inch, Complexion: Wheatish, ID Mark: Tattoo of Binini Harsh Kumar Chal on Right Hand, Injury Mark: Injury on Head, W

U.S. will start trade talks with China: Tai

Trade representative says she will push Beijing to adhere to Phase 1 trade deal

SIRAM LAKSHMAN

WASHINGTON DC

The U.S. will begin trade discussions with China while pushing Beijing to adhere to the terms of the Trump administration's 'Phase I' trade deal, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), Katherine Tai said on Monday.

Speaking at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington DC-based think tank, Ms. Tai said that in talks with Beijing, the U.S. would discuss China's "performance" under the Trump-era trade deal.

"First, we will discuss with China, its performance under the Phase I agreement," Ms. Tai said, referring to a deal that came into effect in early 2020. The agreement involved China committing to purchase goods from certain U.S. sectors (agricultural, manufac-

uring, energy, etc.) and addressing U.S. issues with its practices around intellectual property in return for the U.S. freezing or cutting tariffs imposed earlier in what had been an escalating trade war-like situation between the two countries.

Mr. Biden has repeatedly been critical of Mr. Trump's trade actions towards China. However, senior administration officials told reporters on a Sunday afternoon briefing call that while Mr. Biden was critical of the Phase I deal, it had helped some U.S. industries, and would be continued where it worked.

"For example, there is real-world evidence that some businesses covered by the phase one trade deal have done better. President Biden is going to continue doing things that work..." an official said.

China fell short of its com-



Starting over: Katherine Tai said the U.S. would discuss China's 'performance' under the Trump-era trade deal. ■ FILE PHOTO

mitted purchases in 2020 by 40% and will fall short by 30% in 2021 according to Chad Bown of the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

Next, the U.S. is expected to begin a 'targeted tariff exclusion process' and keep open the option of expanding this process to cover other goods in the future, Ms.

Tai said.

She said Beijing had "doubled down" on its state-centred economic practices and that China's "lack of adherence to global trading norms" had undercut the prosperity of the U.S. and its allies. The third aspect of the trade policy she outlined would involve raising these concerns with China.

The fourth and final part of the strategy would involve working with allies to shape the rules for "fair trade" and to "facilitate a race to the top for market economies and democracies."

"When it comes to our relationship with China, what's best for American workers, is growing the American economy to create more opportunity with better wages, here in the United States," Ms. Tai said.

"As the United States Trade Representative, I intend to deliver on President Biden's vision for a worker centred trade policy in the U.S.-China trade dynamic," she said emphasising a theme of the Biden agenda.

Asked in a question and answer session if the U.S. would consider launching a (another) probe into China's trading practices – commonly referred to as a '301' after the statute that underlies it, Ms. Tai suggested it was an option.

bel committee early on Monday. "One never really expects that to happen... I thought it was a prank," he told Swedish Radio.

'Essential for survival'

The Nobel Foundation meanwhile posted a picture of Mr. Patapoutian next to his son Luca after hearing the happy news. "Our ability to sense heat, cold and mechanical force can initiate the nerve impulses that allow us to perceive and adapt to the world," the Nobel jury said.

The pair's research is being used to develop treatments for a wide range of diseases and conditions, including chronic pain.

Mr. Julius, who in 2019 won the \$3-million Breakthrough Prize in life sciences, said he was stunned to receive the call from the No-

nised for his research using capsaicin – a compound from chili peppers that induces a burning sensation – to identify which nerve sensors in the skin respond to heat.

He told *Scientific American* in 2019 that he got the idea to study chili peppers after a visit to the grocery store. "I was looking at these shelves and shelves of basically chili peppers and extracts (hot sauce) and thinking, 'This is such an important and such a fun problem to look at. I've really got to get serious about this,'" he said. Mr. Patapoutian's discovery was identifying the class of nerve sensors that respond to touch.

They will share the Nobel Prize cheque for 10 million Swedish kronor (\$1.1 million).

U.S. duo win Nobel for work on temperature and touch

They studied how heat and cold initiated nerve impulses

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STOCKHOLM

U.S. scientists David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian on Monday won the Nobel Medicine Prize for discoveries on receptors for temperature and touch.

"The groundbreaking discoveries... by this year's Nobel Prize laureates have allowed us to understand how heat, cold and mechanical force can initiate the nerve impulses that allow us to perceive and adapt to the world," the Nobel jury said.

"As the United States Trade Representative, I intend to deliver on President Biden's vision for a worker centred trade policy in the U.S.-China trade dynamic," she said emphasising a theme of the Biden agenda.

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won the \$3-million Breakthrough Prize in life sciences, said he was stunned to receive the call from the No-

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intrusions, another on September 23 coincided with Taiwan saying it had submitted an application to join the 11-nation CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) trade deal, days after China said it had formally applied to join the Pacific pact.

Last month, Beijing strongly hit out at Taiwan's application to join the CPTPP. "There is only one China in the world," spokesperson Zhao Lijian said. Commenting on Saturday's record air intrusions, U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said the U.S. "is very concerned by the People's Republic of China's provocative military activity near Taiwan, which is destabilising, risks miscalculations, and undermines regional peace and stability."

Kabul IS cell destroyed, say Taliban

The move comes after an attack on a mosque in Afghan capital that killed five



Blood trail: A Taliban fighter walking past the the Eid Gah mosque where the blast happened. ■ AFP

bers in it were killed," Mujahid said on Twitter.

Witnesses and AFP journalists heard blasts and gunfire in the capital at the time of the raid, and images posted to social media showed a large explosion and a fire at the scene.

adding the sound of weapons kept him awake all night.

The operation took place within hours of a deadly attack targeting a prayer ceremony at the Eid Gah mosque in memory of Taliban spokesman Mujahid's mother, who died last week.

A government cultural commission official said that five persons died and 11 were wounded, adding the casualties included both civilians and Taliban members.

"We have also arrested three persons in connection with the blast," he said.

On Monday, Mujahid told AFP that an investigation was still ongoing but "initial information suggests that Daesh-linked groups may have carried out the attack".

Leaders seek to limit 'Pandora' damage

Documents reveal that they have used offshore tax havens to stash assets



Unfurling secrets: Some 35 current and former leaders are featured in roughly 11.9 million documents. ■ AFP

linked via associates to secret assets in Monaco, particularly a waterfront home acquired by a Russian woman reported to have had a child with him.

"This is just a set of largely unsubstantiated claims," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We didn't see anything on hidden wealth within Mr. Putin's inner circle."

Jordan was also keen to play down the revelations,

which exposed how King Abdullah II created a network of offshore companies



Mounting fleet: Monday's breach follows incursion by record number of aircraft on previous two days. ■ FILE PHOTO

arate waves. Taiwan officials have hit out at the aerial intrusions into the ADIZ as acts of "military aggression" and "damaging regional peace".

National Day

The intrusions have coincided with China's National Day, marked on October 1, and come ahead of Taiwan's National Day on October 10.

The aerial deployments

and tax havens to amass a \$100 million property empire from California to London. The country's royal court said the properties were funded with the King's personal wealth and were used for official and private visits.

Family and associates of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev are alleged to have been secretly involved in property deals in Britain worth hundreds of millions.

And the documents also show how Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis failed to declare an offshore investment company used to purchase a chateau worth \$22 million in the south of France.

Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram hit by outage

This follows leaks by FB whistleblower

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SAN FRANCISCO

Facebook and its Instagram and WhatsApp platforms were hit by a massive outage on Monday, impacting potentially tens of millions of users as the social media giant faces fallout over its effect on teens and misinformation.

Tracker 'Downdetector'

was showing outages in heavily populated areas like Washington and Paris, with problems being reported from around 2115 IST.

"We're aware that some people are having trouble accessing our apps and products."

Facebook spokesman Andy Stone said

on Twitter.

Users trying to access Facebook in affected areas were greeted with the message: "Something went wrong. We're working on it and we'll get it fixed as soon as we can."

The outage comes a day after a whistleblower went on U.S. television to reveal her identity after she leaked a trove of documents to authorities alleging the company knew its products were fueling hate and harming children's mental health.

Consequently, the social media platform has come under sharp criticism from U.S. lawmakers.

Fumio Kishida elected as new PM of Japan

His predecessor had lasted only a year



Fumio Kishida

Japan's parliament on Monday elected Fumio Kishida, a former moderate turned hawk, as Prime Minister.

He'll face an economy battered by the pandemic, security threats from China and North Korea and leadership of a political party whose popularity is sagging ahead of a fast-approaching crucial national election.

With his party and its coalition partner holding a majority in both houses, Mr. Kishida won by a comfortable margin against Yukio Edano, head of the largest opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan.

Some 35 current and former leaders are featured in roughly 11.9 million documents leaked from financial services companies across the world. The documents, known as the "Pandora Papers," were obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

Russian leader Vladimir Putin is not named but he is

linked via associates to secret assets in Monaco, particularly a waterfront home acquired by a Russian woman reported to have had a child with him.

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"This is just a set of largely unsubstantiated claims," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We didn't see anything on hidden wealth within Mr. Putin's inner circle."

Jordan was also keen to play down the revelations,

which exposed how King Abdullah II created a network of offshore companies

and tax havens to amass a \$100 million property empire from California to London. The country's royal court said the properties were funded with the King's personal wealth and were used for official and private visits.

Family and associates of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev are alleged to have been secretly involved in property deals in Britain worth hundreds of millions.

And the documents also show how Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis failed to declare an offshore investment company used to purchase a chateau worth \$22 million in the south of France.

"We're aware that some people are having trouble accessing our apps and products."

Facebook spokesman Andy Stone said

on Twitter.

Users trying to access Facebook in affected areas were greeted with the message: "Something went wrong. We're working on it and we'll get it fixed as soon as we can."

The outage comes a day after a whistleblower went on U.S. television to reveal her identity after she leaked a trove of documents to authorities alleging the company knew its products were fueling hate and harming children's mental health.

Consequently, the social media platform has come under sharp criticism from U.S. lawmakers.

Some 35 current and former leaders are featured in roughly 11.9 million documents leaked from financial services companies across the world. The documents, known as the "Pandora Papers," were obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

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Capitals pip Super Kings in tense finish

After Axar and Ashwin combine to restrict the Chennai side to 136, Hetmyer guides the team home

IPL 2021

SPORTS BUREAU

A disciplined bowling effort, led by spinners Axar Patel (2/18) and R. Ashwin (1/20), and vital knocks by Shikhar Dhawan (39) and Shimron Hetmeyer (28 not out) helped Delhi Capitals edge out Chennai Super Kings by three wickets in a pulsating IPL clash in Dubai on Monday.

Electing to field, Capitals' spinners, along with Kagiso Rabada (4-0-21-0), helped restrict CSK to 136 for five. Ambati Rayudu waged a lone battle, his unbeaten 55 (43b, 5x4, 2x6) taking the side to a decent total.

DC started strongly, scoring 48 in the first five overs, but made heavy weather of a modest chase after its batters kept throwing their wickets away and allowed CSK to remain in the hunt till the end.

Dhawan anchored the chase with a measured approach. He started explosively, smashing Deepak Chahar for 21 runs (two sixes and two fours) in one over before holding fort at one end even as wickets kept falling at the other.

Shardul Thakur (2/13) was the star performer for the Chennai side, his accurate back-of-a-length bowling proving difficult for the DC batters to score off.

With 28 needed off the last three overs, Hetmeyer hit two crucial boundaries off Dwayne Bravo in the 18th over. He was lucky with the second one as substitute fielder K. Gowtham dropped a simple chance at long-on when he was on 12. In the end, the West Indian's unbeaten 28 helped DC seal a place in the top two.

Earlier, CSK made a promising start as Ruturaj Gaikwad and Faf du Plessis struck



Delhi's architects: Axar spun a web around the Super Kings batters before Hetmyer got into the act. ■ SPORTZPICS/IPL

a series of boundaries. However, the South African perished when he hit an arm-ball from Axar straight to mid-wicket. The in-form Ruturaj soon followed, mistiming a pull off Anrich Nortje.

Axar and Ashwin bowled tight lines, reaping the benefits whenever the batters decided to take them on.

From 62 for four in the ninth over, M.S. Dhoni and Rayudu forged a 70-run stand for the fifth wicket but struggled to score boundaries. In fact, the skipper (18, 27b) could not find the fence even once.

Rayudu began slowly but switched gears towards the end, hitting sixes off Nortje and Avesh Khan to give the innings some momentum. However, it was not enough.

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Ruturaj Gaikwad c Ashwin b Nortje 13 (13b, 2x4), Faf du Plessis c Shreyas b Axar 10 (8b, 2x4), Robin Uthappa c & b Ashwin 19 (19b, 1x4), Moeen Ali c Shreyas b Axar 5 (8b), Ambati Rayudu (not out) 55 (43b, 5x4, 2x6), M.S. Dhoni c Pant b Avesh 18 (27b), Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 1 (2b); Extras (lb-5, w-10) 15; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 136.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-28 (du Plessis, 2.4 overs), 2-39 (Ruturaj, 4.4), 3-59 (Moeen, 7.4), 4-62 (Uthappa, 8.3), 5-132 (Dhoni, 19.1).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Nortje 4-0-37-1, Avesh 4-0-35-1, Axar 4-0-18-2, Rabada 4-0-21-0, Ashwin 4-0-20-1.

DELHI CAPITALS

Prithvi Shaw c du Plessis b

Deepak Chahar 18 (12b, 3x4), Shikhar Dhawan c Moeen b Shardul 39 (35b, 3x4, 2x6), Shreyas Iyer c Ruturaj b Hazlewood 2 (7b), Rishabh Pant c Moeen b Jadeja 15 (12b, 1x4, 1x6), Ripal Patel c Deepak Chahar b Jadeja 18 (20b, 2x4), R. Ashwin b Shardul 2 (3b), Shimron Hetmeyer (not out) 28 (18b, 2x4, 1x6), Axar Patel c Moeen b Bravo 5 (10b), Kagiso Rabada (not out) 4 (1b, 1x4); Extras (lb-1, w-7): 8; Total (for seven wkts. in 19.4 overs): 139.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-24 (Shaw, 2.3), 2-51 (Shreyas, 5.5), 3-71 (Pant, 8.5), 4-93 (Ripal, 12.5), 5-98 (Ashwin, 14.1), 6-99 (Dhawan, 14.6), 7-135 (Axar, 19.3).

SUPER KINGS BOWLING

Deepak Chahar 3-0-34-1, Hazlewood 4-0-27-1, Jadeja 4-

0-28-2, Moeen 3-0-16-0, Shardul 4-0-13-2, Bravo 1-4-0-20-1.

Toss: DC; MoM: Axar.

Capitals won by three wickets with two balls to spare.

Innings scan

CSK	Dots	DC
46	53	
10	12	
2	4	
48/2	51/2	
6.80	7.06	

Next assignment

CSK: Oct. 7 vs PBKS, Dubai, 3.30 p.m. IST

DC: Oct. 8 vs RCB, Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST

It is crunch time for MI and Royals

Must-win game for both as battle heats up for playoffs spot

SPORTS BUREAU

TODAY'S MATCH



SHARJAH, 7.30 P.M. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 23

RR 11 | MI 12

In 2021

Played 1 | RR 0 | MI 1

STAR SPORTS 1 & SS SELECT 1 (SD & HD)

preceded hat-trick of trophies, but they cannot afford to wait any longer to get their act together.

Time to step up

They need a few from their long list of match-winners – including Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya, Suryakumar Yadav, Quinton de Kock, Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult – to come up with major contributions.

Royals may have been handicapped in the second phase by the absence of Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler and Jofra Archer, but they could take heart from the way Yashavali Jaiswal, Shivam Dube, Evin Lewis and skipper Sanju Samson chased down a formidable target set by Dhoni's men in their last match.

While Royals are in fami-

liar territory, the Mumbai men would be desperate to keep their reputation in tact.

For the tournament's most successful team – with five titles – this has been a season of disappointment.

Rohit Sharma's men could still dream of an un-

Morgan lauds KKR's bowlers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI

Kolkata Knight Riders captain Eoin Morgan is the first one to admit that he has been woefully short of runs throughout the IPL, but is confident of finding some form with the tournament hitting the business end.

"Yeah, I am short of runs in this phase of the tournament, the whole tournament in general. I am very lucky to be in a position where I have been through stages like this in my career," Morgan said after his team's six-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"And I think the longer you go without contributing a significant score, the closer you are to actually contributing. And that's coming from experience," said Morgan.

Speaking about Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy, who have played a key

group. The KKR captain said veteran Kiwi Tim Southee has made a big impression in the absence of key players like Andre Russell, Lockie Ferguson, Pat Cummins and the others.

"Tim's obviously had a huge impact on the side. When you miss two or three big gun players – we miss Pat, Lockie, and Dre (Russell) – it's not easy but Tim has stepped up to the plate."

POINTS TABLE

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Delhi Capitals (Q)	13	10	3	20	0.526
Chennai Super Kings (Q)	13	9	4	18	0.739
Royal Challengers (Q)	12	8	4	16	-0.157
Kolkata Knight Riders	13	6	7	12	0.294
Punjab Kings	13	5	8	10	-0.241
Rajasthan Royals	12	5	7	10	-0.337
Mumbai Indians	12	5	7	10	-0.453
Sunrisers Hyderabad (E)	12	2	10	4	-0.475

After the DC-CSK match on Oct. 4

Double whammy for India paddlers

SPORTS BUREAU

DOHA

The Indian doubles pairs of G. Sathiyan & Sharath Kamal and Manav Thakkar lost in the men's doubles semifinals of the Asian table tennis championships here on Monday.

Harmeet and Manav rallied from a two-game deficit but fell short as Koreans Jong Woojin and Lim Jong-hoon triumphed 11-4, 11-6, 10-12, 9-11, 11-8, while the Sharath-Sathiyan pair was outplayed by Yukiya Uda and Shunsuke Togami of Japan 11-5, 11-9, 13-11.

India ended its campaign with three bronze medals – one in the men's team event and two in men's doubles.

The results (semifinals):

Men's doubles: Jong Woojin & Lim Jonghoon (Kor) bt Harmeet Desai & Manav Thakkar 11-4, 11-6, 10-12, 9-11, 11-8; Yukiya Uda & Shunsuke Togami (Jpn) bt G. Sathiyan & Sharath Kamal 11-5, 11-9, 13-11.

England to decide on Ashes tour this week

Players have concerns over bubble environments and safety

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

England cricket chiefs will meet this week to decide whether the Ashes will go ahead later this year, with fears expressed about the strictness of coronavirus protocols in Australia.

Joe Root's team are due to play a five-Test series starting in Brisbane on December 8, with further matches in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth.

But the players are understood to harbour concerns over quarantine, bubble environments and access for families and Root last week refused to commit to the tour.

Constant touch

The England and Wales Cricket Board said on Monday it was in "regular and positive dialogue" with Cricket Australia.



A replica of the fabled Ashes Urn. ■ REUTERS

place are sufficient for the tour to go ahead and enable the selection of a squad befitting a series of this significance," it added.

Multi-format England players potentially face months of travelling and living in biosecure bubbles. The T20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates and Oman starts on October 17 before the Ashes series in December and January.

The issue of players' well-being was brought sharply into focus in July when it was announced that star England all-rounder Ben Stokes would be taking an indefinite break from cricket to "prioritise" his mental health.

Australia is the current holder of the Ashes after retaining the urn following a 2-2 draw in England in 2019. The host won the last home series in 2017-18 4-0.

Milan stays on Napoli's coattails with a win at Atalanta

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ROME

AC Milan stayed in touch with Serie A leader Napoli on Sunday after coming away from Atalanta with a 3-2 win which maintains its unbeaten start to the season and underlines its title credentials.

Milan came out on top in a frenetic encounter to stay two points behind Napoli, whose 2-1 win at Fiorentina was its seventh in as many games so far this season, after a nervy ending in Bergamo which saw Atalanta pull back two late goals after going three down with 12 minutes remaining.

There are signs that a three-way title race is starting to take shape with Inter Milan a further two points

back in third.

Milan went ahead almost straight from kick-off through Davide Calabria.

The home crowd groaned in disbelief in the 20th minute when, after doing brilliantly to tip away Davide Zappacosta's near post drive from the edge of the area, Milan keeper Maignan then got a hand to Duvan Zapata's bullet header from the subsequent corner.

And Sandro Tonali made the most of his goalkeeper's fine display when he doubled Milan's lead two minutes from half-time with his second Serie A goal of the season.

IN BRIEF



Ruud cruises past Norrie for fifth title in 2021

LOS ANGELES

Casper Ruud powered past Cameron Norrie 6-0, 6-2 to win the ATP San Diego title on Sunday, his fifth in 2021. The Norwegian had earlier triumphed at Geneva, Bastad, Gstaad and Kitzbuhel. Ruud, who had won only one ATP title before this year, moves into eighth place in the Race to Turin as he tries to qualify for the November 14-21 ATP Finals. AFP



Muguruza beats Jabeur in Chicago final

CHICAGO

Garbine Muguruza rallied to beat Ons Jabeur 3-6, 6-3, 6-0 in the Chicago Fall Tennis Classic for her second WTA Tour victory of the season and ninth overall. The ninth-ranked Muguruza had won the Dubai Duty Free Championships in March. AP

Tsvetana Pironkova wins 20th, Diksha slips way down

BARCELONA

Tsveta Pironkova carded a one-over 73 in the final round to finish 20th at the Estrella Damm Ladies Open in Sitges, Spain on Sunday. However, Diksha Dagar, playing her first event since the Olympics, returned a 78 to finish T-58 at one-over 217. Sweden's 21-year-old Maja Stark, who began the day on T-17, carded a 65 to win the title with an eight-under total. PTI

We won the England series 2-1, asserts Rohit

Status of abandoned match a mere technicality, says India star

CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI

India's white-ball vice-captain Rohit Sharma has no idea about the status of last month's abandoned fifth Test against England in Manchester but is quite clear in his mind that his team "won" the hard-fought series 2-1.

The fifth Test in Manchester was abandoned after Team India's junior physio Yogesh Parmar tested positive for COVID-19 and was found to be in direct contact with the players. This was after some senior members of the Indian support staff were also found to be infected.

Extension

The BCCI has agreed to play the fifth Test in July, 2022. BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has said it will be an extension of this year's series

and not a one-off game as England wants.

"I don't know what's happening with the last Test match. Whether we are playing a one-off Test (next year) but in my mind we have won the series 2-1," Rohit said during Adidas' campaign 'Impossible Is Nothing' which also features Tokyo Olympic medalists weightlifter Mirabai Chanu and boxer Lovlina Borgohain among other sports stars.

Milestone

Asked if the England series, where he scored more than 400 runs with a hundred and two fifties in four games was a milestone series for him, he replied: "It was a good one considering where I was standing in my Test career."

But the soon-to-be T20 captain refused to call it his best series.

"It's not my best series. I

feel my best is yet to come. I utilised the time before the World Test Championship final in Southampton (to figure out) what sort of technique and mindset is required. I was pretty happy and would like to take it further."

Save the rhino

Rohit has been actively involved with the 'Save the Rhinos' campaign and also for a plastic free sustainable planet. He spoke about his experience thus far.

"It was in 2014 when I went to Kenya and learnt about the condition of rhinos. India and Africa are two places where we have the maximum rhino population.

"I often thought 'why don't I carry my cause on to the field?'" Rohit said about the company's specially designed cricket shoes which carry the 'Save the rhino' message.



Working to a plan: Rohit Sharma is immensely satisfied with his performance in the series, but claims his best is yet to come. ■AP

Edulji, Shantha prefer 'four-day' Tests as they feel it's more than enough



Diana Edulji.
■FILE PHOTO: PTI

Want BCCI to restart red-ball cricket in domestic circuit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Australia head coach Matthew Mott has reiterated his call for five-day Test in women's cricket but former India captains Diana Edulji and Shantha Rangaswamy are among the ones who prefer status quo and instead want resumption of red-ball games in domestic cricket.

Mott and England captain Heather Knight suggested the need for making women's Test matches a five-

day affair from four after the pink-ball game between India and Australia ended in a draw.

Too much time lost

Close to 100 overs were lost in the game due to rain on the first two days. "It's the five days for me," said Mott after the drawn Test.

The head coach also spoke about the need for five-day Tests after the 2019 women's Ashes Test.

"Had this game gone

another day, I think we'd have seen a very good Test. A little more time in the game would certainly help everyone."

India, which played its first long format game against Australia in 15 years, had also drawn its last Test against England in June.

"The four-day format is fine for now. We played three-day games back in the day. As it is, there are only three countries (India, Australia, England) that are play-



Shantha Rangaswamy.
■FILE PHOTO

Marquez reigns at GP of the Americas

Quartararo extends lead at the top of championship standings

MOTOGP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

AUSTIN

Marc Marquez reasserted his mastery of the Circuit of the Americas on Sunday, winning MotoGP's Grand Prix of the Americas for the seventh time.

Marquez, starting third on the grid, seized the lead at the start and relentlessly powered to victory over championship leader Fabio Quartararo of France.

Marquez never allowed Quartararo a look-in, but the Yamaha rider pushed his lead in the standings to 52 points over Italian Ducati rider Francesco Bagnaia, who finished third.

With just three races left this season – and with 25



Wild in the West: Fabio Quartararo, Marc Marquez and Francesco Bagnaia celebrate on the podium at Austin. ■AP

points on offer to the winner of each one – Quartararo is within touching distance of a first Moto World title.

"The plan exactly was like I did the race," said a beaming Marquez, the six-time World champion who won the first six races held at the

Austin circuit but fell off while leading in 2019.

The event was cancelled last season when he was recuperating after breaking his right arm in a crash, and his front-row start was his first since his return to the sport.

By the halfway stage he

was more than two seconds up on Quartararo, who started from the middle of the front row and finished 4.679s behind.

Bagnaia, starting from pole for the third straight race, was running fourth with a few laps remaining, when his pressure on Jorge Martin finally caused the rookie to cut two corners and draw a long-lap penalty that secured Bagnaia's place on the podium.

History beckons

Quartararo will have the chance to become France's first MotoGP World champion at the next race at Misano in Italy on October 24.

"Today, everyone on the podium is happy," Marquez said.

ATP investigating allegations of abusive behaviour against Zverev

ANI

LONDON

ATP on Monday announced that an internal investigation is currently underway into allegations concerning Alexander Zverev at the ATP Masters 1000 event in Shanghai in 2019.

Notably, more than a year ago Zverev's former partner – Olga Sharapova – alleged she was physically and emotionally abused by the German tennis star. Then just days before the 2021 US Open, a second interview was published by slate.com where she made further claims, as per ubitennis.

Taking note of the



Alexander Zverev. ■AP

incident, the ATP has condemned any form of violence or abuse and stated that the organisation will investigate such allegations related to conduct at an ATP member tournament. ATP CEO Massimo Calvelli in a

statement said: "The allegations raised against Alexander Zverev are serious and we have a responsibility to address them."

Follow-up action

"We hope our investigation will allow us to establish the facts and determine appropriate follow-up action. We understand Zverev welcomes our investigation and acknowledge that he has denied all allegations. We will also be monitoring any further legal developments following the preliminary injunction obtained by Zverev in the German Courts."

In another lively match, Sreenidhi Balaji beat Manognya Madasu 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 in the same section.

In the under-14 girls section, lucky loser Anandi Bhutada beat qualifier Jaya Kapoor 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 to set up a second round against seventh seed Priyanka Rana. **The results (first round):**

Under-16 girls: Saina Deshpande bt Shagun Kumari 6-3, 7-5; Riya Sachdeva bt Sweta Rana 6-1, 6-1; Nandini Dixit bt Saumrita Verma 7-6(4), 7-6(7) in the under-16 girls first round of the National sub-junior tennis championship at the DLTA Complex here on Monday.

In another lively match, Sreenidhi Balaji beat Manognya Madasu 6-3, 3-6, 6-2; Samya Sikand bt Suyash Chaudhary 6-0, 6-3; Pushti Viswathraja bt Vanya Arora 6-1, 6-0; Niyati Kulkarni bt Lagan Budhiraja 6-0, 6-0; Samya Ronde bt Suhani Gaur 6-3, 6-2; Lakshmi Gowda bt Harshini Viswanath 6-2, 6-0; Asmi Adkar bt Ikaraju Kanamuri 6-1, 6-2; Ananya Sri bt Khushi Ghulati 6-1, 6-0.

Under-14 boys: Shanker Heis-

nam bt Kanj Shah 4-6, 6-3, 6-1; Dhrijit Reddy bt Abhiram Nilakhe 6-2, 0-6, 6-4; Tanush Ghilday bt Arnav Yadav 6-2, 7-6(1); Advik Natakar bt Samarth Sahita 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-4; Pratyushraj Goel bt Panshu Uboveja 7-6(2), 3-6, 6-3; Ashwajit Senjam bt Pranav Mishra 6-1, 7-6(4); V Thirumurugan bt Arjun Rath 6-4, 6-4; Rian Sharma bt Vyom Shah 7-5, 6-3; Dhruv Sachdeva bt Arya Ganapathy 7-6(5), 6-1; Raghav Amin bt Kunsh Kakkar 6-3, 4-6, 4-0 (conceded); Aarav Chawla bt Dhruv Ghanghas 6-2, 5-7, 7-6(4); Swastik Sharma bt Shubham Shevraat 3-6, 6-1, 7-5; Krish Tyagi bt Lethesha Kombla 6-4, 6-2.

Under-14 girls: Devanshee Prabhudesai bt Krishna Dalal 6-4, 6-3; Rishitha Reddy bt Aditi Tyagi 6-1, 6-3; Prisha Shinde bt Shatakshi Chaudhary 6-0, 6-3; Harshini N bt Sejal Bhutada 6-0, 6-1; Janhvi Kajla bt Arushi Raval 6-3, 6-0; Maaya Revathi bt Inaaya Mittal 6-0, 6-3; Venketa Reddy bt Neelakshi Lather 6-1, 6-1; Anandi Bhutada bt Jaya Kapoor 6-3, 4-6, 6-3; Ishi Maheshwari bt Aakruti Sonkusare 7-6(5), 6-4; Prarthana Solanki bt Prachi Rana 7-5, 6-3; Harithashree Venkatesh bt Dheepa Yazhini 6-0, 6-2; Anushka Bhatia bt Yashika 7-6(6), 6-1; Aditi Rawat bt Manognya Madasu 6-2, 6-1; Samya Dasari bt Avni Sahary 6-2, 6-3; Pehal Kharadkar bt Navya Sharma 6-2, 6-2; Nemha Sarah Kispotta bt Radha Sadhra 6-0, 6-2.

FOOTBALL

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUSSELDORF: Borussia Dortmund is set to spend the international break worrying about the fitness of Erling Haaland after the club indicated the Norway striker's injury could drag on into the second half of October. Haaland hasn't played since Sept. 19 with an unspecified muscle problem and will sit out Norway's upcoming World Cup qualifiers against Turkey and Montenegro.

Haaland wished the team luck on Twitter on Monday ahead of crunch games for his ambition to

play in Norway's first major tournament since 2000.

"Fundamentally, all clubs have a duty to release (players) for international duty," said Sebastian Kehl, the administrative manager for Dortmund's team, in comments published on Monday by the *Westdeutsche Zeitung* newspaper.

"However, Erling is currently injured and hasn't been able to play for us recently and also can't take part in team training in the following weeks."

Kehl said he expected the Norwegian federation to have "trust in us and in (Haaland)" over the injury.

Mid-fielder Ritu, who is known for her tackling and aerial ability, is satisfied with the way things are shaping up for the team.

"Preparations are going on for AFC with the exposure tours and camps."

"The teammates and coaching staff are supported well and the aim is to perform well in AFC Asian Cup," she said.

"This will definitely bring about a change in women's football all over the country and girls would take it as a career option," Karishma told PTI.

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