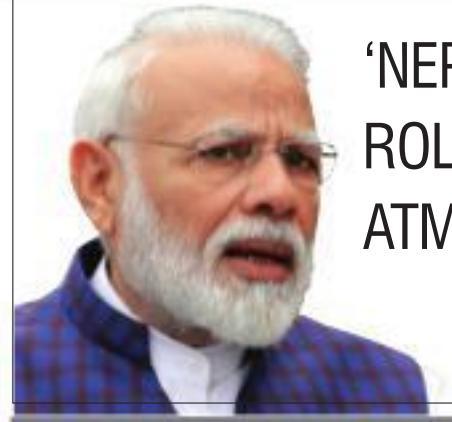
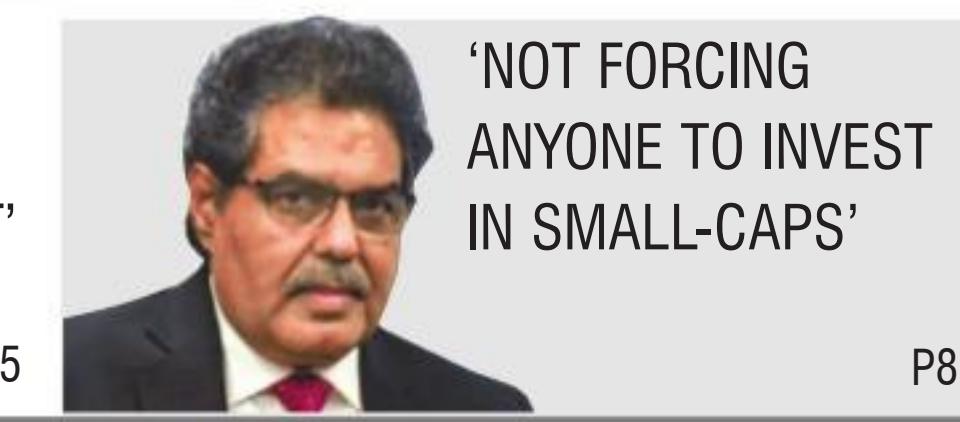




PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



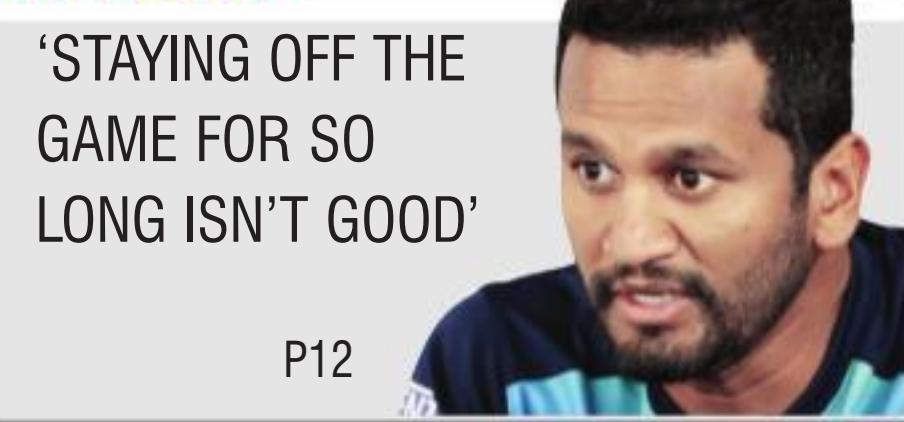
'NEP WILL PLAY KEY
ROLE IN CREATING
ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT'



'NOT FORCING
ANYONE TO INVEST
IN SMALL-CAPS'



NEW COVID-19
CURBS, CURFEWS TO
LAST SIX MONTHS



'STAYING OFF THE
GAME FOR SO
LONG ISN'T GOOD'

P5

P8

P10

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky with light rain/drizzle accompanied with gusty winds. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 35 and 26 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 83%	Min: 54%
TEMPERATURE	
Max: 37.1°C (+3)	Min: 27.5°C (+3)
SUN RISES	SUN SETS
06:11 hrs	18:16 hrs
MOON RISES	MOON SETS
13:26 hrs	22:59 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Youth Congress activists protesting against farm Bills and rise in unemployment in the Capital on Tuesday.

DEEPAK

PM to chair Covid review meeting with CMs of 7 high-burden states: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a high-level virtual meeting with chief ministers and health ministers of seven high-burden states on Wednesday to review the Covid-19 situation. These states include Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Punjab, an official statement said, noting that more than 65 per cent of the active Covid cases in the country were concentrated in these states.

Assange a suicide risk if extradited to the US, say experts: Julian Assange is very likely to attempt to kill himself if he is sent to the United States to face espionage charges, a psychiatric expert said on Tuesday. Michael Kopelman, emeritus professor at King's College London, said Assange has a history of depression and there is a very high risk of suicide if the US extradition attempt succeeds. It's the imminence of extradition and/or an actual extradition that will trigger the attempt, in my opinion, Kopelman said.

CAUTIOUS SHOPPERS



People wearing face masks to beat the Covid-19 while shopping at Connaught Place in the Capital on Tuesday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

Delhi records 3,816 new Covid cases, 37 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Delhi today reported 3,816 coronavirus (Covid-19) cases, which took the cumulative count of such cases in the city to 2,53,075, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The tests conducted for detection of these coronavirus infections were 59,013, including 49,554 rapid antigen tests and 9,459 RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueNat tests. Delhi today recorded 37 deaths due to Covid, which pushed its coronavirus toll to 5,051.

There were 3,097 recovered coronavirus cases in Delhi during the past 24 hours, which took the total number of recovered Covid patients to 2,16,401. (SEE P2)

After military talks, India and China agree to ease tensions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The joint statement said the two sides agreed to hold the 7th round of commander-level meeting as soon as possible, take practical measures to properly solve problems on the ground, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the border areas. "The two sides had candid and in-depth exchanges of views on stabilising the situation along the LAC in the China-India border areas," the statement added.

India is understood to have sought immediate, concrete and complete disengagement by China from all friction points in eastern Ladakh during the talks. The talks, which began early Monday at Moldo on the Chinese side of the LAC, went on till about 2300 hrs, suggesting the difficulties faced by the two sides in ending the border stalemate.

Sources said the talks were positive and there was common understanding on the need to disengage. Since the issues involved were very complex, it would indeed take some time for the two sides to arrive at a consensus. The two sides have agreed to continue talking to each other on the ground and keep lines of communication open to avoid the aggravation of the situation.

Monday's meeting between corps commanders was led by 14 Corps outgoing chief, Lt Gen Harinder Singh on the Indian side. He was assisted, among others, by his likely successor, Lt Gen P G Menon along with Naveen Srivastava, Joint Secretary in charge of China at MEA, a first that a diplomat also participated in the military level meeting between the two sides.

India denounces Pak's 'malicious' statements on J&K at UN

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

India lashed out at Pakistan today for its false narrative on the Jammu and Kashmir situation at the UN General Assembly.

In its right of reply after Pakistan Foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in his virtual address described J&K and Palestine issues as the UN's most glaring and long-standing disputes, Vidisha Maitra, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of India in New York, said, "We completely reject the malicious reference made to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India."

The Pakistani ministerial said the people of J&K still awaited "fulfilment of the commitment" made to them by the UN to grant them their right to self-determination.

In response, the Indian diplomat said, "If there is an unfinished agenda at the UN, it is that of tackling the scourge of terrorism. Pakistan is a country which is globally recognised as epicentre of terrorism, which by its own admission harbours and trains terrorists and hails them as martyrs, and consistently persecutes its ethnic and religious minorities."

Maitra said Pakistan would do well to turn its attention inwards to addressing these pressing concerns, instead of peddling fabricated narratives at UN to divert attention. She said astymied and stonewalled approach rather than reason, diplomacy and dialogue could be expected from a nation bereft of milestones.

SNS

Court extends Rhea Chakraborty's judicial remand till 6 October

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 22 SEPTEMBER

A special court here on Tuesday extended till 6 October the judicial custody of actor Rhea Chakraborty, who was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) probing the drug angle in connection with actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, found hanging in his Bandra residence on 14 June.

Chakraborty was produced before special judge G B Gurao who extended her judicial custody, said special public prosecutor Atul Sarpande.

Other accused arrested in the case will be produced in court on Wednesday, he said.



Chakraborty and others for allegedly abetting the 34-year-old actor's suicide.

Chakraborty and Showik on Tuesday filed an application in the Bombay High Court seeking bail.

Their lawyer Satish Maneshinde said the plea will come up for hearing on Wednesday before a Bench presided over by Justice Sarang Kotwal. Rhea Chakraborty was arrested by the NCB on 9 September. Her bail plea was rejected at that time by a special NCB court and she was remanded to judicial custody for 14 days.

Showik was arrested by the NCB on 5 September

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has summoned actor Deepika Padukone's manager Karishma Prakash and a talent management agency's CEO Dhurv Chitgopekar in connection with

along with Rajput's aide Samuel Miranda on charges of having procured and financed drugs for the late actor. Later, Miranda, Rajput's personal assistant Dipesh Sawant, and alleged drug deal-

its probe into the alleged Bollywood-drug nexus, an official said on Tuesday.

Both of them will be questioned by the NCB on Tuesday afternoon, he said.

Chitgopekar is the CEO of KWN talent management agency and Karishma Prakash is employed

er Abdul Bashir Parihar, moved the HC, seeking bail.

Their plea was heard by Justice Kotwal last week. Further hearing on their pleas is scheduled for 29 September.

While rejecting Rhea

with the agency, the official said.

During NCB's probe into the drugs angle in Sushant Singh Rajput's death, a wider drugs nexus in Bollywood surfaced. Rajput's talent manager Jaya Saha was questioned by NCB on Monday.

Chakraborty's bail plea, the special court had said she could "alert" the people she named in her statement made to the NCB.

The special court had also dismissed her submission

that she was coerced by the NCB into making her statement. While rejecting Showik's bail plea, the special court had said that if let out on bail, he was likely to tamper with the evidence collected in the case.

SNS

Drugs probe: NCB summons Deepika Padukone's manager

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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SNS

Kejri targets Centre over passage of farm Bills, lauds protest by suspended RS MPs

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday targeted the government over the passage of the "dangerous" farm Bills without division of votes in Rajya Sabha, while lauding the sit-in protest on the Parliament premises by the eight suspended MPs.

The eight Rajya Sabha members, including AAP MP Sanjay Singh, were suspended for the remaining part of the Monsoon Session over "unruly behaviour" during the passage of the farm Bills in the Upper House of Parliament.

The other MPs are Derek O'Brien (TMC), Rajeev Satav (Congress), Elamaraan Karem (CPI-M), KKRagesh (CPI-M), Syed Nazir Hussain (Con-



Kejriwal, Ripun Boren (Congress) and Dola Sen (TMC).

Since their suspension on Monday, the eight MPs have been holding a protest on the Parliament premises.

Kejriwal said these eight MPs were fighting for the rights of farmers without worrying about heat, mosquitoes or other inconveniences and have spent the night protesting in the Parliament

complex.

"They are not asking for anything for themselves. They are fighting for democracy and the Constitution. They are struggling for the farmers of the country," Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

Farmers across the country are saying that these laws will end them, he added.

"Such a dangerous Bill was passed without division of

Kejriwal govt is 'actually anti-farmers': Bidhuri

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The Delhi BJP would soon stage a demonstration outside the house of chief minister and AAP supremo, Arvind Kejriwal, for being "anti-farmers", the BJP's Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, said.

Addressing a press conference at the Delhi BJP office, Bidhuri said that AAP MP Sanjay Singh should hold

votes. Then what is the meaning of Parliament, what is the meaning of elections? If you have to pass the law this way, then why did you call a Parliament session," Kejriwal

demonstration outside Kejriwal's house rather than in the

Parliament complex against the Centre's farm legislations since "the Kejriwal government is actually anti-farmers".

Bidhuri claimed that the farm Bills that have been passed by Parliament would benefit farmers "whose income would be doubled".

"The BJP government in Haryana gives free electricity for farming, farmers there do not even need to install elec-

tricity meters. But, the Kejriwal-led Delhi government provides electricity between Rs 1.50 per unit to Rs 8/ per unit to the farmers and fixed charge for farmers is Rs 125 per unit per month," the LOP claimed.

"In Haryana, 50 per cent subsidy is given while purchasing farm equipment like cultivators, harrows, routers, harvesting machines, leveling machines, and sixty per cent subsidy is given on water pipes," Bidhuri said.

asked in another tweet in Hindi.

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia compared the present government to the British colonial

He also charged that "Compensation given to farmers in lieu of land acquisition has increased throughout the country, but Delhi government did not increase a single penny for the last 6 years".

"In Haryana, if state government acquires land from farmers, then it gives compensation of Rs 4.5 crore for one acre. In Delhi, for one acre of land farmers are compensated anything between Rs 17.17 lakh and Rs 53.50 lakh," Bidhuri claimed.

to perpetuate the atrocities. And when they met Gandhiji and other leaders, they (the British) would offer them tea. Our rulers are running the government in the same way

Delhi govt releases ₹32.1 cr grant-in-aid to DU's 6 colleges

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The AAP government on Tuesday released a grant-in-aid of Rs 32.1 crore to six Delhi University colleges fully funded by it to pay salaries to staffers.

However, the Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) called the grants inadequate.

The government has released Rs 4 crore to Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Rs 6.80 crore to Acharya Narendra Dev College, Rs 4.65 crore to Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences for Women, Rs 5.80 crore to

Maharaja Agrasen College, Rs 6.35 crore to Bhim Rao Ambedkar College and Rs 4.50 crore to Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences.

The government and 12 of the colleges fully funded by it have been locked in a tussle over the release of grants.

The colleges have alleged that the grants released by the city dispensation have been inadequate and they have not been able to pay salaries to their staffers since May while the government has said it has released adequate funds.

DUTA said the allocated amount does not cover all the expenses of these colleges. "Yet we hope that the Delhi gov-

ernment will at least transfer these funds to the colleges immediately. Unfortunately, the other six colleges still await the sanction," it said.

"All teachers of the Delhi University stand with their colleagues of these 12 colleges. We must remind the Delhi government that these divisive policies will not work with us," it added. According to a varsity official, who requested anonymity, the governing bodies have been formed in 12 colleges. However, these six colleges, which have received grant-in-aid for paying salaries have governing body chairmen from the government while the other six colleges have vari-

ty nominees as chairmen. Dr Payal Mago, principal of Shaheen Rajguru College of Applied Sciences for Women, said the salary grants will help them in paying the pending salaries from June.

"We will be able to pay the salaries of June, July and August," she said. She said they are expecting fees to be paid by September and plan to manage the salaries through that. Dr Ravi Toteja, principal of Acharya Narendra Dev College, said "we have come to know about the release of grants through note sheets circulating on social media but we are yet to get an official confirmation on it."

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

PROCLAMATION
REQUIRING ATTENDANCE
OF DEFENDANT
(Order 5 Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)
In the Court of MS. RAJ RANI MITRA, DISTRICT JUDGE (COMM-02), (South-East) at Room No. 613, State Courts Complex, New Delhi.
Suit No. CS/COMM/369/19
THE POLO & LAUREN COMPANY L.P.Plaintiff
V/S
LALIT KUMARDefendant
LALIT KUMAR
BUILDING NO. 2324/9B, 2ND FLOOR, HIND CHOWK,
SHAIKH KHAN PUR RAJNEET NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110008.
ALSO AT WZ-72C, 2ND FLOOR, HIND CHOWK, SHAIKH KHAN PUR RAJNEET NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110008.
WHEREAS S Y A R A is intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 30.09.2020 the day fixed for filing a written statement within 30 days and appear in the Court on the 16th day of October, 2020 and determined ex-parte. Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 29.08.2020
DJ COMMERCIAL-02
(South-East)
Saket Court Complex, New Delhi

IN THE COURT OF
SH. UMED SINGH GREWAL
Addl. District Judge-02
Room No. 127, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, PC No. 21/2020
Naresh Kumar Versus State & Ors.
CITATION UNDER SECTION 283(2) OF SUCCESSION ACT, 1925
Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of probate of the Will or for letters of Administration to the estate of Late Sh. Ramesh Bedi, s/o Sh. Diwan Chand Bedi in respect of property bearing No. D-28, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027, died on 9th April, 2008 at Delhi has been made by Sh. Naresh Bedi, s/o Late Sh. Ramesh Bedi, i/o D-28, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027.

Whereas the 4th day of December, 2020, has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the Administration of the Estate of the said deceased may, if he/she desires to appear in this court on the above said date and see the proceedings the Grant of Probate (or for Letter of Administration).

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 16th day of September, 2020.
Addl. District Judge-02
(West)
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, Saket Courts, New Delhi, Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF
SH. UMED SINGH GREWAL
Addl. District Judge-02
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(West)
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Notice is hereby given to the General Public that any person having objection for the grant of Probate of the following immovable properties of Late Sh. K. C. Burman, may file the same in the Court personally or through counsel on or before the next date of hearing 14-12-2020.

S. No.: 1.

Description of the Property:
2-C/10, Kishan Garh, Ward No. 9, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070, measuring about 100 Sq. Yard.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on the 4th day of September, 2020.
Addl. District Judge-02
(West)

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, Saket Courts, New Delhi, Seal of the Court

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is for the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered as a party under section 29-A of the Representation of People Act 1951. Name/address of the office bearers of the party are as follows:-
President: SUKHDÉV SINGH.
Vice President: CHAN SINGH
General Secretary: RAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT
Treasurer: SHILASHRITRA LOK SEVA VYAKTITVA
Secretary: RAMESH KUMAR
Other members: RAMESH KUMAR
If any one has any objection to the registration of the party, he may file a written objection to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, DEOKI Devi Agarwal, wife of late Dwarka Lal Agarwal, residing at HB-22, Salt Lake City, Sector-3, Kolkata-700106, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that vide affidavit dt. 18.09.2020 before the Notary Public, Kolkata, I am also known as Deoki Agarwal. Both Deoki Devi Agarwal and Deoki Agarwal is same and one identical person. Henceforth, I will only be known as Deoki Devi Agarwal.

VIDE affidavit before the 1st Class Judicial Magistrate Serampore, 9.9.2020, I, Lakshmi Mondal & Laxmi Rani is same & one identical person. I declare that my actual DOB is 1.1.1955 instead of 2.8.1963.

COMPANY NOTICES

RAMDURLABHPUR TEA CO. LTD.
Notice
The next Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held at Neeranand (Conference Room), P-34, India Exchange Place (Palhousie, opposite of Tea Board), Kolkata-700001 on Wednesday, the 30th September, 2020 at 11:30 a.m. The notice of the Meeting setting out the business to be transacted thereat and the Audited Account for the period ended 31st March, 2020 together with the reports of Directors and Auditor there-

TENDER

UNDERSIGNED is invited Tender Notice towards NIT No. 07 / DEV / BDO / PUR / 20-21 date: 16.09.20, Bid submission last date: Up to 3.00 p.m. on 06.10.20 and will be opened on 06.10.20 at 5.00 p.m. and e-NIT No. 08 / DEV / BDO / PUR / 20-21 date: 16.09.20, Bid submission last date: Up to 5.00 p.m. on 01.10.20 and will be opened on 05.10.20 at 5.00 p.m. For details pl. contact to the office of the undersigned or visit the website: <http://wbtenders.gov.in>

Block Development Officer

Pursurah Development Block Pursurah, Hooghly

KOLKATA
Statesman House, 4, Chowringhee Square
Kolkata-700011
Tel: (033) 22127070-76,
(033) 41071700
Fax: (033) 2212-6181 / 7107-1780
Email: statesman@vsnl.com
statesmandisplay@gmail.com
statesmanclassified@gmail.com

DELHI
Statesman House, 148, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110 001
Tel: (011) 2331 5911
Ishan House (2nd floor) A-90, Sector II, Noida, UP 201 301
Tel: (0120) 4171421
Email: delhi@thestatesmangroup.com

BHUBANESWAR
Plot 3A, Zone B, Sector A, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751 010
Tel: (0674) 2588060/61/62/ 2588371
Fax: 0674-2588061
Email: bhubaneswar@thestatesmangroup.com
statesmbsr@gmail.com

SILIGURI
13A, Dabgram Industrial Growth Centre,

The Statesman

AIR-SURCHARGE; Kathmandu - Re. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1
All other stations in India - Re. 1

Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of probate of the Will or for letters of Administration to the estate of Late Sh. Ramesh Bedi, s/o Late Sh. Ramesh Bedi in respect of property bearing No. D-28, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027,

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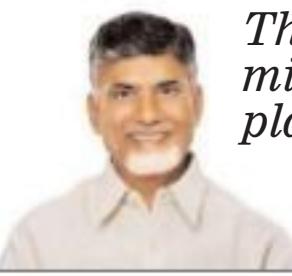
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Addl. District Judge-02
(West)
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, Saket Courts, New Delhi, Seal of the Court

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The evil-minded YSRCP leaders were only spreading misinformation campaigns on TDP projects with a plan to destroy Amaravati Capital city.

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU
ANDHRA PRADESH OPPOSITION LEADER

SAD to step up stir against Centre's farm legislations

A key ally of BJP, SAD announces a state-wide agitation in coming days in Punjab, including a road blockade on 25 September, to press for rollback of the Modi govt's 'anti-farmers' legislations

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 22 SEPTEMBER

Days after the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)'s lone minister in the Narendra Modi-led Union government, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, quit her post in protest against the Centre's three controversial farm sector Bills, the SAD today announced a state-wide agitation in Punjab in order to press for withdrawal of these legislations.

The SAD's proposed agitation against the Modi government's farm sector Bills, which have now been passed by Parliament, would include a state-wide three-hour 'chakkjam' (road blockade) on 25 September as well as a 'simultaneous kisan (farmers) march' to Mohali on 1 October to hand over a memorandum, addressed to the President of India, to the



Punjab Governor.

A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the SAD's core committee last night, which was presided over by party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal.

It was also decided that the SAD president would visit various parts of Punjab to interact with the party cadres from 26 to 29 September.

The SAD's spokesman Daljit Singh Cheema said the

party core committee decided to hold a 'chakkjam' across the state on 25 September.

Acik leaders and workers have been asked to hold the road blockade in all constituencies in league with farmers, 'khet mazdoor' (farm labourers) and 'arhatiyas' (commission agents)

against the central government's agriculture legislations. This will be a three-

hour agitational programme from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Party workers have however been asked not to come in the way of emergency services.

The SAD core committee also decided to contact all like-minded regional parties across the country to evolve a joint strategy to forge a united front to get the "anti-farmer" legislations revoked. It also resolved to pursue all logical steps to ensure the discrimination being meted out to the farmers was removed.

The SAD has been one of the oldest allies of the BJP.

Meanwhile, Sukhbir Singh Badal today asked Punjab's Congress chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh to hold a special session of the state assembly immediately to revoke the amended State Agriculture Produce Markets Committee (APMC) Act of 2017.

The SAD president said the

Punjab CM should not practice "deceit" with farmers by shedding "crocodile tears" at their fate while he remains the "author of the same legislation in Punjab and continues to stand by his own anti-farmer Act".

Sukhbir also asked Capt Amarinder if he could show moral courage to disassociate himself from the Congress manifesto of 2019 that "called for removing the APMC Act altogether".

He also asked the CM to apologize to the farming community for allegedly encouraging corporatization of the farm sector by accepting the Montek Singh Ahluwalia committee report "calling for reducing procurement of foodgrains".

Sukhbir asked Capt Amarinder to scrap this committee and reject its report which he termed as a "death warrant for Punjab farmers".

ITBP serving nation with valour: Himachal CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 22 SEPTEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Tuesday said the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Force is serving the nation with wide range of tasks like rescue works, border security, counter insurgency besides protecting the Indo-Tibetan border.

Addressing ITBP Jawans during the Flag-in Ceremony at Sector Headquarter in Shimla, Thakur said the nation is indebted to the sacrifice and valour of ITBP which is playing a vital role in protecting the borders of the country.

"The state government is committed to provide all possible assistance to ITBP," he added. Thakur said ITBP has a Special Mountaineering Force that trains officers and men in mountaineering and skiing.

He also congratulated the team of ITBP which undertook mountaineering expedition 'Leo Pargial Peak-2020' Code named 'Yodha' of 22,222 feet height. The expedition was carried out from 20th August, 2020 to 5th September, 2020 and initiated by 17th Battalion Reckong Peo. "Such expeditions develop leadership, discipline and confidence among the



troops, besides enhancing the ability to face uncertain and critical circumstances with bravery and courage," he said.

The Chief Minister appreciated the initiative of ITBP for undertaking a cleanliness drive during the expedition where the team collected about 50 kilogram of non-biodegradable garbage.

The state government is laying special emphasis on strengthening of road infrastructure and other means of communications in the border areas to facilitate the local people and Armed forces.

Himachal shares 260 kilometers of border with China where ITBP is safeguarding the frontiers with dedication and vigil," he added.

The Chief Minister was presented with the flag summited at Leo Pargial and also with a memento on this occasion.

03
The Statesman
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

Brascon elected as HAS officers assn president

Urgently implement measures to curb stubble burning: EPCA to Pb, H'yana

PTI
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Himachal Pradesh's Director, Information and Public Relations, Harbans Singh Brascon was on Tuesday elected as HP Administrative Services Officers Association president.

While Vivek Chandel, HAS officer of batch 2004 and presently serving as Director, Technical Education, has been elected as General Secretary.

The election of HAS officers association was held today in Shimla through Google Meet owing to COVID-19 pandemic protocol.

Take action to curb unsolicited communications: HC to TRAI

PTI
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The Delhi High Court Tuesday asked telecom regulator TRAI to start taking action in accordance with law against unregistered entities and those persons not complying with its regulations to curb the problem of unsolicited commercial communications (UCC).

The high court warned Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) of imposing a cost on it for failing to implement the law and granted it eight weeks to take action.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan said the court expects that TRAI will adjudicate the show cause notices issued by it to the unregistered entities and persons and some progress will be shown on the action taken.

The court noted that TRAI's

counsel has shown some definitions of provisions but said they are of no use if no action is to be taken by the telecom regulator after issuance of show cause notices.

We expect TRAI to adjudicate upon the show cause notices, the bench said.

During the hearing, the bench questioned the TRAI for not taking any action against anyone even when the law has been enacted for so long.

Have you taken any action... Suppose there is no fraud, will you allow them to work like this and remain unregistered. Start taking action against at least 10 persons. Why are you feeling shy, take action against one or two and let them come to the court then we will deal with it, it said.

Advocate Arjun Natarajan, representing TRAI, said he was making a statement that TRAI shall take steps for

barring unregistered headers. He sought four weeks time to take action against unregistered entities or against whom the show cause notices have been issued.

The court, however, granted it eight weeks time to show progress was made with regard to registration of the headers, unregistered telemarketers and principal entities. It also asked TRAI to file an additional affidavit.

The observations and direction by the bench came while hearing a plea by One97 Communications Ltd, which runs online payment platform Paytm, alleging that telecom operators are not blocking "phishing" activities over various mobile networks.

Phishing is a cyber crime where people are contacted by e-mail, phone calls or text messages by someone posing as a legitimate representative of a organisation to lure them to part with their sensitive data,

including banking and credit card details and passwords

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for Paytm, said he was only seeking strict implementation of the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preferences Regulations (TCCPR) 2018, which was notified by the TRAI to curb problem of unsolicited commercial communications, by TRAI and the telecom companies.

The counsel had earlier contended that unregistered players are operating on a large scale leading to frauds to the tune of Rs 1.2 crore being committed against Paytm customers every month.

He had said that all unregistered headers should be removed forthwith and not be allowed to operate on the mobile networks and if telecom companies do not take such steps, then penal action be taken against them.

TRAI had earlier said that

it had registered 50,000 headers and 80,000 principal entities and the work of registration was going on.

Examples of some registered headers are -- Paytm, PYTM, PTM, IPAYTN, PYTKY.

Airtel's counsel had said it was complying with the regulations and the same stand was taken by Vodafone-Idea, Reliance Jio, MTNL and BSNL.

Paytm, in its plea filed through advocate Karuna Nandy, has claimed that millions of its customers have been defrauded by the phishing activities over the mobile networks and the failure of the telecom companies to prevent the same has "caused financial and reputational loss" to it for which it has sought damages of Rs 100 crore from them.

Paytm has contended that the telecom majors are violating their obligations under the TCCPR 2018.

wheat and potato. It is one of the main reasons for the alarming spike in pollution in Delhi-NCR.

Despite a ban on stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana, farmers continue to defy it as there is a short window between harvesting of paddy and sowing of wheat.

The high cost of manual or mechanical management of straw is a major reason why farmers choose to burn it. State governments are providing 50 to 80 per cent subsidy to farmers and cooperative societies to buy modern farm equipment for in-situ management of paddy straw, installing paddy straw-based power plants and running a massive awareness campaign against stubble burning.

But these measures are yet to make any significant impact on the ground.

'Fundamental changes in plans needed to mitigate natural disasters in HP'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 22 SEPTEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Urban Development Minister Suresh Bhardwaj on Tuesday called for making fundamental changes in the disaster management plans in order to reduce the risk of natural disasters in the state.

He was addressing a webinar on Sustainable and Safe Hilly Area Development with focus on earthquake, landslide and floods which was organized jointly by National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) and HP State Disaster Management Authority (HPSDMA).

Bhardwaj said more than 58 percent of the world's landmass and about 21 states and four union territories of the country are susceptible to natural disaster.

"Areas of the Himalayan

regions and the Western Ghats are among the highly landslide affected areas.

Himachal is also very prone to natural disaster and during the time of disaster with immediate relief and rescue work, damages to life and property could be reduced," he said.

State Urban Development minister further stated that the National Institute of Disaster Management and the Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority together are making every

possible effort to mitigate these hazards and risks.

"NIDM is playing a vital role in providing information and training related to disaster management to people and we need to make fundamental changes in disaster plans to reduce the risk of these natural disasters," he added.

He added that organizing such webinars would help us in developing such projects in the Himalayan region to mitigate and reduce the chances of recurring disaster.

NIDM Executive Director Major General Manoj Kumar Bindal, former Union Cabinet Secretary Ajit Seth, NIDM Advisory Board member P S Srivastava, Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan Dr Anil Prakash Joshi, HPSDMA Director and Special Secretary Revenue-Disaster Management DC Rana also participated in the webinar.

Stubble Burning: Haryana farmers to get ₹ 155 cr for crop residue management

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 22 SEPTEMBER

To prevent stubble burning in Haryana, as many as 11,311 farmers, who have applied for agricultural implements under the crop residue management scheme 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanisation for In-Situ Management of Crop', will be given financial assistance in the current growing season.

Haryana additional chief secretary, agriculture and farmers' welfare department, Sanjeev Kaushal said an assistance of about Rs 155 Crore will be given to farmers under the scheme.

Kaushal, said the department would provide 454 balers, 5,820 super seeders, 5,418 zero till seed drills, 2,918 choppers, 260 happy seed-

ers, 389 Straw Management Systems, 64 rotary shrub masters, 454 reversible moulds and 288 reapers to the beneficiaries.

He said online applications for agricultural implements were invited from individual farmers and societies till 21 August. As many as 11,311 farmers applied for 16,647 implements, against a target of 2,741, in the individual category.

The state government had recently decided to give preference to small and marginal farmers in hiring machinery from Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs), and in providing equipment to individual beneficiaries under the scheme.

The agriculture and farmers' welfare department has also identified red, orange and green zones in all dis-

Atal tunnel to transform economy of Lahaul-Spiti: Dattatreya



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 22 SEPTEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya on Tues-

day said Atal tunnel at Rohtang Pass will have an immense impact on strengthening the development activities in the tribal district of Lahaul-Spiti

district, especially on the tourism front.

The Governor was interacting with senior officers of the Strabag-Afcons joint ven-

ture company, which was hired by the Border Road Organisation for executing the work of this strategic tunnel of national importance, at Raj Bhavan in Shimla.

Atal tunnel is nearing completion and is likely to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi early next month.

Dattatreya said the tunnel was bound to transform the economy of the landlocked Lahaul Spiti district by providing all weather connectivity to the beautiful valley that remain closed for over 6 months owing to heavy snow on Rohtang Pass from November to April.

Expressing satisfaction over the completion of the tunnel, he said that the world's longest road tunnel at an altitude above 3,000 metres is also significant from the military logistics point of view.

"The Atal Tunnel will pro-

vide better connectivity to the armed forces in reaching Ladakh and will reduce the road length of the Manali-Rohtang Pass by 46 km," he added.

The officers of the executing agency briefed the Governor on how this piece of engineering marvel came into existence and said that the biggest hindrance in construction of this tunnel was Seri Nallah, which was maneuvered with the hard work of engineers.

The difficulties increased exponentially due to heavy flow of slurry from crown area to tunnel face leading to frequent disruption of execution of works.

They told how Sub-Zero temperatures had adverse effects on characteristics and performance of various materials and equipment and difficulty in placing concrete in sub-zero temperatures.



A potter prepares clay lamps ahead of Diwali, in Amritsar on Tuesday. AFP

Compartment exams: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the CBSE to declare results of compartment exams of around two lakh students so that they could apply in colleges by the cut-off date. The SC direction came on a plea seeking extension of college admission deadlines in the backdrop of delayed compartment exams.

SNS

Jagan meets Shah: Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday met Union home minister Amit Shah in the national capital. The CM called on Shah at a time when party MPs and leaders have been demanding a CBI inquiry into the Amaravati land scam that allegedly took place during the previous TDP regime.

SNS

Bill on 5 new IITs: Parliament on Tuesday passed a legislation to declare the five new IITs in Surat, Bhopal, Bhagalpur, Agartala and Raichur as institutes of national importance, enabling them to award degrees.

PTI

Court rejects LDF govt's plea to withdraw 2015 Assembly ruckus case

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
22 SEPTEMBER

In a setback to the LDF government in Kerala, the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court, Thiruvananthapuram, on Tuesday dismissed the state government's plea to withdraw a case related to ruckus in the state Assembly in 2015, in which two of its ministers and four other LDF leaders (then in the Opposition) are the accused.

Dismissing the government's petition, the court said the offenses committed by the accused - all elected members of the Legislative Assembly - are serious. The court made it clear the case of destroying public properties cannot be withdrawn. The accused in the case include industries minister E P Jayarajan and higher education minister K T Jaleel in the Pinarayi Vijayan Cabinet. LDF leaders K Ajith, V Sivashankar, CK Sadasivan and K Kunhammed (then MLAs) are the other accused in the case. All the accused have been asked to appear in the court on 15 October. The Assembly had witnessed unprecedented scenes on 13 March 2015 as LDF members, then in the Opposition, tried to prevent then finance minister K M Mani, who was facing charges in a bribery scam, from presenting the state budget. The state crime branch found the accused had destroyed public properties, including the

Speaker's chair, electronic equipment like computers, keyboard. Mikes on the desk of the Speaker was also allegedly damaged.

The previous Oommen Chandy government filed the case under relevant sections of the Prevention of Destruction of Public Property Act and the IPC sections 447 (criminal trespass) and 427 (mischievous damage). As per the FIR submitted by the crime branch, the total loss caused due to vandalism is estimated to be around Rs 2 lakh.

After assuming office, the LDF government had in 2018 approached the court to withdraw the case. Social workers MT Thomas and Peter Mayiliparambil had filed petitions in the court against the case withdrawal. Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala had also filed a petition against the government's plea.

Responding to the court order, Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala on Tuesday said the UDF would continue its legal battle in the case till the final victory.

Gold smuggling case:

NIA sleuths, probing the Kerala gold smuggling case, on Tuesday visited the office of an autonomous institution under the state Higher Education Department and gathered information on it allegedly facilitating distribution of the Holy Quran brought from the UAE through diplomatic channel, adds.

Farm Bills: Cong steps up attack on govt

Rahul accuses govt of working for development of crony capitalists at farmers' cost

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The Congress on Tuesday stepped up its attack on the government over the farm Bills issue, with Rahul Gandhi accusing the Modi government of working for the development of crony capitalists at the cost of farmers.

The Congress and some other opposition parties have been protesting against the farm Bills, alleging these would harm the interest of farmers and benefit corporates, a claim denied by the government.

The Centre has asserted that the bills would be beneficial for farmers and increase their income.

"2014-Modiji's election promise of Swaminathan commission MSP (minimum support price) for farmers. 2015- Modi government said in court that this will not be possible. 2020-Black agriculture laws," Gandhi tweeted.

Development of crony capitalist "friends" at the cost of farmers, he said, according to a rough translation of his Hindi tweet.

Senior Congress leader and former Union finance minister P Chidambaram also attacked the government over the farm Bills issue.



Youth Congress activists protest against the rise in unemployment and against farm Bills presented by the Central government, in the Capital on Tuesday.

DEEPAK

"What do the Bills do to create thousands of farmers' markets in large villages and small towns?" he asked.

The Congress on Monday announced a massive people's movement which would include protest marches, agitations and collecting two crore farmers' signatures for a memorandum against the legislations to be submitted to President Ram Nath Kovind.

Meanwhile, slamming the Centre over passage of farm Bills in Parliament, Congress leader and Maharashtra Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat on Tuesday said the government was trying to

ing glass, has still announced a protest against it, chief minister K Palaniswami asserted on Tuesday.

Palaniswami, visited Ramanathapuram to inaugurate new projects and distribute government welfare assistance to beneficiaries said his party's aim is safeguarding the interests of the farmers.

"Since the three bills benefitted the farmers, we supported it. We will support any initiative aimed at benefiting the farmers and at the same time oppose any scheme that would affect them and this is our stand and we have made this clear," he told at Ramanathapuram.

BJD does not join Opp boycott, takes part in Parliament

BHUBANESWAR, 22 SEPTEMBER

The BJD which stunned the NDA by opposing the farm Bill did not join the Opposition parties in boycotting the session and opted to participate in Parliament today. Reliable sources said the BJD is back to supporting the NDA. Certain contentious Bills like the amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulations Act (FCRA) and the labour law are likely to be passed in the Rajya Sabha tomorrow. The boycott by Opposition parties has made things easy for the NDA government and Bills are being rushed through without much of a debate, said a BJD MP while confirming the BJD participated in the RS today. It is learnt the BJD will lend support to the FCRA and the labour laws, though there is no official word from the party yet.

"We opposed the farm Bills, does that mean we will oppose the other Bills too," was the cryptic reply of another BJD MP when asked about the pending Bills. He was quick to add that instructions from the party high command have not come as yet. BJD MPs said they were at the receiving end of taunts and sharp comments from the Opposition parties. Our plight needs to be seen to be believed, said a couple of BJD MPs while referring to the flip-flops over controversial Bills. A senior BJP leader said they were holding their horses since the day the BJD opposed the farm Bills just to see what they take on the FCRA and labour Bills. We did not attack the BJD and waited, he pointed out.

SNS

ties, mutual security and close economic linkages.

Asked whether the government is aware that Nepal has signed a number of transit and transportation treaties with China in the past few years to shrug off its dependence on India, he said New Delhi's ties with Kathmandu stand on their own merit.

TENDER

HP.PWD TENDER NOTICE

Sealed item rate tenders are hereby invited on behalf of the Governor of HP for the following works from the eligible contractor enlisted in the appropriate class in HPPWD. So as to reach in the office of the Executive Engineer, Shimla Division No-1, HPPWD Shimla-3 on or before 16-10-2020 up to 10:30 A.M. The tenders will be opened on the same day at 11:00AM. In the presence of the intending contractors or their authorized agents who may wish to be present. The applications for issue of tender forms shall be received 14-10-2020 from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. alongwith FDR for the required amount. The tender form shall be issued on 10-10-2020 from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

The intending contractors shall bring their registration letter renewal of their enlistment and proof of CST/GST/ otherwise the tender documents shall not be issued to them.

The earnest money as shown below shall accompany the tender in the shape of NCS/Time deposit receipt or post office Saving Bank Account in H.P. duly pledged in the name of Executive Engineer. The contractors who do not deposit the earnest money in the prescribed manner, their tender shall

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated cost	Earrest Money	Time Allowed	Form Cost
1	A/R & M/O to House No.3 Ground floor at Brock Hurst Shimla-2 (SH:- C/O Glasshouse in House No.3 Groud Floor at Brock Hurst Shimla-2).	3,98,610/-	4,000/-	60 days	350/-

Terms & Conditions:-

1. The contractor/firm shall have his GST No. and attested copy of the same be attached with the application for issue of tender form.
2. The contractor/firm should attach attested copy of registration/renewal.
3. Copy of PAN card be attached with the application form.
4. Copy of EPF be attached with the application form.

3208/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK



Office of EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAISINGHPUR DIVISION H.P. Public Works Department, JAISINGHPUR 176095

Fax: 01894-228031, e-mail: ee-jaipwd-hp@gov.in

The Executive Engineer, Division, HP PWD, Jaislager 176095 on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the online bids on item rate, electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved Contractors/ Firms registered with HP PWD, Department.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs)	EMD (In Rs.)	Time limit / Form No.	Cost of Bidding Documents
1.	Periodical Maintenance of the road for the year 2019-20 from Lohru to Sadda road under (Village Road) (DRPR No. VR073) (SH:- Providing and laying 20mm thick premix carpet with seal coat at Km. 1/0 to 2/0)	Rs. 6,26,226/-	12,600/-	One Month	6&8 350/-
2.	Periodical Maintenance of the road for the year 2019-20 from Lohru to Dor road under (Village Road) (DRPR No. VR112(SH:- (SH:- Providing and laying 20mm thick premix carpet with seal coat at Km. 0/0 to 1/0)	Rs. 6,34,706/-	12,700/-	One Month	6&8 350/-
3.	Periodical Maintenance of the road for the year 2019-20 from Lohru to Sadda road under (Village Road) (DRPR No. HP0414VR004019113 (SH:- Providing and laying 25mm thick bitumen concrete J/c profile correction laying with paver finisher in Km. 12/00 to 13/0 (Addl. Km.)	Rs. 6,47,258/-	13,000/-	One Month	6&8 350/-

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:- The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://htpndtenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in website which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD. May obtain the same from the website:- <https://htpndtenders.gov.in>. Digital Signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CA can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates.

1. Date of Online Publication.	08.10.2020 10:00 AM
2. Document Download Start and End Date.	08.10.2020 10:30 AM up to 17.10.2020 05:00PM
3. Bid submission start and end date	07.10.2020 10:30 AM up to 17.10.2020 05:00PM
4. Physical Submission of EMD And Cost of Tender document	18.10.2020 up to 10:30 HRS
5. Date of Technical Bid opening ,Evaluation of technical Bid	18.10.2020 11:00 HRS
6. Date of Financial Bid opening	23.10.2020 11:30 HRS

4. TENDER DETAILS
The Tender documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover.

i) Cover 1: Shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/Eligibility information".

ii) Cover 2: Shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bid" where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

5. Submission of Original Documents:- The Bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and other technical documents in the o/o Executive Engineer HPPWD Division Jaislager as specified in Key dates Sr.No.4 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. BID OPENING DETAILS: The bid shall be opened on 18.10.2020 at 11:00 HRS in the office of the Executive Engineer, Jaislager Division HP PWD Jaislager By the authorized officer. In their interest the tenders are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 90 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

3211/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE	
No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT/21/2020-21/W-3 Dated : 21.09.2020 The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.	
1	Name of work
2	Approx cost of work
3	Earrest Money to be deposited
4	Cost of tender document
5	Date & Time of submission of tender bid & opening of tender
6	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen.

* The tenderer must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. * For all terms and conditions please refer tender document * No manual offers are acceptable. * Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

2056/2020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

HOLY PATH



Sikh pilgrims arrive to take part in a ritual on the 481th death anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji, founder of Sikhism, at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur near the India-Pakistan border on Tuesday.

AFP

K'taka BJP refutes reports about replacing BSY as chief minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, 22 SEPTEMBER

The BJP in Karnataka on Tuesday termed as baseless and misleading reports about leadership change in the state by replacing chief minister B S Yediyurappa.

The speculation had gained momentum during the 77-year-old leader's recent visit to New Delhi, during which he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union ministers and BJP national president JP Nadda.

There were reports that Yediyurappa might be replaced

"BJP strongly refutes this report," he clarified in an official statement.

There have been speculations about possible change in leadership in the future, considering Yediyurappa's age.

The speculation had gained momentum during the 77-year-old leader's recent visit to New Delhi, during which he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union ministers and BJP national president JP Nadda.

There were reports that Yediyurappa might be replaced

after the Bihar Assembly polls or after him presenting the budget in March



We were infected because we were helping people from the front during the pandemic. Our leaders helped people in distress

GOA CHIEF MINISTER PRAMOD SAWANT

IN A DIG AT THE OPPOSITION AFTER BEING COVID POSITIVE

THUMBNAILS



A child walks along a flooded road after a heavy monsoon rainfall in Meerpet, on the outskirts of Hyderabad on Tuesday.

AFP

Money-laundering case: The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday said it has attached Dubai-based assets worth over Rs 203 crore of late gangster Iqbal Mirchi's family in connection with a money-laundering case.

PTI

Arms, ammunition seized: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday seized a cache of arms and ammunition, including two AK assault rifles and a pistol, from a village in Jammu, an official said. The consignment, which also included three AK magazines and 90 rounds, was seized based on specific information in, the official added. He said it is suspected that the weapons were airdropped by a Pakistani drone in the village at night.

PTI

Actor Ashalata passes away: Veteran actress Ashalata Wabgaonkar, who had worked in a number of Marathi and Hindi films, died early on Tuesday morning at a private hospital in Satara after battling Covid-19, hospital authorities said. Expressing grief, Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray paid rich tributes to the actress and described her as a versatile artist.

PTI

Ansari aide's house raided: The house of an aide of gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari was raided in Lucknow on Tuesday and a pistol and some cartridges were seized from there, a police official said. Additional chief secretary (Home) Awasthi said that properties of criminals worth over Rs 262 crore have been seized under the Gangster Act.

PTI

Activist for tribals' cause banned from SoU area

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 22 SEPTEMBER

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi launching the seaplane service to the Statue of Unity (SoU) on 31 October, the Gujarat government has excreted social activist Lakhman Musafir who had been leading the tribals' protests against their forcible eviction from their ancestral land.

Gandhian activist Lakhman Musafir had been in the forefront of all struggles of tribals against taking away their ancestral lands for tourism projects linked to the 182-metre statue of Sardar Patel at Sadhu Bet of Narmada river. He is also very popular among the tribals for his activities like organic farming, bio-gas plants and education projects.

Musafir has been banned for six months from the vicinity of the Statue of Unity and also five districts of Narma-

PM Modi: NEP will play key role in creating 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'

Says NEP is meant for the needs of 21st century, to make India a global leader in science & technology

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
GUWAHATI, 22 SEPTEMBER:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing the convocation of Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG) today through video-conferencing as the chief guest, commented that the National Education Policy 2020 is meant for the needs of the 21st century and to make India a global leader in science and technology.

Modi spoke about the importance of education as a key component for creating an "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India) and said the NEP is for the youths of the 21st century who will lead the world and make India the global leader in science and technology.

"NEP 2020 has been made multi-disciplinary and offers flexibility of choosing various courses and allows multiple entry and exit points and it will establish India as major education destination to the World," said PM Modi adding that all the knowledge including science is a means to solve the problems.

He pointed out that the NEP



also proposes a national research foundation for better coordination with all funding agencies regarding research funding and provide funds for all disciplines, be it science or humanities.

NEP allows foreign universities to set up their offshore campuses in India, which would give global exposure to Indian students, added Modi.

Appreciating the way institutions like IITs are advancing and opining that this energy for innovation to serve has kept India alive for thousands of years, Modi urged the youth to be future ready and future fit, saying that is their dreams and aspirations which shape the future of the country.

He also expressed happiness that IITG that graduat-

ed 1,803 students this year has already started making efforts towards this direction.

Mentioning about the northeastern region, the Prime Minister termed it as the center for India's Act East Policy and gateway to India's relations with south-east Asian nations.

He also asked IITG to establish a center for disaster management and risk reduction so that it can provide expertise in dealing with the various disasters.

Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal also addressed the convocation through the video conference to laud its role towards Atmanirbhar Bharat and helping Assam in its drive for self-sustainability.

PM: UN faces crisis of confidence without comprehensive reforms

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for "reformed multilateralism", saying the global community could not fight today's challenges with outdated structures.

Addressing the high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly to mark 75 years of the global body, he said the UN faced a crisis of confidence without comprehensive reforms.

"For today's interconnected world, we need a reformed multilateralism that reflects today's realities, gives voice to all stakeholders, address contemporary challenges and focuses on human welfare."

Modi, who will deliver his formal statement on behalf of India to the General Assembly on Saturday, supported the reforms undertaken by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"We support ongoing reforms by the Secretary-

General. We reiterate our call for reforms of three of the principal organs of the UN. We commit to instil new life in the discussions on the reform of the Security Council and continue the work to revitalise the General Assembly and strengthen the Economic and Social Council," he added.

PM Modi highlighted that India's own philosophies align with the goals of the UN.

He said work still needed to be done towards reducing inequality, mitigating conflicts and addressing the threat of climate change.

He also highlighted that India was one of the largest contributors to the UN Peacekeeping Missions.

"Our world today is a better place because of the UN. We pay tributes to all those who have advanced the cause of peace and development under the UN flag, including UN peace-keeping missions, where India had been a leading contributor," he said.

the actress.

Justice Kathawalla pointed out that if the actress was going to rely on the DVD, then Raut will have to be given a chance to respond.

"What if he (Raut) says that he has not made these statements or that this DVD is fabricated? You have to give him an opportunity to respond," the bench said. Saraf then said he also wanted to make Bhagavant Late a party in the plea as the civic official had issued all communications related to the illegal construction notice and demolition.

Reacting to the development, Raut said he will not get deterred by the move to make him a party in Ranaut's plea.

"Case by an actress in Hon. High Court is abt demolition of illegal structure by BMC which is an indpndt body & Demnd is 2 mk RS MP Sanjay Raut a party! Frm Babri case 2 standing fr Mr Babri pride of my city & my Maharashtra," the Sena MP tweeted on Tuesday night. On September 9, the BMC demolished a part of Ranaut's bungalow, alleging she had made illegal structural changes and repairs to the structure breaching the civic body's sanction plan.

HC allows Kangana to include Sanjay Raut in plea against BMC

PTI
MUMBAI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday permitted actor Kangana Ranaut to add Shiv Sena's chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut as a party in her plea against the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation over the demolition of a part of her bungalow in Mumbai.

A bench of Justices S J Kathawalla and R I Chagla also allowed Ranaut to add Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) H-ward's designated officer Bhagavant Late as a party to let him respond to any personal allegations that the actress makes against him. Ranaut filed a plea in the high court on September 9, seeking that the court declare the demolition of a part of her bungalow in Pali Hill area by the BMC as "illegal".

She subsequently amended her plea to demand Rs two crore as damages from the civic body and its officials for the demolition.

"While hearing her amended plea on Tuesday, the high court noted that Ranaut's counsel, senior advocate Birentra Saraf, had submitted a DVD containing a speech in which Senaleader Raut allegedly made a comment threatening

Tribal status: Opp trying to isolate BJP in Ladakh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 22 SEPTEMBER



With elections having been announced for the prestigious Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), the Opposition parties are trying to isolate the BJP on the issue of the Centre not applying the 6th Schedule to grant tribal status to Ladakh.

The issue has become a hot electoral topic in the cold desert region where the local BJP leadership is finding itself on the backfoot.

What is worrying the BJP leadership is that several senior party leaders have also joined the apex body that is steering the demand for tribal status for Ladakh.

A former BJP MP Thuptsun Chhewang, who had resigned his Lok Sabha seat, is also supporting the demand. Efforts of the party leaders to placate him have remained

futile. Five of the 26 constituencies of the LAHDC where polling will be held next month fall along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) where the Indian Army is standing eyeball to eyeball with the Chinese troops for the past more than five months. These are Aorzok, Nyoma, Chushul, Tang-tse and Rong.

This is the first electoral exercise in Ladakh after 5 August last year when the Article 370 was scrapped and J&K split into two union territories thereby people of

Ladakh meeting their long-standing demand for UT.

This has also led to altering political permutations in the Buddhist dominated Leh district where the Kashmir centric PDP and National Conference have virtually shut their shop and were concentrating on the Shia Muslim dominated Kargil. The BJP had won 18 of the 26 seats of the LAHDC in 2015. In addition, four members are nominated by the government.

The local BJP leadership was upset on the issue of the centre ruling out tribal status for Ladakh while replying to a question in the ongoing session of Lok Sabha. But this has come as a shot in the arm of the opposition.

Rizwan Spalbar, former chief executive councilor of LAHDC, has called for boycott of the election because of uncertainty over the preservation of its unique tribal identity, habitats and ecosystems.

tem vis-a-vis its future existence and survival due to lack of constitutional safeguard in the form of the 6th Schedule.

"I am of the firm opinion that holding the elections to LAHDC Leh, without extending the relevant provisions of the 6th Schedule of our Constitution, is meaningless. The democratically elected Council, representing the popular will of the people of Ladakh, cannot continue to be a toothless and irrelevant ostentatious body like it was made to be so in the wake of the formation of UT Ladakh."

Participation in the Elections and voting in it, while now the demand for the grant of the 6th Schedule has got an unprecedented overwhelming support, may not serve our cause. It is only in the best interest of the demand for the 6th Schedule that we do not participate at all in the elections unless our demand is met", Spalbar added.

Newly passed farm bills will ensure sustainable, profitable future for farming community: FAIFA

PTI
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The newly passed farm bills will give farmers the freedom to trade across states and empower them to turn into traders of their own produce and be in control of the process. Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA) said on Tuesday.

Welcoming the step taken by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government, FAIFA which claims to represent farmers and farm workers of commercial crops across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat, said the new set of bills passed by the Parliament will go a long way in ensuring farmer prosperity and doubling of income.

"These visionary bills will ensure a sustainable and profitable future for the farming community," FAIFA said in a statement.

The new regulation will create an ecosystem where the farmers and traders will enjoy freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce and promote barrier-free inter and intra-state trade and commerce outside the physical premises of markets notified under State Agricultural Produce Marketing legislations," FAIFA President BV Jaware Gowda said.

These timely crucial steps taken by the government will serve as cornerstones for envisioning a fair market for farmers that lets them receive their fair price by letting them be in control of their incomes with freedom to trade, he added.

Chouhan: Adequate beds for Covid patients big challenge

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, 22 SEPTEMBER



Despite the number of Covid deaths in Madhya Pradesh increases rapidly and crosses the 2,030-mark today, with a majority of deaths occurring of patients admitted to ICUs, the BJP state government has been able to add only 144 ICU beds in its Covid hospitals across the state in the past five months.

MP chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan conceded in the state Assembly on Monday that the requirement of beds for corona patients was a major challenge faced by the state government.

"From 1 April to 31 August 2020, the number of ICU beds in the state has been increased from 537 to 681," Chouhan told the House during his official statement on the situation of Covid-19 in MP, at the Assembly's single-day session here.

"Meeting the demand for beds for corona patients in hos-

itals is a big challenge for us," the CM admitted.

As per state health department figures, the number of deaths of positive cases has gone beyond the 1.10 lakh mark. More than 2500 positive cases are being detected in MP every day for the past few days.

As per official figures, the utilisation of ICU beds across the state as of 21 September was 52 per cent, that of Oxygen beds was 12 per cent and general beds was 36 per cent. Despite that, the number of ICU beds has seen the least increase of only 144. In five months, the state government has been able to increase ICU beds from 537 to mere

681. Similarly, the number of general beds has also risen by 22132, as per the CM's statement. The CM told the House that the number of general beds had been increased from 2428 to 24560 in the said period.

"We are constantly trying to tie up with private hospitals of the state in our attempt to increase the availability of beds," Chouhan told the house.

Notwithstanding the CM's assurance of adequate arrangements, leader of the Opposition Kamal Nath alleged laxity in treatment of Covid patients at private hospitals of the state and demanded an inquiry into the matter.

Nath also demanded that a state-level complain centre should be set up where people could lodge their complaints regarding any problems or grievances they had towards the state government's arrangements and treatment facilities for Covid.

Apex body of Ladakhi leaders calls for boycott of LAHDC polls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 22 SEPTEMBER

on Tuesday unanimously resolved to boycott the coming election for the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC).

The decision to boycott the elections for the 26 member LAHDC was announced in a meeting in Leh in which leaders of political, social,

religious and cultural organisations participated. The district president of the BJP, Nawang Samstan was also among the signatories to the boycott resolution. The administration of Ladakh has announced that the elections for Leh's LAHDC would be held on 16 October.

RAJDHANI SPECIAL TRAIN BETWEEN HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN AND MADGAON

For the convenience of rail passengers, Northern Railway has decided to run a Rajdhani Special Train between Hazrat Nizamuddin and Madgaon-Superfast Spacial Train (Bi-Weekly)

Timings of Train No. 02414	STATIONS	Timings of Train No. 02413
Hazrat Nizamuddin-Madgaon		Madgaon-Hazrat Nizamuddin
Non Monsoon	Monsoon	Non Monsoon
11.35 (Fri & Sat)	Dep. Hazrat Nizamuddin	Arr. 16.45 (Mon & Tue)
16.10/16.20	a/d Kota Jn.	a/d 10.45/10.55
23.02/23.20	a/d Vadodara Jn.	a/d 03.39/03.57 (Mon & Tue)

Plaque protest

While the installation of a plaque that challenged the monarchy in Thailand at a site near Bangkok's Grand Palace on Sunday was essentially a symbolic expression of protesters' angst at being deprived of democratic rights, its removal within a day by the establishment is likely to exacerbate matters. For the protests in the Southeast Asian kingdom have now gone well beyond opposition to the continuance in power of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha following a military coup in 2014 to anger at Constitutional provisions that protestors say give too much power to the King. The plaque said that Thailand belongs to its people, and not to the King, and its symbolism lay in its resemblance to a plaque placed outside the Royal Palace in 1932 to mark the end of absolute monarchy. The older plaque was removed in 2017 after the present monarch took the throne. Protestors had flocked up in huge numbers on Sunday and had cemented their plaque in place. Protest leader Parit Chiwarak reacted to its removal within 24 hours by saying, "The plaque was already placed in the hearts of people. You may remove it, but we will make a new one." The growing protests and the installation of the plaque mark the latest challenge to the monarchy, hitherto considered both taboo and illegal under Thailand's lese majeste laws, and suggest that demands for removal of the Prime Minister and fresh elections are escalating out of control into a direct challenge to the monarchy.

Perhaps realising this, the government has been somewhat circumspect in tackling the protests. While protest leaders have been arrested, they were not charged under lese majeste laws but under other provisions and were released soon after on bail. Prime Minister Prayut, a former General and a staunch royalist who once likened Thailand's royal family to deities, appeared to be on the defensive even after Sunday's protests, welcoming the fact they were peaceful and noting that nation, religion and the monarchy, in that order, were the pillars of the Thai people. While a section of the arch-royalists are incensed at growing demands for monarchical reforms and will not readily accept installation of symbols that challenge the king, the fact that protests have intensified over the past two months and even reached the country's schools must send shivers down the establishment's spine and compel it to move cautiously. The protests had begun to take shape last February after a pro-democracy political party popular with youth was abruptly disbanded. The movement gathered pace despite Covid lockdown restrictions when a popular satirist was abducted in broad daylight from a street in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where he had been living in exile. While Thailand's government has been effective in curbing the virus, growing unemployment because of the economic crisis has caused the youth to feel frustrated. Now, the tension is palpable for it is unlikely that protestors will back down without tangible concessions.

The deep state

Disclosures that Pakistan's Army and all-powerful Inter Services Intelligence met leaders of the country's opposition parties last week to ask that the military not be dragged into political affairs underscores the role of the country's deep state and the extent to which it can go to control the narrative about its activities. The closed-doors meeting was reportedly held on 16 September and was attended by about 15 opposition figures including Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shah-baz Sharif, Pakistan Peoples' Party chairman Bil-a-wal Bhutto-Zardari and Jamaat-i-Islami emir Sirajul, besides a few government ministers. The ground rule for the meeting was that its contents would not be publicly discussed, and it was clearly aimed at ensuring that an opposition multi-party conference to be held four days later did not focus attention on the role of the Army and the ISI in manipulating the government of Imran Khan. The other objective, as put out by a government minister, was to discuss constitutional changes in the status of Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. In the event, the opposition parties were relatively muted in their criticism although a 26-point declaration issued at the conclusion of the meeting asked for an end to the "establishment's interference in politics" and said that there should be "no role of Armed forces and intelligence agencies in future elections." Only exiled former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was strident in his criticisms saying there was a "state above the state" in the country, hardly a revelation in Pakistan or elsewhere but important nonetheless in the context. He lashed out at the Army and the ISI saying that the Opposition's struggle was not against PM Imran Khan but those who installed him and "who manipulated elections to bring an incapable man like him into power and thus destroyed the country." In a speech delivered via video link from London, Mr Sharif said if change did not happen, it would cause irreparable loss. Thus, he argued, it was essential that the armed forces stay away from the government. Pakistan's opposition leaders have expressed concern at the manner they have been embroiled in corruption cases by the National Accountability Bureau and believe that the deep state is responsible for their discomfiture. The Sharif family has been a primary target, but others too have faced action. While it is too early to say whether the marathon opposition meeting will lead to concerted, or even decisive action, against the government of the day, or even serve to rein it in, it is unlikely to bring out systemic changes that would reduce the role of the Army and the ISI. For, as ought to be evident to Pakistanis and Pakistan-watchers, the parties now in opposition and so concerned about interference by the deep state were themselves in power not so long ago and could do precious little about the imposition.

Japan's new boss ~ II

Suga's rise in the political hierarchy to the top spot is comparable to that of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Like Modi who rose in politics to be the prime minister of the country from being a tea seller, Suga rose to become the Prime Minister from being a strawberry farmer's son in Akita, northern Japan



Toshihide Suga has promised to keep Abenomics and take it forward to fulfil Abe's unfinished agenda. He wants the central bank to take additional easing steps to protect jobs. But he is not in favour of lowering the 10 per cent consumption tax currently levied, which he sees as indispensable to social security reforms. He is unlikely to comply with the demands of some lawmakers who have demanded lowering the tax to reduce the burden of the coronavirus pandemic on households. In fact, he has hinted that he might consider compiling another economic stimulus package by the end of 2020 to "put the pandemic to an end and shift the economy to a new stage". That would be in addition to the 230 trillion yen (\$2.2 trillion) package the Abe government set out for tackling the Covid-19 outbreak, including subsidies for beleaguered businesses and promotion of domestic tourism.

There are some academics such as Etsushi Tanifuji of Waseda University who have expressed concern that Suga does not have a grand vision for Japan and is more of a problem solver at home but could face problems when it comes to foreign policy issues. But that apprehension can very well be dispelled by ministers who have the right expertise to handle the country's foreign policy. Abe's presence in the government also would be of immense help as he can guide the right course.

Suga's rise in the political hierarchy to the top spot is comparable to that of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Like Modi who rose in politics to be the prime minister of the country from being a tea seller, Suga rose

to become the Prime Minister from being a strawberry farmer's son in Akita, northern Japan. Without any knowledge or blood ties unlike his predecessor Abe, Suga launched into the world of politics, started from zero, then became a local assemblyman and navigated through party traditions and history to hold the key post of chief cabinet secretary since 2012. He acted as Abe's top government spokesman coordinating policies and keeping bureaucrats in line before reaching the top post.

Besides his focus on reviving the battered economy and keeping coronavirus under control, Suga's longer-term challenges would include the falling birth rate and a myriad of diplomatic disputes with Asian neighbours. Suga has pledged to pursue many of Abe's programmes, including his signature "Abenomics" economic strategy, and forge ahead with structural reforms, deregulation and streamlining bureaucracy.

On the foreign policy front, there are apprehensions that owing to Suga's relative inexperience he might falter in his dealings. That would be an extremely pessimistic view. He has already promised to continue working toward securing the return of Japanese nationals who were abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s, and to hold negotiations with Russia to resolve a territorial dispute to clear the way for a long-awaited post-war peace treaty. Suga also looks to continue Abe's push to

amend the post-war Constitution by adding an explicit reference to the Self-Defense Forces to the war-renouncing Article 9.

As regards India-Japan ties, these would remain robust as before on all fronts. Like any previous prime minister of Japan, alliance relationship with the United States shall remain as the mainstay of Tokyo's diplomacy and security. But seeking stable ties with neighbouring countries, especially with the Asean grouping shall be another focus area. Despite Abe's sustained efforts he could not resolve the issue of

Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea decades ago. Suga is expected to pursue Abe's unfinished agenda. Suga is also expected to pursue Abe's unfinished but cherished goal of revising the US-drafted pacifist constitution. If threat perception from China increases over the Senkaku islands, Suga might seek to acquire additional capability to strike

enemy targets. In conclusion, it can be said that Suga's focus point would be first to rebuild the country's economy that has recorded its worst post-war contraction due to the coronavirus pandemic. Suga would remember that public debt has ballooned to more than twice the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and the gap between the rich and the poor widened further. How to shift from such an economic policy would be the focal point of his policy priorities.

Structural reforms ought to be the priority of Suga administration's growth strategy. This

would entail reorganization of small- and mid-sized firms with a view to encourage market competition. Unless this is done, Japan would not be able to recover from a prolonged slump of nearly 30 years since the bubble economy burst.

The establishment understands that the small and mid-sized companies are hit hard due to the Covid-19 and if these firms bearing 70 per cent of the nation's employment were to go out of business, it could lead to the collapse of Japan's economic foundations. Therefore, supporting these firms and protect competitiveness would be one of Suga's priorities.

Whatever might be the strategy, the ultimate aim ought to be to strike a balance between competition and distribution in order to secure a sustainable economic growth and provide a viable social security system that could create a liveable country amid a declining birth rate and aging population.

So, no major policy reversals are envisioned with Suga at the helm. Jumpstarting the economy and containing the virus would be Suga's immediate priorities. Managing tensions with China over Senkaku could be another focus area. In the light of this, ties with the Quad countries could be crucial for Japan and Suga is expected to activate this process. Suga shall be happy that Abe has assured of his support and guidance in any of the policy initiatives that he would undertake. India-Japan ties shall remain on track and it can only assume robustness as geopolitical and geostrategic situation in the region would only draw them closer to see deeper convergences of interests.

(Concluded)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Health, education deserve better

SIR, The state as well as Central governments have made a mess of health and education since independence and the matter is going from bad to worse. Let us first take up the issue of health. There is a dearth of health care professionals throughout the country and most health care outlets lack minimum infrastructure. City hospitals are already overburdened with patient load due to continuous referrals from the periphery.

To add fuel to the fire is the violence faced by healthcare professionals from anti-socials on the pretext of medical negligence. Government has taken no measures to punish these hoodlums and ruffians as they belong to one or the other political party.

Doctors and paramedical staff are at the receiving end of violence. Hospitals and nursing homes get ransacked following unfortunate deaths of patients irrespective of whether treatment was given or not.

Thus private entrepreneurs are showing no interest to invest in healthcare. The private hospitals that are there suffer from huge financial losses. The government allotment in health sector is around one per cent of the budget. This speaks of the government's apathy. Covid 19 pandemic has made things worse. Toothless, spineless and highly politicised bodies like the Medical Council, Ministry of Health and Swastha Commission have made life miserable both for the common man as well as the healthcare profes-

sionals. Regarding education, the scenario is worse particularly in the state of West Bengal. Taking advantage of the pandemic, the state government has made its intentions very clear. Degrees will be awarded without conducting examinations so that teachers and students can leave academics and carry out political activities and hooliganism. Take for example the HS examination conducted by West Bengal Council of HS Education. Only one exam was taken and marks allotted for all other subjects. Take the case of Presidency University. Without any advertisement by WBjee Board which conducts the PUBDET, the university has carried out admission procedure without an admission test which has never happened before.

Enough is enough. Necessary constitutional amendment needs to be made to save the lives and careers of students, patients and healthcare professionals. Educa-

tion and health need to be governed by an independent constitutional body.

Yours, etc., Dr Purushottam Chattopadhyay, Kolkata, 21 September.

ROAD TO PERDITION

SIR, Mr Govind Bhattacharjee's article 'Capitalism with Ethics' in *The Statesman* dated 20 Sep 2020 hits the nail on the head and quite hard. But it all in vain. Already there are signs of business as usual and that will grow in the coming months. So far there has been no sign whatsoever of any measure to mitigate environmental damage. On the contrary, action is being taken to damage the environment further. If there has been any thought about replacing Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations model, I have not heard about it. Neither has Mr. Bhattacharjee offered any insight as to how this could be done or whether anyone is even

working on it. The road to perdition is wide open.

Yours, etc., Pranab Sen IIT, Kanpur, 21 September.

GREATEST SLIP

SIR, I have been an avid reader of *The Statesman* since the early 1960s. Occasionally I have also had the privilege of writing for it. Sadly do I fail to read the "100 Years Ago" column.

This month it was 100 years since the Calcutta session of the All India Congress Committee. It was at this session that Mahatma Gandhi's historic resolution on Non-Co-operation with the Colonial regime was passed by majority. Even British civil service opinion had recognised that the Non-Co-operation movement tore the 'mystic fabric' that had enveloped the Raj after the events of 1857. The movement had led also, as the late KT Paul contemporaneously wrote, to a renaissance in art and

literature throughout India.

I was surprised to find, therefore, that there was no mention of the September 1920 Session in the 100 Years Ago column, let alone of the Non-Co-operation Resolution. There was no reference in the column also to Gandhi's tour of Bengal from 2 September to 18 September 1920, not excluding his visit to Santiniketan from 12 to 17 September 1920. I wonder if such omissions were a reflection of selective reporting in 1920 or of amnesia in 2020.

If the latter, it would appear to be the greatest slip by your esteemed paper in my reading memory. To be fair, your paper is not alone in this lapse, but one's expectations are higher because of the meticulous traditions of your paper.

Yours, etc., Anil Nauriya, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, New Delhi, 22 September.

A MEMBER OF THE



Vouching for the tourism sector

Singaporeans aged 18 and above this year will receive \$100 each to spend on staycations, tickets to leisure attractions, and local tours. This is a practical move to stimulate domestic spending and save jobs in the tourism sector. It is practical because the duration of the voucher programme is timed to coincide with the March, June and December school holidays, and to spread out demand in between. It coincides with the announcement that tourist attractions can apply to increase their operating capacity to 50 per cent - up from the current 25 per cent. The \$320 million SingaporeRediscovers Vouchers scheme should help attractions to carry over their capabilities, built up over the years, and look ahead, even as they consolidate capacity in the interim.

The severity of the downturn that marks the interim cannot be overstated. The coronavirus pandemic has all but decimated the industry after four years of consecutive growth. In February, the Singapore Tourism Board said the sector was facing its biggest challenge since the occurrence of Sars (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in 2003.

The extent of that challenge became clear in subsequent months as Covid-19 ravaged globalised economies, including Singapore's, particularly in sectors associated with international travel. Unlike Sars, whose lethality proved to be relatively short-

THE STRAITS TIMES

lived, the economic after-effects of Covid-19 could be expected to linger for quite some time. Meanwhile, domestic consumption can go some way towards meeting the precipitous decline in international demand. This is not an unreasonable expectation.

Last year, visitors spent \$27.7 billion here. While that figure is impressive, it is smaller than what Singapore's resident population spent on overseas travel last year: \$36.5 billion. But if even a fraction of that spending could be channelled into domestic tourism, the sector would benefit considerably. Admittedly, Singaporeans would not want to spend large amounts within their own country, which they know. Indeed, even their foreign travel plans would have shrunk during a job-eating recession.

However, they are likely to give domestic tourism a chance if the attractions are safe, not too expensive, and encourage interaction between family and friends. Also, they expect their tourism experiences to be authentic, in the sense that they are not treated like foreign tourists but as insiders who are offered deeper insights into the flora, fauna, history and architecture of the country.

IN MEMORIAM

BANERJEE HIRANMOY—Advocate, Deoghar, left this day. Fondly remembered by son, nephews and relatives.



Patients lying on mats in a temporary hospital ward in Deoghar, Jharkhand.

Photo: PTI

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

SIR, You are absolutely right to say "players would not have been exposed to the very serious risk of psychological damage if the commercial instincts laced into the game did not deem a return to action an urgent necessity" (Bad bubble, Sept 22). The pleasure of playing a game vanished from cricket with the inception of the Indian Premier League. The teams are owned by the film actors who have little connection with the game, players are auctioned like slaves and fiscal scandals abound. In short, money earning has become the motivating factor for all concerned in the name of play.

Description of the "bio-secure bubble" and the players imprisoned in it is reminiscent of the solitary confinement cells of the Cellular Jail. Players might have signed on the dotted line without knowing the implications but the organizers were definitely cognizant of them. They have taken a bad decision, lured by large money. Players need a relaxed atmosphere before a match, which is not possible living in the "bubble". Let alone the usual practice of swimming in the sea or a pool on days preceding a match, the players living in the "bubbles" are not allowed even to talk to their colleagues.

Yours, etc., Sanjit Ghatak, Narendrapur, 22 September.

ANAND KUMAR

Why China won't let India rise peacefully

When communist China adopted a calibrated liberal policy to develop its economy in 1979 under Deng Xiaoping, it moved on the path of fast economic growth. The western powers were hopeful that once China grew economically it would adopt liberal values and democracy. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

At the turn of the century China joined WTO which further expedited its economic growth. However, all this while its Communist Party of China (CPC)-led political system remained intact. This raised concerns among Western powers that saw no commensurate change in the Chinese political system. To allay their fears, the Chinese floated the concept of "peaceful rise of China." They argued that China's rise would not threaten world peace.

But now that China's trade and economic interests have spread far and wide, it is now trying to transform itself from being just a continental power to a maritime power as well. Its foreign and security policy has become extremely aggressive threatening world peace.

The Indian economic growth had a delayed start in comparison to China. It started in 1990 with the adoption of liberal economic policies. The continuation of this economic growth required a peaceful neighbourhood so that India could draw foreign capital and multinational companies. Peace was also required to keep the focus of domestic policies on economic growth and not expand scarce resources disproportionately on defence and military matters.

It has often been argued that India should focus on economic growth at least for next few decades and ignore the trouble created by Pakistan and China on its borders. However, it appears that China and Pakistan may not allow India this luxury and the country will have to simultaneously prepare itself to face any possible military and security challenge emerging from these countries.

The nature of security threats posed by China and Pakistan is different. Though Pakistan tried to capture Indian territory in 1999 and was evicted after the Kargil War, the general approach of the country has been to use terror groups as its proxy. By using these terrorist groups, it wants to keep the pot boiling in Kashmir. It hopes to bring world attention to Kashmir through this policy. On the other

hand, China has been using tactics of salami slicing and grabbing Indian territory bit by bit over a period of time.

The approach adopted by China and Pakistan to grab Indian territory or create trouble in Kashmir suffered a setback when the Modi government abrogated Article 370 and created two new centrally administered provinces in the form of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The changed constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir and the abrogation of Article 370 indicated strong political will of the Indian state to fully integrate territory of Jammu and Kashmir state of which Ladakh was a part.

This made China that was slowly eating away territory of Ladakh concerned. The reorganization of Ladakh meant that the previous strategy of salami slicing would not remain effective. Besides, China was also concerned by the building of infrastructure on the Indian side of the LAC. So far, good infrastructure was a privilege of only the Chinese. But once Indians started doing the same, the Chinese felt that it would create another hurdle in their strategy of grabbing Indian territory. Obviously, these developments were not to their liking.

China is now in a hurry to become the leading power of the world. It is not surprising that it does not want any other comparable power to rise in Asia. To keep China developing and to bridge the gap with the US, President Xi Jinping has conceptualized its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) program. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the flagship project of this BRI program. However, a significant part of this project in a disputed territory that is claimed by both India and Pakistan. China wants to ensure the future of this project by capturing as much territory as possible in Ladakh.

Until a few years ago, the issue of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) was not raised by India seriously. It was almost assumed that PoK would remain with Pakistan while it would keep making its claim on the remaining areas of Jammu and Kashmir. This situation has now significantly changed with the change in constitu-



Illustration: Partho

tional status of J&K and Ladakh. Though this step does not change international boundaries of the two new Indian provinces, it does change their internal status. It is hoped that it will now lead to their closer integration with India. This has irked both China and Pakistan.

Perhaps this has prompted China to go for premeditated and planned intrusions in Ladakh as China's "all weather friend" Pakistan is too weak to indulge in similar activity. It is done with the objective to change the facts on the ground violating all previous agreements. Through this step China is also trying to probe the political will of the Indian state to use military as an option.

There is a growing view among

Chinese policy makers that since differences in perception about the border are huge, no meaningful solution of the border issue is likely through talks. The Chinese have been moving their border westward gradually. But they are now apprehensive that this policy may not work. The improving infrastructure on the Indian side may also make the task difficult. Thus, it is not surprising that the Chinese have chosen to intrude into Indian areas when countries are facing difficulty due to the coronavirus.

China's aggressive posture is going to be the biggest challenge of Indian foreign policy. India has been trying to hedge its policy against China in the past despite its provocative behaviour. India and China now

share the largest undemarcated border. China has purposely kept this border undemarcated so that it can move its border westward gradually.

China is now moving into a new era of foreign and security policy where it is no longer shy to show aggression in foreign and security policy. China now thinks that it has achieved considerable economic progress and built a strong military over the years. It may want to use this military to achieve its political, economic or territorial objectives. China may not allow other countries - especially those it perceives as its competitors - to rise peacefully.

The writer is Associate Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

Were the Bad Guys right?

VINCE CABLE

of regulations to reinforce its largely voluntary approach.

Nonetheless, it is just about possible, from comparative data where it exists, to come to some tentative conclusions about what is working and what isn't. It is necessary to look at both the incidence of disease and "excess" deaths, and at the collateral damage from preventive lockdowns. Economic costs matter not just for living standards but also for the public services which a smaller economy can no longer afford. And the collateral damage also includes those who die because Covid-prioritising hospitals and GP surgeries around the world are not functioning for cancer and stroke patients.

In particular, Sweden's apparent success in getting on top of the infection and escaping the worst of economic damage (with an estimated fall of 4 per cent in GDP this year) has begun to restore its reputation after the initial surge in deaths. The lessons from Sweden are that common sense, consensus and self-discipline work better than convoluted, constantly changing, rules and regulations; that people respond better to being treated as adults than wayward children; that consistent, clear messaging is essential; and that schools and workplaces can and must be kept open.

There is a painful contrast with countries which have both high infection and death rates and serious economic damage: Britain, France, Italy and Spain in Europe and India, Argentina and South Africa elsewhere. All seem likely to see a fall of around 10 per cent in GDP this year in addition to relatively high death rates. Conditions obviously vary with some, poorer, countries facing very challenging conditions, as in India. But government competence is clearly a factor with lockdowns being introduced too late (Britain) or too soon (India); failure to develop effective testing and/or tracing systems

(Britain and France); and failures to build cross-party, national, agreement (Spain especially).

For many, the epitome of incompetence would be the president of the US. The US has experienced exceptional death rates in relation to population. But the US economy has got off relatively lightly: the United States is expected to outperform Germany in minimising the damage with an expected fall of around 5 per cent in GDP, very painful but hardly in the territory of the Great Depression when GDP fell 30 per cent from peak to trough. The United States has benefited from the enormous monetary stimulus provided by the Federal Reserve as well as the big, bi-partisan, fiscal stimulus from Congress (at least until the impasse of the last few weeks). But we also have to ask: did Trump help or hinder?

Trump played the role of the hapless, incompetent, joker: the denials, the quack medicine, the apparent failure to understand notions like "herd immunity", the contempt for masks and social distancing. But it now emerges, from the telephone interviews with the journalist Bob Woodward, that Trump knew exactly what was going on and fully understood the risks of the pandemic. He made a calculated, cynical but rational, decision: to resist announcements and actions which might damage consumer and investor confidence and undermine the economy. Minimising economic damage would be the best way to safeguard his re-election chances, even if it meant more deaths. Not nice, but not stupid.

With only a few weeks to go to the election, it looks as if he may have called it right, politically if not epidemiologically. There is a strong recovery taking place (though whether it is sustainable remains to be seen). The stock market, which he equates with economic success, is having the biggest bull-run in living memory buoyed up by technology stocks. The jobless rate is high (8.4 per cent in August) but well below the levels of a few months ago (almost 15 per cent in April). Three months ago, I predicted in this column, to widespread disbelief and disgust, that Trump would pull it off in large part due to economic improvement. Now, the consensus around the election is closer to 50:50.

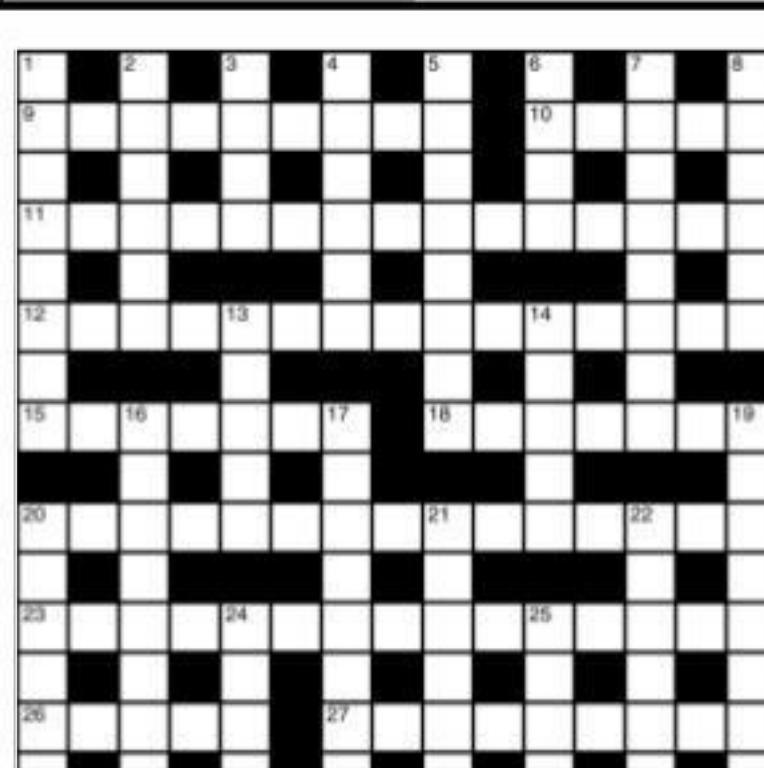
Trump understood that there is a trade-off: death rates versus economic (and re-election) damage. The Covid deaths of 200,000 Americans (under 0.1 per cent of the population, mostly poor, older people in states unlikely to vote Republican) were - for him - a price worth paying. However much we may deplore the president's lack of moral compass, he understands these judgements.

By contrast, I listen with despair as the British prime minister flails around for solutions, constantly changing tack with the choices the country has to face. Equally baffling are opposition spokespeople who act as if policy should be based on the premise that there must never be a single Covid-19 death. That is a recipe for lockdown forever and everywhere. As a "vulnerable" person in my mid-70s I think I would take my chances in Stockholm.

The Independent.

NO 28082

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 9/10/24 Total entertainment — everything being enjoyed by blondes? (3,3,3,3,4)
- 11 Green, coup d'état his sin, taken out (15)
- 12 Archipelago, East Indian, with us all on the move (8,7)
- 15 Death tally back with hospital gone from local area (7)
- 18 Appendix in the middle given serious cut (7)
- 20 Game in which loser first to take lead? (7,8)
- 23 Lazy people in vain occupying property (4-3-8)
- 26 Fragrant resin found in diesel

DOWN

- 27 Planet almost consumed in flood (8)
- 2 Palace in cathedral city and diocese (6)
- 3 Bloke, hot, better going outside (4)
- 4 First person caught in a far-off land (6)
- 5 In or out (2,6)
- 6 Ornament Celts originally placed under rocky hill (4)
- 7 Foreign coin to add in among Jamaican notes? (8)
- 8 Film director does repairs round house at last (6)
- 13 No good avoiding casual employment rates (5)
- 14 Right on a length (5)
- 16 Find dance almost dead (8)
- 17 Skyline against one lake (8)
- 19 Service for example including meat, not the heart (8)
- 20 Feel remorse having run over bird (6)
- 21 Ducks seen outside harbour town and city (6)
- 22 Slip catch turned game (6)
- 24 See 9 Across
- 25 Fish for any number stored in shed (4)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

07

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

Mr. Churchill's confession that the small force at Rumaila is "still holding out" and is being provisioned from the air is a curious comment on the state of affairs in Mesopotamia, where the Rumaila trouble is believed to have begun in the earliest days of July. It is also a queer comment on the proposal, mooted if we remember rightly by the War Minister himself, for the patrolling of the long Mesopotamian frontiers almost exclusively by aeroplanes. Where is the Mesopotamian Air Force for which estimates have been regularly taken and why has it not been more clearly in evidence before this? Probably those on the spot have all along made allowance for a fact of which the enthusiastic War Minister may still not be completely cognizant - the fact, namely, that the potentials of aircraft differ extraordinarily according to the terrain over which they operate. Possibly the real cause of the airmen's comparative inaction in Mesopotamia is the fact that they, like the whole of the Mesopotamian force, have been starved for months past. Estimates amounting to pound 35,000,000 appear considerable to the Home public but even they are probably quite inadequate to the defence, from bases many hundreds of miles distant, of an area with 2,000 miles of vulnerable frontier.

NEWS ITEMS

DACC MEDICAL SCHOOL

The annual prize giving ceremony of Dacc Medical School took place this morning, Sir Henry Wheeler presiding. Among those present were the Hon. Maharajadhiraja of Burdwan and General Robinson, Surgeon-General, Lt.-Col. Newman read a short and interesting report about the progress of the school. He said that at the last census there was only one practitioner of the medical school class to 38,000 of the population. He referred to the widespread system of subsidised private practitioners, and also to the experiment which the Dacc Medical College at Dacc was going to try with five subsidised private practitioners. Sir Henry Wheeler referring to the idea of starting a Medical College at Dacc he remarked that no decision had yet been arrived at, in spite of the provision for a medical faculty in the Dacc University Act.

TRAIN THIEF CAUGHT

The capture by the Geneva police of a train thief with over 50 accusations against him may put an end to the mysterious losses suffered by passengers in Swiss trains for the last 12 months. The criminal, whose name is Hagedorn, was faultlessly dressed and of an amazing coolness, as he went to the police himself a few weeks ago to complain of perpetual train thefts. He was in the act of pocketing a note-case containing pound 60 when the police caught him, and a trunk found in his lodgings contained a large quantity of miscellaneous articles, varying from return tickets and alarm clocks to fountain pens and overcoats. Hagedorn is also accused of thefts at the Young Men's Christian Association, of which he professed to be an ardent member, and at the public baths in the lake near Geneva.

SIR THYAGA RAJ CHETTY

A large gathering of merchants and public men representing several Indian communities responded to the invitation of Rao Saib H. Chinnaya, president of Praja Mitra Mandal, this evening at a public entertainment given to Sir P. Thyaga Raj Chetty. Khan Bahadur Haji Ismail Sait presided and addresses were read recounting the great services of Sir Thyaga Raj Chetty to the cause of public life in this country. Special reference was made to the South Indian Liberal Federation which was started by him in co-operation with the late Dr. Nair. Sir P. Chetty was requested to unveil the statue of the late Mr. Basa Iyer, who worked for the elevation of the backward and depressed classes in the State. Chetty spoke of the need of education and obtain equality for all classes.

BREWERY MANAGER'S ACCIDENTAL DEATH

The news will be received with great regret by a large circle of friends in India of the accidental death of Mr. Stowell, acting manager of the Brewery at Kasauli. Deceased was out shooting on the evening. He had shot one or two pigeons and on reaching a steep lane, close to the Brewery, slipped and fell. The gun was accidentally discharged, the charge entering Mr. Stowell's neck, and death is believed to have been instantaneous. Mr. Stowell at the time of his death was acting as general manager for Messrs. Meakin and Co., Brewers of Kasauli, Ranikhet, Nainital and Darjeeling. He was well known in brewing circles in India and was at one time manager for the firm at Kirkee. He leaves a widow and family.



THUMBNAILS

Blue Dart to hike prices: Logistics services provider Blue Dart on Tuesday announced a 9.6 per cent hike in its average shipment price from January next year to offset higher costs. The price increase, however, will not be applicable to customers signing up with the company between 1 October and 31 December 2020, Blue Dart Express Ltd said. The upward revision in prices is part of the annual exercise undertaken to adjust inflation, fluctuation in currency and fuel price, among others, it said. PTI

Bajaj Finserv: Bajaj Finserv Ltd on Tuesday announced the launch of its fully-owned subsidiary Bajaj Finserv Health Ltd, a health-tech solutions business, aimed at improving the health outcomes of Indian consumers through smarter, connected and holistic care plans. With this new venture, the company has now forayed into the healthcare ecosystem, aiming to disrupt the health segment and make healthcare experience convenient and all-inclusive for consumers, according to a statement from the company. SNS

Ford launch: Ford India on Tuesday unveiled a special sport edition of its Endeavour SUV, priced at Rs 35.10 lakh with a number of design enhancements and additional safety features. Featuring a dozen impressive exterior changes, the Ford Endeavour Sport will be the new top-trim variant in the Ford Endeavour vehicle lineup, available only with an all-wheel-drive or 4x4 driveline, the company said. SNS

The Better Home ropes in Dia Mirza as brand ambassador: Homecare products maker The Better Home on Tuesday said it has onboarded Bollywood actor Dia Mirza as its brand ambassador. Launched earlier this year, The Better Home offers direct-to-consumer subscription kits of eco-friendly, naturally derived home cleaners, according to a Press release. SNS

Industry for 'fiscal future road map' with medium-term goals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Corporate India today made a case for announcing a fiscal future road map with medium-term goals and recapitalising of public sector banks during their representatives' meeting with Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant-led empowered group.

During the meeting with the empowered group - which was constituted on 29 March to suggest measures to ramp up healthcare as well as put the economy back on track - the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) called for better coordination between the Centre, states and city authorities on lockdown and opening up.

"CII asked the government to announce a fiscal future road map with medium-term goals,

IOC lines up ₹17,825 cr for expansion projects

It will raise capacity of Gujarat refinery and set up a petrochem plant at the unit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's top oil firm, today said it will invest Rs 17,825 crore in raising the capacity of its Gujarat refinery as well as setting up a petrochemical plant at the unit as part of plans for upscaling petrochemical business to protect margins.

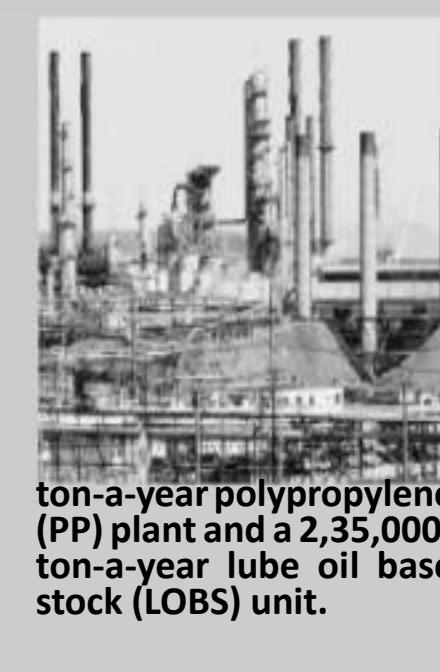
In a regulatory filing, IOC said its board at a meeting on 21 September "accorded approval for implementation of petrochemical and lube integration project at Gujarat refinery at an estimated cost of Rs 17,825 crore".

► The project envisages raising the capacity of the Vadodara refinery in Gujarat from 13.7 million tons per annum to 18 million tons and building a 0.5-million-

increase petrochemical and specialty products integration index on incremental crude oil throughput which would enhance the corporate margins of IOC," it said.

After the company's annual general meeting on Monday, IOC chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya told reporters that IOC is planning to raise petrochemical manufacturing capacity and is looking at diversifying into the textile business.

The project would be a building block for the production of niche chemicals in future with a potential to



ton-a-year polypropylene (PP) plant and a 2,35,000-ton-a-year lube oil base stock (LOBS) unit.

The Gujarat refinery project is part of IOC's plans to boost petrochemical capacity by more than 70 per cent over the next decade, from 3.2 million tons a year currently, Vaidya said.

"Petrochemical production is a lucrative opportunity for energy companies in India as the per-capita consumption still remains very low," he had said, adding that it will raise margins and hedge volatility in the oil market.

The move assumes significance as it marks a major tariff offensive by IOC in the post-paid category, where typically average revenue per user (ARPU) tends to be far higher than the pre-paid segment.

In a statement, IOC said that the main objective of the newly-launched JioPostpaid Plus service is to provide superior services across connectivity, entertainment, and experien-

ce. It also plans to leverage its petrochemical operations to expand into textiles as it looks to diversify operations, Vaidya said.

The company, he said, is already the second-largest player in petrochemicals in the country and in the future, it would focus on entry into new segments like polyester filament yarn, polyester staple fibre, and polybutadiene rubber.

PTI

Bill providing relief to taxpayers on compliance gets approval

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Parliament today gave its approval to a taxation Bill that seeks to provide various reliefs in terms of compliance requirements for taxpayers amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill, 2020, which seeks to replace an Ordinance and make few other changes in direct and indirect tax laws, was returned by a voice vote in the Rajya Sabha.

The Bill was returned amid several opposition parties boycotting the House proceedings protesting suspension of eight members.

Replies to a short debate on the Bill, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Ordinance was necessary to defer various compliance deadlines under Goods and Services Tax and Income Tax (I-T) Act during the Covid-19 times.

It also provides tax benefits on donation made to the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES FUND) set up in March in the wake of the pandemic.

The Bill amends the provisions of the Income Tax Act to provide the same tax treatment to PM-CARES Fund as available to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

The Bill seeks to make faceless assessment applicable to at least eight processes under the I-T Act, including for collection and recovery of tax and gathering of information.

Also, the Bill amends the Finance Act, 2020 to clarify with regard to capping of surcharge at 15 per cent on dividend income of the foreign portfolio investor.

On 5 September, Tata Sons had moved the top court seeking to restrain the Mistry Group from raising capital against their shares.

Through the plea, the Tatas had sought to prevent the SP Group from creating any direct or indirect pledge of shares.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian also directed Tata Sons and the SP Group not to take any further action on the shares which have already been pledged till 28 October, the next date of hearing.

The SP Group, which owns 18.37 per cent in Tata Sons, had said TSPL moved the top court to block its plan to pledge shares for raising funds and that reeked of vindictiveness and oppression of minority shareholder rights.

Earlier, the TSPL had told the top court that it was not a "two-group company" and there was no "quasi-partnership" between it and Cyrus Investments Pvt Ltd.

TSPL had said this in an affidavit filed in the apex court while responding to the cross-appeal filed by Cyrus Investments seeking removal of alleged anomalies in NCLAT order for getting representation on the TSPL's board in proportion to the stakes held by his family.

The apex court had on 10 January granted relief to Tata Group by staying the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order of 18 December last year, by which Cyrus Mistry was restored as the executive chairman of the salt-to-software conglomerate.

SC restrains SP Group, Mistry from pledging or transferring Tata shares

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

The Supreme Court today restrained till 28 October the Shapoorji Pallonji (SP) Group and Cyrus Mistry from pledging or transferring their shares in Tata Sons Pvt Ltd (TSPL).

The finance minister said as a Bill was being brought to replace the Ordinance, the government incorporated other matters like facilitating investment in IFSC Gift City.

The Bill seeks to make faceless assessment applicable to at least eight processes under the I-T Act, including for collection and recovery of tax and gathering of information.

Also, the Bill amends the Finance Act, 2020 to clarify with regard to capping of surcharge at 15 per cent on dividend income of the foreign portfolio investor.

On 5 September, Tata Sons had moved the top court seeking to restrain the Mistry Group from raising capital against their shares.

Through the plea, the Tatas had sought to prevent the SP Group from creating any direct or indirect pledge of shares.

The SP Group was planning to raise Rs 11,000 crore from various funds and had signed a deal with a marquee Canadian investor for Rs 3,750 crore in the first tranche against a portion of its 18.37 per cent stake in Tata Sons.

The SP Group share holding in the country's largest business house is valued at over Rs 1 lakh crore. In a hearing conducted through video conferencing, the top court said that it would hear the plea after four weeks and in the meantime, parties shall maintain status quo regarding pledging/transfer of shares.

We will say status quo on transferring/pledging and any further action with regard to transfer/pledge already made, the Bench said.

Senior advocate C A Sundaram, appearing for the SP Group, said they were being stopped from pledging the shares and it is creating havoc for me.

On the other hand, senior advocate Harish Salve, representing TSPL, said that the point was something else as the TSPL has a right to buy the share at market price, but the SP group was pledging them.

We are of the view tentatively that pledging is a limited transfer, the Bench observed while saying that it will conduct final hearing in four weeks.

losses. Stock exchanges in Europe opened on a positive note.

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.30 per cent higher at \$41.98 per barrel.

In the forex market, the rupee depreciated 20 paise to close at 73.58 against the US dollar. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened on a weak note at 73.50, then fell further and finally closed at 73.58 against the greenback, registering a fall of 20 paise over its last close.

The rupee strengthened by 7 paise to close at 73.38 against the US dollar on Monday.

During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 73.38 and a low of 73.64 against the American currency.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.04 per cent to 93.61.

Equity indices fall for fourth day in a row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Equity benchmarks buckled under selling pressure for the fourth session on the trot today as wary investors took money off the table amid concerns over economic recovery and weak global cues.

A depreciating rupee and stretched valuations in front-line stocks further weighed on risk appetite, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex settled 300.06 points or 0.79 per cent down at 37,734.08 points.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty fell 96.90 points or 0.86 per cent to finish at 11,153.65 points.

Maruti was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.83 per cent, followed by Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, ONGC, HDFC, Reliance Industries, Asian Paints and Kotak Bank.

IT stocks led the gainers' chart, with HCLTech, TCS and Tech Mahindra surging up to 2.43 per cent.

Other winners included Sun Pharma, ICICI Bank and UltraTech Cement.

Asian markets ended in the red following heavy selling on Wall Street overnight. European bourses stabilised after Monday's sell-off, though concerns over a second wave of Covid-19 cases remained an overhang.

"Indian indices witnessed another day of volatility, with

SENSEX BELOW 38K, RUPEE FALLS 20 PAISE

► The 30-share BSE Sensex settled 300.06 points or 0.79 per cent down at 37,734.08 points.

► Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty fell 96.90 points or 0.86 per cent to finish at 11,153.65 points.

► In the forex market, the rupee depreciated 20 paise to close at 73.58 against the US dollar.

indices losing ground in the latter half of the trading day, as the broader markets also underperformed...Doubts about the timing of a global economic recovery emerged, following talks of further restrictions to contain a resurgence in virus infections around the world, especially in Europe.

"This uncertainty hit the Indian markets also, which have been driven by liquidity and the expectation that the economy and earnings would be back on track soon. Mar-

kets seem to be consolidating and taking stock of the situation. Investors are advised to stay cautious," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

BSE industrials, capital goods, oil and gas, energy, reality and auto indices lost as much as 2.49 per cent, while IT and teck indices finished higher.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices slumped up to 1.70 per cent.

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul ended with

Not forcing anyone to invest in small-caps: Sebi chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Sebi chief Ajay Tyagi today said the markets regulator is not forcing anyone to invest in small-caps and investment should always be in the interest of investors amid new portfolio allocation rules for multi-cap mutual fund schemes.

He further said the recent framework that directs multi-cap mutual fund schemes to invest at least 25 per cent of their corpus each in large-cap stocks, mid-caps and small-cap stocks would ensure that such schemes remain "true to label".

Earlier, there was no restriction on the investment that multi-cap schemes needed

to make in large, mid and small-cap stocks and therefore majority of the multi-cap funds have run with a large cap bias.

Sebi's new portfolio allocation rule for multi-cap schemes raised concerns among the mutual fund industry and fund managers estimated that the move would result into Rs 30,000-40,000 crore moving out of large-cap to mid-cap and small-cap companies.

"Multi-cap form should be as per their name. We are not forcing anyone to invest in these caps (small-cap, mid-cap) and investment should be in the interest of investors. Scheme category and its performance vis-a-vis benchmark are major inputs based on which investors decide whether to invest in a scheme or not.

"If a scheme portfolio is not true to its label, it might be giving very different risk return exposure to the unitholders of the scheme than what they have signed up for," he added.

According to him, improper categorisation of mutual fund schemes will only lead to confusion amongst investors apart from the possibilities of mis-selling.

He further said scheme category and its performance vis-a-vis benchmark are major inputs based on which investors decide whether to invest in a scheme or not.

"If a scheme portfolio is not true to its label, it might be giving very different risk return exposure to the unitholders of the scheme than what they have signed up for," he added.

Sebi's norms for categorisation of mutual fund schemes have two objectives - the scheme portfolio should reflect the name of the scheme and the scheme performance can

then be compared against an appropriate benchmark.

"The funds need to keep their scheme portfolios true to their label," the Sebi chairman added.

Debt MFs: With an aim to bring liquidity, markets regulator the Securities and Exchange Board of India is mulling stress testing, minimum asset allocation in liquid assets and swing pricing like mechanism for all open-ended debt oriented mutual fund schemes, its chief Ajay Tyagi said today.

The Sebi is facilitating the setting up of an expert committee to frame a stress testing methodology, encompassing liquidity, credit and market risks, Tyagi said while addressing industry body Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi)'s 25th annual general meeting.

The committee will also design a framework to determine the minimum asset allocation required in liquid assets, taking into account the nature of scheme's assets, type of investors, outcome of stress testing and minimum redemption requirement during gat-

ing, he added.

In the interim, taking into account the recommendations made by the mutual fund advisory committee, the Sebi said it would be stipulating a minimum holding of liquid assets by all debt-oriented schemes.

While overnight schemes are primarily invested in liquid assets such as government securities (G-secs), treasury bills (T-bills), repo in G-secs and cash, and there is a provision for liquid schemes to hold a minimum 20 per cent in liquid assets.

The other debt-oriented

schemes currently have no such requirement and can invest in various categories of corporate bonds, commercial papers, whose secondary markets may not have enough liquidity. As far as performance of the mutual fund industry is concerned, Tyagi said overall, the industry has weathered the storm well, which demonstrates the robustness of the regulatory framework as well as the maturity of the industry.

The industry, however, also went through several patches of challenges, especially on the debt mutual fund side.

"Some of the issues that arose during the period are now addressed and some are in the process of being addressed," he noted.



Let's spray the Philippines or Manila over with pesticide to kill all ... the only thing that we can do, really, is to wear a mask, wear a face mask, and that's it and wait for the vaccine

PHILIPPINES PRESIDENT RODRIGO DUTERTE
AS DUTERTE EXTENDS VIRUS CALAMITY STATUS BY A YEAR

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

09

'Pak Army, ISI had secret meeting with Opp ahead of multi-party conference'

Railway min: Meeting was held to discuss the impending changes in the constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan, a move opposed by India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, 22 SEPTEMBER

Pakistan Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa and ISI head Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed held a secret meeting with the key Opposition leaders just days before a multi-party conference and asked them to refrain from dragging the military's name into their political differences with Prime Minister Imran Khan, a media report said on Tuesday.

The Dawn reported that Bajwa and Hameed held the meeting on September 16 in which about 15 politicians, including Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif and Pak-

istan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, were present.

According to the ground rules set for the session, the meeting was not to be publicly disclosed, the report said. Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid, while confirming the meeting and its participants, said it was held to discuss the impending changes in the constitutional status of Gilgit-Baltistan, a move opposed by India.

However, the Opposition used this opportunity to flag its concerns about other issues, especially the military's alleged interference in politics and allegations of persecution of its leaders on the pretext of accountability.

Rashid was one of the ministers who attended the meeting, the report said. Political observers linked the timing of the meeting and its disclosure with the Opposition's multi-party conference held here on Sunday in which former prime minister Nawaz Sharif bitterly criticised the Army, saying there was a state above the state in the country.

Criticism by other Opposition leaders, in comparison to Sharif's remarks, was relatively subtle. Sharif is currently in London for medical treatment.

Sharif, 70, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo, has been living in London since November last year after the Lahore High

Court granted him permission to go abroad for four weeks for treatment. Despite the meeting with the Army chief, a 26-point declaration issued at the end of the Opposition meeting later, however, contained assertions about ending establishment's interference in politics and no role of armed forces and intelligence agencies in future elections.

Following the multi-party conference, the major Opposition parties demanded Prime Minister Khan's immediate resignation and launched an alliance to hold a nationwide protest movement to oust his government.

Gen Bajwa clearly told the participants of the meeting that the Army was not in any man-

ner linked to the political processes and had no involvement in matters concerning election reforms and accountability, the report said.

He said the military only responds to calls for assistance by the elected civilian government and it would continue doing so irrespective of who is in the office. He also conveyed that no one would be allowed to create chaos in the country, it said.

The allegations of a political witch-hunt in the name of accountability was raised by the PML-N. Bajwa said that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chief and election commissioner were picked up by political leaders represented in Parliament, there-

fore they needed to be careful in choosing them.

The PML-N remained mum about the participation of its leaders in the meeting while the PPP said it would issue a formal comment on the meeting on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a high court in Pakistan said that the federal government was responsible for bringing back former prime minister Nawaz Sharif from London.

Two-member bench of the Islamabad High Court took up hearing of Sharif's case on Tuesday.

The court on September 15 issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Sharif who failed to surrender before it despite clear warning by the bench.

Nepal halts distribution of text book with revised map of Indian areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KATHMANDU, 22 SEPTEMBER

The book states Nepal's new area to be

147,641.28 square kilometres including the 460.28 sq km area of the Kalapani area which was included in Nepal's political map on May 20 by the Cabinet.

the country, however, hasn't made any decision on the area, Joshi said.

Education Minister Giriraj Mani Pokharel on 15 September released the 110-page book titled, Self Study Material on Nepal's Territory and Border which dwells around historical facts about the country's territory and its border dispute mainly with India.

The book states Nepal's new area to be 147,641.28 square kilometers including the 460.28 sq km area of the Kalapani area which was included in Nepal's political map on May 20 by the Cabinet.

Minister for Education Pokharel has written a six-page preface for the book in which he has mentioned about Nepal's border disputes and other related issues. He said that he had launched a campaign to protect the Nepalese territory, including the areas of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura. However, Pokharel told The Kathmandu Post that the distribution of the book has been halted for now.

After Nepal's Parliament approved the revised political map comprising Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura areas, the Cabinet had endorsed the new map and decided to use it in government offices and print school text books with the new map.

China: Spying allegations against NYC cop 'pure fabrication'

BEIJING, 22 SEPTEMBER

China on Tuesday said allegations against a New York City police officer charged with being an "intelligence asset" for the Chinese government are a pure fabrication and part of a US plot to smear Chinese diplomats in the US.

Baimadajie Angwang, a naturalized US citizen from Tibet, allegedly agreed to spy on US supporters of the Tibetan independence movement since 2018 as an agent for China in its effort to suppress the movement, according to a criminal complaint filed in Brooklyn federal court. It says he secretly worked for unnamed handlers from the Chinese Consulate in New York.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Tuesday said the indictment against Angwang was full of hedging terms such as seems and possibly giving the appearance that prosecutors were straining to make their case.

"The relevant accusations made by the US side are pure fabrication," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing. The US plot to discredit the Chinese Consulate and personnel in the United States will not succeed." There was no allegation that Angwang compromised national security or New York Police Department operations. Still, he was considered the definition of an insider threat, William Sweeney, head of the FBI's New York office, said.

AEROBATICS



Russian fighter jets drop bombs over the Ashuluk military base in Southern Russia on Tuesday during the Caucasus-2020 military drills gathering China, Iran, Pakistan and Myanmar troops, along with ex-Soviet Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus. Up to 250 tanks and around 450 infantry combat vehicles and armoured personnel carriers will take part in the 21 to 26 September land and naval exercises that will involve 80,000 people including support staff. AFP

'14 yrs at Guantánamo Bay, nearly half of me has disappeared, gradually I am going to vanish'

AHMED RABBANI
KARACHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

On 21 August, 2006, records show that I weighed 73 kilos. When I was weighed a week ago, the scale registered just 39 kilos. In the last 14 years at Guantánamo Bay, nearly half of me has disappeared.

In total, it has now been 18 years since I was kidnapped and handed over to US forces, to be tortured in Afghanistan and flown halfway across the world to this island gulag. Of the original 780 prisoners, 740 have been released, but here I am, thousands of miles from my wife and children—including Jawad, who is 17, and who I have never had the chance to touch.

Can you imagine one of your children being almost adult, yet you have never

touched him? My hunger strike is a peaceful protest against this indefinite detention without trial. Nobody suggests I have ever committed a crime.

The US military are paranoid about people escaping, though it is hard to think where I might go: there are 100 soldiers for each detainee, along with the second largest landmine field in the world after Korea, plus the shark-infested Caribbean sea.

Yet I have an escape plan: I am going to gradually vanish. I like to think that almost half of me has found freedom already, though I am so thin I can now feel my thumb and finger when I pinch where my stomach ought to be.

This is despite them force feeding me with tins of Ensure, deliberately hurting me in

the process. Twice a day they take me to the 'torture chair'.

They say I go voluntarily, but if I do not walk there in my shackles, they send a team of guards to throw me to the floor and violently drag me out of my cell—and then punish me afterwards for refusing to comply. I may as well get there on my own two feet.

They strap me in and a military nurse uses a 110-centimetre tube on me. It is painful and I get a splitting headache each time they do it, but I am used to that. What I can never accept is being used as a sub-human guinea pig for the nurses to learn the job. Soldiers come and go every few months, but I remain. I try to teach them how to do it, as I am an expert by now: after seven years of hunger striking, on and off, I have prob-

ably had a tube stuck up my nose more times than anyone else on the planet.

In each new six-month deployment there are one or two who can't get it round the top of my nose, or send the tube into my lungs instead of my stomach. (They have to blow air in first to show where it went—or else I would drown in protein shake). One soldier I have at the moment is just untrainable, I don't think she'll ever get it right, no matter how many times she tries.

Mine is a fairly desperate strategy, particularly for someone like me. Back in another world, before I was kidnapped, when I was not driving a taxi around Karachi I would be cooking for my friends and family. Preparing and eating food is one of life's great pleasures, and I do not give it up

lightly.

To distract myself from my misery, I have been working on a cookbook. My family is originally from the Rohingya minority that has suffered from Burmese genocide, so we are used to being mistreated. One of my dishes is Rohingya 'Strappado Chicken', so named as you must hang the chicken rather like they dangled me in the 'Dark Prison'.

A Guantánamo Diet Book would be rather shorter—you just stop eating. What else am I supposed to do? What would you do if you had lost 18 years of your life, with no end in sight? The freedom to refuse food—to starve myself in protest against this terrible injustice—is the only freedom I have left. They tell me that I am not 'cooperating' with

them. They told my lawyers if I testified against some of the high-value detainees, I could go home.

But they wanted me to repeat what I said during 540 days in their 'Dark Prison' in Kabul, where they hung me from an iron bar in a pitch-dark pit. (That is a form of torture that was called 'Strappado' 500 years ago in the Mid-dle Ages, yet is sadly something the US used on me in the 21st century—the pain as your shoulders gradually dislocate is excruciating.)

But I have lines I will never cross, and I said I could not 'cooperate' in repeating lies that I made up to get them to stop torturing me.

I know nothing about terrorism, and it is ironic that unless I swear to these lies, I am labelled a terrorist myself.

I've done a lot of cooperating—following their stupid rules or taking part in their "Perodic Review Board" even though President Donald Trump tweeted he would not let anyone go—but no matter how much I do this, I am still here.

So I will maintain my peaceful protest, aiming to lose another 17 pounds, down to about 70. I suppose in the end, if I keep going, I will not survive. But I was recently 51 years old, and have had the prime of my life taken from me. If they won't let me return to my wife and children soon, the rest of me may as well go home in a box.

The writer is a former taxi driver from Karachi held prisoner by the US for 18 years without charge or trial.

THE DAWN/ANN

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS DOWN
1 Tree trunk (4) 1 Coffee-server (7)
3 Channel port (5) 2 Stratum (5)
7 Ill-defined situation (4,4) 3 Royal crown (6)
8 Nose (informal) (4) 4 Success in battle (7)
9 Camera (6,2,5) 5 Approach (3-2)
10 Egg (4) 6 Past (5)
12 Traditional story (4) 11 Substitute by force (7)
16 Vital (13) 13 Salute (7)
19 Sea eagle (4) 14 Anxious (6)
20 Sufficient (8) 15 Mended (5)
21 Out of practice (5) 16 Derby (5)
22 Skin (4) 17 Mistake (5)
18 Normal (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD



By arrangement with The Independent
Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

2258622, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 180018012511

SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886,

549530, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

Haryana Roadways 23861262

Deen Dayal Upadhyay

25496320, 25494403

Uttar Tegh Bahadur

2371473, 23325320

FLIGHT INQUIRY

AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 18001801407

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi

City Office 43513185, Call Cen-

tre 09910938388,

18001803838, Reservation

43513186, Indigo Airlines Air-

port 011-25671580; Terminal I

B 25671576, Palam Road

25671579, 18001803838

JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 39841111

EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 33773377

Air Canada Flight Inquiry

25656421/25656431 Reserva-

tion 41528181

Air France Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 23466226 (City)

25652294 (Airport)

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A real crisis that required serious presidential leadership he just wasn't up to it, he froze, he failed to act, he panicked, and America has paid the worst price of any nation in the world

US DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE JOE BIDEN
HITS OUT AT TRUMP OVER HANDLING OF COVID SITUATION

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C
TOKYO	18°C	12°C
LONDON	24°C	19°C
DUBAI	30°C	25°C
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C
NEW YORK	10°C	07°C
MOSCOW	19°C	08°C

S=sunny, CL=clear,
H=hazy, R=rainy...

THUMBNAILS



People visit Sensoji temple in Tokyo's Asakusa district on Tuesday. AP

Sikh taxi driver assaulted: An India-born Sikh taxi driver, Vaneet Singh, 41, was subjected to verbal and physical abuse by passengers he drove from a casino in the city of Reading, prompting a UK police force to launch an investigation. They slapped and shoved him, and asked are you Taliban after he received them from the Grosvenor Casino. AP

Strong storm hit Japan: A tropical storm developing in the Pacific Ocean, was slowly sweeping toward Japan on Tuesday, threatening the main island of Honshu with heavy rainfall and harsh winds. Tropical Storm Dolphin had sustained winds of up to 51 miles per hour as of Tuesday morning. AP

Johnson sets out new Covid-19 curbs, curfew to last 6 months

Face covering mandatory in public areas and on public transport; pubs, restaurants to close between 10pm & 5am

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 22 SEPTEMBER

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday laid out a new set of coronavirus restrictions, including tougher curfews and curbs on gatherings and a message for people to work from home, as the UK heads towards a second lockdown which could last six months.

Addressing the House of Commons, Johnson said the UK had reached a perilous point as the rate of infections is rising at an accelerating pace across the country. He, however, stressed that the latest set of measures, which widen the legal requirements for face coverings and set out earlier closing times for pubs, bars and restaurants, will help avoid a full national lockdown.

"We're acting on the principle that a stitch in time saves nine. I want to stress this is by no means a return to the full lockdown of March," he told MPs. We will ensure that schools, colleges and universities stay open because nothing is more important than the health and wellbeing of our young people. However, we must take action to suppress the disease," he said.

The latest set of measures call on all office workers to work from home, where they can do so. From Thursday, all pubs, bars and restaurants must operate at table service only, except for takeaways, and together with all hospitality venues they must close from 10 pm.



"That means alas closing and not just calling for last orders, because simplicity is paramount. I'm sorry this will affect many businesses just getting back on their feet but we must act," said Johnson.

The requirement to wear face coverings, already a requirement in many enclosed public areas and on public transport, will be extended to include staff in retail, customers in taxis, and customers in indoor hospitality settings, except when seated at tables.

"In the retail, leisure and tourism and other sectors our Covid-secure guidelines will become legal obligations," Johnson said.

Gathering rules for weddings will be cut from 30 to 15 and the rule of six, imposing a strict number on groups, is also to be extended to all adult team sports. This means a planned reopening of sporting events, conferences and exhibitions next month will be delayed.

Warning that "greater fire-power, with significantly

greater restrictions" might be deployed unless the latest set of restrictions are followed stringently, Johnson noted: "We will spare no effort in developing vaccines, treatments, new forms of mass testing. But unless we palpably make progress, we should assume that the restrictions I have announced will stay in place for six months."

"This virus is a fact of our lives and I must tell this House and the country that our fight against it will continue," he added. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has slammed the brakes on the country's return to offices, saying people should work from home if possible, to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Johnson on Tuesday announced a package of new restrictions, including a requirement for pubs, restaurants and other venues in England to close between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

He said Britain was at a perilous turning point and had to act now.

His speech came a day

after the UK raised its Covid alert level from three to four, only one short of the highest level of five, meaning that transmission of the deadly virus is high or rising exponentially.

As of Monday, a further 4,368 daily cases and 11 deaths were reported in the UK, where the recorded coronavirus death toll stands at over 41,700.

EU ministers discuss border consistency amid 2nd virus wave

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS, 22 SEPTEMBER

European Union ministers on Tuesday discussed ways to better coordinate travel restrictions in the 27-nation bloc and guarantee the smooth circulation of people and goods as many EU nations see a resurgence of the coronavirus.

European affairs ministers gathered in Brussels hoped to define a common ground following the confusion that individual border restrictions some countries adopted during the early days of the pandemic. In March, several member nations closed their borders in an attempt to stop the spread of the virus, even though the EU's Schengen agreement allows residents to move freely between countries without visas.

The actions blocked traffic and medical equipment. The European affairs ministers are discussing recommendations the EU's executive commission made to avoid a repeat of the situation.

What is very important from the point of view of the

commission is to return as soon as possible to a normal functioning of the single market, to remove all the barriers that have been created during the COVID crisis, and also give assurances to our citizens that we will very soon be getting things back to normal," Maros Sefcovic, a European Commission vice-president attending the discussion, said.

The European Commission has proposed that member countries agree on common criteria and thresholds for putting travel restrictions in place.

The commission suggested that EU governments take into account the total number of new confirmed cases per 100,000 people in a given area in a 14-day period, the percentage of positive tests during a seven-day period, and the number of tests carried out per 100,000 people over the same period.

EU to Britain: Stop playing games with Brexit trade talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS, 22 SEPTEMBER

The European Union is pleading with Britain to stop playing games as time is running out to clinch a free trade deal over the next month.

The sides committed to a new meeting to discuss Britain's plans to disregard part of the withdrawal agreement it had signed with the 27-nation EU amid acrimony that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson would even contemplate to break an agreement he himself signed.

EU countries' ministers for European affairs met in Brussels on Tuesday and German chairman Michael Roth said the British plan was extremely "worrysome since it violates the guiding principle of the withdrawal agreement," which officially allowed the United Kingdom to leave the EU on 31 January.

A transition period now runs until 31 December, during which time both sides are negotiating a trade agreement to replace the open and unfettered economic relations that are currently in place. The EU has repeatedly expressed its exasperation at what it sees as British stubbornness and refusal to compromise on some key points.

Without a deal on future trade relations, chaos is expected at the borders on 1 January. Companies on both sides are set to lose massive amounts of money as new red tape and tariffs will fundamentally change business practices.

Johnson's proposed a bill earlier this month that would disregard part of the withdrawal agreement, Sefcovic said.

The EU has given Johnson until the end of the month to withdraw his bill or face EU action.

drawal treaty dealing with trade between Ireland and the United Kingdom only added to the frustration.

Dear friends in London: Stop the games. Time is running out," said Roth ahead of the meeting. What we really need is a fair basis for negotiations," Johnson is pushing ahead with plans to pass the bill into law in the coming weeks, though it has met with opposition from some lawmakers in his Conservative Party.

Former Prime Minister Theresa May accused Johnson of acting recklessly and irresponsibly, with no thought for the long-term impact on the standing of the United Kingdom in the world.

The EU has given Johnson until the end of the month to withdraw his bill or face EU action. That would further escalate tensions and dim any remaining hope of getting a trade deal ahead of 15 October, which Johnson himself has set as a deadline.

The EU has not explicitly said what action it would take but EU Vice President Maros Sefcovic indicated it would stay within the rules of the withdrawal agreement.

I would like to underscore that the EU believes in calm, constructive cooperation through the channels created by the withdrawal agreement," Sefcovic said.

Trump aims to use UN address to send strong message to China

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 22 SEPTEMBER

If Biden wins, China wins, says Trump: Former US vice president Joe Biden has enormously harmed the US economy in his five decades as a politician, President Donald Trump has said, adding that if the Democratic leader wins it would be a win for China. Joe Biden spent the last 47 years shipping your jobs to China and foreign countries. You know that. I've spent the last four years bringing the jobs back to our country and back to Ohio, Trump said.

On Monday, Trump declared that all UN sanctions against Iran have been reimposed, a move that most of the rest of the world rejects as illegal. Trump's statement came shortly after he signed an executive order spelling out how the US will enforce the snapback of sanctions.

Earlier in his administration, Trump hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping at his Florida club, but now the two leaders are exchanging angry words over trade.

The administration has been slamming the Chinese Communist Party for its handling of COVID-19, election meddling, espionage in the United States and influence peddling across the world.

Trump is not popular at the United Nations and his speech this year comes at a time when UN members are pushing back against Washington.

Russia's FM laments sanctions at UN amid tension with West

MOSCOW, 22 SEPTEMBER

Russia's foreign minister complained about countries using sanctions to meddle in the domestic affairs of other nations, telling the UN General Assembly that such penalties hamper an effective worldwide response to issues such as the coronavirus pandemic, climate change, military conflicts and international terrorism.

In a speech delivered when it was early Tuesday in Moscow but still Monday in New York, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the attempts by some countries to meddle in the domestic affairs of other states, using unilateral sanctions to interfere with addressing challenging threats the world is facing today. We believe that this is largely attributed to the fact that some countries are not willing to account for the legitimate interests of other states, Lavrov said.

They are seeking to impose concepts and standards like the 'rules-based world order' while attempting to meddle in the domestic affairs of other states, using unilateral sanctions in violation of the UN Security Council prerogatives, and exhibiting intolerance and hatred," he charged.

My actions today send a clear message to the Iranian regime and those in the international community who refuse to stand up to Iran," he said. The US said it was reimposing sanctions on Iran for being in noncompliance with the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and global powers. But Trump in 2018 pulled out of the deal in which Iran agreed to curb its nuclear program in exchange for billions of dollars in sanctions relief. Few UN member states believe the US has the legal standing to restore the sanctions because Trump withdrew from the agreement.

They are seeking to impose concepts and standards like the 'rules-based world order' while attempting to meddle in the domestic affairs of other states, using unilateral sanctions in violation of the UN Security Council prerogatives, and exhibiting intolerance and hatred," he charged.

During her Senate confirmation hearing for the appeals court in 2017, Democrats pressed Barrett on whether her strong religious views would

Anti-Semitism a problem in Berlin: Report

BERLIN, 22 SEPTEMBER

A new report documenting anti-Semitism in Berlin reveals that little progress has been made in combatting the problem in the German capital. The Department for Research and Information on Anti-Semitism Berlin, or RIAS documented 410 incidents in Berlin more than two a day in the first half of 2020, including physical attacks, property damage, threats, malicious behavior and anti-Semitic propaganda.

Despite the massive restrictions since March 17, the number of anti-Semitic incidents was just under the level for the first half of 2019, said RIAS, which documented 458 incidents for the same period last year. The findings released Tuesday come amid concern nationwide about the issue.

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During her Senate confirmation hearing for the appeals court in 2017, Democrats pressed Barrett on whether her strong religious views would

SELFIE TIME



People pose for photos at a cosmos flowers field in Goyang, Seoul on Tuesday. AP

Poll indicates NZ's Ardern poised to win reelection

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WELLINGTON, 22 SEPTEMBER

A new opinion poll indicates that New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is poised to win a second term in office when the nation goes to the polls next month. But Ardern said Tuesday that she's taking nothing for granted.

The I News Colmar Brunton Poll put support for Ardern's liberal Labour Party at 48 per cent while support for the conservative Nation-

al Party, led by opposition leader Judith Collins, was at 31 per cent. Support for Ardern as preferred prime minister was at 54 per cent compared to 18 per cent for Collins.

Under New Zealand's proportional voting system, larger parties typically form coalitions with smaller parties to govern. Ardern's popularity has surged since the coronavirus became the defining issue for her government six months ago. Her approach of trying to eliminate the virus

has been widely viewed as successful. Collins is promising more robust border controls to ensure the virus is kept out and sweeping tax cuts to help reboot the economy.

The two leaders met for the first televised debate of the election campaign Tuesday and were asked about the poll. We will keep working every day of this campaign and you will see no complacency from us and no assumptions, Ardern said.

Collins said the campaign

had been hampered by a virus outbreak that temporarily put the city of Auckland back into lockdown, but that her party was in good position going into the home stretch. I'm a fighter,

"Collins said. I never give up, always keep going. And I'm utterly positive for our country, and I've got a vision to sell.

Neither leader made a major stumble in the debate as they took each other on over education, housing, healthcare and taxes ahead of the October 17 general election.

TENDER

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
GURU HARGOBIND THERMAL PLANT, LEHRA MOHABBAT
Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813
e-tendering website: <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through E-tendering)

E-Tender Enquiry No.: 174/MMI-TGM-82/III/M&G/HGT/2020.
SHORT DESCRIPTION: Routine, breakdown, preventive maintenance and overhauling jobs (Mechanical works) of Turbine, Generator & their auxiliaries, HP Bypass, LP Bypass, Regenerative system, condenser, piping & valves etc. of 2x10 MW and 2x250 MW units of GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat Stage-II&III on lump-sum basis for a period of one year.

EMD: Rs. 2,16,000 (Rupees two lakh sixteen thousand only).

Last date & time for bid submission: 23-10-2020 up to 11-30 hrs.

Date & time of opening of Techno-Commercial stage bid: 27-10-2020 up to 12-00 hrs.

Detailed NIT and tender specifications can be downloaded from PSPCL website: <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from dated 23-09-2020 onwards.

Note:

1. The prospective bidders can obtain clarifications regarding tender specifications from this office. For registration of digital signatures and uploading of tender, any information may be sought from M/s. GePNIC Contact

Plants that bite and sting

The stuff they inject has been found to be like the venom of spiders and sea snails

S ANANTHANARAYANAN

Some plants, like the Venus flytrap – move and act to get their prey. Some do not move, but they use venom, which is more common among animals, to keep enemies at bay.

Edward K Gilding, Sina Jami, Jennifer R Deuis, Mathilde R Israel, Peter J Harvey, Aaron G Poth, Fabian BH Rehm, Jennifer L Stow, Samuel D Robinson, Kuok Yap, Darren L Brown, Brett R Hamilton, David Andersson, David J Craik, Irina Vetter, Thomas Durek, from the University of Queensland at Brisbane, Australia and King's College, London, describe in the journal, *Science Advances*, what gives the giant Australian stinging tree, *Dendrocnide excelsa*, its legendary sting, which is as bad, and often far worse, than those of poisonous insects.

They find that the active agents are akin to those found in the animal kingdom, which suggests an intriguing path of evolution, where plants diverged from animals, but developed related instruments of predator control.

"Australia notoriously harbours some of the world's most venomous animals, but although less well known, its venomous flora is equally remarkable," says the opening line of the paper. The giant Australian stinging tree, also known as the stinging brush, mulberry-leaved stinger, gympie gympie or moonlighter, which is found in the rainforests of North-east Australia and parts of Indonesia, the paper says, stands supreme in size -- it is usually one to three metres high, but can grow as high as 35 metres!

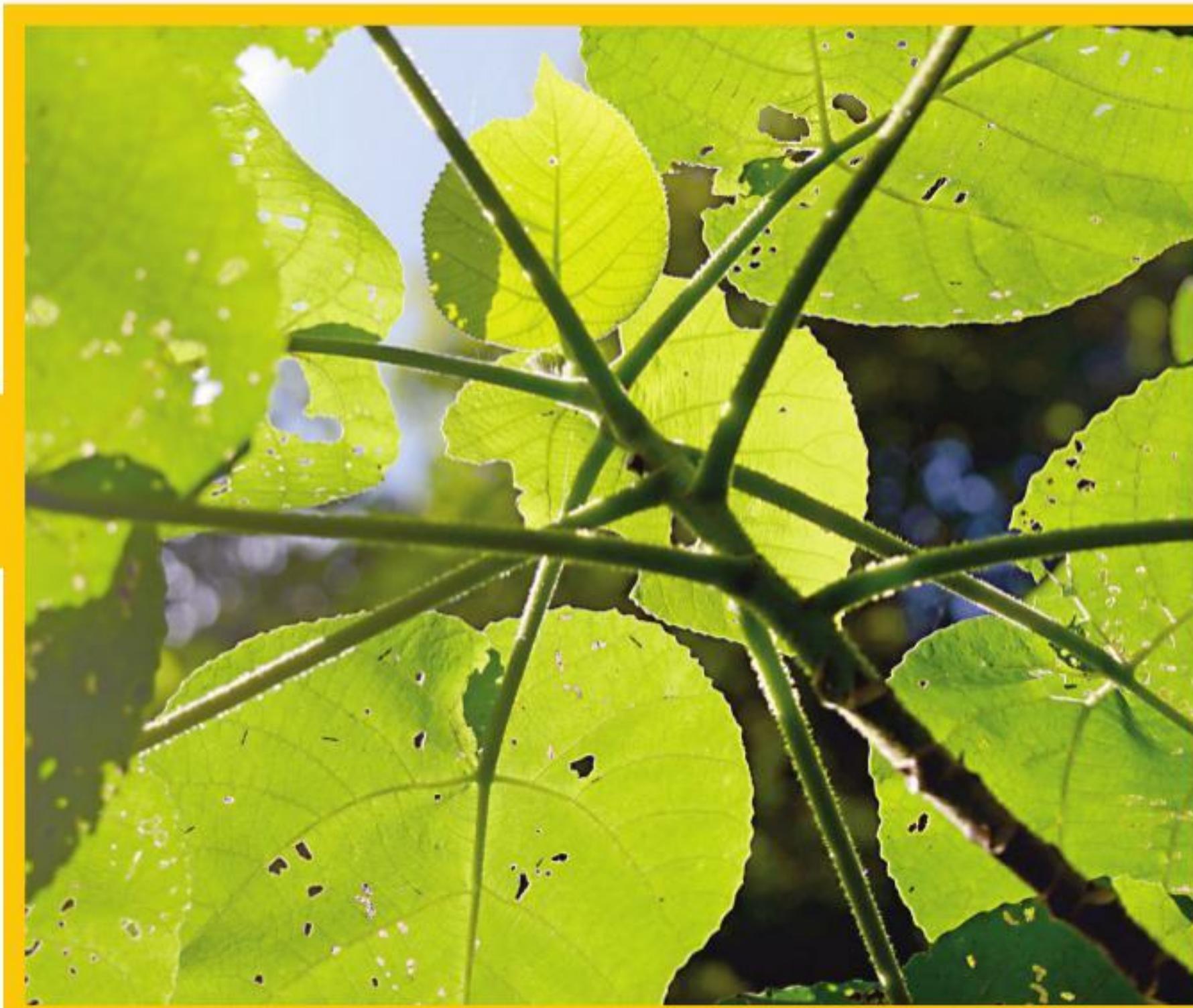
The stinging tree belongs to the family *Urticaceae*, a family that includes the nettles or stinging nettles, well-known shrubs that have stinging hairs. Readers may be familiar with the term, *urticaria*, for the red, itchy welts that sometimes form on the skin. The Australian stingers, however, the paper says, "are far more

than oversized nettles." The Australian stinging tree species "are particularly notorious for producing an excruciatingly painful sting, which unlike those of their European and North American relatives, can cause symptoms that last for days or weeks. Like other stinging plants such as nettles, the giant stinging tree is covered in needle-like appendages called trichomes that are around five millimetres in length -- the trichomes look like fine hairs, but actually act like hypodermic needles that inject toxins when they make contact with skin," says co-author Irina Vetter, in a press release.

The state of Queensland, the paper says, has put up signs along forest tracks, to alert visitors of *Dendrocnide* species and the potency of their sting. The symptoms are usually severe and persistent pain, sometimes with neuromuscular symptoms and respiratory distress. Although most cases do not require hospitalisation, there are instances of patients in intensive care for 36 hours -- with acute pain that did not respond to morphine and symptoms that continued for months!

Apart from analgesics, the severe pain is often treated with dilute hydrochloric acid, to inactivate the venom, and, maybe under the mistaken impression that it is the stinging hairs stuck in the skin that cause the pain, with wax strips, to pull them out. The needle-shaped structures on the leaves and stem of *D excelsa* and *D Moroides*, the leading giant stingers, look like a benign felt cover, the paper says, but they are, in fact, hollow, silica impregnated needles that can inject chemical agents that affect pain-sensitive nerve terminals in the skin.

One proposed component of the *Urtica* sting has been the 'small molecule', a structure that is common in developing drugs that can form a "lock and key" fit with portions of cells, to block or promote their action. Examples are histamine (which sets



of sneezing or allergic reactions), other agents that affect nerves, formic acid (the component in the ant sting and in nettles) and some other acids. Injecting those compounds, even in combinations, however, the paper says, could not replicate or change the severity of extended duration of the pain that *Dendrocnide* extract could cause. There was hence clearly some other substance, that affected nerves, which they had to find.

It is the tip of the stingers' needles that breaks when it enters the skin and allows the contents of the needle to leak out. The team prepared extracts of the sting hairs and analysed the extract -- using methods to separate the contents. One component, which showed pain-inducing behaviour, was further analysed and a group of small-sized proteins were isolated as the active agents. The proteins, unlike any encountered before, were named gypsiptides, from the tribal name, *gympie-gympie*, for the stinging tree.

The effect of gypsiptides was found to arise from the effect that they have on the sodium channels of nerve cells. Nerves function by passing electric signals, which are generated by changes in the material within the nerve cells. The material inside a nerve cell "at rest" has a slight excess of positively charged potassium ions

and some negatively charged protein molecules. At the same time, the cell has a slight deficiency of positive, sodium ions. The relative concentration of the charged "ions" within the cell is thus some 70-80 mV negative compared to outside the cell. And, as the cell wall does not allow ions to go through, there is electrical "tension" across the two sides of the cell wall.

That changes when an electrical signal arrives at the cell from the environment or a neighbouring cell. This signal causes gaps, called gateways, in the cell wall to open, and positive sodium ions rush in, and the net change is reversed to about +40 mV. This change opens another set of gateways that allow positive potassium ions to rush to the potassium deficient exterior, which restores the -70 mV polarity of the cell. This in-and-out shiver passes along the body of the cell, until it affects the neighbouring cell, and so the signal is passed on.

What the Queensland team found was that gypsiptides activated sodium channels and started pulses of pain signals. The team developed a synthetic substance that resembled the gypsiptides and showed that it had the same effect on sodium channels and again, pain in experimental animal subjects for extended periods.

The work is a step forward in understanding how pain-causing agents work and a suggestion that agents that block the sodium channels could be a way to relieve pain. It also reveals a similarity of plant proteins with agents in animal venoms, whose ancestral connection is an exceedingly remote function to cause pain.

The writer can be contacted through the website, www.simplescience.in



TIME TO VISIT THE NEIGHBOUR

The detection of phosphine in Venus' clouds is a big deal - here's how we can find out if it's a sign of life

PAUL K BYRNE

On 14 September 2020, a new planet was added to the list of potentially habitable worlds in the Solar System: Venus. Phosphine, a toxic gas made up of one phosphorus and three hydrogen atoms, commonly produced by organic life forms but otherwise difficult to make on rocky planets, was discovered in the middle layer of the Venus atmosphere. This raises the tantalising possibility that something is alive on our planetary neighbour. With this discovery, Venus joins the exalted ranks of Mars and the icy moons Enceladus and Europa among planetary bodies where life may once have existed, or perhaps might even still do so today.

I'm a planetary scientist and something of a Venus evangelist. This discovery is one of the most exciting made about Venus in a very long time -- and opens up a new set of possibilities for further exploration in search of life in the Solar System.

Atmospheric mysteries

First, it's critical to point out that this detection does not mean that astronomers have found alien life in the clouds of Venus. Far from it, in fact.

Although the discovery team identified phosphine at Venus with two different telescopes, helping to confirm the initial detection, phosphine gas can result from several processes that are unrelated to life, such as lightning, meteor impacts or even volcanic activity.

However, the quantity of phosphine detected in the Venusian clouds seems to be far greater than those processes are capable of generating, allowing the team to rule out numerous inorganic possibilities. But our understanding of the chemistry of Venus' atmosphere is sorely lacking -- only a handful of missions have plunged through the inhospitable, carbon dioxide-dominated atmosphere to take samples among the global layer of sulfuric acid clouds.

So we planetary scientists are faced with two possibilities -- either there is some sort of life in the Venus clouds, generating phosphine,

or there is unexplained and unexpected chemistry taking place there. How do we find out which it is?

First and foremost, we need more information about the abundance of phosphine in the Venus atmosphere, and we can learn something about this from Earth. Just as the discovery team did, existing telescopes capable of detecting phosphine around Venus can be used for follow-up observations, to both definitively confirm the initial finding and figure out if the amount of phosphine in the atmosphere changes with time. In parallel, there is now a huge opportunity to carry out lab work to better understand the types of chemical reactions that might be possible on Venus -- for which we have very limited information at present.

Once more unto the breach

But measurements on and from Earth can take us only so far. To really get to the heart of this mystery, we need to go back to Venus. Spacecraft equipped with spectrometers that can detect phosphine from orbit could be dispatched to the second planet with the express purpose of characterising where, and how much, of this gas is there. Because spacecraft can survive for many years in Venus' orbit, we could obtain continuous observations with a dedicated orbiter over a much longer period than with telescopes on Earth.

But even orbital data can't tell us the whole story. To fully get a handle on what's happening at Venus, we must actually get into the atmosphere.

And that's where aerial platforms come in. Capable of operating above much of the acidic cloud layer -- where the temperature and pressure are almost Earth-like -- for potentially months at a time, balloons or flying wings could take detailed atmospheric composition measurements there. These craft could even carry the kinds of instruments being developed to look for life on Europa. At that point, humanity might finally be able to definitively tell if we share our Solar System with Venusian life.



A new dawn for Venus exploration?

Thirty-one years have elapsed since the United States last sent a dedicated mission to Venus. That could soon change as NASA considers two of four missions in the late 2020s targeting Venus. One, called Veritas, would carry a powerful radar to peer through the thick clouds and return unprecedented high-resolution images of the surface. The other, DaVinci+, would plunge through the atmosphere, sampling the air as it descended, perhaps even able to sniff any phosphine present. NASA plans to pick at least one mission in April 2021.

I have argued before for a return to Venus and will continue to do so. Even without this latest scientific discovery, Venus is a compelling exploration target, with tantalising evidence that the planet once had oceans and perhaps even suffered a hellish fate at the hands of its own volcanic eruptions.

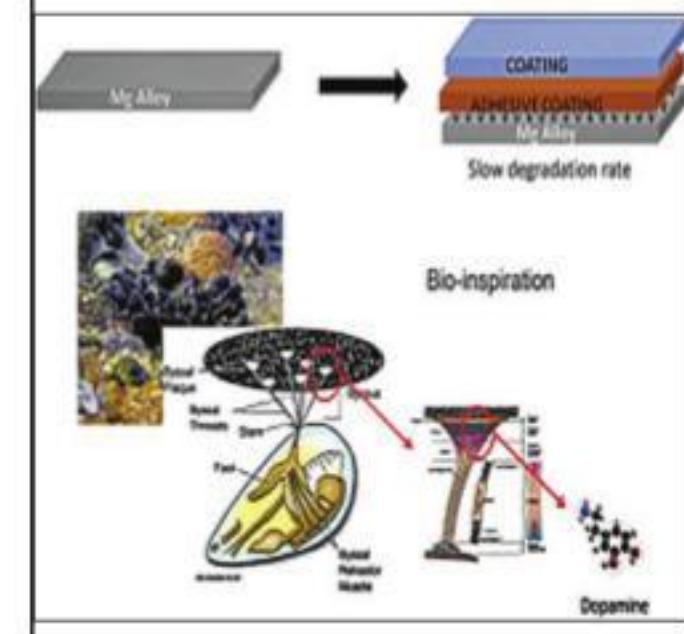
But with the detection of a potential biomarker in Venus' atmosphere, we now have yet another major reason to return to the world that ancient Greek astronomers called phosphorus -- a name for Venus that, it turns out, is wonderfully prescient.

The writer is associate professor of planetary science, North Carolina State University, US. This article first appeared on www.theconversation.com



PLUS POINTS

For bone defects



Researchers have developed nano-coated magnesium alloys that can repair bone defects in rabbits. Encouraged by the results, the research team is planning to study medical applications of nano-coated magnesium alloys in other animals and repairing human bones.

Alloys of magnesium are being considered as a good option for orthopaedic applications as magnesium is biocompatible, biodegradable and has other important mechanical properties. Magnesium is the fourth abundant metal in the body and is known to accelerate the healing of bones.

The research was led by Mukesh Doble, department of biotechnology, IIT-Madras, and the team comprised Govindaraj Perumal, post-doctoral research associate, IIT-Madras, Boopalan Ramasamy, Christian Medical College, Vellore, A Maya Nandkumar, Sri Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, D Sivaraman, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai and R Selvaraj from Bioscience Research Foundation, Chennai. Their latest research has been published in the journal *Nanomedicine* and a patent has also been filed.

For this study, the researchers deployed AZ31 alloy of magnesium and used it for developing magnesium mesh cage implants. Further, they coated the implants with polycaprolactone and nano-hydroxyapatite by dipping and electrospinning. The nano-coated magnesium mesh was then used to heal the bone defect in the femur of rabbits.

The researchers found that the rabbit femur implanted with the coated magnesium alloy showed bone formation and bridged the defect region. The team emphasises that it was possible due to the biocompatible nature of polycaprolactone and nano-hydroxyapatite, which ensured good recovery without any adverse reactions such as "fibrosis".

The team is exploring funding opportunities to further test the newly-developed nano-coated magnesium alloy in repairing bone defects in large animals such as goats or sheep to demonstrate the efficacy of the product and show clinical significance of this research.

Sparing animals

A new laboratory model that can be used to test treatments for preventing and curing eye infections caused by fungi, bacteria and viruses, while also reducing the number of animals used in medical research, has been developed at the University of Sheffield, UK in collaboration with LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad.

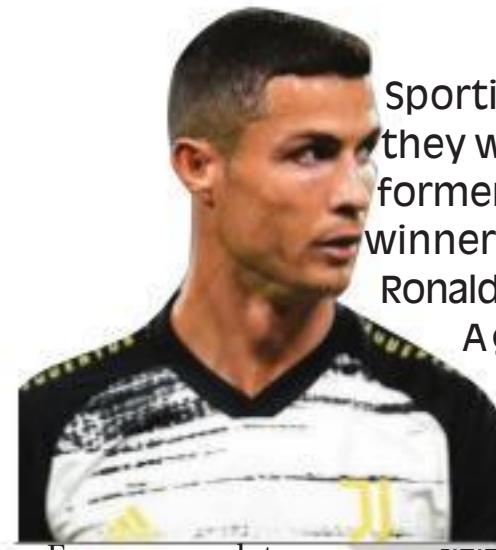
The breakthrough, which will be used to develop novel alternatives to antibiotics to reduce the emergence of antibiotic-resistant superbugs, has been made by engineers and scientists working together at the University of Sheffield's Collaboratorium for Antimicrobial Resistance and Biofilms.

Currently, around 285 million people globally are visually impaired, and seven million people lose their eyesight each year. Over 90 per cent of people affected are from developing countries. In approximately 80 per cent of these people the loss of eyesight can be easily avoided with bespoke healthcare solutions that fit with the unique socio-economic conditions prevalent in developing countries.

Using the *ex vivo* porcine eye model -- the eyes of pigs which are deemed as waste by the food industry -- researchers can mimic infection in human eyes. The cornea is the transparent portion in the front of the eye that allows us to see. Using the *ex vivo* porcine models, researchers were able to study ulcer formation and the development of opacity which leads to the loss of vision in humans.

The new model, which is being developed by PhD researcher Katarzyna Okurowska, gives a better prediction of how effective the new treatments are likely to be in humans. Such data is currently obtained from expensive and highly regulated animal research, which must precede any human clinical trials before the treatment can be made available to patients.

The availability of the model will immediately help to reduce and refine the use of animals in medical research and may one day help to completely replace the use of animals in this kind of study. The added advantage of the *ex vivo* porcine eye model is that it uses waste from the food chain. As the eyes are a waste product, no animals are specifically bred for the study, helping to reduce their numbers for exclusively research purposes.



ROLE MODEL

Sporting Lisbon announced on Monday they would rename their academy after former attacker and five-time Ballon d'Or-winner Cristiano Ronaldo (in photo, left). Ronaldo, who scored in Juventus' first Serie A game of the season on Sunday, joined the capital city side aged 12.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Sherpa dead: Ang Rita Sherpa, a Nepalese mountaineering legend who climbed Mount Everest 10 times without bottled oxygen, died on Monday. Sherpa, also known as Snow Leopard, breathed his last at his daughter's residence at Buddha area of Kathmandu.

Two held: Two people were in custody on Monday after an investigation was opened into suspected doping by the Arkea-Samsic team at this year's Tour de France, the Marseille prosecutor said on Monday. The probe was targeting a "small part of the team."

Football cash: All-India Football Federation chief Praful Patel on Monday evening met all state association representatives in a virtual session, saying that the AIFF would give away the Covid - 19 solidarity funds Fifa had given it - as The Statesman reported earlier this year.

City win: Manchester City got their Premier League campaign off to a flying start with a 3-1 win at Wolverhampton, thanks to first-half goals by Kevin De Bruyne and Phil Foden plus a late Gabriel Jesus strike on Monday. There has been no draw in the initial stages.

Rakitic retires: Croatia midfielder Ivan Rakitic has called time on his international career with the 2018 World Cup runners-up, he said on Monday. The former Barcelona player, 32, was an integral part of the Croatia side who reached the World Cup final in Russia.

Weak defence: Manchester United will not be able to win the Premier League with a centre back partnership of Victor Lindelof and Harry Maguire. Former England international Gary Neville has said. United's season got underway with a shock 3-1 defeat by Crystal Palace.

French Open: A limited number of fans will be allowed to attend the French Open later this month under strict conditions. It was rescheduled because of the coronavirus pandemic, and organisers originally hoped to have up to 60 per cent of the usual capacity.

Djokovic triumphs: World number one Novak Djokovic won the men's singles title at the Italian Open after defeating Diego Schwartzman of Argentina 7-5, 6-3, three weeks after completing his second Career Golden Masters at the Western & Southern Open.

Jordan's team: Basketball icon Michael Jordan announced on Monday he had purchased a Nascar Cup series charter team and recruited trail-blazing black driver Bubba Wallace to race for the new outfit next season. Jordan will be the majority owner in the new franchise.

Nutrition partner: Optimum Nutrition, the World's number one selling sports nutrition powder brand is teaming up with the T20 team, Royal Challengers Bangalore as their 'Official nutrition partner' for this T20 cricket season to be held in UAE. The company's Managing Director Satyavrat Pendharkar, said "It is indeed a great opportunity to be associated with Team RCB. It's our honor to have partnered with one of the best T20 cricket teams in this season."

Ankita progresses: India's Ankita Raina progressed to the second round of the French Open qualifiers with a hard-fought win over Jovana Jovic on Tuesday but Ramkumar Ramanathan's bid to qualify for his maiden Grand Slam singles main draw fell flat. In a marathon two-hour 47 minute contest, Ankita prevailed 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 against the Serbian.

Battle of batsmen: KKR open campaign vs Mumbai Indians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ABU DHABI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Grace and strength will be on one side while poise and killer instinct on the other when a revamped Kolkata Knight Riders take on Mumbai Indians, who have once again faltered in the beginning of the IPL, on Wednesday.

Since 2013, MI have never won an opening game and the script didn't change against Chennai Super Kings, who took control of the match during the last 10 overs of the first innings.

They will be keen to bounce back while KKR would look for a perfect beginning as it will be a battle between big hitters on both sides on a sluggish Abu Dhabi track.

It will be Shubman Gill's third IPL, the one where he would like to own the stage with his languid grace and effortless hitting which he is so capable of. He can hit sixes over extra cover with grace and caress the ball through covers too.

These are exactly the traits that made Rohit Sharma, the great white ball exponent that he is. Seasoned Rohit versus young Shubman is one for the keeps and makes this battle enticing.

But it's not just grace which makes T20 so appealing. The brute masculinity of power that sends the ball soaring into the orbit is what makes it so special.

Hardik Pandya, who is back with a chiselled body. There is no doubt that he can unleash his firepower against Sunil Narine and Kuldeep Yadav as well as KKR's highest paid multi million dollar recruit Pat Cummins. The



KKR has Eoin Morgan, easily the best white ball captain in international cricket at the moment, who could advise Dinesh Karthik on how to tackle tense moments.

second pacer could be between Prasidh Krishna and Kamlesh Nagarkoti.

But Hardik will find his match in Andre Russell (*in photo, right*), easily the most destructive hitter in current T20 cricket. Russell had openly criticised the team management last year for sending him down the order. He had hit 52 sixes during one of KKR's worst editions.

Whether he would fit in among the four overseas players is the question as Knights have Narine, Tom Banton, Russell and Cummins, who walk into any T20 playing XI.

But this time, he has been promised a promotion to number three slot and this could spell doom for any opposition.

"If it benefits the team and helps us win games, why not. If that meant Russell comes

in at three and bats 60 balls, he might actually make a double hundred. Anything can happen with Dre Russ," KKR mentor David Hussey had said recently.

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utility compared to Trent Boult, gets fit to add more balance.

On Saturday, despite a strong start, Mumbai Indians were reduced to 162/9 and they could think about using Ishan Kishan's explosive firepower rather than bulky Saurabh Tiwary, who can't rotate the strike with ease.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah had a rare off-day, leaking 43 runs against CSK and he would like to hit the straps once again.

Apart from pacers and spinners Krunal Pandya and Rahul Chahar, they need one more option in the bowling and that can be in form of Pandya and Kieron Pollard.

Both Hardik and Pollard, who did not bowl against CSK can jointly share the responsibility of another bowler.

Match starts at 7.30 PM

'Hope Shubman will exceed all expectations'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ABU DHABI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Kolkata Knight Riders skipper Dinesh Karthik is optimistic that talented India batsman Shubman Gill will exceed all expectations in the current IPL edition. Gill got limited opportunity to showcase his skills in the last edition as his batting position was constantly fiddled but this time KKR coach Brendon McCullum has already given the opener's slot to the 21-year-old.

"Shubman is a quality player. There is a lot of expectation from him around the world, I'm sure he will exceed all expectations and I'm really confident about that," Karthik said in a virtual interaction ahead of clash against Mumbai Indians.

In Gill and Sunil Narine, KKR have got the perfect opening combination, he said.

"No complicated batting by Sunil Narine makes it easy for us. It's a very unique opening pair," Karthik admitted that he has the 'problem of plenty' to pick the XI from a revamped Kolkata Knight Riders squad.

"One of the tough points for KKR at this point of time is picking the right XI. A lot of guys have put their hands up and are ready for selection. It's going to be an interesting one and a tough one but that's a good sign."

Last season KKR started off well by winning four of their first five matches, but lost six matches on the trot in the business end to miss the qualifiers.

Tokyo Olympics will be my best'

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne (*in photo*) has spoken of the mental struggles associated with not playing international sport for more than six months now, revealing there are cricketers who want to give up playing and focus on "something else." Karunaratne was drawing up plans with head coach Mickey Arthur for the two-match Test series against England when the tourists were forced to return home with less than a week to go for the opening game with the pandemic playing havoc in the UK. Since then, five series have been postponed while Bangladesh's visit to the island is uncertain and Sri Lanka might not tour South Africa later this year.

"These are tough times for all of us. We are from morning to night focused on the game all the time. You can stay away from cricket for a month or so but not more than that. This has been tough. I feel as if that I have lost a large portion of my career," the 32-year-old told The Island. "Fortunately we have started training and that's some relief. We are still wondering when we will play a series. Mentally, it's been really tough. Most cricketers are professionals and you can imagine what happens

when you do not engage in your profession. I am not talking about money. Sri Lanka Cricket has taken good care of us as we are contracted. But it's stressful that you don't compete at the highest level. Some players are wondering whether we will play any cricket at all this year and there are some of them who want to give up playing and focus on something else."

"As a country, we have done really well to combat the pandemic. But some of the other cricket-playing nations are not so fortunate and you never know when we will tour again." These are the best years of my career. I have matured and I feel I am reaching my peak. Then, this happened. As a team, we were shaping up well after the World Cup. Personally, I was getting into some kind of rhythm for One-Day Internationals and now I have to start all over again. We have not played for so long and I have forgotten some of the laws guiding one-day cricket," Karunaratne said, adding: "I am hopeful that whatever the series that has been postponed will be played. SLC is doing well to reschedule them. We have to be patient as we have to follow health guidelines in a bid to resume cricket. Hopefully, we will play very soon."

Samson, Smith guide Rajasthan Royals to 216/7 against CSK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SHARJAH, 22 SEPTEMBER

Samson accounting for nine of them and Smith and Archer having four each in their kitties.

While Smith played the sec-

ond fiddle initially, Samson took the CSK spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja and Piyush Chawla to task taking 95 runs of eight overs collectively. Introduced into the attack in the seventh over, Jadeja was clobbered for consecutive sixes by Samson before Chawla went for four sixes

in his first over -- three by Samson and one by Smith.

SCOREBOARD

Rajasthan Royals innings		J Archer not out	27
Y Jaiswal c&b Chahar	6	Extras: 9 (b 1, lb 0, w 5, nb 3, p 0)	
S Smith c/c Jadhav b Curran	69	Total: 216 (7 wkts, 20 Ov)	
S Samson c Chahar b Ngidi	74	Bowling: Chahar 4-0-31-1, S Curran	
D Miller run out	0	4-0-33-3, Ngidi 4-0-56-1, Jadeja 4-0-40-0, Chawla 4-0-55-1	
R Uthappa c du Plessis b Chawla 5			
R Tewatia lbw b Curran	10		
P Parag c Dhoni b Curran	6		
Tom Curran not out	10		

Samson, thus, brought up his quickest IPL fifty in just 19 balls with the help of one boundary and six hits over the fence. If that was not enough for Chawla, the leg-spinner again leaked in his next overs both Samson and Smith took him to cleaners. CSK made a much-needed comeback in the much-needed comeback in the 12th over with twin blows in the form of in-form Samson and unlucky David Miller. While after some great hitting display, Samson fell in search one too many, caught by Deepak Chahar off Lungi Ngidi, Miller departed two balls later in search on a non-existent double.

Match starts at 7.30 PM

Have learnt a lot from the captain, says Padikkal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
DUBAI, 22 SEPTEMBER

been training here, Virat Kohli has talked to me and I have learnt a lot from him. Whenever I am with him, I keep asking questions from him," he added.

The 20-year-old batsman, who shared a 90-run opening stand with Aaron Finch, further said that Australia's limited-overs skipper showed confidence on him which in turn helped him to bat freely.

"Playing today with Finch felt amazing. He understood that I was scoring quickly, so he gave me the strike and showed confidence in me."

RCB will next play Kings XI Punjab at the same venue on Thursday.

Ashwin recovers

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who had suffered a shoulder injury in Delhi Capitals' opening game against the Kings XI Punjab yesterday, said that the pain had subsided and the scan reports were "pretty encouraging."

will be playing against Hyderabad. When I came to bat, I got settled then, when I played my first two balls, I really felt good," Padikkal told leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal in a video posted on the official IPL website.

"For the past month we have

Wadia to Board: Ensure better umpiring, maximise use of technology

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
DUBAI, 22 SEPTEMBER

Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia has urged the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) led by Sourav Ganguly (*in photo*) to ensure "better" umpiring standards and make maximum use of the technology in the Indian Premier League (IPL). This comes after the Kings XI Punjab lost their IPL 13 opener to Delhi Capitals in the Super Over on Sunday.

During the 19th over of KXIP's innings when Mayank Agarwal and Chris Jordan were battling the square-leg umpire adjudged that a second run taken by England's Jordan was not complete. However, replays showed Jordan's bat had crossed the line. "I would request BCCI to ensure better umpiring and to ensure henceforth that technology is used to the maximum so as to ensure fairness and transparency in a game which is known to be the best leagues

in the world," Wadia said in a statement on Monday.

The Punjabi-based franchise feel that the 'short run' call cost it the game.

"I feel it is unfortunate that Kings XI were the subject of poor decision-making by the umpire and this cost us the game. I do hope that BCCI implements a system and process so that the other teams do not suffer the same plight as Kings XI did yesterday," Wadia said. "If technology is not there to be used for the fairness and transparency of the game and to ensure that it is equitable to all,

then why use technology at all?" he questioned. The Kings XI Punjab co-owner also drew reference to the other leagues and how technology was used there.

"It is exceedingly unfortunate that today with tremendous use of technology, we still do not use technology to ensure the total fairness and transparency in cricket game like several other leagues across the world including EPL, NBA, etc."

"VAR has become something that is used across the world. The game of yesterday in question between Kings XI and Delhi had two umpiring mistakes which cost KXIP the game," he added.

According to Wadia, the first decision that went against Kings XI against Delhi Capitals "came in the first few overs of the match where a leg bye went for four and it was given as leg bye by the umpire but it was actually a wide ball".

"The second disastrous decision came at the end of the

game in the last couple of overs, when a run was deemed as not being a run even though TV replays showed that it had been a run. Unfortunately these two decisions cost Kings XI the game," he said.

Earlier, actress and co-owner of Kings XI Punjab Preity Zinta had also expressed her disappointment over the controversial decision. "I travelled enthusiastically during a pandemic, did six days of quarantine and five Covid tests with a smile but that one short run hit me hard. What's the point of technology if it can't be used? It's time BCCI introduces new rules. This cannot happen every year," she had tweeted.

"I've always believed in being graceful in a win or loss and in the spirit of the game but it's also important to ask for policy changes that improve the game in the future for everyone. The past has happened and it's up to move on. So looking ahead and being positive as always," she added.



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