



JUDGES SHOULD BE
FEARLESS IN
THEIR DECISIONS'

P4



'INDIAN DEMOCRACY
GOING THROUGH ITS
MOST DIFFICULT PHASE'

P5



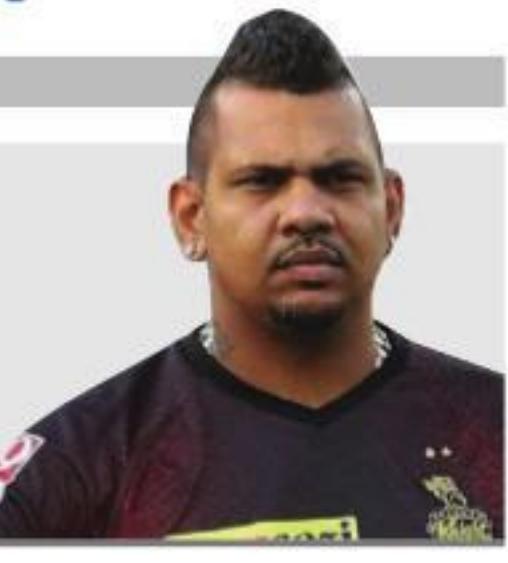
IS FACEBOOK REALLY
READY FOR THE
2020 ELECTION?

P10



SIGH OF
RELIEF FOR
NARINE, KKR

P12



WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Mist in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 34 and 18 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 88% Min: 25%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 34.7°C (+ 2) Min: 16.6°C (-1)

SUN RISES

06:25 hrs

MOON RISES

10:09 hrs

SUN SETS

17:48 hrs

MOON SETS

19:58 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Devotees offering prayers at Jhandewalan Temple on the second day of the Navratri festival, in the Capital on Sunday.

SNS

Flood situation: The flood situation in parts of Telangana and Karnataka remained grim on Sunday as overnight spell of rains in Hyderabad battered the city yet again while the Army was pressed into service in four affected districts in Karnataka. Incessant downpour since Saturday caused flooding in parts of Hyderabad, leaving three people dead in separate rain-related incidents. The Telangana capital had witnessed one of the worst deluges in recent times following unprecedented downpour in over a century early this week.

P4

BrahMos test-fired: BrahMos, the supersonic cruise missile was successfully test fired today from the Navy's indigenously-built stealth destroyer INS Chennai, hitting a target in the Arabian Sea. The missile hit the target successfully with pin-point accuracy after performing high-level and extremely complex manoeuvres, the Defence Ministry said. BrahMos as prime strike weapon will enable the warship to engage naval surface targets at long ranges, thus making the destroyer another lethal platform of the Navy, the ministry said.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH, 18 OCTOBER

Ahead of a two-day special assembly session to counter the Centre's farm laws, Punjab Cabinet on Sunday authorised Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to take any legislative or legal decision he may deem fit to protect farmers' interests.

The decision came after a meeting of the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) in which party MLAs unanimously stressed the need to reject the farm laws outright and not implement these in the state.

Amarinder Singh too called for a frontal attack against the laws.

After the MLAs' meeting, state Congress chief Sunil Jakhar said the Centre may "dismiss" the Congress government if it wants but they will

This fight will go on. We will

fight this till the Supreme Court, the chief minister ear-

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do everything possible to protect farmers.

According to an official statement, the state Cabinet authorised the CM to "take any legislative/legal decision he may deem fit to protect interests of farmers".

The Cabinet decided that a strategy to counter the black farm laws will be finalised ahead of the special session beginning here on Monday.

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This time, shopkeepers of Delhi also took part in the fight against dengue. By doing so, they are protecting themselves and their customers from dengue. Delhi is again defeating dengue

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

Coronavirus claims 28 more people in Delhi, toll tops 6K

Capital records 3,299 new Covid cases detected out of 49,414 tests with 6.68 pc positivity rate

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 18 OCTOBER

Delhi today recorded 28 coronavirus-related fatalities, which pushed its Covid-19 toll past the 6,000-mark, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The city reported 3,299 fresh Covid cases, which took its caseload to 3,31,017. These new cases were detected out of 49,414 tests, including 34,908 tests of the rapid antigen variety and 14,506 of RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueNet kind, conducted the previous day. The positivity rate was 6.68 per cent, the health bulletin reportedly said.

The tally of active cases in the national capital rose to 23,292 from yesterday's 22,884.

The patients who recovered during the past 24 hours and got discharged from different hospitals and other healthcare facilities numbered 2,863 with their cumulative figure going up to 3,01,716 in the city so far. Delhi's recovery rate was



91.14 per cent now, the bulletin said, adding that the case fatality rate stood at 1.82 per cent.

The number of containment zones in the city increased to 2,770 from 2,751 the previous day.

According to the bulletin,

of the total 15,704 beds in Covid hospitals, 10,670 were vacant.

It stated that 884 beds in Covid care centres were occupied by persons under quarantine, including travellers who have returned under the Vande Bharat Mission and by flights operated under bubble arrangements made with other countries.

The Delhi government has significantly ramped up testing over the last several weeks, with the count crossing the 60,000-mark on some days.

The number of tests conducted per 10-lakh popula-

tion as on date was 2,10,023, while the total number of tests stood at 39,90,438.

Since September, the number of daily Covid cases began to rise in Delhi. From the last week of September, it started to come down.

The number of people under home isolation rose to 13,742 today from 13,436 the previous day.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 35 fatalities related to coronavirus infection. The city had then reported 3,259 coronavirus cases detected out of 55,715 tests. On 16 October, it had reported 3,428 Covid cases out of 58,145 tests.

The national capital had on 16 October recorded 22 Covid deaths. This figure was 26 on 15 October. The coronavirus death count on 14 October was 44 while it was 45 on 13 October.

On 10 October and 29 September as well, 48 Covid fatalities were logged in Delhi, which was stated to be the highest Covid death count in a day since 16 July, when the city had recorded 58 deaths.

The varsity announced its second cut-off list on Saturday with many popular courses being closed for admissions and some courses seeing a minor decline in cut-offs. The admission process under the second list will end on October 21. Students will also have the option of cancelling or withdrawing their admissions and migrating to another college if they meet the cut-off

seats, while there are 10 courses which have already been filled up."

Hindu College has kept the cut-off for BA (Honours) Philosophy unchanged at 97 per cent.

The college principal said that they are almost full and have only one or two seats remaining.

Students had complained about experiencing technical glitches, problems in paying fees during the admission in the first round.

The admission process under the second list will end on October 21.

Students will also have the option of cancelling or withdrawing their admissions and migrating to another college if they meet the cut-off.

Anu Srivastava, principal of Hindu College, said, "We are all geared up and we are good to handle a huge rush. There is no such issue of any change in the process and we are co-ordinating with the admission branch. We still have to fill Commerce and Economics

seats, while there are 10 courses which have already been filled up in the first list which is for the first time," Khanna said.

Nearly 50 per cent of the seats have been filled under the first list.

Last year, nearly 24,000 admissions had happened under the first list.

Officials have attributed the substantial increase in admissions this year to the process being online and giving an opportunity to many outstation students to apply sitting in the comfort of their homes.

The first cut-off list was released on October 10. Almost 50 per cent of the seats have been filled under the first list. The varsity has 70,000 undergraduate seats.

The admissions under the second list will commence from Monday 10 am onwards and will end on October 21.

Classified

CHANGE OF NAME

BY THE Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Alipore, I, Manojit Modak, resident of Debnagar, Jalpaiguri-735102 changed my name to Monil Roy on 19.09.2020.

I, SK KHURSHID Ali of Islampur, Kadambagchi, P.S.: Duttapukur, N. 24 Pds., Kol-700125, it was written in my son Yusuf Ali's Admit Card No. YA125666 as Khurshid Ali. I change my name through affidavit vide No. 592/10, dt. 08.10.2020 from Judge Mr. Murali, 1st Class at Barasat as sk Khurshid Ali in place of Khurshid Ali.

LOST & FOUND

I, AAKANKSHA Tiwari, daughter of Shri Ashok Tiwari, residing at CF-397, Ground Floor, Salt Lake, Sector-I, Kolkata-700064 declare that I appeared and passed in ICSE Examination, 2008 under Index No. - T/4547/20, and Passed irretrievably lost my Statement of Marks (Mark Sheet) and Admission Card for the said ICSE Examination, 2008.

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF MANJUSHA WADHWA Additional District Judge-02 Shantinagar District, Room No. 100, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi PC No. 12/2020 1. Daya Shanker Agarwal, s/o Sh. Laxmi Narain Agarwal, r/o Flat No. G-172/S-2, Dilshad Colony, East Delhi-110095. — Petitioner Versus 1. The State, Govt. of NCT of Delhi. — Respondent CITATION FOR PUBLICATION OF PETITION UNDER SECTION 276 OF THE INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 FOR GRANT OF PROBATE OF WILL DATED 09-08-2010 OF LATE SH. YOGESHWAR PRASAD GUPTA, S/L 0/AE SH. MANOHAR LAL, R/O 1/4955-A, GALI NO. 5, BALBIN NAGAR

EXTENSION, SHAHDARA, DELHI-110028 dated 28-10-2020 has been fixed for hearing of the case, notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the said petition concerned may if he/she desire appear in this court of the said 28-10-2020 and see the proceedings.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 15-10-2020.

Additional District Judge-02 Shahdara District, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi.

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT

(Order 5 Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurdeep Singh Saini District Judge (Commercial Court) West-02

Room No. 110, First Floor, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi CS (Comm.) No. 32/2018 State Bank of India

— Plaintiff

Aakash Kamra — Defendant

To, 1. Sh. Aakash Kamra, s/o Sh. Surender Kumar, J-2/236, Paschim Vihar, 3rd Floor, Delhi-110063.

Whereas you, in view of the reports already received, cannot be served in ordinary way. It is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 24th day of November, 2020, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 13th day of October, 2020.

District Judge (Commercial Court) West-02

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

Seal of the Court

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Room No. 110, First Floor, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi CS (Comm.) No. 32/2018 State Bank of India

— Plaintiff

Versus Ashok Wadhwa — Defendant

To, 1. Sh. Ashok Wadhwa, s/o Sh. Radha Krishan Wadhwa, 24/23, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008.

Also at : Akash Print Masters Pvt. Ltd., J-140, First Block Community Centre, Rajouri Garden, Delhi-110027.

Whereas you, in view of the reports already received, cannot be served in ordinary way. It is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 24th day of November, 2020, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

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PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

LOST & FOUND

WEST BENGAL STATE UNIVERSITY Barasat Kolkata-700126

RE-TENDER NOTICE

NIT for Electro Mechanical Operation, Maintenance and Monitoring of 33/0.433 KVA Sub-station, Operation of Pumps and Motors and Diesel Generators (02 Nos.)

works under WBSU for a period of one (01) calendar year (in three shifts basis per each day).

For details please visit the University website:

www.wbsubregistration.org & www.wbsu.ac.in &

& www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Registrar (Officiating)

SDMC adopts 'zero tolerance' against air pollution

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 18 OCTOBER

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) today said that it has adopted "zero tolerance" against air pollution and has slapped a total of 116 challans on violators in a day that amounted to a total fine of about Rs 3 lakh.

The SDMC said that as per the instructions of the commissioner the patrolling teams with adequate strength have been constituted to take instant action against violators including erring government and related institutions.

"The teams have been told to roam round the clock on rotation basis. All zonal Deputy Commissioners are ensuring that there is no leniency during this festive season," the SDMC quoted commissioner as saying.

It stated that the DEMS officials were closely monitoring all the 5 hotspots under its jurisdiction area. Additional personnel and machinery were deployed for these hotspots and adjoining areas. The inspection teams of building departments were inspecting the construction sites across all zones and imposing heavy fines if they are found not to be following anti-pollution measures. To control dust pollution, large-scale water sprinkling and mechanical sweeping was also being done across four zones.

"In all zones, today 116 challan has been slapped on the violators resulting in fine of around Rs 3 lacs, further in case of the violation the quantum of the fine will be decided by the concerned court including the court of Metropolitan Magistrate," the SDMC said.

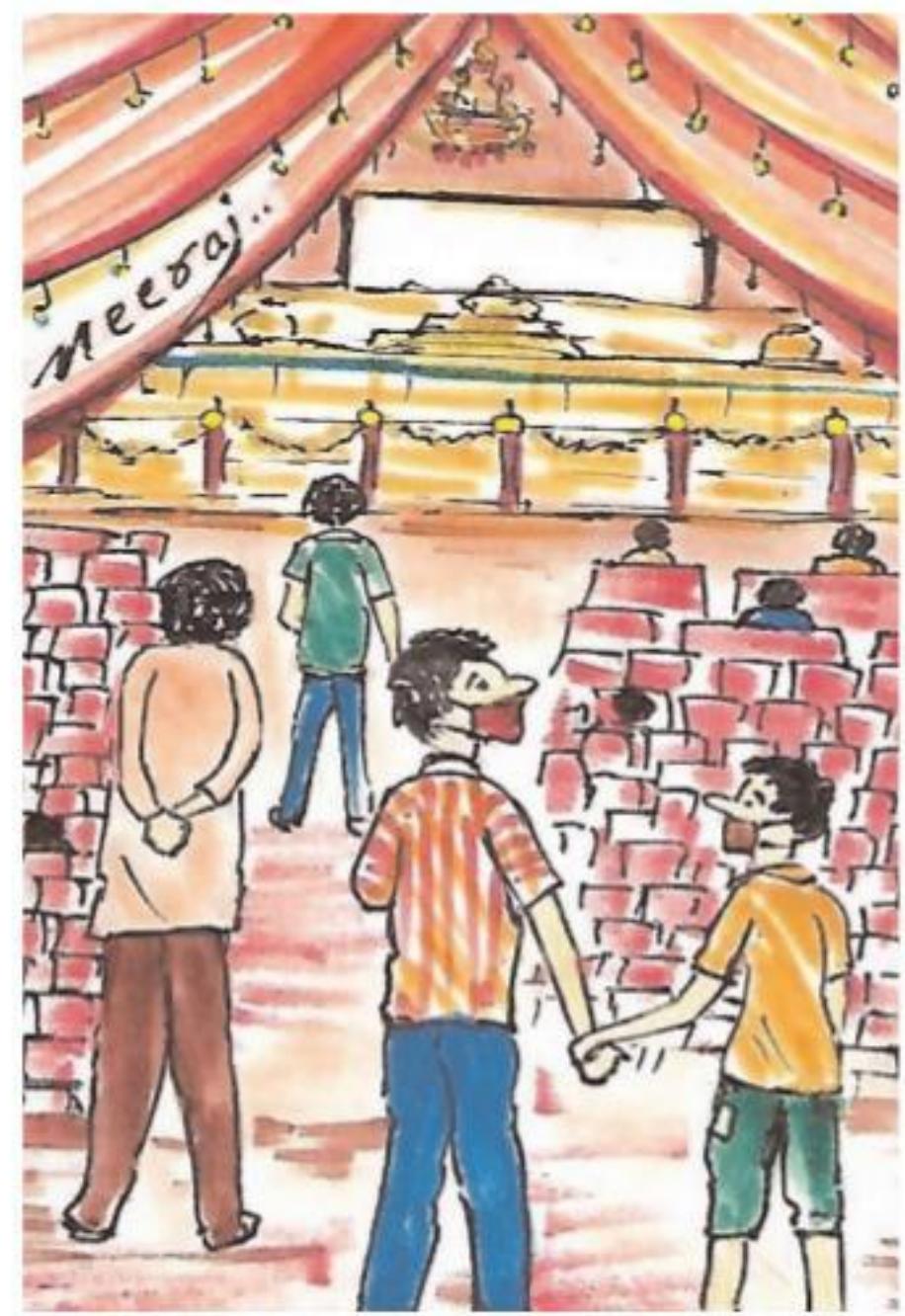
"The share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution stood at 17 per cent. It was 19 per cent on Saturday, 18 per cent on Friday, around one per cent on Wednesday and around 3 per cent on Tuesday, Monday and Sunday.

The city recorded a 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) of 254. It was 287 on Saturday, 239 on Friday and 315 on Thursday, the worst since February 12 (AQI 320).

An AQ

FESTIVE SEASON

The festive season has finally arrived. But celebrating festivals in the midst of Covid-19 will not be easy this year. The 9-day Navratras began last Saturday. On the sixth Navratri, Durga Puja will commence. Ramilas will also be staged simultaneously. Both celebrations end on Dussehra, with the burning of effigies of Ravana and his kinsmen, on 25 October. Eid-e-Milad comes a few days later. Festive spirit is in the air, but Covid-19 protocols will act as a dampener. To ensure health safety of all, the authorities have laid down that Ramilas and Durga Puja cannot be held without permission from District Magistrates and District DCs, who will go by reports of local magistrates, police and municipal officials. Daily video recordings of the celebrations are to be submitted to nodal officers. There will be no fairs or food stalls, which were always a big draw at these events. Many organisers may opt out, going by the conditions imposed. Cinemas can probably follow Delhi Metro-like seating protocols, with marked seats to be kept empty. But Ramilas and Durga Puja draw people, and togetherness is their high point. Unlike cinemas, they are an unorganised segment of public activity. Social distancing will be difficult to



follow here, but will be nevertheless imposed. For closed spaces, only half the capacity can be filled up, with an upper limit of 200 persons. For open spaces, the officials will determine the size of the gathering, depending on the size of the venue. The

colour and aroma of these events will get impacted by masks and sanitisers. The success of the events was traditionally measured in the number of footfalls they received. Since the Sixties and the Seventies, a spirit of competition marked the hold-

ing of Ramilas and Durga Puja in Delhi. Greater the number of visitors, the greater was considered the success of the events. Ramila organisers held media events to announce the special features of their events. The competition was such that the height of the effigies on Dussehra went up by a few feet every year. Packed with firecrackers every inch, the effigies exploded with deafening sounds to the enjoyment of all. "Technology" helped Lord Hanuman "fly" across a sea in search of Sita. While Ramilas drew crowds for Lord Rama's heroic tale, Durga Puja were known for creativity and innovation. Every year, people would rush to Puja pandals to watch the grandeur of Goddess Durga vanquishing the evil. Artists were invited even from other towns for theatrical, dance and musical performances. A few decades ago, screening of highly popular Bangla movies the whole night was the major attraction at the Puja pandals. Slowly, live performances took over. Covid-19 will not permit such celebrations this year. But people must enjoy the festivals to keep their spirits high. They must not, though, forget wearing masks, maintaining hand hygiene and keeping physical distance to save themselves from infection.



Forced to stay at home due to the lockdown, many people found themselves taking up or reviving an old hobby or two. Thanks to the Internet, several DIY (do-it-yourself) options were also found online and promptly taken up. One very popular segment is cooking, where, right from traditional and some almost-forgotten recipes to innovations with modern techniques, several posts have all been uploaded. A colleague got hooked on baking, but for the strangest of reasons. This colleague feeds some half-a-dozen stray cats that stroll in and out of her garden. Mostly feeding them bread and milk, with an occasional chicken bone or egg thrown in, she found herself buying at least a big loaf of bread every other day. To avoid venturing

out frequently during the lockdown period, she decided to bake bread, which would also turn out to be more economical. The videos on the Internet made it look really easy and her first few attempts turned out bricks or rubbery lumps that even the cats turned their noses at. After a few trials and errors and with some words of advice from a friend, she managed to crack the recipe and set out to bake some amazing bread loaves. But then she ran into a stone-wall when she announced the bread was for the cats! Her family forbade her from feeding the fresh, aromatic bread to the felines and offered to regularly buy the bread for her. Our friend is now buying bread as usual and, in addition, baking new varieties on the family's demand!



CHINESE DIKTAT DISMISSED

A head of the National Day of Taiwan recently, the Chinese Embassy in India issued virtually a diktat to the Indian media to follow the "One-China" policy and not refer to Taiwan as a nation. "The Chinese Embassy in India would like to remind our media friends that there is only one China in the world, and the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate government representing the whole of China. Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory," said a terse statement mailed to Indian journalists covering foreign affairs. The media personnel were obviously furious

with many wondering how the Chinese could issue such a directive to the media in a democratic country. "It's silly on the part of the Chinese Embassy to issue this kind of a statement...we are not like Global Times or other Chinese media outlets which are mouth-pieces of the Communist regime," a senior journalist said. When Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu learnt about the Chinese Embassy statement, he promptly tweeted, "India is the largest democracy on earth with a vibrant press and freedom loving people. But it looks like Communist China is hoping to march into the sub-continent by imposing censorship. Taiwan's Indian friends will have one reply: Get Lost!" A Delhi BJP leader, mean-

while, put up several posters right outside the Chinese Embassy in Chanakyapuri wishing Taiwan on its "National Day". The Chinese Embassy was obviously upset and lodged a protest with the External Affairs Ministry. The posters were subsequently withdrawn.

ROSHNI LAND SCAM

There is utter shock and disbelief in Jammu and Kashmir about the mega Rs 25,000 crore land scam, involving top politicians, police officials, bureaucrats and businessmen. Prominent personalities have acquired huge pieces of land by

paying paltry amounts. In its landmark judgment, a high court bench, headed by Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Rajesh Bindal, described it as the biggest scam in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. The bench held that it is essential to do complete justice, given the nature of the crime. The Roshni Act was declared unconstitutional and all allotments were made null and void. The Act is in complete violation of the Constitution, the court said. The Jammu and Kashmir State Lands Act, popularly known as the Roshni Act, was introduced by the Farooq Abdullah government and became operational during Ghulam Nabi Azad's regime. It was aimed to give ownership rights of the govern-

ment land to those who were in its possession. It was expected to generate revenue to the tune of Rs 25,000 crore which was to be spent on various power projects. The government could, however, collect just about Rs 175 crore. The CBI has been authorised to go into all aspects of the matter regarding the Roshni land scam. The revenue secretary will furnish the information with copies of the supporting records to the CBI. Failure to do so may result in contempt of the court proceedings. The anti-corruption bureau of the Union Territory shall place complete records of all matters regarding land encroachment/Roshni Act or rules being enquired into or cases investigated

into by it, before the CBI. The chief secretary of Jammu and Kashmir will monitor the matter.

TAILPIECE

It's a tough call choosing between the wonderful silence coupled with clean air as witnessed during the lockdown and the noisy life now as normalcy returns.

Contributed by: Asha Ramachandran, Deepak Razdan, Ashok Tuteja and Sheikh Manzoor Ahmed

India

Minor girl raped by judo player in UP's Meerut

Accused arrested; his car had a flag of the ruling BJP and a 'BJP Goraksha Samiti' sticker

SWATI SHARMA
MEERUT, 18 OCTOBER

A minor girl was allegedly raped by a 20-year-old man, who was her senior judo player, inside his car in TP Nagar area in Meerut city in Uttar Pradesh on Friday.

The car of the accused had a flag of the ruling BJP besides having a "BJP Goraksha Samiti" sticker.

The accused, Pulkit Saini, has been arrested following a complaint of the victim girl's father and a case of rape has been registered against him in the TP Nagar police

station.

According to police, the victim girl, 15, was on her way to the college on her scooter for her judo practice on Friday evening. Pulkit, who was her senior, stopped her near a shopping complex. They used to practise judo together on the ground of a local college. He asked the girl to park her scooter at the complex on the pretext that they could go together in his car from there.

The girl fell into Pulkit's trap and agreed to go with him, police said. But instead of going to the college, he drove the car to some secluded place and

allegedly raped her inside his car. He also threatened her of dire consequences if she dared to tell anyone about the incident.

The traumatised girl told her parents about the horrific incident when she reached home on Friday night. Her family was in a state of shock and was initially indecisive about their response. But when the girl's condition deteriorated on Saturday night, she was admitted to a hospital by her family members.

A complaint was then lodged with the police against Pulkit, which led to his arrest.

The girl fell into Pulkit's trap and agreed to go with him, police said. But instead of going to the college, he drove the car to some secluded place and

Dinesh Kumar, SHO of TP Nagar police station, said: "On the basis of the FIR lodged by the father of victim girl, a minor, police have arrested accused Pulkit Saini late on Saturday night."

A team of forensic experts also visited the spot and collected evidence from there, including Pulkit's car where the alleged rape occurred, the SHO said.

There was a BJP flag and a sticker of the ruling party's Goraksha Samiti on the car of the accused. Sources said that Pulkit was "actively involved in activities related to Goraksha (cow protec-

tion)".

The BJP's Meerut city president, Mukesh Singh, however, claimed that "Pulkit has nothing to do with the BJP". He claimed that the rape accused was using the BJP flag and a sticker of its Goraksha Samiti "fraudulently".

Several incidents of heinous crimes and horrific atrocities against girls and women have been reported from various parts of Uttar Pradesh in recent days, including from Hathras where a 19-year-old Dalit girl was gangraped and brutalised allegedly by four upper-caste men that led to her death.

Jai Ram orders probe into HRTC conductors exam paper leak

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 18 OCTOBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Sunday ordered a probe into the question paper leak case in recruitment test for filling conductors' posts in Himachal Pradesh Road Transport Corporation (HRTC).

Taking cognisance of the HRTC conductors exam paper leak case, the Chief Minister said that the guilty persons will not be spared at any cost and that strong legal action would be taken against them.

"The state government would ensure complete transparency in the written examinations so that such incidents do not happen in the future," he added.

The examination to fill posts of conductors in HRTC



was held on Sunday and the question paper of the recruitment examination was reportedly leaked 20 minutes after the test started today.

The question paper soon became viral on social media, raising questions on the arrangements made by HP Staff Service Selection Commission (HPSSC) to conduct the recruitment examination.

Sources said the question paper was leaked from an examination centre in Shimla by a candidate but he was caught by the examiner before he could cheat with the help of others.

The question paper of B-Series of recruitment examination has been leaked by the candidate with the help of mobile but it is not clear as yet as to how the candidate managed to enter examination hall with a mobile phone.

A team of Shimla police was rushed to the spot and a case has been filed in this regard against the candidate, sources added.

However, it is unclear that the recruitment examination for filling conductors' posts in the HRTC will be cancelled or not.

Hathras: Anti-Romeo squads back in action to check crimes against women

PTI
HATHRAS (UP), 18 OCTOBER

Nearly a dozen teams with over 50 police personnel are part of the anti-Romeo squads that have been reactivated in Hathras to check crimes against women, officials said on Sunday.

The development comes as part of the "Mission Shakti" campaign of the Uttar Pradesh government, which has faced flak over a string of rape incidents, including the alleged gangrape and death of a 19-year-old Dalit woman here, recently. "There are 11 police stations, including the Mahila Thana, in the district. There are 11 anti-Romeo squads with five police personnel in each team. One team includes three women and two men personnel. These squads would keep an eye on

miscreants harassing or troubling women and girls in the district," Hathras Superintendent of Police Vineet Jain said.

The district police chief on Sunday held a meeting with all members of the squads and stressed on the need to put a check on crimes against women and girls.

These squads would patrol public places like markets, the vicinity of schools and colleges, coaching institutes, bus stands, parks, among others, to prevent harassment of women and girls, and indecency against them by miscreants, a police spokesperson said.

The squads will also apprise the women and children about mobile phone apps like the UP COP and how they could be used by distressed persons, the official added.

Himachal Pradesh aims to eradicate AIDS by 2030

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 18 OCTOBER

The Himachal Pradesh government is committed to work to eradicate AIDS from the state as a public health hazard by the year 2030 as per the target set by the Central government.

Informing about this, a state government official said the government had launched a decisive campaign against AIDS with the goal of three zero which includes zero infection, zero death and zero discrimination.

"To achieve the goal of making Himachal AIDS free, the state government's landmark steps like test and treat and Mission Sampark proved very successful. HIV testing is an important



part of the program and the first step is to identify HIV positive people and link them to Anti Retro Viral therapy," he said, adding to fulfill this objective, about three lakh HIV tests were being done every year in the state.

He said apart from 45 Integrated Testing and Counselling Centers (ITCs) in the state, HIV testing facility was

also being provided through two mobile ITCs.

To provide testing facilities to the residents at their doorsteps, efforts are being made to provide testing facilities up to Health Sub-Center level.

The Prevention From Parent To Child Transmission (PPTCT) programme is being implemented by the state government for eliminating HIV infection in Children, he said. He further stated that under the programme, pregnant women are being tested for HIV and in case women are detected HIV positive then procedure is adopted for prevention of HIV transmission to her newborn child.

Every year about one lakh pregnant women are being tested for HIV in the state. Under the scheme, Himachali's taking ART in the state are being given the benefit of this scheme," he added.

"The government has set up three Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) and three Facility Integrated Anti-Retroviral Therapy (FI-ART) centers in the state to provide ART to People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and 4,646 PLHIV are being treated with Anti-Retroviral Therapy in the state.

The state government is also sensitive towards People Living with HIV and their dependents and has started a financial support scheme of Rs 1500 per month for PLHIVs in year 2019.

Under the scheme, Himachali's taking ART in the state are being given the benefit of this scheme," he added.

The official said in addition, a nutritional support scheme was being imple-

mented for children living with HIV from 2018. Under the scheme, 100 grams of oat or multi-grain biscuits were being provided to these children every day.

Since the year 2019, the state government had made provision of Rs 20 lakhs annually for treatment and medicine for Persons Living with HIV having other diseases.

In addition to these schemes, financial assistance to orphans and children of AIDS victims upto 18 years of age was being provided for education and other living requirements.

The government has launched vigorous awareness campaigns through radio, TV, newspapers, hoardings, folk media and other media including awareness activities

during fairs and festivals for prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Special awareness campaigns are also being conducted on the occasion of International and National Youth Days, World AIDS Day and International Women Day, he added.

He added Himachal had fewer cases of HIV as compared to other states yet the state government has shown its determination to overcome HIV by HIV screening, AntiRetroviral Therapy, social protection schemes and awareness campaigns.

With the efforts of the government and masses in general, eradication of AIDS is expected by the year 2030, and thus the goal of AIDS-free healthy Himachal would be achieved, he added.



How it started: 'Beti bachao' (save daughters). How it's going: 'Apradhi bachao' (save criminals).

CONGRESS LEADERS RAHUL GANDHI



TAKING A DIG AT UP GOVT OVER REPORTS WHICH CLAIM A BJP MLA HAD GIVEN SHELTER TO A RAPE ACCUSED

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THUMBNAILS



A farmer burns straw stubble in a field on the outskirts of Amritsar on Sunday. AFP

MP hooch tragedy: Ujjain District Superintendent of Police and another police official were transferred to Bhopal on Sunday following the death of 12 people after consumption of spurious liquor, while two constables were arrested for their alleged involvement in its sale, officials said.

PTI

Rain fury: Second wave of floods hits Hyderabad

According to GHMC, 37,409 families have been affected, a total of 2,100 families have been evacuated following the flash floods, inundation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 18 OCTOBER

As rain continue to dog the city breaching of a water body after midnight caused flash floods and fresh inundation of many localities as well as roads in Hyderabad.

After the flooding on 13 October many of the lakes, tanks and Musi river are at full capacity and even moderate rain has triggered fresh inundation of colonies.

The heavy rains has also triggered wall collapse killing a six year-old girl at Mangalhat while a man died of electrocution in Malakpet.

The breaching of the Balapur Lake also known as Gurram Cheruvu in the wee hours of Sunday caused flooding in several areas including Hafiz

Babanagar, Nabeel Colony, Gulshan Iqbal Colony, Yaqutpura.

Hyderabad city police along with the Disaster Response Force of the civic body conducted rescue and evacuation of the residents with boats. In some places earthmovers were being used by police to move the residents on the upper floors to safety.

According to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) a total of 2,100 families were evacuated. Heavy rain in afternoon and evening

predicted heavy rain and thunderstorms in next 48 hours citizens are being asked to stay indoors.

The Met office has forecast more rains in parts of Telangana till 21 October.

Himayatnagar TRS councillor were heckled by angry residents while he was touring the area. So far in GHMC area 37,409 families have been affected. With the met office

overturning rickshaws and cars and the debris brought in buried the vehicles with only the roofs visible.

The AIMIM leadership including local MLA Akbarudin Owaisi and local MP Asaduddin Owaisi visited the affected areas and oversaw rescue operations as residents face immense hardships.

Meanwhile TRS leadership faced the ire of the locals. Its MP Ranjith Reddy and minister Sabitha Indra Reddy were forced to face the locals after their convoys were stopped demanding that water should be pumped out of the colony in Meerpet.

Hayathnagar TRS councillor were heckled by angry residents while he was touring the area. So far in GHMC area 37,409 families have been affected. With the met office



predicting heavy rain and thunderstorms in next 48 hours citizens are being asked to stay indoors.

The Met office has forecast more rains in parts of Telangana till 21 October.

Himayatnagar, the reservoir which stores flood waters is currently full and with more inflows officials warned that the gates will be kept open with more water flowing through

the Musi river. People living in the low lying areas have been asked to move to relief camps. Backflows from Durgam Cheruvu, another lake near the IT hub has caused flooding in nearby colonies as well.

Many of the key roads have been flooded including national highways leading to Warangal, Vijayawada and Kurnool. GHMC has issued an appeal

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), besides the local police and district authorities.

There was no loss of human lives anywhere in the flood-affected areas, whereas two cattle died in Vijayapura, KDMA Commissioner Manoj Rajan said. According to the KDMA, as many as 55 villages across six talukas of Kalaburagi, thirteen villages in three talukas of Yadgir and 26 villages of Vijayapura are badly affected by the floods.

The authority said it has also identified 157 villages in Kalaburagi, 45 in Yadgir and 26 in Vijayapura as vulnerable.

Expressing solidarity with the flood-hit people, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured the state of the Centre's full cooperation.

Poor mobile network in U'khand's Madmaheshwar breaks digital connectivity with rest of the country

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 18 OCTOBER

A trip down to Rudraprayag's Madmaheshwar, provide tourists a glimpse of village life and the hurdles they encounter daily. The visitors are left amazed at the warm hospitality of the villagers despite the struggle that the local people go through to remain connected digitally with the rest of the world.

As poor mobile network connectivity prevails from base village Gondar to Madmaheshwar (3,497 Mts), locals have scanned every nook and corner and identified few locations to use mobile phones. They have fixed basic handsets on poles and other places in their houses, so that they can use the signal available for communication.

The Madmaheshwar temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is part of famous Panch Kedars - other being Kedarnath, Tungnath, Rudranath and Kalpeshwar. It is believed that Pandavas built the Shiva temple. The middle (Madhya) or belly/navel of the Shiva is worshipped at this shrine located in Uttarakhand Himalayas. The 18 km trek to the temple starts from village Rasi.

Gondar village is used as a base camp by most of the tourists. As one enters the kitchen of Himalayan Tourist Lodge at Gondar, he will see a mobile phone hanging on a small polythene bag near the shrine premises and have urgent call to make, they trek one km uphill at Buddha Madmaheshwar to communicate.

The struggle for receiving better mobile connectivity compels villagers to walk long distances. Bantoli, Upper Bantoli, Khatar, Nanu, Maikhamba Chatti and Kunchatti are the other halting points (Chattis) on the trek to Madmaheshwar. Villagers living in Upper Bantoli would take a 400 mts uphill trek to use their mobile phone near the forest area. At all the halting points a fixed location for getting mobile signal exists.

At Madmaheshwar, former Gondar Pradhan Bhagat Panwar has fixed his phone on a pole outside his lodge and he says, "It is like a satellite phone. Your smartphone will not operate here, only a basic phone set is required."

He hangs his phone on the pole from through out the day.

The identified spot to fix the phone also indicates the hard work made by the locals in identifying the mobile signal catching-spot. The minute research done!

The Madmaheshwar temple is managed by the Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board and the poor connectivity poses hurdles to temple staff.

Recently a VIP visited

Madmaheshwar, but the temple staff had little information about the tour, when the officer quizzed they just gave a flat reply, 'we don't get WhatsApp connectivity here,' to utter surprise of the guest.

When the temple staff fails to get mobile connectivity near the shrine premises and have urgent call to make, they trek one km uphill at Buddha

Madmaheshwar to communicate.

Judges should be fearless in their decisions: Justice NV Ramana

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 OCTOBER

The seniormost judge of the Supreme Court Justice N V Ramana has said the greatest strength of the judiciary is the faith of people in it and judges must be steadfast in holding on to their principles and fearless in their decisions to withstand all pressures and odds.

Justice Ramana's comments hold importance in the backdrop of a recent unprecedented move by Andhra Pradesh CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of making allegations against him in a letter to Chief Justice of India S A Bobde.

Speaking at a condolence meet on Saturday for former Supreme Court judge AR Lakshmanan who passed away on 27 August, Justice Ramana said, "The greatest strength of the judiciary is the faith of people in it. Faith, confidence and acceptability cannot be commanded, they have to be earned." Justice Ramana's remarks at a public function are the first since the controversy broke out after the Andhra



Pradesh CM wrote the letter.

He added that there are innumerable qualities that a person needs to live what can be called a good life; humility, patience, kindness, a strong work ethic and the enthusiasm to constantly learn and improve oneself. Most importantly, particularly for a judge, one must be steadfast in holding on to their principles and fearless in their decisions. It is an important quality for a judge to withstand all pressures and odds and to stand up against all obstacles, he said.

Recalling the former judge, Justice Ramana said, "We should

all take inspiration from his words and should strive to commit a vibrant and independent judiciary which is required in the current times. He said his belief is that Justice Lakshmanan epitomised all the required qualities of being one of the best judges the country has seen. Justice Ramana said, Our values are ultimately our greatest wealth, and we must never forget the same and added that Justice Lakshmanan wore his values on his sleeves and he has learnt immensely from him about being a good person and a judge. Ramana was elevated as a Judge of the Supreme

Court in 2002.

During his tenure as Supreme Court judge, Justice Lakshmanan was part of several Constitution benches and contributed in more than 200 judgments touching upon wide-ranging issues, including taxation, management of religious institutions, service matters, labour laws and employee welfare. After his retirement, he was appointed as the Chairman of the 18th Law Commission of India and submitted 32 comprehensive reports to the Government of India recommending measures to improve judicial system.

Several lawyers' bodies from across the country including Bar Council of India, Supreme Court Bar Association, Supreme Court Advocates-On-Record Association (SCAORA) and Delhi High Court Bar Association have condemned the act of Andhra Pradesh CM of writing the unwanted letter to the chief justice making allegations against the sitting apex court judge.

Customs registers case against Swapna, Sarith for smuggling 1.9 lakh dollars

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 18 OCTOBER

The Customs, which is probing into the sensational Kerala gold smuggling case has registered a fresh case in the Economic Offences court in Kochi against Swapna Surendra and Sarith PS, the key accused in the case, for violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The agency has registered the case on Saturday after it was found that the duo allegedly smuggled 1.9 lakh US dollars from Kerala to the UAE. They have been booked under section 113 (Confiscation of goods attempted to be improperly exported) of the Customs Act. The court is likely to consider the application moved by Customs to arrest the accused on Monday.

The Customs also suspects the involvement of CM Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary Swapna used the UAE trips to smuggle foreign currency out of the country.

Customs had issued summons to Sivasankar on Friday to depose before the investigation agency. Sivasankar developed uneasiness while being taken to the Customs office in connection with the smuggling of 1.90 lakh US dollars to the UAE. Following this, Customs officials took him to the PRS hospital in Karamana on Friday. After finding that his condition is normal except for a disc prolapse, Sivasankar was shifted to Thiruvananthapuram Medical College hospital on Saturday.

The manager of a private bank in which the UAE Consulate here holds its accounts, had reportedly told the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that Swapna had pressurised him to convert vast amounts of Indian currency into US dollars in violation of RBI norms and FEMA provisions. The agencies suspect that Swapna used the UAE trips to smuggle foreign currency out of the country.

Nitish, Sushil launch joint poll campaign, hit out at Lalu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BUXAR/JAGDISHPUR (BIHAR), 18 OCTOBER

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar and his deputy Sushil Kumar Modi held joint election campaign on Sunday and launched a blistering attack on rival Lalu Prasad highlighting the crime situation and lack of development during his RJD rule in the past.

Reeling out comparative data during 15 years under the RJD and an equal period under the NDA now, the two leaders sought another chance from voters to speed up development work in the state in the next five years. The two started the day with a public meeting at Buxar, where BJD has fielded Parshuram Chaturvedi as its candidate. He is pitted against sitting MLA Sanjay Kumar Tiwari of the Congress.

After launching separate campaigns since beginning of this week, Kumar and Sushil Modi moved together on Sunday and sought support for BJD as well as JD(U) nominees on four seats of Buxar, Dumraon, Tarai and Jagdishpur.

BJP rift widens as Raman rushes to defend Jogi family

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, 18 OCTOBER



The rift within the saffron brass has widened further over the party's perceived ties with the family of former Chhattisgarh chief minister Ajit Jogi. Former CM Raman Singh lashed out at the Congress government for rejection of the nomination papers of Amit Jogi and his wife Richa Jogi for the Marwah Assembly bypoll even as a section of prominent tribal leaders in BJP have lavished praise on the government.

Former CM and a BJP veteran Raman Singh deplored the Bhupesh Baghel led Congress dispensation for rejecting the nomination papers of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh leader Amit Jogi and his wife Richa Jogi for Marwah (ST) assembly by-poll. "Government is scared, that is why it doesn't want the Jogi family to remain in fray for the bypoll", Raman decried.

Several of his party peers, nonetheless sang a different tune by wholeheartedly welcoming the government decided to pull apart the political

"Don't forget that it was BJP that rose to power in 2003 assembly polls solely on the issue of Ajit Jogi being a 'fake tribal'", the CM said.

It was the BJP and its leaders who initiated legal battles and inquiries against Jogi for his caste claims, Baghel reminded. However, Raman Singh and his government were hands in gloves with the Jogi that is why it kept delaying the decision on his caste certificate for 15 years, the fiery CM lamented adding that his government sorted the dispute within 18 months nonetheless.

The election commission on Saturday had rejected nomination papers of Amit Jogi and his wife Richa Jogi for the Marwah bye-election, a Jogi pocket-borough for two decades. Bye-election was necessitated following the death of former CM Jogi early this year.

Another BJP heavyweight Nanaki Ram Kanwar also the hailed Congress government saying Jogi was not a member of the Kanwar tribe and the Kanwar woman he always presented as his mother, was not his mother at all.

CM Bhupesh Baghel who never concealed his tenses and his apparent dislike for the Jogi smelt the saffron schism and retorted that Raman Singh's party comrades have been praising the government for its prompt action.

It is for the first since the inception of this predominantly tribe state, that the Jogi family has been ousted from electioneering on its home turf due to a lingering controversy on his caste certificate.

Gujarat Dalit youth beaten up for ferrying dead cow

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 11 OCTOBER

In a grim reminder of the 2016 Una incident of flogging of a Dalit family by self-styled cow vigilantes, one youth in Rajkot has been beaten up simply because the assailants suspected him to have stolen a cow.

The Dalit youth, Bhavesh Makwana, 24, was ferrying a dead cow in his three-wheeler autorickshaw on Friday when he was intercepted by three upper caste men who beat him up with iron pipes and bats.

It is not known whether the 'cow vigilantes' are members of any saffron organisation or they attacked the Dalits simply due to their own reverence for the divine bovine.

Amidst hurling of casteist abuses, the assailants also video recorded their attack on the youth who kept on telling them that it was a cow carcass he was carrying in his vehicle.

The beating stopped after the assailants realised that it was, indeed, a cow carcass in the vehicle, but the Dalit youth had by that time suffered fractures in his hand and leg.

He was admitted to a hospital with several injuries, including fractures.

Later, one of the assailants came to the hospital and urged him to arrive at a "settlement" with them and not to lodge any police complaint.

Bhavesh Makwana, however, turned down the offer of "settlement" and registered a complaint with the police.

The Dalit youth has named two among the three assailants, but no arrests have been made.

Bhavesh said the cow carcass was lying for two days at the Rajkot Urban Development Authority (RUDA) Transport Nagar.

He had agreed to pick it up for Rs 200/- as he badly required some money for his wife's 'baby shower' ceremony due in few days.

BJP leader, four others held in Ballia murder case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALLIA/LUCKNOW, OCT 18

The Uttar Pradesh Police has arrested the main accused BJP leader and four others in the Ballia murder case, officials said on Sunday.

The incident had taken place on Thursday during a meeting over the allotment of ration shops at Durjanpur village in Ballia's Reoti area.

A local BJP leader, Dhirendra Pratap Singh, allegedly shot dead 46-year-old Jai Prakash Pal Gama. The Uttar Pradesh government suspended the SDM, circle officer and other policemen present at the spot. According to officials, Dhirendra Pratap Singh was arrested by the UP Special Task Force from Lucknow.



ATTACKING LALU PRASAD ON THE CRIME SITUATION AND LACK OF DEVELOPMENT DURING RJD RULE IN BIHAR

BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER NITISH KUMAR

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 19 OCTOBER 2020

'Indian democracy passing through its most difficult phase'

Conspiracy has been hatched to defeat the gains of the green revolution: Sonia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 OCTOBER

Congress president Sonia Gandhi Sunday launched a scathing attack on the government over the three farm laws, the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, economic slowdown and alleged atrocities against Dalits, while claiming that Indian democracy is passing through its "most difficult phase".

A "conspiracy" has been hatched to defeat the gains of the green revolution, she alleged, slamming the government over the three "anti-agriculture black laws".

Addressing a meeting of AICC general secretaries and state-incharges which she presided over, Gandhi also alleged that the country was being ruled by a government which was "systematically" handing over the rights of citizens to a handful of crony capitalists.

This was the first meeting of general secretaries and state-incharges Sonia Gandhi chaired after a major organisational reshuffle last month.

Hitting out at the government over the recently passed farm laws, she said the BJP-led dispensation has attacked the very foundation of India's resilient agrarian economy by bringing in "three anti-agriculture black laws".

A "conspiracy" has been hatched to defeat the gains of the green revolution. Lives and livelihoods of crores of farm labourers, leasehold farmers, small and marginal farmers, toiling labourers and small shopkeepers are under attack.

It is our solemn duty to join hands to defeat this sinister conspiracy," Gandhi asserted.

The three farm Bills - the Farmer's Produce Trade and



Farmers shout slogans before burning effigies of India's PM Narendra Modi and chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd company, Mukesh Ambani, to protest against corporate businesses following the recent passing of agriculture Bills, on the outskirts of Amritsar on Sunday.

Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 - were passed by Parliament recently. Subsequently, President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the Bills.

The Congress, many other opposition parties and several farmers organisations have been protesting against these legislations, claiming that these will harm the interests of farmers and benefit corporates, a claim denied by the government.

The Centre has asserted that these new laws will be beneficial for farmers and will increase their income. Alleging that the country's democracy is passing through its "most difficult phase", Gandhi claimed there is a "designed attack" on the Constitution and democratic traditions.

The country was pushed into the "abyss" of coronavirus pandemic by "sheer ineptitude" and "mismanagement" of the Modi government, Gandhi alleged in her opening remarks at the meeting.

"All this happened as we witnessed the biggest unplanned and cruel migration of crores of migrant labourers as the government remained a mute spectator to their miseries."

The stark truth is that a prime minister who promised to defeat corona within 21 days has abdicated his and his government's responsibility towards the citizens," Gandhi said.

There is neither a plan nor strategic thinking, solution or a way ahead in the fight against the pandemic, she alleged in her address in Hindi.

Gandhi claimed that the government has simultaneously "demolished" the economy, built painstakingly by the hard work of fellow Indians and the vision of successive Congress governments.

"Never has the country

witnessed such a free-fall in GDP as also all other economic indices. Today, the young have no jobs. Nearly 14 crore jobs have been lost. Small and medium businesses, small shopkeepers and other small enterprises are shutting at an unprecedented pace, yet an uncaring government remains a mute spectator," the Congress president said.

She also accused the government of failing to honour even its Constitutional responsibilities, saying the share of GST compensation is being denied to states.

"How will the state governments help our people, if the government of India was to renege on its Constitutional obligations? This must be a first example of economic anarchy being spread by the central government," Gandhi said. Alleging that atrocities against Dalits have reached a "new zenith", she said that instead of honouring the law and granting adequate protection to India's daughters, BJP governments are siding with criminals.

"The voice of oppressed families is being suppressed by the agencies of the state. Is this the new Raj Dharma?" Gandhi asked. She exhorted the general secretaries and state in-charges to take on these challenges and stand with the people, saying this is what defines the Congress organisation.

"I am confident that all of you would toil hard and stand up to the forces attacking India and its people. Let us join hands to defeat the anti-democracy and autocratic designs of the ruling BJP," she said.

"Persistent and determined struggle for the cause of people is the heart and soul of Indian National Congress. Even

today, dedicated service of fellow citizens and determined fight against the injustice, inequity and discrimination

nation in all spheres is the guiding light for every Congress men and women," Gandhi said.

MORE FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2020

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during forthcoming Festival Season, Railways have decided to run the following Festival Special Trains as per details given below:-

09717/09718 Jaipur - Daulatpur Chowk - Jaipur Special Train (Tri-Weekly)

Train No. 09717	↓ STATIONS	↑ Train No. 09718
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.
--- 19:30	JAIPUR	06:40 ---
12:15 ---	DAULATPUR CHOWK	14:05 ---

DAYS OF RUN: 09717 Ex Jaipur from 20.10.20 to 29.11.20 on every Tuesday, Friday & Sunday and 09718 Ex Daulatpur Chowk from 21.10.20 to 30.11.20 on every Wednesday, Saturday & Monday.

STOPPAGES: Gandhinagar Jaipur, Dausa, Bandikui Jn, Rajgarh, Alwar Jn, Khairthal, Jhajjar, Rohtak Jn, Julana, Jind Jn, Uchana Narwana Jn, Kaithal, Kurukshetra Jn, Ambala Cantt Jn, Chandigarh, Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (Mohali), Morinda, Rupnagar, Anandpur Sahib, Nangal Daim, Una Himachal & Amb Andaura stations.

ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

04888/04887 Barmer - Rishikesh - Barmer Special Train (Daily)

Train No. 04888	↓ STATIONS	↑ Train No. 04887
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.
--- 06:45	BARMER	20:30 ---
10:30 ---	RISHIKESH	18:05 ---

DAYS OF RUN: 04888 Ex Barmer from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20 on Daily and 04887 Ex Rishikesh from 21.10.20 to 01.12.20 on Daily.

STOPPAGES: Baytlu, Balotra, Sampla Jn, Jodhpur Jn, Pipar Road Jn, Merta Road Jn, Nagaur, Nokha, Bikaner Jn, Lalgarh Jn, Lunkaranas, Mahajan, Suratgarh Jn, PilBanga, Hanumanagar Jn, Sangaria, Mand Dabali, Bathinda Jn, Bathinda Cantt, Bhuchhu, Rampura Phul, Barnala, Dhuri Jn, Nabha, Patiala, Rajpura Jn, Ambala City, Ambala Cantt Jn, Yamunagar Jagadhri, Saharanpur Jn, Roopkher, Jwalapur, Hardiwark, Motichur & Raiwala Jn Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

04519/04520 Delhi Jn. - Bathinda Jn. - Delhi Jn. Special Train (Daily)

Train No. 04519	↓ STATIONS	↑ Train No. 04520
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.
--- 14:00	DELHI JN.	12:15 ---
21:15 ---	BATHINDA JN.	05:00 ---

DAYS OF RUN: 04519 Ex Delhi Jn. and 04520 Ex Bathinda Jn. from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20 on Daily.

STOPPAGES: Delhi Kishanganj, Shakurbasti, Nangloi, Bahadurgarh, Sampla, Rohtak Jn, Kalanaur Kalan, Bhiwani, Bawali Khera, Hansi, Satrod, Hisar, Mandi Adampur, Bhattu, Ding, Sirsa, Kalanwali & Raman stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 3 Tier, AC Chair Car, Chair Car, Guard Cabin Chair Car & Second Seating (Reserved).

02331/02332 Howrah Jn. - Jammu Tawi - Howrah Jn. Superfast Special Train (Tri-Weekly) (Via Dankuni)

Train No. 02331	↓ STATIONS	↑ Train No. 02332
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.
--- 23:55	HOWRAH JN.	11:30 ---
13:10 ---	JAMMU TAWI	22:45 ---

DAYS OF RUN: 02331 Ex Howrah Jn. from 20.10.20 to 28.11.20 on every Tuesday, Friday & Saturday and 02332 Ex Jammu Tawi from 22.10.20 to 30.11.20 on every Thursday, Sunday & Monday.

STOPPAGES: Asansol Jn, Chittaranjan, Madhupur Jn, Jasidih Jn, Jhajha, Jamui, Kuih Jn, Mokameh Jn, Bakhtiyarpur Jn, Patna Sahib Patna Jn, Danapur, Ara, Buxar, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn, Varanasi Jn, Jaunpur City, Sultanpur, Nihaiygarh, Lucknow, Bareilly, Moradabad, Saharanpur, Yamunanager Jagadhri, Ambala Cantt Jn, Ludhiana Jn, Phagwara Jn, Jalandhar Cantt, Pathankot Cantt, & Kathua stations.

ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

02331/02332 Howrah Jn. - Jammu Tawi - Howrah Jn. Superfast Special Train (Tri-Weekly) (Via Dankuni)

Train No. 02331	↓ STATIONS	↑ Train No. 02332
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ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

02421/02422 Jammu Tawi - Ajmer Jn. - Jammu Tawi Superfast Special Train (Daily)

Train No. 02421	↓ STATIONS	↑ Train No. 02422
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.
--- 10:00	KAMAKHYA	16:35 ---
19:20 ---	ANAND VIHAR (T)	06:45 ---

DAYS OF RUN: 02421 Ex Shri Gangannagar and 02422 Ex Delhi Jn. from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20 on Daily and 02421 Ex Ajmer Jn. from 21.10.20 to 01.12.20 on Daily.

STOPPAGES: Ranjya Jn, Barpeta Road, New Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, New Alipurduar, New Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, New Jalpaiguri, Krishnaganj, Barsoi Jn, Kathiar Jn, Naugaiga, Mansi Jn, Khagaria Jn, Beguara Jn, Barauni Jn, Patliputra, Danapur, Ara, Buxar, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn, Prayag Jn, Fatehpur, Kanpur Central, Etawah, Tundla Jn, Aligarh Jn & Ghazlabadi stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

02422/02421 Jammu Tawi - Ajmer Jn. - Jammu Tawi Superfast Special Train (Daily)

Train No. 02422	↓ STATIONS	↑ Train No. 02421
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.

Europe's woes

As large parts of Europe prepare to reinforce restrictions following a surge of coronavirus cases, it seems clear that efforts to rein in the spread of the disease while resuming economic activity may have come a cropper. Certainly, the responses from the United Kingdom, France and Belgium suggest that the prognosis is far from optimistic. Even as anger rises over the rising economic and public health costs of responses that have generally been perceived as confused, the UK has announced that London and adjoining Essex, both densely populated, would be placed on high alert. This means restrictions on travel of people, who can no longer meet those outside their immediate family either at home or in social settings. A plan to put Manchester under very high alert is under consideration, and this will mean closing pubs and restaurants and preventing people from leaving the area. Already, concerns have been raised that with the brakes put on economic activity, the UK may see poorer people turn destitute and there is anger at the government's belief that people will somehow make do. In France, tighter restrictions will mean night curfews in Paris and other cities and Belgium has announced that all cafes and restaurants will have to remain shut for the next four weeks. Belgian Deputy Prime Minister Georges Gilkinet has warned that the situation is serious from a health point of view", and the measures were necessary to "prevent our healthcare system from becoming saturated". The UK, which has the highest death toll in the continent, has seen a surge of close to 15,000 cases a day, while the situation is grimmer in France with rises in cases of up to 30,000 a day having been recorded in the past week.

The announcement of night curfews that affect 30 per cent of the country's population was greeted with a "last night" binge by the French, as they indulged themselves with bar and café hopping in scenes some said were reminiscent of New Year's Eve.

The consequences of this final indulgence will be known in the days to come. But the concern is greatest among those unable to frequent restaurants, for reports suggest that new infections have been rising rapidly among senior citizens. France's public health agency has warned that the situation in retirement homes is now "very serious". The severe containment measures appear to have popular support with the vast majority of those polled supporting night curfews even as civic officials expressed concern at the high economic cost France is likely to pay as a result of the clampdown that could be extended from four to six weeks if the situation does not improve. About the only silver lining for residents of affected French cities is that no travel restrictions have been put in place. This may lead to an exodus to the country or to smaller coastal towns.

Charting new paths

In these days of globalisation, an announcement that a country that has hitherto never produced a motor car proposes to do so may have only symbolic value. Economies of scale, proximity to ancillary suppliers and the desire to acquire an "imported" automobile, as opposed to a locally made one, often trump any feelings of patriotism the consumer may nurture. Nonetheless, the announcement that a proposal to produce the first motor car with a "Made in Bangladesh" stamp has received official approval will doubtless stir emotions among people of the country. According to reports, the car will be produced by the state-owned Pragati Industries with technical assistance from Japan's Mitsubishi Corporation. The hand-holding role is not new to the Japanese company; it had in the 1980s joined hands with Malaysia's Proton Motors to produce cars. Initially, Proton had rebadged Mitsubishi models but within a space of two decades, acquired the expertise to design its own vehicles from the ground up. While the initial foray was backed by a jingoistic push given by then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed, the company has reported steady but modest growth and now has about a 20 per cent market share and modest exports. Bangladesh will hope its car has at least some of this success, for the announcement of an indigenous car has come in the wake of proposed major changes to its automobile policy.

Traditionally, Bangladesh has relied on reconditioned, imported cars to meet its needs. These are picked up from countries that compulsorily scrap vehicles after a certain number of years. They are refurbished shortly before they turn obsolete and exported to Bangladesh. According to one estimate, 85 per cent of the cars in the country at present are reconditioned imports and while such sales have fallen in the past year, they have traditionally enjoyed robust demand. But now the government proposes to ban the import of such vehicles, as it prepares to give a push to domestic manufacturing. As per its new policy, which is in the final stages of consultation with stakeholders, imports will be phased out over five years to encourage local manufacture, a decision that will involve substantial loss of revenue initially as such imports attract hefty customs duty.

At present, Pragati assembles Mitsubishi cars while another company assembles Proton cars in Bangladesh. India's Tata Motors and Mahindra and Mahindra are reported to be interested in pursuing similar arrangements and are said to be looking for local partners. Indian ancillary manufacturers, especially those in the eastern region, may also wish to pursue opportunities in Bangladesh now that the country plans to make its own car. With Sheikh Hasina's government determined to roll out the first car manufactured in the country as early as next year, motoring in the country is set for a historic change.

Soldiers of finance

Financial literacy has now acquired nuance with the onset of digital financial services (DFS), considered the most powerful tool for financial inclusion. Offering basic financial services through mobile phones, point-of-sale devices, and networks of small-scale agents, DFS have the potential to reach more people, at a lower cost, with greater convenience than traditional 'brick and mortar' banking services

Financial services are analogous to safe water, basic healthcare and primary education - they are essential to enable people to participate in the benefits of a modern, market-based economy. Ideal financial societies are those which provide safe and convenient ways that enable people to navigate their daily financial lives. The poor need to set aside money in times of plenty and draw it in lean times. In addition, they should be able to borrow, make and receive payments, and manage risk.

Without a safe place to save money, it's difficult to cope with the unexpected or to plan for the future. Without access to affordable credit, it is difficult to acquire an asset or set up a business. Without insurance, all your security can be wiped out by one misfortune.

But for people to be able to use financial services, they need to be literate enough to understand the basics of these monetary affairs. Merely opening physical accounts as flag posts of financial identity won't help unless they are actively used by people for managing their money. To make this possible people must be given the ability to understand and execute matters of personal finance, including basic numeracy and literacy, budgeting, investing, and risk diversification. This skill is known as financial literacy. It is a combination of financial awareness, knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviours necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve financial well-being.

In simple terms, it refers to a set of skills that allows people to manage their money wisely along with some understanding of essential financial concepts, not the least of which is an appreciation of the trade-off between risk and return. It is the single biggest skill that can ensure economic well-being and freedom.

People with robust financial skills and a strong grasp of financial principles can better understand and negotiate the financial landscape and avoid possible traps. Conversely, people with a lower degree of financial literacy struggle to understand money matters and their potential impact on financial well-being. Financial ignorance carries significant costs and results in people spending more on transaction fees, getting overextended with debts since they are ripe prospects for predatory practices. They usually fall prey to aggressive marketing and end up with troublesome financial products.

In the last few years financial literacy has gained great momentum because it is seen as an assured path to universal financial inclusion. The financial inclusion ecosystem has become active with several socially-minded young entrepreneurs having come on board. A promising young social entrepreneur to join this community is Neha Mishra whose Fin Lit Project has a singular aim - to spread financial literacy among young corporate employees initially and then to cover educational institutions too. The Fin Lit Project is aiming to educate engineers about personal finances and make them



understand how, with the right tools, they can become financially literate and independent. She then proposes to move on to other segments.

In 2017, her husband was diagnosed with a life-threatening disease and had to take a break from career. That is when she realized the need for proper balance between financial planning and financial management. She realized the importance of learning to manage personal finances on one's own so that one could make one's money grow and prepare for uncertainties.

The financial environment is now populated by a huge range of complex and nuanced products. In such a situation, literate and working populations tend to feel overwhelmed by the range of options and the arcane financial vocabulary in which these options are couched. To keep abreast, even those who are financially literate need to brush up on the latest developments. "We need to develop a full suite of financial literacy interventions so that more youth and women develop the confidence and skills to manage their own finances. On account of financial illiteracy, they get saddled with risky levels of debt", avers Neha.

Neha is an alumnus of IIT Madras. She has worked for about a decade in software firms and in their learning and development departments. She was one of five people from across the world shortlisted and among the final two who got a chance to work with Eric Ries, author of The Lean Startup who was setting up an ethical stock exchange in New York. Prior to that, she worked as an independent financial analyst and investor for two years and in 2019, she was a NISM-certified Currency Derivatives and Equity Trader.

Her experience of working with LTSE (Long Term Stock Exchange) taught her so much about life at Wall Street, internal functioning of stock exchanges and gave her huge opportunities to be at NYSE, Nasdaq, Stern School of Business and so on. Once back from New York, she decided to work on The Fin Lit

Project. The Fin Lit Project is pre-incubated at IIM Bangalore and has most recently won funding support and incubation from IIIT Delhi.

Their flagship module is a Basic Financial Literacy Programme, a five-hour web session that covers stock market anatomy and products, stocks, bonds, mutual funds and an introduction to derivatives. Sessions cover elementary yet critical concepts like time value of money, the power of compounding, basic numeracy and risk diversification.

"Functional proficiency in core money skills and their subtle nuances are crucial if we are to successfully manage future money needs. Financial literacy is expected to impart the means to transform ordinary individuals into informed and questioning users of financial services", emphasizes Neha.

There is a gamut of financial concepts which Neha believes every college student must know in order to handle personal finances prudently. These include interest compounding; loan amortization; inflation and how it affects an individual's income, wealth, debt, and savings; mortgage borrowing and various mortgage terms, mortgage length, fixed vs. floating rate, and mortgage points; the trade-off between risk and returns, and risk diversification and its role in common financial situations.

Neha understands that financial inclusion and financial literacy are two sides of the equation. Financial inclusion works on the supply side by providing financial market/services that people demand whereas financial literacy stimulates the demand side by making people aware of what they need. Therefore, financial inclusion and financial education must move in concert; each triggers a supportive reaction in the other.

Everybody is happy while getting a loan. The problem begins when you must repay the loan. Neha emphasizes that it should be dinned into borrowers' minds again and again that excessive borrowing (taking multiple loans) and sub-lending or

ghost lending (allowing the use of your identity for a loan that someone else uses) can be extremely toxic for financial lives - for communities at all levels of income.

She avers that people with robust financial skills and a strong grasp of financial principles can better understand and negotiate the financial landscape and avoid possible traps. Conversely, people with a lower degree of financial literacy struggle to understand money matters and their potential impact on financial well-being.

Financial literacy has now acquired nuance with the onset of digital financial services (DFS), considered the most powerful tool for financial inclusion. Offering basic financial services through mobile phones, point-of-sale devices, and networks of small-scale agents, DFS have the potential to reach more people, at a lower cost, with greater convenience than traditional "brick and mortar" banking services.

However, millions of people cannot read, write, or understand the long number strings necessary to transact on mobile phones. We need to aggressively train the end-users on the nuances of digital finance that will empower them to adopt technology with ease. Women are eager to learn how to use digital payments because it gives them greater privacy and financial control - something they value a great deal.

At a time when individuals are increasingly being called upon to make complex financial decisions, a large fraction of households have only a rudimentary understanding of basic concepts. Moreover, participation in financial markets is far from universal, and individuals with low levels of education and financial literacy are the least likely to participate in these markets. These correlations have motivated policy makers to devote substantial resources to financial literacy education. Functional proficiency in core money skills and their subtle nuances are crucial if they are to successfully manage future money needs. The complex nature of our financial lives has given rise to a new concept - financial capability.

There is still a lot of illiteracy on issues relating to loan defaults and how they can be handled. A deferment of repayment of loan instalment, which borrowers and their representatives usually clamour for in such events, doesn't give any real benefit to the borrower; it is not even a palliative. A loan holiday or deferment is just a postponement of a liability on which the borrower will continue to incur cost by way of the accruing interest, thus actually increasing his financial burden.

There is strong need for collaboration and convergence between those working towards financial literacy. A weakness has been the absence of a strong conduit for transfer of knowledge and practice between institutions and geographies having successful experiences. This can lead to cross learning and cross-pollination and sharing of best practices, unique experiences and breakthroughs, and both successes and failures.

A MEMBER OF THE

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ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

Indonesian minister says virus vaccine will be halal

The Indonesian government has initiated various efforts to secure access to a Covid-19 vaccine. Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto, who also helms the national economic recovery and Covid-19 response team, said in a virtual meeting on Monday that the government aimed to secure 320 million doses of a Covid-19 vaccine. When asked about its halal status, Airlangga explained that the government had consulted with the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) to ensure the vaccine would receive halal certification.

"We have discussed it with MUI and insya Allah God willing the vaccine will be halal," he said. The halal status of potential Covid-19 vaccines has been a major concern for many.

Earlier this month, Vice-President and senior Muslim cleric Ma'ruf Amin said the potential Covid-19 vaccine currently being developed by the government did not have to be halal. Vice-presidential spokesperson Masduki Baidowi said Ma'ruf's statement was made during a meeting with Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment LB Pandjaitan about progress in the development of the vaccine candidate currently being developed by Chinese biopharmaceutical company Sinovac in partnership with state-owned pharmaceutical firm PT Bio Farma. Tempo.co reported on Monday that the Covid-19 Vaccine Inspection Team, which comprises the Indonesian Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (BPOM), the Ministry of Health, MUI and representatives of PT Bio Farma, would fly to China on Wednesday.

The Jakarta Post
nesday to inspect the quality and halal status of the Sinovac and Cansino vaccine candidates. "The halal status of the Sinovac and Cansino [potential] vaccines will be guaranteed through MUI participating in the data research process," Bio Farma president director Honesti Basir said in a statement. With regard to Covid-19 vaccine procurement, Airlangga said the government was working to secure a vaccine supply in the fourth quarter of this year. He explained that British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical company AstraZeneca had committed to provide 100 million doses of a vaccine to Indonesia. He added that health minister Terawan Agus Putranto, Minister of State-Owned Enterprises Erick Thohir and Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno LP Marsudi were currently preparing the first 50 million doses of a vaccine. Airlangga also said that President Joko Widodo had signed Presidential Regulation No 99/2020 on vaccine procurement. When asked about the status of the vaccine candidate currently being developed by Sinovac in partnership with Bio Farma, he replied that the result would be released in December, according to the plan.

PERSONAL

PRAVER To St. Jude (To be said in grave need) — St. Jude, glorious Apostle, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the name of the traitor has caused you to be forgotten by many; but the Church honours and invokes you as the Patron of things despised of; pray for me, that finally I may receive the consolations and help of Heaven in all my necessities, tribulations and sufferings, particularly (here make your request), and that I may bless God with the elect throughout eternity. Amen. St. Jude, Apostle, martyr and relative of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Mary and Joseph, intercede for me! "Day 1 of the Novena Prayer" — D.S.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Nefarious

SIR, National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah invited all opposition parties to a meeting in Srinagar to firm up a joint strategy for restoration of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir abrogated on 5 August 2019 by the Central Government after approval of both houses of Indian Parliament. Article 370 & Article 35-A were considered by many as a subterfuge for igniting secessionist activities, fomenting militancy in the J&K and benefiting a few families at the helm of power for their dynastic profiteering at the cost of exploitation of people and to create trouble for the entire country. This initiative or act or attempt of the scion of Sheikh Abdullah to collectively fight for restoration of the article 370 constitutes an act of



treason. Recent suggestion of Farooq Abdullah that the opposition parties under his leadership would even seek help from China to restore Article 370 is an open expression of anti-nationalism. Mehbooba Mufti, former chief minister and chief of PDP, former CM and NCP leader Omar Abdullah and Farooq Abdullah are 'birds of a feather who have flocked together' for

aided and abetted by Pakistan and in fact they most often behave as the spokespersons of Pakistan.

These leaders continued to misguide and mislead the Kashmiri youths to embrace terrorism, resort to acts of disruption, indiscriminate killing of army jawans and security personnel apart from thousands of common innocent people. They did not do anything tangible for their development in terms of education, welfare and career-growth. These leaders have instigated, injected and patronised youth and general people to develop a jihadi attitude towards the people of the country creating a state of instability. The Abdullahs and Mehbooba must stop mooting their nefarious designs.

Yours, etc., Samares Bandyopadhyay, Kolkata, 15 October.

DEFICIENT EQ?

SIR, This has reference to the news item, 'Tanishq ad row' (15 October). The advertisement on television depicted a Hindu bride in the company of a Muslim mother-in-law. This gave rise to some controversy, leading to the withdrawal of the commercial. A Tanishq jewellery showroom in Gujarat subsequently put up a handwritten apology on its door, so as not to offend Hindu customers.

The TV ad, in its own merit, was fine to view. The copy-writers had done a good job, and, so had the actors. The ad was obviously cleared by the company owning the Tanishq brand of jewellery. But the owners of the company could probably have shown a higher level of what is called EQ, emotional quotient, knowing fully well the undercurrents in the country. Incidentally, a junior cousin of mine in California, a brat of a self-appointed activist, who speaks against anything done/proposed by the central government in India, asked for my opinion on the episode. I, in turn, proposed an advertisement for American TV, showing a white Southern bride and an African-American groom. My cousin beat a hasty retreat. The age-old adage rightly says, 'An example is better than the precept'!

Yours, etc., Ashok Kumar Ghosh, Kolkata, October 15.

Climate change effects on coral reproduction



HIMMAT BAKSHI

All coral reefs start off as a single polyp. A polyp is essentially a small tissue from the surface inside the body, somewhat similar to a sea anemone. Stony coral species live in colonies and discharge calcium carbonate, which acts as an external skeleton. Like jellyfish and sea anemone, which are their relatives, coral polyps have tentacles that are used to catch food. The tentacles are tucked away during the day, but reach out to catch their prey, mainly plankton, by stinging them.

On an annual basis, coral reefs release their gametes (reproductive cells) simultaneously. This phenomenon is most likely prompted by the right phase of the lunar and solar cycles as well as optimum water tem-

perature. Millions of eggs and sperm rise to the surface and undergo fertilization – turning the ocean into a bright blizzard-like setting which can sometimes be seen from space!

However, due to the rise in water temperatures and ocean pollution, the timing of the release of gametes in some coral species has shifted and some corals are spawning out of sync. This has been attributed to the rise in water temperatures and ocean pollution. Missing the window by a few minutes can lead to lower fertilization rates, while missing the window by hours or days suggests that individual corals are unable to fertilize. The threats climate change poses to synchronized coral spawning have not been studied, but its links to global warming and coral bleaching have been well-

established.

Corals can reproduce asexually and sexually. When a coral reproduces asexually, new clonal polyps bud off from their respective parent polyps and begin to expand and establish new colonies. Most stony coral species are broadcast spawners, which means they release a plethora of eggs and sperm into the water, distributing their offspring over a large area. The eggs and sperm form planktonic larvae called planulae by means of fission. Once the planulae are formed, they swim back down and settle on a site consisting of its favourable conditions and will form colonies which will progressively become larger.

This phenomenon occurs over the course of a few days or a week. This is done because different

species will release their gametes on different days in an attempt to prevent the hybridisation of species. This opens up the possibility of the use of evolved reproductive strategies by the corals, which, if studied to a further extent, could help us understand the science behind the 'blizzard'.

Since colonies may be separated by long distances, the timing of the release of gametes must be precise, and usually occurs in response to various environmental cues or stimuli. The spawning occurs with respect to temperature, day length and the rate at which temperature changes. While the date of spawning depends on the lunar cycle, the minute at which this event occurs is set by the solar cycle. This exposes the topic to a myriad of questions,

such as how do these simple yet amazing creatures manage to tell the time of the lunar month and sunset, with only a simple nerve net and no specialized organs?

Inside the body of a coral are highly productive algae. The algae use carbon in the water and energy from the sun to photosynthesize, and as a result the algae give approximately 95 per cent of this produced energy to the coral. In return, the algae get its essential intake of nitrogen to thrive. This is an example of a symbiotic relationship, and an example of a delicate communication process between the algae and the coral. For this, the algae have to constantly remind the coral that they belong there, and essentially tell the coral to ignore its presence. Otherwise the coral would consider the algae to be a parasite or an invader, and attack and kill it.

If the algae growth does get out of hand, the coral will send out a 'distress call', a chemical which will attract the Gobi fish. This allows the Gobi fish to eat as much of the algae as the coral wants. In protected areas where fishing is non-existent, coral reefs thrive. However, where there is overfishing, the coral reefs wither and die.

A further understanding about the timing and synchrony of coral spawning is not only beneficial for understanding the ecology of coral reef ecosystems, but the management side as well. There is a deficit with respect to data regarding timing of spawning from many coral reefs, particularly from equatorial regions. To understand this phenomenon, further research should be undertaken. Perhaps there is more to it than what meets the eye, like the use of telepathy or a particular wavelength of signals, a revolutionary form of evolved communication.

Corals are under increasing stress due to climate change, thermal stress, and light pollution. Protecting coral reefs should be as much of a focus of sustainable development as anything else. Future generations have every right to experience this little explored, least understood, beautiful aspect of nature, one that may even be supporting human lives in ways we do not comprehend.

The writer is a student of the Jindal School of Environment and Sustainability, Sonipat.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The Royal Society of Literature, whose offices are at 2, Bloomsbury Square, London, is appealing for help to restore the ruined libraries of Serbia. The University of Belgrade was founded only in 1905, but it contained not only the best library in the Balkans, but also the best in the world on the Balkans. During the bombardment of Belgrade by the Austrians, which began on July 28, 1914, the University buildings suffered terribly. The Serbian Government made an effort to save as many of the books as possible, and many volumes were transferred to St. Roman, St. Stephen, Alexiats, Nish and Mitrovitsa. But in the final invasion of Serbia by the combined forces of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, the libraries had to be left behind in the retreat, and they fell into the hands of the enemy, who systematically pillaged them, destroying such books as they did not appropriate for their own use. It is suggested that there is now a good opportunity for promoting in Serbia the study of English literature and science, which have hitherto received comparatively little attention, by the gift of standard English works. A medical faculty of the University of Belgrade is now being founded, and an English medical library would be a very appropriate gift.

NEWS ITEMS

BOMBAY UNIVERSITY

At the annual Convocation of the Bombay University, the Governor presiding as Chancellor, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Vice-Chancellor, delivered the address, choosing as his theme the report of the Calcutta University Commission. After a masterly and lengthy analysis of the report Sir Chimanlal Setalvad said, I have attempted to briefly outline the main conclusions and recommendations of the Commission and the considerations that arise in relation to them. Those conclusions and recommendations have the authority of men eminent both as educationists and men of affairs, and highly qualified to advise of the matters they were called upon to investigate. It is for us to give our most anxious consideration to their conclusions and recommendations, and determine how far it is desirable and necessary to carry out all their recommendations in this Presidency.

VICTORY OVER HATE

On Wednesday His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay laid the foundation stone of a tower which is being raised by the people of Dacca to commemorate the victory of the Allies. The site of this memorial is the Coronation Garden, adjoining the Buckland Bund, by the side of the Buriganga, and the tower will form an imposing addition to the beautiful panorama which greets the eye of those who come to the city of Dacca by water. The Municipal Commissioners had erected in the garden a large pandal, sufficient to accommodate 200 to 300 people. Outside the garden a large crowd of all classes assembled to greet Lord Ronaldshay. On his arrival, a guard-of-honour, furnished by the Eastern Bengal Frontier Rifles under Mr. Davies, was drawn up facing the pandal.

THE CRIMEA

Heavy fighting is proceeding in the Crimea. The Bolsheviks are receiving reinforcements from the Polish front and are attacking vigorously, supported by massed aeroplane bombings. General Wrangel is holding his own. General Wrangel's raiders have crossed the Don and have occupied Kontstantinovskaya, cutting the Tsarsitsin-Ekaterinodar Railway and threatening to isolate the Kuban Cossacks. French warships in the Black Sea will not improbably lend a hand to General Wrangel. The Inter-Allied mission in Posen telegraphed that the first Polish line of defence had been restored and that the Bolsheviks on the south-eastern front were retreating rapidly in face of the Polish counter-offensive.

COUNCIL RULES

The Joint Select Committee's second report on the Draft Rules prescribes the detailed constitution of the Diarchical system of Government, and also the subjects transferred to Ministers and the allocation of finances. The first point observed is that the Secretary of State in Council is divested of control over transferred subjects, save for such purposes as safeguarding the administration of central subjects, arbitrating between two contending provinces, safeguarding the Imperial interests, and determining the position of the Government of India in respect of questions between India and other parts of the British Empire. The Committee take a similar view as to the undesirability of prescribing by statute the extent to which the Secretary of State in Council is prepared to delegate to the Provincial Governments power of control over reserved subjects.

DELHI MOTOR SHOW

The motor show which is to be held in Delhi in February next, under the auspices of the Motor Trade Association, is open only to those motor firms in India which are agents, or recognised sub-agents of a car, lorry, motor cycle, or motor accessories company. It is hoped that the Viceroy will perform the opening ceremony. Along with the show a motor gymkhana will be held, in which there will be a competition for private owners as well as motor firms. A strong managing committee with the Chief Commissioner as its chairman, and Major Morgan as honorary organising secretary, has been formed. During the show days a cinematograph will be run, and there will also be a number of other side-shows.

IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

Something that went awry

The star of the headlines for a long time, the coronavirus, has been finally sidelined in my hometown of Washington. The election of a president will be the big news for the next several weeks. Sadly, it is no more of an uplifting story than a disastrous epidemic.

I am taken aback by the harsh mood of the election, the anger and ferocity of the campaigns. Of course, the stakes are high; the effort is to defeat the opposite side, preferably with a knock-out blow. But the bitterness of adversity, the venomous charges levelled against the candidates, leave many of us stunned. Granted that the two sides will attack each other, but the air of hate and contempt is suffocating. I have lived through ten US presidential elections, seven of them at close range as a capital resident. I have not seen an election as acrimonious as the current one.

The world has taken a long time to go from the rule of a monarch (usually a drunk, whoring scoundrel) or of some aristocrats (typically marauding, sycophantic hoods) to the rule of the people. Aristotle called 'democracy' the rule of the mob, and that is the rule we, the ordinary people, want. But now the scoundrels and hoods are taking their revenge. From the US to India, including the charming bastions of democracy like China and Russia, elections have become a money-driven game of manipulation. You and I have a measly vote each, but from Koch brothers in the US and to the Ambani brothers in India business leaders have expert publicists and lobbyists manipulating thousands of voters. Not to forget political leaders who have an army of paid trolls influencing millions of minds through social media. Today the 'selling' of a presi-

dent – or a prime minister – is no different from the selling of soap or snake oil.

But even this atmosphere of animosity is less disastrous than the other part which is hardly noticed. The main idea of a presidential election is not the elevation of an individual, but the 'electing' of an option, the collection of ideas and policies of which a candidate is both an advocate and a symbol. How does the public make its choice if a candidate does not say anything about the policies he likes and, in fact, scorns the idea of talking about policies? Just as in India, where there was no talk in the last election about the terrible plight of farmers or the lagging economic progress, in the US there is no real discussion about the life-and-death issues like gross inequality or climate change or even budgetary profligacy.

The presidential election we are about to see will be like a polished play you can see on Broadway, where there will be drama and fanfare, concocted and choreographed. There will be excitement at regular intervals, exactly as you expect in a decent stage production. There will be heroes and villains, comic and tragic side characters, all played with breath-taking competence so that you can believe them. I expect there will be small snafus and a couple of big bungles to keep you in suspense – with any luck, resolved by the Supreme Court divinities, exactly along party lines.

What you will not see is a genuine look at the issues like stable income, inexpensive education and decent healthcare for the vast number of people in the country. What you will not have are solutions to the most horrendous problems, such as homeless people, helpless drug

addicts, minimum-wage workers and their impoverished children. What you will not hear, if the last several years are any guide, any genuine, root-cause analysis of the burning problems of widespread racism, police brutality and pockets of scandalous and growing poverty.

Does this seem an over-pessimistic portrayal? It is simply a hard look at a society that is sinking slowly in the global ranking of social progress. According to the Social Progress Index 2020, where experts assess the relative quality of life in different countries, the US has dropped nine positions in the last nine years and is now 28th in the world. Its traffic fatality rate and sanitation facility and internet access are behind most

advanced countries. Its universities are the best in the world, but its basic education ranks 91st, comparable to Uzbekistan and Mongolia. Its medical technology is the world's finest, but it is 97th in providing health care access, comparable to Mongolia and Jordan. What happened to the country Reagan described as 'the shining city on the hill'? How did it slide so far in the muddy valley? There is a lesson here for all of us, in the US or India. When you choose for leadership a glib talker with a false dogma of national power and a spurious promise of economic progress and then cater essentially only to your own power, the success of your party and the wealth of business groups that serve your interests, you are choosing the road to decline.

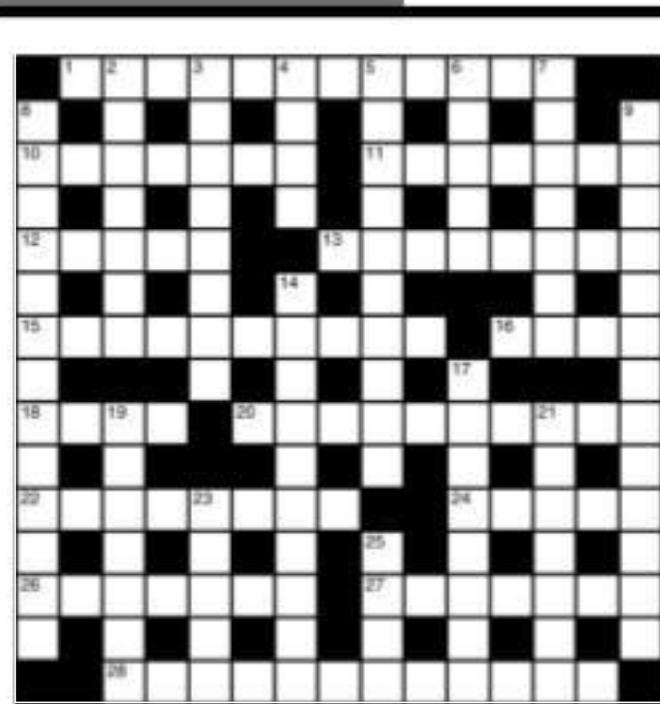
Elections come at rare intervals, but they demand a chance to be open and fair with people, share honestly your policies, explain them to the nation and not bluff people with false promises of national strength, military power and divisive strategies. You need to humbly show your hand and let the voters choose. That is the ground rule for playing the game of democracy.

Kicking the chess board does not qualify as a style of playing chess. And a face-down board is the crest of a country that has fallen on its face.

The writer is a Washington-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com

NO 28108

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Painful rides might result in subconscious mistake (8,4)
- 10 Foolish for native mother to leave (7)
- 11 Falls back again with gunners (7)
- 12 Half-heartedly stagger round the bend (5)
- 13 Brown ale has no tax, reportedly? (8)
- 15 Salerno may be the home of jazz (3,7)

DOWN

- 16 Do evening work for press club ... (4)
- 18 ... and in Berlin, nothing is free (4)
- 20 Convoluted spring is two seasons, by the sound of it (10)
- 22 Oban and Utah combining to build fast transport link (8)
- 24 A danger to other remaining creatures at sea, initially? (5)
- 26 Dandy joins apple hunt (7)
- 27 Tell the scorer (7)
- 28 Walking out (12)
- 2 East End artist produces colourful display? (7)
- 3 Where nurse may be heading is unfortunate (8)
- 4 Nick quietly leaves island (4)
- 5 Teetotaller tattooist goes after unqualified practitioner? (3-7)
- 6 Grasp real change at noon (5)
- 7 Cover render patch (7)
- 8 Provision for others to benefit on expiry date (4,9)

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



Africa could be the next century's economic growth engine, and L&T hopes to be a part of its journey

S N SUBRAHMANYAM
CEO AND MD, LARSEN & TOUBRO

THUMBNAILS

Hind Zinc pact: Vedanta Group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (H2L) has signed an agreement with Gujarat government to set up a greenfield zinc smelter in the state. The project will entail an investment of up to ₹10,000 crore in phases, creating more than 5,000 direct and indirect jobs operational by 2022, H2L said in a statement.

Oil PSUs portal: Public sector oil companies such as IOC and ONGC will launch a portal to provide information on their capital goods requirements to domestic industry in line with the government's Aatmanirbhav Bharat campaign. The portal "aims to highlight the capital goods requirement of oil and gas majors besides the items related to maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO)," an Indian Oil Corp (IOC) Press release said here.

Amazon FC: E-commerce major Amazon India has opened a new fulfillment centre (FC) of 1.2 million cubic feet or 11,000 square feet at Uluberia in Howrah district in West Bengal to meet the growing demand ahead of the festive season, the company said in a statement.

Magicbricks foray: Real estate portal Magicbricks said it has entered into home loan services and has tied up with leading banks. The company aims to offer homeowners a plethora of integrated services from the discovery to the transaction phase, the company said in a statement.

Mangalam Cement unveils new eco-friendly cement: Mangalam Cement Limited, one of the leading cement manufacturers, launched an environment friendly premium quality cement "Mangalam PromaxX" in a virtual launch event. Co-chairpersons of the company Vidula Jalan and Anshuman Jalan unveiled Mangalam PromaxX and expressed their confidence that the product will fulfil all requirements of modern day construction works, according to a Press release statement.

India amongst top 3 choices for investments: Survey

Respondents see the country amongst leading manufacturing destinations of the world by 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 OCTOBER

India has emerged as one of the top three choices for investments in the next 2-3 years, with more than two-thirds of respondents in a survey of multinational companies (MNCs) citing the country as their number one choice for future investments.

According to the FDI survey released recently by CII in association with EY, about half of the respondents see India amongst the top three economies or leading manufacturing destinations of the world by 2025.

Besides, 25 per cent of the respondents, who represent non-Indian headquartered (HQ) MNCs, view India as the first choice for future investments.

The respondents cited market potential, skilled workforce and political stability as the top three reasons to make India their favoured destination.

Other key factors which contribute to the attractive-

KEY FACTORS

» The respondents cited market potential, skilled workforce and political stability as the top three reasons to make India their favoured destination.

» Other key factors which contribute to the attractiveness of India as an investment destination include cheap labour availability, policy reforms and avail-

ability of raw materials.

» Recent reforms in the country such as corporate tax cuts, "ease of doing business" measures, simplification of labour laws, FDI reforms, and focus on human capital have emerged as the top drivers for fresh investments, CII stated on the survey's findings.

ness of India as an investment destination include cheap labour availability, policy reforms and availability of raw materials.

Recent reforms in the country such as corporate tax cuts, "ease of doing business" measures, simplification of labour laws, FDI reforms, and focus on human capital have emerged as the top drivers for fresh investments, CII stated on the survey's findings.

Non-Indian HQ MNCs opined that major investment in infrastructure and 100 smart

cities as well as financial sector reforms will help in establishing India as a favourable destination for FDI, it said.

The survey revealed that over 80 per cent of the respondents and 71 per cent of non-Indian HQ respondents plan to make investments globally in the next 2-3 years.

About 30 per cent of companies are planning to invest more than \$500 million.

The CII-EY survey results strongly indicate that India will be the next global investment hotspot with a high propor-



Indian HQ companies believe corporate tax rate reduction would be the prime mover of future investments.

Infrastructure development, faster clearances, and proper implementation of improved labour laws and labour availability are the top three issues the companies want the government to focus on, followed by research and development (R&D) and innovation, and tax reforms, as per the survey.

In terms of trade policy reforms, investors would like to see a faster turnaround time for exports and imports, improved cargo handling, and trade facilitation measures to be in place.

The survey aims to gauge market sentiment amongst Indian as well as non-Indian MNCs.

It assesses India's competitiveness in terms of key parameters and analyses whether India is likely to be the "+1" jurisdiction for those seeking to relocate investments or making fresh investments.

DoT requests DoS, defence to vacate spectrum for 5G

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 OCTOBER

The department of telecom (DoT) has urged the space department and defence ministry to vacate airwaves in the medium and high range spectrum bands for rolling out 5G services, according to sources.

The issue was discussed in a meeting of a committee formed under the chairmanship of Cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba to resolve spectrum related issues, they added.

Differences among the DoT, department of space (DoS) and the defence ministry have led to delay in rollout of 5G services in the country. The government had set a target to launch 5G services by 2020, but sources said the auction of spectrum can be held only in early 2021 if the issues are resolved in time.

The survey aims to gauge market sentiment amongst Indian as well as non-Indian MNCs.

The DoT has requested the defence ministry to vacate 100 megahertz (MHz) of spectrum in the frequency band of 3300-3400 MHz and use frequencies in the 3000-3100 MHz band.

It has urged the DoS to

vacate spectrum in the frequency band of 3600-3700 MHz, the sources said.

"The DoT is now looking for 400 MHz of contiguous spectrum in the medium band which can be efficiently utilised by telecom operators to meet standard broadband speed for 5G services," a government source said.

E-mailed queries sent to the DoT, DoS and the defence ministry in this regard did not elicit an immediate response.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has given price recommendation only on spectrum in the 3300-3600 MHz band for the next round of auction based on reference sought by the DoT.

The Trai has recommended a price of Rs 492 crore per megahertz for spectrum in the 3300-3600 MHz band.

Telecom operators interested in buying radiowaves for 5G services will have to shell out a minimum of Rs 9,840 crore on pan-India basis to buy spectrum in the 3,300-3,600 MHz band as the Trai has suggested that it "should be put to auction in the block size of 20 MHz".

Bank credit grows 5.7% in June quarter: RBI data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 18 OCTOBER

Bank credit growth decelerated on a year-on-year basis for the sixth successive quarter and stood at 5.7 per cent in the three months to June 2020, according to the Reserve Bank data.

During the quarter, moderation in advances was witnessed across all bank groups.

Industrial credit contracted by 0.6 per cent year-on-year in June quarter and its share in overall advances declined to 30.8 per cent from 32.8 per cent a year ago, according to the data on outstanding credit of scheduled commercial banks for June 2020, released by the RBI.

Credit to the household sector increased by 9 per cent and its share in total cred-

it rose to 50.2 per cent from 48.7 per cent a year ago.

The weighted average lending rate (WALR) on outstanding credit declined by 25 basis points during the quarter ended June 2020 and by 55 basis points over the last one year, the data showed.

The data captures various characteristics of bank credit such as occupation/activeness and organisational sector of the borrower, type of account and interest rates.

Data covering 1,25,686 branches of 90 scheduled commercial banks (excluding regional rural banks) are presented for bank groups, population groups and states, the RBI said.

Separately, a RBI release on "deposits with scheduled commercial banks - March 2020" showed that the house-

hold sector (including proprietor/ partnership firms) held the dominant share (63.5 percent) in total deposits, followed by non-financial corporations, general government, rest of the world and financial corporations.

Individuals (including Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs)), who are major constituents of the household sector, accounted for 55.6 percent share in total deposits in March 2020, it showed.

The share of deposit accounts held by females has been increasing over the years and stood at 32.0 percent in March 2020, the data showed. Amidst general decline in interest rates, the share of term deposits bearing less than 7 per cent interest rate increased to 65.7 per cent in March 2020.

Despite being in the biggest pandemic we had, India is going to create same numbers of unicorn in 2020 as we did in 2018 and 2019, which is a testament of our strong ecosystem," TIE Delhi-NCR president Rajan Anandan said

Country to have 60,000 start-ups, 100 unicorns by 2025: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 OCTOBER

India is expected to have 60,000 start-ups and 100 companies with valuation of over \$1 billion by 2025, a TiE Delhi-NCR report, in association with Zinnov, said.

The report observed that business recovery of start-ups is back on track after the lockdown. However, 12-15 per cent of start-ups are facing risk of survival and a similar percentage of start-ups have closed their business.

"Despite being in the biggest pandemic we had, India is going to create same numbers of unicorn in 2020 as we did in 2018 and 2019, which is a testament of our strong ecosystem," TIE Delhi-NCR president Rajan Anandan said

while sharing the findings of the report.

"We do believe that India is on track to have 60,000 start-up by 2025. We are well on track to have 100 unicorns in India by 2025," he added.

He said investments are also on track for recovery.

TiE is a non-profit organisation devoted to entrepreneurs in all industries.

There are around 38,000 active start-ups, out of which 26 are unicorns. The start-up ecosystem in India had attracted \$14.5 billion of funding in 2019, the report titled "Covid-19 and the antifragility of Indian start-up ecosystem", said.

The report said start-ups are expected to create 1.5 to 1.6 million jobs by 2025.

The study included most of the business data till the end

of February and compared it with data till the end of September, Anandan said.

According to the report, direct job creation in the start-up ecosystem will remain flat in 2020 as about 25,000 jobs in several sectors like hospitality, mobility, among others, have been lost, while a similar number of jobs have been created in some sectors like edutech, communications, online fitness, among others.

Online life insurance, over-the-top platforms, electron-

ic e-commerce, online gaming, digital payments, online stock brokerages, online grocery have not only recovered by the end of September to pre-Covid period but also seen growth in the range of 10-50 per cent.

Education technology platforms and online health insurance have recovered up to 200 per cent, while online fitness and online telecommunication start-ups have seen up to 500 per cent recovery, the report said.

Automotive, travel and hospitality, mobility and logistics are among the worst hit segments and there has been a significant drop in their funding.

"There are 15 per cent of Indian start-ups that are at survival risk," Anandan said.

More fiscal boosters likely: Analysts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 18 OCTOBER

crore fiscal stimulus package announced by the government in May.

However, BofA Securities estimated it at 12.7 per cent of the GDP as it expects GDP contraction to be only 7.5 per cent for FY21.

On Monday, the government announced Rs 73,000 crore direct fiscal support to generate demand.

The measures include advance payment of a part of wages to Central employees and cash in lieu of LTC, and the Centre will offer Rs 12,000 crore special interest free 50-year loans to the states for capital expenditure.

The latest announcements come with a "conditions apply" and look like "too little and too late," SBI Research said in a note, adding that only 10-15 per cent of the Central employees may avail the cash scheme because of the mandatory GST component in the offer.

"The LTC scheme is unlikely to work unless the government decides to pay GST component also over and above the fare entitlement amount as is done by many state-run banks," SBI Research said.

And that only the festive advance proposal offers some additional income over and above the current income and therefore is likely to help boost demand by way of discretionary consumption, as per the note.

On the other hand, BofA Securities sees further demand-side measures via subsidies to SMEs/ real estate, oil tax cuts, bank interest waiver to arrest the contraction in the economy.

With Monday's measures, it sees 1-2 per cent of GDP upside risk to our 12.7 per cent of fiscal deficit forecast for FY21, which will be funded by OMOs/ bank HTM limit hikes'.

More booster doses are

needed as "the pandemic is fast progressing from a supply shock to contain spread to a demand shock with incomes/jobs shrinking".

"In response, the potential demand-side steps could include lending rate/ tax subsidies for SMEs/ real estate; oil tax cuts; waiver of interest on interest during the moratorium; and lower income tax cuts with a pandemic cess on the rich," BofA Securities said in a note.

On the Rs 12,000-crore special interest free 50-year loans to the states to be spent till March 2021, SBI Research note said that of the total amount, Rs 10,000 crore will be provided to all states in proportion to their share in the Finance Commission devolution. The remaining amount of Rs 2,000 crore will be given to the states which meet at least three of the four reforms conditions given in the May package.

Such a trend has been seen for the first time in the country and the reason can be attributed to health awareness after the coronavirus pandemic, they said.

A total of 41,80,945 bicycles have been sold in the last five months

from May to September 2020, according to the All India Bicycle Manufacturers Association (AICMA).

AICMA secretary-general BK Thakur said the increase in demand for bicycles is unprecedented. "Probably for the first time in history, such a trend has been seen on bicycles," he said.

"Sales of bicycles have gone up by over 100 per cent in these five months. In many places people have to wait for their favourite cycle, booking has to be done," he said. In May, the number of bicycles sales was 4,56,818. This number almost doubled to 8,51,060 in June, while in September, the country sold 11,21,544 cycles in a month. In total,

41,80,945 cycles have been sold in the last five months, as per the AICMA data.

Thakur said that the coronavirus pandemic crisis has made people aware of their health and immunity but at the same time they have become conscious about social distancing.

In such a situation, a bicycle has emerged as an option, he added.

Gokul Khatri of Anand Cycle Store in Jaipur said that bicycle sales have increased by 15 to 50 per cent post lockdown. He said that people are buying bicycles to complete important tasks while keeping in mind its utility because they feel this is the cheapest and sustainable mode of transport and it also has health benefits.

The lockdown implemented in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic also brought challenges for manufacturers.

Private equity (PE) investment in Indian real estate fell by 57 per cent year-on-year to around \$2.3 billion during January-September this year as investors remained cautious due to Covid-19 pandemic, according to a Knight Frank report.

The PE investment in real estate stood at \$2,308 million during January-September 2020 as against \$5,318 million in the corresponding period of the previous year. During the entire 2019 calendar year, the PE inflow was \$6,792 million.

As per the data, office segment attracted \$1,871 million PE investment during January-September as against \$2,725 million in the year-ago period.



Sharif is playing a dangerous game by trying to create rifts in the government, the military and the judiciary

PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN
LASHING OUT IN AN AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE TO UNITED OPPPOSITION'S FIRST RALLY

The Statesman

09

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 19 OCTOBER 2020

UN arms embargoes on Iran expire

The Islamic Republic called the end of the arms embargo as a momentous day in defiance of the US regime's efforts

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHERAN, 18 OCTOBER

A decade-long U.N. arms embargo on Iran that barred it from purchasing foreign weapons like tanks and fighter jets expired on Sunday as planned under its nuclear deal with world powers, despite objections from the United States.

While insisting it planned no buying spree, Iran in theory can purchase weapons to upgrade military armament dating back to before its 1979 Islamic Revolution and sell its own locally produced gear abroad.

In practice, however, Iran's economy remains crippled by broad-reaching U.S. sanctions, and other nations may avoid arms deals with Tehran for fear of American financial retaliation.



The Islamic Republic heralded the end of the arms embargo as a momentous day for the international community... in defiance of the U.S. regime's effort."

The Trump administration, meanwhile, has insisted it has re-invoked all U.N. sanctions on Iran via a clause in the nuclear deal it withdrew from in 2018, a claim ignored by the rest of the world.

Today's normalization of Iran's defense cooperation with the world is a win for the

cause of multilateralism and peace and security in our region, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on Twitter.

The United Nations banned Iran from buying major foreign weapon systems in 2010 amid tensions over its nuclear program. An earlier embargo targeted Iranian arms exports.

The U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency predicted in

2019 that if the embargo ended, Iran likely would try to purchase Russian Su-30

fighter jets, Yak-130 trainer aircraft and T-90 tanks.

Teheran also may try to buy Russia's S-400 anti-aircraft missile system and its Bastion coastal defense missile system, the DIA said. China also could sell Iran arms.

Iran long has been outmatched by U.S.-backed Gulf nations like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which have purchased billions of dollars of advanced American weaponry. In response, Tehran turned toward developing locally made ballistic missiles.

Iran has blasted Gulf Arab purchases of U.S.-made defense equipment as regrettably lucrative weapon deals with some of those arms used in the ongoing war in Yemen.

That conflict pits a Saudi-led coalition backing the country's internationally recognized government against

rebel forces backed by Iran.

The U.N. arms embargoes, however, did not stop Iran from sending weapons ranging from assault rifles to ballistic missiles to Yemen's Houthi rebels. While Teheran denies arming the Houthis, Western governments and weapons experts repeatedly have linked Iranian arms to the rebels.

Six Gulf Arab nations that backed the extension of the arms embargoes noted arms shipments to Yemen in their objection to the resumption of any weapon sales to Iran.

They also mentioned in a letter to the U.N. Security Council that Iran mistakenly shot down a Ukrainian passenger plane in January and its navy accidentally killed 19 sailors in a missile strike during an exercise.

The U.N. also linked Iran to a 2019 attack on Saudi Arabia's main crude oil refinery,

though Teheran denies any links and Yemen's rebel Houthis claimed responsibility.

Sunday also marked the end of U.N. travel bans on a number of Iranian military and paramilitary Revolutionary Guard members.

Tensions between Iran and the U.S. reached fever pitch at the start of the year, when an American drone killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad.

Tehran retaliated with a ballistic missile attack on U.S. forces in Iraq that injured dozens. Meanwhile, Iran has steadily broken limits of the nuclear deal in an attempt to pressure Europe at salvaging the accord.

In recent months, provocations on both sides have slowed as President Donald Trump faces a re-election campaign against former Vice President Joe Biden.

their first-ever face-to-face talks in Qatar, where the Taliban have had a political office for many years. The negotiations are meant to end the country's decades-long war.

Arif Aber, spokesman for the provincial governor in Ghor, said the blast was so strong that its sound could be heard across Feroz Koh, the capital city of the province.

It damaged and partially destroyed a few government buildings, including the police chief's office, the women's affairs department and the provincial office for refugees.

Aber said. On Friday, the Taliban agreed to suspend attacks in southern Afghanistan that had displaced thousands of residents in recent days.

It came after the U.S. vowed to halt all strikes and night raids in keeping with the peace agreement the U.S. signed with the Taliban in February.

Car bombing in Afghanistan kills 13, wounds 120

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, 18 OCTOBER

A suicide car bombing on Sunday killed at least 13 people and wounded around 120 others in Afghanistan's western Ghor province, officials said. The head of a hospital in Ghor, Mohammad Omer Lalzad, said emergency staff were treating dozens of people with both serious and light injuries from the bombing. He expected the death toll to rise.

Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Aran said the car bombing struck near the entrance of the provincial police chief's office and other nearby government buildings in the area.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in Ghor, which comes amid an uptick in attacks by the Taliban as representatives of the group and Afghan government officials hold

Second cease-fire violation in Nagorno-Karabakh

ASSOCIATED PRESS
YEREVAN (ARMENIA), 18 OCTOBER

Despite a second attempt at a cease-fire, Armenia and Azerbaijan traded accusations on Sunday of violating the new truce in their destructive conflict over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The latest truce, which was announced Saturday and took force at midnight, was the second attempt to establish a cease-fire since heavy fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh on Sept. 27.

The fighting and shelling has killed hundreds of people both combatants and civilians and marks the biggest escalation of a decades-old conflict over the region in more

than a quarter-century.

The fighting, involving heavy artillery, rockets and drones, has continued despite repeated calls for cessation of hostilities coming from around the globe. It also raises the specter of a wider conflict that could draw in Russia and Turkey and threaten Caspian Sea energy exports.

Armenian military officials on Sunday reported artillery shelling and missile strikes by Azerbaijani forces in the conflict zone overnight. In the morning, the enemy launched an attack in the southern direction," and there were casualties and wounded on both sides," Armenian Defense Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanian said.

Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry, in turn, maintained that

Armenian forces used mortars and artillery in the conflict zone overnight despite the cease-fire and in the morning attempted attacks in several directions.

The ministry accused Armenia of using large-caliber weapons to attack the positions of the Azerbaijani army in two regions north of Nagorno-Karabakh along the border, a claim Armenian military officials denied.

The Azerbaijani military also said it downed an Armenian Su-25 warplane attempting to inflict airstrikes on the positions of the Azerbaijan army in the Fabrayil direction, but Stepanian dismissed the statement as untrue. Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia

since a war there ended in 1994. According to Nagorno-Karabakh officials, 673 of their servicemen have been killed in the renewed fighting. Azerbaijan hasn't disclosed its military losses, but says 60 civilians have died so far and 270 have been wounded. Turkey has publicly backed oil-rich Azerbaijan in the conflict and vowed to help it reclaim its territory.

Russia, which has a security pact with Armenia but has cultivated warm ties with Azerbaijan, hosted top diplomats from both countries last week for more than 10 hours of talks that ended with the initial cease-fire agreement. But the deal frayed immediately after the truce took effect last Saturday, with both sides blaming each other for breaching it.

AGAINST ALL ODDS



Protesters shelter from the rain during an anti-government rally in Bangkok on Sunday, as they continue for the fourth consecutive day to defy an emergency decree banning gatherings. AFP

US, Israeli envoys fly to Bahrain to further nascent bilateral relations

JERUSALEM, 18 OCTOBER

A joint American-Israeli delegation headed on Sunday for Bahrain, where officials will be signing a number of bilateral agreements following an announcement last month to normalize relations.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's national security adviser, Meir Ben-Shabbat, led the delegation that flew out of Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport. Israel's commercial El Al flight 973 a nod to the international dialing code for Bahrain will fly through Saudi Arabia's airspace en route to Manama, where dignitaries from all three countries will speak at a ceremony after landing.

US, Israeli and Bahraini flags festooned the tarmac before take-off. Ben-Shabbat, one of the key Israeli officials involved in negotiations with Bahrain, said ahead of take-off that the visit will translate plans to actions and concrete agreements" with the signing of a range of deals involving finance, investment, trade, tourism, communications, technology and agriculture.

The decision to establish ties with Israel has outraged the Palestinians, whose leadership has blasted the Bahraini move, and a similar Emirati deal, as a betrayal and an undermining of the Arab stance that recognition of Israel should come only after Palestinians achieve an independent state.

Pandemic, politics lead to closure of storied Hong Kong bar

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG, 18 OCTOBER

Nearly 15 years ago, Grace Ma decided to name her bar Club 71, in commemoration of a July 1, 2003 rally where hundreds of thousands of Hong Kongers protested a proposed national security law for the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

I took the name Club 71, because somehow it is more hopeful, with half a million Hong Kong people having a demonstration, a rally, to stand for themselves, not to ignore what's going on in Hong Kong, said Ma.

For years, the storied bar

has served as a watering hole for the city's pro-democracy activists and intellectuals, who could freely engage in discussions over a round of beer or two.

Then the coronavirus pandemic hit and, in a blow to the city's Western-style freedoms, the central government in Beijing in June imposed sweeping national security legislation targeting political expression in response to massive anti-government protests last year. For Ma, the troubles meant it was time to shutter the business for good.

Months of government-mandated bar closures as part of coronavirus restrictions had pushed Club 71's finances

deeper into the red, and operating the bar no longer made financial sense, she said. The bar will close at the end of October. We have closed for three months, out of the past six months, said Ma, who is in her 60s. For our business, it's impossible. Social distancing restrictions have also halved the capacity of the city's bars and restaurants, making it more difficult for them to turn a profit.

Restaurants are allowed to have four at one table but

bars only two per table, she said, pointing out that bars have been subject to much stricter restrictions, compared to eateries. In the last days of the bar, customers have shown up in force, gathering outside in the park and occasionally milling in and out as they order pints of beer.

The colourful interior walls are plastered with posters advertising art exhibitions as well as pro-democracy artwork.

This is a place in Hong Kong where people can drop by and exchange ideas, as long as everyone respects each other, they can say whatever they want, said Ma.

News of the bar's imminent

closure was disappointing for some of its regulars, who cherished the unique atmosphere and the mix of people.

There are very few bars of this kind in Hong Kong. We call it the quiet bar, which allows people to chat with each other, said Keung Fung, 41, another loyal patron and a former Hong Kong student union representative.

It is very unfortunate (that the bar is closing), he said. I'll need to look for another bar with similar atmosphere.

Some of Club 71's customers also include former lawmaker and pro-democracy activist Leung Kwok-hung, known as Long Hair in Hong Kong.

Leung had been a regular in Club 71's predecessor, Club 64. Ma had also run Club 64, before a skyrocketing rent forced her to move to its current location in Hong Kong's Sheung Wan neighbourhood. It was then that she renamed the bar to Club 71.

It is a hub for everyone to connect and communicate with each other, sometimes sit around and discuss what to do. So you can say it's a meeting point, said Leung, who had visited the bar for a beer.

Other famous bargoers over the years included Hong Kong singer Denise Ho as well as acclaimed filmmaker Christopher Doyle.



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Turkey finds more gas reserves in Black Sea. Another 85 billion cubic metres were added to the reserves we had discovered

TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	32	27 CL
HONG KONG	26	20 CL
TOKYO	16	13 R
LONDON	14	12 CL
DUBAI	35	23 S
SAN FRANCISCO	19	12 CL
NEW YORK	20	15 CL
MOSCOW	6	2 CL

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

THUMBNAILS



People walk along the Red Square in downtown Moscow on Sunday. AFP

PIA's former MD arrested for 'illegal' hiring: Pakistan International Airlines' former MD Ajiaz Haroon has been arrested on charges of illegal appointment of a Pakistani-American to a senior position at the national flag carrier at a huge salary package in violation of human resource department rules, according to a media report. PTI

Turkish Cypriots pick new leader: Turkish Cypriots began voting on Sunday in a leadership runoff to choose between an incumbent who pledges a course less bound by Turkey's dictates and a challenger who favours even closer ties to Ankara. AFP

Bolivia vote: Bolivians vote on Sunday in a high-stakes presidential election redo that could determine its democratic future and bring a return of socialism as it struggles with a ragged pandemic. AFP

New Zealand's Ardern credits virus response for election win



Auckland, 18 October
It's Friday night in Moscow, and popular bars and restaurants in the city center are packed. No one except the staff is wearing a mask or bothers to keep their distance. There is little indication at all that Russia is being swept by a resurgence of coronavirus infections.

I believe that everyone will have the disease eventually, says Dr. Alexandra Yerofeyeva, an internal medicine specialist at an insurance company, while sipping a cocktail at The Bix bar in Moscow. She adds cheerfully: Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

The outbreak in Russia this month is breaking the records set in the spring, when a lockdown to slow the spread of the virus was put in place. But, as governments across Europe move to reimpose restrictions to counter rising cases, authorities in Russia are resisting shutting down businesses again. Some regions have closed nightclubs

Ardern's liberal Labour Party got 49 per cent of the vote, crushing the conservative National Party, which got 27 per cent. Ardern said the margin of the victory exceeded their expectations.

The result will give Labour an outright majority in Parliament, the first time any party has achieved that since New Zealand implemented a proportional voting system 24 years ago.

Asked what she would say to those Americans who may draw inspiration from her win ahead of the U.S. elections, Ardern said she hoped people globally could move past the partisan divisions that elections often accentuate. That can be damaging for democracy, regardless of the side of the House that you sit on, she said.

Ardern's popularity soared earlier this year after she led a successful effort to halt the spread of the virus by implementing a strict lockdown in late March.

Ardern, 40, won the top job at the 2017 election. In 2019, she was praised for her empathetic response to a massacre at two Christchurch mosques in which a gunman killed 51 worshippers. AP

Trump leans into fear tactics in bid to win Midwest states

Accuses leftists of trying to 'destroy the American way of life' to voters in Michigan and Wisconsin

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JANESVILLE (WINCONSIN), 18 OCTOBER

President Donald Trump leaned into fear tactics Saturday as he accused the left of trying to "destroy the American way of life" in a late reelection pitch to voters in Michigan and Wisconsin two Midwestern states that were instrumental to his 2016 victory but may now be slipping from his grasp.

In back-to-back rallies, Trump accused the left of wanting to erase American history and purge American values. He claimed, with no basis, that Democratic rival Joe Biden would put communities at risk.

Trump offered the dark message as he faces headwinds not only in national polling, which shows Biden leading, but also in key battleground surveys. His comments come after his campaign, with far less cash than Biden's, largely retreated from TV advertising in the Midwest, shifting much of its money to Sun Belt states such as Florida, North Carolina, Arizona and Georgia, as well as Pennsylvania.

As he tries to energize his base and keep on-the-fence voters from turning against him, Trump sought to paint Democrats as anti-American radicals and said moderates had a moral duty to join the Republican Party. The Democrat Party you once knew doesn't exist, he said.

It was the same on issue after issue, as he claimed in hyperbolic terms that Biden's election would spur the single biggest depression in the history of our country and turn Michigan into a refugee camp." Addressing the coronavirus crisis, Trump warned that Biden would shut down the country, delay the vaccine and prolong the pandemic.



US President Donald Trump claps during a rally at Muskegon County Airport in Muskegon, Michigan late Saturday. AFP

Public health experts say the nation would be in far better shape had Trump's administration taken more aggressive action early on. And while he repeatedly predicted victory, Trump seemed to grapple throughout the day with the prospect that he could indeed lose in November.

In Michigan, he quipped that, in January, he "better damn well be president. In Wisconsin, he wondered how he would process a loss.

"Can you imagine if I lose? I will have lost to the worst candidate in the history of American politics, he said.

"What do I do? Trump has continued to hold rallies despite the threat of the coronavirus, which hospitalised him for several days earlier this month. Wisconsin broke the record for new positive virus cases on Friday the third time that's happened in a week. The state also hit record highs for daily deaths and hospitalizations this past week.

But there was little evidence of concern among the thousands of supporters Trump drew in both states, where audience members stood closely together in the

cold, mostly without masks.

Trump continued to call on Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to roll back restrictions that remain in place to try to halt the spread of the virus, prompting the crowd to break into a Lock her up! chant. (The same chant also broke out after he mentioned his 2016 Democratic rival Hillary Clinton and Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar.)

Whitmer, a Democrat, was the focus of a kidnapping plot by extremists who were angered by lockdown measures. Thirteen men have been charged in connection with the scheme, which included plans to storm the state Capitol and to hold some kind of trial for the governor.

You got to get your governor to open your state and get your schools open. The schools have to be open, right? said Trump, who also took credit for federal law enforcement's role in foiling the plot.

Whitmer's digital director, Tori Saylor, urged Trump to stop. Every single time the President does this at a rally, the violent rhetoric towards her immediately escalates on social media, she tweeted. It

has to stop. It just has to. Biden, meanwhile, had no public events planned for Saturday. But in a memo to supporters, campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon warned about becoming complacent.

The reality is that this race is far closer than some of the punditry we're seeing on Twitter and on TV would suggest, she wrote in the memo, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press.

If we learned anything from 2016, it's that we cannot underestimate Donald Trump or his ability to claw his way back into contention in the

New Congress could have more Indian Americans to the House

WASHINGTON, 18 OCTOBER

Hiral Tipirneni.

Tipirneni, the emergency room physician is leading, though by a narrow margin, against Republican incumbent David Schweikert in the sixth Congressional District of Arizona.

Former State Department Diplomat Sri Preston Kulkarni is leading by five percent against his Republican rival Troy Nehls in the 22nd Congressional District of Texas, which is an open seat this time.

The "Samosa caucus"

comprises of five Indian-American lawmakers, including four members of the House of Representatives and Senator and Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris.

In the House of Representatives, senior most Dr Ami Bera, Congressmen Ro Khanna and Krishnamoorthi along with Pramila Jayapal, who is the first and the only Indian American women in the House, are projected to be re-elected on November 3.

Jayapal, 55, in the new Congress next year is likely to have company from Dr

Biden, meanwhile, had no public events planned for Saturday. But in a memo to supporters, campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon warned about becoming complacent.

The reality is that this race is far closer than some of the punditry we're seeing on Twitter and on TV would suggest, she wrote in the memo, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press.

If we learned anything from 2016, it's that we cannot underestimate Donald Trump or his ability to claw his way back into contention in the

final days of a campaign, through whatever smears or underhanded tactics he has at his disposal." Trump has an aggressive campaign schedule in the coming days, with rallies planned Sunday in Nevada, Monday in Pennsylvania and Tuesday in Pennsylvania.

But Trump's schedule suggests concern.

On Friday, he campaigned in Georgia a state no Republican presidential contender has lost since 1992 but where polling shows Trump and Biden in a tight contest. Trump also has had to court voters in Iowa, which he carried by almost 10 percentage points four years ago.

IN TRIBUTE



People gather on Place de la Republique in Paris on Sunday, in homage to history teacher Samuel Paty two days after he was beheaded by an attacker who was shot dead by policemen. AFP

France demonstrations pay tribute to beheaded teacher

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS, 18 OCTOBER

with a suspected terrorist motive was opened. At least four of those detained are family members of the attacker, who had been granted 10-year residency in France as a refugee in March, was armed with a knife and an airsoft gun, which fires plastic pellets.

His half-sister joined the Islamic State group in Syria in 2014, Ricard said. He didn't give her name, and it wasn't clear where she is now.

The prosecutor said a text claiming responsibility and a photograph of the victim were found on the suspect's phone. He also confirmed that a Twitter account under the name Abdoulah A belonged to the suspect. It posted a photo of the decapitated head minutes after the attack along with the message "I have executed one of the dogs from hell who dared to put Muhammad down."

The beheading has upset moderate French Muslims. A group of imams in the Lyon region are holding a special meeting Sunday to discuss together what the group called "the appalling assassination of our compatriot by a terrorist who in the name of an uncertain faith committed the irreparable."

Political leaders, associations and unions demonstrated Sunday on the Place de la Republique in Paris holding placards reading "I am Samuel," that echoed the "I am Charlie" rallying cry after the 2015 attack on the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, which published caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

Demonstrators also gathered in major cities including Lyon, Toulouse, Strasbourg, Nantes, Marseille, Lille and Bordeaux.

French authorities, meanwhile, say they have detained an 11th person following the killing.

Anti-terrorism prosecutor Jean-Francois Ricard said an investigation for murder

Hope of Covid-19 vaccine deployment in UK by 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 18 OCTOBER

tie-up as it undergoes trials. "We aren't eight years away from it. It isn't a totally unrealistic suggestion that we could deploy a vaccine soon after Christmas. That would have a significant impact on hospital admissions and deaths," The Sunday Times' quoted Van Tam as telling the MPs during a briefing.

was quoted as saying.

It comes as the UK government introduced new laws on Friday that would allow larger numbers of healthcare workers to administer flu and potential Covid-19 vaccines. "COVID-19 vaccines are being developed at speed which, if successful, will save lives," said Van Tam, in reference to the new rules.

Russia shuns tough curbs even as virus cases soar

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW, 18 OCTOBER

It's Friday night in Moscow, and popular bars and restaurants in the city center are packed. No one except the staff is wearing a mask or bothers to keep their distance. There is little indication at all that Russia is being swept by a resurgence of coronavirus infections.

On Friday, Russian authorities reported over 15,000 new infections, the highest daily spike so far in the pandemic. Moscow with less than 10 per cent of the population accounts for up to 30 per cent of new infections each day. The health minister says 90 per cent of hospital beds for coronavirus patients have been filled. Three times this week, Russia's daily death toll exceeded the spring record.

Even these soaring virus tolls are likely undercounts; experts have cautioned that official figures around the world understate the true toll, but critics have taken particular issue with Russia's death tolls, alleging authorities might be playing down the scale of the outbreak.

Right now, situation is difficult but no restrictive measures for the economy are required, Deputy PM Tatyana Golikova told President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday.

They said the prevalence of pre-existing conditions

'Long Covid' complications in young people without pre-existing conditions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 18 OCTOBER

Living coronavirus found on frozen food packaging in China: China's health authority has confirmed the detection and isolation of living novel coronavirus on the outer packaging of imported frozen marine fish in the port city of Qingdao.

It is for the first time in the world that living novel coronavirus has been isolated from the outer packaging of cold-chain food, the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention said on Saturday.

The authorities in Qingdao, where a new cluster of Covid-19 cases were reported recently, conducted tests on all of its about 11 million population.

No new clusters of cases were found.

such as obesity and hypertension was low among the participants, and only 18 per cent of the individuals had been hospitalised with Covid-19. Nearly four months after

cleansings, promote fake cancer cures or attempt to steal elections.

While other platforms like Twitter and YouTube have also struggled to address misinformation and hateful content, Facebook stands apart for its reach and scale and, compared to many other platforms, its slower response to the challenges identified in 2016.

democracy."

Yet for years Facebook executives have seemed to be caught off guard whenever their platform - created to connect the world - was used for malicious purposes. Zuckerberg has offered multiple apologies over the years, as if no one could have predicted that people would use Facebook to live-stream murders and suicides, incite ethnic

groups it found to be engaging in "coordinated inauthentic behavior." That's Facebook's term for fake accounts and groups that maliciously target political discourse in countries ranging from Albania to Zimbabwe.

It's also started adding warning labels to posts that contain misinformation about voting and has, at times, taken steps to limit the circulation of misleading posts.

In recent weeks the platform also banned posts that deny the Holocaust and joined Twitter in limiting the spread of an unverified political story about Hunter Biden, son of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, published by the conservative New York Post.

In the four years since the last election, Facebook's earnings and user growth have soared. This year, analysts expect the company to rake

the election? I'm terrified," said Roger McNamee, a Silicon Valley venture capitalist and an early Facebook investor turned vocal critic.

"At the company's current scale, it's a clear and present danger to democracy and national security."

The company's rhetoric has certainly gotten an update. CEO Mark Zuckerberg now casually references possible outcomes that were unimaginable in 2016 - among them, possible civil unrest and potentially a disputed election that Facebook could easily make even worse - as challenges the platform now faces.

But it has been a long and halting journey for the social network. Critical outsiders, as well as some of Facebook's own employees, say the company's efforts to revise its rules and tighten its safeguards remain wholly insufficient to the task, despite it having spent billions on the project. As why, they point to the company's persistent unwillingness to act decisively over much of that time. "Am I concerned about

democracy?" Yet for years Facebook executives have seemed to be caught off guard whenever their platform - created to connect the world - was used for malicious purposes. Zuckerberg has offered multiple apologies over the years, as if no one could have predicted

The plight of Henglep

This Manipuri village relies on makeshift bamboo stretchers to ferry its sick to a hospital in the absence of an all-weather road and doctors at the Primary Health Centre. In the last two decades, a lot has been promised but nothing delivered

ZAMMINIEN LHUNGDIM

On 13 July this year, a patient with a kidney illness from Henglep village in Manipur was taken to Churachandpur District Hospital by his fellow villagers on a makeshift bamboo stretcher. A photograph captured during his journey went viral online and displayed the predicament they have endured for decades.

Another viral video of a patient from the village being carried on a makeshift stretcher hit social media a few weeks later. Once their mode of ferrying the sick became known, photographs and videos of nine different patients being taken to Churachandpur District Hospital in the same manner surfaced online in the next two months.

After social media was abuzz with the sorry plight of people from Henglep, Vumchinpau Tonsing, chief medical officer of Churachandpur district, issued an order on 14 September that relieved two doctors and two nurses from Covid-19 duty and asked them to attend the Primary Health Centre at Henglep from the next day. Khaikholam Haokip, the village secretary, said "We met the medical team and found out that they were visiting us for just one night. They prepared to leave in the morning, but their vehicle broke down and they were forced to stay another night."

According to Haokip, it is common practice for medical teams to visit the PHC at Henglep for a night or two. Such visits were merely for delivering medicines to the PHC pharmacy, which rarely opened anyway. Village elders would always check expiration dates from fear

of being medicated with outdated drugs. Sadly, most medicines stocked in the pharmacy would be past their expiration dates. Haokip said that village elders now routinely check the drugs a month or two after they are delivered.

Henglep's hope for a better PHC vanished into thin air along with the last medical team's whirlwind visit. After that, villagers decided not to share their plight on any social media platform as no positive change was forthcoming and all they got in return was shame for their collective poverty. A young man sitting next to his sick mother complained that the people of Henglep were vilified on social media for being poor, uneducated, "backward illiterates" and hailing from an undeveloped area.

Unable to bear the shame, Haokip decided against ferrying his wife on the makeshift bamboo stretcher when she fell sick. He tried various traditional medicinal herbs and at the same time, self-prescribed medicines for her. It should not be surprising that the people of Henglep self-prescribe medicines as it is the only way out in the absence of a regular doctor in the area. However, his wife's deteriorating condition forced Haokip to use the bamboo stretcher. He reluctantly took her to his relatives residing in L Semuol village near Lamka town for treatment on 10 October.

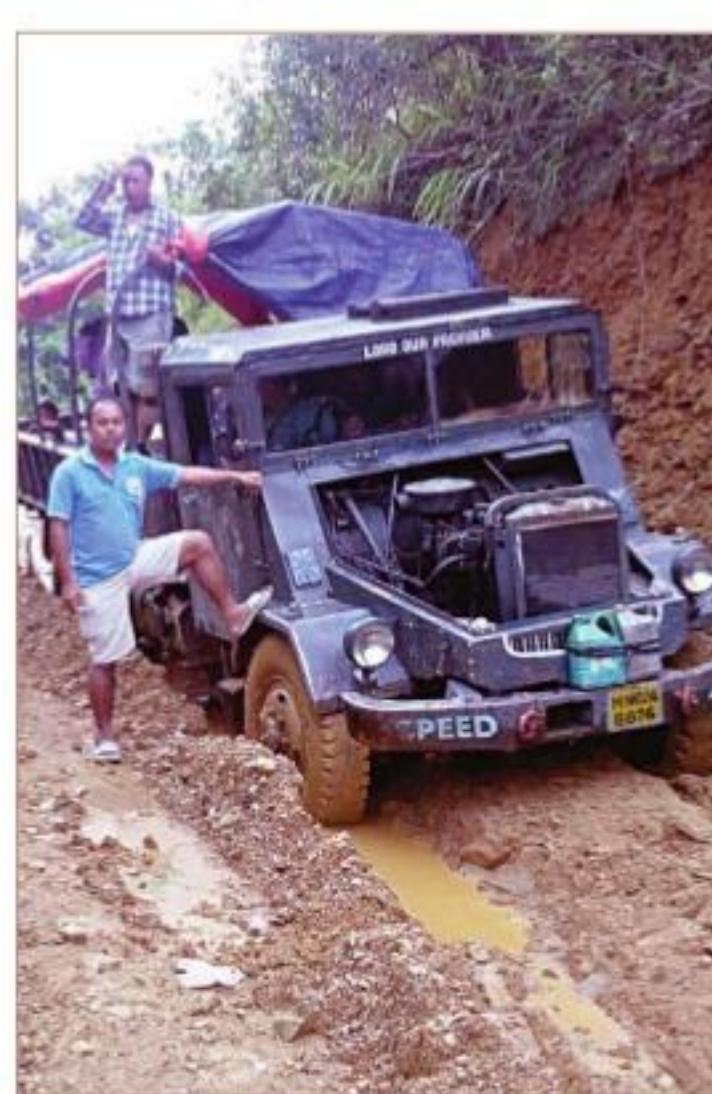
The community spirit of people in Henglep is deserving of appreciation, especially since the situation has remained unchanged for the last two decades. Twenty-four-year-old Mangboi Haokip said that he never hesitates for once to take part in ferrying the sick as some day in the future, he or his family members might also require help. Sick patients are usually carried on

the makeshift bamboo stretchers by villagers with the group becoming larger every time they pass through a new village. More young people join the team till they reach Bungkot, which is a four to five-hour walk. Once there, a vehicle is arranged to transport the patient to Churachandpur District Hospital, 80 kms from Henglep.

The non-functional PHC leaves residents of Henglep with no choice but to rely on the bamboo stretchers. Kamboi, a student leader from the village, lamented that apart from the medical camps organised by various groups, no doctors worth their title ever remained in the PHC. What could be the reason for the reluctance of a medical team to stay at Henglep?

Henglep sub division comprises 123 villages, of which more than 30 (including Henglep village) have no proper roads. They are accessible mainly by the modified Shaktiman trucks used by the Indian Army. Old vehicles were often auctioned by the Army to civilians and they found favour in the hills owing to their durability on the rough terrain. To reach the village, one needs to travel 47 kms up National Highway 2 from Churachandpur to S Kholian by pick-up trucks or Shaktiman. Then another 36 kms on Henglep road before walking once the motorable road ends. The *kutcha* roads are difficult to negotiate at the best of times, but the abundance of rain makes them almost undrivable, even for the Shaktiman. The non-existence of proper roads cuts off Henglep village and denies the people access to basic healthcare facilities.

For decades, the people of Henglep have been waiting for a road that would bring them



PLUS POINTS

Assistance for UPSC aspirants



The Mizoram government announced last week that it will provide full sponsorship, including coaching expenses, to students who aspire to join civil and other central services.

At a meeting, chaired by chief minister Zoramthanga (*in photo*), the state government decided to work with reputed coaching institutes in Delhi to facilitate aspirants to prepare for the Union Public Service Commission exams, officials said. Officials of various departments such as education, labour employment, skill development and entrepreneurship, planning and finance, and Mizoram Youth Commission were present in the meeting, they said.

A full scholarship will be provided to the promising students, who aspire to become civil servants, to meet their expenses incurred while attending coaching classes in Delhi apart from providing cash incentives for clearing prelims and mains exams, officials said. The state will conduct an entrance exam to select the eligible candidates, they said. Criteria for applying will be announced soon, they added.

The number of youngsters from Mizoram joining central services is gradually declining and massive efforts should be made in this regard, the chief minister told the meeting. He called for concerted efforts to motivate the students so that they compete with students of other states.

Zoramthanga said that his government would take all possible steps to assist students. Mizoram government is also making massive efforts to help students join commercial banks and corporates through the MYC. It used to give cash incentives ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh to students who clear various exams, including UPSC, SSC, NDA and state services.

The last person from the state to crack the UPSC exams and become an IAS officer was Grace Lalrindiki Pachaua, who joined the Tamil Nadu cadre. Pachaua, the daughter of former state chief secretary Vanhe Pachaua, cleared the exam in 2014. Only five people from Mizoram have cleared the UPSC exams since 2000.

—PTI

Illegalities ruled out



Ahead of the ensuing autumn session of the Meghalaya Assembly, chief minister Conrad Sangma has defended his government and Cabinet colleagues, categorically ruling out any wrongdoings in coal transportation in the state, says a report in the Guwahati-based *Assam Tribune*.

Reacting to media reports about the alleged involvement of his Cabinet colleague and elder brother James Sangma in the illegal coal transportation cartel, Sangma said the allegations are "completely baseless". The CM said that such allegations can easily be made, but added that he is personally seeing to it that the police ensure no illegalities take place in Meghalaya as far as coal transportation is concerned.

"The police have been told time and again to ensure that no illegal activity takes place. We have given very clear and strict instructions to all departments and agencies to ensure that no such illegal movement occurs," Sangma said in reply.

The CM stated that regular meetings with the police department are being held. Moreover, the deputy commissioners are holding regular meetings with the transport, mining and other departments to ensure that no illegal movement of coal takes place.

Urging people not to be "sceptical" when they see a coal-laden truck moving on the highway, Sangma said the public mindset should change as trucks carrying coal do not necessarily imply that they are plying illegally. On some of the monitoring mechanisms to check illegality in this regard, he said that the state would soon set up integrated check gates with modern technologies like weight-in-motion devices and CCTV cameras.

Further rubbishing coalition partner Bharatiya Janata Party's demand of a CBI probe into alleged illegal coal transportation, Sangma said the BJP is acting irresponsibly. He said the CBI cannot be called in to investigate whimsically. "The government has to act responsibly and practically. If there are any issues, we are definitely going to look into them," Sangma stressed.

ON THE BRINK OF IRRELEVANCE?

Due to several reasons, the Autonomous District Councils in Manipur's tribal hill areas are unable to function as desired



the latest circular from the chairman of the Hill Areas Committee on 8 October, it was proposed and recommended to the state government to hold the ADC elections. In early January this year, the HAC had recommended to the state government for extending the terms of ADC members by six months -- from June to November. It is quite interesting that the HAC seems to have foreseen the unfortunate pandemic or, maybe it did so after keeping the annual monsoon rains in mind. Whatever be the reason, the HAC had recommended postponing the elections and sought extensions as early as January, more than six months before the scheduled end of term.

Subsequently in March, the Manipur government, in a Cabinet meeting chaired by the chief minister, decided to defer the elections based on proposals from the HAC. The reason was reportedly that June-July being the "rainy season", it would not be ideal to hold elections then.

In August, when the extension period was gradually ending, the

State Election Commission urged the government to issue a notification for publication of the draft of electoral rolls for each constituency in order to enable it to conduct the elections on time -- that is in November. The commission though remarked, "However, the opinion of the state executive committee of the State Disaster Management Authority, Manipur may be taken into account regarding holding of election during this time of Covid-19 pandemic".

The priority seems clear. While monsoon rains or the pandemic are being cited as hurdles for conducting ADC polls, the same problems do not seem to matter for the Assembly by-election. The preparations for the first phase of by-election to five Assembly constituencies in November are in progress. Altogether, 13 constituencies are vacant after mass resignations and disqualifications of MLAs.

Perhaps empowered by the announcement of the by-election, intending candidates for the six ADCs, under the "Forum for ADC

Election Intending Candidates" banner, have called for dissolving the current councils, which would pave the way for conducting polls in November. Formed in early October, the forum insists that the incumbent ADC must be dissolved for a free and fair exercise, and the election must be held on time. It has warned that if the state government fails to meet the two demands, they shall resort to a democratic agitation and the state government would be held responsible for any untoward outcome.

The All Tribal Students' Union Manipur also echoed the demand for holding the ADC election. The student union alleged that the state government is not serious, and they are ready to take up "any mode of agitation" if their appeal is not headed.

It may be recalled that the six ADCs -- Churachandpur, Chandel, Ukhru, Tamenglong, Senapati and Sadar Hills -- were established under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971. Beginning in 1975, four elections were held until it was

boycotted from 1990. The reason for the same was the demand for implementation of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in the ADC areas. Meanwhile, Naga areas also boycotted the ADC election while demanding a solution to the Naga political issue.

After a gap of 20 years, the ADCs were revived, and elections were held in 2010. Initially though, as the councils were limping back to life, there was not much public response, while Naga areas still boycotted polls with most candidates being elected uncontested. However, the following election in 2015 saw a wave of public response. Since then, there has been some activity and momentum in the hills, given that the ADCs have a direct touch with the masses.

And yet, they are not without their share of genuine grievances. The ADCs, being the lowest level of governance, are often left at the mercy of the state government and its legislatures. The council members and general public are neglected due to the lack of financial resources and autonomy. On several occasions, elected members have sent representations and memorandums demanding devolution of powers, particularly financial powers.

In a practical sense, the ADCs are merely implementers of projects for rural development. And council members are not empowered to have their own development plans or financial budgets. The only power they are entitled to is in matters of customs and culture. However, in tribal societies wherein traditions are still prevalent, and the custodians are traditional institutions such as the chief, village authorities or clans, ADCs and its members are unlikely to be powerful. Moreover, there are no reported incidents or cases where members of ADCs have intervened in any matter related to custom or culture.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the ADC, as a unit of local self-governance in Manipur's tribal hill districts, is unable to function as desired. Also, it is time to review the role of the state government's HAC.

The writer is a freelance journalist based in Imphal

NINGLUN HANGHAL

The neglect for the tribal hill districts in Manipur is obvious. Local self-governance, which is purportedly hyped as the base and soul of democracy, remains merely on paper. The rural hinterland and grassroot democracy continue to be overlooked, underrated and marginalised without any tangible signs of "autonomy" or "public", in their strict senses, on the ground.

Everything comes from the top down. The most noticeable indicator of that is the continued delaying of elections to six Autonomous District Councils. The last election was held in June 2015 and the five-year-term of members ended this year. Voters, members and intending candidates are still awaiting permission from "authorities concerned" higher up in the government for conducting polls, even as it has been well over six months since the expiry of terms.

Until now, there seems to be no hurry and elections are unlikely to be held any time soon. Even though, in



'WORST DECISION'



Star sprinter Yohan Blake said Mahendra Singh Dhoni (*in photo, left*) had "made the worst decision in a long while", fuming in front of his TV set in faraway Jamaica as Delhi Capitals closed in on a remarkable win in IPL. Blake, an ardent admirer of the sport, questioned the Chennai Super Kings skipper's move to give Ravindra Jadeja the final over on Saturday night. "I think Dhoni made the worst decision in a long while. Dhoni, that's a poor decision to bowl Jadeja at the last part. What happened to Bravo. Really?" he asked in a video posted on Twitter.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Welbeck joins Brighton: Former Manchester United and Arsenal forward Danny Welbeck joined Brighton on Sunday on a one-season deal. The 29-year-old Welbeck was available on a free transfer following the expiration of his contract at Watford where he scored three goals in 20 appearances last season as the team was relegated from the Premier League.

Fall for Mumbai City: Indian Super League franchise Mumbai City on Sunday signed Senegalese defender Mountada Fall on a two-year contract. The 32-year-old centre-half started his playing career with Mohgreh Ttouan, featuring for the Moroccan club over three spells, during which he also won the Botola Pro 1 in 2011-12.

Dortmund, Bayern win: Borussia Dortmund needed substitutes to dig it out of a hole for a 1-0 win against Hoffenheim, while Bayern Munich had no such difficulties as it romped to another Bundesliga rout. Bayern beat Arminia Bielefeld 4-1 on Saturday in what seemed at times like a training match, ensuring its record of not losing to a promoted side since 2010.

Milan beats Inter 2-1: Zlatan Ibrahimovic made a winning return after being sidelined with the coronavirus as AC Milan beat Inter Milan 2-1 in an entertaining derby match. Ibrahimovic only resumed training this week after recovering from the virus but the 39-year-old Swede scored twice early on. Romelu Lukaku netted for Inter in the 29th minute on Saturday.

Elavenil wins gold, Mane gets silver: World number one Indian Elavenil Valarivan won a gold medal and Shahrukh Mane bagged a silver in the Sheikh Russel International Air Rifle Championship, held virtually on Sunday. The championship was organised by Bangladesh Shooting Sport Federation (BSSF).

Rins beats Marquez: Eight winners in the last eight races. MotoGP in 2020 delivered once again as Alex Rins (Team Suzuki Ecstar) took Gran Premio Michelin de Aragon honours in a stunningly tense premier class encounter. Alex Marquez (Repsol Honda Team) picked up his second consecutive MotoGP™ podium to finish 0.2 seconds behind Rins in P2, as the Championship takes another almighty twist. Joan Mir (Team Suzuki Ecstar) now leads the overall standings, the first Suzuki rider to do that since 2000 after polesitter Fabio Quartararo (Petronas Yamaha SRT) takes the chequered flag in P18.

Lockie locks it for KKR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ABU DHABI, 18 OCTOBER

A fast and furious Lockie Ferguson (*in photo*) produced one of the most incredible bowling performances of this IPL edition to lead Kolkata Knight Riders to a thrilling Super Over win over Sunrisers Hyderabad, on Sunday.

Ferguson proved to be the "Knight in Shining Armour" with his storehouse of variation as he dismissed David Warner and Abdul Samad in the Super Over, leaving KKR with only a three-run-target to chase.

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