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NEARBY



Delhi records 3,390 new virus cases, 41 deaths

NEW DELHI

The Capital reported 3,390 fresh COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the tally to 2,79,715 on Wednesday. The death toll has reached 5,361 with 41 fatalities in a single day. There are now 26,908 active cases in Delhi.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

'Will prepare solution to curb stubble burning'

NEW DELHI Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday announced that the Delhi government would start the process of preparing a fermented liquid solution to be sprayed on 800 hectares in the city where stubble burning is practised by farmers. All arrangements for spraying will be made by the Delhi government free of cost.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

'Probe charge against Assam Rifles men'

GUWAHATI A Mizoram-based rights organisation has asked the National Commission for Women to probe the alleged molestation of two women by Assam Rifles personnel. The Zo Indigenous Forum said it had written a similar plea to the Mizoram State Commission for Women more than a month ago.

REGION ▶ PAGE 5

Advani, 31 others acquitted in Babri case

Judge cites lack of credible evidence; verdict comes almost 28 years after December 6, 1992 incident

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

A special CBI court here on Wednesday acquitted senior BJP leader L.K. Advani, former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh and 30 others in the Babri Masjid demolition case, almost 28 years after the December 6, 1992 incident, for lack of credible evidence.

The court rejected the charges of criminal conspiracy levelled by the CBI against the accused, observing that the chargesheet did not have any evidence to show that they "got together in common intent" with a group of "hooligan kar sevaks" to bring down the mosque. It observed that a group of "arajak" (hooligan) kar sevaks from the main crowd "suddenly got agitated" and indulged in violence even as senior VHP leader Ashok Singh appealed to them to retreat that fateful day.

"All evidence in the chargesheet was examined. The crime alleged against the accused could not be proven," said the court.

2,300-page order

The court said in the 2,300-page verdict that evidence submitted by the CBI in the form of newspaper clippings, video cassettes, tapes, printed material, speeches, and witness testimonies made it "clear that there was no moment when the accused persons gathered in a



BJP veteran L.K. Advani, one of the accused in the Babri Masjid demolition case, addressing the media outside his residence in New Delhi on Wednesday after the verdict. ■ PTI

room to plan the scheme to demolish the structure."

"None of the witnesses have clearly named any of the accused to say they were de-

FULL COVERAGE: PAGE 9

mollishing the disputed structure," special judge S.K. Yadav said.

While 351 prosecution witnesses, including many journalists, were examined in the case, none of the accused produced a witness in their defence. Mr. Kalyan Singh was the only accused

to submit documentary evidence in his defense.

The judge observed that it was "not credible" of some witnesses to point to some accused and say that they were exhorting kar sevaks to demolish the mosque as there was a lot of dust inside the complex that was filled with lakhs of kar sevaks.

The disputed structure was about 200-300 metres away from the Katha Kunj dais but some witnesses had said it was 800 metres away, he said.

The court found contradic-

tions in the statements of the eyewitnesses.

Twenty-six of the 32 accused – most of them linked to the Sangh Parivar – were present in court. Those who could not appear in person were Mr. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti, Mr. Kalyan Singh, Nritya Gopal Das and Satish Pradhan. The judge said the CBI had failed to prove "which accused gave what speech" that day.

ACCUSED DID NOT HAVE A PLAN, SAYS COURT ▶ PAGE 9

EDITORIAL ▶ PAGE 6

Runs counter to SC order, say Cong., Left

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The acquittal of all the accused in the Babri Masjid demolition case, including BJP veterans L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, on Wednesday ran counter to the Supreme Court judgment holding the demolition illegal, as well as the spirit of the Constitution, Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said in a statement.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of India called the judgment a travesty of justice. "It will blemish the image of India as a secular-democratic country," the CPI(M) said.

"The entire country witnessed a deep-rooted political conspiracy by the BJP-RSS and its leaders to destroy the country's communal amity and brotherhood for usurping power at any cost. The then-BJP government of Uttar Pradesh was a co-conspirator in the designed attack on India's Constitutional ethos," Mr. Surjewala said.

WRONG AFFIDAVIT FILED IN SC, SAYS CONGRESS ▶ PAGE 9

Hathras rape victim cremated without consent, says family

U.P. govt. forms SIT to investigate case



Dark hour: Policemen cremating the body of the gang-rape victim in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, early on Wednesday. ■ PTI

lege and Hospital earlier. The Dalit girl was allegedly assaulted by four men of the upper caste on September 14, when she went to collect fodder with her mother, leading to a fracture in her spinal cord. The accused were arrested and charged with attempt to murder, which was changed to murder after her death. After the girl's statement was taken under Section 164 of the CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure), the charges of gang rape were added.

The victim's father said the family members were not allowed to see the face of the girl one last time.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 10

Cinema halls, theme parks allowed to open

States can decide on schools: Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued "guidelines for reopening" on Wednesday, permitting cinema halls, entertainment parks and swimming pools for sportspersons to open, and gave the States the flexibility to decide if they wanted to open schools from October 15.

Higher education institutions in the science and technology stream, where research scholars and post graduate students need to access the laboratory, will be permitted to open from October 15.

The guidelines that will come into effect on October 1 have removed restrictions from all activities except "international air travel". Only limited international flights under the air bubble scheme and the Vande Bharat Mission allowed by the government are operating



A multiplex in Mumbai being sanitised. ■ AADESH CHOUHARI

currently. The guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act 2005 state that the movement of passenger trains and domestic flights will continue to be regulated as per the standard operating procedure (SOP). Presently, only 310 special passenger trains are running.

A lockdown will continue to be enforced in containment zones till October 31.

The guidelines that will come into effect on October 1 have removed restrictions from all activities except "international air travel". Only limited international flights under the air bubble scheme and the Vande Bharat Mission allowed by the government are operating

Centre sticks to target for borrowing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's fiscal deficit went further past the Budget target of nearly ₹8 lakh crore in the first five months of 2020-21, touching ₹8.7 lakh crore or 109.3% of the deficit target. Revenue receipts stood at just 18.3% of the Budget targets, while expenditure touched 41%.

Core sector output fell harder in August than July, contracting 8.5% compared to a year ago, indicating that a recovery remains elusive. The plan to raise ₹2.1 lakh crore from disinvestment is waylaid, even as the Finance Ministry extended the deadline for bids to buy BPCL by two months. The Centre held off any expansion of its proposed borrowings of ₹12 lakh crore, with Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj stating that revenues are picking up with re-opening of economy.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

12-LAKH CRORE PLAN ▶ PAGE 14

River route



Hungry tide: Flood-affected villagers travel on the swollen Brahmaputra in Guwahati on Wednesday. Over three lakh people across 12 districts have been affected during the recent wave of floods in Assam. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

We will reach out to regional parties: Badal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), which recently pulled out of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Central government over the new farm laws, plans to bring regional parties across the country on one platform to fight the "anti-farmer" laws.

In an interview, SAD chief and former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal said, "We will try to get all farmers' organisations under one platform and raise our concerns with the Centre. The government has abandoned farmers in favour of corporates."

"The farmers are facing a crisis and the nation must come to their rescue. We will approach regional parties and try to get them on a single platform against the new laws and other farmers' issues," he said.

FULL INTERVIEW ▶ PAGE 10

SC refuses to shift civil services exam from Oct. 4

Court agrees with UPSC on calendar constraints, but asks for concessions

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to defer the civil services preliminary examination scheduled for October 4, but asked the authorities to consider a possible concession for aspirants unable to take their last shot at the exam due to the pandemic. The examination is scheduled to be held at 72 centres (2,569 sub-centres) across the country.

A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar said security and health protocols should be followed strictly. It agreed with the Union Public Service Commission that any further delay in the conduct of the exam would have a "cascading



effect" on future ones.

The Bench asked the authorities to ensure that candidates with admit cards are able to find suitable accommodations near the exam centres/sub-centres. The UPSC said the exam was earlier scheduled for May 31, but then shifted to October 4 due to the pandemic lockdown and restrictions.

"Over the years, a cycle has evolved involving recruit-

ment, training and final appointment ensuring that the government gets its requisite manpower on time. Any disruption at any stage has the potential of upsetting the entire cycle not only for once but is likely to have cascading effects in future as well," the UPSC affidavit said.

It said the calendar of examinations for 2021 is already placed on the website in which the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2021 is scheduled to be held on July 27, 2021. The Commission said in case of any further postponement, it would not be in a position to declare the final result of the 2020 exam before next year's preliminary examination.

In Bharatpur, a 'kiss of life' for newborns

Neonatal respirators installed at major PHCs in district

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Bharatpur has become the first district in Rajasthan to install neonatal respiratory machines at all hospitals, including the primary and community health centres in the villages, having more than 1,000 birth cases in a year. With this capacity, the lives of about 19,500 newborns will be saved using the respirators in the next five years.

The respirators enable the doctors and labour room staff to provide neonatal resuscitation with the correct physiological parameters to the newborns having a breathing problem. The babies born in rural hospitals can be resuscitated at the site of delivery within the "golden first minute", giving them a chance to survive.

Over 8,000 lives saved

The respirators, provided by Bharatpur-based Lupin Foundation and installed at six health facilities in the district since 2016, have so



An infant that received assistance from a neonatal respirator in Bharatpur.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Bodies of Rajouri youths to be exhumed'

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Three families from Rajouri, whose kin were killed in an encounter on July 18 in south Kashmir's Shopian, will be allowed to exhume their bodies, the police said on Wednesday.

"Since the DNA samples matched with the families, the three bodies will be exhumed and handed over to families after the due process of law," Inspector General of Police (IGP) Vijay Kumar told *The Hindu*.

The Army has already initiated disciplinary proceedings against those found prima facie answerable.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 5

A ND-NOE

IN BRIEF

Weekly markets: protest held outside CM's house

NEW DELHI
The Opposition BJP on Wednesday staged a demonstration outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence demanding that all the 2,700 weekly markets in the Capital be allowed to open or the Delhi government give weekly allowance to the families connected with them.

DJB announces rebate for old water bills

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Jal Board on Monday announced an extension of a rebate scheme for old water bills till March 2019 by three more months. "The scheme will cover the consumers whose bills are pending till March 31, 2019. Under the scheme, 100% Late Payment Surcharge waiver will be given to all domestic as well as commercial consumers."

600 register for DDA's 2nd Youth Sabha

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Development Authority on Wednesday said that it has received over 600 registrations for its second "Youth Sabha" on "safe and equitable access to public spaces" to be held on Thursday. The online meetings are being held in the run up to the preparation of the Master Plan for Delhi-2041.

'Reconsider decision over HSRP installation'

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Taxi Tourist Transporters Association on Wednesday wrote to CM Arvind Kejriwal requesting that the government reconsider its decision to enforce the mandatory installation of high security registration plates and colour-coded stickers for vehicles.

22 arrested for gambling in two separate cases

NEW DELHI
Twenty two people were arrested for allegedly gambling in two separate cases, the police said on Wednesday. The accused used to bet on IPL matches.

Activists take to streets, seek justice for Hathras rape victim

FIR registered against protesters; 32 men detained, women allowed to go, say police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Protests erupted across the national capital for the second consecutive day, following the death of the Hathras gangrape victim, with students, women activists and political outfits taking to the streets demanding justice for the 19-year-old woman.

Protests began outside Uttar Pradesh Bhawan here, demanding the resignation of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the rising atrocities against women and Dalits in the State. They said that the rape of the Hathras victim, a Dalit woman, was not an isolated incident and that under the regime of the BJP government life had turned into a nightmare for women and Dalits.

Allege harassment

Members from the AISA, the AIPWA, the Indian Youth Congress, the Delhi Pradesh Mahila Congress and other activists had gathered at the venue. Some activists managed to stage a candle light vigil at India Gate later in the



Police detain activists during a protest against the Hathras rape incident, outside Uttar Pradesh Bhawan in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

evening but were detained later. Members of the AISA and other activists alleged that the Delhi police detained women after 6 p.m. and that they were forcefully removed from the spot and that women protesters were harassed.

"All students and activists were forcefully detained and taken to Mandir Marg police station where the protests continued," AISA Delhi State secretary Prasenjeet Kumar said.

Indian Youth Congress national president Srinivas B.V. said, it was unfortunate that the victim did not get a proper funeral, instead she only got humiliation.

"As the protesters have violated orders under Section 144 CrPC in force and other laws regarding COVID-19, an FIR under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code and other relevant sections of the Epidemic Act and Disaster Management Act has been registered against the

protesters in both the instances, the police said.

Thirty-two male protesters have been detained for illegal protest near Mansingh Road, the police added.

"The protesters belonged to the AISA and the Bhim Army. Legal action under relevant sections of law is being taken," said Additional DCP (New Delhi) Deepak Yadav. The women protesters were only removed from the spot and not detained, the police said.

AAP demands CBI probe into incident

Was beaten up by policemen: MLA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

"The Hathras victim was first raped by a few savages, and yesterday the whole system raped her. The whole episode is very painful," said AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a tweet on Wednesday.

In another development, AAP MLA Ajay Dutt alleged that he was beaten up by three Delhi Police officers when he was enquiring about the Hathras victim on Tuesday at Safdarjung Hospital in the city. Addressing the media, the AAP MLA requested Home Minister Amit Shah that the three officers should be suspended.

"I stood beside the Dalit family of Hathras. Is it a crime to be a Dalit?" he said.

Caste slurs

"The SHO, ACP and DCP all three manhandled and assaulted me at the Safdarjung Hospital. The DCP slapped me and kicked me as well. They also used caste slurs against me. The way the police behaved with an elected representative is unfortunate. The police also denied

ARRVIND KEJRIWAL
Delhi Chief Minister in a tweet

The family of the survivor to see the body and also did not allow them to participate in the last rites," Mr. Dutt said.

AAP Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam said that FIRs should be registered against these three police officers.

The Minister said that the Hathras case should be investigated by CBI in a time-bound manner.

"The trial of the case should be done by a fast-track. Also, ₹2 crore compensation should be given to the family of the victim," Mr. Gautam said.

Meanwhile, Dalit leaders of the Congress party lashed out at the U.P. government for allowing the police to cremate the victim in violation of Dalit rituals without informing their parents.

'Suspend all involved in the cover-up'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chairperson Swati Maliwal on Wednesday wrote to the Chief Justice of India and judges of the Supreme Court demanding a High Court-monitored investigation of the Hathras gangrape incident, punitive action against erring officials and rigorous mechanisms to prevent such incidents.

Stating that "every possible fundamental and human rights of the victim was violated" by the Uttar Pradesh government and police force, Ms. Maliwal in her letter, urged the SC to take cognisance of the incident.

"Immediate suspension and punitive action against all erring police and administrative officials, including the officials who tried to cover-up the incident. Setting in place definite mechanisms to ensure that no other daughter has to suffer the same fate," the letter demanded.

Ms. Maliwal said, "The Hathras gangrape and murder has once again exposed disregard our system shows towards its daughters and mothers."

Fermented liquid to stop crop burning'

CM says the solution will be given free to farmers for spraying

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday announced that the Delhi government would start the process of preparing a fermented liquid solution to be sprayed on 800 hectares of land in the city where farmers practise stubble burning. At a press briefing, Mr. Kejriwal said all arrange-

ments for spraying the solution on farm fields will be made by the Delhi government and will be provided free of cost to farmers. The process will be executed under the guidance of the Pusa Research Institute and the cost of the implementation of the entire project is less than ₹20 lakh. A few days ago, he had also written to the Centre over the issue of

stubble burning, which poses a health hazard for people.

"October is starting. North India in its entirety is troubled by the smoke that covers the belt due to stubble burning every year. Every responsible government must devise alternate systems for their farmers so that they are not forced to burn the stubble," he said.

Incentive for not burning stubble unviable: EPCA

Report instead calls for giving them access to machines for straw management

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority, in a report submitted to the top court, said that giving an incentive of ₹100 per quintal of paddy to farmers for not burning stubble may not be a "viable" option.

"After deliberations it was

found that inclusion of cost of stubble removal in MSP may not be a viable option. It has been agreed that any such incentive, if at all necessary, should be provided by the State government from their own budget," the report said.

The report said that efforts should be to give them machines for straw management. "While there is a de-

mand for additional funds to be paid to farmers for doing stubble management, but as this could be a perverse incentive it may not be advisable. Therefore, the funds already provided and the plan that exists should be implemented this season and in the coming period. The effort must be to ensure that farmers have easy and affordable access to the ma-

chines which allow them to do smart straw management," the report further said.

In 2019, Haryana had given incentives of ₹1.63 crore to farmers for not burning stubble. Similarly, Punjab had given ₹28.51 crore to farmers.

But for this year, Punjab has sought funds from the Centre for the same.

Probe ordered into Tihar jail video of prisoners

Inmate levels charges against official

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The DIG (Prisons) has been ordered to conduct a detailed inquiry after video clips and photographs allegedly taken inside Jail No. 1 of Tihar jail went viral.

According to an order, DIG (Prisons) Rajesh Chopra is to submit a report by October 5.

Prisoner killed

In a video, an inmate claimed that one Sunny Dogra was killed and it was a planned murder. He also levelled allegations against a jail official. On September 24, a 29-year-old inmate,

identified as Sikander, was killed allegedly by four other prisoners. He was lodged in Tihar's Central Jail no. 1, they said.

The prisoner was attacked allegedly with a sharp object by four other inmates outside his barrack. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead.

The video clips have several allegations against the superintendent. The allegations are of serious nature, the order said. The DIG (Prisons) has been asked to find out how videos were filmed as mobile phones are prohibited inside prison.

Mayors criticise AAP govt. over water bills claims

'Will act to recover property tax dues'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Mayors of the three municipal corporations here on Wednesday hit out at the Delhi government over claims of pending water bills of over ₹6,600 crore to the Delhi Jal Board.

They said that they would take action to recover outstanding property tax dues for Delhi government buildings. The South Delhi Municipal Corporation alone needs to get nearly ₹10,000 crore in property tax, Mayor Anamika Mithilesh alleged. With nearly ₹2,500 crore worth of property tax due in each of the corporation's four zones, she said.

Properties of the Public Works Department, the Delhi Secretariat, Delhi Transco Limited, Delhi Jal Board among others have never given property tax to the corporation, alleged North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash.

Mr. Prakash also hit out at the Delhi government for

charging exorbitant commercial rates on water bills from municipal facilities. For the North Corporation, he added that while the principal amount to be paid was only ₹261, the remaining ₹2,173 was penalty and interest. With regard to property tax, the Delhi Jal Board had to pay ₹216 crore and another ₹293 crore as road cutting cost was owed, he said.

East Mayor Nirmal Jain said that the DJB had owed the EDMC ₹175.52 crore, about which he had written to the Chief Minister and that the civic body's water dues of ₹49 crore could be recovered from that amount.

AAP reacts
"It is unfortunate that all the three Mayors united to give completely fake figures to the media. They have made a joke of their offices. People of Delhi will not be fooled," said the Delhi government PRO.



Delhi Police
Shanti · Sewa · Nyaya



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS



FOR DELHI POLICE COMPASSION IS A GESTURE THAT COMES STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART.

OUR ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

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-  Police Verification of domestic help
-  Regular Advice on Safety & Security measures
-  Identity cards to ensure close monitoring
-  Regular interaction over the phone

On this day Delhi Police reiterates its commitment to Love, Care and Treasure the elderly people in the society.

Senior Citizen Helpline 1291

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Reduction in Heinous Crimes against Senior Citizen

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Write to CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL: 112 TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL: 1090

DPI/25/2020

**Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
Government of India**

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

No: PW/SE/NHCS/CTR/ Km 0/0 to 78/0 NH-907A/2020- dated:-

1. MORTH/HPPWD (NH) has been assigned the work of Consultancy Services for feasibility study and detailed engineering for widening to two lane and geometric improvements of NH-907A from Km 0/0 to 78/0 (Nahan to Kumarhatti Stretch) in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

Sr. No.	NH No.	Section	State	Tentative Length (in km)	Period Of Assignment
1.	NH 907A	Consultancy Services for feasibility study and detailed engineering for widening to two lane and geometric improvements of NH-907A from Km 0/0 to 78/0 (Nahan to Kumarhatti Stretch) in the state of Himachal Pradesh.	H.P	78.00 km	300 Days

2. Proposals are hereby invited from eligible Consultants for preparation of Detailed Project Report of Consultancy Services for feasibility study and detailed engineering for widening to two lane and geometric improvements of NH-907A from Km 0/0 to 78/0 (Nahan to Kumarhatti Stretch) in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

Sr. No.	NH No.	Section	State	Tentative Length (in km)	Period Of Assignment
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3. The Letter of Invitation (LOI) and Terms of Reference (ToR) including Request for Proposal (RFP) is available online on e-tender portal of <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. The document can also be downloaded from <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app/e-receipt>. Cost of the Document in the form of a Non-refundable document fee of Rs. 5,000 (Rupees Five Thousand only) deposited through Bharatkosh/INTRP only favoring Regional Pay and Account Officer, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways payable at Chandigarh must be furnished in a separate envelop while submitting the proposal.

4. The RFP has also been uploaded on "INFRACON" (www.infracon.nic.in). As such before submitting the proposal the Consultant shall mandatorily register and enlist themselves (the firm and all key personnel), on the MORTH portal "INFRACON" and furnish registration details along with its RFP. A copy of Infracon Operation Procedure is also enclosed for bidder's reference.

5. All the bidders registered on Infracon shall form a Team on Infracon and which would be assigned unique Infracon Team ID. Bidders while submitting the proposal shall quote the Infracon Team ID.

6. Bid must be submitted online at e-tender portal of <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> on or before 03-11-2020.

7. The following schedule is to be followed for this assignment:

- i) Deadline for downloading of bid: 02-11-2020
- ii) Last date for submission of queries: 14-10-2020
- iii) Pre bid meeting: 15-10-2020
- iv) Deadline for Submission of bids : 04-11-2020

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Superintending Engineer,
NH Circle, HPPWD,
Shimla-171004

HP / 3408/20-21



NATIONAL DAY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

01.10.1949 - 01.10.2020



A Space Marketing Initiative

Ambassador's Message



H.E. Sun Weidong

On the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the People's Republic of China, I would like to extend my sincerest blessings to my motherland and wish her prosperity and our people happiness and well-being.

2020 is a special year for China, a year with a difficult start, and a year of inspiring spirit and forging ahead. In the past 9 months and more, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has led the Chinese people in fighting a fierce battle against COVID-19 and creating a remarkable feat in humankind's struggle against diseases. China has coordinated epidemic prevention and control with economic and social development, and restarted normal work and life in an orderly manner with remarkable achievements. This struggle against COVID-19 epitomizes China's character, strength and responsibility.

2020 is a year of milestone significance for China. We will finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and realize the first centenary goal in 2020. This year is also crucial in winning the anti-poverty battle. We are determined to secure a victory in the battle against poverty. All poor people and counties under the current standard will be lifted out of poverty as scheduled. This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. The great spirit of resisting aggression bred during the war is an invaluable source of inspiration and will always motivate the Chinese people to overcome all difficulties and obstacles and strive to achieve national rejuvenation.

We owe what we have achieved in COVID-19 prevention and control and economic and social development to the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, the sound guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and the concerted efforts of the Party, the armed forces, and the people of all ethnic groups in China.

The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The international community should seize this important opportunity, reject unilateralism, hegemonism and power politics, resolutely champion multilateralism, safeguard the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and jointly defend the UN-centered international system and the international order based on international law. China will follow the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, pursue the grand vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, unwaveringly follow the path of peaceful development, continue to promote international cooperation in fighting COVID-19, expand mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries in opening up, work together to address global challenges and jointly create a better future for mankind.

The year 2020 also marks the 70th anniversary of China-India diplomatic ties. The bilateral relations have withstood test and made hard-won progress. With wisdom and painstaking efforts of generations, we should cherish what we have achieved today. We have provided each other strong support and assistance in fighting COVID-19 since its outbreak. Now China-India relations are facing a complex situation, but the general trend of friendship and cooperation between the two countries should not be changed. As two major neighboring countries, China and India should put differences in a proper context vis-a-vis bilateral relations and take guidance from the strategic consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries that China and India are not competitive rivals or each other's threats, but cooperation partners and each other's developmental opportunities. We should meet each other half way, expand positive dimension of cooperation, promote communication and understanding between the two peoples, and bring the bilateral relations back on the right track for a sound and steady development.

I believe, as long as we draw wisdom from our civilizations of thousands years, follow the direction of "enhancing mutual trust, focusing on cooperation, managing differences and seeking common development", and continue to make efforts to transmit the leaders' consensus to all levels, we will certainly be able to explore a way for neighboring and emerging major countries to get along with each other.

Economy

In 2019, China's GDP reached 99.1 trillion RMB Yuan (around US\$14.2 trillion), an increase of 6.1%, and per capita disposable income of China's residents exceeded 30,000 RMB Yuan (around US\$4350). This year China's economy has shown strong resilience despite negative impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Its GDP growth rate turned from negative to positive in the second quarter, with a year-on-year growth of 3.2%, and key economic indicators continue to move in a positive direction in recent months.

China's infrastructure construction continues to be consolidated. As of the end of July, 2020, China's operational railway length reached 141,400 km, ranking 2nd in the world, while the high-speed rail network topped the world with a total length of 36,000 km, around 70% of global high-speed rail network. Chinese companies continue to grow. 124 companies based on Chinese mainland and Hong Kong appeared on latest Fortune Global 500 list, exceeding 121 companies from the US and ranking 1st in the world.

China's reform and opening up has accelerated. In Doing Business 2018 report, China ranked 78th among the economies around the world, improving to 31st position in Doing Business 2020, and has been included among the top 10 fastest global reformers for two years in a row. The 2020 China International Fair for Trade in Services held in Beijing this September attracted 22,000 enterprises and institutions from 148 countries and regions. China has shown the world its determination and confidence to expand opening up and achieve win-win cooperation.

Society

China's urbanization process is progressing steadily. At the end of 2019, permanent urban residents in China numbered 848.43 million, accounting for 60.6% of the total population. This was the first time the figure exceeded 60%. China has completed 62.7% of its annual target of new urban jobs, with 5.74 million such jobs created in the year's first half. The average life expectancy of Chinese residents increased to 77.3 years in 2019. At the end of 2019, the total number of medical and health institutions nationwide reached

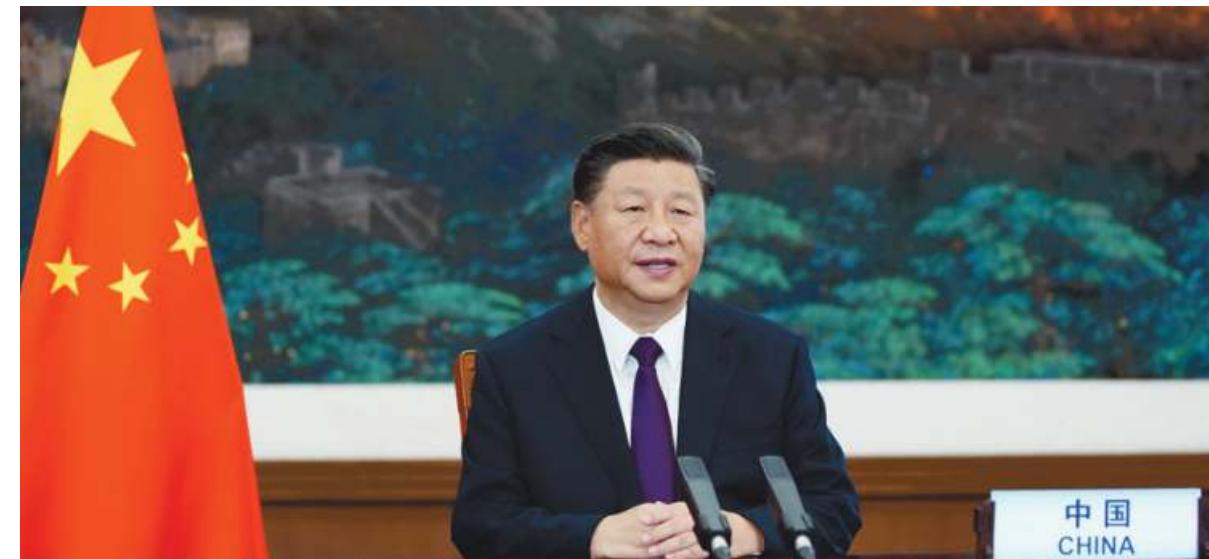


Chinese President Xi Jinping inspected poverty alleviation work in a tea farm of Laoxian Township, Pingli County of the city of Ankang, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, April 21, 2020.

100,7545, with 8,807 million beds, and the total number of health personnel nationwide reached 12,928 million. In 2019, the number of students in compulsory education enjoying living allowances increased by nearly 40%, and higher vocational education enrollment expanded by one million. The number of graduate students studying in school is expected to exceed 3 million in 2020, and the cumulative number has reached more than 10 million over the past 71 years. By the end of 2019, China had 1.319 billion mobile internet users, accounting for 32.17% of the world's total.

China attaches great importance to gender equality and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of women. Women's education level has been significantly improved. The number of female scientific and technological workers in China has increased to about 36 million, accounting for nearly 40%. There were about

China's Achievements 2020



Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed a high-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations via video on Sept. 21, 2020.

28,000 female medical workers who aided Hubei, accounting for two-thirds of all staff. China has made important contribution to women's development in the world. With a donation of US\$10 million to UN Women, China is the largest contributor among developing countries. It has completed 133 health projects for women and children and invited over 30,000 women from other developing countries to training programs in China.

Poverty Eradication

As the world's largest developing country, China takes poverty eradication as a central priority. China has successfully lifted more than 700 million people out of poverty during the 4-decade-and-more Reform and Opening Up, accounting for over 70 percent of poverty reduction worldwide in the same period. From end of 2012 to end of 2019, impoverished population in China had reduced from 98.99 million to 5.51 million with poverty incidence rate dropping from 10.2 percent to 0.6 percent. For 7 years in a row, 10 million plus people were helped out of poverty annually. In the past 7 years, rural per capita disposable income in 832 poverty-stricken counties has increased to 11,567 RMB Yuan (around US\$1677.22) from 6,079 RMB Yuan (around US\$881.45), averaging a yearly growth rate of 9.7 percent. Tarmac and cement roads have been paved in all administrative villages where conditions allow. All villages have had clinics and medical practitioners. Over 99.9 percent of registered poor population have been covered by the basic medical care insurance. Reliability ratio of rural power grid has reached 99 percent. Teaching conditions of 108,000 compulsory education schools have been improved.

China actively participates in global poverty alleviation. China has assisted other developing countries with 180 poverty reduction projects, 118 agricultural cooperation projects, 178 aid-for-trade projects, 103 projects on ecological conservation and climate change, 134 hospitals and clinics, and 123 educational and vocational training institutes. This year, China will overcome the impact of COVID-19 epidemic, win the battle against poverty, and achieve, 10 years ahead of schedule, the Sustainable Development

Goal of ending extreme poverty, thus making historic contribution to the global fight against poverty and efforts for peace and development.

Science & Technology

The 2020 Global Innovation Index Report released by the World Intellectual Property Organization shows that China ranks 14th on the Global Innovation Index list and is the only middle-income economy in the top 30. In 2019, China's total expenditure on R&D amounted to 2.21 trillion RMB Yuan (around US\$ 320.45 billion), and it has remained in 2nd place in terms of R&D spending worldwide. The R&D spending amounted to 2.23% of GDP, and the number of R&D personnel ranked first in the world. In 2020, China has made a series of major breakthroughs in high-tech fields. In May, China's new large carrier rocket Long March-5B made its maiden flight, sending the trial version of China's new-generation manned spaceship and a cargo return capsule for test into space, which inaugurated the construction of a space station. In June, China launched the last satellite belonging to the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System, which marked the completion of the deployment of its own global navigation system, making China the third country with an independent satellite navigation system. In July, China launched its first-ever interplanetary Mars mission, the Tianwen-1, starting



The first ever Mars probe (Tianwen-1) was launched on a Long March -5 rocket from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in south China's Hainan Province, July 23, 2020.

China's great journey to explore Mars. In September, China successfully launched a reusable experimental spacecraft which returned to the scheduled landing site after a two-day in-orbit operation, marking major breakthrough in reusable spacecraft research.

Chinese researchers have been fully engaged in scientific research on the COVID-19 prevention and control, and cooperated with more than 40 countries around the world on developing vaccines. At present, 11 COVID-19 vaccines have entered the clinical trial stage, among which 4 have entered Phase-III clinical trials.

Diplomacy

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 epidemic, President Xi Jinping attended the G20 Extraordinary Leaders' Summit on Covid-19, the 73rd World Health Assembly and the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against Covid-19. He announced a series of major measures that China would take in supporting the global fight against the virus and economic and social recovery, including US \$2 billion of international aid over two years, and the Covid-19 vaccine to be used as a global public product once it is developed and deployed in China. He called for strengthening global governance in public health and increasing support to developing countries especially African countries.

President Xi also attended the 5th annual meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, making suggestions for AIIB to grow into a new platform that promotes development for all its members and facilitates the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. He co-hosted a China-Germany-EU leaders' meeting, charting the course for the development of China-EU relations in next stage. He participated in a series of high-level meetings for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, calling for upholding multilateralism and jointly building a community with a shared future for mankind.

China issued its Position Paper on the 75th anniversary of the UN, introducing how China has actively shouldered its responsibilities and made its contribution as a major country. China has dispatched more than 40,000 peacekeepers to over 30 missions, contributing more peacekeepers than any other permanent member of the Security Council. China has registered an 8,000-strong standby force and a 300-member permanent police squad for UN peacekeeping missions. China has the biggest standby force and most varieties of contingents among all UN Member States. The China-UN Peace and Development Fund has provided a total of US\$67.7 million for over 80 projects, supporting the UN's efforts in areas such as peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, energy, agriculture, infrastructure, health and education.

Chinese enterprises contribute to India's growth and China-India cooperation

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CRFO	CPTC	中通快运	海航集团 HNA GROUP	中远海运 COSCO GROUP
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BOE	中航材航材航材航材航材	SCIVIC INDIA	NUCTECH	
DM	中航材航材航材航材航材	建华建融 JUFENG	FiberHome	
TENCEN				

CHAMBER OF CHINESE ENTERPRISES IN INDIA

Fighting COVID-19: China in Action

The Covid-19 epidemic is a major public health emergency, which has spread faster and wider than any other and been the most difficult to contain since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The Chinese Government has addressed the epidemic as a top priority and taken swift actions. General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Chinese President Xi Jinping has taken personal command and planned the response. The whole nation has waged an all-out people's war on the virus.

China has put the people's interests and lives first. In little more than a single month, the rising spread of the virus was contained. In around two months, the daily increase in domestic corona virus cases fell to single digit. In around three months, a decisive victory was secured in the battle to defend Hubei Province and its capital city of Wuhan. Thereafter several battles against concentrated epidemic outbreaks in local areas were won successively, and major strategic achievements in nationwide fight against the virus has been achieved.



President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, presented medals to the recipient of the Medal of the Republic Zhong Nanshan (2nd R, front), and recipients of the national honorary title, "the People's Hero," Zhang Boli (2nd L, front), Zhang Dingyu (1st R, front) and Chen Wei (1st L, front), at a meeting commending role models in the country's fight against the COVID-19 epidemic at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, Sept 8, 2020.

assistance, 40,000 construction workers and several thousand sets of machinery and equipment were mobilized to build two hospitals. The construction of the 1,000-bed Huoshenshan Hospital was completed in just 10 days, and that of the 1,600-bed Leishenshan Hospital in just 12 days. In little more than 10 days, 16 temporary treatment centers providing over 14,000 beds were built. More than 4.6 million CPC primary-level organizations rallied and served the general public. More than 39 million CPC members fought the virus at the front line. More than 4 million community workers worked day and night in around 650,000 urban and rural communities. China mobilized the people, enhanced R&D, procured supplies and brought them to those in need rapidly. It pooled all its strength in the shortest period of time and halted the spread of the epidemic.

We have been coordinating epidemic prevention and control with social and economic development. The Central Government has adopted a host of policies to reduce the burdens of businesses. Many measures such as strengthening employment as priority, promoting investment and consumption, stabilizing foreign trade, foreign investment, industrial and supply chains were introduced. Development of new forms of business was encouraged. The transportation, catering, supermarkets, culture activities, tourism and other industries have been resumed. Students return to school to continue studies. China becomes the first major economy to recover, with economic development stabilizing and improving, work and normal life resuming.

China has been working together with the rest of the world to defeat Covid-19 outbreak. In an open, transparent, and responsible manner, China gave timely notification to the international community of the onset of a new coronavirus, timely released the genome sequence of the novel coronavirus, and timely released diagnosis, treatment, prevention and control solutions. China has conducted more than 70 exchanges with many countries, international and regional organizations. China established online knowledge center open for all countries, sharing prevention, control and treatment

experiences without reservation. China has provided as much assistance to the international community as it can. It has donated two batches of cash funds totaling US\$50 million to the WHO, sent 34 medical expert teams to 32 countries, provided 283 batches of anti-epidemic assistance to 150 countries and 4 international organizations, offered or exported anti-epidemic materials to over 200 countries and regions. China calls for a joint effort to build a global community of health for all, and puts forward a series of propositions on international assistance and vaccine use. China has helped save the lives of tens of thousands of people around the world with concrete actions, demonstrating China's sincere desire to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

The epidemic will have a significant impact on the development of humanity, but the people's longing for a happy life will remain unchanged. Peace, development, and win-win cooperation will prevail. The sun will always shine again after a storm. As long as peoples in the world cherish hopes and dreams, embrace the idea of a global community of shared future, and unite in pursuit of a common goal, we will overcome all current difficulties and challenges and build a better world for all.

China in Action	
Donated funds to WHO totaling 50 million USD	
Sent 34 medical expert teams to 32 countries	
Provided anti-epidemic assistance to 150 countries and 4 international organizations	
Offered or exported anti-epidemic materials to more than 200 countries and regions	
Between March 15 and Sept. 6	
China exported 151.5 billion masks	
14 billion protective suits	
230 million goggles	
209,000 ventilators to support the global fight against COVID-19	

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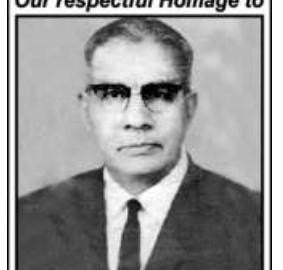
CHANGE OF NAME

I. Rejeet Prasad Gupta, S/o Shiv Shankar, R/o 237A, Gali No. 2, Roshan Vihar Sadarpur, Delhi - 110094 have changed my name as Rajeev Prasad.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

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 Ex.Vice-president, All India Sai Samojo.
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Very Short Term Tender Notice

NIT NO: 0/3/CMC/AMRUT/PARK/O&M/2020-2021
 DATE:26/09/2020

Chas Municipal Corporation (CMC) invites open auction Tender for Ten(10) Years Operation & Maintenance and upkeep of AMRUTPARK PHASE-5, Located at Near Garga Bridge, in front of D.C Office, Bokaro. The Individuals/ registered Agency/ Contractors/Person with Fresher and Experience for upkeep and maintain of the parks, Gardens any other Horticulture and green belt Development Works.

Submission of proposals

Request for qualification (RFQ) consisting of scope of work and Eligibility Criteria may be downloaded from <https://udhd.jharkhand.gov.in/ubl/chas/chas.aspx>. Minimum reserved price is Rs. 11,01,500/- (Eleven Lakh One Thousand Five Hundred) per Year excluding taxes and escalated by 5% every year for Time Period 10 Years. Interested Individuals/ registered Agency/ Contractors/Person may submit their proposals along with a Demand Draft of Rs.5,000/- (Five Thousand only) as a tender Fee (Non Refundable) and bank guarantee (B.G.) of Rs.3,00,000.00 (Non Refundable) for Successful Bidder/favour of "Additional Municipal Commissioner, Chas Municipal Corporation Chas" payable at Chas. Note-In-Successful Bidder /Individuals/ registered Agency/ Contractors/Person bank guarantee (B.G) will be return after award of Operation & Maintenance of Amruth Park Phase-5.

Minimum Eligibility Criteria

More details such as Scope of Work, General Terms & Conditions etc. are provided document which can be downloaded from website of <https://udhd.jharkhand.gov.in/ubl/chas/chas.aspx>.

Detailed Schedule of Bidding Process :-

S.No.	Proceedings	Date & Time
1	Date of Issue Tender	28.09.2020
2	Date & Time of Pre Bid Meeting	05.10.2020 AT 03:00 PM
3	Last date of Submission of hard copy of require document along with tender fees	15.10.2020 AT 04:00 PM
4	Date of Public Auction at CMC, Chas Office	20.10.2020 AT 03:30PM

Additional Municipal commissioner,
 Chas Municipal Corporation, Chas

PR 233551(Urban Development and Housing)20-21*D

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CMK

Timings

DELHI
 THURSDAY, OCT. 01
 RISE 06:14 SET 18:07
 RISE 18:11 SET 05:32
 FRIDAY, OCT. 02
 RISE 06:15 SET 18:06
 RISE 18:40 SET 06:24
 SATURDAY, OCT. 03
 RISE 06:15 SET 18:05
 RISE 19:10 SET 07:16

Delhi Weather max min
 Delhi City 36 22
 Safdarjung 36 22
 Palam 36 24

Delhi Palam Today
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Delhi Palam Tomorrow
 37°C Dry weather with mainly sunny sky. Drop in night temperature.

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THE HINDU

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Minor held in Jamtara for cheating Delhi man

Victim duped on pretext of KYC updation

were obtained and technical analysis revealed that the fraudsters were from Jamtara in Jharkhand, the police said.

Thereafter, a police team went to Jamtara where they disguised themselves as surveyors of telecom companies and started roaming in the area to collect information about their targets.

On Tuesday, the accused minor was apprehended, Mr. Thakur said.

The mobile phone used for calling, online banking transactions and the ATM card of the account, to which cheated amount was transferred, have been recovered from the juvenile, the police said, adding that he has cheated five to six people of different States.

A case was registered at Defence Colony police station and an investigation was taken up, the police said.

During investigation, the bank account details of the beneficiary and details of the alleged phone numbers

that he was lured by two others who were doing the same thing to make quick money.

Virus cases count in Delhi reaches 2,79,715

The city has reported 3,390 new cases and 41 more deaths

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

As many as 3,390 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 2,79,715, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Wednesday.



A man undergoing a rapid antigen test at Patparganj in New Delhi. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

2,570.

The positivity rate is 5.6%, which was low compared to the month's average. The overall positivity rate till now is 9.08%.

The number of people admitted in hospital, people under home isolation and active cases also saw a dip.

"Chief Secretary, Delhi, took a review meeting of all District Magistrates on COVID-19 management," the bulletin added.

Govt's reply sought on plea on COVID-19 posters

People should be given privacy: plea

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The High Court on Wednesday sought response of the Delhi government on a petition seeking framing of guidelines to do away with pasting posters outside homes of COVID-19 infected persons or those in home isolation.

A Bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Subramonium Prasad took note of the report filed by the Delhi government.

Seroprevalence dips to 25% in Capital, HC told

Decline in North-West, Central districts

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The latest seroprevalence survey has found that the percentage of people in the Capital, who have antibodies against COVID-19, has reduced from 28.7% in August to 25.1% in September, the Delhi High Court was informed on Wednesday.

"The seroprevalence has declined in North-West and Central districts but has increased in West, South, North-East and East districts," said the report, which was submitted to the court.

"The seroprevalence has

declined in

North-West

and Central

districts but has

increased in

West, South,

North-East

and East

districts," said the report, which was submitted to the court.

"Seroprevalence was

found to be more in women

during the three rounds of

sero surveillance and least in the age group of 18-49 years, as compared to the age group of those below 18 years and those who are above 50 years," it added.

The conclusion of the sero surveillance-3 report is that there is a need to enhance the focus on sample representativeness of the survey in Central, North-West and north districts. A Bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Subramonium Prasad took note of the report filed by the Delhi government to submit its report by October 17, the next date of hearing.

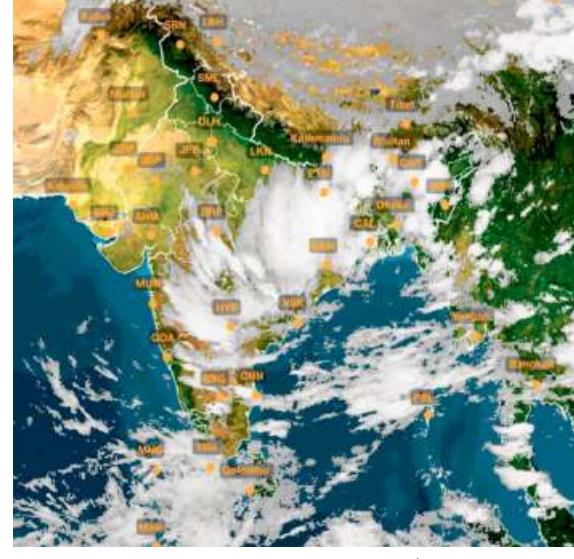
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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Odisha. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand, central Maharashtra, Telangana, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... -	34.4	26.3	Kozhikode	17.6...	24.0	20.0
Ahmedabad	-	33.9	25.2	Kurnool	0.4...	31.2...	23.6
Aizawl	... -	26.9	18.9	Lucknow	-	34.8...	23.2
Allahabad	-	33.7	24.0	Madurai	-	37.0...	24.4
Bengaluru	54.4	26.2	19.0	Mangaluru	-	30.2...	24.1
Bhopal	-	32.9	21.9	Mumbai	5.4	32.2...	24.4
Bhubaneswar	21.2	30.7	25.0	Mysuru	15...	30.1...	21.3
Chandigarh	-	34.3	21.0	New Delhi	-	35.6...	21.8
Chennai	18.2	32.6	24.0	Patna	-	35.4...	25.6
Coimbatore	0.3	32.5	23.5	Port Blair	16.6	29.7...	23.8
Dehradoon	-	33.0	18.9	Puducherry	19.4	32.2...	22.4
Gangtok	26.4	21.0	16.8	Pune	-	32.1...	21.0
Goa	-	31.8	24.8	Raipur	-	33.0...	24.8
Guwahati	-	35.1	24.9	Ranchi	-	29.6...	22.3
Hubballi	-	28.0	21.0	Shillong	-	24.5...	16.9
Hyderabad	1.8	30.8	22.2	Shimla	-	27.0...	16.1
Imphal	-	30.5	21.6	Srinagar	-	26.6...	8.2
Jaipur	-	36.0	25.4	Thiruvananthapuram	-	30.0...	24.1
Kochi	2.8	30.4	24.8	Tiruchi	-	28.6...	22.8
Kohima	0.8	25.2	22.7	Vijayawada	10.3	30.3...	24.5
Kolkata	-	35.1	27.6	Visakhapatnam	2...	28.8...	25.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m. Bhilwadi, Rajasthan recorded an AQI score of 247 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 24

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravated respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Bodies of Rajouri youths will be exhumed: police

Their DNA matched kin contesting 'unidentified militants' tag

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Three families from Rajouri, whose kin were killed in an encounter on July 18 in south Kashmir's Shopian, will be allowed to exhume their bodies, the police said on Wednesday.

"Since the DNA samples matched with the families, the three dead bodies will be exhumed and handed over to families after the due process of law," Inspector General of Police (IGP) Vijay Kumar told *The Hindu*.

The district administration of Rajouri has approached the families to begin the process.

"We have been called by the Rajouri administration for consultations. We demand immediate exhumation of bodies of our sons, compensation, and punishment to those involved in

The three bodies will be exhumed and handed over to families after due process of law

VIJAY KUMAR
Inspector General of Police

the fake encounter," Muhammad Yousuf, father of one of the victims, said.

The graveyard where the bodies were buried after the encounter is located in north Kashmir's Baramulla, far from civilian areas.

Three youth from the Pir Panjal valley's Rajouri, identified as Abrar Ahmed (25), Imtiyaz Ahmed (20) and Mohammed Ibrar (16), were termed "unidentified militants" after a joint operation conducted by the police and the Army on July 18 in Shopian's Amshipora area.

However, three families from Rajouri contested the

security forces' version, claiming all three to be labourers who went missing the day the encounter was carried out.

On September 25, the DNA samples of the slain youth was found to match that of the families.

The police have arrested two locals, including a Special Police Officer from Poonch, so far. They are accused of "tipping off about the presence of militants in the area".

'Incriminating material'
The police claim to have recovered "increditing material" including arms and ammunition, at the site of encounter".

The Army has already initiated disciplinary proceedings under the Army Act against those found *prima facie* answerable.

Probe molestation charge against Assam Rifles men, Mizoram group asks NCW

Two women were allegedly harassed on Independence Day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A Mizoram-based rights organisation has asked the National Commission for Women (NCW) to probe the alleged molestation of two women by personnel of paramilitary Assam Rifles.

The Zo Indigenous Forum said it wrote to the Commission on Tuesday after waiting more than a month for the Mizoram State Commission for Women to act on a letter with a similar plea.

The forum said it request-

ed NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma to take up the case of the two married women who were allegedly molested by Assam Rifles personnel near Seshi village in Champhai district bordering Myanmar on August 15.

The two women were returning home from work at their 'jhum' (shifting cultivation) field in the evening when the alleged incident happened.

The Assam Rifles authorities had trashed the allegation but said any complaint should be lodged with the

officer heading the force.

An arrest warrant was issued on September 9 against the perpetrators following a complaint at the Champhai police station. It is learnt that no legal action has been taken till date," said the forum's coordinator, C. Lalremruata.

'Compensate victims'
He requested the NCW to penalise the authorities concerned for delaying the arrest of the culprits and issue a directive for compensating the victims.

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In a bid to curb the spread of COVID-19, the local trains are currently being run only for essential services staff, State and Central government staff, and employees of nationalised and private banks, PSUs and phar-

ma companies, and QR code-based identity cards are mandatory for them. "The government is seriously considering starting normal train services for citizens by October 15. The decision will be taken after ensuring all COVID-19-related safety protocols are followed," Mr. Thackeray said.

He also said that to reduce vehicular traffic, a proposal to keep offices and commercial establishments working for 24 hours is being considered.

It is difficult to reschedule the office hours since there are different kinds of offices and commercial estab-

lishments in Mumbai, the minister said.

He said the government was in talks with offices, establish-

ments and corporates regarding

working hours.

Govt. considering resumption of local trains for all: Aaditya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government is seriously considering resumption of normal local train services in Mumbai by October 15, Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* on Wednesday said quoting Environment and Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray.

According to the Sena publication, Mr. Thackeray said the issue of resumption of suburban train services for common citizens is being considered as part of efforts to bring the State's economy back on track.

In a bid to curb the spread of COVID-19, the local trains are currently being run only for essential services staff, State and Central government staff, and employees of nationalised and private banks, PSUs and phar-

ma companies, and QR code-based identity cards are mandatory for them. "The government is seriously considering starting normal train services for citizens by October 15. The decision will be taken after ensuring all COVID-19-related safety protocols are followed," Mr. Thackeray said.

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ments and corporates regarding

working hours.

Haryana farmers protest outside grain markets

They allege delay in paddy procurement in the State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Farmers in some parts of Haryana staged a protest outside grains market under the aegis of Bharatiya Kisan Union (Charuni) against the alleged delay in procurement of paddy, besides in support of their demands, including

19% from the 17%, but it is not enough," said Mr. Charuni, who also addressed the agitating farmers at Pehowa and Ismailabad in Kurukshetra.

He also demanded that the farmers be allowed to bring their crops to the market as per their convenience soon after it is harvested, instead of the government imposing a schedule on them. He alleged that the government has yet to start the procurement, causing resentment among the farmers.

Sandeep Beniwal, commission agent, Samalkha New Grains Market, said a few farmers gathered to stage a protest in the mandi against the delay in procurement. "Though farmers are bringing the paddy for the past few days, the procurement is yet to begin," he said.

Don't let board chief resign: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Opposition Congress in Assam has asked Governor Jagdish Mukhi not to let the chief of the State police recruitment board quit until the probe into the leaking of the question paper for appointing sub-inspectors is over.

The Congress has also sought a directive to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal for dropping Law and Justice Minister Siddhartha Bhattacharya because of his "close ties" with Bharatiya Janata Party leader Dibin Deka, who is also an accused in the exam scandal.

Fire at Raymond office in Thane; no casualties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
THANE

A fire broke out at textile and apparels firm Raymond's office building in Thane on Wednesday morning, an official said.

Thane civic fire services received a call at 5.50 a.m. about the blaze, the city's regional disaster management cell (RDMC) chief Santosh Kadam said.

The company said that there were no injuries or casualties. A portion of an office building on the Raymond Ltd's premises in Thane (West) has been affected by the fire. The blaze has been contained by fire officers and RDMC officials.

The damage is being assessed, Raymond said in a regulatory filing.

G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment

Kosi-Katmatal, Almora - 263 643, Uttarakhand

TENDER DATA EXTENSION NOTICE

Please refer to Institute's Tender notice No. GBPNI/Vehicle hiring/LRC/2020-21/11, published in "The Hindu" (Delhi edition) dated 05.09.2020. Following amendments have been made in terms and conditions of tender documents: - 1- The Vehicle to be hired should not be older than 2016 model. 2- The vehicle should have petrol/Diesel engine. The last date of submission of online tender is hereby extended up to 12.10.2020 at 03:00 p.m. The documents shall be submitted online at website <https://moefcc.eunivizade.com>. The other terms and conditions of tender documents will remain as such. The full details of documents are available in the Institute Website <http://gbpnihd.gov.in>. Email: aog@gbpnihd.nic.in

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIV. REASI NOTICE INVITING TENDER, E-NIT No 16 of 2020-21 Dated 26/09/2020

Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Div. Reasi on behalf of the President of India inviting e-tenders on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with union territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments upto 1800 Hrs on 06/10/2020 for the following work.

S. No.	Name of Work	Name of Divn.	Estimated Cost (in lacs)	Cost of Document (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Time & Date of Opening of Tender	Class of Contract

</tbl



Justice in ruins

India cannot afford successive judicial setbacks to secular values and the rule of law

The ruins of the Babri Masjid were cleared in record time by the hordes of vandals mobilised for demolishing it. Some detritus was still left, though: a belief among many that justice would be done and the Constitution and the rule of law would be upheld if the criminal court punishes those who plotted the events of December 6, 1992. Even when the Supreme Court handed over the empty site to those who wanted the mosque brought down to build a Ram temple, its recognition of the demolition as an "egregious violation of the rule of law" gave rise to hope that the ends of justice would be served by the punishment of those who mobilised the vandals. A Special CBI Court in Lucknow has now cleared the remaining debris with an unconscionable judgment. Throwing to the winds the Supreme Court's observations on the demolition, the trial court has in effect given judicial legitimisation to the 'Ram Janmabhoomi movement' by acquitting all those indicted for conspiracy to bring down the structure. Its conclusions are drastic and defy logic and fact. The court's finding that the demolition was not planned in advance flies in the face of the entry of more than a hundred thousand volunteers into Ayodhya that day, armed with crowbars, spades, hoes and ropes and every implement needed to bring down a sturdy structure and clear the site. The proponents of the movement, headed by L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti among others, had positioned themselves in vantage points to witness the occasion and celebrate with pride what ought to have caused shame and disgust.

It is indeed true that it is not easy to prove a conspiracy, as it essentially takes place in secret. This is where courts must draw reasonable inferences from the circumstances. But in a conspiracy of this nature, it is easy to see that those involved were "marching under a banner", an image the Supreme Court had once referred to while explaining the ingredients of a conspiracy. In this case, apart from the political mobilisation and the purported intent to assemble on a particular day, the court had with it sufficient evidence that there was studied inaction on the part of the State, whose Chief Minister was one of the accused, and the unambiguous and open threats to the structure voiced by many of the movement's protagonists. The dissembling Kalyan Singh, as Chief Minister then, had given what, in hindsight, was an obviously false assurance to the highest court and the National Integration Council that nothing but a symbolic 'kar seva' would take place. Specific instructions appeared to have been given to the security forces not to stop the 'kar sevaks' or hinder their plans. How else would one explain the events? When the crowd went into a frenzy, goaded on by provocative speeches by the dignitaries, and vandals went up the dome, the accused would have the court believe that they were actually trying to restrain the mob and prevent the demolition! The possibility of tampered audio and video evidence or even disavowals on record would not undo the cumulative effect of the logistical and financial preparation, besides the communal mobilisation. Mr. Advani, who had then claimed it was the saddest day of his life, now says the en masse acquittal is a vindication of the movement. This indicates that the objective of the mobilisation, exemplified by his Rath Yatra, was always to alter the *status quo* with violence.

The Manmohan Singh Liberhan Commission had laid bare the entire conspiracy in its damning report, but unfortunately, a probe under the Commission of Inquiry Act has no binding value, whereas the evidence adduced at the trial alone matters. It is, of course, the responsibility of the CBI to prove the element of conspiracy, the details of the advance mobilisation, the "meeting of minds" that is required to prove a plot and its broad contours. That the agency failed is no surprise. From the beginning, the police investigation has been marked by bungling. When the main events were covered by two FIRs, the U.P. government initially failed to notify both of them while designating courts for trial. The Allahabad High Court quashed the flawed notification, and the State government's failure to rectify the irregularity resulted in separate proceedings in Lucknow and Rae Bareilly. The CBI, instead of challenging the State's rejection of its request for curing a technical defect, filed a supplementary charge sheet after omitting the 'conspiracy' charge. The Supreme Court later said this derailed the joint trial and resulted in separate proceedings in two places. In 2017, the Supreme Court revived the conspiracy charge, directed the trial court to resume day-to-day trial and sternly reminded the agency that it was because of its failure and that of the State government that a crime that shook the secular fabric of the Constitution had not seen justice for 25 years. Whether a politically hamstrung agency could have successfully prosecuted such a sensitive case is a moot question. But the results are there for all to see.

Even allowing for the possibility that the judiciary is in close alignment with the executive, it is unacceptable to see a court going so far as to parrot the specious theory advanced by the demolition squad from the BJP-VHP-RSS family for years that the destruction was a "spontaneous act". All those who went through that disgraceful phase in India's political history know that the demolition was only the culmination of a revanchist movement. The period was marked by communal mobilisation, holding of processions to gather 'bricks' meant for constructing a temple, and an attempt to storm the site in 1990, which ended in bloodshed. Given this grisly background, and the grave implications that the exoneration of those who demolished a religious structure would have on public trust in the judicial system, it is imperative that the CBI goes on appeal. The cause of communal amity cannot afford successive judicial setbacks to both secular values and the rule of law.

Time to shift focus to the maritime sphere

India's obsession with continental strategies has yielded unflattering results — no secure borders or deterrence stability



HAPPYMON JACOB

For a country that has been traditionally obsessed with a continental approach to war and peace, India's continental 'grand' strategy is facing an existential crisis today. Given that reconciliation with its key adversaries, China and Pakistan, is unlikely at this point and pursuing its ambitious territorial claims on the ground is almost impossible, New Delhi's continental options seem restricted to holding operations to prevent further territorial loss. Put differently, New Delhi's grand strategic plans in the continental space may have reached a dead end.

State of continental strategy
The current state of India's continental strategies is hardly flattering. China has begun to push the boundaries with India, quite literally so, and Beijing is neither keen on ending the ongoing border stalemate nor reinstating the *status quo* with India as of March 2020. The peaceful India-China Line of Actual Control in the Northeast is now a thing of the past with China pushing back New Delhi's claims on Aksai Chin and New Delhi defending against Beijing's expansive territorial claims and their slow but aggressive implementation. China has crossed the red line with India and India's LAC with China is not going to be the same ever again: It is the beginning of a long, bitter winter in the Himalayan borders between the two Asian giants.

In the Northwest, the Pakistan front has also been heating up. Ceasefire violations on the Line of Control (LoC) have spiked since last year as has the infiltration of terrorists across the LoC. With the

change of the status of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) by New Delhi in 2019, and Pakistan altering its political map a few months ago to include all of J&K, the India-Pakistan contestation over Kashmir has become fiercer. Equally important is the geopolitical collusion between Islamabad and Beijing to contain and pressure New Delhi from both sides. While this is not a new phenomenon, the intensity of the China-Pakistan containment strategy against India today is unprecedented. The extent and intent behind this collusion will determine the future of the high stakes game in the Himalayas for a long time to come.

Changes in Afghanistan

The ongoing withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan (the loss of a friend in the region for New Delhi, and the consequent reduction of India's influence in Afghanistan) and the return of the Taliban, with whom India has very little contact, could turn the geopolitical tide against New Delhi — similar to the situation in the early 1990s. But unlike in the 1990s, tables have turned in Afghanistan: the Taliban is no more an outcaste, and with the withdrawal of forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization from Afghanistan, the geopolitical interests of Pakistan, China and Russia would broadly converge in the region. The change of the geopolitical landscape in Afghanistan and the frictions in Iran-India relations will further dampen India's 'Mission Central Asia'. In sum, this is perhaps the end of the road for New Delhi's north-eastern and north-western geopolitical forays.

For sure, India needs to find a way out of this situation. One key part of the solution is to creatively deal with its continental dilemmas. To begin with, New Delhi must seek ways to break up the 'nutcracker situation' that the Pakistani and Chinese strategies have forced India into. To do so, India would need to deal with the com-



paratively easier part first — the Pakistan front. Pressure from the Pakistan front could be eased by addressing the Kashmir question with Islamabad. Creating a modicum of normalcy on the LoC by activating existing mechanisms such as the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) hotline is another way to deal with the Pakistan front. However, there is little appetite in New Delhi to do so. So, unless there is political will in New Delhi to put in place a strategy to address the Pakistan front, there will be little respite from the nutcracker situation that it faces today. And yet, it is time for New Delhi to think beyond its continental fixation.

Maritime strategy explained

It appears abundantly clear now that New Delhi's excessive focus on the continental sphere since Independence has not yielded great returns in terms of secure borders, healthy relations with its neighbours or deterrence stability *vis-à-vis* adversaries. If so, it is time for India to change its grand strategic approach — by shifting its almost exclusive focus from the continental sphere to the maritime sphere. Clearly, New Delhi has already begun to think in this direction with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) establishing a new division to deal with the Indo-Pacific in April 2019. The work in this direction, both ideal and practical, needs to be fast-tracked to keep pace with the emerging realities and to make use of new opportunities.

There are several reasons why a maritime grand strategy would work to India's advantage while still struggling with a continental dilemma. To begin with, unlike in the continental sphere where India seems to be hemmed in by China-Pakistan collusion, the maritime sphere is wide open to India to undertake coalition building, rule setting, and other forms of strategic exploration.

Visualise this: while India seems stuck between Pakistan and China from a continental perspective, the country is located right at the centre of the Indo-Pacific geopolitical imagination, in the midst of the oceanic space spanning "from the shores of Africa to that of the Americas", as Prime Minister Narendra Modi put it at the Shangri La Dialogue two years ago, on June 1, 2018 (<https://bit.ly/30kdRNg>).

Second, unlike in the continental sphere, there is a growing great power interest in the maritime sphere, especially with the arrival of the concept of 'Indo-Pacific'. The Euro-American interest in India's land borders with Pakistan and China is negligible, and more so, there is little any country can do to help India in its continental fixations.

The situation in the maritime sphere is the exact opposite: great powers remain ever more interested in the maritime sphere and this interest has grown substantially since the coining of Indo-Pacific. For instance, Germany recently released its Indo-Pacific guidelines following the example of France which brought out its Indo-Pacific strategy last year.

Third, Beijing's bullying behaviour in the South China Sea in particular and the region in general has generated a great deal of willingness among the Euro-American powers and the countries of the region, including Australia and Japan, to push back Chinese unilateralism. This provides New Delhi with a unique opportunity to enhance its influence and potentially checkmate the Chinese ambitions in the region.

Finally, the maritime space is a lot more important to China than engaging in opportunistic land grab attempts in the Himalayas, thanks to the massive Chinese trade that happens via the Oceanic routes and the complex geopolitics around the maritime chokepoints which can potentially disrupt that trade.

A revitalised Indian maritime grand strategy may or may not checkmate China in the Himalayas; it may even prompt Beijing to increase pressure there. But it will certainly provide New Delhi a lot more space for manoeuvre in the region and message Beijing that its Himalayan adventure could become costly for it. New Delhi must use its Indo-Pacific engagements to dissuade Beijing from salami-slicing Indian territory in the high Himalayas.

Think beyond a division

Therefore, it is high time New Delhi shifted its almost exclusive focus from the continental space to the maritime space, stitching together a maritime grand strategy. The MEA's Indo-Pacific Division is a good beginning; so is the decision in 2019 to elevate the Quad meetings among India, Japan, the United States and Australia to the ministerial level. New Delhi would do well to ideate on the current and future maritime challenges, consolidate its military and non-military tools, engage its strategic partners, and publish a comprehensive vision document on the Indo-Pacific; the current 'Indo-Pacific Division Briefs' document put out by the MEA does not make the cut. More so, New Delhi should consider appointing a special envoy for Indo-Pacific affairs.

The Asian geopolitical chessboard awaits bold moves by New Delhi.

Happymon Jacob is Associate Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

On the Quad, define the idea, chart a path

A positive regional agenda built around collective action by the Quad members will also take care of China's shrillness



VIJAY GOKHALE

It is reported that the second Ministerial meeting of the four countries under the Quad will be held in Japan. Sadly, the person who conceived this idea, Shinzo Abe, has stepped down as the Prime Minister of Japan. Mr. Abe was a strategic thinker who thought beyond the limited timeframe of Japanese revolving-door politics. In 2007, the Quad (the United States, Japan, India, and Australia) was an idea whose time had not yet come. That was a different world.

An evolution

The global financial crisis was still lurking in the shadows as America continued to enjoy its 'unipolar moment'. The American establishment still believed that it could, somehow, persuade China to become a 'responsible stakeholder' and, in any case, required Chinese goodwill in dealing with America's priorities — the nuclear issue with North Korea and Iran, and the War on Terror. Japan and Australia were riding the China Boom to prosperity. If India was ambivalent at the time, it was because this mirrored the uncertainties of others.

China's shrill reaction to the idea of four like-minded countries establishing a plurilateral platform was, *prima facie*, intriguing. The idea was barely on the table; there was no clearly enunciated concept or proposed structures, much less joint understandings. The Chinese, however, labelled it as an Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It became evident years later that the real reason for China's hyperreaction was out of concern that such a grouping would "out" China's plans for naval expansion by focusing on the Indo-Pacific maritime space. China was hoping that its naval build-up might slip under the radar because the Americans were distracted by continental challenges including Russia, Afghanistan and Iran, and would not look sea-ward.

Once the idea of Quad 1.0 had died down, China gained in confidence to reveal its hand. It advanced a new claim — the Nine-Dash Line — in the South China Sea; it undertook the rapid kind of warship building activity reminiscent of Wilhelmine Germany before 1914; it built its first overseas base in Djibouti; and it started systematically to explore the surface and sub-surface environment in the Indian Ocean beyond the Malacca Straits. This entire activity was coordinated by a Central Leading Small Group for Protecting Maritime Rights and Interests, established in 2012. The manner of China's dismissal of the Arbitral



Award in the dispute with the Philippines on the South China Sea and its brazen militarisation of the islands after its President had publicly pronounced to the contrary, has once again brought the four countries onto the same page and given a second chance to the Quad.

A plurilateral mechanism

The Chinese are skilled at obfuscation. They will, perhaps, endeavour to conflate the Quad with the Indo-Pacific vision, and link both to the so-called China Containment Theory. The Quad nations need to better explain that the Indo-Pacific Vision is an overarching framework that is being discussed in a transparent manner, with the objective of advancing everyone's economic and security interests. The Quad, on the other hand, is a plurilateral mechanism between countries that share interest on specific matters.

There are other such mechanisms in the region. In 2016, China itself established a Quadrilateral

Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan and, more recently earlier this year, another one with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal. The Quad is no exception.

The world today

This time around, the four countries are navigating through more turbulent waters. The global pandemic and the faltering global economy are taking a toll on the region's growth and prosperity. The two major Pacific powers (China and America), are moving into a more adversarial phase of their relationships. Public opinion about China in all four countries is different from what it used to be in 2007. The fact of the meeting itself will signal to China that assertive or aggressive behaviour is not going to derail this mechanism. The forthcoming Ministerial meeting will be an opportunity to define the idea and chart a future path.

Needless provocation of China should be avoided. There is no gain in actions that anger the Chinese with no commensurate benefit to the others.

In a recent address to the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) on August 31, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Stephen Biegun, spoke about making sure that all the countries were moving at the same speed. This is an important statement because a plurilateral mechanism should also serve national interest. He also

suggested that other countries might be invited to join in the future. This too is welcome; India has many other partners in the Indo-Pacific.

Reaching out

A positive agenda built around collective action in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, monitoring shipping for search and rescue or anti-piracy operations, infrastructure assistance to climatically vulnerable states, connectivity initiatives and similar activities, will re-assure the littoral States that the Quad will be a factor for regional benefit, and a far cry from Chinese allegations that it is some sort of a military alliance.

An outreach to the Indian Ocean littoral states is especially important since there are motivated reports from some quarters suggesting that India is, somehow, seeking to deny access, or to create infrastructure that impedes the legitimate movement of some extra-regional countries through the Indian Ocean. Prime Minister Abe had presciently said in the Central Hall of the Parliament of India on August 22, 2007 (<https://bit.ly/2HfY545>) - "a 'broader Asia' that broke away geographical boundaries is now beginning to take on a distinct form." It is the right time to realise Mr. Abe's dreams.

Vijay Gokhale is a former Foreign Secretary of India and a former Ambassador to Germany and to China

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

All acquitted

The stark contradictions that plague the Babri Masjid demolition case verdict force one to question the judicial objectivity of courts in India.

The watershed judgment is in spite of the multitude of evidence in the form of visuals, news reports, speeches and even verbal testimonies about the involvement of those acquitted in the demolition. The verdict comes at an inopportune time as the halting of Amnesty International's activities, which has focused global attention on the country. It is quite disconcerting as the secular credentials that

India has upheld since Independence have been subjected to the opprobrium of the international media.

JACOB J. PUTHENVEETIL, Thiruvananthapuram
India's virus 'peak'
The writers of the article, "Imperatives after India's September virus peak" (Editorial page, September 29), claim that the country has reached the peak of the epidemic curve, but this assertion is based on a flawed assumption.

Observing the currently decreasing trend of average daily reported cases of 85,156 (September 19-25) from the figure of 91,801

(during the fortnight of September 5-18) is good news, but suffers some faults in modelling. The faults lie in the assumption of the COVID-19 positive or silently infected population to be around 480-600 million based on the ICMR Survey Round-1 (May 11-June 4); the sero-positivity rate of 0.73%, whereby it is inferred that for every RT-PCR positive case there were 82-130 undocumented infections. When we apply this correction factor — as the writers rightly did — we have already reached a figure of above 35% of India's total population. But the ICMR, just a day after the article, published a

revised sero-positivity rate of 6.6% in Round-2 (August 17-September 22) of the result released recently. Thereby, the community-level of infection is only 26-32 infections per reported cases, say 30 times that which is lab confirmed. This will reduce the presumed hidden community infection to 192 million (30% of 1,380 million), which is the total population of India — way behind the 414 million minimum level of the population which needs to be infected for herd immunity. This must be an eye-opener. But let us not have unrealistic consolation. We

still have densely populated mosaics all over the country where the virus has not reached. When will it reach and explode after the 'Unlocking' steps we cannot predict if we apply maturity of wisdom rather than relying on partially-known epidemiology.
DR. ANTHONY K.R., Kochi
S.P. Balasubrahmanyam
S.P. Balasubrahmanyam is certainly a great and popular film playback singer. If Lata Mangeshkar can be conferred with the Bharat Ratna, so can even K.J. Yesudas and SPB. There are other greats such as M.S. Viswanathan, T.M.

Soundararajan and even Illaiyaraaja to name a few who too can be considered. Dr. Balamuralikrishna shone like a beacon in classical Carnatic music and the celluloid world. He was a great popular singer, innovator par excellence and composer par excellence. When alive, his fans wished the award to be conferred on him, but this does not seem to have reached the ears of those in the hierarchy who decide the awards. It is meaningful to show recognition when the person is alive and well.
V.P. DHANANJAYAN, Chennai



CM YK

The challenge of changing health behaviour

Health behaviour is a subset of human behaviour and is linked to a person's living and working conditions



MATHEW GEORGE

The role of health behaviour (our diet, physical activity, sleep, smoking, substance use, and so on) in public health practice needs special attention during an epidemic. The challenge is that the onus of altering health behaviour lies with the individuals who often don't have the option of changing their livelihood. We see this during this pandemic. This demonstrates the failure of public health in internalising the knowledge about the social origins of human behaviour. Let's examine four aspects of our response to COVID-19.

Identifying 'at risk' sections

The real skill of public health professionals during an epidemic is to identify those social groups which can be at greater risk to disease at any given point of time. The screening of those groups becomes efficient when the high-risk groups are identified and targeted for systematic surveillance to prevent potential spread of a disease. In other words, the real skill of public health surveillance is to pick up those who are at risk from a general population, even before they know that they are at risk. To know whether any group is at risk or not is possible only if we have a deep understanding of the society and its people and their livelihood-related behaviour of which health behaviour forms a part.

It is this classic public health act of identifying an 'at risk' population that calls for an anthropological understanding of human lives for which understanding risky health behaviour becomes inevitable. Laboratory tests only categorise the population as 'positive' and 'negative'. These can be matched with those with risky health behaviour and non-risky health behaviour. These categories are further linked to their livelihood characteristics and are crucial for effective public health action. Any attempt to over-emphasise laboratory tests during an epidemic without capturing the health behaviour of people is actually putting the cart before the horse. This is what hap-



"Health behaviour plays a critical role in deciding the success of any public health intervention." People wearing masks as part of safe practices against COVID-19 at a metro station in New Delhi. ■ REUTERS

pens when very little is known about people, their occupation and health behaviour.

Another related but crucial aspect of health behaviour is the significant linkage it has with the prevention of an epidemic. The primary purpose of public health action during an epidemic is to prevent the spread of a disease in the community. When laboratory tests that are meant for clinical practice become the starting point, and when guidelines state that only those with symptoms be tested, this does not help prevent the spread of the disease. This is because testing is done among those who already have symptoms and who have the potential to transmit the disease to others by the time test results are available. The overreliance on laboratory tests not only means that we lose the opportunity to detect those who are possibly at high risk of transmission but also the opportunity to look for high risk behaviour among people. In other words, the approach to tackle COVID-19 allows, by design, silent transmission of the disease within populations.

Capacity to modify behaviour

The third important aspect is the role of health awareness in health behaviour. Many who are at risk find it difficult to modify their health beha-

viour despite being aware that they are at risk. People are aware that taking precautions like wearing masks, hand washing and maintaining physical distancing can prevent transmission of the disease. Yet we hear of politicians, celebrities, healthcare workers and those travelling in public transport testing positive for COVID-19. This implies that there is a limit to an individual's capacity to modify his behaviour and sustain that behaviour without altering his living and working condition.

Related to this is the fact that if there is success in controlling an epidemic, the credit goes to science and institutions and the government, whereas if there is a failure to control the epidemic, the blame is placed on the people. There is a failure to understand that health behaviour is only a subset of human behaviour and is closely linked to a person's living and working conditions. Behavioural change takes place when society is organised in such a way that there is no option to engage in risky/ unhealthy behaviour by virtue of one's occupation or social position. Right now, those who can afford to modify their life conditions without affecting their livelihood are the ones who are mostly able to keep away from the risk of COVID-19.

Finally, it is important to examine

ways by which States/ governments intervene to ensure that people follow a certain health behaviour. Most States invoked the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 and some gave the police the responsibility to ensure that people follow certain health behaviour. What is the expectation of public health professionals about people's health behaviour during epidemics? Can we expect people to recognise the potential risks on their own and keep away from those risks? Disease control models focus on modifying individual risk factors. The role of public health in this case gets largely confined to 'preaching' with very little scope for action. The second approach has been to create fear of punishment as the basis of behavioural change. The police is given the responsibility to fine people when they violate rules. This has serious ethical implications, especially for those who cannot afford certain health behavioural practices. What history teaches us is that those health behavioural practices that are 'natural' and linked to living and working conditions are more acceptable and sustainable and are followed by people voluntarily. The task of public health professionals is to understand those health behavioural practices and the relationship of those practices with social structures and institutions. Anything short of this commitment in public health will ultimately result in putting the onus on the people to adopt 'self-control' which is the same as 'preaching', where there is little scope for action.

For real change

Health behaviour plays a critical role in deciding the success of any public health intervention. The potential of health behaviour to transform the direction of any crisis is immense. The real change in health behaviour is possible only when there is acknowledgement of its societal roots and there are efforts to alter it at multiple levels. Instead, putting the onus of changing or modifying health behaviour onto individuals will only result in 'victim blaming' and create distrust between people and those responsible for epidemic control.

Mathew George is Professor, Centre for Public Health, School of Health Systems Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. The views expressed are personal

Is one language enough?

A look at how Hindi stands the test among a plethora of languages in India



MADHAVI SRINIVASAN JOHNSON

While negotiating independence from Dutch colonial rule, Indonesian nationalists decided that a reformed version of Malay (renamed Bahasa Indonesia) would become the official language. Malay had evolved due to the need in maritime Southeast Asia for a lingua franca for trade and other exchanges. In this region, hundreds of languages were spoken across thousands of islands that now comprise the modern nations of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. As it was grammatically simple, non-hierarchical, and easier to learn than other regional languages, Malay became an accepted language of communication. Bahasa Indonesia aimed to bring more than 300 ethnic groups together with no one ethnic group, including the Javanese, overshadowing the rest. From the outset of its independence, Indonesia recognised the importance of avoiding the inequality that was likely to occur by imposing the language of one dominant ethnic group over others.

Debates in the Constituent Assembly

In contrast, the issue of adopting a national language could not be resolved when the Constituent Assembly began drafting India's Constitution. The adoption of a national language, the language in which the Constitution was to be written, and the language in which the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly were to be conducted were the main questions debated. On the one side were members from the Hindi-speaking provinces who moved a number of pro-Hindi amendments and argued for adopting Hindi as the sole national language. One of the drafters declared, "People who do not know Hindustani have no right to stay in India. People who are present in the House to fashion a constitution... and do not know Hindi are not worthy to be members of this Assembly." A member of the Assembly from the south said, "If we are going to be compelled to learn Hindi... I would perhaps not be able to do it at my age, and perhaps I would not be willing... because of the amount of constraint you put on me. This kind of intolerance makes us fear that the strong Centre which we need... will also mean the enslavement of people who do not speak the language of the Centre."

Widespread resistance to the imposition of Hindi on non-native speakers, especially in Tamil Nadu, led to the passage of the Official Languages Act of 1963, which provided

for the continued use of English for all official purposes. Hindi became the sole working language of the Union government by 1965 with the State governments free to function in the language of their choice. Meanwhile, the constitutional directive for the Union government to encourage the spread of Hindi was retained within Central government entities in non-Hindi-speaking States.

Later, Hindi speakers from the IT, construction and other sectors began moving for jobs to the south where many languages and dialects are spoken. Despite this migration to States that speak other languages, the Census found that while Hindi is the fastest growing language, the number of speakers of other languages has dropped. In Tamil Nadu, for example, over a 10-year period, the number of Tamil speakers of Hindi doubled largely because Tamilians needed to converse with those who came from the north.

Loss of a language and a way of life

According to the 2001 Census, India has 30 languages that are spoken by more than a million people each. The Constitution lists 22 languages and protects them in the eighth schedule. Many languages are kept out of this schedule even if they deserve to be included. This includes Tulu which is spoken by over 1.8 million people and has inscriptions dating back to the 14th and 15th centuries. When a refined language loses its status in literary and daily interactions, the way of life associated with it also vanishes.

On the other hand, Hindi, a much younger Indo-Aryan language, has been gaining prominence since before independence. Old Hindi assimilated words from Persian. With the arrival of Islamic administrative rule in north India, it became Hindustani. The growing importance of Hindustani in colonial India and the association of Urdu with Muslims prompted Hindus in north India to develop a Sanskritised version, leading to the formation of a modern standard Hindi a century later. It was based on the vernacular of Delhi and the surrounding region and came to replace prestige dialects such as Awadhi, Maithili and Braj. The literary value of these dialects diminished in due course.

While discussing Hindi and its use, let us also focus on the merit of other Indian languages. If we don't protect and promote other well-evolved or endangered and indigenous languages, our future generations may end up never understanding their 'real' roots and culture. Instead of focusing on one national language, why not learn a language beyond one's mother tongue and get to know a different way of life too?

Madhavi Srinivasan Johnson is a gender and human rights advocate

Leaving no older woman behind

How the lives of the elderly, especially women, can be improved significantly

BJÖRN ANDERSSON

Perhaps one of the terrible aspects of COVID-19 is the harm it inflicts on older persons who face multiple and compounding threats, including becoming physically more vulnerable than others, at greater peril of the impacts of social isolation, and at significant risk from the likely long-lasting socioeconomic shocks of the pandemic. In the Asia-Pacific region, these impacts are particularly acute, adding to the challenge of grappling with accelerating population ageing. Women, who generally outlive men, constitute the majority of older persons in the region, but represent an even greater majority of the 'oldest old' population of 80 years and over.

Plans in place

If there are better policies, more resilient social systems and gender equality, the lives of older people, especially women, can be improved significantly. This would also allow societies to harness the valuable experiences of older persons as they age. In fact, the commitment to advance a better world in an ageing society has already been articulated by the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. This agreement commends the development of evidence-based policies that help create a 'society for all ages'. In addition, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals underscore the basis of this approach to healthy ageing.

We must collectively prioritise greater action, funding and implementation. Our mandate in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) incorporates the need to enable and strengthen the self-reliance of older persons. The ICPD Programme of Action is our foundation, and our guiding principle. UNFPA is committed to helping governments in full partnership with civil society and communities. This is the Decade of Healthy Ageing as well as the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs. As Asia-Pacific, with the rest of the world, seeks to 'build back better' from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, let us seize this moment to transform the challenge of population ageing into an opportunity.

To unpack this, let us consider a woman in her 70s in the small village where she was born and raised. As with so many of her generation, she was made to marry early, with minimum education. She had children early, pregnancies were unplanned, childbirth was risky. Her husband, many years older, died a while ago,

leaving her a widow, unprepared to enter the workforce or properly fend for herself. Her children left the village for the city, adding to her isolation. This is the scenario many older women now face, with the added risks and effects of COVID-19. But imagine if, as an adolescent, this woman had been able to complete higher education; achieve gainful employment; marry as an adult and of her own choice; have healthy children and invest in their well-being; and enjoy a secure old age.

Plans in place

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Björn Andersson is the UNFPA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific



DATA POINT

Lagging behind

HOW TO READ THE GRAPHS | Each circle corresponds to a State. Bihar is highlighted in red. The number of States performing better and worse than Bihar are mentioned. The total number of States/UTs considered for an indicator may vary based on data availability

Human development index (2018)*

0.576 35 States/UTs better

0.58 0.62 0.66 0.7 0.74 0.78

Life expectancy at birth (2014-18) in years

6 States/UTs worse 15 States/UTs better

69.1 65 67 69 71 78 75 76

People served by a govt. doctor (2019) (the lower the better)

35 States/UTs better

43,788 0 10,000 20,000 30,000 40,000 45,000

Infant mortality rate (2018) (infant deaths/1,000 births)

15 States/UTs better 6 States/UTs worse

32 5 15 25 35 45 50

Maternal mortality ratio (16-18) (maternal deaths/1 lakh births)

12 States/UTs better 6 States/UTs worse

149 0 40 80 120 160 200 220

Poverty rate (% of population in poverty*) 2011-12

29 States/UTs better

33.7 0 10 20 30 40

Per Capita Net State Domestic Product (at current prices) 2017-18 (in ₹)

38,631 32 States/UTs better

0 1,00,000 2,00,000 3,00,000 4,00,000 4,50,000

Gross enrolment ratio in higher education (2018-19)

13.6 32 States/UTs better

5 15 25 35 45 55

Govt. schools with girl's toilet (2016-17) (%)

89.4 35 States/UTs better

89 91 93 95 97 99 100

Source: RBI, SRS, National Health Mission, Dept. of Higher Education, NITI Aayog, *Global Data Lab, *Tendulkar methodology

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 1, 1970

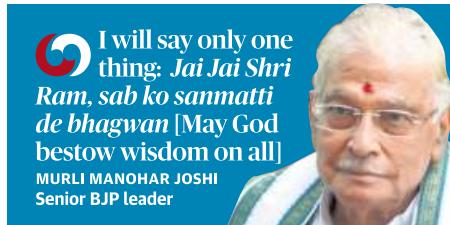
President hails Soviet aid to India

The President, Mr. V.V. Giri, to-day [September 29, Moscow] expressed appreciation at Soviet assistance to India's economic development. The President, on his first official visit to this country, was speaking to the Ukrainian Republican Premier, Mr. Vladimir Shcherbitsky in Kiev, capital of Ukraine. "We highly appreciate the great assistance the Soviet Union has given us in our economic construction. We are learning and are ready to learn in the future the positive experience of the USSR in the development of industry, science and culture," the President was quoted as saying. The Soviet Union to-day called for further strengthening of Indo-Soviet friendship, saying it was not only in the national interests of the two peoples, but would contribute to the consolidation of peace in Asia and the rest of the world. In a statement issued at the end of Mr. Giri's ten-day goodwill tour, the Soviet Government expressed satisfaction at India continuing to follow the policy of non-alignment and upholding the cause of peace.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FROM THE EDITION OF OCTOBER 2, 1920 AS THE OCTOBER 1ST EDITION IS UNAVAILABLE IN FULL

Postal Strike

At a meeting of the Post and Telegraph men [Bombay, September 30], Mr. V.G. Dalvi, Honorary Secretary, Postmen's Union explained to the men the offer of the Post Master General to pay off the men on their returning the uniforms and pointed out the letter was not clear as to whether the men would be reinstated or not. Mr. Dalvi further advised the men not to leave their time but to learn typewriting, weaving and other skills which would be useful to them in a city like Bombay. A letter has been sent on behalf of the men to the Post Master General stating that it is not understood why the return of the uniform has been made a condition to the payment of salary due to them. During the last two strikes of 1906 and 1917, uniforms were not taken from the men. So long as the men are in the service of the department they are entitled to keep the uniforms with them. It is not clear from the letter whether you consider they are in the service of the department from the 20th instant or not. The men want to know definitely the implications of the letter and in hearing the reply will decide their future course of actions.



I will say only one thing: Jai Jai Shri Ram, sab ko samnati de bhagwan [May God bestow wisdom on all]

MURLIDHAR JOSHI
Senior BJP leader



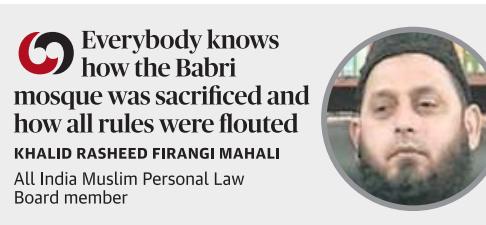
The court has given the verdict... It was expected and hence, we are not surprised

NAWAB MALIK
NCP national spokesperson



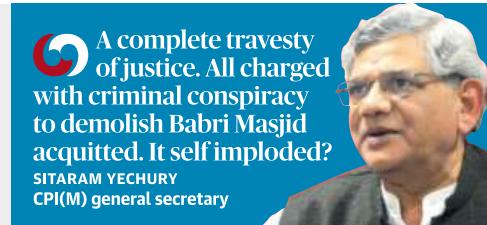
I was witness to the entire incident of 6th Dec. It was all spontaneous, no conspiracy... I was surprised when some kar sevaks climbed Babri [Masjid]

SUSHIL MODI, Deputy CM of Bihar



Everybody knows how the Babri mosque was sacrificed and how all rules were flouted

KHALID RASHEED RANJANI MAHLI
All India Muslim Personal Law Board member



A complete travesty of justice. All charged with criminal conspiracy to demolish Babri Masjid acquitted? Itself imploded?

SITARAM YECHURY
CPI(M) general secretary



Main litigant in Babri case welcomes verdict

LUCKNOW

Iqbal Ansari, the main litigant in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute case, welcomed the special CBI court's decision acquitting all the accused in the mosque demolition case on Wednesday and appealed to all Muslims to honour it. "I appeal to Muslims not to take any further action in this. Just as they honoured the November 9 decision, this verdict too needs to be accepted similarly," PTI



Black day for Indian judiciary, says Owaisi

HYDERABAD

Hours after a special court on Wednesday delivered its verdict in the Babri Masjid demolition case, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimine (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi said that it is a black day for the Indian judiciary, and questioned whether it was sorcery that led to the mosque's demolition. He was speaking at the party headquarters in Darussalaam. He wondered whether the CBI would file an appeal to maintain its independence.



Is it justice or failure of justice, asks Jamiat chief

NEW DELHI

Prominent Muslim body Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind raised questions over the special CBI court's verdict in the Babri Masjid case. Jamiat president Maulana Arshad Madani said, "...those who used the demolition of the mosque for rise of their politics were honourably acquitted." "Is this justice or is it the failure of justice?" he asked. PTI



Truth prevailed, says former Shiv Sena MP

THANE

Former Shiv Sena MP Satish Pradhan, who was an accused in the Babri Masjid demolition case, on Wednesday welcomed the CBI special court's verdict acquitting all the 32 accused in the case. "Truth has prevailed," he said, after attending the hearing through videoconference. Mr. Pradhan had earlier been granted bail in the case. PTI

Accused did not have a plan, says court

Kar sevaks pelted the mosque with stones, broke barricades and climbed the structure, it says

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

A special CBI court here which on Wednesday acquitted senior BJP leader L.K. Advani, former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh and 30 others in the Babri Masjid demolition case, cited lack of credible evidence.

"The video cassettes that have been presented, their related witnesses have themselves accepted that these are edited and tampered with," special judge S.K. Yadav said.

The judge said evidence suggested that RSS and VHP volunteers were taking care of arrangements, including seating for women, elderly and media, and regularly making announcements. "This indicates that there was no scheme of the named accused to bring down the disputed structure on December 6, 1992," the court said.

The court also said that in the case of Mr. Advani, Murlidhar Joshi, Sadhu Rambabar, Uma Bharti, Vinay Katiyar and Acharya Dharmendra Dev, it was clear that the recordings of slogans raised by a specific accused

Many twists & turns

The verdict by a special court in the Babri Masjid demolition case comes 28 years after kar sevaks razed the 16th century mosque and almost a year after the Supreme Court settled the land case in favour of a Ram temple at the disputed Ayodhya site.

A timeline:
December 6, 1992: Babri Masjid demolished
■ Two FIRs filed in the case. One against unknown kar sevaks for demolition of the mosque. The other names BJP leaders L.K. Advani, Murlidhar Joshi and others for allegedly giving communal speeches before the demolition

October 1993: CBI files composite chargesheet accusing Mr. Advani and others of conspiracy

views of the accused and statements published in newspapers and submitted by the CBI from November 1990 to May 1993 could not be considered as evidence.

All was normal'

The court said that it had also been established that on December 6, 1992 around 12 p.m. everything was normal, but when senior VHP leader Ashok Singhal announced

again how the kar seva should proceed, a "section of kar sevaks" became agitated and started pelting the mosque with stones. Some broke the barricades and climbed the structure, following which Singhal asked the group of kar sevaks to return, but they instead started attacking him, noted the court.

"... they were definitely hooligans, because if they

were actual believers of Lord Ram, they would have paid heed to Ashok Singhal's statement that the disputed structure 'is also a temple and you have to protect it,'

said the court. CBI lawyers said it was up to the CBI headquarters to decide on filing an appeal. Any of the aggrieved parties - there were 49 FIRs filed in this case - could also go for appeal, said a lawyer.

travesty of justice, as it was a well-known fact that an intense campaign was carried out by RSS and BJP leaders for mobilising people against the Babri Masjid that finally led to its demolition.

'Anti-social elements'

Mr. Raja asked, "The kar sevaks who took part in the demolition, we are given to understand, are anti-social elements. But who are they?"

CPI secretary and Rajya Sabha member Binoy Viswam said in a statement that the verdict was "disappointing" but "not unexpected".

"The whitewashing of the plethora of crimes committed on December 6, 1992, has been the hallmark of this government and its cohorts. It is ridiculous to believe that the events of that fateful day were spontaneous and the mobs were not spurred on by its leaders," Mr. Viswam said.

No justice delivered'

The CPI(M) Polit Bureau said in a statement that it took 28 long years for this verdict but justice was not delivered.

Citing the Supreme Court judgment, it said: "Now, the Lucknow court has found the main perpetrators of this crime not guilty. This verdict will blemish the image of India as a secular-democratic country governed by the Constitution. The CBI must immediately appeal against this judgment."

General secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI) D. Raja said it was a

travesty of justice, as it was a well-known fact that an intense campaign was carried out by RSS and BJP leaders for mobilising people against the Babri Masjid that finally led to its demolition.

'Appeal against the verdict, says AIMPLB'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) urged the CBI to file an appeal against the special court verdict acquitting all 32 persons accused in the Babri Masjid demolition.

"To uphold the rule of law, we urge the CBI to file an appeal," said Maulana Mohammad Wali Rehmani, AIMPLB general secretary.

"This judgment is far from justice," said Mr. Rehmani.

Should forget the episode now: Raut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Wednesday said the Babri Masjid demolition case lost its relevance after the Supreme Court settled the Ram Janmabhoomi title suit in 2019, even as he welcomed the special court's verdict acquitting all the 32 accused in the case.

Mr. Raut said the demolition episode needed to be forgotten now.

Offer free virus treatment to all, says NHRC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Nearly three months after forming a committee to assess the impact of COVID-19 on rights, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) this week issued an advisory that includes providing free treatment to all COVID-19 patients, including healthcare workers, and paying ASHA workers on time for their contribution in the combating the disease.

Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong said "living in harmony" is the "only correct choice" for the two neighbours.

"We need to remain rational and calm," he said in an address to a number of India-China Friendship Associations on Wednesday, at an online event to mark China's 71st National Day.

DMK MP moves SC against farm Acts

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) MP Tiruchi Siva on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court against the passage of the controversial agriculture laws.

Mr. Siva, in the petition settled by senior advocate P. Wilson and filed by advocate D. Kumaran, has challenged the constitutionality of the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act;

Farmers Produce Trade And Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act; and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020 (Act 21 of 2020) on various

grounds. The DMK leader said the laws were "prima facie unconstitutional, illegal and arbitrary" as they would "usher in a new exploitative regime for the poor farmers of the country, who are entirely dependent on earning their livelihood, by selling their produce in the market".

The amendment to the Essential Commodities Act would facilitate black marketing.

"The Acts attack the very foundation of the agricultural fabric of the country that was built to safeguard the interests of the farmers and not leave them at the mercy of the new era of privatisation," the petition said.

Indian and Chinese officials meet again

They stress the need to 'strengthen communications' and comply with the 5-point Moscow pact

SUHASINI HAIDAR
ANANTH KRISHNAN
NEW DELHI/CHENNAI

Indian and Chinese officials stressed the need to "strengthen communications" between ground military commanders and comply with the 5-point Jaishankar-Wang Moscow agreement, during a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on Wednesday. In separate statements issued in New Delhi and Beijing, the two sides appeared to soften their language a day after they exchanged sharp words over the status of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and China's claim that it does not "recognise" the Union Territory of Ladakh.

"[The two sides] emphasised the need to implement the steps outlined after the last meeting of the senior commanders so as to avoid misunderstandings and to maintain stability on the ground. In this context, the need to strengthen communication, especially between the ground



To the frontier: Army trucks moving along the Manali-Leh highway on Wednesday. ■ ANI

was emphasised by both sides," said a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), referring to the sixth meeting of commanders on September 21, where they agreed to stop sending more troops to the front-lines. While that agreement has been largely held,

no movement has taken place on disengagement or withdrawal of the troops amassed at the LAC.

In its statement, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said a seventh round of commander-level talks would be held shortly to "properly handle the remaining issues on the ground and jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the border areas," and that the WMCC had agreed that both sides would take "practical measures to further ease and cool down the border situation".

The MEA statement said the two sides had also agreed to "work towards early and complete disengagement of the troops along the LAC in accordance with the 5-point Moscow pact".

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They are *prima facie* unconstitutional

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Centre, States must file an appeal: Cong.

SC was misled by filing wrong affidavit'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

CBI to consult legal department on appeal

LUCKNOW

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will decide on filing an appeal against the special court verdict acquitting all 32 accused in the Babri Masjid demolition case after consulting the legal

department, the agency's counsel said on Wednesday.

"After a copy of the verdict is received, it will be sent to the CBI headquarters where it will be studied by the legal

department and a decision on filing an appeal will be taken as per its suggestion," CBI counsel Lalit Singh said. Mr. Singh was replying to a query about the same. PTI

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Citing the Supreme Court judgment, it said: "Now, the Lucknow court

INTERVIEW | SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL

'New farm laws are a clear encroachment on State functions'

When the government did not listen to us, we walked out of the National Democratic Alliance and the Cabinet, says Shiromani Akali Dal chief

VIKAS VASUDEVA

After pulling out of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Union government, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) now plans to bring regional parties across the country on one platform to fight against what it terms 'anti-farmer' laws. Sukbir Singh Badal, party chief and former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister, says it is sad the BJP was 'insensitive' to the huge relevance of the alliance with his party in Punjab against the backdrop of Hindu-Sikh unity. Excerpts:

The SAD-BJP alliance in Punjab was seen as symbol of Sikh-Hindu unity. How do you assess the situation after the breaking of the alliance?

■ The values of peace and communal harmony are very dear to us. Mr. Parkash Singh Badal is a symbol of peace and the basic thing he taught us is that Punjab can progress only if there is peace. Badal sahab's basic fundamental was that he took every community, every religious organisation together. He took everyone into confidence for everything and that is why everyone trusts him, and that philosophy we will carry on.

For us every religion will play equal part in developing Punjab. Punjab is a border State and the Government of India should have been very

sensitive. Punjabis and Sikhs are very emotional people. With love, you can take anything from them, but if you do something which hurts them, they get agitated quickly. It is sad that the BJP is insensitive to the huge relevance of our alliance in Punjab for Hindu-Sikh unity.

The SAD initially supported agriculture sector ordinances but later decided to alter its stance. The Opposition accuses you of changing your stance only after facing backlash from farmers to save your 'vote bank'.

■ We never altered our stand from the beginning. When ordinances came to the Cabinet, we had put forward our objections surrounding them. The ordinances were



Farmers are facing a crisis of life and death, and the nation must come to their rescue

surance in writing was not sufficient. So, all this time, we were conveying what the government said to the farmers, and shared the farmers' view with the government, because we were a part of the NDA. We were assured that they [the Central government] would listen to us. But when they did not listen, we told them we would oppose [them] and walk out of the government. We always remained on one stand.

Were you betrayed by the BJP over the farm laws?

■ The BJP should have con-

sulted its allies first. SAD represents farmers. We know more about farmers than the BJP. In an alliance, numbers should not always be used as the method of taking decisions. Instead, a partnership should be considered as the base for decision-making.

The SAD had always been advocating more powers to the States. Against this background do you think the agriculture legislation encroaches on the States' functions?

■ Yes, absolutely. These laws are a clear encroachment on State functions. Agriculture is a State subject but they [the Centre] got the ordinances through the via media of trading, which falls in the Concurrent List. So, the government used the Concurrent List, which is a wrong way to do [this legislation]. We stand for a federal India. These laws are clearly violating the federal principle.

After the agriculture Bills were passed in the Rajya Sabha, you said that democratic virtues had

been ignored. Can you elaborate?

■ Winning and losing is something different but the system should not be broken. When people in the Rajya Sabha wanted division of votes on the Bills, it should have taken place. Why were the Bills forced? They [the NDA] would still have had the numbers but you cannot just push your way in the manner in which it was done, by bulldozing all norms.

The spirit of democracy is consensus, not majoritarian confrontation. People want consensus and peace. No attempt was made in that direction to bring a consensus in Parliament and the Bills were passed in the Rajya Sabha, flouting all democratic traditions.

How do you plan to fight against the new agriculture laws? Will you be approaching other political parties, especially the regional parties, to join hands for the farmers' cause?

■ We will try to get all farm-

ers' organisations under one platform, emerge as one force, and raise our concerns with the Centre. We will fight these laws at every level, including in the people's court. Farmers are facing a crisis of life and death, and the nation must come to their rescue.

What is happening is that the government has abandoned farmers in favour of corporates. The fire has spread all across the country. We will approach regional parties in the country and try to get all together on a single platform against the Centre's agriculture legislations and other farmers' issues.

The Assembly election in Punjab is due in 2022. Do you think the farm legislation will be the key election issue?

■ First let us fight this battle to save our farmers. The ruling Congress government is the most incompetent government that Punjab has ever had. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is hardly seen in Punjab. He doesn't meet anybody.

Fadnavis is BJP's Bihar poll in-charge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday appointed former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis as its poll in-charge for Bihar. This comes after Mr. Fadnavis was asked to attend the Bihar core committee meetings in the past few weeks.

While many are connecting Mr. Fadnavis's involvement in the Bihar polls to the death by suicide of film actor Sushant Singh Rajput in Mumbai and the subsequent political controversy over the handling of the case by the Mumbai police and the intervention of the Bihar police, party sources were quick to dismiss the suggestion.

"Bhupendrajit [BJP general secretary Bhupendra Yadav] and Devendra Fadnavis worked together in Maharashtra during the 2019 Assembly elections and have a good rapport, which is why it was felt that this appointment be made. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also has faith in Devendra Fadnavis," said a senior leader.

Mr. Yadav incidentally is State in-charge for Bihar.

IN BRIEF



3 labour codes get President's assent

NEW DELHI
The three labour law codes passed by Parliament last week received President Ram Nath Kovind's assent on Monday, according to the Law Ministry's gazette notifications on Tuesday. The Bills were passed by the Lok Sabha on September 22 and the Rajya Sabha on September 23, during the Opposition boycott over the passage of the agriculture Bills earlier in the session.

NHRC notice to MHA over Amnesty's claims

NEW DELHI
The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday took suo motu cognisance of Amnesty International shutting its India operations due to an alleged 'witch-hunt' of rights' organisations by the government, and ordered that a notice be issued to the Union Home Secretary. The comments of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) about the allegations levelled by Amnesty were sought within six weeks, a statement said.

Adityanath must quit: Opposition

Sonia alleges cover-up, says girl not given proper treatment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Opposition parties and activists on Wednesday demanded action against the Uttar Pradesh police and the resignation of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the police allegedly cremating the victim of the Hathras gang-rape case without the consent of her family.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, in a video statement released on Wednesday, said the Hathras rape incident was a blot on society and the country will speak up against the injustice committed by you. On behalf of the Congress, I stand with the demand for justice for the victim's family," she said.

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati tweeted that the BSP condemned the police action, and called on the Supreme Court to take cognisance of the incident.

Samajwadi Party leader and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said in a



Raising their voice: Mahila Congress chief Sushmita Dev, right, condemning the incident, in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ PTI

cruel government." Ms. Gandhi said the victim was denied dignity even in death.

"What kind of a government is this? You think you can do anything and the country will just keep watching. You are wrong, as the country will speak up against the injustice committed by you. On behalf of the Congress, I stand with the demand for justice for the victim's family," she said.

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati tweeted that the BSP condemned the police action, and called on the Supreme Court to take cognisance of the incident.

CPI general secretary D. Raja demanded that the Chief Minister resign, and called for nationwide protests on Thursday.

Modi speaks to U.P. CM, demands strict action

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday and wanted strict action to be taken against the perpetrators in the Hathras rape case. Mr. Adityanath set up a four-member Special Investigation Team and spoke to the father of the deceased.

Plea filed in SC seeking CBI or SIT probe

NEW DELHI
A writ petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking a probe by the CBI or a Special Investigation Team into the gangrape and murder of a 19-year-old Dalit girl in Hathras. The petition said the investigation should be monitored by a former SC or High Court judge.

NHRC sends notice to State govt., police

NEW DELHI
The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday issued notices to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police on the gang rape and murder of a 19-year-old woman in Hathras district. "The incident has raised many questions about law and order in the State," it said.

Southwest monsoon ends with 8% surplus

India received over 100% of its LPA

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon this year has ended with an 8.7% surplus, surpassing estimates by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). This is also the first time since 2010 that India has got more than 100% of its long period average (LPA) of 88 cm in consecutive years. Last year, India saw record rainfall of 110% of the LPA, the highest in a quarter century.

India has never got over 105% of the LPA in consecutive years in at least 30 years, according to records available since 1988 on the IMD website.

"These have been an unusually good couple of years for the monsoon," said D.S. Pai, chief forecaster, National Climate Centre, IMD Pune. "There are larger trends that statistics show of a decadal swing in overall monsoon rainfall. The last two decades, however, have been weak and hopefully, what we see now is the beginning of a new epoch."

The heavy rains this year

have been due to several long-lasting low-pressure systems in the Bay of Bengal that fuelled heavy rain over large swathes of India in August. This wiped out the deficit in July, which is usually the rainiest of the four monsoon months. At 32 cm, August rainfall was nearly 26% more than what's usual for the month.

Tad short of excess

A developing La Niña, the converse of an El Niño, which is a heating of the central equatorial Pacific and responsible for diminished monsoon rain over India, too, contributed to deficient rain this year.

The IMD, in its forecasts, had anticipated 'normal' rain, defined as 96-104% of the LPA. Rains above 110% LPA are termed 'excess' and this year has fallen only a tad short.

Of the 36 meteorological subdivisions that the IMD has partitioned the country into, 12 recorded 'excess' rain and 17 recorded 'normal' rain. Only five divisions posted 'deficient rain'.

I-T returns can be filed till November 30

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The government has extended the last date for filing income tax returns for assessment year 2019-20 by another two months till November 30, 2020, citing difficulties faced by taxpayers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs extended the due date for furnishing annual returns in GSTR-9 and GSTR 9C for 2018-19 to October 31

Maharashtra's response sought by SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought a response from the Secretary of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly on a breach of privilege notice against journalist Arnab Goswami for the reportage on the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Crimes against Scheduled Tribes saw 26% rise in 2019: NCRB report

Scheduled Castes also faced 7% more crimes than in 2018, it says

VIJAYA SINGH

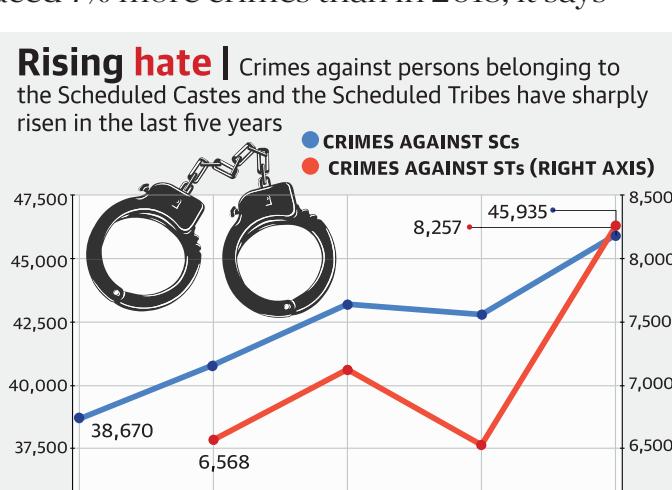
NEW DELHI
Crimes against members of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs) saw an increase of over 7% and 26% in 2019 compared with the 2018 figures, according to the annual Crime in India 2019 report published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) on Wednesday. Due to "non-receipt of data" from West Bengal for 2019, the 2018 data had been used to arrive at national and city-wise figures, the NCRB said.

A total of 45,935 cases were registered for committing crimes against the SCs, showing an increase of 7.3% over 2018 when 42,793 such cases were recorded. At 11,829 cases, Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of crimes against the SCs in 2019, followed by 6,794 cases in Rajasthan and 6,544 cases in Bihar, the report said.

Rape cases

In the number of cases of rape of women belonging to the SCs, Rajasthan topped the list with 554, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 537 and Madhya Pradesh at 510. A total of 8,257 cases were registered for crimes against the SCs and STs in 2019.

Rising hate | Crimes against persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes have sharply risen in the last five years



It showed an increase of 1.6% in registration of cases over 2018 (50,74,635 cases), the NCRB said. A total of 4,05,861 cases of crimes against women were registered in 2019 compared to 3,78,236 cases in 2018, showing an increase of 7.3%.

CHRI statement

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), a police reforms advocacy group, said few cases were being registered for specific discriminatory action against the SCs and the STs.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD

U/o Chief General Manager (Engg), STP Circle-II, Kharibabad, Hyderabad, Telangana State-500004.

Notice No.: 01/HMWSB/CGM/STP Circle-II/FLOW Meters-STPs/Quotations/2020-20 dt: 30.09.2020

NOTICE INVITING QUOTATIONS

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSB) intends to install Digital Flow Meters at inlets and outlets at Sewage Treatment Plants for automatic flow measurement to monitor the inflows and outflows of Sewage Treatment Plants located at various locations.

Quotations are called from open market from reputed firms having similar experience for "Installation of Digital Flow Meters at inlets and outlets at 20 Sewage Treatment Plants for automatic flow measurement including CMC of Flow meters for 5 years including spares and services". The detailed scope of work and proposed payment schedule etc., can be obtained from HMWSB website: www.hyderabadwater.gov.in

The sealed quotations should be submitted to the Chief General Manager (Engg), STP Circle-II, HMWSB, Kharibabad, Hyderabad on or before 10.10.2020 by 3.00 PM.

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Engg), STP Circle-II, Kharibabad, Hyderabad, Telangana State-500004.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT

Trichy (H) NABARD and Rural Roads Circle

TENDER NOTICE (Online Only)

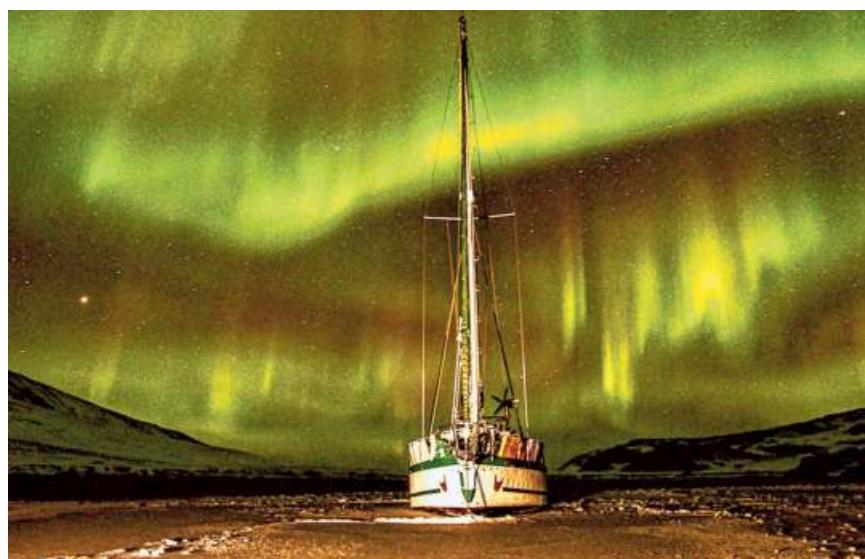
Tender Notice No.17/2019-20/SDO/Dated: 29.09.2020.

For and on behalf of Governor of Tamilnadu Percentage Tender (Two Cover System) will be received by the Superintendent Engineer (H) NABARD & Rural Roads Circle, Trichy, for One Bridge work under NABARD

RIDF - XXIII/18-19/70 BRIDGE WORKS loan Assistance Scheme and one Road work under UPGRADEMENT

OF PANCHAYAT UNION ROADS/PANCHAYAT ROADS UNDER

Meet globe-trotting Monique and her owner, who have sailed across seas through snow and sunshine on a rusty, motorised fishing boat



PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

Monique the hen has probably travelled to more countries than you have. And no, she is not smug about it. She just clucks and goes about her life, laying an egg a day. The now seven-year-old, met Guirec Soudée when he had docked at Tenerife in the Canary Islands, during the course of his world cruise. He adopted the six-month-old hen and they have been inseparable since.

As a 20-year-old, Guirec set off on what he calls his "dream journey" in 2013. His choice of transport: a rusty, motorised fishing boat with a small diesel engine for manoeuvres in ports, or to escape the current when there is no wind. He named it Yvinec, after the French island that is his home. The sailing expedition took him five years to complete.

He received a hero's welcome when he returned. Though, he admits, it was hard to come back and not find his father at home. "He passed away while I was on the high seas," he says.

Since then Guirec has become a local celebrity with three books (*The Hen Who Sailed The World*, *Le Monde Selon Guirec et Monique* and *La Fabuleuse Histoire de Guirec et Monique*) to his credit as well as a 60-minute documentary titled *Du Pôle*

The hen who doesn't give a cluck

Nord au Pôle Sud. "We started the theatre tour with it in France in January this year and received more than 10,000 spectators. But due to the pandemic, we had to cancel everything."

Last week, the documentary was screened at Le Grand Rex, one of the biggest theatres in Paris. (With physical distancing, they could accommodate only an audience of 1,700.)

For now, the 28-year-old is more than happy to recount his adventure over an email interview onboard Yvinec. "I first crossed the At-

lantic leaving France from Brittany, stopped by Spain, Portugal, Madeira, Canary Islands, then straight to the Caribbean," says Guirec, explaining his route.

At the Caribbean, he worked for a year to get his boat ready for ice, as he headed



High on vitamin sea Snapshots from Greenland and Guirec; Monique enjoying the sun in warmer parts of the world • GUIREC SOUDÉE AND JEAN PHILIPPE MERIGLIER

North through Canada, Saint Pierre and Miquelon islands, on to Greenland.

"After wintering in autarky in the ice, I sailed through the Northwest Passage under the Arctic Circle, and became the youngest sailor to cross it without any assistance," he says. Next stop, Alaska, followed by San Francisco, before setting sail on a long stretch through Cape Horn, Antarctica, South Africa, Brazil, French Guiana, the Caribbean again and back to France.

Monique, meanwhile, had no problems with the swinging of the boat and was out and about most of the time. "She loves fish and soon became very good at catching the flying fish on the deck," says Guirec.

The rest of the day for Monique was spent at leisure as she sat back taking in the scenes and watching her friend do all the hard work.

Throughout the voyage the two spent the nights on Guirec's boat, except in Canada, where the hull needed to be fixed. Guirec never planned how long he would dock at each city. But he was keen on spending a few months, at Saqqaq in Greenland.

"The plan was to spend the Arctic winter trapped in the ice. By that I mean,

the boat stuck in the ice. I chose a remote bay and dropped anchor waiting for the ice floe to form around the hull," he says. He had also willingly planned to be cut off from civilisation with no food other than some rice, no communication or connection with anybody. The temperature was -60 degree Celsius and most of the time was spent inside the cabin on board.

"I spent four months like that with Monique," says Guirec. Fortunately for him, Monique laid eggs the entire time. It was hard to source food and his fishing through the ice did not quite work out. He was told that a stressed hen would not give eggs. But given this globetrotting hen's record, she seemed far from stressed. "She is a special chick," he says.

As he travelled, he paused at port cities to make money: fixing boats, giving kite-surfing lessons, cleaning swimming pools and working at nautical beach schools.

That is how he managed to pay off the port fee and buy food. Once the international media started taking note of him, he was able to sell a few images that he shot of himself, Monique, the high seas and the surroundings.

"The challenge was to manage on my own and hold on to my dream," says Guirec, adding that he who had no skills in sailing solo, nor in sailing far from shore. "Everybody thought I was crazy to leave like that with a boat in bad shape. But I am the happiest man in the world to have succeeded and lived through it," he says.

He is already chalking out his next adventure. "It'll take place in 2021, on a faster and bigger boat. But before that, in November, I am crossing the Atlantic in a small paddle boat. This time without Monique."

Jariya Azeez and a team of youngsters are documenting families making traditional flavoured jaggery in Kayalpattinam in Thoothukudi district

AKILA KANNADASAN

When the dust of the day settles and people wait out the afternoon sun indoors, the 'puttu kaara paati' arrives. She walks from one street to another in the seaside village of Kayalpattinam in Thoothukudi, a basket balanced on her head, singing-announcing fresh *puttu*. The old woman – her name is Samudrakani – was a fixture in Jariya Azeez's childhood. "She's unable to walk long distances now, so doesn't sell *puttu* any more," says Jariya over phone.

Twenty-eight-year-old Jariya, who was raised in Chennai, is from Kayalpattinam. She runs Abati, a store that focusses on sustainable and handmade products, from her ancestral home in the town. During the course of curating products for her venture, she came across palm-based edibles such as *puttu*, *pavu*, and *pudisakkaram*.

"These are locally produced and are popular in a few other villages around Kayalpattinam as well," she explains. Made by families who have been in the business for generations, they are sold in small quantities in the villages during summer. "But these delicacies have been confined to our region; not many people outside are aware of them," points out Jariya.



(Clockwise from left) Jariya Azeez and team with 'Puttu paati' Samudrakani; puttu being readied; the assortment

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



village would walk to nearby Poonthottam, where *pavu* was made every summer. They carried coconut, fruits, and vegetables of their choice and handed them over to the *pavu* makers, waited until it was done and brought the dish back home," she recalls.

These days, though, this practice has become a thing of the past. "These are signs that this craft is dying, and we wanted to document it to showcase this to our future generations and the outside world," explains Jariya.

This summer, Jariya even sold the desserts on her Instagram page. In a hand-woven palm box, she packaged 50 grams each of five different flavours of the jaggery in small, colourful palm leaf pouches; a box of *pavu*; a multi-millet mix; and a sweet *seeni maavu* made of rice flour and coconut milk.

"I wanted to share what Kayalpattinam had to offer with everyone else; we take pride in what we make and designed this assortment as an alternative to a box of chocolates," she adds. The jaggery and the *seeni maavu* can be incorporated into breakfast. "They can be added as topping to a lot of dishes, had with tea... *paavu* can be used like jam."

Puttu paati Samudrakani, meanwhile, despite not stepping out for work, is hale and healthy. Jariya and team met her recently for their documentary. She even posed for a photo with them, sporting dark glasses.

For details, visit <https://www.instagram.com/46thaikastreet/>.

Sweet tales from a seaside town

months a year. In Kayalpattinam, there are a handful of families making it. The men head out early in the day to climb palm trees and bring down *padhaneer* (palm sap).

The preparation is mostly done by the women in the family. They empty fermented palm sap into huge cauldrons and stir them over a wood-fired stove until it takes on a golden colour.

"Then the flavouring is added: this can be mango, dry ginger, *moong dal*, sesame seeds, coconut, or cashews," says Jariya. This concoction is then poured into moulds and let to harden. So *puttu*, in essence, is

flavoured palm jaggery.

"To make *pavu*, the women continue to stir the same mixture until it takes on a thick, fudge-like consistency," she adds. "Rice flour is added to this mixture to make *pidasikkaram* that derives its name from 'pidi', meaning, to shape by hand." Jariya laughs as she recalls how her great grandmother stored the jaggery in earthen pots, hung high up from the ceiling, out of reach of children.

Today, if you visit Kayalpattinam or its neighbouring villages in the summer months, you can buy flavoured jaggery by the kilo. "But these days, though, the women make them only in small batches as per demand." Jariya, with help from Mohideen MSL and Mubarak VMH, both college students from the town, and Ahamed Mujahidha, a local, is making a documentary film on the process. "I remember how in the past, women from our

I believe I can fly

With graceful aesthetic videos, choreographer Anusha Swamy is steering the art of pole dancing away from themes of eroticism

SWETA AKUNDI

Gravity hardly seems a universal truth when Anusha Swamy is on the pole. Round and round she moves, twirling her arched legs around it as if cutting through water. In a one-handed motion, she inverts herself until her hair falls away from her face, striking a graceful pose to the music of violins from the late SP Balasubrahmanyam's 'Thoda Thoda'.

"Ask people what superpower they would want to have, and most would say flying," says 29-year-old Anusha.

Chasing after this freeing sensation, the multi-hyphenate choreographer who has worked for movies such as *Maryan* and *Shuddh Desi Romance*, has found her latest passion – pole art. "When you're on the pole, it feels like you are flying. But at the same time, you are in complete control of your body. If you're not in control, you will fall, so it keeps you at a higher level of consciousness."

After just one class in Melbourne last year, on an introduction to pole art, Anusha had a pole installed in her Chennai home in March this year. "A friend of mine ordered it from the US and we self assembled it. I don't think there are companies here who do that," she says. Since then, she has been putting out videos of her pole dances on Instagram every few days, garnering over 73K views on her latest one.

The songs of her choice include classics like Sid Sriram's 'Ennadi Mayavi Nee' and Harrishankar's 'Pachai Nirame' – those that bring melody and rhythm to the pole and make her movements look soft and powerful at the same time.

There is a bigger reason behind the selection of these songs, she explains. "The pole fitness community abroad is huge. They take it as seriously as we take Classical dance. But here pole dance is associated with eroticism. Like, if you're on a pole, you're a stripper." With these well-loved songs, she hopes to break the art form free from that idea and earn respect for the strength it requires.

"Pole dancing needs full body strength:



upper body to pull yourself up against gravity, core to hold on to the pole without using your arms, and lower body to perform mid-air inversions. So it is a combination of strength, flexibility and endurance," she says.

Anusha recalls how she would practise day in and out when she first got the pole, resulting in a shoulder injury. "My trainers sat me down and made me realise that I was trying to get the perfection of Day 1,000, on Day 1. So after that, I started taking it step by step. They moulded my fitness training around the pole, working on my hip strength, core ability and pull-ups."

With this level of fitness also comes a confidence boost – "it makes you feel powerful, every time you unlock a next feat or trick," says Anusha. This is why, by next year she hopes to start a community of pole artists in South India, as Indian pole artists are far and few in between.

"The pole is for everybody but for women especially, I think it's a great way to interact with each other," she says, adding, "I don't think I would have survived the lockdown if not for the pole."



IN OUR BACKYARD

ABHISHEK GULSHAN

It was August 22, 2020, and with the pandemic travel guidelines slightly lifted, I made a quick dash to Gurugram to catch up with a former intern who was leaving for Oxford University. I hadn't expected to hear the shrill, loud disyllabic 'chee-wee' cry of the Greenish Warbler, in a stray wild patch outside her high-rise apartment. I silently excused myself and recorded the call of this dainty medium-sized (10 cm) warbler on my phone.

A few birds are fairly easy to spot, owing to their size, colour, and behaviour, but not this one, of the leaf-warbler species, the members of which are so similar in appearance it's difficult to differentiate one from the other: brightly coloured and slim in appearance.

The timid behaviour of inhabiting the canopies of trees (where they feed on insects) and fluttering around from branch to branch, often makes a skittish bird like the Greenish Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) hard to spot through the thick foliage. The term *Phylloscopus* has been derived from the Greek words *phullon* meaning 'leaf' and *skopos* meaning 'seeker'.

The Greenish Warbler is one of the earliest migrants to travel from



The Greenish Warbler is easier heard than seen • AMIT SHARMA

Delhi's early visitor

The Greenish Warbler comes in from Europe, halts in our city, and then flies down South

its breeding grounds in Europe to our region late in August, before moving further to South India in November, though a few stray birds do stick around until later.

The bird has a pale greyish-olive

plumage above and dull clean white breast, with a dusky grey wash to the sides. Like most arboreal warblers feeding in the canopy of trees, the Greenish Warbler has thin legs (dark in this species) unlike the

stouter legs in other kinds of warblers that prefer to feed on ground. The spiky bill and reflexes help them catch insects in air.

The species has a strong clearly marked head pattern with a long yellowish-white supercilium (eyebrow), prominent white ring around the eye, and a broad eyestripe. Typically, they have a short square-shaped tail and the wings have a single short, quite broad yellowish-white wingbar. Sometimes there is a second narrower wingbar difficult to see on the field.

Both sexes are similar looking, and they're mostly found singly or in pairs. They mostly nest in shrubs, to avoid predatory attacks in high trees.

Although found in a variety of habitats and altitudes, they are forest-dwellers. In the city, look for them in wooded areas: gardens with old dense trees, and places like Vasant Kunj, Saket, and North Campus.

One way of identifying them is to look for fidgety birds that flick their wings and occasionally their tails. Another way, is to listen for the 'chee-wee'.

The writer is the founder of NINOX - Owl About Nature, a nature-awareness initiative. He is the Delhi-NCR reviewer for Ebird, a Cornell University initiative, monitoring rare sightings of birds. He formerly led a programme of WWF India.

The big top on your laptop

For the first time since its inception in 1991, Pune-based Rambo Circus went online last week, to encouraging applause

PRIYADESHINI S

"I received so many messages, paintings, cards and phone calls from children across India," says Biju Pushkaran, a clown with Rambo Circus. He is overwhelmed by the response to their maiden online show 'Life in a Circus: Save the Circus' that was held on September 25.

Last week, in an innovation triggered by the pandemic, Rambo Circus went virtual. A month before this digital show, a fully made-up Biju, performed in an empty big top for the first time along with 30 other artistes in a one-hour scripted, directed show, 'Life is a Circus', relayed eight times over the weekend, was a sell out.

Biju has been the clown at Ram-

bo Circus for 21 years and was hoping to represent India at the Monte Carlo International Circus Festival this year. However, COVID-19 led to the cancellation of the festival as well as the first leg of Rambo Circus' scheduled launch at Airoli in Navi Mumbai. "We had put up the big tent and our artistes were getting ready. We were stranded there with 100 artistes from different parts of India. With the help of the local police and corporators, we managed to send 40 people back but the others had to be looked after," says Sujith Dilip, one of the proprietors of the Pune-based circus company.



Changing times A tent with a capacity to host 1,200 was put up • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Dinesh Shetty of Production Crew and Navneeth Mohan and Saurab Khurana of LaQshya Live Experiences came up with the idea

of a digital circus. "We were figuring out ways to help artistes and get entertainment going. We thought of the circus, which was scheduled to come to town," says Navneeth, ad-

ding: "The circus is already a dying art form and the present generation do not know how much fun it is. We wanted to bring it to them in these times of isolation."

Dinesh discussed the concept with the artistes, explaining the alterations required for a digital show. Dance choreographer Rahul Saxena choreographed the show and Vipul Roy narrated the story of the pandemic-affected circus.

The tent with a capacity to host an audience of 1,200 was put up with the help of 30 artistes and supporting staff. Dinesh says that help from industry vendors poured in. "As it was not a live show, we had to amp up the effects," he says. After a week of diligent rehearsals, the final show was staged.

When the lights came on, a gamut of aerial acts, ladder balance, juggling feats, clown comedy and more unfolded. Some popular acts were missing either because of the manpower needed for big equipment or because the artists had gone home. But for Rambo Circus, this was a watershed moment.



HOMING IN

Saxophones, electronics and just plain bass guitar: this week's roundup of Live Gigs features global names and Chennai-brewed indie talent

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

From The Island

Island City Studios, a Mumbai-based recording studio has joined hands with the Bombay Vanguard, a initiative by Mumbai musician Clayton Hogermeer, to shine the spotlight on 12 deserving talents from that city's flourishing indie circuit. The digital festival, named From The Island, features performances paced out over three months, all to be streamed live from the studio. The lineup features an 11-piece big brass band lead called Bombay Brass led by saxophonist Rhys Sebastian, electronic duo Nothing Anonymous, Hindi rock band Ankur & The Ghatal Family, and popular solo names like Nikhil D'Souza and Raghav Meattle, among others. The sounds are sure to be varied and intriguing; schedule and passes are on skillbox.com.



Rufus Wainwright

The American-Canadian singer-songwriter's music is, in turns, pensive and fierce, baroque and operatic and political. He is doing a series of lives every Friday, from October 9 to November 27, of his studio albums in chronological order. With each album split into two live streams over consecutive Fridays, eight shows have been scheduled so far, along with Q&As. Visit veep.com for details and passes.



Alarte

This alternative rock band from Chennai is being hosted by Bengaluru-based Streamphony, for a live gig to be held this Saturday on Skillbox. The five-piece band, formed in 2015, released its debut album Living The Dream last year, and are worth checking out. The show begins at 7 pm on October 3; passes are on skillbox.com.

We would love to know how you are keeping busy at home. Tell us who you are watching live, at metro@thehindu.co.in.

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



PEANUTS

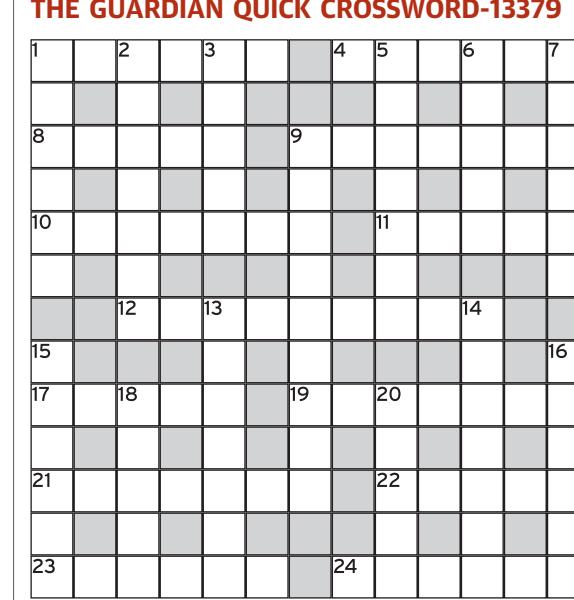


CALVIN AND HOBBES



To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13379

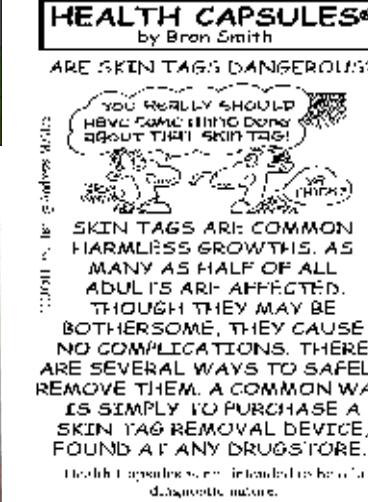


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poppies (5)
7 Wish (6)
9 Scattered (9)
13 Harris, US country singer, b. 1947 (7)
14 Taken away (7)
15 Stop speaking (4,2)
16 Tires (6)
18 Happen again (5)
20 Inert gas (5)

The solution will appear on October 8, 2020

Solution No. 13378



HEALTH CAPSULES®

by Brian Smith

ARE SKIN TAGS DANGEROUS?

You really should have something done about those skin tags! Skin tags are common harmless growths. As many as half of all adults are affected. Though they may be bothersome, they cause no complications. There are several ways to safely remove them. A common way is simply to purchase a skin tag removal device. Find a drugstore.

Health Capsules are intended to be a guide to good health.

- Across
- 1 Front of a building (6)
- 4 Maintain (6)
- 8 Express great joy (5)
- 9 Simple songs (7)
- 10 Attire (7)
- 11 Author of The Iliad (5)
- 12 Yeoman warden of the Tower of London (9)
- 17 Seraglio (5)
- 19 Speech defect (7)
- 21 Amused (7)
- 22 Provided (5)
- 23 Allowing liquid or gas to pass (6)
- 24 Positively charged conductors (6)
- Down
- 1 Savage (6)
- 2 Unit of electric charge (7)
- 3 Get rid of (5)
- 5 Attempt to hit an easy target (7)
- 6 Narcotic derived from



A N D R E W S

Trump, Biden clash in chaotic first debate

President casts doubt on legitimacy of election, refuses to denounce white supremacists; his rival calls him a 'clown'

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump and his opponent, Democratic nominee Joe Biden, clashed in their first presidential debate on Tuesday night – an interaction characterised by chaos and acrimony, not seen before in recent debate history. This was caused primarily by Mr. Trump repeatedly talking over Mr. Biden, interrupting him and attempting to commandeer the debate from the moderator.

During the debate, Mr. Trump failed to denounce White supremacists when provided an opportunity to do so and sought to undermine the legitimacy of the November elections, in which an unusually high number of Americans are expected to vote by mail, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When he was asked to condemn White supremacy and armed militias, specifically the Proud Boys – a group of men who call themselves “western chauvinists” – Mr. Trump said,



Heated exchange: Donald Trump and Joe Biden, right, during their first 2020 presidential debate in Cleveland. ■ REUTERS

“Proud Boys, stand back and stand by! But I’ll tell you what... somebody’s got to do something about Antifa and the left.” Members of the group celebrated the comment on social media.

Mr. Trump repeatedly tried to throw Mr. Biden off balance, including by insinuating that Mr. Biden was controlled by the “radical left” or by bringing his son Hunter Biden – whose relationship with the government of Ukraine had been questioned by Republicans

Mr. Trump questioned Mr. Biden’s intelligence at one point. “Show us your tax returns,” Mr. Biden said when Mr. Trump was asked if he paid only \$750 in federal income taxes in 2016 as reported by the *New York Times*.

Mr. Trump challenged Mr. Biden to say “law and order”. Mr. Biden said it but also said, “with justice where people are treated fairly”. In recent months, the U.S. has witnessed mass protests set off by police killings and violence against African Americans. Some of these have been violent. Mr. Biden has supported the right to protest but has condemned the violence.

Mr. Trump, keen to win the suburban women demographic, repeated a claim – one with racist undertones – that the Democrats under Mr. Biden were out to destroy suburbs. “He wouldn’t know a suburb unless he took a wrong turn,” Mr. Biden said. “This is not 1950... all these dog whistles and racism don’t work any more.”

Mr. Trump, who has been

making unsubstantiated claims on fraud around mail-in ballots, was asked by the debate moderator, Chris Wallace, if he would urge his supporters to stay calm and not engage in “civil unrest” as the election was being decided.

The President used the opportunity to once more cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election. He also urged poll-watchers to go into the polls and “watch very carefully”, and said the Supreme Court would need to look at the ballots.

“I hope it’s going to be a fair election. If it’s a fair election, I am a 100% on board,” Mr. Trump said. “But if I see tens of thousands of ballots being manipulated, I can’t go along with that.” There is no evidence of mail-in voting being a source of significant election fraud. Republican and Democrat-run States use the process and Mr. Trump has used it personally to cast his vote in the past.

From time to time in the debate, Mr. Biden looked directly at the cameras and ad-

dressed the American public. He said Mr. Trump was trying to dissuade people from voting by scaring them into thinking their vote was not going to be legitimate.

“Show up and vote... you will determine the outcome of this election... He [Mr. Trump] cannot stop you from being able to determine the outcome of this election,” he said.

Mr. Biden said voters had the power to choose between changing the country or getting “four more years of these lies.”

Comments on India

India received two mentions in the debate – along with U.S. rivals China and Russia.

On India, China and Russia, Mr. Trump said the number of COVID-19 deaths was unknown because “they don’t exactly give you a straight count”.

Mr. Trump clubbed India with Russia and China again during a segment on pollution. “China sends up real intent to the air. Russia does. India does. They all do.”



Sheikh Nawaf

ing, was reflected in condolence messages that streamed in from countries on opposite ends of regional feuds, from Saudi Arabia to Iran and Qatar.

Calls for unity

Sheikh Nawaf took office as the new ruler of Kuwait in the Parliament building before rows of applauding lawmakers.

“Kuwait throughout its history has seen serious and tough challenges, which we have succeeded in overcoming through cooperating together,” said Sheikh Nawaf.

Although his funeral would ordinarily draw tens of thousands of Kuwaiti mourners and scores of foreign leaders and dignitaries, because of the coronavirus pandemic the burial was restricted to relatives, Kuwait’s state-run news agency KUNA reported. Yet Qatar’s Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, came to pay his respects, alongside an Emirati official, underscoring the late ruler’s deft navigation of the region’s stark political divides.

The challenges are manifold. Gridlock in Parliament has blocked the passage of a public debt law needed to raise \$65 billion and mitigate the country’s looming liquidity crisis. A major credit agency last week downgraded Kuwait for the first time in its history, citing the government’s swelling budget deficit. Plunging oil prices amid the pandemic have robbed the wealthy country of cash.

As fighting rages on, Armenia, Azerbaijan reject talks

French President Macron terms Turkey’s statements backing Baku as ‘reckless and dangerous’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YEREVAN

Armenia and Azerbaijan vowed to keep fighting and rejected international calls for negotiations on Wednesday as clashes over the disputed Nagorno Karabakh region raged for a fourth day.

Armenian and Azerbaijani forces are engaged in the heaviest fighting in years over Karabakh, an ethnic Ar-

menian province that broke away from Azerbaijan in the 1990s during the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The confirmed death toll surpassed 100 people including civilians Wednesday and both sides are claiming to have inflicted heavy losses on opposing forces.

Baku and Yerevan have ignored mounting international pressure for a ceasefire, as

fears grow that the conflict could escalate into an all-out war and draw in regional powers like Turkey and Russia.

Moscow, which has a military pact with Armenia but also good ties with Azerbaijan, has called for an end to the fighting and also offered to host negotiations.

Meanwhile, Turkey said on Tuesday it was “fully rea-

dy” to help Azerbaijan recover Nagorno Karabakh.

Yerevan is claiming that Turkey, an ally of Azerbaijan, is providing direct military support for Baku.

It said that a Turkish F-16 flying in support of Baku’s forces had downed an Armenian SU-25 warplane, but Ankara and Baku denied the claim.

French President Emma-

nuel Macron on Wednesday condemned what he called Turkey’s “reckless and dangerous” statements backing Baku. But Turkey fired back, accusing Mr. Macron of supporting Armenia’s “occupation” of the region.

Russia also called on Turkey to stop proclaiming support for Azerbaijan and to work toward a diplomatic solution to the conflict.

German Chancellor accuses China of ‘cruel treatment’ of minorities

Merkel raises concerns over crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday accused China of “poor and cruel treatment” of minorities and underlined deep concerns over the crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong.

In a speech at the Bundestag a day before an EU summit, Ms. Merkel vowed to bring up rights issues and Germany’s worries over the situation in the former British colony in any future dialogue with Beijing.

“Of course we have to bring up our different opinions in talks,” said Ms. Merkel, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.

“That’s why we have flagged up our deep concern about the development in Hong Kong. The principle of one country, two systems stands but again and again it’s being undermined.



Angela Merkel

“We will bring that up, as well as the poor and cruel treatment in part of the rights of the minorities in China.”

She did not name the minorities bearing the brunt of poor treatment but activists have accused China over the mass internment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang.

More than one million ethnic

Uighurs and other minorities have been herded into internment camps to undergo political indoctrination, according to rights groups and experts.

China insists the camps are training centres aimed at providing education to reduce the allure of Islamic radicalism.

Beijing is also under fire over a security law it imposed on Hong Kong in June that radically increased its control over the financial hub and led to a brutal crackdown on dissent.

Hong Kong was guaranteed autonomy under the “One Country, Two Systems” deal agreed ahead of its 1997 handover from Britain.

But critics say the security law, imposed following months of large and often violent protests calling for greater democratic freedoms and police accountability, spells the end of the agreement.

Death penalty for teacher who poisoned pupils

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

A kindergarten teacher in China has been sentenced to death for poisoning dozens of children in an act of revenge against a colleague that left one toddler dead.

A court in the central Chinese province of Henan said Wang Yun put sodium nitrite into porridge being prepared for her colleague’s students, sickening 25.

The attack took place in March 2019 and left one boy severely ill for months before he died in January this year, according to news reports.

The court on Monday said Wang knew sodium nitrite was harmful but went ahead “with no regard for the consequences”, leaving many innocent children in hospital.

Pope Francis has been working hard to repair ties with China and the Vatican has not appreciated Mr. Pompeo’s public interference.

Mr. Pompeo also met Italy’s PM Giuseppe Conte to discuss U.S. efforts to deter allies from using equipment made by Huawei in developing their 5G networks.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Chennai Construction and Maintenance Circle
TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No.19/2020-21/HDO, dated 29.09.2020
For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 19.10.2020 12.30 PM by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Chennai Circle for work under CRIDP Scheme 2020-21 (Package No.3, 40, 43 & 45) pertaining to Chennai City Roads & Chengalpattu Division and under Non Plan 2020-21 (Package No.124) pertaining to Chengalpattu Division.
Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details will be available from 05.10.2020 onwards in the Government website <https://tntenders.gov.in>. If any Changes / Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

Superintending Engineer (H),
C&M, Chennai Circle.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
RWS&S DIVISION, BALASORE
Tel: 06782-262249, Fax: 262931, email: eerws_bs@nic.in, eerwssbs@gmail.com.
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Tendering
Identification No. 10 Dt. 24-09-2020
1. Nos. of Work : 14 Nos RPWS schemes in Balasore district.
2. Estimated cost : Rs. 15.51 lakhs to Rs. 128.40 lakhs
3. Period of completion : 180 days to 330 days
4. Availability of bid document in Portal : Dt. 09-10-2020 at 10.00 hours to 19-10-2020 up to 17.00 hours through online.
5. Seeking of Clarification : Dt. 09-10-2020 at 10.00 hours to Dt. 16-10-2020 up to 15.00 hours
6. Date of opening of Bid : Dt. 22-10-2020 at 11.00 hours in the O/O EE, RWS&S Division, Balasore.
7. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Tender : Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Balasore. Bid Cost & Bid Security will be receipt through electronic payment by NEFT / RTGS. Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal: <http://tntenders.gov.in>.

Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
RWS&S DIVISION, BALASORE,
OIPR No. 25013/11/0002/2021

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Tirunelveli Highways, (Construction and Maintenance) Circle
TENDER NOTICE
T.N.NO.12/2020-21/HDO, DATED:29.09.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 27.10.2020 at 14.00 hours by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Tirunelveli Circle for CRIDP 2020-21 works, Package No.10,17 and 18 pertaining Tenkasi (H) C&M Division, Package No.32 of Thoothukudi (H) C&M Division and Package No.37, 38, 43, 45, 46 and 49 of Tirunelveli (H) C&M Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 01.10.2020 onwards in the Government website <https://tntenders.gov.in>. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

Superintending Engineer (H),
C&M, Tirunelveli Circle.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FORM OF CONTRACT: LUMPSUM (Two cover system)
P.Q - TENDER NOTICE NO.DB/5 CE/TEC/20-21/DO/dt.28.09.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu sealed tenders will be received from the Registered Contractors of Public Works Department of T.N, for the works noted below by the Chief Engineer, PWD, Technical Education Circle.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Period of Completion	Apprx. Value of work (Rs. in lakhs)	EMD Amount in Rs.
1	Construction of G+3 storied canteen building in main campus, Anna University, Chennai-25.	24 months	2025.00	1022500/-
2	Construction of Instrumentation Centre Building in Manonmaniam Sundaranar University campus at Abishekappatti in Tirunelveli	12 months	267.00	144000/-

Contractor Class: I, Last Date for receipt of tenders: Upto 3.00 PM on 04.11.2020, Date of opening of tender: at 3.30 PM on the same day, Date of availability of tender documents: 03.10.2020 to 03.11.2020, The cost of tender Schedule and GST: Rs.15000 + 1800/-, EMD to be remitted in favour of Executive Engineer, PWD, Technical Education Division, (1) Chennai (2) Thiruvananthapuram. Tender documents & other details are available in www.tntenders.gov.in. Any other details can be had from the office of the Chief Engineer, PWD, Technical Education circle, Chennai 25 during working hours.

Chief Engineer, PWD,
Technical Education Circle, Chennai 25

Sheikh Nawaf takes oath as Kuwait Emir

Late Emir Sheikh Sabah laid to rest

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KUWAIT CITY

Kuwait’s Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah was sworn in before Parliament on Wednesday as the ruling Emir of the tiny oil-rich country, propelled to power by the death of his half-brother after a long career in the security services.

Sheikh Nawaf, 83, is not expected to deviate from the diplomatic path charted by his predecessor, the late Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah. But his accession touched off speculation about who will become the next Crown Prince in the country known for its lively elected Parliament and relative independence in the neighbourhood of Gulf Arab monarchies.

The late Sheikh Sabah, 91, made his final journey to Kuwait later on Wednesday, his remains flying back to Kuwait City from Rochester, Minnesota, where he had been receiving medical treatment after surgery.

Although his funeral would ordinarily draw tens of thousands of Kuwaiti mourners and scores of foreign leaders and dignitaries, because of the coronavirus pandemic the burial was restricted to relatives, Kuwait’s state-run news agency KUNA reported. Yet Qatar’s Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, came to pay his respects, alongside an Emirati official, underscoring the late ruler’s deft navigation of the region’s stark political divides.

The breadth and depth of emotion over the loss of Sheikh Sabah, known for his diplomacy and peacemaking

The challenges are manifold. Gridlock in Parliament has blocked the passage of a public debt law needed to raise \$65 billion and mitigate the country’s looming liquidity crisis. A major credit agency last week downgraded Kuwait for the first time in its history, citing the government’s swelling budget deficit. Plunging oil prices amid the pandemic have robbed the wealthy country of cash.

MISSING

Joseph Wilson H/o jesenatha, Aneesh Villa

MARKET WATCH

	30-09-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,068	0.25
US Dollar	73.76	0.14
Gold	51,372	0.01
Brent oil	40.74	-2.83

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	341.75	0.75
Asian Paints	1986.40	26.45
Axis Bank	424.65	-2.20
Bajaj Auto	2881.10	-16.40
Bajaj Finserv	5852.35	-24.35
Bajaj Finance	3278.60	-16.15
Bharti Airtel	420.95	-14.65
BPCL	353.05	-33.50
Britannia Ind	3798.15	61.30
Cipla	774.70	12.35
Coal India	116.00	-1.65
Divis Lab	3047.95	-13.95
Dixons Lab	5187.80	103.60
Eicher Motors	2202.80	4.30
GAIL (India)	86.80	-0.70
Grasim Ind	744.20	22.75
HCL Tech	811.60	-1.15
HDLC	1740.05	26.95
HDLC Bank	1078.60	16.05
HDLC Life	559.40	-11.40
Hero MotoCorp	3147.30	-27.65
Hindalco	175.25	-1.15
Hind Unilever	2068.25	35.05
ICICI Bank	354.75	-2.30
IndusInd Bank	527.40	-8.85
Infosys	1008.25	-0.75
Indian Oil Corp	73.90	-0.95
ITC	171.70	2.30
JSW Steel	277.75	-6.35
Kotak Bank	1268.20	4.95
L&T	901.60	6.15
M&M	607.90	-5.30
Maruti Suzuki	6743.45	0.70
Nestle India Ltd.	15918.65	297.80
NTPC	85.10	-0.05
ONGC	69.25	0.10
PowerGrid Corp	162.45	-0.85
Reliance Ind	2234.35	-10.70
SBI Life	811.45	2.35
State Bank	185.40	0.35
Shree Cement	20256.95	422.30
Sun Pharma	500.45	-5.70
Tata Motors	133.30	1.60
Tata Steel	359.75	-10.30
TCS	2492.30	3.90
Tech Mahindra	791.75	23.60
Titan	1201.35	34.05
UltraTech Cement	4049.55	-12.55
UPL	502.90	9.80
Wipro	313.55	-2.05

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on September 30		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar.....	73.57	73.89
Euro.....	86.08	86.47
British Pound	94.38	94.80
Japanese Yen (100)	69.62	69.94
Chinese Yuan	10.80	10.84
Swiss Franc	79.67	80.02
Singapore Dollar	53.69	53.93
Canadian Dollar	54.90	55.15
Malaysian Ringgit	17.68	17.78
Australian Dollar	52.33	52.57

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Govt. cuts gas price by 25% to lowest on record
NEW DELHI
Natural gas price in India touched the lowest rate on record after the government slashed the price by 25% to \$1.79, denting the revenue of producers such as ONGC. The price of gas has been cut to \$1.79 per million British thermal units for six months beginning October 1 from the current \$2.39, an order of the Oil Ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell said. PTI

Deadline for BPCL bid extended to Nov. 16

NEW DELHI
The government has, for the fourth time, extended the deadline for bidding for privatisation of Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd. (BPCL) by one-and-a-half months to November 16. "In view of requests received from the bidders and the prevailing situation arising out of COVID-19, the last date for submission of EoIs is further extended to November 16," DIPAM said. PTI

Honda unveils mid-size bike at ₹1.9 lakh

NEW DELHI
Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) on Wednesday forayed into the mid-size motorcycle segment with the global unveiling of 'H'ness CB350' starting from ₹1.9 lakh (ex-showroom). "This is a completely new product from Honda's globally-renowned CB range and would be priced around ₹1.9 lakh," HMSI's MD, president and CEO Atsushi Ogata said.

Lupin introduces Natco's breast cancer drug in U.S.

HYDERABAD
Natco Pharma's marketing partner Lupin has introduced Lapatinib Tablets, 250 mg, in the U.S. market. It followed the USCG receiving the final approval for its abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) from the U.S. FDA. It was the first ANDA applicant with a Paragraph IV certification, the drugmakers said. The drug is indicated primarily for treatment of certain types of breast cancer.

Govt. retains ₹12-lakh cr. borrowing plan

In first 5 months of fiscal, deficit surges to 109% of year's target; 'economic activity likely to rise in H2'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
India's fiscal deficit soared to 109% of the Budget target in just the first five months of the year, with revenues remaining muted. However, the Centre stuck to its ₹12 lakh crore borrowing plan for the year with the Finance Ministry exuding confidence that it would manage to meet its expenditure commitments within this plan.

The Centre had already enhanced its borrowing target for the year by ₹4.2 lakh crore to ₹12 lakh crore in May this year as the initial adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown became apparent.

The government has borrowed ₹7.66 lakh crore in the first half of the fiscal and



Out of whack: Deficit is likely to be in the region of 9% this year, said Madan Sabnavis of Care Ratings. ■ GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

plans to borrow the remaining ₹4.34 lakh crore between October 2020 and January 2021, Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj said on Wednesday. The borrowing was done at a weighted rate

of 5.82%, the lowest in the last 15 years, he said.

"Based on our estimates of revenues... revenues are looking up, keeping in mind the expenditure and keeping some space for some unfore-

seen items, we anticipate that the ₹12 lakh crore should suffice till the end of the year," Mr Bajaj said.

The government is leaving some room for States who also have to do 'major borrowings' as well as the private sector to raise money in the second half of the year. "With the opening up of the economy... we are expecting to see more activity from the private sector in the third and fourth quarters," he said.

Deficit may still grow'

Revenue collections were largely to blame for the fiscal deficit hitting ₹8.70 lakh crore compared to the target of ₹7.96 lakh crore, as tax revenue declined across the board. Rating agencies ex-

pect the fiscal deficit slippage to be much higher by the end of the year.

Aditi Nayar, principal economist at ICRA, reckoned that the deficit will rise to ₹14 lakh crore and the Centre would have to scale up its borrowings by at least ₹1.1 lakh crore, even if no further fiscal support measures were announced.

Care Ratings chief economist Madan Sabnavis agreed that fiscal slippage would be quite wide. "We expect central government deficit to be in the region of 9% this year. This is notwithstanding the fact that there may be no new stimulus involving additional expenditure," he said.

Budget 2020-21 had set a fiscal deficit target of 3.5% of GDP.

Core sector shrinks for sixth month running

August contraction wider than July's

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India's eight core industrial sectors contracted by 8.5% in August compared to August 2019, marking the sixth month in a row of shrinking output.

The decline in August was sharper than the 8% decline in July as per revised data released by the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, with coal and fertilizers being the only two sectors registering growth of 3.6% and 7.3%

months from April to August, the core sectors, which account for a little over 40% of the Index of Industrial Production, shrank 17.8%.

Earlier, the sectors' July output was estimated to have shrunk 9.6%. The government has also revised the numbers for core sector performance in May, stating that output shrank 21.4% reported earlier.

Core sectors had seen an 8.6% dip in March 2020. The sharpest decline was registered in April when output contracted 37.9%.

Fertilizers is the only sector to have managed positive growth in the first five months of FY21, clocking a 4.6% uptick.

Current account surplus widens to \$19.8 billion in Q1

RBI cites steeper decline in imports relative to exports

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

India recorded a surplus of \$19.8 billion (3.9% of GDP) in its current account balance in the first quarter of FY21, on top of a surplus of \$0.6 billion (0.1% of GDP) in the preceding quarter, according to RBI data. A deficit of \$15 billion (2.1% of GDP) was recorded a year earlier.

The surplus in the current account in the first quarter of 2020-21 was on account of a sharp contraction in trade deficit to \$10 billion due to a steeper decline in merchan-



current account surplus in Q1 was well above our expectations, as the fall in remittances was remarkably muted, despite the adverse economic conditions globally amid the ongoing pandemic."

"With domestic and global lockdowns to fight COVID-19 [having] a differentiated impact on exports and imports, the merchandise trade deficit shrunk to just \$10 billion in Q1, most of which was accounted for by the net oil balance," she said.

Aditi Nayar, principal economist, ICRA, said, "The

Small savings rates stay unchanged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday kept the interest rates on small savings schemes, including PPF and NSC, unchanged for the October-December quarter amid moderating bank deposit rates.

Public Provident Fund (PPF) and National Savings Certificate (NSC) will continue to carry an annual interest rate of 7.1% and 6.8% respectively.

There is no change in small savings rate for the third quarter, said Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj.

External debt declines to \$554.5 bn at end-June 2020

Commercial borrowings largest component at 38%; RBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The country's external debt at end-June 2020 was lower at \$554.5 billion, recording a decrease of \$2.4 billion from \$556.9 billion recorded in June 2019.

The June 2020 external debt level was lower by \$3.9 billion over its level of \$558.4 billion at end-March 2020, the RBI said on Wednesday.

The year-on-year percentage variation was -0.4, while the month-on-month percentage variation was -0.7, it said.



depreciation of the U.S. dollar vis-à-vis major currencies such as the euro, yen and SDR were at \$0.7 billion.

Excluding the valuation effect, the decrease in external debt would have been \$4.5 billion instead of \$3.9 billion at end-June 2020 over end-March 2020, RBI data showed.

Commercial borrowings remained the largest component of external debt, with a share of 38.1%, followed by non-resident deposits (23.9%) and short-term trade credit (18.2%).

Investors vote out Dhanlaxmi Bank MD

Over 90% votes cast against Gurbaxani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Shareholders of Thrissur-based Dhanlaxmi Bank Ltd. ousted the MD and CEO at the annual general meeting held on Wednesday.

In all, there were 10 resolutions relating to passing of accounts, appointment of statutory auditors, increasing the authorised share capital and appointment of directors, including MD and CEO Sunil Gurbaxani.

Shareholders representing 90.49% of the total votes cast voted against the appointment of Mr. Gurbaxani

as MD and CEO. All other resolutions were passed

Knight Riders bring high-flying Royals crashing down to earth

Smith's men suffer 37-run defeat in their first game outside Sharjah; pacers Cummins, Mavi and Nagarkoti complete a demolition job for Karthik's side



In the thick of things: Morgan lifted KKR's spirits after Archer, far right, had bowled a sensational spell for RR. Mavi, centre, is the toast of his teammates after getting rid of Buttler. • BCCI/IPL



SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Shubman Gill c & b Archer 47 (34b, 5x4, 1x6), Sunil Narine b Unadkat 15 (14b, 2x4, 1x6), Nitish Rana c Parag b Tewatia 22 (17b, 2x4, 1x6), Andre Russell c Unadkat b Rajpoot 24 (14b, 3x6), Shreyas Gopal c Karthik b Narine 5 (7b), Jofra Archer c Nagarkoti b Varun 6 (4b, 1x6), Jaydev Unadkat c Nagarkoti b Kuldeep 9 (13b), Ankit Rajpoot (not out) 7 (5b, 1x6); Extras (lb-3, w-8): 11; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 174.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-15 (Smith, 1.6 overs), 2-30 (Samson, 4.1), 3-39 (Buttler, 6.1), 4-41 (Uthappa, 7.1), 5-42 (Parag, 7.4), 6-66 (Tewatia, 10.5), 7-81 (Shreyas, 13.5), 8-88 (Archer, 14.4), 9-106 (Unadkat, 17.6).

ROYALS BOWLING

Archer 4-0-18-2, Rajpoot 4-0-

39-1, Unadkat 2-0-14-1, Curran

4-0-37-1, Shreyas 4-0-43-0,

Parag 1-0-14-0, Tewatia 1-0-6-1.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Jos Buttler c Varun b Mavi 21

(16b, 1x4, 2x6), Steve Smith c

Karthik b Cummins 3 (7b), Sanju

Samson c Narine b Mavi 8 (9b,

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Narine 4-0-40-1, Cummins 3-0-

13-1, Mavi 4-0-20-2, Nagarkoti

2-0-13-1, Varun 4-0-25-1,

Kuldeep 3-0-20-1.

Toss: Rajasthan Royals.

Man-of-the-Match: Shivam

Maver.

Kolkata Knight Riders won by

37 runs.

IPL 2020

SPORTS BUREAU

There was no third 70-plus score on the trot for Sanju Samson. There was no second miraculous knock from Rahul Tewatia. And there wasn't another great chase from Rajasthan Royals.

Kolkata Knight Riders brought Royals, who had

won both their games in Sharjah, crashing down to earth at the Dubai International Stadium on Wednesday, winning their IPL encounter by 37 runs.

Responding to Knight Riders' 174 for six, Royals finished with 137 for nine.

Steve Smith, who didn't look as composed as he did in his last two outings, tried to hit Pat Cummins high and

far down the leg-side, but only managed to edge it to rival captain Dinesh Karthik. His dismissal brought to the wicket the other in-form Royals batsman, Samson.

Shivam Mavi, after bowling a tight first over, ensured that the dasher from Kerala would not make it a hat-trick of awards. Samson failed to time his pull and ended up giving a comfortable catch to

Sunil Narine at mid-wicket.

The 21-year-old from Uttar Pradesh wasn't done yet. In his next over, he took one of the most prized wickets in white-ball cricket. Jos Buttler went for a slash off a wider ball and was taken at short third man by Varun Chakravarthy. Kamlesh Nagarkoti, another young pacer from India's under-19 World Cup-winning team in 2018, took

over from Mavi. He dismissed Robin Uthappa and Ryan Parag cheaply to reduce Royals to 42 for five.

The stage was now set for the man-of-the-moment, Tewatia. But he lasted only 10 balls, his middle-stump uprooted by mystery-spinner Varun.

Now, somebody else had

to do a Tewatia – and more – if Royals had to pull off

another incredible chase. Nobody could manage it, although Tom Curran (54 n.o., 36b, 2x4, 3x6) tried.

Earlier, an assured innings at the top of the order from Shubman Gill (47, 34b, 5x4, 1x6), and a calculated assault towards the end by Eoin Morgan (34 not out, 23b, 1x4, 2x6) got Kolkata to total it could defend. That was after Jofra Archer had threatened

to restrict the side to far less.

The England quick came up with a superb spell. He bowled with express pace and was used well by Smith. The beauty to take the out-

MI and Kings XI look to emerge stronger

Former coming off a Super Over defeat to RCB, the latter after a loss to RR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ABU DHABI

Coming off heart-breaking losses, the Indian Premier League game between Mumbai Indians and Kings XI Punjab will be a test of character for both sides as they look to regain momentum here on Thursday.

Defending champion Mumbai Indians lost its opening game but bounced back to beat Kolkata Knight Riders. However, Rohit Sharma's men failed to cross the line against RCB.

Similarly, after losing to Delhi Capitals in their opener, KXIP came back strongly to register its first points by defeating RCB. But, despite a fabulous batting display, the Punjab team lost to Rajasthan.

KXIP has failed to tighten the screws when it mattered most. In its two losses, the team was in a good position but could not grab the moments.

Kings XI's bowling looked out of sorts against Rajasthan as it failed to defend a big total with Rahul Tewatia hitting pacer Sheldon Cottrell for five sixes in an over to win the match.

Even Mohammed Shami (3/53), who has been in brilliant form prior to that on



In blazing form: Ishan will look to put behind the disappointment of not taking MI past the finish line while the Mayank-Rahul pair will eye another resounding start. • BCCI/IPL

Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Delhi Capitals	3	2	1	4	0.483
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	2	1	4	0.117
Rajasthan Royals	3	2	1	4	-0.219
Royal Challengers	3	2	1	4	-1.450
Kings XI Punjab	3	1	2	2	1.498
Mumbai Indians	3	1	2	2	0.654
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	2	-0.228
Chennai Super Kings	3	1	2	2	-0.840

After the RR-KKR match on Sept. 30

slaughter, was taken to the cleaners.

Skipper K.L. Rahul and Mayank Agarwal have made inspiring starts this season, hitting a century and a fifty each, and getting the duo out early will be the key for

the Mumbai side.

Mumbai Indians is endowed with a splendid batting firepower with the likes of Rohit, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan at the top-order, followed by the big-hitting Pollard and Hardik

Pandya. A major cause of concern for Mumbai Indians

will be pace ace Jasprit Bumrah's inconsistency.

Mumbai, though, will have the psychological advantage having played a game here before.

TODAY'S MATCH



HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 24

MI 13 | KXIP 11

In 2019

Played 2 | MI 1 | KXIP 1

STAR SPORTS 1 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD)

SCANNING

IN BRIEF



Bairstow loses Test central contract

England wicket-keeper batsman Jonny Bairstow lost his Test central contract, but Ollie Pope, Zak Crawley and Dom Sibley were rewarded for impressive performances and retained in the list.

England contracts for 2020-21:

Test and limited-overs: Jofra Archer, Jos Buttler, Joe Root, Ben Stokes, and Chris Woakes.

Test only: James Anderson, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope, Dom Sibley, and Sam Curran.

Limited-overs only: Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow, Tom Curran, Eoin Morgan, Adil Rashid, Jason Roy, Mark Wood.



New sports director for Tokyo Games named

The organising committee of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics has named Mikako Kotani as its new sports director. Kotani, who won two bronze medals in synchronised swimming at the 1988 Olympics, takes over the position on Thursday. AP

Golf's Hong Kong Open postponed

HONG KONG
The Hong Kong Open, Asia's oldest professional golf tournament, has been pushed back from November until 2021 because of the pandemic. Last November's 61st edition was moved to January this year because of pro-democracy protests across the city. AFP



Gurpreet to attend goalkeeping course

NEW DELHI
Arjuna awardee and All India Football Federation's (AIFF) Player of the Year Gurpreet Singh Sandhu is set to attend the first-ever online goalkeeping introductory course for coaching, starting Friday. Gurpreet will take part in the three-day course along with 29 other candidates selected from some 200-odd applicants. PTI



Manchester City seals £62m deal for Dias

LONDON
Manchester City announced the signing of Portuguese international centre-back Ruben Dias on a six-year deal from Benfica on Tuesday. Benfica on Sunday confirmed it had reached an agreement to sell Dias for €68 million plus an extra €3.6m in potential bonuses, with Nicolas Otamendi heading in the opposite direction for €15m. AFP



Brisbane
The New Zealand women's cricket team has ended a 13-game losing streak against world champion Australia with a five-wicket win in the third T20I on Wednesday. Amelia Kerr proved the difference, backing up from her 2-18 bowling performance that restricted Australia to 123 for 7 to later score an unbeaten 18 off 10 balls to clinch the result at Allan Border Field.

Nadal chugs along merrily

Thiem advances with ease; cramping Bertens survives match-point

FRENCH OPEN

REUTERS

PARIS

Rafael Nadal continued his quest for a record-extending 13th French Open title with a 6-1, 6-0, 6-3 crushing of American Mackenzie McDonald to advance into the third round here on Wednesday.

The Spanish second seed, looking to equal Roger Federer's men's record of 20 singles Grand Slam titles, played deep and used his forehand to devastating effect on court Philippe-Chatrier.

"My objective is to play as well as I can," said Nadal.

World No. 3 and US Open champion Dominic Thiem survived a third set wobble and had to save three set points before overcoming American Jack Sock 6-1, 6-3, 7-6(6).

Using a wheelchair
Fifth seed Kiki Bertens narrowly avoided joining the exodus of favourites as she survived a match-point and cramps against former runner-up Sara Errani before hobbling into the third round.

Bertens eventually won 7-6(5), 3-6, 9-7 in a duel lasting more than three hours but she left the court in a wheelchair after struggling physically in the final set.

The 28-year-old said she had suffered a full-body cramp when she got back to her chair after the match.

She added that she needed 45 minutes of treatment in the locker room.

Fallen seeds

Men: 21-John Isner; 31-Nikoloz Basilashvili

Women: 6-Serena Williams; 10-Victoria Azarenka; 19-Alison Riske; 23-Yulia Putintseva

First round: 10-Roberto Bautista Agut (Esp) bt Richard Gasquet (Fra) 7-6(5), 6-2, 6-1; Thiago Monteiro (Bra) bt 31-Nikoloz Basilashvili (Geo) 7-5, 6-4, 6-2.

12-Diego Schwartzman (Arg) bt Lorenzo Giustino (Ita) 6-1, 7-5, 6-0; 16-Stan Wawrinka (Sui) bt Dominik Koepfer (Ger) 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-1; Sebastian Korda (USA) bt 21-John Isner (USA) 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.

22-Dusan Lajovic (Srb) bt Gianluca Mager (Ita) 6-4, 7-6(4), 4-6, 6-1; 13-Andrey Rublev (Rus) bt Sam Querry (USA) 6-7(5), 6-7(4), 7-5, 6-4, 6-3; 9-Denis Shapovalov (Can) bt Gilles Simon (Fra) 6-2, 7-5, 5-7, 6-3; 18-Grigor Dimitrov (Bul) bt Grigori Barrere (Fra) 6-3, 6-2, 6-2; 5-Stefanos Tsitsipas (Gre) bt Jaume Munar (Esp) 4-6, 2-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-4.

Women: **Second round:** 3-Elina Svitolina (Ukr) bt Renata Zarazua (Mex) 6-3, 0-6, 6-2; 7-Svetlana Pironkova (Bul) bt 6-Serena Williams (USA) walkover; Anna Karolina Schmiedlova (Svk) bt 10-Victoria Azarenka (Blr) 6-2, 6-2.

16-Elise Mertens (Bel) bt Kaia Kanepi 6-4, 7-5; 20-Maria Sakkari (Gre) bt Kamilla Rakhimova (Rus) 7-6(0), 6-2.

Nadia Podoroska (Arg) 6-3; 23-Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) 6-1, 1-6, 6-2; 25-Amanda Anisimova (USA) bt Bernarda Pera (USA) 6-2, 6-0; 27-Ekaterina Alexandrova (Rus) bt Astra Sharma (AUS) 6-3, 6-3.

First round: 8-Aryna Sabalenka (Blr) bt Jessica Pegula (USA) 6-3, 6-1; 30-Ons Jabeur (Tun) bt Zarina Diyas (Kaz) 4-6, 6-3, 6-1; 13-Petra Martic (Cro) bt Misaki Doi (Jpn) 7-6(2), 7-5.

Julia Goerges (Ger) bt 19-Alison Riske (USA) 6-3, 6-7(4), 6-1; 29-Sloane Stephens (USA) bt Vitalia Diatchenko (Rus) 6-2, 6-2.

THURSDAY'S PICKS

Men

1 - Djokovic vs. Berankis

5 - Tsitsipas vs. Cuevas

7 - Berrettini vs. Harris

Women

2 - Pliskova vs. Ostapenko

4 - Kenin vs. Bogdan

7 - Kvito vs. Paolini

Play starts at

2.30 p.m. IST

Live on

Star Sports 2

IMPORTANT RESULTS

Men: Second round: 2-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt Mackenzie McDonald (USA) 6-1, 6-0, 6-3; 3-Dominic Thiem (Aut) bt Jack Sock (USA) 6-1, 7-6(6).

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