



CAT OUT
OF THE BAG



'COVID CHALLENGES
MENTAL HEALTH'



PRODUCTION-LINKED
INCENTIVES FOR
MORE SECTORS



BARCA LOOKS
TO TURN THINGS
AROUND

P6

P7

P8

P12

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Mist in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 31 and 13 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 93%	Min: 31%
TEMPERATURE	
Max: 31.4°C (0)	Min: 13.1°C (-3)
SUN RISES	SUN SETS
06:33 hrs	17:37 hrs
MOON RISES	MOON SETS
17:42 hrs	06:54 hrs

THUMBNAILS



The New Majherhat bridge under construction in Kolkata on Friday. ■ ARUN LODH

Quake hits Turkish coast, 14 dead: A strong earthquake struck Friday in the Aegean Sea between the Turkish coast and the Greek island of Samos, killing at least 14 people and injuring hundreds amid collapsed buildings and flooding, officials said. A small tsunami struck the Seferihisar district south of Izmir, the city in western Turkey that was the worst affected. At least 12 people were killed in Izmir, Turkey's third-largest city, including one who drowned, according to Turkish authorities.

Onion, potato imports: As retail onion prices skyrocket to over Rs 80 a kg in some parts of the country, Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said private import of 7,000 tonnes and another 25,000 tonnes shipment before Diwali are expected to improve the domestic supply situation and check price rise of the commodity. Also on Friday, the government permitted imports of potatoes from Bhutan without licence, a move aimed at boosting domestic supply and control prices of the commodity.

NC claims Farooq not allowed to leave house

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR, 30 OCTOBER

The Jammu and Kashmir administration prevented former chief minister and National Conference president Farooq Abdullah from leaving his residence to offer prayers at the Hazratbal shrine here on the occasion of Milad-un-Nabi on Friday, his party said.

Abdullah had informed about his visit to the Hazratbal shrine but the authorities stationed a truck outside his residence, preventing him from leaving his house.

Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir condemned the action and termed it a "violation" of rights.

"J-K administration has blocked the residence of party president Dr Farooq Abdul-

lah and stopped him from offering prayers at Dargah Hazratbal. JKNC condemns this infringement of fundamental right to pray, especially on the auspicious occasion of Milad-un-Nabi SAW," the NC said on its Twitter handle.

No one from the Jammu and Kashmir administration was available for comments.

Abdullah, who represents Srinagar in the Lok Sabha, was supposed to visit the Hazratbal shrine, on the banks of the Dal Lake, to offer prayers on the occasion of Milad-un-Nabi.

Former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti condemned the state administration for putting a blockade outside the residence of Abdullah and demanded that it be removed. Abdullah is also the president of the PAGD.

offering prayers on Milad-un-Nabi SAW at Hazratbal exposes GOI's deep paranoia and their iron fist approach towards JK. It's a gross violation of our rights and is highly condemnable."

The recently cobbled People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) comprising regional and some national mainstream political parties including the NC and PDP termed the action a "new low in curtailment of fundamental rights" of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement, PAGD spokesperson Sajad Lone condemned the state administration for putting a blockade outside the residence of Abdullah and demanded that it be removed. Abdullah is also the president of the PAGD.

Malabar naval exercise of 'Quad' nations to begin on 3 November

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

The first phase of the Malabar exercise involving the navies of four 'Quad' nations — India, the USA, Japan and Australia — will be held from 3-6 November in the Bay of Bengal off Visakhapatnam coast.

The second phase of the exercise will take place from 17-20 November in the Arabian Sea, sources said.

This will be the first time in 13 years that the four nations will jointly conduct the mega war games amid the growing Chinese assertiveness on maritime issues in the Indo-Pacific region and the South China Sea.

Earlier this month, India gave up its reluctance and formally invited Australia to join the Malabar series of

naval exercises in a move that was welcomed by both the USA and Japan.

The invitation by India to the Australian Navy came two weeks after the foreign ministers of the 'Quad' held extensive talks in Tokyo with the focus on enhancing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. China has been uncom-

fortable with the informal coalition of the four democracies, which was first formed in 2004. Beijing recently stated that it had "taken note" of Australia's inclusion in the Malabar exercise while underlining that military cooperation should be "conducive" to regional peace and stability.

India had started the Malabar exercise with the US in 1992. Japan joined the exercise in 1992. Despite Canberra's keenness, India was reluctant to include Australia in the exercise keeping in mind the sensitivities of China. But the India-China equation has changed dramatically in the wake of the military stand-off at eastern Ladakh.

Reacting to Australia's inclusion in the exercise, its Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne said the decision was another important step in Australia's deepening relationship with India.

"It will bolster the ability of India, Australia, Japan and the United States to work together to uphold peace and stability across our region," she said.

EC action against Kamal Nath; Cong to go to SC

BHOPAL, 30 OCTOBER

Even as the Election Commission of India (EC) today cancelled Kamal Nath's status as a star campaigner of the Congress party for the 28 assembly-by-elections in MP scheduled for 3 November, the former MP CM said it was an attempt to silence his voice.

Nath tweeted on Friday evening that the people would decide now. He said this is an attempt to trample his voice and that of the Congress party.

According to reports, the EC decision came on complaints against Nath for alleged violations of the model code of conduct, including his calling BJP candidate Imarti Devian 'item' during an election rally.

Congress Rajya Sabha member Vivek Tankha said that the Congress would move the Supreme Court against the EC's decision against Nath. SNS

'Medical report resulted in exclusion of Rohit Sharma from India squad'



PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY
KOLKATA, 30 OCTOBER

A crucial medical report even as he was in the Indian Premier League currently being held in West Asia spoke of a spell of five or six weeks of respite from action, plus, of course, treatment, resulting in injury management suddenly becoming the focal point before Rohit Sharma found himself out of the Australia-bound India squad.

Or, so said a source in the know of things today, adding that, notwithstanding swirling speculation, much of it on social media, about alleged strains in the Sharma-Virat Kohli relationship leading to the batsman's unexpected omission from the national con-

tinent, "the fact of the matter is that the Mumbai superstar had sustained what would have been a serious injury during an IPL game and was obliged to sit out a few subsequent ones in consequence."

It was said that "some of the Board of Control for Cricket in India's own people had secretly passed on a scan report to an independent doctor who recommended the rest-and-treatment way out of the problem."

East Zone selector Devang Gandhi stonewalled all queries, saying his employment contract forbade sharing information with the Press. Asked how Sharma had trained with Mumbai Indians after losing his national squad berth for not

being fit, the source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "There is nothing to be surprised at this, regardless of what an expert's well-publicised opinion is. It was quite likely that Sharma had been allowed to bat but not to run," he said, adding: "Look, he is not the sort of player who gets dropped just like that. One look at his track record and it should come home."

Sunil Gavaskar's criticism of the opacity surrounding Sharma's condition is validated, though, by the BCCI's inability or failure publicly to specify how he came to be excluded several weeks ahead of an assignment of great importance.

Sharma is a contracted play-

er even the nature of whose injury is not known to the people at large. The source played down "speculative, possibly erroneous" references to the player's alleged deletion of his representation identity as an India cricketer from a social media platform. "Uninformed and oversimplified blabbering can cause a lot of damage," he said, adding: "We are talking here of two very successful and intelligent cricketers of our times, when professional sportsmen are focused on their basic job without being excessively bothered by nettlesome personal matters, if any at all. Either they bypass the irritants or they take them in their stride. Besides, where is the proof that the duo does not get on very well with each other? Conspiracy theories are a pathetic commonplace but few of them actually stand up to scrutiny. Each has been appreciative of the other at moments of outstanding achievements and they have played together for long without clashing like heavyweight boxers. Both are invaluable where the Indian cricket team is concerned." Told that it has been said that the exclusion could imply the beginning of Sharma coming again to be positioned in due course as a white-ball-cricket specialist now that India have happened upon Mayank Agarwal and rediscovered Prithvi Shaw, the source said that Sharma might not be out of the team for long, whatever the format.

If you want to be a part of the change, we should not shy away from joining politics. The youth of the country can impact policies and get involved in governance

MANISH SISODIA
DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

With 5,891 new cases, Delhi sees highest corona surge

Amid festive season and rising air pollution, this was the third consecutive day when over 5,000 coronavirus cases were reported in the Capital

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

Delhi today recorded 5,891 fresh cases of coronavirus infection (Covid-19) — its highest single-day Covid spike so far — with 59,641 tests conducted for identifying these cases, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital's positivity rate thus rose to a new alarming level — 9.88 per cent, up from yesterday's 9.55 per cent.

Amid the festive season and rising air pollution levels in Delhi, this was the third consecutive day when over 5,000 single-day Covid cases were reported in the city.

The previous highest single-day spike of 5,739 cases was recorded yesterday.

It was the first time on 28 October that Delhi's daily Covid count crossed the 5,000-mark. The city had then logged 5,673 cases.

According to today's health bulletin, the national capital's coronavirus caseload jumped to 3,81,644.

The city today recorded 47 coronavirus-related deaths, with its Covid toll now mounting to 6,470, the bulletin said.

The number of Covid fatalities logged in the city yesterday was 27. On 28 October, the number of such fatalities was 40 and on 27 October, it was 44.

The count of recovered



People in face masks amid the Covid pandemic, in the Capital on Friday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

Covid patients discharged from various city healthcare facilities

over the last 24 hours was 4,433. This took its cumulative Covid recoveries to 3,42,811, the bulletin stated. The city's recovery rate came down to 89.82 per cent.

The count of active cases in Delhi rose to 32,363, including 7,408 hospitalised patients and 19,064 under home isolation.

Delhi health minister Satyendra Jain yesterday reportedly said that the Delhi government has changed its anti-Covid strategy by conducting "aggressive tracing and testing" in the city, citing it as one of the reasons for a sudden spike in coronavirus cases in the city over the past several days.

Jain then said that this might be a third wave of Covid in Delhi but added that it was too early to say that conclusively. He said one should wait for another week to see the trends before declaring the surge a third wave.

The Union health ministry yesterday reportedly said that social gatherings during festivities, the deteriorating air quality and rising incidence of respiratory disorders are among the factors causing the current spurt in Covid cases in Delhi.

On their part, experts pointed out that milling crowds during this festive season, an increase in the air pollution level and laxity in public behaviour in following the Covid safety protocols have led to the current spell of Covid spike in Delhi. The number of containment zones stood at 3,158 in the national capital now, the health bulletin added.

Chadha highlights significance of dependable water supply

Chadha highlights significance of dependable water supply



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

As part of the Delhi government's bid to develop a planned and dependable water supply system to meet the city's growing demand, Delhi Jal Board Vice-Chairman Raghav Chadha inaugurated a tube-well at Indra Park in Pandav Nagar on Friday in the presence of several residents of the area and senior officials.

This work of ground water extraction was said to have been completed in "record time". Chadha said, "With this ground water extraction work, my family here at Indra Park, Pandav Nagar, will have increased access to high quality water to serve their needs. I fully understand the importance of having continuous, unobstructed access to water."

In a bid to show how safe the ground water is, the MLA drank the water himself first in front of all those present.

Chadha said, "For a long time, residents of Indra Park, Pandav Nagar, have had to face unnecessary problems because of the unpredictable supply of water."

Now, with the successful completion of

ground water extraction, I am certain there will be no complaints, and every resident here will get the required amount of water to serve their needs."

Tubewells are vertically drilled wells that extract water for various purposes and provide domestic water supply. The newly-commisioned tubewell is supposed to "rationalise" water supply to the Indra Park area.

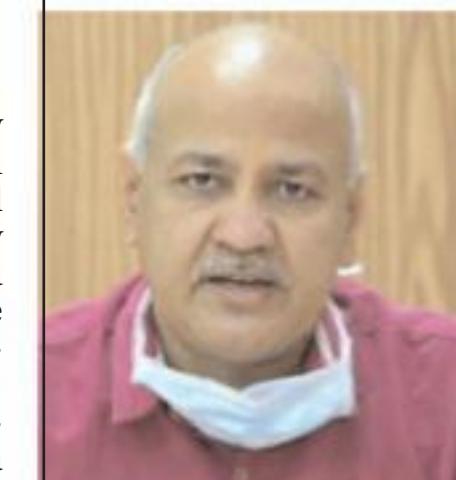
According to a DJB official, the Jal Board has nine water treatment plants and eight sewage testing laboratories set up with adequate facilities and manned by qualified persons for inspection and evaluating the raw sewage and final effluent.

Laboratories collect samples from sewage pumping stations and drains in its command area and conduct routine surveys of the Yamuna downstream from Wazirabad to the Okhla barrage to monitor the quality deterioration.

The DJB is responsible for the production of water in Delhi and its distribution in the area under the control of the Municipal Corporations. Besides, the Board is responsible for collection, treatment and disposal of sewage in Delhi, the official said.

Youths shouldn't shy away from politics, governance: Sisodia

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER



The youths of the country should not shy away from politics and should get involved in governance, Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia told students during an online "masterclass on entrepreneurship in governance".

Sisodia interacted with students of the prestigious Ashoka University at Sonepat yesterday.

tions, Sisodia explained that it would be important for students to understand that for a successful policy, "the public bind is essential".

"During the Right to Information Act movement, lawmakers and policy makers involved in us what was going on. I wasn't in politics then, but we mobilised enough people and stakeholders to create a policy pressure group on the government.

The government needs skilled and knowledgeable professionals, he pointed out.

Sisodia was accompanied by professors Piyush Tewari and Dr Priyank Narayan at the InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship at Ashoka University at Sonepat yesterday.

"If you want to be part of a change, you should not shy away from politics," said Sisodia while interacting with students on how they can impact policies and get involved in governance.

The government needs skilled and knowledgeable professionals, he pointed out.

Sisodia was accompanied by professors Piyush Tewari and Dr Priyank Narayan at the InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship at Ashoka University at Sonepat yesterday.

"People like me are dreamers, and so we work hard to make those dreams come true," said Sisodia while sharing his vision on governance.

On policy-level interven-

the students about how to replicate a movement as powerful as the Anti-Corruption Movement in India for other causes, especially pollution, Sisodia said, "The first job is to make the public understand the issue and create awareness about it.

Information is there, but we fail in creating a collective public sentiment. Is your dream (as a policy-maker/change-maker) the same as the dream of your people? That's the job of a leader and the basis for any powerful movement. Mobilise people through local interventions so that they feel for the cause on a daily basis."

Answering a question on how youngsters can engage themselves in governance, Sisodia told the students, "You don't have to necessarily take part in elections, but by simply becoming a party member or even a party worker, you can engage yourselves in the functioning of various departments where work on research, analysis and policy-drafts is done regularly. Use your skills to work at the grassroots level — that's where the real change happens."

Court dismisses plea seeking FIR in JNU violence matter, noting one already lodged

PTI
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

while dismissing the application.

The judge, however, directed the DCP of crime branch to file a status report of the investigation of FIR which has been registered in this regard by December 19.

The FIR was lodged by the Delhi Police at Vasant Kunj (North) police station and was later transferred to its Crime Branch.

The status report also said that the IO probing the matter has also collected the medical report from the AIIMS, which opined the injuries received by the complainant as simple blunt.

In her plea, she had told the court that the lodging of an FIR was urgent since investigation could take place only after the case is registered.

The professor had said she had to approach the court on account of inaction on the part of police authorities despite "clear and cogent" facts and underlying material placed by her before the investigating agency.

On January 5, masked men armed with sticks and rods attacked students and teachers and damaged property on the campus, prompting the administration to call in police which conducted a flag march.

According to the complaint, Sen, along with students and other teachers, was holding a meeting at Sabarmati Tea Point on January 5 and at about 6:30 pm, it was learnt that a mob armed with deadly weapons had gathered at Periyar Hostel.

The mob reached the

Delhi's air quality 'very poor', likely to improve today

PTI
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

The national capital's air quality was recorded in the very poor category on Friday morning, while a government forecasting agency said some improvement is likely due to favourable wind speed.

On Thursday, the city's air quality index (AQI) touched severe levels for a brief period before slipping back into the very poor category.

According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitoring agency, SAFAR, the share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM 2.5 pollution was 36 percent on Thursday -- the maximum so far this season.

Delhi recorded an AQI of 380 at 9:30 am. The 24-hour average AQI was 395 on Thursday. It was 297 on Wednesday, 312 on Tuesday, 353 on Monday, and 349 on Sunday.

Several monitoring stations, including at Shadipur (417), Patparganj (406), Bawana (447) and Mundka (427), recorded air quality in the severe category.



Delhi continues to be wrapped in smog. On Friday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

able into the lungs. These particles include dust, pollen and mold spores.

The levels of PM 2.5 finer particles which can even enter the bloodstream were 231 g/m3. PM 2.5 levels up to 60 g/m3 are considered safe.

NASA's satellite imagery showed a large, dense cluster of fires that covered most parts of Punjab and some regions of Haryana.

According to SAFAR, the share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM 2.5 concentration was 36 percent on Thursday.

Classified

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

BALAKA

NOTICE FOR LOSS/DEATH

NOTICE FOR LOAN

NOTICE FOR PURCHASE

NOTICE FOR SALE

NOTICE FOR LEASE

NOTICE FOR RENT

NOTICE FOR PURCHASE



Pakistan has admitted that it was behind the Pulwama attack. Now, the Congress and the rest of those who talked about a conspiracy should apologise to the country

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR
UNION MINISTER

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER 2020

03

SAD seeks reopening of Kartarpur Corridor

Sukhbir urges PM to ensure reopening of Kartarpur Corridor to facilitate Sikh pilgrims wishing to visit Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan on the occasion of 551st Parkash Purb of Guru Nanak Dev

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 30 OCTOBER

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)'s president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene and direct the Lands Port Authority of India (LPAI) to reopen the Kartarpur Corridor to facilitate the Sikh pilgrims wishing to visit Sri Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan on the occasion of the upcoming 551st Parkash Purb (birth anniversary) of Guru Nanak Dev.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, the SAD president also urged the PM to allow visa-free pilgrimage to ensure those who do not possess passports could also access the Corridor.

He said easy access should be given to the pilgrims while enforcing health protocols keeping in view the 551st



birth anniversary of the Guru on 30 November.

Badal said in his letter that there was an over-

whelming sentiment in the Sikh community that the Kartarpur Corridor should be reopened at the earliest so that

devotees could pay obeisance at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib as well as visit the hallowed area where Guru Sahib

made a living practising agriculture for eighteen years.

He also said that the Pakistan government had opened the Corridor for travel and permission for the same was only awaited from the Indian government.

The Corridor was temporarily closed by the Indian government on March 16 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The SAD chief pointed out that prominent pilgrimage sites across the world as well as in the country, which had been partially or fully closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, had been reopened.

He said history was made last year when the Indian government decided to open the Corridor and the same was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on November 9 on the eve of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

Himachal govt taking steps to mitigate Covid impact: Jai Ram

STATESMAN NEW SERVICE
SHIMLA, 30 OCTOBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Friday said the state government was taking various steps to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Laying foundation stones and inaugurating development projects worth Rs 24.70 crore in Sundernagar Assembly segment through video conferencing from here, the Chief Minister said the first and foremost task before the government is to check the spread of this virus. He said that to monitor the Covid-19 situation he held 35 video conferences with the Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police and Chief Medical Officers of the state.

He said that necessary directions were given to the district officers to take steps to mitigate the crisis. While addressing a virtual rally from Shimla, the Chief Minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited the state four times during the last about three years, which shows the love and bonding he shares with the state and

its people.

He said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Atal Tunnel Rohtang of Rs. 3300 crore to the Nation which would open new horizons in matters for development for people of the landlocked tribal areas. He said that several historic initiatives have been taken by the Union Government which has paved a way for a strong and vibrant India.

Thakur said all the developmental projects foundation stone of which was laid by him today would be completed within the stipulated time period. He said that the paucity of funds would not come in way of development so that the people could reap the benefits of development.

Thakur said that developmental projects worth Rs 500 crore were being executed in Sundernagar Vidhan Sabha area of Mandi district. He said that these projects include Rs 200 crore schemes of Jal Shakti department and Rs 100 crore projects of PWD (Public Works Department).

Thakur said that the Sundernagar Assembly segment

is fast-forging ahead on the path of progress and prosperity. He said that it was for the first time that Rs. 219 crore was allocated under Central Road Fund (CRF) for construction of road from Salampar to Tattapani, which was the biggest amount for any single road in the state.

The Chief Minister said that He said that 14 video conferences were also held with the elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions so as to ensure people's participation in effectively combating the crisis.

Member of Parliament Ram Swaroop Sharma said that the State was forging ahead on the path of progress and prosperity under the able leadership of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur. He also detailed various developmental projects and welfare schemes of the Union Government for welfare of the people of the country.

MLA Sundernagar Rakesh Jamwal thanked the Chief Minister for dedicating and laying the foundation stones of developmental projects worth crores of rupees for the area.

Trouble brewing for BJP in HP's Jwalamukhi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 30 OCTOBER

Amid some trouble brewing for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Himachal Pradesh, the state BJP president Suresh Kashyap on Friday dissolved the block unit of the party in Jwalamukhi in Kangra district with immediate effect, citing indiscipline by some office bearers who had spoken against the party organisation.

"It was an act of indiscipline and they have tried to malign the image of the party. Along with the block unit, all

the morthas in Jwalamukhi are also dissolved," said HP BJP chief Suresh Kashyap.

He said the party is known for discipline and no party office bearer or worker is above organisation. "If any leader, party office bearer or any other workers tries to violate, the party takes action as per its constitution," he said.

He said BJP is a party of workers and has progressed so far with the hard work of workers so far. "The new block unit of BJP in Jwalamukhi will be put in place soon," he said.

It is pertinent to mention

that the Block officer bearers from Jwalamukhi had hit out at the state organisation secretary of BJP, Pawan Rana some days ago, holding that he had allegedly been running a parallel party unit in Jwalamukhi. Before this, BJP MLA from Jwalamukhi, former minister, Ramesh Dhawala had also been objecting to Rana's political interference in Jwalamukhi segment. The simmering discontent was also addressed by former Chief Minister, Shanta Kumar recently when he said he was pained at the way Ramesh Dhawala, who had helped

BJP form the government in 1998, was being treated and targeted.

Party sources said when Dhawala was called by the party president some days ago to explain his position before two state office bearers of BJP, he had repeated the allegations he had levelled against Rana. Sources said Dhawala had turned the tables on the two 'junior office bearers' who tried to question him in front of BJP chief for contesting election independently in 1998 on denial of ticket by cross questioning their credibility and standing in party.

Rohan Chand Thakur said that till date over 16,406 people have registered themselves for employment on the Skill Reg-

HPKVN seeks to provide jobs to those who returned amid Covid

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 30 OCTOBER

The Himachal Pradesh Kaushal Vikas Nigam (HPKVN)'s MD Rohan Chand Thakur said here on Friday that the HPKVN was making efforts to provide employment opportunities to thousands of unemployed skilled and semi-skilled citizens — who have returned to the state due to the Covid pandemic — through its Skill Register portal, launched during the pandemic.

He said that these job opportunities were mapped as per the eligibility, qualification and aspiration of the citizens registered on the 'Skill Register' portal and based on such mapping, HPKVN identified 1685 candidates eligible for the job opportunities offered by various industries. These candi-

dates were individually contacted, counselled and motivated to join the available job opportunities. Consequently, 405 candidates expressed their interest in joining the job. Out of these, 282 candidates appeared for the interview and 102 candidates got short-listed through interview. Forrest who could not join the job opportunities are being further counselled and motivated by the HPKVN team so that suitable matching job opportunities can be offered to them.

So far, the data analysis shows the major reasons of the candidates not willing to join despite having requisite qual-

ification are job location, higher salary expectations etc. HPKVN is also working on providing multiple offers to each candidate, so that they have options to choose from. Managing Director said that skilled and semi-skilled unemployed citizens returning from outside states can register themselves on skillregister.hpin.gov.in' where companies and industries can also register their requirements, after which the Himachal Pradesh Kaushal Vikas Nigam will attempt to provide job opportunities to the applicants in the nearest company or industry according to their ability and eligibility.

Delhi public buses to run with full seating capacity

PTI
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

Delhi Lt Governor Anil Baijal has approved the Delhi government's proposal to allow buses to run with full seating capacity even as COVID-19 cases are witnessing a surge in the city.

The buses are currently running with 20 passengers in view of the outbreak of coronavirus.

Baijal, who is the chairman of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), has also approved resuming inter-state bus services and the process to plan a standard operating procedure for it is on and the service is likely to restart from next week, a senior government officer said.

The issue of raising the number of passengers in DTC and Cluster buses was

raised in a DDMA meeting on October 23. Transport minister Kailash Gahlot had sought permission for full seating without any passenger standing on buses.

The number of DTC and Cluster buses seat up to 40-45 passengers.

Bus stops in the city witnessed long queues as a result of reduced capacity of passengers allowed in the buses.

Covid-hit Punjab bus operators get 100 pc tax waiver till 31 December

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 30 OCTOBER

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Friday ordered 100 per cent waiver on Motor Vehicle Tax till December 31 for all stage carriage, mini and school buses, while deferring payment of arrears of taxes, without interest and penalty, to 31 March, 2021.

The move will result in total financial benefit to the Transport sector to the tune of Rs 100 Crore, according to an official spokesperson.

The decisions and directives were announced by the CM at a virtual conference with various private transport associations in the state.

Though the transport department had initially suggested waiver up to 50 per cent of tax till December 31, the CM overruled the department to announce 100 per cent relief.

Transporters were earlier provided 100 relief for two months, till 30 September by the state government.

Transporters claim with less than 10 per cent commuters availing the bus services, they were unable to meet even the cost of diesel to run their vehicles. Though the state-run buses, being prime routes, were in demand, private bus operators continued to suffer due to the Covid pandemic, representatives of the transport associations told the CM.

Amarinder agreed with the transporters that their industry, run entirely by Punjabis, needed further support from the state government in the present situation and accepted their demand for total tax waiver till the end of this year.

Speed up construction of Mandi greenfield airport: CM to officials

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 30 OCTOBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Friday directed the officers to expedite various formalities for construction of a greenfield airport at Nagchala in Mandi district and expansion of Kangra and Shimla airports.

He was presiding over a meeting regarding development/expansion of airports in the state held here today.

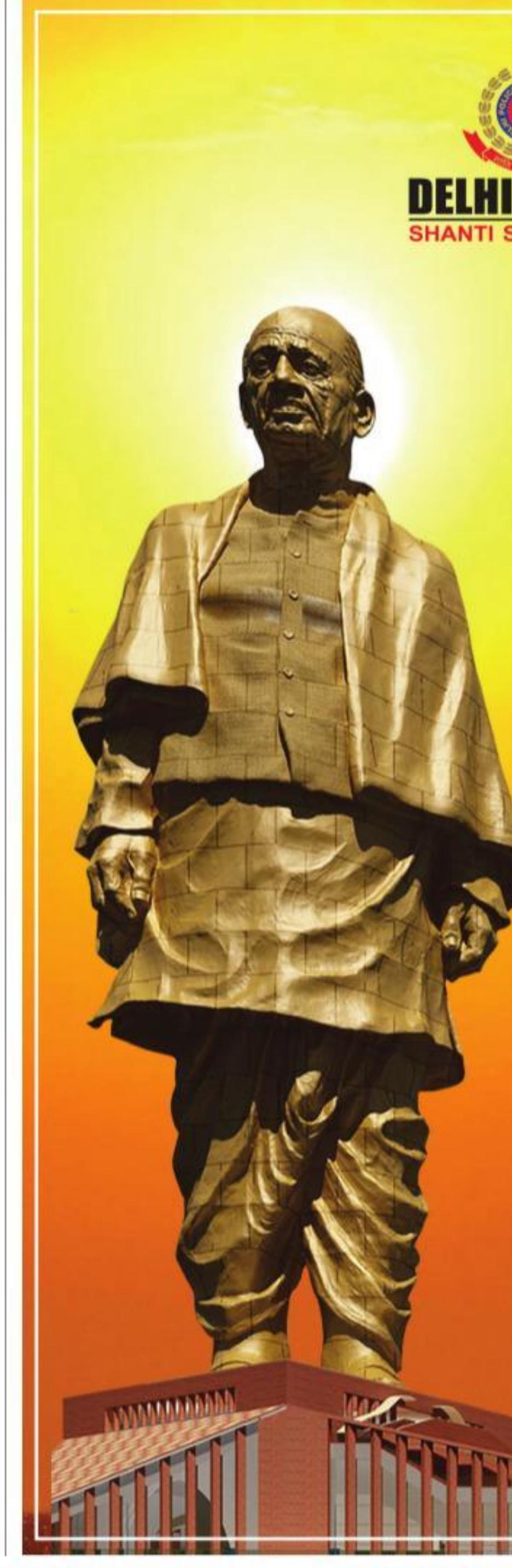
Thakur said that land measuring 2936 bigha has been identified for construction of Greenfield Airport in Mandi district and site clearance has been obtained in January, 2020. He said that during a meeting held with the Ministry of Civil Aviation in November, 2019 it was decided that AAI would go ahead with 2100 meters length of runway in phase-I. However, Government of Himachal Pradesh would acquire land for proposed runway upto 3150 meters for phase-II and additional land would be kept unutilized as bufferzone, headed. He said that the state government had signed MoU for development and operation of this Greenfield airport through a Joint Venture Company on 15 January, 2020.

The Chief Minister said that as per estimates total expenditure of Rs 7448 crore would be incurred on this ambitious project on land acquisition, terminal building, runways and allied activities. He said that expendi-

ture of Rs 2786 crore on land acquisition, Rs. 2965 crore on other developmental activities, Rs. 900 crore on terminal building, runway and allied infrastructure, Rs. 782 crore on structures and Rs. 15 crore on compensatory levies for FCA would be made. He said that this proposed airstrip would require channelization of Suketi khad.

Thakur said that 1780 bigha of land has been identified for development and expansion of Kangra Airport for operation of A-320 type of aircraft and cost of acquisition of land and allied activities would be Rs 3347.18 crore. He said that this proposed airstrip would require channelization of Manjhi khad alongwith construction of a new approach road to the airport.

A presentation was also made on various tourism projects being implemented in the State by Secretary, Tourism and Civil Aviation Devesh Kumar. Jai Shakti Minister Mahender Singh, Additional Chief Secretaries R.D. Dhami and Prabodh Saxena, Principal Secretary J.C. Sharma, Secretary Vikas Labroo, Director Tourism Yunus and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.



Saluting his Contribution to Unity of the Nation

Delhi Police pays tribute to India's First Home Minister - The Iron Man of India, Commemorating The National Unity Day

31st October, 2020

"It is prime responsibility of every citizen to feel that this country is free and to defend its freedom is his duty."

- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

DP/258/2020





Members of AIAPP shout slogans as they pay tribute to former PM Indira Gandhi on her death anniversary, in Amritsar on Friday.

PTI

Nigerian held for duping Ch'g'h' woman: A woman from Chhattisgarh's Koriya district was allegedly duped of Rs 24 lakh by a Nigerian national who got in touch with her through a matrimonial website, police said on Friday. Ajide Peter Chinaka (30) was arrested from Noida, Uttar Pradesh and brought to Koriya district on Thursday, an official said.

Abducted Delhi-based contractor rescued: A Delhi-based contractor who was abducted by one of his co-worker and his associates, was rescued from Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur district, police said after arresting three accused from there. One of the accused, work with the victim, planned the abduction.

PTI

LDF govt, CPM in tight spot over arrest of Sivasankar, Bineesh

Kerala Cong leader Ramesh Chennithala accused CPI-M of running underworld activities in the state

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
30 OCTOBER

The arrests of chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M Sivasankar in connection with the gold smuggling case and the CPI-M state secretary's son Bineesh Kodiyeri in connection with a drug peddling related money laundering case.

party secretary's son was arrested in connection with a drug peddling related money laundering case.

The Opposition parties have alleged that the chief minister's office was the nerve centre of the gold smuggling. Senior Congress leader and Opposition leader in the Kerala Assembly Ramesh Chennithala accused the CPI-M of running underworld activities in the state.

He alleged that the CPI-M itself has been taken into custody in the state and that the party secretary's house has turned into a hub for narcotics business and underworld activities are taking place inside the chief minister's residence.

"The chief minister and CPI-M state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan head the underworld activities. Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's house has become a hub for the sale of narcotics," Chennithala said

The twin arrests have put the CPI-M and the LDF government in a serious crisis, which no government or party has faced in the past. There's never been a time in the history of the country where an incumbent chief minister's principal secretary was arrested in a case related to gold smuggling or a

CM Vijayan in the entire episode in the wake of Sivasankar's admission that he had called the Customs to secure the release of smuggled gold. It was at Pinarayi's behest that Sivasankar contacted Customs, he alleged.

The BJP chief further alleged that the Cliffhouse, the CM's official residence and AKG Centre, CPI-M state headquarters, have become centres to promote gold smuggling and narcotics business.

BJP leader and union minister of state for external affairs V. Muraleedharan said while the LDF government is involved in gold smuggling case, the party is involved in drug peddling case.

The CPI-M, however, stood firmly behind CM Vijayan and party secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan and rejected the demand for their resignations. The party and the CM distanced themselves from the two arrested persons.

The CPI-M has said that Sivasankar was removed from the post he held and

later suspended from service, when allegations were levelled against him.

CPI-M politburo member S Ramachandran Pillai said the twin arrests have nothing to do with the government or CPI-M, the party will not protect anyone.

Soon after the issue surfaced, the CM suspended Sivasankar, he added.

"Those are personal matters. If they have committed some mistake, let them face action," Pillai further said.

But the fact remains that Sivasankar was involved in the smuggling case while being part of CM's office. It may be noted that the government has taken action against Sivasankar only when the national probe agencies brought him under their scanner.

The Opposition asks as to why the chief minister, who is also in charge of the home department failed to note his illegal activities. Wasn't the intelligence wing giving the CM any input regarding his principal secretary's illegal activities?

Here the CM is in a predicament, if the CM says he was not aware of his activities, he will be dubbed as a weak ruler, who is not in the knowledge of what is happening in his office. But, the CM has been described as an astute politician with sound acumen. Then why he failed to judge his principal

secretary?

The Opposition Congress and BJP say that the CPI-M and the government cannot escape from the illegal activities that took place in the chief minister's office by blaming everything on Sivasankar.

Sivasankar was indulged in all these illegal activities collaborating with Swapna Suresh, prime accused in the gold smuggling case, as chief minister's principal secretary.

The double whammy for the ruling CPI-M has come at a time when the party was getting ready to face two polls - for local bodies in December and the Assembly election in early 2021.

The arrests of Sivasankar and Bineesh may have the repercussions in the political scenes in Kerala.

The Opposition asks as to why the chief minister, who is also in charge of the home department failed to note his illegal activities.

Wasn't the intelligence wing giving the CM any input regarding his principal secretary's illegal activities?

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predicament, if the CM says he was not aware of his activities, he will be dubbed as a weak ruler, who is not in the knowledge of what is happening in his office. But, the CM has been described as an astute politician with sound acumen. Then why he failed to judge his principal

TN quota for govt school students in medical courses; Guv clears Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 30 OCTOBER

Governor would take a decision at the earliest.

BJP's Khushbu Sundar said, "We deliver when we promise." PMK chief S Ramdoss said Purohit's consent was the victory of the people.

The Raj Bhavan said Purohit sought to know if the proposed quota was in accordance with the Constitution and compatible with Articles 14 (Equality) and 15 (prohibition of discrimination).

The SGI, Tushar Mehta, in his opinion said 'intelligible differentia' would enable reservation for socially and educationally backward class, an affirmative action. The Bill is in "consonance with the Constitution of India," Mehta noted adding it is however subject to judicial review and also to other constitutional principles like those related to the upper limit to reserved seats.

The Tamil Nadu Admissions to Undergraduate Courses in Medicine, Dentistry, Indian Medicine and Homeopathy on preferential basis to the students of Government Schools Bill 2020, was passed on September 15 in the Assembly and sent to Purohit for his approval. The ruling AIADMK sought expeditious clearance of the bill since the quota should be implemented from the current year and a group of Ministers too had called on Purohit at the Raj Bhavan recently.

"As soon as the opinion was received, honourable Governor has given assent to the Bill," the statement said.

Amid accusations that Purohit delayed clearing the quota Bill, the Raj Bhavan, pointing out that the Bill was approved soon after the receipt of legal opinion - that the Bill is in sync with Constitution- assumes significance.

Chief minister K Palaniswami said efforts were afoot to implement the reservation from the current year.

DMK president M K Stalin claimed Purohit gave his assent to the quota bill as he was left with no other choice and thanked him for giving his nod. His party's protest and the hope expressed by the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court were behind Purohit's "change of heart."

In a Twitter post, Stalin said the approval came after 45 days and when the time for medical counselling was nearing and the Governor had to approve in view of such factors. Hearing a batch of public interest litigation petitions, a division bench had on Thursday hoped that the

Finally, the government issued an order on Thursday ~ pending assent of the Governor for the bill, which showed the government's intention to ensure its implementation from the current academic year. The DMK had targeted the Governor for 'delay' in clearing the bill and had days ago held a massive protest. It had also hit out at the AIADMK regime for not pressuring Purohit to get the bill cleared. Tamil Nadu Assembly elections are due during April-May 2021. BJP Tamil Nadu unit chief L Murugan had said Purohit should clear the bill immediately.

TENDER

HIMACHAL PRADESH e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE INVITING FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer HP PWD Division Manali at Katrain on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system, for construction of following work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost of the Work	Bid Security /EMD	Cost of Document	Period of Completion
1	C/O Pangan Shastri road Km. 0/0 to 7/155 (SH- C/o missing RCC slab culvert at Rd. 2/750).	610449/-	13000/-	350/-	Three Months

Key dates:-

- 1. Date of online publication : 02.11.2020 11:30 AM.
- 2. Document Download start and End date : 02.11.2020 to 13.11.2020 5:00 PM
- 3. Bid submission start and End date : 02.11.2020 to 13.11.2020 5:00 PM
- 4. Physical submission of EMD and cost of tender document : 16.11.2020 11:00 AM
- 5. Date of Technical Bid opening, Evaluation of Technical Bid : 16.11.2020 at 11:30 AM

Bidders documents can be downloaded from the website <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The documents downloaded from the site should not be tampered, and if any such tampering is detected before or after the opening of bids, the bidder shall be penalized and black listed.

Other terms and condition shall remain same as given in the bid document.

Terms & Conditions:-

Scanned copy of Registration/Enlistment with H.P.P.W.D. Deptt.

Scanned copy of PAN/TIN & Income Tax clearance certificate .

Scanned copy of work done certificate of similar nature of work .

Scanned copy of Earnest Money and Cost of Form.

Executive Engineer,
HP PWD Division Manali,
at Katrain

4067/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

439/RTP-45/2020

. The documents downloaded from the website which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPWD may obtain the same from the website: [https://htenders.gov.in](http://htenders.gov.in). Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates:-

1. Date of Online Publication : 16-11-2020 18:00 HRS

2. Document Download Start and End Date : 16-11-2020 18:30 HRS up to 27-11-2020 17:00 HRS

3. Bid Submission Start and End Date : 16-11-2020 18:30 HRS up to 27-11-2020 17:00 HRS

4. Physical Submission of EMD and Cost of Tender Document : 28-11-2020 10:30 HRS

5. Date of Technical Bid opening, Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid. : 28-11-2020 11:00 HRS

4. TENDER DETAILS:- The Tender Document shall be uploaded online in two cover:

(i) Cover 1: shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/Eligibility Information".

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

5. SUBMISSION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS:- The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document/online payment receipt and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)/online payment receipt (c) Form 7-8 and (d) Affidavits to the authorized official of Executive Engineer, Shimla Rural Division, HPWD Dhami H.P as specified in Key dates Sr. No. 4 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. BID OPENING DETAILS:- The bids shall be opened on 28-11-2020 at 11:00 HRS by the authorized official of Executive Engineer, Shimla Rural Division, HPWD Dhami. In their interest the tinkerers are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

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

9. Eligibility Criteria:- The bidders must have successfully completed similar nature of work not less than 40 % of estimated cost during the last five financial years (without Liquidated damages or compensation) for Job No. 1.

10. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

11. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

12. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

13. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

14. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

15. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

16. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

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20. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

21. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

22. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

23. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

24. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

25. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

26. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

27. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

28. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

29. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

30. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

31. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid



Will fight politically, legally for restoration of articles
370, 35A.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE VICE PRESIDENT OMAR ABDULLAH
STATING THAT REVOCATION OF ARTICLES 370 AND 35A BY THE CENTRE WERE UNACCEPTABLE

THUMBNAILS



An activist of Hindu Sena, offers prayer for French teacher Samuel Paty, who was killed in Paris attack, in New Delhi on Friday. AFP

J&K advisor's resignation: Kashmir Lieutenant Governor's advisor KK Sharma on Friday resigned after being appointed the state election commissioner. He will take over the new assignment within a few days. Sharma, who is a former chief secretary of Delhi, has remained advisor to Governor Satyapal Malik and Lt. Governors GC Murmu and Manoj Sinha.

SNS

Village head's husband dies from burn: A village head's husband died from burns here on Friday, with his family claiming that he was killed over electoral rivalry, police said.

PTI

LeT behind killing of three BJP workers in J&K: Police

ICP says 157 BJP workers have been provided personal security officers, 30 with guards

SNS&PTI
JAMMU, 30 OCTOBER

Police on Friday seized an Alto car suspected to have been used by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists to gun down three BJP activists, including the general secretary of party's youth wing, near Qazigund in Kulgam on Thursday night.

The three BJP activists were killed on spot and were declared "brought dead" by a local hospital.

IGP (Kashmir), Vijay Kumar, reportedly told media persons that the attack was pre-planned and carried out by three LeT terrorists.

Security forces have launched search operations at nearly a dozen places to nab the terrorists.

The terrorists came in an Alto car belonging to one Altaf, a local, and drove close to the vehicle in which the BJP activists were travelling and fired indiscriminately at them.

BJP workers Fida Hussain Yatoo (BJP District Youth General secretary), Umer Rashid Beigh and Umer Ramzan Hajam were killed in the terror attack.

The Alto car has been seized near Telwani village near the police post, Achabal. Yatoo left the secure place at Pahalgam after giving an undertaking, reports said. The police are looking into this aspect.

The IGP said that 157 BJP workers have been provided PSOs and 30 with guards. Those vulnerable would be provided more security. PSOs have been asked not to allow them to move during the night, he said.

Strongly condemning the killing, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said law shall take its course and the guilty shall be dealt with sternly.

The Lt Governor assured all the possible help from the government to the bereaved families.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP



Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha activists protesting in Jammu against killing of three partymen by terrorists. ■ SNS

president Ravinder Raina while condemning the killing said it was a great loss to the party. Raina visited the residence of the three BJP activists and expressed sympathies with their families.

Sitting MP and National Conference leader, Farooq Abdullah, condemned the targeted killing and said such gruesome killings have no place in the civilised world. Our instrument should be dialogue, not violence. Sanctity of life should be respected at all levels, he added.

In a tweet, Nadda said the whole society stands with the bereaved families.

Describing the three party workers as "patriots", Nadda said their sacrifice will not go in vain.

2 LeT militant held
Two militant associates of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were arrested in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir and arms and ammunition recovered from their possession on Friday, police said.

This comes a day after three BJP workers were shot dead by militants in the north Kashmir district.

The police along with the Army and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), arrested two militant associates linked to proscribed outfit LeT in Kupwara's Handwara, a police official said. The militant associates have been identified as Liyakat Ahmad Mir and Aqib Rashid Mir, both residents of Hayan area of Trehgam Kupwara, he said.

According to police, they were involved in providing shelter, logistics and other support to active LeT militants, besides assisting them in transporting arms and ammunition.

Parliament and the Gujarat Assembly.

Later on, the Prime Minister flew in a helicopter to Kevadiya Colony where he inaugurated several tourism related projects in the vicinity of the 182-metre Statue of Unity (SoU) in memory of Iron Man Sardar Patel who had passed away yesterday.

■

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Soon after landing in Ahmedabad in the morning, Modi drove to the residence of the departed Patel patriarch and paid his tributes to the BJP stalwart regarding him as a 'father figure'.

■

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The PM's two-day trip to his home state, was already scheduled for launching a slew of projects including the seaplane operations linking the city with the Statue of Unity (SoU). Modi arrived here few hours early to call on the family of late Keshubhai Patel.

Modi also visited the families of actor-singer duo Mahesh and Naresh Kanodia, the siblings who died last week within two days of one another. Both the brothers had earlier represented the BJP in downstream.

The PM also inaugurated the 'Arogya Van' and undertook a tour of the botanical park hosting hundreds of medicinal plants and herbs which have multiple uses.

Modi pays tributes to Keshubhai Patel, launches seaplane

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 30 OCTOBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday made some changes in his two-day trip to Gujarat in order to pay his last respects to former chief minister Keshubhai Patel who passed away yesterday.

This comes a day after three BJP workers were shot dead by militants in the north Kashmir district.

The police along with the Army and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), arrested two militant associates linked to proscribed outfit LeT in Kupwara's Handwara, a police official said. The militant associates have been identified as Liyakat Ahmad Mir and Aqib Rashid Mir, both residents of Hayan area of Trehgam Kupwara, he said.

According to police, they were involved in providing shelter, logistics and other support to active LeT militants, besides assisting them in transporting arms and ammunition.

Fb using Indian experience to stop abuse in US elections

NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has said steps taken by the social media giant have helped protect the integrity of more than 200 different elections around the world, including in India, and have also played an important role in stopping abuse ahead of US elections.

Noting that next week will certainly be a "test" for Facebook, Zuckerberg said the company will continue "fighting to protect the integrity of the democratic process".

"These are all changes we've made in the last four years - and they've helped us protect the integrity of more than 200 different elections around the world, including in the EU, India and Indonesia. And they've been important for stopping abuse ahead of next week's vote in the US," Zuckerberg said during the company's earnings call and outlined some of the steps that have been taken.

He added that the company has focused on issues like voter suppression, and has worked closely with experts in the space, including civil rights leaders.

Pak Hindu families given land & shelter in UP's Muzzaffarnagar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MEERUT, 30 OCTOBER



According to Bhagmal, a migrant, Hindu families are in deep trouble in Pakistan and the majority of them wish to migrate



engagements.

Shukratl is one of the famous pilgrim place of western Uttar Pradesh.

Bhagmal (50) claimed that some of their family members and relatives are still in Pakistan and are in pite state. He said that approximately 2,000 Hindus who had migrated from Pakistan are staying at Palwal, Faridabad and Delhi.

"We belong to Sindh region of Pakistan and were doing farming there. We came here as pilgrims on a visa for one to three months and in order to extend the period of stay in India managed extension

approaching concerned authorities with a person who guaranteed for us. Later on got the visa extension for five to two years and got a court permission to earn a living here," he added.

■

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While living in Delhi and trying to earn a living they came in contact with Pradhan Neeraj a year before.

When Neeraj offered them help and land to do farming to raise their families Bhagmal and others readily agreed.

Bhagmal said, "We have

15K devotees to be allowed to pray at Vaishnodevi Temple from 1 November

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAMMU, 30 OCTOBER

by orders that the guidelines and instructions shall continue to remain valid till 30.11.2020, subject to the following modifications that instead of a ceiling of 7000, the upper limit for permissible number of pilgrims to SMVD Shrine, Katra, shall be 15000, w.e.f. 01.11.2020". The shrine atop the Trikuta hills was reopened on August 16 after a gap of nearly five months due to the outbreak of Covid-19. Initially, the administration imposed a cap of 2,000 pilgrims daily, including 100 from outside Jammu and Kashmir.

The board officials said the

registration of pilgrims will continue to be done online to avoid people gathering at the yatra registration counters. They said accommodation facilities of the board at the bhawan, Adhkuwari, Katra and Jammu are open for the pilgrims following all prescribed SOPs.

All other supplementary facilities set up by the board such as battery-operated vehicles, passenger ropeway and helicopter services are also operating smoothly by strictly following social distancing norms and other precautionary measures, the officials said.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that this person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 65 years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'8", Face: Long, Complexion: Black, Wearing: White Kurta & Dhoti and Bare footed, has been found in unconscious condition from the jurisdiction of P.S. Hauz Khas, New Delhi on 10.08.2020 and he was shifted in AIIMS Hospital, for treatment where Doctor declared him dead on 06.09.2020.

In this regard a DD No.14A, dated 07.09.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Hauz Khas, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S. Hauz Khas, Delhi
Ph. 011-26867878, 26510077
DP/308/SD/2020

SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely Khushi D/o Govind R/o H.No. 142, Khajoor Wali Gali, Ambedkar Basti, Ghonda, Jafrabad, Delhi Age: About 17 years, Height: 5' Built: Thin, Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Identification Marks: Cut mark on upper lip, Wearing: Red check colour suit, white colour pajami, white colour dupatta, pink colour ladies chappal in her feet is kidnapped from her house since 27.09.2020. In this regard a vide case FIR No. 415/20 dated 28.09.2020 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this girl please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/349/NE/2020

SHO
P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi.
Ph: 011-22560191, 22560192,
9136848502

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -1 DELHI

4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING,
PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

O.S.No. 254/2019

Bank of India Versus Ms. Shweta Gunwani & Drs. (Defendants)

To (1) Ms. Shweta Gunwani D/o Mr. Gopi Chand Gunwani R/o House No. F-804, Prateek Wisteria, Near Orchid, Sector -77, Noida, UP -201301

also at (2) Ms. Shweta Gunwani D/o. Mr. Gopi Chand Gunwani R/o 3, Happy Cottage, Opposite S.B.I. Colony, Idgah, Bhopal-462001.

(2) Smt. Surbala W/o Shri Keshav Dass R/o H2/25A & H2/21A, Third Floor, Backside Khasra No. 84/10/4 Mahavir Enclave, Delhi-110045.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 70,37,463.03 (Rupees seventy lakh, thirty seven thousand and four hundred sixty three rupees and paisa three only)

against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Hon'ble Tribunal on 02.11.2020 at 10:30 am (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.tribunal.gov.in Phone number 011-23748473)

Please note that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose : - (i) All the Advocates / Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application/software ; (ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar / Recovery Officer -I and Recovery Officer -II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT official portal i.e. "drt.gov.in" under the Public Notice Head. (iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates / Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748473.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 08th day of October, 2020.

By order of the Tribunal

For Registrar

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -1 DELHI

4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING,
PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

O.S.No. 375/2019

Bank of India Versus Mr. Rajan Deep Singh & Co. (Defendants)

To (1) Mr. Rajan Deep Singh (Defendants No.01)

S/o Sh. Shukhr Singh, Flat No. 07, Rana Market Opposite H-Block, Palam Vihar, Gurugram, PIN-122017, Haryana

Also at (2) Mr. Rajan Deep Singh S/o Sh. Shukhr Singh, H. No. 12, Asiaha Garden, Sonari, Jamshedpur, PIN-831012, Jharkhand

Also at (3) Mr. Rajan Deep Singh S/o Sh. Shukhr Singh C/o M/s Midland Credit MGT India Pvt. Ltd. (Encore Capital Group), Plot No. 28P, Sector-44, Gurgaon PIN-122017, Haryana

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 22,54,441.58 (Rupees twenty two lakh, fifty four thousand and four hundred forty one rupees and paisa fifty eight only)

against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Hon'ble Tribunal on 10.12.

Clean Air Law

By abandoning the smoke and mirrors approach adopted by various states - and, it must be respectfully submitted, sometimes by courts of law - in tackling the problem of air pollution in the National Capital Region, the Union government appears, through the promulgation of an ordinance, to have attempted a holistic solution. At the same time, by subsuming in a sense the powers of state governments and pollution control boards, it has accepted a substantial political risk, for it will no longer be possible to blame the problem on recalcitrant states, a common occurrence in recent years when governments in the territories in question have been led by different political parties. The rather grandiosely named Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance 2020 covers the NCR and adjoining areas in the states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. The multi-member body will be headed by a retired Secretary to the Government of India, or a retired Chief Secretary of a state. It will also have high-powered representation from the Union Ministry of Environment and from each of the five state governments falling within the ambit of the legislation. In addition, it will have two officers who are or have been Joint Secretaries, five technical members including representatives of the Central Pollution Control Board and the Indian Space Research Organisation, three representatives from NGOs and one from the National Institution for Transforming India. In addition, the Commission will have powers to co-opt almost an endless number of members including representatives of six ministries, representative of a trade or industry body and "such other Associate Members as may be prescribed." The significant aspects of this arrangement appear to be, first, that the Commission's composition appears cumbersome, and second that it appears to have a preponderance of bureaucrats. Neither aspect inspires confidence. While the headline-grabbing aspect of the announcement is the power given to the Commission to imprison offenders for up to five years, or levy a fine of up to Rs 1 crore, or both, the provisions of the Ordinance suggest there is considerable fuzziness about its central function. Is it to be a regulatory body, an enforcement agency or an overarching authority with quasi-judicial powers? The provisions of the Ordinance appear to suggest that it will in effect be each of these, with the additional responsibilities of conducting research, building networks of technical institutions and promoting international cooperation. To invest all these powers and responsibilities on a body whose singular purpose is the improvement of air quality in a part of the country might seem excessive and indeed unfair to areas outside its jurisdiction, such as Kolkata, which too have problems of air pollution. Two other aspects must be commented upon. First, by granting to the Commission exclusive jurisdiction over questions of air pollution, the Ordinance renders all pollution control boards redundant to that extent. Second, the grant of powers to take up matters suo motu, or on complaints from any person or body working in the field of environment, itself a nebulous concept, may result in the Commission being bogged down by as many frivolous matters as serious ones. But those are challenges for the future; in the winter ahead, citizens will have to fortify themselves with the hope that things will be better this time next year.

Cat out of the bag

Just days after the Financial Action Task Force extended Pakistan's grey-listing until February, an extension Islamabad described as a victory while claiming that black-listing was off the table, the statement by a senior member of the Imran Khan government on the floor of the country's Parliament must provoke a rethink both by the task force as well as the comity of nations. For Minister Fawad Chaudhary was unequivocal in claiming credit for the terror attack in Pulwama last year and offered it as proof of the muscular approach adopted by his country. While Mr Chaudhary might now seek to back-pedal, as he was seen attempting furiously when questioned by an Indian television channel, his statement was unambiguous and thus capable only of a single interpretation - that the suicide bomber attack on a Central Reserve Police Force contingent in February 2019 was planned, financed and executed by the Pakistani state. The admission came about thanks to a provocative claim made by a member of the Opposition the previous day who had said a quivering-kneed government had ordered the release of an Indian Air Force officer fearing an imminent attack by India. This statement, by former Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, had provoked great consternation in Pakistan, for he had said that a shaken Foreign Minister S M Qureshi at a meeting with the Army chief which the Prime Minister had refused to attend had recommended the capitulation to India, to ward off a military attack. The suggestion that both the civilian government and the military establishment acquiesced in returning the Indian officer has led to frenzied damage control, one manifestation of which was Minister Chaudhary's admission of his government's involvement in the Pulwama attack, offered as proof of being aggressive rather than cowardly. The other has been the attempt by Pakistan's military establishment, which through the head of the Inter-Services Public Relations, described any attempt to link the release of the Indian officer with anything other than a mature response as "disappointing" and "misleading". Pakistan's all-powerful establishment is now trying desperately to defuse the situation, having persuaded Mr Sadiq to adopt the standard politician's ploy of claiming to be misquoted while getting Mr Chaudhary to say that his remarks are being viewed out of context. But with the cat having slunk out of the bag, these efforts at damage control may not succeed.

Technology in agriculture

There is a wide gap between the technologies developed in the research institutions and their applicability at the farmers' field. Awareness among farmers as to technologies must be created for better transfer of research technologies



The agricultural sector carries immense importance for the Indian economy. It plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic fabric of India. It contributes about one-sixth of the national income and provides direct employment to nearly 50 per cent of the work force. It has positioned itself as more relevant for meeting the food, feed, fodder, fuel, fibre and timber demands of an increasing human and animal population. Agriculture, however, enjoys vitality for ensuring food security to all. In addition, it influences the growth of secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy through its forward and backward linkages.

The World Development Report 2008 of the World Bank emphasised that growth in agriculture is, on average, at least twice as effective in reducing poverty than growth emanating outside agriculture. Agricultural growth reduces poverty directly, by raising farm incomes, and indirectly, through generating employment and reducing food prices. While pre-independence periods were marked with severe famines and stresses, the hurtful memories of the mid-1960s still haunts many. India was hit by twin droughts in 1965 and 1966. Crop production crashed by one-fifth. Due to lack of foreign exchange we could not approach the world market to buy foods. Only unprecedented food aid from America, about 12,000 miles away, under PL-480 on rupee payment, saved India from mass starvation. During the second year of that critical period of drought, then US President Lyndon Johnson, because of the certain policies he had adopted, was releasing grain in dribs and drabs. At one point, we reached a stage where there were stocks for only two weeks and there was nothing in transit. The situation of the country was labeled with such undignified remarks as 'ship to mouth'. The crisis gave the country's leadership an opportunity to resolve to become self-sufficient in food grains. The period also coincided with breakthrough in technology for improvement of rice and wheat strains. India took advantage of these technologies, experimented with them under the leadership of Dr M S Swaminathan and launched large-scale agricultural extension services.

Through the use of Mexican wheat varieties, five dwarf varieties of wheat along with about 200 other breeding lines were introduced. The success in rice varietal development and other commodities like maize, jawar, bajra, small millet etc. caused a significant growth in the production of food grains. Within three years the production of wheat doubled. The Green Revolution transformed India to self-sufficiency.

One of the most notable achievements of Indian agriculture over last few decades has been the expansion of food grain output from nearly 51 million

tonnes (MT) in 1950-51 to over 295 MT in 2019-20. Similarly, production of horticultural crops has surpassed 300 MT. The Green Revolution proved instrumental in providing the much-needed stimulus to agricultural production in the country to overcome food shortages by augmenting the yield to produce through the provision of HYV seeds, improved irrigation facilities and fertilizers.

But we can't afford to believe we are far enough ahead in the race (production vs demand) to go to sleep like the hare which lost to a tortoise. The population of our country is expected to reach 1.531 billion by 2030-31. To feed this population and another 40 per cent additional for seed, feed, wastage and industrial uses put the projected food grain demand at 326 to 350 MT depending upon various estimates. The demand for edible oils, milk and milk products, meat, egg and fish, vegetables, fruits and sugar has been projected at 24.31, 256.43, 29.45, 316.33, 178.74 and 44.77 MT, respectively in 2030-31 (NITI Aayog, 2018). We have made progress in agriculture, but productivity of major agricultural and horticultural crops is very low in comparison to other countries. After years of Green Revolution and decline in agricultural products, it is obvious that the necessity of employing new and more advanced technologies is more than ever. Our country is still technology deficit. Farmers still operate with traditional implements. Yields per hectare of food grain, fruits and vegetables in our country are far below global averages. Our rice yield is one-third of China's, and about half of Vietnam's and Indonesia's. Similarly, the productivity of pulses and oilseeds can be increased 2.3 to 2.5 times, with attention to seeds, soil health, pest management, crop life savings, irrigation and post-harvest technology.

But the future demands must be achieved with declining per capita availability of land, water and other finite natural resources. There is also a growing realization that previous strategies of generating and promoting technologies have contributed to serious and widespread problems of environmental and agrarian distress. Productivity gains during the 'Green Revolution' era were largely confined to relatively well endowed areas.

Given the wide range of agro-ecological setting and producers, Indian agriculture is faced with a great diversity of needs, opportunities and prospects. Growth needs to be more rapid, more widely distributed and better targeted. These challenges call for more efficient and sustainable use of increasingly scarce water and germplasm resources.

One of the most important technologies is biotechnology which can lead to transgenic plants: that is plants which are 'human-made' and are tailored to meet the desired objective by transfer and expression of the desired type of gene to a target plant. Transgenic crops can offer valuable benefits - increased yields, improved flavor or nutritional quality of foods and reduced use of pesticides. The raging debate over GM crops points to poorly planned use of technology rather than failure of technology. However, as Borlaug had said in 2004 - 'If the naysayers manage to stop agricultural biotechnology they will precipitate the famines'. Presently, approximately 17 million farmers grow GMO crops around the world; most of them are in developing countries. In total, more than 60 countries import or grow GMO, and in 2017, 24 countries (five industrial and 19 developing) planted biotech crops. As of 2017, the top five countries growing GMO in terms of crop areas are the US, Brazil, Argentina, Canada and India. In India, Bt cotton is the only GM crop allowed for commercial cultivation. Virtually all

cotton grown in the country is genetically modified. But India has not yet grown GMO for food. Brinjal is the second most consumed vegetable, after potato, in India. The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) of the Government of India cleared Bt brinjal for commercialization in 2009. But following concerns raised by some scientists and anti-GMO lobbies the Ministry of Environment announced an indefinite moratorium on Bt Brinjal in India. Healthy soil is a key natural resource and crucial for agriculture as it acts as a dynamic living system delivering multiple services. India faces an acute problem of soil erosion. A national database on land degradation prepared the Indian Space Research Organization in 2016 showed that around 120.7 million hectare (mha) or 36.7 per cent of India's total arable and non-arable land suffers from various forms of degradation with water erosion being its chief contributor in 83 mha (68.4 per cent).

An array of resource conservation technologies including zero and reduced tillage, green manuring, crop rotations etc. are available. Zero tillage is used for minimum soil disturbance. This technology allows direct planting without ploughing or soil preparation. Seeding is done directly through surface residues of previous crops using seed drill which helps reduce seed rate and ensure uniform plant stands. Zero tillage reduces the cost of tillage and gives similar or higher yields. Use of hydrogel (a water ab-

sorbing material) in dry land or limited water conditions can improve water use efficiency. Irrigation practices like drip or sprinkler method also show high water use efficiency and save water. For improving nutrient use efficiency, site specific nutrient management can be followed. Right source, right time, right dose and right place (4R) approach of fertilizer application can improve nutrient use efficiency. In India, agriculture is mostly in rainfed areas therefore climate resilient technologies are the need of the hour to enable the farmers to cope with the climate variability.

Smart agriculture or/and precision agriculture is a new attitude in farm management. It involves the integration of advanced technologies into farming practices. It consists of applying inputs (what is needed) when and where they are needed and has become the third wave of modern agriculture (the first was mechanization and the second the green revolution with its genetic modification). Recently, there have been enormous innovations of agricultural production, not only improving productivity, but just as importantly, safeguarding the environment.

Seed sowing at the right place and right amount is very tedious. Effective seeding requires control over two variables: planting seed at the correct depth and appropriate spacing between plants for optimal growth. Precision seeders are available. In future, the existing precision seeders will come together with autonomous tractors and ICT-enabled systems that feed information back to farmers. Feeding crops with nutrients as and when needed to make synergy between nutrient demand and supply under different field crops production system is the solution to manage special variability of nutrients.

Nanotechnology as a new powerful technique can create massive changes in the food and agricultural system. This technology is defined as relating to materials, systems and processes which operate at a scale of 100 nm (one nanometer is equal to one-billionth of a meter) or less. It helps agriculture in many ways. It helps to reduce environmental pollution, to increase agricultural production and its applications include: (1) nanoformulations of agrochemicals for applying pesticides and fertilizers for crop improvement; (2) plant disease diagnosis; (3) postharvest management etc. Moreover, nano sensors and nano-based smart delivery systems could help in efficient use of agricultural natural resources like water, nutrients and chemicals through precision farming.

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Trump's nominee, Amy Coney Barrett's ascension lends a conservative majority to the court. The purpose is clearly to rig all future decisions of the judiciary in favour of the Republican Party. It is what is referred to in common parlance as "packing the court". It goes against the spirit of democratic values. The efforts by Trump to undermine the integrity of the election sys-

tem create conditions for his supporters to reject the results. In some of the most influential quarters of American life, there is great concern about the prospects of an orderly presidential tran-

sition. Democrats also have reason to fear that Barrett's presence will impact the future of Obamacare, which the Trump Administration diluted through neglect and waivers. All this could lead

RTI CONTEMPT

SIR, Apropos your editorial "Right to know" (29 October), I would like to state that I had a bitter experience with the State Information Officer way back in 2005. In connection with a criminal case, I sought information from the State Information Officer who in turn advised the Calcutta State Transport Corporation to provide it to me. But the latter did not comply with the order. Repeated requests to the State Information Commission did not yield the desired results. It is true that the Right to Information Act remains only on the statute book. Neither the Centre nor the state are interested in complying with the Act and the growing apathy is contemptuous as has been rightly mentioned by you.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, 29 October.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

Overlooked front-line heroes amid the pandemic

The delivery services that we enjoy, whether for food or any other product, are so amazingly convenient and fast that "flash delivery" and "bullet delivery" labels are common.

The convenience surely takes a physical and emotional toll, but it is a cost that few of us stop to think about as we bring in our deliveries. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the global community marvelled at the absence of panicked shoppers and hoarding in Korea. The calmness uniquely contrasted with the chaos in many other nations.

We didn't have long queues of anxiety or store shelves stripped bare before lockdowns went into effect. The explanation was our efficient delivery service systems.

We could order and pay for our groceries and nonfood items online, and well within 24 hours the purchases would be placed at our doorsteps without any person-to-person contact required.

Of course, speedy and efficient home deliveries were already a hallmark of Korean consumer culture before the pandemic. City dwellers, in particular, have become addicted to home delivery of groceries and meals, and businesses have raised the service level higher recently with predawn deliveries of food orders.

Ordering your food at 11 p.m. and

H The Korea Herald
getting it brought to your doorstep before dawn means that some people work overnight for your breakfast.

If those workers can sleep during the day to work the midnight shift, and if they ever can make extra cash for the atypical work routine, even braving the risk of infection, you may have fewer reasons to feel uncomfortable. The job may be essential for their survival, after all. They might not be able to feed their families otherwise.

But the working conditions of most delivery service providers, as we find out, are far from ideal. After three delivery drivers died within a month, a reporter from the Hankyoreh newspaper worked a shift at CJ Logistics, one of the largest delivery companies, for which one of the drivers had worked. The reporter accompanied a driver named Kim Do-gyun, 48, all day on Oct. 13.

He wrote: "Mr. Kim left home at 5:55 a.m. and arrived at his workplace, the Nowon Terminal, at 6:35 a.m. He immediately began sorting boxes pouring down on a conveyor belt and gathered the boxes headed to his area. Then he loaded the boxes on his truck, which he completed at 1:47 p.m. No meal or restroom breaks so far. He visited a nearby Chinese restaurant at 1:53 p.m. and emptied a plate of black noodles, his first meal of the day, in eight minutes."

"His area has few tall apartment buildings, instead mostly small multi-family units and studios, which means there are few elevators. He climbed up all of the stairs carrying a stack of packages."

Kim finished his work by 12:45 a.m., having delivered all 430 parcels assigned to him. "He worked nearly 18 hours," the report continued, "walking 27,000 steps over some 20-30 kilometers on that day."

Kim is paid 700 won (62 cents) per delivery. Out of this amount, he pays all of his expenses, including tax, a 10 percent commission to his agent, truck insurance and fuel.

This means he earns 580-600 won per delivery. He isn't eligible for hazard pay, industrial accident insurance, sick leave or any protections in case of work-related accidents or conflicts with his agent or clients. This is because Kim is not a "worker" as defined by the Labor Standards Act. He is an "independent contractor" earning commissions.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Fears exposed

SIR, Apropos the editorial, "Eyes right" (28 October), the Trump years have been ugly, so this may not raise eyebrows. But in confirming Ms Amy Coney Barrett to the bench, after having previously declared that Presidents in their last year in office should not be able to nominate a new judge to the US Supreme Court, the Republican-controlled Senate has effectively reversed its own "Mitch McConnell rule" of 2016. Yet had the "rule"

not been in place, it still would have been presumptuous on the part of the out-going President, who is supposed to be functioning largely in a caretaker role, to

have actually chosen someone to fill the vacancy on the bench. In so doing, Donald Trump has, in fact, exposed his own fears of not making it to office a second time.

Trump's nominee, Amy Coney Barrett's ascension lends a conservative majority to the court. The purpose is clearly to rig all future decisions of the judiciary in favour of the Republican Party. It is what is referred to in common parlance as "packing the court". It goes against the spirit of democratic values. The efforts by Trump to undermine the integrity of the election sys-

tem create conditions for his supporters to reject the results. In some of the most influential quarters of American life, there is great concern about the prospects of an orderly presidential tran-

sition. Democrats also have reason to fear that Barrett's presence will impact the future of Obamacare, which the Trump Administration diluted through neglect and waivers. All this could lead

to significant uncertainty, legal battles, public protests and mayhem, plunging the country into a post-election crisis.

Yours, etc., S S Paul, Nadia, 28 October.

'Covid challenges mental health'

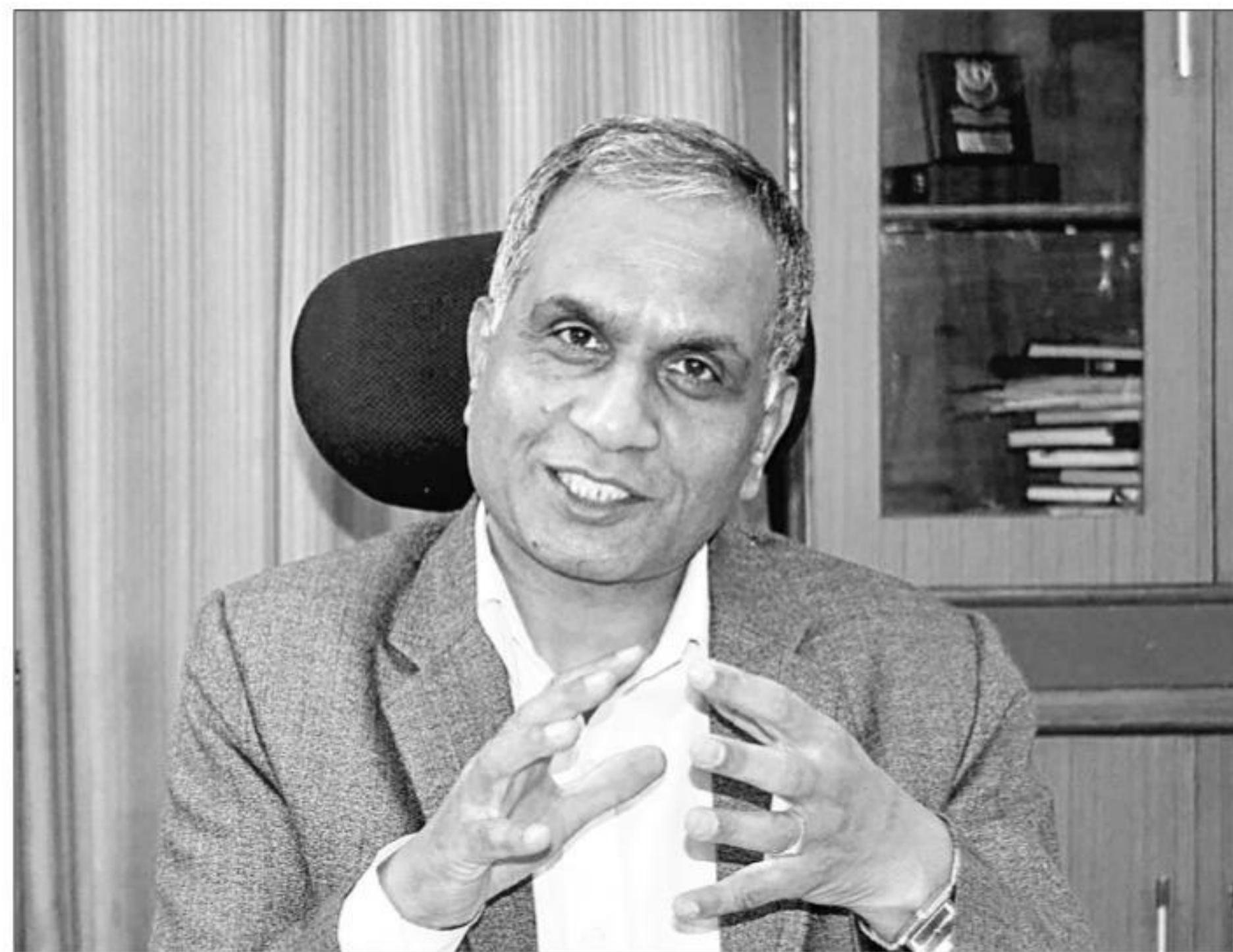
The Himachal Pradesh Mental Health Authority's Chief Executive Officer, **Dr SANJAY PATHAK**, who is also Senior Medical Superintendent at Himachal Hospital for Mental Health and Rehabilitation in Shimla, is a behaviourist with a keen interest in psychology and psychiatry. Since the reconstitution of the Authority two years ago in the wake of the new central Mental Healthcare Act 2017, he has been at the forefront of grappling with key challenges in mental healthcare in HP and addressing them. The Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown have thrown up formidable challenges for mental healthcare, especially given the sharp rise in suicides in the course of this continuing crisis. In an interview with **ARCHANA PHULL**, Dr Pathak touched upon a range of these matters. Excerpts:

Q. Do you think mental health is the focus area of any government?

A. Plainly speaking, mental health has not received as much attention as required all through despite the fact that there can't be any health without mental health. We need serious focus at policy level and all other levels in the government and society to fill the gaps in mental healthcare in the field, especially after the enforcement of a new Act which involves a major shift from the treatment to rights-based approach in mental illness. There has, however, been a lot of emphasis on awareness on mental health and prevention of mental illness through different means. Yet, a lot needs to be done to put the things in place for mental healthcare.

Q. What are the mental health issues amid the changing society and expectations?

A. The modern lifestyle seems to be the breeding ground for mental illness in changing times. The socio-economic factors and individual distress are leading to more anxiety and depression. Generally, the spectrum of anxiety and depression can go up to 10-15 per cent of the population and of major mental illnesses to 1-2 per cent of the population. One out of four people suffer from depression any time during life for different reasons. This may be due to a gap in the expectation and achievement, mainly owing to a



lack of realistic assessment, changing expectation (self-assessment of what it means to be an achiever) or conflicting family situation. The social cues that smoking, alcohol or drugs, particularly in the case of youngsters, are stress busters are increasing the mental health problems. On the whole, it is a continuing process from mental wellness to illness and back.

Q. Do you think a rural state like Himachal also has similar mental health issues?

A. Yes. The world has shrunk into a global village. Mobile connectivity, access to internet and the social media is impacting the behaviour of people in Himachal in the same manner as in any other part of the country or world. The general environment in the hill state of Himachal may be clean, but

the emotional and psychological connectivity with the outer world is the same. The internet has actually given a new temperament and thought process. So the overall stimulants remain the same in the rural state as well. The shift in lifestyle, desires, eating habits — everything is affecting mental health.

Q. What do you think about the rising number of suicides?

A. It's a serious issue. Suicides are increasing across the globe and are the second leading cause of death in the age group between 15-29 years. Behind one completed suicide, there are attempts by 20 persons. Globally, females attempt more suicides, but because of the methods they use, the completed suicide rate is lower in females. As per data, two persons com-

mit suicide in Himachal Pradesh every day. Depression leads to suicidal tendencies. So the coping skills to deal with stress, depression and anxiety play an important role in taking a person out of this situation. More so, a suicidal person is not suicidal every time. They have life instincts like any other normal human being, but they are overwhelmed for a moment and once that moment is handled, a person can be saved. Family, friends and colleagues have a significant role to play as they are the first ones to notice the shift in language, expression and negative state of mind etc and should intervene fast.

Q. What is HP Mental Health Authority doing to prevent suicides?

A. The state is concerned about it. We have recently constituted a panel

of experts, including Dr Dinesh Sharma, a senior psychiatrist from Indira Gandhi Medical College, Shimla and a clinical psychologist, to plan and design strategies for suicide prevention in HP. We have also publicised that anyone can get in touch with us on the hospital or the Authority website or through e-mail to discuss any issue related to mental health illness and seek advice.

Q. The number of suicides during the Covid pandemic has risen in HP? What is your analysis?

A. Covid has certainly thrown up new mental health issues. During the Covid-19 lockdown, the figure of suicides in Himachal Pradesh has shown an increase seemingly due to employment loss and anxiety over getting infected or infecting others. We are conducting a study on the assessment of stress levels in the community due to Covid-19 pandemic, wherein we have picked up three districts of Mandi, Chamba and Shimla. The mobile-based study, which would include messages to around two lakh people in these three of HP's 12 districts, is being done to analyse anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies and its gravity among the community due to Covid-19. The forms are being sent to three age groups — less than 25 years, 26-60 years and above 60 years — considering different parameters.

Q. What are the challenges facing mental healthcare?

A. Social stigma is one of the challenges as people with mental illness don't come out. For instance, depression is a mental illness, but two-thirds of the people suffering from depression do not consult a psychologist or a psychiatrist either due to social stigma or unawareness. The situation in HP is better, but many times patients who get treatment at the Hospital for Mental Health and Rehabilitation are disowned by families. They are then sent to HalfWay Homes (only two in HP) run by the Social Justice and Empowerment Department. In HP, we only have 26 psychiatrists and there is no clinical psychologist. If we have to meet the international standards laid down in the new Mental Healthcare Act, we require huge trained manpower. It's a long way to go.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The declaration just made by Senator Harding, the Republican nominee for the American Presidency, implies a recognition of the principle that the United States shall take its part, if not in the League of Nations, then in some new association which will do the work for which the League was intended. Senator Harding rather hastily pronounces the League of Nations to be "a definite and irredeemable failure," and proposes to start afresh with an effort to construct a world association on the framework of the Hague Tribunal. In such an effort he is willing to take the initiative himself. In the event of his success we should have Senator Harding's Tribunal in place of President Wilson's League, amounting to very much the same thing. For electing purposes no doubt it will suit the Republican party to have a scheme of its own in preference to one adopted from the Democratic side, and on this assumption Senator Harding's declaration is intelligible. Otherwise it is hard to see what improvement could be expected by taking the Hague Tribunal for a model. The League is not such a definite and irredeemable failure as Senator Harding assumes it to be. It has been overshadowed hitherto by the Supreme Council of the Allies and has never yet had a chance of showing what it might do at its full strength. Its organisation, however, is already founded, and it has taken in hand some minor tasks.

NEWS ITEMS

UNIVERSITY SENATE

At a meeting of the Senate of the Calcutta University, to be held on Saturday, the Syndicate will recommend that Dr. Brajendranath Seal be permitted to resign the post of George V Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy, with effect from the 1st of January, 1921, with liberty to take up the appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University; and that Dr. Phanindranath Ghosh, be appointed Professor of Applied Physics on a salary of Rs 500 a month for a term of seven years. Dr. Ghosh is a distinguished graduate of this University. He stood first in the first class in Physical Science at the M.A. Examination in 1908. He was recently approved for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Physics on a thesis on "Colours of Striae in Mica" and other Optical Investigations.

LAHORE MUSLIMS

The Council of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League at a meeting held yesterday accepted the principle of non-cooperation. In the opinion of the council of the league the application of the principle of non-cooperation should in the present circumstances be confined to the renunciation of titles, all honorary posts and privileges conferred by Government, the adoption of Swadeshi goods with an ultimate view to the boycott of British goods, and the refusal to participate in all war loans floated by Government. The council also recommended the same action in view of the failure of Government to carry out the reasonable demands of the Congress sub-committee in the matter of the Punjab disturbances.

COCOANUT DAY IN BOMBAY

Seven Hindus were trampled to death and eleven others seriously injured yesterday in the crowd that gathered to observe the coconut day. An unusually tremendous crowd of Hindus visited the seashore yesterday afternoon, and the rush at the over-bridges and level crossing leading up to the Kennedy seaface was exceptionally heavy. At one of the bridges crossing the railway lines at Thakurdwar there was a regular stampede, which resulted in a number of people being trodden under foot. The result was a tragedy. Two out of the injured men are in a precarious condition.

NORTH BENGAL RAIYATS

The North Bengal Raiyat Conference met today for the second time at Rungpur. Resolutions praying for the amendment of the Bengal Tenancy Act in order to give sole right and possession of the land to the cultivators, right to the tenants to cut trees grown by the cultivators, and make the extortions of money from tenants as abmaks and mathots, a cognisable offence, etc., were unanimously passed. Nearly six thousand raiyats were present. The speakers urged the audience to give their votes to the friends and sympathisers of the raiyats.

Pre-partition feminists can show the way

RAFIA ZAKARIA

Such is the weight of colonial and post-colonial erasure that the girls and women living in Pakistan today have very little idea about the very early feminists who have come before them. Current nationalist intoxications wish to divide all things and everything along the lines of a border drawn by the British and incongruous to the actual groupings of the subcontinent's multitudinous identities. There are persistent efforts, on both the Indian and Pakistani sides, to read current divisions and delusions in the historical past. The consequence has been a history full of holes, large omissions and boisterous erasures where the stories of people should be.

Given that India and Pakistan and Bangladesh are all patriarchal societies, it follows that the histories of these lands that have been resuscitated from the past, and presented to populations that do not have much of an idea of the past, have been male histories. There are many male heroes and leaders, poets and writers, men who gave memorable speeches and men who stood up to the British; the stories of women are harder to find.

Women, however, were present and they were busy. In her essay 'Feminist Inheritances and Foremothers: The Beginnings of Feminism in Modern India', the historian Padma Anagol turns her attention to the women of Maharashtra in India. It is fascinating to consider these intrepid women of the late 1800s who refused to bow to the patriarchal societies in which they found themselves. It is notable that



their activities for reform took place in the context of severe criticism from their Western rulers, who saw India as backward and uncivilised. Some of the struggles took place under the larger umbrella of social reform movements in which individuals of all religions participated and engaged. In Anagol's view, it is these reform societies that were the precursors of contemporary feminisms that exist in the subcontinent today.

In the late 1930s, a woman named Lakshmi Bai Tilak became one of the first Indian women to write her autobiography. The book, which tells the story of

Tilak's life, includes the story of her grandfather who was hanged in 1857 owing to his participation in the uprising against the British. Born in 1868, she was married off at an early age to a Marathi-language poet who was subject to many whims and eccentricities and often just got up and left, leaving his family behind. It is quite likely that it was owing to these events that Tilak advocated for women's financial and economic independence. In an effort to do just this, she began training as a nurse, an endeavour she sadly had to abandon owing to family responsibilities.

Similarly spirited was Rakhambai Raut, a woman who had been married early, but who refused to leave her father's home to live with her husband. The husband sued in court when Rakhambai was 19 years old. She still refused to join him, pointing out his lack of education and his dishonest lifestyle. The British judge ruled in favour of Rakhambai, saying that she did not have to go and live with her husband because the marriage had been arranged when she was a minor and had never been consummated. The decision caused a huge outcry in India, where marriages of minors were often arranged and where asking for the consent of the parties was unheard of. Hindus were particularly incensed by the judge's application of these concepts of consent and consummation because they imagined marriage as a sacrament for eternity rather than a contract lasting a single life.

The tumult from this case and the continuing agitation by women against abuse, child marriage and other cultural and religious customs that demeaned their existence led to vehement debates in the local press across India. Men and religious figures felt that women had become very rebellious and had overstepped their boundaries. Women on the other hand felt that these issues had remained in the dark for a long time and it was time there was public debate on them.

In a similar manner to the feminists of today, those very early feminists were accused of being puppets of the British. It was the emergence of the nationalist Quit India movement

against the British that ended up uniting reform-minded men and women. Ruttie Jinnah, the wife of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was also said to have been active in these movements.

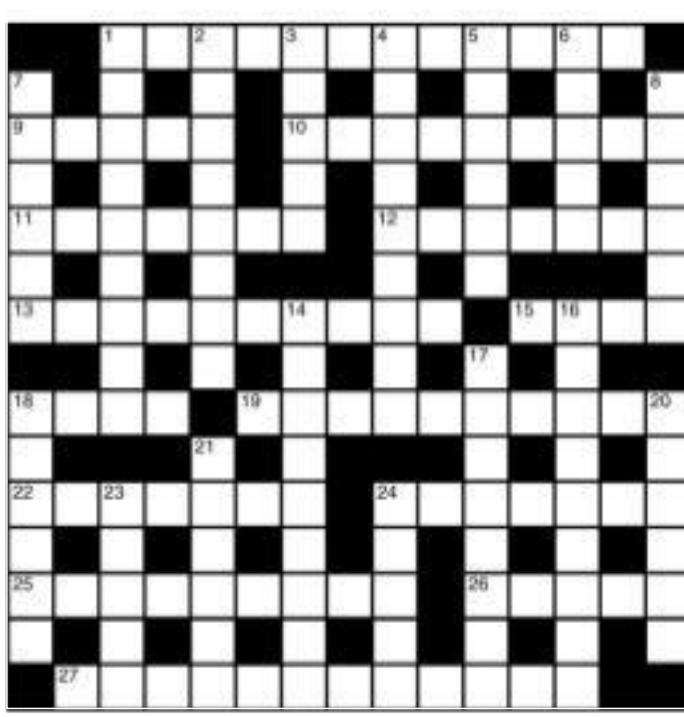
British women who were busy advocating for the right to vote in Britain were eager to have Indian women join their fight for suffrage. They were startled when many Indian feminists from the time expressed no interest in getting the right to vote, alleging that they did not wish to be equal to Indian men because both the men and they would still be under the thumb of the British rulers. When we are free, they said, we will have the right to vote in our free nations. This was correct; when India and Pakistan were created in 1947, Indian and Pakistani women had the right to vote alongside the men.

The blurring of boundaries between nationalism and feminist reform has proven to be a burden. In both India and Pakistan, women who should be feminists are instead subsumed into expressions of 'patriotism' that are based on intellectual and religious obscurantism. They are eager to wave flags but not hold up banners and to denounce those women who do organise and march as 'bad' women. It is an old recipe of divide and rule, of creating useless definitions where a 'good' woman is just one who kowtows to the toxic masculinity of the state and domestic violence. One wishes that the sheer unoriginality of the critiques of women who wish to control their own would convince women to discard theme. If women in the 1800s could rebel, then so can the women of 2020.

Dawn/ANN.

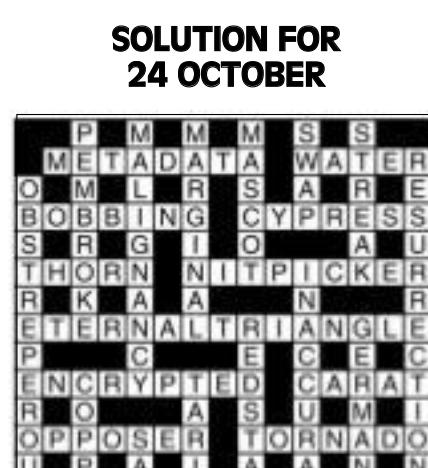
NO 28121

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

SOLUTION FOR
24 OCTOBER



ACROSS

- 1 Frightful collection of presents accepted by good party members (5,7)
- 9 Artist bringing in name for mass performance piece (5)
- 10 Amid commotion, doctor slayed sloth? (6,3)
- 11 Bank takes in stray hound (7)
- 12 Rider Haggard's work reflected island author (7)
- 13 Man supremo, the creator of Man (10)
- 15 Inch of grass with section snipped (4)
- 18 Creature expert packs special item for cold climates (4)
- 19 Keeper in grounds stopped by a beast's cry (4,6)
- 22 Protests spread, our opium regularly being returned (7)
- 24 Stop filming after English town loses last crop (4,3)
- 25 Drunk on about work in circus feature (9)
- 26 Bolt conforming to a certain standard (5)
- 27 12's novel outspoken genius needing information in the first instance (12)

DOWN

- 1 Monster trap tiny animal discovered (9)
- 2 Hammer Studio earlier evacuated stranger (8)
- 3 House that you dared to enter finally (5)
- 4 Run fluids into vessel (urn safest perhaps) (9)
- 5 Help judge to cross lounge (6)
- 6 Painter might use this
- 7 Side of shoe some jumping whippets nip (6)
- 8 Catalyst 'Z' in Yemen reprocessed (6)
- 14 Monument captain's installed on pitch (9)
- 16 Figure of lost bird circling cage around noon (9)
- 17 Bony parts of crown broken by girl (8)
- 18 Containers store skulls centrally in chambers (6)
- 20 Score absent from bottom of table (6)
- 21 Secure mesh mounted below nocturnal thing (6)
- 23 Feeling of chilliness initially from repellent assistant (5)
- 24 Strategic diversion possibly caught Rudolf in WWII (5)

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

K V SUBRAMANIAN
CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISER

THUMBNAILS

Sebi fines Titan employee: The Securities and Exchange Board of India has imposed a fine of Rs 2 lakh on an employee of Titan Company for violating insider trading norms back in 2018. Theekevedu B Alexander (noticee) was a designated employee of the company and had traded on two trading days during the period from 23 September to 12 November 2018 ~ a period during which the trading window was closed. Besides, his wife Sarina Biju Alexander executed trades during closure of the trading window. PTI

ITR filing deadline: The finance ministry has notified the extended due date for filing income tax returns (ITR) for financial year 2019-20. While the deadline for filing ITR by individual taxpayers has been extended by a month till 31 December, the due date for those taxpayers whose accounts need to be audited has been extended to 31 January 2021. PTI

Life insurance: Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance has launched a new plan ~ Invest4G ~ a unit-linked individual life insurance savings plan which can be customised as per the goals and changing requirements of the customer. The plan offers three options to the customers ~ life option, care option and century option. Life option ensures financial protection to a family in case of the customer's unfortunate demise. Care option provides life coverage along with premium funding benefit and century option is a whole-life option available for the policyholder till the age of 100 years, said a Press release. SNS

Celica project: Kolkata-based Celica Group announced the launch of its luxury residential project Celica Residency at Ballygunge in Kolkata. This marks the organisation's return to real estate development after almost two decades. The residential property is being developed under the group's real estate development arm Celica Properties, said a Press release from the company. SNS

Samsung e-catalogue: Samsung has announced the launch of an interactive e-catalogue for its diverse portfolio of products aimed at providing a safe and enhanced buying experience for consumers. It is also a step towards the company contributing to the environment by reducing usage of printed brochures, said a Press release. SNS

E-commerce: Minister of state for commerce Som Parkash on Friday said the government will not spare any efforts in maintaining a level-playing field in e-commerce and stressed that violation of government policy "will not be tolerated any more". PTI

Indian Oil's net profit jumps 11-fold to ₹6,227 crore in Q2

Profit rises due to higher inventory and foreign exchange gains and better refinery margins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

REPORT CARD

► IOC earned \$8.62 on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel in the second quarter of the current fiscal compared with \$1.28 in the same quarter last fiscal.
► The company gained Rs 7,400 crore on using low-priced crude oil

it procured during May and June to convert into petroleum products such as petrol and diesel in Q2. This inventory gain compared to an inventory loss of Rs 1,807 crore in Q2 of fiscal 2019-20.

"The profit was up due to higher inventory and foreign exchange gains and better refinery margins," he said.

The company earned \$8.62 on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel in the second quarter of the current financial year (2020-21), compared with a gross refining margin of \$1.28 in July-September 2019.

IOC gained Rs 7,400 crore on using low-priced crude oil

procured during May and June to convert into petroleum products in Q2.

► IOC also had a foreign exchange gain of Rs 672 crore in the July-September quarter as compared to a loss of Rs 1,135 crore a year ago.



IOC also had a foreign exchange gain of Rs 672 crore in the July-September quarter as compared to a loss of Rs 1,135 crore a year ago.

Vaidya said the fuel demand, which had nearly halved following the coronavirus lockdown, is fast returning to normal.

Petrol demand is already at a pre-Covid-19 level, while diesel is just 0.5 per cent lower than normal. "We expect the two transportation fuels to come back to pre-Covid-19 levels within a month," he said.

During October, petrol sales rose by 3.34 per cent when compared to the same month of last year, while diesel demand was 0.5 per cent lower year-on-year.

However, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) demand continues to be 48-50 per cent of the pre-Covid-19 levels as full services are yet to start. "Other than that the situation is looking better," he said. With the rising fuel demand, refinery run rate or capacity utilisation has also improved.

"Refinery runs had fallen to 49 per cent (of the capacity) in April" as the nationwide lockdown eroded demand, he said.

said.

With a gradual pick-up in demand, the run rate increased to 67 per cent in May and to 89 per cent in June. However due to local lockdowns in several states, the demand fell and the refinery run rates were reduced to 61 per cent in August, which picked up to 77 per cent in the following month and they are now at 94 per cent.

"We expect refinery runs to reach 100 per cent in a couple of months," he said.

Fuel sales at 17.7 million tons in July-September were 16 per cent higher than the preceding quarter but were 12 per cent lower than 20.17 million tons of products sold in July-September 2019.

IOC's refineries processed almost 14 million tons of crude oil in the second quarter, up from about 13 million tons in April-June but lower than 17.5 million tons a year back.

Revenue from operations was lower at Rs 1.15 lakh crore in July-September as compared to Rs 1.32 lakh crore a year back.

business was almost flat at Rs 39,199 crore and EBITDA was 14 per cent lower at Rs 2,009 crore.

Petrochemicals revenue fell by 23 per cent to Rs 29,665 crore and pre-tax profit dropped 33 per cent to Rs 5,964 crore.

Refining EBITA almost halved to Rs 3,002 crore as revenue slumped 36 per cent.

The firm's twin refineries earned \$5.7 per barrel on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel.

The profit in July-September quarter was lower sequentially as well, as the April-June earning of Rs 13,248 crore included one-time gain of Rs 7,629 crore from sale of 49 per cent stake in Petro retailing business to BP.

The company has sold minority's stake in the retail and telecom businesses to investors such as Silver Lake and KKR. It raised Rs 1.52 lakh crore from sale of stake in Jio Platforms and another Rs 37,100 crore from the sale of an 8.48 per cent stake in its retail unit.

The company had a gross debt of Rs 279,251 crore as of 30 September 2020, down from Rs 336,294 crore in the previous quarter.

RIL Q2 net drops 15% on weak oil business

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd today reported a 15 per cent drop in second quarter net profit after a slump in core oil and chemicals business dragged down continued good showing in consumer-facing verticals such as telecom.

Net profit attributable to owners at Rs 9,567 crore in July-September compared with Rs 11,262 crore a year back, Reliance said in a stock exchange filing.

The oil-to-telecom-to-retail conglomerate saw consumer-facing units doing well amid the lockdown easing, but the core business continued to face pressure.

The firm's net addition of 7.3 million subscribers and per-user revenue rising to Rs 145 helped the telecom business soar.

Digital services, which includes the telecom arm Jio, saw pre-tax profit surge by 53 per cent to Rs 8,345 crore as revenues soared by more than one-third.

With markets gradually opening up in the second quarter after a strict lockdown, revenue from the retail

towards the end of the session.

"Volatility in markets is expected to persist in coming week as well led by uncertainty over global economy and US presidential election. However, better corporate earnings so far and improvements in high frequency key economic indicators are expected to offer support to domestic equities," said Arjun Yash Mahajan, head institutional business at Reliance Securities.

BSE telecom, auto, bankex, FMCG, finance and teck indices fell as much as 2.37 per cent, while realty, metal, energy, oil & gas, and power closed in the green.

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended the day with significant losses. Stock exchanges in the Europe were also trading on a negative note as fresh lockdowns in France, Germany and other countries dented risk sentiment.

Production-linked incentives for more sectors: Niti Aayog

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

The government will introduce the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for more sectors to boost domestic manufacturing, Niti Aayog vice-chairman Rajiv Kumar said.

Addressing a virtual event organised by industry body Ficci, Kumar also highlighted the government's efforts to push electric mobility or e-mobility in the country.

He said: "85 per cent of vehicles on the street are two- and three-wheelers and we want to shift them to electric mobility going forward. We have finalised standard of charging for two- and three-wheelers," he said.

On opportunities and facilities for investors, Kumar

said: "We will, while attracting FDI, also repose our faith and trust in those who have already invested in India. And we want to recognise them by giving much better logistics, much better infrastructure," he said.

For this reason, "we have brought out what is called PLI scheme which will be valid for about 9-10 sectors very soon," Kumar added.

The government has already introduced the PLI scheme for pharmaceutical, medical devices, mobile phones and electronic manufacturing companies. It is now considering to extend the scheme to other sectors as well.

The Niti Aayog vice-chairman, however, did not specify which sectors might be made eligible for the incentives.

The objective of the PLI scheme is to incentivise investors in this country to put up globally comparable capacity in scale and competitiveness," he said.

India will pursue self-reliance and give domestic entrepreneurs the best possible environment to go forward while ensuring that the country remains open for investors, he said.

Noting that the government has taken Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity, Kumar said: "We have rationalised the labour laws, we have liberated our farmers, we have liberalised the FDI scheme."

He stressed on the need to increase the share of trade in India's gross domestic product (GDP).

Stock indices fall on weak global cues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 30 OCTOBER

VOLATILITY TO PERSIST

The Sensex and the Nifty retreated for the third session on the trot today amid continued weakness in global markets due to rising Covid-19 cases in Europe and uncertainty ahead of US elections.

After gyrating 746 points during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 135.78 points or 0.34 per cent lower at 39,614.07 points. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 28.40 points or 0.24 per cent to 11,642.40 points.

Bharti Airtel was the top loser among the Sensex constituents, shedding 3.82 per cent, followed by Maruti Suzuki, HUL, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, Kotak Bank and Bajaj Auto. On the other hand, Tata Steel, NTPC, Sun Pharma, Nestle India, TCS, Tech Mahindra and ONGC were among the main gainers, climbing up

to 2.27 per cent. Market heavy-weight Reliance Industries rose 1.37 per cent ahead of its results.

During the week, the Sensex tumbled 1,071.43 points or 2.63 per cent, while the Nifty sank 287.95 points or 2.41 per cent.

"Concerns over prospects

of global economic recovery due to resurgence of Covid-19 cases in various nations continued to weigh on investors' sentiments as domestic equities declined for third consecutive day. Financials and auto were the major drags today, while other key sectoral indices staged a recovery

IndusInd Bank profit falls 53% to ₹647 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

IndusInd Bank today reported over 53 per cent decline in its standalone net profit to Rs 647.04 crore in the three months ended September.

The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 1,383.37 crore in the year-ago period.

On the stand-alone basis, total income fell to Rs 8,731.05 crore in the second quarter of the current financial year. In the same period of a year ago, it stood at Rs 8,877.02 crore, IndusInd Bank said in a regulatory filing.

The bank's gross non-performing assets (NPAs) slightly increased to 2.21 per cent of the gross advances as of 30 September 2020 from 2.19 per cent in the year-ago period.

In value terms, the gross

No sugar export subsidy likely in 2020-21

NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

The government is currently not considering an extension of sugar export subsidies for the 2020-21 season that commenced this month in view of stable international sugar prices, food and commerce minister Piyush Goyal said.

"Sugar (export) subsidy is currently not under consideration because international prices are stable. If there is any requirement, the government will examine it at an appropriate time," Goyal said.

He was replying to a query if the government has plans to extend sugar export subsidies for the third year in a row. The minister also mentioned that domestic sugar prices are ruling stable at Rs 40 per kg, a level that covers the cost of production for sugar mills.

Axis Bank rejigs deal with Max Life on RBI advice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

Axis Bank today said the Reserve Bank has not allowed it to directly acquire 17 per cent stake in Max Life Insurance and the lender will now purchase shares in the life insurer along with its subsidiaries.

Axis Bank and its entities have revised the agreement with Max Financial, the promoter of Max Life, to acquire 19.002 per cent stake in the insurance firm, the lender said in a regulatory filing.

In late August this year, Axis Bank entered into a definitive agreement with Max Financial Services Ltd (Max Financial) for the direct acquisition of 17.002 per cent equity share capital of Max Life Insurance Company Ltd (Max Life) by the lender.

"In response to Axis Bank's

application to the Reserve Bank of India or directly acquiring 17.002 per cent of the equity share capital of Max Life, the Reserve Bank of India has advised Axis Bank that the application for direct acquisition of 17.002 per cent has not been considered," it said in a regulatory filing.

Axis Bank has been advised to be guided by the relevant regulations of RBI, it added.

"Axis Bank and its subsidiaries - Axis Capital Ltd and Axis Securities Ltd (together Axis Entities) have agreed to enter into revised agreements with Max Financial for acquisition of up to 19.002 per cent of the equity share capital of Max Life (revised agreements)," it filing said.

The revised agreements will supersede the previous agreements entered into between the parties.

The transaction is subject to conditions precedent, including regulatory approvals, the lender added further.

Apple puts up good show in India in Sep quarter

NEW DELHI, 30 OCTOBER

Tech giant Apple has posted a record September quarter revenue of \$64.7 billion, with strong performance across markets including India.

"Geographically, we set September quarter records in the Americas, Europe and Rest of Asia Pacific. We also set a September quarter record in India, thanks in part to a very strong reception to this quarter's launch of our online store in the country," Apple CEO Tim Cook said in an earnings call.

In September, Apple launched its first online store in India - a market that is dominated by Android smartphones. Apple, which competes in the premium smartphone segment in India with players like Samsung and OnePlus, has been aggressively ramping up its presence in the Indian market.

The US-based company, in collaboration with partners like Wistron and Foxconn, had recently started assembling iPhone 11 in India.

According to research firm Canalys, the tech giant's renewed focus on India paid off with a double-digit growth to nearly 8,00,000 units in the region during the July-September 2020 quarter.

A Counterpoint report had noted that Apple led the premium segment (over Rs 30,000) surpassing OnePlus even before its flagship launch, driven by strong demand for its iPhone SE 2020 and the iPhone 11. Its latest offering, iPhone 12 will further strengthen its position in the December quarter, it had noted.

India's smartphone shipments in the premium segment (priced above Rs 30,000) was one of the least affected segments.



The BJP is trying to politicise a religious event.

TMC MP SAUGATA ROY

AFTER BJP ORGANISED ITS MAIDEN LAXMI PUJA IN BENGAL

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER 2020

Stakes high for BJP in Balasore by-poll

Union Min Pradhan dubs BJD govt 'arrogant & incompetent'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 OCTOBER:

The BJP is battling hard to retain the Balasore assembly seat bywithstanding an all out onslaught by the ruling BJD while at Tirtol, the second seat for which bye-polls are being held, it is fighting to overcome the odds and cause an upset win.

The high voltage campaign by the major political parties has made COVID 19 guidelines and EC rules a sick joke. Social distancing, masks, limitation on numbers at meetings, door to door campaigns etc are brazenly flouted.

The stakes are high for the BJP Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Pratap Sarangi as they hit the campaign to hold on to the Balasore seat that the party had won a year ago.

Pradhan has been listing out schemes of the central government and claiming that "Modiji has provided over Rs 22,500 crore to Odisha during the pandemic.

He accused the BJD government of being "incompetent, corrupt and insensitive". CM Naveen Patnaik has been in power for 22 years now and there is not much development in these areas, nor has the central funds been utilised properly, he charged today at

Tirtol.

Arrogance of power will lead to the defeat of the BJD as people have made up their minds to strengthen the hands of PM Narendra Modi, he claimed.

He also wanted to know why the BJD government has not opened religious places of worship in the state when it has been done across the country.

The BJD has, as per its strategy, deployed Ministers and MLAs in each and every area seeking votes in the name of CM Naveen Patnaik and his developmental schemes.

The Congress is clearly lagging behind in the campaign in both the seats, partly due to resource constraint and a rather demoralised workforce. The party has been alleging that the BJD and BJP are together in Delhi and are only putting up a mock fight here in the state. Failures of the centre and state in controlling rising prices of essentials, flood control, failure in COVID management issues have been raised by the Congress.

Results to the two seats will not make any big numerical difference as the BJD has only 26 MLAs (as against its Mission 120 campaign in 2019) in the 147 member Odisha Assembly. The ruling BJD has 112 while the Congress a poor third at just 9 seats.

But the claims of the BJP growing in the state and the

cloud and influence of Sarangi and Pradhan are at stake.

Interestingly, both the BJD and BJP are banking on 'sympathy factor' and 'disgruntled elements' at Balasore as well as Tirtol.

At Balasore, the BJP has fielded Manas Dutta, son of the late M M Dutta while at Tirtol the BJD has made Bijay Shankar Das, son of late Bishnu Das, the candidate to garner sympathy votes.

The BJD hopes to cash in on the disgruntled BJD workers at Balasore who are aggrieved over denial of ticket to former MP R K Jena or his wife.

In the 2019 elections the BJD had won the Balasore seat largely due to the urban votes (it took a lead of over 10,000 votes in the municipal area), while the BJD had done well in the rural pockets.

This time around the BJD has concentrated on the urban votes and has gained ground causing worry among the BJD workforce. It has also reportedly gained over a section of the Congress.

At Tirtol, the BJD is banking on the sympathy factor and its organisational network. Plus it has managed to win over discontented BJD workers who are angry that the party had chosen a person Rajkishore Behera who had left the Congress barely a fortnight before elections.

Antibody among 50% people in Bhubaneswar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 OCTOBER:

Nearly half of the population in the urban areas of Bhubaneswar have developed COVID-19 antibodies.

The serological survey conducted by the Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), found approximately 50% of people had contracted the virus, recovered and developed antibodies.

"The latest findings of a serological survey conducted from 16-18 October are quite encouraging in comparison to two similar surveys conducted in Bhubaneswar in the past. Of the 1403 samples collected randomly from 25 wards/clusters,

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 OCTOBER:

Very few cases of COVID 19 reinfection have been found in Odisha, said Ajay Parida, director, Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) here.

He said during the sam-

ple testing of some COVID-19 recovered patients at the institute's laboratory, 3 to 4 of them were found to be reinfected with the disease. However, the rate of re-infection is very low, he added.

He stated that a study is underway to ascertain the

causes of re-infection.

Parida said there were apprehensions that cases will rise during the Durga Puja festivities, but it has not happened in the state as the present average of daily new cases continues to be around 1500.

Meanwhile Bhubaneswar on Friday recorded a high of almost 79% local contact cases while the single-day recoveries breached the number of new infections with 237 recuperating from the disease as against 87 new infections detected during the past 24 hours.

virus.

Meanwhile Bhubaneswar on Friday recorded a high of almost 79% local contact cases while the single-day recoveries breached the number of new infections with 237 recuperating from the disease as against 87 new infections detected during the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile the virus case-load in Bhubaneswar, largest urban conglomerate of the State, surpassed 29,000-mark to reach at 29,072 with the latest below-100 single day spike.

Of the fresh infections, 68 were local contact infections while the remaining 19 cases were sourced from quarantine centres.

Very few cases of reinfection in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 OCTOBER:

The active coronavirus cases in Odisha is dipping on a daily basis with the number of fresh cases as well as that of active patients coming down.

Odisha currently has 15,247 active cases. On Friday 1,547 new COVID cases and 11 deaths were reported. The COVID 19 death toll in the state is 1308.

Of the 1547 new cases, 891 were reported in quarantine centres, while 656 infections were detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, reported the highest number of new cases at 159, followed by Cuttack (98) and Jagatsinghpur (89).

The state has so far tested 45,08,065 samples for COVID-19, including 44,506 on Thursday while the positivity rate stood at 3.47 percent in the past 24 hours.

Despite the spike in deaths, the fatality rate of 0.45 percent in Odisha. The recovery rate is 94.24 percent.

The pandemic's growth rate in October is almost 22 percent as against a 49 percent growth last month.

The antibody prevalence among the tested people stood more than 60% in two urban wards of the city. Thus things are apparently improving in Bhubaneswar, she said.

What remains unexplained is the international studies

that have questioned serosurvey co-relation to COVID 19.

A person infected with any other virus would also develop antibodies. General serosurvey does not distinguish between antibodies related to coronavirus and any other



Election campaign peaked in Balasore and Tirtol. COVID 19 norms, EC guidelines were violated with impunity and yet no action taken. Social distancing, restriction on number of people at meetings, door to door campaigns, masks etc were violated by all political parties.

SNS

6,000 schools in Odisha to be shut

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 OCTOBER:

Plagued by abysmally low student strength and steady rate of dropout, around 6,000 government-run primary and upper schools in Odisha are facing the threat of closure.

The schools with student strength less than 20 will be shut and the students from these schools will be enrolled in the nearby

schools. Nearly 8,000 schools spread across 27 districts have been earmarked for closure after scrutiny.

A notification by the state school and mass education department has been issued in this regard asking the concerned District Education Officers to initiate steps for the closure of such institutions.

Due to poor enrolment of students, the government had initiated similar steps

in the past years. Currently the state has around 58,000 primary and upper primary government schools with nearly 5,000 teachers' post at the elementary level lying vacant.

However the shutting down of schools has reportedly failed to better the state of affairs in the government schools with private schools attracting the parents for their wards' admission.

Apart from keeping tabs on the marine animals' migrant

Odisha doctor selected for WHO Infomedic course

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SAMBALPUR, 30 OCTOBER:

Dr Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, senior resident of VSSIMSR has been selected for the WHO Infomedic Management Course.

The training will be given by WHO in collaboration with CDC - USA. Dr Mishra is among 200 participants selected globally and among

10 contestants from India.

The training will encompass both global and regional-specific topics in the infomedic and health misinformation.

The objective of this programme is to build a curriculum and apply it in delivering a training of the first cohort of cross-disciplinary infomedic managers.

Man held for killing 12 yr old

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DHENKANAL, 30 OCTOBER:

Motanga police arrested one Jagan Jena (24) on charges of murdering a 12 year old girl at her house.

The girl was alone at home as her parents had gone to the hospital and her brother was playing outside the house on 27 October. The accused Jena had absconded after the incident.

SDPO Harsha Mishra said the motive is yet to be ascertained.

IPL betting racket busted

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 OCTOBER:

With the arrest of two persons, the State Police on Friday claimed to have busted an Indian Premier League (IPL) betting racket in Berhampur city.

On a tipoff, the racketeers identified as Lali Achary and Prasant Subudhi were apprehended from a hotel in the city and Rs 33.61 lakh cash, computers, laptops and mobile phones were seized

from them, police said.

"The duo was operating as agents of a racket having networks across the country. They used to receive bets on IPL matches in the form of cash", said Satyabrata Bhoi, the Deputy Inspector General of police (southern range).

The arrested persons who have confessed to the crime were operating as commission agents of an unlawful IPL betting racket with pan-India network.

Odisha seeks satellite surveillance during mass nesting of Olive Ridley Turtles

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 OCTOBER:

Odisha government has sought for satellite imagery surveillance of endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles in view of the annual nesting season of these delicate marine creatures.

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has been called upon to undertake a project for the satellite monitoring of Olive turtles, who turn up in millions for mass nesting along Odisha coast.

Gahirmatha beach off Bay of Bengal coast in Kendrapara district is incidentally acclaimed as World's largest-known nesting ground of these animals. Apart from Gahirmatha, these threatened aquatic animals turn up at Rushikulya river mouth and Devi river mouth for mass nesting, said senior officials who attended the high-powered meeting on turtle conservation at Lok Seva Bhawan here yesterday.

Earlier WII had taken up the tagging and platform trans-

mitter terminals projects for studying the migration path of olive turtles.

These sea turtles are known to migrate thousands of kilometers between their nesting beaches and feeding grounds.

The tagging helped in studying the turtle's migratory route and areas of foraging, said forest officials adding that the PTT fitted turtles had been found to have migrated south towards Sri Lanka.

Apart from keeping tabs on the marine animals' migrant



behavior, the satellite observation will also lend support to the annual turtle patrolling drives, the officials added.

In order to ensure the safety of the breeding animals, the government will clamp a ban on fishing activities within 20 km of the coast for seven months from November 1 as the turtles perish in larger numbers either by getting caught in fishing nets or hit by fishing trawler propellers.

It will be a multi-layered patrolling exercise involving the

forest, fisheries, marine police besides the coast guard personnel. To ensure effective patrolling, 61 on-shore camps and five off-shore camps are being set up.

The Interim Test Range, DRDO, Dhamra Port, Gopalpur Port and Paradip Port authorities were requested to follow the black-out and light dimming practices to save the turtles from possible distraction during breeding and mass nesting.

Around 10,666 fisherman families will be affected following

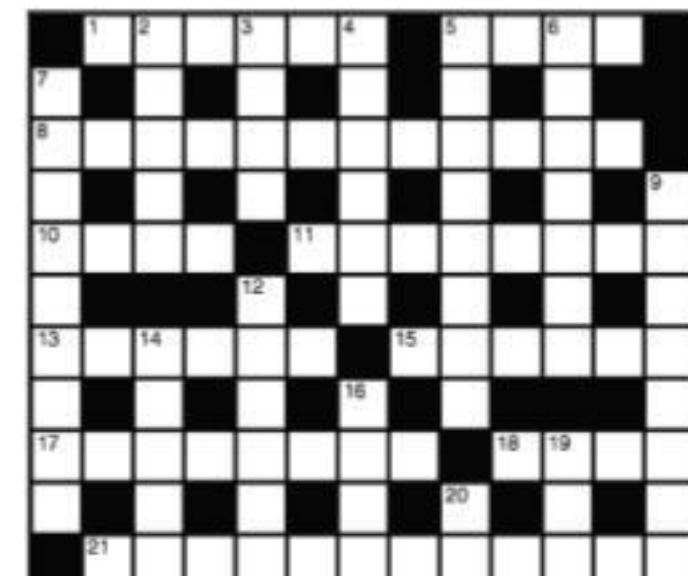
the fishing ban. To compensate the loss of income avenues, the state government has decided to extend livelihood assistance of Rs 7,500 to the affected fishermen families.

Around 7.30 lakh Olive Ridley turtles had turned up for their annual sojourn for mass nesting in the 2019-20 nesting season.

Hatchlings emerge from these eggs after 45-60 days. It is a rare natural phenomenon where the babies grow without their mother.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Whirny (6)	2 Motionless (5)
5 Prophet (4)	3 Toy flown in the wind (4)
8 Hair removal process (12)	4 Callow recruit (6)
10 Betting system (4)	5 Window in a ceiling (8)
11 Completed (8)	6 Descriptive name (7)
13 Pill (6)	7 Confidence (9)
15 Bleach, blanch (6)	9 Scottish city (9)
17 Scalp problem (8)	12 Vigorously (8)
18 spiral-horned antelope (4)	14 Wailing female spirit (7)
21 Having cigarette after cigarette (5-7)	16 Compensate for (6)
22 Attractive (4)	19 Join together (5)
23 Passageway (6)	20 Midday (4)

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker





The election rallies of Donald Trump are super-spreader events

DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE JOE BIDEN

QUESTIONING THE US PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES POSED BY THE PANDEMIC

World

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	26 H
HONG KONG	23	21 H
TOKYO	19	10 CL
LONDON	16	11 R
DUBAI	33	21 S
SAN FRANCISCO	21	11 CL
NEW YORK	9	6 S
MOSCOW	8	03 CL

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

THUMBNAILS



Theo Henley picks a pumpkin at the first pumpkin market at Covent Garden in London on Friday. AFP

Poland abortion protest: Women's rights organisers are preparing for what they say will be the largest protest so far in over a week of mass nationwide street demonstrations in Poland triggered by a court ruling banning abortions of congenitally damaged fetuses.

AFP

Walmart removes guns: Walmart says it has removed ammunition and firearms from displays at its US stores, citing civil unrest in some areas. The nation's largest retailer, based in Arkansas, sells firearms in about half of its 4,700 stores.

AP

Vietnam typhoon: The most powerful typhoon to hit Vietnam in 20 years blew away on Thursday after setting off landslides, knocking out power to 1.7 million people and killing 35 people.

AP

Ransomware assault threatens US health care system: FBI

BOSTON, 30 OCTOBER

Federal agencies warned that cybercriminals could unleash a wave of data-scrambling extortion attempts against the US health care system, an effort that, if successful, could paralyse hospital information systems just as nationwide cases of Covid-19 are spiking.

In a joint alert on Wednesday, the FBI and two federal agencies said they had credible information of an increased and imminent cybercrime threat to US hospitals and health care providers. The alert said malicious groups are targeting the sector with attacks aiming for data theft and disruption of healthcare services. "The impact of the expected attack wave, however, is difficult to assess."

It involves a particular strain of ransomware, which scrambles a target's data into gibberish until they pay up. Previous such attacks on health care facilities have impeded care and, in one case in Germany, led to the death of a patient. But such consequences are still rare.

The federal warning itself could help stave off the worst consequences, either by leading hospitals to take additional precautions or by expanding efforts to knock down the systems cyber-criminals use to launch such attacks.

The offensive coincides with the US presidential election, although there is no immediate indication the cybercriminals involved are motivated by anything but profit.

The federal alert was co-authored by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Independent security experts say the ransomware, called Ryuk, has already impacted at least five US hospitals this week and could potentially affect hundreds more. Four health care institutions have been reported hit by ransomware so far this week.

AP

New arrest after French church attack, security tightened

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NICE, FRANCE, 30 OCTOBER

The investigation into a gruesome attack by a Tunisian man who killed three people in a French church had a second suspect in custody on Friday, as France heightened its security alert amidst religious and geopolitical tensions around cartoons mocking the Muslim prophet.

Muslims held more anti-France protests across the Mideast and beyond on Friday, while mourners placed flowers, messages and candles at the entrance to the Notre Dame Basilica in the French Riviera city of Nice, where Thursday's knife attack took place.

The attacker, Ibrahim Issaoui, was seriously wounded by police and hospitalized in life-threatening condition, authorities said.



Demonstrators shout slogans during a protest against French President Emmanuel Macron's comments over the Prophet caricatures, in downtown Kabul on Friday. AFP

In an interview broadcast on Friday with Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV, the attacker's mother said she was shocked by the events. From the Tunisian province of Sfax, the mother, her eyes wet with tears, said she was surprised

to hear her son was in France when he called upon his arrival and had no idea what he was planning.

"You don't know the French language, you don't know anyone there, you're going to live alone there, why, why did you

go there?" she said she told him over the phone at the time.

His brother told Al-Arabiya that Issaoui had informed the family he would sleep in front of the church, and sent them a photograph showing him at the cathedral where the

attack took place. "He didn't tell me anything," he said.

A neighbor said he knew the assailant when he was a mechanic and held various other odd jobs, and had shown no signs of radicalization.

France's anti-terrorism prosecutor said the suspect is a Tunisian born in 1999 who reached the Italian island of Lampedusa, a key landing point for migrants crossing in boats from North Africa, on 20 September and traveled to Bari, a port city in southern Italy, on 9 October. It is not clear when he arrived in Nice.

Tunisians fleeing a virus-battered economy make up the largest contingent of migrants landing in Italy this year.

Italian media reported that from Lampedusa, where Issaoui was one of 1,300 arriving migrants on 20 September, he was placed with 800 others on a virus quarantine boat

class after the images were re-published by satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*.

The images deeply offended many Muslims, and protesters burned French flags, stomped on portraits of President Macron or called for boycotts of French products at demonstrations on Friday in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. Other protests, largely organised by Islamists, are expected across the region, in Lebanon and Gaza Strip.

Macron said he would immediately increase the number of soldiers deployed to protect French schools and religious sites from around 3,000 to 7,000. France's interior minister said the country is "at war" with Islamist extremists, and the conservative lawmaker for the Nice region, Eric Ciotti, called for a "French-style Guantanamo" to lock up terrorist suspects.

'Get out to vote' is common theme in Trump, Biden rallies

Over 81 out of 240 million eligible voters have already cast their ballots, due to early voting facility

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 30 OCTOBER



President Trump gives a campaign speech just four days before Election Day late Thursday in Tampa, Florida. AFP

Be it the Trump or the rival Biden campaign, "Get out to Vote" is the common theme driving all the rallies and meetings for the 3 November US presidential elections.

President Donald Trump, a Republican who is seeking a second term, and his Democratic rival and former vice president Joe Biden make it a point in their public remarks to emphasise to their supporters how important it is for them to go out and vote next Tuesday. Whatever you do, you have to go out and vote, Trump said at an election rally in the Bullhead City of Arizona on Wednesday.

With just days to go for the polls and in a scenario where every vote counts, Trump even asks his supporters to take their bosses, friends and neighbours to the polling booths to vote.

Go out and vote. Bring your friends. Bring your family, your neighbours, your co-workers. Get out and vote. This is the most important election that we've perhaps ever had, said the president at an election rally in Wisconsin this week. Get out and vote, Trump, 74, told his cheering supporters at Tampa, Florida on Thursday. First Lady Melania

Trump too, in her maiden election speech in Pennsylvania this week, appealed to the voters to go out and vote.

If you haven't already voted, please be sure to get out and vote on 3 November and encourage everyone you know to do the same, she said.

Former vice president Biden, 77, too has been making the same appeal to his voters. Go out and Vote, he says in his public meetings, which because of coronavirus has been restricted to a few people or drive-in car rallies.

Over 81 million out of nearly 240 million eligible voters have already cast their ballots, taking advantage of the early voting facility in view of

the raging Covid-19 pandemic. The Democrats and the Biden Campaign have been aggressive in urging their supporters to mail in their votes or do early voting.

They have also developed mobile apps and website www.iwillvote.com to encourage their supporters to vote.

The Biden Campaign has been spending a significant amount of resources and has deployed hundreds of people, who are writing emails and making phone calls to people appealing them to go out and vote.

I'm urging the American people, go out and vote. Show up. If you can vote early, vote early. Vote whatever way is most convenient for you, but vote, Biden said at a recent election rally. If you (don't) show up in large enough numbers, nothing is going to change, Biden said.

Same has been the case with the two vice presidential candidates- incumbent Vice President Mike Pence and Democratic Senator Kamala Harris. The president cast his vote this weekend. Karen and I cast our votes in Indianapolis. So I need you to go get it done, if you've already requested an absentee ballot you can vote absentee in person. Right? And I checked on the way here, if you don't know where to go with it you can

have a plan has never been more important," former president Barack Obama said in a recent video to his supporters. In the several rallies that he has addressed so far, including the battleground States of Pennsylvania and Florida, Obama makes it a point to underscore the importance of going out and voting.

On Wednesday, the Biden Campaign held a special event involving American celebrity Oprah Winfrey, during which they urged people to get out and vote, if they want to make the change.

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Texas hits milestone: Early voting exceeds all of 2016 turnout

ASSOCIATED PRESS
AUSTIN, (TEXAS) 30 OCTOBER

Texans have already cast more ballots in the presidential election than they did during all of 2016, an unprecedented surge of early voting in a state that was once the country's most reliably Republican, but may now be drifting toward battleground status.

More than 9 million ballots have been cast as of Friday morning in the nation's second most populous state, exceeding the 8,969,226 cast in 2016, according to an Associated Press tally of early votes from data provided by Texas officials.

Texas is the first state to hit the milestone. This year through volunteers wrote more than 15 million letters to fellow Americans urging them to vote. It's one of the biggest tactics in an unusual year where it's no longer possible to knock on people's doors, Scott Forman, who launched the campaign told *The Daily Beast*.

In his election rallies, Obama goes out in detail on voting. "We will never come close to seeing what it would be like if everybody voted.

When I hear people say, 'Well I don't know voting doesn't make a difference.' We don't know because usually no more than half the people who could be voting, vote. We get 50-55 per cent of people voting, and then people say, 'Well looking, you know, not enough change happened.'

Well, imagine if 60 per cent voted. What about 70 per cent? Obama said.

The right to vote is sacred, Obama said at another election rally in Florida.

Still, the fact that the state

exceeded its entire vote total for the past presidential cycle with hours still to go in its early voting period which ends Friday, and before millions more people are likely to vote on Election Day, hints at a potential electoral sea change.

For Democrats, anything different is likely positive. The party hasn't won a state office in Texas since 1994- the nation's longest political losing streak- nor seen one of its presidential nominees carry the state since Jimmy Carter in 1976. The party now believes it has a chance to seize control of the state House, flip as many as six congressional seats and a Senate seat.

President Donald Trump carried Texas against Hillary Clinton in 2016 by a comfortable 9 points, even though that was the smallest margin since Republican Bob Dole beat Democratic President Bill Clinton by 5 points in 1996.

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's campaign has for months insisted that Texas, with its 38 electoral votes, is among the traditionally conservative states it is looking to flip- though it has long been more bullish on Arizona and North Carolina.

The news may not be all positive for Democrats, however. The spike in early voting is most apparent in suburban counties around Dallas and in areas outside Austin.

Karabakh talks amidst Azerbaijan's offensive

ASSOCIATED PRESS
YEREVAN (ARMENIA), 30 OCTOBER

meters of a strategically located town just south of the region's capital, Stepanakert. He urged residents to mobilize all their resources to fend off the attack on Shushi, a town which sits on the main road linking Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia.

The one who controls Shushi controls Nagorno-Karabakh, Arayik Harutyunyan said in a video address from the town's cathedral, which was severely damaged by Azerbaijani shelling.

Harutyunyan's statements marked a somber acknowledgement of Azerbaijani gains in the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh that started on Sept. 27. The latest outburst of hostilities has left hundreds and possibly thousands of people dead, marking the largest

escalation in the region in more than a quarter-century.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a war there ended in 1994. In that war, Armenian forces also seized several regions of Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh, creating a buffer zone around the territory.

Azerbaijani troops, which have relied on strike drones and long-range rocket systems supplied by Turkey, have reclaimed control of some of those regions in the latest fighting and forged into Nagorno-Karabakh from the south. A US-brokered truce ended immediately after it took effect Monday, just like two previous cease-fires negotiated

Russia, the United States and France have co-chaired the so-called Minsk Group set up by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to mediate in the conflict, but they have failed to score any progress.

by Russia. The warring sides have repeatedly blamed each other for violations.

According to Nagorno-Karabakh officials, 1,166 of their troops and 39 civilians have been killed. Azerbaijani authorities haven't disclosed their military losses, but say the fighting has killed at least 90 civilians and wounded 392.

But Russian President Vladimir Putin said last week that, according to Moscow's information, the actual death toll was significantly higher, nearing 5,000.

Russia, the United States and France have co-chaired the so-called Minsk Group set up by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to mediate in the conflict, but they have failed to score any progress.

to bring the spread of the virus under control. The global coronavirus tally stands at 44.7 million cases and about 1.17 million deaths.

Europe, North America and Latin America account for over 66 per cent of global cases and over 76 per cent of global deaths.

Europe's new daily infections have doubled over the

past two weeks as it reported more than 250,000 cases for the first time on Wednesday.

The region has so far reported about 9.5 million cases and about 261,000 deaths.

France reported a new record daily total of more than 50,000 infections for the first time on Sunday.

Euro zone economic activity has slipped back into

