

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2020

**TABLOID | 13**

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■ More on Page 6

IN BRIEF

Delhi records 1,984 new Covid-19 cases

New Delhi: The national capital recorded 1,984 fresh Covid cases on Monday, the lowest in nearly a month, as the infection tally mounted to over 2.73 lakh, while the death toll rose to 5,272. The relatively low count of fresh cases came out of the 36,302 tests conducted the previous day. This is the lowest number of daily cases recorded in Delhi since August 31 when the national capital reported 1,358 cases. As cases continue to rise, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Monday appealed to organisers of a small gathering to take preventive measures. In a face-book post, Mr Jain said, “If you are organising a small gathering or event, take precautions to prevent the spread of Covid-19 among guests. You should provide all necessary supplies: Tissues, hand sanitizer or soap and water, masks, distance markers, closed bins”. The tally of active cases stood at 27,123 down from 29,228 the previous day, it said. The death toll from Covid in Delhi stood at 5,235 on Sunday.

Maha: Corona patient commits suicide

Pune: A 56-year-old Covid COVID-19 patient allegedly committed suicide by slitting his throat in Sangli after calling his son and asking him to take care of the family, police said on Monday. The incident happened late Sunday night at a Covid facility in Miraj, some 240 kilometres from here, a Mahatma Gandhi Chowk police station official said. “The deceased called his son, asked him to take care of the family, and then slit his throat with a knife while sitting on his bed. Doctors tried to revive him but failed. The entire incident has been captured on CCTV cameras at the Covid facility,” he informed. He said no suicide note was found from the spot and a probe was underway to find out why he took this step. Hospital authorities later on Monday evening said a fact-finding committee had been formed to check of there was any negligence on the part of staff at the COVID centre. — PTI

Gangster dies as police car overturns

Guna/Lucknow: A gangster, who was being brought by the Uttar Pradesh Police from Mumbai to Lucknow, died when the vehicle carrying him overturned after hitting a “nilgai” in Madhya Pradesh’s Guna, police said on Monday. Four others, including two police personnel and the vehicle’s driver, were also injured in the incident and admitted to a hospital, they said. A Lucknow Police team had gone to Mumbai Friday and it nabbed Feroz Khan (65) from Nallasopara area of Maharashtra’s Palghar district near Mumbai, an officer said. They were returning with Khan when the accident occurred on Sunday morning on the Gwalior-Betul National Highway near Pakhriapura toll in Chanchoda area, around 150 km north of Bhopal, Guna SP Rajesh Kumar said. — PTI

Cong state govts told to ‘negate’ new farm laws

■ **Continued from Page 1** Singh said his government would approach the Supreme Court soon over the issue of new farm laws. He also claimed that Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence could exploit the farmers’ unrest and try to foment trouble in the state. “I have said we will take this matter forward. The President has approved these bills and now we will take this matter to the Supreme Court,” Capt. Singh said. In Chennai, DMK president M.K. Stalin said his party and its allies were also preparing to challenge the new farm laws in the Supreme Court. The Punjab CM, along with AICC general secretary and state in-charge Harish Rawat, PCC president Sunil Jakhar and others, paid tribute to Shaheed Bhagat Singh on his 113th birth anniversary at Khatkar Kalan village in SBS Nagar district. They held a sit-in protest there against the farm laws. Also, a Congress MP from Kerala, T.N. Prathapan, became the first to challenge the validity of the Farmers (Empowerment and

Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act 2020 in the Supreme Court on Monday. Mr Prathapan represents Thrissur in the Lok Sabha. The Congress has been spearheading the Opposition’s protest against the farm laws both inside and outside Parliament. On Monday, former party president Rahul Gandhi claimed the new laws were a “death sentence” for farmers. He tweeted: “The agriculture laws are a death sentence to our farmers. Their voice is crushed in Parliament and outside. Here is proof that democracy in India is dead.” The party’s youth wing also took to the streets against the new laws, and burnt a tractor at New Delhi’s India Gate in protest. The Delhi police said five people claiming to be Punjab Youth Congress members have been detained. The Youth Congress later said in a tweet: “Our country thrives on the blood and sweat of our farmers. From fighting the British to feeding the entire nation, our farmers are the nation’s backbone.”

Police teams have initiated manhunt for Dahiya in Delhi, Haryana**A day after shooting lover, city cop kills father-in-law**

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28

A day after shooting his lover, who is battling for her life at a hospital in the national capital, a 35-year-old Delhi police sub-inspector (SI), on Monday, shot his father-in-law to death in Rohtak area of Haryana.

The police said that the accused SI also had a matrimonial dispute with his wife and a case was registered against him at the Rohtak police station.

The deceased has been identified as Ranveer Singh (60), a resident of Bhainsi village near Lakhna Majra in Rohtak. The SI has been identified as Sandeep Dahiya, a permanent resident of Sonipat in Haryana. At present, he was living at a government allotted accommodation at the Shalimar Bagh Police

▶ The police said that the accused sub-inspector also had a matrimonial dispute with his wife and a case was registered against him at the Rohtak police station

▶ Teams from the Delhi and Haryana Police are hunting for Dahiya in both the states. Dahiya is posted at Delhi’s Lahori Gate police station at present.

Colony.

The police said that Dahiya was posted at the Lahori Gate police station in Delhi.

Dahiya had shot his lover, with whom he was involved since the last one year, near Sai Mandir on G.T. Karnal Road. She was rushed to a nearby hospital where she is undergoing treatment.

According to station house officer (Lakhna Majra police station) Rajinder Singh, the incident took place at around 7.30 am on Monday. “Ranveer was standing

outside his house when accused Sandeep came and shot him from a close range and fled from the spot,” said the SHO.

“Ranveer died on the spot. On the basis of the statement given by Ranveer’s son Manjeet, a case under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered at the Lakhna Majra police station and a manhunt has been initiated to nab the accused,” the SHO added.

Teams from the Delhi Police and Haryana Police are hunting for

Dahiya in both the states and looking at all possible hideouts. According to the police, on the intervening night of September 26 and 27, Dahiya was on duty from 9.00 pm to 1.00 am.

“But he didn’t turn up for duty and hence was marked absent,” said the police.

“He was on medical rest for two days on the pretext of stomach pain and joined duty on September 25. Since he has been the division officer, a 9 mm pistol with 10 rounds was allotted to him,” the police added.

Dahiya had joined the Delhi police in 2006 as a constable and after passing his exam he became a sub-inspector in 2010.

Meanwhile, the Delhi police departmental enquiry found him guilty and his service was also forfeited.

Farm Bills: Protesters from Youth Congress burn tractor at Rajpath

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28

Punjab Youth Congress activists set ablaze a tractor at India Gate, on Monday morning, in protest against the government’s anti-farmer bills.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Congress workers undertook a Kisan-Mazdoor Nyay March from Rajghat to Raj Niwas to protest against the anti-farmer bills passed by the Modi government at the Centre and to submit a memorandum to the lieutenant-governor.

The Delhi police said

that five people claiming to be members of the Punjab Youth Congress have been arrested. The arrested persons have been identified as Manjot Singh (36), Ramandeep Singh Sindhu (28), Rahul (23), Sahib (28), and Sumit (28)—all residents of Punjab—the police said.

According to a senior police official, the incident took place in a high security area just a few metres away from the President’s house and the Parliament.

“The fire department received information regarding the incident at 7.42 am and two fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The blaze was doused and the tractor was removed,” said a senior Delhi Fire Service official.

DCP (New Delhi) Eish Singhal said that an Innova car and a truck used for transportation of the tractor have been taken into police custody. “In this matter an FIR has been registered under various sections including Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act and 6 persons have been arrested so far. Police has also seized two vehicles in this matter,” the DCP said.



Indian Naval ship (INS) Viraat arrives at Alang ship breaking yard after it was decommissioned by the Indian Navy at Alang in Bhavnagar district on Monday.

MP top cop removed

■ **Continued from Page 1** mercilessly even as two of his staff members try to calm him down.

Mr Sharma’s violent behaviour even upset his two pet dogs who were seen howling around them. Another video of the officer in the company of a media woman in the latter’s house also went viral simultaneously. In the 7.13-minute video, the police officer’s wife is seen confronting him in the media woman’s house.

The officer was heard telling his wife in the video clip, “This is my life. I will continue to do this”. The wife was then heard telling him, “I have caught you red-handed today”. He reacted to it saying, “Haan, Haan (oh, yes) bilkul (absolutely), red-handed, yes”.

The state women commission has taken up the matter and asked the state to take stringent action against the police officer for the crime of domestic violence.

Forces can lease equipment; no ‘offset’ in future def deals

■ **Continued from Page 1** only made defence deals costlier by around 10 per cent. This decision comes after the CAG, in a report on “management of defence offsets” last Wednesday, said that French company Dassault Aviation and European missile maker MBDA has not transferred technology to DRDO which they had initially proposed in

the ₹59,000 crore deal for 36 Rafale jets.

Earlier, a controversy had also arisen when Dassault Aviation chose Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Defence as their offset partner which had no experience in the defence sector.

In 2005, India adopted the offset policy for defence capital purchases. This meant that for all capital purchases above ₹300

crore made through imports, the foreign vendor was required to invest at least 30 per cent of the value of the purchase in Indian defence and aerospace sector.

Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 will be applicable from October 1, 2020. With the announcement of new FDI Policy, suitable provisions have been incorporated, includ-

ing a new “Buy (Global - Manufacture in India)” category to encourage foreign equipment manufacturers to set up “manufacturing/maintenance entities” through its subsidiary in India while enabling requisite protections to domestic industry.

The Indian-IDDM (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured) category

will now require a minimum of 50 per cent indigenous content (IC) against 40 per cent earlier. For the “Buy (Indian)” category, the indigenous content should be 60 per cent against 40 per cent earlier. A separate dedicated chapter has been incorporated in DAP 2020 for acquisition of systems designed and developed by DRDO, DPSUs and OFB.

A fairytale win for Royals, almost too good to be true

■ **Continued from Page 1** their scorn on Tewatia but soon enough began targeting Kings XI Punjab for “snatching defeat from the jaws of victory”.

How many teams make 51 off the last three overs to win a game when chasing, even in a relatively smaller ground like the Sharjah Stadium. Of course, we would have to forget all about past links of this venue to the betting maze of the D-Company controlled cricket “satta” markets when Dawood Ibrahim had a private box in the

pavilion stand for the elite. The drama was far from over even after Tewatia’s heroics. It appeared the chasers were losing their nerve on the threshold of victory. Rajasthan Royals, a team once banned for two years from IPL because their owner was betting on games, nearly made a hash of the final over when two were needed and one batsman was also bowled taking a wild swing.

A final lofted hit settled the issue on a night of the big sixes as RR made the target, a task that their

opponents had not managed against Delhi Capitals and then lost the Super Over.

Fluctuations in form are the norm in T20 cricket. But was Kings XI Punjab guilty of a crucial tactical mistake by bringing on a pace bowler against Tewatia when the batsman showed no sign that he could read spin at all. Rahul had not thought of spin even when runs were leaking in the field-restrictions overs. And the Kings X skipper had overs of spin in hand, besides the pace of

Sheldon Cottrell who panicked after bowling a couple of juicy length balls for the bits-and-pieces all-rounder to connect as he swung in an ambitious arc to the on side.

A shell-shocked Cottrell of the famous Territorial Army salute had given the game away by being taken for five sixes and only escaping with the fifth ball, at which Tewatia, a player who had been traded out before being brought back into RR as an economical domestic recruit, swung and missed. Cottrell’s over-

the-wicket left arm into the batsman line was the perfect gift for a left-handed batsman. And Rahul had overs of Murugan Ashwin in hand besides those of the sharp Mohammed Shami.

The T20 game is the perfect format to make fools of predictors and fantasy game players. The odds-on events can change so rapidly as to leave only the bookies happy because the punters are so bewildered as to make bets at the right time at the wrong price on most matches or events.



A member of district magistrate (Central Delhi) dressed as ‘Yamraj’ stops a commuter for not wearing a mask as part of an awareness campaign to curb Covid-19 spread in New Delhi on Monday.

— PTI

Govt scientist kidnapped after honeytrap, rescued

Noida, Sept. 28: A junior scientist at a top government agency, who was kidnapped two days ago after he got honey-trapped, has been rescued from a hotel room in Noida and three people, including a woman, have been arrested, police said on Monday. Gautam Buddh Nagar police commissioner Alok Singh monitored the rescue operation that began early Sunday after the scientist’s family approached the police saying they got a ‘10-lakh ransom call for his safe release

■ **THE TOTAL** Gautam Buddh Nagar police commissioner Alok Singh monitored the rescue operation that began early Sunday after the scientist’s family approached the police saying they got a ‘10-lakh ransom call for his safe release

ly that he was going to Noida City Centre to buy some items for home.

“But he did not return till late in the night after which his wife got a call from an unidentified person who told her that her husband has been kidnapped and demanded ₹10 lakh for his safe release,” according to a police statement.

Unbeknown to the wife, the scientist had searched for a “massage parlour” online after which he got connected with a man, who had asked him to meet him Saturday evening at the Noida City Centre, from where he got kidnapped, police said.

“The wife tried to arrange the money but could not and then approached the local Sector 49 police Sunday morning after which top officials took note of the matter and an investigation launched to rescue the man,” they said. — PTI

Odisha Assembly monsoon session commence today

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, SEPT. 28

With nearly 18 per cent of persons, including its staff members, MLAs and ministers testing positive, the monsoon session of the Odisha Legislative Assembly will commence legislative businesses commencing Tuesday.

Deputy Speaker Ranjani Kanta Singh, government chief whip Pramila Mallick, ministers Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, Padmini Dian and MLA Debi Prasad Mishra are among the 136 of the 756 persons (17.98 per cent) who tested positive during the Covid tests conducted in the Assembly Sunday and Monday.

The Covid positive personnel have asked for home isolation or institutional treatment, depending upon their health conditions. The Assembly session will continue till October 7 during which 12 bills are scheduled to be presented and passed.

The opposition Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress have decided to grill the treasury benches on the issues of flood devastation, corruption in purchase of masks and personal protective equipments, farmer issues and alleged mismanagement of Covid-19 crisis.

“There are plenty of issues which will be raised during the short session of the Assembly. The government has failed on issues like handling of Covid-19 situation, flood in different river systems. Besides, there is the issue of power tariff hike. We will surely want convincing reply from the treasury benches,” said Leader of the Opposition, Pradipta Nayak. Congress lawmaker Narasingha Mishra said his party would highlight farmers’ plight and the distressing conditions of the guest workers who returned home and are still waiting from income generation opportunities as promised by the state government.

SHORT TAKES

Artillery Regiment marks Gunners Day

New Delhi: Indian Army's artillery Regiment on Monday celebrated 193rd Gunners Day. The Regiment of Artillery is the second largest arm of the Indian Army with a wide variety of weapons and equipment. The evolution of gunners from manning huge ornate cannons to its present level of sophistication, along with their indomitable spirit, gallantry and exemplary professionalism is a unique distinction which makes the gunner fraternity a proud identity in the Indian Army. The landmark event for the Regiment of Artillery falls on 28 September 1827 when a Battery of Bombay Artillery was raised as the 8th Company of the Golangaz Battalion, Bombay Foot Artillery. During the First World War there were 12 Batteries of Artillery which were awarded as many as 37 "Battle Honours".

UP police van hits nilgai, gangster dies

Guna/Lucknow: A gangster, who was being brought by the Uttar Pradesh Police from Mumbai to Lucknow, died when the vehicle carrying him overturned after hitting a 'nilgai' in Madhya Pradesh's Guna, police said on Monday. Four others, including two police personnel and the vehicle's driver, were also injured in the incident and admitted to a hospital, they said. A Lucknow Police team had gone to Mumbai Friday and it nabbed Feroz Khan (65) from Nallasopara area of Maharashtra's Palghar district near Mumbai, an officer said. They were returning with Khan when the accident occurred on Sunday. — PTI

Cong asks Fadnavis to oppose Bihar ex-DGP

Mumbai: Amidst the reports that former Bihar DGP Gupteshwar Pandey is likely to contest the forthcoming assembly polls on the ticket of Janata Dal United JD(U), the Maharashtra Congress has asked senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis to oppose his candidature staunchly saying he has insulted the Mumbai Police and Maharashtra. "It will quite painful if the BJP's ally gives ticket to @jps_gupteshwar, who has insulted the Mumbai Police and defamed Maharashtra, at a time when Devendra Fadnavis is the election in-charge of Bihar. A lot of questions will be asked by people of Maharashtra if Fadnavisji does not oppose his candidature," said Maharashtra Congress spokesperson.

'Custodial' death stirs tension in MP village

Bhopal: Death of a man, accused of theft, in police custody in a village in Madhya Pradesh on Monday triggered tension in the locality. The 42-year-old victim Rajpati Kushwaha, resident of Simhpur village in Satna district, received bullet on his head fired from the service revolver of the in-charge of the local police station Vikram Pathak, while he was in police custody. He later succumbed to bullet injuries in the hospital, police said. Satna district superintendent of police Riyaz Iqbal was transferred from his post following the development, even as Pathak and a police constable Ashish Mishra were placed under suspension following the incident. According to the police, Kushwaha was arrested late on Sunday night on charges of stealing jewelry and a revolver from the house of a local villager two months ago.

Man held for killing and looting stepkin

Thane: A man who allegedly shot dead his stepbrother with the help of a driver and fled with gold worth ₹1.5 crore has been arrested in Thane district, police said on Monday. The duo, after stealing gold to make it look like a killing carried out for robbery, had thrown the body into Vashi Creek to destroy evidence, an official said. "Rakesh Patil, son TMC corporator Manik Patil, went missing on September 20 and 3.7 kilograms of gold worth ₹1.5 crore was also missing from the house, after which the former's wife lodged a complaint with Kasarwadavali police," said a senior police officer. Later, the police came to know that Rakesh was shot dead by his stepbrother, Sachin. — PTI

Cong MP moves SC challenging new 'controversial' farm laws

Acts violative of Articles 14, 15 and 21 of Constitution: Prathapan

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28:

A Congress lawmaker in Parliament T.N. Prathapan on Monday moved the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the controversial Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance, and Farm Services Act, 2020.

This happens to be the first petition in the top court challenging the law which has sparked farmers protests across the country and Akali Dal severing its ties with its long standing ally BJP and pulling out of the government.

Seeking declaration that the provisions of the Agreement on Price and the Farm Services Act, along with the related notifications, as illegal, unconstitutional, and void,



T.N. Prathapan

Prathapan Lok Sabha member from Thrissur has contended that they are violative of Article 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution.

A bare reading of its provisions, Prathapan says, will reveal that it is not a progressive piece of legislation as it exposes the farmers and their agricultural produce to an unregulated parallel market, which is enabled by these

Prathapan HAS expressed apprehension that the exporters, traders and middlemen may resort to unchecked hoarding, that will give them the power to control the agriculture produce, create artificial demand and dictate the prices in the market at their will

nationals and moneylenders thus working against the very object it was seemingly created for", says Mr Prathapan.

Pointing to the 10 provisions of the law being violative of Article 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution, Prathapan says he is also a farmer and well-versed with the difficulties being faced by the farmers due to various government policies and seeks to highlight the cause of the farmers struggling during the present Covid-19 pandemic.

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Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh addresses while staging a dharna along with his Cabinet colleagues and MLAs against new farm bills at Khatkar Kalan in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar on Monday. — PTI

Centre to SC: Decision on loan interest within 2-3 days

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28

The Centre on Monday told the Supreme Court that the issue of not levying interest and the compound interest on the term loans during the lockdown moratorium period is under the "serious consideration" of the Central government and the "decision making process is at an advanced stage".

"The issues are under active consideration of the government and a decision will be taken in two to three days", solicitor general Tushar Mehta informed the court.

The solicitor general told the court "Several issues are being considered. It is a complex matter".

The centre said this to a top court bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan and also comprising Justice R. Subhash Reddy and Justice M.R. Shah while seeking adjournment of the hearing on a batch of petitions seeking waiving off the interest and the compound interest during the moratorium period, its (moratorium) extension and the restructuring of existing loans given to commercial entities.

"Mr Tushar Mehta, learned solicitor general, submits that the issues are under active consideration of the Government of India and only after decision is taken, an affidavit along with decision can be filed. He further submits that the affidavit will be sent by 01.10.2020 through email to appearing counsel," said the order passed on Monday.

Next hearing of the matter is on October 5.

Impossible to further delay civil services exams: UPSC

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Monday told the Supreme Court that it is not possible to further postpone Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination that is scheduled on October 4 as court gave it day's time to file affidavit stating its position..

"Completely impossible to agree with postponement of the exam. The matter was considered and deferment was done. But it was realised that deferment would completely hurt the process of the exam", UPSC lawyer Naresh Kaushik told a three judge bench headed by Justice A.M.Khanwilkar. The bench also comprising Justice B.R.Gavai and Justice Krishna Murari asked the UPSC to list down the logistical reasons for not postponing the exam in which an estimated six lakh candidates are to appear.

About 20 civil services aspirants have approached

Completely impossible to agree with postponement of the exam. The matter was considered and deferment was done. But it was realised that deferment would completely hurt the process of the exam.

— Naresh Kaushik
UPSC lawyer

the top court seeking the postponement of the for two to three months, so that the flood/incessant rains go away and the Covid-19 curve flattens.

The petitioners have contended that the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination a recruitment exam, which is altogether different from an academic exam and in the event of its postponement; there is no question of loss of any academic session.

The petitioners have told the court that Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination is not an ordinary exam since the aspirants have to take a 7-hour long offline exam at the test centres in 72 cities across the country.

"The impugned Revised Calendar is utterly arbitrary, unreasonable, whimsical and patently violative of the 'Right to Health' and 'Right to Life' under Article 21," the petitioners have said.

"Despite alarming spurt in Covid-19 pandemic, UPSC did not increase the number of examination centres, resulting into a situation where many candidates from rural areas will be forced to travel for around 300-400 km, in order to reach the examination centres, and there will be high probability of such aspirants getting affected while using public transport for such travel," the petitioners said.

Rajput family alleges no headway in investigation CBI: No aspect ruled out in Sushant Singh Rajput case

SAURABH JOSHI
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

Following criticism of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) by family members of deceased actor Sushant Singh Rajput, the agency has issued a statement stating the probe is still ongoing. The family expressed their anger over no headway in the death of their actor son. The officials stated that they are conducting a thorough and professional probe in the case.

Rajput's family initially expressed their lack of faith in the Mumbai police and sought a probe by the CBI, which is in their line of fire. Days ago the family's lawyer made sensational claims that the actor was strangled and the same was confirmed by a doctor from Delhi's AIIMS, whose team is also conducting forensic analysis in the ongoing probe being carried out by CBI, Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

The agency issued a statement stating, "The Central Bureau of Investigation is conducting a professional investigation related to the death of Sushant Singh Rajput in which all aspects are being looked at and no aspect has been ruled out as of date. Investigation is continuing."

HC tells Raut, Ranaut to show guts to own their comments

SHAHAB ANSARI
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

The Bombay High Court on Monday told Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut and actor Kangana Ranaut to show guts to own up their comments made against each other on social media and public interviews. The court's observation came after Mr Raut's counsel denied in the court that his client's comment "should be taught a lesson" was aimed at Ms Ranaut. The court also said that the B r i h a n m u m b a i Municipal Corporation's conduct while demolishing Ms Ranaut's bungalow was "fishy".

A bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and R.I. Chagla continued to hear



Sanjay Raut K. Ranaut

the writ petition filed by Ms Ranaut challenging the demolition of a part of her bungalow in Pali Hill in suburban Bandra by the BMC on September 9.

While arguing on behalf of Ms Ranaut, advocate Dr Birendra Saraf played a clip of a news interview where Mr Raut had allegedly said that Ms Ranaut "should be taught a lesson". However, Mr Raut's counsel Pradeep Thorat argued that in the entire interview, the Sena leader had not referred to Ms Ranaut by name.

The central probe agency had taken over investigation of a case that was filed by the Bihar police on the complaint of the actor's family.

PM to open Rohtang Atal Tunnel in HP on October 3

Shimla: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address two public meetings in Himachal Pradesh after opening the strategic Atal Tunnel Rohtang on October 3, chief minister Jai Ram Thakur said Monday, asserting all Covid-19 protocols will be followed during the function.

The CM said that Mr Modi, accompanied by defence minister Rajnath Singh, would inaugurate the tunnel — the world's longest at a high altitude of 10,000 feet — on the Manali-Leh National Highway during his over five-hour stay in the hill state.

The timing of opening of the strategically important Atal Tunnel is very significant in view of the ongoing tension in Ladakh on the Sino-Indian border, he added.

For the inauguration on October 3, the PM is scheduled to arrive at the Center for Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) helipad by a chopper in Manali in Kullu district at 9.15 am.

He will halt at a Border Roads Organisation guest-house for 10 minutes and will interact with officials of the BRO. — PTI

'Will boost renewable energy' India, Denmark vow to elevate ties to 'Green Partnership'

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28

India and the northern European nation of Denmark decided on Monday to elevate their bilateral ties to a "Green Strategic Partnership", the "first of its kind" that will boost bilateral cooperation in the fields of renewable energy, environment, water and combating air-pollution.

The decision was taken at a Virtual Bilateral Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Danish counterpart Ms. Mette Frederiksen on Monday that lasted an hour and which "opened a new chapter in the friendly and cooperative relations" between the two nations. India also welcomed the Scandinavian nation to the International Solar Alliance, with Denmark offering its help to India to combat air-pollution. The Covid pandemic and its impact on global supply chains was also discussed between the two leaders, with PM Modi telling his Danish counterpart that India was working with Japan and Australia to diversify supply chains. In what is being seen as a possible veiled reference to China without naming it, PM Modi highlighted that the pandemic had shown how "risky" it was for supply chains to be dependent on a "single source".

India and Denmark also decided to work towards the "early resolution" of the issue relating to the extradition of Purulia arms drop case prime accused Kim Davy from Denmark.

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decided to work towards the "early resolution" of the issue relating to the extradition of Purulia arms drop case prime accused Kim Davy from Denmark, the MEA's joint secretary (Central Europe) Neeta Bhushan said on Monday evening at a Virtual media briefing. A Dane, Davy is reportedly accused of orchestrating the air-drop of a huge cache of arms and ammunition, including 300 AK-47s, anti-tank grenades and rocket-propelled grenade launchers, from an AN-26 aircraft that he owned on the night of December 17, 1995 in West Bengal's Purulia district.

Meanwhile, the Indo-Danish Joint Statement said, "Prime Minister Modi and (Danish) Prime Minister Frederiksen held an in-depth exchange of views in a warm and friendly atmosphere on bilateral relations, discussed the Covid-19 pandemic and global matters of interest to both sides, including climate change and green transition and reached common understanding with a view to accelerating sustainable economies and societies."

'Staying home, healthy heart beat Covid'

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

September 29 is observed as World Heart Day and this year it is more relevant as "Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions, such as heart disease, are more vulnerable to the novel coronavirus," says World Heart Federation (WHF).

"We don't know what course the pandemic will take in the future but we do know that taking care of our hearts right now is more important than ever," is WHF's message this year.

Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death on the planet.

It has many causes: from smoking, diabetes,

September 29 is observed as World Heart Day and this year it is more relevant as "Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions, such as heart disease, are more vulnerable to the novel coronavirus," says World Heart Federation (WHF)

high blood pressure and obesity, to air pollution among others.

The population of cardiovascular patients is rising rapidly, and the disease is afflicting younger people at their peak. In India, half of all reported heart attacks are caused due to cardiovascular diseases in people under the age of 50,

and 25 per cent of those occur in people below 40. Also heart failure is the number one cause of hospitalisation and there are 26 million heart failure patients worldwide.

"In the time of Covid-19, people are faced with a double-edged threat. Not only are they more at risk of developing severe forms of the virus, but they may also be afraid to seek ongoing care for their hearts," says Anjali Malhotra, chief customer and marketing officer, Aviva Life Insurance.

"Around the globe there is a decrease in patients seeking the usual heart care that they would need in non-pandemic times," according to WHF.

Maha restaurants, bars may open next week

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

After nearly six months of hiatus, restaurants in Maharashtra are likely to be opened from the first week of October. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday gave his nod for the move, which is likely to benefit

about four lakh restaurants, bars and eating houses in the state.

"The State Government has prepared a standard operating procedure (SOP) to restart restaurant operations and submitted it to the concerned authorities. Once finalised, a decision to reopen restaurants will be taken," said Mr Thackeray, who held a vir-

tual meeting with the representatives of restaurant associations from the major cities.

According to sources, dine-in services for restaurants may be allowed with 50 per cent of the actual capacity from the first week of October. Presently, only home delivery services are allowed for the restaurants. Restaurants

in the state had closed in March due to the coronavirus-enforced lockdown.

In the meeting, Mr Thackeray emphasised the need of wearing masks, cleaning hands and maintaining physical distance to tackle the coronavirus pandemic and added these precautions need to be taken when restaurants are reopened.

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CENTRAL STORE
B-2 Block, Near 212 Bus Terminal, Nand Nagari, Delhi - 110093

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No. EE(Central Store)/TC/2020-21/18 Dated : 25.09.2020
Executive Engineer (Central Store) EDMC on behalf of Commissioner, EDMC invites only Online open tenders from reputed agencies/firms/Agencies [Registered and Un-Registered firms or agencies both are eligible] for the following work:

S.No. : 1; Name of Work : Selection of Consultant to work as "PROJECT CONSULTANT" under the scope of Consultancy and Monitoring of PPP project for door-to-door collection & transportation of MSW in East Delhi Municipal Corporation area; **Head of A/c :** XL-III-D-IV; **Tender Amt. :** Item Rate; **Bid Document Fee :** Rs. 25,000/-; **Time of Completion :** 9 Years; **Tender No. :** 319246.

Detailed NIT can be seen from the following Website or from the office of the undersigned:
<http://mcdetenders.com>, <https://mcdonline.nic.in/>
R.O. No. 52/DP/1/East/2020-21 Executive Engineer (Central Store/EDMC)

EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. : 155303

Phone/Fax No: 2443031/2443032 (sgr)
website: www.jkpolice.gov.in

0191-2459029/2459255(jmu)
email: phqjk@jkpolice.gov.in

JAMMU & KASHMIR POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Tender Extension Notice

Due to administrative reasons, last date and online opening dates of NIT No. 32 of 2020 dated 18.08.2020 floated by Police Hqs to procure Bomb Inhibitor is further extended as follows:-

1. Last date for online tender submission = 05.10.2020
2. Online opening of technical bids = 07.10.2020

However, other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain un-changed. Detailed tender documents with terms and conditions are available on J&K State e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in (Rayees Mohammad Bhat)-IPS

AIG of Police (Provision/Tpt)
For Director General of Police,
J&K Srinagar.

No.Prov-II/Sec-56/19-20/41821-35
DIPK-6403 DATED 26.09.2020

IN BRIEF

11-YEAR-OLD LEADS BEACH CLEAN-UP IN HK

Hong Kong, Sept. 28: Lance Lau, an 11-year-old Hong Kong climate activist, has been called the Chinese territory's answer to Greta Thunberg. Outside the school gates, the bespectacled student would discuss issues, including Australia's recent bushfires to melting icebergs.

This week he was back after the school reopened, taking a stand outside the building before organising a beach clean-up as part of broader climate action by young people around the world. "If we don't take action now, humanity is just not going to exist very soon," he said. On weekends Lau goes to shopping malls with his mother to speak to residents and advocate for change.

"No one is too small to make a difference. We can all start taking action now." On a marshy beach opposite the city's international airport, groups of students wearing masks chanted and waved banners with "school strike for climate action". While the government has relaxed some Coronavirus measures, all public beaches remain shut.

TRANSPLANTING CORALS TO SAVE TURKEY REEFS

Ankara, Sept. 28: Transplanting coral is difficult work. "You only have 20 minutes to dive down 30 metres and transplant the coral to the correct part of the rock, where hopefully it will live for hundreds of years," explains Serço Eksiyen, one of a small group of volunteers who have taken on the huge task of saving the corals around the Princes' Islands (Adalar), a picturesque archipelago in the Marmara Sea about a 40-minute boat ride from Istanbul.

The Marmara Sea, made up of water from the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, is home to 24 Alcyonacea coral species whose existence is threatened by the onslaught of nearby property development. Among those disappearing are sea whips, sea pens, sea fans and some types of red and yellow soft corals.

Most of these corals you would never find outside of the Mediterranean basin. The further east you go, the more they move into deeper waters. It's miraculous that we are able to see them on the shores of the Princes' Islands," says Dr Eda Topçu, a marine biologist at Istanbul University and leader of the transplantation project. These corals, she says, are crucial for the survival of marine ecosystems as they provide safe spawning and nursing environments for aquatic life.

SEEKING LEGAL DEFENCE FOR THE STARS

Atacama Desert, Sept. 28: On the open expanses of Chile's high-altitude Atacama desert, bright stars pierce an ink-black firmament, a lure for stargazers looking for wonder and astronomers seeking signs of life on distant planets. Chile's arid northern deserts have attracted massive investment in telescopes in recent years and the country is home to nearly half the world's astronomical observatories. Now, under threat from light pollution coming from urban sprawl and development, Chile's environmental defenders are starting a fight to keep the skies dark, with legal muscle and new protections.

Cristóbal de la Maza, superintendent of Chile's environmental protection body, said the agency was preparing legal suits against companies that skirt regulations, polluting the skies with artificial 'cold light' that dims the brightness of stars and planets.

Regulators have already filed charges against retailers Cencosud and Tottus, as well as the corporate building at BHP's Escondida, the world's largest copper mine.

A decision in the cases is pending. BHP and Tottus parent Falabella said in statements that they had presented corrective plans to the agency. Cencosud did not reply to a request for comment.

De la Maza said each of the companies was exceeding limits on light emissions, and that charges against other companies were pending. "We hope to file charges against other firms where we have detected infractions for quite some time," de la Maza said.

"We have been able to accelerate the sanctions needed to act as a deterrent."



Campaigners say the only long-term solution to the plastic waste crisis is for companies to make less and consumers to use less.

— AFP

World leaders take pledge to halt Earth's destruction

United Nations, Sept. 28: World leaders have pledged to clamp down on pollution, embrace sustainable economic systems and eliminate the dumping of plastic waste in oceans by the middle of the century as part of "meaningful action" to halt the destruction of nature on Earth.

Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel, Justin Trudeau, Jacinda Ardern and Boris Johnson are among 64 leaders from five continents warning that humanity is in a state of planetary emergency due to the climate crisis and the rampant destruction of life-sustaining ecosystems. To restore the balance with nature, governments and the European Union have made a 10-point pledge to counteract the damage to systems that underpin human health and wellbeing. The commitments include a renewed effort to reduce deforestation, halt unsustainable fishing practices, eliminate environmentally harmful subsidies and begin the transition to sustainable food production systems and a circular economy over the next decade.

The leaders describe the pledge as a "turning point" by which future generations will judge their willingness to act on environmental destruction. All signatories to the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, launched virtually in New York on Monday, have committed to putting wildlife and the climate at the heart of post-pandemic economic recovery plans, promising to address the climate crisis, deforestation, ecosystem degradation and pollution.

The announcement comes ahead of a major UN biodiversity summit on Wednesday, which will be hosted virtually from New York, and part way through negotiations on a Paris-style international agreement on nature. The speaking slots at this week's summit are oversubscribed, with more than 116 heads of states and govern-

Germany launches new search for nuclear waste storage site

Berlin, Sept. 28: Germany has launched a new search for a site to store its most radioactive nuclear waste, eliminating a disputed site at a former salt mine that was earmarked decades ago and has long been a focus of protests. A report issued Monday by Germany's waste management organisation, or BGE, identified 90 areas covering 54% of the country's surface area as potentially geologically suited for a nuclear storage site.

It kicked off what is bound to be a politically fraught process, with a final decision slated for 2031. The aim is to start using the selected site in 2050. Following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan nine years ago, Germany decided to phase out its own nuclear power generation by the end of

90 acres identified by Germany's waste management organisation as potentially geologically suited for a nuclear storage site
5% of the total nuclear waste are in 1,900 containers for which German officials are seeking a safe home.

2022. But the question of where to put the waste already generated has remained unresolved. Three years ago, parliament

cleared the way for a science-based search for a site. Officials are seeking a safe home for a million years for some 1,900 containers of waste, which make up only 5% of Germany's total nuclear waste but 99% of its radioactivity, BGE chairman Stefan Studdt said.

"Germany's geology is so favourable, from north to south and east to west, that we can say with conviction that it will be possible to find the one site with the best possible security for the final storage of highly radioactive waste," Studdt added.

One site that won't be considered is the one that was earmarked by West German authorities in the 1970s — a former salt mine at Gorleben, in a sparsely populated area then located in an isolated corner of

the country, close to the border with communist East Germany.

Locals never accepted that decision and Gorleben became a focus for Germany's strong anti-nuclear movement.

Occasional shipments of reprocessed waste to a warehouse near the salt mine turned into huge security operations with days-long cat-and-mouse games between police and protesters, who sought to block rail tracks and roads.

BGE official Steffen Kanitz said Gorleben was found not to have a "favourable overall geological situation", in part because of a potential risk of erosion. It appears unlikely that local politicians will welcome any newly selected site with open arms.

— AP

Carbon storage tech critical for meeting climate targets

Paris, Sept. 28: Global governments and major polluters must take urgent action to develop technologies which can capture and store carbon emissions or it will be "virtually impossible" for the world to meet its climate targets, according to the International Energy Agency. The global energy watchdog said carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) projects should play a central role in meeting climate targets as one of four key pillars in reducing emissions.

Carbon capture, said the IEA, should sit alongside plans to electrify economies using renewable ener-

gy sources, replace fossil fuels with bio-energy and swap methane-rich gas for clean-burning hydrogen in factories, transport and homes. CCUS technologies typically trap the carbon dioxide produced by factories or fossil fuel power plants before they are emitted into the atmosphere where they contribute to global heating.

Once trapped, the greenhouse gas can then be piped into permanent underground storage facilities or sold to buyers who can use the carbon to manufacture plastics, boost their greenhouse crop yields or even make fizzy drinks. Fatih Birol, the IEA's exec-

utive director, said the process is "critical" in the transition from fossil fuels to cleaner energy alternatives. "Without it, our energy and climate goals will become virtually impossible to reach," he said. The IEA also highlighted the "significant potential" of direct carbon capture schemes, which absorb carbon on dioxide already in the atmosphere to create carbon neutral economies, but it warned that costs would need to come down.

The "slow start" for carbon capture projects means there are only 20 projects in commercial use worldwide.

— Agencies

Scientists find proof of two virus-eating microorganisms

New York, Sept. 28: Scientists have found the first compelling evidence that two groups of ecologically important marine microorganisms could be eating viruses — catching their "prey" and engulfing them, an advance that may lead to a better understanding of the flow of organic matter in the oceans.

The findings, published in the journal *Frontiers in Microbiology*, go against the currently predominant views of the role of both viruses and these groups of single-celled organisms called protists in the marine food webs. "Our data show that many protist cells contain DNA of a wide variety of non-infectious viruses but not bacteria, strong evidence that they are feeding on viruses rather than on bacteria," said study co-responding author Ramunas Stepanauskas, Director of the Single Cell Genomics Center at Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences in the US.

The scientists explained that the predominant model of the role of viruses in the marine ecosystem is that of the "viral shunt", where microbes infected with viruses lose a substantial fraction of their chemicals back to the pool of dissolved organic matter.

However, the current study noted that the viral shunt could be complemented by a link in the marine microbial food web which may constitute a "sink of viral particles in the ocean". According to the researchers, this finding "has implications for the flow of carbon through the microbial food web".

In the study, Stepanauskas and his colleagues sampled surface seawater from the Northwestern Atlantic in the Gulf of Maine in the US in July 2009, and the Mediterranean off Catalonia, Spain in January and July 2016. They used modern single-cell genomics tools to sequence the total DNA from 1,698 individual protists in the water, and found evidence of protists with or without associated DNA. The researchers explained that the associated DNA could be from symbiotic organisms, ingested prey, or viruses or bacteria sticking to the protists' exterior.

While the technique is very sensitive, the scientists said it doesn't directly show the type of relationship between a protist and its associates. The scientists found a range of protists, including groups called alveolates, stramenopiles, chlorophytes, cercozoans, picozoans, and choanozoans.

California wildfire forces evacuation of hospital, homes

St. Helena, Calif. Sept. 28: A wind-driven wildfire erupted on Sunday in the heart of northern California's Napa Valley wine country and spread across more than 1,000 acres (404 hectares), forcing the evacuation of several hundreds homes and a hospital, authorities said. Fire crews were out in force, scrambling to fend off flames threatening neighbourhoods and vineyards in the north-west corner of the famed wine-growing valley, about 75 miles (120 km) north of San Francisco.

The blaze, dubbed the Glass Fire, broke out before dawn near Calistoga and raced toward the adjacent towns of Deer Park and St. Helena, with flames advancing to within a mile of the Adventist Health St. Helena hospital. All 55 patients who were at the hospital at the time were safely evacuated by ambulance and helicopter over the course of five hours, beginning around 7 a.m. in the morning, hospital spokeswoman Linda Williams said.

"We had ambulances lined up from all over the Bay area," she said, adding that while the facility was surrounded by smoke, the skies over the hospital itself remained clear enough for helicopters to land and take off with patients who needed to be evacuated by air. It was the second wildfire-related evacua-

tion of the 151-bed hospital since August, coming on the heels of a massive cluster of lightning-sparked blazes that swept several counties north of the San Francisco Bay region. Some 600 homes were placed under evacuation orders, with residents of another 1,400 dwellings warned to be ready to flee at a moment's notice, according to California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) spokesman Tyree Zander.

About 5,000 people in all were affected by evacuation notices, he said. By 1:30 p.m., flames stoked by winds gusting up to 50 miles per hour (80 kph) had scorched some 1,200 acres (485 hectares) of grassy rolling hillsides and oak woodlands, with zero percent containment, Zander said. The fire's cause was under investigation. There were no immediate reports of injuries, but a Reuters photographer in St. Helena saw a number of structures that had been burned.

The blaze erupted midway through the traditional grape-harvesting period in the Napa Valley, world renowned as one of California's premiere wine-producing regions. The area's 475 wineries account for just 4% of the state's total annual grape harvest but half of the retail value of all California wines sold, according to the Napa Valley Vintners trade group. — Reuters

Birds of a feather



Spotted owlets are seen on a tree branch in Kathmandu on Monday.

— AFP



THE ASIAN AGE

29 SEPTEMBER 2020

Arbitrary tax policies harm India's image

A Hague-based international arbitration tribunal's decision to reject India's retrospective tax demand worth ₹20,000 crore against Vodafone Plc and term it as unfair should serve as a lesson to governments that seek to change the rules of the game arbitrarily. The tribunal's award underscores the importance of a stable and fair policy environment for investors.

The case relates to the acquisition of Hutchison Whampoa's telecom interests in India by London-based Vodafone Plc by taking over a holding company based in the Cayman Islands, a noted tax haven. With Hutchison booking huge profits in the sale, the government had asked Vodafone to cough up the capital gains as it had failed to withhold money for tax from the payment made by Hutchison. Vodafone argued that Indian tax authorities do not have jurisdiction over the acquisition deal between two foreign companies involving the takeover of another foreign company. But the Indian argument, led by Pranab Mukherjee, the finance minister of the second United Progressive Alliance government, was that India had the right to demand tax as the underlying asset was in the country. The Supreme Court upheld Vodafone's argument as the Income-Tax Act, 1961 does not envisage such tax levy. But Mukherjee got the law amended in 2012 to allow taxmen to levy tax retrospectively from 1961.

Whereas the government was well within its rights to amend the law, it is the last thing investors would like. Instead of being a rare aberration, the midway policy change — either by executive order or legislation or judicial pronouncements — has become a norm in the country, reflecting poorly on the investor-friendliness environment in the country. Several sectors have borne the brunt of arbitrary policies in the country. The telecom sector, in particular, has ended up with a mountain of debt because of frequent interventions by the judiciary. Several infrastructure companies had become bankrupt when the governments did not meet their obligations on time. The government's sudden demand for switching over to electric vehicles was threatening to nullify thousands of crores showed by automobile companies in adding capacities. Such practices show that businesses in India can flourish until it has the blessings of the government — a scenario that is not any different from a banana republic.

In February 2014, before he became the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, as the Bharatiya Janata Party's prime ministerial candidate, had said that traders take more risk than soldiers. Though he retracted his statement immediately, Modi was speaking the truth, especially in India where an official can wipe out the entire wealth of a person with a mere stroke of a pen. However, his government also continued past mistakes and further consolidated the power of bureaucrats. Tax terrorism still continues with tax officials getting greater powers to meet the revenue estimates given in the Union Budget. It is high time the Prime Minister works towards providing a stable policy framework for businesses in the spirit of his 2014 statement. Otherwise, India will end up in the league of countries governed by ruling class plutocracy.

Akalis out: What next for NDA?

The Shiromani Akali Dal's formal parting of ways with the BJP-led NDA late Saturday took no one by surprise: it was widely anticipated for some time, certainly after Harsimrat Kaur Badal, the lone Akali minister in the Narendra Modi government, quit the Union Cabinet in protest over the agricultural marketing bills passed in Parliament (amid much drama in the Rajya Sabha) a week earlier. The Akalis hadn't spoken out while this legislation was being discussed in Cabinet, and its change of stance gives rise to the suspicion they were driven to it amid the farmers' rising anger to protect their political base. While many commentators and Opposition parties noted the significance of the BJP's "old-est ally" walking out of the saffron alliance, there is little sign the BJP is all that unhappy, which has triggered speculation on whether it was SAD that decided to leave the alliance, or whether it was driven to do so by the BJP which was seeing it as an encumbrance. The NCP and Trinamul Congress, among others, hailed the Akalis' move, hoping it would be a nail in the NDA's coffin, generating talk about possible political realignments, but the Congress' Punjab unit had a different view. Punjab's PCC chief claimed the Akalis were "thrown out" of NDA and "staged a drama" to ensure its political survival.

Where does the BJP go from here? Some in the party wanted to break with the Akalis long back, thinking SAD was a millstone around its neck, and it can now seek more compatible partners, like the breakaway faction led by S.S. Dhillon. On Sunday, Akali chief Sukhbir Badal said for many years the NDA all but ceased to exist, with the BJP disinclined to consult its allies. The ruling party, however, still needs allies to pass bills in the Rajya Sabha and govern several states. More important, it must sit down with the farmers and find solutions so their anger is defused, else it may start a bigger fire. The Punjab CM, among others, plans to move the Supreme Court over the "lethal" farm bills that got the President's assent Sunday, but the real solution must be a political one.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Subhani



Reforming bureaucracy: Many pitfalls lie ahead



Mohan Guruswamy

Six years ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated a discussion under the aegis of the Niti Aayog on the reform of the bureaucracy. Sixteen years ago Dr Manmohan Singh too had said that his topmost priority was the reform of the bureaucracy. Little has happened. We haven't even had a decent and half-intelligent discussion about it. The object of concern clearly doesn't share the need to discuss its reform. The government is now a golden gated community and takes away as much as 11.5 per cent of the country's GDP for its own upkeep. And yet, the dil maange more!

The base of government is the district. A typical district officer is usually still in his twenties or early thirties. But unlike his Indian Civil Service predecessor (of the British Raj era), the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) district collector/magistrate or deputy commissioner has neither the unquestionable authority conferred either by racial exclusivity or superb education or social class, or all three, to dominate and control the lower bureaucracy.

As required in a democracy, the administration is subservient to a government run by elected politicians. They play havoc with civil service tenures. According to a study by S.K. Das, an IAS officer, the average tenure of a district officer is about seven months. He or she invariably falls victim to the constantly changing and treacherous currents of an intensely competitive political system.

The lower and permanent bureaucracy has adjusted well to this essential change and has become a tool in the hands of the politicians. In fact, the lower bureaucracy has increasingly

become the nursery for the new political class. Little wonder, no one gives a fig for our district officers any longer. But quite clearly, ordinary citizens are paying a heavy price for this. India still ranks among the bottom half of the United Nations' global Human Development Index.

Clearly, we need to restructure the government and the administration in each of India's 600-plus districts. The district collector, like his Indian Civil Service predecessor, must become the executive head of the district with all branches of the government subject to his/her authority and power. This must particularly include the police. He/she must be redesignated as the commissioner and should be an officer with over 16 years of service, a mature and seasoned individual with the seniority and clout to exercise complete authority over the administrative apparatus.

This seniority will also give him/her the experience and guile needed to deal with the political system. Above all, the commissioner must have a fixed tenure of at least five years and a board consisting of elected representatives of the district as well as his/her administrative superiors must make the officer's selection to the position.

In the late 1980s, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was reportedly contemplating such a restructuring of the government. No sooner had the word got around, the traditional politicians opposed it, as it would deprive them of much of their clout. Former deputy prime minister Devi Lal jeered that it would be a "PM to DM system" which would bypass all other political structures.

From the mid-1990s,

Poor Dr Manmohan Singh had listed the reform of the bureaucracy as his first priority, but the politicians paid no heed to him, and hence the bureaucracy saw no need to take him seriously.

even amidst the most severe economic downturns, one industrial segment has posted consistent and significant growth. This is the segment called the white goods sector, which accounts for consumer durables like refrigerators, washing machines and other home appliances. This spurt coincides with the selective implementation of the Pay Commission's recommendations. Apart from recommending whopping increases in salaries and benefits, the Pay Commission noted the low productivity and also recommended that the numbers employed in the government should be drastically slashed. Consequently, the wage bill of the Central government alone is now the second biggest item in the Union Budget after interest payments.

The state governments together now directly employ 7.5 million people in addition to the Central government, which gainfully or painfully employs about 3.3 million. Given the comparatively high salary levels in the Central and state governments, one can easily compute the approximate cost of government by way of salaries alone.

In addition to this huge army of babus, the Centre and the states employ a further 6.3 million people in PSUs and departmental undertakings like the Indian Railways. Local bodies like municipalities, zilla parishads and panchayats employ another 2.3 million. This entire cohort of about 23 million people belongs to the 27.2 per cent who make up our middle and upper income groups.

A look at the capital expenditure on account

of "development" suggests that it costs the Centre and the states about Rs 10 to give us a benefit of Re 1! Revenue expenditure very simply means wages, utilities, fuel, repairs and maintenance, and chai-pani aur dawa-daru kharcha. So, the effective cost of government is almost 90 per cent of the cumulative receipts of which the Centre and the states collect as taxes from us and/or beg, borrow and steal for us. This is about a good one-third of our GNP, and growing!

However, the real slap in the face is that "public administration" is categorised as a part of the services sector for national income accounting, and the 14 per cent annual growth in the cost of government is what mainly accounts for the growth of this sector. Even in the time of the coronavirus pandemic, this sector is happily growing. The growth of the industrial sector is marginal, like that of the agricultural sector.

The burgeoning cost of government is our single major public policy issue. Yet, it is not debated at all. All parties go into a funk when they are confronted with these facts. Thus, for the BJP, once again it seems there are only two issues that really matter: Hindutva and the Ram Mandir. And as for the sycophants in the Congress, they are only concerned with the interim Congress president's two issues: Rahul or Priyanka.

Poor Dr Manmohan Singh had listed the reform of the bureaucracy as his first priority, but the politicians paid no heed to him, and hence the bureaucracy saw no need to take him seriously. Now it is Narendra Modi's turn.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, has held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

BIHAR POLLS

The performance of the Bihar government on the health and economic fronts will be a major issue. The popularity of the state government is waning. The state government and the Centre have mismanaged the return of guest workers during the lockdown. They have worked together to divert the debate from substantive issues to emotive rhetoric. But the Opposition has not been able to push the government substantially. Yet, the poll battle will be an exciting affair in Bihar.

Yash Pal Ralhan
Jalandhar

FARM BILLS

WITH THE passing of the three bills, it is being argued that the government is trying to do away with the Minimum Support Price (MSP) regime in the garb of these ordinances. But this is false information being spread by the Opposition parties. The reforms do not remove the MSP nor do they remove the existing APMCs but restricts it to "physical space of the market". There's a lot of misinformation which needs clarity.respective fields even after punishment.

Radhika Pansare
Mumbai

STUDENT SUICIDE

IN A shocking incident, an intermediate girl in Telangana student ended her life on Saturday by consuming pesticide after her parents refused to buy a smartphone for attending online classes. Many boys and girls have lost their lives across the country in last few months due to similar issues. Is only the government responsible for failing to provide all students with resources for their education during the pandemic? I think parents, teachers and society are also responsible. We just encourage them to score good marks and sometimes knowingly or unknowingly, we put them under the pressure. We hardly teach them life science as to how to live, nor we teach them about patience. As a result, if something goes wrong these kids are not prepared mentally to face this challenge and they take such a drastic decision.

M.N. Alam
Saharanpur

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: letters.asianage@gmail.com.



Aakar Patel

Several NGOs trying to uplift India might be forced to shut

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act is a funny old piece of legislation. It appeared in India in 1976 as a law to prevent external interference in India's electoral process and democracy. It prohibited the receiving of foreign money by political parties and their candidates, journalists and newspaper publishers, judges, bureaucrats and members of Parliament.

In time, liberalisation meant that many of these categories could receive foreign money legally and the Indian government actively promoted the bringing in of such money. That, after all, is the foreign direct investment whose numbers this government is so proud of and speaks of regularly. For instance, the media, both print and television and certainly online (which is the most dominant form of media today), can not only receive foreign investment, it can be dominated by it. The largest media companies in India are Facebook and Google, which are entirely foreign owned and managed. Newspapers can receive equity investments from foreign firms as can news channels.

Even political parties managed to

get themselves off the hook on FCRA. In January 2013, a public interest litigation case was filed in the Delhi high court claiming that the BJP and the Congress had got donations from the same company, Vedanta/Sterlite, which were in violation of the FCRA Act. On March 28, 2014, the court held that the BJP and Congress were guilty of violating FCRA and asked the Narendra Modi government and the Election Commission to act against the two parties.

In December 2015, it was reported that the government was making amendments to the law that would get both parties off the hook. This happened in the 2016 Budget, when the definition of foreign source was changed, legitimising the donations received by the political parties. Unfortunately for the parties, this was done in a fairly slipshod fashion and so another amendment was passed in 2018 to again try and get the parties off. This finally happened in March 2018 through the amendment of a repealed law, an entirely farcical operation.

This is the background to the political side of the FCRA, which was the

intent of the legislation. What has happened over the years is that the law has been turned around and instead of reducing foreign influence on politics, it has been made a weapon against non-profit organisations. No government has any fondness for the sector called civil society, but the BJP in particular is hostile to it. In 2016, The Economic Times reported a speech in Bhubaneswar that the Prime Minister made to put forth his views on the subject. Mr Modi offered no evidence for his accusation that NGOs were foreign agents, but was convinced that they were trying to topple his government.

In the entire Modi era, the government has been trying actively to cut the size of the NGO sector. India has over 30 lakh such organisations, which range from neighbourhood associations to the most powerful NGO in the world, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The groups work on education, disaster relief, violence against women, public health, human rights, the criminal justice system, the environment, agriculture and so on. Between 2014 and 2018, a report estimated, there

had been about a 40 per cent cut in foreign funding for these groups.

Yet another amendment made to the FCRA this month seeks to squeeze them further. This was introduced without any advance notice or consultation and passed without much debate. What it does is make it even more difficult for NGOs to function in India and in fact is an invitation for them to shut down.

I have worked in the sector for a few years and can say that it is filled with highly committed individuals who do the work in many sectors that the State in India simply cannot do. This is work that happens without a problem in large parts of the world and in all parts of the democratic world. The damage that is being done to the Indian NGO sector is being done in part because of the paranoia of the BJP that there is some sort of giant agenda behind organisations who do such work. Many of them are highly respected organisations around the world and the one that I worked for has won the Nobel Peace Prize. It is not in the interest of India or its people or even the government to persecute and harass these organisations.

Unfortunately that is what has happened and is happening and the reality is that many of them, already under assault from the State, will have to wind up operations and others will have to scale down.

India's civil society is full of motivated people and much of their work will continue because these individuals are not doing this work because of the money. I have worked with people with a background in investment banking, law and of course the media who have chosen to work in an NGO for much less than in their corporate job. Such Indians will continue their work and it is a shame that they are being hindered.

Today India invites foreign investment in arms and ammunition and bombs and guns, and in alcohol and tobacco, and petroleum and pharmaceuticals and everything else that one can think of. But it restricts investment in India on health, education and people's rights. Something is very wrong with such a state of affairs.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist

IN BRIEF

Shooting outside strip club: 6 hurt

Detroit: A shooting early Monday outside a Detroit strip club has left six people wounded, police said. A large group was outside the club on the city's west side shortly before 2 a.m. when at least one person opened fire, police said, citing preliminary information about the investigation. Details about what led up to the shooting were under investigation, police said. No arrests were immediately reported. Those shot were in their 20s, police said. Five were taken by medics to the hospital and another was transported by private vehicle. Two men were listed in critical condition, police said, and two men and a woman were in stable condition. The condition of another woman who was shot wasn't immediately known by police.

Romania mayor wins poll after death

Bucharest: A mayor in southern Romania grabbed a landslide election victory — despite dying of Coronavirus days earlier, local reports said on Monday. Ion Aliman clocked up 1,057 of 1,600 votes cast in Deveselu municipality even though he died on September 17, reports said.

The ballots had already been printed at the time of Aliman's death and his name could not be removed, according to local officials. After the polls closed, local supporters flocked to his grave to "celebrate the victory". "We want to congratulate him," a Deveselu resident commented under a photo posted on Facebook that showed dozens of people with candles at the local cemetery.

A re-run of the election is now expected.

Deveselu previously hit the headlines in 2018 when a local farmer was ordered to move his flock of sheep because they kept triggering the alarm at a US military facility.

Writer Alexievich leaves Belarus

Minsk: Belarusian writer Svetlana Alexievich has left the country for treatment in Germany, her friend said Monday, after the Nobel Literature Prize winner faced official pressure for supporting the opposition. The 72-year-old author, who has been summoned for questioning by investigators after joining the opposition's Coordination Council, has gone to Germany for planned treatment, her friend Mariya Voiteshonok said. "She will return to Belarus in a month. She is not dropping her activities as a Coordination Council member," Voiteshonok said. She added that Alexievich also planned to visit Italy where she has been awarded a literary prize. The announcement of her departure comes as President Alexander Lukashenko has jailed or forced out most of the country's prominent opposition activists. Known for her Russian-language books with witness accounts of the Soviet era, including World War II and the Chernobyl disaster.

11 KILLED IN MEXICO BAR SHOOTING

Mexico City, Sept. 28: Gunmen killed 11 people, including four women, early Sunday in a bar in the central Mexico state of Guanajuato. State prosecutors said the bullet-ridden bodies were found at a bar near the town of Jaral del Progreso. The area is near the border with Michoacán state, which has been a point of incursion for the Jalisco cartel, which wants to move into Guanajuato. Local media reported the four dead women may have been employed as dancers at the bar, located on the side of a highway. There was no immediate information on a possible motive in the attack, but it bore the signs of a drug gang killing. Guanajuato has been the most violent state in Mexico in recent years, but authorities had hoped the detention of a leader of a local gang on Aug. 2 would help stem the violence.

The detained leader of the Santa Rosa de Lima gang, José Antonio Yépez Ortiz, was better known by his nickname "El Marro," which means "The Sledgehammer." He had long fought a bloody turf battle with the Jalisco cartel, and authorities blamed him for much of the violence in the state.

While murders across the state dropped slightly to 339 in August from 403 in July, they may be rebounding in September as gang members fight to fill the vacuum left by Yépez Ortiz's detention.

Trump paid just \$750 tax in 2016, 2017

President pocketed \$21.2 mn in state, local refunds



Donald Trump

Washington, Sept. 28: President Donald Trump paid just \$750 in federal income taxes the year he ran for president and in his first year in the White House, according to a report in *The New York Times*. Trump, who has fiercely guarded his tax filings and is the only president in modern times not to make them public, paid no federal income taxes in 10 of the past 15 years.

The details of the tax filings published Sunday complicate Trump's description of himself as a shrewd and patriotic businessman, revealing instead a series of financial losses and income from abroad that could come into conflict with his responsibilities as president. The president's financial disclosures indicated he earned at least \$434.9 million in 2018, but the tax filings reported a \$47.4 million loss.

The tax filings also illustrate how a reputed billionaire could pay little to nothing in taxes, while someone in the middle class could pay substantially more than him. Roughly half of Americans pay no income taxes, primarily because of how low their incomes are. But IRS figures indicate that the average tax filer paid roughly \$12,200 in 2017, about 16 times more than what the president paid. The disclosure, which the *Times* said comes from tax return data it obtained extending over two decades, comes at a pivotal moment ahead of the first presidential debate Tuesday and weeks before a divisive election against Democrat Joe Biden.

Speaking at a news conference Sunday at the White House, Trump dismissed the report as "fake

news" and maintained he has paid taxes, though he gave no specifics. He also vowed that information about his taxes "will all be revealed", but he offered no timeline for the disclosure and made similar promises during the 2016 campaign on which he never followed through.

In fact, the president has fielded court challenges against those seeking access to his returns, including the US House, which is suing to get Trump's tax returns as part of congressional oversight.

During his first two years as president, Trump received \$73 million from foreign operations, which in addition to his golf properties in Scotland and Ireland included \$3 million from the Philippines, \$2.3 million from India and \$1 million from Turkey, among other nations. He in 2017 paid \$145,400 in taxes in India and \$156,824 in the Philippines, compared to just \$750 in US income taxes. The *Times* said the tax records did not reveal any unreported connections to Russia. Trump found multiple ways to reduce his tax bills. He has taken tax deductions on personal expenses such as housing, aircraft and \$70,000 to style his hair while he filmed *The Apprentice*.

Washington, Sept. 28: A *New York Times* report that President Donald Trump paid just \$750 in federal income tax the year he entered the White House — and, thanks to colossal losses, no income tax at all in 11 of the 18 years that the *Times* reviewed, suggests why that might have been so. It reported that many of Trump's top businesses are losing money, even as those losses have helped him shrink his federal tax bill to essentially nothing.

The *Times* noted that Alan Garten, a lawyer for the Trump Organisation, said that "most, if not all, of the facts appear to be inaccurate" and asked for the documents on which the reporting was based, which the *Times* declined to provide to protect its sources. He then directly disputed only the amount of taxes Trump had paid.

Some key takeaways: Trump paid just \$750 in taxes in both 2016, 2017.

The newspaper said

Trump initially paid \$95 million in taxes over the 18 years it studied. But he managed to recover most of that money by claiming — and receiving — a stunning \$72.9 million federal tax refund. According to the *Times*, Trump also pocketed \$21.2 million in state and local refunds, which are typically based on federal filings.

Trump's sizable refund became the subject of a now-long-standing Internal Revenue Service audit of his finances.

The audit was widely known. Trump has claimed it was the very reason why he cannot release his returns. But the report is the first to identify the issue that was mainly in dispute.

As a result of the refund, Trump paid an average \$1.4 million in federal taxes from 2000 to 2017, the *Times* reported.

By contrast, the average US taxpayer in the top .001% of earners paid about \$25 million annually over the same timeframe.

Trump has financed an extravagant lifestyle with the use of business expenses

From his homes, his aircraft — and \$70,000 on hair styling during his television show *The Apprentice* — Trump has capitalised on cost incurred from his businesses to finance a luxurious lifestyle.

The *Times* noted that Trump's homes, planes and golf courses are part of the Trump family business and, as such, Trump classified them as business expenses as well. Because companies can write off business expenses as deductions, all such expenses have helped reduce his tax liability.

Many of President's best-known businesses are money-losers

The President has frequently pointed to his far-flung hotels, golf courses and resorts as evidence of his success as a developer and businessman. Yet these properties have been draining money.

The *Times* reported that Trump has claimed \$315 million in losses since 2000 on his golf courses, including the Trump National Doral near Miami, which he has portrayed as a crown jewel in his business empire. Likewise, Trump International Hotel in Washington has lost \$55 million.

Foreign visitors have helped support Trump's properties

Since Trump began his presidential run, lobbyists, foreign governments and politicians have lavished significant sums of money on his properties, a spending spree that raised questions about its propriety and legality.

The report illustrates just how much that spending has been: Since 2015, his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida has taken in \$5 million more a year from a surge in membership. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association spent at least \$397,602 in 2017 at Trump's Washington hotel. — AP

TAX CHARGES ADD FUEL TO FIRST DEBATE

Washington, Sept. 28: US President Donald Trump on Sunday faced allegations that he paid little or no income tax for years before he came to power, as his cloudy financial past stoked controversy ahead of the first election debate. The *New York Times* alleged the billionaire president paid just \$750 federal income taxes in 2016, the year he won the White House, and no income taxes at all in 10 of the previous 15 years because he reported losing more money than he made.

Trump, who immediately dismissed the accusations as "totally fake news," is readying to come face to face with his Democratic opponent Joe Biden at a live debate on Tuesday.

The Republican leader has broken with presidential tradition by refusing to release his tax returns, fighting a long battle in the courts and triggering speculation about what they might contain.

"First of all, I paid a lot and I paid a lot of state income taxes too... It'll all be revealed," Trump said as he shrugged off the *Times* story that cited tax data extending more than 20 years.

The paper said the records "reveal the hollowness, but also the wizardry, behind the self-made-billionaire image"

Russia, China paid money to Biden son: Don

Washington, Sept. 28: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's son Hunter received a large sum of money from Russia and China, US President Donald Trump has alleged and said that the mainstream media is "underplaying" the story and keeping quiet on it.

"It's hard to believe, when you see the kind of money that he (Hunter) has made from China,

from Russia, where the wife of the mayor of Moscow gives him three-and-a-half million dollars and nobody even has any question about it," Trump told reporters at a White House news conference on Sunday.

According to a Senate Republican report released last week, during Biden's tenure as vice president, Hunter, 50, received a \$3.5 million

wire transfer from Elena Baturina, the widow of Moscow's former mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

The report further alleged that Chinese nationals lavished Hunter and other members of the Biden family with money, giving Hunter and Biden's brother James credit cards for a \$100,000 international shopping spree.

Despite such a damaging report being published,

the mainstream media is "underplaying the story and keeping quiet on it," Trump said.

"If we had a media that was fair — even just reasonable — this would be the biggest story for years and years and years. Then you'd really be entitled to real Pulitzer Prizes, not the fake committee that gives you these fake awards," he told reporters. — PTI



People cross a street in Melbourne's central business district on Monday as five million residents in Australia's second biggest city emerged from an almost two-month overnight curfew as just five Coronavirus cases were recorded in worst-hit Victoria state. — AFP

Quarantine breach: Tougher UK fines in force

DUBAI TO RESTRICT NIGHTLIFE AMID COVID-19 INCREASE

London, Sept. 28: People across England will be required by law from Monday to self-isolate if they test positive for the Coronavirus or face a £1,000 fine, which increases to £10,000 for repeat offenders. The government said that as the infection is now spreading rapidly again across the country, the tougher measures are aimed at ensuring compliance and reducing the spread of Covid-19.

"These new measures are about saving lives. Everyone must take personal responsibility and self-isolate if they test positive or if told to do so by NHS Test and Trace," said UK Home Secretary Priti

Dubai, Sept. 28: Dubai has announced new restrictions on nightlife to curb a rising tide of Coronavirus infections.

Dubai's tourism authorities have ordered all bars and restaurants in the city-state to stop serving and halt "entertainment activities" at 1 a.m.

Hotels will be restricted

by law to offering only delivery and room service after 3 a.m.

Authorities urged dining and drinking establishments to adhere to anti-virus protocols or face "consequential procedures and violations," including shutdowns and huge fines.

The new rules are the first since restaurants and

bars were allowed to reopen in July as Dubai, a top travel destination known for its lively nightlife, emerged from lockdown.

The United Arab Emirates has recorded more than 90,600 infections since the pandemic began, including over 400 deaths.

— AP

as a result of the compulsory quarantine, lasting around 14 days, will also be eligible for a new £500 Test and Trace Support Payment. The rules come in as infections continue to rise across the UK but only 18 per cent of people with symptoms of the deadly virus going into isolation, according to a study commissioned by the UK government.

"These simple steps can make a huge difference to reduce the spread of the virus, but we will not hesitate to put in place further measures if cases continue to rise," he said. Local authorities will set up the Test and Trace Support Payment schemes. — PTI

Pak court stays release of Pearl murder accused

Money laundering case: Shahbaz held

Islamabad, Sept. 28: Pakistan's Supreme Court on Monday barred the Sindh government from releasing British-born al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and his three aides — the main accused in the abduction and murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002.

In April, a two-judge Sindh High Court bench commuted the death sentence of 46-year-old Sheikh, who was convicted in the abduction and murder

in a money laundering case. Shahbaz, the Leader of the Opposition and the younger brother of three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, was taken into custody from

of Pearl in 2002, to seven years. The court also acquitted his three aides who were serving life terms in the case — almost

two decades after they were found guilty and jailed. Two days after the Sindh High Court overturned Sheikh's conviction,

the Lahore High Court's premises, where PML-N workers gathered ahead of the hearing in the Rs 700 crores (\$41.9 million) money laundering case. — PTI

COURT INDICTS ZARDARI, SISTER

Islamabad, Sept. 28: An anti-corruption court in Pakistan on Monday indicted former president Asif Ali Zardari and his sister Faryal Talpur in a money laundering case. It comes just ahead of the planned protests next month by Opposition parties to demand the resignation of PM Imran Khan. — PTI

550 Armenians killed in fight with Azerbaijan

Yerevan, Sept. 28: Armenia and Azerbaijani forces kept fighting Monday over the disputed separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh after hostilities broke out the day before, with both sides blaming each other for resuming the deadly attacks.

Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry told the Interfax news agency Monday that over 550 Armenian troops have been killed, a claim that Armenian officials denied. According to Nagorno-Karabakh officials, 31 servicemen have been killed so far.

Armenian Defence Ministry spokesman Artsrun Hovhannisyan said Monday over 200 people have been wounded.

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry claimed that Armenian forces started shelling the town of Tartar on Monday morning, while Armenian officials said the fighting continued throughout the

night and Baku resumed "offensive actions" in the morning.

The heavy fighting broke out between the two countries on Sunday morning in the region that lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since 1994 at the end of a separatist war.

It was not immediately clear what sparked the fighting, the heaviest since clashes in July killed 16 people from both sides. Mostly mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh — a region around 4,400 square kilometres (1,700 square miles) or about the size of the United States state of Delaware — lies 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the Armenian border. Local soldiers backed by Armenia also occupy some Azerbaijani territory outside the region. — AP

US: China using SCS outposts for control

Washington, Sept. 28: China is using its militarised outposts in the South China Sea as platforms of coercion to assert control over waters it has no lawful claim over, the United States has said, demanding President Xi Jinping to honour his commitment that these maritime constructions "would not target or impact any country". Beijing claims almost all of the 1.3 million square-mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region which, in parts, is claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Beijing has impeded commercial activity like fishing and mineral exploration by neighbouring nations in recent years, saying the ownership of the resource-rich maritime territory belongs to China for hundreds of years. US State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortogus on Sunday said five years ago on September 25, 2015 the Chinese President, standing in the

White House Rose Garden, promised 'China does not intend to pursue militarisation' of the Spratly Islands, and China's outposts 'would not target or impact any country'.

Instead the Chinese government backed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has pursued reckless and provocative militarisation of these disputed outposts, deploying anti-ship cruise missiles, expanding military radar with signal intelligence capabilities, constructing dozens of fighter jet hangars and runways capable of accommodating combat aircraft, Ortogus said.

"The CCP uses these militarised outposts as platforms of coercion to assert control over waters to which Beijing has no lawful maritime claim," Ortogus said. They serve as staging grounds for the hundreds of maritime militia vessels and China Coast Guard ships that regularly harass civilian carriers and impede legitimate law enforcement activities, offshore fishing, and hydrocarbon development by neighbouring states. — PTI

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37,981.63	1.59
Nifty 50	11,227.55	1.60
S&P 500*	3,352.21	1.63
Dollar (₹)	73.78	-0.21
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.50	-0.54
Euro (₹)	85.85	-0.05
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,449▼194	0.38
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	6.056	0.018
IN 10-Yr bond yield	0.658	-0.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	42.37	0.45

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Deadline for various schemes extended to Dec.

Providing relief to companies, the government has extended the duration of "several schemes" till December 31. The corporate affairs ministry has extended the Companies Fresh Start Scheme and the LLP Settlement Scheme, besides allowing companies to conduct EGMs and board meetings through video conference or other audio-visual means till end of this year. The earlier deadlines were to end on Sept. 30.

SBI rolls out festive offers for retail customers



State Bank of India announced several festive offers for its retail borrowers, including 100 per cent waiver of processing fee for customers applying for car, gold, and personal loans through Yono. The bank is giving concessions up to 10 bps on interest rates for the customers based on their credit score and home loan amount. For car loan borrowers, it is offering interest rate starting from 7.5 per cent.

Sebi slaps ₹20 L fine on Bonanza Portfolio

The Sebi slapped a penalty of Rs 20 lakh on stock broker Bonanza Portfolio Ltd for mis-using clients' funds and securities, among other issues. The Sebi carried out a multi-theme inspection of books of Bonanza (noticee) during May-July 2018 and found that the broker misutilised client funds. It was observed that the misutilisation of the clients' funds by Bonanza is in the range of Rs 9.6 crore to Rs 45 crore.

Housing sales in top 7 cities down 61% in Sept. qtr

Housing sales are estimated to have fallen 61 per cent year-on-year during July-September to 14,415 units, against 36,826 units, across seven major cities on lower demand, says property consultant JLL India. Housing sales are reported at 1,742 units in Bengaluru, 1,570 units in Chennai, 3,112 units in Delhi-NCR, 2,122 units in Hyderabad, 390 units in Kolkata, 4,135 units in Mumbai and 1,344 units in Pune, JLL said.

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Meet postponed; 3 members term ends
Oops! Truncated MPC can't meet

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday announced a rescheduling of this week's interesting meeting after the government failed to appoint external members to the monetary policy committee (MPC). The RBI in a statement said that new dates will be announced shortly without giving any reason for postponing the bi-monthly monetary policy review that was scheduled during September 29 to October 1. The terms of three external people on the six-member MPC ended last month, and they are yet to be replaced by the government. The rules of the panel require at least four members to be present at the meeting. The RBI is awaiting the government's decision on new external members to the committee. As per the RBI Act, external members of MPC have a tenure



of four years. The terms of the previous external members—Pami Dua, Chetan Ghate, and Ravindra Dholakia—are unlikely to be extended as that can be done only through legislative changes to the Reserve Bank of India Act. The MPC came into existence in October 2016. Some economists pointed out that the move would create uncertainty at a time when the economy is facing its worst contraction while some downplayed the move.

"The government may have its own reasoning and we may have to wait and see what is its thinking (for delaying the appointment of the new members)," said an economist. "Postponing of the MPC meeting a week or two weeks later may not make a great difference to the current economic situation," said another economist. The RBI is likely to maintain a status quo on rates as retail inflation continues to remain elevated beyond the tolerable limit. However, the RBI would continue to emphasise its accommodative stance and keep doing tweaks to liquidity and regulatory operations to keep financial market conditions benign said economists. The RBI has cut repo rate by 115 basis points since February last year. One basis point is one hundredth of a percentage point.

ITI set to make 4G, 5G equipment

New Delhi, Sept. 28: IT company Tech Mahindra is in an advanced stage of sharing technology with ITI Limited and said the state-run electronics manufacturing unit will be ready to make 4G and 5G equipment in a few months, an official of the Mahindra group firm said.

The country's potential to produce talent and software at large scale, coupled with geo-political scenario with China, presents a wonderful opportunity for India to indigenise technologies, Tech Mahindra network services CEO Manish Vyas told PTI. In June, the company

signed an agreement with ITI for development of 4G and 5G technologies. "We are in the stages of exchanging design, starting to plan and also doing a couple of test runs and trials based on the technology that they are looking to manufacture," Vyas said. —PTI

Stocks rise on stimulus hope, unlock moves

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28

The broad-based rally in the market, led by the banks and financials sector, continued on Monday on expectations of the government announcing a stimulus ahead of the key festivals, further opening of the economy, postponement of a Supreme Court verdict in case relating to interest on loans during the moratorium period and positive global cues. Sensex and Nifty-50 gained over 1.5 per cent, with the Sensex rising above 38,000 mark intraday and closing 592.97 points up at 37,981.63. The Nifty-50 gained 177.30 points to close at 11,227.55. Siddhartha Khemka, head-retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "The global cues turned positive amid signs of China's economic recovery, given its upbeat

industrial data. Further, the hopes of a stimulus package announcement by the US government also kept the mood positive. On the domestic front, positive global cues, expectations of a stimulus package from the Indian government along with news flows around further opening up of the economy, cheered the market. Banking stocks gained on hopes that the government may infuse some capital into the sector in order to provide support to the banks over waiving interest rates on loans under moratorium." The broader market outperformed the benchmarks with Nifty Mid-cap 50 up 3.63 per cent and Nifty Smallcap 100 up 3.58 per cent. Reports saying the Maharashtra government may soon allow dine in services in Restaurants led to rally in hotel stocks.

Engineering exports in August decline 18.7%

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 28

Increased demand for basic metals did not help the total exports of engineering goods, which once again declined in August after recording positive growth in July. Subdued industrial activity is still pulling down shipments of value-added products. Overall engineering exports from India dropped by 18.73 per cent during April-August against the same period last year. In August, exports were down 8 per cent. Exports, which were down 63 per cent in April, have been improving month-on-month and had registered a positive growth of 9.6 per cent in July, as per the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India. While some critical basic metal exports grew, 28 out of 33 product categories registered a year-on-year fall. Iron and steel saw a jump of 43.7 per cent to \$5.3 billion from \$3.7 billion



over the same period last fiscal. Likewise, copper and products witnessed a growth of 60.3 per cent from \$313 million to \$501.7 million. Value-added products of iron and steel shipments saw a sharp drop of 29.7 per cent from \$ 2.9 billion to \$2.04 billion. Exports of industrial machinery were down 47 per cent, IC Engines and parts 31 per cent, pumps 34 per cent, air conditioners and refrigeration 43 per cent and machine tools 34.5 per cent. Shipments of motor vehicles and cars declined 56.5 per cent and two- & three-wheelers 46 per cent.

Probe into dumping of API from China

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, SEPT. 28

The government has initiated a probe against alleged dumping of active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) ceftriaxone sodium sterile by China. Based on complaints by Nectar Life Science and Sterile India, the Directorate General of Trade Remedies has initiated an investigation against the imports of ceftriaxone sodium sterile, the API of cephalosporin antibiotic used for treating various infection and inflammatory conditions. The applicants have contended that material injury is being caused to the domestic Industry due to dumped imports from China and have requested for imposition of anti-dumping duty on the imports of the goods from that country, a notification by DGFT said. The applicants have claimed that the goods produced by the domestic industry are identical to the subject goods exported to India. According to them, Chinese producers are not able to demonstrate that their costs and price information are market-driven. Dumping happens when a country exports an item at a price lower than prevailing in its domestic market. "On the basis of the duly substantiated written application by the domestic industry and having satisfied itself, on the basis of the prima facie evidence submitted by the domestic industry, about dumping of the subject goods originating in or exported from the subject country, injury to the domestic industry and causal link between such alleged dumping and injury ... the authority, hereby, initiates an investigation," the DGFT said in the notification.

Startup space gets \$63 bn, 27 unicorns in five years

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI SEPT. 28

The startups ecosystem has raised \$63 billion growth capital between 2016 and 2020 and has spawned 27 unicorns. Of the total inflows, nearly half, or \$34 billion, came in 2019 alone and another \$17 billion in 2020 till May, according to the data collated by the Indian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association and Praxis Global Alliance. This huge funding has helped India become the third largest tech startup ecosystem in the world after the US and China. As per the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, India has around 24,000 firms registered as startups. In recent years, the market has witnessed emergence of a large number of tech-based startups. Nasscom data shows that there are 8,900 to 9,300 tech startups in the country and the ecosystem is adding more than 1,000 every year. Tech-enabled players continue to drive investors' interest and have dominated early stage funding. Between 2016 and 2019, the startup ecosystem saw the emergence of 27 unicorns, or those with valuation of \$1 billion and more. Byju's, BigBasket, Delhivery, Flipkart, Hike, Makemytrip, Oyo, Ola, Paytm, PolicyBazaar, Quickr, Snapdeal, Swiggy, Udaan and Zomato are some of the PE-funded unicorns.

Analysts fear Lakshmi Vilas is heading Yes Bank way

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, SEPT. 28



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of a three-member committee of directors to run the day-to-day functioning of cash-strapped Lakshmi Vilas Bank. The move comes after its shareholders voted out seven directors, including both its promoters and the newly RBI-appointed CEO S. Sundar, at its annual general meeting on Friday.

- ▶ RBI appoints committee of directors to run the bank's operations
- ▶ Move comes after AGM votes out 7 directors, including promoters and RBI-appointed CEO
- ▶ Analysts fear deposit withdrawals could precipitate liquidity issues at bank

Analysts worry that the negative news around the bank could lead to an increase in deposit withdrawals, which may precipitate the liquidity issues at the bank, thereby requiring the RBI to impose a moratorium on the deposit withdrawals, further denting the depositor confidence in the banking system. Depositor confidence which took a hit after the PMC Bank and Yes Bank crisis a year ago, has stabilised in the last six months, they said. Bankers said that in the immediate term, the RBI will have to focus on ensuring that the liquidity in the bank remains sound and ensure a sustainable resolution for the bank in the long-term. They also pointed out that amalgamation with a big bank should not be preferred as it acts as a drag on the acquirer and creates uncertainty among the investors of the other banks. "A resolution similar to Catholic Syrian Bank or Yes Bank will reinforce the confidence of investors and should be explored, whereby a strategic investor could be

inducted in the bank for a sustainable turnaround without impacting the other banks in the system," said a banker. The three-member committee of directors (CoD) will exercise the discretionary powers of MD & CEO in the ad-interim, the bank said in a statement on Monday. The RBI on Sunday appointed the CoD composed of three independent directors—Meeta Makhan, Shakti Sinha, and Satish Kumar Kalra—and the committee will be headed by Meeta Makhan, the bank statement said. The LVB annual general meeting outcome was unprecedented in many ways. According to Shriram Subramanian, founder and MD of InGovern Research Services, a proxy advisory and corporate governance firm, "Shareholders are increasingly demanding that directors be performing. We saw this last month when shareholders voted out an independent director who did not have sufficient attendance in Shriram Transport Company." "The RBI will have to facilitate a quick merger or give approval for any new investor to stabilise

the bank," added Subramanian. The developments have unfolded when the Chennai-based bank is undergoing a challenging phase and is in talks for a merger with Clix Capital. The bank, meanwhile, said its liquidity position remains strong. The lender also said that it has a fully functional board despite the rejection of seven directors by shareholders. The Tamil Nadu-focused bank was placed under prompt corrective action (PCA) by the RBI in September 2019 over high level of bad loans, lack of sufficient capital and negative return on assets for two consecutive years. Under PCA, banks are mandated to cut lending and focus on reducing the concentration of loans to certain sectors. They are also restricted from opening new branches and paying dividends. The bank's deposits declined 27 per cent to Rs 21,161 crore at the end of June on a year-on-year basis. The Lakshmi Vilas Bank stock ended 5.21 per cent higher at Rs 20.20 on the BSE after dipping in early trade.

BBB to interview 15 for SBI MD post on Oct. 5

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28



The government is likely to soon pick a candidate for the position of managing director (MD) in State Bank of India (SBI) out of 15 short-listed candidates. A government panel, Bank Board Bureau (BBB), will interview the candidates online on October 5, said a finance ministry source. By the existing structure, SBI has four MDs, namely, Dinesh Khara, Arijit Basu, S.C. Setty and Ashwani Bhatia. Khara has been already named as the next chairman of SBI once incumbent Rajnish Kumar hangs up his boots on October 7. Once this post is filled up, the country's largest lender will fall short of one MD and another post will become vacant on Basu's superannuation in October end.

hats in the ring include Alok Choudhary (chief development officer), P.C. Kandapal (MD & CEO, SBI General). Sanjeev Nautiyal (DMD) and Swaminathan (CFO)," the source added. The selection process is based on various parameters and most get eliminated in the final round. "For example, four candidates from Central Bank of India had appeared for the ED post of PSU banks, but none could make it to the position. Similarly, nine candidates had appeared for the same interview from the bank a couple of years ago, but none of them was found eligible for the post of ED," the source said. The BBB generally reviews both five-year internal performance appraisal of a candidate and performance in the interview, with both getting equal weight.

ATHER ENERGY UNVEILS SERIES 1 E-SCOOTER

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, SEPT. 28

Ather Energy, the electric vehicle startup, has revealed the collector's edition of the Ather 450X scooter called 'Series1'. The Bengaluru-based company has announced that the Series1 will be given only to the customers who pre-ordered the 450X scooter before their prices were announced on January 28. While Ather 450X scooter was priced at Rs 1.59 lakh at Bengaluru showroom, a spokesperson at the company told PC that Series 1 electric scooter would also carry the same price when it will be made available in November. The company said that the deliveries of Series1 scooters will begin in all 11 cities —Bengaluru, Chennai, Kozhikode, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Coimbatore, Delhi NCR, Kozhikode, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Kolkata.

Adani debunks GDP rhetoric, says India will be 2nd largest by 2050

‘₹1 invested in Adani Ent. yielded 800-times return’

New Delhi, Sept. 28: A rupee invested in Adani Enterprises two-and-a-half decades back has given over 800-times return, Gautam Adani said as he saw his infrastructure conglomerate evolve into an integrated 'platform of platforms'. Speaking at the JP Morgan India summit Adani said the seaports-to-airports-to-energy group's incubation model has created six publicly traded companies with thousands of jobs and unprecedented shareholder value.

"A one-rupee investment in Adani Enterprises (at the time of) our first IPO in 1994 has returned over 800x," he said. A college dropout, Adani, 58, started with trading in commodities and went on to build a conglomerate. "We basically build infrastructure that enables 'flow'—the flow of goods and materials, the flow of electrons, the flow of people, and the flow of data. This focus on helping build India's infrastructure forms the core of our philosophy," he said. —PTI

"For the sake of the fans of the GDP metric, let's look at some statistics. The

trillion. Projecting for another 30 years, in 2050 the global GDP is expected to be about \$170 trillion with India becoming the second-largest economy in the world," he said. Adani said short-term setbacks due to a global crisis cannot be used to write off the country, as its fundamentals remain intact. "The current focus on standardised GDP predictions as against truly understanding what a nation could look like over a decade has unfortunately become one of the primary elements for measuring the health of an economy. In my view, patience and long-term planning and most importantly, an alignment with the government's business agenda are what creates the greatest value," he said. Adani said India needs \$1.5 to 2 trillion of capital over the next decade. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Leicester hit Man City for five

London: Jamie Vardy's hat-trick dealt an early blow to Manchester City's hopes of wrestling back the Premier League title as they conceded three penalties in a 5-2 defeat to Leicester, while Newcastle's late spot-kick to snatch a 1-1 draw at Tottenham sparked fresh debate over the handball rule. City were without a host of first-team regulars due to injury and Covid infections, but the deficiencies at the back that undid their title defence last season were again exposed by the pace and finishing prowess of Vardy as a Pep Guardiola team conceded five for the first time in his coaching career. Leicester stormed to the top of the league, but had to come from behind to extend their perfect start to the season. — *AFP*

Ronaldo salvages draw for Juve

Rome: Even on a night when Juventus were outplayed for long stretches, the nine-time defending Serie A champions managed to salvage a point in a 2-2 draw at Roma. Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice, including a second-half equalizer with a towering header after Juventus had been reduced to 10 men, while Jordan Veretout had a brace for Roma. "We got back into it, even after the red card," Ronaldo said. "By the end of the season this could prove to be an important point." Veretout put Roma ahead in the 31st with a penalty following a handball from Adrien Rabiot, who was trying to block a shot from Veretout. Ronaldo then equalized from the spot after Lorenzo Pellegrini used his arm to block the five-time Ballon d'Or winner. — *AP*

Messi scores as Barca win big

Madrid: Lionel Messi scored in his first game since trying to leave Barcelona as Ronald Koeman began his tenure as coach by overseeing a 4-0 La Liga demolition of Villarreal on Sunday. Messi converted from the spot 10 minutes before half-time and it was the Argentinian's cross that then forced Pau Torres into an own-goal, after an early double from the Ansu Fati had already put Barca in charge. It meant Barcelona's past, present and future were all amongst the goals on the same afternoon as Luis Suarez, whose departure was confirmed on Thursday, marked his Atletico Madrid debut by scoring twice in a 6-1 win over Granada. In a farewell message to his best friend and former neighbour last week, Messi took another swipe at the Barca board by saying he was not surprised by the clumsy way Suarez's exit had been handled. — *AFP*

Heat book finals clash with Lakers

Miami: The Miami Heat poured it on in the fourth quarter to beat the Boston Celtics 125-113 on Sunday and book a NBA Finals showdown with the Los Angeles Lakers. The Heat reached the championship series for the sixth time in club history with a four games to two victory over the Celtics in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference finals. When the finals start on Wednesday they'll be up against a Lakers team led by LeBron James — who reached the title series four times with Miami and won two titles before departing as a free agent in 2014. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Delhi Capitals vs Sunrisers Hyderabad from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

French Open: Matches from 2.30 pm on Star Sports, Select 2

FOOTBALL

Spanish League Real Sociedad vs Valencia from 10.30 pm; Getafe vs Real Betis from 1 am (Wednesday) on LaLiga page on Facebook

UEFA Champions League Play-offs: Dynamo Kyiv vs Gent from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1; Ferencvaros vs Molde from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six; Omonia vs Olympiacos from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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RCB mum Indians

ABD's knock powers Bangalore to down MI in super over

Dubai, Sept. 28: Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Mumbai Indians in a thrilling Super Over contest in the Indian Premier League on Monday after the match was tied during regulation 20 overs.

In the Super Over, Navdeep Saini conceded only 7 runs and RCB skipper Virat Kohli hit Jasprit Bumrah for a boundary off the final delivery to win it for his team.

Chasing a target of 202, Mumbai Indians managed 201 for 5 after Ishan Kishan (99 off 58 balls) and Kieron Pollard (60 off 24 balls) nearly pulled off an incredible chase but could manage 8 off the required 19 runs in the last over.

When RCB batted, half centuries from AB de Villiers, Aaron Finch and Devdutt Padikkal propelled them to 201 for 3 after being put into bat.

De Villiers scored 55 off 24 balls while Finch (52 off 35 balls) and Padikkal (54 off 40 balls) also contributed handsomely.

For MI, Trent Boult got 2 for 34 and Rahul Chahar got the other wicket.

Earlier, it was De Villiers, who used all his might during the death overs to smash his way to an unbeaten 55 off 24 balls, taking the score past 200-run mark. His innings had four sixes and as many boundaries as the swift yet brutal assault of Jasprit Bumrah (0/42 in 4 overs) will be remembered for a long time.

Even James Pattinson

● **It was AB de Villiers who used all his might during the death overs to smash his way to an unbeaten 55 off 24 balls, taking the score past 200-run mark.**

(0/51 in 4 overs) received a lot of stick as two speed merchants accounted for 8 off the 10 sixes in the RCB innings.

The last five overs produced 78 runs with Shivam Dube scoring 27 not out off 10 balls.

While Australia's white ball skipper Aaron Finch scored 52 off 35 balls to get his team off to a flying start, the extremely elegant Padikkal upped the ante in the later half with some delightful big hits, scoring 54 off 40 balls. The duo added 81 runs for the opening stand.

Padikkal's innings was studded with five boundaries and two sixes and a good stand of 62 runs for the third wicket with De Villiers, who then provided the final flourish as he has been doing for years now. The tall upright Padikkal's second IPL half-ton will be remembered specially for two sixes off fast bowler James Pattinson. The first was when the left-hander rocked on the backfoot and punched it over mid-off and the next was a stand and deliver straight into the sight screen.

— *PTI*



AB de Villiers of Royal Challengers Bangalore en route to his unbeaten 55 against Mumbai Indians in their Indian Premier League match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Monday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Devdutt Padikkal c Pollard b Boult 54, Aaron Finch c Pollard b Boult 52, Virat Kohli c Sharma b Chahar 3, AB de Villiers (not out) 55, Shivam Dube (not out) 27. **Extras: (lb-7, w-3) 10. Total: (for 3 wkts, in 20 overs) 201.**

FoW: 1-81, 2-92, 3-154.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-34-2, James Pattinson 4-0-51-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-31-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-42-0, Krunal Pandya 3-0-23-0, Kieron Pollard 1-0-13-0.

Mumbai Indians: R. Sharma (c) c sub (P. Negi) b Washington Sundar 8, Q de Kock c sub (P. Negi) b Chahal 14, S. Yadav c de Villiers b Udana 0, Ishan Kishan c Padikkal b Udana 99, H. Pandya c sub (P. Negi) b Zampa 15, K. Pollard (not out) 60, K. Pandya (not out) 0. **Extras: (w 5) 5. Total: (for 5 wkts, in 20 overs) 201.**

FoW: 1-14, 2-16, 3-39, 4-78, 5-197.

Bowling: Isuru Udana 4-0-45-2, Washington Sundar 4-0-12-1, Navdeep Saini 4-0-43-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-48-1, Adam Zampa 4-0-53-1.

Super Over: Mumbai Indians (7/1) lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore (11/0).

Pooran reacts in Nich of time

Dubai, Sept. 28: Nicholas Pooran stunned the cricket world and social media with a gravity-defying piece of fielding to prevent a six on a record-breaking night in the IPL. Pooran dived cat-like to grab the ball at full stretch six feet over the boundary before twisting in mid-air and backhanding it over the rope a split-second before he hit the ground.

The West Indians' acrobatics to deny Rajasthan Royals batsman Sanju Samson a six weren't enough, however, to stop his Kings XI Punjab side losing to the biggest run chase in IPL history in Sharjah on Sunday.

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar called it "the best save I have seen in my life. Simply incredible!!" — prompting thanks to the "god-of-cricket" from Punjab's fielding coach Jonty Rhodes.

"(There) really is NO question about it being



Kings XI Punjab's Nicholas Pooran makes a gravity-defying save in their IPL match against Rajasthan Royals in Sharjah on Sunday.

THE best save, EVER. Fantastic work by @nicholas_47 who inspired the rest of the @lionsdenkxip fielders to put on 1 of the best defensive fielding displays I have ever seen," Rhodes tweeted.

Former England batsman Kevin Pietersen, commentating on television, was blown away by Trinidad-born Pooran's

"unbelievable" exploit, which resulted in two runs being taken instead of six.

"No way, no way, no way. That is unbelievable! The save of T20 cricket ever, that is the best I have seen," Pietersen said.

The video of the spectacular effort lit up social media.

"Pooran save for the boundary was inhuman

extraordinary, he has redefined the human thinking capability, take a bow," said one Twitter user.

Another said: "Wowza, superman Nicolas Pooran".

Pooran's effort came after his eight-ball 25 with the bat as King's XI scored 223/2 after batting first in the match. — *AFP*

DELHI LOOK TO CONTINUE MOMENTUM

Abu Dhabi, Sept. 28: Off to the best possible start with two wins on the trot, a confident Delhi Capitals will hope to keep the juggernaut rolling when they take on the winless Sunrisers Hyderabad in an IPL match here on Tuesday. Both sides have endured contrasting campaigns so far.

Delhi head in to the game after two morale-boosting victories. The Shreyas Iyer-led side edged past Kings XI Punjab in a thrilling Super Over before thrashing Chennai Super Kings comprehensively to jump to the top of the points table.

On the other hand, SRH are the only side yet to register a win in the tournament, having lost both their games and David Warner and his men will be desperate to turn things around. — *PTI*

Self-belief behind Tewatia's high 5

Sharjah, Sept. 28: Rahul Tewatia, who became an overnight star by smashing West Indian pacer Sheldon Cottrell for five sixes in an over, says his self-belief did not waver despite the "worst 20 balls" he ever played early in his roller-coaster knock.

His sensational effort helped Rajasthan Royals beat Kings XI Punjab in an incredible IPL match on Sunday night. Early on his his innings, he was struggling to put bat to ball.

"The dugout knows I can hit the ball long. I knew I had to believe in myself. It was a matter of one six," the 27-year-old Tewatia said after the Royals' 4-wicket win.

"Five (sixes) in the over, that is amazing. I tried to hit the leg-spinner, but unfortunately I couldn't. So I had to hit other bowlers."

He hit those big hits in the 18th over off Cottrell, four of them on the trot, to turn the match on its head after the Royals needed 51 runs from the last three overs.

Tewatia struggled to connect with the ball initially after he was sent at Steve Smith's fall ahead of the likes of Robin Uthappa. However, with he wasting the deliveries at the crucial juncture, pressure was building on Sanju Samson.

Asked about it, the player from Haryana said, "Now I



Rahul Tewatia of Rajasthan Royals in action against Kings XI Punjab in an IPL match at Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Sunday. — *BCCI*

am better. The worst 20 balls I have ever played. After then I began to hit so I kept going. I will never forget this knock." — *PTI*

TEWATIA ASKED FOR 'PAT ON THE BACK' LAST SEASON

New Delhi, Sept. 28: Rahul Tewatia had to request for a "pat on the back" last year but this season he has earned it.

In a debriefing video of the 2019 season that has gone viral following his match-winning six-hitting spree on Sunday, Tewatia, who played for Delhi Capitals last year, can be seen walking up to head coach Ricky Ponting to remind the legendary Australian about his four catches in the win against the mighty Mumbai Indians.

Tewatia stops Ponting in his stride after he concludes his post-match dressing room speech, patting the likes of Rishabh Pant, Shikhar Dhawan,

Colin Ingram and the bowlers for their match-winning effort at the Wankhede Stadium.

With Tewatia yearning for recognition for his four catches, Ponting obliges by telling the entire squad, albeit in a lighter vein.

"Boys Tewatia took four catches and wants a pat on the back," Ponting tells the dressing room much to everyone's amusement and walks away with a grin on his face.

Axar Patel then chides Tewatia in lighter vein for asking for recognition. "Apne haq ke live ladenge (I will fight for what I am owed)," Tewatia says at the end of the footage. — *PTI*

Coach confident of Rahul's IPL success

New Delhi, Sept. 28: "I always told Rahul (Tewatia) that he will have his day in the IPL and it would be because of his batting," the excitement and satisfaction was palpable in childhood coach Vijay Yadav's voice while talking about his ward's match-defining 31-ball 53 for Rajasthan Royals in an IPL encounter.

IPL throws up unlikely stars and Sunday was a "day of Rahuls" when the lesser known Tewatia from Haryana's Sihi village in Faridabad district stole the thunder from India star K.L. Rahul, striking five sixes in an over.

And icing on the cake was Royals Brand

Ambassador Shane Warne's praise. "Firstly what courage and heart shown by Tewatia, especially after his poor start with bat, well done young man awesome." Warne summed it up in a tweet that Tewatia would remember for a long time.

Yadav, a former hard-hitting India wicketkeeper-batsman remembers a shy kid who came at his "Cricket Gurukul" in 1998-99 as an eight-year old.

"His father is a lawyer in a Faridabad court and they are a middle-class family. But what struck me was his family's enthusiasm even though he was a shy kid," Yadav remembers. — *PTI*

KEY RESULTS

Men's first round: Hugo Gaston (FRA) bt Maxime Janvier (FRA) 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 6-3; Yoshihito Nishioka (JPN) bt Felix Auger-Aliassime (CAN x19) 7-5, 6-3, 6-3; Tommy Paul (USA) bt James Duckworth (AUS) 6-2, 6-3, 6-2; Jack Sock (USA) bt Reilly Opelka (USA) 6-4, 6-4, 6-3; Dominic Thiem (AUT x3) bt Marin Cilic (CRO) 6-4, 6-3, 6-3; Pierre-Hugues Herbert (FRA) bt Michael Mmoh (USA) 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Women's first round: Amanda Anisimova (USA x25) bt Tamara Korpatich (GER) 6-2, 6-0; Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (RUS) bt Svetlana Kuznetsova (RUS x28) 6-1, 2-6, 6-1; Kiki Bertens (NED x5) bt Katarina Zavatska (UKR) 2-6, 6-2, 6-0; Elina Svitolina (UKR x3) bt Varvara Gracheva (RUS) 7-6 (7/2), 6-4; Serena Williams (USA x6) bt Kristie Ahn (USA) 7-6 (7/2), 6-0; Petra Kvitova (CZE x7) bt Oceane Dodin (FRA) 6-3, 7-5.



Serena Williams of the US plays a shot against countrymate Kristie Ahn in their French Open first round match in Paris on Monday. Serena won 7-6 (7/2), 6-0. — *AP*

Serena overcomes patchy start, Thiem aces Cilic test

Paris, Sept. 28: Serena Williams made a slow but successful start Monday to her latest pursuit of a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title at Roland Garros while US Open winner Dominic Thiem navigated a testing first-round tie against former major champion Marin Cilic.

The American star is chasing an elusive 24th Grand Slam title to match Margaret Court's all-time mark, but clay is her least favoured surface.

An error-prone beginning from Williams left world number 102 Kristie Ahn serving for the first set before the three-time Roland Garros champion prevailed 7-6 (7/2), 6-0.

FRENCH OPEN

Williams, playing at the French Open for the 18th time, dropped serve twice as Ahn moved 5-4 ahead in the opener in a rematch of their first-round encounter at Flushing Meadows.

But the sixth seed forced a tie-break that she sealed with an ace after a 74-minute slog before charging to an ultimately comfortable victory.

"She played very well in the first set, it wasn't easy for me and she hit a lot of winners," said Williams. "It was important for me to stay focused."

Williams, seeded sixth here, has not gone beyond

the last 16 in Paris since her defeat to Garbine Muguruza in the 2016 final. Her last major came at the 2017 Australian Open while pregnant.

Meanwhile Thiem, the runner-up to Rafael Nadal in Paris the past two years, defeated 2014 US Open champion Cilic 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 in their second meeting at a major this month. "My level was good. I was very happy with the way I played from the beginning to the end basically," said Thiem.

Having captured his maiden Slam in New York, Thiem is trying to become the only man in the Open era to win his first two majors at successive tournaments. — *AFP*