



CHINA'S
REBOUND



'GDP GROWTH TO BE
NEGATIVE OR NEAR
ZERO THIS FISCAL'

P6

P8



TRUMP PICK BARRETT
SWORN IN AS
TOP COURT JUDGE

P10



'LET US IN
ON THE
SECRET'

P12

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Mist in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 32 and 13 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 87% Min: 37%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 32.4°C (+1) Min: 14.4°C (-2)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

06:31 hrs 17:39 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

16:14 hrs 04:19 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Women performing ' sindur khela' during the immersion of the idol of Goddess Durga at School Bagan Sarbojanin Durgotsav at Bolpur in Birbhum on Tuesday.

RAJA BHAKAT

Pakistan blast: A powerful blast ripped through a religious seminary in northwest Pakistan's Peshawar city on Tuesday, killing at least eight people, mostly students, and wounding over 120 others, senior police officials said. The blast occurred around 8:30 am at a local mosque, which also serves as a religious school in Dir Colony in interior Peshawar, while students were reading the Quran. No organisation has so far claimed responsibility for the attack.

P10

Allahabad HC to monitor Hathras case probe: The CBI investigation in the sensational Hathras case, in which a Dalit girl was allegedly brutally raped and died of injuries, will now be monitored by the Allahabad High Court, the Supreme Court Tuesday said. The apex court said that all the aspects of the case, including monitoring of probe and providing security to the victim's family as well as the witnesses, would be considered by the high court.

Lenders told to implement interest waiver scheme by 5 Nov

MUMBAI, 27 OCTOBER

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday asked all lending institutions, including non-banking financial companies, to ensure that the scheme of waiver of interest on interest for loans up to Rs 2 crore for the six-month moratorium period is implemented by November 5, as decided by the government.

Last Friday, the government had announced the scheme for grant of ex-gratia payment of difference between compound interest and simple interest for six months to borrowers in specified loan accounts. Housing loans, education loans, credit card dues, auto loans, MSME loans, consumer durable loans and consumption loans are covered under the scheme.

Current reopening guidelines to be applicable till 30 Nov

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

In the last order, issued on 30 September, opening of cinemas/theatres/multiplexes up to 50 per cent of their seating capacity was allowed.

grass root level and take measures to enforce the wearing of masks, hand hygiene and social distancing, the order said.

The order recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 8th October call for a 'Jan Andolan' asking all citizens to follow three mantras - wear your mask properly; wash your hands frequently; and maintain safe distance of six feet.

Lockdown shall continue to be implemented strictly in the Containment Zones till 30th November, 2020.

Since the first order on lockdown measures by MHA on 24th March 2020, almost all activities have been gradually opened up in areas outside the Containment Zones.

Some activities have been allowed with some restrictions. These include metro rail; shopping malls; hotels, restaurants and hospitality services; religious places; yoga and training institutes; gyms.

In certain activities, states governments have been permitted to take decisions for their re-opening, based on the assessment of the situation. These activities include schools and coaching institutes.

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New Covid-19 cases fall below 40,000

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

The number of coronavirus cases reported in India in a span of 24 hours has dropped below 40,000 after over three months, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

With the addition of 36,470 new Covid-19 cases in 24 hours, India's tally on Tuesday stood at 79,46,429, while the death toll climbed to 1,19,502 with 488 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 a.m. showed. Out of the total Covid-19 cases as of Tuesday, 6,25,857 are currently active, 72,01,070 have been discharged, while 1,19,502 patients have died. While the recovery rate stands at 90.23 per cent, the fatality rate is 1.50 per cent.

The government said the pandemic is showing a declining trend in India, except for in two to three states, con-

Delhi sees highest Covid spike of 4,853 new cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Delhi today recorded 4,853 cases of coronavirus infection (Covid-19) — the city's highest single-day Covid spike till date — which raised its caseload to 3,64,341, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. The national capital had

reportedly logged its previous highest single-day spike of 4,473 Covid cases on 16 September.

Today's fresh 4,853 cases were detected out of 57,210 tests conducted at different health care centres, with the positivity rate now rising to 8.48 per cent as against yesterday's 8.23 per cent.

SEE PAGE 9

Chhattisgarh and Karnataka witnessed 58 per cent of new deaths due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the last 24 hours, according to the ministry.

Rajesh Bhushan, secretary, Union Health Ministry, said that during the festival

FACT FILE	
TOTAL CASES	79,46,429
ACTIVE CASES	6,25,857
NEW CASES	36,470
NEW RECOVERIES	63,842
TOTAL DEATHS	1,19,502
UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M. TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2020	

season, cases have increased in Kerala, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Delhi.

Bihar polls acid test for both candidates & voters; first phase polling today

MANOJ CHAURASIA
Patna, 27 October

It is going to be a tough test both for the candidates and the voters as Bihar goes to polls in the first phase tomorrow amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 71 assembly constituencies spread over 16 districts of the state go to polls in the first phase.

Even as the Election Commission claims to have initiated sufficient measures to remove fear of the pandemic from the minds of voters, the latter appear to be panicky, given the number of lives the pandemic has claimed and the way the cases have registered a sudden spike after the start of political activities. According to a report of the Bihar health

department, Covid-19 has claimed 1065 lives in the state and infected more than 2 lakh people.

Authorities said the Election Commission has taken adequate steps for safe conduct of polling, which include lowering the cap on maximum number of voters for a polling booth from 1,600 to 1,000, staggering of polling hours and postal ballots for those above 80. Apart from these, intensive efforts have been launched for massive sanitization of electronic voting machines (EVMs), providing masks to the voters and making available thermal scanners, hand sanitizers, soaps, gloves and waters at the polling booth.

But what has panicked the

voters is that currently top five BJP leaders, all star campaigners, were forced to quit the poll campaign midway after coming in the grip of the coronavirus. They included Sushil Kumar Modi, deputy chief minister, Devendra Fadnavis, party's Bihar election in-charge, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, MP, Syed Shahnewaz Hussain, national spokesperson and Mangal Pandey, Bihar health minister. It's to be seen if the masses rush to the polling booths to cast their ballots or stay away from the poll process, but one thing is sure ~ that the voting percentage will register a significant fall.

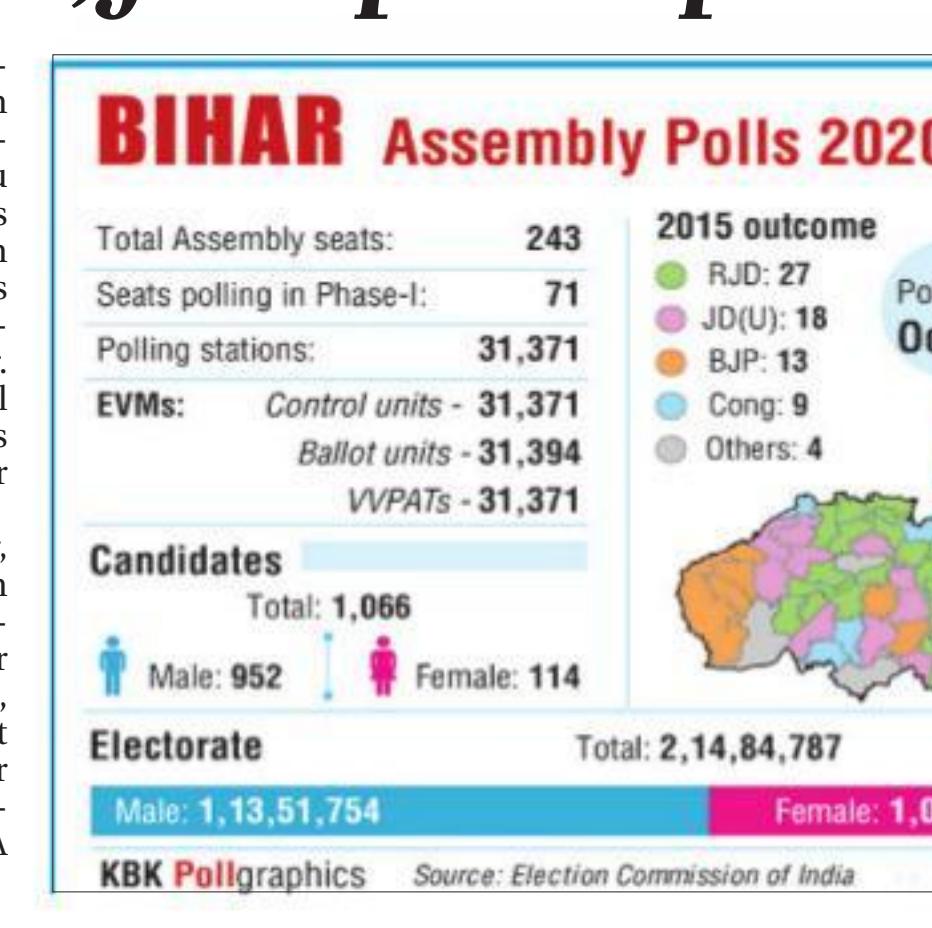
Although there are many alliances in the fray, it is going to be a straight contest between

the ruling NDA and the opposition Grand Alliance headed by Tejashwi Yadav. The way huge crowds are attending each rally of Tejashwi and the chief minister Nitish Kumar facing protests at his rallies amply hints at anger against the ruling regime.

What remains very alarming is the deteriorating level of the chief minister's election speeches at his rallies. Although he has made personal attacks against Tejashwi on many occasions, what has drawn strong objection is Nitish's "explanation" about why RJD chief Lalu Prasad has so many children. "Does anyone care? They have eight-nine children. The son was born after many daughters,"

the chief minister told an election rally in Vaishali district on Monday, in an oblique reference to RJD president Lalu Prasad. This comment has drawn strong protests from various quarters with observers linking it to the "growing desperation" of the chief minister.

The first phase polling will decide the fate of as many as six NDA ministers and a former chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi who returned to the NDA just ahead of the polls.



85 pc symptomatic negative cases of rapid-antigen tests underwent retest in Oct: Delhi govt data

PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Around 85 per cent of the symptomatic patients, who tested negative for COVID-19 in the rapid-antigen test, have been retested by the health authorities in Delhi so far this month using the more reliable RT-PCR method, according to official data.

In September, only 10 to 15 per cent of such cases were being followed up with an RT-PCR test, the data showed.

The increase in retesting numbers came after Special Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) Udit Prakash Rai issued a directive to all districts in September, to ensure that all symptomatic negative cases of rapid-antigen tests are

retested using RT-PCR. According to a report prepared by the health department, 84.59 per cent of the symptomatic negative cases of rapid-antigen tests have been followed up between October 1 and October 20 with an RT-PCR test.

Northwest District DM Sandeep Mishra told PTI that every rapid-antigen test negative yet symptomatic case was being retested through the RT-PCR method.

"We are conducting 100 per cent follow up of such cases. Sometimes, data entry takes time and it shows a different figure," he said, adding in the northwest district, around 1,100 RT-PCR tests and 5,000 rapid antigen tests are conducted every day on an aver-

age.

Last month, the Union Health Ministry had asked all states and Union Territories to mandatorily retest all symptomatic negative cases of rapid antigen tests through RT-PCR so that no positive COVID-19 cases were missed and the spread of the infection could be effectively curbed.

Guidelines of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), as well as the Union Health Ministry, clearly state that all symptomatic (with fever, cough or breathlessness) negative cases of RAT and asymptomatic cases of RAT that develop symptoms within two to three days of being tested negative must necessarily be retested through RT-PCR tests.

Kejriwal unveils waste-to-power plant at Gazipur poultry market

This plant will combust bio-degradable waste to produce 1500 units of power a day, with CM Kejriwal stressing on the need to set up many such small waste-to-power plants across Delhi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday inaugurated a waste-to-power plant at the Gazipur poultry market here, which will produce electricity through combusting the biodegradable waste generated from the market.

This small plant will reportedly produce 1,500 units of electricity a day from 20 November.

Kejriwal said with the establishment of many such plants, waste will not be disposed of in a landfill and will be recycled and used to generate electricity. It is only through such "judicious recycling" that Delhi would prosper, he said.

Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia and Environment Minister Gopal Rai were also present at this inaugural event.

Speaking on the occasion, Kejriwal said, "There are waste dumps all across the city, and there are three waste mountains in Delhi. Several waste-to-power plants are needed to be established across the city. This is a small plant that will combust only 15 tonnes of waste to



CM Arvind Kejriwal, accompanied by his deputy Manish Sisodia and others, inaugurates a waste-to-power plant at Gazipur poultry market in the Capital on Tuesday.

DEEPAK

the development department for launching a first-of-its-kind initiative in Delhi."

The Deputy CM went on to say, "You cannot expect that there will be no waste in any area inhabited by people. But the government is choosing to use the waste to produce electricity instead of letting it be on the streets or dumping it on garbage mountains. This shows how the

government is handling various problems through the use of technological and scientific advancements."

On his part, Gopal Rai said, "Delhi is grappling with pollution contributed by activities within the city as well as around it. We are in touch with the Central government to assist us in finding an effective solution to curb pollution-causing activities

outside the periphery of the city."

Rai also said: "The Delhi government is the only one that has been able to provide a solution to check the harmful effects of pollution on Delhiites. Now we have introduced a new model which will enable us to produce energy and manure by recycling the waste collected from the city."

Noida: 5 suspects in Akshay Kalra's killing held after shootout

PTI
NOIDA (UP), 27 OCTOBER

The Noida Police said it arrested five men, allegedly involved in the killing of a 24-year-old college student here last month, after a shootout on Tuesday in which four of the suspects got bullet injuries.

The encounter broke in the morning between the Model Town roundabout and the NIB cut, under the Sector 58 police station limits, the police said.

Four of the accused were held after a gunfight in which they got hit on their legs. One of them had managed to escape from the spot but was held during a combing operation, a police spokesperson said.

The police have also recovered the Hyundai Creta car which the suspects had looted from the student, Akshay Kalra, on the night of September 3.

Coal scam: HC suspends 3-year jail term of ex-minister Dilip Ray, seeks CBI reply on appeal

PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER



Rs 2 lakh each on Banerjee and Gautam, while Agarwalla was asked to pay a fine of Rs 60 lakh.

It had also imposed a fine of Rs 60 lakh and Rs 10 lakh on CTL and Castron Mining Ltd (CML) respectively. The two firms were also held guilty in the case.

The convicts had urged the trial court to take a lenient view considering their old age and that they were never convicted earlier.

The CBI, represented by public prosecutors VK Sharma and AP Singh in the trial court, however, had sought maximum punishment for the convicts.

The trial court had convicted Ray for the offences of criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust by public servant and cheating under the provision of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Regarding Ray, it had said that he dishonestly facilitated allocation of the abandoned non-nationalised coal mining area in favour of CTL and that too in violation of the direction of law.

The case pertains to allocation of Brahmagiri coal block in Giridih in Jharkhand to CTL in 1999.

In response to the convicts' argument that no loss was caused to anyone in the matter since almost the entire amount of extracted coal was surrendered to the government, the trial court had said, that non-availability of sufficient raw material such as coal has in fact resulted in the lack of infrastructural/ industrial development of the country.

Had coal block been allocated to a deserving applicant company after following the due process of law and the company would have proceeded to extract coal so as to use it captively in its end use project then it would have certainly added to the infrastructural/ industrial development of the country.

Besides him, the trial court has also awarded three-year jail term to two senior officials of the ministry at that time -- Pradip Kumar Banerjee and Nitay Nand Gautam, both about 80-year-old. It has also awarded the same jail term to Castron Technologies Ltd (CTL) director Mahendra Kumar Agarwalla (75).

The high court, which heard the matter during the vacation, admitted the appeal and listed the matter for further hearing on November 25, the lawyer said.

The trial court had on Monday sentenced Ray, the 68-year-old former minister of state (coal) in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, to three-year in jail and also imposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh on him.

The trial court had however granted bail to the convict persons for one month to enable them to approach the high court challenging the verdict.

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I, SREETAMA Bhattacharya, lost original possession letter and Certificate near New Town Bus Stand of Flat No. 902, Heights - 5 in Uniworl City Complex, New Town, Kolkata. If found please Call:

LOST & FOUND

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SHIMLA
Cabin No. 305, P.C. Chambers
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AIR-SURCHARGE; Kathmandu - Rs. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1
All other stations in India - Re. 1

A senior scientist at the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the air quality index (AQI) is likely to improve further with the wind speed picking up.

The city recorded a 24-hour average AQI of 312 on Tuesday. It was 353 on Monday, 349 on Sunday, 345 on Saturday and 366 on Friday.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, the wind direction and speed were favourable for the transport of pollutants from the farm fires in Punjab, Haryana and other neighbouring regions.

It, however, said an improvement in the local

wind speed will counter the effect.

The number of farm fires in the neighbouring states was 1,943 on Monday -- the highest so far this season -- the SAFAR said.

"Stubble-burning share in Delhi PM2.5 concentration was 23 per cent on Tuesday due to favourable transport level wind direction and speed," it said.

Calm winds and low temperatures trap pollutants close to the ground, while a favourable wind speed helps in their dispersal.

According to the IMD, the predominant wind direction was westerly-north-westerly and the maximum wind speed was 15 kilometres per hour. The minimum temperature was recorded at 14.4 degrees Celsius.

Calm winds and low tem-

peratures trap pollutants close to the ground, while a favourable wind speed helps in their dispersal.

The AQI is likely to improve slightly on Wednesday, but the pollution levels will rise again on Thursday, the SAFAR said.

The Centre's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the city's air quality is likely to remain "very poor" till October 31.

It was 16 per cent on Monday, 19 per cent on Sunday and nine per cent on Saturday.

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Calm winds and low tem-

Pollution levels reduced marginally in Delhi on Tuesday, even as the share of stubble-burning in the city's PM2.5 concentration rose to 23 per cent, the maximum so far this season.

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I am happy that a plant to convert the mandi waste into electricity has been started at Gazipur. This will provide relief to Delhiites from waste dumps on the streets...

MANISH SISODIA
DELHI DEPUTY CM

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2020

03

Springing surprise, BJP fields Bansal for U'khand RS seat

The ruling party rejected claims of ex-CM Vijay Bahuguna, others on lone RS seat from the hill state

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 27 OCTOBER

Springing a surprise, the ruling BJP in Uttarakhand decided to field Naresh Bansal for the lone Rajya Sabha seat from the state, the BJP decided to choose Bansal for it. Many names were doing the rounds for it, but eventually Bansal had the last laugh.

Bansal filed his nomination as the BJP candidate for this Rajya Sabha seat in Dehradun today. Bansal was deeply influenced by the ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) since his childhood and joined the Sangh when he was just eight-year-old.

Bansal thanked his party and its leadership at the Centre and in the state for "showing trust in him".

The term of actor-turned-politician and Congress leader Raj Babbar as Rajya Sabha member from Uttarakhand will conclude on 25 November.

The national parties have usually opted for candidates outside the hill state.

Bansal is all set to get elect-



BJP candidate Naresh Bansal filing his nomination for a Rajya Sabha seat from Uttarakhand, in Dehradun on Tuesday. SNS

ed without any major challenge from the Congress, as the BJP enjoys dominating position in the Uttarakhand Assembly.

Raj Babbar's nomination from Uttarakhand did not seem to work for the state Congress as he was rarely seen in

the hill state.

The BJP's today announcement in favour of Bansal shocked Vijay Bahuguna as the latter was considered to be a frontrunner in the race, but the BJP opted for its party worker.

The Congress had removed Bahuguna from the CM's post in 2014 and it was assumed that Bahuguna will be accommodated in the Rajya Sabha. It never hap-

pened. When Bahuguna joined

the BJP with other Congress rebels, similar speculation was rife.

This time too he was in the race for the Rajya Sabha berth from the state. He thus failed to bag it for the third time in a row.

HP to have 3 new Municipal Corporations

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 OCTOBER

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Tuesday decided to upgrade Municipal Councils of Mandi, Solan and Palampur to Municipal Corporations through inclusion of their respective adjoining areas.

So far there are two Municipal Corporations in Himachal-Shimla and Dharamshala.

Held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, the Cabinet decided to create six new Nagar Panchayats, including Kanghat in Solan district, Amb in Una district, Ani and Nirmand in Kullu district and Chirgoan and Nerwa in Shimla district.

It also gave its nod for re-organization of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), including Ner Chowk and Karsog in district Mandi and Nagar Panchayat Jawali in Kangra district by exclusion and inclusion of certain areas.

An official spokesman here said the cabinet decided to exempt land and buildings in newly included areas of these Urban Local Bodies from payment of general tax for a period of three years and to retain the customary rights as provided in the Wazib-UI-Urz in the record of rights.

"The cabinet decided that election to the ULBs in the state (including newly created Nagar Panchayats) and newly created Municipal Corporations of Mandi, Solan and Palampur would be conducted in January, 2021 after consultation with State Election Commission," he said.



fill up 1334 vacant posts of Constables which includes 976 male and 267 female and 91 drivers on regular basis through direct recruitment.

The spokesman said the cabinet decided to raise the honorarium of IT teachers engaged on an outsource basis in the Education department by 10 percent from 1 April, 2020. This would benefit 1345 IT teachers.

It gave approval to provide extension in services of already engaged SMC (School Management Committee) teachers of various categories in Elementary and Higher Education Departments for the academic session 2020-21 and their remuneration may also be disbursed to them for the academic session 2020-21 subject to final outcome of Special Leave Petition (Civil) pending in the Supreme Court.

The cabinet also gave its approval to promote students enrolled in 1st and 2nd year UG courses for academic session 2019-20 to the next academic year on the basis of UG guidelines keeping in view the Covid-19 pandemic.

Himachal police seek to use Aadhar database to ascertain dead bodies' identity

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 OCTOBER

'It will not only allow in identifying dead bodies and handing them over to the next of kin but also in performing the last rites as per the religious belief of the deceased'

bodies and handing them over to the next of kin but also in performing the last rites as per the religious belief of the deceased," he added.

Kundu said further the step would also provide a much needed closure to the family.

The DGP in his letter had requested the UIDAI to work out a mechanism for the same.

It would be pertinent to mention here that over hundred unidentified dead bodies were found in the state every year and these were cremated as per set procedure as not as per the deceased's religious beliefs as their identity couldn't be established.

This was disclosed by Vice-Chancellor of the varsity, Prof HK Chaudhary at a state level Agriculture Officers' Workshop on Rabi crops at Palampur on Tuesday.

CSK agrivarsity urges ICAR to set up 4 new KVks in HP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 OCTOBER

a large number of farmers will be involved and invited in such workshops and other programmes in future. The University will organise farmer related programmes at their farms.

The Vice-Chancellor asked the farmers to sow only university developed or approved crop varieties only to avoid any loss at later stage. Prof. Chaudhary said that collective efforts of the scientists and farm officers will enable the farmers to reap a rich dividend of technologies.

He told that the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has sanctioned a project worth Rs. Rs 94 lakh for tribal areas. The farmers of Lahaul & Spiti will be provided around 3000 wheel hoes under this project. He appreciated the scientists

for presenting proposals on new crop varieties and giving recommendations on rye grass.

Director of Agriculture, H.P. Dr NK Badhan elaborated about arrangements of farm inputs like seeds, fertilizers, etc for the Rabi crops. He also discussed in details various government schemes worth Rs. 650 crore to enhance farm production and asked the farmers to make use of such plans.

He said that four lakh farmers were engaged in vegetable production. He said that 82700 quintal high quality seed of wheat having resistance to yellow rust will be made available to the farmers.

Director of Research Dr DK Vatsa told that four varieties of cereals, pulses and fodder crops developed by the university have been released at

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the national level and 16 varieties have been recommended to the State Variety Release Committee. The University produced 1800 Kg nucleus seed, 56400 Kg breeder seed and 31150 Kg foundation seed of different crops in 2019-20. Eight production technologies have been approved for the farmers.

Director of Extension Education, Dr YP Thakur elaborated about major achievements in extension education. He said that despite pandemic, the University and its Krishi Vigyan Kendras continued their training programmes benefiting around 8000 farmers. Six lakh messages were transmitted to the farmers through electronic and social media platforms.

Six quintal breeder seed of improved wheat variety was also given to six progressive farmers of Kangra at the workshop. Issues like seed multiplication, enhancing farmers' income, natural farming, new agro chemicals and bio pesticides to replace the banned agro-chemicals, etc were deliberated at length.

The Chief Guest also released some extension education publications including revised Package of Practices on Rabi and Kharif crops.

Modi govt targeting Punjab as farmers raising voice: Jakhar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 27 OCTOBER

ic restrictions on the other but for the first time in the history of the country Modi government has unleashed this regime against the states.

Citing the examples, the Punjab Congress chief said that by not giving the share of the state in GST to Punjab and now by stopping movement of goods train in the state, the Modi government was targeting Punjab as its farmers were raising voice against the draconian Bills of the Union government.

He said this attitude of the Modi government was the blatant violation of the federal structure in the country. Jakhar said that the Bills

passed by Union government would ruin the agrarian economy of the state besides being fatal for the aarthiyas (commission agents), transporters, small traders and labourers.

He said to mitigate the woes of all the stakeholders, the Captain government has passed three laws in the recently held Assembly session.

He said that as the Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had acted as saviour of Punjab's water by Terminating the Water Agreement Act in 2004 in the same manner he has now safeguarded the farmers of state by passing these Bills in the state assembly.

NEW NORMAL



Health department employees collecting swab samples of the Shimla municipal corporation workers for Covid tests, at the Ridge in Shimla last week. LALIT KUMAR

'Namaste gang' kingpin arrested in Delhi

PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

The Delhi Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested the kingpin of the Namaste gang which used to greet people with folded hands before robbing them.

Chand Mohammad (35), a resident of Faridabad in Haryana, targeted senior citizens by introducing himself as an acquaintance or friend of one of their relatives and taking away their jewellery, police said.

He had committed more than 100 such crimes in Delhi and its neighbouring areas since 2017, they said.

The accused would greet his victims with folded hands and seek their blessings by touching their feet. He would then ask them to give him their jewellery on some pretext and flee from there, police said.

Along with the accused, police also arrested one Dinesh Kumar Soni (47), a resident of Faridabad, who allegedly bought the stolen items from Mohammad.

According to police, the matter came to notice after a complaint was received from a 70-year-old woman on October 17.

In her complaint, the woman said that Mohammad made 'Namaste' gesture and touched her feet before introducing himself as a jeweller known to one of her relatives.

These bioactive chemicals or polyphenols were found effective in blocking some activity of the novel Coronavirus and made difficult for the virus to thrive inside human cells.

He had committed more than 100 such crimes in Delhi and its neighbouring areas since 2017, they said.

420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code at the Maidan Garhi Police Station, said Atul Kumar Thakur, Deputy Commissioner of Police (south).

On the same day, a similar incident had taken place in Neb Sarai area where the accused cheated another senior citizen using the same modus operandi, he said.

The accused had committed similar crimes in the area of Maidan Garhi, Neb Sarai, Sangam Vihar, Govindpuri, Ambedkar Nagar, Malviya Nagar and other areas of south district earlier. To nab the accused, our team collected CCTV footage of the incident and identified him and the vehicle used in committing the crime," the DCP said.

The accused had also targeted several people in the west district of Delhi from 2017 to 2020.

CCTV footage of multiple incidents at Hari Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Raja Rani Garden, Kirti Nagar, Patel Nagar, Punjabi Bagh and Kapashera areas in west Delhi were analysed, he said.

During investigation, the scooter used by the accused was traced to a vacant spot near a park where it was parked. The team laid a trap there and after waiting for four days, Mohammad was caught.

The accused told police that he had stolen jewellery worth around Rs 60 lakh but lost most of it in gambling.

Kangra tea gets a boost amid Covid crisis

SANJEEV KUMAR
SHIMLA, 27 OCTOBER

study found out that consuming Kangra tea can boost one's immune system and it can block Coronavirus activity better than anti-HIV drugs.

Kangra Small Tea Growers Association member Abhimanyu Katoch said the Covid crisis had resulted in people adopting healthy habits and has raised demand for hot beverages as it reduces the risk of infection.

"Though commercial activities in tea gardens in Assam and Darjeeling in West Bengal remained closed, we were granted permission by the state government to continue activities but with some restrictions and following of Covid protocols," Katoch added.

Katoch said that the Bills

passed by Union government would ruin the agrarian economy of the state besides being fatal for the aarthiyas (commission agents), transporters, small traders and labourers.

He said to mitigate the woes of all the stakeholders, the Captain government has passed three laws in the recently held Assembly session.

He said that as the Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had acted as saviour of Kangra tea fetched higher prices at Rs 250 per kg as compared to Rs 200 per kg in previous year as Covid cri-

sis had halted production in major tea production regions of Assam and Darjeeling in the country.

"Earlier, we were appre-

hensive that the Covid lockdown would adversely impact the tea industry in the region which was already reeling under crisis owing to lack of demand and marketing facilities in previous years.

However, the timely permission by the state government in the month of April had benefitted the industry and we had been able to bridge the shortfall in the market, caused by closure of activities in Assam and West Bengal, the major producers of tea in the country," he added.

Singh further stated that besides, the Kangra region didn't face a shortfall of rains this year as this was the case in the past and this had resulted in an increase of around 10 percent in tea

production this year.

It is worth mentioning here that the scientists at Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) in Palampur had claimed that chemicals in Kangra tea could be effective in boosting immunity as they can block Coronavirus activity better than anti-HIV drugs.

The scientists had screened 65 bioactive chemicals or polyphenols which are expected to bind to a particular vital protein much better than the anti-HIV drug does.

These bioactive chemicals or polyphenols were found effective in blocking some activity of the novel Coronavirus and made difficult for the virus to thrive inside human cells.

He then asked her to give him the gold ear rings that she was wearing and after taking the jewellery, he fled from there, police said.

On her complaint, a case was registered under section

of the Indian Penal Code at the Maidan Garhi Police Station, said Atul Kumar Thakur, Deputy Commissioner of Police (south).

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On her complaint, a case was registered under section

of the Indian Penal Code at the Maidan Garhi Police Station, said Atul Kumar

'Arrogant' Bihar govt deviated from its path, time to usher in change: Sonia Gandhi to voters

PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER



A day before the first phase of voting in Bihar Assembly election, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday accused the JDU-BJP government of being high on power, arrogant and deviating from its path, as she made a fervent appeal to the electorate to herald a change in the state and build a New Bihar".

In a four-minute video message in Hindi, she claimed the present dispensation led by Nitish Kumar was "neither saying good nor doing good" while the labourers were help-

less, farmers upset and youth disappointed with it.

"Drunk on power and arrogance, the government in Bihar has deviated from its path. Their words and deeds are suspect. The labourers are helpless, the farmers upset and the youth disappointed. People are bearing the brunt

of the fragile state of the economy. A serious crisis has enveloped the farmers of India. The lives of Dalits and Mahadalits have been destroyed and similar is the fate of the backward sections of the society," she charged while asserting the people of the state are with the Congress-mahagathbandhan and "this is the call of Bihar".

Gandhi alleged that the governments in Delhi and Bihar have brought demonetisation, lockdown, economic shutdown and shut employment, as she called upon the people of the state to build a "new Bihar" for the next generation and crop.

"Time has come for ushering in a change in the state," she said, noting that governments cannot be formed on fear and crime.

The Congress president claimed that Bihar has quality, talent, strength and the power to build, but unemployment, migration, price rise and starvation have given them tears in their eyes and blisters on their feet.

"They are forced to express themselves through their tears," she noted, in an apparent reference to the plight faced by migrant workers in reaching their homes during the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

TENDER

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Bilaspur, on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh, invites the online Lump Sum Contract bids on turnkey basis from the eligible bidders of Indian Entity through online bidding system on or before 05-11-2020 at 11:00 AM on the site <https://htenders.gov.in>. Bidders should be registered with Central Govt. or any State Govt. Or Central any State Govt. Undertakings.

Name of work:- Reliable Drinking water source/Augmentation of existing source of multi villages group piped water scheme for part of Sadar of Bilaspur District HP under JJJM (SH:- Construction of water treatment plant, pump house, main / sub storage tanks, S/E of pumping machinery providing laying joining and testing of GMSPRW / G.M.S. pipe for rising main, Gravity main and distribution system of 80mm dia., automation system complete, including Operation and Maintenance for three years of whole scheme after successful commissioning & trial run period.) Job No. 1.

Estimated Cost:- Rs 7,37,80,33/-
Bid of Security :- Rs. 7,70,305/-
Cost of Bid :- Rs. 2500/-
Time :- One year

Schedule of tendering :-

1 Date of Online publication	23-10-2020 at 5:00 PM
2 Downloading of e-bid Documents	From: 23-10-2020 5:00 PM to 05-11-2020 at 11:00 AM
3 Date of submission of e-bid	From: 23-10-2020 5:00 PM to 05-11-2020 at 11:00 AM
4 Physical Submission of Original Bid Security and Cost of bid (in case of offline deposit of Bid security)	05-11-2020 up to 11:00 AM
5 Date of opening of bids:-	
1) Cover-1 Eligibility Criteria & Technical bid	On 05-11-2020 at 11:30 AM
2) Cover-2 Financial Bid - Shall be intimated separately	Shall be intimated separately
6 Site Visit	From: 24-10-2020 to 26-10-2020 between 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM except on holiday along with the Assistant Engineer/concerned Junior Engineer, Jal Shakti Sub Division Bilaspur
7 Pre-Bid Meeting	On 29-10-2020 at 11:00 A.M. in the Office of Chief Engineer (Hamirpur Zone) Jal Shakti Vibhag Hamirpur. The queries of the bidders to be discussed during Pre-bid shall be submitted till 28-10-2020 at 4:00 PM. No queries shall be entertained afterwards.
1 Date of Online publication	23-10-2020 at 5:00 PM

Last date of filing/ uploading the tender through e-tendering 05-11-2020 up to 11:00 AM

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website <https://htenders.gov.in>

Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti Division
Bilaspur

3931/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Short terms tenders on form 6&8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer Bangana Division HP-PWD Bangana on behalf of the Governor of H.P. for the following works from the approved and eligible contractors/firms of appropriate class enlisted in HP-PWD as per latest instructions so as to reach and open in his office as per time schedule given below. The offer of the tender will be kept open for 120 days from the date of opening of the tenders. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.

1. Date of receipt of applications for the tender Form a/w requisite documents:- 17.11.2020 upto 5:00 PM.
2. Date of issue /sale of tender forms against Cash payment (Non-refundable):- 18.11.2020 upto 4:00 PM.
3. Date of receipt of tenders:- 19.11.2020 upto 10:30 AM.
4. Date of opening of tenders:- 20.11.2020 at 11:00 AM.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Time Limit	Cost of Tender	Eligible class of Contractor
1	Periodical Maintenance Of Una Basoli Road To village Lamtehri Nichli (SH:-P/L 25mm thick Bituminous Concrete including profile correction in Km. 0/00 to 3/000)	290734	6000	Two Month	350	Class-D
2	Cover- MTO on Tamhehra Deenar Rajpura road . (SH:- patch work in Km. 1/000 to 3/500)	434931	8700	Two Month	350	Class-D

The Earnest money in the shape of National Saving certificate/Time deposit/Saving account of any post office or FDR of Nationalised Bank duly pledged in the name of undersigned must be accompanied with each tender. The conditional tender and tender not accompanying the earnest money in the proper mode of deposit will summarily be rejected.

The Tender documents to be sent should have invariably be waxed in sealed cover and in failure of that those will not be entertained.

The Copy of valid enlistment, GST Registration No., Income Tax PAN No & EPF No. must be attached with application.

SPECIAL CONDITION:-
1. The tender form will be issued to those contractors who have relevant machinery and equipment, the list of which may be attached with their applications.(The proof of ownership of machinery/legal tie up arrangement).
2. The tender form will not be issued to those contractors who have already two works in hand. The earnest money for the above work should be submitted with the application for the purchase of the tender forms. The application received without earnest money shall summarily be rejected.
3. The conditional/ambiguous/telegraphic tenders or tender by fax shall not be entertained/considered in any case.

Executive Engineer
Bangana Division,
KHPPWD Bangana

3966/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAR

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDERS"

Sealed item rate tender are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Bilaspur Division No. II, HP-PWD, Bilaspur for the following works from the registered contractors of appropriate class enlisted in HP-PWD, whose registrations stood renewed as per revised instructions and also registered dealers under the Himachal Pradesh, General Sales Tax Act, 1968. The important date of tender are as under:-

Date of application	20-11-2020 upto 2:00 PM
Date of sale of tender form	20-11-2020 (03:00 PM to 05:00 PM)
Date of receipt of financial bid	21-11-2020 at 10:30 AM
Date of opening of financial bid	21-11-2020 at 11:00 AM

The tender shall be received up to 10:30 A.M. on 21-11-2020 and will be opened on the same day at 11:00 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorised representative who may like to be present. The tender form can be had from this office against cash payment as shown below (Non-refundable) during the working hours on 20-11-2020.

The Earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Deposit at call/ Time Deposit /Account in any of the Post-Office/Nationalised Bank in H.P. duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Bilaspur Division No. II, HP-PWD, Bilaspur must accompany with each application. Conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money will simultaneously be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 90 days. The XEN reserve the right to accept or reject the tenders without assigning any reason.

Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest Money	Cost form	Time limit
1 Construction of Rain Shelter at (I) Village Chamyon in Distt: Bilaspur (HP) (II) C/o Rain Shelter Near Govt. Senior Secondary School Sherpa (iii) C/o Rain Shelter near N.T.P.C. Township main Gate village Jamthal under N.T.P.C. Deposit.	4,02,136/-	Rs. 8,100/-	Rs. 350/-	Three Month

TERMS & CONDITIONS:-
1. The tender forms will not be issued to those contractors whose performance is not found satisfactory.
2. Earnest money should be accompanied with application. Application without earnest money will not be entertained.
3. The photo copy of Pan Number should be attached with the application otherwise tender form will not be issued.
4. The photo copy of GST Number should be attached with the application otherwise tender form will not be issued.
5. The tender forms will not be issued to those contractors who have two or more work in hand.

3925/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

The Executive Engineer, Karchham Division, H.P.P.W.D. Bhabanagar District Kinnaur Pin-172115 invite item rate tenders in sealed cover on the prescribed forms from the eligible Contractors on 23.11.2020 and shall be opened on the same day at 11:00 Hrs. In the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives who wish to be present at the time.

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time	Cost of form
1	Improvement of Kim O' Khalning road in Village Sangla. (SH:- P/F Interlocking Concrete blocks in Km 0/290 to 0/475) Under TASP.	414315.00	8300.00	Three Month	Rs. 350/-
2	Improvement of Kim O' Khalning road in Village Sangla. (SH:- P/F Interlocking Concrete blocks in Km 0/920 to 1/065) Under TASP.	398551.00	8000.00	Three Month	Rs. 350/-
3	Improvement of Karchham Sangla Chhikital road Km 0/0 to 41/500. (SH:- C/o R/Wall at RD 20/040 to 20/058.15) Under SCA to TASP.	172955.00	3500.00	Two Month	Rs. 350/-
4	C/o Link road Nanaspur to Upper Tranda Km 0/0 to 3/500. (SH:- C/o R/Wall at RD 3/405 to 3/425) Under TASP.	200040.00	4000.00	Two Month	Rs. 350/-
5	Improvement of KSC road Km 0/0 to 41/500. (SH:- C/o Protection work to abutment of existing bailey bridge at RD 19/200. 332826.00	6700.00	Three Month	Rs. 350/-	
6	Repair and Maintenance of G.H.S. Panvi (SH:- P/F Prepatined steel sheet roofing and ceiling at Verandah and dismantling of old	312055.00	6300.00	Three Month	Rs. 350/-
7	Improvement of Karchham Sangla Chhikital road Km 0/0 to 41/500. (SH:- C/o R/Wall at RD 21/048 to 21/068) Under TASP.	173724.00	3500.00	Two Month	Rs. 350/-
8	C/o Link road from Kafnoo Bazar to Village Kafnoo (SH:- C/o B/wall in wire crate at RD 0/015 to 0/075.50)	448349.00	9000.00	Three Month	Rs. 350/-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

The Earnest Money shown against each work must accompany with each tender in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Time Deposit Account/Post Office Saving Bank Account of any of the Post Offices duly pledged in the name of undersigned. The application of each tender alongwith following documents must reach in this office on 20.11.2020 upto 12:00 PM and issued on same day.

- (i) Each application alongwith attested copy of the proof of enlistment in the appropriate Class and its renewal.
- (ii) Permanent Account Number (PAN)
- (iii) EPF No and GST
- (iv) Exemption Letter for payment of earnest money from competent authority if any.

The contractor enlisted in a particular class shall be eligible to tender for his own class and one step below. The tender rates must be quoted in words and figures by the tenderer. The conditional tenders or the tenders without earnest money shall be rejected. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason. In case there happens to be a holiday on the date of opening of the tenders the same shall be opened on the next working day. The offer of the tender shall remain valid upto 90days from the opening of the tenders.

3925/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

The days of institutional corruption of the SP, BSP and the Congress when development was limited to one family and one caste are over

YOGI ADITYANATH

UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

*i*ndia

PM slams 'dynastic corruption'

Says it had become part of political culture in some states

PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday batted for strong action to check "dynastic corruption", saying it has become a part of the political culture in some states and is hollowing out the country like termites.

Inaugurating a three-day national conference on vigilance and anti-corruption organised by the CBI, the prime minister said that inaction in a single corruption case forms the foundation for future scams.

"Dynamic corruption (bhrashtachaar ka vanvada), as corruption carried forward from one generation to another, has grown over decades to become a

The state government is not serious about the Maratha quota issue...



MAHARASHTRA BJP CHIEF CHANDRAKANT PATIL
ON MARATHA RESERVATION ISSUE

THUMBNAILS



A labourer spreads maize seeds outside a farm on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Tuesday. AFP

Dispute over loud music:
A 29-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death and his two brothers were injured on Tuesday during a quarrel that erupted after they objected to loud music being played by their neighbour in Delhi's Mahendra Park area, police said.

PTI

Cancel postal ballots:
Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Tuesday demanded that the Election Commission cancel the postal ballots polled so far for the 3 November Madhya Pradesh by-elections as candidates have yet not been given the list of such voters. Earlier, Congress workers staged a protest outside the office of the state Chief Electoral Officer in Bhopal.

PTI

Coal scam: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday suspended the three-year jail term of former Union minister Dilip Ray in a coal scam case pertaining to irregularities in the allocation of a Jharkhand block in 1999.

PTI

Bhojpuri singer injured:
Bhojpuri singer and actor Gol Raja was injured in celebratory firing at the home of a local BJP leader in a village in Ballia, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Monday night when Raja was performing at the birthday function of local BJP leader Bhanu Dubey's son.

PTI

PM interacts with street vendors

Calls for creating awareness about Swanidhi loan scheme

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called for creating awareness about the Swanidhi loan scheme for street vendors in the country.

Interacting with beneficiaries of PM Swanidhi Yojana from Uttar Pradesh through video conferencing, Modi said street vendors who were given the loan through the Swanidhi scheme were repaying their loan on time proving that small time borrowers do not compromise on their honesty & sincerity.

Modi underlined the need to spread awareness about the scheme to as many people as possible.

He said under the scheme there is a provision for 7 percent discount on interest on timely repayment. Besides, there would be Rs 100 cashback a month on digital transactions, he further said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that people had earlier doubted the efficacy of the Jan Dhan accounts but that the same today were helping the poor amid the Covid 19 crisis.

He also enlisted the initiatives of the central government for the welfare of the poor.

The Prime Minister assured the street vendors, workers and farmers that no stone would be unturned to advance their business and improve their life.

In his interaction Modis also gave suggestions on the benefits of digital payment and how to get cashback benefits. He said with this money one can have proper education and a better



Vendors need assistance package, not loans: Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Street vendors and small traders need a special assistance package not loans, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Tuesday, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted in Uttar Pradesh with some beneficiaries of the 'PM SVANidhi scheme' for street vendors.

Tweeting just ahead of the prime minister's interaction with the street vendors from UP, Priyanka Gandhi said throughout the lockdown, street ven-

ders and small shopkeepers, were hit hard. "It became difficult for them to run their homes, their livelihood was ruined," the Congress general secretary in-charge UP East said. "The street vendors, shopkeepers, small traders today need a special assistance package, not loans," she said.

The PM Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme was launched on June 1 to help street vendors resume their livelihood activities after they were hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic.

said. He said during Corona pandemic workers had proven that they can overcome any challenge and fight back and win. The Prime Minister also thanked the government of Uttar Pradesh for providing financial assistance of Rs 1000 to 6 lakh street vendors during the pandemic.

played resoluteness and extraordinary courage to thwart the evil designs of the Pakistan Army who had invaded Kashmir with the help of tribal raiders. The bold and gallant actions carried out by the Indian Infantry Battalions in the ensuing days ensured that the nefarious designs of the Pakistani Army were forcefully defeated.

In the Ladakh Sector, Infantry battalions of the Indian Army have been part of every war fought in the Sector, bringing laurels to the Army and to the Nation. The saga of courage and sacrifice displayed during the battle of Rezang La in 1962 and more recently during Operation Vijay in the Kargil Sector are testimonies to the spirit of sacrifice of the Indian Infantry sol-

RSS chief's view on Hindutva broad, inclusive: Shiv Sena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 OCTOBER

Shiv Sena on Tuesday lauded RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's remarks on Hindutva as being broad and inclusive, adding he has given a befitting reply to those who feel that anyone not with the BJP is not Hindu.

The Sena also said Bhagwat won't seek reopening of temples during coronavirus pandemic as he has a scientific temper.

"He is for investing in vaccine development. The BJP leaders who are happily clanging bells for reopening of temples amid the pandemic should listen to Bhagwat first," an editorial in the Sena mouthpiece Saamana said.

"Some 'thekedar' (contractors) have a perverted ideology that Hindutva is their monopoly and those not with the BJP are not Hindus. The RSS chief has shown them their place," the editor-

ial said.

Responding to Shiv Sena's fresh salvo, Maharashtra BJP's chief spokesperson Keshav Upadhye said, "It is the Shiv Sena that has given up Hindutva and to hide its failures, that party needs to criticise the BJP over any issue."

At the RSS' annual Dussehra event in Nagpur on Sunday, Bhagwat had said the Sanghs concept of Hindu rashtra is not political or power centred.

He had said the Hindu culture expressed itself in diverse forms, but some groups are trying to spread hatred in society by creating insecurities among people.

Bhagwat had claimed the word Hindutva was applicable to the 1.3 billion people of India as it expressed identity, continuity of spirituality-based traditions and the entire wealth of value system in the land of Bharat.

The Sena mouthpiece

claimed the BJP's Hindutva revolves around the cow. "Hindutva supporters in BJP have instigated Hindu-Muslim riots and reaped political benefit out of it," it said. There is cow slaughter daily in many BJP-ruled states, so BJP's cow politics on Hindutva is baseless, it added.

"It is shocking that rape and murder are also seen through the Hindutva prism. The definition of Hindutva has never been so narrow as it is now,"

Thackeray responded strongly, saying his definition of Hindutva does not include clanging of bells and dishes," the editorial said.

Upadhye claimed the 11-month-old MahaVikasAghadi government in the state, comprising the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress has failed on almost all the fronts.

"This government is still struggling to control the Covid-19 cases, the state administration is weakened and there is no direction to this government at all," Upadhye said.

"That is why the Sena needs to keep criticising the BJP to divert attention," the BJP spokesperson said.

AVIAN VIEW



Devotees take a boat ride as seagulls fly over the Sangam, in Allahabad on Tuesday. AFP

Infantry Day celebrated across J&K, Ladakh UTs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 27 OCTOBER



The 74th 'Infantry Day' to mark landing of the Indian Army in Srinagar on this day in 1947 to thwart attempts of the Pakistani troops and raiders to grab Kashmir was celebrated on Tuesday across the Union Territories (UTs) of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh with traditional solemnity and reverence.

Lieutenant General CBansi Ponnappa, Chief of Staff, on behalf of Lieutenant General YK Joshi, Army Commander, Northern Command, laid wreath at Dhruba Shahid Smarak, Udhampur, and complimented all ranks and veterans of Infantry for their devotion to duty and indomitable spirit while work-

ing under trying and challenging conditions.

Lieutenant General PGK Menon, General Officer Commanding of the Ladakh based 'Fire and Fury' Corps, laid a wreath at the War Memorial in Leh and paid homage to all the brave heroes, who have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

Indian Army celebrates 27 October every year as the 'Infantry Day', as it was on this day that the 1st Battalion of the SIKH Regiment landed at Srinagar airbase and dis-

dier.

Of the 21 Param Vir Chakras awarded till date, seven PVCs were awarded to officers and men who fought in the Ladakh Sector, including three posthumous awards.

In his message, Lieutenant General Menon complimented the Infantrymen for their devotion to duty and indomitable spirit, while serving under trying and difficult conditions.

He acknowledged their invaluable contribution in maintaining the sanctity of the nation's borders in the Ladakh region, with fortitude and elan. He also called upon all ranks of the 'Fire & Fury' Corps to continue to draw inspiration from the heroic deeds of the bravehearts and always keep 'Nation First' in all their endeavours.

Cong raises a cry whenever govt takes any major decision: Khattar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH, 27 OCTOBER

Haryana chief minister M L Khattar on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the Congress over its criticism of the recent farm sector laws, and said the opposition party raises a hue and cry whenever the government takes any major decision.

On the occasion of completion of one year of the BJP-JJP coalition in office, Khattar and his Deputy Dushyant Chautala said the ruling combine is committed to take the state on a higher growth trajectory.

Speaking at a state-level event in Hisar to mark the

occurrence, the chief minister said they provided "corruption-free, transparent and an accountable government to the people of the state".

Over the next four years the government is committed to take the state "on a higher growth trajectory", Khattar told reporters at Hisar.

He also said the Congress is "misleading" farmers by telling them that the new laws will "ruin" them, lead to dismantling of mandis and the minimum support price system, and will help big corporate houses "exploit" them.

The Congress is repeatedly spreading "lies" and is in the habit of raising a hue and cry whenever the government

takes any major decision, be it the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution or the Ram temple construction in Ayodhya, he said.

In his address to the gathering, Dushyant Chautala, a JJP leader, said, "A year ago, the opposition used to say this government will not complete three months, then they used to say it will fall after six months, but now we have completed one year."

The chief minister took a dig at the Congress, saying only father-son (former chief minister B S Hooda and his MP son Deepender Hooda) were campaigning for party candidate Indraj Narwal in Baroda.

Bypolls: Scindia meets Pilot, says he's welcome in MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHOPAL, 27 OCTOBER

BJP MP Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday said he met his former colleague and senior Congress leader Sachin Pilot in Gwalior and that he is welcome to the state to campaign for the November 3 by-elections.

Pilot arrived in Madhya Pradesh for a two-day visit on Tuesday morning to campaign for Congress candidates in

one on its soil, therefore he (Pilot) is also welcome here, said Scindia, the scion of the erstwhile Gwalior royal family. Asked whether his (Pilot's) presence will make any difference in the bypolls, Scindia said in a democracy everyone has the right to campaign.

By-elections to 28 Assembly seats in the state are scheduled on 3 November. Twenty-five of these seats fell vacant after sitting Congress MLAs resigned and joined the BJP, leading to the collapse of the Kamal Nath-led state government.

Most of these rebel Congress MLAs were considered close to Scindia. Besides, three seats fell vacant due to the death of their sitting MLAs.



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 27 OCTOBER

In a bid to empower the youth, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Tuesday sanctioned more than 10,000 applications under the Self Employment Programme, Economic Package and My Town-My Pride.

Sinha made the announcement while addressing media persons in Srinagar where he made announcement of various major reforms in the business sector, giving a determined push to the business revival and economic development of J&K, besides empowering youth and women entrepreneurs, mak-

ing a positive impact on Self Employment.

The Lt Governor said that his mantra for development of J&K revolves around 4 Ps viz Peace, Progress, Prosperity and People first. He said that the sanctioning of over 10,000

Government. A total of 15,309 applications were received, out of which 10,828 have been sanctioned and an amount of Rs 100 cr has been disbursed to 6734 applicants, identified under B2V3.

"We had taken up a target of covering atleast 2 persons in each Panchayat who were in need of financial assistance for self employment," he added.

The Lt Governor called upon the I&K Bank to not only extend financial assistance to these entrepreneurs but also provide handholding to them so that the youth who opt for self employment can set up sustainable businesses and flourish in their lives.

The Lt Governor also handed over a cheque of Rs 250 crore to J&K Bank as commencement of disbursement of 5% Interest Subvention and coverage of restructured accounts of 2014 and 2016. He also termed it as a very important milestone. Speaking on the Economic package, the Lt Governor observed that the economic package announced had 83 measures. These include, interest subvention of 5% in case of all borrowers.

Customised "Help Tourism" scheme by I&K Bank for financial assistance to persons associated with the Tourism Sector has been launched and further streamlining underway.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an Unknown male person was found lying abandoned in the area of P.S. Laxmi Nagar. In this regard a DD No. 21-A dated 26.10.2020 has been registered at P.S. Laxmi Nagar East District, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for identification at Subzi Mandi Mortuary Delhi for 72 hours.

The description of the dead body is given as under: Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 30-35 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Sallow, Face: Oval, Built: Thin, Hair: Small Black, Wearing: Black & White Check Shirt with Blue Jeans.

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

SHO, P.S. Laxmi Nagar East District, Delhi Ph.: 011-22542992, 22441741, 8750870622

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in
Ph.: 011-2436838, 2436841
Fax: 011-2436839
DP/244/ED/2020

2360/20
TENDER

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Notice Inviting Tender
1. General: - UMB division of northern railway invites single tender through E-tendering system from eligible agencies who fulfill qualification criteria as stipulated in tender document for 'Dismantling, Shifting & Re-commissioning of 01 No. CNC Pit Wheel Lathe, Make HYT from MEMU Car Shed, SRE to MEMU Car Shed, KJY'.
2. The key details are as follows:
Tender No. 30-EL-MEMU-T-12-20-21 Type of Tender Single
Name of work Dismantling, Shifting & Re-commissioning of 01 No. CNC Pit Wheel Lathe, Make HYT from MEMU Car Shed, SRE to MEMU Car Shed, KJY.
Approximate Cost ₹48,08,500/- Earnest Money ₹96,200/-
Completion Period 04 (Four) Months from the date of issue of the letter of acceptance.
Validity of offer 45 Days
Tender papers issued by Sr.DEE/MEMU/SRE.
Date of Closing/Opening 11.11.2020 at 10:30 Hrs./thereafter.
Cost of Tender Document Free of Cost
NOTE: - 1) The required earnest money will only be accepted through on line payment mode available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. up to tender closing date and time. Exemption from submission of Earnest Money for tender shall be as per Railway Board Guidelines. 2) Manual payments through demand draft, banker cheque, deposit receipt, FDR etc are not allowed. Offers which are not complying above will be considered invalid. 3) Tender must provide validity of the offer for 45 (forty five) days from the date of opening of tender. 4) Public procure order 2017 issued by Rly. board vide L. No. 2015/RSG/779/5 16.03.2018 shall be followed. 5) The tender can be seen or upload on web portal as under: Website Portal: [https://www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Tender Notice No.:12/2020-21 2360/20 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Eyes right

By voting along partisan lines to confirm the 48-year-old Amy Barrett in a lifetime appointment to the United States Supreme Court, Republicans have handed to Mr Donald Trump a major victory on the eve of the Presidential election due in a week's time. Her appointment under controversial circumstances gives conservatives a 6-3 majority on the Bench, one that is expected to have far-reaching consequences. The first of these may come soon after the election results are announced, as the President has already said he expects the court to decide the outcome of his battle with Democratic contender Joe Biden. Mr. Trump is on record as having questioned several of the poll procedures, especially mail-in voting which he alleges will be riddled with fraud. Should the contest be a close one that he loses, the President is unlikely to accept defeat with grace and may opt to inject acrimony into the process, in the hope that the six conservatives on the Bench ~ three of them appointed by him ~ will rule in his favour. His belief will be bolstered by the fact that just before the Senate confirmation, the five conservative judges had voted to cut short the deadline for receiving mail-in votes in the key state of Wisconsin, a ruling that favours Republicans. The controversy around the appointment stems principally from it having taken place so close to the Presidential election ~ unprecedented in itself and also, according to Democrats, duplicitous as the Republicans had blocked a similar proposal in the twilight stage of Mr Barack Obama's presidency by saying it reeked of impropriety. Certainly, Mr Trump has made his expectations of Justice Barrett quite clear by touting her appointment to loudly cheering supporters at campaign rallies.

But beyond the issues that the election outcome may throw up, the sharp tilt towards conservatism is expected to lead to several liberal pronouncements of America's highest court to be revisited. The first of these will be the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, which will come up for adjudication a week after the election. The Act, which helped millions of Americans obtain access to health insurance and stopped insurers from denying coverage to those with pre-existing conditions, is opposed by Mr Trump and by several Republican-ruled states. In addition, Ms Barrett's positions on abortion, climate change and presidential powers ~ on which she evaded questions during confirmation hearings ~ are likely to be conservative. A mother of seven children, five borne by her including one with Down's syndrome and two adopted from Haiti, Justice Barrett's position on abortion even in special circumstances has endeared her to Christian conservatives. Thus, many Americans feel that the 1973 Roe vs Wade judgement of the Supreme Court, which gave women the right to choose to abort without excessive government intervention, may be overturned. Already liberals have raised a cry for expanding the Supreme Court to negate the Conservative majority, and this may be one of the first demands made on Mr Biden should he make it to the White House.

China's rebound

As China's leaders meet behind closed doors this week, they will take stock of how their country has performed during the period of the coronavirus epidemic while simultaneously drawing up a vision for 2035 at the behest of President Xi Jinping who sees that year as the deadline for achieving "socialist modernisation." Speculation about challenges to Mr. Xi's authority are effectively being countered by this move, which many believe is suggestive of how long the 67-year-old President for life sees himself helming affairs. While there have been reports of some internal criticism of his performance, the fact is that through accident or design, China has emerged as the only major world economy to see both growth and regular signs of an upswing. On the eve of the crucial meeting of the Communist Party's Central Committee, the China Fashion Week got underway at Beijing as models without masks walked the catwalk before enthusiastic fashion aficionados who had forsaken all pretence at social distancing. China's economy is rapidly bouncing back to pre-Covid levels, with cinemas packed, restaurants rocking and live performances featuring on the entertainment menu. Consumer goods sales have risen across the board, and on the first day of the Golden Week holiday on 1 October, box office collections at cinemas were at a staggering 745 million yuan, the second-best ever for the holiday. In sharp contrast to the global gloom, China in the first nine months of 2020 created 8.98 million urban jobs, just short of the annual target of 9 million, while household incomes grew by 0.6 per cent. While the auto sector led the buying boom, even the services sector which had been hit worst by the epidemic is showing signs of a sharp recovery. Notwithstanding the opacity surrounding official claims, the fact is that signs of a recovery are so evident in China that they cannot be dismissed as propaganda. For China has above all been helped by one factor ~ in sharp contrast to countries around the world, its virus afflictions have shown a steady, unrelenting fall after the initial surge that rocked the world. There has been no resurgence and only occasional, minor, localised blips that have been swiftly contained. Mystifyingly, not even the relaxation in social contact norms, nor holiday travel (the Golden Week saw 637 million Chinese leave their homes) nor even festival gatherings or falling temperatures have caused fresh outbreaks of the disease. It is almost as if the virus, after having rocked Wuhan with intensity early this year, packed its bags and bought a one-way ticket out of China. Certainly, during its introspection, the Communist Party of China will pat itself on the back for this remarkable achievement, while cementing plans to increase the country's dominance of global affairs over the next decade and a half.

Climate and Agriculture

No one has factored in the environmental cost of the new agricultural regime. Most people harbour the misconception that agricultural activities do not contribute to pollution, and that agriculture is in some way beneficial for the environment. That may have been true for traditional agriculture, but modern agricultural activities make extravagant use of fossil fuels



The acrimonious war of words on the three newly legislated agricultural Acts viz. Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 (FPTC Act), Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 (FAPAFS Act) and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, has drowned out rational debate on the long-term effects of the legislation.

Seemingly, no one, including the Government has factored in the environmental cost of the new agricultural regime. Most people harbour the misconception that agricultural activities do not contribute to pollution, and that agriculture is in some way beneficial for the environment. That may have been true for traditional agriculture, but modern agricultural activities make extravagant use of fossil fuels in chemical fertilisers, pesticides, running farm machinery, as also food processing and packaging, and transportation.

It is estimated that while traditional farming produces 2.3 calories of food energy for every calorie of fossil-fuel energy consumed, modern farming needs 10 calories of fossil-fuel energy to produce one calorie of packaged food. According to estimates, farming activities consume 19 per cent of fossil fuels in the US and emit 37 per cent of the greenhouse gases in that country. After large-scale farming is taken up in earnest in our country, we may see the seasonal spike in pollution, when farmers clear the land after harvesting, becoming a permanent feature in the entire country.

Farming conglomerates, which would replace traditional farmers in India after operationalization of the three farming Acts, generally practice monoculture of crops and animals. Monoculture of crops i.e. repeatedly planting the same crop in the same area depletes the nutrients from the earth leaving the soil

weak and unable to support healthy growth, forcing farmers to use chemical fertilizers which, in turn, disrupt the natural composition of the soil and contribute further to nutrient depletion. Also, there is a danger of plant diseases wiping out the crop of an entire geographical area.

Monocultures of animals would create a pollution problem because waste from animals raised in farms is used as manure but waste from animals reared in a factory environment is difficult to dispose of. Also, diseases spread quickly amongst animals kept close together.

Monoculture of both kinds wastes a lot of water, which is a scarce resource in our country. Despite these obvious risks, farming conglomerates would rely on monoculture because performing complex rotations of plants and managing pests without petrochemicals is labour intensive and requires traditional skills, different from merely driving a tractor or harvester and spraying chemical insecticides. The bottom line is that corporate farmers would only be tenants on the land they farm, so they would not worry unduly about the long-term impact of their wasteful farming methods on the soil. One only has to see the black, degraded soil of farming states in the USA, like Iowa, to realise the lasting ill-effects that 'modern' farming methods have on the soil.

To add value to foodstuffs, corporates engaged in farming would go in for food processing in a large way which would be at the expense of public health, because consumption of calorie-dense processed food, often leads to heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. Statistics show that spending on health has gone up from 5 per cent to 16 per

cent of national income in the USA in the last 70 years, the period in which the country switched over to industrial farming. Consequently, educated Americans now realise the ill-effects of fast food and value healthy local organic food.

As averred by the Government, the cumulative effect of the three farming Acts would be to change the agricultural eco-system forever, but not necessarily in the way the Government has predicted. On the positive side, the FPTC Act would end the monopoly of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) and allow free purchase and sale of agricultural produce across the length and breadth of the country, which would enable farmers to get better prices for their produce and reduce selling costs by avoiding APMC and other charges of around 8.5 per cent. The FAPAFS Act would legalise contract farming leading to economies of scale, private sector investment in agricultural infrastructure and ultimately to modernisation and monetisation of agriculture. Business entities would take on farming lease large tracts of farmland belonging to different farmers and employ modern farming methods and with economies of scale, ensure bumper production at low cost. Briefly put, agriculture under the new dispensation would be practiced on large mechanised farms relying heavily on technology with little human involvement. On the flip side, the owner of the land is likely to be relegated to a peripheral role, working at the command of the company that leases his land. Inevitably, the number of farmers would decline, like in the US, which after seventy years of industrialised farming, has less than 2 million farmers for a population of 331 million. Viewed in this perspective, corporatisation of Indian agriculture would result in a colossal human tragedy for the 45 per cent of our population engaged in farming, most of whom are small farmers, landless labourers and tenant farmers, who know no skill except farming.

Needless to say, the eco-system emerging after the current reforms would be the antithesis of organic, local, pasture-based, humane farming that the Government was promoting till recently, through initiatives like Zero Budget Natural Farming. At the time when countries like the US are trying to wean away agriculture from its diet of fossil fuel and put it back on a diet of natural photosynthesis, we are proceeding in a totally opposite direction. We should also appreciate that Indian farmers engaged in traditional agriculture could withstand the ravages of the Coronavirus pandemic and provide sustenance to the nation in these difficult times that annihilated the much-pampered corporate sector. But corporatised agriculture may not prove as resilient at a time of crisis. In addition to the humongous environmental and sociological cost entailed by industrialised farming we have the danger of food grains getting costly, beyond the reach of ordinary citizens, at certain times, say, in times of famine, war, epidemics etc. The Government routinely arm-twists farmers to keep the prices of agricultural produce artificially low; browbeating large corporate bodies may not be so easy. Author Kilroy J. Oldster sounded a dire warning in his book Dead Toad Scrolls: "Less than two per cent of all Americans are now farmers. Corporations with all the warmth of equity investors now control the breadbasket of America. Anyone care to speculate how corporate control of the world's food banks will work out for ordinary people who must eat to survive?"

Let us hope that this warning does not come true for our country.

Given the well-healed classes with access to air purifiers can afford to live with it, the poor and unprivileged whom all political parties claim to stand for the most are impacted. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has political capital to do something about this and he must because inaction on this front will taint his legacy.

Yours, etc., N Sadasiva Reddy,
Bengaluru, 24 October.

OPPORTUNISTIC

SIR, This is with reference to your report "Free Vaccine, Jobs : BJP's Bihar bonanza" (October 23). BJP's declaration in its poll manifesto is nothing but playing politics

with the deadly pandemic. The vaccine is yet undeveloped and if it comes at all in time that would not be the property of the ruling party at the Centre. Credit for the same must go to the scientists for their tireless efforts, not to politicians.

In this context, the opposition parties' castigation of the BJP government for its cynical exploitation of people's fear is absolutely justified. It seems that the states where polls are not due any time soon should brace for discrimination in priority of access to the vaccine.

It is surely an opportunistic ploy to use an undeveloped vaccine as an election bait. The BJP manifesto for Bihar Assembly polls released by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman does not say much that is constructive. The conspicuous emphasis is on trading in death for votes.

Yours, etc., Sumit Kumar Das, Baidyabati, 24 October.

GURUNG SURFACES

SIR, This is with reference to the report beginning "Gurung ends 3-year hiding..." (October 22). Bimal Gurung was "on the run" since 2017 after his separatist actions regarding "Gorkhaland". The report states that the state government has slapped several charges against him. Now the absconder has surfaced freely in Kolkata, and expressed his new political tilt towards the Trinamul Congress.

This begs a few fundamental questions. Have the charges by the state against Gurung been dropped? Or have they been proven unsubstantiated in court? If neither, then strange indeed are the workings of the present dispensation in the state.

Yours, etc., Amit Banerjee, Kolkata, 24 October.

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

ASIAN VOICES
Top spot for pension systems

A League table assessing retirement income systems has again put Singapore at top spot in Asia and seventh overall. The ranking comes amid concerns that the pandemic will hit future pensions, with reduced contributions, lower investment returns and higher government debt, said the Mercer CFA Institute Global Pension Index report.

It examined 39 retirement income systems covering almost two-thirds of the world's population using a combination of responses gathered from May to July and publicly available data. The Netherlands led the way, followed by Denmark and Israel.

The index, now in its 12th edition, assessed each retirement system based on adequacy, integrity and sustainability. The adequacy category examines a system's benefits, design, levels of savings and home ownership, among other factors, to determine its ability to provide adequate retirement income.

Integrity considers factors such as regulation, governance, communication and operating costs, while sustainability measures how likely a system will be able to provide benefits in the future. Singapore ranked seventh for adequacy, 11th for integrity and 12th for sustainability. The city-state has Asia's top retirement system, followed by Hong Kong and Malaysia.

Dr David Knox, senior partner at Mercer and the study's lead author, told a briefing on October 16 that Singapore ranked well as it has an established system ~ the Central Provident Fund (CPF) ~ with good governance and wide coverage of all employed Singaporean residents.

"The CPF also has an annuity focus, so you have an income-oriented system with money being set aside for the future," said Dr Knox in reference to CPF Life, which provides a lifelong

THE STRAITS TIMES
monthly payout once a member turns 65. The report noted that the Singapore government implemented changes to the CPF scheme in 2016, including more flexibility in drawing down retirement pension amounts and increases to certain contribution and interest rates.

Singapore also retained its "B" grade, indicating that it has a pension system with a sound structure and good features, but with some areas for improvement.

Chong Chee Loong, who heads Mercer's wealth business in Singapore, said the system can be improved by reducing the barriers to established tax-approved group corporate retirement plans and increasing the age at which CPF members can access their retirement savings. "The system would also be fortified by opening the CPF to non-residents working in Singapore, given that they comprise a significant portion of the workforce," Chong said.

PERSONAL

SUBHO BIJOYA and best wishes to all patients, colleagues, friends and relations. — Prof. Dr. Salil Kumar Panja.

N G MEDICARE & N G Nursing Home wishes you Subho Bijoya.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editor@thestatesman.com

Address 'filthy air' problem

SIR, This refers to the news item "Trump fires 'filthy air' barb at China, India, Russia", (*The Statesman*, October 24).

People living in North India, particularly in Delhi, under truly suffocating conditions would not really disagree with US president Donald Trump's statement about India's air being filthy.

They should hope that this ultimate repudiation of our ambient air quality and pollution in a US presidential debate might force the central and state governments to finally do something.

The persistently poor

air quality in India is now officially a global joke and our politicians' reluctance to deal with the issue holistically because they do not want to irritate their agricultural vote bank is an even bigger one.

Hundreds of crore rupees have been raised as green cess in Delhi. Why is this money not being used to subsidise agricultural machinery for farmers so that they can get rid of crop waste in an eco-friendly manner? Delhi's air knocks years off the lives of its citizens, the lives of children are being ruined by chronic pul-

monary conditions such as asthma. The government can't even blame the automotive industry as it has moved to very low emission BS-6 vehicles now.

There could soon be medical evidence to prove a direct connection between high level pollution and the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Trump does speak about a lot of things without filtering them through political double speak. He was proven right about China and he is absolutely right about India's air quality. The right to air quality should be

a given. While the well-healed classes with access to air purifiers can afford to live with it, the poor and unprivileged whom all political parties claim to stand for the most are impacted. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has political capital to do something about this and he must because inaction on this front will taint his legacy.

Yours, etc., N Sadasiva Reddy,

Bengaluru, 24 October.

BEST PUNISHMENT

SIR, This is with reference to Prafull Goradia's article headlined "Castrate the rapist", published in *The Statesman* on 22 October. As a deterrent to the crime of rape, he has rightly mentioned the various methods of castration in some countries without capital punishment.

I think his suggestion for surgical method to make the criminal sterile is the best one for society. When turned into a 'eunuch', he would be a walking advertisement for the society to see what happens to a rapist.

Yours, etc., Ratanmani Chakraborty, Kolkata, 25 October.



QUAD and Malabar exercises

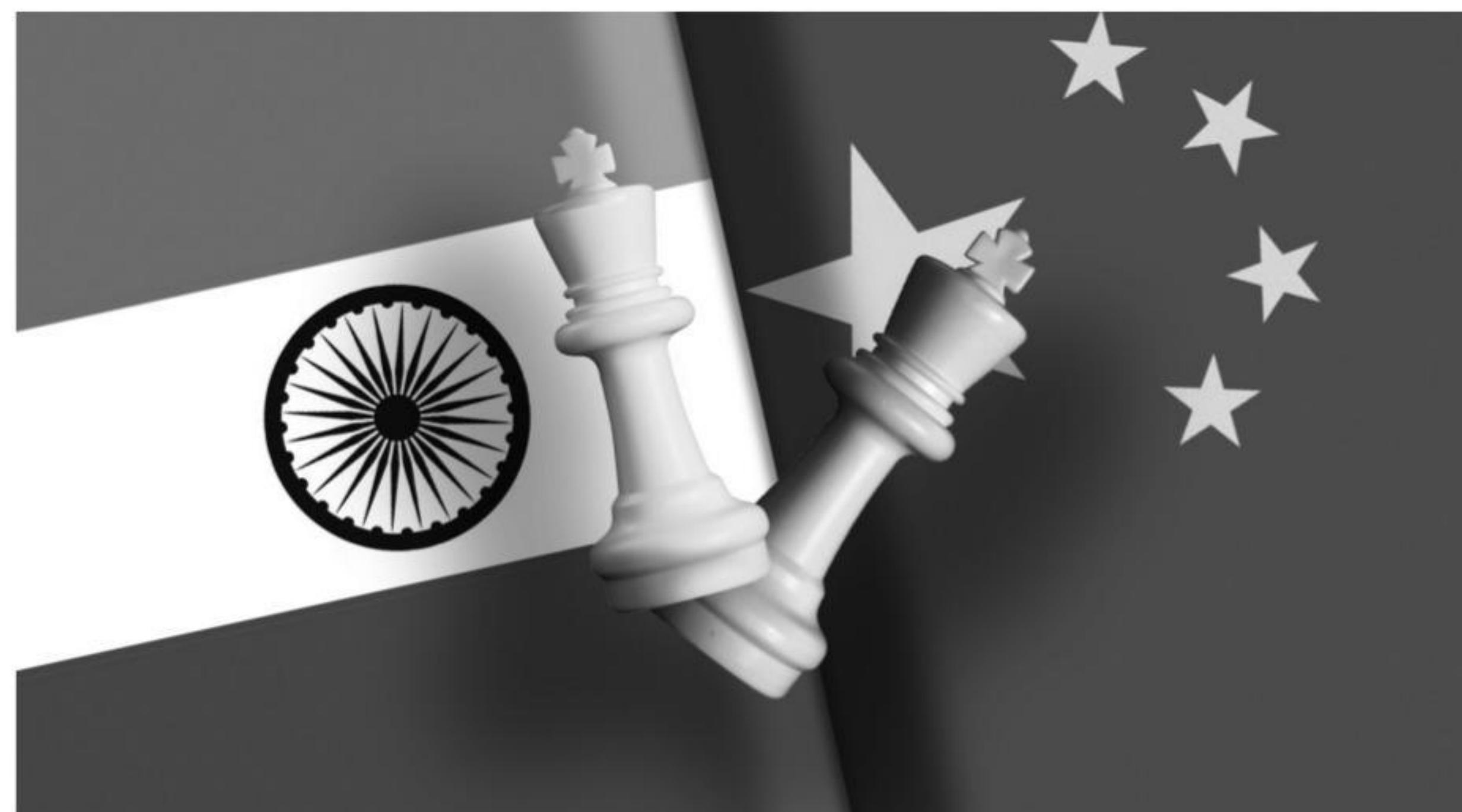
HARSHA KAKAR

Two recent decisions involving the Indian government are being linked to project India as joining alliances to contain China. There is no doubt that Chinese unilateral actions in the South China Sea (SCS), its threat of annexing islands belonging to other nations and imposing the nine-dash line will impact global shipping. Added to it are its offensive threats against Taiwan and India. This power projection by China has also brought European nations including UK, France and Germany into the region, aiming to work in unison to contain China.

The two events being linked are the recent meeting of the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) and Indian invitation to Australia to join the next Malabar exercises to be hosted by India in the Bay of Bengal. In the QUAD meeting earlier this month, Foreign Affairs Minister S Jaishankar stated, "We remain committed to upholding the rules-based international order, underpinned by the rule of law, transparency, freedom of navigation in the international seas, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and peaceful resolution of disputes."

Jaishankar also emphasized that QUAD was aiming for "maintaining a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific." He did not mention China, nor did his counterparts from Japan and Australia. It was only Mike Pompeo who named China directly. There is no doubt that the QUAD is directly aimed at China, however, it has never emerged as an 'Asian NATO' as China terms it. The Chinese consider the QUAD as a threat and their embassy in Tokyo commented after the meeting, "We hope that relevant countries will do more to enhance mutual understanding and trust among countries in the region, and promote regional peace, stability and development, and not the opposite."

Since its evolution in 2007, it was India which kept the QUAD from rising to levels of foreign ministers, seeking to assuage China. Recent years were witness to China pushing India on multiple issues from blocking entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group, enhancing its military relations with Pakistan, refusing to address the growing trade deficit and finally entering Ladakh. Indian patience had finally run dry. It thus willingly pushed for making the QUAD a reality. If QUAD is to grow beyond just a 'consultative'



body then it must draw in nations most impacted by Chinese hegemony in the region, which are the ASEAN countries.

For India, actively joining the QUAD may raise questions about it shedding its independent foreign policy and joining an alliance. This may not be true. The current QUAD plus which includes South Korea, New Zealand and Vietnam, though aimed at China, is more than just a consultative or possibly future military grouping or alliance. It also has an economic component which could benefit India, as all countries within the group seek decoupling from China.

Officially, QUAD remains a grouping of democracies seeking to ensure freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific. PS Raghavan, a former member of the National Security Advisory Board, describes it as, "not a closed club or a starting point of an arc of democracy encircling China. Even less is it an alliance. The broad objectives of its participants are political equilibrium and a sustainable security architecture."

The Malabar Exercise scheduled next month has always been viewed by China as the military dimension of QUAD. Indian hesitation to invite Australia in the past few years was more because of Chinese concerns. The current invite is an indicator that India is ready to challenge Chinese objections. The Malabar exercise aims at interoperability with emphasis on humanitarian assistance, surface war manoeuvres, anti-submarines warfare, counter-terror operations and aerial surveillance. Classically, it is enhancing capabilities of operating jointly in an adverse scenario if the situation so demands.

Realistically, India has no interest to draw in other nations into its current Ladakh crisis as it feels capable of handling it. The Indian statement inviting Australia read, "as India seeks to increase cooperation with other countries in the maritime security domain and in the light of increased defence cooperation with Australia, Malabar 2020 will see the participation of the Australian Navy." Australia immediately confirmed its

participation. The US and Japan welcomed the Indian decision.

The participation of all four members of the QUAD in the Malabar exercise is a signal to China that nations in the region are willing to challenge its hegemony and territorial assertiveness. As India strengthens its military against Chinese pressures, it is simultaneously enhancing its ties with other nations that possess similar views. Alliances in the maritime domain are essential as this is where India remains on a weak footing. Chinese comments post the announcement of the Malabar exercise included, "the QUAD military alliance is officially formed."

Simultaneously, India does not seek a NATO type Asian alliance with the US. Nor would India desire to be stuck into operations in the SCS unless they are of specific concern to India. Finally, India would never become a junior military partner in any US-led alliance. India would never allow its diplomatic ties with Russia, Iran and other nations where the US has differing perceptions to deteriorate

by joining a US-led alliance.

Taken together, the enhanced levels of the QUAD and the inclusion of Australia in the Malabar exercises is aimed at conveying that major democracies in the region are joining hands to counter China. They would seek to draw in other nations in the region as a larger security blanket

intending to box in China.

Currently neither QUAD nor the Malabar exercises are an alliance. They remain a grouping, a consultative mechanism aimed at China. Turning it into an alliance, soft or concrete, is a matter of time depending on the way China projects its hegemony. Its remaining a club of four nations or drawing in others, including UK, France, Germany and ASEAN, will be dependent on Chinese posturing. China will determine the future of the QUAD. As Brahma Chellaney stated, "If Xi's increasing threats toward Taiwan lead to military action, then a grand international coalition, with the Quad at its core, will become inevitable."

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

Fights to the last speech

ARIFA NOOR

Pakistan's opposition continues down the jalsa path. Big crowds, star speakers and hard-hitting speeches—their coming together has now taken political centre stage while the government has been reduced to little more than reactions galore as minister after spokesman takes to the mike in front of a bunch of journalists to attack the opposition. By now, it's hard to see if these talks are serving any purpose.

This is not the first time a government has behaved thus, despite the many, many previous moments when such behaviour has merely illustrated a government's nervousness.

But let's give the government its due. Its jitters are not uncalled for—after all, it is aware that their sins of omission and commission in keeping a check on the prices of food have provided oxygen—and ears—to the opposition's thunder. This is the one issue which lends authenticity and mass appeal to the angry leadership's argument that the selectors have brought gloom and suffering to the people. Without the strain of the ever-increasing food bills, the opposition leaders would simply sound like petulant children left out of the play.

This is what makes the government nervous. Along with the government, its backbenchers too are skittish and angry for they have little to offer their voters and not many answers for the inflation. This has made the opposition relevant as it



takes to the jalsa grounds. And a nervous government adds to their clout by talking less and less of the 'naya' Pakistan it had promised and focusing more and more on bashing and hounding those who once stood for purana Pakistan (though now even Nawaz Sharif is promising a 'naya' Pakistan).

But in all this confusion, both the government and the opposition are helping each other. The rhetoric of PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif makes the government as relevant to the establishment as inflation makes the opposition relevant. Both the PTI and the PML-N should be grateful to each other, if nothing else.

But the more important question right now is—what will the onslaught of the opposition achieve? Will it change anything or everything? Or will nothing change?

It's hard to say if it will be a transformative moment which will usher in great change. Hadn't we thought the same of 2007 only to have hopes dashed as the years passed? This time around, hopes and expectations are more tempered, with the experience of history.

This is not to say, however, that nothing will happen. As the more pragmatic among the political leadership say, something has to give. The government may not be sent packing

or the establishment may not get so scared that it retreats from politics entirely but there will be some change, somewhere. Some pressure on the opposition will ease; some of the more ambitious plans for the future will be discarded and some space will be ceded. This is not beyond the realm of possibility, especially as it is not clear if the opposition is in the mood for more than a few jalsas at the moment. They may promise more but the 'more' is so vague that it is hard to take it into consideration.

Now for Nawaz Sharif's rhetoric, which has set many a tongue wagging. As an aside, it is interesting how his own bayanai (narrative) about the civil-military relationship has evolved over the years. When he came to power, his focus appeared to be on making peace with India—the round-about way to address the civil-military balance at home; by 2016 he had either given up on this route or realised its futility and moved on to highlighting the international context and the costs of Pakistan's policies. 'Dawn leaks' and the interviews in which he spoke of Mumbai are cases in point.

Four years later, he is now positioning himself as the real patriot who understands Pakistan's security needs but is unwilling to allow any unconstitutional intervention in politics. Hence, he is now constantly trying to distinguish between the institution and its few top decision-makers, whom he is identifying as the culprits. It is as if he has realised that this is a battle to be fought domestically—ghar ki baat and all that. However, it's hard to say if he realises that such efforts to cause

fissures within institutions go only so far—when push comes to shove, the larger institutional interests may just force the individuals to opt for circumspection, discretion and an effort to stay away from controversy. At best, an individual or two will be shuffled here and there, as we saw in 2007 and to a lesser extent in February of this year. The larger policy direction may not necessarily change. If this is what happens this time around, it remains to be seen if Sharif senior—and his supporters—is willing to see this as enough.

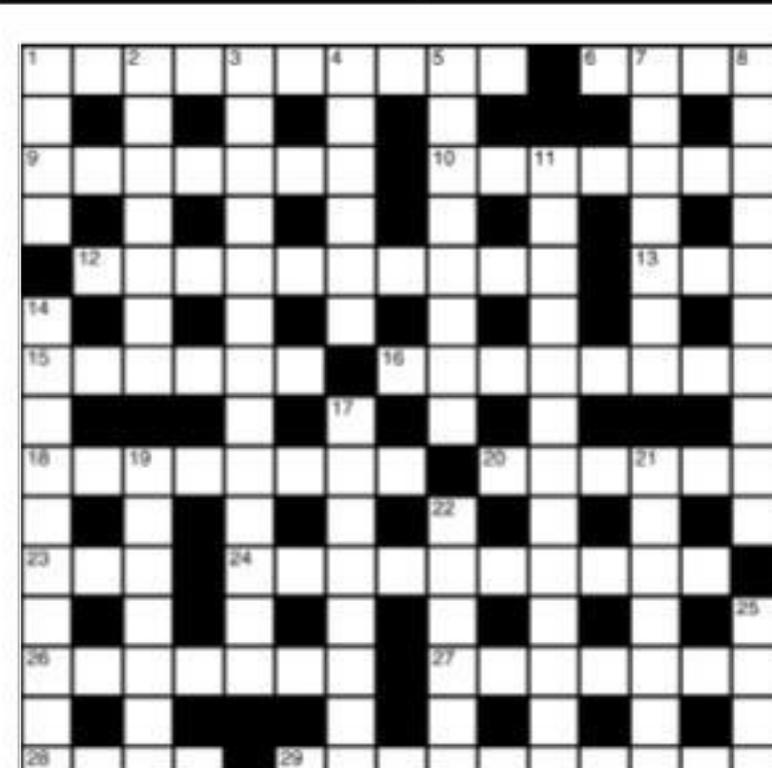
It is hard to make predictions, which is journalistically unsound as well. But even so, soon into the opposition's campaign, it would be unfair to not point out the two winners of this latest round of shadow boxing. First is the chief minister of Punjab, Usman Buzdar. The ruckus kicked up by the opposition has once again diverted attention and debate from his lackluster way of running Punjab.

Indeed, everyone had forgotten that he was the main bone of contention between Khan and his party and Khan and his supporters. And on the other side of the divide, Capt Safdar has also surely gotten the cat's crown and has inched his way closer to the leadership circles of the Noon, thanks to the shenanigans, his own and others', in Karachi. Whether he can find other ladders to climb in the days to come may be uncertain but he has become a 'somebody' in the party. The gains, sometimes, of those on the sidelines of the big fights are stories in themselves.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28117

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1 Extra jam, perhaps, is popular (10)
- 6 Some recipes from the east of impressive proportions (4)
- 9 Clever leader is accommodating, at the moment (7)
- 10 Collusion? California loudly shows disapproval (7)
- 12 Backtracking oil producer's at first an advocate of Home Rule (10)
- 13 Field exposed when fencing is removed (3)
- 15 State: "You look a state" (6)
- 16 Understood female in Germany (8)
- 18 Body fluid and fly found in mug (8)
- 20 Reportedly spirit-like spirit? (6)
- 23 Leaves note with answer (3)
- 24 I smell following purge, awareness essentially shot (10)

DOWN

- 26 It cuts the chat at sea (7)
- 27 Salesman allowed European to be charged (7)
- 28 Lapwing loses it, twisting to give cry (4)
- 29 Religious office in hot periods abandoned (10)
- 1 Pan's People finally aware of bigotry (4)
- 2 Couple study advanced body parts (7)
- 3 Lead from salt mine of Wieliczka possibly taken outside with excessive cleaning (4,3,6)
- 4 Container of chopped-up garb and assorted gibbons, primarily (6)
- 5 Cary, in reality, mostly gets Victor
- 6 to replace book of records (8)
- 7 Interrogate male about liberal pest, maybe (7)
- 8 Criminal is captured displaying classic comedy prop (7,3)
- 11 Possibly the aim of bowls and snooker players: to win big (3,3,7)
- 14 Young dog and cat perhaps present Sesame Street? (6,4)
- 17 Clock catalogue (8)
- 19 Surprise promising young actress with time up (7)
- 21 New team in France getting discontented Ronaldo for nothing? Anything but (3-4)
- 22 Order grade to be changed, getting C for German (6)
- 25 Cash short? Study: Cash missing upfront? Study (4)

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

100 YEARS AGO

OPTIONAL NOTE

Reuter's Agency has long enjoyed the reputation of being trustworthy and it is often utilised not only by the British Government but by others also as a means of making a semi-official announcement. When, therefore, Reuter stated that the French Government had recognised General Wrangel's Government as the de facto Government of Southern Russia and were about to send a French diplomatic agent to Sebastopol with the title of High Commissioner the news, though startling, was received in London as authentic, more especially as Reuter's message mentioned that Mr. Lloyd George had been informed of the decision of the French Government. Sir Donald Maclean promptly drew attention to Reuter's announcement in the House of Commons, and asked the Prime Minister for further information on the matter. The House must have been not a little amazed to learn that Mr. Lloyd George had himself read Reuter's telegram with the greatest surprise. The Foreign Office had not received the news, nor had the French Embassy. He admitted that the French Government were disposed to assist General Wrangel, but the question was never raised by M. Millerand even so lately as last Monday and Mr. Lloyd George accordingly put down the report circulated by Reuter to a blunder on the part of a "very reliable agency." It now remains to be seen whether Reuter has blundered.

NEWS ITEMS

PORT CONGESTED

Never before in the history of the Port Trust has there been such a large number of steamers in the port of Calcutta as there were yesterday. Owing to this great congestion, which has been gradually increasing during the past month, several steamers have been compelled to be idle in midstream for a few days waiting for a berth at the jetties to unload their cargo. Hand-in-hand with this inrush of vessels, there has been a great glut of export cargo. Every shed in the Kidderpore docks is full of merchandise for out-going vessels. The supply of gunnys from the mills has been unprecedented, in fact, there are not sufficient river cargo boats to convey the stuff from the various mills. Before the war the highest number of steamers in port on one single day was 70, and during the war the figure dropped as low as 22.

CAMBODIA COTTON

The Madras Publicity Bureau has issued a communication regarding a notification that has been issued under the Pests Act, which shows how necessary it is to protect Indian ryots from the results of their own folly and cupidity. The notification enjoins, under threat of a penalty, the rooting out and destruction of the stumps of Cambodia cotton after the first crop has been picked. The ryot prefers to leave it to grow a second crop of cotton with which he hopes to supplement his profits on the first with little trouble to himself. It matters little to him that this second crop is usually infected with the boll-worm and weevil, which not only make it worthless, but also infect the first crop in adjacent fields, and generally ruins the whole Cambodia cotton of a district.

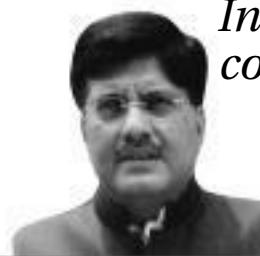
MINERS' BALLOT

While it is considered that the miners' ballot will result in a large strike majority, it is understood that this is officially regarded as indicating little more than the union's strength. It is declared that Mr. Smillie will not advise direct action without the certain co-operation of the whole triple alliance, but there is evidence that the alliance will hesitate to sanction a combined strike unless the outside unions agree to finance it. Moreover, Moderate Constitutionalists like Mr. Clynes will throw their whole influence into the scale to preserve industrial peace. In the event of a prostrate ballot, the triple alliance will meet next week to consider the situation, but Labour officials believe that the alliance itself will not take the course of direct intervention to the Government.

STOREKEEPER'S BAIL REDUCED

At the High Court yesterday before Justices Richardson and Ghose, Mr. Ave-toom, with Mr. Chippendale, applied on behalf of H.L. Stringer, for reduction of bail. Stringer was the late storekeeper in charge of the Munitions Depot at Narkaldanga. Stringer was arrested by the police in connection with what is known as the Munitions Board scandal and was placed before the Commissioner of Police who ordered him to be released on bail of Rs 60,000. Subsequently Stringer petitioned the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta for reduction of bail on the ground that it was excessively heavy but the Magistrate declined to interfere. Their lordships directed that the bail which the petitioner has been directed to furnish be reduced. The petitioner must give his own recognisance in the sum of Rs 15,000 with two sureties for the same amount.





India has allowed all sorts of engagements and allowed international companies to work in India, prosper in India and grow in India.

UNION MINISTER PIYUSH GOYAL
TALKING ABOUT GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

THUMBNAILS

E-commerce: E-commerce companies reported a 55 per cent jump in sale goods to USD 4.1 billion (Rs 29,000 crore) across platforms during the first week (15-21 October) of festive sales, research firm RedSeer said on Tuesday. Smartphones led the sale accounting for 47 per cent of total festive sales with Rs 1.5 crore worth of smartphones being sold every minute across the online platforms in the first week of 2020's festive sales.

PTI

Sebi bans Beckons Industries: Markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday restrained Beckons Industries Ltd and its senior officials from accessing securities market in a matter related to manipulation in issuance of global depository receipts (GDR) issuance. Through two orders, Sebi noted that the firm issued 1.44 million GDRs amounting to USD 5 million in July 2008 and 2.49 million GDRs worth \$10.54 million in June 2010.

PTI

Gadkari urges Walmart to work with khadi industries

NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Union MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday urged retail giant Walmart to work with khadi and village industries to take their products, including khadi denim, to global markets.

He also highlighted that the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector in India is a major job creator and contributor to the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

"Khadi gram udyog has very good products. We are making khadi denim...the quality of products is good, of international standards...I will request if you can give opportunity to khadi gram udyog. I feel that will be a unique thing for Walmart also," Gadkari said at a virtual event there.

The minister noted that the MSME sector is the backbone of the country's economy, employing over 11 crore people and is an engine to economic growth. He said the government has taken a number of steps to help the MSME sector that has seen significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gadkari suggested that Walmart can engage with sectors like handloom, handicrafts, and other village industries.

"They (industries) have unique types of products that are definitely going to give you (Walmart) more business. At the same time, it creates job opportunities in India. Our target is to increase exports, and Indian MSMEs must become part of the global supply chain," he said.

PTI

Rupee ends 13 paise higher against dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 OCTOBER

The rupee staged a rebound from the day's lowest level to settle 13 paise higher at 73.71 against the US dollar on Tuesday, buoyed by upbeat domestic equities and greenback selling by exporters.

At the interbank foreign market, the domestic unit opened on a weak note at 73.94 against the greenback, but soon staged a smart recovery.

During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 73.71 and a low of 73.94 against the greenback. It finally closed at 73.71, registering a gain of 13 paise over its previous close of 73.84 against the US currency. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.07 per cent to 93.11.

On the equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 376.60 points or 0.94 per cent higher at 40,522.10; and the NSE Nifty was 121.65 points or 1.03 per cent up at 11,889.40.

"The Indian rupee appreciated against the US dollar on Tuesday supported by strong local shares and persistent greenback sales by exporters. Hopes of higher foreign inflows also aided the local unit," said Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at

GDP growth to be negative or near zero this fiscal: Nirmala

Recent data indicates revival in the economy which is steady & sustainable, says FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said there were visible signs of revival in the economy but the GDP growth may be in the negative zone or near zero in the current fiscal.

She said the economy saw a contraction in the April-June quarter, but demand has picked up in the festival season. Speaking at the India Energy Forum of CERAWeek, she said infrastructure, fintech and all employment generating and asset creating industries would be priority sectors for the government.

Sitharaman further said recent data indicates revival in the economy, with PMI number being the highest since 2012.

"Which sort of indicates that the revival is there which is going to be steady and sus-



tainable revival. If that sustainable revival is going to happen between quarter three and quarter four, we expect that the overall GDP growth... (is) going to be in the negative or near zero this time," she said. India will regain the tag of the fastest growing major economy next year, she asserted.

The Indian economy had contracted by a huge 23.9 per

cent in the April-June quarter, hit by the Covid-19 crisis.

Sitharaman said a "very firm lockdown" was imposed beginning March 25, with the government putting lives before livelihood to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

"We had a contraction which happened during the first quarter and post which the unlocking has been steady

positive to 5.3 per cent YoY in September after contracting for six months. Fuel consumption contracted by (-) 1.3 per cent YoY in September versus (-) 14 per cent YoY in August.

"Demand for durable goods, agriculture equipments, tractors, vehicles are all going up. Festival season has commenced in India, as a result of which I expect demand to go up and be sustainable also," she emphasised.

High-frequency economic indicators show continued improvement both in month-on-month (MoM) and year-on-year (YoY) terms. Manufacturing PMI rose to 56.8 in September, an eight-and-a-half year high, while services PMI, albeit marginally below the 50 mark, continued to increase from its April trough.

Growth in power demand stood at 10.2 per cent YoY for October versus 4.6 per cent for September. Exports turned

positive to 5.3 per cent YoY in September after contracting for six months. Fuel consumption contracted by (-) 1.3 per cent YoY in September versus (-) 14 per cent YoY in August.

The RBI has projected the Indian economy contracting by 9.5 per cent in the current fiscal, while International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank estimate the contraction at 10.3 per cent and 9.6 per cent respectively.

The Indian economy had been slowing even before the pandemic struck. India's quarterly growth rate has been receding sequentially since Q4 FY18. It recorded a GDP growth of 4.2 per cent in FY20.

Sitharaman further said India is continuing with its policies to attract foreign investment in terms of lower taxation and ease of doing business. She said foreign direct investment (FDI) rose 13 per cent in April-August.

approvals and their reporting formats to make it easier for businesses and make regulations less intimidating," he added.

Talking about global supply chains, Goyal said the world has now realised that it needs trusted partners and a fair and transparent trading system, equal and equitable market access. "It can not be that large companies are thrown out of certain countries and not allowed to even enter, when you have countries which have not allowed Facebook and e-commerce companies or even something like chat rooms to come in from other parts of the world," Goyal said.

"...India has allowed all sorts of engagements and allowed international companies to work in India, prosper in India and grow in India and leveraging 1.3 billion people market. I think the world today has seen in India...an open economy and therefore I believe that India has an important role to play in the diversified supply chains that many countries are looking for," he added.

Working with states, local bodies to make it easier for biz to get licences: Goyal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

The Commerce and Industry Ministry is working with states and local bodies to make it easier for businesses to get licences, permissions, Union minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

The Commerce and Industry minister also said that the government is looking at addressing problems of quality so that domestic products can be recognised for high quality. He said the government, academia, and private sector are working together for it.

The government is addressing the challenges of each sector, he said, adding that "we are studying all the laws and regulations around the industry in India to kind of demystify the business environment, bring in more simple and predictable regulatory practices."

Goyal was speaking at the India Energy Forum of CERAWeek. "We in the Ministry are working with states and local bodies to try and make it easier to get licenses, permissions,

lion pound in the prior quarter, but lower than the PBT of 156 million pound a year ago.

"Despite concerns around the risk of second wave of infection in many countries and other geopolitical risks, we expect a gradual recovery of demand and supply in the coming months," Tata Motors said.

In this context, the company is committed to achieving near-zero net automotive debt in the coming years by focusing on better front-end

activations of our exciting product range and executing cost and cash savings with rigour, it added.

Tata Motors reports consolidated net loss of ₹ 307 cr in Sept quarter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 OCTOBER

Bharti Airtel, the country's second largest telecom operator, on Tuesday reported its highest-ever quarterly consolidated revenue on the back of a rise in data usage and higher realisations, helping it narrow losses in the July-September period.

Consolidated revenue rose 22 per cent to Rs 25,785 crore in the September quarter while net loss narrowed to Rs 763 crore.

The quarterly showing was bolstered by an all-round growth across the portfolio - geographies and segments, and rise in Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) as well as strong 4G additions.

The net loss (before exceptional items) for Q2 FY21 was at Rs 744 crore while loss (after exceptional items) stood at Rs 763 crore.

Airtel's losses were significantly lower than the year-ago period when it stood at Rs 23,045 crore after the company had made provisions of Rs 28,450 crore in the immediate aftermath of the Supreme Court ruling on statutory dues.

Airtel's revenues at Rs 25,785 crore in the just-concluded quarter marked the "highest ever consolidated quarterly revenues".

India business delivered strong growth across revenue, margins and customers, the company said in a statement.

PTI

AT WORK



A labourer spreads maize seeds used for manufacturing poultry feed outside a farm on the outskirts of Bangalore on Tuesday.

AFP

'Spike in internal remittance, new EPFO registrations indicate recovery'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 OCTOBER

Indicating a faster-than-expected recovery, remittances from migrant labourers and the number of first-time EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) registrations have crossed the pre-lockdown levels in September, according to a report on Tuesday.

Another silver lining is the massive 60 per cent increase in the number of Jan Dhan accounts to over 41 crore and the balances in them, which also indicate the fall in crimes during the lockdown months, SBI Research said in a report on Tuesday.

The point of concern though is that the degree of formalisation has dropped significantly to six per cent in 2020-21 from an average of 11 per cent in earlier years.

Similarly, according to the payroll data from the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), during April-August 2020, 25 lakh new EPFO subscribers have joined, of which 12.4 lakh were first-time payroll entrants.

During 2019-20, 110.4 lakh new EPFO subscribers were added compared to 139.4 lakh in 2018-19, indicating a loss of 29 lakh subscribers.

As of 14 October, total number of Jan Dhan accounts stood at 41.05 crore with a total balance of Rs 1.31 lakh crore.

Since the beginning of April, around 3 crore no-frills accounts were opened, with a total rise in deposits of Rs 11,060 crore in these accounts.

The coronavirus pandemic has led to a 60 per cent increase in the opening of new Jan Dhan accounts. The average balance in these accounts increased to Rs 3,400 in April and declined thereafter to Rs 3,168 in September and again

now marginally increased to Rs 3,185 in October.

The government has paid Rs 500 to woman Jan Dhan accounts a month till September.

During the same period in 2019, only 1.9 crore were added with increase in deposits of only Rs 7,857 crore. Thus, the pandemic has led to a 60 per cent rise in the opening of Jan Dhan accounts.

Empirical and NCRB data show that wherever there was increased usage of Jan Dhan accounts, there has been less number of crime/theft. The report did not offer an absolute number, as NCRB data is available only up to end 2019.

There is evidence of Jan Dhan accounts having some impact on crimes. UP, Maharashtra and Haryana may have witnessed a lagged impact of the usage of these accounts and thus a positive impact on theft, said the report.

It added that Bengal, Tamil Nadu and even Kerala have seen a continuous impact since inception, and Gujarat and Karnataka have also seen a favourable impact.

On a standalone basis, the company posted a net loss of

Airtel losses narrow to ₹ 763 crore in Sept quarter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 OCTOBER

Bharti Airtel, the country's second largest telecom operator, on Tuesday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 307.26 crore for the second quarter ended September 30.

The auto major had reported a net loss of Rs 187.7 crore during the July to September period previous fiscal.

The company's total revenue from operations declined to Rs 53,530 crore in the second quarter as against Rs 65,431.95 crore during the same period last fiscal, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing.

The quarterly showing was bolstered by an all-round growth across the portfolio - geographies and segments, and rise in Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) as well as strong 4G additions.

Airtel's revenues at Rs 25,785 crore in the just-concluded quarter marked the "highest ever consolidated quarterly revenues".

India business delivered strong growth across revenue, margins and customers, the company said in a statement.

PTI

'Covid-19 to erode 3 yrs of fiscal consolidation gains of states'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 OCTOBER

The study noted that the Indian economy has been hit hard, with the second largest caseload in the world and the Covid-19 curve yet to flatten on a sustained basis.

With about a quarter of GDP already lost in Q1 2020-21 (April-March) and the contraction estimated at close to 10 per cent in Q2, "public finances have been subjected to severe strains".

"The debilitating combination of compression in tax receipts and ramped-up expenditures has generated unprecedented pressures on fiscal positions at sub-national levels," it said.

Some states have been impacted quicker and harder than others, depending upon indigenous demographics and epidemiological features as well as availability and accessibility of health care resources, said the RBI's study.

Supply chain disruptions have also been different depending on nature of businesses and other activities that various states specialise.

Further, with health care, social services and other critical aspects of containment being the responsibilities of state governments, testing, monitoring, and enforcing confinement and ensuring the continuity of provision of

essential services has turned out to be a function of the digitisation base of states.

As against the conventional push/pull factors which work towards influencing the migrants' movement, a different kind of push/pull worked during the pandemic, associated with high levels of informal unemployment.

"Indian states had to contend with reverse migration from abroad as well as across states, with large-scale implications for underlying activity, conditional upon the extent of dependence of states on migrants for factor income, employment and performance of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)," it said, and added this had implications for state finances as well.

As per the RBI, the overall impact on state finances would be conditional upon the exposure to Covid-19, the availability of initial fiscal space and access to rainy day funds, or other reserve funds, if any.

State governments' responses by delaying or cutting down expenditures, even wages and salaries, also need to be taken into account in the assessment of the pandemic's direct effects on state finances.

The company continued

Ceat Q2 net profit surges four-fold to ₹ 182 crore

CEAT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI



BJP-led NDA is national destruction alliance... migrant workers from Bihar have been worst victims of its policies

ASSERTING OPPPOSITION GRAND ALLIANCE IN BIHAR IS HEADED FOR A LANDSLIDE WIN

SENIOR CPI-M LEADER BRINDA KARAT

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2020

09

2 held for killing woman in H'yan; students block road

PTI

CHANDIGARH, 27 OCTOBER

Police on Tuesday arrested two men for allegedly killing a 21-year-old woman outside her college in Haryana's Ballabgarh, a murder which triggered protests with students and local residents blocking the road to Sohna.

A special investigation team has been formed to ensure a quick probe into the case, Haryana's Home Minister Anil Vij said.

Police said main accused Tausif, hailing from Sohna in Gurgaon, and his accomplice Rehan, who is from Noida, have been arrested.

The two men were produced before a court in Faridabad district and sent to two-day police remand.

Nikita, a student of B.Com final year, had come out of her

college after appearing for an exam on Monday afternoon when the incident took place, Ballabgarh ACP Jaiveer Singh Rathai had earlier said.

The accused, who arrived at the spot in a car, had tried to pull the woman inside, in a bid to abduct her, but she resisted after which the key accused shot her, police had said.

She was taken to a hospital, but she succumbed to injuries, the ACP had said.

The woman's father alleged that Tausif had been harassing her for the last two years and pressing her for marriage, which she refused.

He also claimed that Tausif was trying to convert Nikita.

"He should be given capital punishment and our family should be given security," the woman's father said.

During investigation, it

emerged that the main accused was the woman's classmate earlier, police said.

The entire sequence of the crime was captured by someone over mobile phone, the footage of which went viral over social media.

In the video, Tausif, along with his accomplice, is seen arriving outside the college and parking the white-coloured car on the road.

Nikita is seen walking on the road accompanied by one of her friends and the accused suddenly takes out a pistol and shoots her behind her ear from a close range leaving her in a pool of blood at the spot.

Before a few passersby, who noticed the crime taking place, could react, the two accused escaped from the spot in their car.

The incident triggered protests with students and

local residents blocking the Sohna-Ballabgarh road for several hours on Tuesday.

"Both the accused involved in the brutal murder of a girl student in Faridabad last evening have been arrested," Haryana Home Minister Vij said.

He said the murder weapon has also been recovered.

"An SIT led by ACP, Crime, Anil Kumar would ensure quick investigation and time-bound trial to ensure justice to the family," the minister said.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala slammed the Khattar government over the law and order situation in the state.

"During the past two years,

there has been a 45 per cent increase in crime against women in Haryana. In gang-rape incidents, Haryana is at

the top," he claimed.

"The chief minister should feel ashamed, the BJP-JJP should feel ashamed. Can our daughters not reach their homes safely after appearing in examinations, he asked.

He appealed to the Khattar government to take stringent action against the criminals.

"Otherwise, newspapers will be filled with such news each day. This government does not have any moral right to stay in power for another day," the Congress leader said.

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State and Faridabad MP K P Gurjar and Haryana's Transport Minister Mool Chand Sharma, who is BJP MLA from Ballabgarh, told reporters that the accused will be dealt as per law. Sharma also visited the civil hospital in Faridabad where a postmortem of the woman was conducted.

Priyanka: SC ruling in Hathras case strengthens hope for justice

PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday hailed the Supreme Court directive that the CBI investigation in the Hathras case is to be monitored by the Allahabad High Court, saying the decision strengthens the hope for justice.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the CBI investigation in the Hathras case in which a Dalit girl was allegedly brutally raped and died of injuries, is to be monitored by the Allahabad High Court and the CRPF would provide security to the victim's family and witnesses.

"Supreme Court's decision in connection with the Hathras case strengthens the hope for justice. The victim's family from day one has been demanding that there should be a court-monitored probe," Priyanka Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

The victim in the Hathras



case and her family were treated badly by the Uttar Pradesh government, she alleged.

"Character assassination of the victim was done. Decisions were taken with malice and prejudice," the Congress general secretary in-charge UP said.

"The victim was cremated in the dead of the night near her home on September 30. Her family alleged they were forced by the local police to hurriedly conduct her last rites.

Local police officers, however, said the cremation was carried out "as per the wishes of the family".

Tejashwi: Confident of two-thirds majority



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI/PATNA,
27 OCTOBER

Confident of the 'Mahagathbandhan' getting two-thirds majority in the Bihar polls, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday said providing jobs to unemployed youth would be top priority for him and his government will also bring a legislation in the first Assembly session to nullify the "anti-farmer" laws brought by the Centre.

Yadav, Mahagathbandhan's chief ministerial face, said he is running an issue-based campaign in the Assembly polls which was resonating with the masses and come 10 November, the day of the counting of votes, "Bihar will witness a new dawn".

In an interview, Yadav said for the first time in history a promise has been made to the youth of Bihar that 10 lakh jobs will be provided with the "first stroke of the pen in the very first Cabinet meeting" if voted to power.

Asked how many seats he

is expecting to win, the former Bihar deputy chief minister said: "I am no astrologer but the public reception during canvassing gives me confidence that we have the blessings of the great people of Bihar and they have decided to trust us with a huge responsibility."

Yadav expressed confidence that the Mahagathbandhan will get a "thumping two-thirds majority". "I can confidently tell you that deposits will be forfeited of NDA candidates in maximum constituencies. Come 10 November, Bihar will witness a new dawn," he asserted.

Talking about his major promises and poll plank, he said that if voted to power, providing jobs to unemployed youth would be his topmost priority.

"Employment, health, education and industries are the sectors which have been neglected in 15 years of (chief minister) Nitish Kumar's rule. We will revive and transform these sectors," the 30-year-old leader said.

Left, Cong forge Bengal Assembly poll pact

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 27 OCTOBER

Three days after a meeting between PCC chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Left Front chairman Biman Bose to decide an electoral understanding for next year's state Assembly elections, CPI-M politburo sent its nod for the alliance today.

This is the second time since 2016 state Assembly elections when Congress and the CPI-M-led Left Front are closing ranks to form the third force against ruling Trinamul Congress and a resurgent BJP in the state.

The Congress camp has reciprocated the Left Front's gesture following the first round of talks between the two outfits following PCC chief Somen Mitra's death.

Delhi sees highest Covid spike of 4,853 new cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Delhi today recorded 4,853 cases of coronavirus infection (Covid-19)—the city's highest single-day Covid spike till date—which raised its case-load to 3,64,341, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital had reportedly logged its previous highest single-day spike of 4,473 Covid cases on 16 September.

Today's fresh 4,853 cases were detected out of 57,210 tests conducted at different health care centres, with the positivity rate now rising to 8.48 per cent as against yesterday's 8.23 per cent.

Yesterday, the fresh cases of the deadly virus infection were 2,832 identified from 34,411 tests.

Delhi today recorded 44 fresh Covid fatalities—down

The Delhi's active cases tally soared to 27,873 from yesterday's 25,786

from yesterday's 54 such fatalities—which pushed its coronavirus toll to 6,356, the health bulletin said.

According to the bulletin, the number of patients who recovered in the national capital during the past 24 hours was 2,722, which took their cumulative total to 3,30,112. Delhi's Covid recovery rate was stated to be 90.60 per cent.

The coronavirus patients under home isolation numbered 16,415 and the count of those being treated in various city hospitals was 6,605, the bulletin said. The city's active cases tally soared to 27,873 from yesterday's 25,786.

Delhi now had 3,032 containment zones, the bulletin added.

Vaccine: West Bengal govt seeks health workers' list

SUBHENDU MAITI
KOLKATA, 27 OCTOBER

The West Bengal health department has directed all government and private healthcare establishments in the city and districts to fill up excel forms giving names and other details of frontline health workers who would be administered vaccines on priority basis.

The Union health ministry has already begun identifying about 300 million people in the country who would be given the vaccine first when it is ready.

The ministry has already formed a National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEG-VAC) so that vaccination can be expeditiously implemented.

The expert group has identified frontline health and sanitation workers, police officials and elderly people

with co-morbidities to get the vaccine on priority.

A senior official at Swasthya Bhaban said that frontline healthcare workers (HCW) include ANM, ASHA, ASHA supervisors, AWW, nurses, medical officers (allopathic doctors, medical teachers, doctors in administrative posts) AYUSH doctors, dentists, paramedical staff like technicians in laboratories and operation theatres, pharmacists, psychotherapists, radiographers, ward boys, medical students including AYUSH, support staff, clerical and administrative employees who would begin the vaccine first.

"All periphery hospitals, mental hospitals, medical colleges (allopathic, homeopathic and AYUSH), health centres, private healthcare units and polyclinics have been asked to fill up the excel forms as per the directives of the NEG-VAC," the official

said requesting anonymity.

The selected individuals will be given an estimated 600 million doses.

Earlier this month, health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan had said that India hopes to receive up to 500 million doses of coronavirus vaccines by July next year to inoculate about 250 million people. Officials have said that giving the vaccine to India's 1.3 billion people will be a mammoth exercise, likely to stretch well into 2022.

The draft implementation plan, prepared by NEG-VAC, has received inputs from central agencies and the states and incorporated them. A handful of Covid vaccine candidates is nearing the end of last stage clinical trials. Two vaccine frontrunners including a US-based biotechnology company are set to release late-stage and phase 2 trials this month.

Parliamentarians can no longer be silent bystanders, must unite to fight terrorism: LS Speaker

PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 OCTOBER

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday said as people's representatives, parliamentarians can no longer be silent bystanders and they must unite to fight the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism.

Stating that the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries need to intensify their collective fight against terrorism, which poses the

biggest threat to humankind, Birla said, "As people's representatives, parliamentarians can no longer be silent bystanders and they must unite to fight the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism." He emphasised that the funding of all terrorist activities must be stopped immediately and the conditions that are conducive to the spread of ter-

rorism and violent extremism need to be addressed and resolved at the earliest, the Lok Sabha Secretariat said in a statement.

The speaker said the parliaments of the BRICS nations must use international platforms to highlight their collective resolve to support all treaties and agreements against ter-

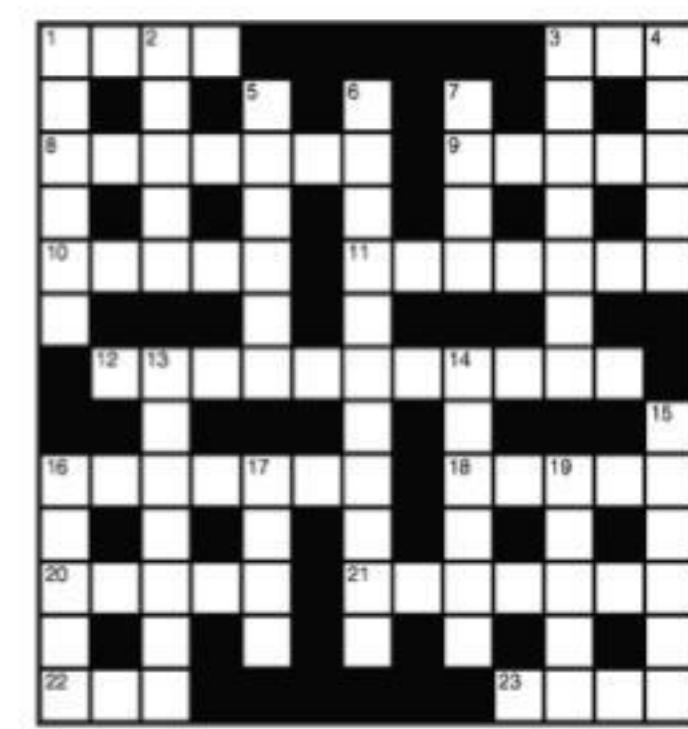
rorism. Talking about the COVID-19 pandemic, Birla said it has caused the tragic deaths of millions of innocent people, severe economic challenges and disruption of everyday life.

"If ever there was any greater need for international unity and cooperation, then it is now," he was quoted as saying in the statement.

Sharing India's experience and strategies to deal with the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, Birla said the government is implementing a multi-billion-dollar economic stimulus package to address the challenges posed by the pandemic and has quickly and successfully made cash transfers to vulnerable sections of the population.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 Look for (4)
3 Headwear item (3)
8 See (7)
9 Roof edge (5)
10 Upright (5)
11 Mimic (7)
12 Identifying name (11)
16 Vest (7)
18 Drive back (5)
20 Broadcasting (2,3)
21 Daydreaming (7)
22 Plant container (3)
23 Conversation (4)

DOWN

1 Australian city (6)
2 Elicit (5)
3 Make an attempt (4,1,2)
4 Discrimination (5)
5 Snuggle (6)
6 Law-making body (11)
7 Abominable snowman (4)
13 Tapering flag (7)
14 Flourish (6)
15 Even though (6)
16 Pry (5)
17 Cooking fat (4)
19 Covered entrance (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Faux, 14 Always, 17 Disable, 19 Smear, 20 Walkie-talkie, 21 Keen, 22 Toys.

DOWN

1 Another, 13 Sublime, 15 Amenity, 16 Newton, 18 Sole, 19 Split.

By arrangement with The Independent

Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

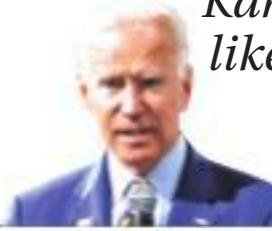
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidysagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh



Kamala Harris is smart as a devil, has a backbone like a ramrod and is vastly experienced

DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JOE BIDEN

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	18°C	12°C CL
LONDON	14°C	9°C H
DUBAI	30°C	25°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C S
NEW YORK	13°C	09°C H
MOSCOW	09°C	03°C H

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

THUMBNAILS



Sunni Muslims protesting against French president Emmanuel Macron's comments over Prophet Mohammed cartoons, in Karachi on Tuesday.

AFP

Belarus nuke plant: The Baltic nation of Lithuania sent a protest note on Tuesday to Belarus over a planned nuclear power plant close to their border that is scheduled to start operating in early November. The Astravets nuclear power plant is to start production between 1-10 November, Belarusian operator Belenergo said.

Poland abortion row: Poland's PM defended the tightening of the abortion law and condemned massive nationwide protests led by women's rights activists, saying they shouldn't be happening amid Covid restrictions and decrying acts of aggression.

US announces planned \$2.37 bn weapon sale to Taiwan

WASHINGTON, 27 OCTOBER

The Trump administration on Monday notified Congress of plans for a \$2.37 billion sale of Harpoon missile systems to Taiwan just hours after Beijing announced sanctions on US defence contractors, including Boeing, the lead contractor on the Harpoon deal. The United States maintains an abiding interest in peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and considers the security of Taiwan central to the security and stability of the broader Indo-Pacific region, the State Department said.

It said the sale would not alter the military balance in the region. Harpoon missiles are capable of striking ships and land targets.

Boeing says the missile uses GPS-aided inertial navigation and delivers a 500-pound blast warhead.

It can target coastal defense sites, surface-to-air missile sites, exposed aircraft, ships in port, and port and industrial facilities. Earlier Monday, China said it was imposing sanctions on Boeing, Lockheed Martin and other U.S. defense firms for providing weapons to Taiwan.

Washington promised in the 1980s to reduce and eventually end weapons sales to Taiwan but insists its dispute with Beijing must be settled peacefully. A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, gave no details on what penalties might be imposed or when.

Trump's pick Barrett sworn in as SC justice

Senate confirmed nomination of Barrett as the 115th SC Judge by 52-48 votes

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 27 OCTOBER

Conservative jurist Amy Coney Barrett was sworn in as a justice of the US Supreme Court, an hour after the Republican-controlled Senate confirmed her controversial nomination, handing President Donald Trump a major victory just a week before the election.

The deeply-divided Senate confirmed the nomination of Barrett as the 115th Supreme Court Judge by 52-48 votes on Monday, pushing the top court in a more conservative direction for generations to come. Barrett, a 48-year-old religious conservative, was administered the official constitutional oath by Justice Clarence Thomas on the South Lawn of the White House alongside President Trump.

"I stand here tonight, truly honoured and humbled," she said shortly after she took the constitutional oath.

"This is a momentous day for America, for the United States Constitution and for the fair and impartial rule of law," said Trump in his remarks on the occasion. "She is one of our nation's most brilliant legal scholars, and she will make an outstanding justice on the highest court in our land, he said about his nominee.

Out of nine Supreme Court Justices, Trump, so far, has nominated three of them. In the US a Supreme Court justice is appointed for life and does not have a retirement age.



US President Donald Trump, US First Lady Melania Trump stand with Judge Amy Coney Barrett and her husband Jesse M. Barrett on the Truman Balcony after she was sworn in as a US Supreme Court Associate Justice at the White House on Tuesday in Washington, DC.

AFP

Barrett is likely to serve on the court for decades and will give conservatives a 6-3 majority on the Supreme Court, a shift in its makeup that could have dramatic implications for a range of issues that could come before it, including the future of the Affordable Care Act and any potential disputes regarding the 2020 election.

"It is highly fitting that Justice Barrett fills the seat of a true pioneer for women: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Tonight, Justice Barrett becomes not only the fifth woman to serve on our nation's highest court, but the very first mother of school-aged children to become a Supreme Court justice. Very important, Trump said.

The opposition Democ-

ratic Party slammed the Senate for confirming her nomination. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden had said that the new judge should have been selected by the winner of the November 3 elections. Trump, however, defended his decision.

"I want every American child watching to understand that this is a very special and important ceremony. We are fulfilling the duty that passes to each new generation to sustain the national traditions and virtues that make possible everything we have achieved before that we will do tomorrow," Trump asserted at the White House event.

Grateful for the confidence of the Senate in her, Justice Barrett in her remarks pledged to the American peo-

ple that she will discharge her duties to the very best of her ability.

"The confirmation process has made ever clearer to me one of the fundamental differences between the federal judiciary and the United States Senate, and perhaps the most acute is the role of policy preferences," she said.

"It is the job of a senator to pursue her policy preferences. In fact, it would be a dereliction of duty for her to put policy goals aside. By contrast, it is the job of a judge to resist her policy preferences. It would be a dereliction of duty for her to give in to them," she added.

Federal judges don't stand

for election. Thus, they have no basis for claiming that their preferences reflect those of the people. This separation of duty from political preference is what makes the judiciary distinct among the three branches of government, Barrett said.

"A judge declares independence not only from Congress and the President, but also from the private beliefs that might otherwise move her. The Judicial Oath captures the essence of the judicial duty—the rule of law must always control," she said.

Biden said the rushed and unprecedented confirmation of Barrett as Associate Justice to the Supreme Court, in the middle of an ongoing election, should be a "stark reminder to every American that your vote matters".

US: Airstrike killed 7 leaders of al-Qaeda in Syria

WASHINGTON, 27 OCTOBER

The United States believes it killed seven senior leaders of al-Qaeda in Syria in an airstrike last week as the leaders were meeting near Idlib, U.S. Central Command said Monday.

A Central Command spokeswoman, Maj. Beth Riordan, said the strike was conducted Oct. 22. She did not identify the seven leaders by name.

The removal of these AQ-Sleiders will disrupt the terrorist organization's ability to further plot and carryout global attacks threatening U.S. citizens, our partners, and innocent civilians, she said.

PTI

BIDDING ADIEU



Devotees submerge a clay idol of the Goddess Durga on the Buriganga River during the final day of the Durga Puja festival, in Dhaka on Tuesday.

AFP

8 killed, 120 injured in Pak mosque blast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PESHAWAR, 27 OCTOBER

The blast occurred around 8:30 am at a local mosque in Peshawar, which also serves as a religious school in Dir Colony in interior Peshawar, while students were reading the Quran

mission," Bangash said, adding that the incident would be fully probed and the perpetrators will be brought to book.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast in the city, bordering war-torn Afghanistan. A bag filled with explosive materials was kept close to wall of the seminary by some unknown person which went off, superintendent of police in Peshawar city Waqar Azeem said. He said the bag is believed to have had

an IED device that went off. An official from the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) said 4 to 5 kg explosives were used in the blast. Most of the students who died and were injured in the blast were aged between 7-11 years, the official said, adding that many of them were from Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Imran Khan condemned the deadly blast and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

"Deeply saddened by terrorist attack on madrassah in Peshawar. My condolences go to the victims families & prayers for early recovery of the injured. I want to assure my nation we will ensure the terrorists responsible for this cowardly barbaric attack are brought to justice asap," he tweeted.

There was a general threat alert in the Peshawar district,

said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police chief Sanullah Abbasi, who also confirmed the death toll. According to police, around 40-50 students were present inside the seminary when the bomb went off.

The seminary's adminis-

tration said around 1,100 students study at the institution. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Mehrmud Khan condemned the attack on children.

He has convened a meeting to take stock of the security sit-

uation in the province. The area

has been cordoned off and

police teams are collecting

evidence.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Taimur Saleem Jaghra visited the site of the blast. He said that the focus was on providing the injured the best possible treatment to increase their chances of recovery.

'Our ongoing trials will provide further data, but this marks a key milestone and reassures us that the vaccine is safe for use and induces strong immune responses in both parts of the immune system in all adult groups'

ing trial volunteers from the UK in the 56-69 and 70+ age groups have been submitted to a peer-review journal, and

we hope to see their publication in the coming weeks.

Our ongoing trials will provide further data, but this marks a key milestone and reassures us that the vaccine is safe for use and induces strong immune responses in both parts of the immune system in all adult groups, it said.

AstraZeneca said that the initial results further build the body of evidence for the safety and immunogenicity of its experimental vaccine, one of around 10 promising vaccine candidates globally.

The results further build the body of evidence for the safe-

Biden goes on offense in Georgia while Trump targets Midwest

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 27 OCTOBER

One week until Election Day, Joe Biden is going on offense, heading Tuesday to Georgia which hasn't backed a Democrat for president since 1992 and pushing into other territory where President Donald Trump was once expected to easily repeat his wins from four years ago.

The Democratic presidential nominee planned to travel to Iowa, which Trump took by 10 points in 2016, later in the week. His running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, is heading to Arizona and Texas, where Republicans haven't lost any statewide office since 1994 the nation's longest political winning streak. The aggressive schedule is a sign of confidence by

the Biden team, which is trying to stretch the electoral map and open up more paths to 270 electoral college votes. But after Democrats flirted with GOP territory in 2016, only to lose those states as well as their traditional Midwestern strongholds, Biden's campaign is mindful of overreaching. The former vice president will also visit in the coming days Wisconsin, Michigan, and Florida.

Georgia, where Biden will make two stops on Tuesday, has increasingly become a draw for Democrats in recent years, as turnout increases among Black voters and the Atlanta suburbs tilt away from the GOP.

If this was the Georgia of 2008, 2012 I think there's no way we would have seen a Biden come this late, said NS

Ufot, chief executive officer of the New Georgia Project, which aims to increase voter registration, especially among young people and minorities.

It's a loud signal and acknowledgement of Georgia as a battleground state. Trump is staying focused on the so-called blue wall states that he flipped in 2016: Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, where he'll return on Tuesday to hit West Salem. While Biden rarely travels to more than one state per day, the president has maintained a whirlwind schedule, crisscrossing the country and making the argument that he built a booming economy before the pandemic upended it. Biden is hoping to lift Democrats running for Senate in Georgia and Iowa with this travel plans.

Embattled Malaysian PM gets respite but survival in balance

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KUALA LUMPUR, 27 OCTOBER

PARIS, 27 OCTOBER

France is increasing security at religious sites as the interior minister said Tuesday that the country faces a very high risk of terrorist threats, amid growing geopolitical tensions following the beheading of a teacher who showed his class caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

French diplomats are trying to quell anger in Turkey and Arab nations amid anti-France protests and calls for boycotts of French goods in response to President Emmanuel Macron's firm stance against Islamism in the wake of the October 16 beheading. European allies have supported Macron, while Muslim-majority countries are angered by his defense of prophet cartoons.

Eight months after taking office, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin is being challenged by Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who says he has majority support to form a new government with defections from Muhyiddin's ruling coalition.

The support reportedly comes from the United Malays National Organization, the biggest party in the unelected governing coalition that was angry at being sidelined amid rivalry with Muhyiddin.

Muhyiddin sought to checkmate his rivals with a proposed coronavirus emergency that would have suspended Parliament and given him uncontested powers but he miscalculated.

The king stepped out of his largely ceremonial role Sunday to declare Muhyiddin's proposed emergency was unnecessary and existing

laws were enough to fight a spike in coronavirus cases.

Many Malaysians were angered by Muhyiddin's move, and a senior UMNO official called on him to resign. UMNO leaders discussed late Monday whether to abandon Muhyiddin but the party said in a statement later that it would remain in the coalition but demanded respect and better cooperation.

French diplomats are trying to quell anger in Turkey and Arab nations amid anti-France protests and calls for boycotts of French goods in response to President Emmanuel Macron's firm stance against Islamism in the wake of the October 16 beheading. European allies have supported Macron, while Muslim-majority countries are angered by his defense of prophet cartoons.

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New protests loom as Europeans tire of virus restrictions

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MILAN, 27 OCTOBER

Italy braced Tuesday for more protests in cities nationwide against virus-fighting measures like regional curfews, evening shutdowns for restaurants and bars and the closures of gyms, pools and theaters a sign of the growing discontent across Europe with renewed coronavirus restrictions.

Police in the financial capital of Milan arrested 28 people after protests turned violent on Monday night when police blocked their procession to the regional government headquarters.

And in Italy's industrial northern city of Turin, at least 11 people were arrested, including a pair who smashed the window of a Gucci boutique and stripped a mannequin of its lemon yellow trousers.

Italy is not the only country facing unrest. All of Europe is grappling with how to halt a fall resurgence of the virus before its hospitals become overwhelmed again. Nightly curfews have been implemented in French cities and in Spain, and restaurants and bars in Italy must close at 6 p.m.

Schools have been closed in Northern Ireland and the Czech Republic. German officials have ordered de-facto lockdowns in some areas near the Austrian border and new mask-wearing requirements are popping up weekly across the continent, including a nationwide requirement in Russia.

We would all like to live like before, but there are moments where you have to make tough decisions, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Tuesday as the government held emergency meetings on the pandemic.

The development comes as UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said that work on the Oxford University vaccine programme was progressing well and that his expectation was that the "bulk" of it is likely to be rolled out by next year.

Yet in this new round of restrictions, governments are finding

What goes into ink

A recent research paper has attested to the sophistication of ink-making in ancient Egypt and Rome

S ANANTHANARAYANAN

The cuneiform is an ancient form of writing, in clay, using a stylus made of reed, which left a wedge-shaped impression – hence the word *cuneiform*, which means “wedge-shaped”. And there was carving, on seals or temple walls. But the best ancient records are writing with inks, on papyrus, or more commonly in India, on palm leaves.

What this means is that some ancient writing has been preserved for over 2,000 years. This is more than we can say of most of the records we create today. And it speaks of the sophistication of ink-making in ancient times. Thomas Christiansen, Marine Cotte, Wout de Nolf, Elouan Mouro, Juan Reyes-Herrera, Steven de Meyer, Frederik Vanmeert, Nati Salvadó, Victor Gonzalez, Pou Erik Lindelof, Kell Mortensen, Kim Ryholt, Koen Janssens, and Sine Larsen, from the Universities of Copenhagen, Sorbonne, Pierre and Marie Curie, Paris, Antwerp, Catalonia, the National Museum of Denmark and the Synchrotron facility in Grenoble, France, write, in the journal, *PNAS*, of their work with the red and black inks found on Egyptian papyri. While they found that iron and lead were used in the pigments, they worked out that iron was the colourant while lead was for fixing stains.

Black inks were usually made by mixing carbon black with a thickening and adhesive agent, like oils and animal glue. The mixture was then ground and allowed to dry, for moistening when needed for use. The ink was applied with a reed pen and the carbon stayed on the writing surface when the ink dried. The paper in *PNAS* says that examples of writing, with ink on papyrus, have been found in ancient Egypt from more than 5,000 years ago, and the examples are both of black ink, and red ink that was used for headings or emphasis. While soot was the main component of black ink, red ink made use of ochre, the red oxide of iron.

The paper says that different kinds of black ink were developed over the ages, some containing copper or lead, along with carbon, and those have been fairly well studied.



INDIA INK & THE ACCOUNTANT

The earliest black ink was carbon-based and invented in China, though it is known as India ink. This was perhaps because some of the constituents came from India.

Nearer home, it is said that the accountants from the Marwar region of Rajasthan had their own method to make black ink. The method involved allowing iron nails to rust in a bath of unrefined sugar, and the property of this ink was that it would never fade.

Now, fading of ink is the feature that allows forgeries or changes in writing, carried out after a delay, to be detected. Clients of the accountants of Marwar, however, had a way out if they needed to alter their books even years after they were written.

The accountants stored each year's stock of ink in pots buried in a vault below their place of work. When a client who wanted changes came to them, they could pull out the bottle with the ink used when the entries were made, and the new writing would look no different from what was being changed!

The nature of red ink, however, has received less attention. The authors of the paper hence undertook detailed analysis of the black, red and pink inks found on a selection of fragments of several manuscripts from the so-called Tebtunis temple library, an institutional library, the only one to survive, of ancient Egypt.

The Tebtunis library was discovered in 1899–1900, during excavations at the site of the ancient city, now the village of Umm-el-baragat, in Egypt, some 100 kms southwest of Cairo. The library was inside the main temple precinct and threw up thousands of fragments of some 500 manuscripts –

“among the most important assemblages of papyri unearthed in the sands of Egypt,” the paper says. “The papyri selected for analysis were acquired in 1931 to 1938 by the Carlsberg Foundation on (sic) the antiquities market in Cairo. Today they are housed in the Papyrus Carlsberg Collection at the University of Copenhagen.”

Earlier analyses of the red and pink inks had shown that they had iron and lead compounds, and ochre, the oxide of iron had been identified, but none of the methods used had provided information about the nature of the lead-based compounds, the paper says. The use of lead compounds to produce pigments was also documented, but those compounds had not been found in papyri. While the compound, red lead, had been used in some applications, its use in pigments was much later. The present investigation was hence directed to pinning down the iron and lead compound found in the writing on papyri. And to this end, the authors went back to papyrus fragments in the Carlsberg Collection.

Detailed analyses, with high energy X-ray probes, generated at the particle accelerator at Grenoble, to reveal the structure, and analysis of infra-red absorption to reveal the chemical bonds, were used to study the elements and chemical composition of the tiniest grains of the pigment material. With 12 samples and two colours, there were 24 samples in

all, and variations in the papyrus and the thickness of the ink had to be factored in, with statistical analysis to arrive at reliable estimates of the composition.

The results were that almost all the red samples contained iron and lead, aluminium, sometimes with magnesium, silicon and potassium. The elements in the red samples corresponded to the ores of iron, notably the oxide, ochre, with clay and sand intermixed. The composition of the lead content was also made out, with it forming rings around specks of ochre, in the red pigment and in the pyramids.

Lead was found to be present in both the red and black samples. The lead compounds, however, were not the forms that were later documented for use with pigments. This observation, that the lead compounds would not contribute to colour and that they

were found in the black ink as well as the red ink, suggests that they were not there for colour, but for other properties, like enabling drying. The paper refers to other records of the paint recipes of master painters in later centuries, and close chemical analysis, to conclude that the lead content was only for drying the pigment and added at the time of preparation.

Considering the volume of the manuscripts and the writing, it is not likely that the temple priests mixed their own inks, they must have relied on specialised workshops, the paper says. “The results presented in this article have provided valuable information on the preparation and composition of red and black inks in ancient Egypt and Rome some 2,000 years ago,” the paper concludes.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in



Twelve fragments, with writing in black and red, from the manuscripts

MORE SUSCEPTIBLE

Here's why men may have a worse response to Covid-19 than women

MEGHAN E REBULL

If you ask most women about how their male relatives, partners and friends respond to being sick, they'll often tell you with an accompanying eye roll, “He’s such a baby.” “He’s extra whiny.” Or “he exaggerates so much.” But there may be a biological explanation for this behaviour.

Dubbed the “man flu,” this phenomenon has been validated in a review of previously published, large epidemiological studies, as well as in studies of influenza in animals. In these studies, males were sick longer, with more severe symptoms and had a weaker response to vaccination. Laboratory tests with animals infected with the influenza virus also underscore that there are sex-based differences in immune response that influence outcomes observed in humans. But are these more severe symptoms and outcomes unique to cold and flu?

As a respiratory toxicologist and researcher investigating sex differences in the respiratory system, I was intrigued to read a recent study on sex-specific responses to Covid-19 that suggest that men are, actually, more vulnerable and suffer more from this disease.

Sex differences in Covid-19

These findings may apply to other respiratory viruses like Sars-CoV-2, which causes Covid-19. For example, reports of Sars-CoV-2 infection rates are similar between males and females, but male sex is a significant risk factor for more serious Covid-19 disease and death. In fact, one study revealed that men are 2.4



times more likely to die from Covid-19. I find it interesting that higher death rates in men also occurred in other coronavirus diseases like severe acute respiratory syndrome, caused by Sars-CoV, and Middle East respiratory syndrome.

Based on data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of 5 October 2020, the risk of death from Covid-19 in men 30–49 years old was also found to be more than twice that of females. In other age groups, the risk of Covid-19-related death in males was also higher than the same female age cohort. But it was not as high as in the 30 to 49-year-old age group.

This contrasts with almost equal rates of Sars-CoV-2 infection in those same age groups, leading scientists to wonder why males might be more susceptible.

Study identifies why men may be more susceptible to Covid-19

The recent report published in *Nature* explores how males and females respond differently to Covid-19.

This study examined samples including nasal swabs, saliva, and blood, which were either collected from healthy individuals or Covid-19 patients. These samples were used to better understand what the immune response to the infection looks like and how it differs in people with more severe disease.

Similar to CDC data on infection rates, no sex difference in the concentration of virus or the amount of virus present was observed in either the nasal swab or the saliva. There were also no differences in antibody levels –

a signal the body had identified the virus – detected in infected men and women.

Males with Sars-CoV-2 show greater inflammation

However, the authors identified major sex differences during the early immune response that occurs soon after someone is infected with the Sars-CoV-2 virus.

The blood samples were analysed for a variety of cytokines – some of the first signalling molecules that help immune cells respond to pathogens. The levels of these signals rise and fall to provide an adequate response to fight an invading pathogen. But large quantities of these molecules can severely damage the body. This is the case in a cytokine storm.

The authors of the *Nature* report observed sex differences in the strength of the cytokine response. Men showed higher levels of cytokines that trigger inflammation, like IL-8 and IL-18, than women. Higher quantities of these cytokines are linked to more severe disease. In severe cases of Covid-19, fluid builds up in the lungs, reducing the oxygen available in the body for normal functions. This can lead to tissue damage,

shock and potentially the failure of multiple organs.

Females with Sars-CoV-2 are better prepared to eliminate the virus

In addition to sex differences in cytokine levels, the authors also found sex differences in the function of immune cells.

Compared to men, women had a higher number of T cells – essential for eliminating the virus – that were activated, primed and ready to respond to the Sars-CoV-2 infection. Men with lower levels of these activated T-cells were more likely to have severe disease.

Thus, there are several aspects of the human immune response to Sars-CoV-2 that differ between men and women. Understanding these differences can inform how doctors treat patients and can help researchers develop sex-specific therapies.

Increased Covid-19 susceptibility in men is likely biological
These results contradict speculation that male susceptibility to Sars-CoV-2 infection is due to more risky behaviours. Those include downplaying the seriousness of the virus, joining

large gatherings and ignoring social distancing guidelines, as well as lower rates of hand-washing and wearing masks. Instead, rates of infection are similar between males and females, while males are more at risk of serious Covid-19 disease, suggesting biological differences in response to infection.

This paper is one of the first of its kind to delve into mechanisms of susceptibility sex differences. With greater innate biological risk for severe disease and death in men, this suggests that males might need to be hypervigilant about social distancing, hand-washing and mask-wearing.

Greater adherence to infection prevention protections, especially in men, would not only reduce their risk of infection, but also combat their increased risk of severe disease and death from Covid-19.

The take-home message of this new paper is that researchers need to consider strategies to ensure treatments and vaccines are equally effective for both women and men, especially when one is more susceptible than another.

The writer is assistant professor of paediatrics, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, US. This article first appeared on www.theconversation.com

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2020

PLUS POINTS

Transmission numbers

Reopening schools following coronavirus lockdowns is linked to a surge in transmissions within a month, according to the first study to look at the impact of lifting restrictions on the R rate.

R represents the average number of people each person with Covid-19 goes on to infect. When the figure is above one, an outbreak can grow exponentially.

Children's return to classrooms was followed by an average 24 per cent rise in the R transmission number, University of Edinburgh researchers found after analysing data from 131 countries. The only other measure linked to a higher increase in the rate is lifting a ban on groups gathering, which led to a 25 per cent rise in R. To create their models, the authors linked data on country-level R estimates from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine with information about non-pharmaceutical interventions from the Oxford Covid-19 government response tracker.

Reopening schools was associated with a 24 per cent increase in R after 28 days, although the researchers cautioned they were unable to account for different precautions some countries implemented for reopening schools, such as limiting class sizes, social distancing, cleaning, personal hygiene, face masks, and temperature checks.

“We found an increase in R after reopening schools but is not clear whether the increase is attributable to specific age groups, where there may be substantial differences in adherence to social distancing measures within and outside classrooms,” said Harish Nair, professor of paediatric infectious diseases at the University of Edinburgh. “Furthermore, more data are needed to understand the specific role of schools in increased Sars-CoV-2 transmission through robust contact tracing.”

The study, published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal, also created models of the impact combinations of measures had on the R rate when introduced. They found a comprehensive package of restrictions including public



events bans, school closures, a ban on gatherings of 10 or more people, widespread home-working, and stay-at-home orders was linked to the biggest fall in R rate. Transmissions fell by 52 per cent within four weeks when those measures were all introduced.

The least comprehensive package of measures – a ban on public events and gatherings of more than 10 people – would reduce R by 29 per cent by day 28, the study concluded. Looking at the measures individually, a ban on public events was associated with the greatest reduction in R, amounting to a 24 per cent reduction after 28 days.

Nair said, “Our study can inform decisions on which measures to introduce or lift, and when to expect to see their effects, but this will also depend on the local context – the R number at any given time, the local healthcare capacity, and the social and economic impact of measures.”

The researchers also analysed Google mobility data, modelling visits to workplaces and time spent in residential areas. Results indicated that people took some time to adapt their behaviour to comply with workplace closures and stay-at-home requirements, which was like the delay between the measures and the effects seen on R of between one and three weeks. Researchers suggested the delay was possibly due to the population taking time to modify their behaviour to adhere to measures.

They said some of the greatest effects on R were seen for measures that were more easily enforceable by law, like schools reopening and public events bans. This may have been because their effects were more immediate and compliance was easier to ensure, the researchers added.

Chris Bauch, a professor of applied mathematics at Canada's University of Waterloo and who was not involved in the research, said the study “could be highly valuable for optimising a country's” coronavirus rules as its findings “tell us that non-pharmaceutical interventions work and which ones work best”.

—THE INDEPENDENT



DIFFERENT STROKES

Two weeks after winning his 13th French Open tennis title Rafael Nadal (photo, left) finished tied sixth in the Balearic Golf Pro-Am Championships on Monday. The 34-year-old, who boasts a handicap of 0.3, came in 10 shots behind the winner after the three-day tournament in Llucmajor on his native Mallorca.

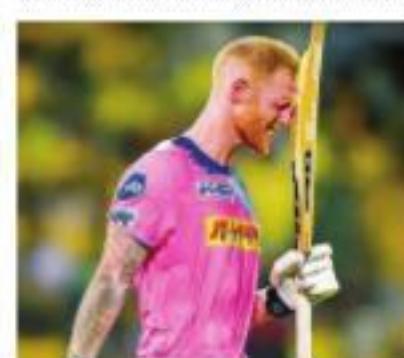
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THUMBNAILS

Pay cuts: The England and Wales Cricket Board has announced its men's players have agreed to 15 per cent reductions in their contracts as part of further cost-cutting measures in English cricket. The contracts, awarded in September, run for 12 months from 1 October

Big blow: The inaugural Lankan Premier League have been dealt a severe blow with five overseas players, including Faf du Plessis, Andre Russell and David Miller, pulling out of the Twenty20 tournament less than a week after they were drafted into various franchises.



Big Ben: Ben Stokes has dedicated his biggest Indian Premier League innings to his father, who is battling cancer in New Zealand. Stokes smashed an unbeaten 107 off just 60 balls to help Rajasthan Royals beat holders Mumbai Indians by eight wickets on Sunday.

3-3 draw: AC Milan dropped their first points of the season, despite a Zlatan Ibrahimovic brace, when AS Roma came from behind thrice to draw 3-3 in an enthralling game at San Siro on Monday. Ibrahimovic gave Milan the lead in the second minute.

Positive test: AC Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma has tested positive for the coronavirus and will miss the club's next three matches. Donnarumma will also sit out Thursday's Europa League match against Sparta Prague, it was reported.



Fading magic: Messi has not scored in open play in six matches, with only two penalties to his name – and there are suggestions he has not found his place yet in new Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman's set-up. He played deep for most of the recent El Clasico.

Censure vote: Barcelona are waiting for authorisation from local health officials before scheduling a referendum that could lead to the ouster of club president Josep Bartomeu and his board of directors. Club members have called for a motion of censure.

Sharma, dropped by India because of injury, tunes up with Mumbai team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, 27 OCTOBER



Sunil Gavaskar has called for greater transparency on the status of limited-overs vice-captain Rohit Sharma's (in photo) hamstring injury after he was seen practising in the Mumbai Indians nets within hours of being left out of the national squad for a tour of Australia.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India did not throw much light on Sharma's fitness, only stating that it was monitoring his progress whilst announcing yesterday the three teams for the Australia tour. On the same day, Sharma was seen practising in the Mumbai Indians nets.

"We are talking about the Test matches, which are a month and a half way. What actually is the problem with him will help everybody. And

if he is practising in the nets kind of an injury it is," Gavaskar told Indian Premier League broadcaster after the

game between Kings XI Punjab and Kolkata Knight Riders in Sharjah last evening.

"I think a little bit of transparency, a little bit of openness about what actually is the problem with him will help everybody," he added.

The tour of Australia comprises three Twenty20 Internationals, as many One-Day Internationals and four Tests. The series is scheduled to start on 27 November.

Opener Mayank Agarwal, who too has missed out on the last two games for KXIP owing to an injury, was named in the Indian contingent for the tour.

"The Indian cricket fan deserves to know, more than anything else. The franchises, I understand. They don't want to give their hand away. They don't want to give the opposition any psychological advantage. But we are talking

about the Indian team here. Even Mayank Agarwal for example. For an Indian cricket fan, they ought to know what happens to two of their key players," Gavaskar said.

Sharma may not be in the India squad but there is a possibility that he will return to lead Mumbai Indians later in the IPL.

Ahead of the Chennai Super Kings game on 23 October, Mumbai Indians said that Sharma had suffered a hamstring injury in the game against KXIP on 18 October.

"Rohit Sharma has suffered a left leg hamstring strain during Mumbai Indians' previous game. Rohit has made good progress over the past four days, while the management is taking one day at a time monitoring the recovery process in consultation with the BCCI," the statement said.

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Mumbai and RCB aim to secure play-off berth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ABU DHABI, 27 OCTOBER



Rohit Sharma is likely to miss his third game in a row when Mumbai Indians face Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Wednesday with both teams aiming to secure their spot in the IPL play-offs.

While Mumbai are sitting on top of the table despite their eight-wicket hammering by Rajasthan Royals with 14 points, Virat Kohli-led RCB too remain on 14 following their loss to Chennai Super Kings on Sunday.

A win for either side on Wednesday should be enough to take it to the play-offs.

Rohit's fitness has become a subject of unwanted attention ahead of the game. Having missed the last two games due to a hamstring injury, Mumbai Indians skipper returned to the nets on Monday, a day when he was not named in the India squad for

the Australia series.

There is still no conclusive update on his fitness from either Mumbai Indians or the BCCI.

In Rohit's absence, Mumbai would persist with both Saurabh Tiwary and Ishan Kishan, who has played some scintillating knocks.

Quinton De Kock (374 runs) had a rare failure against Rajasthan and he would be keen

to make an impact. Kishan (298 runs) and Suryakumar Yadav (283 runs) are among the leading run-scorers who can go on the offensive against any attack. The six-hitting prowess of Hardik Pandya (224 runs) was on display in the RR game, when he plundered seven maximums.

Along with stand-in captain Kieron Pollard (214 runs) and Krunal Pandya (85 runs), he can

take any attack to cleaners and their hard-hitting ability could prove to be the difference between the two sides.

Mumbai bowlers would be more than keen to forget the hammering they received from Rajasthan's Ben Stokes and Sanju Samson.

Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah have been lethal both at front and at the death, accounting for 33 wickets amongst them-

selves. For the third pacerspot, MI could choose between James Pattinson and Nathan Coulter Nile.

For RCB, Kohli (415 runs) would like to continue his splendid run in the tournament.

Australian Aaron Finch (236 runs), young Devdutt Padikkal (343 runs) and AB de Villiers (324 runs) need to be more consistent and support their skipper.

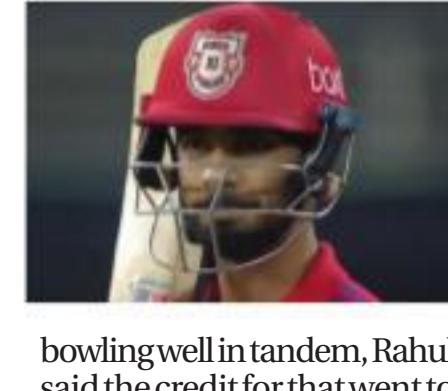
De Villiers has shown time and again, why he is regarded as one of the best T20 batsmen by turning the clock back on few occasions.

If the RCB top-order fires in unison, then they can pummel the MI attack into submission. The likes of Chris Morris, Moeen Ali and Gurkeerat Mann, who form the lower-middle order, can also chip in with useful cameos. But for the southern team there is injury scare on the bowling front with pacer Navdeep Saini suffering a split webbing. There is no clarity on his participation for the game against Mumbai.

Singh praised by captain for his mental strength

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SHARJAH, 27 OCTOBER



Mandeep Singh (in photo) scored a match-winning 66 two days after losing his father, and Kings XI Punjab skipper KL Rahul said last night the mental toughness shown by the opener had rubbed off on the entire squad.

Singh made an unbeaten 66 against Kolkata Knight Riders, young Devdutt Padikkal (343 runs) and AB de Villiers (324 runs) need to be more consistent and support their skipper.

De Villiers has shown time and again, why he is regarded as one of the best T20 batsmen by turning the clock back on few occasions.

If the RCB top-order fires in unison, then they can pummel the MI attack into submission. The likes of Chris Morris, Moeen Ali and Gurkeerat Mann, who form the lower-middle order, can also chip in with useful cameos. But for the southern team there is injury scare on the bowling front with pacer Navdeep Saini suffering a split webbing. There is no clarity on his participation for the game against Mumbai.

With wrist-spinners Murali Ashwin and Ravi Bishnoi

bowing well in tandem, Rahul said the credit for that went to head coach Anil Kumble.

"When you have Anil Kumble as coach, it's not surprising that we are playing with two leg-spinners. It's something that had it in his mind even before the Indian Premier League started. He always kept telling me that towards the second half or at some point two leg-spinners was always an aggressive option," he said.

KXIP have won all their games since Chris Gayle returned to the side after sitting out the first half of the tournament.

"It was a very hard decision not to play him because he was batting really well. This is the hungriest I have ever seen him in the last seven or eight years that I have played with him. He's always positive, always pushing the youngsters," he said.

Saha, Warner power Sunrisers Hyderabad to 219/2 against DC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, 27 OCTOBER



Wriddhiman Saha (in photo) stamped his class with a 45-ball 87 while captain David Warner hit a quick-fire half-century as Sunrisers Hyderabad posted a mammoth 219 for two against Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday.

Warner (66), who looked in great nick, and Saha, playing his second game of the season, laid the base for Sunrisers' huge total, the highest score in Dubai this season, while Manish Pandey (44 off 31 balls) provided the final flourish in the team's must-win game.

Sent in to bat, both Warner and Saha went after the Delhi

bowlers from the word go. Fully capitalising on the field restrictions, the duo smashed boundaries (11 fours and two sixes) every over to collect 77-

runs in the first six overs, the best Powerplay figures of the season.

In the sixth over, Warner smashed the tournament's leading wicket-taker Kagiso Rabada (0/54) for four boundaries and a six, helping the Sunrisers reach 100 runs in just 8.4 overs.

Till Warner was taking on the bowlers, Saha played the second fiddle to perfection. The Australian celebrated his 34th birthday with a half-century off just 25 balls, hitting two sixes and eight fours at the Dubai International Stadium.

To Delhi's relief Ravichandran Ashwin (1/35) broke the 107-run opening stand in the 10th over as he dismissed danger man Warner, who was

caught at extra cover by Axar Patel.

With Warner gone, Saha hammered the Capitals bowlers all around the park. The wicketkeeper batsman reached his fifty in style with a boundary. He plundered 12 fours and two sixes before pacer Anrich Nortje (1/37) dismissed him in the 15th over.

This is in addition to the permission of many hours of dedication, negotiation and hard work by individuals behind the scenes to ensure that our fans have an exciting line-up of cricket to look forward to throughout the summer," Kugandrie Govender, CSA's acting CEO, said in a statement.

"... Although the matches

will be played behind closed doors, we will have enough entertainment to make them feel as though they are a part of match-day activities."

Crisis-ridden CSA announces impressive home season schedule, explores visiting Pakistan

AGENCIES

JOHANNESBURG, 27 OCTOBER

The crisis in its house notwithstanding, Cricket South Africa on Tuesday announced an impressive home summer schedule including visits by Australia, England and Sri Lanka, while mulling a tour of Pakistan for the first time in more than a decade.

This is in addition to the permission of many hours of dedication, negotiation and hard work by individuals behind the scenes to ensure that our fans have an exciting line-up of cricket to look forward to throughout the summer," Kugandrie Govender, CSA's acting CEO, said in a statement.

"... Although the matches

were dropped points where we shouldn't have this season so we've still got a lot to learn, but nights like this will definitely give us that confidence," Kane said.

"We're just at the stage where we've been so close for so many years and I think the additions this season have given us more leaders on the pitch and made us more experienced."

Tottenham, which didn't manage a shot on target in the first half at Burnley, moved up to fifth in the standings and didn't even need Gareth Bale

being deployed from the bench.

"We've dropped points where we shouldn't have this season so we've still got a lot to learn, but nights like this will definitely give us that confidence," Kane said.

"We're just at the stage where we've been so close for so many years and I think the additions this season have given us more leaders on the pitch and made us more experienced."

West Bromwich is still searching for its first win but Karlan Grant did rescue a third point of the season by equalizing for a 1-1 draw at Brighton.

Brighton took the lead five minutes before half-time when an attempted clearance from Branislav Ivanovic rebounded off Jake Livermore and into the back of the net.

But West Brom's second-half pressure paid off when Grant turned a ball from Callum Robinson past goalkeeper Mat Ryan in the 83rd minute.

Grant joined West Brom from Huddersfield in the off-season after netting 19 goals in the second-tier Championship last season. "The way he smashed it was brilliant for him," West Brom manager Slaven Bilic said, "and brilliant for us."

Brighton is two points better off than West Brom with five points.

'Champions League reforms could kill small clubs' dreams'

MICUEL DELANEY

LONDON, 27 OCTOBER

European football is in danger of killing the "dream" of small clubs, according to FC Midtjylland chairman Rasmus Ankersen, as he expects the 2024 reform of the Champions League to make it "more of a closed league for the big teams."

The Danish side take on Liverpool on Tuesday amid a wider discussion about the future of the game, and the English champions' push for a controversial plan like Project Big Picture. Through all this, there have been ongoing negotiations about what the Champions League will look like after 2024, as figures like Juventus owner Andrea Agnelli push for something closer to a super league.

Ankersen has been involved in European Club Association meetings due to being chairman of Midtjylland and fears the way the game is going will

kill the "dream" of fixtures for them like trips to Liverpool.

"I think Midtjylland are a good example of, you know, the importance of keeping the dream alive for small clubs," Ankersen said. "I've been taking part in all these ECA meetings in the past few years, where all the conversations are what the future is going to look like in European football, and listen, I think, unfortunately the way it's going, there's going to be some reforms coming up in the next years, they will move football towards becoming more of a closed league for the big teams."

"But I think it's really important for football, too, because that's the fairytale we love, to follow that it's actually possible for a team like Midtjylland, from a small town with 50,000 people in the middle of nowhere in the west of Denmark, to go and play on the biggest stage. So I hope that opportunity will

still be kept alive for us, and other teams in similar positions, but I think it's going to be more difficult."

Asked about the reasoning, Ankersen put it down to the global ambitions of the super-clubs, but insisted the sport should be more mindful of solidarity.

"I think it's obviously a financial game, it's like, how can you increase your revenue, these brands are becoming more global, and when you look at the TV figures, you also have to admit what drives the TV figures are typically the big teams playing, and I think they want to have more stability in their revenue streams, because football is still random. That's also what we love, a small team can beat a big team, maybe not over a season of 40 games, but over one or two games it's possible, so football is brutal in a sense, often small margins that means whether you get a big chunk of

revenue or you don't, so you want more stability, more guarantees that they have this revenue coming in every year, so, it happens on a