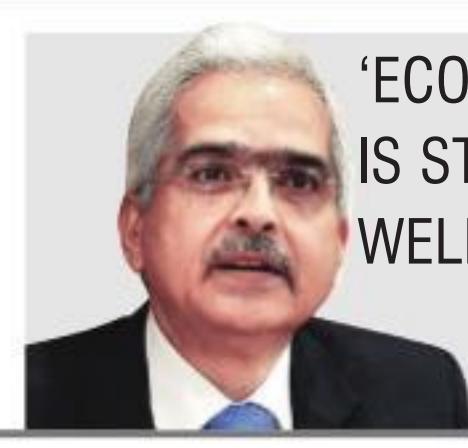




CELEBRATING
MUSICAL MARKERS
OF THE 60s

P7



'ECONOMIC RECOVERY
IS STILL NOT
WELL ENTRENCHED'

P8



CELEBRITIES JOIN
PROTEST AGAINST
FACEBOOK INACTION

P10



NOT ONE TO
BE CHAINED
TO THE PAST

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 38 and 27 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 88% Min: 46%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 37.9°C (+4) Min: 26.0°C (+2)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

06:08 hrs 18:23 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

6:48 hrs 18:40 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Sabiha, mother of Umar Khalid, former JNU student speaks to the media on Wednesday in New Delhi. The special cell of Delhi Police arrested Khalid on Sunday night under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

SNS

Rajasthan boat capsizal: At least 11 people, including women and children, were killed after a boat carrying over 30 devotees to a temple in Rajasthan's Bundi district capsized in the Chambal river here on Wednesday morning, officials said. Three people are still missing while 20 devotees were rescued, they added. Belonging to the Khatolitawa area of Kota, they were going to the Kamleshwar temple in Indergarh of Bundi to offer prayers.

Bachchan security boost: Security has been increased outside the bungalows of Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan in Mumbai, a day after she told Parliament that the film industry was being defamed by some and asked the government to protect and support it, police said. "Amitabh Bachchan already has X category security cover. After the speech (in Parliament by Jaya Bachchan), we stepped up peripheral security and increased patrolling outside their bungalows in Juhu," a police officer said.

P5

RDIF, Dr Reddy's tie up for clinical trials, distribution of Sputnik V vaccine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HYDERABAD, 16 SEPTEMBER

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), a Russian sovereign wealth fund, and Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd. have agreed to cooperate on clinical trials and distribution of the Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine in India.

Upon regulatory approval in India, RDIF shall supply to Dr. Reddy's 100 million doses of the vaccine, Dr Reddy's said in a release on Wednesday. Deliveries could potentially begin in late 2020, subject to completion of successful trials and registration of the vaccine by regulatory authorities in India, the release said.

Kirill Dmitriev, CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, said RDIF is very pleased to partner with Dr. Reddy's in

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has given permission to Serum Institute of India to resume clinical trial of the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine candidate in the country. It has revoked its order suspending any new recruitment for phase II and III trials.

India, "India is amongst most severely impacted countries from Covid-19 and we believe our human adenovirus dual vector platform will provide a safe and scientifically validated option to India in the battle against Covid-19," Dmitriev was quoted as saying.

GV Prasad, Co-Chairman

and Managing Director of Dr. Reddy's Laboratories said the Phase I and II clinical trials of Sputnik V have shown promising results. "We will be conducting Phase-III trials in India to ensure safety and efficacy for the Indian population and to meet the requirements of the Indian regulators," he said.

On August 11, the Sputnik V vaccine developed by the Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology was registered by the Ministry of Health of Russia and became the world's first registered vaccine against Covid-19 based on the human adenovirus vector platform. But the step was taken before large-scale Phase III trials were complete, stirring concern among scientists and doctors about the vaccine's safety and efficacy.

Babari demolition case verdict on 30 Sept

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW, 16 SEPTEMBER

A special court here will deliver judgment on September 30 in the Babri Masjid demolition case, ruling whether BJP veterans like L K Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi were involved in razing the mosque in 1992.

Judge SK Yadav on Wednesday directed all 32 accused to be present in the court on the day of the judgment.

The accused include former deputy prime minister L K Advani, former Union ministers M M Joshi and Uma Bharti, former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh, Vinay Katiyar and Sadhvi Rithambara. The CBI court was working against the month-end deadline set by the Supreme Court for the verdict. The final arguments by the defence and the prosecution

were heard by September 1, and then the judge began writing the verdict. Some of the final submissions by the accused were made through video conferencing.

Issuing the order on Wednesday, the judge said the verdict will be pronounced on September 30 and asked all accused to be present in court.

The Central Bureau of Investigation, which investigated the case, has produced 351 witnesses and about 600 documents as evidence before the court. Charges were framed against 48 people, but 16 died during the course of the trial.

In a landmark judgment last year, the Supreme Court allotted the disputed site in Ayodhya for the construction of a Ram temple, while calling the demolition of the mosque a violation of the rule of law. An alternative five-acre site has been found in the city for building a mosque. Champat Rai, the general secretary of the trust in charge of constructing the temple, is among the 32 accused in the Babri mosque demolition case.

On July 24, BJP veteran L K Advani recorded his statement before the court through video conferencing, denying any involvement in the conspiracy to demolish the mosque. He pleaded that he was unnecessarily dragged into the case, claiming that the investigation was conducted under political pressure and the charge sheet was based on fabricated evidence.

Meanwhile, defence Minister Rajnath Singh will make a statement in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday on the border row with China in eastern Ladakh.

In answer to a separate question whether India's bilateral ties with neighbouring countries like Nepal, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Myanmar have deteriorated recently, Muraleedharan responded with a negative. "No," he said to the question that was submitted by Trinamul Congress member Sougata Ray.

After his statement, opposition leaders will speak and Singh may give a clarification if required, the sources said.

This was decided in a meeting of floor leaders of the Rajya Sabha which was attended by Singh.

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The National Education Policy will fulfil the vision of Prime Minister, Shri @narendramodi to create a 'self-reliant India'

RAJNATH SINGH
DEFENCE MINISTER

Capital riots: Charge sheet filed against 15 for 'larger conspiracy'

Delhi Police's charge sheet, filed under UAPA and running into over 10K pages, draws fire from various quarters for naming only anti-CAA protesters as accused and not naming any CAA supporters

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

Delhi Police today filed a charge sheet before a city court under the stringent law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and various sections of the IPC against 15 persons for "larger conspiracy" in Northeast Delhi riots that raged in the last week of February.

According to sources, those named in the charge sheet are Tahir Hussain, Mohd Parvez Ahmed, Mohd Illyas, Saifi Khalid, Ishrat Jahan, Miran Haider, Safoora Zargar, Asif Iqbal Tanha, Shahdab Ahmed, Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita, Tasleem Ahmed, Saleem Malik, Mohd Saleem Khan and Athar Khan.

The charge sheet drew fire from various quarters for naming only those as accused, who had been opposed to the Centre's controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC), and not naming anyone who had been pro-CAA-



FILE PHOTO

NRC.

Delhi Police's Special Cell told Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat that it has relied upon CD-R and WhatsApp chats.

In the charge sheet running into over 10,000 pages, the city

police has listed 747 witnesses and of them 51 have recorded their statements under CRPC 164 (before the magistrate).

The final report has been filed under the stringent UAPA, various sections of the Indian

Penal Code (IPC) and the Arms Act.

Delhi Police said it has given a chronology of "conspiracy" and relevant events in its charge sheet, which is likely to be taken up for consideration in coming days.

The evidence includes WhatsApp chats of 24 February, the time when riots were erupting. At that point, key conspirators were guiding their foot soldiers about violence in the area. The key conspirators were directly in touch with their foot soldiers, police claimed.

WhatsApp groups were used by conspirators for violence in Seelampur-Jafarabad area, they charged.

There were 25 protest sites in 25 cities. 25 WhatsApp groups were especially created for each city. The impression was given that they were anti-CAA protest groups but through these sites conspirators were being guided, police claimed.

The Special Cell said that Tahir Hussain, Khalid Saifi and Umar Khalid had allegedly planned to carry out massive violence in the national capital during US President Donald Trump's New Delhi visit. In charge sheet, which discusses the conspiracy behind the Delhi riots, the city police has also claimed that on 8 January Tahir had met Umar Khalid and Khalid Saifi

at Shaheen Bagh sit-in protest. The meetings subsequently also took place in the PFI office in Jamia. Khalid Saifi allegedly instigated Tahir. Umar allegedly assured that through his contacts (in PFI) logistical support etc will be provided.

Police also said that their probe was still underway and that they will file a supplementary charge sheet in the matter. Massive communal riots had broken out in Northeast Delhi on 24 February after violence between pro and anti-CAA supporters and protesters spiralled out of control.

The riots, which raged for several days, convulsed Delhi, leaving at least 53 people dead and a large number of people wounded. The violence and arson gutted and devastated many people's homes, shops, properties and places of worship.

Delhi Police, which failed to control these riots for several days, came under attack for being "mute spectators" during the riots and for even their alleged complicity with rioters in various cases.

N-E Delhi violence: Activists demand release of those booked under UAPA



Prashant Bhushan, Syeda Hameed, Kavita Krishnan and other activists during a press conference at the Press Club of India in the Capital on Wednesday.

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

Communal clashes had swept through Northeast Delhi late February this year after violence between supporters of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and those against the legislation spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and more than 200 injured.

At a press conference earlier in the day, Bhushan said they recently requested President Ram Nath Kovind to constitute a commission of inquiry into the Delhi riots.

The statement comes after the arrest of former JNU student leader Umar Khalid by Delhi Police on 13 September. Khalid has been charged under the UAPA.

In

a joint statement, they alleged that the democratic voices of dissent are being "gradually implicated".

The

group of activists and academics today demanded immediate release of those booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in connection with the Northeast Delhi riots and setting up of a judicial inquiry commission to punish its "real culprits".

In

a joint statement, they alleged that the democratic voices of dissent are being "gradually implicated".

The statement was issued by Syeda Hameed, writer and former member of erstwhile Planning Commission of India, senior lawyer Prashant Bhushan, former JNU students' union president Kanhaiya Kumar, CPIML politician Kavita Krishnan, journalist Pamela Philipose and former DUTA president Nandita Narain.

"All democratic voices of dissent are being gradually implicated. This includes students, academicians, artists, politicians and activists. We demand an immediate end to this outrageous investigation that is being conducted with prejudice and malafide intent," the statement said.

Bhushan also claimed that the Central government has taken a massive loan from China for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana project. In response to this allegation, Khurana said Bhardwaj must trust constitutionality bodies. He claimed that there are links between Tahir Hussain, suspended AAP leader who is an accused in the riots case, and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal.

"We demand that activists booked under the UAPA be immediately released; and a judicial inquiry commission be constituted to punish the real culprits and ensure justice for the Delhi violence," it stated.

The city police personnel have even been accused of being allegedly complicit with violent mobs in some cases during these riots — worst communal violence in Delhi after 1984 anti-Sikh carnage — that convulsed the national capital.

BJP responsible for Delhi riots, alleges AAP

PTI

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

The BJP is responsible for the Delhi riots and there are public records to show that its leaders had spread hatred between two communities, AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said on Wednesday.

Responding to a question on the recent arrests in the

northeast Delhi riots case, Bhardwaj said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) holds the BJP responsible for instigating the riots.

"AAP has a straight take on Delhi riots that the BJP and main people of the party are responsible, he said.

This doesn't even need investigation as public records are available to show how

they spread hatred between two communities and they increased hatred to the extent that it led to riots. Everyone knows how the party contributed to the riots," he said.

He further claimed that Delhi Police and other investigating agencies have become political wings of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"Everyone knows that the

police, ED, CBI, Income Tax department they all are political wings of BJP. Like there is youth wing, women's wing, traders' wing so these are Delhi Police wing of BJP, CBI wing of BJP. Their credibility is minimum so there is no point commenting on them. Delhi Police can name anyone as per their imagination," Bhardwaj claimed.

Flitting back, Delhi

BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana said, The matter is in court and the enquiry is happening under court's observation. Why is AAP so afraid of this inquiry and arrests? He claimed

This doesn't even need investigation as public records are available to show how they (BJP leaders) spread hatred between two communities and they increased hatred to the extent that it led to riots. Everyone knows how the party contributed to the riots'

that there are links between Tahir Hussain, suspended AAP leader who is an accused in the riots case, and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Communal riots had broken out in northeast Delhi on February 24 after violent clashes between supporters of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and those against the legislation spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured. In their attempt to prevent violence, 108 police personnel received injuries and two died.

Bhardwaj also claimed that the Central government has taken a massive loan from China for the Pradhan

Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana project. In response to this allegation, Khurana said Bhardwaj must trust constitutionality bodies.

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Re-e-Tender Notice No.: PR / S / VHF Repeater (> 25 Watt) – LB (66 to 88 MHz) / 230 Dated: 12.09.2020.

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Registrar ID: Advt.No. 311/R-2020 Date: 16.09.2020

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Enactment of farm Bills will lead to unrest in Punjab: CM

Pointing to Pak's bid to disturb Punjab's peace & stability, Capt Amarinder says the Centre's three 'anti-farmer' legislations amid the Covid pandemic would fuel people's anger and deepen social unrest

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 16 SEPTEMBER

Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh today warned that the enactment of the Centre's farm sector legislations would lead to resentment and unrest in the border state, even as he declared that no cases would be registered against farmers protesting against these three controversial agriculture sector legislations.

The Punjab CM led a delegation of the ruling Congress party to submit a memorandum to Governor VP Singh Badnore, seeking his intervention for non-pursuit of the agriculture Bills by the Centre in Parliament.

The CM told the Governor that the Congress party felt that any move to tinker with the present system of procurement of farmers' produce and that too in the midst of the nationwide Covid crisis, might deepen social unrest among farmers of Punjab.

"It may not be conducive for peace and development of the region, which faces serious challenges of public order due to a live international



border," Capt Amarinder said. Pointing to Pakistan's bid to disturb the state's peace and stability through narco-terror and other anti-India acts, the CM later told reporters that these "anti-farmer legislations" would lead to a rise in people's anger. "Why are we playing into the hands of

Pakistan?" he asked.

"These three controversial farm sector Bills, one of which has already been passed in the Lok Sabha yesterday, are against national interest, and particularly detrimental to Punjab, where the majority of farmers tilled less than five acres of land and would be the

worst hit," warned Capt Amarinder.

Hoping that the Centre will back out of pursuing the remaining two Bills and not get them passed in Parliament, he said the Centre had failed to take the interest of the farmers into account in bringing these Ordinances and

instead took a stand in favour of corporate houses.

The CM said he had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi thrice on the issue, but had not received any response so far.

The enactment of the remaining two Bills would ruin Punjab, he said. "If Min-

imum Support Price (MSP) ends, which is what the Centre seems to be moving towards, the agriculture sector will be ruined in Punjab and across the country," he added.

Attacking the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), a BJP ally, over its "U-turns" on the issue, the Punjab CM said all except the SAD and the BJP were on board at the all-party meeting he had convened on the issue. "We passed a resolution in the state Assembly, we talked to all political parties and farmer unions...and all were on board except the Akalis, who are now pretending to be opposed to the Ordinances," he said.

The Congress delegation urged the Governor to recommend to the Union government not to pursue the Bills

— The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, The Farmers' Empowerment and Protection Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 — introduced in the Lok Sabha to replace the three Ordinances.

HP opens borders for all; Covid pass curb removed



HP CM Jai Ram Thakur addressing the state assembly in Shimla on Wednesday.

SNS

Cong opposes bid to open borders for outsiders

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 16 SEPTEMBER

The Himachal Pradesh government has opened borders for all and now the restriction of COVID-19 e-Pass or registration has been removed, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur informed the House during the ongoing monsoon session of the state assembly on Wednesday.

Thakur said the decision was taken in the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday evening to boost economic activities in the state and as per the directions of the Union government in this regard in Unlock 4.

"The state government has taken effective steps to curb the spread of Coronavirus and Himachal is in much better position as compared to other states of the country.

If we compare the situation in the state, Himachal has only 10,513 cases so far while Maharashtra has recorded 10.97 lakh cases, Delhi 2.25 lakh cases, Rajasthan 1.05 cases, Punjab 84,482 cases and Uttarakhand has 34,407 cases.

The death rate in the state is 0.8 which is much lower than the national average of 1.64 and 2.98 in Punjab," he added.

He said with increased death rate, it has been noticed that people when they notice symptoms like cough, cold and fever, try various home remedies and seek medical help which further aggravates the Corona infection.

This leads to people visiting the hospital when the infection has reached an advanced stage, resulting in an increase in fatalities in the state.

As per the order, no liquor will be sold without social distancing and they will have to keep sanitizers.

The Union Ministry has said that provision for thermal scanning, hand wash and sanitizer would be made at all entry points besides ensuring regular health checkups of all the staff to monitor the ILI symptoms.

now, the asymptomatic patients would be discharged from hospital after 10 days without any test and they would be kept in home quarantine.

The new protocol has been issued to provide better facilities to those patients who are suffering other diseases (comorbidity)," he added.

He added that the government had also made amendments in the treatment protocol of COVID-19 patients.

Earlier, the Corona patients after treatment for 10 days, used to be discharged after a negative test report but

Delhi violence: HC asks accused to move bail plea after filing of charge sheet in UAPA case

PTI
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

The Delhi High Court Wednesday asked Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) student Asif Iqbal Tanha, arrested under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in a case related to the communal violence in northeast Delhi in February, to approach a trial court for bail after the filing of the charge sheet.

Justice Vibhu Bakshu also directed the trial court that if a bail plea is filed, it should consider and dispose of it expeditiously, preferably within two weeks from the filing.

The high court asked the trial court, which has earlier dismissed Tanha's bail plea, to consider the bail application fresh.

The high court's order came after Delhi Police



informed it that the agency was going to file a charge sheet in the case on or before September 17.

Later in the day, however, the police filed the charge sheet before the trial court in the case.

The high court had earlier said that considering the charge sheet is filed in the case on or before September 17, it does not consider it appropriate to entertain the petition of the accused seeking bail. Once the

charge sheet is filed in the case, the accused can agitate the bail before the trial court, it said.

Tanha, a 24-year-old student who was arrested on May 19 and is in judicial custody since May 27, has challenged a trial court's order dismissing his bail plea in the case.

Tanha's lawyer had claimed that he was falsely implicated in the case and had argued that invocation of UAPA against Tanha was bad in law as there was no unlawful association or terrorist organisation with which he was

associated.

Pinjra Tod members and JNU students Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal; JNU student Sharjeel Imam; Jamia Millia Islamia students Asif Iqbal Tanha and Gulfisha Khattoon; former Congress Councillor Ishrat Jahan; Jamia Coordination Committee members Safoora Zargar, Meera Haider; President of Jamia Alumni Association Shifa-Ur-Rehman; suspended AAP Councillor Tahir Hussain; activist Khalid Saifi, and former student leader Umar Khalid have been booked under the anti-terror law in the case.

While dismissing the bail plea, the trial court had said the statements of the protected witnesses in the case reflected the role of many accused persons including accused Tanha regarding the protest sites and how everything was being planned.

Tanha's lawyer had claimed that he was falsely implicated in the case and had argued that invocation of UAPA against Tanha was bad in law as there was no unlawful association or terrorist organisation with which he was

associated.

The communal clashes had broken out in northeast Delhi on February 24 after violence between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiraled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

HP allows opening of bars

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 16 SEPTEMBER

The Himachal Pradesh government has allowed opening of bars in the state with the conditions that all the norms and Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) specified by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs will be followed help which further aggravates the Corona infection.

This leads to people visiting the hospital when the infection has reached an advanced stage, resulting in an increase in fatalities in the state.

As per the order, no liquor will be sold without social distancing and they will have to keep sanitizers.

The Union Ministry has said that provision for thermal scanning, hand wash and sanitizer would be made at all entry points besides ensuring regular health checkups of all the staff to monitor the ILI symptoms.

FOR RIGHTS CAUSE



The members of the Dalit Shoshan Mukti Manch hold a protest for their rights and demands outside the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha in Shimla on Wednesday.

Increase RT/PCR testing capacity as COVID cases shooting up daily: HC to Delhi govt

PTI
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

The court directed the Delhi government to file a status report along with a report of the committee in this regard and listed the matter for further hearing on 30 September

Chain Reaction, is a laboratory technique widely used in the diagnosis of genetic diseases and to measure gene expression in research.

At present, the sanctioned strength of conducting RT/PCR is 14,000 per day in Delhi.

The high court expressed concern over continuous rise in COVID-19 cases, with nearly 4,500 new infections reported on Tuesday.

"Having regard to the fact that results of RAT are 60 per cent accurate, leaving grave doubt about infection in those who are asymptomatic, we are of the firm view that RT/PCR should be the way forward," said a bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Subramonian Prasad.

"In our opinion, Delhi government ought to focus on shoring up the capacity of testing through RT/PCR so that testing is increased through RT/PCR as much as possible, it said."

The court was informed that out of 435 mohalla clinics in Delhi, 400 were functional and 50-60 of them were conducting COVID-19 testing after completing their

OPDs.

The bench said it was of the view that not only mohalla clinics, but community centres shall also be roped in for setting up testing facilities as cases of COVID-19 are shooting up on a daily basis and on Tuesday 4,473 fresh cases have come up in Delhi, taking the tally to more than 2.25 lakh.

During the hearing, Delhi government's counsel Satyakam assured the court that the authorities will consider increasing testing through RT/PCR but also defended its process of conducting more RAT saying it gives quick results.

The court said as RAT mostly gives false negative reports, why the government should wait for it and then go to the next level of RT/PCR. Instead, it should shore up to RT/PCR capacity.

Satyakam said the government has a guideline which provides for the way they have to proceed and assured the court that they are not falling short of RT/PCR capacity and have enough capacity.

The court suggested that the testing by RT/PCR should be at least 50 per cent of the total testing numbers.

The Delhi government's counsel claimed that the testing done in the city was the best in the country and they were doing the maximum number of tests.

To this, the high court said,

Modesty is not your virtue. To say you are the best should come from the residents of the city and not from the state itself.

The bench observed, This is for sure that there is no cure for this disease till the vaccine comes. We have to ensure that the person who has this infection does not spread it further.

In pursuance to the court's September 8 direction, the Delhi government has now issued a notification that doctor's prescription is not mandatory for those voluntarily going for RT/PCR test to detect COVID-19 infection in the national capital.

People need to carry Aadhaar card for Delhi address proof and fill a form as prescribed by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for COVID-19 testing, it said.

Before this, it was mandatory for a person to have a doctor's prescription or symptoms to get tested for the virus.

In pursuance to the court's order, the Delhi government has also set up COVID-19 testing camps at Inter-State Bus terminals (ISBT) Anand Vihar, Sarai Kale Khan and Kashmire Gate and Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station and New Delhi Railway Station.

The court was hearing a PIL by advocate Rakesh Malhotra seeking increasing the COVID-19 testing numbers in the national capital and getting speedy results.

Delhi court stays order to unlock residential parts of Nizamuddin Markaz

PTI
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

A court here on Wednesday stayed an order directing Delhi Police to unlock the residential portion of the Nizamuddin Markaz, which was locked after a case was registered against several people attending a religious congregation in violation of COVID-19 guidelines in March.

Additional Sessions Judge

(ASJ) Sandeep Yadav passed the direction on a plea by Delhi police, which approached the sessions court against an order passed by a magisterial court on September 11.

The magistrate had directed Delhi Police to inspect the premises within five days and hand over to the family of Tablighi Jamaat chief Maulana Saad, the keys of the residential portion of the Nizamuddin Markaz and later

many of them tested positive for COVID-19. The Metropolitan Magistrate had directed Khalida and her family members to give an undertaking on an affidavit that they would not obstruct the investigation in any manner and the residential portion of the property shall be used for residing purpose and they would not enter into any part other of the Markaz and its premises for any other purpose.

RTPCR, short for Reverse Transcription Polymerase

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The Delhi government's counsel claimed that the testing done in the city was the best in the country and they were doing the maximum number of tests.

To this, the high court said,



A vendor carries bags to sell in a shopping arcade in New Delhi on Wednesday. AFP

RS pass Ayurveda Bill: Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020, that would pave the way to establish a state-of-the-art Ayurvedic at Jamnagar, Gujarat, and confer the status of Institution of National Importance (INI) to it. SNS

Fire engulfs shops in Gangasagar: A fire in the adjacent areas of the Kapil Muni Ashram at Gangasagar Island in South 24 Parganas gutted few shops yesterday. The blaze started around 7pm and damaged seven shops close to the ashram. According to the district magistrate, P Ulaganathan, no casualties or injury to anyone was reported. The fire was controlled within 45 minutes with the help of two fire tenders. SNS

'Farm Bills revolutionary; Cong misleading farmers'

Nadda says farm Bills are for empowerment of farmers, MSP not revoked



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

Amid opposition from ruling NDA's Punjab ally SAD and other Opposition parties, the Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the controversial farm Bill that allegedly sought to do away with MSP (Minimum Support Price) and APMC (Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee), an allegation denied by the BJP later. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020 was taken up for a discussion and later passed by a voice vote. BJP national president Jagat

Prakash Nadda addressing a Press conference at the party headquarters accused the Congress party of misleading the farmers over the said Bill's provisions which he said would only help farmers increase their incomes.

Denying that the provisions of the MSP and Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) revoked, the BJP national president said, "The MSP system was there, is there and will remain in future also." He also said similarly the APMC would also continue. He said farmers would, however, be free to choose the most prof-

itable market for selling their produce in the country.

In all three farmers' Bills were passed in the Lok Sabha. These include Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, The Farmers Empowerment and Protection Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill.

Nadda slammed the Opposition parties for opposing the Bills' passage. He

'Farm Bills will lead to unrest in Punjab'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 16 SEPTEMBER

Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh warned that the enactment of the farm legislations would lead to resentment and unrest in the border state.

The CM also said that no case would be registered against farmers protesting against agriculture sector legislations. Amarinder led a Congress delegation team to submit a memorandum to Governor VP Singh Badnore, seeking his intervention for non-pursuit of the agriculture Bill. The CM told the Governor that the party

felt that any move to tinker with the present procurement system, and that too in the times of nation-wide crisis, may deepen social unrest amongst the farmers of the state.

Pointing to Pakistan's bid to disturb the state's peace and stability through narco-terror and other anti-India acts, the CM later told reporters that these anti-farmer legislations would lead to rise in the people's anger. He claimed that the Centre failed to take the interest of the farmers into account in introducing Ordinances and instead, favoured corporate houses.

The CM said he had written to the Prime Minister thrice on the issue but had not received any response to far. If minimum support price ends, which is what the Centre seems to be moving towards, the agriculture sector will be ruined in Punjab and across the country, he added.

Siromoni Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Badal on Wednesday said his party can sacrifice anything for farmers' interests as he came out strongly against the three farm sector-related bills introduced by the government in the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament.

termed the Bills truly reformist and revolutionary. "All three Bills related to the empowerment of the farmers are truly reformist and revolutionary. Farmers will be free to sell their produce in a cooperative market of their choice. By opposing these Bills, the Congress is only disrupting all round development of farmers," the BJP head charged.

J P Nadda explained that the bills would enable farmers sell their produce in any

profitable market without any obstacles. "The farm contract will be on the produce and not the land. The land will always belong to the owner," he added. He said Congress' opposition to the Bills was unwarranted as the same party had promised to take similar legislative steps in its 2014 Lok Sabha polls manifesto.

Nadda accused the Congress party of hindering the empowerment of farmers by its opposition to the farm Bills.

BATTLE WON



A nurse wearing a PPE suit pushes a wheelchair carrying Mai Handique, 101, as she is being released from hospital a day after testing negative for Covid-19, in Guwahati on Wednesday. Handique got admitted as a coronavirus patient on 7 September at Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital. AFP

Junior doctor found hanging in hostel room, police suspect suicide

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 16 SEPTEMBER

from inside. Some of his colleagues also battered the door trying to force it open.

Finally, they informed the hospital authorities. Local Beniapukur police rushed to the spot after upon the hospital authorities information.

Police wrenched open the door and Sarkar was found hanging from the ceiling. A case has been registered today.

Preliminary investigations revealed it might be a case of suicide. His family members in Gosaba were informed both by police and hospital authorities.

Investigating officers have also started questioning his colleagues and other employees of the hospital.

SC orders fresh probe into mysterious death of NLU student

PTI
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

The Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside a closure report filed by Rajasthan Police and ordered fresh probe into the mysterious death of a third-year student of National Law University,

Jodhpur, in August 2017, saying it was needed to sustain the confidence of the society in rule of law.

The apex court said the probe be conducted by a fresh team of investigators headed by a senior police official and it must be concluded within two months

from today. A bench headed by Justice R F Nariman said the closure report, holding that though the death was homicidal but there was no clue, was a clear hasty action and the entire investigation lacked bona fide. The interest of justice therefore requires a de novo investigation to be done,

to sustain the confidence of the society in the rule of law irrespective of who the actors may be, said the bench.

The top court delivered its verdict on a plea filed by Neetu Kumar Nagaich, mother of the victim Vikrant Nagaich (21), seeking CBI investigation.

Banker denied leave for Covid dies

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 16 SEPTEMBER

The death of a branch manager of the State Bank of India in Visakhapatnam due to Covid-19 after he was denied leave by his superiors for a week though he had displayed symptoms of being infected by the virus, has led to outrage among bank

employees. SBI issued a stern advisory saying that contrary to its instructions, "at some places staff members despite showing symptoms of cough & fever are being called upon to attend office work," and directed strict action be taken against errant officials for violating the standard operating procedures (SOP) issued during the pandemic.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Office of the Executive Engineer Shimla Division No. III, HPPWD Shimla-3.

Web: www.hppwd.gov.in Email: ee-sm3-hp@nic.in Phone/ Fax No.: 0177-2652832.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate tenders on form No. 6&8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Shimla Division No. III, HP.PWD. Shimla-3 on behalf of the Governor of H.P. for the following works from the eligible Contractors/Firms enlisted in HP.PWD, so as to reach in his office on or before 24-10-2020 up to 10.30 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M. in the presence of the intending Contractors/Firms or their authorized representatives. The tender form can be had from his office against cash payment (non-refundable) on any working day up to 4.00 P.M. on 23-10-2020 and the application for issue of tender form shall be received up to 4.00 P.M. on 22-10-2020.

The earnest money in the shape of National saving Certificate/Time deposit account/saving account in any of the post office in HP, duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Shimla Division No-III must accompany with the application form for the tender offer. Conditional tender and the tender received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject the tender without assigning any reason there to. Other conditions are applicable as per form No. 6&8. The offer shall remain open for 90 days.

Sr. No	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Earnest money	Time	Form No	Cost of form
1	S/R to Ellerslie main building at HP Sectt. Chotta Shimla(SH:- P/F PVC flooring in room No. E-106,E-209 & G-6).	Rs.1,36,400/-	Rs.2,730/-	One Month	6&8	350/-
2	S/R to DDUZH building at Shimla(SH:- P/L C.I. pipe fittings etc to harvesting tank near car road).	Rs.1,30,472/-	Rs.2,650/-	One Month	6&8	350/-
3	A/R & M/O various residential blocks/ssets at Nabha Estate Shimla(SH:- Out side painting & distempering in block L-II,M-II,D-II etc.).	Rs.2,56,277/-	Rs.5,150/-	One Month	6&8	350/-
4	S/R to Ellerslie main building at HP Sectt. Chotta Shimla(SH:- P/F pine wood ceiling cup board painting polishing etc in room of Hon'ble Forest minister Room No.E-328).	Rs.4,26,730/-	Rs.8,540/-	One Month	6&8	350/-
5	S/R to Burj Cottage near Advance Study Shimla(SH:- P/F railing from RD's 0/00 to 0/066 on link road and stair cases to Burj Cottage servant Qrs. etc.).	Rs.2,67,994/-	Rs.5,400/-	One Month	6&8	350/-

Terms & Conditions:-

1. The contractor/firm shall have his GST No. and attested copy of the same be attached with the application for issue of tender form.
2. The contractor/firm should attach attested copy of registration/renewal.
3. Copy of PAN card be attached with the application form.

30/1/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

Chief Engineer (Shimla Zone)
HPPWD Nirman Bhawan Vihar
Shimla H.P. 171002

UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice

The Government of India has received a loan/ credit number "IRBD-8840" under PMGSY-II (Rural Road Project-II) under World Bank Funding (Additional Financing & Green Climate Resilience) Rural Roads Financing towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-II) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of roads under the project.

The Superintending Engineer 11th Circle HPPWD Rampur District Shimla HP-172001 under the batch of Governor Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-II (Batch-I) of 2019-20 in the district of Kinnar as detailed in the Table below from the eligible contractors registered with HPPWD/ CPWD/P&T, Railways/ other State Govt/ Central Govt. agencies. Non-registered bidders may submit bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

Sr. No	Name of work	Period of construction in Days	Estimated cost	Total Cont	Bid Security	Cost of form
1	Kinnar HP-05-59A Upgradation of link road from Karcham to Reckong Peo Km 0/000 to 11/635 (Portion Km 0/000 to 6/000)	365	46706229	4517400	1024500	5000
2	Kinnar HP-05-59B Upgradation of link road from Karcham to Reckong Peo Km 0/000 to 11/635 (Portion Km 6/000 to 11/635)	365	45764258	4156008	49920266	998400

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

Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 17th September 2020.

The technical bid shall be opened in the office of Superintending Engineer, 11th Circle, HPPWD, Rampur Bushahr on 09th October 2020 at 1100 hours. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with Concerned Executive Engineer, HPPWD, on a date not later than two working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the technical bids shall be declared non-responsive.

The financial bids shall be opened in the office of Chief Engineer (Shimla Zone) HPPWD Shimla (Date and Time shall be intimated).

The Government has enhanced the tendering limit of Class-B contractors from Rs. 2.00 crore (Two crore) to Rs. 5.00 crore (Five crore) only for PMGSY works.

The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the tender without declaring any reasons thereof.

Superintending Engineer
11th Circle HPPWD,
Rampur Bushahr, Dist. Shimla (HP)
Fax: 01782-233167, Tel: 01782-230344



The Centre has committed this maha paap (great sin) of pushing the farmers into deeper trouble by banning onion export...

TERMING THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AS 'ANTI-FARMER' AFTER IT BANNED EXPORT OF ONIONS
MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER AJIT PAWAR

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

05

THUMBNAILS



Commuters wearing face-masks walk past a National Flag in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ AFP

Pakistan shelling: Army soldier Naik Aneesh Thomas was on Wednesday martyred after he was critically wounded due to unprovoked shelling by Pakistani troops in the Sunderbani Sector of Rajouri district in Jammu. A Major and another soldier were injured during exchange of fire with Pakistani troops. ■ SNS

Kedarnath flood victims: Uttarakhand Police and State Disaster Relief Force launched a joint operation to find bodies of the 2013 Kedarnath disaster in the Mandakini valley from Wednesday. Hundreds of pilgrims lost their lives and scores went missing in the devastating flash flood. Ten teams are conducting search operation on different routes connecting the pilgrimage town. ■ SNS

Vatsyayan condolence: Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal condoled the demise of eminent scholar and author of art & dance Padma Vibhushan Kapila Vatsyayan, who was also honored with Assam's prestigious Shankardev Award. ■ SNS

'Mughal museum': An upcoming 'Mughal museum' in Agra, renamed after Chhatrapati Shivaji, will house artefacts from UP's Braj region as well, a government official said on Wednesday. Braj, also known as Brij or Brijbhoomi, is considered to be the land of Lord Krishna. ■ PTI

Seaplane flight to Patel statue from 31 Oct

AHMEDABAD, 16 SEPTEMBER

Preparations are in full swing to finish the construction of floating jetties for water aerodrome facilities where seaplanes can land.

The idea of seaplanes to take visitors to the 182-metre Statue of Unity (SoU) on the bank of Narmada river was popularised after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's famous flight in such a plane from Sabarmati river to Dharoi dam in north Gujarat during the last leg of his election campaign here in December 2017. As per present plans, seaplane service to the SoU site would be operational from 31 October, the second anniversary of inauguration of the statue of Iron Man who had integrated 562 princely states into the Indian Union during the months after independence.

While a large portion of the Narmada river's reservoir has been earmarked for the seaplanes to land, a jetty is also being prepared for the dignitaries to disembark and hit the road to the SoU. In Ahmedabad, a floating jetty is being brought to Sabarmati Riverfront from where the seaplane would take off. ■ SNS

Geneva meet: India slams Pakistan, Turkey and OIC

Indian diplomat Pawan Badhe says Pakistan is an epicenter of terrorism

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

India has hit out at Pakistan, Turkey and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the 45th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for their remarks on India's internal affairs.

Responding to the references made by Pakistan about Jammu and Kashmir, Pawan Badhe, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of India to the UN in Geneva, said, New Delhi did not need "unsolicited lecture on human rights from a country that has consistently persecuted its ethnic and religious minorities".

The Indian diplomat went on to say that Pakistan was an epicenter of terrorism with the distinction of providing "pensions" to individuals on the UN Sanctions list and has a Prime Minister (Imran Khan) who proudly admitted training tens of thousands of terrorists to fight in Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting how "mass influx of outsiders has whitewashed down the number of Kashmiris to an insignificant number in Pakistan", he said, "thousands of Sikh, Hindus and Christian minority women and girls have been subjected to abductions, forced mar-



riages and conversions in Pakistan."

On OIC, the Indian diplomat said, it has "no locus standi to comment on internal affairs of India".

The grouping, he said, has "allowed itself to be misused by Pakistan to subvert its own agenda."

"It's for the members (of the OIC) to decide if it is in their interests to allow Pakistan to do so," he added.

About Turkey's remarks, Badhe said, New Delhi could "only advise Turkey to refrain from commenting on the internal affairs of India and develop a better understanding of the democratic practices."

Exercising the Right of Reply to the statements made by Pakistan Indian representative on Tuesday said that it has become habitual for Pakistan to malign India with false and fabricated narratives for its self-serving malicious purposes.

"In its zeal to reassert its theocratic ideology, it (Pakistan) has ensured that ethnic and religious minorities have no future through systematic persecution, blasphemy laws, forced conversions, targeted killings, sectarian violence and faith-based discrimination," India said.

On the plight of people

in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, India said, "Not a single day has gone by when a family in Balochistan doesn't find its members picked up or kidnapped by the security forces of Pakistan."

"Pakistan does well when it comes to intimidation and attacks against journalists, human rights defenders and political dissidents in particular by its state machinery. It is not without reason that Pakistan has been highlighted by international organisations as a country where journalists are slain and their killers go scot free, India said.

India also slammed Pakistan for abusing various HRC mechanisms and platforms for raising issues, which are extraneous to the mandate of the HRC and which relate to the internal affairs of India, with a view to distract the attention of the international community from serious human rights violations committed by it against its own people, including in Indian territories occupied by it.

India also rejected the reference made by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India.

Mumbai Police increase 'peripheral' security outside Bachchans' homes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 16 SEPTEMBER



Cricketer Raina's kin case solved



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 16 SEPTEMBER

Kangana attacks Jaya again: Kangana Ranaut on Wednesday reacted sharply to veteran actor and MP Jaya Bachchan's "thaali" comments in the Parliament, claiming that she did not receive anything on the platter. "Which plate are you referring to Jaya ji? A thaali (plate) was given, in which a two-minute role, item numbers and a romantic scene were offered and that too only after sleeping with hero."

"I taught feminism to the film industry, decorated the 'thaali' with patriotic films. This is my own plate Jaya ji, it is not yours," she wrote in Hindi on Twitter. Ranaut's tweet drew sharp criticism from her TanuWedsManu co-star Swara Bhasker, who called the actor's comment "sickening" and "shameful". Filmmaker Alankrita Srivastava also called out Ranaut for her tweet.

Bachchan was praised by many of her colleagues in Bollywood for raising her voice in the House against those defaming the Hindi film industry.

Sushant case:

A member of the NCB team probing drugs angle in actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case tested positive for coronavirus on Wednesday following which questioning of the actor's former manager Shruti Modi was postponed, an official said.

Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Wednesday announced that the case of attack and murder involving cricketer Suresh Raina's kin has been solved with the arrest of three members of an inter-state gang of robbers.

Eleven other accused are yet to be arrested, Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta said, giving details of the arrests in the case which took place on the night of 19 August in village Tharyal in Shahpurkandi area of Pathankot.

Raina's uncle Ashok Kumar, a contractor, had died on the spot, while his son Kaushal Kumar succumbed to injuries on 31 August and wife Asha Rani is in hospital in critical condition. Two others injured in the attack had been discharged from hospital.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) during investigation received information that three suspects, who were seen at the Defence Road on the morning after the incident, were staying in Jhuggis (shanties) near the Pathankot Railway Station. A raid was conducted and all three were nabbed.

According to the DGP, a gold ring bearing AK, one ladies ring, one ladies gold chain and Rs 1530 was recovered, along with two wooden sticks, were recovered from the arrested accused, identified as Sawan alias Matching, Muhibbat (in photo) and Shahrukh Khan, currently residents of Chirawa and Pilani jhuggis, in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan.

er such incident was reported from Jamui district where a Congress legislator Sudhir Kumar alias Bunty Chaudhary was greeted with slippers and shoes.

The minister had gone to a village when he was shocked to find shoes and slippers hung by thread on either side of the road. "You are welcomed this way," read a handwritten poster put up on an electric pole.

The developments come amid LJP president Chirag Paswan shooting off a letter to the Prime Minister to inform that the ruling Nitish Kumar government is facing a strong anti-incumbency wave.

Politicians in Bihar are applying various tricks to swim against the tide and win elections.

While some are promising the moon to the masses, others are terrorising them with serious disasters if they don't vote for them! Brij Kishore Bind, BJP legislator and Mines and Geology minister in the Nitish Kumar government, has been moving in his constituency urging the voters to vote for him in the upcoming elections lest they could land in serious natural disasters. The Assembly elections

In the past one fortnight, sev-

eral legislators and ministers have faced the anger of the voters. Only yesterday, agriculture minister Prem Kumar from the BJP had to face an angry crowd when he went to attend a function in Aurangabad district.

The minister was addressing a street corner meeting when the angry crowd moved menacingly towards him and shouted vociferous slogans.

Another BJP legislator Sanjay Sarawagi faced strong protest in Darbhanga where the people also clashed with his supporters. Eventually, the legislator walked away quietly without addressing the crowd. Another

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The Tragic Trek

In their urgent desperation to get back to their source of livelihood, migrant workers have started to return from Odisha's Ganjam district to their primary source of income, specifically the diamond-cutting units and textile factories of Surat in Gujarat. The rush to return from one of Odisha's worst affected districts would normally have raised no cavil if the workers had not violated the stipulation that determines the inter-state border movement of labourers, notably the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979. The Act to protect the rights of inter-state migrant workers at their workplace has till date remained a non-starter for labourers who predominantly belong to Ganjam, as it has for others around the country. On the face of it, the critical legislation has been sacrificed at the altar of hunger and need. Equally, it is a commentary on the lack of employment opportunities in the perdurable poor district. Indeed, the return to Gujarat began in June when the pandemic was at its peak. The suffering of the migrants had exacerbated as they were without livelihood for two months and no less crucially, Ganjam had become the epicentre of Covid-19 in the state. According to data released this week and reported in this newspaper, no fewer than 50,000 migrants have already returned to Surat, the country's centre for cutting and trading in diamonds, and an important component of the textile trade. Surat has historically occupied a special slot in the economic development of British India. At least 15 buses from Gujarat are arriving in Ganjam each day to transport these migrant workers from their homes. Both state governments are acutely aware that the unofficial return journey to workplaces flies in the face of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act. The risk of the contagion spreading in crowded buses is dangerously real. Social activists contend that the Odisha government has lost a "golden opportunity" to map the workers' skill profiles and register each one of them under the Act. The journey of the migrants has a heart-rending facet as well. Nearly 1,000 migrants are reported to have perished while returning home ~ not necessarily from Surat ~ during the lockdown. Yet the Centre had no substantive data to offer in Parliament on Monday on whether any compensation was given to the families of migrant workers who died. These migrant workers have suffered an incredibly raw deal since 25 March, and it is decidedly astonishing that the government has no figures on the casualties among the jobless migrants in course of their trek from their workplaces to be with their families. The onus lies with the government to verify the deaths and offer compensation. The privation over the past six months has deepened the tragedy. On closer reflection, the implementation of the Act devolves on the state governments, and not on the migrants per se.

Post-Brexit discord

Britain is in crisis yet again, and this time post-Brexit. Two former Prime Ministers, pre-eminently Tony Blair (Labour) and Sir John Major (Conservative), have urged MPs to reject what they call "shameful attempts" to override parts of the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement. The two have accused their government of "embarrassing" the UK by seeking the power to change the details of a treaty agreed last year with the EU. Happily for Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the crisis may have blown over for now with his controversial bill having cleared its first parliamentary hurdle by winning the first House of Commons vote by 340 to 263 votes. The Internal Market Bill has been opposed by the Opposition and senior members of the ruling Conservative party who are determined to revolt against the legislation as it progresses through further stages in its parliamentary process. And this could happen despite Mr Johnson's 80-seat majority in the Commons. Having effected the messy divorce, the Prime Minister is rather unlikely to be overly optimistic over the nitty-gritty quite yet. It cannot be said that he has won the first round. While Whitehall contends that the bill has vital safeguards to protect Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, its critics have warned that the legislation runs the risk of damaging international law. A senior minister was not off the mark when he claimed that the United Kingdom faces an "unprecedented situation". Justice Secretary Robert Buckland said the powers being sought by ministers to amend aspects of the Northern Ireland Protocol were an "insurance policy" to be used only if attempts to settle differences in other ways failed. The Protocol, a key part of the Withdrawal Agreement, signed by both sides last year, is designed to prevent a hard border returning to the island of Ireland. Should the bill become law, it will empower ministers to modify or "disapply" rules relating to the movement of goods between Britain and Northern Ireland that will come into force from 1 January if the UK and EU are unable to strike a trade deal. The discord has been stoked by an article in *The Sunday Times* by Sir John and Mr Blair ~ former Conservative and Labour prime ministers respectively. In an exceptional conjunction of two rival party leaders, they argued that the government's actions were "irresponsible, wrong in principle and dangerous in practice". Strong words indeed for the incumbent Tory head of government. "It raises questions that go far beyond the impact on Ireland, the peace process and negotiations for a trade deal ~ crucial though they are. It questions the very integrity of our nation," they said. The former PMs, both vehement opponents of Brexit, said that respecting treaty obligations was "just as important" as domestic law, and called on MPs to reject the legislation. "As the world looks on aghast at the UK ~ the word of which was once accepted as inviolable ~ this government's action is shaming itself and embarrassing our nation." Leaders have raised pertinent issues; the bill calls for reflection.

The nowhere people

Policy-making is about ensuring that policy measures impact people favourably or at least do not impact the economically or otherwise handicapped unfavourably, which is a principle that is observed in its absence. Matters get worse under straitened conditions

In a plaintive message, potter Arun Pal, master craftsman, recognized and feted by the government and the crafts community in general, talks of his pathetic plight. Post monsoon, his home is without a roof and he has been without an income since the Covid-19 lockdown. A potter by birth, he has carried on the creative parampara that the Government of India is supposedly promoting through smartly named schemes such as Usttar or even the 'Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme' through Zonal Cultural Centres amongst others. The smarter the names the more ridiculous the outcomes because both access to the schemes and their reach are grossly limited by the incompetence of those who prepare them.

Over the years, the Indian bureaucracy has mastered the art of exclusion while swearing by inclusivity. This holds good not just for the artisans, whose numbers are expected to be around 17 million (that must surely be a gross underestimation) but for all segments of the dispossessed or vulnerable. Some are excluded on the basis of their gender, others because of their age, yet others because of their profession and even others because of the category of working class they fall under ~ the migrant labour for example ~ who are invariably hurt much more than the more competently abled. Such competence is often determined by being the right age, the right sex, at the right place, with the right connections and with skills currently in demand. A first class teacher, hitherto making a decent living from private tuitions, will starve under lockdown conditions; a bike-riding youngster with scant education, will find ready employment in the food-delivering space.

Policy-making is about ensuring that policy measures impact people favourably or at least do not impact the economically or otherwise handicapped unfavourably, which is a principle that is observed in its absence. Matters get worse under straitened conditions. The Indian economy, reeling under the lockdown pressures, amongst others, has shrunk nearly 24 per cent in the first quarter of the current financial year. China posted a 3.2 per cent growth and while taking China on, on several fronts, it may be worthwhile for our blueprint makers to look at what China is doing right. It is the apparently utter cluelessness that is worrying for a populace that is expecting good news just around the corner. That hope is belied as the fiscal deficit Rs 8.2 lakh crore and revenues of the exchequer go southwards and there is no idea of how a much talked about stimulus will work; nor for the many small businesses that form the backbone of Indian manufacturing and indeed keep the entire system running; nor for most other segments in need. Corporate needs are, of course, being addressed because they are India's big-ticket performers.

On paper even the micro



enterprises are being addressed. There are 63 million micro enterprises in the country that form a part of the bigger MSME universe that has 90.19 lakh registered units. The actual numbers may be much more but, officially, the space employs upwards of 110 million people and contributes 29 per cent of India's gross domestic product. It also accounts for almost half of its exports, 48 per cent to go by recent calculations. Yet, this entire space is in a chasm of horrendous proportions with 99 per cent of its constituents in the micro enterprise space. They have little access to help. For starters the help on offer is found wanting both in quantity and quality and, worse, the beneficiaries have little clue about them, which means a denial of access.

What about the other sectors in the vulnerable space? The senior citizens; indigent women, farmers or migrants each of which accounts for upwards of 100 million people? The agriculture sector employs around 52 per cent of the total workforce, migrant workers comprise around 20 per cent of the workforce and should account for upwards of 100 million people; India's elderly are estimated to number around 104 million and expected to increase to 173 million by 2026. The bureaucracy has, of course, made it to global case studies on how not to treat migrants at a time of crisis with little evidence of regret or admission of policy failure when even in June, migrant workers remained stranded. Nor is there any plan for a way forward to get them back into employment.

What about our indigent female population? Forget the more than five lakh female foetuses that have gone missing in under a decade because of sex selection that, incidentally, is banned in India. India's gender statistics (48.03 per cent of the population is female) are appalling and apply virtually to the entire space. At least 50 million women live below the poverty line and even those just above it are in an extremely indigent state of being. Matters are made worse courtesy violence and abuse in various forms which the laws of the land can do little to help, again given the lack of access. India's

fairer sex is in a sorrier global ecosystem in which 500 million women and girls live in extreme poverty that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. There are pits of despair and bottomless pits of despair, multitudes of women in farming are almost a non-existent cohort. The pronoun for a farmer is "he". Probably the worst off amongst the fairer sex is that lot about to bring new life to the world have been facing in India, with a 50 per cent drop in institutional deliveries and those with no access to them even in better times deprived of services of even a midwife.

What about India's senior

citizenship? The impoverished amongst the old are a forsaken lot with little access to food and healthcare but even the senior citizen who has thus far managed to get by on savings and a frugal lifestyle is served with a double whammy of rising costs and diminishing returns from investments, fostered by the current

dispensation. Things looked so bleak for them that on 4 August 2020, the Supreme Court of India delivered itself of a direction enjoining the Centre to ensure that senior citizens were well taken care of during the Covid-19 pandemic with regular payment of pensions and given medicines, masks, sanitizers and other essential goods. Given the vulnerability of this fixed income segment, it was inexplicable how the government chose to slash small savings schemes rates by 0.7-1.40 per cent, for instance, for Q1 of FY 2020-21. Had it continued in this maverick fashion and cut rates for this quarter as well, as was definitely being considered, the PPF would have fetched returns below the seven per cent mark, which would be a 46-year low. Fortunately, good sense has prevailed and the government has kept the interest rates on small savings schemes or post office schemes unchanged for the July-September quarter of FY 2020-21. The slashing of EPF rates for 2020-21 is yet another blow across the board. Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cutting key rates over the past year or so has induced banks to reduce interest rates on fixed deposits. Not that it has passed on the full benefits to borrowers, it has only increased the bank's margins at the cost of depositors. Indeed, according to one analysis, interest on savings from some riskier small finance banks and smaller private sector banks have been known to be higher than the fixed deposit rates offered by the PSU banks and bigger private sector banks. The danger in this is that it is pushing senior citizens, sometimes desperate for higher returns to avenues fraught with risks.

Finally, what about the farmer? The pandemic has taken the wind out of the sail of the farming community that was closing ranks and becoming vociferous about its many vulnerabilities amidst the government talk of doubling farm incomes while driving them down consistently, all the time. Thanks to the adverse impact of even non-farm related policy measures the bureaucracy chooses to remain in the dark about the bottomline impact of its decisions. An interesting analysis from the chairman of the Bharat Krishak Samaj is indicative of the state of affairs in many beneficial programmes if only someone reads between the lines and joins the dots. Under the PM Kisan scheme every landowning farmer (landless are excluded) receives Rs 6,000 a month. Now read this benefit along with a cost imposed on the farmer (in Punjab) growing a combination of paddy and wheat and using 80 litres of diesel. Each litre of diesel fetches a tax of Rs 45 for the exchequer and even, if one were, for the sake of this argument, to reduce the average diesel consumption by half, to 40 litres, the government is virtually collecting Rs 1,800 per acre tax from farmers. A small five-acre farmer could actually be paying about Rs 9,000 as diesel tax, which is more than the largesse received.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

ASEAN's new partners

ASEAN member countries have reached consensus on cooperation mechanisms with France, Italy, Cuba and Colombia following the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM 53) this week. ASEAN granted the status of development partnership to France and Italy, and admitted Columbia and Cuba to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). Vietnamese Deputy Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh told a press conference on AMM 53 and related meetings in Hanoi on September 12. Regarding the UK's proposal to become ASEAN's dialogue partner, Minh said the grouping acknowledged the country's significant role, both regionally and internationally, in the relationship between the UK and ASEAN member countries. "ASEAN states are considering the UK's proposal on the basis of ASEAN regulations, as well as cooperation outcomes and commitments of countries in general that want to become the bloc's dialogue partners," he added. Many countries want to become ASEAN's partners France, Italy, Cuba, Columbia, become ASEAN's new partners Participants to the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in virtual format on September 9, 2020. Photo: VGP Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Quoc Dung, who is also Head of SOM ASEAN Vietnam, said on September 7 that many countries have proposed setting up partnership with ASEAN whose role and position have been advanced over the past time. Apart from the UK, France, Italy, Cuba and Columbia, other countries like Morocco and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are also interested in establishing dialogue partnerships in areas with the grouping. Within the framework of

Vientiane Times

AMM 53 and related meetings, ASEAN's current partners supported the grouping's centrality in the open, rules-based regional architecture.

ASEAN and its partners consented to join hands in order to intensify the role and efficiency of ASEAN-chaired forums, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+). They reiterated commitments to backing multilateral cooperation and the framework of relations between countries on the basis of principles of international law, while stepping up their fruitful cooperation in coping with emerging challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and pushing ahead with comprehensive recovery. Currently, China, Russia, the US, Japan, the Republic of Korea (RoK), India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the EU are major partners of ASEAN. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh chairs the international press conference on AMM 53. Photo: VnExpress At the press conference, Minh said the ministers adopted up to 42 documents at the AMM 53, a record in the history of ASEAN foreign ministers' meetings. The documents include the Joint Communiqué and the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II. Notably, 10 initiatives raised by Vietnam also sailed through the meeting, including the Hanoi statement on the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the EAS and the organisation of a meeting of the EAS expert group on Covid-19, among others.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Not invincible

SIR, This refers to Harsha Kakar's 'A battle on China's hands' (15 September). It's the pro-China lobby which exaggerates the bravado of PLA to demoralize the resolute, redoubtable Indian Army in a hideous bid to run down the Modi dispensation to score political brownie points at the expense of national security. The reality is that the limitations of PLA have been exposed on a number of occasions, be it in 1967, or 1975 when the

Indian Army pushed back the Chinese aggressor in an exemplary display of valour and courage. Who can forget how Vietnam thrashed the Chinese troops in 1979?

The media-hyped PLA's invincibility as a part of Chinese designs to terrorize smaller countries has been laid bare. The way our bravhearts mauled the PLA on 15 June is itself a tell-tale evidence of how the Chinese soldiers were brought to their knees. The PLA does

not have a track record of winning a major war. So far as experience in mountain warfare is concerned, the Indian Army has the upper hand over the Chinese.

It's unfortunate that some people get swayed by fake Chinese narratives instead of believing the Indian Army which has defeated Chinese designs. Rightly has General Kakar said, "Within India many are influenced by writings in Chinese state-controlled media, which project topics determined by CCP..."

Yours, etc., Sudipta Ghosh,

Jangipur, 16 September.

FILTHY MINDS

SIR, Rafia Zakaria's brilliant article, 'Primitive brained, repulsive people' (11 September) has depicted the dirty mindset of former US president Richard Nixon and interlocutor Henry Kissinger as far as their attitudes towards the people of India and Pakistan are concerned. Their utterances are the manifestation of frustration of those who were not even the original inhabitants of America; they forcibly evicted the

native Indians and occupied the territory. We Indians and Pakistanis have at least strong roots and we are proud

of that. Ours is a civilization that is more than 5,000 years old and we did not forcibly occupy another country or

dispossess its original owners.

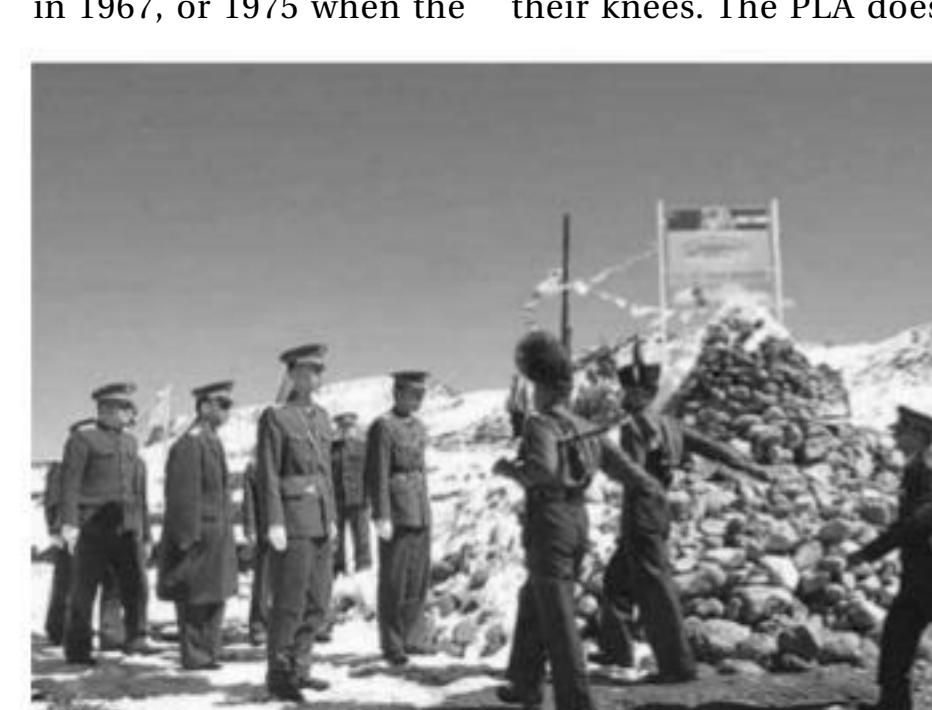
Yours, etc., Aranya Sanyal,
Siliguri, 12 September.

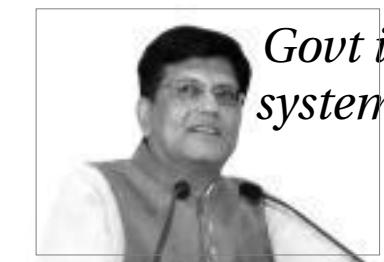
NOSHIR F. TANKARIWALA

SIR, An eminent citizen of Kolkata and a leading light of the Parsi community passed away a few days ago in the city, after a brief illness. When I was working for James Finlay & Company Limited, Calcutta, a Scottish tea producing company, I was sent on tour to Assam in 1959 to report on the tea manufacture at Majuli Tea Estate, whose Manager, Arnold Bryning, of pre-WWII vintage, was said to be eccentric! At age 31, I was apprehensive, not knowing what to expect. On arrival, I was greeted by the Manager supervising the preparation of a football field. He introduced his brand new Assistant, Noshir Tankariwala, instructed him to spare no effort for the success of the Bryning Cup, and led me to the Burra Bungalow where he poured gin, taking out a glass eye and perching it on the mantelpiece, with the comment "It is watching you". I was not allowed to taste the day's manufacture, which I knew would be good - gin and glass eye notwithstanding. Tankariwala proved a good pupil, in making a football field and tea. He showed much promise and promotion came, not long after his marriage to Roshni. However, she preferred life in Assam and Finlay's lost a good planter/Potential Visiting Agent. After handling a management, Nosh, as he was called, resigned and joined a Williamson Magor group company, serving them in Assam and Kolkata till retirement. Settled in Kolkata after an Assam Burra Bungalow luxury, parenthood of Jehangir and Niloufer was a reward, followed, in the goodness of time, by grand-parenthood. Nosh was a kingpin in the Kolkata Parsi community. He became President of the Tollygunge Club, where he indulged in golf, a sport he loved.

Ten years older than him, I had played golf at Tolly and at the Royal Calcutta Golf Club, where I had been Captain. He was a worthy opponent whenever we met on the links, usually better. In recent years, Tolly had become a watering-hole for me, at 90-plus. Nosh would greet me at the shamiana as he finished his round. I heard of Roshni and Nosh both falling ill followed by Nosh's passing away. My frailty and that of my wife, prevented me attending the funeral, where my son, Tilak, represented the Mehera family, including his elder brother, Sanjeev, resident in Bangalore.

Yours, etc., Saroj Kumar Mehera, Kolkata, 14 September.





Govt is working on setting up a single window system for clearances and approvals of industry

PIYUSH GOYAL

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

THUMBNAILS

REITs and InvITs: The Securities and Exchange Board of India on Wednesday allowed emerging investment vehicles ~ REITs and InvITs ~ to list on stock exchanges operating in the International Financial Services Centre. Besides, the watchdog has asked bourses in the IFSC to evolve a detailed framework prescribing the initial and continuous listing requirements for InvITs and REITs whose units are proposed to be listed. PTI

Online fantasy sports: Eighty per cent of the online fantasy sports (OFS) users prefer participating in the "free-to-play" format and 98 per cent of the remaining 20 per cent who "pay-to-play", have either won or lost less than Rs 10,000 net in their lifetime (past 3 to 4 years). This reinforces the fact that fantasy sports are a competitive digital sports engagement platform and clearly not in the nature of addiction, said a report prepared by IndiaTech.org. SNS

Mini online shop: MINI India has introduced the MINI online shop ~ shop.mini.in, said a Press release from the company. Customers can explore the entire MINI range, configure a MINI of their choice, locate the nearest MINI dealer, request for a test drive or quotation, calculate EMI as well as book their favourite MINI from the online shop, it added. SNS

MakeMyTrip in UAE: Online travel firm MakeMyTrip on Wednesday said it has entered the United Arab Emirates with its portfolio of offerings for travellers across Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, and Umm Al Quwain. PTI

Volvo car finance: Volvo Car India on Wednesday introduced Volvo Car Financial Services in collaboration with HDFC Bank to enable buyers receive easy finance for a Volvo car of their choice, according to a Press release. SNS

Economic recovery still not well entrenched: RBI Guv

The central bank is battle ready to take appropriate measures to support growth, he says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das today said economic recovery is still not well entrenched and that the central bank is "battle ready" to take appropriate measures to support growth.

Addressing a virtual conference organised by industry body Ficci, Das said that gross domestic product (GDP) data released by the government was a "reflection of the ravages of the Covid-19".

The economy contracted 23.9 per cent during the April-June quarter on account of the strict lockdown imposed by the government towards end of March to check the spread of coronavirus infections.

Nevertheless, high frequency indicators of agricultural activity, the purchasing managers' index that PMI for manufacturing and certain private estimates on unemployment point to some stabilisation of economic activity in the second quarter of the current year, while of course

**SHAKTIKANTA DAS
RBI GOVERNOR**

We are also very carefully monitoring the markets. As and when required further measures will be taken. I even said it earlier during my statements that the RBI stands fully prepared... I had used the terminology that the RBI stands battle ready and whatever measures are required will be taken up by the RBI.

contractions in several other sectors are also simultaneously easing," he said.

However, Das said that the economic recovery was not yet fully entrenched and also that the recovery is likely to be gradual.

"The recovery is, however, not yet fully entrenched and moreover, in some sectors, the uptick, which was noticed in June and July, appear to have levelled off. By all indications, the recovery is likely to be gradual as efforts towards the

reopening of the economy are confronted with rising infections," he said.

At the same time, Das assured the industry that the RBI stands "battle ready" and whatever measures are required will be taken to support liquidity, growth and control price rise.

According to him, the immediate policy response to Covid-19 in the country has been to prioritise the stabilisation of the economy and support quick recovery poli-

cies for durable and sustainable high growth in the medium term post the coronavirus.

The Governor also said financial market conditions in India have eased significantly across segments in response to the front-loaded cuts in the policy repo rate and large system-wide as well as targeted infusion of liquidity by the central bank.

"We are also very carefully monitoring the markets. As and when required further measures will be taken. I even said it earlier during my statements that the RBI stands fully prepared... I had used the terminology that the RBI stands battle ready and whatever measures are required will be taken up by the RBI," he said.

Despite substantial increase in the borrowing programme of the government, Das said that persistently large surplus liquidity conditions have ensured non-disruptive mobilisation of resources at the lowest borrowing costs in a decade.

Currently, government paper borrowing rates are the lowest in the last 10 years, he said.

Noting that fragility of NBFCs is a concern, Das said the RBI is regularly monitoring the health of top 100 NBFCs and it would be the endeavour of the central bank that no large institution should fail.

Prior to the IL&FS crisis, Das said there were light touch regulations for the NBFC sector and the RBI is now trying to bring the regulations at par with banks so that there is no repeat of failure.

Regarding loan restructuring scheme, the RBI chief said he would look into the suggestions of the industry.

Interests of depositors and financial stability were kept in mind while framing the loan restructuring scheme, he said, adding that it had to be careful and a balanced decision on the part of the RBI.

players, both individuals and companies, are supposed to pay advance tax for the quarter, personal income tax at the national level stood at Rs 1,47,004.6 crore and corporation tax at Rs 99,126.2 crore, totalling the two major components of the tax revenue at Rs 2,46,130.8 crore, the source said.

The total collection fell 22.5 per cent, led by a 13.9 per cent dip in collections from Mumbai, which is the largest tax base, contributing to more than a third of the national collection.

The megapolis still continues to be the most affected region by the pandemic.

Total collection from the nation's financial capital fell to Rs 74,789.6 crore, down 13.9 per cent year-on-year, the source said, but refused to share advance tax numbers for the quarter.

Of the total collection till 15 September, when the

Tax collection falls 22.5% till 15 Sep

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 16 SEPTEMBER

Total tax collection of the Centre, including advance tax collection for the second quarter, fell by 22.5 per cent to Rs 2,53,532.3 crore till 15 September of the current fiscal as compared to the year-ago period, according to an income tax department source. The source shared some details about the provisional data.

During the same period ended 15 September 2019, total tax collection stood at Rs 3,27,320.2 crore, the income tax department source from Mumbai zone said. However, the source refused to share the advance tax numbers separately for the current quarter. The numbers are provisional as banks will be able to update the final data by the end of the day, the source said.

During the first quarter ended June, gross tax collections fell by 31 per cent, driven down by a massive 76 per cent plunge in advance tax mop-up, as the country was in a full lockdown due to the pandemic.

Regarding loan restructuring scheme, the RBI chief said he would look into the suggestions of the industry.

Interests of depositors and financial stability were kept in mind while framing the loan restructuring scheme, he said, adding that it had to be careful and a balanced decision on the part of the RBI.

Revenue of airlines declines by 85.7% in Apr-Jun quarter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

The minister said the employee count at airports has reduced from 67,760 on 31 March to 64,514 on 31 July.

Scheduled domestic flight services were suspended in India from 25 March to 24 May due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown. They were resumed from 25 May but in a curtailed manner.

The employee count at ground handling agencies fell by 22.44 per cent to 29,254 in April-July period, Puri said.

In his written reply, Puri was giving information about the "impact of Covid-19 on the civil aviation sector".

"The revenue of Indian carriers has reduced from Rs 25,517 crore during April-June 2019 to Rs 3,651 crore during April-June 2020," the minister said.

Air India's total revenue has

reduced from Rs 7,066 crore during April-June 2019 to Rs 1,531 crore during the first quarter of 2020-21, Puri stated.

Puri stated the domestic air traffic in the country fell to 1.2 crore during March-July period as compared to 5.85 crore in the year-ago period.

International traffic dropped to 11.55 lakh in March-July period as compared to 93.45 lakh in the year-ago period, he added.

Scheduled international flights have been suspended in India since 23 March due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown. However, special international passenger flights have been operating in India under Vande Bharat Mission since May and under bilateral air bubble arrangements formed between India and other countries since July.

"We believe this innovative offering will redefine the shopping experience for our customers with tap and pay technology. The opportunities are endless because we have seen the explosion in digital transactions. The time is right for contactless (payments)," the bank's chairman Rajnish Kumar told reporters. PTI

SBI, Titan launch contactless payment watches

MUMBAI, 16 SEPTEMBER

SBI and Titan Company have partnered to introduce a range of Titan Pay watches powered by Yono, the lender's mobile banking app. These watches will have contactless payment functions. With this launch, account holders of the bank can tap their Titan Pay watch on contactless payment point-of-sale machines without the need of swiping or inserting their debit card, the bank said in a statement.

"We believe this innovative offering will redefine the shopping experience for our customers with tap and pay technology. The opportunities are endless because we have seen the explosion in digital transactions. The time is right for contactless (payments)," the bank's chairman Rajnish Kumar told reporters. PTI

BHEL ties up with SwissRapide to bring Maglev trains to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

of easily up to 500 km/h and significantly reduces the total cost of system ownership.

The MoU was signed by S V Srinivasan, GM & head (transportation business group), BHEL and Niklaus H Koenig, president and CEO, SwissRapide AG.

Aimed at expanding its footprint in the urban transportation sector as part of its diversification initiatives, BHEL has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with SwissRapide AG for Maglev train projects in India, a company statement said.

The Maglev rail system hovers in the air instead of rolling, due to magnetic levitation, thus the vehicles have no physical contact with the guideway. This enables the system to be highly energy efficient, allows operating speeds

train projects in India.

The SwissRapide AG is a Swiss company specialised in the promotion, project management, planning, specification, design, implementation and commissioning of international Maglev rail projects and related technologies. It holds the unique position of offering Transrapid Maglev technology, the only established and commercially proven ultra-high-speed Maglev rail system in the world.

BHEL has been pioneering new technologies and has been a reliable partner in the growth of Indian Railways for over five decades by supplying electric as well as diesel locomotives, EMUs (electrical multiple unit), and propulsion system sets and drives for the same.

Great Learning ropes in Virat Kohli as brand ambassador

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, 16 SEPTEMBER

(\$350,100) for each tweet advertising a brand, and said to charge about Rs 4 crore per endorsement as brand ambassador.

Great Learning will be launching a multi-film campaign with Kohli during the Dream 11 Indian Premier League, set to begin in the United Arab Emirates from 19 September.

"Virat is the obvious choice to be our brand ambassador because he best embodies the Great Learning ethos of excellence and continuous learning," said Great Learning founder and CEO Mohan Lakhamraju. "He exemplifies hard work, integrity and ambition - values critical to reach the pinnacle of success in any field."

Great Learning is part of an online education market in India, expected to reach around \$2 billion by 2021, according to Google and KPMG.

Collaborating with leading institutions such as Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, IIT Madras and the University of Texas, Great Learning says it has delivered over 30 million hours of "transformational learning" to more than 300,000 learners across 150 countries.

ONGC exits Sudan over payment issue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

against the Government of Sudan to recover the dues and has terminated the exploration and production sharing agreement (EPSA), he said.

ONGC had also not been paid about \$99 million for the 741-km-long pipeline it built from Khartoum to Port Sudan.

The project cost and rental of \$254 million was to be paid by Sudan in 18 half-yearly installments of \$14.135 million each starting from 30 December 2005. The company got a total of 11 installments (\$155.48 million) till December 2010 and the balance seven installments amounting to \$98.94 million remained outstanding.

Sudan had since 2011 not paid OVL and partners for oil it bought from the block. Sudan's dues towards OVL totalled \$430.69 million, the official said.

2003 by acquiring a 25 per cent interest in the Greater Nile Oil Project.

ONGC consisted of the upstream assets of on-land blocks 1, 2 and 4 spread over 49,500 sq km in the Muglad Basin, located about 780 km south-west of the capital city of Khartoum in Sudan.

Upon the secession of South Sudan from Sudan in July 2011, the contract areas of blocks 1, 2 and 4 which straddle between Sudan and South Sudan were split with a major share of production and reserves now situated in South Sudan.

Post-secession, as the gov-

ernment of Sudan's share of total production from Sudan was not sufficient to meet the requirements of local refineries, foreign firms were asked to sell their share of crude oil to it.

However, the payment of dues on account of crude oil purchased by the government of Sudan was not received, the official said.

Sudan had denied ONGC and partners an extension of licence to operate block 2B after the initial contract expired in November 2016.

OVL had, along with state-owned Oil India Ltd, constructed and financed a 741-km multi-product pipeline from Khartoum refinery to Port Sudan for \$194 million.

OVL's share of the project cost was 90 per cent, while the rest was borne by Oil India Limited.

The pipeline was handed over to the government of Sudan in October 2005.

CAMS announces ₹2,240-cr IPO; NSE to sell off entire holding

MUMBAI, 16 SEPTEMBER

CAMS, which acts as a registrar and transfer agent (RTA) for mutual funds, today announced its initial public offering (IPO), targeting to raise Rs 2,240 crore from investors amid the liquidity flush. The offer will see sale of 1,82,46,600 equity shares or 37.4 per cent stake by NSE Investments, the subsidiary of National Stock Exchange (NSE).

The entire quantum of shares being sold to investors is NSE's holding and there will not be any new issue of shares which may see money coming into the company.

The company counts on other investors, including private equity major Warburg Pincus and HDFC Group, who will continue to be invested.

The issue will open on 21 September and close on 23 September. Before that, the anchor investors' portion will open on 18 September, it said.

Half of the issue is reserved for qualified institutional buyers, 35 per cent for retail investors, 15 per cent for non-institutional bidders and there is a reservation of 1.82 lakh shares for employees, who will get the shares at a 10 per cent discount.

The price band has been set at between Rs 1,229 and Rs 1,230 per share and the company will raise Rs 2,242 crore at the upper end of the band.

The issue comes amid a jump in IPOs lately, and is the biggest offering by size in the recent times.

Banking, IT and auto shares push stock indices up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 16 SEPTEMBER

Bank, Infosys, L&T and UltraTech Cement.

On the other hand, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, SBI, ONGC, Bharti Airtel and Axis Bank were among the laggards, skidding up to 1.80 per cent.

According to traders, stock-specific action and sustained foreign fund inflows drove domestic equities higher, despite mixed cues from global markets ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy outcome.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 258.50 points or 0.66 per cent to close at 39,302.85 points. The broader NSE Nifty rose 82.75 points or 0.72 per cent to finish at 11,604.55 points



EU sanctions (are) an option to halt Turkey's gas search

AFTER TURKISH DRILL SHIPS BEGAN SEARCHING FOR ENERGY RESERVES IN CYPRUS WATERS

CYPRUS PRESIDENT NICOS ANASTASIADIS

NEW DELHI THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

Yoshihide Suga named Japan's PM

The new PM, a self-made politician & son of a farmer, has stressed his background in promising to serve the interests of ordinary people

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, 16 SEPTEMBER

Japan's Parliament elected Yoshihide Suga as prime minister Wednesday, replacing long-serving leader Shinzo Abe with his right-hand man.

Suga had been chosen as leader of the ruling party on Monday, virtually assuring he would succeed Abe, who resigned earlier in the day because of ill health.

Suga, who was chief Cabinet secretary in Abe's government, is to launch his own Cabinet later Wednesday.

Suga has stressed his background as a farmer's son and a self-made politician in promising to serve the interests of ordinary people and rural communities.

He has said he will pursue Abe's unfinished policies, and that his top priorities will be fighting the coronavirus and turning around an economy battered by the pandemic.

Abe said before the change was official that as a lawmaker, he will support Suga's government and he thanked

the people for their understanding and strong support for the upcoming leadership under Suga. I devoted my body and soul for the economic recovery and diplomacy to protect Japan's national interest every single day since we returned to power, Abe told reporters at the prime minister's office before heading into his final Cabinet meeting.

During this time, I was able to tackle various challenges together with the people, and I'm proud of myself."

Suga gained the support of party heavyweights and their followers early in the campaign on expectations he would continue Abe's line.

Suga has been a loyal supporter of Abe since Abe's first stint as prime minister from 2006 to 2007. Abe's tenure ended abruptly because of illness, and Suga helped him return as prime minister in 2012. Abe, 65, has ulcerative colitis and his current treatment requires IV injections.

He said last month his condition has improved but, facing ongoing treatment and



Japan's new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga (front row C) and his cabinet members pose during a photo session at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Wednesday. ■ AFP

physical weakness, he decided to resign. Suga has praised Abe's diplomacy and economic policies when asked about what he would like to accomplish as prime minister. Suga, who does not belong to any wing within the party and opposes factionalism, says he is a reformer who will break down vested interests and rules that hamper reforms. He says he will set up a new

government agency to speed up Japan's lagging digital transformation.

In a reshuffle of the ruling party key posts, however, Suga evenly allocated top posts to key factions, a balancing act seen as a return of favour for their support in the leadership race. Suga said he will appoint reform-minded, hard-working people to the new Cabinet. About half of the mem-

bers in the Abe Cabinet are expected to be retained or shifted to different ministerial posts.

Media reports say some key ministers, including Finance Minister Taro Aso, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Olympic Minister Seiko Hashimoto, and Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, the son of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, will stay. Abe's younger brother, Nobuo Kishi, is reportedly tapped as defense minister, replacing Taro Kono who is expected to be shifted to administrative reforms minister.

Compared to his political prowess at home, Suga has hardly traveled overseas and his diplomatic skills are unknown, though he is largely expected to pursue Abe's priorities.

The new prime minister will inherit a range of challenges, including relations with China, which continues its assertive actions in the contested East China Sea, and what to do with the Tokyo Olympics, which were postponed to next summer due to the coronavirus.

And he will have to establish a good relationship with whomever wins the US presidential race.

Abe resigns, clearing way for successor: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his Cabinet resigned, clearing the way for his successor to take over after parliamentary confirmation later Wednesday. Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister, announced last month that he was stepping down because of health problems.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, long seen as Abe's right-hand man, was chosen Monday as the new head of the governing Liberal Democratic Party, virtually guaranteeing his election as prime minister in a parliamentary vote Wednesday because of the party's majority.

Suga, a self-made politician and the son of a strawberry grower in the northern prefecture of Akita, has stressed his background in promising to serve the interests of ordinary people and rural communities.

BOUND TOGETHER



Boats at the bank of the Buriganga river in Keraniganj, Dhaka on Wednesday. ■ AFP

Israel strikes Gaza after rocket barrage

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, 16 SEPTEMBER

The Israeli military struck Hamas militant sites in the Gaza Strip early Wednesday in response to rocket fire toward Israel the previous night that coincided with the signing of normalization agreements between Israel and two Arab countries at the White House.

The barrage against Israel began Tuesday night just as the ceremony in Washington was getting underway to formalize the new agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Two Israelis were lightly wounded.

The rocket fire continued overnight, with sirens sounding across southern Israel.

The military said five projectiles landed in open areas

The Palestinians are opposed to the agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, viewing them as a betrayal of their cause by the Arab countries

with the rest intercepted by Israel's rocket defense system. In response, the military said it struck about 10 sites belonging to Gaza's militant Hamas rulers, including a weapons and explosives manufacturing factory, underground infrastructure and a military training compound.

The renewed exchange offered a stark reminder that the festive events in Washington would likely do little to change Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. In addi-

tion to the bilateral agreements signed by Israel, the UAE and Bahrain, all three signed a document dubbed the Abraham Accords after the patriarch of the world's three major monotheistic religions.

The Palestinians are opposed to the agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, viewing them as a betrayal of their cause by the Arab countries, which agreed to recognize Israel without securing territorial concessions. They vow that the agreements, and any others that may follow, will not undermine their cause.

Neither President Donald Trump nor Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mentioned the Palestinians in their remarks at the signing ceremony, but both the UAE and Bahraini foreign minis-

ters spoke of the importance of creating a Palestinian state. Upon his departure back from Washington, Netanyahu said he was not surprised by the rocket attack or the timing of the militants.

They want to take peace backwards but they won't succeed, he said. We will strike hard against all those who seek to harm us and reach out a hand in peace to all those whose hand is reached out to peace with us.

The Islamic militant group Hamas has ruled Gaza since 2007, when it seized power from the internationally-backed Palestinian Authority.

Israel and Egypt have imposed a crippling blockade on the coastal territory since then. There were no immediate reports of any injuries in Gaza.

Seoul: North to conduct underwater missile test

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL, 16 SEPTEMBER

North Korea may soon conduct its first underwater-launched ballistic missile test in about a year, a top South Korean military official said Wednesday, amid long-stalled nuclear talks between the North and the United States.

In written remarks to law-

makers ahead of a confirmation hearing, Won In-choul, the nominee for chairman of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said North Korea has been repairing recent typhoon damage at its northeastern Sinpo shipyard, a place where it builds submarines.

Shortly after the repairs are

complete, there is a chance it will carry out a submarine-launched ballistic missile test, Won said.

He said South Korea's military is keeping a close watch on developments there, according to a copy of his remarks provided by a lawmaker, Kang Dae-sik.

In recent years, North

Korea has been pushing hard to acquire the ability to launch missiles from submarines in what experts say is a worrying development because such weapons are difficult to detect before launch.

A test of an underwater-launched missile by North Korea last October was the first of its kind in three years, and the most provocative weapons

test since North Korea entered nuclear negotiations with the U.S. in 2018.

The nuclear talks have made little headway since the second summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump in Vietnam in early 2019 collapsed due to disputes over U.S.-led sanctions against North Korea.

Jung Changwook, head of the private Korea Defense Study Forum in Seoul, said North Korea could perform a submarine-launched ballistic missile, or SLBM, test to upgrade its nuclear attack capability and put pressure on Washington after the U.S. presidential election in early November.

US tariffs on China are illegal: WTO

GENEVA, 16 SEPTEMBER

A World Trade Organisation panel ruled Tuesday that Trump administration tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods are illegal, vindicating Beijing even if the United States has all but incapacitated the WTO's ability to hand down a final, binding verdict.

The decision marks the first time that the Geneva-based trade body has ruled against a series of high-profile tariffs that President Donald Trump's government has imposed on a number of countries allies and rivals alike. Trump has repeatedly claimed that the WTO treats the US unfairly. The ruling, in theory, would allow China to impose retaliatory tariffs on billions' worth of US goods.

But it is unlikely to have much practical impact, at least in the short term, because the US can appeal the decision and the WTO's appeals court is currently no longer functioning largely because of Washington's single-handed refusal to accept new members for it. In its decision, the WTO's dispute settlement body ruled against the US government's argument that China has wrongfully engaged in practices harmful to US interests and it quickly drew criticism of US trade representative.

UN-appointed experts cite 'crimes against humanity' in Maduro's Venezuela

ASSOCIATED PRESS
GENEVA, 16 SEPTEMBER

Independent experts commissioned by the U.N.'s top human rights body have alleged the government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro committed crimes against humanity.

The experts issued a scathing, in-depth report on Wednesday that said the people responsible for crimes that include extrajudicial exe-

cutions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture must be held to account, in part to ensure they don't happen again.

The report was commissioned last year by the 47-member-state Human Rights Council, which has the backing of the United Nations.

The report appeared likely to face international and domestic criticism of Maduro's government, which has overseen a country in tatters with runaway inflation, a violent crackdown and an exodus of

millions of Venezuelans who have fled to neighboring countries to escape the turmoil since he took power in 2013.

Maduro's government has come under increasing politi-

cal pressure from the United States and dozens of other countries which consider politician Juan Guaido the legitimate leader of Venezuela. Maduro has called this a plot to overthrow him so the U.S. can exploit Venezuela's vast oil wealth.

Critics in other countries have already accused Maduro's government of crimes against humanity. The 411-page report for the Human Rights Council represents an extensive

look at rights violations in Venezuela and was based on interviews with victims, relatives, witnesses, police, government officials and judges, as well as videos, satellite imagery and social media content. The authors said they did not receive responses from the government itself.

The experts -- Marta Valinas of Portugal, Francisco CoxVial of Chile, and Paul Silcock of Britain -- worked under a fact-finding mission the Gene-

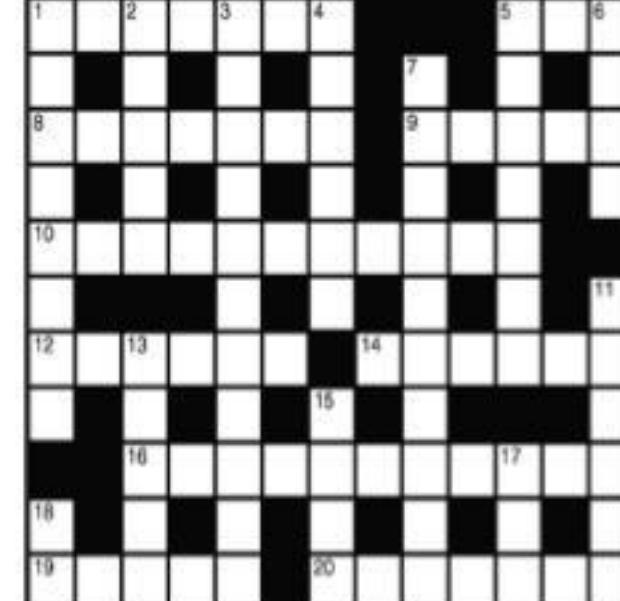
va-based rights council set up last September to investigate alleged cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment and other human rights violations in Venezuela over the past five years.

These acts were committed pursuant to two state policies, one to quash opposition to the government and another to combat crime, including by eliminating individuals perceived as criminals, "Valinas told reporters.

PTI

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



CROSS

- 1 Excursionist (7)
- 5 Meadow (3)
- 8 Kneecap (7)
- 9 Shaving implement (5)
- 10 Relative (5,6)
- 12 Go beyond (6)
- 14 Cut of beef (3-3)
- 16 Eventuality (11)
- 19 Small light boat (5)
- 20 Farewell (7)
- 21 Playing card (3)
- 22 Genius (7)

- 1 Characterised (8)
- 2 Bury (5)
- 3 Artist's tool (7,5)
- 4 Sanity (6)
- 5 Pastile (7)
- 6 Askew (4)
- 7 Severe scolding (8-4)
- 13 Narcotic drug (7)
- 15 Biting insects (6)
- 17 Magnanimous (5)
- 18 Continent (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

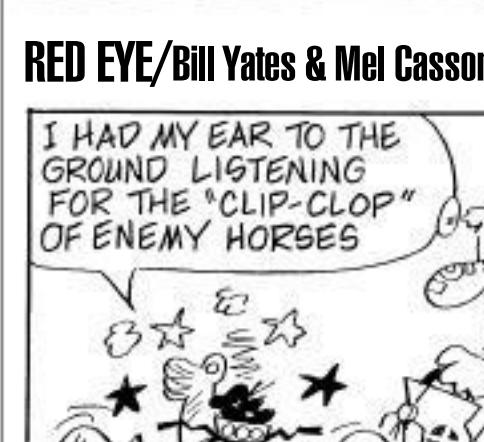
- ACROSS 1 Straight-laced, 14 Tangent, 15 Alerted, 16 Jewels, 17 Phase, 18 Half, 20 Glide.
- DOWN 1 Facets, 2 Panacea, 3 Euphoria, 4 Embrace, 5 Ember, 6 Granule, 7 Thrice, 12 Enroute, 13 Essentially.

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407
- INDIGO AIRLINES 23861262, City Office 43513185, Call Center 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

port 011-25671580; Terminal I 23860626

- B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

- JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

- EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 3373377

- AIR CANADA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181

- AIR FRANCE Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport)

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EU-UK withdrawal agreement cannot be unilaterally changed, disregarded or disciplined. This is a matter of law and trust and good faith

ON BRITISH PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON PLANS TO RENEGE PARTS OF THE WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	22°C	15°C H
LONDON	26°C	19°C S
DUBAI	30°C	25°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C C H
NEW YORK	20°C	17°C C S
MOSCOW	16°C	09°C H

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

THUMBNAILS



A model at the Beijing Fashion Week in Beijing on Tuesday. ■ AFP

400th Mayflower anniv: Dignitaries, seafarers and scientists were gathering in Plymouth, England, on Wednesday to mark the 400th anniversary of the departure of the *Mayflower*, the ship that carried a group of Puritan settlers to a new life in America. ■ AP

Bosnia wartime: Authorities in Bosnia on Wednesday arrested seven Bosnian Serb former military officers and troops suspected in the killing of 44 Bosniak civilians during the 1992-95 war. In all, nine people are suspected of the 1992 crime, Bosnia's prosecutor's office said. ■ AP

Quake hits Nepal: A strong earthquake of 6 magnitude shook Kathmandu and surrounding areas on Wednesday, forcing people to rush out of their houses. However, no casualty was so far reported. The epicentre of the earthquake was Ramche village. ■ AP

TENDER

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
Tender Notice	
Name of work	Fabrication, supply, installation & commissioning of rain water arrester for roof in LHB type AC coaches (1st AC, II AC, Chair car & Pantry Car) of Delhi Division.
Tender No.	30-Elect-10T-Chg-2020-21
Approx cost of the work in (Rs.)	Rs. 31, 59,000/-
Cost of tender form	Rs. 3,540/-
Address of the office	Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/Ctg/Northern Railway, New Delhi.
Ernest Money	Rs.63,200/-
Period of completion of work	04 Months
Last date & time of submission of tender	12.10.2020, 15.00 hrs
And opening of tender	12.10.2020, 15.01 hrs
Website & notice board	www.reps.gov.in & Sr. DEE/Ctg/DLI
Serving Customers With A Smile	2013/2020

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Notice inviting Tender

Sealed item/ percentage rate tender are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer B&R Division HP PWD Shillai on behalf of Governor of HP from the approved/ eligible contractor registered in HP PWD for the following works. So as to reach in this office on dated 14-10-2020 up to 11:30 AM and shall be opened at 12:30 PM 14-10-2020 on the same day in the presence of contractors or their authorized representative who may like to be present. The tender form can be had from this office against cash payment (non refundable) up to 5.00 PM on dated 13-10-2020 for which the applications should reach in his office up to 5:00 PM on dated 12-10-2020.

The earnest money in the shape of NSC/Time deposit account (saving account in any of the post office). FDR/CDR in HP duly pledged in the name of XEN B&R Division HP PWD Shillai must be accompanied with the application. Conditional tender and tender received without earnest money will be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 90 days. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning the reason. If there happens to be any hold-day the same will be opened on the next working day.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Cost of Tender Form	Eligible class of Contractor
1	Construction of link road from Nanidhar to Shanhkoli Km 0/0 to 2/600 (SH:- Construction of 5/7 Mtrs. Wide formation cutting from Jeppale road in Km 0/240 to 2/600)	489657.00	9800.00	Two Months	350/-	C & D Class
2	Construction of link road from Salan Meenur road to Hanjan Basti Panog Km 0/0 to 1/400 (SH:- Construction of 5/7 Mtrs. Wide formation cutting from Jeppale road in Km 0/135 to 0/540 and construction of Retaining wall at RD 0/0 to 0/018)	498254.00	10000.00	Two Months	350/-	C & D Class
3	Construction of link road from Panog to Ajral Km 0/0 to 3/0 (SH:- Construction of 5/7 Mtrs. Wide formation cutting from Jeppale road in Km 2/405 to 2/480 and construction of Retaining wall at RD 1/780 and 1/795 to 1/805)	468725.00	9400.00	Two Months	350/-	C & D Class
4	Construction of link road from Kulah to Nichia Jarwa Km 0/0 to 6/0 (SH:- Formation cutting 5/7 mtr wide road, C.D. Works, and providing and laying soil in Km 3/0 to 6/500)(SW:- Formation cutting 5/7 mtr wide road in Km 3/200 to 3/675)	479489.00	9600.00	Two Months	350/-	C & D Class
5	Construction of Missing culvert on Rast Manal Chanoti road Km 0/0 to 15/060 (Construction of 5x5 mtr. Size RCC Box culvert at RD 5/310)(SW:- Construction of balance work of approaches of RCC Box cell culvert at RD 5/310)	424774.00	8500.00	Two Months	350/-	C & D Class
6	Construction of Proposed Helipad in Govt. Degree College Shimla Tehsil Shimla District Sirmour HP(SH:- Providing and laying cement concrete in 50.0Mtrs. Length)	225529.00	4520.00	One Month	350/-	C & D Class
7	Restoration of rain damages to Salwala Satala road Km 0/0 to 9/610 (SH:- Construction of Retaining wall in wire crates from RD 7/490 to 7/498)	83821.00	1700.00	One Month	350/-	C & D Class
8	Construction of residential accommodation for sub-tehsil building at Ronjal District Sirmour HP(SH:- Providing and laying interlocking concrete pavement block in front of Naib Tehsildar residence and sub tehsil office etc.)	417156.00	80350.00	Two Months	350/-	C & D Class

Terms and conditions:-

- The Earnest Money shown against each work must accompany with each tender in the shape of CDR / FDR duly pledged in the name of undersigned.
- Each application along with attested copy of the proof of enlistment in the appropriate class and its renewal.
- The Contractor / Firms are requested to insert the rate of each item in words as well as in figures/ failing which Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/ reject any or all tenders.
- Only two tenders shall be issued to one contractor.
- Any application as received without the above documents shall not be entertained. In case any information supplied by the contractor /firm is found false at any stage, his tender is liable to be rejected and action shall be taken against contractor/firm.

EU-UK withdrawal agreement cannot be unilaterally changed, disregarded or disciplined. This is a matter of law and trust and good faith

EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT URSLA VON DER LEYEN

ON BRITISH PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON PLANS TO RENEGE PARTS OF THE WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT



US govt unveils Covid vaccination plan

The Pentagon is involved with the distribution of vaccines, but civilian health workers will be the ones giving shots

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 16 SEPTEMBER

The federal government outlined a sweeping plan Wednesday to make vaccines for Covid available for free to all Americans, even as polls show a strong undercurrent of skepticism rippling across the land.

In a report to Congress and an accompanying "playbook" for states and localities, federal health agencies and the Defense Department sketched out complex plans for a vaccination campaign to begin gradually in January or possibly later this year, eventually ramping up to reach any American who wants a shot.

The Pentagon is involved with the distribution of vaccines, but civilian health workers will be the ones giving shots.

The campaign is "much larger in scope and complexity than seasonal influenza or other previous outbreak-related vaccination responses," said the playbook for states from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Among the highlights:

For most vaccines, people will need two doses, 21 to 28 days apart. Double-dose vaccines will have to come from the same drugmaker.

There could be several vaccines from different manufacturers approved and available.

Vaccination of the U.S. population won't be a sprint but a marathon. Initially there may be a limited supply of vaccines available, and the focus

will be on protecting health workers, other essential employees, and people in vulnerable groups. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the National Academy of Medicine, and other organizations are working on priorities for the first phase. A second and third phase would expand vaccination to the entire country.

The vaccine itself will be free of charge, and patients won't be charged out of pocket for the administration of shots thanks to billions of dollars in taxpayer funding approved by Congress and allocated by the Trump administration.

States and local communities will need to devise plans for receiving and locally distributing vaccines, some of which will require special handling such as refrigeration or freezing.

States and cities have a month to submit plans.

Some of the broad components of the federal plan have already been discussed, but Wednesday's reports attempt to put the key details into a comprehensive framework. Distribution is happening under the umbrella of Operation Warp Speed, a White House-backed initiative to have millions of doses ready to ship once a vaccine is given what's expected to be an emergency use approval by the Food and Drug Administration. Several formulations are undergoing final trials. But the whole enterprise is facing public skepticism.

Only about half of Americans said they'd get vaccinated in an Associated Press poll taken in May. Of those who wouldn't get vaccinated, the overwhelming majority said they were worried about safety. To effectively protect the nation from the coronavirus, experts say upwards of 70 percent of Americans must either

be vaccinated or have their own immunity from fighting off Covid. Since the poll, questions have only mounted about whether the government is trying to rush Covid treatments and vaccines to help President Donald Trump's reelection chances.

Before the Republican National Convention in August, the FDA granted authorization for treatment of Covid patients with plasma from people who have recovered, even though some government scientists were not convinced the clinical evidence was sufficiently strong. And last week it was reported that Michael Caputo, a Health and Human Services Department political appointee, tried to gain editorial control over a weekly scientific publication from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As public confidence in core health agencies has taken a beating, Trump administration officials have been forced to play defense.

"We are working closely with our state and local public health partners ... to ensure that Americans can receive the vaccine as soon as possible and vaccinate with confidence," HHS Secretary Alex Azar said in a statement Wednesday. "Americans should know that the vaccine development process is being driven completely by science and the data." That could be a tough sell. In the AP poll, 1 in 5 Americans said they would not get a coronavirus vaccine, and 31 percent said they were unsure.

US President denies downplaying virus

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA, 16 SEPTEMBER

Science mag makes first endorsement in 175 years, taps Biden

Even though Scientific American had never endorsed a presidential candidate in the magazine's 175-year history, its top editor said Tuesday there was little internal debate over a decision to back Democrat Joe Biden. Editor-in-Chief Laura Helmuth said President Trump's administration was worse for the scientific community than the magazine had feared.

AP

good, Trump said, though his own Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly urges their use.

The event, hosted by ABC News' George Stephanopoulos, was a warmup of sorts before Trump faces Democratic nominee Joe Biden in the first presidential debate on September 29.

Taped at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, it featured Trump taking questions from an audience of just 21 voters to comply with state and local coronavirus regulations. Trump sought to counter his admission to journalist Bob Woodward that he was deliberately playing it down when discussing the threat of Covid to Americans earlier this year.

Face-to-face with everyday voters for the first time in months, Trump was defensive but resisted agitation as he was pressed on his administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and why he doesn't more aggressively promote the use of masks to reduce the spread of the disease. There are people that don't think masks are

months, so it's kind of hard to dictate what's good and what's bad. I mean, we shouldn't be outside period, Portland resident Issa Ubidia-Luckett said Monday. The hazy air closed businesses like Whole Foods and the iconic Powell's Books in Portland and suspended garbage pickup in some communities.

Pollution and fire evacuations cancelled online school and closed some college campuses in Oregon.

It is so bad that you can likely smell (smoke) inside your house, said Sarah Present, the health officer for Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties.

In some areas, the air quality is so hazardous it is off the charts of the EPA's rating scale. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Air Quality Index is considered hazardous between 301 and 500.

Celebs join Instagram 'freeze' to protest Fb inaction

LONDON, 16 SEPTEMBER

Kim Kardashian West, Katy Perry and Leonardo DiCaprio are among celebrities taking part in a 24-hour Instagram freeze on Wednesday to protest against what they say is parent company Facebook's failure to tackle violent and hateful content and election misinformation.

They were among the high-profile names lending their backing to the #StopHateForProfit movement's latest campaign. The movement asks people to put up a message highlighting what they called the damage Facebook does but otherwise refrain from posting on Instagram for a day.

I can't sit by and stay silent while these platforms continue to allow the spreading of hate, propaganda and misinformation created by groups to sow division and split America apart only to take steps after people are killed, Kardashian West posted on her Instagram account on Tuesday.

Facebook declined to comment but pointed to recent announcements about what it's doing to limit the reach on its platform of groups that support violence and its efforts to protect the U.S. election in November.

With 188 million followers, Kardashian West is one of the most influential people on Instagram and support from her and other big names for the boycott saw Facebook shares slide in aftermarket trading late Tuesday. They were down 1.3% ahead of the market open on Wednesday.

The organisers behind #StopHateForProfit, including civil rights groups such as the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP and Color Of Change, had previously led a campaign that got hundreds of companies and groups to join Facebook advertising boycott in July.

Ashton Kutcher, Mark Ruffalo, Kerry Washington, Rosario Dawson, Jamie Foxx and Sacha Baron Cohen were among at least two dozen other Hollywood stars supporting the campaign, the organizers said.

DiCaprio said he was standing with the civil rights groups to protest the amplification of hate, racism, and the undermining of democracy on those platforms. Social media companies, led by Facebook, are facing a reckoning over what critics call indefensible excuses for amplifying divisions, hate and misinformation on their platforms.

Russian spymaster: US inciting Belarus protests

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW, 16 SEPTEMBER

Russia's intelligence chief on Wednesday accused the United States of fomenting massive demonstrations against Belarus' authoritarian president that have entered their sixth week.

Protesters in Belarus are seeking the resignation of Alexander Lukashenko, denouncing his landslide re-election in the August 9 vote as rigged and demanding an end to his 26-year rule.

The U.S. and the European Union have criticized the election as neither free nor fair, and urged Luk

Striking at a pillar of the Insolvency Code

A recent order of the Calcutta High Court holding it is not mandatory to submit information to an information utility in terms of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code may be both untenable and undesirable, argues SOURAV SARDAR.

The Calcutta High Court in a recent decision, *Unival Projects Vs. Union of India* has inter alia ruled that section 215(2) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code) is not a mandatory provision for financial creditors. In this matter, the main question before the court was the legal validity of the 12 May 2020 order (May Order) of the Registrar, NCLT. In this Order, the NCLT had made it mandatory for financial creditors to file a record of default issued by an Information Utility (IU) while filing new petitions under section 7 of the Code and also directed that in pending cases filed under section 7 of the Code, the parties to such cases have to file a record of default issued by an IU, thereby giving the order retrospective effect. As expected, many financial creditors did not have any record of default and therefore preferred appeals before various forums.

The NCLT realised the restrictive nature of its May Order and by a modification order dated 13 August 2020 (August Order) changed its earlier order by stating that for new petitions or pending petitions under section 7 of the Code, a record of default was to be filed wherever available.

Be that as it may, the Calcutta High Court in its 18 August 2020 order, struck down the May Order of the NCLT largely relying on section 7(3) of the Code which allows for the production of other proofs for establishing default before the NCLT. While striking down the May Order of the NCLT, the Calcutta High Court also ruled that section 215(2) of the Code which makes it mandatory for financial creditors to submit 'financial information' to an IU, is not mandatory even though the provision uses the word 'shall'. The court relied on the decision of the SC in *Swiss Ribbons Vs. Union of India* wherein it was held that financial creditors can make use of IU record of default or other records as mentioned in Form 1 to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Application to Adjudicating Authority) Rules, 2016. This interpretation of section 215(2) of the Code is problematic and shall be the subject of examination in this paper.

Section 215 of the Code and sharing of financial information with IU

Section 215 of the Code states that any person who intends to submit financial information to an IU or access financial information from the IU may do so by providing such information and such fee as may be specified by regulations. In furtherance of the same, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has enacted the IBBI (Information Utilities) Regulations, 2017. Further, the provision also states that a financial creditor 'shall' submit financial information and information relating to assets in relation to which any security interest has been created, in such form and manner as may be specified by regulations and for operational creditors, the provision states that an operational creditor 'may' submit financial information to the information utility in such form and manner as may be specified.

It seems that the intent of the legislature is to make the submission of financial information of financial creditors to IUs mandatory because the word 'shall' has been used while the submission of financial information of operational creditors to IUs is optional as the word 'may' has been used. The Supreme Court in *Lakshmanisami Gounder Vs. CIT Selvamaniheld* "...it is settled law that the word 'shall' be construed in the light of the purpose of the Act or Rule that seeks to serve. It is not an invariable rule that even though the word 'shall' is ordinarily mandatory but in the context or if the intention is otherwise, it may be construed to be directory. Mere use of the word 'shall' need not be given that connotation in each and every case that the provision would be invariably interpreted to be mandatory or directory."

Further the Supreme Court in *Delhi Airtel Services Vs. State of UP* held "the word 'shall' would normally be mandatory while the word 'may' would be directory... The word 'shall' raises a presumption that the particular provision is imperative but this *prima facie* inference may be rebutted by other considerations such as object and scope of the enactment and the consequences flowing from such construction."

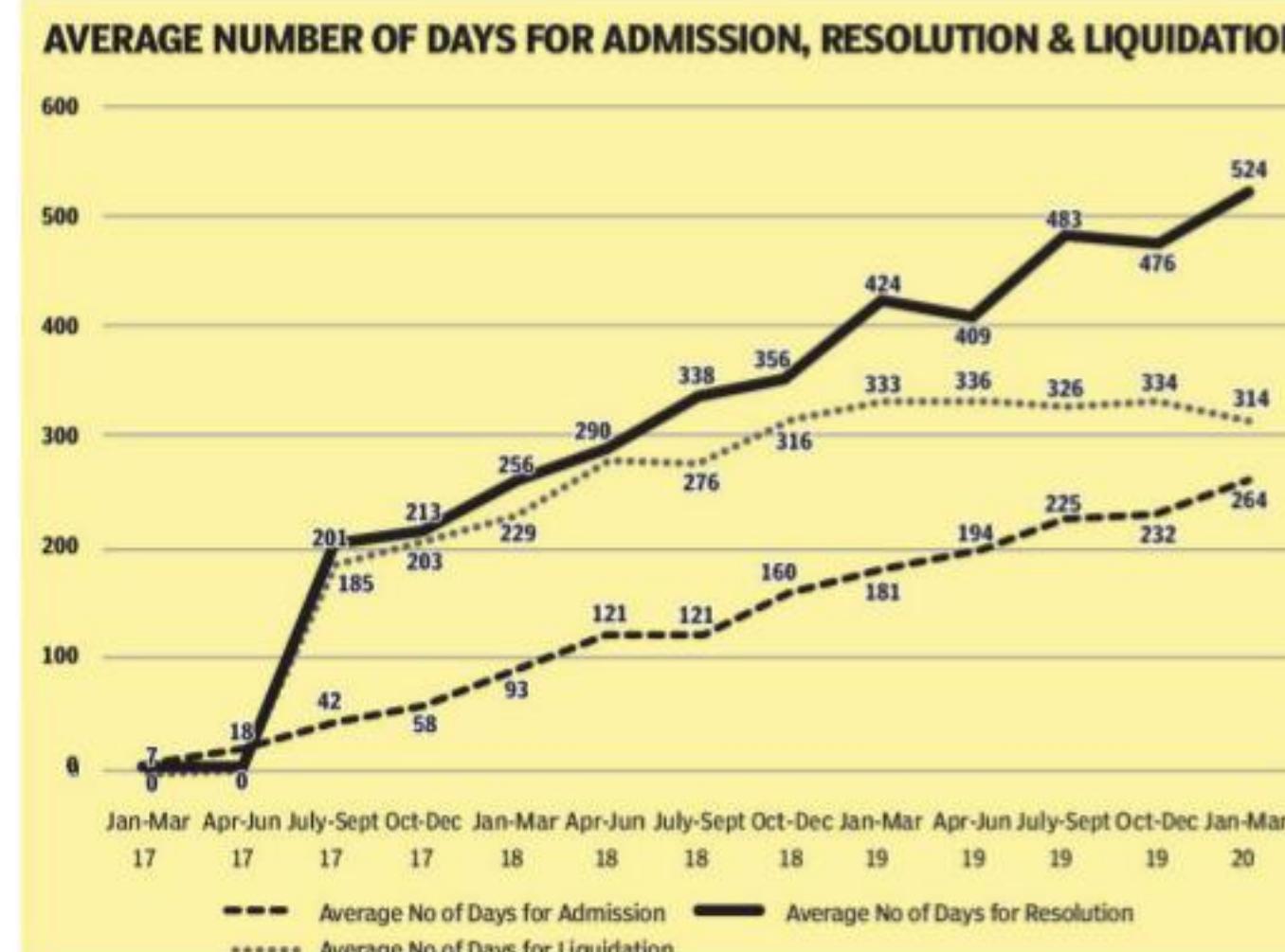
It is apparent that the Calcutta High Court was of the opinion that the legislature did not intend to make the submission of financial information to IU by financial creditors to be mandatory on the basis that other records of default can be used by financial creditors to establish default therefore, the use of 'shall' in section 215(2) of the Code cannot be construed as mandatory.

Purpose of IU & Legislative Intent of Section 215 of the Code

The Bankruptcy Law Reforms Committee (BLRC) Report on pg. 30 of states:

"The Committee recognises that asymmetry of information is a critical barrier to fair negotiations, or ensuring swiftness of the process. The Committee recommends the creation of a regulated information utility that will make available all relevant information to all stakeholders in resolving insolvency and bankruptcy."

Further the BLRC Report on pg. 51 states:



"Before the process of resolution can begin, an essential step required is to correctly establish the facts about what are the assets available, who the claimants are, and what contracts are in force. Traditionally, this has involved paper based processes... Advances in technology... have created an opportunity to dramatically reduce the cost and complexity of managing information... this allows using the information to eliminate delays and frictions in resolving insolvency and bankruptcy: drastically reducing delays and reducing costs."

"The information infrastructure required for the insolvency and bankruptcy process that is proposed in this report consists of two sets of rules: rules that govern information submission and rules that govern information access and release during insolvency."

From the above-stated paras of the BLRC Report, three objectives of the IU can be made out: (1) eliminating asymmetry of information, (2) ensuring swiftness of the insolvency resolution process and, (3) reduction in the cost of conducting the process. To achieve these objectives, the BLRC envisages two types of rules, (1) rules that govern information submission and (2) rules that govern information access. The Calcutta High Court, it appears has conflated the two, leading to the finding that section 215(2) of the Code is not mandatory.

The mandatory nature of section 215(2) of the Code is further buttressed by the observations of the Report of the Joint Committee of the 16th Lok Sabha on the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2015 (April 2016). The Committee in para 56, pg. 40 of the report observes:

"The Committee, therefore, decide that words 'or as the case may be, an operational creditor' as appearing in clause 215(2) may be deleted. Besides a new sub-clause as given under may be inserted after clause 215(2)".

This observation was in the context of the Code, as placed before the Committee which made it mandatory for both financial and operational creditors to submit

financial information to an IU in clause 215(2). But the Committee was of the opinion that operational creditors may include employees, workmen, trade creditors who may not be able to pay for submission of information to IU and therefore, a new sub-clause (3) was recommended to be inserted in clause 215 which makes the submission of financial information to an IU optional for operational creditors. Therefore, the legislative intent was to make data sharing with IU mandatory for financial creditors and optional for operational creditors.

Need for IU

Time is of the essence in the Code. But the average time taken for admission of cases, completion of resolution cases and ordering for liquidation of a corporate debtor is a matter of concern for all stakeholders. The graph published here tracks the average number of days taken for admission of a case by the NCLT (thick dotted line), the average number of days taken from the admission order till an order for resolution by the NCLT (thick line) and the average number of days taken from the admission order till an order for liquidation by the NCLT (thin dotted line).

It can be seen from the graph, that the average time taken for admission of cases under sections 7, 9 and 10 of the Code is more than the 14 days asmandated under the Code and the graph is continuously rising. In Q4 of FY19-20 the average number of days taken is 264 days. This is almost the same time for the completion of CIRP i.e. 270 days as per section 12 of the Code. The data relating to resolution cases is also not heartening as the time taken for resolution has been consistently rising which should ordinarily be completed within 270 days with a maximum of 330 days including litigation time as per section 12 of the Code. Only the time taken for Liquidation has stayed around the 330 days' time period, but Liquidation is not the objective of the Code, resolution is the objective of the Code.

If this time period is not followed, the valuations of the corporate debtor are affected, delay in admission may lead to stripping of assets of the corporate debtor by the promoters and overall loss of faith in the process. To address this problem, the IU was envisaged. A record of default in the IU may ensure that the cases are admitted within the time period and ultimately, the process can be conducted within the time period if all financial information is shared by the financial creditors to the IU. But for this to happen, data must be shared with the IU by the financial creditors as well as the operational creditors, for which section 215 of the Code was enacted. In furtherance of this objective, the RBI had issued two circulars dated 19 December 2017 and 4 January 2018 which forced financial creditors to share financial information with IU but this decision of the Calcutta High Court weakens the force of these Circulars. In addition to the timely completion of CIRP, the IU data can also be used for data analytics on debt and default of companies, aiding the process of data driven loan processing by banks. It is expected that this would improve the asset quality of Banks and reduce NPAs in the system.

The Supreme Court in *RK Garg Vs. Union of India* had held "Every legislation, particularly in economic matters is essentially empirical and it is based on experimentation or what one may call trial and error method and therefore it cannot provide for all possible situations or anticipate all possible abuses. There may be crudities and inequities in complicated experimental economic legislation but on that account alone it cannot be struck down as invalid... The Court must defer to legislative judgment in matters relating to social and economic policies and must not interfere, unless the exercise of legislative judgment appears to be palpably arbitrary." The principle laid down by the Supreme Court is judicial hands-off in case of economic legislations and intervene only when the exercise of legislative power appears to be arbitrary.

In the instant case, the order of the NCLT appeared to be arbitrary as it was too restrictive. The NCLT realized the same and modified the order but to lessen the force of section 215(2) of the Code appears to be legally untenable and process-wise undesirable. This provision was enacted in aid of the corporate insolvency resolution process and must be distinguished from sections 7, 9 and 10 of the Code which provide for the extraction and use of data with the IU to initiate CIRP while section 215 of the Code is for sharing of financial information with the IU. Moreover, the opinion of the Standing Committee of the 16th Lok Sabha to insert sub-section (3) to section 215 of the Code to make sharing of financial information optional for operational creditors by suggesting a change in sub-section (2) of section 215 of the Code clearly shows the legislative intent behind section 215(2) of the Code i.e. mandatory sharing of financial information with IU for financial creditors.

The writer, a graduate of the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, is Assistant Manager, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India. The views are personal.

THE POSSIBILITY OF ABUSE

The prerogative of the Master of Roster must be held up against the higher principles of Constitutionalism, says ASHIT KUMAR SRIVASTAVA.



The convention of 'Master of Roster' (MoR) has archaic origins dating back to the late 18th century when High Courts of Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta got established. One of the prime reasons of this was to bestow power on the Chief Justices of the respective Courts so that they could administer justice smoothly. Interestingly, none of the Chief Justices in these Courts ever was an Indian-origin judge (of course till the time India got independence), which tells us a lot about the imperialist hue of the office of the 'Chief Justice'.

Nonetheless, the concept of the Master of Roster has become a part of contemporary Supreme Court jurisprudence, notwithstanding the colonial colour it has. The concept of MoR means it shall be the responsibility of the Chief Justice of India to allocate cases to benches, to set up constitutional benches, and to decide who gets to hear which case. This prerogative of the Chief Justice is important because the justice-dispensing institution must know fully well that the cognitive capacity of a judge plays a vital role in the outcome of the adjudication.

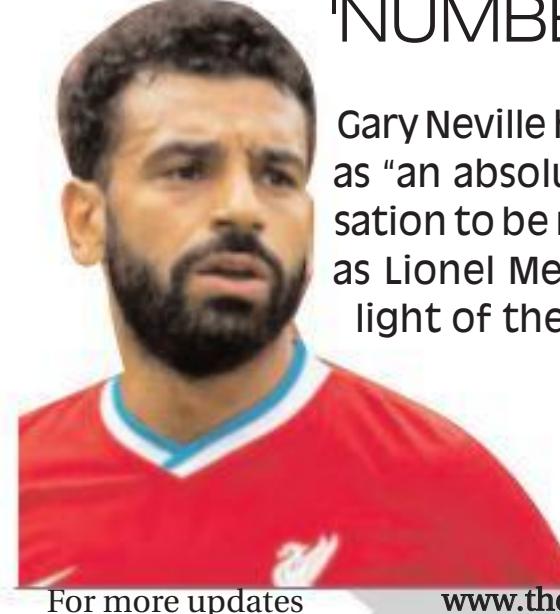
However, there is no standard procedure which binds the Chief Justice while allocating cases. Yet, there are certain elements that the Chief Justice needs to keep in consideration while making the allocation [which were discussed at length in the case of *Asok Pande v. Supreme Court of India 2018 & Shanti Bhushan v. Supreme Court of India (2018)*] like the specialization of the judge, pendency of cases, upcoming retirement of a judge and many more. The power-construct and the influence that the Chief Justice has over the outcome certainly cannot be denied.

However, what we need to understand is that in the absence of any standard practice (or more specifically memorandum of procedure), the possibility of abuse of this prerogative also exists. Since the 1950s, there have been lawyers and judges who have shown dismay at this prerogative of the Supreme Court and more specifically how this power is being exercised. This was highlighted by the incident of 12 January 2018, when four senior judges of the Supreme Court (Justices Jasti Chelameswar, Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Madan Lokur and Justice Kurien Joseph) held a press conference against the manner in which the then CJJ was exercising the prerogative of the Court.

It is not a secret that the Supreme Court has suffered through a phenomenon of 'Committed Judges,' something which was elaborately portrayed in the books of George Gadbois Jr. and recently in the books of Abhinav Chandrachud as well. To imagine that the Chief Justice's office would be immune from this phenomenon seems naive especially when we recall the 1970s when judges were appointed at the will of the executive, especially in the tenure of Justice A.N. Ray (who had superseded three senior judges to become the Chief Justice of India). These incidents create enough stimulation to raise suspicion over the prerogative of MoR.

Further, the prerogative of MoR needs to be seen in light of a higher principle of Constitutionalism. In simple terms, the idea of Constitutionalism as propounded by John Locke and as propagated by American jurists is 'Limited Government.' When we talk about limited Government, its implications run through all the government bodies and that includes the judiciary. In simpler terms, the idea of Constitutionalism, as seen through the Constitution's lens, implies the diffusion of power rather than the concentration of power. Therefore, it won't be wrong to say that the concentration of power at a conceptual level is antithetical to the idea of Constitutionalism. The fact that the office of Chief Justice de-facto generates significant power through MoR is a classic example of power concentration. This concentration of power does not go well with the Indian kind of Constitutionalism, knowing that India is an ardent follower of the higher principles of Constitutionalism. The written Constitution of India is an implication of that higher goal. The more we find concentrated power under the Indian Constitution, the more we move away from that higher principle. As Professor Yogesh Pratap Singh (Professor at National Law University-Odisha) says, there are certain intra-organ power control devices which each organ of the State needs to have a check upon itself. In the case of the Judiciary it would be dissenting opinions and diverse benches. Yet the prerogative of MoR remains unchecked. It has been challenged before the Supreme Court several times, only to be reaffirmed again.

The writer is Assistant Professor of Law, National Law University-Jabalpur.



For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Cricket's appeal: Sri Lanka Cricket has urged the country's health ministry to relax safety guidelines in a bid to resume international cricket on the island. Bangladesh's three-Test tour is in serious doubt after they objected to a two-week quarantine requirement.

Positive test: Bangladesh batsman Saif Hassan has tested positive in his second coronavirus test. His second sample was taken exactly seven days after he had first tested positive. He is not among those being considered for the Test series in Sri Lanka.

'Foolish act': Neymar said he had "acted like a fool" following his expulsion against Marseille but urged officials to do more to end discrimination after accusing defender Alvaro Gonzalez of racism. Neymar forward was one of five players sent off after a brawl.

Fans invited: Bundesliga club Borussia Dortmund will allow 10,000 fans inside the stadium for their 2020-1 season-opener against Monchengladbach to be played at the Signal Iduna Park on Saturday. "It is set to be played in front of around 10,000 spectators," they said.



Challenging season: Robert Lewandowski is convinced that Bayern Munich's players face the most challenging year of their careers going into the 2020-1 season, where they seek to defend last season's treble of Bundesliga, the German Cup and the Champions League.

Maracana pitch: The turf at Rio's Maracana stadium will be relaid after weeks of criticism from players, coaches and officials. A new pitch will be installed following Wednesday's Copa do Brasil match between Fluminense and Goianiense, according to authorities.

Bale loan: Tottenham Hotspur are in talks to sign Real Madrid winger Gareth Bale on loan. Madrid are desperate to offload Bale's exorbitant wages and are willing partially to subsidise a deal in order to facilitate the 31-year-old's return to the Premier League.

No probe: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has committed his future to Arsenal, signing a three-year contract worth in the region of £250,000 a week. The club captain had less than one year remaining on his current deal and had delayed a decision over his future.

Gopi's proposal: Celebrated National Badminton Coach Pullela Gopichand has proposed a novel idea of creating bio-secure bubbles and organising multiple mini leagues among top athletes to kickstart sport in the country.

Cricket.com remodels: Cricket.com powered by Cricinfo will allow a user to follow IPL at a match level and a tournament level. With intriguing Tournament Level Engines and Match Level Engines, Cricket.com will provide a state-of-the-art sport platform for all the cricket enthusiasts.

Gary Neville has described Mohamed Salah (*photo, left*) as "an absolute killer" and insists he is in the conversation to be recognised as the best player in the world as Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo enter the twilight of their careers.

Doctor accused of masterminding doping network goes on trial

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN, 16 SEPTEMBER

The murky business of doping in sport goes under the microscope on Wednesday when the trial of a German doctor accused of masterminding an international blood-doping network dismantled last year opens in Munich.

Sports physician Mark Schmidt (*in photo*, 42, from Erfurt, and four co-defendants who allegedly aided him, are accused of helping at least two dozen athletes undergo blood transfusions to boost performance.

illicitly from "the end of 2011 at the latest", according to state prosecutors.

"One must not forget, this is a business with a hard currency - money," sports lawyer Michael Lehner said ahead of the trial. "We are not dealing with an athlete who dopes himself, but with the business of doping."

So far, 23 cyclists and skiers from eight countries are known to be involved, but more names could emerge. "More can - and should - come out than what we already know," Lehner added.



"There are certainly more athletes involved, the network will have been bigger."

The case echoes that of

sports doctor Michele Ferrari, who worked with disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong and was given a 12-month suspended jail sentence by an Italian court in 2004 for malpractice.

If found guilty in Munich, Schmidt and his co-defendants could be jailed for one to ten years under Germany's Anti-Doping Act introduced in 2015.

Schmidt has already been held in custody for 16 months.

The sports doctor was one of several arrested in Germany as part of Operation "Aderlass", "blood let-

ting" in German, which involved raids at the Nordic world skiing championships in Seefeld, Austria in February 2019.

Two hours before the start of the men's 15km cross-country event, five athletes and two suspects were detained on site.

One Austrian athlete was caught during a blood trans-

fusion.

While no big-name sports stars are currently involved, Schmidt is alleged to have helped dope athletes who competed at both the 2014 and 2018 Winter Olympics.

According to the prosecu-

tion, he is also accused in the doping of cyclists who

competed at the 2016 summer Olympics, as well as the 2018 Tour de France, the 2016 and 2018 Giro d'Italia and Spain's Vuelta in 2017.

As part of Aderlass, Austrian cyclist Georg Preidler was given a 12-month suspended sentence for sports fraud by a court in Innsbruck in July.

Among others, Austrian cross-country skier Johannes Duerer, whose doping confessions in a documentary aired by German broadcaster ARD helped trigger Aderlass, was sentenced to a 15-month suspended sentence for doping in January.

I-League Qualifier to begin on October 8

KOLKATA, 16 SEPTEMBER

The I-League Qualifier will begin here on October 8 and kick off the football season, the All India Football Federation said on Wednesday.

Five clubs will battle it out for a single I-League qualification spot at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata and the Kalyani Municipal Stadium in Kalyani, West Bengal. The Qualifiers will be played in a round-robin format among ARA FC, Bhawnipore FC, Garhwal FC, FC Bengaluru United and Mohammedan SC.

The team that finishes at the top of the table after match-day five will gain entry into the 2020-21 I-League.

"The Hero I-League qualifiers are an important event as it gives a number of teams the chance to qualify for this pan-India league," said AIFF League CEO Sunando Dhar.

"It is unfortunate that these teams missed out on the opportunity to gain promotion last season due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic," he added.

"That is why this is a unique opportunity for them to make it to the Hero I-League this season."

Due to the pandemic, the domestic season was pushed back by two months and the summer transfer window began on August 1 and will run till October 31.

Fraud Detection Services to prevent corrupt practices during IPL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPTEMBER

The BCCI hastened up with UK-based company Sportradar, which will offer its "integrity services" to prevent betting and other corrupt practices during the upcoming IPL through its Fraud Detection Services (FDS).

With the 13th Indian Premier League being held behind closed doors, the challenge for the Board's Ajit Singh-led Anti-Corruption Unit is very different as there has been a surge in betting-related frauds even during some of the state unit's leagues, and it's expected to increase manifold during the lucrative event.

Yes, BCCI has inked a deal with Sportradar for this year's IPL. They will be working closely with the ACU and offer their integrity services," an IPL source confirmed. The development to PTI.

"Sportradar has very recently flagged at least half a dozen games in Goa football league which came under fire. They have also worked with FIFA, UEFA and various leagues across the globe," the source added.

The BCCI ACU, in recent times, tracked unusual betting patterns during the state T20 leagues, including the Tamil

National Premier League (TNPL), as a major betting company stopped taking bets after unusual bets were being placed.

According to Sportradar, Fraud Detection System (FDS) "is a unique service that identifies betting-related manipulation in sport. This is possible due to the FDS's sophisticated algorithms and constantly maintained database of odds which are leveraged for the purpose of detecting match-fixing."

It is believed that the company tracks the odds and movements of at least 600 independent bookmakers to detect anomalies in betting patterns. It processes around 5 million data sets per day.

It is understood that apart from bookies and possible corruptors, who will look to approach players and support staff online, the advent of multiple fantasy gaming company will also keep the world's richest cricket board on tenterhooks.

"Fantasy gaming is not exactly betting in its traditional sense but the element of gambling does exist. So it's a good thing that BCCI is engaging with a company that works on betting rather than corruption in sport," a BCCI veteran said.

An interesting aspect of fraud detection is the mathematical algorithm that is used to study betting patterns.

It is a "sophisticated model" which monitors live betting on offer during an event.

There are 25 live alerts, which instantly identifies irregular betting in the marketplace. The mathematical model uses calculated odds, which runs alongside bookmakers' odds, in order to highlight if the odds during a specific minute or time is out of line, and therefore, potentially suspicious," the Sportradar website stated under its '25 Live Alerts' section.

There are also "44 detailed pre-match alerts which are based on odds movements observed at betting operators."

"An alert is generated in FDS when odds at a bookmaker changes greater than predefined parameter", which can be customised according to the nature of the sport.

CSK's COVID-struck batsman Gaikwad remains in isolation; unlikely for IPL opener

Chennai Super Kings batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad, who tested positive for COVID-19 last month, remains in isolation and is unlikely to be available for the team's IPL opener against Mumbai Indians on September 19 in Abu Dhabi.

CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan

said the India A batsman is doing "absolutely fine" but has not yet got the BCCI's clearance to join the team's bio-bubble.

"Ruturaj has still not been cleared by the BCCI medical team and is in isolation. He is unlikely to be available for the first match. We are expecting him back in the (bubble) in the next couple of days and he is

doing absolutely fine," Viswanathan told PTI. Thirteen members of the CSK contingent tested positive for the virus last month and two of them were players - Gaikwad and Deepak Chahar. Chahar, along with 11 others, has recovered and resumed training after clearing his mandatory two tests.

Gaikwad too underwent two tests on Sunday and Monday, the results of which are not known. After clearing the COVID test after the 14-day quarantine, a player also needed to undergo a cardiovascular and lung function test to ensure he is fit to train. Gaikwad is seen as Raina's replacement in the team after the latter pulled out of the tournament and flew back home due to personal reasons. Senior spinner Harbhajan Singh has also withdrawn due to personal reasons.

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Viswanathan said the team has not decided on their replacements yet.

Adjusting to UAE heat biggest challenge, says RCB star AB de Villiers

South African star AB de Villiers believes the biggest challenge for all teams in the upcoming Indian Premier League will be adjusting to the prevailing hot and humid conditions in the

Championship side Blackburn Rovers' 20th St James' Park. Ryan Fraser marked his Newcastle debut with the win over the Premier League side beat Championship club Blackburn Rovers 1-0 at St James' Park.

Bournemouth goalkeeper Asmir Begovic missed a spot-kick but still finished as the hero in the Championship club's 11-10 penalty shoot-out win over Premier League side Crystal Palace on Saturday.

French striker Haller scored twice in four minutes midway through the first half and Felipe Anderson added a late third for David Moyes' troubled side.

It was a much-needed result for the Hammers, who face Leeds or Hull in the third round, after they started the Premier League season with a dismal 2-0 home defeat against Newcastle on Saturday.

That limp surrender came after fan protests against co-owners David Gold and David Sullivan, while West Ham captain Mark Noble criticised the club's lack of ambition following the sale of promising midfielder Grady Diangana to West Bromwich Albion.

With Arsenal, Wolves, Leicester, Tottenham, Manchester City and Liverpool on West Ham's immediate fixture schedule, it was vital to avoid an embarrassing exit against third-tier Charlton at the London Stadium.

Probably the only disappointment is we should have won more comfortably," Moyes said. "But Seb getting a couple of goals will be good for his confidence. We had Michael Antonio scoring for us at the end of last season and now we hope Seb gets on a run of scoring goals."

Jack Wilshere was absent from the West Ham squad despite 10 changes made by Moyes, with the club reportedly

wanting to sell the injury-prone midfielder.

Bournemouth keeper Asmir Begovic missed a spot-kick but still finished as the hero in the Championship club's 11-10 penalty shoot-out win over Premier League side Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Jack Grealish celebrated his new Aston Villa contract by scoring in their 3-1 win at League One side Burton Albion.

Villa's club-record signing Ollie Watkins equalised for the Premier League team late in the first half to cancel out Colin Daniel's opener after only 68 seconds.

Grealish, who signed the new five-year deal earlier on Tuesday, struck a sweet volley from the edge of the area in the 88th minute.

Third tier Lincoln will host Premier League champions Liverpool after thrashing Bradford 5-0. It will be the first meeting between the clubs since 1961.

All the third round ties are due to be played next week, with the dates to be set later.

Keinan Davis's stoppage-time goal ensured last season's League Cup runners-up head to Bristol City or

Djokovic says he is determined to move on from New York

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ROME, 16 SEPTEMBER

Novak Djokovic (*in photo*) learned a "big lesson" after being disqualified from the US Open for unintentionally hitting a line judge in the throat with a ball.

The incident nine days ago marked a stunning end to Djokovic's 29-match winning streak and his bid for an 18th Grand Slam title.

"I'm working mentally and emotionally as hard as I am working physically," Djokovic said on Monday at the Italian Open. "I'm trying to be the best version of myself on the court and off the court and I understand that I have outbursts and this is kind of the personality and the player that I have always been."

"I'm going to take this as profound as possible for me as a big lesson. I've been thinking about it. I've been comprehending. I've been talking to my team. It's just one of these things that is just unfortunate and happens. You have to move on."

The disqualification came during Djokovic's fourth-round match against Pablo Carreno Busta.

As he walked to the Arthur Ashe Stadium sideline for a changeover, trailing Carreno Busta 6-5 in the first set, Djokovic—who was seeded and ranked No 1 and an overwhelming favorite for the championship—angrily smacked a ball behind him.

The ball flew right at the line judge, who dropped to her knees at the back of the court

and reached for her neck. "It was totally unexpected and very unintended as well," Djokovic said.

"When you hit a ball like that you have a chance to hit somebody that is on the court. The rules are clear. So I accepted it. I had to move on and that's what I did."

"Of course I did not forget about it," Djokovic added. "I don't think I'll ever forget about it, because it's one of those things that stays in your memory for the rest of your life. But I don't think I'll have any major issues coming back to the tour and being able to perform well and hit the tennis ball."

Djokovic said he had checked with the lineswoman after the incident and was told she was not seriously injured.

"I felt really sorry to cause the shock and drama to her, because she didn't deserve

that in any way," Djokovic said.

"She obviously is volunteering and doing her work. She loves tennis, and she's been there, as I understand, for quite a few years."

Djokovic had won five of

the past seven Grand Slam tournaments to raise his total to 17, closing in on rivals Roger Federer, who has a men's record 20, and Rafael Nadal, who has 19.