



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



VAGHELA FLOATS  
NEW PARTY, TO  
CONTEST ALL POLLS

P5



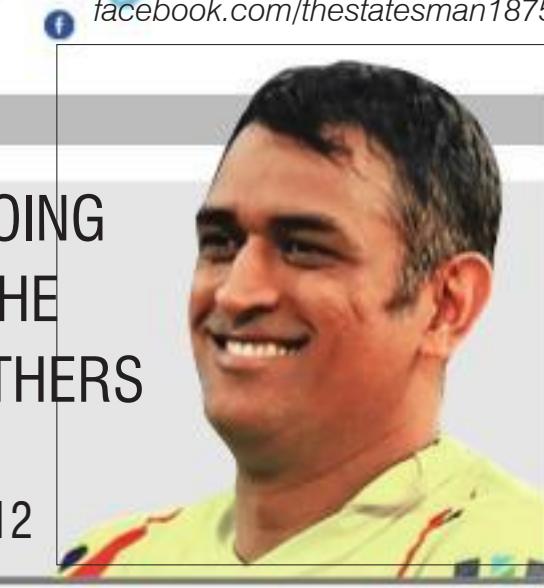
MALAYSIAN  
OPPOSITION LEADER  
PLANS NEW GOVT

P9



NAVALNY LEAVES  
GERMAN HOSPITAL  
AFTER 32 DAYS

P10



WHEN THE GOING  
GOT TOUGH, HE  
LEFT IT TO OTHERS

P12

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 37 and 27 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 85% Min: 56%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 36.5°C (+3) Min: 27.6°C (+4)

SUN RISES

06:11 hrs SUN SETS

18:15 hrs MOON SETS

23:54 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Commuters wade through a flooded street following heavy monsoon rains in Mumbai on Wednesday. ■ AFP

**India on Erdogan remarks:** India hit out at Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan after he made unwanted remarks on Kashmir during his address to the UN General Assembly. The Permanent Mission of India to the UN said Erdogan's comments were an act of "gross interference" in New Delhi's internal affairs. "...They constitute gross interference in India's internal affairs and are completely unacceptable. Turkey should learn to respect the sovereignty of other nations and reflect on its policies more deeply," India's Permanent Representative T S Tirumurti tweeted.

**Saudi bans India flights:** Saudi Arabia has banned flights to and from India from Tuesday amid a surge in coronavirus cases. In a circular issued on Tuesday, Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) said it was "suspending travel to and from the following countries: (India, Brazil and Argentina) including any person who has been in any of the mentioned countries above in the last 14 days prior to their arrival to the Kingdom".

## Sudarshan TV violated programme code: Govt

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER



The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Wednesday that it has prima facie found violation of the programme code by Sudarshan TV's Bindas Bol show and has issued a notice to the channel.

The top court said that the steps taken by the government in pursuance to the show cause notice against the channel will be subject to the orders of the court.

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud, Indu Malhotra and KM Joseph was informed by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that Sudarshan TV has to give reply to the show cause notice by September 28, failing which an ex parte decision will be taken.

During the course of the hearing today, Tushar Mehta, Solicitor General of India stat-

ed that the Central Government has, in exercise of the power conferred upon it by sub-section (3) of Section 20 of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995, issued a notice to show cause dated September 23, to Sudarshan News'. The bench said in its order. It said that since the notice is stated to be returnable on September 28, Mehta has requested the Court to defer the hearing in the case so as to enable the central government to take a considered view of the matter. It accordingly deferred the hearing to October 5.

## India's Covid tally crosses 56-L mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

### MoS Railways Suresh Angadi dies of coronavirus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

Minister of State for Railways Suresh Angadi died of COVID-19 on Wednesday, becoming the first union minister to succumb to the deadly virus.

The 65-year-old BJP MP passed away around 8 pm at the AIIMS trauma centre which has been converted into a dedicated COVID-19 facility, sources at the hospital said.

August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and it went past 50 lakh on September 16.

According to the ICMR, a total of 6,62,79,462 samples have been tested up to September 22 with 9,53,683 samples being tested on Tuesday. Prime Minister

He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

A fourth-term parliamentarian from Belagavi in Karnataka, Angadi had on September 11 announced on Twitter that he had contracted the disease and had requested all those who came in close contact with him in the previous days to monitor their health and get tested in case of any symptoms. He is the first Union minister to have died of coronavirus.

Narendra Modi asked states to press on in opening economic activities alongside fighting the coronavirus pandemic and suggested that they should now focus on "micro-containment zones" to curb the disease. He was speaking at a review meeting through video conference with chief ministers and representatives of seven states with a high burden of Covid-19 cases.

### FACT FILE

TOTAL CASES	56,46,010
ACTIVE CASES	9,68,377
NEW CASES	83,347
NEW RECOVERIES	89,746
TOTAL DEATHS	90,020

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8:00 A.M. WEDNESDAY 23 SEPT 2020

## Rafale vendors yet to meet offset obligations: CAG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

The CAG painted a grim picture of the efficacy of India's offset policy, saying it did not find a single case of foreign vendors transferring high technology to the Indian defence industry

proposed to discharge 30 per cent of their offset obligation by offering high technology to DRDO," the CAG said.

The first batch of five Rafale jets arrived in India on July 29.

"DRDO wanted to obtain technical assistance for the indigenous development of engine (Kaveri) for the Light Combat Aircraft. Till date the vendor has not confirmed the transfer of this technology," according to a press release issued by CAG.

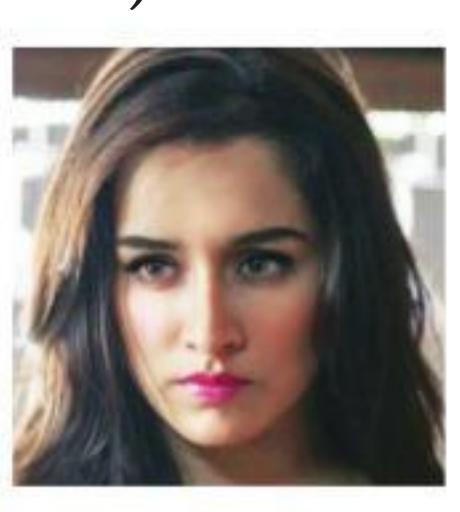
Under India's offset policy, foreign defence entities are mandated to spend at least 30 per cent of the total contract value in India through procurement of components or setting up of research and development facilities.

The offset norms are applicable to all capital purchases above Rs 300 crore made through imports. The offset obligations can be made through Foreign Direct Investment, free transfer of technology to Indian firms and purchase of products manufactured by Indian firms. The CAG said as the offset policy has not yielded the desired result, the defence ministry needs to review the policy and its implementation.

## NCB summons Deepika, Shraddha, Sara Ali Khan in drugs case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 23 SEPTEMBER



The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), which is probing an alleged Bollywood-drugs nexus, on Wednesday summoned actors Deepika Padukone, Shraddha Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan and Rakul Preet Singh among others for questioning, an official said.

Padukone has been summoned on Friday, the senior NCB official said here.

The NCB, which began the probe after a drug angle came to light in connection with actor Sushant Singh Rajput's alleged suicide, has now widened its investigation and asked these 'A-list' celebrities of the Mum-

bai film industry to "join the probe", he said.

Earlier, NCB sources had claimed that there was a "reference" to Rakul Preet Singh and Sara Ali Khan in the statement of Rhea Chakraborty, who has been arrested in the case. Deepika has been called

to record her statement on September 25; Sara Ali Khan and Shraddha Kapoor on September 26 while Rakul Preet Singh, Rajput's talent manager Shriti Modi and designer Simone Khambaria have been asked to appear on Thursday.

Earlier, Padukone's man-

ager Karishma Prakash was summoned to join the investigation, but she sought time due to ill health. Prakash's WhatsApp chats included conversations about drugs with one 'D', NCB sources said, adding that the agency wanted to find out who this person was.

## FIR against Anurag Kashyap after actress alleges rape

MUMBAI, 23 SEPTEMBER

Mumbai Police have registered an FIR against filmmaker Anurag Kashyap after actress Payal Ghosh accused him of raping her in 2013, an official said on Wednesday.

Kashyap has dismissed the allegations as "baseless". The First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Versova police station late Tuesday night after the actress along with her lawyer

Nitin Sapute approached the police, the official said.

Kashyap will be called for questioning in connection with the alleged seven-year-old incident, he said.

In her complaint, the actress alleged that Kashyap raped her at a place on Yari Road in Versova in 2013. On Saturday, the actress took to Twitter, claiming that Kashyap was sexually inappropriate towards her; an allegation the director called "baseless".

PTI



*Our government is looking at profit or loss in running the Metro, because it is the social responsibility of the government to provide cheap and easy transport service to the people*

ASHOK GEHLOT  
RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

# Deputy CM Sisodia admitted to LNJP Hospital due to Covid

Sisodia was admitted to the hospital's ICU as a precautionary measure; he was on oxygen support, even as his condition was said to be stable; Delhi reports 3,714 fresh Covid cases, 36 deaths

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

**D**elhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia was today admitted to the ICU of the Delhi government-run LNJP Hospital due to his coronavirus infection (Covid-19). His condition was stable, officials said.

The 48-year-old Aam Aadmi Party leader was admitted to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital — the Delhi government's largest Covid facility — at around 4 pm after he complained of fever and low oxygen level, an official said, adding that he was under observation. The official said the deputy CM does not have any comorbidities.

"He (Sisodia) was admitted to hospital as a precautionary measure since he was continuously having a little higher body temperature and his oxygen level dropped slightly."

The doctors are assessing his condition, but there is nothing serious," another official said.

According to officials, Sisodia was being kept in the Intensive Care Unit as a precautionary measure and that he was on oxygen support.

Sisodia had tested positive for Covid on 14 September



and had been under home isolation.

He was unable to attend the one-day special session of the Delhi Assembly on 14 September.

Sisodia is the second Cabinet minister in the Arvind Kejriwal government to get affected by Covid after health minister Satyendar Jain.

Jain had tested Covid pos-

itive in June and was hospitalised. He had also been given plasma therapy.

The Delhi government has been promoting home isolation for Covid patients in the city, especially for asymptomatic patients, as part of its coronavirus management strategy over the past several months.

The Delhi health minister had on 7 September asserted

that the Kejriwal government's home isolation policy had proved a "game-changer" in dealing with the Covid surge in June and that the government would continue with it.

Meanwhile, Delhi today recorded 3,714 fresh Covid cases, which took its tally of cases to 2,56,789, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. These fresh cases

were recorded from 59,580 tests done the previous day. The national capital today recorded 36 fresh coronavirus fatalities, which pushed its Covid toll to 5,087, the health bulletin said.

The cumulative total of recovered Covid patients in the city increased to 2,20,866, with 4,465 recoveries reported over the last 24 hours. The recovery

rate rose to 86.01 per cent. The active cases tally stood at 30,836.

Delhi had yesterday reported 3,816 coronavirus cases. The tests conducted for detection of these coronavirus infections were 59,013, including 49,554 rapid antigen tests and 9,459 RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueNat tests. The positivity rate had then stood at 6.47 per cent.

The number of deaths due to Covid-19 taken into account in the national capital yesterday was 37. The case fatality rate was 2 per cent.

The Delhi government has ramped up Covid testing significantly in recent days. The number of tests conducted and corresponding fresh cases reported, ranged from 24,198 (2,312) on 1 September to 61,973 (4,071) on 19 September. Before 20 September, the national capital recorded over 4,000 Covid cases a day for five consecutive days.

Delhi recorded 4,071 cases on 19 September; 4,127 on 18 September; 4,432 on 17 September; 4,473 on 16 September; and 4,263 on 15 September.

On 21 September, 2,548 new coronavirus cases were reported in Delhi as only 33,733 tests were conducted the previous day.

vious hearing on September 16.

The apex court's order came on a plea by Mohan, Facebook India vice president Ajit Mohan with regard to the northeast Delhi riots, deferred its proceedings on Wednesday after the Supreme Court stopped it from taking any "coercive" action.

The Peace and Harmony Committee of the Delhi Assembly said it would notify its further course of action and the next date of sitting in due course of time.

The announcement came hours after the Supreme Court directed the committee not to take coercive action against Mohan till October 15 in connection with its summon asking him to depose before it.

"In view of the issues of law pending before the Supreme Court, today's proceedings before the Delhi Legislative Assembly's Committee on Peace & Harmony has been deferred," it said in a statement. "Further course of action and next date of sitting of committee will be notified in due course."

The committee had issued a fresh notice to Mohan to appear before it on Wednesday after he did not appear before the panel for deposition in the pre-

trial hearing on September 16.

The panel had earlier said it took cognisance of allegations against Facebook for its alleged complicity in the riots on the premise of "incriminatory material" produced on record by the witnesses, as well as their depositions in its previous meetings.

The committee, chaired by AAP MLA Raghav Chadha, had begun its hearing in the backdrop of a "Wall Street Journal" report that claimed that one of Facebook India's senior policy executives intervened in internal communication to stop a permanent ban on a BJP lawmaker from Telangana after he allegedly shared communally-charged posts.

## Classified

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known that my client Amrik Singh S/o Late Sh. Makhluk Singh R/o Village Harsar, Distt. Gurugram Haryana was the owner in Possession of Land & Khetw/Khet No. 115/127, Musli No. 58, Killu No. 102(7-11) & 111/1 (D-5) Total measuring 7 Kanla 16 Marla situated with in the Revenue Estate of Village Harsar, Distt. Gurugram Haryana and have entered in to Collaboration Agreement with N.A. Builders Pvt. Ltd. in respect of the aforesaid land if in case any body else deals with the builder in respect of the aforesaid land under that event, My client shall not be responsible for the same.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Public at large is hereby informed that my clients Manzoor Ahmed Khan, s/o M. I. Khan & his wife Gohar Sultan, r/o 4094, Urdu Bazar, Jarna Masjid, Delhi-06, has disowned their son Khalid Saifullah and his wife Aliya Hasan, who have left the house and moved to unknown place. My clients shall not be responsible for any of their acts/deed.

Mohd. Khurshid Advocate Enrol No. D-1716/07 Ch. No. C-46, C.L. Joseph Block, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054, Mob. 9212110924

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Plot No. D-4/1 was registered in the name of Col. Rajender Singh Bal S/o S. Lal Singh Rio c/o SS Bal, # 147, Carrappa Marg, Sainik Farm, Khanpur, New Delhi. Who has expired on 21/01/2010 leaving behind a registered will in favour of Mr. Sahibzada Sudeep Singh Bal also known as Sudeep Singh Bal and accordingly the name of Mr. Sahibzada Sudeep Singh Bal is being noted in DLF's record in respect of the captioned plot. If anybody has any objection to this, he or she may approach Ms. DLF Ltd. or the undersigned within 21 days of publication of this notice.

**NOTICE**  
Selection of candidates under Karmarithra Prakalpa - Applications from bonafide residents of Basirhat-I Development block are hereby invited for the selections of candidates for the distribution of stalls of Merulandi Karmarithra, Basirhat-I Block. Application form is available at Basirhat-I BDO office from 21.09.2020 to 29.09.2020 (Except holidays) at office hours. For more details contact block office during office hours/except holidays.

Sd/- EO, Basirhat-I PS

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Plot No. D-4/1 was registered in the name of Col. Rajender Singh Bal S/o S. Lal Singh Rio c/o SS Bal, # 147, Carrappa Marg, Sainik Farm, Khanpur, New Delhi. Who has expired on 21/01/2010 leaving behind a registered will in favour of Mr. Sahibzada Sudeep Singh Bal also known as Sudeep Singh Bal and accordingly the name of Mr. Sahibzada Sudeep Singh Bal is being noted in DLF's record in respect of the captioned plot. If anybody has any objection to this, he or she may approach Ms. DLF Ltd. or the undersigned within 21 days of publication of this notice.

**I, SMT. Arati Mohanty, wife of Sri Partha Sarathi Das of Village- Mahipal, P.O.: Kendrapara Town, P.O./Dist.: Kendrapara state that I am owner of land and building situated at Mouza: Mahipal, P.S.: Kendrapara, Dist.: Kendrapara, Khatian No. 207/3, Plot No. 84 - A0.020 dec., Khata No. 207/4, Plot No. 83 - A0.020 dec., Plot 0.64/623 - A0.010 dec. total A0.050 dec. by virtue of registered gift deed which stood recorded in my name as per order of the Tahasildar, Kendrapara in Mutation Case No. 541/1989, 542/1989. But to my misfortune the original RORs issued by the Tahasildar, Kendrapara in my favour have been lost/misplaced from my custody and all my attempt to trace / find the same fruitless despite of my best efforts. A Station Diary GD No. 07 dated 20.09.2020 has been made at Balichandrapur Police Station in this respect on my report. I have not created any equitable mortgage/charge / security with any bank / financial institutions by depositing the said RORs in original for any advance before creating mortgage in favour of Indian Overseas Bank, Kendrapara Branch. If any individual, bank and financial institution is holding the abovesaid RORs in original as security for any advance or loan granted, they are requested to inform Branch Manager, Indian Overseas Bank, Kendrapara Branch, New**

Bus Stand, P.O./Dist.: Kendrapara-754211 with whom I have deposited certified copy of the said RORs as mortgagor for the loan advanced / to be advanced. If no objection is received from any concerned within a period of one month from the date of publication of this notice, it will be presumed that the property in question is free from all encumbrances by others.

Smt. Arati Mohanty

### LEGAL NOTICES

**COURT NOTICE**  
(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)  
(SUCCESSION CASE)  
IN THE COURT OF  
SANDEEP CHAUHAN  
Civil Judge  
(Senior Division),  
Faridabad

Vikas Sethi  
Versus  
State of Haryana  
CNR No. HRFB02-002526-  
2020

Next Date: 27-10-2020

Notice to :

General Public.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 27-10-2020 at 10:00 a.m. For details logon to https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?t=rs=district\_notice&district=Faridabad.

Dated, this day of 14-09-2020.

Civil Judge  
(Senior Division),  
Faridabad  
Seal of the Court

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday directed officials to explore the implementation of a low-cost technology developed by scientists of Indian Agriculture and Research Institute (IARI) here to manage crop residue across all farms in outer Delhi that face the issue of crop stubble.

Dr AK Singh, the director of IARI, and several senior scientists from the institute presented the technology to the chief minister on Wednesday.

Commending the innovation, Kejriwal said, "Crop stubble is the major source of pollution in Delhi in winter. I congratulate IARI scientists for developing a low-cost, effective technology to deal with stubble burning. Governments need to listen

and work hand in hand with scientists to address the issue of stubble burning."

The meeting was also attended by Environment Minister Gopal Rai, officials from the Development Department and Dialogue

## Explore implementation of IARI technology to manage crop residue: Kejriwal to officials

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER



nology across all farms in outer Delhi that face the issue of crop stubble.

Kejriwal will visit the Pusa campus on Thursday to witness a live demonstration.

The technology, called Pusa Decomposer, involves a liquid formulation prepared using Pusa decomposer capsules and readily available inputs, fermenting it over 8-10 days, and then spraying the mixture on crop residue to ensure speedy biodecomposition of the stubble.

Capsules worth Rs 20 can effectively deal with 4-5 tonnes of raw straw per acre.

The use of this approach by IARI in Punjab and Haryana have shown very encouraging results over the last four years. It also reduces fertilizer consumption and increases farm productivity.

## 'Centre translated draft EIA 2020 in all 22 languages but after HC deadline'

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

The Centre translated the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) in all the 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution but much after the deadline set by the Delhi High Court.

An environmental conservationist on whose PIL a direction for translating the notification was issued told the high court that the draft EIA in all 22 languages were translated quite late.

He informed that the translated draft EIA was published on the websites of Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board, West Bengal Pollution Control Board, and Goa Pollution Control Board on August 19 after expiry of the August 11 deadline for receiving comments.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Praetek Jalan on June 30 had directed the Environment Ministry to translate the draft EIA notification in all the 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution within 10 days of the order and had also extended till August 11 the time for receiving remarks from the public. The order had come on the PIL by environmental conservationist Vikrant Tongad seeking publication of the notification in all ver-

nacular languages and also extension of the time to receive public comments on it.

The June 30 order was challenged by the ministry in the Supreme Court which allowed the government to withdraw its appeal and instead file a review before the high court.

The apex court also put on hold the proceedings in the contempt plea filed by Tongad for non-compliance of the June 30 direction.

Subsequently, the ministry filed a plea seeking review of the June 30 order on the ground that official documents are required to be published only in Hindi and English.

It had also contended that the law does not require notifications to be published in local languages.

Seeking dismissal of the review plea, Tongad in his reply has alleged that the ministry has "failed" to mention that the translations have been completed.

Tongad also said in his reply that the ministry in its office memorandum of July 4 to all the states and union territories requested all of them to translate the draft EIA, but also said that the translations be not uploaded on their respective websites till they receive specific directions to do so from the central government.

Shaheen Bagh protester Bilkis on TIME's list of 100 most influential people of 2020



PTI  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

winds. She emerged as the face of the protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens.

The protest at Shaheen Bagh ended in March this year in view of the COVID-19 outbreak and a subsequent lockdown announced by the government to contain the spread of the disease.

Also on the TIME magazine's list from India are Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana.

## The Statesman

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**SILIGURI**  
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**P.O. Satellite Township,**  
Siliguri-3



# SAD condemns passage of J&K Official Languages Bill

SAD chief Sukhbir Badal, a key BJP ally, expresses shock & anguish over the manner in which the Bill, which does not include Punjabi as one of J&K's official languages, was 'bulldozed' through Parliament

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 23 SEPTEMBER

**W**ith Parliament today passing the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill 2020, which does not include Punjabi as one of J&K's official languages, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal said the voice of the people of J&K in support of the Punjabi language had been "muzzled".

Expressing shock and anguish at the manner in which this Bill was "bulldozed" through Parliament, the SAD president said it was a matter of deep concern that parliamentary procedures had not been followed while placing the Bill for approval before Parliament.

He said the Bill was neither put on the agenda of the Lok Sabha yesterday nor the Rajya Sabha today. "Even today it was passed at the last minute in the absence of the Opposition," the SAD chief said.



Badal condemned that the Bill was taken up for approval without taking into consideration the objections of the SAD as well as other regional parties of J&K.

He said while speaking in the Lok Sabha he had pointed out that Punjabi was not

only the mother tongue of a large number of people of the current J&K Union Territory but was also a recognised language as per the constitution of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Dr Farooq Abdullah of the National Conference, who is

a former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, supported me and said a sizable number of Kashmiris also spoke Punjabi. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has also supported the inclusion of Punjabi as an official language in the Union Territory," he said.

Badal said Punjabi was being spoken in J&K since the time of the Khalsa Raj of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and was widely used as a medium of instruction and was also a compulsory language along with Urdu till 1981.

"The first Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir – Mehr Chand Mahajan was a Punjabi and even now Punjabis constitute three per cent of the population of the state," the Akali leader said.

Parliament today passed a Bill for inclusion of Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi in the list of official languages in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in addition to the existing Urdu and English. The Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha through voice

vote today. The Lok Sabha had cleared the legislation yesterday.

Significantly, the SAD has been one of the oldest allies of the ruling BJP. The SAD has also been up in arms against the Narendra Modi dispensation over its three controversial farm sector legislations.

Days after the SAD's lone minister in the Modi-led Union government, Hardeep Singh Puri, quit her post in protest against the Centre's farm sector legislations, the SAD yesterday announced a state-wide agitation in Punjab in order to press for withdrawal of these legislations.

The SAD's proposed agitation against the Modi government's farm sector Bills, which have now been passed by Parliament, would include a state-wide three-hour 'chakkajam' (road blockade) on 25 September as well as a simultaneous 'kisan (farmers) march' to Mohali on 1 October to hand over a memorandum, addressed to the President of India, to the Punjab Governor.

## Himachal Govt goes into self-isolation after ADC tests Covid positive



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 23 SEPTEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya on Wednesday isolated himself after his ADC (ade-camp) at Raj Bhawan tested positive for COVID-19.

The ADC to Governor was tested for infectious disease on Tuesday and his test report came late last night.

After this, Dattatreya isolated himself and his all appointments had been cancelled. Besides, Secretary to Governor, Rakesh Kanwar and the entire personal staff of ADC had also been quarantined and a team of Health department will now test

them for COVID-19.

Earlier, State Power minister Sukhram Chaudhary and Jal Shakti minister Mahender Singh Thakur had also tested positive for Coronavirus but now they had recovered from the disease.

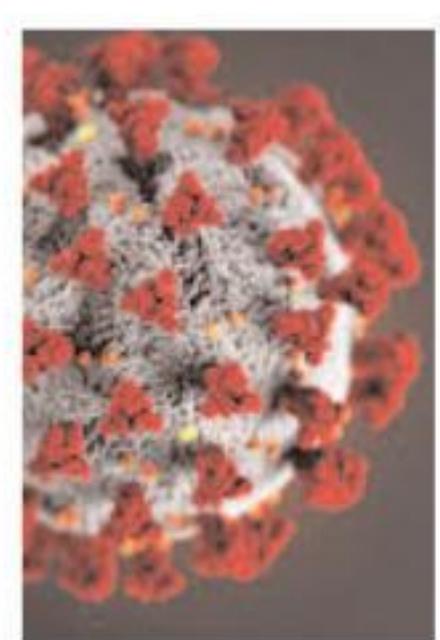
Sundernagar MLA Rakesh Jamwal and Nachan MLA Vinod Kumar too had been tested positive for COVID-19 on 21 and 22 September and they had been shifted to Covid Care facilities in Mandi district for treatment.

It is worthwhile to mention here that the number of COVID-19 cases had risen to 12,899 in Himachal Pradesh with 130 more persons testing positive for the disease on Wednesday.

There were a total of 4,028 active cases of COVID-19 in the state and 132 persons had succumbed to the viral disease while 8,715 persons had been cured of disease.

The worst affected districts in the state are Solan with 2698 cases, followed by Kangra 1,921 cases, Sirmour 1,629 cases, Mandi 1,435 cases, Una 1,143 cases, Shimla 982 cases and Hamirpur with 839 cases.

Covid +ve woman commits suicide in Shimla hospital



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 23 SEPTEMBER

A 54-year-old woman, who had tested positive for COVID-19, allegedly committed suicide by hanging inside Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital (DDU) in Shimla.

Police said the woman was found hanging from a pillar in the patients waiting area of DDU Hospital on Tuesday night.

The woman, a resident of Chopai area of Shimla district, was tested positive for COVID-19 on 18 September and she was shifted to DDU hospital for medical treatment.

A case had been registered in this regard and a magisterial probe had also been ordered into the incident.

## Delhi riots: Death of head constable Ratan Lal among casualties police suffered

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

Head Constable Ratan Lal, who died on duty was among 105 casualties police suffered during the north east Delhi riots, said the charge sheet filed in a court here.

Lal was attacked by a mob on February 24, police said adding that the first set of injuries reported during the communal violence were of policemen who were on duty in the area due to the mass protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

"In total over 500 medico-legal cases (MLCs) in connection with north east Delhi riots, 105 were related to injuries to police personnel and 53 people were killed including one Delhi police Head Constable (Ratan Lal)

and one Intelligence Bureau staffer (Ankit Sharma), the charge sheet filed on September 16 said.

"The magnitude of the riot was so high that the district police had to be supplemented by a force which was almost four times its own strength," it said.

During the peak of the riots, about 78,000 additional police forces were deployed to restore and maintain peace in the area, it said.

The charge sheet further stated while 100 policemen and 41 public persons were injured in the December 2019 violence with no deaths being reported, 108 policemen and 499 people were injured in the February 2020 riots, with 53 deaths reported.

It further said that the second set of MLCs in relation to north east Delhi riots

In the first 24 hours of the

riots, there were seven medico-legal cases related to attacks on police personnel at Majipur Chowk by anti-CAA protestors and two public persons were injured, it said.

"On February 23, at about 5.23 pm, a PCR (Police Control Room) call was received at the Welcome Police Station that 200/300 Muslims are pelting stones at Majipur metro station. After police reached the spot, the mob started stone pelting at the police party. Inspector Rohtash and Head Constable Vikrant got injured in stone pelting by the mob. Thus the second set of MLCs in relation to north east Delhi riots were also of policemen on duty," the charge sheet said.

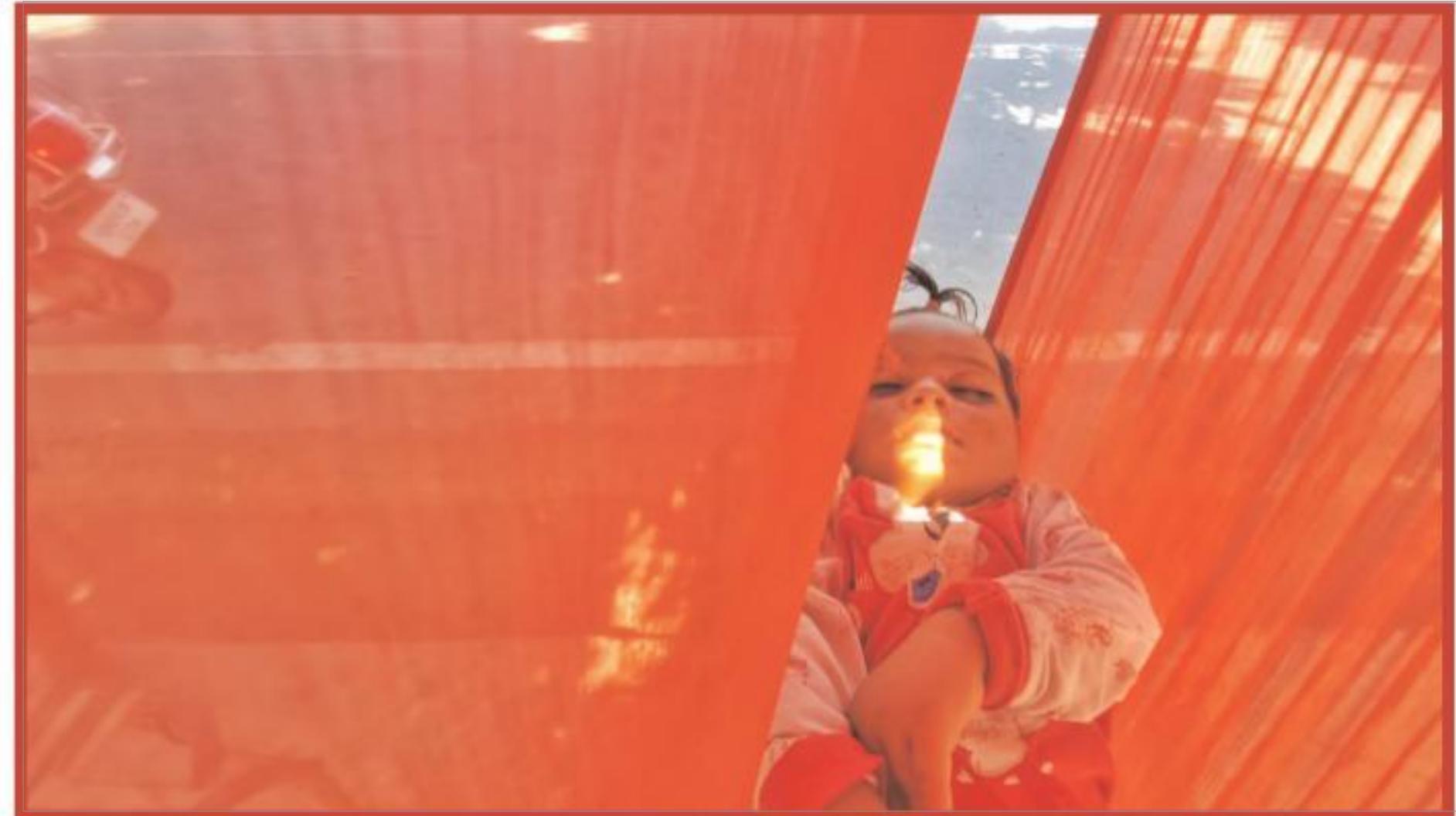
Communal clashes had broken out in northeast Delhi on February 24 after violence between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

were also of policemen on duty.

"On February 23, at about 6.40 pm, Inspector Rohtash Kumar, along with staff was present at Vijay Park main road, when rioters from Shamshain Ghat Pulia side, Kabir Nagar, started heavy stone pelting at the police party. Inspector Rohtash and Head Constable Vikrant got injured in stone pelting by the mob. Thus the second set of MLCs in relation to north east Delhi riots were also of policemen on duty," the charge sheet said.

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

### COSY CORNER



A baby is resting in a cradle made with a stole of her mother — a balloon-seller at traffic lights — on a roadside at Panchkula on Wednesday.

PARDEEP SAINI

## Punjab cop 'manipulates' Truecaller app to pose as CM's PA, arrested

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 23 SEPTEMBER

acquitted in three different cases earlier.

Recruited as a constable in Punjab Police in 2006, the cop was at present deployed as a sentry guard at 1st India Reserve Battalion (IRB), Patiala.

Gupta said the police initiated action after secretary expenditure and director mining, Vijay N Zade, informed that he had been getting calls from a person claiming that he was speaking from CM's residence.

When it was checked, it was found that no such per-

son was on duty in CM's residence or office. However, the Truecaller showed that the call had emanated from "CM house Chandigarh", Gupta said. A Master of Business Administration, the suspect

used to call various government officials, and often introduced himself as Kuldeep Singh, PA to CM Punjab.

He was making use of technology to shield his original identity, the DGP said, adding the cop was apparently manipulating the Truecaller app to identify himself as someone from CM office Chandigarh.

Eight mobile phones of various companies like Lava, Samsung, Nokia, Oppo, Panasonic, along with 12 SIM cards, have been recovered

from the constable's possession, along with an Innova car, copies of Aadhar, voter cards and marksheets of other individuals, etc. The Innova car and VIP stickers pasted on the front glass, said the DGP.

Among the seizures from the accused, a resident of House 132A, Sarabha Nagar Bhudson Road, Patiala, were two Aadhar cards (in the names of Kamlesh Chaudhary and Jagtar Singh), voter ID card of Jagtar Singh, photo copy of Aadhar card of Satnam Singh.

development in the entire region.

The Chief Minister further stated that it was due to the distant vision of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, was constructed which would bring transformation in development in Lahaul Valley.

"With inauguration of Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, unprecedented development would be witnessed in Lahaul valley and initiate a new era of prosperity in the valley. Atal Tunnel Rohtang not only symbolises development but is also a paradigm of technology for the world," he added.

He said Atal Tunnel has strategic importance and is also the entry point for Ladakh area and it would also boost tourism and agricultural activities.

He directed the authorities to make special arrangements for the VIPs visits, keeping in view SOPs of the COVID-19 pandemic. State Technical Educa-

## U'khand govt issues new guidelines for free tourist movement in state

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
DEHRADUN, 23 SEPTEMBER

Uttarakhand. The state government has also cancelled this condition.

In view of attracting tourists to Uttarakhand a hill state, the Uttarakhand government has issued new guidelines. Under these new guidelines, the visitors are exempted from bringing their Covid-19 negative test reports to enter the state.

Earlier, it was mandatory for tourists to book hotel/home stays accommodation for two days to tour

tourists in Uttarakhand. Only thermal scanning will be conducted while entering the state.

No Covid-19 test report and mandatory hotel/home stay booking is required now.

Issuing the new guideline, Uttarakhand chief secretary Om Prakash states, "If any tourist is found Covid-19 positive then the hotel management shall intimate the district administration immediately."

## PM to inaugurate Atal Tunnel at Rohtang on 3 October: HP CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 23 SEPTEMBER

Hi

machal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Wednesday said that the construction of Atal Tunnel at Rohtang has finally been completed now and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Lahaul Valley on 3 October to inaugurate it.

Thakur today reviewed the preparations for the arrival of PM Modi for the inauguration ceremony of Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, in a meeting with officers of Lahaul-Spiti district at Keylong.

"Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, is an important achievement from strategic point of view for the nation, besides this, the tunnel would also bring vital change in the socio-economic development of the people of the area," he added.

He said new opportunities would emerge in the agriculture sector, tourism sector and horticulture sector with commencement of the Atal Tunnel

which would change the economy of the tribal district.

Before the construction of Atal Tunnel, the Lahaul Valley remained closed for vehicular

movement for about six months due to heavy accumulation of snow at Rohtang but now the people will have round the year connectivity," he said.

Thakur said the construction of the Tunnel has fulfilled the long awaited dream of the people of Lahaul and there has been renewed enthusiasm for

development in the entire region.

The Chief Minister further stated that it was due to the distant vision of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, was constructed which would bring transformation in development in Lahaul Valley.

"With inauguration of Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, unprecedented development would be witnessed in Lahaul valley and initiate a new era of prosperity in the valley. Atal Tunnel Rohtang not only symbolises development but is also a paradigm of technology for the world," he added.

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tion and Tribal Development Minister Ram Lal Markanda said construction of the tunnel was a historic decision which would reduce the distance considerably and prove beneficial for the development of the tribal area of Lahaul-Spiti.

"Due to the untiring efforts of the present BJP government, the work of this tunnel has been completed. But the previous Congress government did not work with sincerity for forest clearance which delayed the work," he said, adding the development of tribal areas was neglected by the previous Congress government.

Tribal Advisory Committee member Shamsheer Singh presented a demand charter to the Chief Minister and urged to encourage tourism and winter sports in the tribal district. State Education Minister Govind Singh Thakur, Chief Secretary Anil Khachi, Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

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Sharma termed the Congress party's allegation that the bills will lead to closure of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) as a balantant lie and said these bills will open many avenues for the farmers to sell their produce in open markets besides APMCs to get better prices.

"Congress has always supported corruption and they, during their previous regimes, supported the middlemen who used to harass the farmer by paying them less prices for their produce.

But these bills will end corruption and lead to farmers getting better remunerative prices, hence working towards the goal of doubling farmers' income," he said.

He added PM Modi government was working for the betterment of the farmers and recently the hike in MSP for Rabi crops will result in farmers getting 106 percent profit for their crops.

Hi

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Trains to run at 160 kmph, Howrah-Delhi high-speed corridor work in full swing

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 23 SEPTEMBER

The work on 'high-speed rail corridor' in Howrah Division of Eastern Railway has started in full swing. The corridor from Howrah to Delhi will enable operation of trains at a speed of 160 kmph, slashing the overall duration.

As part of the robust infrastructure including a corridor, work on modifications in overhead (OHE) wires is being carried in Howrah Division extensively.

"The overhead wires are divided in segments of 1.5 km," informed the divisional railway manager, Howrah Division of ER, Ishaq Khan, adding, "The tension of the overhead wires, weight at two ends of the OHEs, fittings and the suspension arrangements are being increased to enable uninterrupted power supply. This apart, improvements in the tracks are also being done for the corridor. The point-end crossing is to be done at the other end also."

## YSR's refusal to sign 'faith form' sparks political row

TDP, BJP leaders face house arrests; Bajrang activists protest at Lotus Pond

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 23 SEPTEMBER

**A**ndhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy today participated in the rituals at Venkateshwara Temple in Tirupati despite protests and political row over his refusal to sign a form declaring his faith in the deity. Police kept TDP and BJP leaders under house arrests while supporters of Bajrang Dal protested in front of his residence at Lotus Pond in Hyderabad.

There was more controversy in store as BJP and TDP leaders, including former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, took a dig at the chief minister for participating in the temple rituals without his wife and YSRCP leader Kodali Nani hit back and dragged Prime Minister Narendra Modi's name as well.



He retorted by saying that BJP leaders should get their leader Modi take his spouse to Ram Temple before demanding the same from Reddy.

Since Reddy is a practicing Christian, TDP and BJP leaders have been demanding that he must sign the mandatory form declaring his faith on Lord Venkateshwara, the main deity at the temple. People of other faiths are allowed to enter the temple

*The BJP government should honestly make PM Cares Fund a public care fund and worry about the future of the country.*

SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV  
OBJECTING TO SUGGESTION OF OPENING SCHOOLS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

**i**ndia

## UDF convener writes to Yechury seeking CM Vijayan's removal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
23 SEPTEMBER

Senior Congress leader and Kerala Opposition alliance (UDF) convener Benny Behanan on Wednesday wrote to CPI-M general secretary Sitaram Yechury stating that Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's office is under the shadow of suspicion and urged him (Yechury) to direct Vijayan to step down from the chief minister's post.

The chief minister participated in the temple rituals for the annual Brahmostavam.

Staying back at Tirupati overnight Reddy will tomorrow accompany Karnataka chief minister BS Yediyurappa for a visit to the temple before jointly laying the foundation for a new guesthouse at Tirumala funded by state government of the neighbouring state for its visitors.

Opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu has alleged Reddy was playing with the sentiments of the people.

to be allowed to remain in office. It may be mentioned CPI-M leaders are known for their fight against corruption," UDF convener said in the letter.

Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala, too, had shot off a similar letter to Yechury with the same demand.

Meanwhile, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) continued its inspection at the State Centre for Advanced Printing and Training (C-apt) office at Vattiyoorkavu in Thiruvananthapuram for the third consecutive day in connection with the distribution of copies of Quran in the state after receiving them from UAE Consulate.

The LDF government issued the order after Opposition parties alleged many political leaders and officers accepted bribes for the implementation of the project. The spotlight was flashed on the project after revelation by Swapna Suresh, key accused in gold smuggling case, that she allegedly received Rs 1 crore as commission from the builder.

the statements of former CAPT director M Abdul Rahman.

Opposition Congress, Muslim League and BJP had alleged Jaleel was involved in smuggling gold under the pretext of bringing Quran from the Consulate.

Govt orders vigilance probe into LIFE project

Kerala government on Wednesday ordered the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau to probe into the allegations pertaining to irregularities in the LIFE (Livelihood, Inclusion and Financial Empowerment) Mission project at Wadakkanchery in Thrissur district.

The LDF government issued the order after Opposition parties alleged many political leaders and officers accepted bribes for the implementation of the project. The spotlight was flashed on the project after revelation by Swapna Suresh, key accused in gold smuggling case, that she allegedly received Rs 1 crore as commission from the builder.

## Mamata launches two eco-friendly projects

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 23 SEPTEMBER

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today launched two environment-friendly and sustainable development projects paving the way for investment and employment generation.

Proposals for both the projects were received during the Digha business conclave in December 2019.

The first project is an effective waste management and sustainable development project for Bantala Leather Complex-Asia's largest leather hub. A Dutch consortium signed an MoU with Calcutta Leather Complex Tanners' Association, on conversion of solid waste to value added products at Bantala Leather Complex.

The second project is a 200 megawatt solar power project in East Midnapore. The German Bank KFW had submitted a proposal in this regard to the state government.

"The projects have been finalised in six months and the progress indicates that if there is a will there's a way. All should take lessons from us. The uniqueness of the projects is that they are environment-friendly. We are committed to environment-friendly development. If nature and humanity are to be saved then we have to give attention to the environment and so the environment is our priority area. The state government is getting



### Abhishek attacks Centre on farm Bills

KOLKATA, 23 SEPTEMBER

Trinamul Youth Congress president Abhishek Banerjee today slammed the Centre for making a mockery of the nation.

He said, "They fail to record the number of farmer suicides in their reign and then claim to implement pro-farmer laws while thwarting every rule in Parliament. We'll not stay quiet, and take this battle head-on. We want democracy."

He also said more than 100 MPs today supported TMC in their protest against the two farm Bill both inside and outside the House.

"Farmers are India's backbone. This is just one step towards pursuit of justice for our farmers and we'll keep moving forward in our battle. We'll fight this fascism from each corner of the nation, standing beside our party supremo Mamata Banerjee, the true warrior safeguarding farmers' interests," he added.

Partha Chatterjee, TMC secretary general today said, "Centre is spreading misinformation which is why they've probably missed CM's letter to Union minister for agriculture." He alleged that the Centre did not appreciate state government's efforts and ignored requests.

Firhad Hakim, TMC general secretary stated this was a true example of BJP's aversion to verify facts and making baseless allegations against Bengal government.

"Mamata Banerjee's government has always been one step ahead in securing farmers' future in Bengal," he added.

Meanwhile, Trinamul Chandra Parishad (TMCP) today hit the street from Subodh Mullick square to Gandhi statue on Mayo Road. TMCP units from Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, North and South 24 Parganas joined the procession. They carried with them vegetables and said that food, clothes and dwellings are basic needs of the citizens. By bringing farm Bill which are "anti-farmer in nature", the BJP government is trying to deprive the citizens of basic needs, alleged a TMCP leader.



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

Giving a major boost to India's indigenisation programme, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired Laser-Guided Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) from the main battle tank Arjun.

The test was conducted at the KK Range in Ahmed-

nagar, which houses the Indian Army's Armoured Corps Centre and School (ACC&S). The DRDO today said that in these tests, ATGM successfully defeated a target at 3 km.

The missile employs a tandem HEAT warhead to defeat Explosive Reactive Armour (ERA) protected armoured vehicles. It has been developed with multi-platform launch capability. The missile is designed to destroy modern as well as future enemy battle tanks.

The Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), Pune, in association with the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMLR), Pune, and the Instruments Research and Development Establishment (IRDE), Dehradun, have developed the missile.

Congratulating DRDO, defence minister Rajnath Singh tweeted: "India is proud of Team DRDO which is assiduously working towards reducing import dependency in the near future.

### PROTEST PITCH



Hindu Sena activists during a protest march against Pakistan, in New Delhi on Wednesday. AFP

## Covid-19 on India-Lanka summit agenda

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Sri Lankan counterpart, Mahinda Rajapaksa, will hold a virtual bilateral summit on 26 September, the Ministry of External Affairs announced on Wednesday.

"The summit will give an opportunity to the two leaders to comprehensively review the broad framework of the bilateral relationship soon after Parliamentary polls in

Sri Lanka and in the context of time-tested friendly ties," the ministry said in a Press release.

The virtual summit is the first official interaction between the leaders after they met in New Delhi in February this year. While the official agenda of the virtual summit is not known, the two leaders are expected to discuss issues of bilateral interest, including development projects and cooperation in the response to Covid-19.

Last week, Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa had conveyed their birthday wishes to Modi and expressed their desire and commitment to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Thanking both leaders, Modi conveyed he was looking forward to working with them to further expand cooperation between the two nations in line with India's "Neighbourhood First" policy.

## Multiple raids across city as CBI probes cattle-smuggling nexus

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 23 SEPTEMBER

in thriving the racket.

A group of officers split into 12 teams had fanned out across the state.

A team raided the resi-

dence of an alleged cow-

smuggler at Topsia, Enamul Haq and conducted search

operation for more than two

hours and was learnt to have

confiscated incriminating

documents.

Another team also knocked

at a BSF officer Satish Kumar's

Bj block residence near Salt

Lake's City Centre 2 and

seized the residence after

conducting search opera-

tion there. But the source

did not confirm of seizure, if any, from there.

The BSF officer was posted

at Siliguri before being transferred to Jharkhand.

The raids were conducted at 15 locations simultaneously at Rajarhat, Salt Lake, Topsia, Murshidabad, Berhampore, Lalgola, Raghunathganj and Siliguri and other parts of the state, the source informed.

The raids, against the cattle-smuggling racket assumed significant since nine al-Qaeda operatives-six from Murshidabad and three from Ernakulam, Kerala-were

torate is also likely to be

involved in the probe of money

trail that changed hands while smuggling.

According to the CBI official, the agency has been probing into cattle smuggling along the international border in Bengal for last one year. Cattle smuggling along the India-Bangladesh border has been a menace for the last several years.

According to sources in the BSF, smugglers tie socket bombs to the necks of the cattle while smuggling them to cause physical harm to the troopers when they are apprehended.

## In a first, Kolkata to get tram library

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 23 SEPTEMBER

In a first of its kind, Kolkata is set to get a tram library, a top official said on Wednesday.

The specially designed tram

library will have books and

magazines, including those

on competitive examinations

such as the civil services, WBCS,

GRE or GMAT in order to attract

readers from various educational institutions along its route, West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC) managing director Rajanvir Singh Kapur said.

The tram library, which will

be inaugurated on Thursday,

will travel regularly between

Shyambazar and Esplanade,

traversing 4.5 km through the

city's education hub--College

Street, Kapur said.

There are at least 30 educational institutions along or

near its route, including the Calcutta University and Presidency University, Scottish

Church College, Hindu School,

Hare School and the Calcutta Girls' School.

"The tram library, being introduced by the WBTC that oversees India's only functional trams, is a special tram with books, magazines, which can be read while travelling on

the tram," Kapur said.

"The tramcar will also have free wifi and will help passengers read e-books apart from laying their hands on books in the library, he said, adding that the collection will be updated regularly.

"We are also planning book

reading sessions, book launches and literary festivals in the tram library in the future," the official said, terming the project as a dream come true that will give a new dimension to the city's electric tram service, which is in existence since 1902.

**CORIGENDUM NOTICE**

Subject: Tender No. OP/2020/2021 - DNIT for replacement / Installation of LT CT Meter Boxes, Current Transformers (CTs), Cables and allied accessories for Smart Metering Project under Electr. 'OP' Sub Division No. 5, Electricity Wing of Engineering Department, U.T., Chandigarh (EWEDC).

The subject cited tender due to be opened on dated i.e. 23.09.2020 at 16.00 Hrs. is hereby extended upto 30.09.2020 at 14.00 Hrs. for uploading and opening date i.e. 30.09.2020 at 16.00 Hrs. due to some administrative reason.

All the other terms and conditions shall remain the same.

DA/-

Executive Engineer,  
Electricity (OP) Division No. 2  
Chandigarh, U.T.

**NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar invites e-Tender for the Work(s) for Annual Operation and Maintenance Service of 410 KLD Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) at Housing Complex, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar (NIT No. : AIIMS-BSSR/Engg/ 574/ NIT-018 / 2020-

We all are united to fight these black laws. Our fight is for farmers and it will be taken to a logical conclusion



PUNJAB MLA NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU  
STAGING A PROTEST AGAINST THE FARM BILLS

## THUMBNAILS



Technicians build a cell tower atop a residential building in Hyderabad on Wednesday. AFP

**Major landslide hits NH10:** A major landslide, triggered by heavy rains, on the National Highway 10 cut off Sikkim from the rest of the country on Wednesday morning, officials said. Officials at the site said that it will take at least a day or two to clear the debris completely. PTI

**Atma Nirbhar Assam:** Pushing the mission for Atma Nirbhar Assam, chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Wednesday launched the Mukhyamantri Gramya Paribahan Achoni and distributed vehicles under the scheme. The scheme is expected to improve rural connectivity and generate employment in the villages. SNS

**Nine in cops' net:** The Kotwali police station in Cooch Behar arrested nine persons and recovered 1.2 kg gold and fake Indian currency notes of over Rs 1 crore from their possession on Tuesday. Based on information provided by the SSB intelligence, police chased a vehicle, which was on the way to Assam, on National Highway, and intercepted seven persons. Two others were on two-wheelers. SNS

## Bhiwandi building collapse toll rises to 39

THANE, 23 SEPTEMBER

The death toll in the Bhiwandi building collapse in Maharashtra rose to 39 on Wednesday, with the recovery of 14 more bodies overnight, police said.

The dead include 18 children in the age group of two to 15, including three toddlers, an official said.

Twenty-five persons have been pulled out of the debris alive so far and are being treated at hospitals in Bhiwandi and Thane, he said.

The search operation continued throughout the night despite heavy rains, the official said. The bodies recovered from the debris were mutilated and highly decomposed as they had remained there for over 50 hours, he said. The 43-year-old Jilani building collapsed at 3.40 a.m. on Monday.

Two civic officials have been suspended in connection with the collapse and an offence has been registered against the building owner, the official said. The building had had 40 flats and around 150 persons lived there, the official said. PTI

# Farm Bills: Haryana Police uses water cannon to stop YC's 'tractor rally'

4 leaders, Youth Congress workers were taken into preventive custody, released after some time



Congress MLA Navjot Singh Sidhu along with other activists protest against agriculture Bills passed in the Lok Sabha, in Amritsar on Wednesday. AFP

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
CHANDIGARH, 23 SEPTEMBER

**T**he Haryana police on Wednesday used a water cannon in Panipat's Samalkha village to stop a state Youth Congress-led tractor rally from proceeding to Delhi to protest against Centre's farm Bills.

The protesters started the rally from Samalkha and were to travel to Delhi, about 90 km away.

Haryana Congress MLA from Samalkha, Dharan Singh Chhoker, Israna MLA Balbir Balniki, Indian Youth Congress president Srinivas B V and state Youth Congress chief Sachin Kundu were also part of the rally which was stopped by the police at a barricade in Panipat district.

All the four leaders besides some Youth Congress workers were later taken into preventive custody before being released after some time,

Deputy Superintendent of Police (Headquarters), Panipat, Satish Kumar, said.

Earlier, when the Kisan Aakrosh tractor rally which started from Anaj Mandi in Samalkha reached the police barricade on the Panipat-Delhi national highway, some workers tried to cross the barricade after which police used a water cannon to disperse them.

They did not have permission to move to Delhi.

## Farm Bills offer revolutionary changes, says agriculture expert

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
BENGALURU, 23 SEPTEMBER

The farm sector Bills offer 'revolutionary' changes benefiting the farmers and help break the network of middlemen, money-lenders and market operators, an agriculture expert said on Wednesday.

Former Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Prof. R S Deshpande said the farmer would now be able to sell produce across the country in any market of his or her choice at the price negotiated with the purchaser.

This price discovery by the farmers will certainly benefit them and get them

larger portion of the market margins, which was hitherto enjoyed by the traders, according to him.

"It will be completely erroneous to assume that the purchasers will be only the corporate sector and nobody else," said Deshpande, who was Head of the Agricultural Development and Rural Transformation Centre between 1998 and 2008.

At ADRTC, he steered a mega study on "Farmer at the Millennium" and completed many research works.

He was a policy supporting academic to both the Government of Karnataka and Union Ministry of Agriculture.

Restrictions are in place due to coronavirus pandemic, that is why they were stopped, the DSP said.

Congress MLAs staged a dharna on Haridwar bypass

road on Wednesday after they were stopped by the police from going to the state Assembly in a tractor-trolley to protest the passage of farm sector reform Bills in Parliament.

## DIFFICULT PATH



Commuters make their way through a flooded road after heavy monsoon rains in Mumbai on Wednesday. AFP

# Heavy rains cause waterlogging in Mumbai, disrupt traffic

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
MUMBAI, 23 SEPTEMBER

police official said.

There was also waterlogging in several areas in the suburbs like Goregaon, Malad and Dahisar, he said.

"Around 6 inches high water logging at Andheri Subway. However traffic has been resumed and police personnel from DN Nagar Police Station are on the spot to ensure convenient commute for Mumbaikars," Mumbai Police tweeted.

Rains across the island city and the western suburbs picked up late on Tuesday evening. There were intense spells across Mumbai overnight, a civic official said.

On Wednesday morning, public transport services were hit and normal life affected in the financial capital due to heavy downpour and waterlogging.

A doctor from the hospital said the normal OPD at the hospital has been suspended temporarily and only emergency cases are being examined at the casualty ward.

Two watchmen died in Arripada area after getting stuck inside a lift in the basement of a high rise building because of waterlogging, a

police official said.

Heavy rains lashed Mumbai overnight, leaving many parts of the metropolis in waist deep water and disrupting rail and road traffic on Wednesday, officials said.

The Santacruz observatory recorded 286.4 mm rainfall during the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday, making it the fourth highest rainfall in Mumbai since 1974, an IMD official said.

At the municipal Nair Hospital in central Mumbai, the Covid-19 outpatient department (OPD) set up in a temporary shed in the compound was shifted to the casualty ward inside the building due to waterlogging in the compound, they said.

Rains across the island city and the western suburbs picked up late on Tuesday evening. There were intense spells across Mumbai overnight, a civic official said.

On Wednesday morning, public transport services were hit and normal life affected in the financial capital due to heavy downpour and waterlogging.

Several streets and low-lying areas were waterlogged due to overnight rains and the road traffic was also badly hit, a civic official said. Some vehicles broke down in the water, affecting the traffic movement, he added.

Mumbai's municipal commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal

has asked that all offices and establishments in the city, barring essential services, be shut on Wednesday due to the downpour and IMD's forecast of "heavy to very heavy rains" in the city.

In the city, Chahal has also appealed to Mumbaikars not to step out of their homes, unless it is an emergency.

Suburban train services of Central Railway and Western Railway were suspended but resumed later as the intensity of the downpour waned.

Railways also cancelled or rescheduled many long-distance trains following the heavy rains. There was waterlogging in Sion-Kurla and Chunabhatti-Kurla sections and traffic was suspended on CSMT-Thane and CSMT-Vashi sections for safety reasons, a

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## Flights of fancy

There is considerable merit in the call by the International Air Transport Association for a global agreement on pre-flight Covid tests for international travel, in place of the inconsistent quarantine requirements that different countries follow. These restrictions have hit the international travel and tourism industry hard. Additionally, abrupt changes in quarantining policy as announced by Britain some weeks ago add to the uncertainty and lead to cancellations. While IATA would like its recommendation of affordable rapid antigen test results, if accepted by the country of origin and by the destination country under a globally-accepted set of standards, to be made part of the travel protocol, this may pose a problem, not the least because of the unreliability of these tests. IATA though believes that the low cost of the tests and the speed at which they deliver a result make up for the lack of accuracy and says such an arrangement could boost confidence among travellers. Airlines battered by the pandemic have been urging governments to lift blanket restrictions that are in place in many countries. On ground, though, many European nations facing a fresh surge in virus numbers, have stiffened protocols. The result is that the industry that had shown a hint of a recovery is facing a slump once again. The travails of the past six months have pushed airline companies worldwide into the red and many, including Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific just a few days ago, have warned they may not survive further assaults on bottom lines. By July, the global tourism sector had lost \$320 billion, and these losses have mounted since.

As countries around the world realised the importance of restarting economies, airlines with robust domestic schedules such as those in China and India might have expected a revival in fortunes. But even within a country, variances in travel requirements have heightened uncertainties. Earlier this month, the Airports Authority of India put out a 28-page advisory entitled "State-Wise Quarantine Guidelines" that underscored the problem; indeed, it revealed just how acutely India has become a Disunion of States after the Covid outbreak. If the size of the advisory itself was not testament to the confusion that prevails, its contents made this clear. Every state and union territory appears to have its own set of rules, even as far as international arrivals are concerned, and even contiguous states follow widely divergent protocols.

Thus, an international business visitor to Bengaluru on a 48-hour trip could plan to enter the city without any restrictions but would face 14 days' quarantine if his flight gets diverted to Thiruvananthapuram or Chennai. As far as domestic travel goes, such whimsies as allowing flights from certain states on certain days of the week, as seen not so long ago in West Bengal, throws schedules out of gear. While public health imperatives must trump profits, an industry that employs a quarter of a billion people worldwide deserves greater consideration than it has received.

## Disturbing ignorance

Among the many dubious firsts logged by the government in managing the first session of Parliament after the outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic, its reluctance to share data relating to the impacts of the disease in the past six months must disturb citizens the most. The government told Parliament that 10.5 million workers had left for home during the lockdown but said it did not know how many had died on the journey, or who, if anyone, had been compensated. The government claimed further to not know how many workers had lost their jobs, nor how many policemen had died from Covid. It also did not know how many MSME enterprises had shut down since March, nor how many workers had committed suicide. Asked for details of healthcare professionals who had been infected by the disease and those who had died as a result, the Government said it did not have the information. This incredible admission was countered almost immediately by the Indian Medical Association that published a list of 382 doctors who had died of Covid and asked that they be treated as martyrs. In an uncharacteristically harsh denunciation of the Government, the IMA termed the Health Minister's admission as "abdication of duty and abandonment of the national heroes who have stood up for our people." It said: "No nation has lost as many doctors and healthcare workers as India. Doctors suffer four times the mortality of ordinary citizens and private practitioners suffer eight times mortality on the same scale. To feign that this information doesn't merit the attention of the nation is abominable."

While this is not the first government to stonewall when asked inconvenient questions, nor will it be the last, the manner in which it managed the epidemic must be deemed part of a social contract that binds it to answering questions, especially when it has been patting itself on the back for a job it claims it did very well. This must of course beg the question - how can the government know it did well when it claims not to have much of the critical data based on which such a conclusion could be reached? Doubtless, there have been successes in India's battle against the epidemic and certainly the low fatality rate and the high recovery rate are components of this success.

But they make up just one part of a story that has many dimensions. Unless governments at the Centre and in the various states introspect honestly on what they could have done better, no lessons will have been learnt on how to handle the next public health crisis. Either itself, or through the Niti Aayog, which is tasked with precisely this function, the Government should commission a White Paper on all aspects of its response to the epidemic and share it with citizens.

# Small is Beautiful

We would do well to shun our pursuit of the extraordinary, to the detriment of the ordinary. Let us set simple goals for ourselves, to be achieved at our natural pace; the first one being that no man should sleep hungry or stay permanently unhappy



**A**s a people, we are obsessed with pigeonholing all kind of things. We even grade our VIPs; we have a Warrant of Precedence which tells us whether a retired Governor is senior to a sitting MP and so on. No wonder that we take pride in trying to race to number one position in everything, even if it is in the number of Coronavirus infections.

This fixation with one-upmanship makes us try to leapfrog to becoming a \$5 trillion economy, at a time when we rank at 102 out of 117 countries in the World Hunger Index and at number 144 out of 156 countries, ranked in the World Happiness Index. A relevant question arises: "Should we follow policies that take our economy forward but leave most of our countrymen behind, poor and unhappy?"

The days of slow, incremental progress that took everyone along are now referred to as the bad old days; such development is derided as progress at the 'Hindu rate of growth.' The opening up of the Indian economy in 1991, which accelerated the growth of our economy, has also exacerbated inequalities of wealth and income in our society, that have rapidly increased year after year.

Thomas Piketty and Lucas Chancel in their aptly titled study *Indian Income Inequality 1922-2014: From British Raj to Billionaire Raj* pointed out that currently, the richest 1 per cent Indians earn 22 per cent of our total income; up from 6 per cent in the early 1980s and somewhat higher than their 21 per cent share in the 1930s.

According to the Annual Global Wealth Databook published by Credit Suisse, the richest 1 per cent of our country cornered 61 per cent of the extra wealth generated between 2000 and 2015. Oxfam in their study *Time to Care* ahead of the 50th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, mentions that India's richest 1 per cent hold more than four times the wealth held by 953 million people who make up the bottom 70 per cent of the country's population. The difference between the rich and poor can be gauged from the fact that India has more than 30 crore people living below the poverty line but 2.5 lakh of our countrymen, led by Mr Mukesh Ambani, who earned Rs 300 crore per day, figure in the top 1 per cent of the world's richest people.

Not all the money with the super-rich has been earned honestly; in addition to the various scams, our banks have lost around Rs 12 lakh crore to bad loans. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had observed: "India happens to be a rich country, inhabited by very poor people." Unfortunately, 73 years after independence we can only add 'and some ultra-rich ones' to Mr Singh's observation.

The present economic crisis, triggered by the Coronavirus pandemic, has seen our GDP dip by 24 per cent. Big business has been badly affected; despite generous handouts by the Government most industry associations are still begging for sops at the Government's door. The RB-appointed KV Kamath Committee, which worked out the financial parameters for loan restructuring, has concluded that 72 per cent of the banking sector debt worth Rs 37.72 lakh crore was under stress.

Further, according to the Committee, the Coronavirus pandemic is not solely responsible for the stressed loans; Rs 23.71 lakh crore, or 45 per cent of banking sector debt, was already under stress, even before Covid-19 hit the economy. All these stressed bank loans are, ultimately, to be paid for by the Indian public through taxes like GST, VAT and Income-tax. This alone would show that far from being an engine of growth, big business is proving to be an albatross around the economy's neck. It goes to the credit of the Kamath Committee that it has laid down stringent criteria which would ensure that only deserving businesses would be financed. However, the basic principle on which big businesses operate viz. "profits are personal while losses are public" needs to be discarded for good. Even otherwise, under various incentive schemes, the Government is restructuring loans, providing guarantees and reducing interest rates, as an antidote to the Coronavirus induced slowdown. Such measures are sure to decrease the profits of banks and affect adversely the income of honest people who had saved for a rainy day. Surprisingly, there has been little public debate on this strategy of the Government,

with most (interested) people justifying the move to provide cheap loans and even suggesting cash handouts to defaulting businesses, unmindful of the fact that the rock bottom bank interest rates have made money fly away from productive avenues to the stock market and gold bourses.

The underlying idea of achieving rapid growth, financed by cheap credit to big businesses, so assiduously promoted by successive Governments, is flawed for many reasons. If after availing of so many incentives, our manufacturing sector is not strong enough to stand up to China, South Korea or even Vietnam then something is decidedly wrong with our policies and their implementation. Rather, availability of easy credit prompts many promoters to overvalue their assets and then borrow to the extent of their actual investment leaving them with no financial stakes in their enterprises. More dishonest promoters borrow against non-existent assets or dispose of their assets after taking loans and then hoof it to foreign shores. The interest cost on borrowed funds ensures that

only established and well-run businesses can thrive on borrowed funds; investors flock only to such enterprises, an example being the Reliance group that has attracted Rs 1.5 lakh crores of foreign equity investment, even in these difficult times. In contrast to big businesses, agriculture and most small businesses were not so badly affected by the pandemic; plodding away, slowly and steadily, at their 'Hindu' rate of growth, like the tortoise, in the hare and tortoise story. Around 45 per cent of our population is employed in agriculture while almost 70 per cent of the workers in the non-agricultural sector are employed in informal enterprises, which may be the reason that human misery has not been more pronounced in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic. For long, the Government had a policy of supporting small manufacturing units through various measures, but the Economic Survey 2018-19 had an entire chapter "Nourishing Dwarfs to become Giants: Reorienting policies for MSME

Growth" which advocated withdrawal of all benefits to such units. Many business enterprises prefer to remain small, not just to avail of Government munificence but because of many reasons, different for each unit. Then, a small and well managed enterprise is any day preferable to a large but badly managed one. Misuse of incentives should be curbed but pulling the plug on all small units may not be the best policy.

According to GST data, we have only 70,000 units with a turnover exceeding Rs 5 crore, which alone could need large loans. The credit requirement of such units could be met by a special bank jointly floated by all Public Sector Banks. This bank would soon develop enough skill to keep its money safe. Except some banks exclusively for farmers, all other banks could finance and provide technical expertise only to small enterprises.

Banks may resist this arrangement but such a step may be necessary to prevent public money from falling into the hands of fraudsters and loan defaulters. The 2008 meltdown exposed the venality of big banks in the USA. Despite their long list of delinquencies, the US Government found that the stressed financial institutions were 'too big to fail' and had to be saved at public cost. The present thinking of the Finance Ministry of amalgamating all public sector banks into four large banks would create similar leviathans in our country also. We would do well to shun our pursuit of the extraordinary, to the detriment of the ordinary.

Let us set simple goals for ourselves, to be achieved at our natural pace; the first one being that no man should sleep hungry or stay permanently unhappy. We should aim for greater things, at an accelerated pace, only after we have successfully achieved such 'small' goals. The pointlessness of unbridled and uneven economic development, at the cost of people and environment, has been highlighted in E.F. Schumacher's classic treatise *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*.

The conclusion reached by Schumacher is worth repeating: "Economic development is something much wider and deeper than economics, let alone econometrics. Its roots lie outside the economic sphere, in education, organisation, discipline and beyond that, in political independence and a national consciousness of self-reliance."

A MEMBER OF THE



## Assess and address risks

Covid-19 infections in Nepal are at their peak and rising. As of Tuesday afternoon, there were 66,632 infections and 429 coronavirus-related deaths reported in the country since the pandemic began. But the Oli administration continues to downplay the Covid-19 situation despite the growing number of cases and deaths. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health and Population continues to make reckless decisions that increase the risks for citizens and those serving in the frontlines. It seems, there is little effort or intent to flatten the curve or ensure that people's lives are not endangered.

Given the slippery situation we are in, risks have escalated, to say the least. However, instead of expanding tests and tracing susceptible contacts, the government has failed to make any headway based on empirical evidence. It has even failed to initiate a sero-prevalence survey while it continues to deny community transmission. Amid all this failure, restrictions, by and large, have been lifted with 'strict safety protocols' to be followed while there is little monitoring if the government orders are being adhered to.

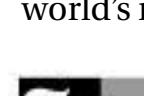
In the lack thereof, epidemiologists and infectious disease doctors fear that the public is at greater risk of being infected especially as the Dashain festival is just around the corner, and all long-haul public transportation including domestic aviation has resumed. Designated parking areas and public transportation stops along the routes have also gone back to becoming crowded, which further increases the risks of people contracting the virus through droplets or contaminated surfaces.

## THE KATHMANDU POST

Multiple studies on the virus have warned that there is a risk of airborne transmission, which could have dire implications if physical distancing guidelines are not followed. Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have discovered that droplets can travel as far as 8 metres. In Wuhan, China, researchers have highlighted that the virus could remain afloat even after the carrier had left the bus. According to the researchers, the virus can linger in the air for at least 30 minutes and travel up to 4.5 metres. Another study across 120 cities in China has shown that one out of three outbreaks involved public transportation.

The government cannot turn a blind eye to these scientific findings or bow down to pressure from various quarters while making decisions that directly affect people's lives. In the capital and major cities and towns across the country, we are already seeing public vehicles failing to comply with health and safety protocols that allow only one passenger per seat. Epidemiologists fear the situation could worsen when the Dashain traffic picks up in a fortnight from now. With increased public mobility, the virus could also spread to all parts of the country, and there is little public confidence that the safety protocols will be enforced.

Risks run equally high on board an aircraft where the chance of disease transmission within confined spaces has been found to be affected by ventilation and distance between passengers. The government has backed down from its earlier decision and allowed domestic airlines to operate at full capacity while a negative PCR test report is not mandatory. How can we screen for asymptomatic cases with only a temperature reading and a self-declaration form at the airports?



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Farmers' woes

SIR, The initiative of the Modi government to bring about far-reaching reforms in agriculture has run into rough weather, mainly over fears that the free market philosophy at its core could spell the end of MSPs for produce that has so far been centrally procured by the government.

The minister of its oldest ally has resigned in protest, and there is a strong

pushback from farmers against three Bills that seek to replace ordinances issued in June on key aspects of the farm economy.

The opposition to the Bills, particularly on trade, flows from the position, articulated by Punjab, that agriculture and markets are State subjects, and there should be no tinkering with the MSP and Agricultural Produce Market Commit-

tees (APMC) that form the backbone of existing trading arrangements. Mr Modi has characterised the arguments as misleading, promising that the MSP system will continue.

This is welcome, but the new dispensation cannot bring cheer to small farmers, who form the majority and whose access levels to markets under the APMC system is well below the recommendation of the National Commission on Farmers (NCF). There is evidence also

that mere liberalisation does not lead to private investment in new markets.

If the Centre's intent is to strengthen competition, it should massively fund the expansion of the APMC market system, removing trade cartels, and providing farmers with good roads, logistics of scale and real time information.

Rather than opt for heavy centralisation, the emphasis should be on empowering farmers through State Farmers Commissions recommended by the NCF to bring about a speedy government response to issues.

Yours, etc., Sanjay Chopra,  
Mohali, 22 September.

## SUBURBAN TRAINS

SIR, This is with reference to your report "Suburban train services: Rlys may seek help of Bengal police" (September 20). The Central Government clamped five lockdowns to contain the spread of Covid-19 pandemic start-

## UNPRECEDENTED

SIR, The way two important bills on farms and farmers were passed in Rajya Sabha was unprecedented in Indian democracy. The demand of the opposition to send the bills for further discussion to a select committee was bypassed by a voice vote.

The opposition leaders demanded a division, but the Deputy Chairman who was in chair rejected the plea. The Central government is slowly but steadily tightening the noose on the throat of democracy. Why is the government keeping Parliament open and indulging in this farce when it is determined to bulldoze everything on the basis of majority?

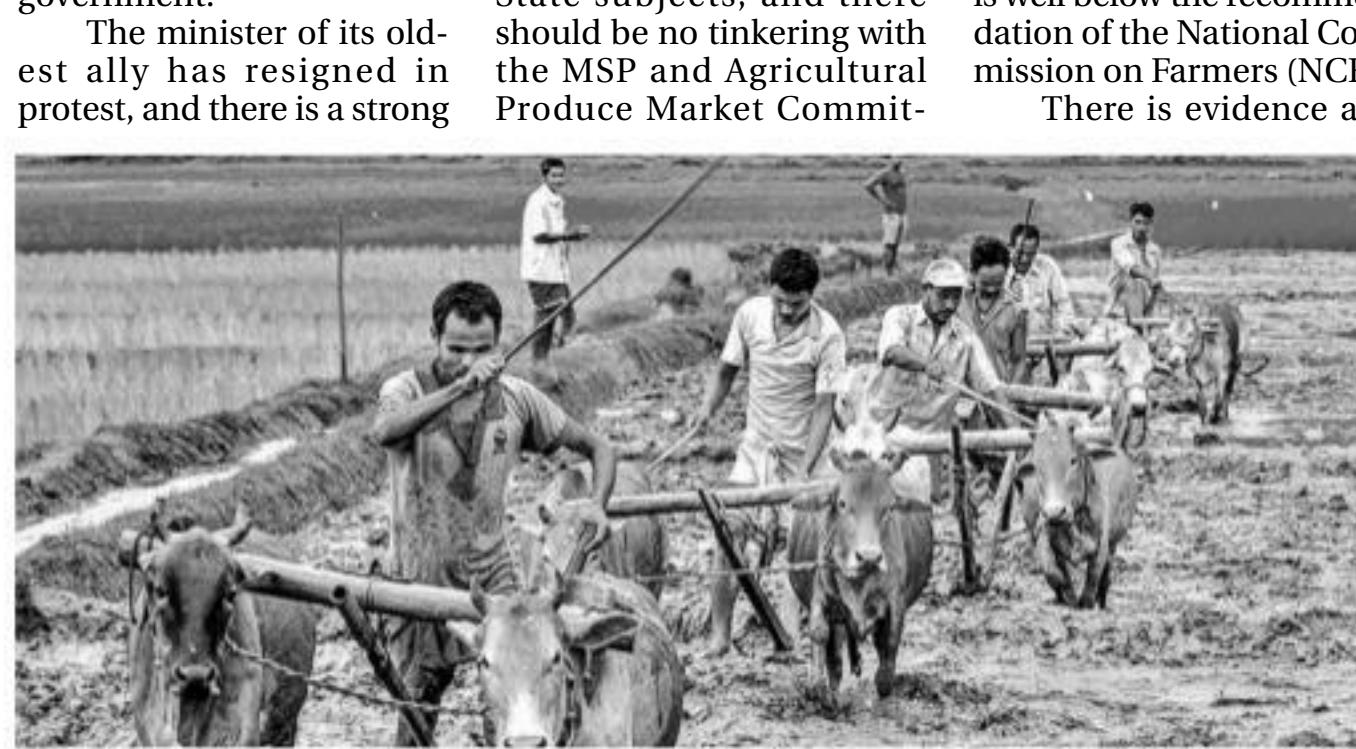
Yours, etc., Shovonlal Chakraborty,  
Kolkata, 21 September.

ing from 24 March. With the announcement of Unlock 5, everything will return to normal and an announcement is expected after the Prime Minister's consultation with Chief Ministers of states. The daily commuters of suburban trains are going through very difficult phase due to suspension of such train operations and are paying much more for travel on private buses that are charging twice the normal

fares while abandoning social distancing norms.

The government has been a mute spectator. People are taking risks by boarding overcrowded buses for the sake of their livelihoods. If suburban trains start running along with the Kolkata Metro with certain rules and regulations, it will be a blessing for commuters.

Yours, etc., Sumit Kumar Das, Baidyabati, 20 September.



# The importance of Blue Carbon Conservation

ABHIROOP CHOWDHURY AND ARMIN ROSENCRANZ

**E**xreme weather events, forest fires and the increasing frequency of natural disasters due to climate change can be mitigated by conserving the salt water-loving tropical mangrove ecosystems. They have a high potential of "blue carbon" sequestration as well as serving as a bio-shield against cyclones and storm surges.

The world is currently battling climate change. The modern era is plagued by rising temperatures, increasing natural disasters, changing weather patterns and blazing forest fires, impacting lives and livelihoods across the globe. All these disaster events are related to climate change. Scientific evidence indicates that there has been a 45 per cent increase in the global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentration between 1700 and 2015. CO<sub>2</sub> is the major contributor to climate change. The focus of the present century is to capture this unwanted gas from the atmosphere to halt global warming trends.

Mangrove plantations can 'lock' carbon within their green plants. Unlike rain forests or other diverse tropical ecosystems, the saline coastal wetlands have a large capacity to capture carbon. The mangroves and sea grasses trapped in the body, biomass, soil or sediment of coastal wetlands are termed 'blue carbon'. Because this 'carbon capture' is facilitated by coastal saline wetlands and marine ecosystems, the term 'blue carbon' is used by scientists. Scientific literature indicates that mangroves, a special type of plant group adapted to survive in saline coastal wetlands, can trap 1,023 megagrams of carbon per hectare. This is higher carbon capture than any other terrestrial ecosystem.

In recent years there has been an exponential rise in development activities along the coasts. The problem is particularly acute because of population increases along the globe's coastal regions. Coastal regions account for 4 per cent of the world's total land area but are the home to



one third of the world's population. This development and population increase have resulted in a 30-50 per cent decrease of mangrove cover across the globe over the last half-century. Rampant land conversion, over-exploitation of resources, aquaculture, large scale fishing and tourism activities account for this sharp decrease in mangroves.

Mangroves render a multitude of ecological services; foremost amongst these is mitigation of disaster impacts on the coastline. Areas having mangrove bio-shields saved millions of lives from a super cyclone in eastern India during October 1999. Sundarbans mangrove reserve forests fringing the Bay of Bengal saved extensive

areas of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta during the 2004 tsunami, demonstrating the disaster mitigation services rendered by these salt-loving plants. In the current scenario of climate change-influenced sea level rise, these forests are nature's major bulwark to save the coastal regions.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that there are 170,756 square kilometers of mangroves spread over 112 countries. Indonesia has the highest mangrove cover in terms of area but India-Bangladesh's Sunderban region has the world's largest contiguous mangrove forest, spread over 10,000 square kilometers. In spite of conservation initiatives taken by the govern-

ment to protect this mangrove treasure, the Sundarbans region has to bear the brunt of pollution, land conversion, exploitative fishing activities and tiger poaching that directly impact the mangrove ecosystem.

Salinity rise in the delta due to the intrusion of salt water from the sea is another reason behind the reduction of mangrove biodiversity in the Indian parts of the Sundarbans. Scientific studies have revealed that saline intrusion excludes many salt-sensitive mangrove species, which is alarming news for mangrove conservationists.

With the ever-growing threats of climate change, extreme weather events now affect millions across the

globe. Given the capacity of mangroves to sequester large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> and to protect the coastline from sea level rise, mangrove conservation seems crucial. Developmental activities should be strictly regulated in the mangrove forest areas to conserve the ecosystem. Recreational visits should also be in 'responsible tourism' models, keeping in mind the fragility of the mangrove ecosystem. Proper governance, strict rules and awareness campaigns can be effective tools in protecting mangroves across the globe.

The writers are, respectively, Assistant professor and Dean of the Jindal School of Environment and Sustainability, Sonipat, Haryana, India.

## Virus may open door to pain relief

RAJESH KHANNA

ment.

You might be wondering how my lab began to probe the connection between SARS-CoV-2 and pain. We were inspired by two preliminary reports that appeared on the preprint server BioRxiv that showed that the infamous spike protein on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus bound to a protein called neuropilin-1. This means that the virus can also use this protein to invade nerve cells as well as through the ACE2 protein.

For the past year, some six months before the pandemic took hold, my colleagues and I had been studying the role of neuropilin-1 in the context of pain perception. Because neuropilin-1, like the ACE2 receptor, allowed spike to enter the cells, we wondered if this alternate gateway could also be related to pain.

Under normal circumstances, the neuropilin-1 protein controls the growth of blood vessels, and as well as the growth and survival of neurons.

However, when neuropilin-1 binds to a naturally occurring protein called Vascular endothelial growth factor A (VEGF-A), this triggers pain signals. This signal is transmitted via the spinal cord into higher brain centres to cause the sensation we all know as pain.

Staring at this jigsaw puzzle – neuropilin-1 and VEGF-A and neuropilin and spike – we wondered if there was a link between spike and pain.

Previous research has shown a link between VEGF-A and pain. For people with osteoarthritis, for instance, studies have shown that

increased activity of the VEGF gene in fluids lubricating joints, like the knee, is associated with higher pain scores.

Although activity of the neuropilin-1 gene is higher in biological samples from Covid-19 patients compared to healthy controls and activity of the neuropilin-1 gene is increased in pain-sensing neurons in an animal model of chronic pain, the role of neuropilin-1 in pain has never been explored until now.

In vitro studies done in my lab

using nerve cells, we showed that when spike binds to neuropilin-1 it decreases pain signalling, which suggests that in a living animal it would also have a pain-dulling effect.

When the spike protein binds to the neuropilin-1 protein, it blocks the VEGF-A protein from binding and thus hijacks a cell's pain circuitry. This binding suppresses the excitability of pain neurons, leading to lower sensitivity to pain.

If our finding that the new coro-

navirus is attacking cells through a protein associated with pain and disabling the protein can be confirmed in humans, it may provide a new pathway for drug development to treat Covid-19.

A small molecule, called EG00229, targeting neuropilin-1 had been reported in a 2018 study. This molecule binds to the same region of the neuropilin-1 protein as the viral spike protein and VEGF-A. So I and my colleagues asked if this molecule was able to block pain. It did, during pain simulations in rats. Our data reaffirmed the notion of neuropilin-1 as a new player in pain signalling.

There is precedence for targeting the neuropilin-1 protein for cancer treatment: for example, a Phase 1a clinical trial of an antibody called MNRP1685A (known under the product name Vesencumab) that recognizes and binds to neuropilin-1 and blocks VEGF-binding. This was mostly well tolerated in cancer patients, but it caused pain rather than blocking it.

Our studies identify a different approach because we targeted blocking the pain-triggering VEGF-A protein, which then resulted in pain relief. So, our preclinical work described here provides a rationale for targeting the VEGF-A/NRP-1 pro-pain signalling system in future clinical trials.

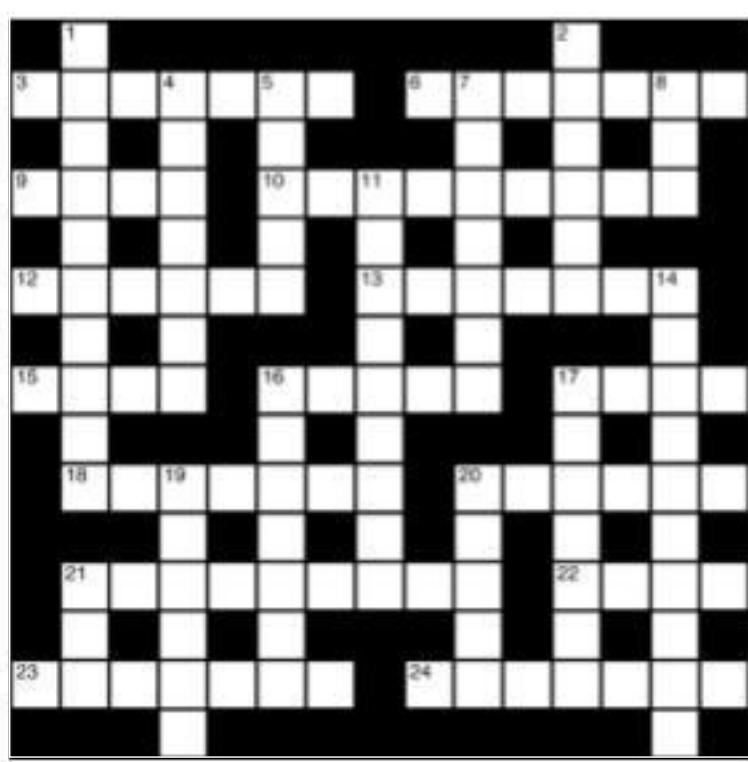
Analysis of the structure of the neuropilin-1 receptor protein may allow design of drugs targeting this critical site which also controls axon growth, cell survival – in addition to pain relief.

The writer is Professor of Pharmacology, University of Arizona. This article was published on [www.theconversation.com](http://www.theconversation.com)

NO 28083

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|---|---|---|
| <b>ACROSS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 "Odd choice of choirs", said chap in outlying region of France (7)</li> <li>6 Wrong football team has managed to lose? Rats! (7)</li> <li>9 Bass about soprano: "Flipping stuck-up sort" (4)</li> <li>10 Being resigned to doing without a mushroom (9)</li> <li>12 Kind of anthem: timelessly fresh and intrinsically universal (6)</li> <li>13 Lowest note? Second in sung Mass (7)</li> <li>15 Edit choral piece that's really long? (4)</li> <li>16 Happily sing choral</li> </ul> | <b>DOWN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17 Choir's foremost mature composer (4)</li> <li>18 Unnerved conductor with loud ending (7)</li> <li>20 Ring a girl about Van Morrison song (6)</li> <li>21 Essentially free thinkers, those like Christ (9)</li> <li>22 Fine piece from 1 I clued (4)</li> <li>23 Piece of music by rock band, with short piano introduction (7)</li> <li>24 Escaped from one-time capital in Germany after vacation (5,4)</li> </ul> | <b>8</b> Piece of music from 1 (a 20A) (3)<br><b>11</b> River crossing 5 16D's city (9)<br><b>14</b> Hymn needing organ briefly? Arranged without one, in fact (10)<br><b>16</b> Old King's lecturer, say, resident in it? (7)<br><b>17</b> Rearranged 16A? He gets a complaint (7)<br><b>19</b> Muted trombone's finale, playing hymn (2,4)<br><b>20</b> Gadget item somehow messing with our heads? (5)<br><b>21</b> Fishballs? (3) |
|---|---|---|

### CROSSWORD



#### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

S	E	C	A	O	T	S	M
A	L	L	T	H	E	F	U
T	Y	A	R	S	R	O	N
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I	C	R	I	E	E	A	L
A	L	E	U	T	I	U	T
I	E	K	E	K	E	U	N
E	N	D	E	M	I	N	G
T	E	N	G	R	R	A	V
R	U	S	R	A	G	E	E
S	U	S	U	R	E	N	T
R	U	S	U	R	E	N	T
G	O	D	F	R	N	O	T
O	O	N	T	O	N	T	H
R	E	A	R	U	N	O	T
E	L	M	I	N	T	E	N
T	R	R	L	O	T	S	G

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

100 YEARS AGO

#### OPTIONAL NOTE

The full details given by the Australian papers regarding the accident to the train in which the Prince of Wales was travelling on the 5th instant confirm the brief accounts which were transmitted by cables, but they must increase public thankfulness for the providential escape which the Prince had from a very serious danger. Fortunately, the train was moving at a slow speed; otherwise much worse consequences almost inevitably must have happened. It is said that the train had been obliged to slow down because of the appearance of a stray cow on the line. One can but hope that this is true, if only to provide a companion story for Stephenson's hackneyed saying. The pluck exhibited by the Prince and the members of his staff in an emergency which might well try the strongest nerves will certainly be appreciated in Australia and everywhere else. It is a matter for very sincere gratitude that an incident which might have thrown a cloud over the whole Empire ends instead in providing a theme for congratulation and in giving the public another glimpse of the sterling qualities of which the Prince proved himself to be possessed when he went to the front.

#### NEWS ITEMS

#### THE WORLD'S FOOD

According to the June Bulletin of Agricultural and Commercial statistics, just published by the International Institute of Agriculture, Rome, the official estimate of the winter wheat crop of the United States of 1920 is for about 13.7 million tons and that of the spring crop for about 7.5 millions. Hence the aggregate yield of wheat in the United States will be 21.2 million tons, or 27 per cent below that of last year, though only 4.9 per cent less than the average of the five years 1914 to 1918. It should however be remembered that the actual quantity exported from the United States during the current season falls short of the available surplus, so that stocks at the end of this period will be greater than those held last year.

#### EAST AFRICAN EMPIRE

Sir Theodore Morrison, in a letter to the Times, strongly supports the suggestion made by Lord Islington in the House of Lords for a Royal Commission to examine the political problems of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika. He urges that the Commission be composed of men with wide experience of tropical administration, and suggests that the true solution of the East African problems lies in the establishment of a powerful Central Government to deal with them on the spot. Sir Theodore Morrison expounds a scheme for an East African Empire, of which the various Colonies and Protectorates should become Provinces, with a Governor-General, enjoying a status comparable to that of the Viceroy of India.

#### BOXING AT MADRAS

The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Rifles Boxing Tournament opened last night in a special enclosure arranged for the purpose on the grounds of the Madras Gymkhana. The tournament was under the patronage of the G.O.C., Southern Brigade, with Lt.-Colonel H.M. Dwanie, Commanding 1/32 Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Rifles, as president. Flight-Lieutenant Saunders, of the Royal Air Force was referee, and Major W.H. Warden, 88th Carnatic Infantry, and Lieutenant A.L.B. Plunkett, Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Rifles, judges. The programme for the night was a long one and consisted of no less than 21 bouts. Cadets, Indian Defence Force, and British units took part in the boxing.

#### JAPANESE IN BURMA

Rumours have been current for some time past that the Japanese were trying to get a footing in the rice business in Burma. It is now known they have succeeded, and have completed the purchase of Joseph Heap and Sons' Dawbong rice mill in its entirety, and have also purchased land in Kanaungto and Bassein, belonging to the same firm. The price is not known. The purchasers of Messrs. Heap and Sons' property are the Japan Cotton Trading Company who have started actively by purchases of paddy.

#### SECOND BOMB OUTRAGE

In connection with the statement of the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore about the second bomb outrage at Rawalpindi, we are informed by the Punjab Government that they have received no confirmation of the report. Bombs recently discovered in the Northern Punjab area are apparently of the nature of the so-called hairbrush, and are believed to have emanated from beyond the frontier. These cases are regarded as a new form of Ghazi fanaticism, which is endemic on the frontier.

Implementing the reforms vision  
is the principal challenge for IndiaCHARLES KAYE  
CEO, WARBURG PINUS

## THUMBNAILS

**CIL contract:** Coal India Ltd, the world's largest miner, has finalised contracts for heavy earth moving equipment worth over Rs 5,900 crore to ramp up production, its chairman Pramod Agrawal said on Wednesday. The miner is also planning a capex of Rs 10,000 crore during the current financial year. Early this year, the company had said it was looking at spending around Rs 7,000 crore on heavy equipment to bolster production.

PTI

**HDFC cash chase:** Mortgage lender Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd (HDFC) on Wednesday said it will raise up to Rs 5,000 crore by issuing bonds on a private placement basis. The issue size for the secured redeemable non-convertible debentures (NCDs) will be Rs 2,500 crore with an option to retain oversubscription of up to Rs 2,500 crore, HDFC Ltd said in a regulatory filing to stock exchanges.

PTI

**EESL MD:** State-run Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) on Wednesday announced the appointment of Rajat Sud as its managing director. Rajat Sud has taken over the charge of managing director of the EESL, a company statement said. Sud has taken over the position from S Gopal, director (commercial), who had been given additional charge of interim managing director. Sud is an energy sector veteran with 29 years of industry experience.

PTI

**LG TV:** LG Electronics has launched 8 new LG OLED TVs in India led by two new series ~ GX Gallery series available in 77 and 65-inch class and Real 8K 88-inch ZX series. The whole new range of 8K and 4K LG OLED & NanoCell TVs are designed to deliver stunning picture quality and innovative design with upgraded performance and artificial intelligence-enabled features that bring movies, sports and video games to life like never before imagined, the company said in a statement.

SNS

**Motorola smartphone:** Motorola on Wednesday announced the launch of its new smartphone ~ moto e7 plus. The phone is completely made in India and delivers the best-in-class camera with a 48MP f/1.7 primary shooter with night vision technology, the company said. It will be available from 30 September exclusively on Flipkart at a price of Rs 9,499, it added.

SNS

**Chemcon IPO:** Mirroring massive investor demand, the initial public offer of Chemcon Speciality Chemicals was subscribed a whopping 149 times on the last day of bidding on Wednesday. The Rs 318-crore initial public offer received bids for 97,64,26,440 shares against 65,47,061 shares on offer, according to information available.

PTI

# KKR picks up 1.28% stake in Reliance Retail for ₹5,550 cr

This is the second investment by KKR in RIL units; It had previously bought 2.32% in Jio Platforms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

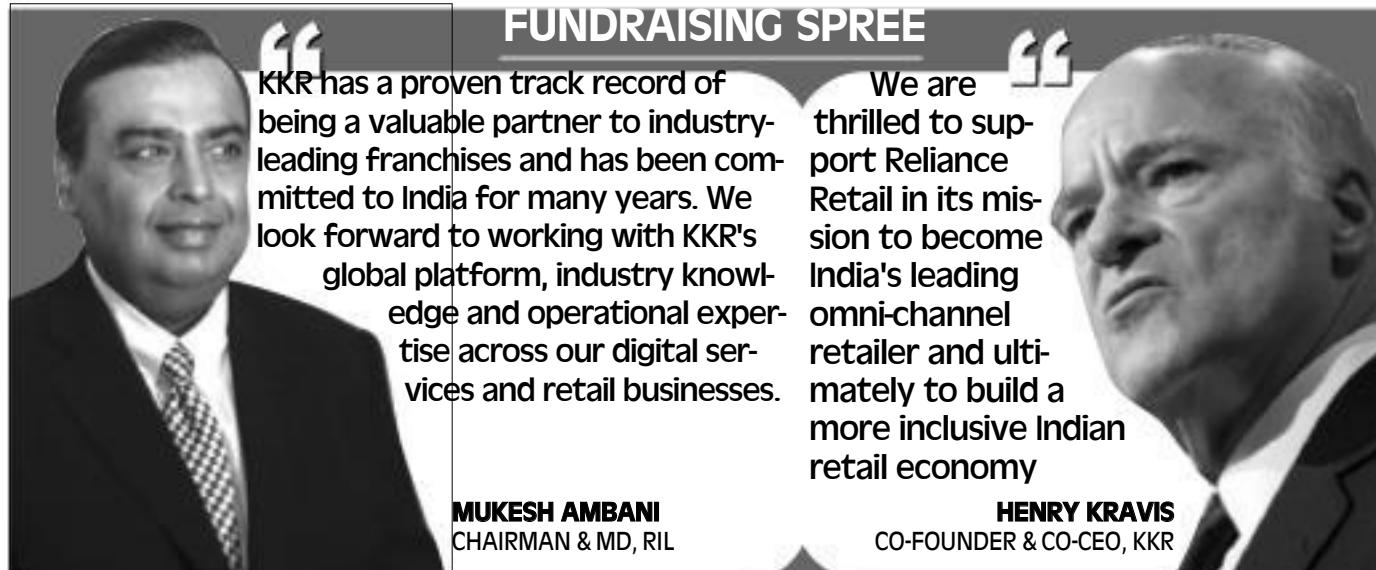
**U**nprivate equity firm KKR & Co will invest Rs 5,550 crore to buy a 1.28 per cent stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's retail arm as the Mukesh Ambani-run conglomerate extends fundraising spree that has already netted more than \$20 billion.

"KKR will invest Rs 5,550 crore into Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd," the Indian firm said in a statement.

The investment values Reliance Retail, which runs grocery stores and fashion chains, at a pre-money equity value of Rs 42.1 lakh crore.

"KKR's investment will translate into a 1.28 per cent equity stake in RRVL on a fully diluted basis," it said.

This is the second investment by KKR in Reliance Industries (RIL) units. It had previously picked up a 2.32 per cent stake in the digital arm, Jio Platforms for Rs 11,367 crore.



## FUNDRAISING SPREE

KKR has a proven track record of being a valuable partner to industry-leading franchises and has been committed to India for many years. We look forward to working with KKR's global platform, industry knowledge and operational expertise across our digital services and retail businesses.

MUKESH AMBANI  
CHAIRMAN & MD, RIL

We are thrilled to support Reliance Retail in its mission to become India's leading omnichannel retailer and ultimately to build a more inclusive Indian retail economy.

HENRY KRAVIS  
CO-FOUNDER & CO-CEO, KKR

For Reliance Retail, KKR is the second investor. US private equity firm Silver Lake Partners had earlier this month agreed to buy 1.75 per cent stake in the venture for Rs 7,500 crore.

Reliance Retail Limited, a subsidiary of RRVL, operates India's largest, fastest-growing and most profitable retail business spanning supermarkets, consumer electronics chain stores, cash and carry wholesale business, fast-fashion outlets, and online grocery store JioMart. It operates almost 12,000 stores in

nearly 7,000 towns.

The investment will add fire to Ambani's battle for dominance in the retail market that is also being eyed by Jeff Bezos' Amazon.com and Walmart Inc's Flipkart. In May, Reliance launched an online grocery delivery service JioMart. It has tied up with WhatsApp to connect customers with local kirana stores.

Late last month, Reliance acquired the retail and logistics businesses of Future Group for Rs 24,713 crore to boost its retail vertical.

Founded in 1976, KKR has

\$222 billion in assets under management as of 30 June 2020. It currently has about \$5.1 billion in private equity investments across more than 15 Indian companies, including Jio Platforms, JB Chemicals, Max Healthcare, Eurokids International and Ramky Enviro Engineers.

"We are thrilled to support Reliance Retail in its mission to become India's leading omnichannel retailer and ultimately to build a more inclusive Indian retail economy," he said.

"KKR is making its investment from its Asia private equity funds. The transaction is subject to regulatory and other customary approvals, the statement said.

working with KKR's global platform, industry knowledge and operational expertise across our digital services and retail businesses."

Henry Kravis, co-founder and co-CEO of KKR, said: "RRVL is empowering merchants of all sizes and fundamentally changing the retail experience for Indian consumers."

"Reliance Retail's new commerce platform is filling an important need for both consumers and small businesses as more Indian consumers move to shopping online and the company offers tools for kiranas to be a critical part of the value chain."

"We are thrilled to support Reliance Retail in its mission to become India's leading omnichannel retailer and ultimately to build a more inclusive Indian retail economy," he said.

Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of RIL, said: "KKR has a proven track record of being a valuable partner to industry-leading franchises and has been committed to India for many years. We look forward to

stop importing from countries from which we apprehend a risk or countries which are of concern," the minister said.

The government will continue to examine imported equipment with a "magnifying glass" for years, he said, indicating choice of importing may cause business losses as well.

Singh further said that there is a need of a government-industry partnership in the sector. The whole world works on this pattern.

The government wants to make the industry "Aatmanirbhar", he said, adding manufacturing of equipment will create jobs in India. It will also avoid forex outgo.

"Our sector is very vulnerable to cyber attacks. We have connected the whole country into one grid...you bring down one part and rest will collapse. Therefore, we need to check all imports. (In fact) we are checking if some device is inserted in the imported item. So my advice to you is

to set up a task force and give them the target of setting up manufacturing zones (in the country). I am thinking of setting up at least three to four manufacturing zones where you will get land at very reasonable prices, power at very reasonable prices, and we will set up a common testing centre..." the minister said.

## Japanese firms buy 56% in Bharat Insecticides

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

Japanese companies Mitsui and Nippon Soda have acquired 56 per cent stake in agro-chemical firm Bharat Insecticides Ltd (BIL).

As a result of this deal, BIL has become a group company of Mitsui & Co Ltd and Nippon Soda Co Ltd (Nissos), the Delhi-based company said today, without disclosing the next level."

Mitsui and Nissos have acquired 56 per cent stake in BIL through a special purpose company co-founded by Nissos and Mitsui. The BIL's promoters will continue to hold balance shares in BIL," the company said in a statement.

The new relationship with Mitsui and Nissos will further

strengthen BIL's ability to deliver innovative crop protection products and support sustainable growth of India's agriculture sector, it added.

BIL's founder promoter Sat Narain Gupta said: "This is a momentous occasion for us. BIL was started 43 years back with just 2 products and since then, BIL has come a long way. We hope that being part of Mitsui group will take BIL to the next level."

Other promoters, MP Gupta and RP Gupta, also expressed confidence that the tie-up will help BIL grow at a faster pace.

BIL managing director Dharmesh Gupta said: "With this alliance, BIL will be in a unique position to leverage the synergies in area of product development with access

to Mitsui's global assets and Nissos' world class R&D capabilities."

The alliance will help BIL to grow not only in domestic market but also global markets.

As part of this association, there are few additions to BIL's leadership team, the statement said.

Kimihide Kondo, GM Mitsui, has joined BIL as joint MD, and Masanori Katsura has joined as the CFO. Both will be based out of New Delhi.

Kondo said: "Although Mitsui has been active in the rapidly growing Indian agro-chemical industry, this investment into BIL provides us the exciting opportunity to contribute in mainstream manufacturing and distribution of plant protection products in India."

## Tech Mahindra sells stake in US firm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

adding the consideration received from the sale is \$45 million.

In 2018, Tech Mahindra had acquired 17.5 per cent stake in the US-based telecom software development company Altistar Networks for \$45 million. Rakuten now owns majority stake in Altistar.

Tech Mahindra has also inked an agreement with Rakuten Mobile, under which the Indian tech firm will be a preferred partner and provide technologies as well as software capabilities to support the development and deployment of mobile networks for global customers of Rakuten Communications Platform (RCP).

In a regulatory filing, Tech Mahindra said its subsidiary Tech Mahindra (Americas) Inc has divested its holding of 18,518,181 Class I preferred shares in Altistar Networks.

"The buyer is Rakuten USA, Inc," the filing said.

strong relationship with telecom firms around the world, would become a preferred partner.

Gurnani said the 5G market presents an opportunity worth a few hundred billion dollars. The company has divided the 5G ecosystem into three parts - mobile service providers or various devices that are 5G enabled; 5G for communication service providers (telcos) trying to launch these services; and 5G for enterprises. Through the agreement with Rakuten, Tech Mahindra will also provide managed IT, security and network services to Rakuten Mobile. There are also plans to designate Tech Mahindra as an official reseller of RCP.

Mickey Mikitani, chairman, president and CEO of Rakuten Inc, said with a common vision for digital transformation of the telecommunications industry, the

company is very excited about the potential of the partnership with Tech Mahindra in bringing more agile, responsive and efficient services to customers around the world.

"RCP is the next stage in our journey...RCP is a next generation operator enabling platform that combines the technology blueprint and expert planning of Rakuten mobile and our world class partners to offer telecom companies and enterprise a way to easily build and deploy fully cloud native network at a speed and low cost," he added.

It is based on industry-disrupting technology that is democratising mobile and making 5G deployment more competitive, he said.

Mikitani said its technology will reduce operating expense by more than 30 per cent and capital expenditure by more than 40 per cent.

## Airtel acquires strategic stake in tech start-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

in a statement. The programme aims to help promising start-ups unlock their potential, the statement added.

The public cloud services market in India is likely to reach \$7.1 billion by 2024, according to IDC estimates. Of this, the cloud telephony market is seeing rapid growth as businesses move processes to cloud-based platforms.

"Waybeo has built cutting-edge analytics tools for the enterprise cloud telephony segment. Under the Airtel Startup Accelerator Program, Waybeo's solutions will get larger distribution reach while giving Airtel access to Waybeo's proven as well as emerging technologies," the statement added.

Backed by an integrated product portfolio, Airtel serves over 2,500 large enterprises and more than a million emerging businesses.

## Taxation, regulation need to run parallel: Toyota

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

loskar Motor managing director Masakazu Yoshimura said.

On the other hand, if the regulation system heads towards the other direction to meet new environmental and safety norms, it adds further to the cost of vehicles.

Yoshimura was responding to a query on Toyota's plans to bring new products from its global portfolio in India.

"Toyota, as you see globally, we are introducing newest, latest technology cars. Corollas, Yaris, GR Yaris, Supra, whatever cars we are producing, but if the market demand gives us the feasibility to introduce those cars, we can always bring (them) in India," he said.

The Indian auto industry has consistently sought reduction of GST on automobiles saying the current level of 28 per cent plus cess ranging from 1 per cent to 22 per cent depending on vehicle type and engine capacity, is making

vehicles unaffordable, while transitioning to BS-VI emission norms from April this year in a very short span has increased vehicle costs.

When asked if Toyota is ready to plunge into India's electric vehicle (EV) market, Yoshimura said the company would do so only when it becomes feasible.

"Even taking a risk at the moment is very huge. So we will see what will become feasible..." he added.

Yoshimura, however, said Toyota is investing over Rs 2,000 crore this year to prepare for production of parts of "electrified vehicles" at its plant in Karnataka in order to be ready as there is a shift in "demand

structure" of automobiles with such vehicles gaining traction.

With the new investment, the production capacity of 3 lakh units annually will not increase so much but the structure of manufacturing capability will be shifting towards that new technology area, he added.

Seeking government policy support for strong and plug-in hybrids, Yoshimura said at the moment Indian government is pushing for battery electric vehicles and the key to its success would be on its popularisation.

New launch: Toyota on Wednesday launched its compact SUV Urban Cruiser, which it has sourced from compatriot Suzuki, in India with price starting at Rs 8.4 lakh as it looks to use cross-badged products from the latter to draw more customers in the volume segment.

## Likhitha Infra sets IPO price band at ₹117-120

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 23 SEPTEMBER

Proceeds of initial share sale will be utilised by the company towards its working capital requirements so as to capitalise on the growing demand from oil and gas sector, and for general corporate purposes.

The Hyderabad-headquartered firm has over two decades of experience in laying pipeline networks along with construction of associated facilities, as well as providing operations and maintenance services to leading city gas distribution companies in India.

Likhitha Infrastructure had executed the first trans-national cross-country pipeline of south-east Asia, connecting India to Nepal.

## Equity indices fall for 5th straight day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 23 SEPTEMBER

cent to close at 11,131.85 points.

Bharti Airtel was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, tanking 7.89 per cent, a day after Reliance Jio unveiled aggressively priced post-paid plans bundling data and subscription to streaming services.

Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, PowerGrid, ONGC, TCS and Bajaj Finance were among the other losers, tumbling as much as 3.46 per cent.

On the other hand, Axis Bank, HUL, Infosys, HDFC Bank, Nestle India and Titan led the winners' chart with gains of up to 1.82 per cent.

Reliance Industries closed 0.83 per cent higher after the company said global investment firm KKR will invest Rs 5,550 crore in its subsidiary Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL) for 1.28 per cent equity stake.

### BHARTI AIRTEL DOWN 8%

► Bharti Airtel was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, tanking 7.89 per cent, a day after Reliance Jio unveiled aggressively priced post-paid



1.4 billion Chinese, undaunted by Covid-19,  
have made all efforts to control the virus

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
DURING THE 75TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

# Telling Covid's story: At UN, leaders spin virus storylines

Leaders use this week as an opportunity to depict pandemic from vantage points of their nations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS, 23 SEPTEMBER

**T**he subject: coronavirus. The status: urgent. The solutions: as diverse as the nations they lead.

With the 75th annual U.N. General Assembly reduced to recorded speeches because of the pandemic, leaders are using this week as an opportunity to depict the pandemic from the vantage points of their nations and themselves - and present their visions of efforts to fight the virus and advocate what they believe must be done.

A smattering of myriad ideas from speeches on Tuesday, the first day of the general debate:

- South African President Cyril Ramaphosa called for a suspension of interest pay-

ments on African nations' debt and renewed focus on eradicating global poverty.

Chilean President Sebastián Piñera called on powerful nations to work together and stop generating "a worrisome lack of leadership."

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte echoed a call from many leaders when he said that once an effective vaccine is developed, it must be made available to all nations.

Not surprisingly in such speeches, aimed at both domestic audiences and the international community, heads of state were presenting their own efforts in favorable light while sometimes harshly criticizing other countries or taking jabs at the United Nations.

This year's theme "reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism"

- comes at a time of extreme physical isolation between citizens in respective countries and between nations, a moment when international travel has declined sharply. It also comes as the world approaches 1 million deaths from the virus since December, adding urgency to the search for solutions.

"The leaders of our nations are not personally present. They will not be able to interact with each other," General Assembly President Volkan Bozkir, a Turkish diplomat, said in opening Tuesday's session. "But our need for deliberation is higher than ever."

Despite this year's theme, speeches by leaders of some of the world's most powerful nations have thus far been peppered with initiatives that sound more go-it-alone than collaborative, though all gave

nods to working together.

Russian President Vladimir Putin went so far as to offer U.N. personnel a coronavirus vaccine his country is developing. Chinese President Xi Jinping said a handful of vaccines were in phase 3 of clinical trials and that Beijing would give millions to a U.N. fund to combat the virus.

"1.4 billion Chinese, undaunted by COVID-19, have made all efforts to control the virus," Xi said, underscoring how China had drastically slowed the spread after the virus was discovered in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, while lauding his own nation's cooperation and calling for nations to work together, took a swipe at how the U.N. currently functions. Earlier this year, Erdogan said, it took months

for the Security Council to even discuss the pandemic.

Saeed Khan, director of global studies at Wayne State University in Michigan, said the coronavirus has "become a metaphor for globalism versus nationalism."

"The greatest resistance is coming from regimes that are hypernationalistic," he said.

To be sure, the pandemic has brought out simmering divisions between nations, providing new things over which to argue.

US President Donald Trump told the assembly that America had "waged a fight against a great enemy, the China virus," and called on the U.N. to hold China accountable for the virus and other things.

Trump, campaigning for re-election, did not mention that the US reached a grim milestone of 200,000 Covid deaths.

## Lankan main opp, five others challenge 20A draft Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO, 23 SEPTEMBER

day, while five other individuals filed it on Wednesday.

The interested parties have a week from submitting the petition to file objections in the Supreme Court challenging its constitutionality.

The apex court has further

3 weeks to determine if the proposed amendment would be consistent or ultra vires of the Constitution.

The SJB petition has argued that the amendment could only become law if it would be passed with two-thirds majority in Parliament and if approved in a referendum.

The government on September 2 gazetted 20A, the new proposed legislation that would replace the 19th Amendment introduced in 2015 that curtailed the powers of the President and strengthened the role of Parliament.

The main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) filed the petition on Tues-

key areas of governance including the system of elections.

The 19A was seen as the most progressive pro-democracy reformist move since Sri Lanka came to be governed under the all-powerful executive presidency in 1978.

The 20th Amendment proposes to restore full legal immunity to the President, removing the provisions made in the 19A to take legal action against the President.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected with a mandate to abolish the 19A.

During the last November's presidential elections and last month's parliamentary elections, Rajapaksa said that the 19A had made governance difficult as it created a rift between the executive president and PM.

He was also critical of the 19A provision which barred dual citizens from contesting elections. He had to renounce his US citizenship to contest the presidential election.

## Nepalese stage protests against China's land encroachment: Reports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, 23 SEPTEMBER

A civil society group in Nepal has launched protests against China for allegedly constructing buildings on the country's territory in Humla district, according to media reports on Wednesday.

The activists chanted slogans such as "Return Nepal's land" and "stop Chinese expansionism," it said.

According to media reports here, China has allegedly constructed 11 buildings on the Nepalese territory in the Humla district bordering Tibet. The disputed area lies in Lamphaville of Namkha Rural Municipality in Humla district.

Beijing has maintained that the constructions were carried out on the Chinese side of the border.

The reports also said that Pillar Number 11 that defined the Nepal-China boundary was missing from the area.

"There was just a hut in the area in 2005," Dattaraj Hamal, assistant chief district officer of Humla who visited the disputed area recently, was quoted as saying by *The Kathmandu Post*.

"I talked to the people there and reported to the chief district officer, Hamal said. "I in turn reported to the Home Ministry. He now has gone to the area as per the Home Ministry's instructions."

China and Nepal have no territorial disputes. The two sides have always maintained close communication on border affairs," the statement said.

### SAFE MEAL



People wearing face masks use their phones while waiting in front of a restaurant, in Beijing on Wednesday. ■ AFP

## Malaysian opp leader Anwar plans new govt

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KUALA LUMPUR, 23 SEPTEMBER

Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim (in photo) said Wednesday he has secured a majority in Parliament to form a new government that is strong, stable and formidable."

Anwar said he has been granted an audience with the king Tuesday but it was postponed because the king was in a hospital for treatment. He said he will not reveal details until after he has met the king.

Conclusively, we have a strong, formidable majority. I am not talking about four, five or six ... but much more than that, Anwar said. With a clear and indisputable support and majority behind me, the



government led by ... Muhyiddin Yassin has fallen."

There was no immediate response from Muhyiddin, who is due to give a televised speech later Wednesday. Muhyiddin has been grappling to maintain support amid infighting in his coalition that has just a slim two-seat majority. He can ask the king to dissolve Parliament to seek early general elections.

Science and Technology Minister Khairy Jamaluddin countered Anwar's claim. He tweeted a picture of the Cab-

inet meeting, saying: Cabinet meeting just ended. Nothing collapsed or fell." Anwar said it will be the king's sole discretion but noted that his government will not be an unelected one even though it involves new partners.

Anwar's Alliance of Hope was elected in 2018 but collapsed after Muhyiddin withdrew his party and tied up with corruption-tainted opposition parties to form a Malay-centric government in March. Then-Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad resigned in protest, but Anwar said Wednesday that Mahathir won't be part of his new government.

If he succeeds, it will mark a dramatic comeback for Anwar after his roller-coaster political journey since the 1990s. Once a high flyer in the rul-

ing party, Anwar was convicted of homosexual sodomy and corruption after a power struggle with Mahathir in 1998. He was imprisoned for a second time for sodomy in 2014.

Anwar and his supporters have long denied the sodomy allegations, saying they were concocted to destroy his political career. Yet rather than give up, Anwar ended his feud with Mahathir from his prison cell to forge a new opposition alliance that won a stunning victory in May 2018 national elections.

Mahathir became premier strong again. Anwar was freed with a royal pardon days after the polls and was Mahathir's designated successor before their alliance fell apart.

## China uproots ethnic minority villages in anti-poverty fight

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
CHENGDE GAN'EN, CHINA, 23 SEPTEMBER

Meanwhile, the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu refuted the allegations and said the buildings were constructed on the Chinese side of the border.

"The government of China has conducted necessary investigation into the matter and the Nepal government can also do so if needed," said a statement issued by the embassy.

China and Nepal have no territorial disputes. The two sides have always maintained close communication on border affairs," the statement said.

Farmers who tended mountainside plots were

assigned jobs at an apple plantation. Children who until then spoke only their own tongue, Nuosu, attend kindergarten in Mandarin, China's official language.

"Everyone is together," said Ashibusa, 26.

While other nations invest in developing poor areas, Beijing doesn't hesitate to operate on a more ambitious scale by moving communities wholesale and building new towns in its effort to modernize China. The ruling Communist Party has announced an official target of ending extreme poverty by the end of the year,

ahead of the 100th anniversary of its founding in 2021.

The party says such initiatives have helped to lift millions of people out of poverty. But they can require drastic changes, sometimes uprooting whole communities. They fuel complaints the party is trying to erase cultures as it prods minorities to embrace the language and lifestyle of the Han, who make up more than 90% of China's population.

At a time when the party faces protests by students in China's northern region of Inner Mongolia over plans to

reduce the use of the Mongolian language in schools, officials want to show they are sensitive to minority cultures.

They invited reporters to visit Chengde Gan'en and four other villages—Xijiashan, Qingshui, Daganyi and Xiaoshan—that are part of what authorities see as a successful development project for the Yunnan province's Liangshan prefecture.

The initiative is one of hundreds launched over the past four decades to spread prosperity from China's thriving east to the countryside and west.

Mass relocations still are carried out because some mountainous and other areas are too isolated, said Wang San-gui, president of the China Poverty Alleviation Research Institute of Renmin University in Beijing.

"It is impossible to solve the problem of absolute poverty without relocation," he said.

In Sichuan, which includes some of China's poorest areas, 80 billion yuan (\$12 billion) has been spent to date to relocate 1.4 million people, according to Peng Qinghua, the provincial party secretary. He said that included

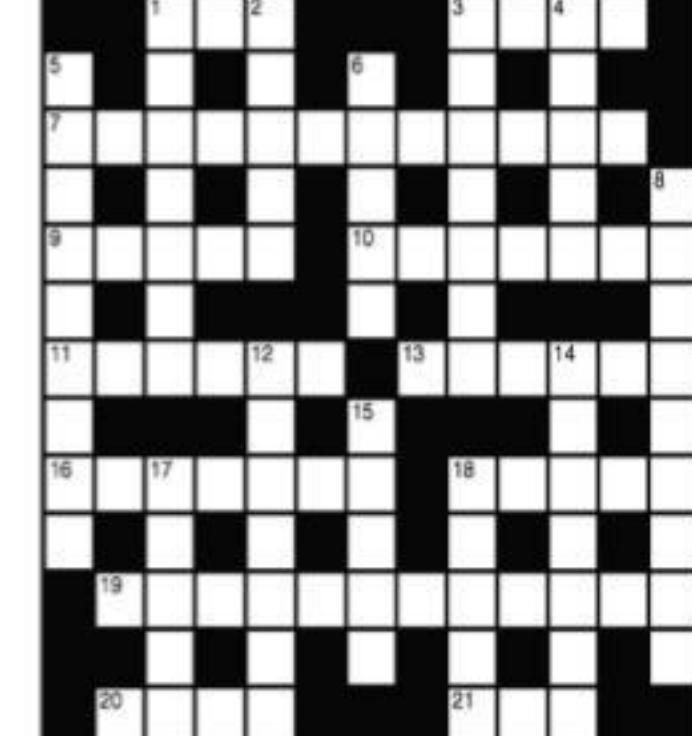
building 370,000 new homes and over 110,000 kilometers (68,000 miles) of rural roads.

In Chengde Gan'en, 420 million yuan (\$60 million) was spent to build 1,440 apartments in 25 identical white buildings, a clinic, a kindergarten and a center for the elderly.

Craftspersons sell silver jewelry, painted cow skulls and traditional clothing that are popular with Han tourists. Yi women can study to become nannies, a profession in demand in urban China, in classes taught with pink plastic dolls.

### LEISURE

#### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**

- 1 Colorant (3)
- 3 Religious faction (4)
- 7 Inauspicious (12)
- 9 Extra payment (5)
- 10 With an oblique glance (7)
- 11 Observe (6)
- 13 Condiment (6)
- 16 Withdraw (7)
- 18 Mix (5)
- 19 Occasionally (4,2,1,5)
- 20 In this place (4)
- 21 Conifer (3)

**DOWN**

- 1 Extinct (7)
- 2 Fairytale creatures (5)
- 3 Glitter (7)
- 5 Punctuation mark (5)
- 6 Farming (9)
- 8 Unable to get up (9)
- 12 Formal process (7)
- 14 Advance showing (7)
- 15 Entity (5)
- 17 Feeling (5)
- 18 Side road (5)

**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

- ACROSS 10 Agog, 12 Myth, 13 Healthy, 14 Uneasy, 15 Fixed, 17 Error, 18 Usual.
- DOWNS 1 Barista, 2 Layer, 3 Diadem, 4 Victory, 5 Up, 6 Brute, 7 Grey area, 8 Conk, 9 Erne, 10 Adequate, 11 Rusty, 12 Play, 13 Oppress,

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**



**DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski**



#### NEED TO KNOW

##### HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental 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, 54956, 5676747

##### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

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

*He supports the troops and knows what it means for someone who has served...*

CINDY McCAIN, WIDOW OF LATE SENATOR JOHN McCAIN



ENDORsing DEMOCRAT JOE BIDEN FOR PRESIDENT IN A REBuke OF PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

## WEATHER

City	Max	Min
SINGAPORE	29°C	26°C R
HONG KONG	30°C	26°C R
TOKYO	23°C	18°C R
LONDON	25°C	18°C R
DUBAI	41°C	27°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	22°C	14°C S
NEW YORK	27°C	18°C H
MOSCOW	22°C	9°C H

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

## THUMBNAILS



Models parade at a fashion show during the Milan Fashion Week, on Wednesday. ■ AFP

**Russian frigate and container ship collide:** A Russian frigate has collided with a Marshall Islands-flagged container ship off Copenhagen, Denmark's navy said. The navy also said that no one appeared to have been injured and that there have been no reports of any leaks during the collision near the Oresund tunnel, a tunnel and bridge that connects Copenhagen to Malmö, Sweden's third largest city. ■ AP

**'Beatles' case:** Britain says it has turned over to US authorities evidence against two members of an alleged terror cell known as the Beatles, ending a drawn-out legal battle to block the handing over of the information. ■ AP

**More restrictions for Madrid:** Health authorities in Madrid may extend to more communities the restrictions on movement it imposed on areas of the Spanish capital with high coronavirus infection rates. About 860,000 Madrid residents already are required to justify trips out of 37 neighborhoods, mostly working-class areas. People have complained that the restrictions stigmatize the poor. ■ AP

**UK says no-deal Brexit could see 7,000-truck border queues**

LONDON, 23 SEPTEMBER

The British government says there could be lines of 7,000 trucks at the English Channel and two-day waits to get into France immediately after the U.K. makes its economic break from the European Union at the end of the year.

Michael Gove, the minister in charge of Brexit preparations, described that as a reasonable worst-case scenario in a letter to logistics firms. He's due to give more details to Parliament on Wednesday.

The government letter says that between 30% and 50% of trucks wanting to cross the Channel may not be ready for new paperwork and regulations that will come into effect on Jan. 1.

This could lead to maximum queues of 7,000 port-bound trucks in Kent and associated maximum delays of up to two days, the document said.

The U.K. withdrew from the EU's political institutions on 31 Jan but remains in a tariff-free transition period until the end of the year while negotiators try to work out a future trade relationship. Even with a deal, Britain will be leaving the bloc's single market and customs union, meaning some new checks and trade barriers. Without a deal there will be much greater disruption, with the U.K. and the EU having to slap tariffs on each other's goods.

Chief EU negotiator Michel Barnier is due to hold talks with his British counterpart David Frost in London Wednesday ahead of a ninth formal round of negotiations next week. ■ AP

## 'Unfathomable': US death toll from Covid hits 200,000

The number of dead is equivalent to a 9/11 attack every day for 67 days.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 23 SEPTEMBER

The U.S. death toll from the coronavirus topped 200,000 on Tuesday, by far the highest in the world, hitting the once-unimaginable threshold six weeks before an election that is certain to be a referendum in part on President Donald Trump's handling of the crisis.

"It is completely unfathomable that we've reached this point," said Jennifer Nuzzo, a Johns Hopkins University public health researcher, eight months after the scourge first reached the world's richest nation, with its state-of-the-art laboratories, top-flight scientists and stockpiles of medical supplies.

The number of dead is equivalent to a 9/11 attack every day for 67 days. It is roughly equal to the population of Salt Lake City or Huntsville, Alabama.

And it is still climbing. Deaths are running at close to 770 a day on average, and a widely cited model from the University of Washington predicts the U.S. toll will double to 400,000 by the end of the year as schools and colleges reopen and cold weather sets in. A vaccine is unlikely to become widely available until 2021.

"The idea of 200,000 deaths is really very sobering, in some respects stunning," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease expert, said on CNN.

The bleak milestone was reported by Johns Hopkins, based on figures supplied by state health authorities.

But the real toll is thought to be much higher, in part because many Covid-19 deaths were probably ascribed to other causes, especially early on, before widespread testing.

Trump said it was "ashame"

the U.S. reached that number but argued the toll could have been much worse.

"I think if we didn't do it properly and do it right, you'd have 2.5 million deaths," Trump told reporters at the White House before leaving for a campaign rally in Pittsburgh. He added that the United States is now "doing well" and "the stock market is up."

He also gave his often-

repeated broadside that China was at fault for the pandemic. In a prerecorded speech to the U.N. General Assembly, he demanded that Beijing be held accountable for having "unleashed this plague onto the world." China's ambassador rejected the accusations as baseless.

On Twitter, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden said, "It didn't have to be this bad."

"It's a staggering number that's hard to wrap your head around," he said. "There's a devastating human toll to this pandemic—and we can't forget that."

For five months, America has led the world by far in sheer numbers of confirmed infections—nearly 6.9 million as of Tuesday—and deaths. The U.S. has less than 5% of the globe's population but more than

20% of the reported deaths. Brazil is No. 2 with about 137,000 deaths, followed by India with approximately 89,000 and Mexico with around 74,000. Only 10 countries rank higher in Covid-19 deaths per capita.

"All the world's leaders took the same test, and some have succeeded and some have failed," said Dr. Cedric Dark, an emergency physician at Baylor College of Medicine in hard-hit Houston. "In the case of our country, we failed miserably."

Black and Hispanic people and American Indians have accounted for a disproportionate share of the deaths, underscoring the economic and health care disparities in the U.S.

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 31 million people and is closing in fast on 1 million deaths, by Johns Hopkins' count, though the real numbers are believed to be higher because of gaps in testing and reporting.

For the U.S., it wasn't supposed to go this way.

When the year began, the U.S. had recently garnered recognition for its readiness for a pandemic.

Health officials seemed confident as they converged on Seattle in January to deal with the country's first known case of the coronavirus, in a 35-year-old Washington state resident who had returned from visiting his family in Wuhan, China.

26 years. Official results of the country's Aug. 9 presidential election had him winning 80% of the vote. His strongest opponent, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, got 10%. Tsikhanouskaya, who is in exile in neighboring Lithuania after being forced to leave Belarus, says the outcome was invalid, as have the tens of thousands of her supporters who continue to demand Lukashenko's resignation during more than six weeks of mass protests.

The people haven't handed him a new mandate, she said, adding that the inauguration was a farce and an attempt by Lukashenko to declare himself legitimate.

I, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, am the only leader that has been elected by the Belarusian people. And our goal right now is to build the new Belarus together, she said in a video from Lithuania's capital, Vilnius.

Even after this ceremony today, Mr. Lukashenko cannot claim democratic legitimization, which would be the condition to recognize him as the legitimate president of Belarus.

The United States and the European Union have questioned the election and criticized the brutal police crackdown on peaceful protesters during the first few days of demonstrations. The EU is pondering sanctions against top Belarusian officials, but failed to agree on imposing them this week.

Several European countries used the occasion to reiterate that they don't recognize the results of the election and refused to regard Lukashenko as the legitimate president. The ceremony was held in front of several hundred dignitaries at the ornate Palace of Independence in the capital of Minsk, the state news agency Belta said. Police and other security forces blocked off parts of the city and public transportation was suspended.

Lukashenko, 66, took the oath of office in Belarusian with his right hand on the constitution, and the head of the Central Election Commission handed him the official ID card of the president of Belarus.

He added that the secrecy surrounding the swearing-in was very telling. Lukashenko has run Belarus, a former Soviet nation of 9.5 million, with an iron fist for

the day of assuming the post of the president is the day of our victory, convincing and fateful, he said. We were

not just electing the president of the country—we were defending our values, our peaceful life, sovereignty and independence. The absence of public involvement in the inauguration only proved that Lukashenko lacked a valid mandate to continue leading the country, according to his political opponents and European officials.

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# A legacy at risk

**The indelible legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg could be threatened if President Trump manages to fill her seat on US Supreme Court with a conservative candidate, say HANNAH AZIZA GHULAM and ADITYA MANUBARWALA**

The presidential tenure of Bill Clinton can best be described as tumultuous. The jury is out regarding many of his decisions, except one - the nomination of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg as an Associate Justice of the USA Supreme Court in 1993. Supporters and detractors of Justice Ginsburg converge on the fact that her tenure was one of the most eventful ones in the US Supreme Court in the past fifty years. Justice Ginsburg passed away on 18 September, after close to three glorious decades on America's top court.

Justice Ginsburg was the second woman to adorn the bench of the US Supreme Court, the first being Justice Sandra O'Connor. Later dubbed the "Notorious RBG", she was a pioneer of the women's liberation movement in the USA and spent a significant portion of her life's work in ushering in gender-just laws. Ginsburg was inspired by the civil rights movement and saw this feminist activism as its extension and logical successor.

Growing up in the inherently unequal America of the 1940s-1960s with its institutionalised and mainstream sexism, Ginsburg was quickly confronted with the unjustice of the system. Despite having served on the Harvard Law Review (considered a symbol of intellectual brilliance) and graduating top of her class at Columbia, no law firm in NYC wished to hire a woman at the time. Similarly, she lost a chance of serving as a Law Clerk to Justice Felix Frankfurter of the USA Supreme Court, who unabashedly told her that he wasn't ready to hire women.

Confronted by this harsh reality, Ginsburg turned to activism. From 1972, she began a close relationship with the American Civil Liberties Union and co-founded its Women's Rights Project. Within two years she had taken part in more than 300 gender-related cases.

One of her most iconic wins at the Supreme Court was *Frontiero v Richardson* (1973), which decided that compensation and other service benefits cannot be given differently on the basis of gender alone. The case particularly challenged the service rules of the US Air Force prohibiting 'husbands' of female officers from being listed as dependents for the purposes of housing and other perquisites. This was based on the assumption that men are the family breadwinners and women the caretakers. Of the total six cases she argued in the Supreme Court, she won an astonishing five, setting the foundation for a revolution in gender justice-oriented jurisprudence which has subsequently been emulated across the world.

In her attempts to persuade an all-male Supreme Court, Ginsburg focused on male applicants. This strategic litigation allowed her to confront the Justices with the harmful effects of gender discrimination on men such as themselves. Winning their empathy in this manner, she managed to shake the foundations of the sexist system to the advantage of both men and women.

Ginsburg also landed several teaching positions and became the first female tenure lecturer at Columbia University. Subsequently, she functioned as a surprisingly moderate federal judge. Her appointment as a Supreme Court Justice was therefore met with a great deal of suspicion from feminist activists, who feared that she would

not be the most passionate advocate for women's rights.

Justice Ginsburg proved them wrong. Her years at the Supreme Court were characterized by her staunch belief in gender equality and her support for LGBTQIA+ and minority rights. She was the author of the majority opinion in *United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515 (1996), wherein the Court struck down as discriminatory the practise of male-only admissions in the Virginia Military Academy. This judgment revolutionized the US Constitution's equal protection of laws' clause (14th Amendment) by adding equality on the basis of gender to the traditional interpretation of equality on the basis of race.

Referring to the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Education Board of Topeka*, Ginsburg stated that if racially segregated schools were declared unconstitutional, then so should separate military academies for women for they would not impart the same level of military training as the male ones. Justice Ginsburg's verdict in the Virginia Military case in particular served to be a great inspiration for the Indian army permitting the commissioning of women.

Faced with a conservative-leaning Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg often had to turn to dissenting opinions as well. She famously disagreed with the majority's view in *Bush v. Gore* that the manual vote recount for the presidential election ordered by the Florida Supreme Court was unconstitutional. In *Shelby County v. Holder*, the majority held the federal preclearance for changes in the voting laws of states with a history of racial discrimination to be unconstitutional. Justice Ginsburg vehemently protested, stating that this preclearance effectively protected against racial voting discrimination and that the judgment resembled "throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet." Some of her other influential dissents dealt with issues such as gender workplace discrimination and reproductive health.

Justice Ginsberg's death has caused a political storm in the USA. President Trump plans to fill her seat as soon as possible by replacing her with a female, loyal and conservative candidate. This would present the conservatives with a 'super majority' in the Supreme Court.

Democrats met this news with a wave of protest and called to postpone any nomination until after the presidential election in November. Such a super majority would put the right to abortion, amongst others, on a shaky pedestal. A part of Ginsberg's legacy in the fight for gender equality could therefore be at serious risk of being erased.

This is a troublesome testimony that the fight against discrimination in the USA has not been won yet. Regardless, there can be no doubt that Justice Ginsburg was one of the most influential figures in the fight for women's rights and liberal thought in the USA. Her highly respected, brilliant mind will be missed in these times of growing insecurity.

The writers are LL.M candidates at the University of Cambridge. The former was a Student Research Assistant to Professor Dr Y Haack at Ghent University, Belgium where she obtained a LLM with a specialisation in human rights while the latter served as Special Advisor on International Law and Public Policy to the President of Afghanistan.

## RACE TO PICK A JUDGE

**Can President Trump rush through the four stages to seat a Supreme Court judge in the six weeks to the election, asks CAREN MORRISON**

United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died on September 18, thrusting the acrimonious struggle for control of the Supreme Court into public view.

President Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell have already vowed to nominate and confirm a replacement for the 87-year-old justice and women's rights icon.

This contradicts the justification the Republican-controlled Senate used when they refused to consider the nomination of Merrick Garland, President Barack Obama's pick for the Court after the death of Antonin Scalia in February 2016.

Garland, a moderate judge on the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, was nominated in March 2016, but McConnell balked on the basis that it was an election year.

"The American people are about to weigh in on who is going to be the president," said McConnell in March 2016. "And that's the person, whoever that may be, who ought to be making this appointment."

The 2020 presidential election was just 46 days away on the day of Bader Ginsburg's death, but McConnell has apparently abandoned such considerations this time around. Trump tweeted on September 19 that he would nominate a replacement "without delay."

Since the 1990s, the Supreme Court has increasingly split 5-4 along ideological lines on many important cases, including decisions on voting rights, affirmative action, gay marriage, the Affordable Care Act, gerrymandering and gun rights.

Being able to replace a reliable liberal voice on the Court with a conservative justice would entrench a 6-3 tilt towards the right for years. There is bound to be vehement opposition from the Democrats.

However the politics play out, there is a process for Supreme Court nominations and confirmations. Here are the four steps:

### The presidential pick

The first thing to know is that the Constitution of the United States gives the power of nomination to the president. Article II, section 2 provides that the president "shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint... judges of the Supreme Court."

By law, so long as he is in the White House, President Trump can nominate whomever he wants to replace Justice Ginsburg. Appointment is really a three-step process: nomination (by the president), confirmation (by the Senate), and appointment (by the president again).

Things can get tricky somewhere between nomination and confirmation. But changes made in the Senate – in particular, the rule change in 2017 that allows a Supreme Court Justice to be confirmed with 51 votes, instead of 60 – are likely to smooth the way considerably.

### Senate Judiciary Committee



Once the president has made a choice, the nomination is referred to the United States Senate.

Since the early 19th century, this has meant that the nomination will first be considered by a smaller group within the Senate, the Senate Judiciary Committee. The only exception was in 2016, when the Judiciary Committee refused to consider President Obama's nomination of Judge Garland.

The Judiciary Committee currently has 22 members – 12 Republicans and 10 Democrats – and has a three-step process of its own.

First, it conducts an investigation into the nominee's background. This process can take 30 to 45 days, but it's easy to imagine it going a lot faster.

Second, the committee holds a public hearing, in which the nominee is questioned and may give testimony about everything from her judicial philosophy to her stand on abortion. This may give voters a chance to see the Democratic vice-presidential nominee, Kamala Harris, who also serves on the Judiciary Committee, display her prosecutorial skills during questioning of the nominee.

Finally, the committee will report its recommendation to the full Senate as either favourable, negative, or no recommendation.

The 10 Democratic members of the committee have already sent a letter to the chairman, Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, calling on him to "state unequivocally and publicly that you will not consider any nominee to fill Justice Ginsburg's seat until after the next President is inaugurated."

But that seems highly unlikely, given Graham's new statements backtracking from his 2018 assertions that he would not want a confirmation vote on a Supreme Court appointment in a presidential election year.

"I want you to use my words against me," said Graham at the time, "[if] a vacancy occurs in the last year of the first term, you can say Lindsey Graham said let's let the next president, whoever it might be, make that nomination."

Once the public hearings have concluded, if the Democrats want to buy time, they can delay the committee vote for a week. But after that, it's on to the main floor of the Senate.

So let's move on to the next stage, shall we?

### The full Senate

There are 100 senators in the United States Senate – two for each state. Currently, the Senate is majority Republican, with 53 Republicans, 45 Democrats and two Independents, who both caucus with the Democrats.

While the Senate has historically followed rules so arcane and incomprehensible that otherwise reasonable writers freely refer to them as "insane," they can now be changed by a simple majority vote, which simplifies matters for the majority party considerably.

If the motion that the nomination be considered is made during a special "executive" session of the Senate, then the motion itself is debatable and can be blocked by filibuster – that movie-ready delay tactic in which a senator recites Shakespeare, Dr. Seuss or recipes for fried oysters until everyone gives up and goes home.

But closing debate on the motion so that the Senate could move on to a vote no longer requires a supermajority of 60 votes, just a bare 51-Senator majority. So filibustering is likely to be about as effective as a paper hammer.

After that, the Democrats can insist on a minimum of 30 hours of debate, and then, they will be out of options to delay or stop a confirmation vote.

### The vote

The vote to confirm requires a simple majority of the senators present and voting. If the nominee is confirmed, the secretary of the Senate will transmit the confirmation vote to the president.

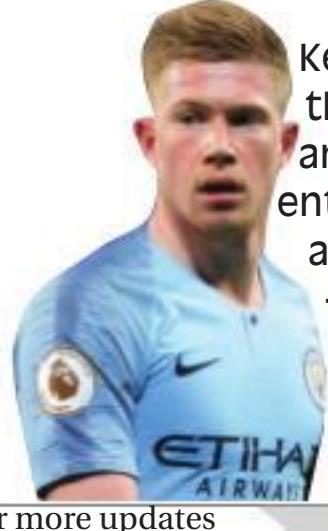
The president then will sign a commission appointing the person to the Supreme Court.

### The timing

The real question is whether all of this can be accomplished before the election on November 3, or if it will roll over into the lame-duck session of Congress after the election.

Either way it will be a first. The Senate has never filled a Supreme Court vacancy this close to a presidential election. The closest time in the past was when Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes resigned from the Court to run for president. And that was 150 days before the election.

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Kevin De Bruyne (*photo, left*) is the best player in the Premier League and is just below Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo in terms of world-leading talent, according to Jamie Carragher. De Bruyne starred as Manchester City beat Wolves 3-1 in their season-opener at Molineux on Monday night.

For more updates [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## THUMBNAILS

**Ciriello quits:** The Indian men's hockey team's analytical coach Chris Ciriello has resigned, a Sports Authority of India source said on Wednesday. The SAI, with which the Australian has signed his employment contract, has yet to accept the resignation, though.

**French Open:** Anika Raina earned a victory against Jovana Jovic of Serbia to make the second round of the French Open qualifiers. On Tuesday, Anika defeated Jovana 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 in two hours and 47 minutes. She will next take on Japan's Kurumi Nara.

**Formula One:** Lewis Hamilton's maiden shot at matching Michael Schumacher's victory record will be played out in front of *Netflix* cameras this weekend. Film-makers will be granted access by Mercedes as Hamilton goes in search of his 91st career win.

**Dope turmoil:** Cycling across the world has been thrown into fresh turmoil after French judicial authorities opened a preliminary investigation into potential doping at French team Arkea-Samsic on Monday, a day after the Tour de France had ended in Paris.

**Dire straits:** Gateshead chairman Neil Pinkerton has warned that English National League clubs will go bust without intervention following a decision to delay the return of football spectators. Dagenham have sought a £20million bail-out package to save the clubs.

**Real tragedy:** Gareth Bale's treatment by Real Madrid fans was "disgraceful" and the Spanish club did not help the situation, according to the Wales attacker's agent. Bale has returned to Tottenham on a loan deal, having left them in 2013 for a record pay.

**Juve's gain:** Juventus have signed Spain striker Alvaro Morata on a one-season loan from Atletico Madrid for €10 million. The agreement also gives Juve an option to buy the 27-year-old at the end of the season for €45 million to be paid over three years.

**Rigged test:** Italian finance police and the public prosecutor's office of Perugia have opened an investigation into allegations of irregularities in Luis Suarez's Italian citizenship test. Suarez flew to Perugia last week for the exam amid reports of a transfer.

**Andrescu out:** World number seven Bianca Andreescu has pulled out of the French Open Grand Slam and will take the rest of the season off to focus on her health and training. "I have come to the difficult decision to skip the clay court swing this year," she said.

**Bribe alleged:** A consulting firm for Tokyo's Olympic bid committee paid around \$370,000 to the son of Lamine Diack, once one of the world's most powerful sports officials, around the time Japan was picked to host the 2020 Games, *Kyodo News* reported.

## Kings XI Punjab face RCB

PTI  
DUBAI, 23 SEPTEMBER

**K**ings XI Punjab will look to put behind the controversial 'short run' decision in their IPL opener and start afresh when they take on Virat Kohli's buoyant Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Thursday.

In their opening game against Delhi Capitals, the square-leg umpire erroneously called KXIP's Chris Jordan for a 'short run' in the third ball of the 19th over, effectively costing his team the closely fought game.

KXIP went on to lodge an appeal to the match referee over the incident but on Thursday, KL Rahul and Co would like to forget the unsavoury incident and focus on the task ahead.

In contrast, RCB opened



their campaign on a winning note defeating Sunrisers Hyderabad by 10 runs, raising hopes that things might finally fall into place for them this season.

Devdutt Padikkal started his IPL career on a classy note hitting a sublime half-century and will once again be in focus, and focus on the task ahead.

In contrast, RCB opened

to continue in the same vein following a crucial half-century.

Both Kohli and Aaron Finch looked good on Monday night and would be itching to spend more time in the middle.

Yuzvendra Chahal, as always, will be the key man in the RCB bowling attack. The

leg-spinner was instrumental in his team's victory on Monday, triggering a batting collapse.

However, RCB will again miss the services of South African all-rounder Chris Morris who has picked up a side-strain. Morris was bought for a whopping Rs 10 crore at the auction.

Umesh Yadav continues to leak runs in the IPL and going by his showing in the first game, he could be replaced by Mohammad Siraj. It remains to be seen if the team can fit in England all-rounder Moeen Ali in the middle-order. With Josh Phillips being chosen as the specialist wicketkeeper batsman to start with, Ali can only replace Dale Steyn in the eleven.

For KXIP, Mayank Agarwal looked in imperious touch

but was gutted to not be able to get his team over the line with just one run required to win.

Rahul, Glenn Maxwell and Nicholas Pooran will be expected to step up as they possess the ability to take away the game from any opposition.

Big hitters Chris Gayle, who was left out of the openers for better balance in the eleven, could be back and batting all-rounder Jimmy Neesham could also be given a chance.

KXIP's bowling is spearheaded by Mohammed Shami, who proved his high worth in the team's opener.

Young leg-spinner Ravin Bishnoi will go into the game more confident, having impressed against Delhi Capitals.

Match starts at 7.30 PM

## Rohit's blitzkrieg powers Mumbai Indians to 195/5



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ABU DHABI, 23 SEPTEMBER

(0/34), including a cover-drive and a flick, in the third over.

Rohit got going after smashing pacer Pat Cummins (0/49) for two maximums both his trademark pull-short. With the two looking good and hitting sixes and fours at will, Mumbai raced to 94/1 after 10 overs.

Kolkata, however, cut short Surya's stay when he was run out.

Rohit continued his bru-

tal onslaught against chinaman Kuldeep Yadav (0/39), smashing him for two maximums.

Saurabh Tiwary (21), Hardik Pandya (18) played perfect second fiddle to Rohit, who literally bulldozed the opposition bowlers.

Kolkata tried to pull things back by removing Rohit, Hardik in quick succession even as Mumbai added 48 runs in the last five overs at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium.

### SCOREBOARD

Mumbai Indians Innings  
De Koch c Naik b Mavi 13  
Rohit Sharma c Cummins b Mavi 80  
Suryakumar Yadav run out  
(Narine/Morgan) 47  
Saurabh Tiwary c Cummins b Narine 21  
Hardik Pandya hit wkt b Russell 18  
Kieron Pollard not out 13  
Krunal Pandya not out 1

Extras: 14 (b 0, lb 2, w 11, nb 1)

Total: 195/5 (20 Overs)

### Bowling

Warrier 3-0-49-0, Mavi 4-1-32-2,  
Cummins 3-0-49-0, Narine 4-0-22-1,  
Russell 2-0-17-1, Kuldeep 4-0-39-0

Spanish triathlete allows rival to cross finish line



TOM KERSHAW  
LONDON, 23 SEPTEMBER

Triathlete James Teagle has hailed an "incredible" gesture of sportsmanship by a rival who stopped on the finish line and allowed the Briton to finish first.

Teagle was on the verge of taking bronze when he missed the finish chute during the dying stages of the race and crashed into a barrier, enabling Spaniard Diego Mentrida (*in photo*) to overtake him.

However, after realising what had occurred, the 21-year-old waited just short of the finish line so Teagle could clinch a position on the podium.

Addressing the incident on *Instagram*, Teagle said: "So this happened a week ago..."

"I missed the finish chute in a triathlon in Spain. After around 50m I realised and sprinted back. By that point Diego Mentrida was 50m from the finish chute and we ended up sprinting for the line. I crashed into the barrier and thought it was over."

"A video of this has now gone worldwide and been picked up by loads of media outlets."

Moral of the story is that sportsmanship is a highly regarded trait!"

Speaking to *Eurosport*, Mentrida said: "When I saw that he had missed the route, I just stopped. James deserved this medal."

THE INDEPENDENT

Gambhir criticises Dhoni's decision to bat at No 7

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHARJAH, 23 SEPTEMBER

Former Indian opener Gautam Gambhir believes MS Dhoni (\*\*\*) should have batted at the top of the order during Chennai Super Kings' 16-run loss to Rajasthan Royals in their Indian Premier League 2020 clash.

Chasing 217, the highest total chased in IPL history, Dhoni last night came out to the middle in the 14th over when CSK needed 103 off 38 balls. Faf du Plessis at the other end was struggling at that point. Sam Curran, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Kedar Jadhav were sent ahead of Dhoni, who himself came in at number seven.

"I was a bit surprised, to be honest. MS Dhoni batting at number seven? And sending Gaikwad before him, Sam Curran before him. (It) makes no sense to me. In fact, you should be leading from the front. And this is not what you call leading from the front. Batting at number seven when you're chasing what 217? The game was over. Faf was probably the lone warrior," Gambhir said.

Dhoni and du Plessis did try to break free of the shackles towards the end, but it was a little too late as Rajasthan beat Chennai for the first time since 2010 after batting first. Dhoni did hit three sixes in the final over, ending his innings on unbeaten 29 from 17 balls.

"Yes, you can talk about MS Dhoni's last over when he hit three sixes, but it was of no use, to be honest. It was just all personal runs. See, if someone else had done this, some other captain had batted at number seven, he would have got a lot of flak," said Gambhir.

"It is MS Dhoni - probably (that's) why people don't talk about it. When you don't have Suresh Raina, you're making people believe that Sam Curran is better than you. You're making people believe that Ruturaj Gaikwad, Curran, Kedar Jadhav, Faf du Plessis, MVijay, all these guys are better than you," he added.

Dhoni, however, defended his decision to bat down the order, saying he had not batted in a very long time.

"I haven't batted for a long time; a 14-day quarantine doesn't help," the 39-year-old said after the game. "Also wanted to try different things, give opportunities to Sam. Have the opportunity to try

out different things. If it doesn't work, you can always go back to your strengths. Faf adapted very well."

Sanju Samson said that he had worked hard on power-hitting in recent months, having played a starring role in Rajasthan Royals' 16-run win.

"My game plan is stand and deliver. If it's in the arc I go for it, and it's very important to keep the intent to hit the ball if it's there to be hit," said 25-year-old Samson in the post-match presentation ceremony when he was declared Player of the Match.

"I've been working hard on my fitness, diet and training, and on my strength, because my game relies a lot on power-hitting. I think range-hitting is what the game demands in this generation. I had time for workouts in these five months, and I think I've increased that ability."

Additionally, Samson took two catches and stumped two batsmen during CSK's chase. RR already have other wicket-keeping options in Robin Uthappa and Jos Buttler, though the latter has yet to join the team.

"Everyone likes to keep wicket (about Buttler and Uthappa as alternative options) and no one likes running around, but it's up to the coach. We are happy to bring smiles to the fans' faces and we hope to continue doing so," said Samson.

Dhoni said that CSK did not get a good start, considering the target. He also felt that his bowling unit could have done better to restrict the opposition.

"With 217 as the target, we needed a very good start which was not the case. Steve (Smith) and (Sanju) Samson batted very well. Need to give credit to their bowlers. Once you've seen the first

innings, you know the length to hit. Their spinners did well to bowl away from the batsmen. Our spinners made

the error of bowling too full. Had we restricted them to 200, it would've been a good game," he said.

Royals captain Steve Smith was all praise for Samson. Jofra Archer later provided the apt finishing touch, smashing 27 off eight deliveries thanks to Lungi Ngidi bowling consecutive no-balls in the final over.

### Catch controversy

Umpires came under the spotlight for wrongly declaring RR's Tom Curran out after Dhoni had claimed a catch behind off paceman Deepak Chahar. Replays, asked for by the umpires, showed the ball bouncing before Dhoni picked it up and appealed.

Curran, who hadn't opened his account by then, looked shocked but walked some distance away after being given out by Cheteshwar Pujara and stood there even as confusion reigned in the 18th over of the innings. And while the two umpires were conferring, Dhoni joined them in the animated discussion.

Dhoni seemed to suggest to the umpires to ask the third umpire for a reply. It was sought and it suggested that the ball had bounced just before Dhoni grabbed it in front of him, after hitting Curran's thigh pad - and not the bat.

Curran promptly returned to the crease and resumed batting. He went on to score 10 off nine balls and remained not out, as Rajasthan Royals finished at 216 for seven wickets in 20 overs.

The on-field umpires were Shashshuddin and Vineet Kulkarni w

## Mancunians among last 16 as coronavirus causes chaos

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON, 23 SEPTEMBER

late, with the trio said to be asymptomatic.

West Ham were not the only Premier League club affected by the virus as Tottenham's tie at Leyton Orient was postponed after their fourth-tier opponents suffered a Covid-19 outbreak.

The news of the virus striking at football's heart came after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson dealt a major blow to the sport's financial future on Tuesday.

Johnson said fans would

not be allowed back into stadiums in October as originally planned due to a spike in virus cases.

He suggested the measures introduced on Tuesday would remain in place for "perhaps six months," leaving teams facing the prospect of playing most of the season behind closed doors.

At Kenilworth Road, United bounced back from a dismal 3-1 home defeat against Crystal Palace in their Premier League opener on Saturday. He preserved United's advantage with his only save of the

match in the final minutes, keeping out Tom Lockyer's header at the far post.

Britain is looking at delaying plans to allow a controlled return of fans into stadiums from Oct 1, 2020.

Marcus Rashford came off the bench to net in the 88th minute before fellow substitute Mason Greenwood's stoppage-time goal put a flattering gloss on the scoreline.

United will travel to Brighton or Preston in the fourth round.

West Ham's match went

ahead as planned despite the virus tests, with assistant manager Alan Irvine taking charge of the Hammers.

Sébastien Haller and Andriy Yarmolenko both struck twice for the east Londoners after Robert Snodgrass opened the scoring.

Tottenham's clash with Orient has been rearranged amid reports Jose Mourinho's men could be given a bye into the last 16, where they would face Chelsea or Barnsley.

Orient had revealed the positive cases on Monday after Tottenham paid for their opponents' testing, but the match was not called off until two hours before kick-off.

"If I was doing this again I would not do the testing - this is an incentive not to test and that is bad for football and bad for health and safety," Orient chairman Nigel Travis told the BBC. In the midst of a hectic spell of five games in 10 days, Tottenham might not be disappointed to get a night off before

they travel to Macedonia for their Europa League third qualifying round tie against Shkendija on Thursday.

West Bromwich Albion crashed out against second-tier Brent