



Former CBI Director
Ashwani Kumar found
dead at his residence
page 11



U.S.-French duo win
Nobel Chemistry Prize
for gene editing tool
page 13



Kings XI Punjab
takes on Sunrisers
Hyderabad today
page 15



Nadal eases past Sinner,
Kenin meets Kvitova in
French Open semifinal
page 15

NEARBY



Delhi cinema halls to
reopen from October 15

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Wednesday permitted reopening of cinemas, theatres and multiplexes with up to 50% of their seating capacity from October 15. The Delhi Disaster Management Authority has also allowed all weekly markets to function with immediate effect.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Police reveal details of witnesses in riot case

NEW DELHI

Delhi police have revealed the names and addresses of 15 protected witnesses in the chargesheet they submitted in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act case registered in connection with the Delhi riots that broke out in February. The police said the act was "inadventive".

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

JD(U) offers ticket to Manju Verma

PATNA

The Janata Dal (United) on Wednesday released a list of all 115 party candidates for the Bihar Assembly election, and among them was the name of former Minister Manju Verma, who had to resign after her husband's name had come up in the Muzaffarpur shelter home abuse case.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 11

SC: public places cannot be occupied indefinitely

Blocking of road by Shaheen Bagh protesters unacceptable'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday found the indefinite "occupation" of a public road by the Shaheen Bagh protesters unacceptable.

The court said the protest, considered an iconic dissent mounted by mothers, children and senior citizens of Shaheen Bagh against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, became inconvenient to commuters.

The 13-page judgment upheld the right to peaceful protest against a law but made it unequivocally clear that public ways and public spaces cannot be occupied, and that too indefinitely.

"Democracy and dissent go hand in hand, but then the demonstrations expressing dissent have to be in designated places alone. The present case was not even one of protests taking place in an undesignated area, but was a blockage of a public way which caused grave inconvenience to commuters," Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, who authored the verdict for a three-judge Bench, observed.

The court suggested that the outcry may have even gone out of hand for the women protesters. It referred to reports about how women were ensconced inside

Democracy and dissent go hand in hand, but then the demonstrations expressing dissent have to be in designated places alone. The present case was not even one of protests taking place in an undesignated area, but was a blockage of a public way which caused grave inconvenience to commuters

Fundamental rights do not live in isolation. The right of the protester has to be balanced with the right of the commuter. They have to co-exist in mutual respect

a tent while a "huge periphery" of "male protesters, volunteers and bystanders", who wanted the blockade to continue, milled around.

'Out of hand'

While the tent occupied half the road, the other half was blocked by a 3-D map of India and even a library. Factors such as the absence of leadership and many "influencers" and groups working at cross-purposes saw the movement slip out of hand. "Thus, the protest perhaps no longer remained the sole and empowering voice of women, who also appeared to no longer have the ability to call off the protest themselves. There was also the possibility of the protesters not fully realising the ramifications of the pandemic, coupled with a general unwillingness to relocate to another site."

The court noted that Shaheen Bagh seemed typical of the many digitally-fuelled "leaderless" events of dissent seen in modern times. Technology and social media could both empower and weaken mass movements.

"The ability to scale up quickly, for example, using digital infrastructure has empowered movements to embrace their often-leaderless aspirations and evade the usual restrictions of censorship. However, the flip side is that social media channels are often fraught with danger and can lead to the creation of highly polarised environments, which often see parallel conversations running with no constructive outcome evident," Justice Kaul ruminated.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

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HC grants bail to Rhea in drugs case

Actor's brother gets no relief; both held following Sushant Singh Rajput's death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Actor Rhea Chakraborty, 28, was granted bail by the Bombay High Court on Wednesday. She had been in the Byculla jail after being arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau on September 8 in a drugs case following the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

She was directed to be released from jail on furnishing a personal bond of ₹1 lakh, with one or two sureties in the amount.

Justice S.V. Kotwal said,

"The investigation did not reveal any recovery either from Rhea or from the house of Sushant Singh Rajput. It is their own case that the drugs were already consumed and hence there was no recovery. In that case, there is nothing at this stage to show that Rhea had committed any offence involving commercial quantity of contraband. The material at the highest shows that she has committed an offence involving contraband, but the crucial element of incurring rigours of Section 37 [offence punishable under Sections 19 (punishment for embezzlement of opium by cultivator), 24 (punishment for external dealings in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances) or 27A (punishment for financing illicit traffic and harbouring offenders) of the Narcotics Drugs Psychotropic Substances Act] or any other offence involving commercial quantity."



Rhea Chakraborty outside the NCB office, in this file photo.

es to be cognisable and non-bailable] in respect of commercial quantity is missing."

The court added, "Therefore, I am satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the applicant that is Rhea is not guilty of

any offence punishable under Sections 19 (punishment for embezzlement of opium by cultivator), 24 (punishment for external dealings in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances) or 27A (punishment for financing illicit traffic and harbouring offenders) of the Narcotics Drugs Psychotropic Substances Act) or any other offence involving commercial quantity."

The court granted bail to Sushant's domestic aides Dipesh Sawant and Samuel Miranda, but rejected Ms. Chakraborty's brother, Shomik Chakraborty's bail plea.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Palaniswami is AIADMK CM candidate

Confusion ends as Panneerselvam announces name

T. RAMAKRISHNAN

CHENNAI

Edappadi K. Palaniswami will be the ruling AIADMK's candidate for Chief Minister in the 2021 Tamil Nadu Assembly election.

This was announced by Deputy Chief Minister and party coordinator O. Panneerselvam at the party headquarters on Wednesday in the presence of senior leaders and Ministers. The announcement ended the unease in the party over the issue since August 15.



United fight: Edappadi K. Palaniswami and O. Panneerselvam greeting each other on Wednesday. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

As an indication of his agreeing to Mr. Panneerselvam's principal demand for an 11-member steering committee, the Chief Minister made public the composition of the panel that would

guide the organisation in all matters.

Key demand

The formation of the committee was one of the points of agreement of the panel that would

merger of groups led by Mr. Palaniswami and Mr. Panneerselvam in August 2017. A resolution adopted by the general council in September 2017, too, made a mention of the committee.

Those who made it to the committee were Dindigul C. Sreenivasan, R. Kamaraj, P. Thangamani, S.P. Velumani, D. Jayakumar and C.Ve. Shanmugam, all Ministers; K. Manickam, Sholavandan MLA; P. Mohan, former Minister; P.H. Manoj Pandian and R. Gopalakrishnan, former Members of Parliament; and J.C.D. Prabhakar, former Villivakkam MLA.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Scribe, 3 others booked for sedition in U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh police on Wednesday booked journalist Siddique Kappan from Kerala and three others on sedition and other charges. The four were arrested on Monday while they were on their way to Hathras. They were produced before a local court, which remanded them in judicial custody.

"Further action will be taken after collection of evidence in the investigation," said Mathura SSP Gaurav Grover. An FIR lodged against them at the Main police station charges them under Section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

FIR AGAINST 2 JOURNALISTS IN PHONE TAPPING CASE ▶ PAGE 12

Prepare for winter surge of 15K cases'

NCDC report also says virus deaths possibly under-reported

the death figure may be "under-reported".

The government is expected to come up with a revised strategy based on the report, which was prepared in consultation with an expert group headed by NITI Aayog member V.K. Paul. Last month, Lt. Governor Anil Baijal had directed to prepare a revised plan to fight the virus.

Patients from outside

"It is recommended that Delhi should prepare for a daily surge of about 15,000 positive cases and make arrangements for inpatient admissions of patients and moderate and severe disease roughly amounting to 20 percent of this surge (sic)," says the report, seen by The Hindu.

Explaining why the Capital should prepare for a surge of 15,000 cases a day, the report says winter months make respiratory illnesses more severe and patients from outside Delhi, who are likely to be "more serious", may come in "large numbers".

'NEXT 3 MONTHS CRUCIAL' ▶ PAGE 4

Money woes



Wage warriors: Resident doctors of Hindu Rao Hospital protesting against non-payment of salaries for the past four months in Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR (REPORT ON PAGE 2)

City of Joy caught between fear and festivities

With theatres set to open and Durga Puja soon after, Kolkata stares at an impending COVID-19 spike

BISHWANATH GHOSH

KOLKATA
How bad the COVID-19 situation going to get is a question that appears to be uppermost on the minds of people in Kolkata, where the healthcare system is already under strain at a time when the city is all set to open up for festivities.

On October 15, theatres across the city and the rest of West Bengal will open. As many as 12 Bengali films, perhaps the highest ever, but could not be because of the lockdown. Theatres, of course, will have to follow procedures – only 50% occupancy, staggered shows, audience giving their phone number for contact tracing, and so on – but people would



People shopping for upcoming Durga Puja in New Market, Kolkata, on Wednesday. ■ PTI

still be at risk.

Shopping spree

The opening of the theatres will be followed by Durga Puja, which is barely two weeks away, and since the State government has given its go-ahead for the celebrations to be held, albeit with some restrictions, people are now out shopping. A recent picture

under the chin – it would seem life is normal.

The scene, however, is very different in hospitals. There is even panic in some places, such as the iconic Medical College on College Street. On Tuesday, its principal sent an SOS to the Director of Health Services urgently asking for more doctors.

Doctors' shortage
"Presently, 26 post-graduate trainees including 12 faculty members have tested positive for COVID-19 and are either quarantined or undergoing treatment. As such, the Medical College is facing an acute shortage of doctors with the enhancement of 100 beds. Hence [I request] you to post/ detail senior residents with specialisation in MD (medicine), preferably ex-students of this institution, to cater effective and adequate care to

patients admitted [here]," the principal wrote.

Said Dr. Punyabrata Guha, convenor of West Bengal Doctors' Forum: "So many doctors getting infected is a serious matter. It becomes more serious as we are anticipating a manifold rise in the number of cases after Durga Puja. There will be acute shortage of human resources."

According to him, the situation had almost come under control in Kolkata, with the numbers dropping in the city but rising in the districts, but after Mahalaya and Vishwakarma Puja, the graph climbed up again. "We fear the number of cases will again rise after Puja," Dr. Guha said.

On Tuesday, West Bengal saw the highest number of daily deaths so far: 63. The number of daily cases in the State continues to hover around the 3,000 mark.

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IN BRIEF

Driver held for killing man in inebriated state

NEW DELHI
A 45-year-old driver of a cluster bus was arrested five days after he allegedly killed a man while driving in an inebriated condition near Kashmere Gate metro station, the police said on Wednesday. DCP (North) Anto Alphonse said that the accused has been identified as Pardeep alias Nagraj. Maujpur resident Sanjay (33) was killed in the accident on October 1. The police said the accused was previously involved in 13 cases, including a fatal accident.

Notice to EC on petition by Bhim Army chief

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice to Election Commission on a plea by Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Azad seeking registration of his political party, Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram), before the end of filing period for nomination of Assembly elections in Bihar.

Justice Jayant Nath asked the poll panel to respond to Mr. Azad's plea seeking to reduce the mandatory 30-day period for inviting objections from the public before registration of his party to seven days.

Mr. Azad, in his plea, stated that the election commission had on September 22 approved the name, Azad Samaj Party (Kashi Ram), following which on September 25 and 26 he got published public notices on two national and two local newspapers inviting objections.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission announced the dates for Bihar election, with the first phase to begin from October 28. In the petition filed through advocate Mohan Shamay Arya, Mr. Azad said that his party will contest the Bihar election on all seats. Hence, if the poll panel does not issue the certificate of registration and allot the symbol of the party for the present election, his party may "suffer irreparable losses".

The High Court will hear the case on October 20.

Police reveal details of protected witnesses in riot case chargesheet

Document contains names and addresses; police say the act was 'inadvertent'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has revealed the names and addresses of 15 protected witnesses in the chargesheet they submitted in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act case registered in connection with the Delhi riots that broke out in February. Police said the act was "inadvertent".



Paramilitary personnel taking out a flag march at riot-hit Shiv Vihar in north-east Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

eet provided to the accused persons as part of compliance of judicial orders."

Ensure safety

Police further said that the witnesses are court-protected and steps are being taken to ensure the safety and security of these witnesses and

four Hindus and 11 Muslims, mentions their names along with addresses against their pseudonym and dates on which their statements were recorded before the police and the magistrate. The pseudonyms given include Omega, Victor, Charlie, Gamma, Delta, Echo among others. The document also states that the identities of these public witnesses were concealed during the proceedings of the case.

The 17,000 page chargesheet divided into different folders was filed against 15 persons. For six persons who were charged under the UAPA, including Sharjeel Imam and Umar Khalid, a supplementary chargesheet will be filed in due course.

Special Marriage Act: interfaith pair seek removal of objection provision

Delhi High Court seeks response from Union government

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought a response from the Union government on a petition by an interfaith couple seeking to do away with the provision of inviting objection from public while applying for marriage registration under the Special Marriage Act (SMA).

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan also issued notice to the Delhi government on the petition. The couple, currently housed at an NGO here, have sought their marriage to be registered immediately.

All marriages done under the SMA require publication of the names of the couple for inviting objections from the public for 30 days. Within this period, anyone can

object to the marriage on the ground that it would contravene one or more of the conditions specified in Section 4 of the SMA.

The petition stated that the 30-day gestation period was not warranted as the same objective could be mitigated on the basis of certificates issued by government hospitals and on the basis of an undertaking by them. The question with regard to whether either party had a living spouse could arise in other religious marriage also, but they were exempted from the 30-day notice period, advocate, Utkarsh Singh, for the couple, argued.

The relationship of the 28-year-old Hindu man and the 26-year-old Muslim woman had led to various difficulties, with resistance from their respective parents, Mr. Singh said.

on the ground that it was unreasonable and arbitrary.

It claimed that the law commission had urged a reduction of this period to bring the procedure in line with all other personal laws, where registration under the Hindu Marriage Act could be attained in a day and signing of a 'Nikahnama' also conferred the status of husband and wife on a couple immediately.

"The 30-day period offers an opportunity to the kin of a couple to discourage an inter-caste or inter-religion marriage", it said.

The relationship of the 28-year-old Hindu man and the 26-year-old Muslim woman had led to various difficulties, with resistance from their respective parents, Mr. Singh said.

2 killed after container truck overturns on car

Driver who fled spot was arrested later



The mangled remains of the car in south Delhi's Lajpat Nagar on Wednesday ■ R.V. MOORTHY

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two persons travelling in a car were killed after the container of a truck carrying rice bags toppled on their vehicle near Lajpat Nagar flyover on early Wednesday morning, police said.

Ankit Malhotra and Ranjan Kalra, both aged 35, were into event management. Malhotra, who is a resident of Karkardooma had come with his car to pick up Kalra from his residence in Lajpat Nagar. They were going to the airport to catch a flight to Kolkata for work-related purpose when the ac-

cident took place, police said.

The truck driver fled the spot soon after the accident, police said, adding that the owner of the truck bearing a Haryana registration was identified. The police called the owner of the truck and got the details of the accused. Driver Vipin Yadav (25) was later arrested from Delhi, they said.

A case has been registered under section 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way) and 304 A (causing death by negligence) of IPC, a senior police officer said.

Retired Lt. Colonel arrested for duping armymen of ₹88 lakh

Accused induced his targets to invest in residential plots

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A retired Lt. Colonel was arrested for allegedly cheating army personnel on the pretext of providing them residential plots, the police said on Wednesday.

The accused has been identified as Rakesh Rana, a resident of Dwarka's Sector-18A. He was previously involved in two criminal cases, they said.

The police said one Haval-dar Chandan Kumar, along with other army personnel, alleged that they have been cheated by SWO-India Ltd., to the tune of around ₹88 lakh.

They alleged that the accused showed them rosy pictures of the 'Veer Aawas Bo-

karo Project' and assured that they were running an NGO in the name of SWO-India for the benefit of army personnel. It was also told that no-profit motive was there in the projects.

The investors were asked to deposit money in SWO India Ltd. The company, through its official, ensured that they would provide residential plots to the investors at Bokaro in Jharkhand, the police said. Assured by the accused, the victims invested money in the plots.

During investigation, it was revealed that Rana induced the army personnel that the whole project was on a 20-acre land and the land had been purchased and ne-

cessary approvals had been taken, a senior police officer said. The company provided an allocation-letter-cum-agreement on the receipt of the total amount, but neither provided the plots, nor returned their money. Even the company has no land and requisite approval from authority concerned, the police said.

"During investigation, it was revealed that Rana, retired Lt. Colonel, Kirti Chakra Vijeta, was the mastermind.

He was arrested on Tuesday from one of his residences at Dwarka. He was also the authorised signatory of various accounts of the company," Joint CP (EOW) O.P. Misra said.

Karat moves court over hate speeches' issue

Plea likely to come up for hearing today

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat has moved the Delhi High Court against a trial court order which rejected her plea for lodging an FIR against Union Minister Anurag Thakur and MP Pravesh Verma for their alleged hate speeches in relation to anti-CAA protest at Shaheen Bagh here.

The petition is likely to come up for hearing before Justice Yogesh Khanna on Thursday.

The trial court had on August 26 rejected her plea for registration of FIR against the BJP leaders on the ground that the requisite sanction from the competent authority, the Central

government, was not obtained.

The trial court had stated that prior sanction of competent authority - Central government - is required as per section 196 of the Code of Criminal Procedure at the stage of ordering of registration of FIR as both Mr. Thakur and Mr. Verma are MPs.

Delhi HC declines plea on guidelines on tuition fee

Plea seeks break-up of fees, concession

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday declined a petition seeking guidelines to universities and such institutions to charge only the tuition fee, too that in installments, in view of the COVID-19 crisis.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan asked the authorities concerned to treat the plea as a representation and take a decision in accordance with law and government policy applicable to the facts of the case.

The Bench said that universities have to pay their

professors and also set up the infrastructure for online classes and therefore, they cannot be directed to grant fee concessions. "Such petition deserves to be dismissed with costs, but we are not doing it now," the Bench said while disposing of the plea.

The law student, in his plea, had sought directions from the Ministry of Education to various universities and such institutions to give a break-up of the fees being charged by them and to also grant concessions to parents on a case-to-case basis in the form of extension of time period to deposit the fees.

Hindu Rao doctors go on strike over non-payment of salary

Nurses also join the 3-hour daily 'symbolic indefinite strike'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Resident doctors at the civic body run Hindu Rao Hospital in north Delhi have resorted to a three-hour daily "symbolic indefinite strike" in response to the non-payment of salaries for the last three months.

The group of doctors was joined by nurses of the hospital, who too have not been paid their salaries for several months.

Hindu Rao Hospital, the largest municipal hospital in Delhi with 900 beds, is currently a dedicated COVID-19

facility and many of its healthcare workers have contracted the virus since the pandemic began. Since it is a dedicated COVID-19 facility, medical services, according to the striking medical workers, will not be essentially affected. Doctors, who are not on rotational duty, will join the strike for the three hour duration, they said.

"We are on a symbolic indefinite strike to make our voices heard to authorities, who have not responded to our appeal so far. We have been doing the symbolic pen

down from 9 a.m. to noon for the last several days as well as online protests, but no one listened to us," said Abhimanyu Sardana, president of the Resident Doctors' Association of the facility.

"We are humans too and have a family to run. We are risking our lives for humanity. Is it too much to ask for our due salaries," Dr. Sardana asked.

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash had recently said the civic body was doing "everything possible to resolve the issue".

Transcript collection long drawn out, say DU graduates

They complain of lack of information on varsity's website

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

Delhi University graduates, who queued up at the South Campus on Wednesday to collect transcripts, complained of the process being long drawn and time-consuming specially with several of them applying to universities abroad.

Stating that one is required to visit the centre "at least four to five times" before the transcript is ready, they also complained of the lack of information on the varsity's website regarding the process.

While last month the university had informed the Delhi High Court that it was "willing to devise a mechanism for urgent requests," several of those lined up at the centre were unaware of the direction.

Vaani Sharma (name



Students and their relatives line up to collect transcripts at a counter in Delhi University's South Campus. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

changed), who graduated from Lady Shri Ram College in 2018, said: "I have not looked up for the online method yet and anyway DU has been fairly unreliable with technology. This is the fourth time I am coming to this centre. The list of documents provided is also vague and everyday they ask for a new document."

The Lucknow resident added: "There is a lot of miscommunication. Nowhere on the website is it mentioned that the centre will remain open on alternate days. I vi-

sited the centre on Tuesday only to find it shut. This is very difficult for someone like me who is not a city resident."

Multiple trips
For Anil Kumar, a resident of Palam, who was at the window to collect his son's transcript, it was his fifth visit. "My son graduated from Ram Lal Anand college in 2013 and now we need the transcript as he is applying abroad. Nothing seems to move here unless one makes multiple trips. If we are com-

ing after a month to collect it, then at least keep the thing ready. Usually transcripts are needed urgently. What is the point of making someone wait for two months?"

Mr. Kumar added, "Even government work is done online these days. Instead here we wait endlessly."

Vandana Sapra, who graduated from Sri Venkateswara college in 2019 said: "As of now I have not come across any online mode. I paid the fees online but for submission and attestation of documents we had to come to the campus. It has been a month since I paid the fees and now I have been asked to wait for sometime before I can collect the transcript."

Saloni Singh (name changed) waiting for her daughter's transcript added: "My daughter, who graduated in 2018, studied life sciences and now wants to apply abroad. We live in north Delhi and it is a hassle to keep making trips to South Campus for the transcript.

But we do not have any other option at the moment. We are also not aware of any provision to apply for online transcripts and hence did not apply for the same."

In its affidavit to the Delhi HC, the university had said that an online mechanism could not be devised for those who graduated before 2017 as printing of degrees had already been undertaken and sent to the respective colleges.

High Court order
The HC in its September 28 order had said, "Let the mechanism devised for issuance of urgent transcripts and the details thereof be placed on record before the next date of hearing."

The varsity had also informed the court that out of a total of 1,788 applications received with an urgency request, 1,728 degree certificates had already been issued and 450 online degree certificates are being generated on a daily basis.

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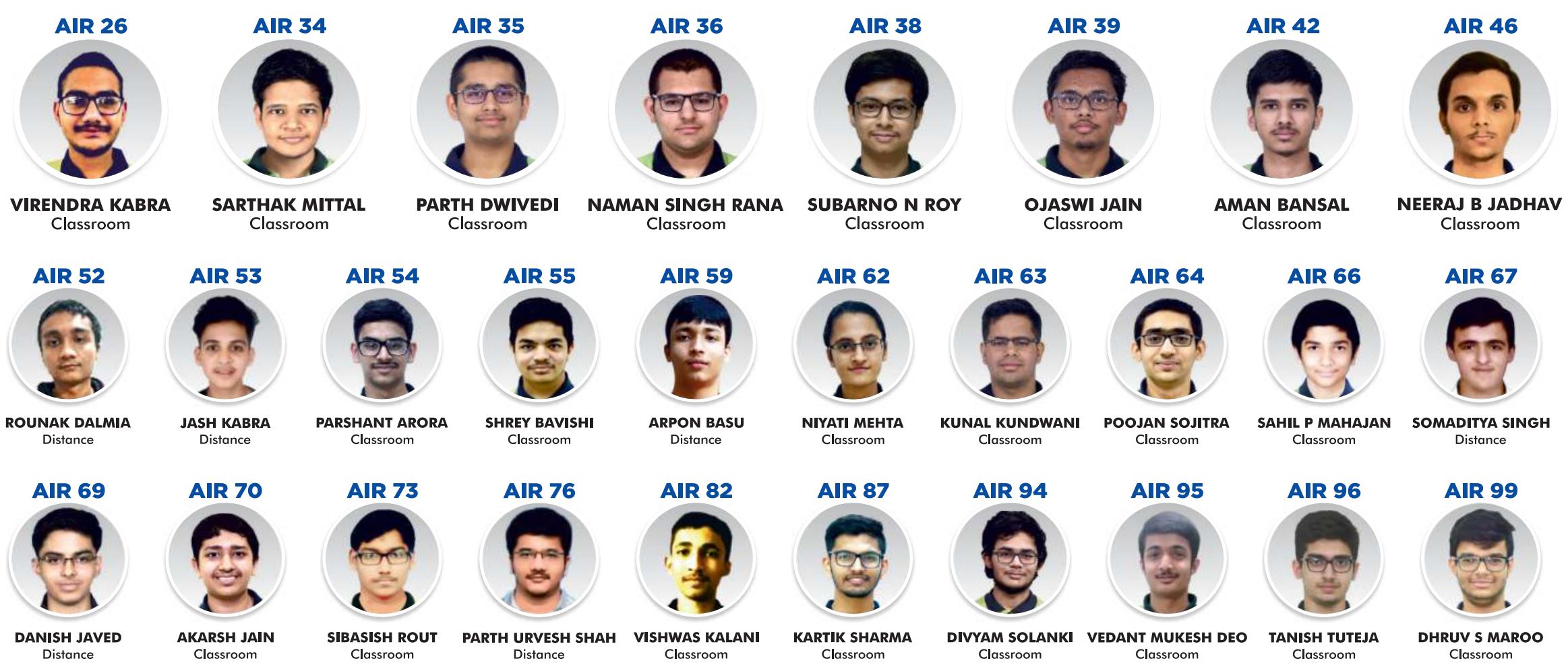
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Timings

DELHI

THURSDAY, OCT. 08
RISE 06:18 SET 17:59
RISE 22:16 SET 11:45
FRIDAY, OCT. 09
RISE 06:19 SET 17:58
RISE 23:09 SET 12:40
SATURDAY, OCT. 10
RISE 06:19 SET 17:57
RISE 00:00 SET 13:33

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 36 19
Safdarjung 36 19
Palam 35 21

Delhi Ploom Today
36°C Pleasant morning and warm day with gentle breeze.

Delhi Ploom Tomorrow
36°C A comfortable morning and night. Dry weather with few clouds.

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THE HINDU
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Delhi cinema halls to open from October 15

All weekly markets to begin operations immediately

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Cinema halls and weekly markets will be allowed to reopen in the Capital according to the latest unlock guidelines issued by the Centre, said an order issued by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Wednesday.

The order, dated October 6, and released in the name of Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Dev, stated that theatres can open from October 15 with 50% capacity while all weekly markets can open with immediate effect.

The relaxations do not apply to containment zones.

The Delhi government attributed the order to the 'persistent efforts' of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

"Now all weekly markets of Delhi will open. Till now only two markets per zone were allowed. The poor will get a lot of relief from this. Cinema halls of Delhi will also be opened from October 15. They have to follow all the guidelines issued by the Central government," Mr. Kejriwal tweeted.



The order stated that theatres can open with 50% capacity. ■ FILE PHOTO

Earlier, the DDMA had ordered a status quo regarding relaxation of restrictions in the city.

SOP compliance

The reopening of cinema halls will be subject to "strict compliance" of the SOP for Exhibition of Films on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19, as well as other directions/instructions issued by the Delhi government and the DDMA.

The functioning of weekly markets in the city will also be subject to strict compliance of preventive measures, read the order.

CM ensures relief to city restaurants

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday convened a meeting aimed at easing business for those in the restaurant industry here.

A delegation of the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), Ministers concerned and officials of various departments and agencies were present at the meeting. "Delhi's restaurants are the pride of the city and provide employment to lakhs of people. I have directed all the respective departments to remove unnecessary hassles in the smooth running of restaurants," Mr. Kejriwal said.

The NRAI team requested the abolishment of police licences since restaurants are a part of the retail sector.

Next three months crucial in Capital's COVID fight: report

'Isolation in thickly populated areas may have spread infection'

NIKHIL M BABU

NEW DELHI

A report prepared by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) says "the next three months are crucial in our battle" against COVID-19 with multiple festivals such as Diwali, Chhath Puja, Dussehra, and Id lined up.

The report says 2,324 healthcare workers in the Capital have been infected by COVID-19 and 75 have died so far. Out of the 2,324 cases, 34% are nurses, 23% doctors, 15% paramedics, 18% Group D staff and 10% others, according to the report.

"Formation of new containment zones could be restricted only for highly dense localities such as resettlement colonies and JJ clusters/slum areas," says the report. Hence all efforts should be undertaken to prevent the healthcare-associated infection in all the hospitals, labs, and field workers," states the report.

trimental for maintaining the morale of these COVID warriors. Hence all efforts should be undertaken to prevent the healthcare-associated infection in all the hospitals, labs, and field workers," states the report.

The report states that the percentage of cases from containment zones varied from 15-20% in districts and 80% were outside the zones. Of the total positive people, 30% were in different government facilities and 50-55% were in home isolation.

"All symptomatic positive cases reported from densely populated areas should be isolated only in CCC (COVID Care Centre) to ensure optimal utilization of CCC facilities," the report recommends.

As many as 2,871 new COVID-19 cases were reported in the Capital in the past 24 hours taking the total number of cases to 2,98,107, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Wednesday.

The report also states that home isolation was observed in "densely populated areas" as well and with the number of cases in thousands, this "may be one of the reasons for the spread of infection".

"Formation of new containment zones could be restricted only for highly dense localities such as resettlement colonies and JJ clusters/slum areas," says the report. Hence all efforts should be undertaken to prevent the healthcare-associated infection in all the hospitals, labs, and field workers," states the report.

Active virus cases drop further

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

As many as 2,871 new COVID-19 cases were reported in the Capital in the past 24 hours taking the total number of cases to 2,98,107, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Wednesday.

Also, 35 more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 5,616. As per the bulletin, 3,370 people have recovered in the past 24 hours and in total, 2,70,305 people have recovered. The number of active cases, which fell below the 25,000 mark after almost 25 days on Sunday further decreased to 22,186 on Wednesday. The number of active cases has been falling for the past eight days.

CPCB points to lacunae in Delhi's pollution plan

Nearly 40% complaints by citizens posted via the SAMEER app are unattended

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

taken and conducting random audits of pollution-under-control certificates.

Among the lacunae pointed out were that nearly 40% of complaints by citizens posted via the SAMEER app – designed specifically for consumer complaints – were unattended. Thirteen of the most polluted hotspots were expected to furnish action plans and Wazirpur had yet to provide one. The Delhi Jal Board, Public Works Department and Irrigation and Food and Control Department also hadn't furnished their 'winter action plans' and mixed municipal solid

waste at the dumpsites in Bhalswa, Ghaziabad and Okhla. Nearly all major districts

A key prong this year was the use of the bio-decomposer technique developed by the PUSA Research Institute which the Delhi government will be taking to farmers' doorsteps from Tuesday.

"We have also delineated 13 pollution hotspots for which detailed and specific plans will be made. We are creating the 'Green Delhi' app, which will receive complaints of pollution that will need to be taken care of in a time-bound manner," he had said on Monday.

Panchayats to be rewarded for zero crop burning

CM highlights efforts to tackle climate change

At global meet, he explains govt's plans

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

Haryana Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan has directed the Deputy Commissioners to achieve the goal of zero stubble burning and ensure the availability of crop residue management machinery to small and marginal farmers on a priority basis.

Mr. Vardhan said that panchayats falling in the red zone for high number of incidents of farm fires would be rewarded for their performance on crop residue management. The panchayats securing first, second and third positions would be rewarded an amount of ₹10 lakh, ₹5 lakh and ₹3 lakh respectively.

The Chief Secretary said this in a videoconference with the Deputy Commissioners on Wednesday to prevent the burning of crop residues in compliance with the Supreme Court order.



Arvind Kejriwal

Went to Hathras after getting virus test report'

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

Am Aadmi Party MLA Kuldeep Kumar on Wednesday accused the BJP of spreading false propaganda against him after the Uttar Pradesh police lodged an FIR against him for visiting Hathras despite being COVID-19 positive.

Mr. Kumar, MLA from Kondli in Delhi, tested positive on September 29. On October 4, he declared on social media that he visited the family of the Hathras victim. A case was registered against him for violation of COVID-19 protocol, as per reports. Mr. Kumar said he got to know about the FIR from media. He accused the BJP and its IT cell of spreading propaganda that he visited Hathras after testing positive. The MLA stressed that he himself was from the Dalit community and had gone to meet the family after getting a negative report.

Season's debut for 'poor' AQI

Air quality to dip further in next 3 days

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

sport from external emission sources to the city and local conditions are also conducive for accumulation of pollutants in the city, as per SAFAR.

The AQI of the city was 215 on Wednesday as per CPCB. The AQI was in the moderate category till Tuesday and was expected to drop to the poor category this week.

Strict actions

Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday said that there will be strict implementation of anti-dust drive to control air pollution. He also said that farmers can sow seeds after about five days of spraying the bio-decomposer on stubble and do not have to wait for 20-25 days.

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Police detain, later release farmers in Sirsa

VIKAS VASUDEVIA
CHANDIGARH

The police in Haryana's Sirsa on Wednesday morning detained around 70 people, most of them farmers, who were squatting on a road leading to Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala's residence, demanding his resignation from the post against the Centre's agriculture sector laws.

The protesters were released late in the evening. The agitating farmers announced to resume their sit-in close to Mr. Chautala's residence.

"Finally, after 10 hours, everyone was released unconditionally. Farmers to resume their dharna. A small step for farmer activists, a big leap for farmers' movement. Congratulations!" said Swaraj India's national president Yogenendra Yadav, who was also detained.

Sirs DSP Aryan Chaudhary confirmed that the protesters have been released.

Earlier, Sirsa SP Bhupender Singh said, "We had detained around 70 people who were squatting on a road since Tuesday night, close to Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala's residence, causing inconvenience to the public. Most farmers had left after yesterday's protest. We are investigating if any 'anti-social' elements are among the group."

Mr. Yadav said the State government was rattled by the farmers' agitation and was using force against them. "I have been detained by the Haryana police for joining peaceful dharna at Sirsa. About 100 farmers and leaders were arrested."

Farmer groups reject Centre's invite for 'talks' on agri laws

'Government's approach seems to be non-serious towards our concerns'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH



Farmers shout slogans as they block railway tracks during a protest against farm laws, in Amritsar on Wednesday. • PTI

Meeting of 30 outfits

Members of as many as 30 farmer outfit held a meeting here, in which it was decided that farmers would not participate in any meeting as the government's approach seems to be "non-serious" towards addressing farmers' concerns.

"We have rejected the invitation extended by Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Agarwal to several members of

different outfits for the conference. The language of the letter sent to us indicated that the meeting was not for any conversation or discussion on the farm laws. But it seems a call from the Agriculture Secretary to explain

the benefits of these laws to the farmers," said Jagmohan Singh, general secretary, Bhartiya Kisan Union (Dakunda). "It shows the non-serious approach of the government," he added.

Mr. Singh said farmer out-

fits had also decided to continue their 'rail-roko' agitation across the State. "It was also decided that if the Punjab government did not convene an Assembly session by October 15 to repeal the agriculture sector laws, we will start boycotting Congress leaders in the same way as the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) leaders are being boycotted," he said.

Impact, implementation

The Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, government of India, had written to representatives of different farmer organisations, inviting them for a meeting in New Delhi on October 8, to address the concerns regarding the impact and implementation of new farm laws.

U.P. govt. inks agreement with Swiss firm for Jewar airport

To be opened in 2024, it will handle 1.2 cr. passengers per year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday signed a concession agreement with representatives of Zurich Airport International for designing, building and operating the Noida International Airport at Jewar for a period of 40 years.

The airport will be developed on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) basis and is scheduled to open in 2024. It will be located at a distance of 70 kms from Delhi, 40 kms from Noida and 130 kms from Agra.

"We are targeting the first six months for financial closures and the next 36 months for completion of the first phase of airport with a capacity of 1.2 crore passengers per annum. The project will be constructed with an initial investment of

₹4,588 crore for the first phase," Daniel Bircher, Chief Executive Officer, Zurich Airport International Asia, told *The Hindu* in an e-mail. The airport will open with a single runway, but once it is fully developed by 2040, it will have two runways and will have a capacity of 7 crore passengers per annum.

Land for expansion

The airport will be developed on 1,334 hectares of land and the U.P. government has reserved an additional 5,000 hectares for airport expansion, Mr. Bircher added.

Zurich Airport International AG (ZAI) won the contract to build and operate the airport for a period of 40 years last November. ZAI received the security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs in May this year.

To a question on whether another international airport so close to one in the national capital will be viable, Mr. Bircher replied, "The Noida international airport will be a visionary airport for Delhi NCR, Noida and Western U.P., which will activate the catchment area and connect it to other metropolitan areas in India and the world. We see Noida International airport as complementary and an efficient alternative to Indira Gandhi International Airport which is set to reach its peak capacity of 11 crore in the next six or seven years".

The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority has also shared plans to link the airport with Yamuna Expressway, Metro and Western Peripheral Expressway.

Road map ready for National Education Policy in Rajasthan'

It would promote quality in education, says Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The road map for the National Education Policy-2020 was ready in the universities in Rajasthan, where the implementation would be done in a phased manner, Governor Kalraj Mishra, who is Chancellor of the State-funded universities, said here on Tuesday. The new policy would promote quality, innovation and research in education, he said.

Mr. Mishra said at a meeting of the task force consti-

tuted for the policy's execution that the priority areas would be identified for implementation within the next one month and action initiated for bringing about the desired changes.

The sub-committees would be appointed for the formulation of action plans in different spheres, he added.

A detailed feedback for higher education will be obtained from the Vice-Chancellors of all universities at a three-day dialogue to be held

here from October 21 to 23. The task force was appointed on April 10 on the directions of the Governor.

Changes recommended

Mr. Mishra said several universities had recommended changes in the academic and administrative set-up, introduction of new self-financed course, formulation of credit points at the national level and multi-level entries, besides seeking Central assistance for the digitalisation programme.

Cong. hits out at Haryana govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Senior Congress leader Ranbir Singh Surjewala on Wednesday criticised the BJP-JP government in Haryana for failing to curb rising crime in the State after a businessman was allegedly burnt to death by unidentified assailants in Hansi district.

"Criminals having a free run in Haryana. It was shocking that the businessman Ram Meher was looted in the middle of a road and then burnt alive. Where is the government? The criminals have no fear for law as the attackers not only looted the businessman but reportedly locked him in the car and set it on fire," said Mr. Surjewala.

Fighting flames



Firemen trying to control the fire as an underground CNG tank exploded at a petrol pump near the Raj Bhavan in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday. Nine people were injured in the mishap. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

Ex-Assam DIG in CID custody

Prime accused in paper leak case was nabbed on Tuesday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A court in Guwahati on Wednesday gave the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) custody of former Deputy Inspector General of Assam police Prasanta Kumar Dutta for six days.

The retired DIG, one of the prime accused in the leaking of question papers for appointing 597 unarmed sub-inspectors, was arrested by the West Bengal police from Kakarbhitta on the India-Nepal border on Tuesday.

The CID had sought a week's custody but the court of the chief judicial magistrate prescribed six days. The court also directed

ed the CID to check Mr. Dutta's health at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital before interrogation.

The former DIG had tested negative for COVID-19 hours after a police team that fetched him from northern West Bengal on Tuesday night. The police, however, told the court that he was suffering from high blood pressure, diabetes and cardiac problem.

Jobs for cash

Mr. Dutta and suspended Bharatiya Janata Party leader Dibin Deka had allegedly assured jobs to many candidates for cash.

Handwritten copies of the leaked question paper were given to 50 job aspirants.

rants who sat for the "written test" at a guesthouse in Guwahati on September 19, a day ahead of schedule.

Some 66,000 candidates had started answering the questions on the scheduled date when the exam was questioned following a social media upload of the leaked question paper.

The "recruitment scam" saw retired IPS officer Deepak Kumar quit as the chairman of the State Level Police Recruitment Board, which later rescheduled the date for the written test to November 22.

The elections to 40 seats in the council were to have been held on April 4 but were deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The council has been under the Governor's rule since its dissolution on April 27.

"The Cabinet also decided to make Bodo the associate official language in Assam through an ordinance," Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said.

Bodoland poll gets Assam Cabinet nod

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Sarbananda Sonowal-led Assam Cabinet on Wednesday decided to request the State Election Commission to schedule the Bodoland Territorial Council election in December.

The elections to 40 seats in the council were to have been held on April 4 but were deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The council has been under the Governor's rule since its dissolution on April 27.

"The Cabinet also decided to make Bodo the associate official language in Assam through an ordinance," Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said.

Christian group flays pastor's arrest in Arunachal

Action taken for illegal construction of a church, say Tawang district authorities

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

A Christian organisation in Arunachal Pradesh has slammed the authorities of Buddhist-dominated Tawang for the arrest of a pastor on charges of illegally constructing a church.

Joseph Singh was arrested on October 6 and released on bail hours later. The local police had also detained and recorded the statements of eight of his associates.

Tawang's Additional Deputy Commissioner Lobsang Tsering said the arrest was made on the basis of a first information report lodged by the district Land Revenue and Survey officer.

The action followed complaints by two groups – the Indigenous Faith and Cultural

Society of Arunachal Pradesh and Monpa (dominant Buddhist community) Mimang Tsogpa – against the pastor and others for allegedly constructing a Revival Church illegally.

The church is located behind the district planning officer's quarters in Tawang's AIR Colony. The minuscule Christian community in the district claimed the church had stood there since they occupied the plot in 1999 with the department concerned "ignoring their application for land allotment initiated in 2003".

"We were assured allotment of the piece of land after we met Chief Minister Pema Khandu and Chief Secretary [Naresh Kumar] in August. We started construction of

the church out of frustration," said Sonara Degio, vice-president of the Arunachal Pradesh Christian Revival Church Council (APCRC).

"Pastor Singhji and the Christian community here are under stress," Mr. Degio told *The Hindu* from Tawang, about 450 km northwest of capital Itanagar.

A district official said the pastor had been served several notices to stop the construction of the church and dismantle the structures. The last such issue on the basis of a Supreme Court directive was served in 2017.

The apex court had on September 29, 2009 said no unauthorised construction shall be permitted in the name of temple, church, mosque, gurdwara or any other place of worship on public facilities.

The APCRC said the district authorities invoked the Arunachal Pradesh Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupant) Act, 2003, after Mr. Singhji had allegedly failed to comply with the order to stop construction. Work on the church had started in 2015.

APCRC president Tai Ete said the police action was 'unjust' since public spaces have been used in the State for structures associated with other faiths.

The district authorities denied targeting any particular community. Officials said land allotments issued to many private and public parties have been cancelled in more than a decade.

KARYAKALAK AMBIVARTA KA KARYALAY

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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Andaman Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Assam, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, coastal Karnataka and Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.3	34.8	25.9	Kozhikode	—	32.5	25.2
Ahmedabad	—	37.8	25.3	Kurnool	—	33.3	24.7
Aizawl	—	27.1	17.1	Lucknow	—	36.3	22.6
Allahabad	—	36.3	26.4	Madurai	88	36.0	22.4
Bengaluru	—	30.4	21.9	Mangaluru	21.2	31.1	23.6
Bhopal	—	34.1	17.9	Mumbai	—	33.5	25.8
Bhubaneswar	—	32.9	24.7	Mysuru	2	32.0	21.8
Chandigarh	—	36.0	19.5	New Delhi	—	36.0	18.6
Chennai	—	36.8	27.7	Patna	—	34.8	26.2
Coimbatore	—	33.8	23.6	Pon Blair	1.4	29.4	24.3
Dehradoon	—	33.2	18.1	Puducherry	37.5	37.7	23.0
Gangtok	6.8	22.6	17.7	Pune	—	33.3	21.5
Goa	12.4	32.0	23.3	Raipur	11.4	32.6	24.4
Guwahati	—	32.0	26.4	Ranchi	—	32.2	22.0
Hubballi	—	29.0	22.0	Shillong	1.4	20.7	17.5
Hyderabad	—	27.4	23.5	Shimla	—	27.5	17.0
Imphal	1.8	29.7	20.2	Srinagar	—	26.8	6.8
Jaipur	—	37.0	22.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	31.9	24.4
Kochi	0.4	30.4	24.6	Tiruchi	—	37.3	25.5
Kohima	1.4	24.2	18.2	Vijayawada	83.7	31.8	24.8
Kolkata	1	32.7	26.7	Visakhapatnam	38	32.4	25.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO₂ NO_x CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	41	84	26	91	112	—
Bengaluru	.3	29	39	65	101	—
Chennai	56	30	67	78	101	—
Delhi	26	116	82	242	261	—
Hyderabad	.9	67	36	124	137	—
Kolkata	10	18	—	44	—	—
Lucknow	.6	88	47	.303	.219	—
Mumbai	18	20	43	71	147	—
Pune	—	—	—	—	—	—
Visakhapatnam	.5	20	16	.52	.72	—

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m. Charhki Dadi, Haryana recorded an AQI of 320 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Mysuru, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 33

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Scribes chasing vehicle of any celebrity to face action

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Hours after actor Rhea Chakraborty was granted bail by the Bombay High Court in the drug case following the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, the Mumbai Police said strict action would be taken against media persons chasing vehicle of any celebrity, advocate, or any person.

Ms. Chakraborty was released from the Byculla jail after a month of being arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau. A highly-placed source, requesting anonymity, said that no media person or journalist should be seen chasing any celebrity or advocate for an interview or byte. He said that media professionals could not endanger the life of a person on the road or travelling in a vehicle.

BJP demands reopening of temples

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

In a bid to pressure the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi government to reopen temples in Maharashtra, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will hold a Statewide hunger strike on October 13.

"The State government has decided to open hotels, restaurants and bars. But it has yet not given the green signal to open temples. To condemn this decision, we will observe a one-day fast in front of temples," said Tushar Bhosle, State president of the BJP's spiritual wing.

"We see no problem with the 90 hectare, but anything above 90, you will have to get CRZ clearance... Stick to 90," Chief Justice S.A. Bobde orally suggested to BMC counsel Darius Khambata. He in turn informed the court that his client has already made an application

Maharashtra's COVID-19 recovery rate nears 81%

More than 16,000 patients discharged against 14,578 new cases

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Recoveries continued to outweigh the case surge as Maharashtra reported 14,578 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday as opposed to 16,715 patients being discharged.

The State's total case tally reached 14,80,489 while the active cases have come down to 2,44,527 with the recovery rate rising to an all-time high of 80.81%.

With 355 more deaths, the State's death toll has climbed to 39,072. The cumulative recoveries now stand at 11,96,441.

"Of a total 73,24,188 laboratory samples tested thus far, 14,80,489 (20.21%) have returned positive with around 83,000 samples across the State being tested in the last 24 hours," State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said, adding that the State's case fatality rate currently stood at 2.64%.

Pune district reported over 2,000 cases to take its total case tally to 3,08,434

No stopping testing: A health worker at a medical camp at Peddar Road in Mumbai. ■ FILE PHOTO

while 40 deaths saw its fatality toll climb to 6,073. As per the Pune district administration, the recovery rate has reached 86.36% with the number of active cases down to 33,691.

Mumbai reported a high surge of 2,848 cases to take its total case tally to 2,19,961 of whom 26,544 are active cases. As many as 46 fatalities saw the city's death toll rise to 9,248.

Nagpur district in Vidarbha reported over 950 cases, taking the district's total

case tally to 84,124 of whom 10,862 are active. As many as 20 deaths saw the death count climb to 2,241.

In western Maharashtra, Satara reported a sharp fatality spike of 35 deaths to take its death toll to 1,179. As many as 376 fresh cases saw the total case tally rise to 40,905 of whom 7,984 are active.

Sangli reported nearly 350 cases to take the district's total case tally to 41,147 of whom 7,091 are active.

With 11 deaths, the death toll has risen to 1,282.

No problem in reclaiming 90 hectares: SC on coastal road

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday indicated it may not see a problem with the reclamation of 90 hectares for the Coastal Road Project in Mumbai, but the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) would have to transform the project. "It is a completely different project now... They have completely altered it," Mr. Divan argued. He sought a blanket stay of the project. The Bench reserved orders on the issue.

The court is hearing an appeal filed against a Bombay High Court decision stopping work on the project till it gets a proper environmental clearance.

before the Maharashtra CRZ.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, representing respondents led by Worli Koliwada Nakhwa Matsya Vyavasay Sakhari Society, however, said the increase in land reclamation from 90 hectares to 111.5 hectares has transformed the project. "It is a completely different project now... They have completely altered it," Mr. Divan argued. He sought a blanket stay of the project. The Bench reserved orders on the issue.

The various local societies have contended that "the project is not just about a road. It touches on 90 hectares. The road is only a tiny stretch but large areas of land would be reclaimed".

The girl's parents approached the Turbhe MIDC police station and registered

On December 17 last year, the apex court found that the high court order "needs to be stayed having regard to the factor of balance of convenience; prima facie case and irreparable damage/injury".

The apex court had said the petitioners were "free to reclaim the land, build the road thereon and secure the road. They shall however not carry out any other development work until further orders of this court".

The accused, identified as Vijay Rathod, an autorickshaw driver, dragged the victim from his neighbourhood chawl in Turbhe to his house on Sunday evening and allegedly raped her. He then switched off his phone, and told his friends that he was going to Pune.

The girl's parents approached the Turbhe MIDC police station and registered

In SC, Maharashtra says Palghar lynching pleas filed for 'political capital'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Maharashtra government on Wednesday said the petitions filed in the Supreme Court for a CBI probe into the lynching of two sadhus at Palghar was an attempt to derive "political capital" of the incident that happened during the pandemic lockdown.

"All the action seems to have been taken by the State," Justice Ashok Bhushan, heading a three-judge Bench, observed orally at the beginning of the hearing. Senior advocate R. Basant, for Maharashtra, affirmed that "all action has been taken". He said the writ petitions filed under Article 32 of the Constitution should be wound up now.

"Two crimes have been registered. One against the mob under murder and 126 persons have been charged. The second one is against police officers who were at the scene. We think some of them ought to have acted better. They have been punished with compulsory retirement and/or other disciplinary actions... We don't understand how Article 32 petitions are still pending... They are making

political capital of these Article 32 petitions," Mr. Basant submitted. The court gave the petitioners two weeks' time to file their replies to the Maharashtra affidavits.

Punished for negligence
In an earlier hearing, the State informed the court that 18 police officers were punished for negligence and dereliction of duty for their inability to prevent the lynching. The police opposed the plea filed by the relatives of the priests to transfer the case to the CBI. A short affidavit filed by the police said a departmental enquiry *prima facie* found that they did not act in time to prevent the incident.

The punishment of the 18 officers ranged from dismissal to reverting to minimal pay for a specific number of years and even compulsory retirement. An earlier affidavit by the government informed the court that a specialised unit of the State CID was probing the case since April 20 and two charge sheets had been filed.

The court had ordered the State to place the charge sheets on record before it.

Turbhe man flees after raping minor, nabbed in Osmanabad

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

The Navi Mumbai Police on Tuesday arrested a 30-year-old Turbhe resident in Osmanabad for allegedly raping a 12-year-old girl.

The accused, identified as Vijay Rathod, an autorickshaw driver, dragged the victim from his neighbourhood chawl in Turbhe to his house on Sunday evening and allegedly raped her. He then switched off his phone, and told his friends that he was going to Pune.

The girl's parents approached the Turbhe MIDC police station and registered

a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

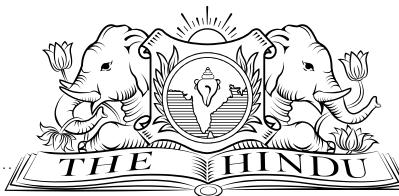
The police decided to keep a tab on the calls received by his wife and soon found a call from an unknown number between Monday and Tuesday.

Since Mr. Rathod lived on the outskirts of Osmanabad and the number was also from the same district, the police dispatched a team to Umarga in Osmanabad.

"He was caught from a sugarcane field in Lohara," senior police inspector Sachin Rane from Turbhe police station said.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

E-TENDER NOTICE</b



Four for one

Whatever the benefits of Quad, India should not be led by the U.S. on regional initiatives

With the second meeting of the Australia-India-Japan-United States Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue of Foreign Ministers in Tokyo on Tuesday, the Quad has entered a decisive phase. The Ministers, who had last met at the UN General Assembly, made a considered push to hold the meeting, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In a departure from the earlier secrecy, they made public a large part of their deliberations, including the decision to make the FM meeting an annual event, to cooperate on combating the pandemic, and on building infrastructure, connectivity and a supply chain initiative in the region. As the host, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga dispelled any notion that he might not be as proactive as his predecessor, Shinzo Abe, who originally conceived the idea in 2007. Australia's Foreign Minister Marise Payne attended despite the two-week quarantine that she faces on return, and India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar undertook the journey despite the government's preoccupation with the LAC stand-off. But it is probably the U.S. that displayed the most eagerness to hold the meeting, just weeks before the Presidential election. Mr. Trump's COVID-19 illness and sudden hospitalisation prompted U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to cancel other scheduled stops, in South Korea and Mongolia. But in Tokyo, he made it clear that his mission was to direct the Quad towards building a coalition to counter Beijing's aggression in the region, saying that their partnership was not "multilateralism for the sake of it". He called on the entire Quad to "collaborate to protect" the region from what he called the "CCP's exploitation, corruption, and coercion", pointing to the LAC stand-off, as well as Chinese aggression in the South and East China Seas. What he seemed to propose was not just a coalition of democracies committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific, as the Quad's informal charter has thus far stated. Instead, the U.S. seems keen on turning the Quadrilateral into a full-fledged military alliance of countries facing tensions with China.

The government should not downplay the import of such openly stated intentions. While Japan and Australia are bound by alliance treaties to the U.S., New Delhi has thus far charted its course on strategic autonomy. Mr. Pompeo's words could well be bluster borne of politics ahead of the U.S. elections, but they point to an interest in bringing India into bilateral tensions in the Indo-Pacific, while inviting the Quad to take a role in India-China tensions as well. The Modi government has rebuffed such suggestions, and any shift would be unwise now. India has much to gain strategically and in terms of capacity building from the Quadrilateral dialogue, but little from the impression it is being led by Washington on an important initiative for the region in which India is an equal and important stake-holder.

The hole in the middle

The physics Nobel celebrates both theoretical work and observational studies

This year's Nobel prize in physics awards studies that established the existence of black holes. It celebrates theoretical work as much as it does dedicated observation. Andrea Ghez is only its fourth woman recipient. Roger Penrose, now at Oxford, who gets half the prize, ingeniously used mathematics in the 1960s to theorise under what conditions black holes must form. This was a time when the reality of black holes as a solution to Albert Einstein's field equations of the General Theory of Relativity was not accepted by many prominent physicists. Within a couple of months after Einstein proposed his General Theory of Relativity in 1915, Karl Schwarzschild published a solution to the field equations that exhibited singularities, or points where physical quantities grew infinitely large or vanished. Today, this is understood as the event horizon – the point of no return beyond which even light cannot escape the black hole's gravitational attraction. While more solutions were found to Einstein's equations that suggested black holes, they all required special symmetries and their realisation under general astrophysical conditions was doubtful. Penrose, through the singularity theorems, identified the formation of trapped surfaces as the condition for the formation of black holes in a generic manner. In this climate came observational hints of supermassive black holes, through the discovery of what were initially called quasars that were supermassive and found at the centre of galaxies.

The other half of the prize is jointly awarded to Reinhard Genzel, at the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics, Garching, Germany, and Prof. Ghez, of the UCLA, U.S., for showing that the dense region in the centre of our galaxy – the Milky Way – is indeed a black hole. Towards the end of the 1960s it was clear that the region named Sagittarius A* occupies the centre of the Milky Way, which is about 26,000 light years away. Around this, all stars in the galaxy orbit. In the 1990s, when telescopes and equipment were developed that could tackle this distance, Prof. Genzel and Prof. Ghez set up independent groups to explore this region. They built unique instruments and pursued research from Very Large Telescope, in Chile, and the Keck Observatory, Hawaii, respectively. For three decades, the groups tracked nearly 30 stars, in particular one named S-2 (or S-02). This star's orbit has been nearly completely tracked. These stars followed elliptical, Keplerian, orbits, which can only imply a central concentrated massive object – a supermassive black hole. Thus, the prize strings together theoretical research from the 1960s driven by conviction, and a three-decade long observational study that started in the 1990s. It reiterates that in the pursuit of truth, time is but a twinkle.

Using facts to hide underlying truths

In the clever use of seemingly appropriate words and phrases by the powerful, one finds a clear intent to deceive people



RAJEEV BHARGAVA

The Hathras atrocity is weighing on the national conscience, or whatever is left of it. People have witnessed not just the most brutal face of social oppression, but a cynical and brazen use of the state machinery to support the oppressors. The inhuman assault of the teenage Dalit girl – I shall call her Bharati – that eventually killed her was followed by a hesitation in filing the first information report, the callous and deferred medical examination, the neglect of the dying declaration, and, most alarmingly, the haste in burning the body by the police without appropriate rites or the presence of family members.

This wilful destruction of evidence was followed by political tyranny: family members were virtually put under house arrest, the entire village was barricaded by massive police force, Opposition leaders and mediapersons who tried to reach the victim's family were stopped and roughed up – an appalling instance of dictatorial behaviour that made a mockery of our constitutional democracy.

Shaping the discourse

I shall not, however, focus on any of these, attending instead to the slippery speech-acts of spokespersons of the ruling party as they tried to shape the discourse around the horrific incident. Using false arguments to deceive the listener is a common form of sophistry. But what was heard here was the use of true statements to hide other more urgent and relevant truths. This is no ordinary fake news or misinformation but the

clever use of seemingly appropriate words and phrases with the clear intention of deceiving the populace. Few better instances are available of how facts and truth are used to generate a false discourse.

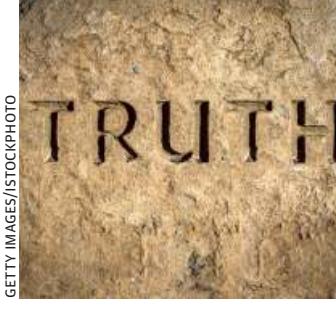
I illustrate my point with three examples. Take first the issue of mis-description. I heard it being said on a television channel that 'I was pained at the death of the young woman'. On the face of it, it sounds sensitive and apt; it is true after all that Bharati died. And expression of pain at the loss of life seems fitting. But is it? Since it is incontrovertibly true that she was mercilessly pulverised and eventually killed, the term 'died' is entirely inappropriate. 'Death' fails to distinguish the demise of a person by natural causes, accident, suicide or murder.

To speak of the death of a person when she was murdered is grossly misleading. If used persistently and deliberately it is nothing but unforgivable sophistry. It obfuscates truth. Likewise, pain alone is not an appropriate emotion in the face of a brutal murder. To not have feelings of anger, horror, or outrage indicates an emotional and moral disability. Overall,

then, expressing pain at Bharati's ghastly murder is an inadequate emotion accompanying a gross mis-description. Together, they hide the truth of the gruesome incident. In human situations, finding just the right, the most appropriate description of what has occurred is often the difference between Truth and Falsehood.

Irrelevant explanations

Such mis-descriptions are not the only way in which powerful wrongdoers distort public discourse and evade responsibility. Very often, explanations that are otherwise factually correct or true are equally damaging. So, what is to be made of explanations of the



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chilling assault on Bharati by reference to the male propensity for aggression, violence and control?

Consider the following example. An investigating police officer enters a charred house, and finds a can of kerosene and a used matchstick. As he exits, a reporter asks how the house caught fire. The officer answers "because of the presence of oxygen at the location". Now, this account is not untrue, for nothing catches fire without the presence of oxygen. However, the response is entirely irrelevant and would send the news reporter into a tizzy. The answer is wrong because a good explanation needs to be not merely factually correct but relevant to the question at hand.

Surely, at the back of the reporter's mind is whether the house was burnt accidentally or intentionally and if the latter, precisely who caused it and why. Finding the motive and attributing responsibility for the criminal act is vital. Likewise, it is probably true that males are prone to aggression. Yet, like oxygen, this is part of the standing conditions of specific acts of rape and murder. It is not explanatorily relevant in most cases of actual violence such as in Hathras. If our interest is in finding precipitating causes for why Bharati was assaulted, we need to identify local social, economic, cultural, perhaps political factors. To provide irrelevant and general statements instead is a straightforward ploy to hide the truth, to cover up a possi-

ble crime. Likewise, broadening the discussion in the immediate aftermath of the atrocity by speaking generally about rapes all over the country deflects from the specific atrocity in Hathras and lets its perpetrators get off the hook.

Identity of the victim

This brings me to the third point which is so obvious that I am surprised that I need to make it at all. To say that Bharati was assaulted and murdered and stop there is being both economical with the truth and morally callous. The omission of a detail withholds the most crucial feature of the story, one without which what happened cannot be understood and explained. Horrendous as all rapes are, it was not just any woman who was brutalised by some men, but a Dalit who was sexually assaulted and killed by 'upper caste' men. This crime would likely not have occurred if it was not for Bharati's Dalit identity. Indeed, she was reportedly gang raped and murderously beaten not only because she was a Dalit but precisely because in the past, her family had resisted 'upper caste' domination. Even Bharati did not remain mute as she lay battered, but named her perpetrators in her dying declaration.

So, it is not false to say that a young woman was assaulted and murdered by brutal men, but to ignore Bharati's Dalit-ness and hide the caste-related nature of the crime is to fail to explain what happened, provide a false account. For it is the criss-crossing co-presence of caste and gender that truly explains what happened to Bharati in Hathras. Ignoring or concealing this falsifies the account, even when no factually incorrect general statement, no outright lie is offered.

We cannot paper over the difference between the horrendous act of killing a woman out of personal

hatred for what she did, killing her to assert brute male power and murdering her only because of her Dalit identity. In a caste-ridden society, some groups are imprisoned in their castes, facing horrendous consequences simply on account of the family into which they are born, and because of where precisely their family happens to be located in caste hierarchy.

The inadequacies of homilies

Usually the same is true of our religious identity. This is why the targeting of Dalits or Muslims all over India or of Kashmiri Pandits only because of who they are brings in a dimension of violence that cannot be condemned by general homilies such as 'all killing is horrible' or that 'all rapes are terrible'. These true, generalised statements tend to obliterate the very reason for which some people are killed. To mistreat, discriminate and target individuals because of their colour, gender, religion or nationality is to commit a crime qualitatively different from other horrific acts. For it attacks and terrorises not just one person but her entire community. To omit any mention of these specific group identities where relevant is then to entirely mis-describe the crime and obscure its real cause.

In short, in cases such as the Hathras atrocity where caste and gender oppression are deeply intertwined, one cannot foreground gender in a way that prevents people from seeing the causal role of caste in the violent act. To de-emphasise this point is to falsify the narrative. To place emphasis on just one and not on the other is also to distort the account. This politically motivated sophistry is dangerous. By legitimising the crime, it helps perpetuate the

Rajeev Bhargava is Honorary Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi

Playing catch up in flood forecasting technology

India needs a technically capable workforce that can master ensemble weather and flood forecast models



J. HARSHA

Have you ever wondered how a local agency makes a decision if a flood forecast merely uses the words "Rising" or "Falling" above a water level at a river point? Especially when the time available to act is just 24 hours, there is no idea of the area of inundation, its depth, and when the accuracy of the forecast decreases at 24 hours and beyond?

There are many times this happens in India during flood events, when the end users (district administration, municipalities and disaster management authorities) receive such forecasts and have to act quickly. These compelling scenarios are often experienced across most flood forecast river points, examples readers will be familiar with – in Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala or Tamil Nadu.

Compare this with another form of flood forecast (known as the "Ensemble forecast") that provides a lead time of 7-10 days ahead, with probabilities assigned to different scenarios of water levels and regions of inundation. An example of the probabilities ahead could be something like this: chances of the water level exceeding the danger level is 80%, with likely inundation of a village nearby at 20%. The "Ensemble flood forecast" certainly helps local administrations with better decision-making and in being better prepared than in a deterministic flood forecast.

The United States, the Euro-

pean Union and Japan have already shifted towards "Ensemble flood forecasting" along with "Inundation modelling". India has only recently shifted towards "Deterministic forecast" (i.e. "Rising" or "Falling" type forecast per model run).

The shortcomings with Indian flood forecasting are glaring.

A case of multiple agencies

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issues meteorological or weather forecasts while the Central Water Commission (CWC) issues flood forecasts at various river points. The end-user agencies are disaster management authorities and local administrations.

Therefore, the advancement of flood forecasting depends on how quickly rainfall is estimated and forecast by the IMD and how quickly the CWC integrates the rainfall forecast (also known as Quantitative Precipitation Forecast or QPF) with flood forecast. It also links to how fast the CWC disseminates this data to end user agencies.

Thus, the length of time from issuance of the forecast and occurrence of a flood event termed as "lead time" is the most crucial aspect of any flood forecast to enable risk-based decision-making and undertake cost-effective rescue missions by end user agencies.

Technology plays a part in increasing lead time. Reports suggest that the IMD has about 35 advanced Doppler weather radars to help it with weather forecasting. Compared to point scale rainfall data from rain gauges, Doppler weather radars can measure the likely rainfall directly (known as Quantitative Precipitation Estimation or QPE) from the cloud reflectivity over a large area; thus the



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lead time can be extended by up to three days.

But the advantage of advanced technology becomes infructuous because most flood forecasts at several river points across India are based on outdated statistical methods (of the type gauge-to-gauge correlation and multiple coaxial correlations) that enable a lead time of less than 24 hours. This is contrary to the perception that India's flood forecast is driven by Google's most advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques!

These statistical methods fail to capture the hydrological response of river basins between a base station and a forecast station. They cannot be coupled with QPF too.

Google AI has adopted the hydrological data and forecast models derived for diverse river basins across the world for training AI to issue flood alerts in India. This bypasses the data deficiencies and shortcomings of forecasts based on statistical methods.

Not uniform across India

A study by the National Institute of Technology, Warangal, Telangana shows that it is only recently that India has moved to using hydrological (or simply rainfall-runoff models) capable of being coupled with QPF. So, a lead time of three days is sporadic in India, and at select river points.

Just as the CWC's technological gap limits the IMD's technological advancement, the technological limitations of the IMD can also render any advanced infrastructure deployed by CWC infructuous. Here is another example. The United States which is estimated to have a land area thrice that of India, has about 160 next generation S-band Doppler weather radars (NEXRAD) with a range of 250-300 km. India will need at least an 80-100 S-band dense radar network to cover its entire territory for accurate QPF. Else, the limitations of altitude, range, band, density of radars and its extensive maintenance enlarge the forecast error in QPF which would ultimately reflect in the CWC's flood forecast. Conspicuously, the error margin is always away from the public gaze.

Therefore, outdated technologies and a lack of technological parity between multiple agencies and their poor water governance decrease crucial lead time. Forecasting errors increase and the burden of interpretation shifts to hapless end user agencies. The outcome is an increase in flood risk and disaster.

Ensemble technology

Global weather phenomenon is chaotic. For instance theoretically, "the flap of a butterfly's wings in Chennai can create a Tornado in Tokyo" according to MIT's Edward Lorenz. In simple terms and scientifically, any small change in the initial conditions of a weather model results in an output that is completely unexpected. Therefore, beyond a lead time of three days, a deterministic forecast becomes less accurate.

The developed world has shifted from deterministic forecasting towards ensemble weather mo-

odels that measure uncertainty by causing perturbations in initial conditions, reflecting the different states of the chaotic atmosphere. Probabilities are then computed for different flood events, with a lead time beyond 10 days.

India has a long way to go before mastering ensemble model-based flood forecasting.

Although, the IMD has begun testing and using ensemble models for weather forecast through its 6.8 peta flops supercomputers ("Pratyush" and "Mihir"), the forecasting agency has still to catch up with advanced technology and achieve technological parity with the IMD in order to couple ensemble forecasts to its hydrological models. It has to modernise not only the telemetry infrastructure but also raise technological compatibility with river basin-specific hydrological, hydrodynamic and inundation modelling.

To meet that objective, it needs a technically capable workforce that is well versed with ensemble models and capable of coupling the same with flood forecast models. It is only then that India can look forward to probabilistic-based flood forecasts with a lead time of more than seven to 10 days and which will place it on par with the developed world.

With integration between multiple flood forecasting agencies, end user agencies can receive probabilistic forecasts that will give them ample time to decide, react, prepare and undertake risk-based analysis and cost-effective rescue missions, reducing flood hazard across the length and breadth of India.

J. Harsha is Director, Central Water Commission, Government of India. The views expressed are personal



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

A disintegration

The handling of the Hathras assault and murder case is a total failure of our legal and law enforcement systems. From the badgering of the victim's family to outright denial of the grievous crime, it is a case defined by its incompetence. This blatant miscarriage of justice does not behove a country which seeks to position itself as a world leader. Over the last two years, NCRB data show crimes against women to have risen significantly; the

same can be said about crimes against Dalits.

RAHUL IYER,
Bengaluru

attention from the government's failures. When will the conscience of the Chief Minister be reflected?

S.K. KHOSLA,
Chandigarh

■ Ever since the unfortunate incident, the Uttar Pradesh government has only been trying to hush up the issue with various theories. Every development seems to have political patronage. Instead of protecting the life, liberty and dignity of the downtrodden and the vulnerable, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is only exploring ways to divert

government's track record in the Unnao case. When such atrocities are happening in a BJP-ruled state, it is perplexing that the Prime Minister is still quiet.

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

■ The fact that the Supreme Court has now stepped in gives us some hope that justice will be ensured (Page 1, "Will ensure smooth probe into Hathras gang rape, says SC", October 7). The top court must make it clear that it will enforce strict and personal supervision of the investigations, given the U.P.

The identity game in Bihar politics

The NDA, with its wide social base, seems to have an edge over both new and old players



RAJAN PANDEY
SAJJAN KUMAR

Amid receding floodwaters and a raging pandemic, Bihar is going to polls in the coming weeks – the first Indian State to do so since the COVID-19 outbreak started this year. Routine election activities like canvassing and rallies are getting complicated, with the Election Commission issuing strict but confusing guidelines that remain vastly overlooked across the length and breadth of the State. However, after our single round of fieldwork in the State, it can be said that the political situation in Bihar is less confusing after all, as there seems to be a pattern to the electoral preferences of voters.

Old formula

Our field study across seven sub-regions of the State revealed that the Janata Dal (United) (JD-U)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) had an upper hand. The NDA this time has gone back to its formula of 'BJP plus JD(U)' that won two successive Assembly elections, before both the parties parted ways in 2013, only to come together again in 2017. The Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) of former Chief Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi has also rejoined the NDA. The NDA's principal opponent, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)-led *Mahagathbandhan*, or the 'Grand Alliance', comprises the Congress and three Left parties – the CPI, the CPI (M) and the CPI(ML). Based on field insights, it could be inferred that the Nitish Kumar-led NDA seems likely to emerge victorious once again, while the *Mahagathbandhan* may find it difficult to strike a chord beyond their core base of Muslims and Yadavs despite having the opportunity to cash in on prevailing social, epidemic, economic and flood-related crises.

The principal reason for this is the complex socio-political fabric of Bihar. While the State BJP has predominantly been a 'Baniya' party, an upper caste comprising less than 1/5th of Bihar's population, the RJD has com-



On the stump: Locals gathered near an election campaign vehicle outside the BJP's office in Patna on September 2. ■ PTI

manded the support of a majority of Yadavs and Muslims, who form around 1/3rd of the State's population. With both these parties and their mass-bases locked in an unequal contest, the key to power lies with the remaining sections – the non-Yadav OBCs (other backward classes) like Kurmis and Koeris, the EBCs (extremely backward classes) like Nishads, Nai-Kahars and Mandals, and the Mahadalits like Paswans, Musahars and Chamars. Barriers the Paswans, who have mostly remained committed to Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), the remaining social sections have stood firmly by Mr. Kumar, thus explaining his indispensability in Bihar's politics.

This time too, little seems to have changed. Despite the fact that the sheen of Mr. Kumar's image as the 'Vikas Purush' (development man) has pattered out, the EBCs, the non-Yadav OBCs and Mahadalit voters we interacted with across the State unequivocally expressed that they will continue supporting him as 'there is no better alternative'. Most of them accepted that they voted for the JD (U)-RJD-led *Mahagathbandhan* in 2015 and the NDA in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, showing the 'transferability' of Mr. Kumar's diverse social base. It is this transferability that could change the fortunes of parties like the BJP or the RJD, which continue to remain locked in the plateaus of their respective social bases.

Though it may seem counter-intui-

tive, the only other political force that commands a relatively diverse support base in Bihar are the Left parties. However, their influence is limited to small pockets, not covering more than 50 seats in total. Because of the history of land struggles and militant agitations, the Left in Bihar developed a social base among the Mahadalits, the EBC-OBCs, Muslims, and even the poor from upper castes. This explains RJD's newfound love for the Left.

Contrary to the prevailing argument that the deepening of identity politics has led to fragmentation of social bases of mainstream parties and the emergence of various caste leaders who could sway their support base, Bihar presents a different case. The new entrants, especially the Nishad-based Vikashshee Issaan Party (VIP) of Mukesh Sahani, the Kushwaha-based Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP) of Upendra Kushwaha, and the Mahadalit-based HAM, have failed to make their mark. Even then, Mr. Kumar was more than willing to bring Mr. Manjhi back into the party fold, while Mr. Kushwaha and Mr. Sahani were shunned. What explains this differential treatment?

Symbolic vs. real appeal
The answer lies in the directionality of alliances chosen by the new caste leaders. The ground reality is that the people of a caste have a pre-existing political inclination wherein they want a symbolic leader to accentuate their importance. As long as the lead-

er pitches for more power in the same direction as desired by the community, she or he is celebrated. However, any move in the opposite direction is shunned, as it is considered a threat to the core social base. Hence, attempts by Upendra Kushwaha to break the old Kurmi-Kushwaha core, part of Mr. Kumar's base, led to Mr. Kushwaha's isolation by community members. Similarly, Mr. Sahani, despite being praised, has been rejected in the past by community voters for siding with the RJD. In our field-study, Nishads in Darbhanga (Bahadurpur), Samastipur (Morwa), Madhubani (Harlakhji), Begusarai (Bachhwara) declared Mr. Kumar as their leader, while stating that though Mr. Sahani did good, he should have stayed with Mr. Kumar. So, while a 'pressure group' model, as long as it increases the community's bargaining power, is good, an attack on traditional support that could jeopardise patronage and benefits is bad. Hence, breaking from a pre-existing strong anchor may not be feasible.

Meanwhile, there seems to be a discernible change in the attitude of Muslim voters. While a majority of them remain with the RJD, the appeal of Mr. Kumar has disappeared profoundly post the unrest following the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Interestingly, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimine (AIMIM) leader, Asaduddin Owaisi, has emerged as a force with strong electoral viability in the Muslim-dominated Seemandh region. During the 2015 election, we had found significant Muslim anger towards Mr. Owaisi for being a vote-spoiler by dividing the community's vote, which meant an advantage for the BJP. However, post the Centre's CAA move, Mr. Owaisi seems to be an absolute gainer and Mr. Kumar the loser of the minority community's votes in Bihar.

In conclusion, armed with a wide social base of upper castes, the non-Yadav OBCs and a majority of Dalits, the NDA seems to have a decisive edge over the RJD-led *Mahagathbandhan*, which is struggling to find an appeal beyond its core support base of Muslims and Yadavs.

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Gig work and its skewed terms

The new labour codes do little to provide better pay and definitive rights to platform workers



ADITI SURIE

The new Code on Social Security allows a platform worker to be defined by their vulnerability – not their labour, nor the vulnerabilities of platform work.

Swiggy workers have been essential during the pandemic. Even so, they have faced a continuous dip in pay and no rewards for being essential workers. During the last six months, many platform workers have unionised under the All India Gig Workers Union and have protested day in and day out, deploring Swiggy for reducing their base pay from ₹35 to ₹10 per delivery order.

It has been truly remarkable to see the 'food delivery' identity being developed through collective action, just as that of Uber and Ola taxi drivers has been taking shape for a few years now. Stable terms of earning have been a key demand of delivery-persons and drivers through years of protests.

The three new labour codes passed by Parliament recently acknowledge platform and gig workers as new occupational categories in the making, in a bid to keep India's young workforce secure as it embraces 'new kinds of work', like delivery, in the digital economy. But do the codes let Swiggy workers ask for the pay that they were promised? No. What a platform worker is allowed to claim as rights, responsibilities and working conditions that can be legally upheld is the key question in these codes, such as for factory workers, who have been an important industrial element in India and around the world. The specific issues of working in factories, the duration of time needed on a factory floor, and associated issues are recognised as the parameters for defining an ideal worker under most labour laws, and this has not shifted much.

Defining an 'employee'

The Code on Wages, 2019, tries to expand this idea by using 'wages' as the primary definition of who an 'employee' is. The wage relationship is an important relationship in the world of work, especially in the context of a large informal economy. Even so, the terms 'gig worker', 'platform worker' and 'gig economy' appear elsewhere in the Code on Social Security.

Since the laws are prescriptive, what is written within them creates the limits to what rights can be demanded, and how

these rights can be demanded. Hence, the categories and where they appear become key signs for understanding what kind of identity different workers can have under these new laws. Platform delivery people can claim benefits, but not labour rights. This distinction makes them beneficiaries of State programmes. This does not allow them to go to court to demand better and stable pay, or regulate the algorithms that assign the tasks. This also means that the government or courts cannot pull up platform companies for their choice of pay, or how long they ask people to work.

The main role of the laws for a 'platform worker' is to make available benefits and safety nets from the government or platform companies. Even though platforms are part of the idea of how work will evolve in the future, the current laws do not see them as future industrial workers.

No guarantees

In the Code on Social Security, 2020, platform workers are now eligible for benefits like maternity benefits, life and disability cover, old age protection, provident fund, employment injury benefits, and so on. However, eligibility does not mean that the benefits are guaranteed. None of these are secure benefits, which means that from time to time, the Central government can formulate welfare schemes that cover these aspects of personal and work security, but they are not guaranteed. Actualising these benefits will depend on the political will at the Central and State government-levels and how unions elicit political support. For some states like Karnataka, where a platform-focused social security scheme was in the making last year, this will possibly offer some financial assistance by the Centre. However, that is not assured. The language in the Code is open enough to imply that platform companies can be called upon to contribute either solely or with the government to some of these schemes. But it does not force the companies to contribute towards benefits or be responsible for workplace issues.

The 'platform worker' identity has the potential to grow in power and scope, but it will be mediated by politicians, election years, rates of under-employment, and large, investment-heavy technology companies that are notorious for not complying with local laws. But there are no guarantees for better and more stable days for platform workers, even though they are meant to be 'the future of work'.

Aditi Surie is a researcher focusing on technology and the informal economy. She works at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements in Bengaluru.

The cost of political posturing

The White House rule on a salary floor for H-1B visas has serious economic implications

NARAYAN LAKSHMAN

U.S. President Donald Trump has done it again, and this time only a few weeks before a Presidential election – the 45th Commander-in-Chief has put another turn in the screws of his country's immigration system by announcing a hike in the salaries for those arriving in the U.S. on H-1B or skilled-worker visas.

This is expected to cut visa applications by around 33%, according to experts, and it comes as only the latest White House rule following executive actions that earlier banned the issuance of new skilled worker visas and new green cards.

The question that these policy changes beg is, how much of the motivation for them is pure economic rationale versus political value for the incumbent's final stages of election campaigning?

It would not be unreasonable to expect that the visa issuance ban, combined with the mandatory salary floor soon to be instituted, will seriously hit U.S. imports of services from India, estimated to be at \$29.6 billion in 2018, 4.9% more than in 2017, and 134% more than 2008 levels. The skilled visa issuance picture has been a positive one to date: the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has been issuing 85,000 H-1B visas annually, of which 20,000 are given to graduate students and 65,000 to private sector applicants, approximately 70% of which are granted to Indian nationals.

The Migration Policy Institute has predicted that Mr. Trump's June 22, 2020 ban on new H-1B visa issuance could impact up to 219,000 workers, who would effectively be blocked from taking up any potential jobs on offer in the U.S. going forward. But how likely are firms, including the Silicon Valley tech giants, to embark on recruitment drives at this economically depressed time in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic? Although unemployment in the U.S. peaked in the summer and has fallen for the fifth consecutive month since then, the latest figures suggest that both the unemployment rate and the number of unemployed people remain substantially higher than the pre-pandemic values in February 2020.

Even so, it is important to distinguish between the ban on new visa issuance and the Labour Department rule that would insist on higher salaries being paid to all H-1B visa workers in the U.S. Under the latter rule, assuming it stands the test of time and inevitable litigation, companies would be required to pay entry-level staff in the 45th percentile of their industry's salary instead of the 17th percentile; for high-skilled workers, the rise would be from the 67th to the 95th percentile.

Staunch criticism
Speaking of litigation, it is telling that days before the Trump administration's announcement of the proposed salary hike that makes H-1B hiring significantly more expensive to potential employers, a federal judge in the Northern District of California blocked the enforcement of the new visa ban, ruling that the President "exceeded his authority" under the U.S. Constitution. Driving that legal challenge to the White House proclamation was a swath of U.S. manufacturing and industry associations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Retail Federation, TechNet, a technology industry group, and Intrax Inc., which sponsors cultural exchanges.

In a similar vein, Google CEO Sundar Pichai hit out at the ban, saying, "Immigration has contributed immensely to America's economic success, making it a global leader in tech, and also Google the company it is today. Disappointed by today's proclamation – we'll continue to stand with immigrants and work to expand opportunity for all." Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Apple CEO Tim Cook echoed similar sentiments.

This goes to the heart of the issue, the question of why Mr. Trump is willing to risk damage to corporate America's bottom lines, all to garner some campaign ammunition for his familiar plank of nativist populism. The answer is a simple one: people vote, while companies do not. What might happen after the election is an entirely different story.

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DATA POINT

Friendly foe

CHANGE OF HEART | An increasingly higher share of people across countries have developed an unfavourable opinion on China in the recent years. For instance, in the U.K., only 16% had an unfavourable opinion on China in 2002, whereas in 2020, the share increased to 74%

The chart shows the share of people surveyed who viewed China in a negative light (red) and positive light (blue) across years in select countries



People's opinion on China has deteriorated rapidly in the recent years, shows a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. In stark contrast, among almost all the countries surveyed, most citizens had a favourable view of China back in the early 2000s. On the other hand, the demand for Chinese products in these countries surged parallelly. Due to this surge in demand, these nations significantly increased their imports from China over the years, show World Bank trade data (WITS). By The Hindu Data Team

MORE DEPENDENT | However, the nations mentioned in the first chart have become more dependent on China for their import needs. China's share of U.K.'s overall imports grew from 5.2% in 2002 to 9.4% in 2018

The chart shows China's share in a country's total imports between 2002 and 2018. Lately, Japan and South Korea have tried to drive down their dependency on China



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 8, 1970

Kerala and Assam find more jobs for their women

[Bombay, October 7] More than one in every ten persons employed in India's organised sector is a woman. In agriculture and forestry sector, women employed have a much higher proportion of about four in ten. Since more women find employment in plantations than in any other sector, Kerala and Assam, though industrially backward, provide more jobs for their women folk than other States. In Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, the educated eve seems to be chasing more jobs in the services. In June 1969, they accounted for 13.1 per cent of the jobs in services (largely in education and health services). In mining and quarrying, women accounted for 9.1 per cent and in manufacturing industries 8.5 per cent. This picture of women's employment in the organised sector is presented in an article prepared in the Division of Planning and Special Studies of the Reserve Bank and published in the latest bulletin. The data exclude employment in agriculture, self-employed, household establishments, those in the private sector employing less than ten workers and defence forces. Of the total number of 16.5 million persons employed as at the end of June 1969, women constituted 1.82 million or 11 per cent. The private sector employed more women than the public sector - 1.04 million against 0.78 million.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 8, 1920

Mr. Mohamed Ali

[Bombay, October 7] Mr. Mohamed Ali, who headed the Khilafat delegation in Europe and returned on Monday last, declared in the course of a statement to the press and in reply to the reception arranged in honour of the delegation that the attainment of Swarajya was their goal and non-co-operation the only means. Indian freedom had to be attained by work in India and not in England. He wished to lay more emphasis on Indian freedom than Khilafat wrong, because though he as a Musselman could not give up his religious claims till he realised that success would be achieved in Moslem cause only when India was in Indian hands. He had no antipathy or superstition about British connection which must be judged on its intrinsic merits in relation to what India would gain or lose thereby. Indian good must be the chief and sole consideration.

FROM PAGE ONE

SC: public places cannot be occupied indefinitely

It was finally the gaining pandemic, which intervened like the "hand of God", that led the protesters to relent and end the blockade, the court said. They were removed by the police from the site on March 24.

The seeds of protest and dissent were sown deep during the Freedom struggle. But dissent against the colonial rule cannot be equated with dissent in a self-ruled democracy, Justice Kaul reasoned.

In a democracy, the rights of free speech and peaceful protest were indeed "treasured". They were to be encouraged and respected, the court said.

Reasonable restrictions
But these rights were also subject to reasonable restrictions imposed in the interest of sovereignty, integrity and public order. Police regulations also weighed in.

"Fundamental rights do not live in isolation. The right of the protester has to

be balanced with the right of the commuter. They have to co-exist in mutual respect."

The judgment, based on a petition filed by advocate Amit Sahni, said the Delhi High Court should have intervened positively and not left the situation fluid. The administration too should have talked to the protesters.

"Unfortunately, despite a lapse of a considerable period of time, there was neither any negotiations nor any action by the administration, thus warranting our intervention," the Supreme Court observed.

The court held it was entirely the responsibility of the administration to prevent encroachments in public spaces. They should do so without waiting for courts to pass suitable orders.

"The courts are not meant to give shoulder to the administration to fire their guns from," Justice Kaul observed.

Bombay HC grants bail to Rhea in drugs case

"There are no other criminal antecedents against her. She is not part of the chain of drug dealers."

She has not forwarded the drugs allegedly procured by her to somebody else to earn monetary or other benefits. Since she has no criminal antecedents, there are reasonable grounds for believing that she is not likely to commit any offence while on bail."

Elucidating the charge of financing, the court said, "Simply providing money for a particular transaction or other transactions will not be financing of that activity."

The court said the allega-

tions against Ms. Chakraborty of spending money in procuring drugs for Sushant Singh Rajput "will not, therefore, mean that she had financed illicit traffic".

The 70-page-order mentioned, "Everybody is equal before law. No celebrity or role model enjoys any special privilege before the court of law. Similarly, such person also does not incur any special liability when he faces law in the courts. Each case will have to be decided on its own merits irrespective of the status of the accused."

The court also rejected the bail plea of alleged drug peddler Abdel Basit Parihar.

Palaniswami is AIADMK CM candidate

The first six were regarded as nominees of the Chief Minister and the last five were those of the Deputy Chief Minister.

No woman leader was nominated. Former Ministers B. Valarmathi and Gokula Indira were said to be aspirants.

Mr. Panneerselvam pointed out that the decision to make Mr. Palaniswami the party's candidate for Chief

Minister was in tune with the decision taken at a meeting chaired by presidium chairman E. Madhusudhan and attended by key functionaries. He said the decision was approved by senior office-bearers and the steering committee. The day's developments brought to a close the debate in the AIADMK in the last two months on the issue of candidate for Chief Minister.

Journalist, three others booked for sedition in U.P.

They have also been booked under Sections 14 and 17 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967; Sections 65, 72 and 76 of the Information Technology Act, for promoting enmity between groups and outraging religious feelings. Section 17 of the UAPA deals with raising funds for terrorist acts.

The four were taken into custody at a toll plaza in Mathura on Monday when they were travelling in a car from Delhi to Hathras, the police said. The car was stopped after the police found their activities "suspicious".

Besides Mr. Kappan, a journalist working with Malayalam portals based in Delhi, the other three were identified as Ateeq-ur-Rehman of Muzaffarnagar, Masoon Ahmed of Bahraich and Alam of Rampur. While Mr. Ahmed and Rehman are research scholars, Mr. Alam was the driver of the car, said Ansar Indori, their lawyer.

In the FIR, sub-inspector Prabal Singh accuses the four of carrying pamphlets reading 'Justice for Hathras Victim' and moving towards the district to disrupt peace as part of a "big conspiracy".

Kerala, Karnataka add record new cases

Kerala breaches 10,000 cases barrier; Karnataka incidence at 10,947; Telangana stays low at 2,154 cases; A.P. adds 5,120

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's daily COVID-19 cases crossed the psychological barrier of 10,000 on Wednesday, touching 10,606.

The State registered the record spike when tests were hiked to 73,816, again a record for a single day.

The test positivity rate was steady at 14.3% even when

COVID-19

the tests were hiked by over 10,000, indicating steady community transmission.

Earlier projections were for the State to record over 10,000 cases daily when the epidemic curve touched the peak. However, going by current trends, the epidemic peak could be weeks away, officials said.

The toll from the virus rose with 22 more deaths being added. Thiruvananthapuram accounted for 14 deaths, Malappuram five and Idukki, Alapuzha and Kollam recording one case each.

Among districts, four registered over a 1,000 cases, with Kozhikode registering the highest at 1,576, Malappuram 1,350, Ernakulam 1,201 and Thiruvananthapuram, 1182 cases.

With daily tests crossing one lakh on Wednesday, Karnataka too reported the highest single day spike with 10,947 new cases. This was the fourth time cases were above 10,000.

Bengaluru Urban district reported 5,000 cases and 55 of the 113 fresh deaths statewide on Wednesday.

The State conducted 10,434 tests, the highest so far, including 55,690 RT-PCR tests.

Telangana recorded 2,154 cases on Tuesday and eight deaths. The State conducted 54,277 tests.

Rising count

Andhra Pradesh, which has reported the highest number of COVID-19 cases in south India, has increased the number of tests. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



*Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Tuesday. **Kerala has a mismatch of 85 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons; ***Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths

The new cases included 303 from Greater Hyderabad, 205 from Rangareddy, 187 from Medchal-Malkajgiri, 124 from Nalgonda, 121 from Khammam, 96 from Karim-

nagar, and 92 from Bhadravati-Kothagudem.

Andhra Pradesh added 5,120 cases on Wednesday. During the same period, 34 new deaths were reported.

For the first time in nearly two-and-a-half months, active cases were less than 50,000.

New cases and deaths were as follows: Chittoor

Is there proof of terror funding, asks courtSPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is planning to probe the involvement of some officials in the UAE consulate in Thiruvananthapuram in the diplomatic baggage gold smuggling channel in Kerala.

The agency informed the NIA Special Court here on Wednesday that the active or passive role of some consular officials in the smuggling of gold under the cover of diplomatic baggage and whether some others had facilitated the illegal activities need to be found out.

More clarity would be obtained in these aspects after obtaining the custody of Fai-

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has filed a chargesheet against three accused persons, Sarith P.S., Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair, in connection with the smuggling of gold through diplomatic channel in Kerala.

In her statement to the ED, Swapna is believed to have claimed that she met IAS official M. Sivasankar

sal Fareed and Rabins Hameed, who were arrested in the UAE on Tuesday.

Opposing the bail application of six accused in the case, P. Vijayakumar, Assistant Solici-

tor General, said a larger conspiracy was hatched among over 30 people and international connections were involved in the case.

Many of the accused had invested huge money into smuggling for the purchase of gold. Over ₹100 crore was suspected to be involved in the deal.

Arjun Ampalapatta, senior public prosecutor of the agency, said the Central Eco-

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ED chargesheet in gold smuggling case

Swapna Suresh

and that the Chief Minister knew her as secretary to the Consul General.

Mr. Sivasankar allegedly told the agency that he knew Swapna as secretary to the Consul General since early 2017 and that they later became family friends.

The gold smuggling racket was unearthed after the Customs officials seized 30 kg of gold at the Trivandrum International Airport on July 5.

invested huge money into smuggling for the purchase of gold. Over ₹100 crore was suspected to be involved in the deal.

Arjun Ampalapatta, senior public prosecutor of the agency, said the Central Eco-

Economy on recovery path, says Nirmala Sitharaman

Feedback from industrialists has been positive: Minister



Taking stock: Union Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman interacting with farmers in Krishna district. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday that the economy was on the path to recovery, going by the feedback she received from the States about the positivity in some high-frequency indicators and from industrialists who told her they had almost reached the pre-COVID capacity utilisation levels.

Addressing the media here, she said the GST Council had decided that the compensation cess collection could go beyond the five years transition period originally proposed.

Revenue deficit grant

On the Andhra Pradesh government's demand for revenue deficit grant, she said it had to be discussed as it was a matter in the purview of the 14th Finance Commission whose term had expired.

"The Ministry of Finance has to work on it, considering that the amount being claimed by the State is based on the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission. The 15th Finance Commission has already submitted

its first year's report and it is under implementation," Ms. Sitharaman observed while addressing the media here.

She avoided a firm reply to a question on the demand for Special Category Status (SCS), saying she would answer if she had one.

On the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation), Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Acts, 2020, she said farmers were happy

that certain taxes that cut into their meagre returns were eliminated and inter-State trade was made hassle-free.

Criticises Opposition
The Centre did not meddle with the Agricultural Produce Market Committees, which were the domain of the States, and it was not going about contact farming in a roughshod manner lest the relevant laws should become counterproductive.

The Opposition parties, she said, were doing politics as usual after wasting an opportunity to engage with the government in a meaningful debate in Parliament.

Later in the day, Mr. Yediyurappa in a statement said the fines had been reduced following widespread objections. He urged people to voluntarily wear masks, maintain a social distance, and help the government in its efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19.

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This is not the first time the government has at

'Why is govt. silent on minor girl's rape?'

No Minister or MLA has visited the family so far, says Congress MLA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Congress MLA D. Seethakka has questioned the silence of the Telangana government over the rape of a 13-year-old girl from Khammam and attempt to murder her. She is now battling for her life in Osmania General Hospital.

Ms. Seethakka, along with TPCC spokesperson Indira Shobhan and a team of Congress workers, who visited the girl in the hospital, said it was unfortunate that a Minister or even an MLA had not visited the family even 18 days after the horrific incident.

She said the government did not even shift the girl with 70% burns to a private hospital for better treatment. "This government is blind and deaf to the rape of a Dalit girl and it is shameful that none from the government has responded so far," she remarked.

According to the police, the girl was allegedly set ablaze after she resisted the attempt by the son of the owner of a house where she was a domestic help.

As she resisted and tried to escape, the accused allegedly poured kerosene on her and set her ablaze.

Karnataka cuts fine for not wearing mask

Now ₹250 in urban, ₹100 in rural areas

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Barely a week after the Karnataka government increased fines for not wearing a mask properly to ₹1,000 in urban areas and ₹500 in rural areas, it has made a U-turn in the face of public opposition.

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Wednesday reduced the fines to ₹250 in urban areas and ₹100 in rural areas.

Prior to the increase, violators were being fined ₹200. The government's decision to increase the amount to ₹1,000 did not go down well with many activists and citizens' groups, who felt it would encourage corruption. On Wednesday, protests were held by citizens in front of the BBMP's office in Jayanagar against the prohibitive fines.

Later in the day, Mr. Yediyurappa in a statement said the fines had been reduced following widespread objections. He urged people to voluntarily wear masks, maintain a social distance, and help the government in its efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19.

This is not the first time the government has at

tempted to raise fines. When masks were first made mandatory in Bengaluru this May, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) fixed the penalty at ₹1,000 for the first violation and ₹2,000 for subsequent violations. However, it was soon revised to ₹200.

The CM's order was received around 4 p.m. on Wednesday. "We stopped fining citizens soon after and only issued strict warnings," said a marshal.

According to sources in the BBMP, handheld machines used by the marshals will have to be recalibrated as they are automated to issue receipts for ₹1,000. "The recalibration should be completed on Thursday," sources said. Irrespective of the fine amount, they said, there was now better awareness among people about the importance of wearing masks properly.

Srinivas Alavilli from Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy said

Bihar poll: BJP gives 11 of its seats to VIP

Three-phase elections to begin on Oct. 28

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Wednesday gave 11 seats from its quota to Mukesh Sahni-led Vikash Insaan Party, the new entrant to the National Democratic Alliance in Bihar.

Earlier, the two major alliance partners had shared the 243 Assembly seats between themselves: the JD(U) 122 and the BJP 121. The three-phase elections to the Assembly are scheduled to begin on October 28.

Seats to HAM(S)

On Tuesday, the JD(U) allocated seven seats from its quota to another alliance partner, the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), led by former Chief Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi.

"We have allocated 11 seats and one State council seat to VIP... The BJP has always res-



New ties: BJP leaders Devendra Fadnavis, Sushil Kumar Modi and Sanjay Jaiswal with VIP leader Mukesh Sahani. ■ PTI

pected people from Extremely Backward Castes ... in the previous Assembly poll, our party gave 25 seats to EBS candidates, of which they won 12," senior State BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi said.

"It was the NDA government that came up with 20% reservation for the EBC in panchayat polls and today over 1,600 mukhias [village

heads] in Bihar are from these castes," he said.

Mr. Sahni said he was happy to return to the NDA. "I had started my political innings in the 2014 Lok Sabha election with the aim of making Narendra Modi the Prime Minister," he said.

Earlier on October 2, Mr. Sahni had stunned the grand alliance leaders by making an abrupt exit from the press

Manju Verma in JD(U) list

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

The Janata Dal(United) on Wednesday released a list of all 115 party candidates for the Assembly election, and among them was the name of the former Minister Manju Verma, who had to resign after her husband's name had come up in the Muzaffarpur shelter home abuse case involving 34 minor girls. In the list, Ms.

meet called to announce the seat allocation among alliance partners. "I was stabbed in the back and cheated," Mr. Sahni said while making a hasty exit.

The VIP has been given Brahmpur, Bochaha, Gaura Bauram, Simri Bakhtiyarpur, Sugauli, Madhubani, Kewati, Sahebganj, Balrampur, Ali Nagar and Baniapur.

Meanwhile, candidates

Verma's name figured on serial number 64 to contest from the Cheria-Bariyarpur constituency of Begusarai district.

Recently, Ms. Verma was seen standing in a long queue outside the JD(U) headquarters.

In the JD(U) list, most candidates have been repeated. The election result will be out on November 10.

have started filing nominations for the first-phase of elections for 71 seats. October 8 is the last date for filing nominations.

Senior BJP leader Prem Kumar filed his papers for the eighth time from the Gaya assembly constituency, while HAM(S) party leader Jitan Ram Manjhi filed his nomination from Imamganj constituency.

Congress releases first list for Bihar

The party is set to contest 70 seats

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Barely 24 hours before the process of filing nominations for the first phase of the Bihar Assembly elections gets over, the Congress on Wednesday released its first list of 21 candidates.

Electing for the first phase in the three-phase election will be held on October 28.

The party nominated Shubhanand Mukesh, who is the son of the Congress Legislature Party leader in Bihar Sadanand Singh, a nine-term MLA, for the Kalgaon Assembly seat.

Even though the list was formally released late on Wednesday evening, Mr. Mukesh had already filed his nomination as the party's candidate earlier in the day.

Another notable candidate was Akhaura Onkar Nath from Gaya, who was a last minute replacement as the party's earlier nominee, a powerful local politician, was dropped following rape charges against him.

On Tuesday, *The Hindu* had reported that the party had withheld three names as they faced serious charges of crimes against women.

Former Bihar Youth Congress chief Lallan Yadav has been given a ticket from the Sultanganj seat.

The last minute announcement was part of the party's strategy to avoid a backlash from aspirants who did not find a place among the successful candidates, said a



Akhaura Onkar Nath

source. Of the 21 candidates, while five sittings MLAs have found a place, an equal number of newcomers who recently joined the party have also been accommodated, creating a sense of resentment among party old-timers.

"The central leaders knew that if they had announced the names earlier, then there would have been greater scrutiny. That's why they individually informed the candidates on phone to keep their papers ready but announced the list only now," said a Bihar Congress leader who did not wish to be named.

Earlier, the central election committee of the party, headed by party chief Sonia Gandhi, cleared their names.

The Congress will be contesting on 70 seats as part of the Rashtriya Janata Dal-led 'grand alliance' in Bihar.

Polling in the three phase elections will be held on October 28, November 3 and November 7.

JD(U) ticket eludes former police chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Former Bihar Director General of Police Gupteshwar Pandey was unlucky for the second time as his name did not figure in the list of 115 Janata Dal-United (JD-U) candidates to contest the upcoming State Assembly poll.

Mr. Pandey had recently taken voluntary retirement and joined the JD(U) with the hope of a ticket.

In 2009 too, he had taken voluntary retirement to contest the Lok Sabha poll on a BJP ticket but was denied one.

Fewer star campaigners this time

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Wednesday revised norms for star campaigners for polls during the pandemic, reducing the maximum number from 40 to 30 for a recognised party and requiring permission from the district election official 48 hours prior to campaigning.

The new norm will apply to the Bihar Assembly election and other elections during the pandemic, the EC said in a letter.

The EC decided to reduce the number of star campaigners from 20 to 15 for unrecognised registered parties.

IN BRIEF



Tejaswi seeks CBI probe into murder case

PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejaswi Yadav on Wednesday wrote a letter to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, asking him to order a CBI probe into the murder of a "political-social worker of Purnia district". Mr. Yadav and his brothers are named in the FIR pertaining to the case. The Purnia police arrested seven persons in connection with the Shakti Mallik murder on Wednesday.

NCW summons BJP's Ranjeet Shrivastava

NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Wednesday issued summons to Bharatiya Janata Party leader Ranjeet Shrivastava for making derogatory comments against the victim of the alleged gang-rape and murder in Hathras. The women's rights panel has directed Mr. Shrivastava to be present before it on October 26, after a video of him went viral, in which he can be heard trying to absolve the four accused.

Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday expressed "resentment and

Three militants killed in south Kashmir operation

They had taken part in several terror attacks, say police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Three militants – two of Al-Badr and one of Hizbul Mujahideen – were killed in a 12-hour operation at Shopian in south Kashmir.

"During a search operation at Suga in the area, the trapped hiding terrorists were given the opportunity to surrender on Tuesday evening. However, they fired indiscriminately at the security forces. Later, they made attempts to break the cordon and escape, but were neutralised," a police spokesman said.

The police said the operation was suspended in the night and was resumed on Wednesday morning.

"The slain terrorists were part of groups involved in planning and executing several terror attacks including civilian atrocities and attacks on security establishments," the police said.

They were identified as Sajad Ahmad Malla of the Hizb and Junaid Rashid Wani

and Waseem Ahmad Magray of the Al-Badar outfits.

Incriminating material including arms and ammunition were recovered from the site, the police said.

"It is an act of cowardice. Those involved will be brought to justice," the LG said. He also extended solidarity with the family of the deceased personal security officer who was guarding the BJP leader.

"All possible help will be extended to the family of the deceased," he said.

Back to camp: Security personnel returning from an encounter at Suga in Shopian on Wednesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

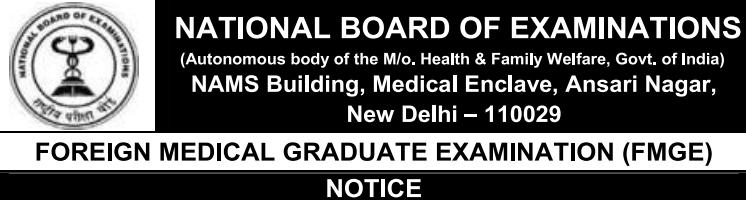
anguish" over the militant attack on a BJP leader in the Ganderbal area on Tuesday.

'Act of cowardice'

"It is an act of cowardice. Those involved will be brought to justice," the LG said. He also extended solidarity with the family of the deceased personal security officer who was guarding the BJP leader.

Those with suicidal thoughts can seek help and counselling by calling Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health at 011-4076 9002.

Important Dates for FMGE – December 2020 Session



NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar,
New Delhi – 110029

FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATE EXAMINATION (FMGE) NOTICE

National Board of Examinations (NBE) shall conduct the next FMGE on 4th December 2020.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBE website <https://nbe.edu.in> for details pertaining to eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

Availability of Information Bulletin	7 th October 2020 onwards
Online Submission of the Application Form	8 th October 2020 to 28 th October 2020
Examination Date	4 th December 2020
Declaration of the Result	by 20 th December 2020

CandidateCare Support: +91-22-61087595; E-mail: helpdesk@nbeexam@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT NABARD & Rural Roads Circle, Chengalpattu TENDER NOTICE

Short Tender Notice No.17 / 2020-2021 / SDO / Dt. 07.10.2020

For and on behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 27.10.2020, 15.00 hours by the Superintendent Engineer (H) NABARD & Rural Roads, Chengalpattu Circle for One Individual work in respect of Chengalpattu (H) NABARD & Rural Roads Division under Upgradation of Panchayat Union roads and Panchayat Roads to ODR Standards.

Details of Name of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 14.10.2020 onwards in the Government website <https://tenders.gov.in>. If any changes / corrections / amendments etc to the tender, it will be published on the above Government website only.

DIPR/3753/Tender/2020

Superintendent Engineer (H)
NABARD & Rural Roads Circle, Chengalpattu-1

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT NABARD & Rural Roads Circle, Chengalpattu TENDER NOTICE

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DIPR/3753/Tender/2020

Superintendent Engineer (H)
NABARD & Rural Roads Circle, Chengalpattu-1

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY Y. e-Tender Notice

Tender No : 57/2020-21 SE/PH/CA/P Li/Blapuzhha - Augmentation and Modernization of Water Supply distribution System in Alappuzha Municipality, Arayad, Marakkulam South Panayath - Balance works-Package I- including construction of 16LLOHSR at Chathanadu, Vadikadu, 12LLOHSR at Kattoor, 3LL sum pump cum pump house at Chathanadu, 3LL sum pump cum pump house at Vadikadu and Kattoor, construction of operators quarters at Pazhavangadi, laying 260m - 280mm HDPE Clear water pumping main, supply and erection of 15/30 HP CF pump set at various sumps/rails, railway crossing works at Kalavoor - Sarvadaparam road and road restoration works. EMD: Rs.500,000/-, Tender fee: 1680/- Last Date for submitting Tender: 16-11-2020, 3:00 pm Phone: 0477-223794. Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.in www.etenders.kerala.gov.in Superintending Engineer PH circle Alappuzha

KWA-JB-GL-458-2020-21

Kerala Water Authority Y. e-Tender Notice

No.: EE/MLP/TEND/E-PROC/07/2020-21 Date: 01-10-2020

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

(Two Cover System) Through GoK e-Procurement Portal only

The Executive Engineer, Mahalakshmiapuram Division, BBMP, Bengaluru on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP invites tenders from eligible contractors for the below mentioned works.

SI. No. Ward No. Approx. Value of work (Rs. in Lakhs) EMD (in Rs.) No. of Works

1 43 51.00 to 100.00 1,02,000/- to 2,00,000/- 07

2 44 100.00 each 2,00,000/- 03

3

IN BRIEF

**Payal Ghosh to tender apology to Richa Chadda**

MUMBAI

Actor Payal Ghosh told the Bombay High Court on Wednesday that she was willing to tender an unconditional apology to actor Richa Chadda (in picture) as she regretted what she had said. A single Bench of Justice A.K. Menon was hearing a defamation suit filed by Ms. Chadda seeking an apology, an interim injunction for Ms. Ghosh to withdraw her statement, video, articles and tweets about Ms. Chadda, and damages of ₹1.1 crore.

Gujarat HC holds lawyer guilty in contempt case

AHMEDABAD

A Division Bench of Gujarat High Court on Tuesday held Advocate Yatin Oza guilty of contempt of court in a suo motu contempt proceedings initiated by the HC against him. The Bench, consisting of Justice Sonia Gokani and Justice N.V. Anjaria, pronounced the verdict in the criminal contempt case, while posting the matter for Wednesday to pronounce the sentence. In June, the court had initiated the contempt proceedings after Mr. Oza made public allegations of maladministration of justice.

'Decide on opening of temples in eight weeks'

CUTTACK

The Orissa High Court has directed the State government and the State Endowment Commissioner to take a view "as expeditiously as possible" with regard to providing financial assistance or ration kits to the priests (servitors) or in the alternative, for opening of the temples, "but not later than eight weeks". The decision came while disposing of two writ petitions seeking directions to extend financial relief to servitors of registered temples for the period of lockdown.

FIR against 2 journalists in phone tapping case

Duo charged for spreading rumours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

The police have registered a case against two journalists based in Jaipur on charges of circulating rumours through their reports on an alleged episode of phone tapping of the Congress MLAs, who were shifted to Jaisalmer during the political crisis two months ago. The turmoil ended with the Congress government winning a confidence vote in the Assembly on August 14.

The FIR, registered in the Vidhayakpuri police station here, has named Lokendra Singh, who runs an independent news agency, and Sharat Kumar, State editor of a TV news channel, as the accused. Mr. Singh's news agency also has the contract

Govt. to back preventive steps

Banners, posters and stickers will be put on public transport and buildings

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre will launch an awareness campaign on Thursday to promote the use of face masks, maintaining a safe distance between one another and hand-washing to help curb the spread of COVID-19, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said on Wednesday.

Mr. Javadekar was addressing presspersons after the Cabinet meeting which he said had discussed the pandemic situation.

**Briefing on:** Prakash Javadekar and Dharmendra Pradhan at a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ KAMAL NARANG

There was a need to be careful, and not afraid, especially with the winter coming, he said. With no vaccine

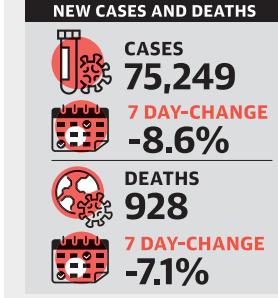
or treatment available, he said, the only way to stay safe was to wear masks, maintain a safe distance and

wash hands regularly.

Banners, posters and stickers would be put on public transport such as railways, Metros, buses and airports, petrol pumps, schools, colleges, anganwadi centres, markets, office complexes, housing societies, police stations and government offices, he said.

Viral tracker

With 75,249 COVID-19 cases recorded on Wednesday, India's tally stood at 68,29,529. As many as 928 new deaths were registered, taking the toll to 1,05,548. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. The States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising ▲; falling ▼; or showing a mixed trend △.

**78 additional special trains to be run**

They are separate from about 200 planned for festive season: spokesperson

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

The Railways have decided to run 78 additional trains, taking the total number of special passenger services operational in the country to 388.

In a notification to all the zones, the Railways have asked that 39 pairs of trains, mainly AC Express, Duronto, Vande Bharat, Rajdhani and the Shatabdi services, "should be introduced as special trains from an early convenient date".

A Railways spokesperson clarified that these trains were separate from the 200 festive passenger trains that they planned to run between October 15 and November 30 to cater to the festive season demand.

Tejas services to resume
The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) announced plans to restart two corporate-run trains – the Lucknow-New Delhi Tejas Express and the Ahmedabad-Mumbai Tejas Express from October 17, nearly seven months after the operations were sus-

**New rides:** The trains will mainly include AC Express, Duronto, Vande Bharat, Rajdhani and Shatabdis. ■ FILE PHOTO

pended owing to the pandemic.

The IRCTC said this was being done to cater to the growing passenger demand due to the festive season.

Every alternate seat would be kept vacant to ensure the social distancing norm and passengers would not be allowed to exchange their seats once seated.

Additionally, use of face covers/masks would be mandatory for passengers and staff.

"All travellers will install the 'Arogya Setu' app and the same will be shown as and when demanded. Detailed instructions will be given to the passengers at the time of booking of tickets," it said.

Protection kit for all

All passengers would be provided a 'COVID-19 protection

kit' that would comprise a hand sanitiser, a mask, a face shield and a pair of gloves. All would go through thermal screening and hand sanitisation before entering the coach.

"On getting approval from the Ministry of Railways to restart the operation of the two popular corporate trains, IRCTC is making all-round preparations to ensure that the trains, once started, match the expectation of people in terms of levels of services and safety and health protocols amidst the ongoing pandemic," the IRCTC stated.

The coaches, including the pantry areas and lavatories, would be thoroughly disinfected at regular intervals, along with luggage and baggage of the passengers, frequently touched surfaces inside the coach and the service trays and trolleys.

The IRCTC said it had conducted an extensive training programme to educate and train the employees of Tejas trains to manage the operations and provide services according to the 'new normal' amid the pandemic.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Ten States and Union Territories account for 78% of the COVID-19 cases confirmed in India in 24 hours, with Maharashtra continuing to lead the tally and contributing more than 12,000 cases, followed by Karnataka with nearly 10,000, a press release issued by the Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

The release said 986 deaths had been reported during the period, with 10 States and Union Territories accounting for 83% of them. "Maharashtra reported more than 37% of deaths with 370 deaths, followed by Karnataka with 91 deaths," it said.

Success strategy
On India's ongoing fight against COVID-19, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, digitally inaugurating a super-specialty block at Shyam Shah Government



Harsh Vardhan

Medical College in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, said: "For the past nine months, India has been relentlessly fighting the infectious disease. India's continuously rising recovery rate and progressively falling active cases have proven the success of the Centre-led COVID-19 containment strategy."

"We have successfully ramped up our testing capacity, which has crossed the eight crore milestone in terms of total tests. From one lab in January, we now

have 1,889 spread across the country. We have confidence in the scientific developments taking place in the field of treatment, and vaccines for COVID-19, and soon India will achieve more success in our fight against COVID-19," he said.

Appropriate behaviour

The Minister also urged people to follow COVID-appropriate behaviour, and said that at the moment, they should use the social vaccine of wearing masks or face covers in public places, following hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and maintaining physical distancing or 'do gaz ki doori' to curb the spread of the infection.

The Minister said the number of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) facilities had increased from six to 22, while another 75 existing institutions are envisioned to be upgraded to provide AIIMS-like services.

UGC declares 24 universities as fake**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) on Wednesday announced a list of 24 "self-styled, unrecognised institutions" in the country, terming them as "fake" with the maximum of them operating from Uttar Pradesh.

"Students and public are informed that currently 24 self-styled, unrecognised institutions are functioning in contravention of the UGC Act," UGC Secretary Rajnish Jain said.

The majority of eight of these universities are from Uttar Pradesh.

Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Maharashtra have one fake university each.

India, Japan finalise text of pact for AI, 5G

Cybersecurity agreement to promote cooperation between two countries

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE

NEW DELHI

India and Japan on Wednesday welcomed the finalisation of the text of a cybersecurity agreement that will promote cooperation in key areas such as 5G network and Artificial Intelligence.

The announcement on the agreement followed the 13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Japanese counterpart Motegi Toshimitsu in Tokyo.

"The two ministers... welcomed the finalisation of the text of the cybersecurity agreement. The agreement promotes cooperation in capacity building, research and development, security and resilience in the areas of Critical Information Infrastructure, 5G, Internet of



S. Jaishankar

tional operators and especially since there is a lack of clarity on possible participation of Chinese technology majors.

The two Ministers also exchanged ideas on regional and global issues of "mutual interest and agreed that the strong and enduring partnership between the two countries will play a pivotal role in overcoming challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic".

The ongoing military tension along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh was expected to feature in the talks but the official statements did not elaborate on that point.

The Ministers reiterated the need to draw the attention of the stakeholders in the Indian 5G sector as it gets ready to open up for interna-

tionaries in their vision. The Japanese Foreign Minister highlighted the 50 billion Yen emergency assistance loan and a 1 billion Yen grant for provision of medical support to India that will help India fight COVID-19. He also raised the issue of abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea and asked for early resolution. Mr. Jaishankar's conveyed India's support to finding a closure.

Jaishankar, Payne meet
Mr. Jaishankar also met his Australian counterpart Marise Payne on Wednesday. This was the second meeting between him and his Japanese and Australian counterparts a day after they participated in the "Quad" ministerial dialogue along with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Quad worried about China's 'gross aggression'

This is about free world versus Chinese authoritarianism: U.S. State Department

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN

WASHINGTON

A senior State Department official cited "sudden" and "gross aggression" by China as a concern of the Quad, in response to a question on whether Quad members other than the U.S. were less "forward-leaning" on countering the Chinese threat, and whether the U.S. risked alienating the other three countries with its emphasis on China.

"No. That is the concern. I mean, if you look at the conflict on the – in the Himalayas between China and India, something that has been in the past handled according to unspoken or unwritten rules in the past to prevent these things from getting out of control, and then you look at what happened here recently, where



Mike Pompeo

you've got actually people beating each other to death – no," the official said.

"...if you look at the single thing that's driving all this, it's a sudden turn toward gross aggression by the Chinese government in its entire periphery. I mean, you take it all the way around the Indo-Pacific and its western borders; you're seeing things

that you haven't seen before, and these are responding to that," the official said.

Later, the official reiterated that it was not "just the U.S. dragging folks [i.e., India, Australia, Japan] who are maybe unwilling or hesitant to" take on the challenges that China was posing. "Everybody likeminded is looking at erosion of democracy, of free market economy and all that, and they're taking action."

The comments, transcripts of which were released by the State Department, were made on

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's aircraft en route to Anchorage, from Japan, where Mr. Pompeo had met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and counterparts Toshimitsu Motegi of Japan and Marise Payne of Australia for the second "Quad" Minister-level meeting. In Tokyo, Mr. Pompeo had said it was "critical" for Quad partners to "collaborate to protect our people and partners from the CCP's [Chinese Communist Party] exploitation, corruption, and coercion," in various geographies including the Himalayas.

"But we also have to frame the problem correctly. This isn't about a U.S.-China dispute. This is about the free world versus Chinese authoritarianism," a second senior State Department official said.

Asked on speculation by analysts that the Quad sounded like an "Asian NATO", the first official said looking at the language underpinning the framework of cooperation was on the to-do list for the countries.



Carnivorous plants have got the attention of gardening enthusiasts in the country, many of whom are falling prey to their captivating beauty, much like the insects they feast on



ATHIRA M

"If possible, I would have filled my house with Nepenthines (pitcher plants)," laughs Dr Payel Sarkar. At her home in Uran, Navi Mumbai, Payel grows different varieties of carnivorous plants; she also hosts workshops on these plants for school students.

Payel is among a growing tribe of carnivorous plant growers in India. Says Partha Pratim Bohra from Nagaon, Assam, "There were not many growers when I started collecting these 12 years ago, but things are different now." Partha has over 10,000 plants in his growing nursery. Last year he resigned from his job to devote his time to this.

Besides Nepenthines, the varieties that are commonly grown and sold in India include Venus flytraps, Drosera (sundews), Utricularia (bladderworts), Pinguicula (butterworts) and Sarra-

cenia (American Pitcher Plant).

Wilson C Varghese, owner of Vinay Gardens in Kozhikode, Kerala, began his tryst with carnivorous plants two decades ago, during the inauguration of Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences in his hometown. "I spent ₹1,000 to get my first. Although rodents destroyed it a few months later, I could replant it," says Wilson. Today, his nursery is a leading producer of hybrid species of Nepenthines, and he has clientele across India.

Enigmatic flora

Social media has played a huge role in popularising these plants. When Prajy Jervis Fernandes from Thane, Mumbai, started the Facebook community 'Carnivorous Plants India' five years ago, it was out of a desire to find fellow hobbyists.

"The community now has ov-

Fatal attraction



er 1,600 members, and is a forum for sellers and for new growers to clear their doubts," says the 33-year-old, whose favourite is a Nepenthines that "does not kill". The lower surface of the lid contains a sweet sugary laxative which is tempting for tree shrews. It causes them to involuntarily poop inside the pitcher. This poop is high in nitrogen, thus providing the nutrient for the plant, he adds.

The collectors note that the world of carnivorous plants is mysterious. They argue that there is more to them than what

our science classes in school have let on.

"I consider them intelligent and sophisticated. Even humans and animals have to go in search of food, but they get it delivered directly. Their morphological features are bizarre in the most beautiful way, and some of them have the loveliest flowers," says Nirmal Kumar, a gardening enthusiast from Kochi, who owns a terrarium of carnivorous plants, and runs the YouTube channel, Nandanam Exotics, dedicated to gardening.

These plants are grown from

IT'S A TRAP!

Since they thrive in less fertile, marshy lands, carnivorous plants have adapted themselves to gain nutrients by capturing and digesting their prey.

Pitcher plants have pitfall traps, while sundews capture prey with beads of sticky glue. Venus flytrap has hinged leaves like tiny jaws that snap shut around its prey.

Bladderworts, primarily aquatic, have underwater traps and use a vacuum action to suck insects into the trap.

India is home to only one Nepenthines species, *Nepenthes khasiana*, which is endangered.

99% of carnivorous plants fall into endangered category. Some have gone extinct because their beauty and trapping mechanisms have led to large scale poaching. Shrinking habitats, due to human intervention, also destroy them.

seeds, from cuttings and by tissue culture. Seeds or plants are imported from Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Americas and Europe. Rates differ as per variety. Sundews are priced at ₹250 onwards; the cost

Exotic collection (Clockwise from far left) Pitchers of a Nepenthes variety; Drosera or sundew; Venus flytrap; N Nirmal Kumar; Prajy Jervis Fernandes • PARTHA PRATIM BOHRA, N NIRMAL KUMAR AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

of Nepenthines starts at ₹600 and can go up to several thousands. Venus flytraps and Sarracenia cost upwards of ₹700. Meanwhile, a pack of seeds costs around ₹300. "Refrain from buying seeds from unknown or unverified sellers on e-commerce platforms, as there can be fake or old seeds in the consignment," adds Prajy.

Hooked to the hobby

The plants require good sunlight and the soil should be nutrient free. Coco peat and sphagnum moss are preferred options. No fertiliser should be applied. Water used should be devoid of dissolved solids or minerals. Experienced growers even create new varieties by crossing breeds through manual pollination, but it is not easy.

"Female plants are few when compared to their male counterparts and you can only differentiate them when they flower. However, flowering doesn't happen often, and the flowers are so small that you have to use a paint brush to handle the pollen," says Wilson.

There are varieties that require cold winters to enter dormancy stage. Creating artificial conditions, then, is the solution. While certain collectors have their own incubators, keeping them in the fridge (for at least two months) is another option.

However, the tedious process involved in nurturing the plant has not affected its demand. For instance, Lakshmi Ashok Kumar, facilitator with a learning community in Kochi, cultivated Utricularia in the small pond at her home without knowing what it was. "Now I look forward to collecting more varieties and studying about the species," she says.

And once you get hooked, you tend to want more plants. Partha and Nirmal look forward to adding the Australian pitcher plant to their collection, even though they are expensive and need extremely cold conditions to thrive.

"For me, having a carnivorous plant is the closest I can get to owning a pet," says Prajy, adding "Since these plants are rare and some are getting extinct, having them gives me a sense of satisfaction."



A song takes flight

It is World Migratory Bird Day on October 10, and we welcome our winged visitors with some music and a quiz.

Saturday, October 10, 7 pm:

Name an Indian language and Benny Dayal has probably sung a song in it. In his new EP, *Shoshal Media Music*, this singer and musician pulls no punches in pointing out how the music industry has become a numbers game. Are we embracing music to become good artists, or are we doing it for the following and subscriptions, he asks. This weekend, he joins us live, as he speaks his mind about the music industry and his journey in it so far.



Sunday, October 11, 6 pm:

Did you know that birds follow the sky's version of paths – called flyways – when migrating from one part of the globe to another? The winter migration has begun, and as feathered visitors from the northern hemisphere keep their annual date with the Indian subcontinent, we put together a fun trivia quiz about it, with help from K Selvaganes, a teacher and a birding enthusiast in Valparai who won ebird's Great Backyard Bird Count challenge in 2017 with his students. The quiz on Saturday evening will be followed by a live on Sunday evening with a bird expert.

Photographer Hasnain Ahmed's collection of photos shows the different faces of the United Arab Emirates while also trying to draw a parallel to Indian culture



Arabian DELIGHT

REJI VARGHESE

"A photograph is a poem about time," says Hasnain Ahmed. "Photographs can capture a moment in time that is gone forever, or capture a moment in history for future generations. They can also change behaviour and stimulate understanding between people," he adds.

He holds up a photograph he has taken of Al Jalihi Fort, which he explains is one of the largest forts in the United Arab Emirates built in the late 19th Century by Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa (1835-1909), as a royal summer residence. There are also vivid, colourful images of an old Ira-

nian carpet shop, the Dubai Souk and the Creek Side market, where exotic spices, *oud* and perfumes are sold.

"*Oud* is sourced from the wood of the agar tree which when infected with a particular type of mould, produces a warm, woody, smoky fragrance that is highly sought after. The Arabs call it 'liquid gold,' he says.

Connecting cultures
Colours Of Arabia, an exhibition he is bringing to Chennai, shows the different faces of the UAE and its swank cities, a few miles



large swathes of empty desert where the Bedouins have lived for centuries.

"My intention was to bring to the people of India various images from the Middle East, and also do a Colours Of India photo exhibition in the Middle East. My hope is that these images will bring the people of the two regions together, as I feel that there are a lot of similarities between us in terms of food, family values, the hospitality we extend to our guests..." says Hasnain, who is the ne-

phew of the current Nawab of Arcot.

"Growing up in Chennai and visiting my grandparents in Saudi, and my extended family in UAE, I felt at home in all these places. I wanted to bring the people of these regions together because I think there is more that we have in common than what separates us," says Hasnain.

Looking back
The turning point in his life was when his father gifted him a Panasonic digital camera when he was in Class X. Hasnain says, "I was an average student, and not too interested in academics. The camera opened up a new world for me – a world of light, shadows, colours and

Framed in memories

(Clockwise from top left) A heritage building in the UAE; Jumeirah mosque; Hasnain Ahmed • HASNAIN AHMED, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

stories." Family members encouraged the hobby.

He learnt photography from the Mind School Film Institute, Chennai, founded by filmmaker Rajiv Menon. "I subsequently did advanced professional photography and film making courses from IFTA, Mumbai and the Gulf Photo Plus Institute in Dubai," he adds. He started his own production house, Hasnain Ahmed Productions, in 2018, and makes corporate and documentary films, music videos, and short films in India, the UAE and the UK. He's also a member of The Hamdan International Photography Award Association.

Colours Of Arabia is open from 5pm on October 9 at Hotel GRT in T Nagar, Chennai

HOMING IN

From globally iconic theatre to Indian talent, and a blend of the old and new, here's your list of live gigs for the coming weekend

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR



Project Mishram

The Bengaluru-based Carnatic fusion band is not just about Carnatic classical and rock:

their music also blends in jazz, reggae, blues, funk and other influences. The band will be streaming live from Bengaluru's Muzico Studio this Sunday at 8 pm, in a gig hosted by Bohemian Live in

association with Skillbox. Visit skillboxes.com/events for passes and other details.



Shakespeare's Globe

The globally renowned performing arts space that sits on the South bank of River Thames has been prolific in its online reach in recent times. There are podcasts, online workshops, limited screenings of plays in association with Warner Media and globeplayer.tv, the theatre's online viewing site where you can stream all the plays staged since 2007 (it also has a music tab, and is accessible around the world), but all charges are in pounds.

There are also limited, free screenings of select plays on the Shakespeare's Globe YouTube channel, where a 90-minute production of *Romeo and Juliet* is currently available, and will be till February 28, 2021. Check YouTube, globe.tv and shakespearesglobe.com to explore all your options.



Kalai Va Nee Art Festival

This one is brewing in Chennai. From October 11 to October 19, a fresh lineup of five artistes from different cities and socio-economic backgrounds will take the (virtual) stage. There will be standup comics and poets, musicians and dancers, storytellers and other performing artistes in the mix, bringing in as much variety as can be expected from 35 different minds and

performance styles.

There are three payment slabs ₹99 day pass, ₹499 season pass, and pay-as-you-like. Show starts at 8 pm on Zoom each night. Passes are on insider.in.

We would love to know how you are keeping busy at home. Tell us what you are watching live at metro@thehindu.co.in.

Birdwatchers track the Lesser Whitethroat through its sound, but if you're not an expert, try and watch out for it on the ground when it hops down to forage for food



Up where they belong

In the foliage The Lesser Whitethroat barely visible in a bush

• ABHISHEK GULSHAN

The warblers had begun to arrive! After the bird-watcher's yearly dry spell through summer, and with the monsoon migrants (Indian Pitta and Jacobin Cuckoos) flying away, we heard a metallic che...che, followed by a dry rattle, in the Aravalli Biodiversity Park in Gurugram. It is time to welcome a dainty little (13 cm) speedster, the Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*) to our tuva.

Like the Greenish Warbler that arrived a month and a half ago and the Hume's Warbler that came in a few days ago, this one prefers canopies and hunts insects while flitting from branch to branch. It does have a slight difference in feeding behaviour: it also forages on the ground for insects and grubs. However, this is occasional, and unlike the Greenish Warbler, this warbler is a skulker, i.e. it usually stays where it cannot be seen, a behaviour that makes it difficult to sight.

This bird breeds in Europe and is a part of the 'Old World Warbler' family *Sylviidae*. It travels long distances to temperate regions in winter. The sexes are similar with their plumage fashioning plain brownish-grey upperparts, a greyer head, a broad dark mask, clean white underparts, dark legs and greyish feet.

The bird is fairly adaptive, adjusting to varied habitats like open country, thorny shrubs and acacias of arid scrubland, and even inhabits trees at the periphery of wetlands, sometimes feeding on insects on the surface of the water.

In Delhi-NCR the species is common throughout the city, especially in biring hotspots (Sultanpur sanctuary outskirts, Okhla Bird Sanctuary), and areas with old dense trees (Vasant Kunj, Chanakyapuri, Lodhi Garden, Vasant Vihar). The fruits of the Chamrod tree ripen near the reverse-migration (when they head back to their breeding grounds) time for these birds, and along with so many different animals like squirrels and bulbuls, you will notice the Lesser Whitethroat relishing them as well.

The writer is the founder of NINOX - Owl About Nature, a nature-awareness initiative. He is the Delhi-NCR reviewer for Ebird, a Cornell University initiative, monitoring rare sightings of birds. He formerly led a programme of WWF India.

SRINIVASA RAMANUJAM

It is a Saturday evening, and Arun the mentalist – or ATM, as he calls himself – has his eyes focussed on the camera. He is ready to unleash one of his most popular tricks on the 50-plus audience who have turned up for his live virtual show on Zoom.

He writes on a piece of paper, and places it inside a bowl that everyone can see. He then requests volunteers from the audience, and three – from different parts of the world, unrelated to each other – give answers to three questions: favourite holiday destination, what they would eat there and the rough cost of this dinner. Minutes later, Arun opens that piece of paper and shows the world that he had already predicted these answers: the US, curd rice and \$99, plus tax.

The audience unmute themselves and clap in disbelief. From his modest Villivakkam residence in Chennai, Arun Loganathan grins widely as he bows in acknowledgement.

For Arun and many of his peers in the magic-mentalist industry, the world has opened up online to witness their magic that unfolds in their drawing rooms. When the pandemic and lockdown hit, most of the corporate world adapted to a rigorous WFH routine. But the transition was not so smooth for magicians and performers, who thrive on the energy and alacrity of the stage.

A new act
Delhi-based illusionist Karan Singh, who has been performing since 2008, used the lockdown to write a new show: one that would include new tricks for online performances.

"Writing a show generally takes six to eight months but due to the increased frequency of the performances during lockdown, I could do it in a few weeks," he says. He has been presenting that, and doing magic videos in collaboration with comedians and influencers like Samay Raina, Tamay Bhat and Bhuvan Bam for the past months.

Karan believes that the pandemic has opened up a world of possibilities for performers. "It is a little difficult for magicians as they require a bigger space and props, but for mentalists who can read your mind and figure out your ATM pin or phone password, a corner of the house is enough," says Karan, who adds that he is going the extra mile to adapt to international performances – he recently performed at 3 am IST for audiences in the US and the UK.

Mumbai-based Naman Anand is a relatively new entrant in the magic space; he started his professional career with virtual shows earlier this year, after many years of dabbling in it as a hobby. "During virtual shows, every person feels like they have a prized front-row seat," says Naman.

Nikhil Raj has been doing something similar from Bengaluru; the illusionist has been trying to incorporate elements of comedy in his online shows, which revolve around mentalism and conjuring. "In one of my initial shows, a member of the audience pointed out that I was doing tricks us-

ing props from my desk. Since then, I tell audiences to keep something ready in their house; objects like pen, paper and phone, and try to perform a trick using that," adds Nikhil, who has been busy these last few months, with over 35 virtual sessions.

Preparation for such online shows requires time, effort and money. Arun took a ride to Ritchie Street, Chennai's well-known electronics hub, to purchase a couple of lights, a microphone and a green screen. He converted a

A new bag of tricks



Magic moments (Clockwise from top) SAC Vasantha, Karan Singh and Arun Loganathan have been busy with virtual shows • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

part of his bedroom to a studio containing a two-camera setup. "My home is my stage now," beams Arun, who also attempted a blindfold act virtually.

The wow factor
With such virtual shows being the new normal, how do magicians plan their future performances?

Addressing this question was the legendary magician David Copperfield, who spoke about various challenges on a recent Facebook Live hosted by Chennai-based popular magician SAC Vasantha. Vasantha, who has done numerous TV shows involving magic, might be popular for being the "man who predicted Garry Kasparov's next move" but the last few months sans live stage shows have been a challenge.

"The transition was difficult," he admits. "Even on a live stage, we are asked a hundred questions. On an online platform, we need to convince audiences. Believability is a big factor. David [Copperfield] stressed about the need to pick your genre of magic, and I'm trying to presentation skills."

Vasantha seems to have cracked that; since March, he has done more than 30 virtual shows, most of them ticketed. "We keep it limited to 25 tickets, priced at ₹2,000 each for a one-hour show. The advantage is that everyone in the family can gather around the laptop and enjoy the show." For such events, he does tricks connecting all 25 people – they each think of a number that adds up to one grand number, which Vasantha reveals he had predicted on his Instagram page a day before!

He concludes, "Magic is all about making people happy. That's what matters."

(With inputs from Aishwarya Upadhye)

POOCHE CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



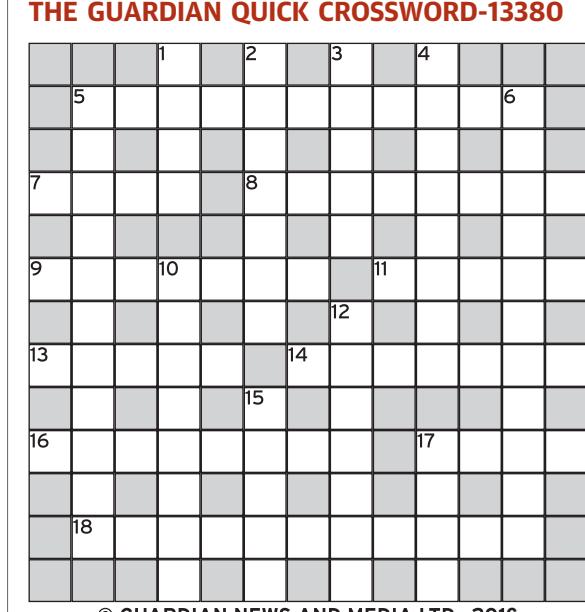
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13380



To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

6 Tepid or pale (anag) – butterflies and moths (11)

10 Legitimate (8)

12 Mobilise – US law-enforcement officer (7)

15 Hidden store (5)

17 Owl's cry (4)

The solution will appear on October 15, 2020

Solution No. 13379

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

HEALTH CAPSULES
by Bron Smith
DO PEOPLE WITH CHIAC DISEASE NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT GLUTEN SUNSCREENS?
NO. NOT UNLESS YOU ARE SENSITIVE TO GLUTEN. AVOID USING GLUTEN-CONTAINING DENTAL PRODUCTS, MOUTHWASHES AND TOOTHPASTES. IF YOU ARE UNCOMFORTABLE, CHECK THE INGREDIENT LIST ON THE LABEL OR CONTACT THE MANUFACTURER.
Health Capsules is not intended to be a diagnostic resource.

- (8) **17** Colours (4)
- 18** US state, capital Pierre, d. 1917 (7,4)
- 7** Small and weak (4)
- 8** Wife of Odysseus (8)
- 9** Extravagantly indulgent (7)
- 11** Potatoes (informal) (5)
- 12** Sediment (5)
- 14** Portable computers (7)
- 16** Marriage ceremony (11)

'America has become a dangerous place'

There's something bigger going on in this nation than broken politics, something darker, says Biden

SIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

Standing in front of a field in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where a significant battle in the American Civil War was fought, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden spoke of a country divided and the need to come together. The former Vice-President said America had become a "dangerous place" with something "darker" and more "dangerous" than just broken politics.

"There's no more fitting place than here today in Gettysburg, to talk about the cost of division. About how much it has cost America in the past, about how much it is costing us now, and about why I believe in this moment, we must come together as a nation," he said in a speech of a little over 20 minutes.

"There's something bigger going on in this nation than just our broken politics. Something darker, something



Call for unity: Joe Biden speaking at Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania on Tuesday. ■ AP

ing more dangerous... Too many Americans seek not to overcome our divisions, but to deepen them," he said.

Mr. Biden repeated a campaign theme: that while he is running as a "proud Democrat", he would work for those who vote for him and those who do not. Mr. Biden, who first joined the U.S. Senate in 1973, has campaigned on his ability to work across

aisle and committed to doing the same as President.

Balancing act

Mr. Biden has had to balance the expectations of his constituents on the left – such as progressives who did not see their candidate Bernie Sanders make it past the primaries – in addition to catering to his own moderate support base, while also appealing to

Republicans disenchanted with the Trump administration.

"I do not believe we have to choose between law and order, and racial justice in America. We can have both," Mr. Biden said on Tuesday. The death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, at the hands of police officers sparked protests this summer that have spread across the country. While most of the protests have been peaceful, some have turned violent. Mr. Trump and Republicans have accused Mr. Biden of being soft on law and order – using violence against law enforcement officials to bolster their case.

Talking about white supremacists, Mr. Biden said that in a Biden administration, hate would be given "no license" and "no oxygen".

"I think about what it takes for a black person to love America. That is a deep love for this country. That

has for far too long, never been recognized," Mr. Biden said.

Scepticism for masks

Mr. Biden said wearing a mask and social distancing were not political statements but scientific recommendations. His opponent Mr. Trump's scepticism for masks and social distancing have been widely criticised. Mr. Trump and many of those who recently attended non-socially distant gatherings at the White House had tested positive for the coronavirus.

Later on Tuesday, after Mr. Trump had tweeted that he was looking forward to the second debate with Mr. Biden scheduled for October 15, Mr. Biden said the debate should not go ahead if the President is still infected.

"I think if he still has COVID, we shouldn't have a debate," he said, adding that his decision would be guided by medical advice.

Pakistan to keep top suspect in Daniel Pearl murder in jail

Govt. extends his custody by 3 months during SC hearing

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ISLAMABAD

A British-born Pakistani man who has been on death row over the 2002 killing of American journalist Daniel Pearl will remain in jail for another three months despite his acquittal by a lower court earlier this year, according to a government order on Wednesday.

The development was announced by prosecutors during a brief hearing of the high-profile case at Pakistan's Supreme Court, which was to decide whether the key suspect in Pearl's slaying, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, should stay in jail following his acquittal.

According to Faisal Siddiqi, the lawyer representing Pearl's family, government prosecutor Fiaz Shah told the judges he needed more time for paperwork in connection with the case. The judges then adjourned the hearing till October 21.

Mr. Siddiqi, who had expected the court to rule against Sheikh's acquittal on



Daniel Pearl
chief of the *Wall Street Journal*

Wednesday, said he still hopes such a decision would come before the expiration of the suspect's new, 90-day detention.

Sheikh's defence lawyer, Mahmood Shaikh, told he had expected his client to walk free on Wednesday.

"My client cannot be kept in jail for an indefinite period," Mr. Shaikh said.

The government has opposed Sheikh's release, despite his acquittal in April, saying it would endanger the public. Sheikh had been convicted of helping lure Pearl to a meeting in the southern Pakistani port city of Karachi, where he was kidnapped. Pearl had been investigating the link between Pakistani militants and Richard C. Reid, dubbed the "Shoe Bomber", who attempted to blow up a flight from Paris to Miami with explosives hidden in his shoes.

ELSEWHERE



Trump calls off talks on new stimulus plan

WASHINGTON
President Donald Trump on Tuesday called off talks on a new stimulus plan to boost the pandemic-ravaged U.S. economy until after the election. The afternoon tweet undid optimism that had developed in recent days after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin resumed talks on a follow-up measure to the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act passed to blunt the coronavirus downturn. ■ AP

Karabakh capital struck by rockets, drones

STEPANAKERT
The capital of the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region was targeted in heavy strikes by Azerbaijani forces overnight and Wednesday morning. The shelling in Stepanakert was the most intensive night-time bombardment in the city of more than 50,000 people. Meanwhile, France on Wednesday accused Turkey of "military involvement" on the side of Azerbaijan in its conflict with Armenia. ■ AP

'90 dead as Syria govt. forces clash with IS'

BERJUT
Clashes in the Syrian Desert between pro-government forces and affiliates of the Islamic State have killed at least 90 combatants this month, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has said. The clashes broke out in two areas of the vast desert that separates the Orontes Valley in the west from the Euphrates Valley in the east. ■ AP

Pandemic could push 150 mn into extreme poverty'

Sub-Saharan Africa, with 27-40 mn new poor, and South Asia, with 49-57 mn, will be badly hit, says WB

SIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

Global extreme poverty is expected to rise for the first time in 20 years because of the disruption caused by COVID-19, exacerbating the impact of conflict and climate change, which were already slowing down poverty reduction, the World Bank said on Tuesday. The pandemic may push another 88 million to 115 million into extreme poverty or having to live on less than \$1.50 per day, resulting in a total of 150 million such individuals, the

Bank said in its biennial Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report.

Some 9.1% to 9.4% of the world will be affected by extreme poverty in 2020, the Bank said, compared to 7.9% in the counterfactual scenario where the pandemic had not raged across the world.

Many of the newly poor individuals will be from countries that already have high poverty rates while many in middle income countries (MICs) will slip below the poverty line, as per the report. Some 82% of the total

will be in MICs.

Sub-Saharan Africa, with 27-40 million new poor, and South Asia, with 49-57 million new poor, will be badly hit as per the Bank's projections.

"The pandemic and global recession may cause over 1.4% of the world's population to fall into extreme poverty," World Bank Group President David Malpass said via a press statement.

"In order to reverse this serious setback to development progress and poverty reduction, countries will

need to prepare for a different economy post-COVID, by allowing capital, labour, skills, and innovation to move into new businesses and sectors. World Bank Group support... will help developing countries resume growth and respond to the health, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19..." he said.

Lack of data in India
As the government decided not to release the 2017-18 All India Household Consumer Expenditure Survey data

from the 75th Round, there is an "important gap in understanding poverty in South Asia", the report said. Consequently, the Bank has estimated India's poverty numbers for 2017 based on "strong assumptions", resulting in "considerable uncertainties".

In fact, a number of results in the report are incomplete, or uncertain because of the lack of data from India which, as per the report, accounted for 139 million of the 689 million people living in poverty in 2017,

Greek neo-Nazi party a criminal group: court

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ATHENS

A Greek court found the leaders of neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn guilty of running a criminal organisation on Wednesday at the end of a historic trial that was hailed by the Prime Minister as a victory for democracy.

The judgment in an Athens court came as police and anti-fascist demonstrators clashed outside the courthouse, on the sidelines of a large protest of some 15,000 people.

After a trial lasting over five years, presiding judge

Maria Lepenioti said Golden Dawn founder and leader Nikos Michaloliakos and other senior members were guilty of running a criminal organisation.

The prosecutions were sparked by the late-night murder of 34-year-old anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013.

He was chased down by a mob of Golden Dawn members and stabbed to death in front of a cafe in the western Athens suburb of Keratsini.

"Democracy won today," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said.

Sri Lanka unveils operation to identify source of virus cluster

Positive cases linked to a garment factory increase to 1,022

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Days after Sri Lanka identified a new COVID-19 cluster, public health authorities, with the Army assisting them, are frantically tracing the source of the recent infections.

authorities have had to step up targeted testing again, after a woman employed in a garment factory in Minuwangoda, about 40 km north of Colombo, tested positive this weekend. By Wednesday, the cluster rose to 1,022 persons, all employed in the factory. Subsequently the Ministry of Health banned public gatherings until further notice.

'No India link, fake claim'
Meanwhile an Opposition legislator told Parliament on Wednesday about "some Indians" reportedly visiting the garment factory, located near the Bandaranaike International Airport, suggesting that was the source of the infections.

Sri Lanka has so far reported 4,442 cases, 3,274 recoveries and 13 deaths.

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MARKET WATCH

	07-10-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	39,879	0.77
US Dollar	73.33	0.18
Gold	51,215	-1.28
Brent oil	41.41	-3.20

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	360.65	-2.25
Asian Paints	2105.00	15.00
Axis Bank	453.10	3.45
Bajaj Auto.	3077.40	105.15
Bajaj Finance	5905.25	-90.15
Bharti Airtel	422.45	-4.30
BPLC	342.25	-9.80
Britannia Ind	3785.95	20.10
Cipla	773.60	-6.75
Coal India	114.45	-2.35
Divis Lab	3181.90	19.30
Dr Reddys Lab	5104.95	-31.55
Eicher Motors	2238.00	40.40
GAIL (India)	86.70	-1.05
Grasim Ind	759.65	1.95
HCL Tech	828.05	-1.10
HDFC	1948.75	14.35
HDFC Bank	1162.25	18.15
HDFC Life	578.95	-3.10
Hero MotoCorp	3233.65	97.30
Hindalco	172.85	-4.05
Hind Unilever	2139.35	23.45
ICICI Bank	382.65	2.05
IndusInd Bank	619.10	-3.70
Infosys	1066.55	10.80
Indian Oil Corp	75.20	-0.15
ITC	169.50	-0.40
JSW Steel	291.45	0.10
Kotak Bank	1324.70	-13.55
L&T	887.90	-4.70
M&M	631.60	4.20
Maruti Suzuki	7046.90	154.50
Nestle India Ltd.	16114.40	237.55
NTPC	82.80	-1.35
ONGC	70.50	1.15
PowerGrid Corp	159.60	-3.60
Reliance Ind	2257.50	47.15
SBI Life	827.95	-2.10
State Bank	190.70	-0.90
Shree Cement	20712.50	415.55
Sun Pharma	511.75	-9.30
Tata Motors	141.00	-3.75
Tata Steel	371.10	-6.30
TCS	2735.95	21.65
Tech Mahindra	846.35	-1.05
Titan	1254.00	54.05
UltraTech Cement	4213.35	77.25
UPL	510.85	1.30
Wipro	335.30	2.5

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.14	73.46
Euro	85.99	86.37
British Pound	94.30	94.71
Japanese Yen (100)	68.97	69.28
Chinese Yuan	10.77	10.82
Swiss Franc	79.67	80.06
Singapore Dollar	53.81	54.05
Canadian Dollar	54.99	55.23
Malaysian Ringgit	17.58	17.68
Australian Dollar	52.15	52.38

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Blue Star unveils ACs with anti-virus technology

MUMBAI
Blue Star has introduced a range of new air-conditioning products and solutions with Virus Deactivation Technology (VDT) for both residential and commercial applications. Blue Star's new range of AC products with VDT has the capability to deactivate viruses including the SARS-CoV-2 with up to 99.9% efficacy, when air passes through these systems, the company said.

Bharti extends 5G radio contract with Ericsson

NEW DELHI
Bharti Airtel has extended its multi-year contract with Ericsson for supply and deployment of a 5G-ready radio network. However, the companies did not disclose the size of the deal. "The products will enhance the network experience of Airtel customers," a statement said. The company is focussed on delivering a robust network experience to customers, said Randeep Sekhon, CTO, Bharti Airtel.

Brickwork downgrades LVB's bond ratings

CHENNAI
Brickwork Ratings India has downgraded ratings for Lakshmi Vilas Bank's ₹50.50 crore long-term bonds from 'BWR BB+' (credit watch with developing implications) to 'BWR B+' (credit watch with negative implications). The downgrade was due to removal of seven directors at the AGM, LVB's substantially weak capital position and high levels of gross NPA and weak earnings, a filing said.

eBikeGO to roll out 3,000 e-bikes in 7 cities

MUMBAI
Start-up eBikeGO, in partnership with Advance Services for Social and Administrative Reforms (EoDB), is planning to scale up its operations by introducing more than 3,000 new e-bikes across seven cities in India to promote e-mobility and green energy. The Ministry of MSME would support the initiative through government schemes and by augmenting funding.

CMYK

TCS Q2 net dips 7% to ₹7475 cr.

IT company announces ₹16,000 crore share buy-back, interim dividend of ₹12

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI
Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) on Wednesday reported second-quarter net profit declined 7% to ₹7,475 crore, from ₹8,042 crore in the year-earlier period.

Net income after excluding a provision of ₹1,218 crore towards a legal claim, however, was 4.9% higher at ₹8,433 crore, TCS said. Consolidated revenue grew 3% to ₹40,135 crore. Revenue in constant currency terms, however, declined 3.2% on a year-on-year basis, TCS said in a regulatory filing.

The software services provider's board approved a share buy-back of ₹16,000 crore at ₹3,000 per share – representing a 9.6% premium over Wednesday's closing price on the BSE of ₹2,737.40. The buy-back amounts to 1.42% of the total



Money matters: As on September 30, the technology services bellwether had ₹58,500 crore cash in hand. ■ REUTERS

paid up share capital. As on September 30, TCS had ₹58,500 crore cash in hand.

The company also announced an interim dividend of ₹12 per equity share.

"Driving accelerated business value realisation of our customers' digital investments has resulted in broad-based revenue growth," CEO and MD Rajesh Gopinathan said. "The strong order

book, a very robust deal pipeline, and continued market share gains give us confidence for the future," he added.

"What we are witnessing right now is the start of the first phase of a multi-year technology transformation cycle. In the current phase, enterprises are building a cloud-based foundation that will serve as a resilient, se-

cure and scalable digital core," the CEO said.

Long-term resilience'

"Our all-round performance this quarter is a huge endorsement of the increased relevance of our services and solutions to our clients as they pivot from risk mitigation to long-term resilience powered by cloud, digital and simplification of working methods," said COO N. Ganapathy Subramanian.

The company said a surge in future-focused discretionary investments for growth and transformation drove a strong, broad-based rebound in growth across industry verticals and geographies.

TCS also announced it would restore salary increases, effective October 1, for the second half of the financial year.

Google said to face antitrust case in India over smart TVs

Firm faces allegation it abused Android's market position

REUTERS

NEW DELHI

Google is facing a new antitrust case in India in which the U.S. tech giant is alleged to have abused its Android operating system's position in the smart television market, a source and two lawyers involved in the case told Reuters.

The case is Google's fourth major antitrust challenge in India, one of its key markets where it is currently facing public criticism from local start-ups for enforcing certain policies and company charges they contend hurt their growth.

It also comes as Google



faces new antitrust challenges in the U.S., and a potential antitrust probe in China that is set to look into how it allegedly uses its dominance of its Android mobile operating system to stifle competition. Google has denied any wrongdoing.

Since June, the Competi-

tion Commission of India has been looking into allegations that Google engages in anti-competitive practices by creating barriers for firms wanting to use or develop modified versions of Android for smart TVs, such as Amazon Fire TV's operating system, according to the source, who has direct knowledge of the case.

A Google spokesman declined comment.

Data from Counterpoint Research shows 8 million smart TV sets were sold in India in 2019. Three in five smart TVs sold in India are based on the Android operating system.

HDFC Bank offers loan for care at Apollo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

HDFC Bank has tied up with Apollo Hospitals Ltd. to offer its customers unsecured, pre-approved loan of up to ₹40 lakh for medical expenses incurred at the healthcare chain.

The Healthy Life Programme will be offered exclusively to HDFC Bank customers at Apollo 24/7.

As per the plan, the bank's customers will have round-the-clock access to an emergency doctor at the hospital at no cost along with benefits such as a choice of payment options and ease of finance for treatment at all Apollo Hospitals.

The loans will be disbursed almost instantly when the need for money arises, and the patients, who are HDFC Bank customers, will receive preferential treatment, said the bank's MD Aditya Puri.

Cabinet nod for reforms in natural gas marketing

'Changes will help price discovery'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday approved 'natural gas marketing reforms' with an aim to standardise the procedure to discover the price of gas sold in the market.

"The policy has also permitted affiliate companies to participate in the bidding process in view of the open, transparent and electronic bidding," an official statement said. "This will facilitate and promote more competition in marketing of gas."

It, however, added that rebidding would be needed in case only affiliates participated, and that there were no other bidders. The Centre said the policy would bring uniformity to the bidding process across various contractual regimes and policies to avoid ambiguity



and contribute towards ease of doing business. "The policy will also grant marketing freedom to Field Development Plans of those Blocks in which Production Sharing Contracts already provide pricing freedom," it added.

The government expects the move to spur production of infrastructure for and marketing of natural gas, while also creating jobs in gas-consuming sectors, including in MSMEs.

New H-1B curbs to hurt U.S. economy'

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI

Reacting to the U.S.' new curbs on H-1B visas, the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) said the changes will restrict access to talent and harm the American economy.

Nasscom said this would also "endanger U.S. jobs, put U.S. interests at risk and slow down R&D into solutions for COVID-19 crisis" while reiterating it was important for the U.S. to be able to access skilled talent for its businesses, especially during the COVID-19 recovery phase.

The rules change the definitions of specialty occupation, employer and employee-employer relationship and limits visa validity to one year for a worker at a third-party work site, while increasing enforcement and investigations for these visas.

Wipro board to consider buy-back plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

IT services major Wipro on Wednesday said its board would consider a buy-back plan at its October 13 board meeting. The announcement comes on a day when larger rival Tata Consultancy Services cleared an up to ₹16,000 crore buy-back plan.

"... the board of directors will be considering a proposal of buy-back of equity shares of the company at the... meeting scheduled to be held on October 13, 2020," Wipro said in a regulatory filing. However, no other details were provided. Wipro is also slated to announce its results for the September quarter that day.

RBI ED Rao is named Dy Governor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday appointed RBI's senior-most Executive Director M. Rajeshwar Rao as Deputy Governor.

He succeeds N.S. Vishwanathan, who stepped down in March, three months ahead of his extended tenure on health grounds. "The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of M. Rajeshwar Rao, Executive Director, [RBI] to the post of Deputy Governor Reserve Bank of India," a notification by the Department of Personnel and Training said. The RBI needs four Deputy Governors: two from within the ranks, a commercial banker and an economist to head the monetary policy department.

Many governments have been cautious, and some would argue overly cautious, because they have lower resources for relief, and they fear rating downgrades. For a number of countries, the right thing to do, which is perhaps what the IMF is now saying, is to spend to diminish the damage than to wait to spend hoping that it will increase demand

Super Kings lose the plot, Knight Riders hold their nerve

Pursuing 168, the Chennai side slips up from 99 for one; Rahul Tripathi's 51-ball 81 sets up the Kolkata team's 10-run win

IPL 2020

SPORTS BUREAU

Chennai Super Kings squandered a good start and stumbled in its chase, losing to Kolkata Knight Riders by 10 runs at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday.

Chasing 168 for victory, CSK was 90 for one at the end of 10 overs before KKR fought back strongly, led by Sunil Narine, to record its third win of the season.

Good platform

Shane Watson continued his good run from the previous match, scoring 50 (40b, 6x4, 1x6) as he set a good platform with Ambati Rayudu (30).

But once the two were dismissed in quick succession, first Rayudu followed by Watson – leg-before to Narine – the game slipped away.

Vital wickets

The West Indian spinner was ably supported by Kamlesh Nagarkoti, C.V. Varun and Andre Russell, all of whom chipped in with crucial wickets.

The CSK middle-order looked out of sorts, as M.S. Dhoni, Kedar Jadhav and Sam Curran struggled to

Innings scan

KKR	CSK
39 Dots	41
14 Fours	18
5 Sixes	3
52/1 PP	54/1
8.35 RR	7.85



On the charge: Rahul Tripathi relished the opportunity to bat at the top of the order while Sunil Narine put the skids on Super Kings' chase by removing dangerman Shane Watson. • BCCI/IPL



get the remaining runs.

It was a puzzling decision by the team management to send an out-of-form Jadhav (7 n.o., 12b, 1x4) ahead of powerful hitters such as Dwayne Bravo and Ravindra Jadeja.

Boundaries dry up

CSK could not strike any boundaries between the 11th and 15th overs, scoring only 20 runs.

Earlier, Rahul Tripathi justified his promotion to the top of the order by smashing a 51-ball 81 (8x4, 3x6) and guiding KKR to a respectable score of 167.

Led by leg-spinner Karn Sharma's brilliant spell (4-0-25-2) in the middle overs, CSK came back strongly.

Karn, who replaced Piyush Chawla, was playing his first match of the

Next assignment

KKR: Oct. 10 vs. KXIP
Abu Dhabi, 3.30 p.m. IST

CSK: Oct. 10 vs. RCB
Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST

season.

Tripathi, who shot into the limelight in the 2017 IPL as an opener for Rising Pune Supergiant, made full use of the opportunity to go after the bowling in the PowerPlay.

After being hit for a six by Tripathi in his opening over, Karn made a grand comeback.

He varied his length and pace cleverly and did not concede another boundary in his spell.

Pulling things back

Kolkata Knight Rider, at 93 for two after 10 overs, was

well placed for a strong finish.

But Super Kings medium-pacers Shardul Thakur (two for 28), Curran (two for 26) and Bravo (three for 37) ensured that KKR's momentum was arrested.

In the end, however, KKR had enough runs on the board to hand CSK its fourth defeat of the season.

Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Mumbai Indians	6	4	2	8	1.488
Delhi Capitals	5	4	1	8	1.060
Kolkata Knight Riders	5	3	2	6	0.002
Royal Challengers	5	3	2	6	-1.355
Chennai Super Kings	6	2	4	4	-0.371
Sunrisers Hyderabad	5	2	3	4	-0.417
Rajasthan Royals	5	2	3	4	-0.826
Kings XI Punjab	5	1	4	2	0.178

After the KKR-CSK match on Oct. 7

■ CSK could not strike any boundaries between the 11th and 15th overs, scoring only 20 runs

■ The Chennai team's middle-order looked out of sorts, as Dhoni, Jadhav and Curran struggled

■ This was CSK's fourth defeat of the season

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Rahul Tripathi c Watson b Bravo 81 (51b, 8x4, 3x6), Shubman Gill c Dhoni b Shardul 11 (12b, 1x4), Nitish Rana c Jadeja b Karn 9 (10b, 1x4), Sunil Narine c du Plessis b Karn 17 (9b, 1x4, 1x6), Eoin Morgan c Dhoni b Sam Curran 7 (10b, 1x4), Andre Russell c Dhoni b Shardul 2 (4b), Dinesh Karthik c Shardul b Sam Curran 12 (11b, 1x4), Pat Cummins (not out) 17 (9b, 1x4, 1x6), Kamesh Nagarkoti c du Plessis b Bravo 0 (2b), Shivam Mavi c Dhoni b Bravo 0 (b), Varun Chakravarthy run out 1 (1b); Extras (lb-4, w-6):10; Total (in 20 overs): 167.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-37 (Gill, 4.2 overs), 2-70 (Rana, 8.1), 3-98 (Narine, 10.6), 4-114 (Morgan, 13.6), 5-128 (Russell, 15.2), 6-140 (Tripathi, 16.5), 7-162 (Karthik, 18.6), 8-163 (Nagarkoti, 19.2), 9-166 (Mavi, 19.5).

SUPER KINGS BOWLING
Deepak Chahar 4-0-47-0, Sam

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Shane Watson (bw b Narine 50 (40b, 6x4, 1x6), Faf du Plessis c Karthik b Mavi 17 (10b, 3x4), Ambati Rayudu c Gill b Nagarkoti 30 (27b, 3x4), M.S. Dhoni b Varun 11 (12b, 1x4), Sam Curran c Morgan b Russell 17 (11b, 1x4, 1x6), Kedar Jadhav (not out) 17 (12b, 1x4), Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 21 (8b, 3x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-2, w-2): 4; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 157.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-30 (du Plessis, 3.4 overs), 2-99 (Rayudu, 12.1), 3-101 (Watson, 13.1), 4-129 (Dhoni, 16.3), 5-129 (Sam Curran, 17.1).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Cummins 4-0-25-0, Mavi 3-0-32-1, Varun 4-0-28-1, Nagarkoti 3-0-21-1, Narine 4-0-31-1, Russell 2-0-18-1.

Toss: KKR. **MoM:** Tripathi.

KKR won by 10 runs.

A battle of power-hitters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KXIP and SRH, with their bowling attacks struggling to find form, will look to their power-hitters to do the job when the two teams go head to head in the IPL here on Thursday.

KXIP's strength has been its formidable opening duo. Skipper K.L. Rahul has scored two fifties and a century, while Mayank Agarwal also has a half-century and a three-figure knock to his credit.

Apart from Mohammed Shami, all the others have failed to take wickets.

Sunrisers, blessed with a strong top order comprising Jonny Bairstow, David Warner, Manish Pandey and Kane Williamson, will look to exploit the KXIP's bowling unit.

TODAY'S MATCH



VS.

DUBAI, 7.30 P.M. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 14

SRH 10 | KXIP 4

In 2019

Played 2 | SRH 1 | KXIP 1

STAR SPORTS 1 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD)

IN A NUTSHELL

Steve Smith, Rajasthan Royals' captain, has been fined ₹12 lakh for his side's slow-over rate during the IPL match against Mumbai Indians on Tuesday. PTI

Ali Khan, KKR's fast bowler and the first USA cricketer to be signed by an IPL franchise, has been ruled out of the tournament due to an injury.

My father asked me to play IPL: Stokes

SPORTS BUREAU

Ben Stokes, writing in his column for British daily *Daily Mirror*, revealed that it was his ailing father who encouraged him to play in the IPL.

"He told me I have a duty to do," wrote Stokes.

He added that the decision to fly to the UAE was taken after discussions with his family members.

"We all gave it a lot of thought and came to the decision that now sees me focusing on the game again and then I'll be heading home to Clare and the kids," he wrote.

Stokes could not have joined Royals at a better time. After winning its first two matches, the team has recorded a hat-trick of defeats.



Powering through: Tsitsipas made his second career Slam semifinal on Wednesday. • REUTERS

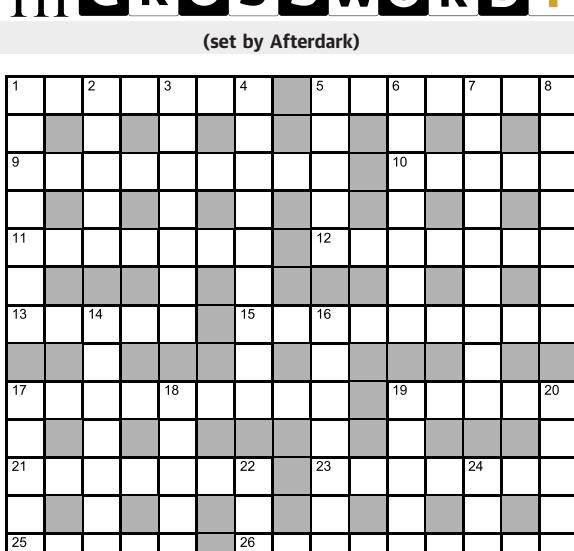
CROSSWORD + 13061

(set by Afterdark)

Are you better with numbers or with words?
Try our Crosswords site and find out!

at <https://qrqo.page.link/jppTn>

SCAN TO PLAY



ACROSS

- 1 A disheartened boy's love breaking up. Clear? (7)
- 5 Small place with green leaves at the edges of stretches (7)
- 9 Bad taste; people are turned back in transport, say (6,3)
- 10 Confine an animal in a container... (3,2)
- 11 ... bad to start, fluid collection overcoming resistance leads to disease (4,3)
- 12 Showered; police officer ready in a frenzy (7)

- 13 Ridiculous to weep holding first and last letters (5)
- 15 Indifferent in a way, returns advance (9)
- 17 Printing pioneer's tenure disturbed by force on either side to accommodate boy (9)
- 19 Olympian has covered last mile (5)
- 21 Midwives appeal after a cocktail with vodka's empty; getting another liquor (7)
- 23 Dingbat house's illegal, not uniform; case to follow (7)
- 25 Complete book? Not half. Almost absurd (5)
- 26 Queen has zeal, somehow controls a baron with competence, essentially hard (9)
- 27 Designate listener to spot (7)
- 28 Former spouse holds deed? Heartless lady indeed (7)
- DOWN
- 1 An apparatus for distilling beer, primarily mild and lighter, perhaps (7)
- 2 Found in transit, arriving with instrument... (5)
- 3 ... we will take the plane by attacks (4,3)
- 4 Urge company to sack team leader and hire Charlie (9)
- 5 Vassals in a corner, king's force gets silly primarily (5)
- 6 Revival of tribe somehow controlled by a factor, say (7)
- 7 Shrub to grow remotely, all over the place without energy, oxygen (3,6)
- 8 Astronomical term to sync and gather match, say (7)
- 14 Four adult films; perhaps Marlon Brando should get an agent (9)
- 16 Saint is imposing in second sermon (9)
- 17 Receiver of good pay's in grief often (7)
- 18 Short story? No, very long, covering England's tryst with the French (7)
- 19 Family of dragonflies on a toad? Impossible (7)
- 20 Just after five, hotel should be vacated in sixty (7)
- 22 Pinch, hit, weakling will bear it (5)
- 24 Honoured to be left amongst the finest (5)

SUDOKU

			2			3	6	
				9	4		5	

Bumrah was keen to take new ball: Bond

The Mumbai Indians pacer returned a four-wicket haul against Rajasthan Royals

IPL 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ABU DHABI

Mumbai Indians bowling coach Shane Bond has revealed that star pacer Jasprit Bumrah took the new ball and backed his yorkers with renewed vigour against Rajasthan Royals as he was a bit disappointed with his IPL performances so far.

Bumrah, who was having a rather ordinary tournament, was back to his destructive best, claiming a four-wicket haul as his side inflicted a 57-run defeat on Rajasthan on Tuesday.

It was the first time the 26-year-old was handed the new ball in the tournament and Bumrah didn't disappoint, returning the impressive figures of 4/20, including the prized scalp of Steve Smith.

"Jasprit genuinely wanted to take the new ball so there was a discussion that went on one day before the game against Royals, we obviously have used him in a defensive manner at the back-end of the PowerPlay," said Bond during the post-match press conference.

"It was a fresh wicket and there was grass on it, he has



Bouncing back: Jasprit Bumrah delivered big in the first match of this edition where he was handed the new ball. ■ BCCI/IPL

the ability to nip the ball around, we knew Rajasthan's key players were in the top-order so we wanted to give him an opportunity to get out there, take the new ball and take some wickets for us," he added.

Bond said the Indian pace spearhead was unhappy with his performances in the tournament and wanted to make the kind of impact that is expected from a bowler of

his calibre. "Jasprit really wanted to back his yorkers against Royals, he wanted to go back to his strengths and use his bouncer as he normally does," the New Zealander said.

"That's his strength, if he is not happy with his performances, he tends to bounce back to a new level. I know, traditionally through IPL, Bumrah tends to get better and better," he added.

Ashwin let off 'pal' Finch

The off-spinner moots a 10-run penalty for backing up too far

ASHWIN ACHAL

Delhi Capitals (DC) spinner R. Ashwin cited his close friendship with Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) opener Aaron Finch as a reason for not affecting the 'Mankad' dismissal in their IPL encounter on Monday.



R. Ashwin. ■ BCCI/IPL

Like a derailed bogey
Ashwin added that Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting wanted him to run Finch out.

"Going into my jump, I saw a gold helmet (Finch) moving forward like a derailed bogey of a train. I stopped to think whether to run him out or not. Finch didn't even return to the crease; he just stared at me."

Finch and I played together at KXIP. Finch is a great guy; he is my friend. We spent a lot of time together during our KXIP days. I did the math in my head – it did not work out, so I gave him a final warning," Ashwin said, on his YouTube channel.

Finch's offence was so blatant that even Ponting –

Poignant farewell for Dean Jones

The popular cricketer accorded a lap of honour at the MCG



Final goodbye: Family members at a ceremony for Dean Jones with the hearse that made a lap around the MCG. ■ AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Former Australia batsman Dean Jones has been farewelled in a poignant final lap around an empty Melbourne Cricket Ground following his sudden death last month.

The casket of Jones, who collapsed and passed away aged 59 in Mumbai, was draped in an Australian flag and carried in a white hearse adorned with flowers spelling "324", his Test cap number and his highest first-class

score, achieved at the MCG. *Rocket Man* by Elton John – a friend of Jones – echoed through the 100,000-capacity arena as the hearse, followed by only 10 mourners due to anti-coronavirus rules, proceeded around the field on Saturday.

Deeply moved
"We have been deeply moved by the outpouring of love for Dean over the last week and can't thank everyone enough for their sup-

port and for sharing their memories with us," Jones' wife Jane said in a tribute statement.

"We will forever miss Dean's energy, his zest for life, passion for cricket and his love for us as a family," she added.

Known as "Deano", and an inspiration for his aggressive batting, Jones was remembered as a fierce competitor whose knockabout demeanour concealed a keen cricketing mind.

India's Oz tour: Broadcaster unhappy with itinerary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SYDNEY

Cricket Australia's broadcast partner Seven West Media has sought official arbitration in its bid to secure a cut in its annual fees, reportedly dissatisfied with the planned schedule for the year-end Test tour by India.

'Seven' has lodged paperwork with the Australian Chamber for International and Commercial Arbitration (ACICA), a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* said.

The report also said that CA "could call the network's bluff and head directly to court."

The network has sought an independent expert to determine the rights value of this summer's schedule.

The report said the network's claims included CA's decision to "change of dates for the matches, with only one Test before Christmas and the final Test finishing in mid-January when many people are back at work."

Lakers hit back, go 3-1 up



Slow, but sure: LeBron James took some time to get going before guiding Lakers home with 28 points. ■ AP

NBA FINALS

REUTERS

ORLANDO

LeBron James overcame a sluggish start and Anthony Davis made a key three-pointer and block late on as Los Angeles Lakers beat Miami Heat 102-96 on Tuesday to take a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven NBA Finals.

Coming off a win in their last meeting, Heat played with confidence early on as Jimmy Butler went 5-5 from the field, including a jump shot at the buzzer that cut Lakers' lead to 27-22 at the end of the first quarter.

The Miami defence frustrated Lakers in a back-and-forth second quarter and Heat went into the break down two points after roo-

kie Tyler Herro's put-back jumper went in just before halftime.

James scored just eight points and committed five turnovers in the first half but was much better in the second, finishing with 28 points including a driving layup where he was fouled after Heat tied the game 83-83 with 6:22 left to play.

With less than a minute left, Davis hit a long three-pointer to push the advantage to nine and blocked a Butler layup attempt to seal the win and put Lakers one victory away from their first championship since 2010.

Game Five is on Friday.

The result: LA Lakers 102 (James 28, Davis 22) bt Miami Heat 96 (Butler 22, Herro 21). Lakers 3-1.

Messi-Barca soap opera takes a break

Argentine begins yet another tilt at securing the World Cup

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BUENOS AIRES

Superstar footballer Lionel Messi will take a break from his Barcelona soap opera as he bids to fire Argentina to the World Cup in Qatar and what will probably be his last chance to try to win the coveted trophy.

The 33-year-old, a record six-time winner of the *Ballon d'Or*, has won everything in the club game with Barcelona several times over but his international trophy cabinet looks bare in comparison. "The only goal I have now is to win the World Cup with the national team," he has said.

Losing finalist

The closest he has come so far was as losing finalist against Germany in 2014.

Thursday's clash with Ecuador gives him the chance to start building towards one last tilt at that goal.

He will be 35 by the time the Qatar World Cup ends, and will turn 39 during the following global showpiece in North America.

In the meantime, he has a pair of qualifiers – Argentina



In the spotlight: Lionel Messi will once again hold the baton for Argentina on its way to the World Cup in Qatar. ■ AFP

also travels to Bolivia next Tuesday – to distract him from his club travails.

Messi tried to force his exit from the Catalan giants in the close season but Barca held firm and a €700 million release clause ensured he remained, albeit disgruntled.

Potential difficulty

Playing Ecuador in his homeland may provide a welcome respite but it is also fraught with potential difficulty.

Four years ago at the start of qualifying for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, Ecuado-

Tyagi is an exciting talent: Buttler

Star keeper-batsman says the Royals' top-order needs to fire

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KOZHIKODE

Jos Buttler finally was back amongst the runs on Tuesday. But his 44-ball 70 could only soften the blow a bit for Rajasthan Royals from Mumbai Indians at Abu Dhabi.

Buttler, who was in cracking form for Royals in the last IPL, had failed to get going in the first three games. "I hadn't been feeling my best in the middle," the England wicketkeeper-batsman said.

Finding his feet

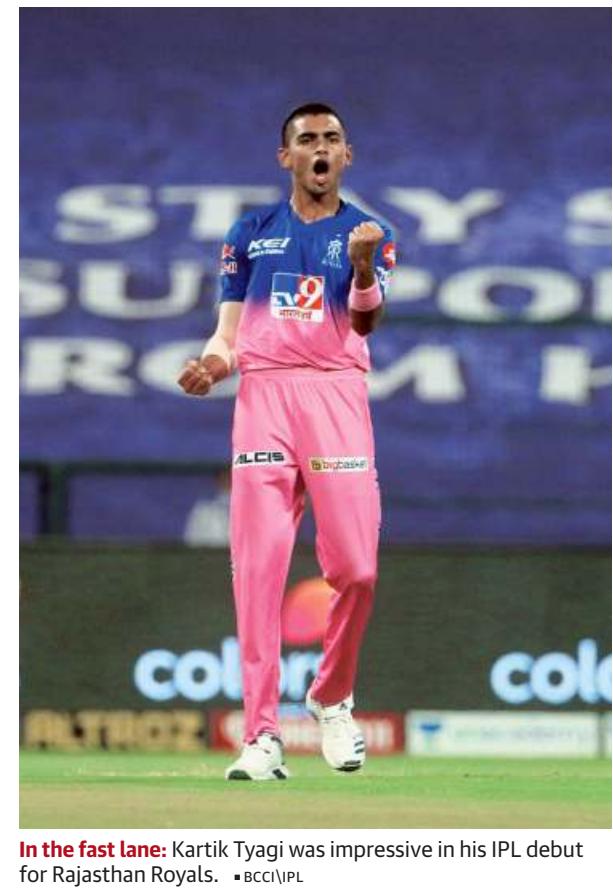
"I still feel like I am finding my form a bit. It was good for me to have spent some time in the middle."

"Hopefully I can take some confidence from today and use that for the rest of the tournament."

He said Royals had to sort out the issues at the top of the order. "We haven't managed to come off as a top-order in the last three games," he said. "We lost three wickets in the PowerPlay... In T20 cricket, you never win too many games from that position."

One of the few positives for Royals against Mumbai was Kartik Tyagi, the 19-year-old seamer who made a promising debut.

"He is really an exciting talent," he said.



In the fast lane: Kartik Tyagi was impressive in his IPL debut for Rajasthan Royals. ■ BCCI/IPL

ten 79 (47b) laid the foundation for Mumbai's victory.

"He played a fantastic innings," said Buttler. "We couldn't quite tie him down. He used the angles and the crease very well."

IN BRIEF



Australia women equal record ODI win streak

BRISBANE Australia demolished New Zealand by 232 runs in the third women's One-Day international to equal the world record of 21 consecutive ODI victories set by Ricky Ponting's all-conquering men's team in 2003. After smashing 325 for five off 50 overs, the Australians then bowled New Zealand out for just 93 to record their biggest ever win against the Kiwis. AFP

Amaan Sandhu signs up with First Love Christian Academy

MUMBAI NBA Academy India prospect Amaan Sandhu has signed with the First Love Christian Academy, a private high school in Pennsylvania. The 18-year-old thus becomes the third male student-athlete from the NBA Academy India to get a high-school basketball scholarship in the US. Sandhu joined the NBA Academy India in 2017 as part of the inaugural class of student-athletes identified through the ACG-NBA Jump Program. PTI

Boxers to train and compete in Europe

Shiva Thapa to replace Manish Kaushik

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

Sixteen elite Indian male and female boxers, excluding the Olympics qualified M.C. Manish Kom (51kg) and Manish Kaushik (63kg), will embark on a 52-day tour of Italy and France for training and competition.

Mary recovering

It is learnt that Mary is recovering from dengue. Manish, who is going through rehab following an operation, has been replaced with former World championships medalist Shiva Thapa.

The exposure trip has been sanctioned by the Government at an estimated cost of ₹1.31 crore, said a Sports Authority of India (SAI) statement on Wednesday.

Prominent names such as Tokyo Olympics quota place winners Amit Panghal (52kg), Ashish Kumar (75kg), Satish Kumar (+91kg), Simranjit Kaur (60kg), Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) and Pooja Rani (75kg) will be part of the 28-member contingent, comprising 10 men and six

women boxers. Vikas Krishnan (69kg), another Olympic-bound boxer, is currently training in the USA.

High performance director Santiago Nieva and women's foreign coach Raffaele Bergamasco will join the squad directly from their respective home countries Sweden and Italy.

The boxers will leave on October 14 and will train in Assisi, Italy, till December 5. Thirteen of them will participate in the Alexis Vastine international tournament to be held at Nantes, France, from October 28 to 30.

Beneficial: Kuttappa

Men's chief coach C.A. Kuttappa said the exposure will be beneficial. "We have been training in Patiala for quite some time. Our boxers need to compete to know where they stand. Top boxers from Ireland, England, Italy and France will be available on this tour. When our boxers spar and compete with them, we will get to know the areas of improvement and work accordingly," Kuttappa told *The Hindu*.