



Noted Malayalam poet and Jnanpith laureate Akkitham passes away
page 8



Spurious liquor kills 14 in Madhya Pradesh; CM orders inquiry
page 10



Sensex snaps 10-day rally, falls 1,066 points amid global sell-off
page 12



Rahul, Gayle shine as Kings XI pulls off a last-ball win over RCB
page 13

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NEARBY



Delhi-NCR AQI slips to 'very poor' category

NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi, Gurugram and Noida, all part of the National Capital Region, worsened to 'very poor' category on Thursday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board data. It is for the first time this season that Delhi's air quality has deteriorated to "very poor" and is expected to remain unchanged on Friday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Theatres reopen to poor response in the Capital

NEW DELHI

After staying shut for more than six months due to the COVID-19 outbreak, theatres and multiplexes reopened to poor response on Thursday. Multiplexes across the Capital resumed operations as per the guidelines issued under 'Unlock 5'. Theatre owners are hopeful of bouncing back to business during the festive season when multistar movies are scheduled for release.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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J&K parties team up for restoring special status

Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration formed

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Thursday chaired a meeting of regional political parties and announced the formation of a new grouping, named the 'Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration', comprising the parties that had signed it on August 4 last year to fight for Jammu and Kashmir's special status".

"Our motive is to fight for the restoration of the August 4, 2019, position. It's a constitutional battle to assure the return of all the rights which the people of J&K, including Ladakh, enjoyed before the abrogation of Article 370," Dr. Abdullah, a three-time Chief Minister, said after the meeting.

The meeting was held at the residence of Dr. Abdullah on Gupkar Road in Srinagar and attended by Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti, Peoples Conference (PC) chief Sajad Lone and CPI(M) leader M.Y. Tarigami, among others.

Dr. Abdullah, who is a Member of Parliament, pointed at the larger, lingering political problem and underlined the need to address it. "We want steps taken for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. All the stake-



Joint fight: National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah, centre, with son Omar Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti, left, in Srinagar on Thursday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

holders should be taken on board in this regard," he said.

In a shift, the alliance of these regional forces, which includes the Awami National Conference, the J&K Peoples Movement, the Awami Ittehad Party and the Peoples Democratic Front, has not restricted its goal to restoration of J&K's special status but also included the final settlement of the Kashmir issue on its agenda.

Dr. Abdullah also hinted at taking into confidence members from all the regions of the erstwhile J&K State, including Ladakh, in the next meeting. "The next meeting will be held soon," he added. Congress leader G.A. Mir did not attend the meeting, citing a "medical emergency".

Ms. Mufti, released from detention after 14 months, on Thursday visited the grave of her father, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, in Anantnag district and offered prayers. Several leaders accompanied her as she drove to south Kashmir's Bijbehara town, where the late Mufti is buried.

BJP protest in Jammu
In Jammu, the BJP held a protest against the new alliance. "The parties who were part of the meeting have been rejected by the people. It is not the people's alliance but a dynasty alliance by power hungry politicians who always cheated the people," BJP spokesman Altaf Thakur said.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, orally told the petitioners and intervenors,

SC CLOSES PETITION ▶ PAGE 9

Man shot dead in front of police, administrative officials in Ballia

Dispute broke out between two groups during a village meet

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

A man was shot dead in the presence of police and administrative officials after a dispute broke out between two groups during a village meeting over the selection of a government ration shop at Ballia in eastern Uttar Pradesh on Thursday.

The son of the deceased, Jai Prakash, claimed that the accused, Dhirendra Pratap Singh, was linked to the sit-

ting BJP MLA, though it could not be independently verified.

CM orders suspension
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered immediate suspension of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Circle Officer (of DSP rank) and police personnel present at the spot, a government spokesperson said, adding that strict action would be taken against the accused and the

role of the officers would be investigated.

The incident took place at Durjanpur village in Rewati area. Ballia SP Devendra Nath said selection of a ration shop was on when an argument broke out between two groups, one of them supported by the accused.

The SDM halted the process and when people were leaving, Dhirendra Pratap allegedly fired shots which hit Jai Prakash, the SP said.

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CM orders suspension

IN BRIEF

BJP unveils Nakshatra Vatika, sports complex

NEW DELHI
The BJP on Thursday inaugurated the Nakshatra Vatika and sports complex on the occasion of former Delhi CM Madan Lal Khurana's birth anniversary. The facility was inaugurated in the presence of Union Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur, Delhi BJP President Adesh Gupta and MP Meenakshi Lekhi. "Khurana ji steered Delhi on the path of development," Mr. Thakur said.

Disclosure statement in riots case not leaked by us'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI
The city police on Thursday informed the Delhi High Court that the information about disclosure statement of a Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) student, who was arrested in a case related to the north-east Delhi communal violence, was not leaked by its officers.

DCP (Special Cell) in an affidavit stated that Delhi Police was also aggrieved by the news report in which the alleged confessional statement of JMI university student Asif Iqbal Tanha was leaked.

Justice Vibhu Bakshu, after perusing the affidavit, asked the counsel for Zee News and OpIndia to disclose the source of the statement by the next date of hearing on October 19.

Mr. Tanha, a 24-year-old student, had in his plea stated that he was aggrieved by various news reports which appeared in electronic media that he has confessed to organising and inciting the communal riots.

It was Mr. Tanha's case that he was coerced by the police officers to sign certain papers and make statements while in their effective custody. He contends that the alleged disclosure statements, which are subject matter of news reports, were not given voluntarily and are inadmissible as evidence.

He had alleged that Delhi police officers have with the "mala fide intention of prejudicing" him in pending proceedings, leaked the statement to media.

Mr. Tanha is currently lodged in judicial custody.

AQI slips to 'very poor' category

Gurugram and Noida too in same category; cases of stubble burning on the rise

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi, Gurugram, and Noida, all part of the National Capital Region (NCR), worsened to "very poor" category on Thursday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

This is the first time this season that Delhi's air quality has plunged to "very poor". It is expected to remain unchanged on Friday. As per CPCB's 4 p.m. bulletin on Thursday, which is the average for the past 24 hours, the air quality index (AQI) in Delhi was recorded at 312, Gurugram 311 and Noida 321.

All the values are in the "red" category and can cause "respiratory illness on prolonged exposure", said CPCB. The AQI of all three cities were in the "poor" category on Wednesday.

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

"AQI is likely to stay at the very poor category for to-



Delhi's air quality is expected to remain unchanged on Friday.

• FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

morrow [Friday]. Marginal improvement is likely on October 17 but in the lower end of the very poor to poor category," SAFAR said.

An increase in stubble burning fire counts was observed on Wednesday around Haryana, Punjab, and neighboring border regions and as per SAFAR, the fire counts were estimated to be 740. Also, wind direction is partly favorable for transfer of pollutants from these states to Delhi and hence an increase in the contribution of stubble burning to PM2.5, a chief pollutant, in Delhi is

expected.

Also, a ban on diesel generators, except for emergency purposes, came into force in Delhi and neighboring cities from Thursday as part of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) measures to control air pollution.

The Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority (EPCA) on Thursday wrote to the Haryana government that last year an affidavit was given by the government that all colonies will be connected to power grids before the onset of winter of 2020, but it was not

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	312	Gurugram	311
Ghaziabad	322	Faridabad	335
Noida	321	Greater Noida	357
Good 0-50	51-100	Moderate 101-200	
Poor 201-300	301-400	Very poor >401	Severe

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

done. The EPCA has also asked for fresh timelines for the same in view of a ban on diesel generators in NCR cities.

The Haryana government had asked for an exemption from the ban.

Rai writes to EPCA

In a related development, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai wrote letters to the EPCA and the CPCB to close 11 power plants outside Delhi, but in the NCR region, within a week. He also urged them to not allow diesel generators in Haryana.

"It feels that the Central government has become the spokesperson of these States [where stubble burning is happening] and is competing with Delhi," Mr. Rai said at a press meet.

Kejriwal launches campaign to tackle rising levels of air pollution

CM appeals to motorists to switch off vehicles at traffic signals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday launched an initiative – Red Light On, Gaadi Off – to tackle the problem of rising air pollution in the Capital.

Mr. Kejriwal said there are one crore vehicles registered in Delhi out of which if 10 lakh turn off their ignition at traffic signals, around 1.5 tonnes of PM10 will reduce in a year and PM 2.5 will decrease by 0.4 tonnes. The initiative has been launched under the "Yuddh, Pradushan Ke Viruddh" campaign of the government.



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

briefing.

"From today, we are launching a new initiative. Every time vehicles stop at a red signal, we have noticed that drivers do not turn the engine off. This is known as idling when the vehicle emits a lot of toxic air. In Delhi, there are around one crore registered vehicles. Even if we estimate that around 30-40% of the vehicles come out on the streets of Delhi and cause emissions, we can imagine how polluting the air can get," he added.

Experts had calculated and informed him that the initiative could lead to a de-

crease in PM 10 levels by 1.5 tonnes and PM 2.5 by 0.4 tonnes, he said. The experts noted that when a car is in idling mode, it emits a lot more pollutants than when traveling.

"If the car is in idling mode for 10 seconds, it emits more pollutants than if you stop the engine and then restart it. In this way, you can also save more fuel in your car. Every day, one car spends around 15 to 20 minutes at the red signal on an average. During this time one car utilizes around 200 mL of fuel. But if you switch off the engine at the red signals, you can save ₹7,000 per month," he added.

Mr. Kejriwal said vehicular emissions in winters stay near the surface and contribute to the air pollution.

Kejriwal to citizens

"I want every citizen of Delhi to cooperate with us to bring down the pollution levels. This is the time of pandemic and if the pollution level increases now, the situation can worsen," he said.

AUD releases first cut-off list for UG applicants

Students can upload papers till Oct. 17

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) released the first cut-off list for its merit-based undergraduate courses on Thursday night.



Applicants will be able to pay fee on the portal till October 19.

Highest cut-off
At 99%, BA(Hons) psychology has the highest cut-off for students outside of Delhi. The cut-off on the same course for those from within Delhi is 97%.

BA (Hons) sociology has a 98.25% cut-off for students from outside Delhi and for applicants from the city, it demands 96.5%.

For BA (Hons) social sciences and humanities, there was a difference of 2% in the cut-off for candidates in NCT and outside Delhi, 96.25% and 98.25%, respectively. The cut-off for BA (Hons) economics stood at 96.5% and 96.75% for NCT and outside NCT candidates respectively.

BA (Hons) mathematics has an asking score of 94.5% for students outside of the city while 93% for those from Delhi.

Applicants will be able to upload documents only till October 17, but the portal will remain open for fee payment till October 19.

Entire process online
The entire admission process will be online this year, including the verification of documents. AUD reserves 85% of its seats for students from Delhi.

Merely because triple talaq is void, doesn't mean it can't be criminalised'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has sought response from the Centre on a plea seeking to declare the provision penalising a Muslim husband for pronouncing 'triple talaq' upon his wife as unconstitutional.

The High Court's order came on a petition which argued that since the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, has declared the practice of 'triple talaq', to be void and illegal, there is no justification for criminalising pronouncement of 'triple talaq'.

The court also declined to grant interim relief sought by Nadeem Khan.

Section 4 of the Act provides that any Muslim husband who pronounces 'triple talaq' upon his wife shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years. "The purpose of Section 4 appears to be to provide a deterrent against such practice. Merely because triple talaq has been declared to be void and illegal, it does not mean that the legislature could not have made the continuation of such practice an offence. This is our prima facie view," the Bench said.

The court also declined to grant interim relief sought by Nadeem Khan.

Couple kidnap toddler for 'begging', arrested

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A couple has been arrested for allegedly kidnapping a toddler from south-east Delhi for begging, the police said on Thursday.

They said on October 3, one Asia Khatoon from Batla House in Jamia Nagar reported the kidnapping of her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter.

She told the police

that her daughter was playing with other children on the street when she went missing on October 2 at 6 p.m.

The police recovered the toddler from Jogabai Extension in Jamia Nagar with one Mohammad Ali and Jehnara on Tuesday," said DCP (Crime) Monika Bhadrav.

During interrogation, the couple confessed to the crime.

Landlord calls Kashmiri student terrorist, threatens her in policeman's presence

Tenant alleged that her house was broken into and belongings stolen

HEMAMI BHANDARI

A 22-year-old student from Kashmir was allegedly called a "terrorist", abused and threatened by the owner of her rented accommodation in south-east Delhi's Amar Colony on Wednesday night, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South East) R.P. Meena said that a case has been registered on charges of house trespass, theft, house break-in, causing hurt, and intending to insult modesty of woman based on a complaint submitted by the victim identified as Noor Bhatt, who lives on the fourth floor of a house in East of Kailash.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Ms. Bhatt said that she was in Kalkaji on Wednesday evening and when she returned to the house, where she has been living since June, she saw the lock broken and her belongings stolen. "My furniture, clothes and money were stolen. The whole house was turned upside down. I immediately messaged my sister and then called police," she said.

Meanwhile, Ms. Bhatt said that the house owner Taruna Makhija came with a man and a policeman and alleged that she had stolen the furniture. "I asked him to check CCTV footage if I had taken anything. The owner couldn't say anything to that," she said.

Ms. Bhatt alleged that the man who had come with the woman called her a terrorist after which the owner also called her the same.

Women's panel issues notice to Delhi Police over assault

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Thursday issued notice to Delhi Police over the alleged assault on a Kashmiri woman by her landlady.

The women's panel wrote to Delhi Police seeking details on the matter, including whether action has been taken against the accused. Noting that the woman had alleged that she was assaulted in the presence of a police officer, the DCW in its letter wrote: "Please provide information and details of any police personnel present at the spot as alleged and the action taken against them." The DCW also sought information pertaining to the steps taken by the force to increase the security around the woman and her friends. A detailed action taken report has also been sought by the DCW.

In the notice issued, the women's panel asked Delhi Police to respond by October 19.

"She said 'You are a terrorist. Your father is a terrorist. You have come from Kashmir to spread terrorism'. Ms. Bhatt said, adding that the owner also made derogatory statements pointing at her religion."

"I asked the policeman how he could allow this to happen in front of him," she said.

Subsequently, senior officers from the police station also came after which Ms. Bhatt submitted her written complaint. "I was standing in the balcony of the house when the owner threatened me about my life. That too, in front of police personnel," she alleged.

Bill dispute

According to Ms. Bhatt, an incident took place about a month ago when a man came to the house and claimed to be from BSES. Ms. Bhatt claimed that the man had trespassed the house and they called the police at that time as well but the matter reached a compromise. "The owner has a problem with us

because we flagged the issue over our electricity bill. Our fourth floor meter was connected with the fifth floor, which we don't use. The bill was fine for the first month but it was exorbitant for the next month because of fifth floor," she said.

DCP Meena said: "It has also come to notice that a dispute has also taken place earlier over the payment of rent and not paying electricity bills by the tenant. The electricity was also disconnected by the BSES".

Police said that the owner Taruna Makhija has also given a written complaint, which is being examined.

Ms. Bhatt also claimed that she has been in the Capital for the last four years and she has been subject to "subtle bullying" because of her Kashmiri identity. "I have been bullied in college. I have been denied accommodation by landlords because I am a Kashmiri. Does being a Kashmiri make me any less of an Indian?" she said.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

S.R. NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PANCH					

Timings		
DELHI		
FRIDAY, OCT. 16		
RISE 06:23	SET 17:51	
MOON 05:32	SET 17:50	
SATURDAY, OCT. 17		
RISE 06:23	SET 17:50	
MOON 06:40	SET 18:29	
SUNDAY, OCT. 18		
RISE 06:24	SET 17:49	
MOON 07:50	SET 19:12	

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	35	20
Safdarjung	35	20
Palam	34	23

Delhi Pali Today
34°C Comfortable hazy (Smoke) morning and warm day with light winds and partly cloudy sky.

Delhi Pali Tomorrow
34°C Pollution in lower level would prevail. Dry and warm weather with few clouds.

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THE HINDU
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IN BRIEF

Meeting held over opening of Kisan Bhavan

A BJP Kisan Morcha delegation met APMC secretary and handed over a memorandum demanding the opening of Kisan Bhavan, which is meant for the facilitation of travelling of farmers seeking to sell their produce at Azadpur Mandi. "The resumption of Kisan Bhavan will be a big win for the farmers. If it is not opened within one month, then the farmers of Delhi and the BJP Kisan Morcha workers will take this issue to the streets," said Rajan Tiwari, Delhi BJP vice-president.

Theatres reopen to poor response

Owners hopeful of bouncing back to business during the coming festival season

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI



A staffer sprays disinfectants inside the theatre before the show begins at a city multiplex on Thursday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

After staying shut for more than six months due to the COVID-19 outbreak, theatres and multiplexes reopened to a poor response on Thursday. Multiplexes across the city resumed operations as per the guidelines issued under Unlock 5. However, theatre owners are hopeful of bouncing back to business during the festive season when new multistar movies are scheduled to release.

Following the protocol, all theatres have maintained that auditorium occupancy will not be more than 50%, adjacent seats on either sides will be left vacant. Floor markers will be placed at ticket counter and food counters. Digital modes of transactions have been encouraged. Availability of PPE kits for purchase has also been made.

Safety protocol

"Security persons have been instructed to follow the safety protocol and people will not be allowed inside the premises without face masks and thermal screening. Show timing, intermissions and exits

will be staggered to maintain social distancing. Contactless sanitiser dispensers will be placed at entrance and in lobbies. There will be designated bins for masks, gloves etc," said a staffer at INOX Eros One in Jangpura.

Alok Tandon, CEO of INOX Leisure Ltd said: "The SOPs are simple and audience-friendly, and will ensure that the overall cinema viewing experience is safe and reliable. We are completely geared up and prepared for the new normal, which would assign top-most priority to safety and hygiene. Our preparations on the hygiene and disinfection front will set new benchmarks for any public

premises, whether inside the auditorium, or in our lobbies and F&B counters."

PVR Icon at Vasant Kunj has encouraged contactless sale of ticket by placing QR code at windows. They are also offering PPE kits, gloves, disposable 3D glasses, disposable seat and armrest covers at extra cost to make cinema viewing experience more safe.

"Cinema goers will be encouraged to download Aarogya Setu app. Food items will not be allowed inside halls. At the food and beverages section, all food will be sterilised under UV rays in a machine for eight minutes before being handed over to custom-

ers. Enhanced air filtration systems are in place for the safety of visitors," said an employee at a multiplex in South Delhi.

"We are hopeful to bring the crowd back to theatres with the new releases. Presently, we are screening Bollywood movies released a few months ago," said a member of the PVR cinema in Ghaziabad.

Delightful offers

To draw more crowd, multiplexes are offering cashbacks on more than one ticket, discount food coupons and selling two movie tickets at the price of one. At PVR Plaza in Connaught Place, the ticket prices are just ₹99 flat for all categories.

Gautam Dutta, CEO, PVR Cinemas said, "We are pleased to be back and as we reopen slowly and steadily, ensuring the safety of our customers and employees is our first priority. Currently, the focus is on building consumer confidence and following the guidelines laid down by the MHA. We are optimistic that we will emerge out of this stronger and more robust."

Delhi records 3,483 new virus cases

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

As many as 3,483 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 3,21,031, according to a Delhi government health bulletin on Thursday.

Also, 26 more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 5,924. Of the total cases, 2,92,502, people have recovered and there are 22,605 active cases.

Out of the total 16,109 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in Delhi, 68.2% were vacant.

Doctors strike

Meanwhile, healthcare workers under the North Delhi Municipal Corporation continued their protest against non-payment of salaries since three-four months.

Doctors working at Hindu Rao Hospital said that they have got one month's salary on Thursday and will continue the protest. The Resident Doctor's Association of the hospital said that they will hold a protest at Jantar Mantar on Friday.

Delhi House has no power to call FB official: Centre

He was called to testify in relation to riots

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Central government on Thursday *prima facie* told the Supreme Court that the Delhi Legislative Assembly has no jurisdiction to summon Facebook's senior official Ajit Mohan to testify in connection with the February communal riots as police and public order are not within its domain.

But senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for Mr. Mohan and Facebook, maintained that his client cannot be "compelled" to appear against his "right of silence" in an issue on which he did not want to comment. He said the threat of breach of privilege action was "worse than clutching at straws". The case required detailed hearing on the jurisdiction of the committee to summon his client.

Justice Kaul observed that the court needed to examine the competency of the Assembly to constitute a fact-finding committee.

Hearing on Dec. 2

The court scheduled the case for December 2 for detailed hearing of arguments of both sides. Meanwhile, the committee will not issue any further summons to Mr. Mohan.

TO ADVERTISE

PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

PH: 9820350726

selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

Concessionaire of waste management project accused of violating agreement clause

It has entered pact with third party for door-to-door waste collection'

agreement with a third company for door-to-door collection of waste in contravention of the concession agreement with the Haryana government.

Holding a press conference at Shama Tourist Complex here on Thursday, Panipat-based RTI activist P.P. Kapoor distributed copies of the agreement between the Ecogreen Energy and India Green to claim that the former had violated 'No Partnership' clause of the concession

agreement. The two firms have signed the agreement for a period of one year from March 1 for wards no. 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 9 of Zone-II.

'Clause 19.9: No Partnership' of the concession agreement says that "nothing contained in this agreement shall be construed or interpreted to create an association, joint venture or partnership between the parties".

Mr. Kapoor also claimed that the husband of the head of the Project Monitoring Un-

it, responsible for the enforcement of the concession agreement, was employed on a senior position in Ecogreen Energy in a direct "conflict of interest".

No response from CEO
Ecogreen Deputy CEO Sanjay Singh and the PMU head Sonia did not respond to calls and messages.

Mr. Kapoor said the reply to his RTI application had revealed that Municipal Corporation Faridabad had im-

posed a fine of ₹1.57 crore and the Municipal Corporation Gurugram had imposed penalties in 400 instances on the concessionaire following complaints received on social media and monitoring by the municipal corporation staffers.

He claimed the MCG did not reveal the amount of fine imposed on the company and an appeal was pending in this connection.

The MCG has the right to cancel the concession agree-

ment in case aggregated liquidated damages levied by it on the company on account of non-performance exceed ₹7 lakh for a quarter. Haryana State Pollution Control Board also imposed a fine of ₹25 lakh on Ecogreen last year.

Mr. Kapoor said the two municipal corporations had together paid ₹26 crore to the concessionaire over the past 30 months to transport 18 lakh ton waste to Bandhwari.



Punjab Government

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Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister

will pay homage at

**Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Memorial,
Chappar Chiri (SAS Nagar)**
on October 16, 2020

Punjab Government to install a life-sized statue of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur at Sirhind shortly.

Special online events to perpetuate the supreme and unparalleled sacrifice of Great Martyr in the Sikh history

Date/Time	Online Event/Activity	Controlling Department and Centre	Youtube Channel / Facebook Page / Online link
October 16 2:00 PM	One-day National Webinar on 'Life and Contribution of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur'	Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala	Registration link is: https://forms.gle/ACpK8nTSEEdegwrT9 Join with Google Meet link: https://meet.google.com/kwm-xqsj-vax
October 19	Special online Class for students Subject: 'Life and valour of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur'	School Education Department, Punjab	
October 20 11 AM - 1:30 PM	One-day National Conference (online)	Department of History and Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, GNDU, Amritsar	Join with Google Meet link: https://meet.google.com/igd-rgqx-evx
October 22 11 AM - 1 PM	Webinar: 'Baba Banda Singh Bahadur: Life and Inspirations'	Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana	Join with Zoom Meeting Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89175523421?pwd=VpVWEx0S2twY09z00zsafpLSW422z09 Join with YouTube link: https://youtu.be/gimU03owa6w

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MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF GREATER MUMBAI Department : Chief Engineer (Mechanical & Electrical) e-Tender Notice	
Tender Document No	Bid No: 1. 7100182895 2. 7100182843 3. 7100182841 4. 7100182896
Name of Organization	Municipal Corporation Of Greater Mumbai
Subject	1. Supply, installation, testing & commissioning of lightning protection as per IEC 62305-1:2010 and DG set works at Suryakant Vagal Maternity Home in C Ward. 2. SITC of UV + UF based online storage type Electric water Purifier at various SWM chowky in 'G/South' ward. 3. Providing various electrical facilities & allied work in COVID Centers at Race Course & NSCI. 4. Work of designing, providing and installation of nano technology adhesive for ground floor OPD building of B.Y.L. Nair. Ch. Hospital.
Cost of Tender	1. Rs. 4,500/- + 5.0% GST 2. Rs. 500/- + 5.0% GST 3. Rs. 3,800/- + 5.0% GST 4. Rs. 1,800/- + 5.0% GST
Cost of E-Tender (Estimated Cost)	1. Rs.49,97,132/- 2. Item Rate Tender 3. Item Rate Tender 4. Item Rate Tender
Bid Security Deposit / EMD	1. Rs. 50,000/- 2. Rs. 5,000/- 3. Rs. 42,200/- 4. Rs. 20,000/-
Date of issue and sale of tender	16.10.2020 from 11:00 Hrs
Last date & time for sale of tender & Receipt of Bid Security Deposit	22.10.2020 upto 15:00 Hrs
Submission of Packet A,B & Packet C (Online)	22.10.2020 upto 16:00 Hrs
Opening of Packet A	22.10.2020 after 16:01 Hrs
Opening of Packet B	22.10.2020 after 16:02 Hrs
Opening of Packet C	02.11.2020 after 13:00 Hrs
Address for communication	Office of the E.E.Mech.(E.I.)Maint., MCGM Municipal Workshop, R.S.Nimkar Marg, Byculla, Mumbai- 400 008
Venue for opening of bid	Online in E.E.Mech.(E.I.)Maint's office.
MCGM's Portal	http://portal.mcmg.gov.in
This tender document is not transferable. The MCGM reserves the rights to accept any of the application or reject any or all the application received for above subject without assigning any reason thereof.	
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Development Council, Panjab University, Chandigarh. Reservation for S.C./S.T candidates

and person with disabilities will be followed as per rules of P.U./Pb. Govt./Govt. of India as the case may be. Appointment will be made strictly as per Pb. Govt. notification No.

11/148/2013-3 Edu-1/248623/1 Dated- 20.06.2014 (Honorable Pb. & Haryana High Court CWP 10650 of 2013). Principal

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that Late Mr. Kamal Ahuja, son of Late Mr. Devi Chand Ahuja, who passed away on 26-May-2020, and who was owner of a Society Bhat Up Duplex MIG FLAT Building No.7, Situated in the Layout Plan of Banu Bhandari Co-Operative Group Housing Society Ltd., Prekha Colony, Sector 12, Sector 12, Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, transfer of property to his legal heirs Smt. Krishan Ahuja & Sh. Sanjay Kumar Ahuja. Now Smt. Krishan Ahuja transferring said property to Mr. Sanjay Kumar Ahuja if anybody have any objection he/she can appeal within 7 days from the publication of this Notice otherwise the said property will be transferred in name of Mr. Sanjay Kumar Ahuja.

Tender Notice No.05 / 2020-2021
Tenders are invited online by Executive Engineer Panchayat (R&B) Division, Chhotaudepur (Phone : 2669-233053) for total 13 works and estimated cost of particular work ranging from 10 lakhs to Rs. 220 lakhs. The tender will be online till the date 11/11/2020. The online tender will be filled online on website www.nprocure.com. For more information regarding this you can contact our office during office time. The full details of the works will be there on notice board & on website : www.statetenders.com. Any correction now onwards will be made only online. While submitting the physical document by post, Agency must write Name, Address & Name of work on the cover.

Executive Engineer
Panchayat (R&B) Division
Chhotaudepur
(INF-VAD-754-2020-21)

OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER
GOVT. OF MADHYA PRADESH, MADHYA PRADESH BHAWAN
2, LOKPRIYA GOPINATH BARDOLAI MARG
CHANKYAPURI, NEW DELHI-110021
Phone No. 11-42340180, 190 Fax: 23019461
NIT No. 05/Civil/MPB/2020 Dated 09.10.2020

TENDER NOTICE
Sealed tenders are invited for supply of Civil items (Annual Rates Contract) in State Guest Houses of Government of Madhya Pradesh at New Delhi, namely, Madhya Pradesh Bhawan, 2 Lokpriya Gopinath Bardolai Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021 and Madhyanchal, 12 IHC Pocket, Institutional Area, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi with two bid systems (Technical bid & Financial bid) through e-Tendering website www.mptenders.gov.in and www.mpbhawan.gov.in in the prescribed proforma from interested parties/ registered firms/ agencies/ shop.

Date and Time of Pre-bid conference 20.10.2020 at 3.00 p.m.
Last date and time of submission 11.11.2020 upto 3.00 p.m.
Date and Time of Opening of Technical Bid 12.11.2020 at 3.30 p.m.
Date and Time of Opening of Financial Bid of qualified bidder 20.11.2020 at 03.30 p.m.
Probable cost of work Rs. 8,00,000/-
EMD Rs. 16,000/-
Cost of Tender Document Rs. 500/-

G- 14909 / 2020 Addl. Resident Commissioner
M.P. Bhawan, New Delhi

'Farm fires not key factor in Delhi pollution spike'

Contribution from Punjab minimal, says State official

VIKAS VASUDEV
CHANDIGARH

As the air quality in the national capital has started to worsen over the past few days and stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana is being blamed as one of the reasons behind it, experts and officials in Punjab have dismissed it as a key factor.

As per the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB), the average air quality index (AQI) in Punjab has been 120 from September 21 till October 14, 2020, while the AQI in Delhi has been 179 for the same period. The stubble burning cases in Punjab started around September 21.

PPCB member secretary Kurnesh Garg said that AQI levels in Punjab during this period had largely remained within 'moderate' level whereas in Delhi the AQI has slipped into 'very poor' category.

"Contribution of stubble burning from Punjab is minimal to Delhi's air pollution. The ambient air quality of Delhi remains poor or very poor even in December, January and February even



A farmer burning stubble in Amritsar district. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

though there's no stubble burning during that period. The major factor of air pollution in Delhi is inherent to the anthropogenic, vehicular, solid waste burning and industrial activity within the NCR. Even active farms fires in the NCR or in Uttar Pradesh. And it is the dominant reason for the poor air quality persisting throughout the winter instead of improving in December onwards as it does in Punjab relative to the paddy burning season.

The hypothesis of stubble fires being responsible for most of the PM enhancements in Delhi does not hold, the study points out.

Assam paper leak case: ex-SP arrested

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

ern Assam's Kokrajhar district on October 13.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is eyeing the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) where elections, deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are expected to be held in December.

Assam Finance and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the BJP would contest the elections to the 40-member council alone, hinting at the widening gap between the saffron party and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), one of the two regional partners in the government it heads.

The BPF had been ruling the BTC comprising four districts since February 2003, until the council was dissolved after the expiry of the last five-year term on April 27.

The dissolution followed the deferment of the elections, earlier scheduled on April 4, due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

"As in the other autonomous councils of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, we are looking at forming the government in BTC, which will bring about a complete transformation for the development of the areas administered by the council," Dr. Sarma said during a meeting of the BJP Scheduled Tribe Morcha in west-

The Minister also downplayed speculations about a few BJP legislators and senior leaders joining the BPF.

"We cannot say anything about the internal matters of another party," he said.

Bodo peace accord

The BJP and the BPF have reportedly been drifting apart since the signing of the new Bodo peace accord in January with all the factions of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB). Leaders of the influential All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), aligned against the BPF leadership, had played a key role in the accord.

There are allegations that the BJP has been cultivating the leaders of the disbanded NDFB factions as well as the BPF's rival United People's Party Liberal headed by former ABSU president Promod Boro.

The name of the former Karimganj SP, the brother of Assam's Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna, had dropped up after the CID interrogated one Rubul Ali, an accused in the leaking of question papers of the exam to recruit 597 unarmed sub-inspectors.

Some 66,000 candidates were answering the questions on September 20 when the exam was cancelled after the leaked question paper went viral on social media.

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR,
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RE-01 SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE
Gist of e-NIT NO. 47 OF 2020-21 Dated. 13.10.2020
For and on behalf of Lt. Governor U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover system from Manufacturer/s/Authorized Dealers/Registered/Reputed firms and Experienced firms having expertise as detailed in the tender document for the following works:

S.No	Name of the Work :-	Estimated Cost (in Lacs)
1	Providing, fitting, servicing & repairing of Air Compressor Model HX2T-75NP of oxygen concentrator Plant-750LPM in SKIMS, Soura.	Rs. 7.35 Lacs

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jkttenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders/tenderers may view, download the e-bid document, seek clarifications and submit their bids online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Specifications, Bills of Quantities, & Terms and conditions of the contract and other relevant details.

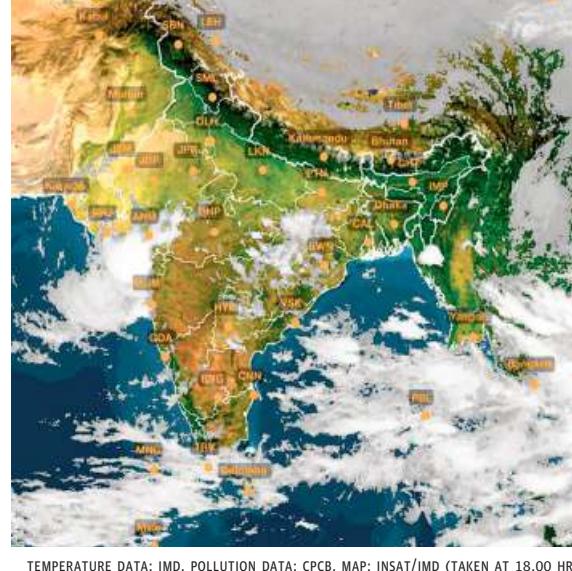
i) Date and time of downloading/Sale of tender documents	14. 10. 2020 from 11:00 Hours.
ii) Date & Time of Bidding Queries/clarification/Pre-bid meet	17.10.2020 at 14:00 Hours.
iii) Last Date & Time of Bid Uploading	19.10.2020 upto 16:00 Hours
iv) Date of Submission of hard copies (only Original EMD/DD for Document Fee)	20.10.2020 upto 14:00 Hours
v) Date & Time of Commercial/technical Bid (Cover-I) opening of the qualifying Bidders	20.10.2020 15:00 Hours (or next convenient day).
vi) Date & Time of Financial Bid(Cover-II) opening of the qualifying Bidders	Shall be intimated separately.
vii) Cost of e-bid Document	Rs.500/- (Rupees Five hundred only)
viii) Amount of Earnest Money Deposit(CDR/FDR)	Rs. 14700/- (Rupees Fourteen thousand & Seven hundred only)
ix) Completion Time	05 Days
x) Budget Head	Non-Plan for the year 2020-21

No-SIMS 139 EXMECH/2019-20-518/20-2438-48-5480-83, Dated:- 13.10.2020
No-SIMS 5483 Dated:- 15.10.2020

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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Friday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over south Gujarat, Saurashtra & Kutch and Konkan & Goa and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	34.9	26.3	Kozhikode	—	31.6...	24.4
Ahmedabad	—	37.4	27.7	Kurnool	—	31.1...	23.3
Aizawl	—	29.8	19.8	Lucknow	—	36.6...	22.6
Allahabad	—	36.5	24.0	Madurai	—	36.8...	25.2
Bangalore	—	26.8	19.2	Mangaluru	14.1...	27.3...	23.1
Bhopal	—	33.4	24.0	Mumbai	86.5...	31.1...	24.5
Bhubaneswar	4.2	29.1	24.9	Mysuru	—	29.0...	20.4
Chandigarh	—	35.0	19.4	New Delhi	—	34.8...	20.4
Chennai	0.2	36.1	26.7	Patna	3.5...	35.2...	25.4
Coimbatore	—	33.0	22.8	Pond Blair	43.4...	25.8...	23.3
Dehradoon	—	32.8	19.2	Puducherry	—	36.2...	24.8
Gangtok	—	23.4	15.6	Pune	125.7...	27.7...	22.3
Goa	8.6	27.6	22.8	Raipur	11.3...	31.1...	24.4
Guwahati	—	35.8	25.6	Ranchi	—	32.2...	22.1
Hubballi	—	25.0	21.0	Shillong	10.4...	25.3...	17.1
Hyderabad	21.9	29.2	22.0	Shimla	—	25.2...	16.1
Imphal	—	31.2	18.1	Srinagar	—	24.9...	6.4
Jaipur	—	34.4	25.6	Thiruvananthapuram	16.9...	30.4...	24.2
Kochi	4.6	30.2	24.6	Tiruchi	—	37.1...	24.3
Kohima	—	27.0	17.5	Vijayawada	6.2...	32.2...	22.1
Kolkata	—	35.4	26.9	Visakhapatnam	4.5...	29.5...	26.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m. Meert, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 359 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 21.

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES **SO₂** **NO_x** **CO** **PM_{2.5}** **PM₁₀** **CODE**

Ahmedabad ... 40 .82 .25 .150 .123 ...

Bangalore ... 15 .21 ... 91 .81 ...

Chennai6 .17 .55 ... 58 ...

Delhi ... 100 .170 ... 298 .316 ...

Hyderabad ... 5 .52 ... 12 .50 ... 46 ...

Kolkata ... 9 .13 ... 38 ...

Lucknow ... 7 .19 ... 166 .126 ... 52 ...

Mumbai ... 6 .32 ... 116 .65 ... 80 ...

Pune ... — ... — ... —

Visakhapatnam ... 36 ... —

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.

PM_{2.5} & 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

Heavy rain claims 27 lives in Solapur, Sangli, Pune districts

Chief Minister asks State administration, Army, Navy, Air Force to be on high alert

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUNE

At least 27 people have died in rain-related incidents in Solapur, Sangli and Pune districts of western Maharashtra, officials said on Thursday. Over 20,000 people were evacuated to safer places in these three districts. Mumbai too witnessed waterlogging after overnight rains on Thursday.

"A total of 27 people have died due to rain-related incidents in Solapur, Sangli and Pune districts since Wednesday. Fourteen casualties are from Solapur district, nine from Sangli and four from Pune district," said an official from the Pune Divisional Commissioner's office.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) began rescue work in Pandharpur, where six people died in wall collapse on Wednesday, while over 6,000 people from 500 families were evacuated in Solapur.

In Pune, the police retrieved three bodies, including that of a woman, after four people on two two-wheelers were washed away in Daund taluk. Two NDRF teams stationed in Maval taluk have been deployed for rescue and rehabilitation efforts. While one team reached Pandharpur, the other was pressed into action in Latur in Marathwada.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray chaired a meeting to take a review of the flood situation and asked the State administration, Army, Navy and Air Force to be on high alert to tackle any emergency in parts of western Maharashtra and Marathwada.

In a statement, the Chief Minister's Office said, "NDRF teams have been stationed in Osmanabad, Solapur, Pand-



Rough ride: A bus trudges through the waterlogged Karad-Vita highway following heavy rain, in Karad on Thursday. ■ PTI

harpur and Baramati." The Chief Minister asked the administration to avoid loss of life, property and agriculture and expeditiously carry out assessment of the losses caused by the rains. He also directed the local administration to provide financial aid to the kin of those who lost their lives in the wall collapse in Pandharpur.

Relentless overnight rain led to massive property damage in Solapur and Pune districts, with thousands of villagers marooned by rising floodwaters in rural Solapur. Rising levels of Sina river have affected residents in at least 100 villages in Madha and Mohol talukas in Solapur, with several livestock being washed away by the floodwaters. The Vakav village was entirely cut-off from the rest of the district by the swollen waters of Sina river.

In Pune, overnight showers caused damage to property in the city with furious rainwaters mangling scores of two-wheelers parked in the open. In Baramati in rural Pune, a flood-like situation prevails as several residents have moved to higher grounds for safety. The rains

evacuated from their homes.

Two lakh cusecs of water were discharged from Ujjani dam since 10 p.m. last night.

With rains providing a temporary respite to Solapur in the morning, the discharge has been reduced to one lakh cusecs. The rains have compelled authorities to shut traffic on Pune-Solapur road, as well as roads connecting Solapur to other districts like Bijapur in neighbouring Karnataka.

Intense and continuous showers saw an alarming rise in the water levels of all major rivers in western Maharashtra: the Panchganga in Kolhapur rose by seven feet, owing to massive rainfall throughout Wednesday night, while the Krishna river level in Sangli has risen by five feet in just three hours. All main roads in Sangli have been closed for traffic as a precautionary measure.

In Pune, overnight showers caused damage to property in the city with furious rainwaters mangling scores of two-wheelers parked in the open. In Baramati in rural Pune, a flood-like situation prevails as several residents have moved to higher grounds for safety. The rains

had led the Savitribai Phule Pune University to postpone the final year examinations scheduled for Thursday.

As per a notification put up on the varsity's website, authorities said it was postponing the online and offline exams given the flood-like situation and the fact that the civic administration had issued a cyclone and heavy rainfall alert. They said the revised schedule would be announced soon.

In Pune city, Katraj-Sinhagad Road, Sahakarnagar and Shivajinagar areas were badly hit with water entering houses, including Patil hospital on Sinhagad road.

PMC to blame, says Sule Baramati MP and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Supriya Sule visited the worst-hit areas in Katraj in Pune city later in the day. Hitting out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) controlled-Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), Ms. Sule said it was responsible for the deplorable state of the city's public works. She said, "A similar situation occurred last year in which more than 20 people lost their lives owing to intense bouts of rain. But it appears that the PMC has not grown any wiser and is not expending sufficient funds to improve the city's anti-rain infrastructure."

BJP leader and Pune Mayor Murli Darbar Mohol said that no one ought to play politics over natural calamities. He said, "The BJP has only been in power for the last three years in the PMC. It was the NCP and Congress who were in power for the past two decades in the civic body. So, why weren't any repairs carried out then?"

(With PTI inputs)

Normal OPD services to resume in Punjab

CM warns against any complacency

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

With COVID-19 cases declining in Punjab, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday ordered resumption of normal Out Patient Department (OPD) services and elective surgeries, but warned against any complacency given the projections of a possible second wave of the pandemic.

The Chief Minister has also allowed opening of government schools from October 19 after due sanitization and disinfection procedures, and with clear SOPs mandating parents' consent as well as ceiling on number of students and hours of operation.

Expressing concern over

warnings by medical experts of the possibility of the second wave hitting the State during the festival season or during the winter months, Captain Amarinder directed the concerned departments to take all steps to ensure that things remain under control.

Review meeting

The Chief Minister, who was chairing a virtual review meeting on COVID-19 situation, also asked the departments to ensure that the medical staff is kept motivated and all vacancies are filled up immediately so that normal OPD services and elective surgeries can be carried out seamlessly amid the pandemic situation.

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

The Bhind police have launched an initiative to stamp bullets with quick response (QR) codes which will help in tracing them back to the firearm, in a bid to curb gun violence.

The police had exhorted nearly 22,000 firearms licensees of the district to come forward to get casings of bullets printed with the code ahead of the by-election, as part of the country's

first such initiative, said Superintendent of Police Manoj Kumar.

In the past five years, the district had witnessed around 150 murders, most committed using illegal weapons. "Hardcore criminals procure country weapons and bullets from different locations, but others buy a country pistol and use factory-made bullets. My effort is to reduce gun violence, even if by 10%," Mr. Kumar added.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, TRANSMISSION LINE MAINTENANCE DIVISION-VIII, JKPTCL, AMBEDKHAR CHOWK, RAILWAY ROAD, JAMMU

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(SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER)

e-NIT NO: TLMD-VIII/J/13 OF 2020-21 DATED: 12/10/2020

The Executive Engineer, Transmission Lines Maintenance Division-VIII, JKPTCL, Jammu, J&K for and on behalf of the Managing Director, JKPTCL Transmission, J&K invites on line e-bids from experienced Contractors / Companies / Firms for Strengthening of 132KV D/C Rajouri Draba Transmission Line by way of Repairing of Revetment and Earth Filling of the plate form at Tower Location No. 98 situated at Dera Gali area, District Poonch, J&K.

Bidders are advised to study the bidding Document carefully. Submission of e-bid against this Standard Bidding Document (SBD) shall be deemed to have been done after careful study and examination of the procedures, terms and conditions of the standard bidding document with full understanding of its implications. The tender document is available at website <http://jkttenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may download the e-bid document, submit their e-bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below:

Scope Of The Work	Estimated Cost (In lacs)	Earliest Money (Rs.)	Cost Of Tender Documents
Strengthening of 132KV D/C Rajouri Draba Transmission Line by way of Repairing of Revetment and Earth Filling of the plate form at Tower Location No. 98 situated at Dera Gali area, District Poonch, J&K.	5.00 (Five lacs only)	10000.00 (Ten thousand only)	Rs. 1000/- (Rupees one thousand only) in the shape of non-refundable bank draft drawn in favour of Executive Engineer, TLMD-VIII, JKPTCL, Jammu, J&K.
A date & Time of downloading of Standard Bidding Document			The Standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over http://jkttenders.gov.in from 13-10-2020 (10:00 AM onwards)
B Tender Document Sale and Download end date		21/10/2020 at 4:00 PM	Sd- Executive Engineer, TLMD-VIII, JKPTCL, Jammu.

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Dealing with a deluge

As floods swamp Hyderabad, the focus is on the inadequacy of drainage infrastructure

A deep monsoon depression over the west central Bay of Bengal, which weakened as it moved over Telangana, resulted in downpours over several districts in the State, severely affecting the city of Hyderabad as well. On October 13, the monthly average rainfall of Hyderabad for October (103.6 mm according to Skymet) was surpassed on a single day when 192 mm of rain fell. According to the India Meteorological Department, this is the highest rainfall for October recorded in Telangana's capital since 1903. Such a high intensity downpour in a short span is bound to affect a densely populated urban area, and Hyderabad was no exception. At least 24 people were killed and several localities submerged and isolated following incessant rains and the overflowing of the city's lakes. Other districts were badly affected too: roads damaged and irrigation tanks breached. The monsoon storm that never became a cyclone, has managed to cross the east (Andhra Pradesh) and west coasts (north Karnataka and Maharashtra) of India. This is rare and a rain-related disaster event that is difficult to plan for. Floods and deluges, like any other disaster, disproportionately affect the poor. Disaster management agencies have managed to limit the impact of the disaster as many of those marooned in submerged areas and flooded houses were rescued. But the extent of the damage and the turmoil show a lack of preparation and disaster mitigation, a problem that plagues most urban centres in the country.

Much of the damage was due to the overflowing of lakes – in particular, the Hussain Sagar Lake in the middle of the city and the breaching of storm water drains. Construction over lake beds and encroachments of drainage channels have been identified as problems that have exacerbated flooding and inundation in the city in the past (the deluge in August 2000, for example). But the little that has been done to unblock existing storm drains over the last decade has not been enough to handle the requirements of the city, which still depends upon an antiquated sewerage and drainage system. Hyderabad urgently needs to expand and remodel its drainage system. Besides lakes and canals, wetlands and watersheds play a vital role in absorbing excess rainfall, but regrettably, rapid urbanisation in the twin cities has resulted in the loss of a large portion of the wetlands. An analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment in 2016 revealed that 3,245 hectares of water bodies were lost in Hyderabad between 1989 and 2001. In the long term, the effects of flooding due to deluges can only be mitigated if urban planners take into account the hydro-geology of cities and ensure that construction, development and land occupation do not take place in a way that reduces the area of wetlands.

Showdown in Thailand

The protests are unlikely to die down without a reversal of recent anti-democratic steps

The Thai government's decision to issue an emergency decree, banning public gatherings and censoring the media, demonstrates both its acknowledgement of the seriousness of the challenge it is facing in the wake of months-long street protests and its refusal to address the actual problems. The protests, from July, by students against the authoritarian government of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha have since grown into a large political movement, raising challenges for the government and also to the monarchy, an institution that has historically been protected from public criticism by tough *lèse-majesté* laws. Mr. Prayuth, who captured power in 2014 through a military coup, won a disputed election last year. Backed by the King, he has tightened his grip on power and cracked down on dissent. In 2017, a new Constitution saw democracy being eroded further. This gradual erosion of political rights, along with the outbreak of COVID-19 and its related economic woes, triggered the protests. The protesters have earned the support of sections of society. They now call for the Prime Minister's resignation, free and fair elections, a new Constitution that guarantees democratic rights, and want the powers of the monarchy clipped. The declaration of the emergency decree comes a day after protesters raised the three-finger salute, a symbol of resistance taken from *The Hunger Games* trilogy, at a royal motorcade.

Under the new rules, the authorities have banned the gathering of five or more people and restricted the publication of news "that could create fear". They can also prohibit people from entering "any area they designate". Clearly, the government has granted itself sweeping powers and wants to crack down on the protests. But this could have the opposite impact. That the students continued their agitation despite government pressure and have started questioning even the monarchy shows their resolve. The Thai monarchy, which lost absolute powers in the 1932 revolution, continued to maintain its high influence in the government and god-like status in society. Now, the protesters are openly challenging the powers of King Vajiralongkorn, who ascended the throne in 2016 after the death of his father, Bhumibol Adulyadej. The new King, who is mostly in Europe, and Mr. Prayuth, have become symbols of extravagance and oppression for the protesters, who have dismissed the emergency decree, saying the movement has gone past the point of no-return, and in turn setting the stage for a showdown with the police. In the past, authorities had used brutal force to suppress protests. In 1976, the police and right-wing thugs massacred protesters in Thammasat University, Bangkok. Mr. Prayuth and his Generals should ask themselves whether they should take matters to such a dangerous turn or reach out to the protesters, seeking a solution to the crisis.

The message in the Peace Nobel – multilateralism

That the pandemic could also be impacting the anti-poverty fight is another reason why the world needs full solidarity



SHYAM SARAN

It is a paradox that precisely at a time when the salience of cross-national and global challenges has significantly increased, nation states are less willing to cooperate and collaborate in tackling them. COVID-19 recognises no national or regional boundaries as it rages across the world. One would have expected that countries, particularly those with technological and financial capabilities, would agree to pool their resources together to work on an effective and affordable anti-virus vaccine. Instead, there are several parallel national efforts under way even as the World Health Organization (WHO) has put together a Covax alliance for the same purpose. There is a competitive compulsion at work which may be appropriate in economic and commercial domains. When the lives of people are at stake, active collaboration would have enhanced our collective ability to overcome what has become a public health-cum-economic crisis. But we live in an era when nationalist urges, fuelled by a political opportunism, diminish the appeal of international cooperation. As pointed out by Nicholas Eberstadt of The National Bureau of Asian Research, "The post-pandemic world will have no choice but to contend at last with a problem long in the making: the awful dilemma of global integration without solidarity."

Looming food crisis

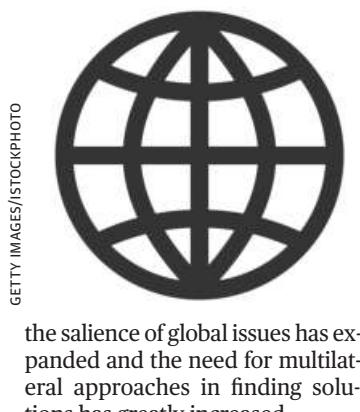
This year's Nobel Peace Prize to the World Food Programme (WFP) is a recognition of its role in combating hunger and malnutrition across the developing world. But the WFP's achievement are modest, not because it is an inefficient

institution, but because it is perennially under-funded. But more important is the message which this award is sending to the world – that we need multilateralism as an expression of international solidarity. It is also a warning that the novel coronavirus pandemic is reversing the substantial gains made in the fight against poverty.

According to the WFP, 132 million more people could become malnourished as a consequence of the pandemic. To the 690 million people who go to bed each night on an empty stomach, perhaps another 100 million or more will be added. This counts for a major world-wide catastrophe and unless the conscience of the world is aroused, we will be condemning vast pools of humanity to living in wretchedness and deprivation. The Nobel Prize to the WFP will hopefully nudge our collective conscience to come together and relieve this looming humanitarian crisis.

The UN at 75 is still important

The United Nations is at the centre of multilateral institutions and processes. It is celebrating the 75th anniversary of its founding. While it is a pale shadow of the vision with which it was invested at its founding, nevertheless it has kept alive the notion of international solidarity and cooperation. If it has become increasingly marginal in mobilising international responses to global challenges, the fault lies with its most powerful member countries. They have deprived the UN of resources. They have resisted efforts to institute long overdue reforms; 75 years on, its structure no longer reflects the changes in power equations that have taken place. It is anachronistic that a country such as India continues to be denied permanent membership of the Security Council. And yet despite these disabilities, the UN is now an essential part of the fabric of international relations; its role has become even more important precisely because



the salience of global issues has expanded and the need for multilateral approaches in finding solutions has greatly increased.

India has been a consistent advocate of multilateralism and Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said: "India firmly believes that the path to achieve sustainable peace and prosperity is through multilateralism. As children of Planet Earth we must join hands to address our common challenges and achieve our common goals."

Institutions and problems

There is a network of multilateral institutions, several as part of the UN system. Others are inter-governmental in nature; still others may be non-governmental of a hybrid character. This is a network which enables governance in areas which require coordination among nation states and set norms to regulate the behaviour of states so as to avoid conflict and to ensure both equitable burden sharing and, equally, a fair distribution of benefits. This network continues to function and deliver benefits to participating states despite the less than propitious international environment. However, going forward, there are more complex challenges which would require a different mind-set and patterns of behaviour.

While there are multilateral institutions they have become platforms for contestations among their member states. There is recognition of the need to cooperate but this is seen as compulsion rather than desirable. When parti-

cipating in multilateral negotiations, whether at the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, or later at multilateral negotiations on climate change in the run-up to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009, my brief would be the same as other country representatives – concede as little as possible, and extract as much as you can. If all delegations work on the same brief, is it any wonder that even a supposedly "successful" outcome is invariably the least common denominator? This may be appropriate when dealing with trade or security matters but not in tackling global challenges such as climate change or the current pandemic.

Globalisation here to stay

Given the scale, urgency and seriousness of the challenges we confront, we need maximal, not minimal, responses. The dynamics of negotiations and their outcomes would dramatically change if delegations came with a brief to contribute as much as possible within the limitation of resources and demand the minimum in terms of assessed needs. This is the international solidarity which a globalised world requires to handle the dense interconnections that bind us.

Globalisation may have stalled, but as we become increasingly digitised, there will be more, not less, globalisation. The pandemic has triggered galloping globalisation in the digital economy. Globalisation is driven by technology and as long as technology remains the key driver of economic growth, there is no escape from globalisation.

Don't we need to first focus on getting our domestic imperatives right and then think of international cooperation? In the contemporary world, the line separating the domestic from the external has become increasingly blurred. In tackling domestic challenges deeper external engagement is often indispensable. This is certainly

true of climate change. Even if India's carbon emissions became zero tomorrow, climate change would continue to affect us if others do not also reduce their emissions. The pandemic originated in a third country, but soon raged across national borders. If there had been a robust and truly global early warning system, perhaps it could have been contained.

The thread in challenges

When one speaks of the rising salience of cross-national issues we must also take into account the inter-connectedness among various challenges. For example, food, energy and water security are inter-linked with strong feedback loops. Enhancing food security may lead to diminished water and energy security. It may also have collateral impact on health security. Raising crop yields with current agricultural strategies means higher incremental use of chemical fertilizers and toxic pesticides. India's unprotected farmers are exposed to serious health risks as a result and often get bankrupted not due to crop failure but debilitating health costs. It is in recognition of these inter-connections that the international community agreed on a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are cross-domain but also cross-national in character, and hence demand greater multilateral cooperation in order to succeed.

Finally, this also points to the need for a more democratic world order since lack of cooperation from even a single state may frustrate success in tackling a global challenge. A fresh pandemic may erupt in any remote corner of the world and spread throughout the globe. Prevention cannot be achieved through coercion, only through cooperation. It is only multilateralism that makes this possible.

Shyam Saran is a former Foreign Secretary and Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research

The road to zero hunger by 2030

Resilient food systems will have to be built back as the world is not on track to achieve global targets

TOMIO SHICHIRI, RASHA OMAR & BISHOW PARAJULI

Food is the essence of life and the bedrock of our cultures and communities. It can be a powerful means to bring people together to grow, nourish and sustain the planet. The exceptional circumstances we have all been living in through 2020 underscore this – not only does COVID-19 pose a threat to food security and agricultural livelihoods, it compounds the threats already faced by 690 million people around the world. This World Food Day, we – the food agencies of the United Nations (UN) – pledge to work together to end hunger, eradicate food insecurity and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2.

There is much to be done. While we can all be proud of the progress we have made – for instance, agricultural productivity has improved significantly in recent decades – yet sadly, more than two billion people globally still lack access to sufficient, nutritious and safe food. Projections show that the world is not on track to achieve zero hunger by 2030, or to meet global nutrition targets.

India has gone from being a net importer to a net exporter of food grains. This strength has been evident through the pandemic. Central and State governments were able to distribute around 23 million tonnes from India's large domestic food grain reserves in three months (April to June) through the Public Distribution System, providing much-needed

emergency assistance to families around the country. The government also successfully mobilised food rations for 820 million people from April to November 2020, including finding alternate solutions to provide food rations to 90 million schoolchildren. Throughout the national lockdown imposed in March, there were efforts to remove bottlenecks in the food supply chain due to restrictions on movements, and to ensure that agricultural activities weren't disrupted. Thanks to these measures, agriculture grew at 3.4% during the first quarter this financial year and the area cultivated this *kharif* exceeded 110 million hectares. This is a major achievement.

Malnutrition, anaemia

But the focus on food during the COVID-19 containment measures has also brought out the multi-dimensionality of India's food challenges – not least those centred around malnutrition and climate change. Even as malnutrition in India has notably declined over the past decade, the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey 2016-18 revealed that over 40 million children are chronically malnourished, and more than half of Indian women aged 15-49 years are anaemic. Initiatives such as the Integrated Child Development Services – which provides cooked meals and take-home rations to 100 million children under the age of six, as well as to pregnant and lactating mothers – and the mid-day meal programme, are however stellar examples of how the government is working to fix these



challenges.

Climate change continues to be a real and potent threat to agrobiodiversity, which will impact everything from productivity to livelihoods across food and farm systems. Though India is dealing innovatively with climate change – for example, through the development of drought and flood tolerant seed varieties, weather-based agricultural advisories, promotion of millets, and small-scale irrigation – this year, we saw how climate-related shocks made it difficult for farmers to deal with pest and locust attacks, as well as floods and cyclones. Intensified food production systems with excessive use of chemicals and unsustainable farming practices cause soil degradation, fast depletion of groundwater table and rapid loss of agrobiodiversity. These challenges multiply with an increase in fragmentation of landholdings. In India, more than 86% farmers have less than two hectares of land contributing around 60% of the total food grain production and over half the country's fruits and vegetables.

All this points to two undeniable imperatives: the way we produce food must change through agroecology and sustainable pro-

duction practices in agriculture and allied sectors; and second, we must stop the waste – one-third of the food we produce is wasted. That is why the UN, and our three agencies – the FAO (The Food and Agriculture Organization), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) and WFP (The World Food Programme) – are committed to working with government, civil society, farmers' organisations and the private sector to build sustainable food systems.

Supporting India

During the COVID-19-precipitated lockdown, the FAO, IFAD and the WFP worked in close coordination to support the Government of India's Empowered Group 5 on facilitating supply chain and logistics management, so necessary items such as food and medicines were available. The agencies provided daily updates on the real-time situation on the ground, collating challenges/red flags, dynamic anecdotal data and good practices from their sources in the field. This prompted swift action in terms of resolving bottlenecks and ensured progress on addressing red flag issues.

What is a food system? It is a framework that includes every aspect of feeding and nourishing people: from growing, harvesting and processing to packaging, transporting, marketing and consuming food. To be sustainable, a food system must provide enough nutritious food for all without compromising feeding future generations.

As countries begin to develop

and implement COVID-19 recovery plans, it is also an opportunity to adopt innovative solutions based on scientific evidence so they can build back better and make food systems more resilient and sustainable. Today, with the FAO celebrating 75 years of fighting hunger in over 130 countries, IFAD becoming the first UN agency to receive a credit rating, and the WFP being awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace this year, we are more committed – and better prepared – than ever to together develop solutions with the government, civil society and private sector.

Working in concert

That is why this World Food Day (October 16), we call for global solidarity to help all populations, and especially the most vulnerable, to recover from the crisis, and to make food systems more resilient and robust. Everybody – governments, the private sector, civil society and local communities – has a role to play in transforming our food systems so they can withstand increasing volatility and climate shocks, deliver affordable and sustainable healthy diets for all, and provide decent livelihoods for food chain workers. We must all work in concert to make sure that our food systems nourish a growing population and sustain the planet, together.

Tomio Shichiri is the FAO Representative in India; Rasha Omar is Country Director, IFAD India, and Bishow Parajuli is Representative and Country Director, WFP India. The views expressed are personal

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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.

Hyderabad blues

The recent heavy rains in Hyderabad have shown up the gaps in planning by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. It is evident that there is unplanned expansion of this great city, with many illegal constructions on numerous lake beds. As a resident and a member of a family that has lived here for three generations, we are well aware of how it used to be in the past – as a place surrounded by lakes and rock features. Most of these have gradually

vanished due to greedy and thoughtless expansion.

Nature is bound to retaliate.

T. KAILASH DITYA,
Hyderabad

■ There could be a number of reasons behind the calamity in Hyderabad – climatic changes, improper storm water drainage, illegal constructions on river beds and catchment areas. Urban flooding is becoming one of the biggest problems in the world. Since 2000, there have been extreme events in Ahmedabad, Delhi, Jamshedpur, Mumbai,

Kolkata and Chennai. The

National Disaster

Management Authority

released a 190-page book

with guidelines, called

National Disaster

Management Guidelines - Management of Urban Flooding, but the question is,

how many are following it?

There needs to be a proper stormwater drain system in all our cities.

RAVI TEJA KATHURIPALLI,
Hyderabad

Gentleman captain
Much respected John Reid was a legend of his times, as

the iconic captain and all-rounder of the New Zealand team touring India in 1964-65 ('Sport' page – 'In Brief', "New Zealand great John Reid passes away", October 15). The team had set itself high standards in the four tests it played. Having drawn the first three tests, the fourth was played at Feroz Shah Kotla, a four-day affair. India needed 70 runs to win on the last day (fourth day) in their second knock when overnight rain almost ruled out play. John Reid along with the ground staff helped drain the water and roll the

ground – the picture was published in *The Hindu*. India won the Test and the series. This is not to be confused with a similar act by captain Graham Dowling, in 1969 in Hyderabad, who also worked with the ground staff to help drain the wicket of water. But the situation was different, in fact the opposite. The Kiwis were in a winning position on the last day. The groundsmen and curator saw to it that the match ended in a draw by going slow in draining the water. There were no match referees then. Today, such a thing cannot happen.

A.V. NARAYAN,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

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Should the government regulate TRPs?

PARLEY

Though the government can facilitate the process, it should be the industry that regulates TRPs

Last week, the Mumbai Police said that a TRP (Target Rating Points) racket involving three news channels had been busted. Since then, the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), which monitors the TRPs, has suspended ratings of news channels for three months. The alleged scam has once again highlighted the need for regulation. Television channels are driven by TRPs and it is viewership that drives their business. In a conversation moderated by Anuradha Raman, S.Y. Quraishi and Sashi Kumar discuss how TRPs are manipulated and what could be the solution. Edited excerpts:

Mr. Quraishi, you wrote recently that manipulating TRPs is not only a financial scam but also morally and ethically wrong. Could you elaborate on that?

S.Y. Quraishi: Viewership generates advertisement spending of nearly ₹27,000 crore. Now, every channel from Doordarshan (DD) to the private channels are eyeing the pie. This kitty should be distributed honestly. And that is where the dishonesty comes through TRPs. The financial fraud, which has been highlighted by the Mumbai Police Commissioner, is one aspect. Now because of that cheating, the channels' ratings are getting distorted. That is the other aspect. Channels are spreading a hate narrative which is violative of the fundamental right of the citizen to know the truth through the media. The media has become a source of disinformation. And that is the ethical issue. Both dimensions, legal and ethical, are equally serious. What is now being investigated is the financial fraud, which is good enough. We should get to the bottom of the problem.

Mr. Sashi Kumar, as the founder of Asianet, were you bothered by the menace of TRPs?

Sashi Kumar: Yes, certainly. When you are running a private channel, TRPs are in your face. In the early 1990s, when private channels started, we didn't have people's meters. We didn't have the modern, so-

called sophisticated systems of verifying who was watching what. We had the diary method. You gave diaries to people and found out what they were watching during the week. That was inadequate and the sampling size was also very small. It was an unscientific method, but the only method and we used that. Advertisers used that along with their own common sense and what their people on the ground – agents, retailers, sellers of consumer durables – told them about the claims of a particular channel and the kind of viewership it was talking about.

Today I think it's only a difference of degree, not of kind. We still have the same small sampling size for the huge ecosystem of TV viewership that we were introduced at the beginning. Now, 44,000 homes is the sampling size of BARC. The sample size of Mumbai, which is in the eye of the storm of this TRP fiasco, is only about 2,000 homes, and Mumbai is the biggest TV viewing metropolis in the country. The sample of 2,000 homes is woefully inadequate and distorted. And as Mr. Quraishi said, the problem with this competition for TRPs is that there's a race to the bottom and therefore, you find people insulting each other, insulting people, doing anything to attract attention. We have ample evidence of this, particularly in the context of the Sushant Singh Rajput case and how it was covered. I think this whole TRP dispute is a sequel to that. It's a ratings mindset. This ratings mindset has taken over us.

This is not peculiar to television. If you go to a bookshop these days, there is somebody who has already rated the first top-selling 50 books. There is somebody who's rated the top-selling music. Who's doing this?

There is no transparency in who is rating this. We are therefore limited to choosing from what has already been rated for us. Our intellectual horizons are shrinking, not expanding. And therefore, there's something very distorted in this process of the ratings mindset and television is a good example we have of that.

Would you like to weigh in on what Mr. Quraishi said, which is the right of the people to be informed? That the TRP race is



not just a financial fraud, but also is also morally and ethically wrong?

SK: Certainly. The role of TV news is to create an informed citizenry which makes for a better, more mature democracy. The duty to inform should be an equivalent duty. Is that what we are getting on TV news? That is a big question mark. TRPs can be deceptive. For example, DD is the biggest act in town. And as recently as April-May this year, BARC itself admitted that DD has the highest reach, demographically and geographically, but it doesn't get a proportionate share of the advertising revenue because advertising goes by another calculation, which is your purchasing power. So, the advertiser goes for that segment which has better purchasing power, which is why this small sliver of the English news channels, which incidentally account for less than 1% of total TV viewership, and each of these channels, which will be 0.4% of that 1% TV viewing ecosystem, is fighting for the advertisement pie. So, they need these TRP ratings far more than the entertainment channels. The pie is very small. And so the circus every night on these channels.

The scam, as we are calling it now, is nothing new. AC Nielsen-owned TAM was in the news back in 2003-04 when allegations of viewership being rigged surfaced. TAM was dissolved and BARC took its place. It would seem that nothing has really changed.

SYQ: Yes. People meter is the key to understanding the problem, as the entire system of viewership is based on this. Unfortunately, nobody

Who are the buyers of products for whom advertisers advertise the BMWs? And where are the people meters installed? In poor people's homes. They are the ones who can be bought over by a pressure cooker and a TV set.

S.Y. QURAISHI

seems to know how it works. When I was in DD, we realised that despite 50% of the country being dependent only on terrestrial network, which meant that half of India was watching only DD, TAM showed us as a shareholder of only 2% of the audience. As a result, the advertisement revenue was assigned to only 2%, which was a fraud.

I asked TAM to install a meter on my official TV. The people meter is operated by a remote control with buttons assigned to every member of the family. They are expected to switch on the button when they are watching a channel and switch it off when they step out of the viewing room. Who is going to do this day after day? The technician who had come to install a people meter admitted after some hesitation that they paid the household in kind: a dinner set for one family, a TV set for another, with a request to watch a channel. Who are the buyers of these products for whom advertisers advertise the Mercedes cars and BMWs? And where are the people meters installed? In poor people's homes. They are the ones who can be bought over by a pressure cooker and a TV set. So, despite a socioeconomic classification of households on the lines of ABCD and E, the top three segments from A to C will not install a people meter in their homes for ₹500 and ₹1,000 a

month. To my mind the cheating was inbuilt into the system. The same people meter continues, only the owner has changed from TAM to BARC. Two years ago, there was a similar scam unearthed in Gwalior.

Would we achieve anything if we increased the sample size?

SK: Increasing the sample size is a first step. But equally important is to get the demographic right so that it is truly representative. As I understand it, BARC pays something like ₹100 to ₹200 to households (a month) where the people meters are installed. And so these households obviously have a particular economic status. There's a uniformity about it. They are not representative of the TV viewing public, particularly for an English news channel. It is distorted. It's not just the sampling size. It's the methodology, the quality of sampling, the geographic and demographic spread.

How should the industry be regulated and who should regulate it? BARC viewership ratings haven't really addressed the problem.

SYQ: I had put this question to advertisers in my meeting many years ago. This was in the context of TAM being accused of rigging viewership. Namely, this is your money and all of us are interested in your money. So, what precautions are you taking? They said, we have to go by some statistic, some audience figures. Let me also remind you that before TAM became a monopoly, there used to be INTAM, and every week, they would give diametrically opposite viewership figures. TAM bought over INTAM and said, now instead of two currencies there will be one currency. To my mind this was nothing more than cartelisation. Let there be four or five agencies in the same city. They will come up with different figures. And let us aggregate the figures coming from four or five different agencies. Probably, we will get to the truth.

What is wrong with a single currency? We are talking of one nation, one vote, one GST, etc.

SK: Everybody's vying for the same small sliver of the pie of advertising spend. So, I think it's a good idea to

have checks and balances, to have, say, competing agencies which are professional, so that the industry can then decide which agencies' figures it wants to follow. There should be some oversight too. For instance, in 2017 BARC had set up an independent disciplinary committee, headed by the retired judge, Justice Mukul Mudgal. Over the next two years, they got about 18 to 20 cases referred to that committee. So, there should be also an oversight committee with teeth. It's important because the industry is going through a big shift. Already, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has notified a new tariff order where customers can choose channels they want to watch. The people meters have not adapted to reflect these big shifts that have taken place. And if it's not up to date, it gets distorted. This case of rigging households really affects the medium, smaller players, and the regional media players. I think it makes for a different kind of cartelisation through a corrupt mode. Therefore, these measures must come in to correct the situation. Otherwise, the losers are not just the advertisers. The losers are also the consumers because consumers have a right to be informed. There's a larger public interest in this and it's not just something that the industry can incessantly decide for itself.

Should the government get into the business of regulation?

SK: I wouldn't say the government should step into any such role to regulate the media. It has to be an autonomous body. It has to be the industry, as it's in the interest of those who are spending ₹25,000 crore or ₹27,000 crore on advertising to make sure that it is cost effective.

SYQ: There's no question of government regulation, but at the same time, the government can facilitate the process. Maybe the government can pass a law that any violation will face a legal action, criminal action. The government can play an honest broker, but it has to be industry run, it has to be self-regulation and at the same time an independent regulation. Can't the industry come up with a good, technically foolproof solution? They only have to sit together and apply their mind.



S.Y. Quraishi
is former Chief Election Commissioner and former Director General of Doordarshan



Sashi Kumar
is the founder and editor in chief of Asiaville, a digital multimedia platform. He was also the founder of Asianet television channel



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

Bollywood's moment of reckoning?

The industry has shown a united front because its interests are being compromised

KUNAL RAY

of these shows turned to some big names, their apparently amorous lifestyle and purported villainy.

It is easy to attribute qualities to the film industry about which very little is known. Even the little we do know about the lives of filmstars and the rumours and gossip pertaining to their films is often the handiwork of their PR machinery for visibility of their films. Hindi cinema by itself is responsible for furthering the myth about the industry. It needs more transparency in its dealings to counter such an image.

Others joined the nepotism debate blaming certain industry children, or 'star kids', for being favoured and privileged over outsiders. The campaign was relentless and malicious.

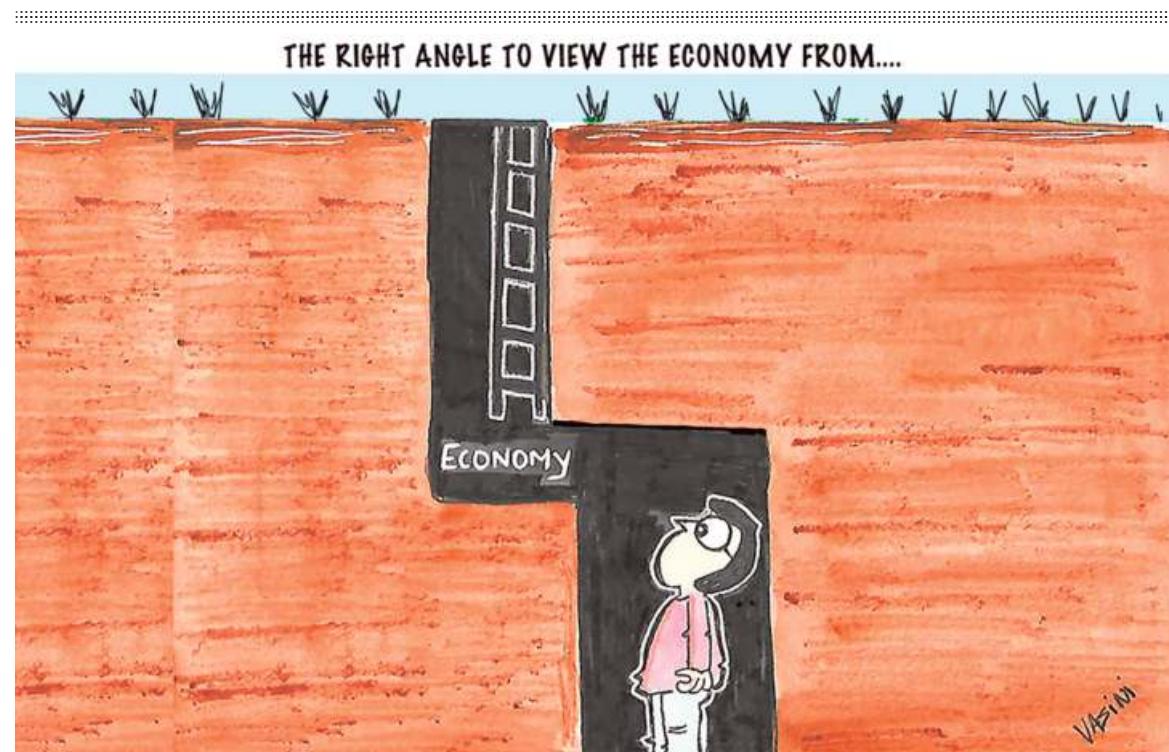
Perhaps there's no antecedent to an event like this in the history of independent India when an entire industry with enormous soft power has been vilified by some news channels to serve their narrow gains. Also Bollywood is a big draw to win the TRP race. Unsuspecting audiences believe that the news channels are on the path of satyagraha to perform an act of cleansing.

Reason for protest

Bollywood's collective action to expose the fake media trial is welcome. The industry has shown a united front because its interests are being compromised. The news campaign might have an effect on the movie business leading to the boycott of certain films. This collective outburst shouldn't be misconstrued as a unified condemnation of the quality and health of television news in the country. It is a protest to ensure that Bollywood's economic interests aren't undermined.

Further action should lead to boycott of film awards and magazines that belong to the same media conglomerate that also owns one of these news channels engaged in spewing venom against the industry. While there may not be a radical shift in Bollywood, we certainly hope that this intervention will help to reduce the toxicity of some news channels and their anchors if not obliterate it.

Kunal Ray teaches literary and cultural studies at FLAME University, Pune



NOTEBOOK

The importance of building trust

Being unprepared for an assignment can land a journalist in big trouble

SUMIT BHATTACHARJEE

The district of Visakhapatnam, and especially the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha border region, is densely forested and filled with water bodies. As a result, it is a difficult one to traverse. There is no access to these areas; only long treks can get you there. There is no cell phone connectivity in most parts of the 11 Adivasi mandals of the district. Malaria is a common disease in these areas and getting drinking water is a big challenge. Without gaining the trust of the Adivasis, a journalist covering the Maoist problem in the region can not only get lost easily in the jungle but also fall sick.

The Adivasis, who are often caught between the police and the Maoists, are naturally suspicious of questions and conversations. They wonder whether people want to in-

terview them are actually officers from the Intelligence Wing of the police who have come to gather information about the 'Anas' (elder brothers, as the Maoists are called), or are Maoists who have come to recruit them. If journalists pose questions, they pose as many in return. They only open up once they are satisfied that the journalist is neither a police officer nor a Maoist.

Some years ago, during a visit to Ramaguda, the photographer and I did not do our homework of networking with local reporters. We were covering a fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Forum after an encounter between the elite anti-Naxal force of Andhra Pradesh, the Greyhounds, and the Maoists. The encounter took place on October 24, 2016 at Ramaguda, a remote village. More than 30 Maoists, including

some top leaders, were killed in the incident.

We visited the site about four days after the encounter. We travelled till a village called Bejjangi in a vehicle after which we set out on foot to the site. We made our way through the forest for two hours until we finally came across a man carrying firewood. We asked him about the encounter site. He did not understand our tongue and we did not comprehend his. But he understood our query from our gestures. He looked at us suspiciously and then gave us some directions.

We learnt over the next couple of hours how unprepared we were. The man who had sized us up had directed us the wrong way. We wandered about aimlessly in the heat until we reached an Adivasi hamlet. We were exhausted. We sat down in the village square and asked for

some water, though we had brought bottles of water with us. Past experience had taught us that there is no better way of gaining the confidence of the Adivasis than sitting cross-legged on the porch of their homes, requesting them for some water and food, and chatting for a while.

We finally got our bearings right, but only after trekking for about 10 km in the wrong direction. Though the 15-km distance from Bejjangi to Ramaguda that day stretched to 25 km, we reached the spot and completed our work. But we learnt an important lesson that day: always reach villages a day earlier if you're on an assignment, interact a lot with the locals, and build trust. Only trust can yield good reports. And only through trust can you avoid getting lost in difficult, unfamiliar terrain.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 16, 1970

Call to UN to develop new vision

The United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant, yesterday [October 15, United Nations], said that the United Nations had done well in its first 25 years – but not well enough. In an anniversary message, he said: "It is unforgivable that so many problems from the past are still with us, absorbing vast energies and resources desperately needed for nobler purposes". He cited the "horrid and futile armaments race", remnants of colonialism, racism and violations of human rights, power and domination instead of fraternal coexistence, China's exclusion from the U.N. extension of ideological domains, and the local conflicts that plagued the world. "It is time for governments to make a fresh start and to lift themselves again to the same high level, if not a higher level, of vision and determination as that of the authors of the Charter". "We must give the Charter a real chance at least. We must pass from words to deeds. We must pass from rights to obligations. We must pass from self interest to mutual interest. We must pass from partial peace to total peace", U Thant said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 16, 1920

Mr. Pennington's letter to Mr. Gandhi

The following letter sent by Mr. J.B. Pennington, I.C.S. (Retd.) to Mr. Gandhi is published in "Young India" – Dear Sir, I do not like your scheme for "boycott" the Government of India under what seems to be the somewhat less offensive name of "Non-Co-operation"; but I have always given you credit for a genuine desire to carry out revolution of peaceful means and am astonished at the violence of the language you use in describing General Dyer on page 4 of your issue of the 14th July last. You begin by saying that he is "by no means the worst 'offender'", and so far I am inclined to agree, though as there has been no proper trial of anyone it is impossible to apportion their guilt; but then you say "his brutality is unmistakable", "his object and unsoldierlike cowardice is apparent," he has called an "unarmed crowd" of men and children – mostly holiday makers – a rebel army." You must excuse me for saying that all this is mere rhetoric unsupported by any proof, even where proof was possible. To begin with neither you nor I were present at the Jallianwala Bagh on that dreadful day-dreadful especially for General Dyer for whom you show no sympathy -, and therefore cannot know for certain whether the crowd was or was not 'unarmed'.

CM YK

FROM PAGE ONE

GST: Centre to borrow and lend to States

"This is a wise, timely and non-disruptive move from the Centre, especially when some States were planning to move the Supreme Court," said N.R. Bhanumurthy, Vice-Chancellor, Bengaluru Ambedkar School of Economics University. "It will offer a big breather to States, particularly those that have high fiscal deficits and would have had to pay higher rates if they approached the market," he said.

In its original proposal put up at the 41st GST Council meeting in August, the Centre had said the shortfall on account of GST implementation would be borrowed by States through the issue of debt under a Special Window coordinated by the Finance Ministry. "The GOI will endeavour to keep the cost at or close to the G-sec (government security) yield, and in the event of the cost being higher, will bear the margin between G-secs and average of State Development Loan yields up to 0.5% through a subsidy," it added.

Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac said on Twitter: "I welcome the new announcement that Centre will borrow through special window and provide back to back loans to States in lieu of Compensation".

"Provide full compensation payment of ₹2.3 lakh crore this year itself. Since under the new arrangement additional borrowing does not affect the fiscal deficit of the Centre, why should it hesitate to borrow ₹1.7 lakh crore instead of the present offer of ₹1.1 lakh crore?" he asked in another tweet.

SC may ask HC to oversee Hathras probe by CBI

The State government and the Director General of Police (DGP) left it to the wisdom of the court to decide which court should supervise the probe, saying their only purpose is to see justice in the case.

"Do not be concerned... State government has raised no objections. There should not be any shadow of doubt. The CBI took over the case on October 10 and the investigation is on," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the government, submitted.

Mr. Mehta only objected to a plea that the charge sheet in the case should be filed in Delhi. He said the final report ought to be filed in the jurisdictional court as per the law. The DGP, to a plea that CRPF personnel and not the State police should form the security net around the victim's family and witnesses, left it to the court to decide "whoever best protects the family".

BARC suspends ratings of all news channels

"Starting with the 'News Genre', BARC will cease publishing the weekly individual ratings for all news channels during the exercise. This exercise is expected to take around 8-12 weeks including validation and testing under the supervision of BARC's Technical Committee. BARC will continue to release weekly audience estimates for the genre of news by state and language," a BARC India statement read.

Punit Goenka, chairperson of BARC India Board, said, "Given the most recent developments, the BARC

Centre's fiscal deficit or expand general government debt, the Finance Ministry said it was being done to ensure that States would not have to pay different interest rates for these borrowings.

"The amounts will be reflected as the capital receipts of the State governments and as part of financing of the respective fiscal deficits," the Ministry said. This would enable avoiding the prospect of individual States having to pay differential interest rates if they borrowed the amount as a State development loan, it added.

Hyderabad City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar on Thursday pointed out the hardship faced by those living on the south of Musi river, which comprises large parts of the Old City. He tweeted, "South zone too suffered a lot from the fury of heavy rains. Every PS of SZ remained alert from the first

hour. Along with me, many senior officers personally supervised the rescue operations. We had to call Army at Al Jubail Colony for operations. Community had faith and it helped."

According to data released by the Telangana State Development Planning Society, Rajendranagar received 41 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours. Hayatnagar recorded 40 mm, and Mehdipatnam witnessed 39 mm rainfall. L.B. Nagar, Kapra, and Goshamahal received the lowest rainfall in the last 24 hours.

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SYED MOHAMMED
HYDERABAD

The skies cleared on Thursday after heavy rain battered Hyderabad, giving residents the much-needed relief. While water from many flood-hit colonies receded, distress calls continue to pour in.

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hour. Along with me, many senior officers personally supervised the rescue operations. We had to call Army at Al Jubail Colony for operations. Community had faith and it helped."

After the deluge, and the subsequent receding of waters, areas such as Chaderghat, Moosanagar and Shankar Nagar, a low-lying area where several houses were submerged in the Musi flood, were dealing with muck washed up to their streets and houses.

After respite for several hours on Wednesday, the rains pounded the city briefly at night. The Gurram Cheruvu in Balapur area began to overflow. Public representatives attempted to contain the water by stacking sand bags.

WhatsApp to the rescue
Meanwhile, WhatsApp chat groups began coordinating relief work. Users shared information such as the need

for volunteering and relief in flood-hit areas.

Locals and volunteers of non-government organisations continued to deliver cooked food and dry ration packs to those in need. Till late on Wednesday night, pleas for help came from Upal, Al Jubail Colony, Nadeneem Colony, and Hashama-

bad. Some parts of these neighbourhoods continued to grapple with flooding as waters had not fully receded.

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) officials along with elected public representatives Asaduddin Owaisi and others took stock of the situation and visited Nadeem Colony,

among other places. Mr. Owaisi said there was a breach in Palle Cheruvu and that the authorities have been alerted.

Connectivity problems
While power was restored in many areas in the city on Wednesday, supply in parts like Film Nagar, Suchitra, Er-

Woman gives birth on floodbank

STAFF REPORTER
KOLLURU

As the villagers of Kolluru were getting ready to vacate their houses near the swollen Krishna river, Nattala Bhagya Lakshmi, a resident, started getting labour pains. With no time to lose, the villagers helped her give birth right on the narrow floodbank. Sub-inspector S. Ujwal, along with some villagers, reached the area using a rope tied to palm trees and shifted them to hospital.

ramanil and Begumpet was restored only on Thursday. Several residents working from home dealt with connectivity issues due to the power outage.

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has directed the officials of different departments to take up relief measures on a war footing.

IN BRIEF

Don't arrest Sivasankar till Oct. 23, court tells ED

KOCHI The Kerala High Court on Thursday directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) not to arrest M.

Sivasankar, former Principal Secretary to the Kerala Chief Minister, till October 23 in a money laundering case registered in connection with the diplomatic channel gold smuggling case. The order came on a plea filed by him.

Engineering student dies after man attacks her

VIJAYAWADA A 20-year-old engineering student was hacked to death at her house in Christurajapuram on Thursday by a man for allegedly rejecting his marriage proposal. The attacker was identified as Nagendra Babu, a painter. He also injured himself with the same knife and is in hospital. According to neighbours, both knew each other since long.

Lawyers criticise Andhra CM for letter to CJ

NEW DELHI The Bar Council of India has condemned the "reprehensible move" by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to target Supreme Court judge Justice N.V. Ramana and several HC judges through the letter to Chief Justice of India. The Delhi Bar Association said the letter was written with a "mala fide intent".

Concerns over ship that ran aground in Vizag

VISAKHAPATNAM The 3,000-tonne Bangladeshi ship MV Maa that ran aground near Tennen Park in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday, has become a cause of worry. "Such ships can be an environmental issue.

Luckily, there is no oil spill, and efforts are on to shift the diesel stock from it. A ship carries other contaminants too," marine chief engineer S.V. Durga Prasad said.

Hyderabad residents relieved as water recedes

Locals had to deal with muck washed up to their streets; power restored



Raining worry: People being shifted from the old city of Hyderabad on Thursday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

Southern States see a spurt in fresh cases

Karnataka records 8,477 cases and 85 deaths, followed by Kerala with 7,789 infections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Southern States registered a spurt in COVID-19 cases and fatalities on Thursday. Kerala recorded 7,789 new cases while Andhra Pradesh saw 4,038 infections and 38 deaths.

Telangana reported 1,432 cases and eight fatalities and Karnataka recorded 8,477 cases and 85 deaths. In Tamil Nadu, Chennai continues to lead in fresh cases, accounting for 1,148 of the 4,410 new cases reported in the State.

COVID-19

Kerala registered 7,789 cases on Thursday when 50,154 samples were tested in the past 24 hours, taking the cumulative case burden to 3,17,929 cases. The State also recorded 7,082 recoveries on the day. Of the active cases, 720 patients are critically ill with 169 on ventilator support.

The toll went up to 1,089,

Caution is the key

States continue to test thousands of samples every day. The graph shows the spread of pandemic in the southern States.



Worth the wait: People waiting for COVID-19 test in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

with 23 more deaths, which occurred in the past few weeks, being added to the official list of COVID deaths. Thiruvananthapuram accounted for 18 deaths, Kozhikode has two while Kollam, Ernakulam and Thrissur reported one death each.

Andhra Pradesh reported 4,038 infections, taking the tally to 7,71,503. The fatalities increased to 6,357 with 38 more deaths.

Also, 5,622 patients have recovered and the total number of recoveries increased to 7,25,099. The recovery

rate was at 9.399% and the death rate 0.82%

Telangana recorded 1,432 cases, taking the total to 21,670. While 38,895 people were examined, results of 884 were awaited. Eight more patients died, taking the toll to 1,249.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai bureaus)

'Oppn. parties looted waqf land in Karnataka'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP accused Opposition parties in Karnataka on Thursday of having "looted" waqf land meant for poor Muslims, citing a report by the State's Minorities Commission.

Party spokesperson and MP Rajeev Chandrasekhar said the commission had pointed out that over 29,000 acres of waqf land was "surreptitiously and illegally" transferred for commercial use. While the report was prepared in 2012, it was tabled in the State Assembly eight years and two "secular governments" later in September this year.

Mr. Chandrasekhar demanded an investigation in-

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

to such waqf land irregularities in other States too.

The waqf board in the State holds 54,000 acres of land, of which 29,000 acres were "illegally" used for commercial purposes, he said. He named Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and C.M. Ibrahim as being among the alleged beneficiaries of the irregularities.

Nothing to substantiate terror funding: NIA court

10 accused in gold smuggling case get bail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

Ninety days of the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) probe into the diplomatic channel gold smuggling case has failed to bring out any material to substantiate the suspicion that the proceeds from the smuggling were used to fund terror, the NIA Special Court, Kochi, said on Thursday.

Releasing 10 accused in the case on bail, NIA Special Judge P. Krishnakumar noted that it was obvious from the case diary that some of

the petitioners had only funded the frontline accused persons for smuggling gold through the diplomatic channel and conspired with them in that respect.

The mere act of smuggling gold would not attract the offence of terrorist act, unless it was coupled with certain other elements, which at least suggested the broad probability of an intentional act to threaten the economic security of India, noted the judge, while refusing to accept the prosecution's allegation against the petitioners.

The prosecution case was that the accused committed

a terrorist act by funding and conspiring with the other accused for smuggling gold through diplomatic cargo and were therefore punishable under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

A careful reading of Section 15 of the Act left no doubt that the act of smuggling gold to India from abroad would attract the said provision only if it was done "with intent to threaten or likely to threaten the economic security of India", the court noted.

The bail application of accused Swapna Suresh and P.S. Sarith were withdrawn by their lawyers on the day.

Malayalam poet Akkitham passes away

STAFF REPORTER

PALAKKAD

Legendary Malayalam poet and Jnanpith laureate Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri, 94, died at a private hospital in Thrissur on Thursday. He was hospitalised two days ago following a urinary infection.

The last Malayalam poet to be called 'Mahakavi' (great poet), Akkitham was considered the tallest among Malayalam poets. He intro-

duced "meaningful modernism" in Malayalam poetry several decades ago.

Born in 1926 at Kumaranallur in Palakkad district, Akkitham began writing poetry very early in life. He worked for nearly three decades with Akashavani as a scriptwriter. He edited magazines such as *Unni Namboothiri*, *Mangalodayam* and *Yogakshemam*.

Akkitham was closely associated with Communist ideologue E.M.S. Namboodiripad in his early years.

His work *Balidarshanam*

won the Kerala and Kendra Sahitya Akademi Awards in

Award, Sanjayan Award, Lalithambika Antharjanam Award and several other honours.

Akkitham was known for leading a life of great personal virtue. His widely quoted line "Velicham dukhamanunnee, thamassalo sugraphadam" (which roughly translates as "light brings sorrow, my child, darkness is bliss") has few parallels in modern Malayalam poetry.

His body was cremated at his house at Kumaranallur, near Thrithala, in the afternoon with full State honours.

His elder son Vasudevan Akkitham lit the pyre.

Strengthening of cold chain supply to ensure delivery and availability of the vaccine across its network, comprising hospitals, clinics, corporate health centres

and pharmacies, and imparting training to 10,000 Apollo employees, who will be stationed at its centres across the country, are key components of the plan.

"It will be our privilege to work with all governments, governmental agencies and healthcare networks to ensure that a large number of people get the vaccine, quickly and safely as it becomes available," Shobana Kamineni, executive vice-chairperson of the Apollo Group of Hospitals told media on Thursday.

She expected a major role for the private healthcare af-

On the charges Apollo would be levying, she said while the cost of vaccine would be as per the government direction, the administering charges would be "insignificant" comprising the cost of consumables and a service charge.

A release said Apollo has secured cold chain to manage 300 million doses per annum.

A senior executive said while

FB unblocked official page:
Meira Kumar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar on Thursday said Facebook India unblocked her official page after facing protests over their move just before the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections.

In a tweet earlier, the former Lok Sabha Speaker had accused the social media giant of carrying an "assault on democracy" by blocking her page in the middle of the Bihar election campaign. Ms. Kumar is a senior Congress leader from Bihar and a member of the party's panel on election management in the State.

Soon after Ms. Kumar raised the issue, several Congress leaders took to Twitter to accuse Facebook of trying to "stifle" the Opposition's voice.

Grand alliance releases joint candidate list for all Bihar seats

There were reports of discord in the Congress over choice of nominees

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Amid reports of differences in the Congress over candidates for the Bihar Assembly election, the *Mahagathbandhan* (grand alliance) released a joint list of candidates for all 243 seats in the State on Thursday.

The Congress's list of 70 had the names of Luv Sinha, son of Bollywood actor and two-time BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha, from Bankipur (Patna), and Suhasini Raj Rao, daughter of Loktantrik Janta Dal leader Sharad Yadav, from Bihariganj (Madhepura).

Expected names

Among others in the list are Chandan Yadav from Beldaur, M.A. Usmani from Jale,



Working together: RJD MP Manoj Jha addressing a press conference of the grand alliance in Patna on Thursday. •PTI

Ajit Sharma from Bhagalpur, Kali Pandey from Kuchaikot and Amita Bhushan from Begusarai constituencies.

Most of the names have been doing the rounds in party corridors for the last two days.

Earlier, delay in releasing the names, reportedly in the

wake of intra-party disagreement, had caused embarrassment to the top party leadership.

It was also said that the delay was rocking the Congress-RJD alliance in the State.

'At one go'

On Thursday, all five alliance partners – RJD, Congress, CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(Marxist-Leninist) – came together on a common platform to release the names.

"We're not like the NDA, which releases names of their party candidates separately... we are releasing the names of all the candidates at one go," said RJD leader and party MP Manoj Jha, while releasing the list at a hotel in Patna.

'Court of Inquiry work on Shopian encounters apace'

Major General says recording of statements progressing

DINAKAR PERI

AWANTIPORA

The Army's Court of Inquiry (CoI) into Operation Amshipora in Shopian, in which three terrorists were killed and the Army had accepted there were excesses, would complete recording statements within the next 10 days and action taken as per the recommendations, said Maj. Gen. Rashim Bali, General Officer Commanding of the Victor Force covering South Kashmir under 15 Corps, said on Thursday.

"As on today, the statements of 70%, or perhaps more, of all the essential witnesses have already been recorded. The only people left are those who not here locally. I am very certain that within a week or perhaps 10 days, the proceedings will be

over. The officer concerned has been put in close arrest in a different unit," Maj. Gen. Bali told a small group of journalists. "Whatever has to happen as per the right tenets of the law will happen".

Police probe also on

As soon as the CoI gave its recommendations, the summary of evidence recording, a precursor to court martial proceedings, would start. Police investigation into the criminology part was simultaneously on.

Maj. Gen. Bali said that within 20 days of the incident, an advertisement was placed in the media stating that anyone who had information should come forward. Within one week, the CoI was constituted and within 10-15 days, it had estab-

lished that *prima facie* there was a case of violation of the Army's code of conduct. "We are clear that our code of conduct has been flouted," he stated. The nature of the excesses would be determined by the inquiry. The Army and its Chief were absolutely clear that "any act of negligence by omission or commission will be addressed." It will not be overlooked," he asserted.

Last month the Army said an inquiry ordered into the Shopian encounter of July 18 concluded that during the operation, the powers vested under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act "were exceeded" and the "do's and don'ts" of the Chief of the Army Staff as approved by the Supreme Court have been contravened."

Talks a work in progress: Jaishankar

MEA says India, China now have a better understanding of each other's positions

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Talks between India and China on disengagement at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) were a "work in progress" and "confidential" at present, said External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, even as his Ministry said the two sides now had a "better understanding" of each other's positions.

"We had a discussion and we agreed on the importance of early disengagement," Mr. Jaishankar observed at the online Bloomberg India Economic Forum, referring to his meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Moscow on September 10.

"Since then, there have been a series of meetings on-



S. Jaishankar

Its spokesperson, Anurag Srivastava said, "The two sides have a better understanding of each other's positions. Disengagement is a complex process that requires redeployment of troops by each side towards their regular posts on their respective sides of the LAC".

The "current momentum of communications" would continue to ensure that the decision by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping to "not turn differences into disputes" would be followed, he added.

Despite several mechanisms for talks, including seven rounds of face-to-face meetings of military commanders at the Chushul-Moldo points at the LAC, five

rounds of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC), and several conversations at the levels of the two Foreign Ministers, Defence Ministers and Special Representatives, ground reports suggest that Chinese troops have not yet pulled back from positions they had

taken along the LAC in the six-month stand-off, ensuring that Indian troops maintain their counter positions as well.

The comments from Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Srivastava came in response to questions being asked about whether the "five-point agreement" between him and Mr. Wang is still relevant.

Centre firm on 'one solution', says Rio

Nagaland Chief Minister calls for unity and support for peace process

VIIJITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said on Thursday that the message from the Union government was clear that there would be only one "solution" for the Naga political issue.

Mr. Rio was addressing over 150 members of civil society groups in Kohima at a meeting on the Naga peace talks and the Naga political issue.

He said one of the reasons for the meeting was to convey the Centre's "one solution" message.

"Having understood that there will be only one solution, we need to deliberate and support the peace process, strengthen the negotiations and facilitate the jour-



Neiphiu Rio

ney towards achievement of this one solution in the earliest time possible," he said.

The Naga talks hit a road-block in August after the NSCN(IM) leadership refused to hold any dialogue with R.N. Ravi, interlocutor and Nagaland Governor. A

team of Intelligence Bureau officials were deputed to continue the discussions with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah).

"If Nagas as people are to achieve progress and realise our aspirations as a people, we must come together like today. We must also accept that our biggest challenge today is division. We all know that this situation is only leading to self-destruction. During the British era, a divide and rule policy was used to govern, which was inherited by India, and till today, our society is thoroughly divided, which has created too many groups and organisations leading to different opinions and voices. The only way forward is

unity and oneness as one Naga family," the Chief Minister said.

Following the consultative meeting, the participants, including the Nagaland government, adopted a resolution appealing to the negotiating groups to come together towards achieving one solution for one people as early as possible. BJP MLA Mmhonlumo Kikon said it was affirmed to work in a collective manner.

The Congress and the Naga People's Front boycotted the meeting.

The Congress demanded that the Chief Minister step down as the final agreement was to be inked soon, and he should avoid being an obstacle in paving the way for a post-solution arrangement.

No messages sent to Pakistan: India

Ministry says official's claim is an effort to divert attention from domestic failures

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday categorically denied that it had reached out for a dialogue with Pakistan, dismissing a suggestion by a senior Pakistani official that the Modi government had sent "messages" for a conversation to the Imran Khan government in the past year.

"The statements are contrary to facts on the ground, misleading and fictitious. As regards the purported message, let me make it clear that no such message was sent from our side," External



Anurag Srivastava

Affairs Ministry spokesman Anurag Srivastava said at a weekly press briefing.

The claim by Mr. Khan's

Special Assistant on National Security and Strategic Policy Planning, Moeed Yusuf, in an interview with Karan Thapar on the news portal *The Wire* earlier this week, had led to speculation and scepticism.

"In the past year, we have got messages about a desire for conversation but you know why there is a desire for conversation – in my reading? So that there can be a dialogue which India can take to the world and say, 'Oh, everything settled, Pakistan-India have agreed,'" Mr. Yusuf said.

The Ministry dismissed the statements as interference in India's internal affairs.

"As always, this is Pakistan's effort to divert attention from domestic failures of the present government and mislead its domestic constituents by pulling India into headlines on a daily basis.

The official is well advised to restrict his advice to his establishment and not to comment on India's domestic policy," Mr. Srivastava said in his response to Mr. Yusuf's interview.

SC closes petition by Mehbooba's daughter

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday closed a petition filed by Iltija Mufti seeking the immediate release and whereabouts of her mother and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti.

A Bench led by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul dismissed the petition as infertile on learning from Ms. Iltija's lawyer, advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan, that Ms. Mufti had already been released.

"Good," Justice Kaul said to Ms. Ramakrishnan's submission.

Ms. Mufti was released on October 13. She had been detained under the Public Safety Act. In its previous hearing on September 29, the court had asked the J&K administration on how long it proposed to keep Ms. Mufti under detention.

**Office of the Chief Engineer Water Resources Zone Jodhpur
No./AF/NIB/2020/11685 Date: 09-10-2020**
Corrigendum to Notice Inviting Bid IFB No. 02/2020-21
The date of submission bid of Rehabilitation and Improvement work of Jawai dam Distt. Pali under Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase-II will be 17:00 hours of 18.11.2020. Other conditions and particulars of the bid will be same. UBN: WRD2021WLOB00425
Chief Engineer
Water Resources Zone,
Jodhpur

Department of Mines & Geology
No. 49, Khanija Bhawan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560 001. E-mail: dir-mines@karnataka.gov.in
No.: DMG-17012/1/2020-21 C. No. 360206 Date: 14.10.2020

NOTIFICATION AND NOTICE INVITING TENDER

"Invitation of bids for grant of Mining Lease for Limestone Block"

In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 10(B) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Minerals (Evidence of Mineral Contents) Rules, 2015 and the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 and amendments notified thereunder, the Government of Karnataka is conducting the auction of Bommanalli limestone block.

Any person, firm, company who satisfies the eligibility criteria can participate in the auction.

Technical and financial bids for the above listed block are invited online. Apart from the online Technical Bids, bidders will have to submit duly executed original physical copies of their Technical Bids to the Tender Inviting Authority i.e. the Director, Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Karnataka. Eligibility conditions, terms and conditions, date and time for participating in the electronic auction are provided in the Tender Document. Tender Documents, notifications, updates and other details for the e-auction process shall be available in electronic form only at MSTR Limited (<http://www.mstrcommerce.com/auctionhome/mlc/index.jsp>).

Interested and eligible bidders can register themselves at the above website. On successful registration, bidders will obtain login ID and password, which are necessary for participation in the e-auction process. Model Tender Document and summary of the block shall be available free of cost at the website of MSTR Limited (<http://www.mstrcommerce.com/auctionhome/mlc/index.jsp>). For participating in the bidding process, the registered bidders will have to purchase the block specific tender document at the website of MSTR Ltd by paying Rs. 5,00,000/- (Rs. Five Lakhs Only) + GST.

The sale of tender document shall commence from 14.10.2020. Last date for sale of tender document at the website of MSTR Ltd is 25.11.2020. Last date for submission of Technical Bids plus the Initial Price Offers at the website of MSTR Ltd is 17:00 hours IST on 05.12.2020. Physical copies of the Technical Bids must reach the Tender Inviting Authority i.e. the Director, Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Karnataka on or prior to 17:00 hours IST on 05.12.2020.

Sd/- DIRECTOR

HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19? CALL APATHAMITRA ON 14410

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, N.H. Circle (North) BBSR, OIPR No. 34010/11/0001/2021

14-b

Wear Mask Follow Physical Distancing Maintain Hand Hygiene

MISSING
Deepa, age 32 W/o Rathesh Kollassery Vadakkethil House, Puthiyavilla Muri, Kandalloor Village, Kanakakkunnu, Alappuzha district was missing from 23.09.2019 and she is not returned so far. Hence any information about her please inform the nearest Police Station or below mentioned phone numbers.
DESCRIPTION
Height: 165 cm, Complexion: White, Body Shape: Lean, Wearing dress: Saffron colour Churidar. Sub Inspector of Police, Kanakakkunnu PS - 9497980274 DySP Kayamkulam - 9497990044 District Police Chief, Alappuzha - 94979 96982 (1629/F/2020/I&PRD)

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREST MANAGEMENT
(An Autonomous Institute Under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India)
Nehru Nagar, PB No. 357, Bhopal (M.P.) India

Contractual Appointment of Social Media & PR Executive
No. IIFM/PERS/A -69 (24)/2020

Online applications are invited up to 26.10.2020 for engagement of "Social Media and PR Executive" on contract basis initially for one year. For details of qualifications, experience, compensation, other eligibility conditions and application format please visit our website www.iifm.ac.in/vacancies. Candidates fulfilling the above requirements may submit their application online under the link <https://erp.iifmphub.edu.in/ifiamp/apply23> uploading self-attested scanned copy of the certificates/testimonials and a brief write-up about their experience for the said position on or before 26.10.2020. Please note that the online application will be available upto 26.10.2020 5.00 PM only.

M.P. Madhyam/98694/2020

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Roc.No.PRA/13923/Adv.No.178/PRO/2020; Dated:14-10-2020 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS : TIRUPATI S.V.PRAYER HALL CUM INFORMATION CENTRE, CHENNAI.

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited for SUPPLY

IN BRIEF



Sushant case probe is still on, clarifies CBI

NEW DELHI
The CBI on Thursday said its investigation in the Sushant Singh Rajput death case has not been completed. "There are certain speculative reports in the media that the CBI has reached a conclusion. It may be reiterated that these reports are speculative and erroneous," said its spokesperson R.K. Gaur.

Move Bombay HC first, SC tells Arnab

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Thursday asked ARG Outlier Media and journalist Arnab Goswami to have faith in the Bombay High Court rather than come straight to the top court with their plea against the Mumbai police investigation in the Television Rating Point (TRP) scam case, involving allegations of rigged viewership.

'Eat right movement will be a game-changer'

NEW DELHI
Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has said that the "Eat Right India" and the "Fit India" movements will prove to be game-changers in the future. He said the results of these movements will be visible to all in the next 10 years. A systems-based approach can ensure food safety along with promotion of a healthy diet and environmentally sustainable practices, he said at an inter-ministerial meeting.

SC issues notice to RBI, NPCI over UPI user data

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to examine a petition filed by Rajya Sabha member Binoy Viswam accusing the Reserve Bank and the National Payments Corporation of India of 'compromising' the sensitive data of Indian users on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platforms. A notice has been issued to the RBI and NPCI.

Two get death for rape, murder in U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GHAZIABAD
The district and sessions court of Hapur on Thursday awarded the death penalty to two domestic help for raping and killing a 12-year-old in September 2018. The third accused, Amarjeet, has been acquitted.

In her order, Veena Narayan, additional district

States must oppose farm laws'

Umbrella organisation urges Chief Ministers to enact legislation to protect MSP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after its leaders participated in a walkout and demonstration at Krish Bhawan, the Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh (RKM) is taking the fight to the State capitals.

The umbrella body of more than 180 farmers groups across the country has written to the Chief Ministers of all States, demanding that they fight the controversial farm market reform laws in the Supreme Court on the grounds that the Centre has usurped the States' rights to make laws on agricultural issues. They also want all States to bring out their own legislation providing a legal guarantee to minimum support price (MSP).

"The State governments are limiting themselves to making statements only. They are not taking concrete steps against these laws," RKM spokesperson Abhimanyu Kohar said. "They need to step up and take responsibility. If they do not take concrete legal steps soon, then we will oppose them also, just as we have been opposing the Central government."

The letter lays out the le-



Making a point: Members of the Delhi BJP Kisan Morcha demanding that the Kisan Bhawan be reopened at Azadpur market in New Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

gal argument for questioning the Constitutional validity of the three laws passed by Parliament last month. "Agriculture being a State subject under the Constitution, any Central legislation seeking to

remove barriers to trade and creating a unified national market for farm produce has the capacity to start a fresh debate on federalism. Union of India lacks legislative power to bring such an enactment and in the garb of re-

forms, have pushed forth an ill-thought-out piece of legislation," says the letter.

Accusing the Centre of "trespassing" on a State subject, the letter argues that the new legislation could prevent State governments from bringing out marketing schemes to aid their own farmers, and urged States to approach the apex court.

The RKM also urged States to fix MSP themselves and enact new laws which

ban sale, purchase or contract of farm produce below MSP rates, including by corporates and private buyers.

The letter is signed by RKM national convener Shiv Kumar Sharma, better known as "Kakkaji", who has previously been associated with the Sangh Parivar, but who led the 2017 farm protests in Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh, when the police shot dead six farmers, sparking off a nationwide stir.

Spurious liquor kills 14 in Ujjain

STAFF REPORTER
BHOPAL

Fourteen persons died within 24 hours in Ujjain after reportedly consuming spurious liquor, the police said on Thursday.

While seven bodies were found on Wednesday, the police discovered the remaining the next day. "The persons had died after consuming some poisonous liquid in the police stations limits of Kharakuwan, Jiawigunj and Mahakal," Additional Superintendent of Police Rupesh Dwivedi told presspersons.

"The prime accused, Younis, has been arrested. He was trying to flee from the Indore bus stand to Agra. Besides, 12 other bootleggers not directly involved in this incident but active in Ujjain district have also been arrested," Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Rajesh Rajora told *The Hindu*.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan ordered the setting up of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to inquire into the deaths and directed Mr. Rajora to visit Ujjain and also submit a report.

No end to violence against women: SC

'A majority prefer to suffer in silence'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said crimes against women continued in a "never-ending cycle" in India.

In a 151-page judgment, a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan said women in India faced violence and discrimination in one form or the other in their various roles as daughter, sister, wife, mother, partner or single woman.

Though the judgment called a 2005 law against domestic harassment as a "milestone", the Bench said domestic violence continued to be the least reported form of violence towards women.

Women continue to be vulnerable to these crimes because of non-retaliation, coupled with absence of laws addressing their rights and ignorance of the existing statutes. Societal attitude, stigma and conditioning also made women vulnerable to domestic violence, the court said.

Also, relationships outside marriage were not recognised. This set of circumstances ensured that a majority of women preferred to suffer in silence, not out of choice but of compulsion, the Bench, which included R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah, said.



It said the progress of any society depended on its ability to protect and promote the rights of women.

The observations came in a judgment that held that the relief granting right to residence to a married woman under the domestic violence law by a criminal court was relevant and could be considered even in civil proceedings seeking her eviction from the matrimonial home.

SC seeks govt. reply on use of 'plain English'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the government to respond to a plea to use "plain English" for drafting laws, Government Orders and notifications to make them digestible for the public.

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde referred to writer Anthony Burgess's work *Language Made Plain*, and said the more simple the language, the more people were attracted to it.

The Bench, led by the Chief Justice of India, issued notice to the government on a petition filed by Subhash Vijayran, who also wants a new course of study in law colleges called 'Legal writing in plain English'. The petitioner also said the oral arguments of lawyers in court should not be rambling, but made to the point so that the court gets time for all and not an elite few.

PM seeks scaling up of sero-surveys, testing

He calls for vigilance against virus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday chaired a review meeting on the research and vaccine deployment ecosystem against COVID-19, including testing technologies, contact tracing, drugs and therapeutics, said a press release by the government.



Narendra Modi

At the meeting, calling for continued vigilance and a high state of preparedness against the pandemic, Mr. Modi directed that both sero-surveys and testing must be scaled up.

He said the facility to get tested regularly, speedily and inexpensively must be available to all at the earliest.

Global solutions

"He also reiterated the country's resolve to provide cost-effective, easily available and scalable solutions for testing, vaccine and medication, not only for India

Gunjan Saxena film: govt., IAF for deletion of scenes

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Centre and Indian Air Force (IAF) on Thursday insisted on deletion of certain scenes from the Netflix film *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*, saying that the disclaimer at the beginning of

the film was just an "eyewash".

"If what you are showing in a so-called biopic is something which is distorting the image of the IAF, then the disclaimer is not going to dilute it," Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain said.

Varavara Rao's wife moves SC for his release

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The wife of Varavara Rao, poet and activist, approached the Supreme Court on Thursday for his immediate release from jail, saying his continued custody as an undertrial amounts to cruel and inhuman treatment and is in violation of his dignity.

Pendyala Hemalatha blamed the Maharashtra government and the National Investigation Agency for the deterioration of her husband's health. She urged the court to grant him bail.

"The treatment meted out to Rao amounts to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. It is a form of punishment not permitted by law. He is entitled to immediately be set at liberty," Ms. Hemalatha, represented by advocate Sunil Fernandes, submitted.

The last rites took place at the Chandanwadi crematorium in south Mumbai.

"She passed away early this morning. Eight years ago, she was diagnosed with a tumour in her brain. For the last three years, she was bedridden because one side [of her body] was paralysed, Ms. Gupta said.

The Kolhapur-born Athaiya, who worked till as recently as five years ago, began her career as a costume designer in Hindi cinema with Guru Dutt's 1956 super hit *C.I.D.* She went on to work in over 100 films.

"It's too good to believe

Bhanu Athaiya, India's first Oscar winner, passes away

She won the award for her work in the 1983 film *Gandhi*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, India's first Oscar winner, died at her home on Thursday after a prolonged illness. She was 91.

She died peacefully in her sleep, her daughter Radhika Gupta said.

Ms. Athaiya won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design, along with John Mollo, for her work in Richard Attenborough's 1983 film *Gandhi* which starred Ben Kingsley as the Mahatma. The lavish biopic about Mahatma Gandhi swept the Oscars with eight awards.

The last rites took place at the Chandanwadi crematorium in south Mumbai.

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The Kolhapur-born Athaiya, who worked till as recently as five years ago, began her career as a costume designer in Hindi cinema with Guru Dutt's 1956 super hit *C.I.D.* She went on to work in over 100 films.

"It's too good to believe

name was announced, Ms. Athaiya had said fellow nominees told her she was a frontrunner for the best costume award. "I was sitting in the audience with the other nominees in my category. They all told me that they did not stand a chance to win the Oscar. They told me my canvas was huge, so I would definitely win the award. In my mind, I had told myself that I had done my best, that I had done justice to Gandhiji's name and the freedom movement.

"When they called my name, I did not allow myself to get carried away. I calmly went on the stage and thanked Sir Richard Attenborough for focusing world attention on India," Ms. Athaiya had said in her acceptance speech at the Academy Awards.

In 2012, Ms. Athaiya returned her Oscar to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for safe keeping.

"She passed away early this morning. Eight years ago, she was diagnosed with a tumour in her brain. For the last three years, she was bedridden because one side [of her body] was paralysed, Ms. Gupta said.

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"When they called my name, I did not allow myself to get carried away. I calmly went on the stage and thanked Sir Richard Attenborough for focusing world attention on India," Ms. Athaiya had said in her acceptance speech at the Academy Awards.

Things did not change much after the Oscar win.

The costume department continued to be a neglected part of the Indian film industry,

Recalling the moment her

Sleeper coaches will stay: Railways

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Railway Board CEO and Chairman V.K. Yadav on Thursday said while no plan was afoot to do away with sleeper class coaches, only air-conditioned coaches would be used on select routes where trains would run at speeds of 130 kmph or higher.

The Railways have designed a new AC three-tier coach, which it is currently testing.

"Sleeper class coaches will continue ... We are in the process of increasing the speeds of our trains to 130 km from 110 km, particularly along the golden diagonal and golden quadrilateral ... when train speeds will be increased, there might be discomfort in sleeper coaches due to wind and dust. Hence, we have designed a new AC three-tier coach ... The fare will be kept somewhere in between [the current] AC three-tier and sleeper with the aim that more people can afford travelling in AC coaches," Mr. Yadav said during a virtual conference.

The Railway Ministry released a new policy for development of goods sheds aimed at augmenting terminal capacity through private participation.

Nod for gatherings of over 100 persons in safe zones

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Culture Ministry on Thursday issued detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for organising cultural events during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SOPs, based on the Unlock 5.0 guidelines of the Union Home Ministry, have been finalised after considering suggestions from various stakeholders in the creative industry.

The Ministry clarified that cultural activities would continue to be prohibited in containment zones. The State governments and Union Territory administrations may consider proposing additional measures after field-level assessments.

"These guidelines contain standard operating procedures to be followed by the management of theatres and performance spaces, as well as the entertainment/creative agencies, artists and crew or any other persons who hire the auditoria or any other open/closed performance spaces, whether on payment or gratis," it said.

The comprehensive guidelines have been issued for artistes and crew; management of green rooms; stage



Provisions should be made for temperature scanning,

the guidelines said.

Unlock 4.0 guidelines had allowed social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, sports and religious functions and other congregations with a ceiling of 100 persons, outside containment zones, from September 21, subject to strict adherence to protocols such as social distancing and sanitisation.

The Unlock 5.0 guidelines allow congregations beyond the limit of 100 persons, outside the containment zones, after October 15, subject to certain restrictions.

In closed spaces, a maximum of 50% of the hall capacity will be allowed, with a ceiling of 200 persons. Wearing of face masks, maintaining social distancing, provision for thermal scanning, and use of handwash or sanitiser, will be mandatory.

Any gathering in open spaces will be allowed keeping the size of the space or ground in view, and with strict observance of social distancing, mandatory wearing of face masks, provision for thermal scanning and handwash or sanitiser. The governments will issue detailed SOPs to regulate such gatherings.

</



Virtual worship (Clockwise from far left) An idol on a screen, an idol-maker at work in Chennai, different kinds of rasgullas • RAGHU AND GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The Goddess descends through livestream

Video *aartis*, *bhog* by delivery and socially distanced pandals mark Durga Puja celebrations this year as the festival raises spirits despite COVID-19

TEAM METROPLUS

The call of the conch will be heard through headphones. The *dhunuchi*'s scent – a smoky mix of camphor and coconut husks – will be summoned from memory. Durga Puja celebrations are innovating and adapting to the challenges of COVID-19 to usher in necessary cheer in a difficult year.

CR Park, the bastion of Delhi's Bengalis, will be unusually quiet this *pujo*,

as will pandals across the country in this year of social distancing. In any other year, they would have seen a footfall of over two lakh daily. This time, of the nearly 10 pujas that take place there, only the one inside the premises of the Kali temple will be held.

"All rituals will be followed, Saptami through Navami. We have a partnership with DEN (a popular cable channel) and Tata Sky to stream the morning *pujas* and evening *aartis*. You can also

watch them on our website, YouTube and Facebook," says Prodip Ganguly, of the CR Park Kali Mandir Society, echoing the intentions of others across the country.

Puja goes live

In Chennai, secretary Jaypal Menon of Dakshin Chennai Prabasi Cultural Association (DCPCA) says the live rituals will be "virtually aired for members who want to experience it from home." He adds, "Last year, we had a footfall of about 2,500 people each day. This time, however, we are not inviting non-members or even our regular patrons. Association members who are older than 65 and younger than 10 are also being asked to stay home, for their own safety."

In Hyderabad, too, puja committees will be streaming their sessions online – live on social media platforms. Many, like Attar puja committee, are also talking about restricting the number of visitors to 50. Atin Chowdhary, member of Bangiya Sanskriti Sangha, says "Core committee members and the priest make up about 20 people. Controlling people will be a tough job, so we have decided to stream the puja instead. There will be no food stalls, no *bhog*."

Mukul Dasgupta, secretary of Chennai's Dakshini Society echoes this: "We will not be serving *bhog*. Every year, we bring *dhakis* (drummers) to make things festive and a *thakur* (traditional chef) to prepare the traditional *bhog*,



all the way from West Bengal. We provide them housing and take care of their food. But this time, we didn't want them to travel all the way and be put at risk."

Not everyone, however, can imagine Durga Puja without the *bhog*. DCPCA is arranging for the meal to be packed in eco-friendly boxes and delivered to members' home. "It will be cooked by our regular Chennai caterers. After all, food is a big part of puja," says Menon. In Delhi, those living in a two-kilometre radius from CR Park's Kali Mandir can book the five-item *bhog* online. "We have got special four-tier dabba carriers from Mumbai for this purpose," Ganguly says, adding that the cooks and delivery persons will be tested for COVID-19.

Hyderabad's Marigold hotel has a *bhog* package with *khichdi*, *dalna*, *begun bhaja* (fried brinjal), a selection of

toks (Bengali bittersweet dips) and a much-loved *ilish* (hilsa) selection. The *khichdi* comes with a smoky flavour, to give the feel of it being cooked at a puja pandal's firewood kitchen.

Kathi rolls, Mughlai parathas, *ghugni* – Visakhapatnam-based Sayantika Adak Ghosh devours it all at the city's pandals every year. This time, she will be serving them from her home kitchen instead. "This way, I can recreate the festive feel at home for my seven-year-old son," she says. Sayantika is also busy finishing her Mandala art series of Maa Durga which will be the highlight of this year's homey Durga Puja for her.

In fact, all around the country this year, celebrations have shifted from the pandals to homes. "In my entire lifetime, I have never seen Durga Puja being celebrated this way," says Rita Basu, a core committee member of Utsav, that conducts the festival every year at AMCOSA in Visakhapatnam. "We used to start preparing for it from June with rehearsals for cultural programmes and corporate sponsorships."

About the idol

A lack of food stalls and banner space, however, means a lack of advertising and funds for the idol. Chennai's DCPCA and Dakshini Society nevertheless are making it a point to support the idol-makers, who arrived in August only to be met with a drop in demand. As Menon points out, "They set out from Kolkata, and in the absence of a direct train to Chennai, took a detour via train and bus to get here. This, even though they were not sure if they would get orders." Most committee are bringing in the idols on October 21, for celebrations that will run till October 26. Many have also turned from idols to the *ghot* (a copper, brass or silver pot) *puja*: this involves worshipping a representation of the idol, in the form of a coconut in a *kalash*.

The festivities remain emotionally significant for other reasons. DCPCA is moving back to the grounds where it had its first celebrations in 2013. For Delhi's Kashmere Gate puja, this year is historic. It is their 11th puja, shares Som Prakash Mitra, president of the puja committee: "Up until 1911, we would only have *ghot* puja. And now after 109 years, history is repeating itself."

With inputs from *Prabalika M Borah, Nivedita Ganguly, Sweta Akundi and Meghna Majumdar*



How Kalidas and Jayaram teamed up for their upcoming anthology

GAUTAM SUNDER

There is much interest over the Tamil anthology *Putham Pudhu Kaalai* releasing on Amazon Prime Video today, featuring five shorts from five acclaimed directors exploring themes.

A cursory glance at the list of names involved is enough to whet the appetite of any Tamil movie-goer; but special mention to Sudha Kongara for pulling off a casting coup in her segment, *Ilamai Idho Idho*.

If bringing back one of the most cherished on-screen pairings in Jayaram and Urvashi was not exciting enough, the former's son Kalidas and Kalyani Priyadarshan join the two veterans in what seems to be a breezy feature on two couples discovering/re-discovering love in the time of COVID-19.

While Kalidas has acted with Jayaram before (as a child artiste, even winning a National Award for *Ente Veedu Appuvinteyum* in 2003), the father-son duo has not made an appearance on screen since Kalidas' debut as a lead actor.

"I haven't had any influence at all on his career decisions; right from when he wanted to act as a kid to his choices now as a hero. We don't even discuss cinema at home," says Jayaram, who looks dapper in the new, snazzy look that he has been sporting since his turn in *Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo* earlier this year. "Fitness is an integral part of cinema today; everyone looks for it and expects it even now. So I too felt a makeover was important; I took off for 70 days, dedicated myself to a new routine and worked really hard to get in shape," he grins.

Joining us together on a Zoom call, the father-son duo is as charming and warm as ever. Excerpts:



Twinning in style Jayaram and Kalidas on coming together for *Putham Pudhu Kaalai*

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

that I should not make her regret choosing me. I also know that she casts actors only if she genuinely wants to convey a story with them, and give prominence to their roles.

From the trailer, we see that both of you share a commendable chemistry with your co-stars, Urvashi and Kalyani Priyadarshan...

Kalidas: I have known Kalyani for a while, but this is the first time I am acting with her. Our working styles are similar; we like to be prepared and do our research. Due to lockdown restrictions, there could not be more than three actors on set at all times. However, after finishing my portions, I used to be present there as an AD as I am very comfortable with the team, to watch my dad and Urvashi take over. They have decades of experience together, and I could learn a lot merely by just looking at them perform.

Jayaram: Urvashi is the co-star I have worked with the most. We go back 32 years.

Why do you think Malayalam cinema has been so popular on OTT platforms during the pandemic? How has the space opened up work for aspirants?

Jayaram: Irrespective of the genre or length of the film, it is all about the filmmaker trying to express his voice and intention to the viewers through his story. I think that is where the success lies. It has also got to do with the simplicity of the script; we have seen so many young, brilliant directors and writers emerge in the last year who I badly want to work with.

Kalidas: In feature films, you cannot even imagine characters like the ones that are now being explored in the content on streaming platforms. That is when Sudha ma'am got in touch and gave me an opportunity (they worked on an anthology for another OTT platform). The only thing running through my mind was for some actors who have been lucky enough to get such opportunities.

Like father, like son

with me. I am a huge fan of her earlier films like *Irudhi Suttru*, and was longing to collaborate with someone like her. It is also my digital debut in a space like this, which makes it all the

more so exciting. But I was most interested in seeing how Sudha and her team would overcome the challenge of shooting this footage in just a couple of days. After the shoot, I can safely say that she is not just a director... but also an assistant, costumer and make-up artist rolled in one!

Ilamai Idho Idho features veterans in the field. Was there concern about garnering screen space?

Kalidas: I have to be honest; I went through a year where nobody called me for work and I felt quite chastened. That is when Sudha ma'am got in touch and gave me an opportunity (they worked on an anthology for another OTT platform). The only thing running through my mind was for some actors who have been lucky enough to get such opportunities.



How did this project take shape under Sudha Kongara?

Jayaram: We actually have to thank the director for casting us. Kalidas had already worked with her on another project, and broached the idea

of feature films, you cannot even imagine characters like the ones that are now being explored in the content on streaming platforms. That is when Sudha ma'am got in touch and gave me an opportunity (they worked on an anthology for another OTT platform). The only thing running through my mind was for some actors who have been lucky enough to get such opportunities.

As Madras Crocodile Bank waits to welcome visitors again, enclosures are being painted to resemble reptiles' habitats of origin



Ally's home makeover

SWETA AKUNDI

For all of Ally's 17-year-old life, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust (MCBT) has been home, as it has been for her parents. Now, this young alligator is also surrounded by reminders of her heritage – the outside of her pen is painted with animals and birds that originate from the Everglades in Florida, US. With the continuing downtime at the enclosure, Croc Bank has found time for renovation.

Pen 1, comprising three enclosures – housing the Cuban crocodile, a critically endangered species in the (International Union for Conservation of Nature) IUCN list, Ally, the alligator and the slender-snouted crocodile – has been painted to resemble the habitat of origin of each of these three reptiles. They sunbathe inside as murals of their warmer blooded friends, including leopards, elephants, and the Cuban tody, pop out of the wall to keep an eye on the visitors.

"We were very lucky to have got a grant from Cholamandalam Finance, as part of its CSR, just before the lockdown started, to reconstruct our first pen," says Zai Whitaker, author and director of MCBT.

"We wanted the pen art to give people an idea of the kind of habitats these species live in," explains Zai. "So you have the hutia from Cuba, which is a funny little animal – looks like a large guinea pig, and then you have raccoons for the alligator." The slender-snouted crocodile is from West Africa, and so, has leopards and elephants for company.

The artists behind the project,



With friends (Clockwise from top) Ally the alligator in her pen; surrounding wall art of elephants and a leopard ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

K Veerabathiran and his team, belong to the nearby village, Vadennemeli in Kanchipuram.

"I have been working with this wonderful group since I rejoined the Croc Bank in 2015," says Zai. The team has previously painted stone pillars and signboards imparting information on birds and snake bites for the centre.

Pen 8, which is one of the mother pens, is illustrated with information on crocodiles for kids. "We realised people engage with visual information better. So we thought why not do more of that, the Croc Bank is full of walls!" adds Zai.

"We wanted the pen art to give people an idea of the kind of habitats these species live in," explains Zai. "So you have the hutia from Cuba, which is a funny little animal – looks like a large guinea pig, and then you have raccoons for the alligator." The slender-snouted crocodile is from West Africa, and so, has leopards and elephants for company.

"From the beginning, when Rom [Whitaker] started his work and I joined him, our real mission was to bring reptiles into the sphere of conversation. By that

time in the 1970s, everyone wanted to save the elephant and giraffes, and called for Project Tiger, but snakes were still called pests.

So this is part of our journey to make people feel more empathetic towards reptiles."

What is also likely to help is the dynamic nature of the first three reptiles that visitors will meet upon entry. Ally is currently being trained in basic communication. The seven-footer appears when called, and understands a mixture of visual and voice commands, including instructions to look up at the trainer, hold the position, jump, or get into the water again.

Despite having to make do without visitors for all this while, Zai believes that the pandemic has underlined how much support the centre has from Chennai. "The response we have had, in terms of donations as well, shows us that people in Chennai see this place as important to the city and are willing to protect it," she says, happily.



In the zone (From left) Ramku, Vikram, Karthick, Sumesh and Reshwin; (below) the song art ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Dual energy

Indosoul's latest track explores the concept of duality through saint Thyagaraja's 'Dwaitamu Sukama'

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

A raw yet controlled riff from Vikram Vivekanand's guitar gets a pick-me-up – first from Ramku Kannakarajan's drums, then Reshwin Nishith's bass guitar. The trio's pulsing energy lasts about 20 seconds, before giving way to a sudden calm. Karthick Iyer's soothng voice seamlessly steps in, singing saint Thyagaraja's 'Dwaitamu Sukama', to the soft accompaniment of Sumesh Narayanan on the mridangam.

This ebb and flow of energy continues through Indosoul's new track 'Dwaitamu', titled after saint Thyagaraja's *kriti* on duality by the

same name. The song is the first to be released in Indosoul's fourth album *Equilibrium*. Guitars Vikram says the band hopes to release a song each month from now, but clarifies that not all of them will have the philosophical bent of mind that the album title suggests. He adds, "This album has elements of both our first album and our third (*Two Sides of Karma*). The first album was very feel-good and happy; the third was contemplative."

This one, he says, will be a bit of both: "You can talk about balance in so many ways – both musical and non-musical – especially considering what's happening around

The track can be traced back to a weekend in Puducherry that the band spent together in the summer of 2019

us now." Karthick, the vocalist and violinist, elaborates, "This song marries the philosophy of the album, with what saint Thyagaraja talks about in 'Dwaitamu Sukama': the Hindu concept of duality and non-duality."

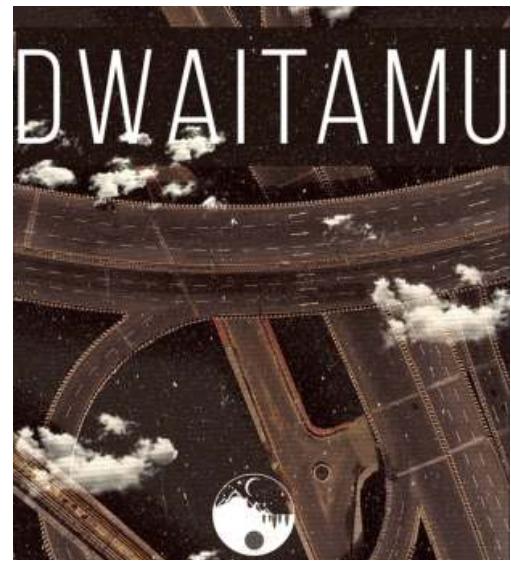
The track, like all seven tracks in the album, can be traced back to a weekend in Puducherry that the

band spent together in the summer of 2019. Says Karthick, "We decided to just jam for five days. The sessions were open-ended, with no ideas built beforehand. We tried to not get caught up in one idea; every session had to be a different one. We came up with seven different ideas."

The band then took their time deliberating with each other, coordinating virtually once the pandemic hit. Vikram points out, "We were lucky that everyone in the band has a recording setup at home. We were able to work using the reference track recorded in Pondy."

The video was shot largely at home. Drone footage of empty Chennai roads form the opening shot – "These were taken in the beginning of lockdown, when there was hardly anyone on the streets," says Vikram. More such shots, interspersed with each member playing on his own against a black backdrop, form the rest of the video.

How similar or different will the next track be? All Karthick shares is its story of origin. "We had a performance at Sir Mutha Venkata Subbarao auditorium, years ago. During the sound check then, we were jamming and came up with something. We recorded it and hoped to use it later. Inspiration usually strikes on impulse, when the five of us are in the moment," he says.



Your fitness calendar for the week

Working out, self care, eating 'clean', meditation – doing everything 'right' can get overwhelming for someone who has just started on the health journey.

On our Instagram, @thehindumetropius, we help you ease into the process through a day-by-day break-down, focussing on a different aspect of well being for each Live session.



#MeatlessMonday

October 19, 6 pm
Earlier this year, Chennai-based Akash Muralidharan went on a 100-day cooking project, rediscovering native vegetables. In this session with Chindi Varadarajulu of Pumpkin Tales, the duo will discuss how to introduce more local vegetables into our diets.

#TransformationTuesday

October 20, 6 pm

Michael Ajay became an inspiration to many after overcoming depression and losing 25 kilograms. He will share how he manages to stay motivated and the support systems he relies on, for his mental health.

#WellnessWednesday

October 21, 9 pm
In her recent book, *The Food Mood Connection*, nutritional psychiatrist Uma Naidoo talks about how our diets influence

our mental health. She will be going Live with us, to guide us on the same.

Trainer Sohrab Khushrushahi has worked with stars like Alia Bhatt and Anushka Sharma. He will discuss making fitness fun for beginners.



#ThirstyThursdays

October 22, 9 pm
Hydration is one of the relatively ignored pillars of wellness. In this session, dietitian will tell us how to keep ourselves hydrated and share what juices would help optimise our health.

#FitnessFriday

October 23, 6 pm



Prior to the pandemic outbreak, Karthik Subbaraj was one of the first among mainstream stakeholders of Tamil cinema to expand his portfolio into indie films, launching a separate arm under his banner, Stone Bench Productions, to help fund quality small budget films.

Comedy Showcase

This is a 'Tanglish' (Tamil plus English) standup comedy show, put together by Chennai-based South Comedy aka SOCO and Eavan Standup Tamasha. The lineup comprises Kunal Rao, Rabhinder Kannan and Vikash Paul, so laughs are guaranteed. Show starts at 7.45 pm on October 18; passes are on insider.in.

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



The queen on the prowl
City birder Karthik Ramamurthy photographs a rare phenomenon during lockdown: the gutsy Shaheen falcon in action at Kanchipuram lake

AKILA KANNADASAN

Water birds at the Kanchipuram lake are heaving a sigh of relief. A fearsome predator, that stalked them over the past few months, has finally gone home. For now, things are back to normal at the grassland.

A Shaheen falcon, a sub-species of the fastest predator on earth, the Peregrine falcon, had visited the region from its home in the hills for the monsoon.

"I first spotted the bird, a juvenile female, towards the end of June," says Chennai birder Karthik Ramamurthy. Karthik, who takes birding enthui-

siasts along with him on his expeditions, kept visiting the grassland the following months to see, photograph, and consequently, fall in love with the bird. "I witnessed 44 of her kills," says Karthik, who cannot stop raving about the "bold and gutsy" beauty.

News of her arrival near Chennai was enough to draw several local birders to the location. Among them, was K Gnanasankaran. "What makes this precious is that this



When he spotted the bird towards the end of last month, Karthik knew it was the last time he was seeing her. "Another falcon coming from Europe was there and I was sure it will chase her away," he says.

Now that she is back home, Karthik does feel sad that he cannot see the bird any more, having spent so many hours in her company. "I named her Jhansi Rani," he says. "Perhaps I will see her next year."

A game of HOPE

Filmmaker Karthik Subbaraj and actor Bobby Simha discuss their upcoming anthology *Putham Pudhu Kaalai*, which brings together five of Tamil cinema's finest directors

PRADEEP KUMAR

Of all incidents that could spark an idea for a film, it was a theft that did the trick for filmmaker Karthik Subbaraj. The victim in the incident was actor Bobby Simha, whose office was targeted by thieves.

While there is no clear picture on the nature of losses incurred by the actor, Karthik, however, wrote a story based on the incident, which eventually developed into a short film set to stream on Amazon Prime from October 16 as part of an anthology titled *Putham Pudhu Kaalai*. The film brings together filmmakers Karthik Subbaraj, Rajiv Menon, Suhasini Maniratnam, Gautham Menon and Sudha Kongara: a first-of-its-kind initiative as regards Tamil cinema.

Anthology love

"I'm always interested in anthologies," says Karthik, who has previously been a part of two other anthologies: *Bench Talkies* and *Aviyal*. Connecting over Zoom alongside Bobby, Karthik notes that a short film allows space for a filmmaker to experiment with ideas not possible in a feature film format. "Amazon [Prime] approached us with the idea of making these shorts but the rider was that the stories should have a common thread of hope or a new beginning. All five shorts give hope to the characters as well as the audience towards the end," he says.

Bobby chips in: "Watching an anthol-

ogy is a unique experience. Instead of watching one story unfold, the audience gets to watch five different short stories, in different genres."

Karthik's short is titled *Miracle*. "We are all still hoping that COVID-19 miraculously goes away one morning and someone will say 'We are back to normal'. This film is a

USUAL SUSPECTS

Also starring actors Muthukumar, Sharath Ravi and Ezhil, *Miracle's* cinematography is by Shreyas Krishna. The latter handled the camera for *Jagame Thandhiram*, which counts Bobby Simha among its cast. Karthik shot for *Miracle* with a limited crew following relaxation of shooting restrictions.

story about similar characters... of people who yearn for that miracle," Karthik says.

Prior to the pandemic outbreak, Karthik Subbaraj was one of the first among mainstream stakeholders of Tamil cinema to expand his portfolio into indie films, launching a separate arm under his banner, Stone Bench Productions, to help fund quality small budget films. Even with corporate behemoths like Amazon venturing into the same space, Karthik sees no threat to his investment but rather looks at it as an encouraging sign. "With OTT platforms, there is a lot of interest in producing anthologies," says Karthik, adding, "When we brought *Bench Talkies* and *Aviyal* to the theatres, we only acquired previously completed short films and presented them as an anthology, unlike *Putham Pudhu Kaalai*."

Unique situation

Though their association stretches back well over a decade, Bobby remarks that he approaches every project with Karthik Subbaraj as his first film. "The fear and discipline is still there. I am his close friend but he is eagle-eyed and smells out any lag in performances," he laughs.

Questions still remain over a potential OTT release for *Jagame Thandhiram*, Karthik Subbaraj's upcoming film starring Dhanush. But the filmmaker prefers to play coy. "If theatres open by October-end, then it is very good news for the cinema industry," he says. On the film's release prospects, he adds: "It is the producer's choice. Stone Bench produced *Penguin*, which we gave to Amazon though it was made for a theatrical release. We are in a stage where we have to survive with what we have."

Putham Pudhu Kaalai will stream on Amazon Prime from October 16

HOMING IN

From a teen icon wowing fans across the globe to comedians in their 20s and 30s exploring existential dread, this week's **Live Gigs** roundup takes on a wry note

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR



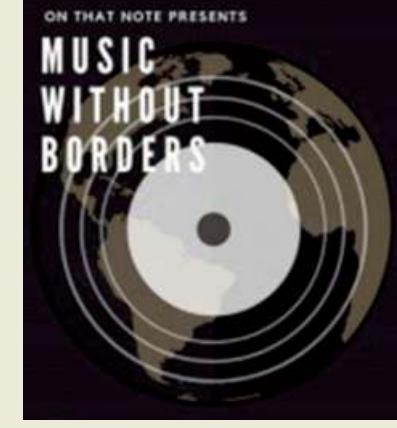
Billie Eilish

The 18-year-old Grammy awardee had to cancel a tour due to COVID-19, and is now making up for it with a live online concert that is to be streamed directly from her official website. 'Where Do We Go? The Livestream' kicks off at 3.30 am IST on October 25. Passes (for \$30 each), merchandise and other details are on www.billieeilish.com.



Music Without Borders

This online performance series, organised by Chennai-based On That Note, has been featuring budding musicians based around the world – in places and cities like Goa, Boston and New York, to name a few – since July. Their next edition is on October 24: in the spotlight are Berklee College of Music student Emily Sangher and Indian independent singer-songwriter-producer Aman Sagar. You can watch them perform on Zoom or just livestream the audio on Gramophone, at 9.30 pm IST onwards. Passes and details on insider.in.



Comedy Showcase

This is a 'Tanglish' (Tamil plus English) standup comedy show, put together by Chennai-based South Comedy aka SOCO and Eavan Standup Tamasha. The lineup comprises Kunal Rao, Rabhinder Kannan and Vikash Paul, so laughs are guaranteed. Show starts at 7.45 pm on October 18; passes are on insider.in.

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Despite ban, thousands join Thai protest

Govt. had issued decree banning public gatherings and censoring media; protest leaders arrested

REUTERS
BANGKOK

Thousands of protesters demonstrated in Thailand's Bangkok on Thursday, defying a ban imposed to end three months of anti-government action that has targeted King Maha Vajiralongkorn as well as Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader.

Despite police appeals over a loudspeaker to disperse, the group spilled across the Ratchaprasong Intersection in one of Bangkok's busiest commercial districts. It was the scene of bloodshed in 2010, during more than a decade of violence between supporters and opponents of the Thai establishment.

"Like dogs cornered, we are fighting till our deaths," said Panupong "Mike Rayong" Jadanok, one the high-profile protest leaders who remains free. "We won't fall back. We won't run away. We won't go anywhere," he



Up in arms: Protesters outside the Government House during a demonstration in Bangkok on Thursday. ■ REUTERS

told the cheering crowd.

Protesters also filled the walkways of the nearby shopping complex, holding up the three-finger salute adopted as a symbol of opposition after Mr. Prayuth's 2014 coup.

"The people who came know that there is a ban against public gathering of five or more," police spokes-

person Kissa Phathana charoen said. "We will take things step by step."

Three months of protests in the country of 70 million have been largely peaceful, as was a march by tens of thousands of people on Wednesday. But in one incident, police pushed jeering protesters away from a motorcade carrying Queen Suthida.

Oversight, the government banned political gatherings of five or more people and the publication of news and online information that could threaten national security.

"The measures were necessary to ensure peace and order and to prevent further incidents after protesters affected the royal motorcade and violated the monarchy with provocative language," government spokesperson Anucha Buraphaisri said in a statement.

'End it with us'

The protests have largely been driven by students and young people.

"We don't want anyone or the next generation to have to put up with this. We have to end it with us," said Ma meaw, 17, who came to the protest right after school exams.

Police said they had arrested protest leaders Parit

Penguin' Chiwarak and rights lawyer Arnon Nampa. Mr. Arnon said on Facebook he was being forced to board a helicopter to the northern city of Chiang Mai, where he faces sedition charges over a speech in August.

The protest movement aims to remove Mr. Prayuth, saying he manipulated an election last year to keep hold of power. He says the election was fair.

Those marching on the streets also want a new Constitution and have called for a reduction in the powers of the King. They want his role to be clearly subject to the Constitution and seek the reversal of orders that gave him control of the palace forces and some Army units.

Criticism of the monarchy is punishable by up to 15 years in prison under lese majeste laws, though Mr. Prayuth said earlier this year the King had asked that they not be enforced for now.

EU imposes sanctions on six Russians over Navalny attack

The measure is a deliberate, unfriendly step, says Kremlin

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS

The European Union (EU) and Britain imposed sanctions on Thursday on six Russians, some among the highest-ranked officials in the nation, and a state research institute over the nerve agent poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The move comes a day after Russia's Foreign Minister threatened the 27-nation EU with retaliatory action.

"Russia is our neighbour and shares this continent with us, but we will not give up our principles and convictions when it comes to chemical weapons," French President Emmanuel Macron told reporters at a summit of EU leaders in Brussels.

He said the bloc must continue "a transparent but de-



Vladimir Putin
manding dialogue" with
Moscow.

Bortnikov, the chief of Russia's Federal Security Service, the top KGB successor agency that is in charge of domestic security, and Sergei Kiriyenko, President Vladimir Putin's Deputy Chief of Staff.

The State Scientific Research Institute for Organic Chemistry and Technology was also targeted. The EU said that institute, which was responsible for destroying Soviet-era chemical weapon, was years ago involved in the development and production of chemical weapons, including the nerve agent Novichok allegedly used to poison Mr. Navalny.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov called the move "a deliberate, unfriendly step towards Russia" and said the EU "inflicted damage" on the bloc's relations with Russia.

U.S. warship in Taiwan Strait enrages China

Taiwan has been a source of tension

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

A U.S. warship sailed through the Taiwan Strait in what the American military described as a "routine" passage on Wednesday, but enraging China, which claims sovereignty over the island and surrounding seas.

Ties between Beijing and Washington have deteriorated in recent months, over issues including trade and Hong Kong, with the self-ruled island of Taiwan a long-running source of tension.

The guided-missile des-

troyer USS Barry passed through the Strait on October 14, according to a statement by the U.S. Pacific Fleet. "The ship's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," it said.

"We warn the U.S. to stop its words and deeds that provoke trouble and disturb the situation in the Taiwan Strait," Eastern Theatre Command spokesperson Colonel Zhang Chunhui said. Beijing views the passage of foreign vessels through the Strait as a violation of its sovereignty.

Although Sri Lanka contained the pandemic effectively in the last few months, the latest outbreak is the biggest test yet to the country's much-hailed pandemic response from the public health

sector with the Army's support. Especially since authorities are yet to track down the source of the latest cluster, unlike in the previous waves of COVID-19 infections in the country.

Sri Lanka's Chief Epidemiologist Dr. Sudath Samaraweera has said the women worker who tested positive on October 4 may not be the first case, while cautioning the public about a more virulent strain of the virus this time.

Steep rise

The recent bout of infections – nearly 2,000 cases in the last 10 days – has led to the

steepest rise in cases in Sri Lanka since the global pandemic hit the island nation in March.

The new cluster, known as the 'Brandix cluster', referring to the garment factory where it broke out, has infected several hundred workers and their contacts in the last two weeks.

The Army has since been leading an extensive contact-tracing exercise to find all those that the over 1,000 workers – who tested positive – may have met. They have so far traced patients from 21 out of Sri Lanka's 25 districts. Curfews have been limited to areas around the

cluster, in contrast to the government's earlier response of shutting down the entire country for two months.

"Our main strategy is the same as before – to trace, isolate and provide swift treatment to those found infected. This time, we find more middle-aged and older people infected," Dr. Jayawardhan Bandara, spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

Concern over treatment

Meanwhile, trade unionists and activists have voiced concern about the treatment of workers – those infected and others. Addressing re-

porters on Thursday, Sandun Thudugala of the Law and Society Trust said in several instances, Army personnel visiting the workers at their boarding rooms gave them only a few minutes to pack up and leave for the quarantine centre.

"Sometimes, they are made to travel with their colleagues who tested positive. Many praised the military for their work in running quarantine centres, but why are these workers being treated differently, like second-class citizens?" he asked.

Further, the new wave has also made the workers' employment more uncertain,

Kyrgyzstan President resigns to end post-election crisis

More than 1,200 people were injured during clashes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan's President Sooronbay Jeenbekov resigned on Thursday, saying he wanted to bring an end to the crisis sparked by disputed parliamentary elections earlier this month and avoid any further bloodshed.

Protests erupted after the October 4 election was won by parties loyal to Mr. Jeenbekov, with opponents disputing the results, alleging vote-buying. The vote was later annulled but this did not quell the tensions.

"I am not clinging to power. I do not want to go down in the history of Kyrgyzstan as a President who allowed bloodshed and shooting on its people. I have taken the decision to resign," Mr. Jeenbekov said in a statement re-



leased by his office.

More than 1,200 people were injured and one killed during the post-election clashes between protesters and police.

Little resistance

During the unrest, protesters met little resistance as they sprang prominent figures from jail, including po-

pulist figurehead Sadyr Japarov.

Mr. Japarov had been serving jail time for hostage-taking, but was named Prime Minister soon after his release.

In a growing power struggle, Mr. Japarov's supporters gathered once more on Thursday to demand Mr. Jeenbekov's immediate resignation.

The President had on Wednesday finally affirmed Mr. Japarov as Prime Minister, in a move seen as the first step towards calming the crisis. Mr. Jeenbekov had previously pledged to resign after overseeing fresh parliamentary elections in the country. But Mr. Japarov insisted that the President should step down without delay.

Media mogul's office raided in Hong Kong

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Hong Kong police raided a private office of pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai on Thursday as part of their investigation into whether he has broken Beijing's new national security law.

Mr. Lai, 71, is among more than two dozen people who have been arrested under a draconian security law imposed by Beijing in June to quell massive pro-democracy protests over the past year.

Police confirmed the raid was triggered by officers from the same newly-formed national security unit that first arrested him in April. "No person was arrested today," the police said. Mr. Lai accused officers of removing items before his lawyers could get there.

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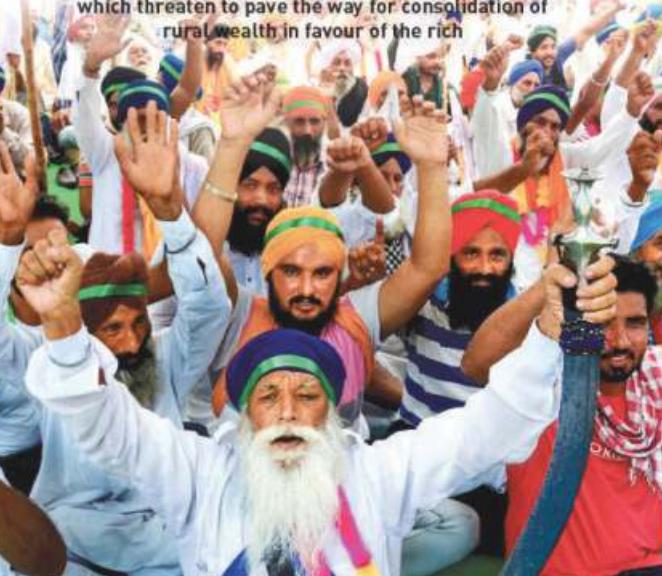
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FRONTLINE

FARMERS' FURY

The Narendra Modi government is shaken by the widespread protests against its new laws on marketing agricultural produce which threaten to pave the way for consolidation of rural wealth in favour of the rich



IN BRIEF



Greece accuses Turkey of delaying Minister's plane

ATHENS

Greece on Thursday lodged a formal protest with Turkey, saying a state plane carrying its Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias was delayed on a flight home from Iraq. The incident came ahead of EU talks between the two over energy resources in the eastern Mediterranean. AFP

FB shuts New Zealand party's page before polls

WELLINGTON

Facebook shut down the page of conspiracy-embracing political party Advance New Zealand on Thursday just two days out from a general election, accusing it of spreading misinformation about COVID-19. AFP

Yemen's warring sides begin hard-won prisoner exchange

They are to exchange 1,081 prisoners over two days

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SANAA



A plane of the International Red Cross at an airport in Yemen's Seiyun. ■ AFP

A hard-won prisoner exchange between the Yemeni government and Houthi rebels got underway on Thursday with the departure of the first plane loads of released combatants.

The warring sides in Yemen's long conflict are to exchange 1,081 prisoners over two days under a deal struck in Switzerland last month, the largest number since the conflict erupted in 2014.

One of them was headed for the city of Abha in neighbouring Saudi Arabia with released prisoners of war from a Saudi-led military coalition that supports the Yemeni government, rebel

eration overseen by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), rebel officials said. United Nations Yemen Envoy Martin Griffiths, who attended last month's talks in Switzerland, hailed the successful start of the operation. "Today's release operation, led by the ICRC, is another sign that peaceful dialogue can deliver," the Envoy said.

The Yemeni government and the Iran-backed rebels resolved to swap some 15,000 detainees as part of a peace deal brokered by the UN in Sweden back in 2018. This week's planned swap would mark the first large-scale handover since the war erupted in 2014.

Officials said. Those on board included 15 Saudis and four Sudanese.

Planes are also due to de-

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THE HINDU GROUP

Temple of enlightenment

The Mahabodhi temple complex in Bodh Gaya, where the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment, has a multi-layered history and figured prominently in the formulation of independent India's foreign policy



MARKET WATCH

	15-10-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	39,728	-2.61
US Dollar	73.36	-0.07
Gold	51,503	0.26
Brent oil	42.09	-2.23

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	342.80	-6.15
Asian Paints	2090.45	19.10
Axis Bank	462.60	-8.70
Bajaj Auto	3027.40	-26.75
Bajaj Finserv	5899.05	-201.00
Bajaj Finance	3214.75	-157.30
Bharti Airtel	399.20	-14.05
BPCL	326.65	-6.25
Britannia Ind	3731.00	-58.80
Cipla	768.30	-13.20
Coal India	110.60	0.05
Divis Lab	3111.40	-19.05
Dr Reddys Lab	5056.25	-66.75
Eicher Motors	2248.60	-5.30
GAIL (India)	82.30	-0.35
Grasim Ind	750.10	-13.50
HCL Tech	860.00	-30.45
HDFC	1947.20	-32.65
HDFC Bank	1169.25	-42.25
HDFC Life	561.50	-10.85
Hero MotoCorp	3314.30	3.50
Hindalco	173.65	-0.55
Hind Unilever	2152.55	-5.60
ICICI Bank	391.00	-15.80
IndusInd Bank	598.00	-24.65
Infosys	1108.25	-28.75
Indian Oil Corp	74.55	-0.10
ITC	165.05	-2.75
JSW Steel	291.55	0.90
Kotak Bank	1309.55	-43.80
L&T	888.80	-26.40
M&M	617.30	-6.55
Maruti Suzuki	6892.60	-109.75
Nestle India Ltd.	15602.75	-70.30
NTPC	79.00	-0.10
ONGC	66.05	-0.95
PowerGrid Corp	155.75	-1.30
Reliance Ind	2206.50	-81.30
SBI Life	804.75	-5.85
State Bank	192.85	-7.20
Shree Cement	20642.25	-493.65
Sun Pharma	490.30	-11.90
Tata Motors	126.95	-3.75
Tata Steel	373.90	-1.65
TCS	2740.40	-69.00
Tech Mahindra	812.40	-36.45
Titan	1213.60	-9.85
UltraTech Cement	4383.30	-59.55
UPL	506.55	-4.35
Wipro	341.60	-8.85

EXCHANGE RATES

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



LVB to raise ₹500 crore through rights issue

CHENNAI
Private sector lender Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd. (LVB) will come out with a rights issue to raise ₹500 crore. On Thursday, the board considered and approved raising of funds via issue and allotment of equity shares or securities for an aggregate amount of up to ₹500 crore by way of a rights issue. The terms will be decided at a later date, LVB said. The bank's shares fell 2.73% to ₹17.80 on the BSE.

National authority for ships' recycling notified

MUMBAI
The Centre has notified the Director General of Shipping as the National Authority for Recycling of Ships. "DG Shipping will look after the sustainable development of the Ship Recycling industry, monitoring the compliance to environment-friendly norms and safety and health measures for the stakeholders working in the ship recycling industry," the Press Information Bureau said in a statement.

JLR rolls out new Land Rover Defender

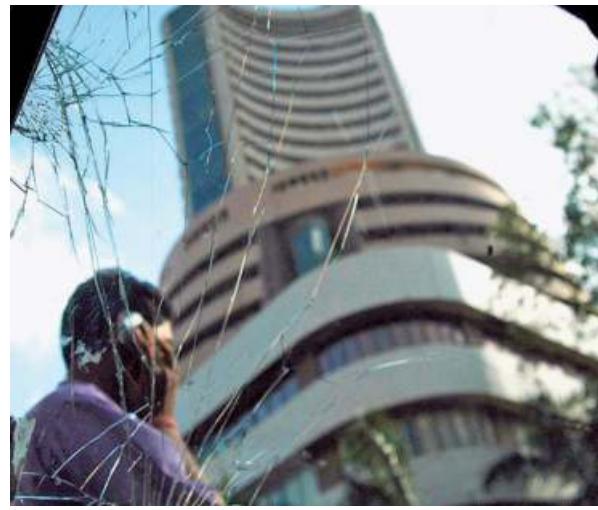
MUMBAI
Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) India has introduced the New Land Rover Defender 90 starting at ₹73,98 lakh and New Defender 110 starting at ₹79,94 lakh (ex-showroom India). "So far, under Land Rover, we had the Discovery product pillar and Range Rover product pillar in India. With this introduction, the third product pillar, Defender, is now available," said Rohit Suri, president and MD, JLR India.

RITES buys 24% stake in IRSDC for ₹48 crore

NEW DELHI
State-owned RITES has picked up a 24% stake in the Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation (IRSDC), a JV between Rail Land Development Authority and IRCON, infusing ₹48 crore as additional capital. "IRSDC will now benefit from RLDA's land development experience, IRCON's construction experience and RITES' consultancy experience," said S.K. Lohia, MD & CEO, IRSDC.

Sensex snaps 10-day rally, slumps 2.6%

Index slides 1,066 points amid global sell-off on fading U.S. stimulus hopes, fresh lockdowns in Europe



Future trends will depend on measures announced after the stimulus and Q2 results, says an analyst. ■ PAUL NORONHA

book profits after the recent rally amid already stretched valuations, traders said.

Barring Asian Paints, which inched up 0.32%, all Sensex constituents closed

Exports grow 6%, snap six-month-long slide

Pharma, ready-mades aid turnaround



September include iron ore (10.9% at \$303.42 million), ready-made garments (10.2% at \$1.19 billion), rice (93.9% at \$725.14 million), and drugs and pharmaceuticals (24.4% at \$2.24 billion).

Exports were \$26.02 billion in September 2019. Imports contracted 19.6% to \$30.31 billion in September. It was \$37.69 billion a year earlier. The trade deficit narrowed to \$2.72 billion, compared to a shortfall of \$11.67 billion a year earlier. Gold imports fell by almost 53% to \$601.43 million in September. Major export commodities that grew in

Remittances growth turning muted: report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI
Remittances growth is muted due to 'structural' reasons which will hamper consumption demand locally, according to a report on Thursday.

"The muted external remittances growth is more of a structural issue than transitory," India Ratings and Research said in its note.

India received over \$70 billion inflows last year.

The agency argued that flows had started to moderate even before the pandemic outbreak, pointing out that as a percentage of gross disposable income, the share of remittances fell to 2.5% in FY19 as against 3.5% in FY10.

Bharti Airtel and HCL Tech.

Investors lost ₹3.25 lakh crore in Thursday's session as the total market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies fell to ₹157.31 lakh crore.

"The market had moved up in expectation of a big stimulus, but the desired fiscal package was not announced in India and a delay of it in U.S. has changed the trend," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

"The broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices nose-dived, falling by up to 1.75%.

In the rest of Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended up to 2% lower.

Stock exchanges in Europe slumped up to 3% in early deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 2.17% lower at \$42.38 per barrel.

In the forex market, the rupee pared its initial gains and settled 5 paise lower at 73.36 against the U.S. dollar.

The margin of safety is low given premium prices and the slowdown in economic recovery. The trend, going forward, will depend on the supportive measures

'Latest stimulus to have minimal growth impact'

Small scale a credit negative: Moody's



Measures taken so far will cost 1.2% of our GDP. Peer nations are spending up to 2.5% of their GDP

In total, the two rounds of stimulus bring the government's direct spending on coronavirus-related fiscal support to around 1.2% of GDP. This compares with an average of around 2.5% of GDP for Baa-rated peers as of mid-June," the firm said in a note. The average fiscal stimulus of I3 Baa-rated nations was calculated from the International Monetary Fund's database of fiscal policy responses to COVID-19, for this comparison.

India's rating is Baa3 negative as per Moody's, following a downgrade this June from Baa2 negative. The country's policymaking institutions will be challenged in enacting policies that effectively mitigate the risks of a sustained period of relatively low growth, significant further deterioration in the general government fiscal position and stress in the financial sector, the agency had said in its rationale for the downgrade.

'Growth may rebound'
Consumer confidence, the agency pointed out, has remained subdued even as India has emerged from a very stringent nationwide lockdown, which drove a 24.5% year-on-year contraction in private consumption in the April-June quarter.

While Moody's has forecast growth to rebound to 10.6% in 2021-22, due to base effects and a gradual normalisation in economic activity, it expects growth to settle around 6% over the medium term, with downside risks that partly arise from 'ongoing stress' within India's financial system.

IRDAI unveils standard term life insurance cover

Saral Jeevan Bima a 'must offer' by Jan.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Insurance regulator IRDAI has come up with a standard individual term life insurance product whose simple features as well as standard terms and conditions are expected to help customers make an informed choice and reduce mis-selling.

The product, Saral Jeevan Bima, will be a non-linked, non-participating individual pure risk premium life insurance plan providing for payment of the sum assured in lump sum to the nominee in case of the insured's death during the policy term. The regulator mandated all life insurers to offer the stand-

dard product by January 1. The plan will be for those in the 18-65 years age group.

The policy term will be 5-40 years, while the sum assured will be a minimum of ₹3 lakh and a maximum of ₹25 lakh, IRDAI said. Insurers, however, have the option of offering sum assured beyond ₹25 lakh with all other terms and conditions remaining the same.

The product shall be offered to individuals without restrictions on gender, place of residence, travel, occupation or educational qualifications.

There will be no maturity benefit. Neither will there be any surrender value nor can any loan be taken against the product.

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Kings finally win, put a spoke in Royal Challengers' wheel

Punjab squeaks through off the last ball after Rahul and Gayle fifties, prevents Kohli's men from climbing to second on the table

IPL 2020

SPORTS BUREAU

Kings XI Punjab nearly made a mess of it once again, but Nicholas Pooran's six off the last ball ended the team's losing streak on Thursday. K.L. Rahul's men beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by eight wickets at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

With Rahul (61 n.o., 49b, 1x4, 5x6) and comeback man Chris Gayle (53, 45b, 1x4, 5x6) at the wicket, seven runs from the last two overs should have been a walk in the park.

Just five came off the 19th over bowled by Isuru Udana, but only two were required off six balls. But Yuzvendra Chahal kept Gayle – who did well to overcome the rustiness of not playing a game for nine months – quiet for the first two balls.

The scores were tied – at 171 – when the 'Universe Boss' was run out off the penultimate ball.

He was called through for a non-existent single by Rahul, who only managed two runs off six balls in the 19th



Back with a bang: Gayle returned in style for Kings XI. Right: Skipper Rahul continued his fine form. ■ BCCI/IPL



Right: Skipper Rahul continued his fine form. ■ BCCI/IPL

Innings scan

RCB	Dots	KXIP
33	46	
8	6	
8	14	
57/1	56/0	
8.55	RR	8.85

and 20th overs.

Fortunately Pooran took charge, stepping out and hitting the final ball over long-on. KXIP's only other win this season was also against RCB.

Sigh of relief

Rahul must have heaved a sigh of relief when he saw Pooran clear the fence. The

skipper had played some glorious strokes, like the pull over square-leg off Navdeep Saini.

Along with Mayank Agarwal (45, 25b, 4x4, 3x6), he added 78 for the first wicket.

And for once, the big runs from the openers were translated into points.

Earlier, captain Virat Kohli, in his 200th game for RCB,

top-scored with 48 (39b, 3x4), but his side was restricted well by the KXIP bowlers, led by leg-spinner M. Ashwin.

If it wasn't for the 24 runs clobbered in the final over by Chris Morris (25 not out, 8b, 1x4, 3x6) and Udana off Mohammed Shami, RCB likely wouldn't have been in the game.

The decision raised ques-

Before the nightmare, though, Shami had bowled a dream over in which he dismissed both Kohli and A.B. de Villiers.

The South African genius had come in too late, however, with RCB promoting left-handers Washington Sundar and Shivam Dube to tackle leg-spin.

The decision raised ques-

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Aaron Finch b M. Ashwin 20 (18b, 2x4, 1x6), Devdutt Padikkal c Pooran b Arshdeep 18 (12b, 1x4, 1x6), Virat Kohli c Rahul b Shami 45 (39b, 3x4), Washington Sundar c Jordan b M. Ashwin 13 (14b, 1x4), Shivam Dube c Rahul b Jordan 23 (19b, 2x6), A.B. de Villiers c Hooda b Shami 2 (5b); Chris Morris (not out) 25 (8b, 1x4, 3x6), Isuru Udana (not out) 10 (5b, 1x6); Extras (b-4, lb-2, w-6); Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 171.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-38 (Padikkal, 4.1 overs), 2-62 (Finch, 6.3), 3-86 (Washington, 10.3), 4-127 (Dube, 15.6), 5-134 (de Villiers, 17.3), 6-136 (Kohli, 17.5).

RCB BOWLING

Morris 4-0-22-0, Saini 4-0-21-0, Chahal 3-0-35-1, Udana 0-14-0, Siraj 3-0-44-0, Washington 4-0-38-0.

Toss: RCB.

Man-of-the-Match: Rahul. KXIP won by eight wickets off the final delivery.

KINGS XI BOWLING

Maxwell 4-0-28-0, Shami 4-0-

Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	12	0.990
Mumbai Indians	7	5	2	10	1.327
Royal Challengers	8	5	3	10	-0.139
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	4	3	8	-0.577
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	3	5	6	0.009
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	6	-0.390
Rajasthan Royals	8	3	5	6	-0.844
Kings XI Punjab	8	2	6	4	-0.295

After the RCB-KXIP match on Oct. 15

IN BRIEF



Commentator Kishore Bhimani passes away

Veteran sports journalist and cricket commentator Kishore Bhimani has passed away aged 80, family sources said on Thursday. Bhimani, who was on air when Sunil Gavaskar crossed 10,000 Test runs and when the second Tie happened in 1986, had worked for *The Statesman*. PTI

Lovlina tests COVID positive

KOLKATA Double World championship bronze medallist boxer and Olympic quota winner Lovlina Borgohain has tested positive for coronavirus, according to a statement from the Sports Authority of India on Thursday.

Divij-Withrow pair loses

COLOGNE Divij Sharan and Jackson Withrow (US) lost 6-3, 6-3 to Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut of France in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the €325,610 ATP tennis tournament here in Germany. Other results: €44,820 Challenger, Alicante, Spain: Doubles (quarterfinals): Gerard Granollers & Pedro Martinez (Esp) bt Purav Raja & Ramkumar Ramanathan 6-2, 6-2; Enzo Couacaud & Albano Olivetti (Fra) bt Luca Margaroli (Sui) & Sriram Balaji 6-4, 6-4.

Srikant in quarterfinals; Lakshya crashes out

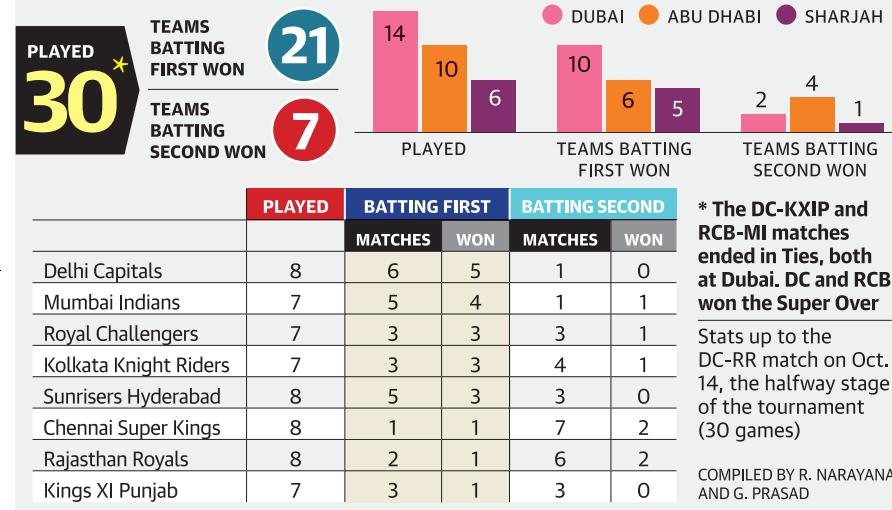
ODENSE Fifth seed K. Srikant stormed into the Denmark Open quarterfinals with a 21-15, 21-14 win over Jason Anthony Ho-Shue in the second round on Thursday. However, it was the end of the campaign for Lakshya Sen, who lost to Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus 15-21, 21-7, 21-17. PTI

Joshna loses in last-eight stage of Egyptian Open

CAIRO Joshua Chinappa's stay at the CIB Egyptian Open squash tournament came to an end on Thursday after the Indian was beaten by the second seed and local favourite Nour El Sherbini 11-5, 11-9, 11-9 in a quarterfinal that lasted 34 minutes.

Hot pursuits have gone cold

In IPL 2020, the dice has been loaded in favour of teams taking first strike, especially at Dubai and Sharjah. In all, a total has been defended successfully 21 times while there have been only seven productive chases



Can Kolkata halt Mumbai's run?

KKR sweats on Narine's participation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ABU DHABI

An explosive batting line-up and a lethal death-bowling attack will give defending champion Mumbai Indians a definitive edge over Kolkata Knight Riders when the two teams clash here on Friday.

MI is on a roll having won its last four games, while there are problems aplenty for KKR, which was decimated by Royal Challengers Bangalore in its last game.

But KKR also has a number of batsmen who can take any attack to the cleaners.

TODAY'S MATCH



ABU DHABI, 7.30 P.M. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 26

MI 20 | KKR 6

FORM GUIDE

(last five matches, latest game first)

MI W | W | W | W | L

KKR L | W | W | L | W | L

STAR SPORTS 1 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD)

Range-hitting is the name of the new game

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

Range-hitting has changed the dynamics of PowerPlay. The batsmen who practise this form of brutal but scientific strokeplay start with an enormous advantage in T20s.

Why do some batsmen keep clearing the fence with astonishing regularity while others walk back having been caught in the deep? The answer lies in Range-hitting.

Range-hitting is a specific drill where the batsman places cones at different corners of the ground – where

the boundaries are – and then strikes the ball only with the intention of clearing them.

And when your head is still and low, your eyes are invariably focused on the ball. So, your head is still, your eyes are on the ball and you hit the ball with a lovely, free swing of the willow. More often than not, the sphere lands in the stands.

Range-hitting is done with the intention of going over the fielders stationed on the fence, making them hapless spectators. And Range-hitting is not reckless striking of the ball. For instance, your head has to be still and low when you make contact with the ball for it to travel the maximum distance.

You also have baseball techniques coming into range-hitting. There is this transfer of weight from the thighs and hips as the ball is struck rather flat and with frightening force.

In fact, transfer of weight, as much as a still head, is the key in every aspect of

range-hitting.

Now, the bats are super strong, the batsmen are muscular having worked out in the gym. But then, it is range-hitting that lends them the cutting edge.

In fact, after his incredible 32-ball 74 with nine sixes for Rajasthan Royals against CSK in the ongoing IPL, Sanju Samson said, "Range-hitting is what the game demands in this generation. I had time to work out in these five months [lockdown period] and I think I have increased that ability."

Range-hitting is the name of the new game.

(Van de Beek 25).

Group 1: England 0 lost to Denmark 1 (Eriksen 35-pen); Iceland 1 (B. Saevarsson 17) lost to Belgium 2 (Lukaku 9, 38-pen).

Group 3: Croatia 1 (Vlaic 65) lost to France 2 (Griezmann 8, Mbappe 79); Portugal 3 (B. Silva 21, Jota 44, 72) bt Sweden 0.

League B: **Group 1:** Norway 1 (Dallas 68-og) bt Northern Ireland 0; Romania 0 lost to Austria 1 (Schopf 76).

Group 2: Scotland 1 (Fraser 6) bt Czech Republic 0; Slovakia 2 (Hamsik 16, Mak 38) lost to Israel 3 (Zahavi 68, 76, 89).

Group 3: Moldova 0 lost to Slovenia 4 (Lovric 8, Vuckic 37-pen, 42, 55); Greece 0 drew with Kosovo 0.

Ozan Tufan 76) drew with Serbia 2 (Milinkovic-Savic 22, Mitrovic 49-pen); Russia 0 drew with Hungary 0.

Group 4: Bulgaria 0 lost to Wales 1 (J. Williams 85); Finland 1 (Jensen 66) bt Republic of Ireland 0.

League C: **Group 2:** North Macedonia 1 (Alioski 90+3-pen) drew with Georgia 1 (Kvaratskhelia 74); Estonia 1 (Sappinen 14) drew with Armenia 1 (K. Hovhannyan 8).

Group

I didn't know I had bowled the fastest ball'

Delhi Capitals' pacer Anrich Nortje's delivery to Rajasthan Royals opener Jos Buttler measured at 156.2 kmph



Speed merchant: Anrich Nortje, who uncorked a thunderbolt while bowling to Jos Buttler, had bowled the five-fastest deliveries of this season's IPL till Wednesday. ■ BCCI/IPL

Jayawardene happy with MI's progress

We have been very consistent, says team head coach

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians has achieved much more in the first half of the Indian Premier League than it had hoped for. Not only has the defending champion broke its winless streak in the United Arab Emirates, it has also shed the tag of poor starters by winning five of its seven games.

No wonder then that head coach Mahela Jayawardene was upbeat ahead of its Thursday's encounter against Kolkata Knight Riders.

Wobbly start

"The start was little wobbly. The first game (versus CSK), we played good cricket but we didn't have that clinical instinct to finish it off. The



Mahela Jayawardene.
■ FILE PHOTO

Jayawardene said on Wednesday.

"Since then we have been very consistent, trying to improve in all departments, and playing some consistent cricket, so you can't complain. After seven matches, to be on 10 points and having two losses, one of those being Super Over. Overall, as a coach, I am happy but there are areas we can improve and keep improving because the tournament is always going to get tough and tougher at the back-end."

Having lost all its five games in UAE in 2014, the team has made a strong comeback this time around. In fact, having used just 12 players in seven games, it appears the most settled unit in the tournament so far.

IPL 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI

Delhi Capitals' speedster Anrich Nortje, who bowled the fastest delivery in IPL history, says he was unaware of the feat until after the end of the match.

The 26-year-old South African clocked a breathtaking 156.2 kmph while bowling to Jos Buttler in the third over of Rajasthan Royals' run-chase against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday.

Bettering Steyn

He bettered compatriot Dale Steyn's (154.4 kmph) record in the process. "I heard about it afterwards. I did not know about it at the time," Nortje told his teammate Shikhar Dhawan in a video posted by IPLT20.com.

"I have been working real-

ly hard to get my pace up, been a couple of seasons. Been working on my braced leg and my front arm... simple stuff. Happy to get some pace behind it but you obviously need to get it in the right area, that's the most important thing."

Bowling the fastest delivery did not have the desired result for Nortje as Buttler scooped it for a boundary. The Englishman had played the same shot the previous delivery.

However, the duel didn't last long as the South African claimed Buttler's wicket with a 155 kmph thunderbolt, the second fastest ball in IPL history.

"Yeah, the battle against Buttler was interesting. I know he plays the scoop shots, but when he played the first one, it took me by surprise," Nortje said.

Nortje, who made his debut after Capitals roped him as a replacement for all-rounder Chris Woakes ahead of the start of the season, has clocked the five fastest deliveries in the ongoing edition of the IPL.

Rabada full of praise

Kagiso Rabada, who bowls in tandem with Nortje, was delighted for his compatriot, adding that they are learning from each other. "It looks like that every game. Really happy for him but not happy for the batter," said Rabada.

"When we play we only think about the delivery and not about the speed gun. We learn a lot from each other. He is a real fast bowler and I can learn some technical stuff from him. I have some experience which I can tell him about. It is good to chat," added Rabada.

"Yeah, the battle against Buttler was interesting. I know he plays the scoop shots, but when he played the first one, it took me by surprise," Nortje said.

Relax quarantine for players: Aus Open chief

Bio-secure bubble ought to be enough, says Tiley

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MELBOURNE

Australian Open chief executive Craig Tiley wants international tennis players arriving for the first Grand Slam tournament of 2021 to be exempt from the 14-day strict hotel quarantines that are mandatory now for inbound travellers.

Tiley said on Thursday he was absolutely confident the Australian Open would go ahead as planned at Melbourne Park from January 18-31, along with lead-up events including the men's ATP Cup and tournaments in Brisbane, Sydney and Hobart.

He said he was counting on Australia's State and Federal governments to relax border restrictions and grant special approval for players to go into a bio-secure training bubble, similar to what the U.S. Open and French Open did recently.



"You can't ask players to quarantine for two weeks and then step out and be ready to play a Grand Slam," he said.

Roger Federer and Serena Williams have already committed to playing in Australia, but Tiley said players simply wouldn't show up if they were not allowed to prepare properly.

Tiley said preparations for the Australian Open were getting to crunch time now.

"We need commitments from the governments and the health officers," he said.

Siddhant scores six in Sona Polo's big win

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Siddhant Sharma scored six goals in guiding Sona Polo to an overwhelming 11 goals to 1-1/2 victory over Army Green in a league match of the Bhopal Pataudi Cup 8-goal polo tournament at the Jaipur Polo ground here on Thursday.

It was the second loss for the Army Green team, which had been beaten by Army Red on the opening day.

Jindal Panther revived its fortunes by beating Aravali Polo 10 goals to 5-1/2, after having lost to Rajnigandha

Achievers.

The results (league): Sona Polo 11 (Siddhant Sharma 6, Tommy Severn 4, Sunjay Kapur) bt Army Green 1-1/2 (Anant Rajpurohit, handicap 1/2); Jindal Panther 10 (Phil Seller 5, Simran Shergill 4, Naveen Jindal) bt Aravali Polo 5-1/2 (Angad Kalaan 3, Nick Sherring 2, handicap 1/2).

Army Red 12 (Vishal Chauhan 6, ARS Warraich 3, NK Ravinder Mang 2, Aman Singh) bt Army Green 6 (Sameer Choudhary 3, Anant Rajpurohit 3); Rajnigandha Achievers 8 (Daniel Otamendi 5, Padmanabh Singh 3) bt Jindal Panther 6-1/2 (Simran Shergill 3, Phil Seller 2, Venkatesh Jindal, handicap 1/2).



Pat Cummins. ■ BCCI/IPL

'Got to make amends against MI'

Cummins hopes KKR bowls better in their second meeting

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders speedster Pat Cummins hopes that his side will learn from its mistakes and perform better against Mumbai Indians in their second meeting of the Indian Premier League at Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

"We have got to make amends for our first match. They beat us, (we) did not play our best game. Now there is a chance to test ourselves," Cummins said.

Big hitters

The Australian said KKR bowlers must give their best against an opponent packed with big-hitters. "Hopefully we will bowl better than we did in the first match. We will concentrate on what we do well as bowlers."

Cummins looked forward to providing more breakthroughs. "I have been bowling quite well. I am happy with my rhythm, would love to take a few more wickets, especially bowling the PowerPlay... Trying, working on a few new things."

Assessing KKR's performance, including four wins and three losses, Cummins said the team could improve further.

Good signs

"I don't think we have played anywhere near our best yet... The real good signs were we had two matches against Chennai and Kings XI where we had no rights to win and we still won. We feel like we can win from any position," said Cummins.

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