FOLLOW US:
thehindu.com
facebook.com/thehindu
twitter.com/the_hindu

THE HINDU

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2020

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

DELHI
CITY EDITION
16 pages • ₹10.00

Minister mocks Bengal Governor Dhankar at Gandhi event
Page 9

Macron says Islam is 'in crisis', unveils anti-radicalism plan
Page 13

Halep, Svitolina, and Thiem cruise into fourth round of French Open
Page 16

Garg, Abhishek and bowlers help Sunrisers beat Super Kings
Page 15

PRINTED AT · CHENNAI · COIMBATORE · BENGALURU · HYDERABAD · MADURAI · NOIDA · VISAKHAPATNAM · THIRUVANANTHAPURAM · KOCHI · VIJAYAWADA · MANGALURU · TIRUCHIRAPALLI · KOLKATA · HUBBALLI · MOHALI · MALAPPURAM · MUMBAI · TIRUPATI · LUCKNOW · CUTTACK · PATNA

NEARBY

Farmers prepare to stage protests across Haryana

GURUGRAM

The Haryana chapter of the All-India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee on Friday announced that it will hold demonstrations across the State against the three farm Bills recently passed by Parliament. They are planning to "gherao" Delhi on November 26 and 27.

CITY ▸ PAGE 3

Cong. claims fulfilment of manifesto promises

JAIPUR

The ruling Congress in Rajasthan on Friday claimed that the State government had fulfilled more than half of the promises made in the party's manifesto for the 2018 Assembly election during the first 21 months of its tenure. The party released a "report card" at a virtual event.

NORTH & EAST ▸ PAGE 4

Delhi reports 2,920 new virus cases, 37 deaths

NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 2,920 new COVID-19 cases, 37 deaths and 3,171 recoveries in the past 24 hours, according to a heath bulletin released by the Delhi government on Friday. There are now 26,450 active cases in the Capital, out of which 15,852 are under home isolation.

CITY ▸ PAGE 3

Trinamool MPs stopped outside Hathras village

District SP, four others suspended over gang-rape

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD / NEW DELHI

Political pressure on the Uttar Pradesh government continued on Friday over its handling of the Hathras gang-rape and the rushed late night cremation of the victim.

In a late evening development, the State government suspended Hathras Superintendent of Police Vikrant Vir and four other officials for negligence over the incident. The action was taken on the basis of the first report submitted by the Special Investigation Team, said Awanish Awasthi, Additional Chief Secretary (Home).

With the Hathras administration continuing to bar the entry of outsiders, the situation at the victim's village of Bulgaddhi remained tense. A delegation of Trinamool Congress MPs, which tried to reach the village to meet the victim's family, was manhandled and Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien pushed to the ground by the police about 1.5 km from the village. Later in the day, more leaders from the Congress, the Aam Admi Party and the Peace Party of India were turned back by the administration.

The Trinamool leaders, including Lok Sabha MPs Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar and Pratima Mondal and former MP Mamata Thakur, apart from Mr. O'Brien, said they had travelled individually to the village to ensure that Section 144 imposed in the area is not violated.

The police refused to let even the women MPs meet the victim's family, despite repeated requests. When Ms. Mondal tried to walk towards the victim's house, she was blocked by SDM Prem Prakash Meena.

This led to a tussle between Mr. Meena and Mr. O'Brien, in which the MP was pushed down. The delegation later staged a dharna around a kilometre away from the victim's home.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8
MORE REPORTS ON ▸ PAGE 9
CASTE, CRIME, AND A CREMATION ▸ PAGE 7

Putting up a fight: Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien being roughed up by the police near Hathras on Friday. ▪ ANI

3 held in Bhadohi for girl's death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Three people have been arrested on the charge of killing a Dalit girl by smashing her head with bricks, the police in Bhadohi, Uttar Pradesh, said on Friday.

The 14-year-old was found dead in Gopiganj area of eastern Uttar Pradesh, around 260 km from Lucknow, and was suspected to have been raped, police said on Thursday.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Trump, wife test positive

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

With just over a month to go for the presidential election, U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania announced they had tested positive for coronavirus. The news will mean a dramatic reduction in the in-person rallies Mr. Trump can hold in October.

Announcing his condition, Mr. Trump tweeted: "Tonight, FLOTUS and I tested positive for COVID-19. We will begin our quarantine and recovery process immediately. We will get through this TOGETHER!"

CARRYING OUT DUTIES ▸ PAGE 13

Grim picture

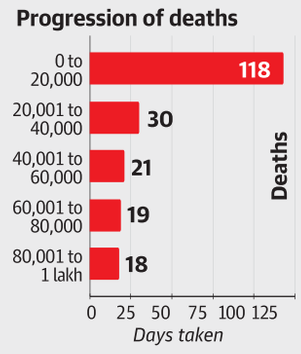
*AS OF 10 PM

India's COVID-19 death toll crossed the **1 lakh mark,** with 1,035* fatalities recorded on Friday. Only the **U.S. (2,07,816)** and **Brazil (1,44,680)** have registered more deaths. Fatalities in the country are growing at a fast pace. While the first **20,000 deaths** were recorded in 118 days, it took only 18 days for the last **20,000**

Long wait: People in a queue to get tested for COVID-19 in Vijayawada on Friday. ▪ V. RAJU

- Maharashtra accounted for almost **40%** of the total deaths in the country
- Between September 26 and October 1, India recorded **1,070 deaths** daily on average, the highest in the world

Progression of deaths



State	Deaths
Maharashtra	37,480
Tamil Nadu	9,653
Karnataka	9,138
Uttar Pradesh	5,917
Andhra Pradesh	5,900
Delhi	5,438
West Bengal	5,070
Punjab	3,501
Gujarat	3,478
Madhya Pradesh	2,372

LJP will go it alone in Bihar but back Modi

It will contest on anti-Nitish plank, support BJP's CM candidate after election

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

It is almost certain that the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) will contest 143 seats outside the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with the slogan "*Modi se bair nahi, Nitish teri khair nahi,*" which roughly translates to "No enmity with Modi but won't spare [Bihar Chief Minister and JD (U) president] Nitish Kumar".

LJP president Chirag Paswan met BJP president J.P. Nadda and Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday. It will be a friendly alliance, with the BJP offering not to contest in the seats that will fall in the LJP's kitty. The LJP also assured the BJP that in the post-poll scenario, it will back the BJP's candidate for Chief Minister. A formal announcement is likely over the weekend.

A senior LJP leader said the party was in the NDA at the national level but not at the State-level.

Technically, therefore, it is not formally walking out of the NDA.

With party patriarch Ram Vilas Paswan seriously ill and undergoing treatment at a Delhi hospital, his resignation from the Cabinet post is completely ruled out.

BJP's proxy

Practically, the LJP will work as the BJP's proxy.

The LJP leader said, "In the 2015 elections, the BJP contested in 157 seats. With the JD(U) wishing to play the big brother in the alliance, they will get fewer than 120 seats. So there will be 37 candidates of the BJP who will have nowhere to go but find space with us".

To counter the JD(U)'s candidates, the LJP, a Dalit outfit, is likely to field the so-called upper caste candidates, according to its strategist. The whole idea is to mop up the anti-Nitish and pro-Modi votes, on the JD(U) seats. The whole campaign of the party will be pro-BJP and anti-Nitish.

The LJP has proposed this as a win-win situation for itself and the BJP as well. The BJP gets to accommodate its candidates, albeit under the LJP symbol, while the LJP will be able to increase its profile manifold.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Anger boils over

Members of various organisations during a protest over the death of a woman who was allegedly gang-raped in Hathras, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Friday. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was also at the protest. ▪ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA (SEE ALSO PAGE 2)

PDP leaders seek to meet Mehbooba

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Days after the Supreme Court's observation that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leaders should approach the local administration for any meeting with incarcerated leader Mehbooba Mufti, the party has formally written to the District Magistrate, Srinagar. "The PDP's top leaders have sought permission to meet Ms. Mufti at the Sub-Jail Fairview in Srinagar," PDP spokesperson Suhail Bukhari told *The Hindu*.

In the letter, jointly signed by the PDP's G.N. Hanjura, A.R. Veeri, Khursheed Alam and Aijaz Ahmad Mir, a copy of the SC order is also attached, which says "as and when a request is made to meet her [Ms. Mufti] the same should be promptly considered by the authorities".

Intention to abet suicide cannot be assumed, it has to be evident: SC

Solid and visible proof needed, says three-judge Bench

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The intention to abet suicide cannot be assumed and it needs to be backed by solid, visible proof, the Supreme Court held in a judgment.

A three-judge Bench of Justices N.V. Ramana, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy said every crime should be backed by a "state of mind" or *mens rea* or intention.

The police have to establish that an accused wanted to abet the suicide. 'Abetment' is defined in Section 107 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Its ingredients consist of instigating a person or to intentionally aid a person to do or not do something. Similarly, the crime of 'abetment of suicide' under Section 306 of the IPC involves instigating or actively aiding a person to take his own life.

The police cannot assume the intention (*mens rea*) of the abettor of a suicide. It has to be evident, it held.

'Something on record'

"In order to prove *mens rea*, there has to be something on record to establish or show that the appellant herein had a guilty mind and in furtherance of that state of mind, abetted the suicide of the deceased. The ingredient of *mens rea* cannot be assumed to be ostensibly present but has to be visible and conspicuous", Justice Roy, who authored the judgment, said.

The judgment came on an appeal filed by Gurcharan Singh, who was convicted of abetting the suicide of his wife 22 years ago in Punjab.

The trial court found him guilty, saying the woman was pushed into taking her own life when her hopes of a happy relationship was dashed by his "wilful neglect". There was, however, no direct evidence of any cruelty on his part towards her. The trial court had even acquitted the man of dowry harassment charges.

The High Court agreed with the trial court, saying the death was a cause of the "circumstances and the atmosphere" at home.

In his appeal before the Supreme Court, Singh argued about the complete lack of evidence to show that he had instigated or intentionally aided his wife to take her own life. here was no proof that he wilfully neglected her, he said.

Setting aside his conviction, the court said it cannot make conjectures about why a young woman with two small children chose to take her own life.

Local BJP leader, four others arrested for running sex racket in Rajasthan

Party removes its Sawai Madhopur Mahila Morcha chief

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

Five persons, including a local woman BJP leader, have been arrested in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district on charges of running an alleged sex racket, which came to light following a complaint of sexual assault lodged by a minor girl with the police last month. Two government employees are also among the accused who have been arrested.

The girl, aged 17, alleged that BJP leader Sunita Verma had forced her to have physical relations with several persons between October 2019 and May 2020 and also took money, including her father's savings, from her. The accused filmed the incident when the girl was allegedly raped for the first time in a hotel and later used the video clips to blackmail her, according to the complaint.

The BJP has removed Ms. Verma as the party's district Mahila Morcha president after her arrest. The case against the BJP leader and her accomplices has been registered under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

More arrests likely

Sawai Madhopur Women Cell's Circle Officer Om Prakash Solanki said on Friday that an accomplice of Ms. Verma had befriended the girl when she was returning from school. She later started sending the girl to meet several persons who allegedly raped her. The 17-year-old was allegedly assaulted more than eight times at different locations, Mr. Solanki said.

Those arrested include Sandeep Sharma, who is a clerk at Sawai Madhopur District Industries Centre, Shyoraj Meena, who is a peon in District Collectorate, and Raju Lal Raigar, an electrician.

The police were probing whether Ms. Verma had also blackmailed some other girls and forced them into the racket. More arrests could take place in the coming days in connection with the case, according to the police.

Branded witches, two killed and cremated in Assam

Witch-hunting claimed 107 lives in the State from 2011 to November 2019

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The police in central Assam's Karbi Anglong district have arrested nine persons, including three women, for killing a man and a woman after branding them as witches and cremating them together.

Police said a murder case has been registered under the Indian Penal Code and the Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Act against the nine who confessed to the killing.

The incident happened in Rahimapur, an Adivasi village about 80 km from district headquarters Diphu, on September 30.

"A 50-year-old woman and an unrelated 28-year-old man were killed and cremated together after a kangaroo court was held in the courtyard of the village headman to hold them responsible for the death of a girl on September 27," the district's Superintendent of Police Debojit Deuri told *The Hindu*.

The two were accused of practising black magic that made the girl fall ill and die.

"All the nine arrested confessed to having killed and cremated the two. Six others accused in the case are absconding," said Mr. Deuri.

A local police officer, recounting the confessional statements, said the two were bludgeoned to death before being cremated. Remains of their bodies recovered from the pyre have been collected for forensic test.

Witch-hunting has been an age-old social malaise in Assam, mostly reported from the western part of the State. Data presented in the State Assembly said witch-hunting claimed the lives of 107 people from 2011 to November 2019. The Assam police had in 2001 launched Project Prahari to counsel certain communities against practising witch-hunting. The initiative by former Director-General of Police Kuladhar Saikia followed the killing of five people after being labelled as "witches" in Kokrajhar district's Thaigarguri village.

Lynching cases

Karbi Anglong district has not been as notorious for witch-hunting but has recorded several instances of mob-lynching in recent years. The most infamous among them was the killing of two adventure-loving Assamese friends - Goa-based sound engineer Nilotpal Das and Guwahati-based businessman Abhijeet Nath - on June 8, 2018.

On February 28, a court in Diphu awarded life imprisonment to 12 people for lynching 16-year-old Jhankar Saikia on July 1, 2013, following a tiff over an auto charging ₹10 more than the normal fare.

Women protest against the social malaise in Guwahati. ▪ FILE PHOTO

16% of PDS rice stocks in M.P. 'unfit'

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

As much as 16.6% rice stocks meant for the public distribution system across Madhya Pradesh have been found beyond prevention of food adulteration (PFA) standards or unfit for human consumption, during an inspection.

Of the 2.747 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) inspected across 52 districts, 1.806 LMT was found 'issuable', while 0.457 LMT was found to be beyond the PFA limit, Madhya Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited managing director Abhijeet Agrawal told *The Hindu*.

DETAILS ON ▸ PAGE 4

Modern satyagraha: (From left) Various organisations protest against the Hathras incident; Brinda Karat and Swara Bhaskar at Jantar Mantar on Friday evening. ▪SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Hathras case: hundreds gather at Jantar Mantar, demand Yogi's resignation

Activists and politicians blame police for not letting them meet victim's kin; calling incident 'painful', Kejriwal says victim's family should not be put under lock and key

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Hundreds of citizens, student groups, activists and politicians gathered at Jantar Mantar here on Friday evening demanding justice for the Hathras gangrape and murder case victim. The protesters demanded Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's resignation alleging increased violence against women and atrocities against Dalits in the State.

Besides the incident, protesters said they were also outraged by what happened after it, including the last rites of the victim not having been performed in her family's presence. They chanted slogans against the U.P. Police for the manner in which they have handled the case.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the accused should be hanged at the earliest. "Whatever has happened is painful. The whole episode – the treatment meted out to the victim, the non-registration of the FIR, her not getting proper treatment – this is all very painful," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added that there is an impression that attempts are being made to save the accused. "Allow the family to meet whoever they want, don't put them under lock and key. There should also be no politics on this incident; whether it happens in U.P, Rajasthan or Delhi, the point is that such incidents should not happen," he said.

Yechury on BJP 'silence'

CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury lashed out at the silence of the BJP's top brass on the incident. He said: "Silence of Centre, BJP top brass on Hathras incident and U.P. government's response speaks volumes about the party's authoritarian face".

Lawyer and activist Prashant Bhushan alleged that what was happening in U.P. was "goonda raj" and said that the police have surrounded Hathras and are not allowing Opposition leaders and media persons to enter so that the voices of the victim's family are not heard.

Actor Swara Bhasker called for President's rule in U.P. and hit out at the government and the police for failing to prevent a crime and also not letting her family perform the last rites.

> **The accused should be hanged at the earliest. There should also be no politics on this incident.**
>
> ARVIND KEJRIWAL
> Chief Minister

MLA and activist Jignesh Mewani alleged that the U.P. Police was putting pressure on the victim's family to sign statements to cover up their failures and was therefore not allowing the media and Opposition leaders to enter Hathras.

Bhim Army Chief Chandrasekhar Aazad called for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to break his silence and for the Supreme Court to intervene in the matter. "I will visit Hathras and ensure that the victim gets justice. We will not stop our protest until the U.P. Chief Minister resigns," Mr. Aazad said.

Students' voice

At the protest, there were a large number of students as well.

All India Student Association Secretary (Delhi) Prasenjeet Kumar said U.P. has become a State where rapists and culprits get protection from the government. "In Unnao, Kuldeep Sengar was protected. And once again this is happening. Without 100% conviction rate, rape culture cannot be stopped. The district-level officers must be booked under SC/ST Act immediately," said Mr. Kumar.

The protest was supposed to be at India Gate but after the police barricaded the area, the venue was shifted to Jantar Mantar. The entry gates of Janpath, Rajiv Chowk and Patel Chowk metro station were closed to prevent people from gathering at Jantar Mantar after the crowd started growing.

Following this, later in the evening, the police registered a case against the protesters. "The gathering was in violation of orders issued by NGT, Supreme Court and Delhi Police," said Delhi Police Spokesperson. The protesters have violated prohibitory orders and other laws regarding COVID-19 and a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, Epidemic Act and Disaster Management Act has been registered at Parliament Street police station against them.

IN BRIEF

BIMTECH hosts virtual book launch event

GREATER NOIDA

Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), Greater Noida, hosted a virtual book launch event, 'The Fresh Page', in collaboration with EdiCo and Entrepioneer for the national best-selling author, Sanil Sachar's book, 'And... Perhaps Love' on September 30.

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	180	Gurugram	155
Ghaziabad	204	Faridabad	201
Noida	179	Greater Noida	204

Good 0-50 | Satisfactory 51-100 | Moderate 101-200 | Poor 201-300 | Very Poor 301-400 | Severe >400

Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) | Source: CPCB

'Find solution to flooding of basements in GK-II'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked the South Delhi Municipal Corporation to find a solution to flooding of basements in Greater Kailash-II here, saying steps taken by it do not inspire confidence.

Justice Najmi Waziri also directed the PWD, along with three members of resident welfare association, to clean storm water drains and conduct video recording of the proceedings.

The court said if the residents have been suffering from inundation by water in their basements, solution has to be found primarily by the Corporation. It also directed the civic body to use drone photography and work along with corporation to clean the storm water drainage.

It directed SDMC to visit the houses of the petitioners and those who have annexed photographs of inundated basements in the petition, and come out with a system in place within 10 days. On previous hearing, the court had said: "As far as citizens are concerned, they have to approach only one agency for their civic amenities – SDMC". The court was hearing a petition by Sadhana Mohan, who was aggrieved by water accumulating in the basements of their properties and in the neighbourhood.

9-km-long cycle track inaugurated in Gurugram

Over 1,500 people bicycled on the new stretch on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Around nine-km-long dedicated two-way cycle track between HUDA City Centre metro station and Subhash Chowk along Netaji Subhash Marg was inaugurated on Friday to mark the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

More than 1,500 people bicycled on the newly-inaugurated stretch. The cyclothon was especially loved by children with bicycles available for them as well.

Nagarro, Brookefield Properties and Essel Energy partnered with authorities and civil society groups to organise the event. Members of Kalagram painted the blank walls along the stretch. Cycling groups like Road Riders joined the rally.

The newly inaugurated two-way cycle track in Gurugram. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority, Chief Executive Officer, V.S. Kundu addressed cyclists, sharing upcoming plans of the city. He also appreciated efforts of municipality, public agencies, and other organisations involved in getting the track made.

He urged participants to keep cycling and using the track since it was good for health and also given lesser opportunity to encroachments of any kind.

Cleanliness drive

MLA Panipat and Chairman Swachh Bharat Mission State Taskforce, Mahipal Dhanda also addressed people about cleanliness drive around Gurugram.

It was emphasised that Swachh Gurugram with green mobility can attain clean air as well.

"It was a big gift to the people of the city on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. For long there have been talks of creating space for the cyclists, but little precious was done so far. It is a good beginning. Mr. Kundu spoke about creating more cycle tracks in the city. To promote non-motorised transport and public transport is the need of the hour in the city," said Associate Director Nagarro Sarika Panda Bhatt, a resident of Malibu Towne, also part of the cyclothon.

NDMC opens dedicated cycle corridor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

To promote cycling in Lutyens' Delhi, the NDMC has inaugurated a 6 km dedicated pilot corridor that stretches from India Gate to Jor Bagh Metro Station via Lodhi Garden.

Titled 'NDMC Cycle4Change', the civic body said at a time when the physical and sports activities have been drastically curtailed in view of the pandemic, it has initiated a move towards normalcy and road safety by organising pilot cycle rides in New Delhi area.

To elevate the safety, convenience and experience of cyclists, this pilot corridor will provide a unique cycling experience around the playful recreational space surrounded by gorgeous wall paintings, the NDMC said.

It added that the cycle tour will continue till October 10 for a duration of three hours in the morning between 6.00 am to 9.00 am and two hours in the evening from 5.00 pm to 7.00 pm every day in the dedicated pilot corridor. The route begins at Bikaner House (India Gate) moves via Humayun Road, Amrita Shergil Marg, Lodhi Garden Gate No.6, Lodhi Garden Gate No.11, Avenue Road-II, Lodhi Colony Block-17, Lodhi Colony Cycle Plaza and ends at Jor Bagh Metro Station.

To ensure safety of the participants, especially women and children, NDMC has deployed Marshals during the specified timings. E-bike, scooters and motorcycles are not allowed on cycle tracks.

Secretary of NDMC, Amit Singla, invited citizens to take part in the cycle ride and bring their own cycle or rent a smart bike from the smart bike stations in New Delhi area. "Based on the success of this pilot project, many more corridors will be dedicated in other areas in the coming winters," he added.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

WAGON REPAIR WORKSHOP KOTA JN.
NIT No.: M-324-2-6-BODYREP-02 & M-324-2-6-Stripping-03
Date: 29.09.2020
E-Tender Notice

For and on behalf of the President of India, Chief Works Manager, Wagon Repair Shop, Kota invites E-Tenders for following works:- **S.N.-1, Tender No.:** M-324-2-6-BODYREP-02, **Description of work:** Stripping (gas cutting), fitting and welding of MS patches (Railway material) and misc. Body repair work of 72 nos. of BCN/BCNA & BOXN wagons at WAGON REPAIR SHOP, KOTA, **Qty.:** 72 Nos. wagon, **Approx. Cost of the work:** ₹ 40,47,481.66, **Earnest money:** ₹ 81,000/-, **Cost of Tender form:** ₹ 3,000/-, **Completion period:** 06 months, **Time and date of closing/opening of tender:** Closing **12.00 hrs** on **29.10.2020** & Opening at **12.30 hrs** on **29.10.2020, S.N.-2, Tender No.:** M-324-2-6-Stripping-03, **Description of work:** Stripping (gas cutting, cleaning) of 1689 Nos. wagons (Mild Steel and Stainless Steel Wagon) at Wagon Repair Shop, Kota, **Qty.:** 1689 Nos. wagon, **Approx. Cost of the work:** ₹ 1,19,31,833.82, **Earnest money:** ₹ 2,09,700/-, **Cost of Tender form:** ₹ 5,000/-, **Completion period:** 24 Months, **Time and date of closing/opening of tender:** Closing **12.00 hrs** on **28.10.2020** & Opening at **12.30 hrs** on **28.10.2020, Note:** E-Tender notice complete details are available on the website **https://www.ireps.gov.in** and also available on the tender notice board of progress section in CWM office, Kota. Offers are acceptable through E-tender only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such offer received shall be ignored.

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/I Wagon Repair Shop, WCR, Kota

रेल यात्रा के दौरान शिकायत हेतु 138 पर एवं सुरक्षा हेतु 182 पर संपर्क करें।

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL
RIDGE ROAD, DHAULA KUAN, NEW DELHI-10

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from leading firms with professional expertise for providing Housekeeping services to Army Public School, Dhaula Kuan. Those with experience in providing services in public schools and having registration No, EPF Code, ESI Code, GST Code etc may contact school office between **11:00 a.m to 2:00 p.m.** on any working day for collection of tender forms costing **Rs1,000/-**. Last date for submission of tender form is **09.10.2020 by 1100 hrs**.

Principal

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
P.H.E (M&P) DIVISION, HMT, SRINAGAR.

Phone: - 0194- 2496307,E-Mail:- xenmandp@gmail.com

Dates-Corrigendum

Subject: - Extension of dates for Supply of ISI marked Centrifugally Cast (Spun) Ductile Pipes conforming to IS: 8329/2000, read with upto date amendments for assorted sizes ranging from NB100mm upto and including NB400mm (in class K7) from Govt. registered / Gem approved manufacturers holding valid CML certification for the manufacture of said diameters of D. I. Pipes required for petty and maintenance works of the Department.

Ref: 1. This office NIT No: PHE/QC&PD/09/2020-21/e-Tender Dated: 12-09-2020.
2. Representation Made by different firms for extension of e-NIT.

In light of above referred representation, the above referred e-tender is hereby re-scheduled as follows:

1	Tender Notice No.	**PHE/M&P/ 09 of 2020-21/ e-Tender Dated: 12-09-2020.**
2	Date of Inviting Tender	12-09-2020……10.00AM
3	Clarification End Date	07-10-2020……04.00PM
4	Document Downloading End Date	13-10-2020……02.00PM
5	On Line Document Submission End Date	13-10-2020……4.00PM
6.	Date of opening of Cover 1st.	14-10-2020……2.00PM

No: PHE/M&P/2243-46
Dated: 29-09-2020

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti PHE (QC&PD),
HMT Srinagar

DIPK-6605/20

Roads around Ashram Chowk to bear the brunt of construction work

Projects undertaken to ease congestion in city's busiest transit points

SAURABH TRIVEDI
JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

For the next nine months, traffic on Barapulla and other roads around Ashram Chowk will continue to witness congestion due to two ongoing construction projects on the arterial Ring Road by the Public Works Department (PWD).

These include, the extension of the Ashram flyover to the DND Flyway and an underpass at a cost of ₹125 crore and ₹75 crore respectively.

Though both are intended to ease congestion at one of the busiest transit points in the city in the long run, commuters will have to wait for several months to reap the benefits.

Alternative routes

While the extension of the flyover is expected to be completed only after a year, the underpass is expected to be completed by mid-2021, necessitating the diversion of vehicular traffic to alternate routes leading to a ripple effect on stretches in the vicinity of Ashram. Anjitha Chepyala, DCP (Traffic) of Southern Range, said extra traffic policemen have been deployed on diverted routes to ensure smooth traffic movement.

> **We have called extra traffic policemen from nearby traffic circles to manage traffic on diverted routes. Before enforcing diversion, we have made all arrangements to avoid any inconvenience to motorists. Entry timing of heavy vehicles have been strictly monitored.**
>
> ANJITHA CHEPYALA
> DCP (Traffic) of Southern Range

"We have called extra traffic policemen from nearby traffic circles to manage traffic on diverted routes," said Ms. Chepyala. "Before enforcing diversion, we have made all arrangements to avoid any inconvenience to motorists. Entry timing of heavy vehicles have been strictly monitored," Ms. Chepyala said.

Traffic police said that Ashram Chowk, the intersection of Mathura Road and Ring Road is one of the busiest crossings in South Delhi. On a 24-hour basis, about 2.8 lakh PCU (passenger car units) pass through Ashram Chowk amounting to about 11,600 PCU per hour on an average. Traffic volumes reach saturation point, both, during morning as well as evening peak hours.

Reduce travel time

The extension of Ashram up to DND Flyway will be through a six-lane flyover intended to decrease the travel time between Noida and Ashram due to no extended signals, allowing commuters travelling from Lajpat Nagar to Noida and Sarai Kale Khan to face no diversions or signals. Ramps of about 1,400 metres will be constructed for Sarai Kale Khan and will also be built for Ashram from ITO in addition to a subway for the convenience of pedestrians.

The underpass at Ashram Chowk is likely to be completed by April-May 2021.

On completion, the underpass will help in mitigating the current traffic congestion at Ashram Chowk by allowing traffic to pass through without stopping from Jangpura towards Sarita Vihar and from Sarita Vihar towards Jangpura, along Mathura Road. According to the PWD, the 410-metre-long underpass will be four lanes, and after its completion, 41% of the traffic will use it.

Seven months on, tensions still writ large in Shiv Vihar

Small-scale flare-ups and a general air of hostility strain the nerves of the already anxious Muslim residents in the north-east Delhi locality that witnessed communal violence in February this year

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Reconstruction work in progress at Madeena Masjid in north-east Delhi's Shiv Vihar. ▪ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

As one enters north-east Delhi's Shiv Vihar, the dug-up streets are a reminder of the large-scale destruction witnessed in the area during the communal violence that erupted in the city in February this year.

Seven months on, the locals are still jittery. Adding to their anxiety and fears has been recent incidents of loud chanting of religious slogans for two consecutive Tuesdays.

On September 22, the local Muslim community submitted an application at the Karawal Nagar police station stating they hoped that the police would not allow miscreants to cause problems in the area. Based on this, police personnel were deployed at strategic locations. The last two Tuesdays (September 22 and 29) have been peaceful, they said.

"We have not forgotten what happened seven months ago... how houses were burnt and vandalised... how we fled our homes... and it looks like they are ready to repeat it," cried Zarina Begum (63), who has been living in the area for 35 years.

A 48-year-old resident of street number 13 near Madeena Masjid, which was damaged during the riots, said that it was after sunset on September 15 when loud chants of 'Jai Shri Ram' were heard.

Second time in a row

Groups of men were seen holding saffron flags and roaming the streets. "We told our young sons to stay indoors fearing the matter might escalate. Because it had happened for the second time in a row, all the elderly women decided to go and talk to the people who seemed to be doing the chanting... where people had gathered in large numbers," she said, adding that they went and talked to a resident who lives on a street close to the mosque.

Subsequently, police and Rapid Action Force (RAF) officials who have been stationed in the area since February were called in and the matter was settled, the locals said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North East) Ved Prakash Surya said, "Shiv Vihar is a mixed population area. One community was observing their religious practices, which was misconstrued by the other community. Respectable members from both the communities were called and their apprehensions were amicably resolved. The situation is absolutely normal and peaceful."

Similar religious chants were heard on September 8. A teenager who claimed to have been part of *Hanuman Chalisa* recitals in the area for the past 25 weeks said they would continue the practice. When asked if he was aware of groups of men roaming the streets chanting slogans, he denied any knowledge.

Vandana Gupta, a resident of the area who organised the Tuesday recitations, submitted a complaint with the police on September 18 alleging that the worshipping of September 15 was interrupted by a group of people who threatened them and she is scared.

In Ms. Gupta's opinion, the riots were started by the Muslims, and the Hindus only reacted. "If they had not started it, this would not have happened with them," she said, referring to the burnt and vandalised houses of Muslims in the area.

Ms. Gupta claimed she saved the only Muslim house on her street and ensured the safety of her neighbours till February 26. But, now the relationship of the Hindus on the street with the sole Muslim family have soured, she added.

"Just to get compensation, they [the Muslim family] told police that ₹6 lakh and gold were stolen from their house. It brought bad name to the street and we do not believe that they could have had that kind of money or gold," Ms. Vandana said.

Arti, another resident, said: "We are only performing a pooja, we are not selling arms and ammunition. They perform their namaaz anywhere anytime, why should they have a problem with us?"

Soured relationships

She admitted that relationships between the communities had changed after the riots. "There used to be a lot of exchange of food earlier, our kids used to address them as *chacha, mausi, bua*... but now there is hardly any interaction," she said.

Zarina, a resident, echoed the opinion. "Hindu neighbours do not see eye to eye. These are the same people who gave us shelter when rioters were torching our houses. Their attitudes changed after we returned to our houses," she said.

The community is finding it difficult to deal with the mental stress of the recent incidents, we have not yet recovered from the February riots and the subsequent lockdown due to COVID-19, said Muniza, another resident.. "Our children have yet not been able to find work. We were also blamed for spreading the novel coronavirus. People have only now started to rebuild their houses," she added.

Imam of Madeena Masjid Mohammed Zahid, who has been supervising the reconstruction of the mosque, said that work started two months ago and it would take another month to finish.

"Cylinder blasts inside the building broke parts of the floor and walls. Everything was destroyed," he said. Pointing to a poster outside the mosque that read 'Ravaged in Delhi Riots - 2020', the Imam added that masjids in the area are being reconstructed by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, the largest and oldest Muslim organisation in the country.

"Most of the Hindus living around the mosque are friendly and warm. Even after the Friday prayers [October 2], many of them lined up outside the mosque for a religious practice to cure their ailing children," he said, referring to an age-old belief that children can be cured of a disease if an Imam blows into their ear.

Most Muslims in the area are either running bakery shops or sew for a living; the younger generation mainly does labour work. A majority of the Hindus are rickshaw drivers, sell vegetables or work in factories in Gandhi Nagar.

Locals from both communities said people who run their own business have begun to earn slowly, but labourers and those doing small-time private jobs are yet to start to earning "proper" money. "*Kaam halka hi hai* (work is slow)," said 23-year-old Abdul, who runs a tailoring shop in the area.

Tensed atmosphere

Locals said the atmosphere of the area is always charged. Around three weeks ago, an argument over the shutting of an iron gate escalated to the point where members of both communities got involved, and the police was nearly called in. "Even the smallest of matters can lead to something disastrous here," rued locals.

Gulshan (23) is concerned about girls in the area. "If the situation remains like this, none of our elders will allow us to go out to study or work. They still don't. What will we do with our lives?" she said.

Members of the Muslim community claim to have lost faith in the police as well. "Whatever we say falls on deaf ears. This Tuesday, both RAF and police officials said it is only chanting and that no one has abused us," said Akram Hussain.

"Lord Ram never taught violence. He was peace-loving and sacrificing. No religion teaches hate," said Asmat (53), who is planning to shift from Shiv Vihar to Mustafabad fearing safety of her two young daughters. Two saffron flags were planted outside her house on August 5 – the day Bhoomi Pujan ceremony for the Ram Temple was performed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ayodhya.

Woman held for cheating people of more than ₹2 cr.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old woman has been arrested from Gujarat for allegedly duping people on the pretext of inducing them to invest in various schemes for high returns, the police said on Friday.

The police said that one Parveen Kumar Singh, along with a woman friend, was operating a society called Jai Maa Laxmi Co-operative Thrift and Credit Society Ltd. and running a shop – Arpit Cloth Store at Mandawali. They induced people, who visited their shop, to invest in various schemes, including interest earning scheme, loan scheme, flat booking scheme and lucky draw scheme, a senior police officer said. They cheated around 200 people to the tune of more than ₹2 crore, the police said.

The woman was traced to Surat. Thereafter, a police team went there and apprehended her.

Man arrested for impersonation and duping

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 28 year-old man was arrested for allegedly posing as an Army official at railway stations and duping people by asking them for help, the police said on Friday.

The accused has been identified as Sunil Kumar Dubey, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Mirzapur area.

He used to swap ATM cards of the victims with his and then withdraw money from their account, they said.

During interrogation, Dubey said that he would specifically target Army personnel at railway stations to seek help and dupe them by swapping ATM cards without the knowledge of the victims. The accused has been found involved in four cases. He was earlier arrested at GRP Itarsi, GRP Nagpur and New Delhi railway station.

'Issue guidelines for Dussehra and Ramlila'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Friday wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asking him to ensure that guidelines for Ramlila and Dussehra celebrations be issued at the earliest.

In a letter to Mr. Kejriwal, Mr. Gupta stated that Unlock 5 guidelines issued by the Home Ministry had provisions to allow religious and social gatherings in open spaces subject to directions from State governments. "In the absence of guidelines, organisers are facing issues in booking venues," he wrote.

Timings
DELHI

SATURDAY, OCT. 03		
RISE	06:15	SET 18:05
RISE	19:10	SET 07:16
SUNDAY, OCT. 04		
RISE	06:16	SET 18:04
RISE	19:41	SET 08:08
MONDAY, OCT. 05		
RISE	06:16	SET 18:03
RISE	20:13	SET 09:01

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	36	21
Safdarjang	36	21
Palam	36	23

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

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C Dry weather with mainly sunny sky. Moderate gusty winds during day.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

Farmers' outfit to stage protests across Haryana against new Acts

AIKSCC to also seek resignation of Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Swaraj India national president Yogendra Yadav (left) addressing a press conference in Rohtak on Friday. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Haryana chapter of All-India Kisan Sangharsh Co-ordination Committee (AIKSCC) on Friday announced to hold demonstrations across the State intensifying the stir against the three agriculture Bills passed by the Parliament recently.

The farmers would hold a protest demonstration outside the residence of Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala in Sirsa on October 6, seeking his resignation and would show black flags to the leaders of the parties in the State supporting the legislations, said Swaraj India national president Yogendra Yadav, also a member of All-India Working Group of AIKSCC, at a press conference in Rohtak.

He was announcing the programme for protest demonstrations in a phased manner on behalf of 20 farmers' organisations in Haryana, which are part of AIKSCC, a coalition of around 200 farmers and labourers' groups across the country.

These farmers' groups in Haryana will observe October 14 as the 'Minimum Support Price Right Day' and gherao Delhi on November 26 and 27.

Mr. Yadav said either Mr. Chautala should give up his position for the sake of farmers or the farmers should eventually leave him. He ridiculed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his utter desperation in the wake of "Bharat bandh" on September 25 against the pro-corporate legislations which no one had ever demanded and were being forcibly "bestowed on the peasantry already reeling under unprecedented crisis".

Kisan Sabha state vice-president Inderjit Singh countered the "misleading" claims of Haryana CM Manohar Lal regarding the purchase of crops with MSP as there were caps in place for maximum amount of produce and other stringent conditions.

Mr. Yadav also addressed the agitating farmers at Rohtak's Meham during the day.

2,920 virus infections, 37 deaths reported in Delhi

Total cases have risen to 2,85,672

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital on Friday recorded 2,920 new COVID-19 cases with 37 deaths and 3,171 recoveries during the past 24 hours, according to a heath bulletin released by the Delhi government. The bulletin added that 56,258 tests were conducted during the same period and had a positivity rate of 5.19%.

There are currently 26,450 active cases in the Capital. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

COVID-19

There are currently 26,450 active cases out of which 15,852 are under home isolation. Out of the 15, 844 hospital beds available in the city, 6,071 are occupied. Dedicated COVID Care Centres and Dedicated COVID Heath Centres that have 8,137 and 527 beds have 5,937 and 211 vacant beds respectively. There are a total of 2,648 containment zones.

The total number of cases has now risen to 2,85,672 with a positivity rate of 8.95%. The total number of deaths stands at 5,438 with a fatality rate of 1.9%. The number of people who has recovered from the virus now stands at 2,53,784.

BJP to ramp up outreach programme on farm Acts

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

The BJP's outreach programme on the recently passed Farm Bills will intensify from Saturday with 'Khaat baithaks' or corner meetings on the lines of its tested 'Chai Pe Charcha' format. It is scheduled to be organised across 360 villages in the Capital.

According to a senior party leader, apart from these small public meetings to discuss the merits of the Bills, which the party hopes will be relayed by the audience to family members in other States, a "Mahila Kisan panchayat" involving women from agricultural households will also be organised.

"A meeting focusing on women from the community per se is also scheduled. This is probably the first time that such a meeting focusing on female members of such households is being organised," a party source said.

The programme to sensitise Delhi's farmers is scheduled till October 15.

14 arrested for stealing two-wheelers

Police claim to have recovered 116 bikes from the accused

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested 14 people under operation 'Eagle Eye' and recovered a total of 116 stolen two-wheelers from them, said officials on Friday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) A. Koan said snatchers have been using stolen vehicles for their crimes as noticed in the past few months. He said there is a nexus between the snatchers, vehicle thieves and their middlemen. The stolen vehicles are given to the snatchers on rent or commission basis, he added. "It has also come to fore that the criminals park the vehicles around parks, drains and other parking spaces, instead of outside their homes," the officer said.

Following this, two teams, named Eagle Squad and Eagle Eye, were formed to nab the criminals. The accused have been identified as Vikram (35), Rashid (41), Jogender (25), Asheem (28), Suraj (22), Manish (20), Deepak (29), Sumit (25), Sumit (25), Nikhil (20), Rohit (25), Amit (25), Yogesh (23) and Sagar (22), the police said.

On September 25, the police spotted two vehicles lying unattended in Industrial Area Phase-1 in Mangolpuri. The vehicles were found stolen from Tilak Nagar and South Rohini.

"Next, a trap was laid and after sometime, four persons arrived near the motorcycles. The accused were apprehended after they tried to take away the vehicles. At their instance, 10 more people were arrested," Mr. Koan said.

During interrogation, it was revealed that the high-end motorcycles were being provided to the criminals by the syndicate for entertaining their girlfriends, on high rental charges, whereas the low-end bikes were being provided to the snatchers on commission basis from the proceeds of stolen and snatched articles.

It was also revealed that Vikram was the mastermind of the whole syndicate. He was involved in 89 such cases.

A total of 116 stolen vehicles, including 39 bikes, were recovered from the possession of accused along with stolen mobiles, countrymade pistol and live cartridges.

Masked Mahatma

A man dressed as Mahatma Gandhi puts a mask on a motorist's face during an awareness event, 'Gandhigiri to Maskgiri', at Connaught Place in New Delhi on Friday. ▪ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT
Mr. N SELVA KUMAR
PH: 9820350726
selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in
THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

Published by N. Ravi at Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002 and Printed by S. Ramanujam at HT Media Ltd. Plot No. 8, Udyog Vihar, Greater Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201306, on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).
Regd. DL(ND)-11/6110/2006-07-08 • RNI No. UPENG/2012/49940 • ISSN 0971 - 751X • Vol. 10 • No. 237

50 more die of COVID-19 in Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Fifty more fatalities due to COVID-19 were reported in Punjab on Friday pushing the death toll to 3,501, while 1,071 new cases took the infection tally to 1,16,213.

Eight deaths were reported in Amritsar, six each in Gurdaspur and Ludhiana, four each in Ferozepur, Hoshiarpur and Sangrur and three each in Fatehgarh Sahib and Patiala, as per a health department bulletin.

Two deaths each were reported from Fazilka, Jalandhar, Moga and SBS Nagar and one each from Bathinda, Faridkot, Kapurthala and Mohali, it added.

Among the places in the State which reported new cases included Amritsar (134), Mohali (131), Jalandhar (128), Ludhiana (111) and Patiala (91).

Is there 'jungle raj' prevailing in Haryana, asks Punjab CM

Amarinder fumes at Haryana govt.'s plan to not allow Rahul rally to enter State

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

A day after Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's tractor rally won't be allowed to enter the State, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday hit back, asking if a "jungle raj" is prevailing there.

Reacting sharply to the Mr. Vij's remarks, Captain Amarinder said it is a futile move to stifle the voice of an angry nation.

He warned that such dictatorial steps would only strengthen the resolve of the Congress to fight for the rights of farmers.

"Is there a jungle raj in Haryana that you can stop anyone, least of all a duly elected leader of a national political party, from entering the State or from raising his voice against the injustice being meted out to farmers," the Chief Minister asked the Haryana government in a statement.

CM Amarinder Singh

Coming on the heels of the assault and cases registered by the UP Police against Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and seen in the context of the earlier lathicharge by the Haryana Police against agitating farmers, it is clear that BJP governments were bent on suppressing the voice of the Opposition in total violation of the democratic rights enshrined in the Constitution, he said.

Capt. Amarinder said the Congress will not be cowed down by such autocratic and undemocratic actions of the BJP-led governments, either at the Centre or in the States .

"If they think they can break the will of the Congress leadership or quell all opposition with such high-handedness, they are living in a fool's paradise," he said.

"History stands testimony to the fact that the voice of the people only gets stronger if it is sought to be crushed by force," Capt. Amarinder warned.

Mr. Vij had on Thursday had said Rahul Gandhi's proposed tractor rally won't be allowed to enter Haryana.

"They will not be allowed to disturb Haryana's atmosphere. Earlier, two Congress-sponsored rallies were stopped from entering the State. Likewise, we will stop his rally and won't allow him enter Haryana," he had told reporters.

Tractor rallies

Rahul Gandhi will hold tractor rallies in Punjab and Haryana from October 4-6 to protest against the contentious farm laws.

"Rahul will start his Kisan Mazdoor Yatra on October 4 from Punjab's Moga. On October 6, this yatra will enter Haryana from the Pehowa border," Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said in Kaithal on Friday.

16% of PDS rice stocks in M.P. 'unfit for human consumption'

Statewide inspection undertaken following checks by Centre

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

As much as 16.6% rice stocks meant for the public distribution system across Madhya Pradesh have been found to be beyond the prevention of food adulteration (PFA) standards or unfit for human consumption, during an inspection.

Of the 2.747 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) inspected across 52 districts, 1.806 LMT had been found to be issuable, while 0.494 LMT has been found to be replaceable by millers, Madhya Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited Managing Director Abhijeet Agrawal told *The Hindu*. Further, 0.457 LMT has been found to be beyond the PFA limit.

"We are issuing notices to more than 15 officials. Since there are quite many people responsible, we can't remove everyone. So we will initiate departmental inquiry against them," Mr. Agrawal added.

Meanwhile, 18% of the stocks inspected were replaceable, and would be returned to millers. The Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection has given millers three weeks to supply issuable stocks.

When asked about action taken against millers responsible, Mr. Agrawal said first the stocks needed to be replaced. "We still have around 7 LMT of paddy, which is to be milled," he explained.

The State-wide inspection was undertaken following inspection by the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution in Mandla and Balaghat districts which found all samples to be unfit for human consumption, and instead suitable for livestock, cattle and poultry. The Centre had directed the State government to withhold stocks across districts until recategorisation after inspection.

Revamp of policy

Earlier, the State government said it planned to revamp its milling policy in view of the inspection's findings with greater emphasis on quality control and a graded approach to incentives and mobile phone-based solutions. It said a separate quality control cadre was essential.

At present, Mr. Agrawal said, the State government was looking at policies in other States and noting their best practices.

Life goes on

Farmers thrash rice paddy at a field in Jalandhar district of Punjab on Friday. ▪PTI

Akhil Gogoi's group forms political party

Raijor Dal is the fourth party to have emerged ahead of the 2021 Assam election

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Jailed peasant rights activist Akhil Gogoi's group Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and about 70 associate organisations on Friday floated a political party, the fourth to have been birthed ahead of the 2021 Assam polls.

The regional entity, largely sired by the movement against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, has been named Raijor Dal, meaning People's Party.

'To defeat BJP, RSS'

"We have formed the party to defeat the fascist Bharatiya Janata Party and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in the 2021 elections besides keeping the communal combine of the Congress and the All India United Democratic Front at bay," the new party said in a statement.

The minority-based AIUDF is headed by Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, a perfume baron and Lok Sabha member from Assam.

KMSS president Akhil Gogoi. ▪FILE PHOTO

"The constituents of Raijor Dal decided to float the party under the prevailing extraordinary circumstances in the country and the State. The fascist government imposed the CAA completely disregarding the public movement against it, thus triggering the need for our own political party," the party said.

'Doors open to all'

KMSS president Bhasco de Saikia said the Raijor Dal was an "inclusive" political party that would keep its doors open to people from all communities. It would endeavour to make Assam a leading State.

Filmmaker Jahnu Baruah, who was present at the party's launch in Guwahati, described the day as "historic" for Assam.

"There has been a belief among people that Assam will be ruined if all communities cannot unite. Everyone said this is the last battle for protecting the rights of the indigenous people. So, they took a resolve despite differences and came together," Mr. Baruah said.

The Raijor Dal is the second regional party in Assam formed within a month. In September, the influential All Assam Students' Union and Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chhatra Parishad floated the Asom Jatiya Parishad.

Earlier this year, people from various walks of life formed parties called the Asom Gana Mancha and the Asom Songrami Mancha. The second one merged with the AJP on September 26.

All the new parties have trained their guns on the BJP.

"In a democracy, anyone can float a political party. We welcome the formation of the political parties. It will only benefit the BJP," the party's Assam unit chief Ranjit Kumar Dass told journalists.

For the KMSS, the Raijor Dal is the second political venture in five years. It formed the Gana Mukti Sangram, Asom, in March 2015 for "changing the capitalist system of India" but it could not be sustained.

Compensation for kin of killed soldier

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday announced ex gratia compensation of ₹50 lakh and a government job to the family member of Havildar Kuldeep Singh, who was killed along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sarpanch attacked in Punjab

Police don't rule out old enmity as motive behind the assault

PREDD TRUST OF INDIA
PHAGWARA

Armed assailants attacked a village sarpanch here with sharp-edged weapons on Friday and severely injured him, police said.

Harjit Singh (60) was initially hospitalised in Panchhat and then taken to the civil hospital in Phagwara.

He was later referred to the DMC hospital in Ludhiana, they said, adding that his condition is critical.

Tarlochan Singh, son of the sarpanch, told reporters that his father was going on his motorcycle to fetch milk like he did everyday when he was attacked by six-seven men. He said the assailants were hiding in a roadside field to pounce on the sarpanch.

"When my father reached near them, they virtually waylaid him, attacking him with swords and 'datturs' while he was still on his bike. After the attack, my father fell down and the assailants pounced upon him, inflicting multiple serious injuries to him," Tarlochan Singh said.

Police did not rule out old enmity as a motive behind the murderous assault.

Cong. claims fulfilment of manifesto promises

Party releases 'report card' in Jaipur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The ruling Congress in Rajasthan on Friday claimed that the State government had fulfilled more than half of the promises made in the party's manifesto for the 2018 Assembly election during the first 21 months of its tenure.

The party released a "report card" of its achievements at a virtual event here.

Pradesh Congress Committee president Govind Singh Dotasra said the ruling party had fulfilled 252 of the 501 promises made in the manifesto, while the work on 173 promises was in progress. "Thus, 85% of the promises have been completed or are underway in the State," he said.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot could not attend the event because of sudden indisposition. The report card mentioned short-term crop loan waiver, subsidy for agricultural equipment, removal of educational qualification for panchayat elections and loans released for small businesses among the promises which had been fulfilled.

Gehlot govt. praised

AICC general secretary in-charge of Rajasthan Ajay Maken, who attended the event through video-conferencing, said the State government had adopted the Congress manifesto as a policy document and appointed a Cabinet sub-committee for its implementation.

"This is an ideal way for a government to function in the democracy," Mr. Maken said while praising the government's performance.

Police recruitment exam rescheduled in Assam

20 held so far for question paper leak

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The written test for the recruitment of 597 unarmed Sub-Inspectors of the Assam police, which was cancelled in September following a question paper leak, has been rescheduled on November 22.

The State Level Police Recruitment Board (SLPRB), which conducts exams for the department, assured all applicants that the examination process will be "totally transparent" and each candidate will "get a fair opportunity to compete".

A formal notification providing procedural details will be published in due course, an Assam police spokesperson said on Friday.

At least 20 people, including Bharatiya Janata Party leader Diban Deka, have been arrested in connection with the leaking of question paper for the recruitment test that was scheduled on September 20.

'Kingpin' absconding

The alleged kingpin of the question paper scam, retired Deputy Inspector-General of Police Prasanta Kumar Dutta, has been absconding.

The scam came to light after a handwritten replica of the question paper was posted on social media. Following the lead, the police seized the question papers from a guest house near the Assam Assembly where 50 candidates had appeared for the "written test" on September 19.

Sleuths of the Crime Investigation Department said a candidate paid up to ₹4 lakh to get hold of a copy of the question paper.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

DASASTHU

"Uncrowned King, Educational Samrat"
Shri N.V. NARAYANASWAMI. M.Com., M.Ed
CHAIRMAN & SECRETARY OF SIR SIVASWAMI AYYAR EDUCATIONAL CHARITIES, THIRUKATTUPALLI, THANJAVUR DISTRICT.
PASSED ON 24.09.2020 , DASASTHU ON 03.10.2020
DEEPLY MOURNED BY, Family Members , All Heads Of Institutions, Teaching And Non Teaching Staff Members.

G BABU (90) , Retired Packer,THE HINDU, Chennai passed away on 02-10-2020. Address: 49/3, Ellaiamman Kovil Street, Kottur, Chennai-600085.Contact:9941158707.

For enquiries on announcements in this section, please contact our office at the following number between 10a.m. and 8p.m.
New Delhi : 011- 43579797
Rate for New Delhi:
(Minimum Rs. 320/- 2 Lines
Extra Line - Rs.160/-)
(B/W Display): Rs.60/Per Sq.cm
(Clr Display) : Rs.70/Per Sq.cm
Log on to
www.thehinduads.com
For Placing Advertisements Online

In memory of your loved ones
To dedicate a space in this section, Please contact:
011-43579797
from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. &
For Placing Advertisements Online log on to
www.thehinduads.com
DONATE EYES-GIFT SIGHT

THE HINDU GROUP
A GREETING TO REMEMBER
Be it an anniversary, a birthday, an academic accomplishment or even a promotion. Now you can surprise your loved ones by wishing them on
THE HINDU CLASSIFIEDS
For more details,
email: classifiedscustomercare@thehindu.co.in
Contact Toll Free Number: 180030700404
For Placing Advertisements Online
Log on to www.thehinduads.com

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
NATIONAL AEROSPACE LABORATORIES
P.B. No. 1779, HAL Airport Road, Kodihalli, Bengaluru - 560 017
Phone: +91-80-25086040, 41, 44, Fax: +91-80-25269611
E-mail: purchasek@nal.res.in
ISO:9001:2015 Certified

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

A Pre-Indent Conference is proposed to be held at CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) with the prospective manufacturers, their authorized channel partners or agents / suppliers and system integrators to discuss with the Technical Committees on the aspects of utility, technology, feature, literature, design, technical parameters, clientele and other related issues of the equipment and material for the following item to be procured for CSIR-NAL

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Description	Mode of Services
1)	NAL/PUR/ACD/200/20-Z	Design and Engineering of Airframe for SARAS MK2.	Open

Please visit website: Central Public Procurement Portal (CPPP) of Government of India website: ***http://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app*** and CSIR-NAL Website ***www.nal.res.in.***

Sd/-
Stores & Purchase Officer
For and on behalf of CSIR

Floodwaters in Assam recede; 2.41 lakh people hit

Goalpara, Morigaon, Hojai and Nagaon districts still remain submerged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Floodwaters in Assam receded further on Friday and remained in four districts affecting a population of over 2.41 lakh, though the deluge claimed one more life, a government bulletin said here.

With the death of one person in Morigaon district, the total number of people who lost their lives in flood-related incidents this year rose to 121, Assam State Disaster Management Authority said in the bulletin.

It said that 2,41,825 people of 379 villages in four districts are now affected, while the number of people hit on Thursday was 2.70 lakh in seven districts.

People in a village on the banks of the Brahmaputra river, on the outskirts of Guwahati. ▪FILE PHOTO

Floodwaters receded from three districts since Thursday and the districts of Goalpara, Morigaon, Hojai and Nagaon remained submerged now.

ASDMA said that 22,802 hectare of crop areas are under water now.

Nagaon is the worst-hit district with more than 1.79 lakh people reeling under the flood, followed by Morigaon (34,424), Goalpara (26,127) and Hojai (2,067).

Danger mark

The Brahmaputra river is flowing above the danger level at Dhubri, while the Kopili is flowing above the red mark in Nagaon, the ASDMA said.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

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

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over West Bengal, Jharkhand, coastal Andhra Pradesh, interior Karnataka, north Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and north Kerala

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	30.2	34.0	26.4	Kozhikode	–	32.4	24.2
Ahmedabad	–	35.6	25.8	Kurnool	–	32.6	23.6
Aizawl	23	27.1	18.1	Lucknow	–	35.6	23.4
Allahabad	–	35.0	24.2	Madurai	–	35.4	24.4
Bengaluru	–	29.6	21.0	Mangaluru	0.2	31.6	23.2
Bhopal	–	34.3	21.6	Mumbai	–	31.9	24.6
Bhubaneswar	1.6	29.9	24.0	Mysuru	–	31.0	21.8
Chandigarh	–	35.7	20.4	New Delhi	–	36.4	20.6
Chennai	–	35.8	26.8	Patna	–	34.8	26.0
Coimbatore	–	33.1	22.4	Port Blair	13.8	29.0	25.2
Dehradun	–	33.3	20.4	Puducherry	–	35.6	25.2
Gangtok	1.3	22.6	16.5	Pune	–	33.0	22.5
Goa	–	32.0	25.2	Raipur	–	34.3	25.2
Guwahati	0.2	33.6	23.4	Ranchi	–	29.2	22.0
Hubballi	–	28.0	21.0	Shillong	6.7	22.4	16.7
Hyderabad	–	32.8	22.1	Shimla	–	27.7	18.4
Imphal	–	29.5	20.6	Srinagar	–	27.0	7.6
Jaipur	–	36.8	25.0	Thiruvananthapuram	–	32.1	23.6
Kochi	–	30.4	24.2	Tiruchi	–	36.3	24.8
Kohima	47.2	25.4	17.7	Vijayawada	–	33.4	26.2
Kolkata	–	33.9	26.6	Visakhapatnam	–	31.8	26.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing — **Yesterday**

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	14	49	49	60	81	Poor
Bengaluru	6	27	38	68	93	Good
Chennai	5	8	28	49	–	Good
Delhi	4	38	27	206	262	Poor
Hyderabad	44	27	9	94	106	Moderate
Kolkata	12	19	–	34	49	Good
Lucknow	3	73	41	287	193	Poor
Mumbai	18	18	39	63	123	Moderate
Pune	–	–	–	–	–	–
Visakhapatnam	–	28	19	78	138	Moderate

In observation made at 4.00 p.m, Charkhi Dadri, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 300 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 16

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

SO_2: 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_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

Man quit make-up artiste job to sell drugs; arrested

Crime Branch seizes mephedrone worth ₹3.15 lakh from duo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Crime Branch of Mumbai Police has arrested two drug peddlers, including a former Bollywood make-up artiste, and seized mephedrone (MD) worth ₹3.15 lakh from their possession, an official said on Friday.

Unit-11 of the Crime Branch arrested Parvez alias Laddu Hanif Halai (30) and Niketan alias Nikhil Suresh Jadhav (30) from Rajendra Nagar in Borivali (West) on Thursday, he said. The duo were nabbed by a team led by senior inspector Sunil Mane during patrolling in the area.

During search, the police found 105 gm of narcotic drug MD, worth ₹3.15 lakh in illicit trade, in their possession, the official said, adding that the two were arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

Mr. Jadhav and Mr. Halai had serious offences, including attempt to murder, cheating and theft registered against them, he said.

Mr. Jadhav told the police that he once worked as a make-up man and hair dressing artiste for prominent film production houses and leading male and female actors and celebrities appearing in international reality shows, the official said.

He came in contact with drug peddlers during this period and after realising that huge amounts of money could be made by selling narcotics, he quit working as a make-up artist in Bollywood.

He had allegedly been selling drugs for the last four years. The Crime Branch is investigating from where he procured drugs and whom he supplied them to, the police official said.

The accused ensured that WhatsApp chats with customers about drugs were deleted after reading, and the police will try to retrieve these deleted messages, he added. The arrest comes on the heels of the Narcotic Control Bureau's high-profile investigation into alleged drug use in Bollywood.

Kashyap denies rape allegations

He provides evidence that he was in Sri Lanka in August 2013

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

Film-maker Anurag Kashyap has vehemently denied all allegations of sexually harassing an actor in 2013. He provided documentary evidence to the Mumbai Police showing that he was in Sri Lanka throughout August that year.

After the actor alleged that he had raped her, the Versova police station issued summons to Mr. Kashyap. On Thursday, he appeared before the police station to record his statement.

He was quizzed for eight hours, and he denied all wrongdoing in the matter. The police recorded his statement, in which Mr. Kashyap said that the complaint was an "outright lie".

Anurag Kashyap

He also provided documentary proof of the fact that throughout August 2013, he was away in Sri Lanka in connection with the shooting of one of his films.

A statement was released by his lawyer Priyanka Khimani on Friday, which said, "These sudden, belated allegations of an alleged incident of August 2013 have been widely publicised by the complainant for the purpose of vilifying Mr. Kashyap, irrespective of the outcome of the judicial process. He has sought severe action against the complainant for misusing the criminal justice system and for hijacking the Me Too Movement for her ulterior motives."

The statement further said, "Mr. Kashyap is confident that the falsity of the complaint has been exposed, not only by the evidence presented by Mr. Kashyap, but also the ever-shifting version of events put forth by the complainant in the media. Mr. Kashyap is apprehensive that now that the falsity of her allegations in the FIR have been established, she will alter her version of events in the investigation process as well."

Parth's tweets express his opinions, not that of NCP's, says Ajit Pawar

He hits out at Yogi Adityanath for obstructing Rahul Gandhi

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday clarified that the opinions expressed by his son, Parth Pawar, in a series of tweets on the Maratha quota issue were his own and not that of the NCP's.

Parth, who is the grand-nephew of NCP chief Sharad Pawar, had stirred up a political controversy yet again with a string of tweets expressing anguish over the alleged suicide of a Maratha youth, while chastising his own Maha Vikas Aghadi government (of which the NCP is part of) for not doing enough to ensure justice for the Maratha community.

Speaking in Pune, Mr. Ajit Pawar said with mock-irritability that he had more important things to do than commenting on his son's tweets. At the same time, he said that everyone had a right to express their opinions by tweeting whatever they felt.

"These days, youngsters tweet avidly and on a myriad number of issues...each time, I am asked to comment on my son's tweets. I have more important responsibilities...Supriya Sule [Baramati MP and Mr. Ajit Pawar's cousin] has already said that his [Parth's] tweets do not necessarily reflect the party's stance on an issue," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

Mr. Pawar, however, stressed that the MVA government and the NCP were of the firm opinion that both the Maratha and the Dhangar communities must get their due rights and that the State government was fully behind them.

On Wednesday night,

Ajit Pawar

Parth had taken to Twitter to plunge into the politicised arena of the Maratha quota imbroglio after a student from Beed district allegedly died by suicide.

"The future of an entire generation is at stake. I have no choice but to approach the Hon'ble Supreme Court and file an intervenor application in the Maratha reservation matter pending before it... I am ready to carry the burning torch of Maratha agitation in my heart and knock the doors of justice...," he had tweeted, while announcing that he would be filing an intervention application before the Supreme Court over the Maratha quota issue despite the State government already having filed an application last month seeking to vacate the stay on the implementation of the Maratha quota law in the State.

Parth's tweets had drawn the contempt of Maratha outfits like the Sambhaji Brigade, who accused him of brazen opportunism while stating that he had never once spoken out in the past when several Maratha youths had taken their lives nor had ever participated in any of the quota agitations.

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, however, had expressed subtle approval of Parth's remarks, stating that they merely illuminated the failure of the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government for failing to strongly defend the Maratha quota law in the SC.

More importantly, Parth's positions on recent matters have triggered tremors of suspicion that all is not well within the Pawar family. In August, a vexed Mr. Sharad Pawar, in an uncharacteristic public admonishment of a family member, had slammed his grand-nephew's contrarian stance in the Sushant Singh Rajput case, dismissing Parth as "immature".

Meanwhile, Mr. Ajit Pawar strongly condemned the horrific Hathras rape incident in Uttar Pradesh, stating that such atrocities were intolerable regardless of whichever party was in power.

"There are no words to condemn the crime that occurred at Hathras...such atrocities and grisly violence against women and backward caste community members are a blot on humanity. Unfortunately, after a few discussions and displays of righteous anger, these incidents are forgotten. The Centre must make stronger laws to deter such crimes from happening again," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

Hitting out at the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government for obstructing Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, Mr. Pawar said that unless political leaders or social activists were permitted to meet with the kin of the victim, the truth would never emerge.

"How is one to get to the bottom of these crimes unless elected representatives are allowed to meet the victim's relatives and present their version in Parliament or in the Assembly?" Mr. Pawar said.

Farm Bills: Congress launches Statewide signature campaign

Protests organised in all districts to mark Gandhi Jayanti

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Taking an aggressive stand demanding repeal of the recently-passed farm Bills, the Maharashtra unit of the Congress on Friday launched a Statewide campaign aiming to collect two crore signatures from farmers which will be sent to President Ram Nath Kovind.

Congress observed the day as Kisan Mazdoor Bachao Din by organising protests across all districts and tehsils in the State.

Revenue Minister and State Congress president Balasaheb Thorat said, "This is just the beginning of the struggle. We will continue to work for the benefit of the farmers. The market committee and the minimum support price system have come into being after massive efforts. With the oppressive farm Bills, the BJP government plans to undermine these systems which were brought in to support the farmers."

The BJP government's ploy was to help certain industrialists by making farmers landless by promoting contract farming.

Speaking in Nanded at a bullock cart march held his leadership, Public Works Minister Ashok Chavan said that the Union government had passed the Bills in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with a dictatorial attitude of "we can do what we want to". "The BJP is looting the country for the last six years by bringing in such laws. Traders are now looting the country in the same way that the East India Company looted the country during the British rule," he said.

In Mumbai, city Congress president Eknath Gaikwad led the protests while Rajiv Satav, MP, and Gujarat in-charge took the lead in Hingoli. In Amravati the protest was headed by Women and Child Development Minister Yashomati Thakur.

Others who headed the protests included Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development Minister Sunil Kedar in Nandurbar, Tribal Development Minister K.C. Padvi, and Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Vijay Wadettiwar in Chandrapur.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs Satej alias Bunty Patil headed the protest in Kolhapur, while Minister of State for Agriculture Dr. Vishwajeet Kadam held an agitation in the Sangli market yard.

Drawing attention

Unique protest: Students stand with face painted in Mumbai on Friday to condemn the gang rape of a girl from Hathras in Uttar Pradesh. ▪ VIVEK BENDRE

New cab aggregator starts pilot service

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A new cab aggregator Darwin Platform Car Cab Trade Ltd (Darwin Platform Taxi), a subsidiary of Darwin Platform Group of Companies (DPGC), has announced the introduction of its services on a pilot basis with over 200 cabs in Mumbai.

Darwin Platform Taxi will expand its full-fledged business for all travellers in Mumbai by November. By the end of the current financial year, the company plans to expand its fleet to over 5,000 cabs in Mumbai and other big cities.

Ajay Harinath Singh, chairman and managing director, DPGC, said, "Darwin Platform Taxi would offer several unique features in the Indian market."

Siblings suffocate to death in locked car

Police to question owner of garage

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

Two brothers, aged three and five, have died of suffocation after being trapped in a car at the garage of a scrap dealer in Mahad. The Mahad MIDC police on Friday ruled out foul play, but said that they are investigating if there was any negligence on the part of the garage's owner.

The police said the siblings, Sohail and Abbas, went missing shortly after they stepped outside their house in Nangalwadi chawl to play at 4.30 p.m. on Thursday. While their father was away, their mother, who was in the kitchen, alerted locals when the duo did not return home. Around 7.30 p.m., the brothers were found dead inside a Honda City car in the garage. The locals smashed the car's windows and pulled out the children. They were rushed to hospital, where they were declared dead on arrival.

"The car had a manual locking system. The siblings might have entered it while playing and got trapped inside. Their father was also a scrap dealer and the garage belonged to their neighbour. We will record his statement and find out if he should be booked for negligence. A case of accidental death has been registered," assistant police inspector Pankaj Giri, Mahad MIDC police station, said.

Steady stream of visitors at Bapu Kutir

Copies of speech delivered by Gandhiji on his first visit to Sevagram circulated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WARDHA

Printed copies of a speech given by Mahatma Gandhi 84 years ago were circulated among visitors at the Bapu Kutir in Wardha to mark the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation on Friday.

The Bapu Kutir is a small hut where Mahatma Gandhi used to stay in Sevagram during the freedom struggle. It has now become a tourist attraction, and is a place regularly visited by Gandhians.

After being closed since March-end due to COVID-19, the place was opened for visitors on Friday on Mahatma Gandhi's 151st birth anniversary. Every year, the Sevagram Ashram Pratishtan organises various programmes to mark Gandhi Jayanti, but due to the pandemic it did not invite anyone this time

Governor of Maharashtra and Goa Bhagat Singh Koshyari pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri on their birth anniversary, at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai on Friday. ▪ PTI

and kept its events low-key.

However, the ashram management decided to open the Bapu Kutir for visitors. Secretary of the ashram, Mukund Mhaske, said all COVID-19 guidelines are being followed on the premises.

"We are allowing only five persons at a time inside the Bapu Kutir. Visitors have to follow COVID-19 rules formulated by the State government," he said. This year, the management printed a speech delivered by Mahatma Gandhi on his first visit to Sevagram, then known as Shegaon, on April 30, 1936.

Uddhav bats for heritage status for Sevagram

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said the Sevagram Ashram in Wardha should get world heritage site status.

After virtually inaugurating some development works in Sevagram on the occasion of the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Thackeray said, "Mahatma Gandhi is a thought and we cannot move ahead in time without remembering it," he said.

HC grants bail to man accused of raping ex-wife

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court recently granted bail to a man accused of raping and sexually harassing his ex-wife who has dyslexia.

They had got married in June 2003, and have two children. The woman alleged that on June 15, 2017, her ex-husband Jignesh Dangarwala took her out for a walk. Then Mr. Dangarwala's friend Rajiv came in a car and her husband made her sit in the front seat with Mr. Rajiv.

She said she was reluctant and she was forced to sit in the car, and then Mr. Rajiv started touching her indecently. She alleged that Mr. Rajiv then took both of them to his house in Malad and had forced intercourse with her. When she came out of the room and told her ex-husband about it, he told her not to tell anyone and assured her that this would not happen again.

An FIR was lodged by the woman against her ex-husband at Samata Nagar police station on December 17, 2019, describing sexual harassment incidents with different persons named as Ravi alias Rohit and Tushar at Borivali in October 2018 and at Dahisar in February 2019. She also claimed to have complained about the incidents to her father-in-law but he did not pay any heed and uttered indecent words to her. A single judge Bench of Justice S.V. Kotwal took into account that Mr. Tushar and Mr. Ravi had been granted bail, and directed that Mr. Dangarwala be released on bail on furnishing a PR bond of ₹25,000.

Pathways to diversity

As a biodiversity convention key member, India's pandemic recovery must be greened

The UN Summit on Biodiversity convened on September 30 in the midst of a global crisis caused by the novel coronavirus that is thought to have spilled over to humans from an animal reservoir. In New York, member-nations of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) took note of the link between biodiversity loss and the spread of animal pathogens, calling for an end to destructive industrial and commercial practices. There is consensus that conservation targets set a decade ago in Aichi, Japan, to be achieved by 2020, have spectacularly failed. Evidence is presented by the latest UN Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 report: none of the 20 targets has been fully met. Many countries have chosen to ignore the connection between biodiversity and well-being, and depleted ecological capital in pursuit of financial prosperity. Among the Aichi targets that fell by the wayside are those on reform or phasing out of subsidies that erode biodiversity, steps for resource use within safe ecological limits, preventing industrial fisheries from destroying threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems, and an end to pollution, including growing plastic waste. A bright spot is the partial progress made on protecting surface and subsurface water, inland, coastal and marine areas. But the losses appear even more stark from WWF's Living Planet Index, which points to precipitous declines in vertebrate populations, a key indicator, by 68% over 1970 levels. Faced with fast-eroding ecosystem health, the 196 CBD member-countries must chart a greener course, aligning it with the Paris Agreement, which has a significant impact on the health of flora and fauna.

At Wednesday's summit, India's message was one of pride in an ancient conservation tradition, as one of the few megadiverse countries, and one that recognised the value of nature as much as the destructive impact of unregulated resources exploitation. National laws of the 1970s and 1980s have indeed shielded islands of biodiversity, particularly in about 5% of the country's land designated as protected areas, but they are today seen as irritants to speedy extraction of natural resources. In this unseemly hurry, due process is sought to be dispensed with, as envisaged by the new EIA norms proposed by the NDA government. There is little concern for indigenous communities that have fostered biodiversity, and no effort to make them strong partners in improving the health of forests and buffer zones. Now that CBD members are set to draw up fresh conservation targets to be finalised next year, India too has the opportunity to plan a trajectory of green growth after COVID-19, around clean energy, ecological agriculture, a freeze on expansion of mining and dam-building, resource recovery from waste, and regeneration of arid lands. It should join the coalition of the enlightened.

Brawling in Cleveland

Trump and Biden missed a chance to showcase policies in their first debate

When it was time for U.S. President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger for the 2020 election, former Vice-President Joe Biden, to go toe-to-toe in their first ever presidential debate, there was no expectation that the much-anticipated event would showcase bipartisan bonhomie or statesman-like conduct. Yet, the low bar of uncivility on display, undergirded by hostility and a lack of mutual respect, made the event at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, a disturbing spectacle. Almost throughout the 90-minute extravaganza of cognitive disconnect, the two candidates interrupted each other, name-called, and generally made obvious their disdain for the other. A low point for Mr. Trump was when he wilfully sidestepped a passionate defence by Mr. Biden of his late son, Beau, to segue into a vector of proven lies about Mr. Biden's other son, Hunter, and his business dealings in Russia and the Ukraine. Similarly, Mr. Biden hardly covered himself in glory when he said to Mr. Trump, "Will you shut up, man?", or referred to him as a clown, a liar and a racist. While many might empathise with Mr. Biden's sentiments in this context, given Mr. Trump's record on issues of race, his personal finances and taxes, and his penchant for indulging in acerbic bombast, some Democrats might have hoped that Mr. Biden would hold himself to a higher standard.

One thing that the verbal brawl made clear is that the two leaders will likely offer radically different policy visions, in a sense making the choice between them a straightforward one on November 3, Election Day. Mr. Trump dug his heels in on choosing a right-leaning candidate for the vacant seat in the U.S. Supreme Court after the passing of liberal stalwart Ruth Bader Ginsburg. He refused to label a known white supremacist gang as racists. He stood his ground on his intention to dismember the Affordable Care Act passed by former President Barack Obama – when Mr. Biden was his deputy – by killing off the individual mandate. On every policy of serious consequence to the American middle class, whether in the realms of health care and the COVID-19 response, immigration, job creation, clean energy or women's reproductive rights, Mr. Trump defended the very same approach he has followed for the past three and a half years. Yet his bungling, ambiguous pandemic response speaks for itself, as does his disastrous record on saving jobs in its wake, and his uncompromisingly harsh tack on immigration. Mr. Biden's policy agenda might be an echo of the Obama years, reflecting traditional, mainstream Democratic Party values that some Americans have grown to resent. Yet, if he can convince the American people, not of any grand liberal vision but simply that he will better Mr. Trump's low performance bar, this election might be Mr. Biden's to lose.

Flagging cess non-transfer, its economic impact

The C&AG's observations in its financial audit report relate to the denial of States' share in the divisible taxes pool

M. GOVINDA RAO

The Financial Audit Report of the Government of India by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for 2018-19 (https://bit.ly/36uwBb5 and https://bit.ly/3ilJrL5) placed in Parliament on September 23 has raised significant issues of a lack of transparency and propriety. The Opposition-ruled States have criticised the Centre on the short transfer of Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation cess revenues to the GST Compensation Fund.

The C&AG's report stated that the Government of India did not transfer ₹6,466 crore of compensation cess revenue in 2017-18 and ₹40,806 crore in 2018-19. Thus, a total of ₹47,272 crore was retained in the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI). The report also alluded to the non-apportionment of a portion of Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST) among the States and retaining it in the CFI.

Boosts claim by States

At a time when there is a raging controversy over the Union government's refusal to compensate States for the shortfall in the collection of GST as per the agreement, and, instead, giving States two options to borrow, the C&AG's report has only added more fuel to the fire of the States' claim. These States contend that when there were surplus collections, the Union government appropriated them and when there is a shortfall, it simply distances itself, instead asking States to borrow.

Levy of cesses

The C&AG's observations on a non-transfer of cesses, however, has a much larger macroeconomic significance. There are as many as 35 cesses levied by the government of India. These are earmarked taxes and the proceeds should be used for the purposes for which they are levied. A number of reserve funds or development boards have been created for these specified purposes and the collections from the cesses are supposed to be transferred to these funds placed in public accounts for defraying expenditures on the specified purposes. They are not a part of the CFI and cannot be used for defraying regular expenses. The transactions in public accounts are supposed to be done by the government as a trustee or a banker, and are not subject to vote by Parliament.

The C&AG has pointed out that in 2018-19, the collections from 35 Cesses amounted to nearly ₹2.75-lakh crore of which only ₹1.64-lakh crore was transferred to various reserve funds and boards designated for the purpose in Public Accounts. Thus, the short transfer to the Public Account during the year amounted to ₹1.11-lakh crore payment.

Besides, ₹47,272 crore short transfers to the GST Compensation Cess Fund, there was a short payment of ₹38,000 crore in the transfer of the road cess to the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund. In addition, the government collected ₹1,24,399 crore from the cess on crude oil which, as required, was not transferred to the Oil Industry Development Board (the designated Reserve Fund) and retained in the CFI. By short

GETTY IMAGES

transfer of the realised amount of cess to the respective funds and boards in Public Account, the government understated revenue and fiscal deficits for the year; and it works out to more than 1.2% of GDP.

Thus, in addition to off Budget borrowings to cover fertilizer and food subsidy, financing irrigation projects from the Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF) created by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), and financing of railway projects through borrowings from the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), short transfer of cess revenue to public accounts is a method used to obfuscate the Budget to show lower revenue and fiscal deficits.

Process becomes opaque

Should the government of India raise revenues through so many cesses? Cesses are earmarked taxes and to ensure a minimum allocation to important and priority programmes, this method of financing could be used. In India, even after a number of cesses and surcharges were abolished when the GST was implemented, there are as many as 35 cesses levied by the Finance and other Ministries of the Government of India. The ostensible reasoning for levying these cesses is the belief that ring fencing of revenue for specified priority purposes may evoke greater tax compliance as people can link the benefits with the taxes paid.

However, when there are as many as 35 earmarked cesses, it is difficult to see all of them as priority areas requiring protection of funding. There is also a possibility of limiting the funding of important and priority areas to the amount of cess collected even when they require much larger amounts. Too many cesses also complicate the tax system and add to administrative and compliance costs. In addition, the operation of the cesses involving collections and transfer to designated funds in the Public Accounts makes the entire process opaque as the operation of these funds too needs to be monitored and audited.

Governmental arrangements

A major reason for the proliferation of cesses in India is to be found in the inter-governmental fiscal arrangements. Article 270 of the Constitution requires the Union government to distribute the proceeds from all Central taxes listed in the Union List based on the recommendation of the Finance Commission. However, Article 271 excludes the distribution of the revenue from any surcharge or cess levied by the Union government for any specified purpose.

As the Finance Commissions are appointed once in five years, the Union government can raise additional revenue from taxes mainly through the levy of cesses and surcharges to avoid sharing them with the States. This has been practised for long and despite the adverse comments of many Finance Commissions, the Union government has found the practice convenient.

This is one of the ways to partially negate the recommendation of the Finance Commission, particularly when the Centre sees the recommendations as generous to the States. After the Fourteenth Finance Commission recommended that the share of the States in the divisible pool be pegged at 42%, almost all discretionary increases in taxes were done by levying cesses and surcharges. The large increases in additional excise duties on petroleum products this year will entirely accrue to the Centre. The States' share in the gross Central taxes was 35% in 2015-16, the first year of the Fourteenth Finance Commission's recommendation, but decreased to 32% in 2019-20, and in the current year, it could be less than 30% as a large volume of revenue from petroleum products is sought to be raised through additional excise duties.

As shown by Y.V. Reddy and G.R. Reddy (in their book, *Indian Fiscal Federalism*, p.241), the cesses and surcharges constituted just about 3% of Central gross tax revenue in 2000-01; but in 2015-16, it was 16.5%. It could be as much as 20% in 2020-21.

The issues raised by the C&AG relate merely to short transfer of funds, but the implications are much larger. They relate to obfuscations in the Budget and denying the share of the States in the divisible pool of taxes.

M. Govinda Rao is Chief Economic Adviser, Brickwork Ratings. He was former Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, and Member, Fourteenth Finance Commission. The views expressed are personal

After the Ohio debate chaos, the essential politics

Despite the parley's dynamics, Donald Trump and Joe Biden did give some indicators of where their key votes lie

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

Tuesday's chaotic Presidential debate, and the first, between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, was unusual in that it was not focused on a substantive discussion of policies, but overwhelmingly focused on the speakers and their dynamics. So much so that debate moderator Chris Wallace, who, prior to the debate had declared his desire to be invisible, also became a talking point.

Therefore any analysis of the debate (and its aftermath) must, rather than focusing on specific policy positions alone, examine other signs to get a fuller sense of the priorities at this stage of the campaign.

Suburban focus

It is clear that both candidates are reaching out to suburban voters but their conception of the suburbs are different. Additionally, Mr. Trump catered to his base – evidenced by his reluctance to condemn outright, white supremacism. His calling into question the legitimacy of the election because of mail-in voting also stood out in the debate. On the other side, Mr. Biden's response to the charge that he was controlled by the "radical left" and his reference to his working-class Scranton, Pennsylvania, roots are indicative of the votes he is specifically targeting at this stage in the campaign: those in the middle class (some of whom have likely not decided how to vote) and working class white voters, who have over the years shifted to the Republican party.

Since Tuesday, Mr. Trump has found distance between himself and some key Republicans on Capitol Hill for his failure, during the debate, to condemn the 'Proud Boys' – an all-male group of "western chauvinists". Instead, the President instructed the group to "stand back and stand by" before immediately saying that somebody had to do something about "Antifa and the left".

Several Senators including Trump supporter Lindsey Graham and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell distanced themselves from Mr. Trump's comments. Others, such as Susan Collins of Maine who faces a tight electoral contest also criticised Mr. Trump. With all House seats and over a third of Senate seats being contested in November, Republicans on Capitol Hill fear alienating moderates (i.e., those who are outside of Mr. Trump's loyal vote base) and losing support among racial minorities. Mr. Trump walked back his 'Proud Boys' statement on Wednesday.

Trump's voter fraud narrative

The President, who trails behind Mr. Biden in the national polls, signalled, as he has been doing for some time now, that in the event of a tight contest, he would allege voter fraud over mail-in ballots. Americans are expected to vote by mail in unprecedented numbers due to the pandemic and there is no evidence that mail-in voting is associated with a significant level of voter fraud in the U.S.

Mr. Trump urged his supporters to watch polls at polling booths on

AP

Election Day. Critics have said this is tantamount to voter intimidation.

Other talking points

The President has also tried to get Mr. Biden to alienate moderates and undecided voters, who are particularly important in battleground States. He did this on Tuesday by repeatedly accusing Mr. Biden of being controlled by the "radical left" in the context of health-care policy and the Green New Deal (progressive Democrats' framework for climate action and the economy).

Presumably, Mr. Trump's strategy was to discourage moderates from voting for Mr. Biden, who is a centrist.

Mr. Biden denied he was "dominated" by the left flank of the party and that the party platform was approved by him and that he had defeated progressive candidate Bernie Sanders "by a whole hell of a lot". Mr. Trump's response was that Mr. Biden had "just lost the left".

Several progressive leaders have since closed ranks with Mr. Biden. For instance, on Wednesday, Mr. Sanders told ABC that he was campaigning for Mr. Biden and that his and Mr. Biden's health-care plans were indeed different, as per a report in *The Washington Post*. With regard to suburban voters, especially women, Mr. Trump's narrative is that Democrats' reluctance for law and order would impact suburbs. His administration has also rolled back some Obama-era fair housing policies.

During a debate segment on crime, Mr. Trump said that if Mr. Biden got to run the country, "suburbs would be gone". Mr. Biden's response was that he was raised in a suburb and that it was not the 1950s, so dog whistles and racism do not work and that suburbs were "by and large integrated". (While suburbs are more integrated than in previous decades, most Americans do not live in substantially integrated neighbourhoods, as per PolitiFact).

Mr. Biden has highlighted his working class city of Scranton as a campaign theme, contrasting it to his characterisation of Mr. Trump's background: Scranton vs. Park Avenue. On Tuesday, he said Mr. Trump and his friends looked down upon Irish Catholics like him "who grew up in Scranton" and on people who did not have money (Mr. Trump shook his head in disagreement). Abstracting from whether or not this is a fair characterisation of Mr. Trump, this is the populist theme Mr. Biden has been pushing (it is true that Mr. Biden's family did fall upon hard times when he was young).

On a post-debate campaign tour of Ohio and Pennsylvania by train (Mr. Trump flipped both States from Democrat to Republican in 2016), Mr. Biden reached out to white working class voters. In Alliance, Ohio, he drew parallels between the economic hardships faced by those whose factories risked closure to his own father's experience of having to leave Scranton when coal mines started shutting down.

Judicial nomination

Also important was the discussion around Mr. Trump's nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court; the Senate confirmation hearings of the judge are scheduled to begin on October 12. Democrats and Republicans will use the hearing to show-case issues to voters.

Given how polarised the country is and how stable candidate vote shares are, there is a view that the controversy around the timing of the nomination itself will not impact Mr. Biden's or Mr. Trump's chances significantly.

Elaine C. Kamarck analyses this in a paper for Brookings. Mr. Biden has maintained his national lead through this year of "unimaginable drama" – the pandemic, racial tensions, shutdowns and conventions. He led by 5.4 points in February and has a 6.6 point lead now. While these numbers are indicative of stable vote shares, they do not mean that Mr. Biden will necessarily win the presidency. First, polls undercounted support for Mr. Trump in 2016. Second, these are national and not State polls.

Winning the popular vote is one thing, winning the elections is another. As in 2016, the outcome might come down to a handful of votes in a few key battleground States altering the Electoral College arithmetic enough to make a winner of the candidate who loses the popular vote. The candidates are clearly aware of this.

sriram.lakshman@thehindu.co.in

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.

To read more letters online, scan the QR code

Almost forgotten

May 27, 1964 is a day that sent shivers through every Indian then, desperate to imagine the future course of the nation; it was the day India's first Prime Minister and a towering personality, Jawaharlal Nehru, breathed his last. It was, in short, a Himalayan task to fill the void created. Lal Bahadur Shastri happily dispelled the misgivings of every cynic and proved a strong man, with his qualities of firm conviction, honesty, simplicity and sincerity (Editorial page, "The Prime Minister India almost forgot", October 2). Steering the country through difficult times – internally, on the food front, and externally, in a war with Pakistan – he emerged as the nation's little strong man. Agriculture was given its due and the farming community had new vigour and life. Unfortunately, his sudden passing in Tashkent remains a mystery.

SESHAGIRI ROW KARRY,
Hyderabad

■ The article reminded me of another personality long forgotten. Recently, the Defence Minister while in Russia to attend the 75th Anniversary Victory Parade among other official meetings, mentioned the services of Dr. Dwarkanath Shantaram Kotnis to the Chinese during World War II. I would have been happier had he also mentioned the services of a scientist of Indian origin (who became a citizen of Soviet Union), Dr. Kolachala Seetha Ramayya, to the Soviet Union. A luminary in the field of tribiology (it was also called chemotology, or the chemistry of motors), he was educated in the U.S., at Chicago and Cornell. In the 1930s, responding to a call by the then USSR to build its petrochemical industry, he was offered a top spot at the Petrochemical Institute in Moscow. He was also associated with the Central Scientific Research Automobile and Automotive Engines Institute. He developed a kerosene fuel for battle tanks which proved a big factor in the Soviet battle against the Germans in World War II.

S.R.S. SASTRI,
Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh

Tamil national question

In his interview, "'Rajapaksas must honour their past commitments to India and the world'" ('World' page, September 19), Sri Lanka's Tamil National Alliance (TNA) spokesman and Jaffna MP M.A. Sumanthiran correctly identifies that to resolve the problems faced by TNA's constituents, broad-based support from the other communities including the majority Sinhala Buddhists is essential. However, it is the very political behaviour of the TNA during the Wickremesinghe government (2015 to 2019) that undermined any support that could have been earned from other communities to further the TNA's agenda. I feel Mr. Sumanthiran has not yet captured the sentiments of the communities of Sri Lanka other than his own constituents in Jaffna district. In summary, the TNA's servile, incompetent, and dishonest approach turned off the majority community – even those who had been sympathetic to their cause –– from actively championing to resolving the grievances of the TNA's constituents. A significant section of the NE Tamils too saw through its game. In my view, the plurality support enjoyed by the governing party and its allies has opened an avenue for the people of the North and the East to work hand in hand with the sitting government for the first time since 1965. Whether the government would make full use of this rare opportunity and how TNA would react to such endeavours remain to be seen.

ARAVINDA KARUNARATNE,
Athens, Georgia, U.S.

Caste, crime, and a cremation

The alleged rape and assault of a young woman in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh leading to her death and a rushed cremation has sparked anger across the country. **Anuj Kumar** reports on a horrific case that flags the prevalence of caste-based discrimination that often leads to violence

With sadness in his voice, the uncle of the 19-year-old woman who was assaulted and allegedly gang-raped in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, speaks fondly of the family's pride. He talks of how the young woman was "traditional". Though she had little formal education, she would give sane advice on family issues. Her mother says she was good with household chores. The uncle sums her up in one sentence: "She was a superstar."

Following her brutal assault on September 14, the young woman fought for her life at Aligarh's J.N. Medical College and Hospital and later passed away in New Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital on September 29. Her death and hurried cremation in the early hours of September 30 by the district administration has sparked an outcry across India and protests in some pockets. The family says the authorities did not seek their permission before cremating their daughter, a claim that the district administration refutes. The ghastly incident, which has led to a political slugfest, highlights the plight of women in the State and the country, continuing caste-based discrimination, and lapses in administration.

Policemen, political leaders and relatives of the victim crowd outside her house in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, on September 30. (Below): Relatives of the victim watch her funeral on TV in their home. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

A story of discrimination

The beginning of this grisly story of alleged rape and murder is not in the undulating millet fields of Boolagarhi village of Hathras, situated 200 km from New Delhi; it begins in discrimination, according to various accounts of the family. Like most girls from the Dalit Valmiki caste, the young woman could not study beyond primary school, says her father Ram Lal. "We always lived in fear of our girls getting dragged into the millet fields," he says. The millet fields are barely a kilometre away from where the family lives. The tall crops that gently sway in the breeze now look menacing to the family, serving as a terrible reminder of what their child went through.

The woman's uncle, too, says she always preferred to stay at home. In her dying declaration, the woman had said that two of the accused men, Sandeep and Ravi, both belonging to the dominant Thakur community, had tried to assault her earlier. But she had kept quiet as she feared for the life of her father and brother.

"We have been punished twice," says the victim's younger brother Rakesh who works as a lab attendant in Noida. "Once when my sister was killed by the Thakur boys and the second time when the administration burnt her body in the dead of the night. All I wanted was to wait till dawn and dress up my sister in new clothes for her last journey." Despite the family pleading to be allowed to see the victim's face one last time, they were not allowed, they say. The village was turned into a police fortress and the police manhandled anyone who tried to come out of their house that night, they allege. They say they don't even know what material was used for her funeral.

Ram Lal has an LPG cylinder, two buffaloes, and two bighas of allotted land, which is more than what many others in the village have. He works part time as a sanitary worker in a neighbouring school. While Rakesh is in Noida, Ram Lal's older son Rajesh stays in the village. A steady income ensured that the family did not slide into poverty.

Ram Lal's house is one of the four Valmiki houses in a village dominated by Thakurs and Brahmins. "*Yeh ghar thoda achhcha hai unse* (this house is slightly better than theirs)," says Khema Singh Chauhan explaining the alleged animosity between the families of the victim and the accused. In 2001, Sandeep's father spent time in judicial custody for assaulting the young woman's grandfather with a sickle. Chauhan is a sanitary worker in Delhi and is married into the family. "When my *baraat* came to this village in the late '90s, I found the shopkeepers here sprinkling water on our money before accepting it. Not much has changed since then. They still consider us animals," he says.

Assaulted in the fields

The victim's mother, Gayatri, is inconsolable but doesn't tire of talking to the media. In her retelling of the incident, the horrors of that morning emerge. On September 14, at around 9 a.m., she went to cut grass with her daughter and her elder son Rajesh. A little later, Rajesh returned home to tend to the cattle and stack up some of the collected grass. The mother and daughter stayed in the field.

After some time, Gayatri could not see her daughter, who was working further away in the fields. She called out her name several times. When she didn't hear an answer, she assumed that her daughter had gone home to drink water as it was an exceptionally hot and humid day. But when she was returning home, she saw one slipper belonging to her daughter lying upside down at the edge of the millet field. "She would have cried for help but I am hard of hearing,"

she says. A little ahead, she found another slipper and tell-tale marks of a person being dragged into the millet fields that are thick enough and sometimes tall enough to hide an elephant. Overcome by sudden fear, she ran ahead only to find her daughter lying unconscious and naked, her tongue protruding out. Gayatri quickly covered her daughter's body with her sari and screamed for help. Gayatri says she didn't mention anything about sexual assault to anyone as she wanted to save her daughter's dignity. "I sprinkled water on her face. Soon Rajesh came and we took her to Chandpa police station on a motorcycle," she recalls.

At first, the officials thought nothing of the victim's complaint that she was struggling to articulate. When Gayatri intervened to say that Sandeep had tried to strangulate her daughter, the station in-charge took down the complaint and asked Rajesh to rush his sister to the hospital. "He sent two constables with us in the auto. At Hathras, they said they didn't have the facility to treat her and referred her to the Jawaharal Nehru Medical College and Hospital in Aligarh," says Rajesh.

The two constables had orders to accompany the family only till Hathras and refused to proceed further. Rajesh dialled 108 for an ambulance. It took the family two hours to reach Aligarh.

One incident, different versions

The district administration and the family have presented two different versions of the incident through videos. Some of these videos were ostensibly recorded when the young woman was taken to the Chandpa police station and made to lie on a stone slab. While Gayatri insists that her daughter was gang-raped, the district administration has tried to discredit her version by circulating a video where the young woman is heard saying Sandeep tried to strangulate her because she resisted his attempt to molest her.

The administration has also shared a video where the young woman's mother can be heard saying that only Sandeep was involved in the crime. However, in a video released by the family, the young woman is heard saying she was raped by at least two men while the other two ran away on seeing her mother. A relative of the woman recorded this video when she was in the Aligarh hospital.

A source in the hospital says the woman noted down four names in her dying declaration and attributed the crime to enmity between the families. Brahm Singh, Circle Officer, Sadabad, who recorded the statement on September 22, says she mentioned the names of Ravi, Ram Singh, and Luv Kush, and so their names were added to the FIR under the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The family alleges the police are trying to drop the gang-rape charges so that the accused will not be sent to the gallows. An uncle of the young woman who works in Aligarh Muslim University says, "My niece had told her mother about the sexual assault when she regained consciousness. She had kept silent earlier because of social pressures. But when she told the investigating officer about the gang rape, we accepted it as her decision."

A lack of trust

Vikrant Vir, Superintendent of Police (SP), Hathras, refutes the claim that an attempt is being made to save the accused. "Had that been the case, why would we [the Station House Officer] lodge an FIR under attempt to murder and atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes within an hour of the incident," he asks. Why was the SHO shifted out of his post a few days after filing the FIR, then? "I shifted him to police lines because I felt he could not win the trust of the people he is meant to serve," he says. Vir himself was suspended on October 2.

Vir, who is from Bihar, adds that Sandeep was arrested on September 19, a few days after the incident. And when the girl named the other three men, the police nabbed them quickly and added the section of the IPC pertaining to gang rape to the FIR, he says.

Vir also insists that the timing of the cremation was not odd. "I have been told it is not unusual to conduct last rites during the night in this belt. Another official said if you delay the cremation, the soul wanders... The point is, there is no one Hindu way. Anyone can be wiser in hindsight. Anyway, a three-member SIT has come to guide us."

Both Vir and the District Magistrate, Praveen Laxkar, say the young woman's father is being manipulated by people with vested interests. Rajesh says his father is a simple man, which is why he is being pressured by the administration. On October 1, in a video that went viral, Laxkar can be heard telling the family that the media will be gone in a day or two, but they (the administration) will stand by the family. He can also be heard saying that the family should not change its statements so much that the officials get changed. Laxkar has denied the contents of the video since, but the video shows a lack of trust between the family and the administration.

Citing the autopsy and forensic reports, Prashant Kumar, ADG (law and order) told reporters that the victim was not raped. "The FSL reports say that no semen was found in the woman's body," he said. Haris Khan, medical superintendent of Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, says the medical and forensic examination was conducted on September 22, eight days after the incident.

On being asked about the alleged delay in the medical examination of the woman, Vir also says it was conducted as soon as the victim told them about the incident. When asked whether the police could have asked the medical team to conduct it within 72 hours considering the condition in which the woman had been brought to the police station, Vir concedes it could have been done. "There are some systemic gaps for which we all need to work together but our intention always was to do the best for the young woman. I ensured that she got the best of treatment free of cost," he says.

Shahid Siddiqui, Principal, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, says the young woman suffered a fracture in the cervical spine and a gash on the tongue, possibly because she had bitten her tongue while being strangulated. "As she and her mother didn't say anything about sexual assault, we didn't examine her. She had developed paralysis of the limbs. She was first admitted to the general ward but later, as her condition deteriorated, she was shifted to a high dependency unit and then to the ICU where she was put on a ventilator," he says. Neurosurgeon Fakhrul Hoda says they were waiting for the patient to stabilise. "She should have been shifted to a higher centre in the first place. There was no point in referring her at a later stage," he says. "We have all the facilities she required," he adds.

'They are all low life'

In front of Ram Lal's house stands Sandeep's house. Sandeep has been accused of murder and gang rape along with his uncles Ravi and Ram Singh and friend Luv Kush. Sandeep and Luv Kush are 18-19-year-olds, while Sandeep's uncles, both in their thirties, are married. There is no male member in the house except for Bhanu, Sandeep's brother who is a teenager. None of the brothers has more than three bighas of land. The women in the house refuse to buy any story about the wrongdoings of the men. "*Koi bhi badchalan nahin hai* (There is no bad character)," says Manorama, Sandeep's aunt.

In 2001, Sandeep's father Narendra Singh Guddu and Ravi spent time in judicial custody for an attack on Ram Lal's father. "Ravi sells vegetable biryani in the neighbouring village and was busy with its preparation when the incident took place [on September 14]. All the rice went waste that day," says his mother Rajwanti. Ram Singh's mother Shanti Devi says her son was in the dairy outside the village at the time of the incident. The families say Ram Lal has become greedy and wants to make money over his daughter's death. "He wants to avenge what happened in 2001," says Rajwanti.

Bhanu says Sandeep was at home during the incident. It was Luv Kush who took water for the woman when she was gasping for breath, she claims. "He was in his field which is close to the place where she was found. And now, he has been named in the FIR."

The families describe their neighbours as "*neechi kaum* (low life)" whom they won't touch with a barge pole. When asked if Ravi would sell biryani to a Valmiki, Bhanu chuckles. "We sell biryani on a plastic plate and we don't mix business with caste," she says. The conversation reveals how entrenched caste is despite the trappings of modernity in the village, such as televisions and refrigerators.

Handling a volatile situation

Watching over the wailing women in the victim's house, who all have their heads covered, are gods of the Hindu pantheon. When the body of the victim was brought to the village from Delhi, several people from other villages and members of the Bhim Army poured into Hathras. Many youngsters could be heard saying, "*Yeh log bhatak gaye hain, humein inko line par lana hai* (These people [the family] have lost their way, we need to bring them back on track)." The implication is that by sticking to Hinduism, they have strayed from the path of B.R. Ambedkar. The local administration feared that these people who infiltrated into the village would cause a law and order problem. Meanwhile, on the basis of the ADG's assertion that the victim was not raped, the All India Kshatriya Mahasabha held a protest outside the village demanding that the rape charges be dropped.

Hathras is a reserved constituency in U.P. It is represented by the Bharatiya Janata Party's Rajvir Diler. The party holds four of the five Assembly seats in the district. The anger against Diler is palpable in the village. Though Diler is from the Valmiki community, members of the community see him as someone who is beholden to his upper caste patrons in the party. Like his father Kishan Lal Diler, who nurtured the reserved constituency for the BJP since Kalyan Singh was at the helm of the State, stories of Diler carrying his own glass whenever he visits the family of an upper caste voter are common.

On September 30, there were cries that he was a blot on the community. "If a Thakur offers him a chair, he sits on the ground. Today, we made him sit on the ground in a Valmiki's house," says the sister-in-law of the victim. It took him more than a week to reach out to the family after the incident, she says. While Diler takes credit for helping the victim shift to Delhi, the family members say it was too little, too late.

On his part, Diler says the administration let him down. "I was stopped at the Chandpa police station on the night the body was brought to the village. The District Magistrate and the former SP carried out the funeral without the family. Had I been allowed entry, I would have found a middle path," he says. Diler says he has complained to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath about the high-handedness of the officials.

Shyoraj Jeevan, a senior Congress leader from the area, agrees with his rival. "The administration lacks maturity. It should have used people like us to build bridges with the family. They tried to handle a volatile situation by forgetting that the Dalit youth of today are assertive about their rights."

Meanwhile, in the outer courtyard of the house, relatives can be heard discussing their experiences of everyday discrimination. Things haven't changed since independence, they say.

Surendra Singh, who worked in U.P. Roadways for some time, says he was taunted for his fair skin when he joined service. "My superior would often say that I submitted a fake Scheduled Caste certificate to get the job. They could not digest that a Valmiki can be fair. It led to many skirmishes in the office and ultimately I had to leave the job."

The names of the victim's family members have been changed to protect their identity

FROM PAGE ONE

Trinamool MPs stopped outside Hathras village

"We are here on a peaceful mission to pay condolences to the grieving family. Lady MP was manhandled by U.P. SDM," Mr. O' Brien tweeted.

The scuffle with the administration came a day after Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were arrested on the Yamuna Expressway by the Uttar Pradesh police and prevented from entering Hathras.

CM's assurance

Breaking his silence on the gangrape, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said forces who even harbour ill thoughts against the honour and self-respect of mothers and sisters in the State would be completely annihilated.

In a tweet in Hindi on Friday, Mr. Adityanath promised a punishment that will become an example for the future. He said the U.P. government was bound by oath to protect "mothers and sisters" in the State.

The Chief Minister's tweets came after he interacted with the father of the victim on Wednesday via video conferencing and promised him ₹25 lakh as compensation and a job for a family member.

A young boy who described himself as the brother of the victim and claimed he had escaped the police cordon on the pretext of collecting fodder, told pressmen at the barricades, that there was an atmosphere of fear in the village. "Everybody has been asked to remain inside and the police were instilling fear among villagers. The mobile phones of many villagers have been collected by the policemen," the boy said.

The young boy who identified himself as Gajendra alleged that the policemen were colluding with the accused.

As the day progressed, members of the All India Kshatriya Mahasabha gathered outside the village and threatened to hold a panchayat supporting the four men accused of the gangrape and brutal assault on the Dalit girl.

Officers suspended

According to the U.P, government release, apart from SP Vikrant Vir, Circle officer Ram Shabd, inspector Dinesh Kumar Verma, SI Jagveer Singh and head constable Mahesh Pal have also been suspended. The release added that the members of the victim's family and the police officials will have to undergo polygraph and narco tests.

Three held in Bhadohi for girl's death

Police are waiting for the autopsy report to confirm sexual assault. According to the police, previous animosity between the girl's family and the accused was the reason for the murder. On September 28, the accused threatened to destroy the family, said the police.

When she went to the fields to answer nature's call on October 1, the accused found her alone and murdered her, said police.

The arrested persons were identified as Kundan, Collector and Prince.

LJP will go it alone in Bihar but back Modi

In the 2015 Assembly elections, fighting for 42 seats, the LJP got only 4.83% of the total vote share and won only two seats. Its best performance was 29 seats in 2005. "When we contest 143 seats, our vote share will naturally go up. We won't be a 5% party any more," another LJP leader said.

The LJP is also presenting it as a *fait accompli*, considering the division of seats would leave them with a measly 20-25 odd seats. "We do not really have an option here. This is a far lower tally than what we are ready to settle for. And thankfully, we have been working over a year and have serious candidates for all the 143 seats," the leader stated.

Nagaland student bodies seek regularisation of teachers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOHIMA

Two major student organisations of Nagaland on Friday said they have decided to launch an indefinite agitation from October 12 to demand regularisation of services of over 2,730 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) teachers appointed in 2010 and 2013.

The Naga Students' Federation (NSF) and the Eastern Nagaland Students' Federation (ENSF) told a joint press conference that they were forced to take the path of agitation as the State government did not take any step to fulfil an agreement signed in this regard two years ago.

NSF president Ninoto Awomi and ENSF chief Sepili L Sangtam said they had on September 2 served a 30-day ultimatum to the government to honour the pact and it expired on Friday.

Kerala curbs gatherings as cases cross 9,000

Telangana reports 2,008 cases; Godavari districts in A.P. witness high spread; Karnataka adds 8,793 cases; T.N. records 67 deaths

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In another big spike, Kerala on Friday reported 9,258 new cases of COVID-19, after testing 63,175 samples in 24 hours.

As cases soared, the State government said prohibitory orders would be imposed in the districts, including Thiruvananthapuram, which had 1,096 cases, banning gatherings of more than five persons in public places from Saturday.

The restrictions under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code would be in effect till October 31. Test positivity went up to 14.6% on Friday.

Active cases defied State plans for the peak of the epidemic, touching 77,482. Of these, 501 were being treated in ICUs, with another 115 on ventilator.

The number of areas designated as hot spots in the State on Friday is 705.

Telangana recorded 2,008 cases on Thursday and 10 more people died of the virus. Active cases stood at 28,620 with 23,372 patients under home or institutional quarantine. The State tested 54,098 samples.

Karnataka on Friday reported 8,793 more cases and 125 deaths. Bengaluru Urban recorded 4,259 cases and 47 deaths. The State tested 92,059 samples, 44,046 through rapid antigen tests.

Andhra Pradesh added 6,555 infections and 31 deaths on Friday. Currently, 56,897 patients were in hospitals or in home isolation. The tally for test samples was 70,399. The two Godavari districts and Chittoor reported over 900 new infections.

Tamil Nadu recorded 5,595 new cases of COVID-19 on Friday. The State also recorded the deaths of 67 patients. While Chennai accounted for 1,278 of the fresh coronavirus infections, Coimbatore reported 495 cases and Chengalpattu had 396 cases.

Another 5,603 persons were discharged after treatment. With this, the State's overall COVID-19 tally stood at 6,08,885 - 46,294 active cases, 5,52,938 persons discharged and 9,653 deaths.

A total of 84,991 samples were tested in the last 24 hours in the State. Till date, 75,26,688 samples were tested.

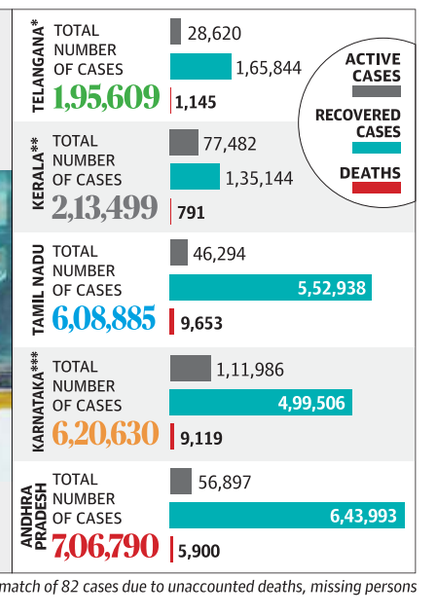
(With inputs from Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai bureaus)

COVID-19

Keeping safe

To contain the spread of the virus, the authorities in many cities are collecting fines from those not wearing masks in public places. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States

Protective gear: People wearing masks while travelling on a BMTC bus in Bengaluru on Friday. ▪ K. MURALI KUMAR



**Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Thursday | **Kerala has a mismatch of 82 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons ***Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths*

Suspecting COVID, retired judge ends life

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD

A retired district judge, Ramachandra Reddy Ramireddygari, 67, suspected to be COVID-infected, was found dead at his house in Miyapur, near Hyderabad, on Friday.

"Fearing that he might spread it to his family, he resorted to the extreme step," the police said.

(To overcome suicidal thoughts call 4066202000.)

Suspension of doctor, nurses triggers stir

Kerala govt. acts on alleged negligence in care at Thiruvananthapuram hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The medical faculty and a section of the nursing staff at the Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, went on a flash strike and staged a demonstration on the hospital campus on Friday soon after the Kerala government suspended a doctor and two head nurses, pending disciplinary action, in connection with the alleged negligence in the care of a patient at the Medical College Hospital (MCH).

The government issued suspension orders on a report filed by the Director of Medical Education regarding the negligence committed in the care of an elderly patient, Anilkumar, who had been admitted to the COVID ward recently.

Mr. Anilkumar, who had been undergoing treatment following a fall, had been referred to the MCH from the Peroorkada district model hospital. However, after he tested positive for COVID-19, he had been admitted to the COVID ward. Since all his family members had been asked to go into quarantine, he was in the ward without any care-givers.

Mr. Anilkumar's family complained to the Health Minister that the patient, when he was discharged and brought home, was in a totally emaciated condition and that he was covered in bed sores from head to toe, with maggot-infested wounds.

The visuals of the patient's plight, as seen on news channels, had evoked much outrage.

Following this, the Health Minister ordered an inquiry into the incident.

The medical faculty and nurses have, however, taken exception to the government's decision to suspend Dr. Aruna, nodal officer in-charge of supervision of the COVID ward, and two head nurses, Leena Kunjan and K.V. Rajani, because they said that the negligence in care had happened due to the acute shortage of support staff in the MCH.

They said the government had been informed time and again about the shortage of nursing assistants, staff nurses and other ancillary staff in the MCH, especially after the hospital was made a COVID hospital. The number of COVID patients has been going up steadily and though new wards and ICUs were being opened to accommodate patients, the government was paying scant attention to human resources, they pointed out.

The doctors, as a mark of protest against the suspension order issued to their colleague, decided to organise a 48-hour relay fast to draw the government's attention to the issue of human resources shortage. The nurses will observe a "Black Day" on Saturday in protest against the action taken against their colleagues.

Postal ballots for COVID-19 patients

Kerala Governor issues ordinance

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

COVID-19 patients and those quarantined in Kerala can exercise their franchise through postal votes in the coming elections to local bodies. The voting time has also been increased and polling stations will remain open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for exercising franchise.

The sweeping changes to allow postal ballots and increasing the voting time had been made through the Kerala Panchayat Raj (Second Amendment) Ordinance 2020 promulgated by Governor Arif Mohammed Khan based on the recommendations made by the Cabinet last month. The ordinance, that amends temporarily the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act 1994, has come into effect. Amendments had been made to Section 70 of the Principal Act for increasing the voting time by one hour and a new Section inserted after Section 74 to allow postal ballot to those affected by the pandemic and quarantined.

The Cabinet decision was based on the proposal of the State Election Commission to allow postal ballots for COVID-19 patients and those in quarantine. However, there was stiff opposition from major parties to the proxy voting.

15 workers suffer burns in fire at KPCL Yelahanka power plant

It took four fire tenders an hour to bring fire under control

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Fifteen employees suffered burns in a fire that broke out at a combined cycle power plant at Yelahanka early on Friday. Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) officials confirmed that they had been preparing to commission the long-pending plant. Initial investigations revealed that leakage of CNG had led to the accident, but experts are investigating to ascertain the exact cause.

A view of the KPCL Gas Power Corporation limited at Yalahanka in Bengaluru. ▪ SUDHAKARA JAIN

According to Fire Department officials, an accidental fire broke out at the plant around 3 a.m., when employees, belonging to KPCL, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited and General Electric were working there. They were injured and shifted to hospital before fire and emergency services were alerted. It took four fire tenders one hour to bring the fire under control.

A resident of the area, requesting anonymity, said there had been activities taking place in the plant for four or five days, adding, "Early in the morning, people in the area heard a big noise. Residents in apartments close to the plant woke up and heard sirens. They initially thought they were ambulances. The chimney of the plant was smoking away." The Yelahanka police have taken up the case based on the complaint by a KPCL officer in charge on Friday.

'Did not accept phone from Swapna'

Chennithala denies builder's charge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala on Friday denied that he had received an expensive mobile phone as a gift from Swapna Suresh, the second accused in the high-profile case relating to the smuggling of gold in bulk via air cargo consignments addressed to officials at the UAE consulate here.

Ramesh Chennithala

Politicians from the ruling front had attempted to cast Mr. Chennithala under a harsh spotlight after a private builder said in a court filing in Ernakulam recently that he had purchased five cell phones at the behest of Swapna in 2019.

She had purportedly told the builder that UAE consulate would make a present of the devices to dignitaries attending an Iftar party hosted by the diplomatic mission in December that year. Mr. Chennithala was one of the invitees. At the time, Swapna was a consulate employee who often officiated as the master of ceremonies at events organised by the diplomatic mission.

The ruling front had raised the baseless allegation to divert public attention from its wrongdoings, Mr. Chennithala said.

IN BRIEF

Padayatra from Telangana to A.P. for world peace

KOTHAGUDEM

A padayatra has been launched by a group of people covering 619 km — from Bhadrachalam in Telangana to the Tirumala hill shrine in Andhra Pradesh — two days ago. The yatra is intended to invoke divine blessings for the well-being of the mankind and universal peace, sources said.

Phase VII of Vande Bharat flights commence

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Phase VII of the Vande Bharat Mission to repatriate Indians stranded abroad due to COVID-19 has commenced and 1,067 flights will be operated till October last. This phase has been announced on the basis of an assessment of the demand for seats from NRIs and their families.

Three-fold increase in leopard capture, translocation: study

Policy guidelines brought out by Government of India to mitigate human-leopard conflict had little impact on the ground

R. KRISHNA KUMAR
MYSURU

A study conducted across Karnataka indicates that the policy guidelines brought out by the government to mitigate human-leopard conflict and discourage translocation of the animal have had little impact on the ground.

The number of leopards captured per month increased more than threefold (from 1.5 to 4.6) after the human-leopard policy guidelines were brought out in 2011. Similarly, there was a threefold increase in the number of leopards translocated per month (from 1 to 3.5).

Sad plight: Capture and translocation continue despite a policy guideline on reducing such exercises. ▪ M.A. SRIRAM

Sanjay Gubbi of the Nature Conservation Foundation, who led the study in the State, said the guidelines for human-leopard conflict management were brought out in April 2011 to reduce conflict with leopards, discourage their translocation, and suggest improved ways of handling emergency conflict situations.

Mr. Gubbi, the lead author of the paper, said that in Karnataka, 357 leopards were in conflict situations and were captured between 2009 and 2016, and the final outcome was available in the case of 314 leopards. Of these, 268 were translocated in contravention of the spirit of the policy, 34 were captured and kept in captivity, while 12 died during the capture.

These findings have been published in a paper, 'Policy to on-ground action: Evaluating a conflict policy guideline for leopards in India', in the *Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy*. The co-authors of the paper are Aparna Kolekar and Vijaya Kumara.

Taking Karnataka as a case study, the researchers analysed pre- and post-guidelines leopard captures, reasons for the captures, and the outcome for the captured leopards.

Protected areas

The study found that out of 357 leopards captured across 23 of the 30 districts in the State during 2009-16, a majority (79%) occurred in Mysuru, Udupi, Hassan, Tumakuru, Ramanagaram, Ballari, Koppal, and Mandya districts.

Of the 268 leopards translocated, many were moved to protected areas (59.7%) and some to reserved/State/minor forests (29.8%). The highest number of translocations occurred into the Bandipur Tiger Reserve (22.5%), followed by the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve (20.6%) and the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary (15%).

The study indicated that of the 80 leopards translocated to reserved/State/minor forests, most releases were to the Kemphole Reserved Forest (16.2%), followed by the Devarayanadurga State Forest (7.5%) and the Bukkapatna State Forest (5%).

Though eight reasons were attributed to capture and translocation of leopards, the main justification was livestock depredation (38.1%), said Mr. Gubbi.

Andhra Pradesh govt. to give pattas to tribals

Step to ensure right over land in forests

STAFF REPORTER
SRIKAKULAM / VIZIANAGARAM

Tribals numbering 9,056, spread over several mandals in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh, will be given 1.28 lakh acres under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the State-wide, month-long programme virtually on Friday and spoke with several beneficiaries through videoconferencing.

Speaker Thammineni Seetharam, Deputy Chief Minister Dharmana Krishna Das, and Minister for Fisheries Sidiri Appala Raju formally launched the patta distribution programme at the Sithampet ITDA office.

Mr. Seetharam said that the exercise would ensure the legitimate right of the tribals over the lands in forest areas.

Engineering college

In Vizianagaram district, Mr. Reddy virtually laid the foundation stone for an engineering college in Kurupam mandal.

Collector M. Hari Jawaharlal and ITDA-Parvathipuram Project Officer R. Kurmanath told him that they would take steps for early construction of the engineering college.

Will get justice for rape victim: Priyanka

Congress leader attends prayer meeting for Hathras girl, says all women should raise their voice

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary for Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday said every woman in the country needs to raise her voice to ensure justice for the "daughter of Hathras", referring to the gang rape victim who died on Wednesday.

Ms. Vadra was speaking at a prayer meeting organised by the Valmiki community in memory of the rape victim at the Bhagwan Valmiki Mandir in Delhi that once hosted Mahatma Gandhi for 214 days.

She asserted that her party would continue to put pressure on the government until justice is delivered to the victim's family.

"Whatever has happened to the woman, her family faced it alone as they did not get any support from the government. I came here to express solidarity with you and her family so that you don't feel you are alone. We will fight against it. I urge you all to raise your voice and we will put political pressure on the government," Ms. Vadra said.

Criticising the U.P. government and the police for cremating the victim at night without the family's consent, she said: "Our country does not have a tradition where the father, brother and the family of the victim are not allowed to light the pyre."

Earlier in the day, Ms. Vadra welcomed the Allahabad High Court taking suo motu cognizance of the police action to cremate the body without the family's consent.

In a separate set of tweets, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi also attacked the U.P. administration, tweeting a video clip showing a young boy from the victim's family alleging misbehaviour by senior officials and saying the family was being prevented from interacting with anyone. "The U.P. administration is resorting to cruelty to hide the truth. Neither we nor the media is allowed to meet the victim's family. They are not allowed to come out but the family members are beaten up and brutalised," Mr. Gandhi tweeted.

Newly appointed Delhi Pradesh Mahila Congress president Amrita Dhawan meanwhile alleged that her clothes were torn during a scuffle with the U.P. police on Thursday. Ms. Dhawan said the incident occurred when she intervened as the police tried to detain Congress leaders.

In solidarity: Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at a prayer meeting held for the Hathras victim in New Delhi on Friday. ▪SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Will destroy those harming women: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said his government is committed to women's safety and those who even think of harming their self-respect will face total destruction. The warning comes days after the Hathras incident.

"Total destruction of those who even think of harming the self-respect of women in U.P. is inevitable," the Chief Minister tweeted in Hindi. "Such people will get exemplary punishment that would be remembered by future generations," he said.

Let media, party leaders in, Uma Bharti urges Yogi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leader Uma Bharti, currently undergoing treatment for COVID-19 at the AIIMS in Rishikesh, on Friday urged Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to allow mediapersons and leaders of political parties to meet the family of the Hathras rape victim.

Ms. Bharti, in a series of tweets said that while she had been hesitant to speak out earlier on the issue, watching the media coverage had convinced her that she needed to speak out.

"Your image is very clean and you have set up a Special Investigation Team to speedily investigate the matter. But, setting up an SIT while ring-fencing the family members of victim from meeting anyone could affect the integrity of the probe," Ms. Bharti said.

'Will hurt party image'

"She [the victim] is a daughter of a Dalit family, and after her death her cremation was done hastily and now her family is being ring-fenced by officials. We have recently performed the *bhoomi poojan* (ground breaking ceremony) of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, and are working to establish Ram Rajya. The actions in Hathras will hurt the image of the party and the U.P. government," Ms. Bharti said.

Choose wisely, Sonia tells the voters of Bihar

Govt. trading in fear, she says at launch of election campaign

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Some people are running the government by trading in emotions, confusion and fear and people should choose wisely, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday told a rally in Bihar via videoconferencing, as the party formally launched its Assembly poll campaign in the State by recalling Mahatma Gandhi's Champaran movement on his 151st birth anniversary.

"Brothers and sisters, enough is enough now. I just want to say that some people are running the government by trading in emotions, confusion and fear. You should be most careful and make the right decision. For this, we all have to fight unitedly, walking on the path of truth, non-violence and swaraj of Gandhi *ji*," she told the rally in Motihari.

Her comments came on a day when the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) moved a step closer to finalising a seat-sharing pact in which the Congress may get 70 seats, Left parties 29 and Mukesh Saini's Vikassheel Insaan Party 11.

The RJD would contest in the remaining 133 seats, said a source.

'Laws diluted'

Irrespective of the status of alliance, Ms. Gandhi mounted a scathing attack on the Union government ahead of the three-phase Bihar polls later this month and next month. She accused it of diluting all laws that empowered citizens.

"Several laws enacted by the UPA [United Progressive Alliance] government, whether they were for employment, health or education or those associated with labour, farmers, food security, women security and empowerment, have been weakened so much by the Modi government that it is an assault on citizen's rights. Their rights have been snatched away,"she said.

Crores of youth have lost their jobs, lakhs of micro and small industries have shut shop, farmers were in pain and biggest government employers were being privatised, she said.

In poll mode: Congress president Sonia Gandhi speaking via video conference from New Delhi on Friday. ▪ANI

'Modi govt. did grave injustice to farmers'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday termed the agricultural laws 'black laws' and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of committing a grave injustice to farmers. In a video statement released on the occasion of the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, she said the party's workers in every Assembly segment were agitating against the laws.

Former party chief Rahul Gandhi is likely to take part in a tractor rally in Punjab and Haryana between October 3 and 5 to express solidarity with farmers.

Police officer held after rape victim dies

STAFF REPORTER
BHOPAL

An assistant sub-inspector of police (ASI) in Madhya Pradesh's Narsinghpur district was arrested on Friday for not reportedly registering a case of rape against three men on the complaint of a 32-year-old Dalit woman on Monday. His arrest came hours after she was found dead at her house.

The police has suspended Mishrilal Kodapa and filed a case under Section 166A(c) of the IPC. The woman had gone to fetch fodder on Monday when the incident took place. "On Friday, she had gone to fetch water where she was taunted. She came home and died by suicide," police said.

Those in distress may dial 7389366696 for support.

'Laws protected women, children'

Smriti Irani addresses UN General Assembly

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

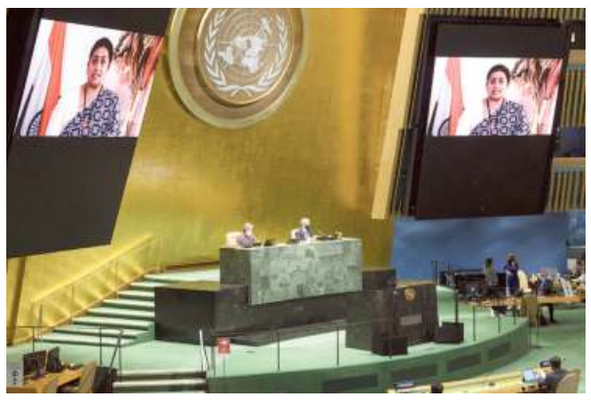
Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani addressed the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Friday morning on the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to highlight India's achievements in gender equality.

Ms. Irani was among over 150 Prime Ministers, Presidents and Ministers who addressed the UNGA's High-Level meeting held under the theme "Accelerating the realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls".

Ms. Irani spoke about a shift in India "from a paradigm of women's development to women-led development", which is a theme that first found mention in the Bharatiya Janata Party's manifesto ahead of the 2019 general elections.

"Several of our legislations, such as those pertaining to sexual harassment of women at workplace, protection of women from domestic violence, protection of children from sexual offences, and our criminal laws' amendments, have been strong enablers of women empowerment and protection of children, especially girls, over the past six years," Ms. Irani said.

She added, "The government of India took a series of measures for ensuring safety, security and well-being of women during the COVID pandemic.."



Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani speaking at the U.N. General Assembly on Thursday. ▪AP

Activists unhappy

However, activists said the omissions on caste and religious divide, and domestic violence, were glaring in her speech. "Different governments in the world today are pushing behind women's agenda. There needs to be a conducive environment for these global agendas to work and ensure transformative changes," said Ruth Manorama, Dalit women's rights activist. "The omissions in the speech about religious and caste problems are also telling. The government should ensure that through education and quality curriculum, these retrograde thoughts that divide the society are removed," she added.

"The lack of priority given to women's needs and safety can be seen from the budget of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, where a mere 4% of the budget has been allocated towards services and empowerment of women, and prevention of crimes," said founder-director of Swayam, an NGO based in Kolkata.

Rahul-Tejashwi talk helps seal seat-sharing in Bihar

NDA partners continue meetings in Delhi and Patna

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

With the first phase of the Assembly poll in Bihar less than a month away on October 28, a seat-sharing deal is said to have been finalised in the opposition *mahagathbandhan* (Grand Alliance) on Friday. Leaders of alliance partners are likely to officially announce the formula this weekend.

However, confusion continued in the NDA, despite several rounds of meetings between party leaders, both in Patna and Delhi.

A day after the RJD and Congress – two major alliance partners of the mahagathbandhan – attacked each other over seat sharing, leaders of both the parties, Tejashwi Yadav and Rahul Gandhi respectively, are said to have had a telephonic discussion on Friday to reach an agreement.

The Bihar Assembly has 243 members. If RJD sources are to be believed, the party is to contest around 134-136 seats leaving 65-68 for the Congress and 17-19 for the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), five each for two other Left parties – the CPI and the CPI(M) – 10-12 seats for the Vikassheel Insaan Party and two for the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.

"Yes, we've almost done our seat-sharing among alliance partners and top party leaders are likely to announce it on Saturday or Sunday," a senior RJD leader told *The Hindu*. He added that the "seat finalisation was done after Tejashwi Yadav spoke to Rahul Gandhi."

Earlier on Thursday, RJD and Congress leaders had blamed each other for trying to "rock the boat". Lashing out at RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, heir apparent of party chief Lalu Prasad, Bihar Congress in-charge Shaktisinh Gohil called him "inexperienced" while RJD leader and party spokesman Mrityunjay Tiwari hit back saying, "he [Mr. Gohil] is trying to rock the boat".

Tejashwi Yadav

Over 1,600 kg of gold seized till September

Smuggling from Myanmar goes up

DEVESH K. PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The over 30% increase in the price of gold in India has led to a spurt in smuggling in the past one year and enforcement agencies seizing more than 1,600 kg of gold from across the country.

"The share of middlemen and carriers goes up with the increase in gold price. Most of the smuggled gold of foreign origin is ultimately traced to Dubai or Thailand. Gold is currently worth about ₹50 lakh per kg in India," said a customs official.

2,112 cases

On Friday, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized about 33 kg of gold worth ₹17.51 kg from a truck in West Bengal's Siliguri district and arrested four persons. The consignment was smuggled in from Myanmar via Manipur and was destined to Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan.

Till August this year, as many as 2,112 cases of gold seizures were reported by various agencies. About 484 kg of gold was seized in February, while in March the figure was 205.81 kg and 280.66 kg in April.

However, due to the lockdown measures, no seizures were made in May and only 37.54 kg of gold was impounded in June.

Land route

"Gold is smuggled through both air and land routes. International flights were banned as part of the lockdown. Therefore, the land routes have become more active. A spurt in gold smuggling through the Indo-Myanmar, Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bangladesh borders has been noticed," the official said. Two seizures of 10.30 kg and 26.56 kg were made on the Imphal-Moreh Road, close to the Myanmar border, and at the New Jalpaiguri railway station. In both cases, the agency suspects that the gold was smuggled in from Myanmar.

Shun violence for jobs, J&K L-G tells youth

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Extending an olive branch, J&K Lieutenant-Governor, Manoj Sinha on Friday offered jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities to those "misguided youth who are ready to shun violence and return to the mainstream".

"I urge the misguided youth to shun violence and return to the mainstream. The government is ready to help all with jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities," Mr. Sinha said in volatile south Kashmir's Shopian during a public programme.

Mr. Sinha was speaking on the occasion of the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. He launched the Jammu and Kashmir government's ambitious 'Back to Village-3' programme in Shopian's Shirmal area. Under this programme, senior officers visit villages and help address developmental issues.

Hygiene and immunity take priority in food habits: survey

Webinar explores key trends during the pandemic

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

As work and life adjust to a new normal, people are looking for long-term solutions that incorporate hygiene and mindful practices into food habits, according to insights drawn from a survey of 150 food experts across the country.

Culinary expert and writer Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal, who designed the survey, shared the insights during a panel discussion on "Evolving Food Habits and Home Kitchens in the New Normal" recently organised by Godrej in association with *The Hindu*.

Third edition

The interactive session is part of the conversation series "Rise of the Culinary Explorer" and the survey was done for the third edition of the Godrej Food Trends Report.

Moderator Ruth Dsouza, an independent food writer, opened the discussion on the changing practices during the pandemic.

Primary concerns

Health and hygiene are the primary concerns among consumers today, said Kamal Nandi, business head, Godrej Appliances.

Appliances specially designed for fermentation and germination at home were being sought after.

Disinfection devices

Mr. Nandi said the company was looking at launching disinfection devices using ultraviolet-C radiation.

Award-winning chef Varun Inamdar said the focus is now on family meals, smart meals, and discretionary product purchases like microwave appliances and ovens.

Boosting immunity

On the priorities in different segments of home kitchens, Monika Manchanda, AltLife chief culinary officer, said that immunity boosting took the spotlight.

The webinar was powered by Godrej Appliances and Vikhroli Cucina - Godrej Group's brand-agnostic media platform in the food space.

As part of the series, the first segment included five one-on-one conversations on the Vikhroli Cucina Instagram handle.

The Godrej Food Trends Report - 2020 is available for download on www.vikhrolicucina.com.

West Bengal Minister slams Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Differences between West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and the State government came to the fore on Friday at an event to observe Gandhi Jayanti.

Senior Minister Bratya Basu, who accompanied the Governor at Gandhi Ghat Barrackpore, called Mr. Dhankar "Noirajyapal". (*Noirajya* means lawlessness or anarchy in Bengali and *rajyapal* refers to Governor. Also, *noi* means 'no' in Bengali).

"Ask him what his views on the DM [district magistrate] Hathras trying to intimidate the family members of the victim are... Why by making such comments, he is putting a prefix of *noi*to his name, turning his name from *rajyapal* to *noirajyapal*," Mr. Basu told journalists.

Earlier, the Governor raised a number of issues like political violence and 'denial' of PM Kisan benefits to farmers in the State.

Andhra Pradesh State Co-operative Marketing Federation Ltd.,
55-17-2 to 4, 5th Floor, Stallin Corporate Building, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada, Krishna District - 520 007.
Email : procurement.apmarkfed@gmail.com
Webpage : www.apmarkfed.in

SHORT e-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tenders are invited for supply of Moisture Meters to the procurement centers. e-Tenders followed by reverse Auction. The RFP with all details can be downloaded from **tender.apeprocurement.gov.in** from **03.10.2020 at 11.00 A.M. onwards.**

Sd/- MANAGING DIRECTOR

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Trivandrum Division
TENDER NOTICE. No. SR-TVC0SnT(TEND)3/2020/04
Dated : 29.09.2020.

Sl.No.1. Tender No.: TVC-SNT-TELE-20-21-06. **Name of work** : Maintenance of Telecom Assets in TVC Division - DSTE/TVC & ADSTE/TVC Section. Cash Value (Approx.) (₹.Ps) :**19,73,520.87;** Earnest Money Deposit (₹) : **39,500/-;** Last Date for Receipt of Tender : **30.10.2020** Up to **14.00** Hrs. Completion Period: **8 months.**

Sl.No.2. Tender No.: TVC-SNT-TELE-20-21-07. **Name of work** : Maintenance of Telecom Assets in TVC Division - ADSTE/ERS Section. Cash Value (Approx.) (₹.Ps) : **19,73,520.87;** Earnest Money Deposit (₹) : **39,500/-;** Last Date for Receipt of Tender : **30.10.2020** Up to **14.00** Hrs. Completion Period: **8 months.**

The complete details & tender document will be available at **www.ireps.gov.in.**

Divisional Railway Manager/ Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Trivandrum – 695 014.
For and on behalf of the President of India

Follow us on : twitter.com/GMSRailway

Good conduct is key to early release: SC

'Jail term should not be only factor'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The length of a prison sentence or the gravity of the crime cannot be the sole basis for denying a convict premature release from jail, the Supreme Court has held in a judgment.

A three-judge Bench of Justices N.V. Ramana, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy said an assessment of the proclivity to commit a crime upon release "must be based on antecedents as well as the conduct of the prisoner while in jail, and not merely on his age or apprehensions of the victims and witnesses".

In a judgment on September 30, Justice Kant wrote: "Society has a right to lead a peaceful and fearless life, without free-roaming criminals creating havoc in the lives of ordinary peace-loving citizens. But equally strong is the foundation of reformative theory, which propounds that a civilised society cannot be achieved only through punitive attitudes and vindictiveness."

The court said reformative justice should not merely focus on public harmony, but should foster brotherhood and mutual acceptability.

First-time offenders should especially be given a second chance at life. "First-time offenders ought to be liberally accorded a chance to repent their past and look forward to a bright future," the court observed.

Prisoners' plea

The judgment came in a plea made by two prisoners who gave been incarcerated for a botched kidnapping for ransom case in Uttar Pradesh. They are in their early middle age with a record of good conduct in jail.

The court, ordering their release, said that their "action of kidnapping was nothing but a fanciful attempt to procure easy money, for which they have learnt a painful life lesson".

Elder care is a priority: Harsh Vardhan

Health Minister says that the States have been urged to develop models for home-based care

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Health Ministry data showed that 1,095 COVID-19 deaths were registered in the country in the past 24 hours, with 83.37% of them being reported from 10 States and Union Territories.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, speaking about the pressure that COVID-19 puts on the older population, noted that the pandemic has caused an upheaval across the country and the world.

The highest number of deaths was reported from Maharashtra (394), followed by Karnataka (130), Uttar Pradesh (80), Tamil Nadu (66), West Bengal (59), Punjab (45), Andhra Pradesh (41), Delhi (40), and Kerala and Chhattisgarh (29 each), according to a release issued by the Ministry on Friday.

The Ministry added that 78.07% of the new cases in the last 24 hours in the country are concentrated in ten States/UTs, with Maharashtra contributing more than 16,000 new cases.

Karnataka has contributed around 10,000 cases and Kerala follows with more than 8,000.

"As on date, the active cases contribute only 14.74% to the positive case load of the country. Maharashtra is leading the States' tally with more than 2.5 lakh cases, Karnataka follows with more than 1 lakh cases," said the Ministry.

The Health Minister said, "The government has responded to address the concerns of the elderly by recognising them as a vulnerable population category for COVID efforts, issuing advisories, raising awareness of their special needs, encouraging State governments to develop need-based models for delivery of medications and home-based care to the elderly."

"The number of active cases on Friday is 9,42,217 with 78,877 recoveries registered in the last 24 hours in the country. India's total recoveries are 53,52,078. The last 10 lakh recoveries were added in just 12 days. With this, India continues to maintain its global position of being the country with the maximum number of recovered COVID patients in the world. 10 States/UTs account for 72% of the newly recovered cases," said the Ministry.

IMA demand

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), on Friday, has demanded that the government should work at strengthening public hospitals and come up with a strategy to sustain small and medium hospitals during the ongoing pandemic.

"Reconceive, redesign and restructure Ayushman Bharat is also one of our demands. The response of the government is not only inadequate, it is totally inappropriate in respect to COVID-19," the IMA said in its release.

Viral tracker

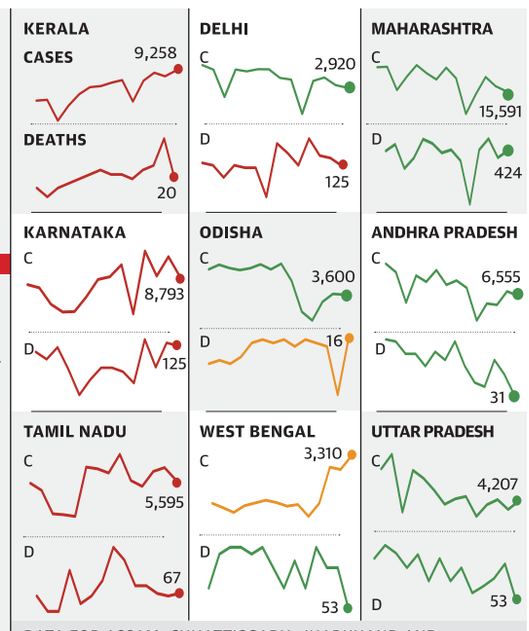
With **1,035 fatalities** recorded on Friday, India's COVID-19 death toll stood at **1,00,867.** As many as 74,834 cases were registered on the day. A total of 7.67 crore samples have been tested as of October 1, according to the ICMR

NEW CASES AND DEATHS

CASES 74,834 — 7 DAY-CHANGE -8.1%

DEATHS 1,035 — 7 DAY-CHANGE -2.8%

The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases and deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases and deaths are rising; if they are lower, then dropping; if they are similar, then cases and deaths are flatlining in that State



DATA FOR ASSAM, CHHATTISGARH, JHARKHAND AND TRIPURA WERE NOT RELEASED AS OF 10 P.M. ON FRIDAY

PM praises India's vaccine developers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India had "broken its inertia" in vaccine development after 2014 and had introduced four new vaccines into the country's immunisation programme.

"This included an indigenously developed rotavirus vaccine. Recently, we also gave market authorisation for an indigenously developed pneumococcal vaccine," he said, addressing an online conference of scientists of Indian origin on Friday.

"Our vaccine developers are active and globally competitive during this pandemic," he added. "Time is of the essence and we have committed to eliminate tuberculosis from India by 2025 – five years ahead of the deadline."

The VAIBHAV Summit is a virtual summit of overseas and resident Indian researchers and academicians, and is being organised from October 2 - 31.

'Regulate extraction of minor minerals'

J&K HC Bench directs setting up of a panel on green damage

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Sanjay Dhar has directed the J&K administration to regulate extraction of minor minerals from waterbodies and set up an expert committee to assess any environmental degradation.

"The Chief Secretary of the Union Territory shall appoint a committee of experts on the lines of directions given by the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal Bar Association to assess the components and scales of compensation and recommend measures of reparation for acts and omissions which have resulted in environmental degradation," Ms. Mittal and Mr. Dhar observed.

Plea for regulation

The Bench also directed immediate steps to appoint professional and qualified persons or agencies for technically and scientifically evaluating and fixing the reserved prices of minerals in the UT of J&K.

"The recommendations of the experts so appointed be implemented in public interest," it said.

The Bench was hearing a plea that expressed concerns on account of auction notices "being issued without a study of the environmental impact of these auctions". "We find that it is without conducting any study on the possible environmental impact on the riverbeds and elsewhere [that] the auction notices have been issued," the petition reads.

'Collective impact'

The plea argued that it is not an answer to say that the extraction is in blocks of less than five hectares and separated by 1 km.

"Their collective impact may be significant, hence the necessity of a proper environmental assessment plan," it added.

It pointed out that the States and UTs should see that the mining of minor minerals is permitted only under a strict regulatory regime and is carried out only under an approved framework of a mining plan, which should provide for reclamation as well as rehabilitation of people in the mined areas.

"Sand mining may have an adverse effect on biodiversity as loss of habitat caused by sand mining will affect various species, flora and fauna and it may also destabilise the soil structure of river banks and often leaves isolated islands," the plea stated.

High-altitude tunnel

Final checks: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inspecting the Atal Tunnel on Manali-Leh road on Friday. The tunnel will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday. • PTI

Lalu-Nitish two sides of same coin: RLSP

Three-party front is to give positive choice to people, says Upendra Kushwaha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA

Describing Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and RJD supremo Lalu Prasad as "two sides of the same coin", RLSP president Upendra Kushwaha on Friday said the three-party front they have formed is not to "spoil" votes of any alliance but to give a "positive choice" to the people of Bihar.

"People of the State want an end of 15 years of misrule under Kumar and on the other hand the RJD-headed Grand Alliance does not have a strong face for the post of Chief Minister, besides people have not forgotten 15-year rule of Lalu Prasad's party," he said.

"People don't have confidence in Nitish Kumar and they don't want to go with the RJD as they are two sides of the same coin... in such a situation we have come out with a front of the three parties to give a positive choice to the people," Mr. Kushwaha said.

After being spurned by the NDA and discarded by the RJD-helmed 'Mahagathbandhan', Mr. Kushwaha has forged an alliance with Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party and a non-descript Janatantrik Party (Socialist) ahead of the polls in Bihar.

BSP chief Mayawati has also announced that her party would be supporting Mr. Kushwaha as the "Chief Ministerial" candidate in Bihar, an assertion which is being scoffed at by the ruling NDA as well as the grand alliance comprising RJD, Congress and others.

Railways to pay pending wages to contract staff

Lockdown will be treated as on duty

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

The Indian Railways will pay its contractual/outsourced staff their dues for the COVID-19 lockdown period, when train services were suspended till May 31, 2020. This will benefit thousands of workers who were directly affected by the lockdown.

In an order to General Managers of all Zonal Railways and Production Houses, the Railway Board referred to the circular of the Ministry of Finance on "payment of wages to outsourced persons of Ministries/Departments and other organisations of Government of India during lockdown period due to COVID-19," and said payment to contractors should be made after obtaining proof of paying salaries to workers for the previous month.

As part of social distancing measures due to the spread of the coronavirus, Central/State governments had announced a lockdown across the country.

Safety norms

Due to these measures, the Ministry of Finance said there was a likelihood of a number of contractual, casual and outsourced workers such as housekeeping staff being required to stay at home, which in normal circumstances would result in deduction in their pay/wages.

On track: The decision will benefit thousands of workers, who were directly affected by the lockdown.

"In order to avoid any undue hardships under the prevailing extraordinary circumstances, it has been decided that wherever any such contractual, casual and outsourced staff of Ministries/Departments and other organisation of Government of India is required to stay at home due to the pandemic shall be treated as 'on duty' during such period of absence and necessary pay/wages would be paid accordingly," the order said.

The Indian Railways engages a large number of contractual workers for housekeeping, cleaning, catering, bedroll supply/management, laundry and other services in trains, railway stations and other establishments across its network. These staff are paid by contractors and the bills settled by the Zonal Railways/production houses.

INTERVIEW | SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR

'Govt. cannot keep deferring labour reforms'

An extensive consultation process was undertaken with all the stakeholders, says Union Minister

DAMINI NATH

The recently passed Code on Social Security, the Industrial Relations Code and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, which along with the Code on Wages, 2019 subsume 29 labour laws into four codes, were passed after widespread consultations, says Union Labour and Employment Minister **Santosh Kumar Gangwar.**

There has been criticism about the manner in which the three labour codes were passed. How would you address the criticism that the Bills were not sent to the Standing committee again and there was lack of consultation with the stakeholders?

■ I wish to clarify that the final draft of the Codes has been framed after wide-ranging consultations with all stakeholders. The reforms were initiated on the basis of the recommendations of the Second National Commission on Labour, 2002, which had recommended to subsume the then existing Central labour legislations into four or five Codes. It was from 2014 onwards that our government took active steps towards codification exercise.

I would like to inform that the Labour Ministry seeks to always ensure tripartite consultations. In this context, an extensive consultation process was adopted wherein all stakeholders, including trade unions, employer associations, State governments, international organisations and citizens were consulted. Various consultation processes were held along with seeking the comments of general public by placing the draft codes on the website. Subsequent to these broad consultations, various modifications were made. Many suggestions of trade unions including recognition of trade unions at unit, State and Central level and providing mechanism for inter-trade union dispute resolution through industrial tribunals were accepted. Lastly, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on labour, after scrutinising the labour codes and consulting all stakeholders, gave 233 recommendations out of which about 74% of the recommendations were accepted.... We cannot keep on referring the Bills again and again to committees and in the name of consultation process keep deferring the much needed reforms.

The final draft of the Codes has been framed only after wide-ranging consultations with all stakeholders

How will the four labour codes change the lives of workers? And when will they be implemented?

■ These labour Codes will bring qualitative change in the lives of our workers and they seek to achieve the twin objective of securing the basic rights of the workers and facilitating employment generation.

These labour Codes seek to universalise the right to minimum wage of workers, presently available to only about 30% of the workforce engaged in the scheduled employments. Apart from this, the right to timely payment of wages without any unauthorised deduction has been universalised for all employees. The OSH Code seeks to establish a dynamic occupational safety regulatory framework in consonance with the changing technology and working conditions. The IR Code strengthens the dispute resolution machinery in the industrial establishments besides enabling effective participation of trade unions. The Code on Social Security takes a significant step towards ensuring a universal coverage of all organised and particularly unorganised workers in the social security net. The Rule-making exercise for the Codes has been initiated and we will implement these Codes after framing of subordinate legislations.

(For full interview, log on to bit.ly/LabourMin)

Trade unions call strike on Nov. 26 against labour laws

Government accused of trying to snatch workers' rights

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Ten Central trade unions will observe a nationwide general strike on November 26 to protest against the recent labour laws cleared by Parliament. This was decided at a virtual national convention of the unions and other independent federations held on Friday to coincide with Gandhi Jayanti.

Parliament passed the Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2020; the Code on Social Security Bill, 2020 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code Bill, 2020 in the recently concluded monsoon session.

Indian National Trade Union Congress president G. Sanjeeva Reddy said that for the working class, the Modi government's rule was worse than the British regime. "The Modi government is trying to snatch the rights we earned after 60 years of struggle. They are taking the worker's living standards to British era," Mr. Reddy said. He said that it was important that all trade unions come together at this hour.

Ten Central trade unions will join the protest next month.

All India Trade Union Congress general secretary Amarjeet Kaur said the government, instead of formulating policies for the last man in the line was making policies to benefit those at the top of the food chain.

The organisations said the new labour codes had taken away the fundamental right of the worker to go on strike. The unions have collectively drafted seven demands, including cash transfer of ₹7,500 a month for all families that do not pay income tax and 10 kg free ration per month to the needy. The unions have also demanded withdrawal of the new labour and farm laws.

Centre of Indian Trade Unions general secretary Tapan Sen said the government was adamant on selling public sector units and on privatisation. "On November 26, there will be a nationwide general strike. But this is merely the first step, we will constantly oppose the Modi government's every effort to try and sell off public sector companies," Mr. Sen said.

Instapick

Architecture for Dogs: This "earnest project" explores architecture that can be joyful for both dogs and their humans. First launched at Design Miami in 2012, it has since toured Japan, China and Brazil, making its European debut in London last month with the addition of a new piece by UK architect Asif Khan. The pieces are designed for different breeds, including the Beagle, Bichon Frise and Shiba Inu. Till January 10, 2021. Details: @archfordogs.

Talking point

London Marathon: It will be pros only at the 40th annual race on October 4, as the mass participation event stands cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic. The race will be run without spectators with 19 laps of a closed course at St James's Park. Staff and athletes will also wear a Bump device that gives an audible alert when you get too close to others. Take part in the 24-hour virtual version of the event on virginmoneylondonmarathon.com.

SPIT TAKE

Beware, I've changed my DP

The secret weapon that is stronger than any military arsenal

:: KRISHNA SHASTRI DEVULAPALLI

In October last year, a bunch of fearless freedom fighters voluntarily sacrificed 12 entire hours of their internet time – but not before changing their DPs – as a mark of solidarity for the internet blackout in Kashmir while I, uncaring **** that I am, spent much of that time Googling Kangana Ranaut's quotes on patriotism.

The activists were bruised and battered, but, by god, they emerged triumphant from this gruelling, life-threatening ordeal that lasted for a nail-biting, spine-chilling, blood-curdling 43,200 seconds.

After sipping on tender coconut water and chilled watermelon juice (add gin or vodka to taste) to regain some of their depleted spirit, and being rewarded for their bravery with hundreds of heart emojis from other fearless friends, these warriors went back to the business at hand: responding with heart emojis on the selfies of fellow activists, spreading brotherly love, and basically showing us how it was done. Without ever leaving home.

What an eye-opener it was for a low fool like me. Here I was thinking *satyagrahas* were for Mahatmas, and my friends proved that to perform a new-age one, you could be a perfectly ordinary *atma*, didn't have to leave home and, heck, you didn't even need the principle ingredients: *satya* or *agraha*. All you needed was a phone. And a DP.

Today, the same lion-hearted folks are back. They keep coming back despite the wounds, scars and PTSD because that's how committed and selfless they are.

But for the current cause, take my word, they have pulled out all the stops.

Watch out, Patriarchy! Your days are numbered. My fiery friends are here, armed with the lethal 'Let's Smash Patriarchy' T-shirts that they'll sucker-punch you with in the solar plexus, and as you are wondering what hit you, finish you off with a (drum-roll) 'Let's Smash Patriarchy' DP.

The way things are going, rumour has it that Patriarchy could soon ask for Y+ category security because it fears the T-shirts and the DPs could not just demolish its headquarters, but put its very life in danger.

What a massive booster-shot in the arm this must be for the women who have been fighting Patriarchy for centuries, no? As they board trains and buses – or are trudging barefoot – to schools, colleges, computer classes, hospitals, factories, shops, beauty parlours and upper-middle class households, to study, to work, to survive, they now go with the reassuring thought that Patriarchy's *achhe din* are ending. Because the ever-vigilant wives, girlfriends, sisters and mothers of the principal practitioners of Patriarchy have changed their DPs, dammit. From their previous ones, taken in Paris or Panruti. And dumb, arrogant Patriarchy didn't see it coming, LOL. The sheer suddenness of the move, the unexpected nature of the move, the unpredictability of the move.

I want to take this opportunity to thank these stoic souls who have given up this sacred space, the little virtual circle or square reserved for their own beauteous faces, repeatedly, to put their formidable social media influence behind such a range of causes as I Am Charlie Hebdo, #MeToo, I Oppose CAB, Black Lives Matter, etc. By bunging in appropriate ready-made JPEGs downloaded from the internet on that all-powerful pedestal.

How are these valorous folks one bit inferior to the *thali* clangers, the *diya* lighters, the pumpkin-breakers, the chilli-and-lemon garlanders and the Go-Corona-Go chanters, tell me?

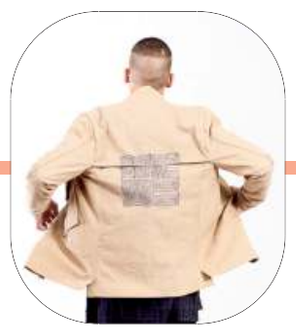
India is safe in their hands, my friends. Let's you and I relax. Because, if an all-powerful neighbour were to attack us tomorrow, we can rest assured that my friends will annihilate them with their DPs.

Krishna Shastri Devulapalli is a satirist. He has written four books and edited an anthology.

▪ SREEJITH R KUMAR

Pick of the week

Concerts, stand-up and other events this weekend.



Digital GenNext batch

Lakmé Fashion Week's latest GenNext batch – part of the digital-first, season-fluid edition mid-October – features three designers, all working with sustainable collections. Dhātu Design Studio by Anmol Sharma focusses on menswear (jackets, jeans) from handloom fabric. Mishé by Bhumika and Minakshi Ahluwalia creates contemporary womenswear with zero-waste patterns. The Loom Art by Aarushi Kilawat recreates techniques like *kantha* and *phulkari*, working closely with artisans in villages. @lakmefashionwk on Instagram

Floyd's favourites

The teams behind The Bombay Canteen and O Pedro celebrate Chef Floyd Cardoz's birth anniversary with a delivery-only tribute menu. #FloydsFood, till October 18, features dishes that the chef, who passed away earlier this year, loved to eat and cook at home for family and friends, as well as dishes that defined milestones in his career. This includes Barkha's *seyal gosht*, an heirloom Sindhi mutton curry, lotus root *kakori*, and a *chai* biscuit dessert. Pre-book your favourites on order.opedromumbai.com.

Lights, camera, Bumble

The networking / dating app has partnered with India Film Project for a series of virtual workshops starting today. 'Femmes in Film' – hosted by actor Sayani Gupta (in photo), poet Aranya Johar, screenwriter Kanika Dhillon and director Anjali Menon – will focus on acting, screenwriting, storytelling and filmmaking. To attend, download Bumble, match with the India Film Project profile on the Date, Bizz or BFF modes and apply to book a spot. More sessions are slated for October 10, 17 and 24. Details: bumble.com

Kids in action

It is never too early to teach kids the importance of community service and social responsibility. This weekend, children aged three to 16 have put together their talents to raise funds for paediatric cancer treatment. The initiative, supported by Madras Mylapore Ladies Circle 4, will see an online auction of art, food and craft, including acrylic painting on jute, gourmet *chikki* and chocolate cupcakes as well as handcrafted gift tags, ranging from ₹300 to ₹5,000. Till October 5 or till stocks last. Details: mmlc4.org/kia

Raza on the wall

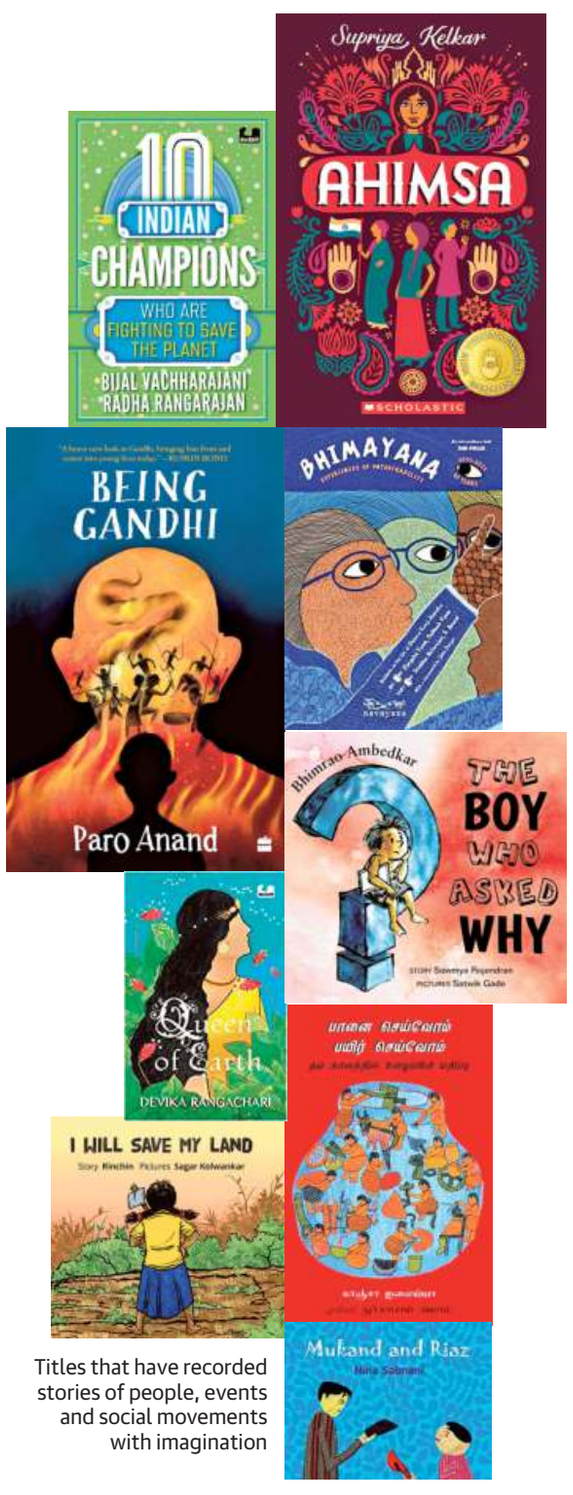
The Arts Trust is currently exhibiting an extensive selection of masterpieces celebrating the artistry of Indian modernist SH Raza. Titled 'Raza - Rendezvous', it will present a compendium of the artist's work spanning over six decades and 100 paintings. Look for everything from his early expressionist landscapes to his explorations with geometric forms in the '70s and his eventual progression into works centred around the "Bindu" (seen here). View it online till October 9 on theartstrust.com

You've got mail

When was the last time you sent or received snail mail? On October 1, World Postcard Day, *The Hindu Weekend* featured people who use postcards as their canvas and means of connecting with the world, sans DMs or video calls. Head to weekend.thehindu.com for the full story. Earlier this week, Sleep Vigilante Dr Abhinav Singh was in conversation with Sunalini Mathew on Instagram. The sleep medicine expert spoke about how to get a good night's rest – which involves putting down your phone! On @thehinduweekend.

Travelling titles

InKo Centre, in association with Tara Books, presents a series of live readings on YouTube that introduces children to cross-cultural books. The latest was *To Market! To Market!*, a much-loved picture book that was published in Korean in 2009. It reminds readers of the enduring charm of a typical city market in southern India, and is read by author Anushka Ravishankar. The recordings are hosted on the Tara Books YouTube channel. Look out for two more sessions, one each in October and November.



Titles that have recorded stories of people, events and social movements with imagination

What about us?

Featuring recent titles and characters presented in non-stereotypical ways, *The Hindu Weekend* reading list is for our children who are growing up to be active citizens

:: MENAKA RAMAN

In July this year, the CBSE announced a 30% reduction in syllabus across subjects for students in classes 9-12, due to the disruption caused by Covid-19. Portions on citizenship, secularism, democracy, diversity, gender, caste and wildlife will not be taught to students in the academic year 2020-21.

If such erasure continues in the years to come, where can youngsters turn to find out more about the people, events and social movements that have shaped the narrative of their own country? Fortunately, here are some picture books, historical fiction and non-fiction titles that have recorded these stories with imagination.

Understanding the past

Women are often written out of history. Dr Devika Rangachari's recent *Queen of Earth* is the story of the ninth-century Odisha queen, Prithvimahadevi. Intelligent and feisty, she is married to an enemy king as part of a power-brokering deal. But rather than wilt, she comes very much into her own and takes charge of the rapidly evolving political situation.

In Supriya Kelkar's *Ahimsa*, 10-year-old Anjali's life goes through big and small setbacks when her mother heeds Gandhiji's call to join the freedom movement. From having to give up clothes made from imported materials to being shunned by the community for teaching Dalit children, Anjali overcomes her own inner prejudices to step forward and do what needs to be done when her mother is imprisoned.

Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability, written by S Anand and Srividya Natarajan and illustrated by Durgabai Vyam and Subhash Vyam, takes readers through the inspiring life of Dr BR Ambedkar. The book documents several stories that young people will rarely get to read in textbooks, like the Mahad Satyagraha.

Paro Anand's *Being Gandhi* takes us back to 1984. Chandrashekhar is a privileged teenager who is trying to find ways to shirk off a history project about trying to live by Gandhi's philosophy. When riots break out post the assassination of the Prime Minister, he finds himself embodying the Mahatma's ideologies, unwittingly at first and then with intent. The book reminds us that the Gandhian way is as relevant today as it was in the past, and always will be.

Understanding the present

At a time when *pourakarmikas* are bearing the brunt of the nation's fight against Covid-19, understanding dignity of labour is crucial. Kancha Ilaiah and Durgabai Vyam's *Turning the Pot, Tilling the Land: Dignity of Labour in Our Times* looks at the labour of *adivasis*, potters and weavers, and traces the immense contribution that they have made to society through the lens of caste, gender and religion. For the youngest of readers, Rajiv Eipe's *Anand* is a gorgeously-illustrated picture book about a sanitation worker who loves to look good and keep neighbourhoods looking good, too.

I remember thinking that the Constitution had little to do with my life when I was in school. Young readers today will not arrive at such a foolish conclusion if they have read *The Constitution of India for Children* by Subhadra Sen Gupta and Tapas Guha. Written in a wonderfully conversational style, it introduces readers to the Constitution and the key figures who helped frame it.

With the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) 2020 being hotly debated, *I Will Save My Land* by Rinchin and Sagar Kolwankar beautifully depicts a girl's anxiety about losing her land to hungry machines and tackles the issue of 'development' at a cost.

Every Indian girl in this country owes their education to the efforts of Savitribai Phule. In Sangeeta Mulay's book *Savitribai Phule and I*, we come to learn more about this education reformist. Two stories run in parallel: Shabri, a young Dalit girl in college in the present day and Savitribai Phule's life told through fictional diary entries. Both of them face humiliation and hatred for daring to seek an education.

Betiyaan Bhi Chaahain Azaadi by Kamla Bhasin and Shrujana Shridhar is a call to action and *azadi* for youngsters. *Azadi* from violence and harassment. *Azadi* to be who they want to be. *Azadi* to exercise their rights. The illustrations bring to mind the powerful images of the young women at the fore of the anti CAA-NRC protests from earlier in the year.

Being prepared for the future

With the climate crisis looming large, I want to end with Bijal Vachharajani and Radha Rangarajan's *10 Indian Champions Who Are Fighting to Save the Planet*. Meticulously researched and lucidly written, this slim book is packed with inspiring stories of the hard work, dedication and real love that it takes to fight the good fight when it comes to saving the planet.

It is the same hope, commitment and passion that young people today will need to draw upon to help steer India in the right direction in the years to come.

Hotels are the monuments of today and the trends she set at the start of the growth trajectory was an important element in hotel design in India. Sadly, few of the western designers being used today have the same empathy she had for the arts, crafts and textiles of India

SHARAN APPARAO

Elisabetha Kerkar:

The Pioneer of 'Indian Modern'

SURYA PRAPHULLA KUMAR

Everyone has a story about Elisabetha Kerkar, the interior designer who passed away on September 19 at the age of 82, and who gave Taj Hotels its distinct design identity in the latter decades of the 20th century. For Naomi Menezes, a close friend, it is about a small, weather-beaten 300-year-old Portuguese map of Goa that Elisabetha had restored, mounted and framed. "She asked me if she could use it in some way. The next thing I knew, it was blown up into an 18 ft x 6 ft print and mounted at the back of Fort Aguada's Anchor bar," says the wife of Lenny Menezes, director of Goa's first five-star beach resort.

For Saraswathi Mahadevan, former executive housekeeper at Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur, it is Elisabetha's fascination with the fading *haveli*-style wall paintings that she'd discovered while renovating the suites occupied by the erstwhile royal family. "She went to the local market and found Suresh, an artisan with the expertise to restore them," she says, adding how Elisabetha played up each room's distinctive features, such as the glass inlay mosaic on the ceiling of the Sajjan Niwas Suite – where the *maharana* is said to have lain on his bed, enjoying the reflection of the moon outside – or the 'happy' colours in the Khush Mahal Suite. "She got the team to restore the squares of multi-hued glass in the *jharokhas* [arched windows at the 18th century palace] so that when the sunlight came in, brilliant oranges, magentas and yellows stained the floors and walls," she says.

Her vision, her way

But the single memory everyone shares: of Liz as a perfectionist. At 8 am, she would be at her desk in her second floor office in the Heritage Wing of The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai. By 8.30 am, she would begin work, placing orders with carpenters and tile makers in her accented English, drawing up patterns to send to fabric manufacturers, and overseeing her team of architects and draftsmen as they mapped out floor plans for properties under refurbishment.

She left behind a legacy that spans the Taj properties. Friends and former colleagues share memories that celebrate the interior designer and art connoisseur

"You would see her sitting with the painters, telling them the exact percentage of colour to add to get a specific shade. She would go personally to the Johnson & Johnson tile factory in Mumbai, to sit with them until they got the samples right," recalls MM Parvathy, who retired as Director Operations for Taj Vivanta and worked closely with Elisabetha when she redid the interiors of the Taj Coromandel in Chennai.

Her elephantine memory was legendary. "She used so many artefacts across so many hotels, but she could recall where each one was placed," says Parvathy, while Mahadevan adds, "Every time she walked into a hotel, she would stand for a minute and scan the lobby. If anything was amiss, everyone from the general manager on would get a dressing down."

Indian at heart

Swiss by birth – Elisabetha met and married Ajit Kerkar in the mid-50s, when she was an art student in London – she flawlessly merged her European sensibility with the Indian aesthetic. "I've always thought of her as one of India's first design directors. She understood the country and its artistic potential, and gave Taj Hotels its character, creating what we know today as India Modern," says Chennai-based gallerist Sharan Apparao.

Friends and colleagues remember how she would hunt for antiques wherever she went, be it Chor Bazaar and AK Essajee in Mumbai or the *gullys* of Varanasi and Rani Arts and Crafts in Chennai. "When we first opened Taj Coromandel, she frequented Kora Ramaswamy's antique shop to source objects such as an old wooden temple chariot that she placed in the lobby," says Sujaya Menon, whose husband was then Vice President of Taj Group (South). Elisabetha returned to Chennai once more in 1997, to redo the suites in preparation for Queen Elizabeth's visit. Working with terrible deadlines, the suite was completed by midnight, just ahead of the royal entourage's arrival. "It was almost like the last polisher went out and in came the Queen," Menon recalls, adding, "She personally told us how much she enjoyed her room [outfitted in royal blue, with Italian Crema Marfil marble]".

The art collector

Away from her drafting table and countless lists, Elisabetha also made a name for herself collecting art. In the '60s, she and Rodabeh Sawhney, the sister of JRD Tata, scouted galleries in Mumbai and Delhi. "The art scene was not as mature as it is today. But an advantage she had was that there was a gallery [functioning from the 1950s] in the Taj itself. As it was perceived to be one of the more prestigious venues in the city, it attracted a number of quality artists," says Mortimer Chatterjee, gallerist and art consultant to the Taj. Among the early works she acquired were Jehangir Sabavala, whose father was a manager at The Taj Mahal Palace and MF Husain. Abstract painter Ram Kumar was a favourite, along with names such as Vasudeo Gaitonde and SH Raza.

You may not see much of her 4,000-strong collection in their original 'hangs' today. Post the 2008 terror attack, a major rehang, overseen by Chatterjee, gave the masters a fresh outlook. "We created new narratives with her collection. At the renovated Harbour Bar, for example, we worked around abstraction, juxtaposing artists of the '60s and '70s like Ram Kumar, Ganesh Haloi and Laxman Pai," he says. Others from the collection hang at the Taj Mahal in Delhi, Taj Bengal in Kolkata or the Taj West End in Bengaluru.

Read the full story on thehindu.com.

(Clockwise from top left) *Haveli*-style wall paintings in the Sajjan Niwas Suite, Taj Lake Palace; marble chairs with *pietra dura* detailing at The Chambers in Delhi; the columns Elisabetha rescued from Petit House, Mumbai, installed in the Crystal Room; an old photo of Elisabetha; and gold leaf painting in the Sukh Nivas Suite

A different side

Evenings often found Elisabetha in her room, knitting cardigans and scarves (which she distributed to orphanages and old age homes every Christmas) and watching her favourite TV soap, *The Bold and the Beautiful*. "She also loved animals and donated generously to People for Animals," says Mahadevan, who recalls how she had the security guards at the Mumbai Taj make a kennel for stray dogs, and she would feed them leftover food from the hotel.

FOOD SPOT

A thumbs up to more Bengali food

BongTastes delivers over the weekend and its menu changes each week, with a rerun of old favourites

RAHUL VERMA

Every now and then, I raise a silent toast to all my food loving friends. Some like good food, some cook well, some are knowledgeable about everything culinary – but there is one thread that connects them. They keep me informed about food developments in the city and elsewhere.

That's how I got to know about BongTaste, a new food delivery outfit in town. My friend Pritha – who was a journalist when we first met, has turned into a gourmet cook over the years, and is now a walking encyclopedia on Bengali culinary customs. She asked one of the brains behind the service – Adusyanti Chatterjee – to get in touch with me. She did, I read the menu, ordered a few dishes, and the rest, as they say, is food history.

BongTastes operates from south Delhi and delivers to most parts of Delhi-NCR, but only on weekends. They change the menu every week, and rerun old favourites. There were various kinds of chicken dishes (chicken *korma* and *doi* chicken) on the menu that week, but I had already ordered a chicken roast from Utpala Mukherjee's food service, and had cooked a Malaysian chicken for a few friends who were coming over. So we asked for a plate of *kanchkolar kofta* (green banana *kofta*), prawns (*chingri bati chorchori*) and mutton *do piyaza*, all amounting to ₹1,160, a reasonable price, you would agree. The helpings are good enough for two hungry people.

I thought I'd had enough of Bengali dishes, but clearly I was mistaken, for I relished all three. The *kanchkolar kofta* was a revelation. Raw banana is not something we often have at home, and the last time we did, we'd followed a southern Indian recipe from YouTube. This recipe was completely different, and I enjoyed the dish thoroughly.

For this, the bananas had been boiled, then mashed with spices, boiled potatoes, onion paste, ginger, and green chillies. The mash was shaped into balls, which went into a mildly sweet and gingery curry, flavoured with grated coconut and then topped with ghee. It was truly subtle, and I found myself going in for seconds.

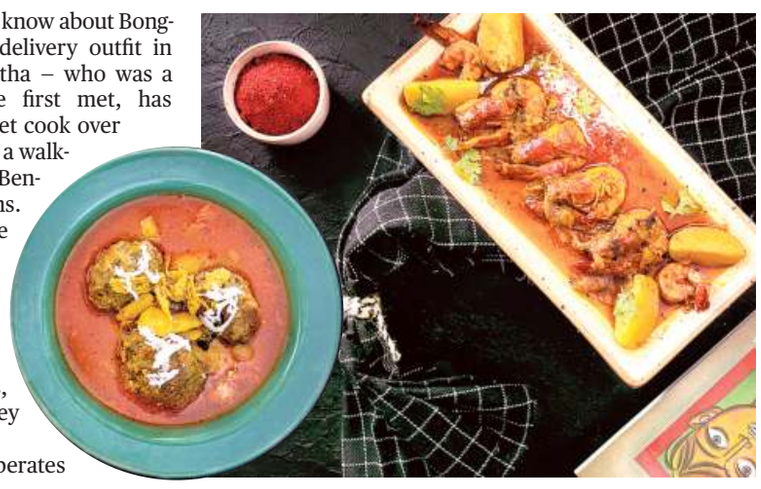
This dish was light, while the *bati chorchori* was deliciously spicy. Some fairly large prawns had been marinated with mustard oil and spices and then cooked in a bowl – called bati in Bengali – over a low flame. *Chorchori*, as most know, is a mix. "This is called a bachelor's dish," explains Subinoy Das, co-founder of BongTaste. I suppose the name comes from the fact that it translates into hassle-free cooking. The mutton *do piyaza* was all right, though I fear it had too much oil. Still, the gravy was tasty, and went well with my home-cooked roti.

This week they have something called a Sultanate edition: chicken dishes from Lucknow, Murshidabad, Hyderabad, and Bhopal. It has on offer Nizami murgh, Nawabi murgh, Sultani murgh and Darbari murgh (each ₹410).

My only grouse with the service is that they don't factor in the delivery charges when they give us the bill (₹150). The amount is not much, but it is easier when the sum is added to the bill so that you have a cashless delivery.

I look forward to more Bong dishes in the near future. *Kanchkola*, my near and dear ones tell me, is also the Bengali word for the Hindi '*thhainga*', a rude upturned thumb gesture that stands for a phrase like 'too bad' or 'ha ha'! I think in this case the dish – along with BongTaste – deserves not a kanchkola, but a cheerful thumbs up.

The writer is a seasoned food critic.



(Clockwise from top) Mutton *do piyaza*, *chigri bati chorchori*, *kanchkolar kofta*

▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

On a glory night

German ambassador and musician, Walter J Lindner has produced an Indo-German rendition of the song that commemorated the reunification of East and West Germany, 30 years ago

An Indo-German collaboration Chezin, Gadamsetty, Mishra, Mathew, Dhar (above); Walter J Lindner ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SUNALINI MATHEW

Exactly 30 years ago, on October 3, 1990, after the wall between the East and West had been brought down by the people of the land in November the previous year, Germany became one nation. At Brandenburg Gate, in Berlin, a symbol of both division and then unification, The Scorpions, a rock band from Hanover, sang 'Wind of Change' against a backdrop of fireworks and people reunited. The event was telecast live across Germany.

Walter J Lindner, then a diplomat at the start of his career, and now the German ambassador to India, watched it from his home in Bonn, wishing he had been in Berlin, but enthralled because, "We thought in Germany this [the Cold War] would never end. Many people gave up hope after 40 years of separation," he says.

To commemorate the event during the pandemic, Lindner turned to music. Thinking back to 1989-90, he felt 'Wind of Change' was the song that represented the era.

Reinventing a song

After speaking to Klaus Meine, the composer and lead singer, he got the rights to perform the song, and asked four Indian musicians he had played with before, if they would like to be a part of the project. Rakesh Chaurasia on the bansuri, Pandit Vikash Maharaj on the sarod, Prabhash Maharaj on tabla, and Abhishek Maharaj on the sitar, all consented. The 15th-generation musician, Prabhash says it is special for their Varanasi-based family because his father, Pandit Vikash, was in Germany, a witness to the wall coming down.

Lindner, who has a studio at this Delhi home, played the guitar, keyboard, synthesizer, bass, percussion, and strings, and coordinated with Peter Retzlaff, a drummer he had worked with before in New York. Four background voices – Vrnda Dhar, Renie Mathew, Akash Gadamsetty, Shambhavi Mishra – recorded their parts one at a time in a studio, and the musicians recorded theirs at home, all within 10 days between July and August.

He sent the musicians the master indicating where their parts came in, and integrated these into the master. Mumbai-based Chaurasia, who first met Lindner in South Africa at a concert, says while chord changes can be challenging for musicians schooled in classical music here, he found it easy to make the transition, because of his own experience playing with musicians who play different instruments.

Then there was a singer to choose: "I needed someone who was soft but not too soft, still rocky." He asked Gurugram-based singer-songwriter Chetan Dominic Awasthi (Chezin).

The message today

The song itself was inspired by the 1989 Moscow Music Peace, where The Scorpions and several other metal acts performed. It was the first time that bands from beyond the Iron Curtain performed in then USSR.

Today, in a splintered world Lindner says what we need are charismatic politicians, a common consciousness around the globe that things have to change, and more peace movements.

The main message, says Prabhash, is to live "with love, peace, and music".

Wind of change: Day of German Unity 2020 has been released today on YouTube with an introductory address by Klaus Meine

Trump to carry on with duties: WH doctor

President and the First Lady started 'quarantine process' after the news of his aide's infection broke

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

The White House on Friday sent out a memorandum from President Donald Trump's physician Sean Conley, confirming that the President and the First Lady contracted the novel coronavirus and saying they will remain at home during their convalescence.

"Rest assured I expect the President to continue carrying out his duties without disruption while recovering," Dr. Conley said.

Hours before Mr. Trump made the announcement on Twitter, Bloomberg News reported that his adviser Hope Hicks had tested positive. Ms. Hicks had travelled with the President this week, including to Ohio for the first debate against Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

In addition to appearing on stage with his Democratic rival Joe Biden, Mr. Trump had a full schedule this week, including a flight to his golf course in Bedminster, New Jersey, for a fundraiser. He did not wear a mask at the golf course or on the plane, the *Washington Post* reported. Mr. Trump announced that he and Ms. Trump had begun their "quarantine process" as news of Ms. Hick's infection broke and the Trumps awaited their test results.

On recovery path: Donald Trump and Melania after the first presidential debate in Cleveland, Ohio, on September 29. ▪AP

Mr. Biden said he and his wife, Jill, wished the Trumps a "swift recovery".

"Jill and I send our thoughts to President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump for a swift recovery. We will continue to pray for the health and safety of the President and his family," Mr. Biden tweeted.

Mr. Biden's last tweet before the news of the President's health situation broke was about Mr. Trump distracting the country from his "failed COVID-19 response".

Mr. Trump was supposed to hold a roundtable with supporters in Washington on Friday and later fly to Sanford, Florida, for a rally. Instead, his Friday calendar was updated to show just a previously scheduled phone call "on COVID-19 support to vulnerable seniors".

First Lady Melania also tweeted about the situation, saying "too many" Americans had tested positive and were quarantining.

"As too many Americans have done this year, POTUS & I are quarantining at home after testing positive for COVID-19. We are feeling good & I have postponed all upcoming engagements. Please be sure you are staying safe & we will all get through this together," Ms. Trump said.

Biden tests negative for virus, heads to Michigan

WILMINGTON

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden said on Friday he has tested negative for COVID-19, three days after his debate with President Donald Trump. The 77-year-old former Vice- President opted to maintain a scheduled trip to Michigan, a key battleground State in his campaign to unseat the Republican incumbent. AFP

V-P, wife test negative

Vice-President Mike Pence and Second Lady Karen Pence tested negative on Friday morning as per a tweet from Mr. Pence's office.

Some 2,08,000 Americans have died and 7.3 million have been infected since the virus hit the U.S. Had social distancing guidelines been instituted a week earlier in March, the U.S. could have seen 36,000 fewer deaths and 7,00,000 fewer infections by May, as per a Columbia University study.

The President has been criticised for not taking the virus seriously. He told veteran investigative journalist Bob Woodward that he wanted to play down the virus so as not to create panic. In February, he said the virus would disappear "like a miracle". His campaign rallies have been characterised by a lack of masks and little social distancing.

The President's estranged niece Mary Trump, who recently wrote a scathingly critical book on Mr. Trump, implied that her sympathies were not with her uncle but with those who were sick or had died or had been misled.

"I reserve my sympathy, empathy, and despair for those who are sick and for those who have died because they were misled, lied to, or ignored. Wear a f****** mask," she wrote on Twitter.

Modi wishes Trumps

President Ramnath Kovind wished the Trumps a "speedy recovery" on Twitter. "Our prayers and best wishes are with you during this time," he wrote.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also wished the couple. "Wishing my friend @POTUS @realDonaldTrump and @FLOTUS a quick recovery and good health," he tweeted.

Maldives's slow progress on rights a concern, say activists

They acknowledge some gains, especially in child rights

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Two years after Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih rose to power promising to "restore democracy", his government's record on fulfilling the poll-time pledge could be better, say activists.

Politically secure, the Solih administration – which decisively won the September 2018 presidential poll and the April 2019 general election – is faced with a grave economic crisis after its tourism-reliant economy broke down in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The UNDP termed the pandemic's impact on the Indian Ocean archipelago, with a 500,000-population, among the worst-affected in Asia. Even as the government tries to cope with COVID-19 – over 10,000 cases and deaths so far – and its grave economic impact, its promise to probe alleged human rights abuses committed during the former Abdulla Yameen administration has not been forgotten by those awaiting justice. While acknowledging some significant gains since Mr. Solih came to power, especially in child rights through the Juvenile Justice Act and Child Protection Act ratified by the President last year, activists voice concern over the government's slow-paced efforts on other fronts.

"In comparison to the previous government, the civic space has opened up since 2018. However, this does not mean that there have not been issues pertaining to citizens' democratic and fundamental rights, especially their right to Freedom of Expression," said Deekshya Illangasinghe, executive director, South Asians for Human Rights. Human rights defenders, who call for freedom of religion and belief, continue to receive death threats, verbal attacks, especially on social media, she noted, adding: "civil society are still not able to express their opinion without fear or repression."

Ibrahim Mohamed Solih

According to Mushfiq Mohamed, secretary general of the Executive Committee of non-governmental organisation Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN), while the Solih administration has brought "commendable changes" to get the Maldives back on track with democracy, legal reforms to previously enacted anti-democratic laws have been slow over the past two years. "Recently, the government restricted protests based on anti-democratic amendments made by the previous government, which it was voted into repeal," Mr. Mohamed told *The Hindu*.

Freedom of speech

Although the Whistleblower Protection Act – passed last year – and the decriminalisation of defamation have sought to improve the environment for freedom of speech, journalists and human rights activists continue to operate in a "dangerous climate", said Mr. Mohamed.

Meanwhile, the government's slow progress on two crucial cases has come under scrutiny. In their campaigns ahead of both the presidential and parliamentary elections, the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP)'s leader and Speaker Mohamed Nasheed and President Solih made bold pledges to probe the disappearance of journalist Ahmed Rilwan, who was known for his critical views and has been missing since August 2014, and the killing of dissident blogger Yameen Rasheed in 2017. "It is disappointing to note that, even though the current government came into power with a promise to investigate these cases, the progress has been very slow where the perpetrators have still not been brought to justice and the families remain in hope," Ms. Illangasinghe said.

When President Solih convened the Commission on Investigation of Murders and Enforced Disappearances on his first day in office, November 17, 2018, he gave the victims' families and rights groups reason for hope. In September last year, the panel said the investigation, then "nearing completion", threw up troubling evidence of radical Islamist groups targeting dissidents like journalist Rilwan, who they believed, was murdered on a vessel at sea.

The murder of Rasheed too was linked to the case. There has been no substantial forward movement since. In July this year, the families of Rilwan and Rasheed requested President Solih to invite an international expert to assist the investigations undertaken by the Commission, hoping that would expedite the probe.

ELSEWHERE

'Osama details not shared with Pak. over trust deficit'

NEW DELHI

The U.S. did not inform Pakistan about Osama bin Laden's location due to lack of trust and past experiences of terrorists being tipped off after information was shared with Islamabad, former U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said. PTI

Armenia says it is ready for mediation

Azerbaijan asks Yerevan to withdraw its troops; main Karabakh city faces firing

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijani forces on Friday struck Stepanakert, the main city in Azerbaijan's breakaway Nagorny Karabakh region, wounding "many" people, an Armenian official said as fighting raged for a sixth day.

The two neighbours have been locked in a simmering conflict for decades over the region and new fighting that erupted on Sunday has been the heaviest in decades.

In a joint appeal, Russian President Vladimir Putin, U.S. President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron urged the two sides to return to negotiations aimed at resolving the longstanding dispute.

Mr. Macron has warned NATO member Turkey – which backs Azerbaijan – against the alleged deployment of militants from Syria to the Karabakh conflict.

The separatist government in Stepanakert said Azerbaijani forces destroyed a bridge linking Armenia to Karabakh.

Armenia "stands ready to engage" with France, Russia, and the U.S. – which co-chair the OSCE group of mediators – "to re-establish a ceasefire regime," the Foreign Ministry in Yerevan said. But it said that talks could not begin unless fighting is halted.

Azerbaijan retorted that Armenia must first withdraw its troops.

Nearly 200 people have been killed since Sunday, including 30 civilians, and there are fears of the fighting expanding into an all-out war that could suck in regional powers Turkey and Russia.

Macron vows to fight Islamist separatism

'Govt. worried by broader signs of radicalisation within Muslim communities'

REUTERS
PARIS

France President Emmanuel Macron pledged on Friday to fight "Islamist separatism" which he said was threatening to take control in some Muslim communities around France.

France has struggled with homegrown Islamist militancy for years but Mr. Macron's government is increasingly worried by broader signs of radicalisation – often non-violent – within Muslim communities, French officials say.

They cite the refusal of some Muslim men to shake women's hands, swimming pools that impose alternate time slots for men and women, girls of as young as four being told to wear full-face veils, and a proliferation of 'madrassa' religious schools.

More than 250 people have been killed on French soil over the past five years in attacks by Islamist militants or individuals inspired by jihadist groups.

Emmanuel Macron

"What we need to fight is Islamist separatism," Mr. Macron said during a visit to the impoverished Paris suburb of Les Mureaux. "The problem is an ideology which claims its own laws should be superior to those of the Republic."

France follows a strict form of secularism, known as "laicite", which is designed to separate religion and public life. The principle was enshrined in law in 1905 after anti-clerical struggles with the Catholic Church.

In recent decades, the growing desire among French Muslims to express their religious identity has shifted the focus of balancing religious and secular needs onto Islam.

Many French Muslims, though, have long complained of discrimination and marginalisation that have contributed to poverty and social alienation within their communities.

Legislation next year

At the heart of the matter is the question of what it means to be French in a country with Europe's largest Muslim minority – numbering around 5 million or 7-8% of the population.

A Bill tackling Islamist separatism will be sent to Parliament early next year, the President said.

Among the measures in the draft law, Mr. Macron said home-schooling will be severely restricted to avoid having children being "indoctrinated" in unregistered schools that deviate from the national curriculum.

Prefects – local representatives of the central government – will be given the power to annul decisions by Mayors to restrict school cafeterias or swimming pools to women or men only.

There was no immediate reaction from Muslim communities.

Less than two years before the presidential campaign, Mr. Macron is keen not to leave himself open to attacks from the conservative right-wing parties.

On China's National Day, dozens held in Hong Kong

60 detained as they defied protest ban

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Dozens of democracy supporters were arrested in Hong Kong on Thursday for defying a protest ban as the city marked China's National Day and its leader hailed Beijing's new security law for restoring stability to the restive finance hub.

The People's Republic of China celebrates its founding on October 1 with a holiday and carefully choreographed festivities.

But in Hong Kong, it has become a day of grievance for those worried about authoritarian Beijing's intensifying crackdown against its opponents.

Protest has been effectively outlawed for most of this year due to coronavirus restrictions on gatherings and Beijing also imposed a strict national security law on the city in June.

Police said at least 60 were detained during protests, mostly for "unlawful assembly". Officers also raised banners warning crowds that they were breaching the national security law with their protest chants.

Last year's National Day, the PRC's 70th anniversary, brought fierce clashes between protesters and police during seven months of democracy demonstrations that upended Hong Kong.

Authorities denied permission for a protest march this year, citing security concerns and an anti-coronavirus ban on more than four people gathering in public.

Trump denounces all White supremacists

He condemns 'hate group' Proud Boys

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said on Thursday he condemned all White supremacists, including the "Proud Boys," an organisation identified as a hate group, further walking back comments he made this week that were viewed as emboldening the group.

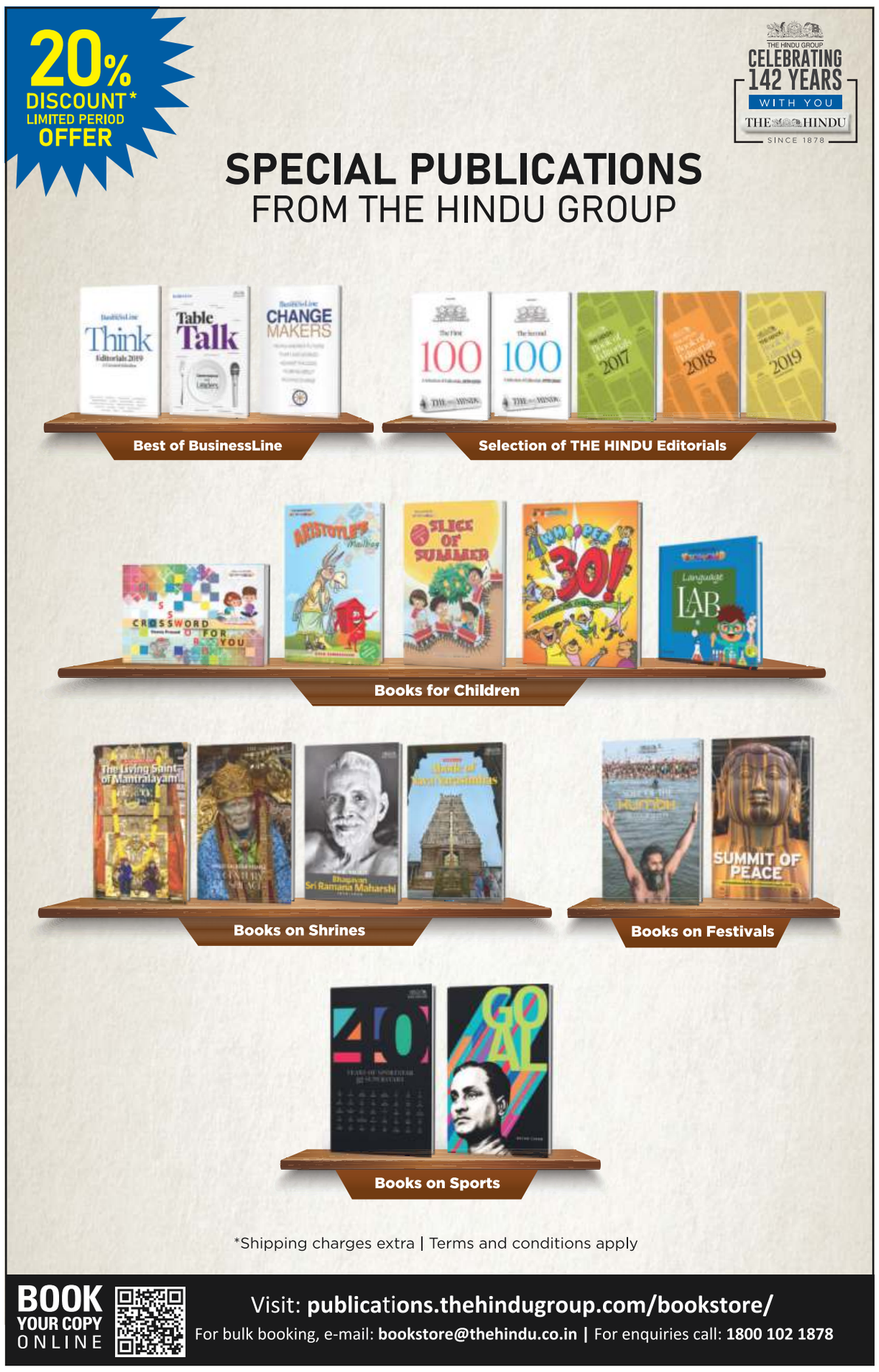
"I condemn all White supremacists, I condemn the Proud Boys. I don't know much about the Proud Boys but I condemn that," Mr. Trump told Fox News in an interview.

During the first presidential debate with Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden on Tuesday, Mr. Trump was asked if he was willing to denounce "white supremacists and militia groups" and tell them to stand down amid violence that has marred anti-racism protests in some U.S. cities.

"Proud Boys, stand back and stand by," Mr. Trump then said. The comment drew wide criticism and was viewed by many to be a sign of encouragement to the group.

Proud Boys member Joe Biggs celebrated the group's mention on the social media platform Parler, saying: "President Trump told the proud boys to stand by because someone needs to deal with ANTIFA...well sir! were ready!!"

Antifa is a far-left movement whose followers aim is to confront those they view as authoritarian or racist. Mr. Trump called on Mr. Biden to condemn Antifa.



U.S. stocks fall after Trump tests positive

REUTERS

Wall Street's main indexes tumbled at the open on Friday after President Donald Trump tested positive for COVID-19 weeks before the election, with an elusive fiscal stimulus and a slowdown in the domestic economic recovery also denting sentiment.

At 9:37 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.99%, the S&P 500 was down 1.25% and the Nasdaq Composite was down 1.68%.

Mr. Trump's tweet that he and first lady Melania had contracted the disease rankled global financial markets and sent investors scurrying to the perceived safety of the dollar, yen and gold.

Analysts said the news could hurt Mr. Trump's campaigning ability and jack up market volatility at a time when investors were already skittish after a chaotic presidential debate heightened fears of a messy transfer of power.

"It's one more insecurity heading into a tight, contentious election," said Oliver Pursche, president of Bronson Meadows Capital Management.

"And given that Trump does not adhere to conventional norms and rules, who knows what he'll do in terms of postponing the elections."

Exports rise 5.3% in September, imports fall narrowing deficit

For April-September, exports decline 21% while imports contract 40%

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

After contracting for six months in a row, the country's exports grew by 5.27% year-on-year to $27.4 billion in September, while imports slipped by 19.6% to $30.31 billion, according to data released by the Commerce Ministry on Friday.

The trade deficit during the month under review narrowed to $2.91 billion as against $11.67 billion in the same period of 2019. The exports in September last year stood at $26.02 billion.

Exports during April-September this fiscal dipped by 21.4% to $125.06 billion. Imports during the period stood at $148.69 billion, recording a contraction of 40%. Commodities that registered growth in exports in September include iron ore (109.5%), rice (92.4%), oil meals (43.9%), carpet (42.9%), pharmaceuticals (24.4), meat, dairy and poultry products (19.9%), cotton yarn/fabrics/madeups, handloom products (14.8%), tobacco (11.1%), spices (10%), petroleum products (4.17%), engineering goods (3.73), chemicals (2.87%), and coffee (0.79%). The Ministry said that in September 2020, oil imports fell 35.9% to $5.82 billion.

Burden too heavy: Exports had been contracting since March due to the pandemic and sluggish global demand. ▪ N. RAJESH

During April-September 2020-21, it contracted 51.1% to $31.85 billion. Non-oil imports in September too declined by 14.4% to $24.48 billion. The imports during the first half of the current fiscal declined 36.1% to $116.83 billion, the preliminary data showed.

Gold imports slump

Gold imports plunged by 52.9% during September this year.

Since March, exports had been recording contraction due to the COVID-19 pandemic and sluggish global demand.

'Tesla to enter India next year'

CEO Musk tweets assurance; had earlier cited 'high' duties

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Elon Musk, the co-founder and CEO of automaker Telsa Inc, on Friday tweeted that the company would be entering the Indian market "next year for sure".

Mr. Musk was replying to a tweet with pictures of a t-shirt with messages 'India wants Tesla' and 'India loves Tesla'.

In response to another tweet in which a Twitter account stated that they were waiting for this piece of news for ages, Mr. Musk added, "Thanks for waiting!"

However, this isn't the first time that the Tesla chief has hinted at an entry into the Indian market.

Last year, he had tweeted saying that import duties in India were "extremely high (up to 100%), even for electric cars. This would make our cars unaffordable," amid expectation of a 2020 launch.

Mr. Musk had said in 2017 that it would be hard to source 30% parts locally.

Likewise, in 2017, Mr. Musk had said he was hopeful of an India entry in the summer of that year. However, he had later tweeted, "Maybe I'm misinformed, but I was told that 30% of parts must be locally sourced and the supply doesn't yet exist in India to support that."

Had sought relief

He had further said that the company was in discussions with the Indian government, requesting temporary relief on import penalties/restrictions until a local factory was built.

The Commerce and Industry Ministry, however, had then clarified that it wasn't accurate to say that the Foreign Direct Investment policy mandates any company to conform to any minimum sourcing of local components if it wanted to establish a manufacturing unit in India.

Mobiles to get dearer as govt. slaps duty on panels

'Prices may rise by 3% on 10% levy'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Mobile phone prices are expected to rise about 3% as the government has imposed 10% duty on the import of displays, industry body ICEA said on Friday.

The duty on display assembly and touch panel was proposed to be applied from October 1 under a phased manufacturing programme (PMP) announced in 2016 in consensus with the industry. "There will be an impact on mobile phone prices between 1.5 and 3%," ICEA national chairman Pankaj Mohindroo said in a statement.

"In a rare miss, the industry could not ramp up display assembly production adequately because of COVID-19 and NGT embargo, Mr. Mohindroo said.

"We continue to be fully committed to domestic manufacturing of sub-assemblies and components. However, now the focus is to take a lion's share of global markets and not just import substitution," he added.

Paytm CEO rallies app operators against Google over Play Store's billing mandate

Several Indian firms oppose U.S. company's demand; Google says it's being 'fair'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Paytm founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma doubled down in his bid to rally Indian app operators against Google over the U.S. company's requirement that apps use the Play Store's billing system for in-app purchases of digital goods, by firing a salvo on Twitter.

"Be the app that, you want to see in the world. Condition: If only Google let's you be," Mr. Sharma tweeted on Friday.

Last month, Google had briefly removed Paytm from its Play Store citing a violation of its policy on gambling. Paytm had at the time called upon the Indian start-up ecosystem and developers to "think the bigger question". "As a start-up, we are running law-abiding businesses and building for India. Google and its employees are making policies which are over and above the laws of our country, and are arbitrarily implementing them," it had said.

Several Indian start-ups have been exercised over Google's notification on applications needing to mandatorily use Google Play's billing system as the method of payment for access to features or services, including any digital content or goods.

Earlier this week, senior representatives from almost a dozen start-ups joined a call to discuss ways to deal with Google's alleged 'dominance', including setting up an alternative to Google Play Store and seeking government intervention.

Industry body IAMAI, which counts Google as a member, had also suggested a meeting of founders, a community that it said was 'on fire' at Google's announcement.

Google clarified that all apps distributed on Google Play offering in-app purchases of digital goods had always needed to use Google Play's billing system.

"We only collect a service fee if the developer charges users to download their app or they sell in-app digital items, and we think that is fair," the U.S. firm added.

FinMin to work on Budget from Oct. 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry will kick-start the exercise to prepare the annual Budget for 2021-22 from October 16, according to a notification.

"The pre-Budget/RE (Revised Estimate) meetings will begin on October 16, 2020," according to the Budget Circular (2021-22) of the Budget Division of the Department of Economic Affairs. These meetings will continue till the first week of November.

Ceilings for all categories of expenditure, including the central sector and centrally sponsored schemes will be discussed, according to the circular.

Mahindra opens bookings for SUV Thar

Prices it in ₹9.8 lakh-₹13.75 lakh range

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (M&M) has opened online and offline bookings for its new sport utility vehicle (SUV) Thar from Friday.

The delivery of the vehicle will start from November 1, the company said.

Thar had been introduced on the occasion of M&M's 75th anniversary, with a price range of ₹9.8 lakh and ₹12.20 lakh for the basic AX four-wheel drive manual transmission range.

The luxury range titled the LX series in four-wheel drive manual transmission is priced between ₹12.49 lakh and ₹12.95 lakh.

The four-wheel drive with automatic transmission is priced between ₹13.45 lakh and ₹13.75 lakh.

The Thar comes in both petrol and diesel variants and will be available in six colours, namely Red Rage, Mystic Copper, Galaxy Grey, Napoli Black, Rocky Beige and Aquamarine.

"Over the years, the Thar has been a part of Mahindra's rich history and has found its way into the hearts of many as an object of desire. On the occasion of the Group's 75th anniversary, we have written another chapter in its glorious history," MD Pawan Goenka said.

'Sanitaryware sector seeing online surge'

Pandemic spurs omnichannel approach

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

Traditional sanitaryware, faucet, plastic pipe and fittings and tile sectors – cumulatively estimated at about ₹50,000 crore – have been compelled to embrace the omnichannel approach to reach customers because of the pandemic, said Sanjay Kalra, CEO, bath products and tiles, Brilloca Ltd., the makers of Hindware products.

Industry players have seen a sudden spurt in customer enquiries and visits to their websites. Reacting to this, many manufacturers are eager to adopt a combination of offline and online sales model, as it was the need of the hour, he added.

"An omnichannel system will flourish as most brick-and-mortar players in our industry are increasingly looking at online options today," said Mr. Kalra.

"Digital will play a key role for us. Many of us are already engaging customers on various social media platforms," he added.

Responding to a query on the impact of COVID-19 on the sectors, whose growth is directly linked with real estate development, he said, "Currently, individual customers from small cities and towns are driving our sales."

Mazagon Dock IPO subscribed more than 157 times

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The ₹444-crore initial public offering (IPO) of defence public sector shipyard Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL), that closed on Thursday, was subscribed by over 157 times. "The IPO of MDL closed with an overwhelming response from investors in all categories," tweeted Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management. "The issue was subscribed more than 157 times," he said. The IPO for the biggest shipyard in the country was open from September 29 to October 1 in the price band of ₹135 to ₹145 per share. In August, the government divested 15% stake in aircraft manufacturer HALto raise about ₹5,000 crore. The issue was also oversubscribed. The government is also looking sell 10% stake in Mishra Dhatu Nigam (MIDHANI) expected to raise around ₹400 crore.

Successful bidder cannot withdraw offer, rules NCLAT

'No provision in IBC to allow U-turn after CoC's selection'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has said that once a resolution plan for a debt-ridden company is approved by the lenders, the successful bidder cannot be permitted to withdraw its offer.

A three-member NCLAT bench said the sanctity of the resolution process has to be maintained and such withdrawal by a successful bidder 'frustrates' the entire exercise of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process.

Moreover, there is also no express provision in the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code to allow any successful resolution applicant to 'stage a U-turn', it added.

"We are of the considered opinion that the sanctity of resolution process has to be maintained and the resolution applicant whose resolution plan has been approved by Committee of Creditors cannot be permitted to withdraw its Resolution Plan," the bench headed by Acting Chairman Justice B.L. Bhat said. The NCLAT further said even under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, there is no express provision for allowing any successful resolution applicant to "stage a U-turn" and withdraw its bids, after being selected by the CoC.

"Provision for submission of a Performance Bank Guarantee by a resolution applicant while submitting its resolution plan, as required under the amended provisions of IBBI [Insolvency Resolution Process of Corporate Persons] Regulations, 2016 is a step in this direction, but may not be deterrent enough to prevent a Successful Resolution Applicant from taking a U-turn," the NCLAT said.

Warburg to invest ₹700 cr. in Home First

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Home First Finance Company India Ltd. has entered into definitive agreements with Orange Clove Investments BV, an affiliate of Warburg Pincus LLC, for an investment of ₹700 crore through a combination of primary fund raise and secondary sales by existing shareholders.

Warburg Pincus will join existing marquee PE firm shareholders True North and Bessemer Venture Partners.

"This transaction is a huge vote of confidence for the affordable housing segment in general and more specifically for the performance of Home First in the face of the crisis," Home First Finance said in a statement.

Sunrisers ride on Garg and Abhishek's dazzling performance

The two add 77 for the fifth wicket in seven overs after the team slips to 69 for four; Super Kings' batting comes undone yet again

IPL 2020

SPORTS BUREAU

A week's break seemed to have made little difference to Chennai Super Kings, as it slumped to its third straight defeat in four matches, losing by seven runs to Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Dubai International Stadium on Friday.

Chasing a target of 165, the Super Kings batsmen looked all at sea, yet again, with no real intent shown against a disciplined Sunrisers attack. The chase got off to a poor start with Shane Watson (1) and Ambati Rayudu (8) falling cheaply. Rashid Khan and Abdul Samad then applied the squeeze in the middle overs to suffocate M.S. Dhoni's men. Only Faf du Plessis looked like forcing the issue, hitting four boundaries in a 19-ball 22, but he was run out.

Middle-order struggle

The middle-order of Kedar Jadhav, Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja struggled against the spinners with the score reading 44 for four at the halfway stage. After taking 18 balls to get his first boundary, Jadeja did produce a late blitz (50, 35b, 5x4, 2x6) with skipper Dhoni remaining unbeaten on 47 off 36 balls. But it was too little too late.

Earlier, after electing to bat, a late flourish from youngsters Priyam Garg (51 n.o., 26b, 6x4, 1x6) and Abhishek Sharma helped Sunrisers Hyderabad post 164 after it was reduced to 69 for four.

Tall order

Garg and Abhishek (31, 24b, 4x4, 1x6) had the tall order of rebuilding the innings and the youngsters proved equal to the task, taking time to settle in before erupting towards the end. The duo put on 77 off 42 balls.

Sunrisers lost Jonny Bairstow in the first over before Manish Pandey (29, 21b, 5x4) showed promise with some clean hitting in the V. But it didn't amount to much. After Pandey's dismissal, Warner tried to take charge and hit Piyush Chawla for two boundaries, but the leggie had him caught spectacularly by du Plessis at long-on. Off the very next ball, Kane Williamson was run out.

It was then that the Garg-Abhishek double-act unfolded. Abhishek was the initial aggressor, hitting Jadeja for a four and six, before Garg tore into Sam Curran in the 17th over, hitting him for three fours and a six. The Super Kings were tardy on the field, with Jadeja and Shardul Thakur dropping Abhishek off back-to-back deliveries. Sunrisers collected 64 runs from the last five overs, a phase that ultimately proved the difference.

Providing the sparks: Garg and Abhishek revived SRH's innings while Jadeja tried his best for CSK. ▪BCCI/IPL

Matches	Player	Team(s)
194	M.S. Dhoni	CSK/Rising Pune Supergiant
193	Suresh Raina	CSK/Gujarat Lions
192	Rohit Sharma	Deccan Chargers/MI
185	Dinesh Karthik	Delhi Daredevils, KXIP, MI, RCB, Gujarat Lions, KKR
180	Virat Kohli	RCB
180	Robin Uthappa	MI, RCB, Pune Warriors, KKR, RR

Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Mumbai Indians	4	2	2	4	1.094
Delhi Capitals	3	2	1	4	0.483
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	2	1	4	0.117
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	2	2	4	-0.084
Rajasthan Royals	3	2	1	4	-0.219
Royal Challengers	3	2	1	4	-1.450
Kings XI Punjab	4	1	3	2	0.521
Chennai Super Kings	4	1	3	2	-0.719

After the CSK-SRH match on Oct. 2

Next assignment

SRH: Oct. 4 vs. **MI**
Sharjah, 3.30 p.m. IST

CSK: Oct. 4 vs. **KXIP**
Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST

Top of the charts

ORANGE CAP

MAYANK AGARWAL (KXIP)
Matches: **4** | Runs: **246**
HS: **106** | SR: **166.21**

PURPLE CAP

MOHAMMED SHAMI (KXIP)
Matches: **4** | Wickets: **8**
BB: **3/15** | Econ: **7.86**

After the CSK-SRH match on Oct. 2

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
David Warner c du Plessis b Chawla 28 *(29b, 3x4)*, Jonny Bairstow b Deepak Chahar 0 *(3b)*, Manish Pandey c Sam Curran b Shardul 29 *(21b, 5x4)*, Kane Williamson run out 9 *(13b, 1x4)*, Priyam Garg (not out) 51 *(26b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Abhishek Sharma c Dhoni b Deepak Chahar 31 *(24b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Abdul Samad (not out) 8 *(6b)*; Extras (w-6, nb-2): 8; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 164.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-1 (Bairstow, 0.4 overs), 2-47 (Manish, 7.1), 3-69 (Warner, 10.5), 4-69 (Williamson, 10.6), 5-146 (Abhishek, 17.6).

SUPER KINGS BOWLING
Deepak Chahar 4-0-31-2, Sam Curran 3-0-37-0, Shardul 4-0-32-1, Bravo 4-0-28-0, Chawla 3-0-20-1, Jadeja 2-0-16-0.

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
Faf du Plessis run out 22 *(19b, 4x4)*, Shane Watson b Bhuvneshwar 1 *(6b)*, Ambati Rayudu b Natarajan 8 *(9b,1x4)*, Kedar Jadhav c Warner b Samad 3 *(10b)*, M.S. Dhoni (not out) 47 *(36b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Ravindra Jadeja c Samad b Natarajan 50 *(35b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Sam Curran (not out) 15 *(5b, 2x6)*; Extras (lb-3, w-8): 11; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 157.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-4 (Watson, 2.3 overs), 2-26 (Rayudu, 5.1), 3-36 (du Plessis, 5.6), 4-42 (Jadhav, 8.2), 5-114 (Jadeja,17.4).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Bhuvneshwar 3.1-0-20-1, Khaleel 3.5-0-34-0, Natarajan 4-0-43-2, Abhishek 1-0-4-0, Rashid 4-0-12-0, Samad 4-0-41-1.

Toss: Sunrisers Hyderabad
Man-of-the-match: Priyam Garg.
SRH won by seven runs.

Innings scan

SRH		CSK
43	Dots	52
19	Fours	14
2	Sixes	5
42/1	PP	36/3
8.20	RR	7.85

Royals face the Royal Challengers test

Both teams go into the match with two victories from three games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ABU DHABI

Searing heat will be an issue when Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) meets a better-prepared Rajasthan Royals (RR) here on Saturday.

Having played its first two games at Sharjah, the smallest of the three venues, RR got its strategy wrong in the game against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in Dubai.

Here too the ground is on the bigger side and Royals' experience of playing in Dubai will help in taking decisions. It will also be RCB's first appearance at Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium.

Royals leg-spinner Shreyas Gopal accepted the fear of unknown. "We can't really estimate anything sitting here, we've practised during the day a few times in the ICC Academy, so we'll go there and take a call," he said on the eve of the match.

Since the team has a settled overseas players' combination, one possible change in the eleven could be replacing pacer Ankit Rajpoot with Varun Aaron.

Royals has benched young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal after Jos Buttler's arrival but calls have been growing for his inclusion.

Both Royals and the RCB go into Saturday's afternoon match with two wins from three games.

RCB's move to open the bowling with Washington Sundar paid off as the offie returned figures of 12 for one in four overs in a game where more than 400 runs were scored.

AB de Villiers has been in ominous touch and it must be heartening for the team management to see Shivam Dube providing the big hits towards the end against Mumbai Indians.

The spin battle: Shreyas and Washington will hope to make their presence felt. ▪BCCI/ IPL

TODAY'S MATCHES

ABU DHABI, 3.30 P.M. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **20**
RR **10** | RCB **8** | NR **2**
In 2019
Played **2** | RR **1** | NR **1**

SHARJAH, 7.30 P.M. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **23**
KKR **13** | DC **10**
In 2019
Played **2** | DC **2** | KKR **0**

STAR SPORTS 1 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD)

Capitals, Knight Riders in high-octane clash

Given the short boundaries, another run-fest is on the cards at Sharjah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SHARJAH

Andre Russell's brute power will meet its match in Rishabh Pant's fearless approach when Kolkata Knight Riders faces Delhi Capitals with an aim to light up the Sharjah skyline in what promises to be another six-hitting IPL contest here on Saturday.

Russell gave a glimpse of what is in store with three sixes at a big Dubai ground against Rajasthan Royals while Pant will be itching to throw caution to the wind and play his natural game – destructive edge of the seat hitting.

In fact, Pant needs it more than Russell as three of his peers, K.L. Rahul, Ishan Kishan and Sanju Samson have got runs under their belt, something that the beefy man from Roorkee so desperately needs.

This will be the first weekend of double-headers in the IPL and there couldn't have been a better ground for that than Sharjah, which has short boundaries promising another run-feast.

KKR has been slowly getting into the groove with some comprehensive performances while Capitals, after two fine victories, hit a roadblock against Sunrisers Hyderabad in its last outing.

For KKR, its young pace attack of Kamlesh Nagarkoti and Shivam Mavi will have their task cut out on a batting paradise where their temperament will be put to test.

Speaking ahead of the game, Capitals coach Ryan Harris believes his team was not at its best in its last match, and is not in a panic situation at all.

"Coming off an unlucky loss, we just weren't at our best for the game against Sunrisers Hyderabad. But, there's no panicking by any means," he said.

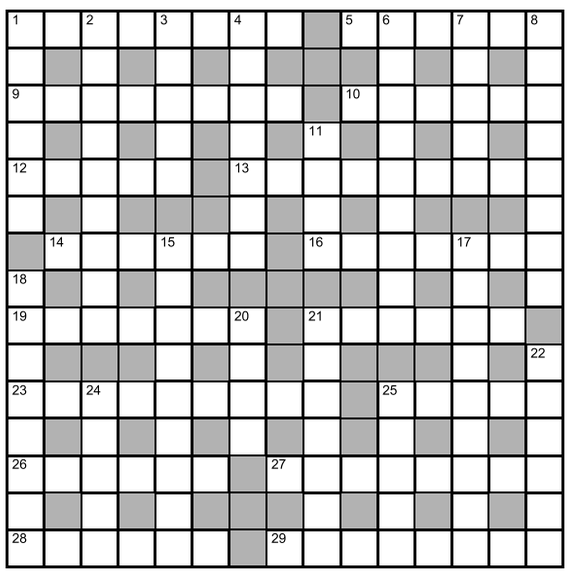
Power-packed: Kolkata Knight Riders' Andre Russell and Delhi Capitals' Rishabh Pant are capable of clearing the fence with ease. ▪BCCI\IPL

TH CROSSWORD + 13057

(set by Lightning)

Are you a cryptic-lover or a quick-solver? Find out Now! @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



ACROSS

1 Difficulties supporting mistake – hard one to let go (8)
5 Shake container for arrows (6)
9 Arrive with label for monument (8)
10 We hear you are near a star spinning onto an ice giant (6)
12 Fear threat eclipsing our home (5)
13 Move invaded U.S. – it was not well counselled (9)
14 Detailed talk left opener without energy, very pale (6)
16 Yes, Spanish insurer working to get semiconductor material (7)
19 In retreat compose song for Roman god (7)
21 Short airplane daughter owned returning to Arabian city (6)
23 This journey may not always take a circular path! (5,4)
25 Place, ideal place, in part it's icy (5)
26 Posed beside vessel – one that has giant rings (6)
27 Banner to remain upright by a road (8)
28 Retired expressing regret, prays regularly for income (6)
29 After commencement, heartache disturbed air tubes (8)

DOWN

1 Question excluding first digit (6)
2 Possession of drug daughter left on cruise liner (9)
3 Not fine, dash off with measure of speed to get fluid (5)
4 It may be used to measure temperature of planet (7)
6 Peerless democrat rule in Virginia in trouble (9)
7 Leading with very efficient, nice, useful serve, she won grand slams (5)
8 One that stays with leader lacking power (8)
11 Injures animal going north of Sweden (4)
15 Criminal under real worry (9)
17 Clot is firm with ailment around muscle (9)
18 Engineer runs test for delegates (8)
20 Jeez! Rabbi withheld old priest (4)
21 Judge raised appeal with hesitation for massive body (7)
22 Loving puree regularly in dish (6)
24 Prior to powerless kick, sick for the most part (5)
25 Criticise one hundred in fear (5)

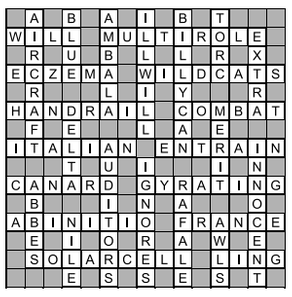
SUDOKU

8		4						
	5	9	7	1				8
	2							
1				9		6		5
	4		6	3	1		9	
3		6		5				4
							8	
4				8	3	7	1	
						5		6

No.SS4855 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13056



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	2	3	1	4	7	6	5	8
6	8	7	2	3	5	4	1	9
1	4	5	6	8	9	2	7	3
7	5	2	8	9	6	1	3	4
8	9	4	3	7	1	5	6	2
3	6	1	4	5	2	9	8	7
5	3	6	9	2	8	7	4	1
2	7	8	5	1	4	3	9	6
4	1	9	7	6	3	8	2	5

FAITH

Worship by yagnas

Yagas and yagnas are forms of worship that the Vedas prescribe for human beings. The Gita refers to yagnas as the wish-fulfilling mythical cow Kamadenu. Prajapati created men along with sacrifice to establish a mutual dependence between the celestial beings in the different worlds in creation and the human beings on earth. When the celestial beings are worshipped in the yagnas, they bestow their grace on human beings. But though there are yagnas for fulfilment of specific purposes and desires, the Gita advises that these should be done in a selfless manner and dedicated to God without an eye on personal gain, pointed out Sri K. Srinivasan in a discourse.

Janamejaya, Parikshit's son, is totally shaken at the turn of events in his life following the death of his father under the extraordinary circumstance of a curse. On the advice of Sage Uttanka, he undertakes the performance of a Sarpa Yagna to avenge his father's death. But due to divine intervention, it is halted midway when Sage Astika arrives at the yaga sala and asks Janamejaya to stop the sacrifice. The snakes that were yet to be summoned to fall in the fire are thus protected. In the Devi Bhagavata narrative it is shown that there is mention of this Sarpa Yaga of Janamejaya long before its actual conduct. Kadru, the mother of snakes once cursed those snakes who had disobeyed her saying that they will die in the Sarpa Yaga of Janamejaya. So these snakes led by Vasuki had then approached Brahma who foretells the birth of sage Astika by whose power they will be delivered from the curse. There is mention of another story that explains the Sarpa satra yaga as punishment for snakes. It is held that snakes resided in deep seas and that once they entered land they caused distress to people with their deadly venom.

TV PICKS

Premier League: SSS elect 2 (SD & HD), 5 p.m., 7.30 p.m., 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)
Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m., 9.30 p.m., 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)
NBA Finals: Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.
Giro d'Italia: Eurosport (SD & HD), 4.10 p.m.
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)

IN BRIEF

Lahiri's good start puts him in Tied-7th

JACKSON (MISSISSIPPI)
Anirban Lahiri's flying start with a bogey-free, six-under 66 left him Tied-7th after the opening round of the Sanderson Farms Championship on Thursday. Charley Hoffman and Jimmy Walker shared the lead with a 64. PTI

Honda to withdraw from F1 at end of 2021 season

PARIS
Honda said on Friday it would withdraw from Formula One at the end of the 2021 season. The Japanese manufacturer, which returned to the sport in 2015, said in a statement it would instead dedicate its resources to "the future realisation of carbon neutrality". AFP

Walsh named coach of WI women's team

KINGSTON
Fast bowling great Courtney Walsh has been appointed as the new head coach of the West Indies women's cricket team. He will lead the preparation and development of the team at least till the end of 2022, including competing in the next ODI World Cup and T20 World Cup. PTI

Halep trounces Anisimova

Thiem and Svitolina also advance with ease to the pre-quarterfinals

FRENCH OPEN

REUTERS
PARIS
Top seed Simona Halep extracted brutal revenge on American teenager Amanda Anisimova with a 6-0, 6-1 victory to move into the fourth round of the French Open on Friday.

Anisimova caused a huge upset last year when she comfortably beat the Romanian, then the defending champion, in the quarterfinals, but could not reproduce that form as she received a 54-minute claycourt lesson.

Miserly mood

Halep was in typically miserly mood on Court Philippe Chatrier, giving precious little away and waiting for the 19-year-old Anisimova to make mistakes.

She pocketed the opening set in 23 minutes and although 25th seed Anisimova, who had dropped only four games in her first two matches, briefly threatened a revival at the start of the second set Halep raced away to victory.

Halep will face another rising star in the next round when she plays Poland's Iga Swiatek in a repeat of their fourth-round clash last year in which Halep dropped only one game.

Mertens crashes out

The event came alive as home hope Caroline Garcia battled back to beat 16th seed Elise Mertens 1-6, 6-4 7-5 in a third-round thriller

Earlier, Ukrainian third seed Elina Svitolina advanced with a no-nonsense 6-4, 7-5 victory against Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova.

In the men's section, third seed Dominic Thiem was not at his best but still had enough firepower to see off the challenge from Norway's Casper Ruud with a 6-4, 6-3, 6-1 win to march into the fourth round.

Later, American qualifier Sebastian Korda who beat Pedro Martinez 6-4, 6-3, 6-1, became the first qualifier to reach the second week in nine years and first man outside the top 200 to make the pre-quarterfinals here since local player Arnaud di Pasquale in 2002.

Fallen seeds

- **Men:** 22-Lajovic; 28-Ruud
- **Women:** 14-Rybakina; 16-Mertens; 25-Anisimova; 27-Alexandrova

The Day in Paris

I played a really good match. I was very aggressive. I knew from last year I had to change something, so I really wanted to be better than last year and definitely I was today
HALEP, after her win over Anisimova

1 Halep has lost just one out of her last 18 matches on clay (to Anisimova at 2019 French Open)

5 Thiem is into the fourth round in Paris for the fifth straight year, his best streak across Slams

13 Number of men's players who have reached the third round at a Major for the first time, the highest since 14 at 1982 French Open

I've been playing tennis for 15 years. You don't think I know a mark, or what? We just started the set. There should not be two marks in the same place
RUUD, to the chair umpire, amidst increasing calls for using Hawk Eye on clay

IMPORTANT RESULTS

Men: Third round: 3-Dominic Thiem (Aut) bt 28-Casper Ruud (Nor) 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.
Second round: 10-Roberto Bautista Agut (Esp) bt Attila Balazs (Hun) 6-3, 6-1, 6-2; 7-Matteo Berrettini (Ita) bt Lloyd Harris (RSA) 6-4, 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.
Kevin Anderson (RSA) bt 22-Dusan Lajovic (Srb) 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 3-6, 6-3; 13-Andrey Rublev (Rus) bt Alejandro Davidovich (Esp) 7-5, 6-1, 3-6, 6-1.

Women: Third round: 1-Simona Halep (Rou) bt 25-Amanda Anisimova (USA) 6-0, 6-1.
3-Elina Svitolina (Ukr) bt 27-Ekaterina Alexandrova (Rus) 6-4, 7-5; Caroline Garcia (Fra) bt 16-Elise Mertens (Bel) 1-6, 6-4, 7-5.
Second round: Fiona Ferro (Fra) bt 14-Elena Rybakina (Kaz) 6-3, 4-6, 6-2; 13-Petra Martic (Cro) bt Veronika Kudermetova (Rus) 6-7(1), 7-5, 6-3.

Saturday's picks

MEN
1-Djokovic vs. Galan
5-Tsitsipas vs. Bedene
10-Agut vs. 17-Carreno Busta

WOMEN
4-Kenin vs. Bara
7-Kvitova vs. Fernandez
11-Muguruza vs. Collins

Play starts at 2.30 p.m. IST
Live on Star Sports 2

Dev makes it to junior French Open

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI
Dev Javia overcame the challenge of Mexico's Emiliano Aguilera Guerrero 6-2, 3-6, [10-8] in the second and final league match of the Roland Garros junior wild card event in Paris on Friday.

The 18-year-old Dev had earlier beaten Brazil's Nicolas Marcondes Zanellato 0-6, 6-1, [10-4] in the first league match.

Coach Shrimal Bhat, who has accompanied Dev, was happy with his ward's fighting performance.

The results:
Boys (league): Dev Javia bt Emiliano Aguilera Guerrero (Mex) 6-2, 3-6, [10-8]; Dev bt Nicolas Marcondes Zanellato (Bra) 0-6, 6-1, [10-4].

Dev Javia. FILE PHOTO

Messi-Fati in the act again

Former works his magic, latter scores

Well done! Ansu Fati, who once again opened the scoring for Barcelona, gets a pat from Jordi Alba. AP

LALIGA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID
Barcelona's new double-act delivered again as Lionel Messi and Ansu Fati led the team to a 3-0 victory at Celta Vigo in LaLiga on Thursday, despite Clement Lenglet's sending off in the first half.

After scoring twice in Barca's opening game of the season, Fati fired early at a blustery Balaidos, only for Lenglet to collect a second yellow card in the 42nd minute for pulling back Denis Suarez.

But even when down to 10, Ronald Koeman's side was undeterred and Messi made the lead more comfortable shortly after half-time, his weaving run and shot diverted in for an own-goal by Lucas Olaza.

Celta hit the crossbar but never really threatened a comeback, and when the ball spilled loose after another Messi dash in injury-time, Sergi Roberto rifled it home and made it 3-0.

The results:
Athletic Bilbao 0 lost to Cadiz 1 (Lopez 57-og).
Sevilla 1 (En-Nesyri 90+2) bt Levante 0; Celta Vigo 0 lost to Barcelona 3 (Fati 11, Olaza 51-og, Roberto 90+5).

NCA holds seminars for women coaches

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU
The National Cricket Academy (NCA) recently concluded a seven-week series of CPD (Continuous Professional Development) seminars for women coaches across the country.

It was conducted by the Coach Education department of the NCA, led by Sujith Somasundar and supported by Atul Gaikwad, Apurva Desai and Rajib Dutta.

Twenty-Four BCCI Level 2 certified coaches and former India cricketers with BCCI level 1 certifications participated.

Topics included skill acquisition, modern coaching concepts, the art and science of fast bowling, etc.

"Women's cricket has been growing at a very fast pace. I believe the last seven weeks have been used well by our education department to connect with some of the women," a press release quoted Rahul Dravid, Head of Cricket, NCA, as saying.

French league stint excites Harmeet

TABLE TENNIS

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI
Indian paddler Harmeet Desai is excited about playing in the French second division league beginning at Roanne on October 20.

The 27-year-old, who will turn out for Club-Loire Nord TTC, said: "I am quite excited and a bit anxious as well because I have not been away from competition for such a long time.

"I feel I am playing well in practice, but it will be totally different in a match. I hope everything will fall in place," Harmeet told *The Hindu* from Surat on Friday.

Harmeet.

Harmeet said he would be flying out on October 9. "Even if I am quarantined, I will still have time to get ready for the match. I heard that the quarantine period is one week and there will be no need for it if I test COVID-19 negative," said Harmeet.

He revealed that he will travel to Ochsenhausen (Germany) after his second match in the French League on October 27.

"I will train in Ochsenhausen as it has one of the best training facilities in Europe before returning to Roanne in the third week of November," said Harmeet, ranked 72nd in the world.

TMB Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd
Be a step ahead in life

Registered office: 57, V.E.Road, Thoothukudi – 628 002
email : shareholders@tmbank.in CIN: U65110TN1921PLC001908

NOTICE OF 94th to 97th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Notice is hereby given that the 94th to 97th Annual General Meetings (AGMs), pertaining to years 2015 - 2016 to 2018 - 2019, of the members of **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited** will be held on Wednesday, 28th October 2020 at 10.00 A.M.,10.30 A.M., 11.00 A.M. and 11.30 A.M. onwards or at the conclusion of the previous AGM respectively through video conferencing / Other Audio Visual Means (VC/OAVM) facility to transact the business as detailed in the Notices of the AGMs along with explanatory statements pursuant of Section 102 of the Companies Act, 2013 sent on 09.03.2020. These Annual General Meetings(AGMs) are being convened pursuant to an order dated 06.02.2020 passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Madras in W.A. 2 of 2016 & CMP.Nos.10145, 16385, 16388, 16389 of 2019 and 16419 of 2019 & WP.Nos.23056 of 2019 and WMP.22748, 22751 of 2019 and an order dated 16.09.2020 passed in C.M.P.Nos.7089 and 7094 of 2020 in W.A.No.2 of 2016. The Hon'ble High Court has directed vide order dated 06.02.2020 that the 94th to 97th AGM's relating to the years 2016 to 2019 shall be conducted under the Chairmanship of Mr.Justice R.Balasubramanian, Former Judge of the Madras High Court. In continuation to the said order, the Hon'ble High Court of Madras has granted permission vide order dated 16.09.2020 to resume the 94th to 97th AGM process from the stage of receiving the nominations for the post of directors and granted 45 days time from the date of receipt of a copy of the order to convene the AGM's through Video Conference (VC) / Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM) by adopting the guidelines/ circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

Notes:

1. THIS NOTICE is in furtherance to the Notice dated 24th February, 2020 issued by your Bank for holding 94th to 97th AGMs on 9th April, 2020 at Thoothukudi. In the light of the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and the proclamation of country wide lock down by the Government of India, it was not possible for the bank to convene the AGMs (the 94th to 97th) as scheduled on April 9, 2020. As a consequence, the AGMs were deferred and appropriate news paper publication (public notice) was made.
2. In view of the massive outbreak of the COVID – 19 pandemic, social distancing has become a norm to be followed. The Government of India, Ministry of Corporate Affairs allowed conducting AGMs through video conferencing (VC) or other audio visual means (OAVM) and dispensed with the personal presence of the members at the meeting. Accordingly, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs issued Circular No. 14/2020 dated April 08, 2020, Circular No.17/2020 dated April 13, 2020 and Circular No. 20/2020 dated May 05, 2020, prescribing the procedures and manner of conducting the AGMs through VC/OAVM. In terms of the said Circulars, the 94th to 97th AGMs will be held through VC/OAVM. Hence, Members can attend and participate in the AGMs through VC/OAVM only. The resolutions proposed in the Notices dated 24th February, 2020 as circulated to the shareholders will hold good except for the manner of holding the meetings.
3. The 94th to 97th AGMs of the members are to be held through VC/OAVM, which does not require physical presence of members at a common venue. The deemed venue for the 94th to 97th AGMs shall be the Registered office of the Bank i.e. 57, V.E.Road, Thoothukudi – 628002
4. Pursuant to provisions of Section 101 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 18 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Secretarial Standard on General Meetings, the electronic copies of the Notices of AGMs and Annual Reports for the financial years 2015-2016, 2016- 2017, 2017- 2018 and 2018-2019 have been sent to all the members on 9th March, 2020 whose email IDs are registered with the bank/ Depository participants. Physical copies of the notice of the AGMs and Annual Reports for all the four financial years have also been sent to all the members at their registered addresses by Post. The same is also available on the bank's website https://www.tmb.in/annual-general-meetings.aspx
   Members who have not received the Notice and Annual Reports may download the same from the website of the Bank https://www.tmb.in/annual-general-meetings.aspx or make request for the same 7 days prior to the meeting date fixed therein. The same will be forwarded to their registered email ID/ address by post.
   The details of ordinary business and special business to be transacted in the AGMs were already covered in the AGMs notice sent to members. All the businesses mentioned therein, are important and unavoidable. Since the Bank has already completed most of the requirements, it has only to fix the date of AGMs and also provide sufficient time as laid down under the companies Act, 2013 to file nominations, if any, for the post of director and to send the e-voting user ID and password to the newly added members after the earlier book closure date i.e. 03.03.2020.
   The user ID and password sent by the CDSL for remote e-voting earlier by email to the members whose email IDs are registered with the Bank/DP or in PIN mailer through Registered Post to other members for the AGMs will hold good and shall be valid for the proposed AGMs. As such we are not sending afresh and the same can be used for the remote e-voting and e-voting during the AGMs. **Members should use the User ID and password sent by CDSL only.**
5. As per the order dated 06.02.2020 of the Hon'ble High Court of Madras, the agenda related to the election of Directors can be taken up at the 97th AGM, being the last of the four AGMs, to be conducted together and notice for candidature of directors will be informed to shareholders through Newspaper publications and the candidatures for directorship can be proposed up to 14 days before the date of meeting.
   Further, the candidates for directorship are also required to meet the 'fit and proper' criteria as laid down in RBI circular DBOD.No.BC.104/08.139.001/ 2003-04 dated June 25,2004 and are required to submit a declaration in the prescribed revised format as per DoR.Appt.No.58/29.67.001/2019-20 dated March 31,2020 in order to enable the Bank to undertake the process of due diligence of the person for the post of director on the Board.
   All the candidates for directorship are required to give their respective consents in form DIR-2 of Companies (Appointment and Qualification of Directors), Rules, 2014 u/s 152(5) of the Companies Act, 2013 and declaration in form DIR-8 of the said Rules confirming that they are not disqualified to act as directors under Section 164(2) of Companies Act, 2013. They are also required to deposit along with the above documents, the notice under Section 160 of the Companies Act, 2013 along with requisite deposit of ₹1 lakh by Demand Draft with the Registered Office of the Bank. The candidate(s) who have already filed the nomination for the post of director need not file again. However, he/she will be required to submit the revised "declaration and undertaking" as mentioned above and the same may be downloaded from the website of the Bank https://www.tmb.in/doc/Declaration-and-undertaking-by-a-proposed-director.pdf.
6. Since, the AGMs are being conducted through VC/OAVM and in line with the MCA Circular No.20/2020 dated 5th May, 2020, physical attendance of members has been dispensed with. Accordingly, the facility for appointment of proxies u/s 105 of the Act by the members will not be available for the AGMs and hence the Proxy Form and the Attendance slip as circulated along with the original Notice of AGMs dated 24th February, 2020 will not be relevant.
7. Since, the AGMs are being conducted through VC/OAVM facility, the Route Map annexed to original Notice of AGMs dated 24th February, 2020 will not be relevant.
8. The Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) will be providing facilities for voting through remote e-voting, for participation in the 94th to 97th AGMs through VC / OAVM facility and e-voting during the AGMs.
9. Members may join the 94th to 97th AGMs through VC / OAVM facility by following the procedures as mentioned below, which shall be kept open for members from 9.30 A.M. i.e. thirty minutes before the time schedule for the start of the 94th AGM
10. Members are advised to note that the VC / OAVM facility allows participation of at least 1000 members on first-come-first-serve basis, as participation through video conferencing is limited. However, the participation of members holding 2% or more, promotors, Institutional Investors, Directors, Key Managerial Personnel, the Chairperson of the Audit Committee, Nomination and Remuneration Committee, Stakeholders Relationship Committee and Statutory Central Auditors etc., are allowed to attend the AGMs without restrictions.
11. The Attendance of the members participating in the AGMs through VC / OAVM facility shall be counted for the purpose of reckoning the quorum under Section 103 of the Act.
12. Corporate members are requested to send a duly certified copy of the Board Resolution authorizing their representative to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting through VC/OAVM, pursuant to Section 113 of the Companies Act, 2013 at least 48 hours before the meeting at shareholders@tmbank.in or helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com before e-voting/ attending AGMs through VC/OAVM.
13. During the AGMs, members may access the scanned copy of the Register of Directors' and Key Managerial Personnel and their shareholding maintained under Section 170 of the Companies Act, 2013, the Register of Contracts or arrangements in which the Directors are interested under Section 189 of the Companies Act, 2013 and all other documents referred to in the Notice, upon logging in to CDSL e-voting system at https:// www.evotingindia.com.
14. Pursuant to Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013, Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended, the Bank is providing the facility to Members to exercise their right to vote on the resolutions proposed to be passed at AGMs through VC / OAVM by remote e-voting and the e-voting during the AGMs.
15. **The Members, whose names appear in the Register of Members/ List of Beneficial Owners as on 21/10/2020, i.e. the cut-off date, are entitled to vote on the Resolutions as set forth in the earlier sent Notices. A person who is not a member as on the cut-off date should treat this Notice of AGMs for information purpose only.**
16. Members may cast their votes on electronic voting system from any place (remote e-voting).
    The remote e-voting period will commence at 9.00 A.M, Sunday, 25/10/2020 and will end at 5.00 P.M, Tuesday, 27/10/2020.
    In addition, the facility for voting on the day of AGMs shall also be made available and the members attending the AGM through VC/OAVM who have not cast their vote by remote e-voting shall be eligible to vote at the AGM (Refer point no. 22 (D) for detailed procedure to vote through e-voting).
17. The Bank has appointed Shri Nagendra D.Rao, Company Secretary in practice to act as the Scrutinizer, to scrutinize the entire e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner. The Members desiring to vote through remote e-voting are requested to refer the detailed procedure as given below.
18. The scrutinizer shall after the conclusion of AGMs shall make a consolidated scrutinizer report of the total vote cast in favour or against, invalid votes, if any and whether the resolution has been carried or not, and such report shall then be sent directly to the Chairman within 48 hours from the conclusion of 97th AGM.
19. The results alongwith the report of scrutinizer shall be placed in the website of the bank at https://www.tmb.in/annual-general-meetings.aspx and on the website of CDSL at www.evotingindia.com immediately after the declaration of results by the Hon'ble High Court of Madras.
20. The helpline numbers regarding any query/assistance for participation in the AGM through VC/OAVM, please contact Mr. Nitin Kunder (022- 23058738) or Mr. Mehboob Lakhani (022-23058543) or Mr. Rakesh Dalvi (022-23058542) and in case of any specific queries please call to this mobile no. **9566141888.**
21. **Members may note that the user ID and password received from CDSL can only be used for TMB remote e-voting or e-voting on the date of the AGMs.**
22. The details of the process and manner for remote e-voting are explained herein below:

A. In case a Member receives the user ID and password for the AGMs through email from CDSL (for Members whose email IDs are registered with the Company/Depository Participant(s)):

(i) The Members should login to the e-voting website www.evotingindia.com.
(ii) Click on Shareholders/Members.
(iii) Enter the User ID as provided in the separate mail/speed post sent by CDSL.
(iv) Next enter the image verification as displayed and click on Login.
(v) Next enter the password provided in separate mail/speed post.
(vi) After entering these details appropriately, click on "LOGIN" tab.
(vii) Click on the EVSN's of <Association Name> on which you choose to vote.
(viii) On the voting page, you will see "RESOLUTION DESCRIPTION" and against the same the option "YES/NO" for voting. Select the option YES or NO as desired. The option YES implies that you assent to the Resolution and option NO implies that you dissent to the Resolution.
(ix) Click on the "RESOLUTION FILE LINK" if you wish to view the entire Resolution details.
(x) After selecting the resolution you have decided to vote on, click on "SUBMIT". A confirmation box will be displayed. If you wish to confirm your vote, click on "OK", else to change your vote, click on "CANCEL" and accordingly modify your vote.
(xi) Once you "CONFIRM" your vote on the resolution, you will not be allowed to modify your vote.
(xii) You can also take out print of the voting done by you by clicking on "Click here to print" option on the voting page.
(xiii) In case you have any queries or issues regarding e-voting, write an e-mail to shareholders@tmbank.in or helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com.

B. In case a Member receives physical copy of the user ID and password for the AGMs (for Members whose email IDs are not registered with the Bank or who have requested for physical copy):

(i) The user ID and password sent by the CDSL in PIN mailer through Registered Post for the AGMs:
-EVSN (e-voting Event Number), USER ID and PASSWORD-
(ii) Please follow all steps from Sl. No. (i) to Sl. No. (xiii) above, to cast vote.

C. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHAREHOLDERS ATTENDING THE AGMs THROUGH VC/OAVM ARE AS UNDER:

1. Shareholders will be provided with a facility to attend the AGM through VC/OAVM through the CDSL e-Voting system. Shareholders may access the same at https://www.evotingindia.com under shareholders / members login by using the remote e-voting credentials sent by CDSL through e-mail or by post. The live streaming link for VC/OAVM will be available in shareholder/members login page where the Electronic Voting Sequence Number (EVSN) of Company will be displayed.
2. Shareholders can join the Meeting through Mobile phone/Laptop/ IPad/Desktop.
3. Further, shareholders are advised to allow Camera and use Internet with a good speed to avoid any disturbance during the meetings.
4. Shareholders who would like to express their views/ask questions during the meeting may register themselves as a speaker by sending their request in advance at least **7 days prior to meeting** mentioning their name, demat account number/folio number, email ID, mobile number at bank's email ID shareholders@tmbank.in. The shareholders who do not wish to speak during the AGMs but have queries may send their queries in advance 7 days prior to meeting mentioning their name, demat account number/folio number, email ID, mobile number at bank's email ID shareholders@tmbank.in. These queries will be replied by the bank suitably by email.
5. Those shareholders who have registered themselves as a speaker will only be allowed to express their views/ask questions during the meeting on first-come-first-serve basis and subject to the availability of time as the chairman of the meeting may decide in the matter. The Chairman reserves the right to restrict the number of questions and number of speakers, as appropriate for smooth conduct of the AGMs.

D. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHAREHOLDERS FOR E-VOTING DURING THE AGMs ARE AS UNDER: -

1. The procedure for e-voting on the day of the AGMs is same as the instructions mentioned above for remote e-voting.
2. Only those shareholders, who are present in the AGM through VC/OAVM facility and have not cast their vote on the resolutions through remote e-Voting and or otherwise not barred from doing so, shall be eligible to vote through e-voting system available during the AGM.
3. Shareholders who have voted through remote e-voting will be eligible to attend the AGMs. However, they will not be eligible to vote at the AGM.

23. General Guidelines for shareholders

a) Institutional shareholders (i.e. other than individuals, HUF, NRI, etc.) are required to send a scanned copy (PDF/JPG Format) of the relevant Board Resolution/Authority letter etc. with attested specimen signature of the duly authorized signatory(ies) who are authorized to vote, to the Scrutinizer by email to shareholders@tmbank.in with a copy marked to helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com.
b) Those members whose email address is not registered with the bank or with their respective depository participant and who wish to receive the notice / annual report / user ID and password and other communication sent by the bank at least 7 days prior to meeting, can get their email address registered by following the steps as given below:
   i. For members holding share in physical form, please send scanned copy of signed request letter mentioning folio number, complete address, email address to be registered along with scanned self-attested copy of ID proof and address proof supporting the registered address of the member, by email to the bank email address **shareholders@tmbank.in.**
   ii. Members holding shares in demat form are requested to update their email address through depository participant.
c) Those members who lost the user ID and Password sent by CDSL and who wish to receive again can request the bank by email, addressing shareholders@tmbank.in or can send the request by post to the following address.
   Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited,
   Secretarial Department,
   57 V E Road, Thoothukudi – 628002
   The email/ post should reach us at least 7 days prior to the date of meeting.
d) It is strongly recommended not to share your password with any other person and take utmost care to keep your password confidential. Login to the e-voting website will be disabled upon five unsuccessful attempts to key in the correct password. In such an event, you will need to go through the "Forgot Password" option available on www.evotingindia.com to reset the password by providing valid credentials to reset.
e) If you have any queries or issues regarding attending AGM & e-Voting from the e-Voting System, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") and e-voting manual available at www.evotingindia.com, under help section or send an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or contact Mr. Nitin Kunder (022- 23058738) or Mr. Mehboob Lakhani (022-23058543) or Mr. Rakesh Dalvi (022-23058542).
f) All grievances connected with the facility for voting by electronic means may be addressed to Mr. Rakesh Dalvi, Manager, (CDSL) Central Depository Services (India) Limited, A Wing, 25th Floor, Marathon Futurex, Mafatlal Mill Compounds, N M Joshi Marg, Lower Parel (East), Mumbai - 400013 or send an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or call on 022-23058542/43.

By order of the Hon'ble High Court of Madras
For Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited

Hon'ble Justice R.Balasubramanian
Former Judge, High Court of Madras
Chairman of the Meeting

Thoothukudi
September 24, 2020