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#### Outbound Students

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Student Exchange, Short-Term Study  
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**118**

Asia

**93**

Europe

**85**

Americas

**09**

Africa

**22** Australia & New Zealand

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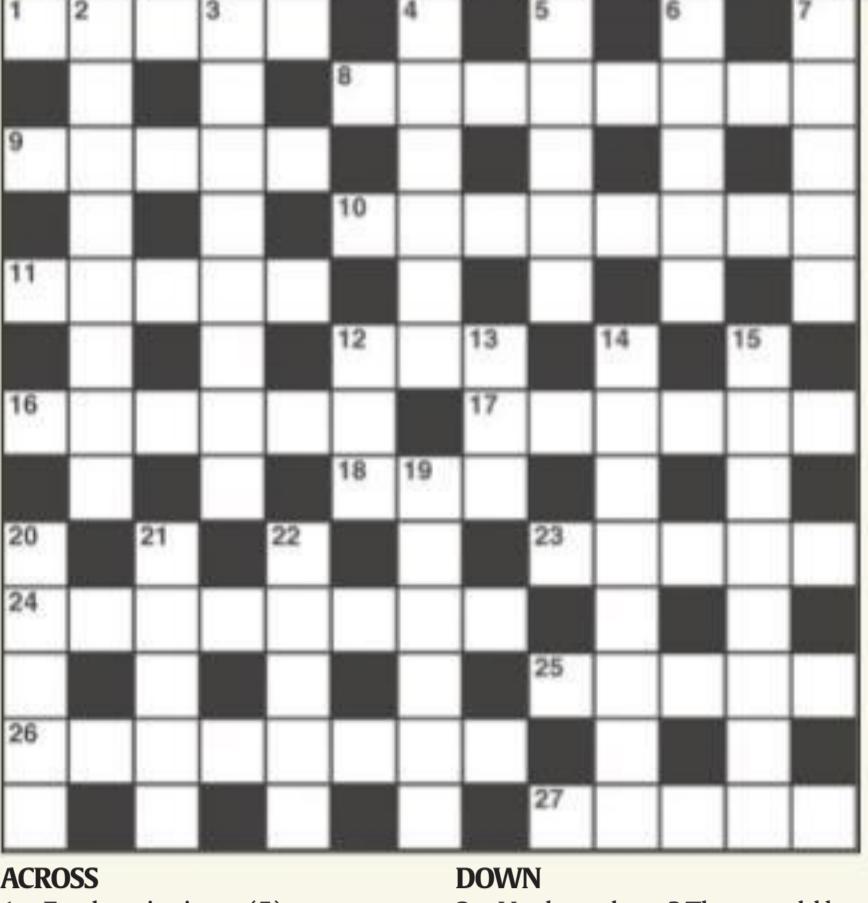
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Bangladesh	Cyprus	Israel	Mexico	Portugal	Sweden	UK
Belarus	Czech Republic	Italy	Moldova	Romania	Switzerland	Ukraine
Belgium	Denmark	Japan	Mozambique	Russia	Syria	Uruguay
Brazil	Dominican Republic	Kenya	Myanmar	Serbia	Taiwan	USA
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Canada	Germany	Lebanon	New Zealand	South Africa	The Netherlands	
Chile	Greece	Liberia				

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## CROSSWORD 4539



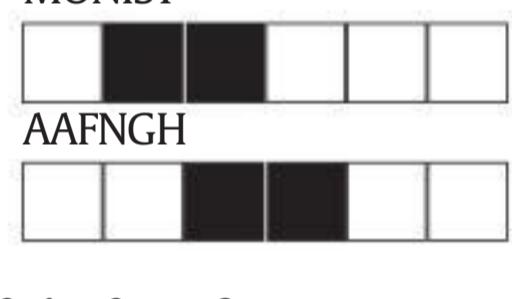
- ACROSS**
- Fresh script issue (5)
  - Prime minister? (8)
  - Sounds much to distribute (5)
  - He doesn't know what to believe (8)
  - Situation report (5)
  - The French held eastern piece of land (3)
  - Content of a book (6)
  - Australian city chap's name (6)
  - A runner making little impact (3)
  - Where to find father in the beginning of the year (5)
  - Open clash that reveals the strength of one's hand (8)
  - Stiff clothes I'd put on (5)
  - It changes later - yes, towards the sunrise (8)
  - Distinguish hallmark (5)
- DOWN**
- Uncle perhaps? That would be telling (8)
  - Bob saves the traveller's time (5,3)
  - T-junction muddle (6)
  - Being a fool I do it wrongly (5)
  - One object of alliance (5)
  - Fire about fifty for being lax (5)
  - Allow for rent (3)
  - Clasped at the heart - by Cleopatra? (3)
  - A visionary transaction is included in it (8)
  - It may be cultivated for example in a rum cocktail (8)
  - A VIP too (2,4)
  - He leads us to her (5)
  - Audience has half an hour to spend (5)
  - I'd acted as a guide yet didn't do any work (5)

**Solutions Crossword 4538:** Across: 1 Astonished, 6 Rubs, 10 Moral, 11 Not at home, 12 Aeuncion, 13 Cited, 15 Ironing, 17 Shampoo, 19 Caddies, 21 Egotist, 22 Notch, 24 Niceties, 27 Unprinted, 28 Rainy, 29 Tide, 30 Wristwatch. Down: 1 Acme, 2 Threshold, 3 Nylon, 4 Sinking, 5 Extends, 7U-boat, 8 Speedboats, 9 Staccato, 14 Misconduct, 16 Irish jig, 18 Price list, 20 Senator, 21 Encodes, 23 Toped, 25 Throw, 26 Myth.

## JUMBLED WORDS

Below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quiz.

Music is \_\_\_ in the gloomy night of life. -Jean Paul (9)



Answers: DVIOO=UNDERTAIL, INULT=INITIAT, MONIST=AFCCHAN, AAFNGH=MUSIC'S soundEight in the gloomy night of life. -Jean Paul

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry &amp; T Lewis



## CALVIN &amp; HOBBES by Bill Watterson

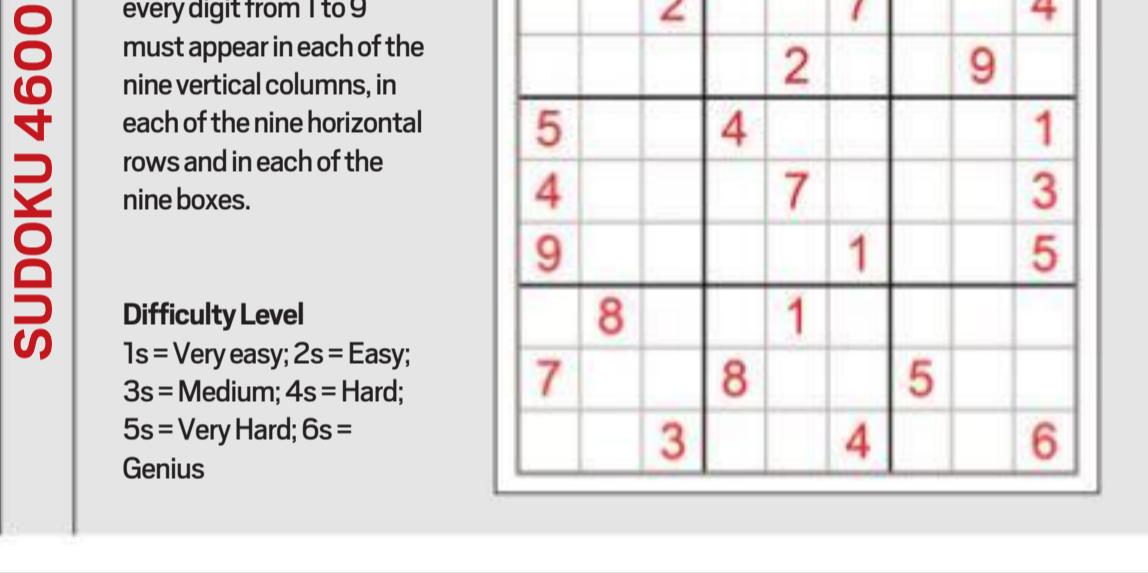


## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## Difficulty Level (5s)

**Instructions**  
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.



## SOLUTION SUDOKU 4599



## DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

## ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

The fascinating relationship between Mars and Uranus may yet prove to mark a turning point in your domestic and family affairs. The way forward at home is through hard work. In professional matters, the key to success lies in adopting a radically different approach.

## TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Financial news could be optimistic, and it may be useful to team up with a partner in a long-planned enterprise. The most important pressures in your chart are social, so you'll mix business with pleasure and cultivate useful contacts. Oh, and give a loved one the benefit of the doubt.

## GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Interesting news may set you on a new course of action, and you will feel a sense of urgency. Use your imagination and follow hunches, especially if any short journeys are planned. In matters of the heart you're hoping for the best, but you could be too pushy.

## CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

The current planetary patterns seem to be definitely beneficial, even though you may come close to despairing of a particular person. Bear in mind that other people are just incapable of committing themselves at the moment and wait until the time is right.

## LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

There's a lot of energy around, and there's no reason why you shouldn't achieve your aims. If you're in the property market, a little lateral or creative thinking should help cut through entrenched problems. And a word of advice, don't feel rushed into making practical choices.

## VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept 23)

This is unlikely to be a restful day. The planets are putting pressure on everyone, although from your point of view this is all very positive. Try socialising with colleagues you'd normally ignore. You might even consider welcoming rivals into your closest circle.

## PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Catch up on all routine tasks and you might achieve more than you intended. You may even get ahead of yourself, in which case you'll be thankful for your foresight when pressures build up, possibly before the end of the week. And a word of warning, don't take partners for granted.

## LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)

You'll only be as busy as you want to be, so arrange your schedule to suit your needs rather than those of friends and associates. There is every sign that decisions taken now will work out as planned, but only if you're sensitive about putting them into practice.

## SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

The accent is on domestic improvements, if only at the planning stage. There's much to be said for taking a radical approach, even though this may not be well received by your more cautious relatives. The other factor you have to bear in mind is that children and younger relations require still more of your time.

## SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

If travel is on the horizon, please get arrangements tidied up as soon as possible. Recent conditions may have been a little stressful, although by now you should have got the hang of your new responsibilities and duties. You will have implemented all necessary changes by the beginning of next week.

## CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Career-wise, you're in for a busy time although your attention may be drawn more and more towards emotional complications and personal relationships. You must ask yourself what it is exactly that you want from a certain person and then work out how you can get it.

## AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Lively conditions continue, although there's no reason to join in with cooperative activities if you've something better to do. Disagreements will be made up with just a little effort and attention in the right quarters. Throwing money at problems may also help.

## PICTURES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Catch up on all routine tasks and you might achieve more than you intended. You may even get ahead of yourself, in which case you'll be thankful for your foresight when pressures build up, possibly before the end of the week. And a word of warning, don't take partners for granted.

## UVN LIMITED

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharanji Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006, Tel.: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2765308, CIN No. U40101UR2001S025866, Website: www.uvn.com

NIT-No.:NCB-13/EE(Civil)/UVN/L/Pashulok Barrage/2021-22.

Name of Work:- Protection & Refurbishment work from spillway glaciis to end silt of gate no. 5 to 15 of Pashulok Barrage, Rishikesh.

Revised bid document of the above Tender has been uploaded on the e-Procurement portal <https://uktenders.gov.in>

Other Terms & Condition will remain same.

Full & Further Details of tender can be seen from the e-procurement portal.

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

Executive Engineer (Civil)

## NMDC Limited

(A Government of India Enterprise)

'Khanji Bhavan', 10-3-111A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad - 500028

Corporate Identity Number (CIN) - L13100T1950G001674

## CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT

E-Tender Notification

Tender Enquiry No: HO/(Contracts)/Engg/KDL/Res Towers/2020/ 233 Dt. 20.09.2021

MSTC Ref. No.: MDC/HO/56/20-21/ET/24

NMDC Limited, A NAVARATNA Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites online bids from prospective bidders for the work of "Construction of Residential Towers at BIOM, Kirandul Complex, Dantewada District, Chattisgarh".

The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and /or downloaded from 20.09.2021 to 21.10.2021 from following website links;

1. NMDC website - <https://tenders.nmdc.co.in/nmdctender/>

2. Central Public Procurement portal - <https://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> and search tender through tender enquiry number

3. MSTD portal - [https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/buyer\\_login.jsp](https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/buyer_login.jsp)

For further help refer to vendor guide' given in MSTD website.

The bidders are requested to submit their bids online through MSTD Limited website. The details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT. The Bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website/CPP Portal / MSTD website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.

For further clarification, the following can be contacted -

General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad, Fax no. +91-040-23534746, Tel No. +91-040-2353 2800, email: [contracts@nmdc.co.in](mailto:contracts@nmdc.co.in) General Manager (Contracts)

## एक काम देश के नाम

रजिस्टरेड ऑफिस: IFCI Tower, 61 नेहरा प्लॉट, नई दिल्ली-110 019

नं. 886 एस. 686

टेल: 011-4733008, 011-4733080, 011-4733080, 011-4733080

वेबसाईट: [www.ifcltd.com](http://www.ifcltd.com)

CIN : L48999DL199301N05367

APENDIX-II & IV/A

[See provision to rule 6(2) & 8(6)]

## SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVEABLE &amp; IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Moveable & Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to rule 6(2) as well as 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/Mortgagor and Guarantor(s) that the below described moveable as well as immovable properties hypothesised/mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of IFCI Ltd. (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 25/10/2021, for recovery of Rs. 767, 10,42,568.55 detailed as under-

S.N. Name of Institution Outstanding dues

1. IFCI Ltd. Rs.25,39,11,574/- as on 14.07.2012 together with further interest with effect from 06.07.2012 till realisation

2. IDBI Ltd. Rs.475,83,23,517/- as on 02.07.2017 together with further interest with effect from 15.07.2017 till realisation

3. IARC Ltd. Rs.60,88,07,737.58 as on 14.07.2012 together with further interest with effect from 15.07.2012 till realisation.

due to IFCI Ltd., IDBI Bank Ltd. and IARC Ltd. (Secured Creditors) from Himachal Advanced Circuits Ltd. (In Lq.) (Borrower/Mortgagor/Hypothecator) and Sh. Kuldip Singh Minhas, Sh. Kanwal Singh, Sh. Avtar Singh, Sh. Kubir Singh & Sh. Gurmoan Singh Minhas (Guarantor(s)). The details of Reserve price along with EMD is as under-

Lot No. Details of property Reserve Price EMD @ 10%

1. Land & Building Rs.04,93,57,205/-

2. Plant & Machinery Rs.05,95,00/-

3. Composita (I+2) Rs.04,99,52,205/-

Description of the Moveable & Immovable Property

The whole of the movable property of the Borrower including its movable plant and machinery, machinery spares, tools and accessories and other moveables lying at Village Baddi, Tehsil Nalagarh, Distl. Solan in the shape of scrap on As is where is. As is what is, and Whatever there is (No separate list).

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in IFCI Ltd.'s Secured Creditor's website i.e. [www.ifcltd.com](http://www.ifcltd.com)

Date: 20.09.2021

Place: New Delhi

Authorised Officer (IFCI Limited)

## The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd.

(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking)

(An ISO 9001, ISO 14001 & OHSAS 18001 & SA 8000 Certified Company)

KMML

Sankaramangalam, Chavara-691 583, Kollam, Kerala, India

Phone: 91-476-2686722 to 733 (12 Lines).

Fax: 91-476-2680101. E-mail: contact@kmml.com, URL: [www.kmml.com](http://www.kmml.com)

## TENDER NOTICE

Competitive Tenders are invited for following. For more details please visit the E-Tendering Portal <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in> or [www.kmml.com](http://www.kmml.com)

No. Tender ID Items

1 2021\_KMML\_439884\_1 For the supply of Flow Calibration Test Bench Facility

2 2021\_KMML\_439949\_1 For the supply of Inconel Pipe

Chavara 18.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2021, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 16 PAGES

**SWEARING-IN AT 11 AM TODAY**

# On day of drama, Congress picks Dalit face Charanjit Singh Channi as new Punjab CM

At the end of several meetings in Delhi, Chandigarh, Chamkaur Sahib MLA edges out Sidhu, Randhawa

**KANCHAN VASDEV**  
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 19

CHARANJIT SINGH Channi will be the first Dalit chief minister of Punjab after he was nominated leader of the Congress legislature party (CLP) on Sunday evening.

Fifty-eight-year-old Channi, the MLA from Chamkaur Sahib and the state's technical education minister, will replace Captain Amarinder Singh, who stepped down as chief minister on Saturday.

Channi was among the leaders who had rebelled against Amarinder.

After meeting Governor Banwarilal Purohit to stake claim to form the government, Channi told reporters that he would be sworn in at 11 am on Monday.

Channi, who has been vocal in raising the issues of Dalits, was CLP leader and Leader of Opposition in 2015-16 when the previous SAD-BJP government was in power.

He is considered close to Rahul Gandhi, and is learned to have been picked by the party high command after Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu and Dera Baba Nanak MLA Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa opposed the move to make a Hindu leader, Sunil Jakhar, chief minister.

Channi's name was announced as the two Jat Sikhs leaders jockeyed for the post. The choice remained uncertain until well into the evening as the Congress weighed its options between a Hindu and a Sikh.

A CLP meeting convened at 11 am was deferred, and Congress general secretary in charge of Punjab Harish Rawat and the party's two central observers, Ajay Maken and Harish Chaudhary, held parleys with

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



EXPLAINED

**FIVE REASONS WHY CONG CHOSE CHANNI**

PAGE 11



Charanjit Singh Channi, PCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu and other Congress leaders outside Raj Bhavan Sunday. Kamleshwar Singh

## Lawyer, MBA, fighter for Dalit rights rebelled against Captain

**MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA**

CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 19

LAWYER, MANAGEMENT graduate, a strong voice for Dalits – Charanjit Singh Channi is a man of many parts.

Channi, who started out as a student leader, has risen through

the ranks to be Punjab's chief minister designate, and believes his strength lies in his connect with the masses.

Long before the revolt against Captain Amarinder Singh began to brew among Congress MLAs, Channi, who hails from the Rambasia community, had been seeking a greater representation of Dalits in the Cabinet, given

their large numbers in the party.

After the revolt against Amarinder gathered momentum this April, Channi became an active participant. Last fortnight, he was among the four ministers who went to meet the Congress's Punjab in-charge Harish Rawat in Dehradun. But unlike the others, he chose to be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Punjab tremors in Rajasthan, Gehlot OSD quits over tweet

**DEEP MUKHERJEE**

JAIPUR, SEPTEMBER 19

THE PUNJAB political crisis had an impact on the Rajasthan government, with Lokesh Sharma – the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot – tendering his resignation over a tweet that was seen as questioning the party high command's decision to replace Amarinder Singh.

On Saturday, hours after Singh's resignation, Sharma had tweeted: "Mazboot ko majboor, mamuli ko maghrro kiya jaye...badh hi khet ko khaye, us fasal ko kuan bachaye!! (The strong are being made to feel helpless, the ordinary are encouraged to feel arrogant... Who can save the crop when the fence itself destroys the field?)"

As some Twitter users interpreted Sharma's tweet as questioning the decision of the Congress high command in Punjab, Sharma sent his resignation letter to Chief Minister Gehlot late on Saturday, writing, "My tweet from today is being

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## (CM) Sikh hona ya Hindu hona secondary hai: Akal Takht jathedar

**VANDITA MISHRA**

TALWANDI SABO, SEPT 19

BEFORE THE Congress put an end to the suspense and announced the name of Charanjit Singh Channi as the next Chief Minister of Punjab Sunday, giving the state its first Dalit CM, it was said to have played with the possibility of another first.

There was speculation about Punjab getting a Hindu CM for the first time after it was created



Giani Harpreet Singh opens a space. Vandita Mishra

as a Sikh-majority state in 1966. That was not to be.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

**'SHARP ATTITUDINAL CHANGE'**

## Retro tax to telecom relief to bad bank: Political call to bite economy bullet

Vodafone India interest dues could translate to government picking up 30% stake in the telecom major

**PVAIDYANATHANIYER**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

FOR A GOVERNMENT led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi sensitive to charges of corporate favouritism, acquiring substantive shareholding in a private company is a leap of faith. Buried in the fine print of the telecom package was this provision that lets the government do exactly that.

Even in the United States, in the wake of the financial meltdown in 2008, emergency legislation was enacted to undertake a \$700-billion Troubled Assets Relief Program or TARP to bail out private banks and institutions. A TARP-like move – as in the telecom relief package – requires more than just conviction in Indian economy, which like politics, is prone to binaries of a different kind: "pro-corporate" and "pro-poor."

Indeed, most economic decisions taken in the last two months – from a law to bury retrospective taxation to a govern-



"We are pulling out of the worst... Problem with stimulus is it's easier to start a spending programme than to stop it"

**TV SOMANATH**  
FINANCE SECRETARY

PAGE 12

ment guarantee for a bad bank – required a political call to be taken at the level of the Prime

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## From nowhere to top of the list: How Channi choice was made

**MANOJ CG**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19



Senior Congress leaders after the meeting at Rahul Gandhi's residence in Delhi on Sunday. Prem Nath Pandey

however, several leaders told The Indian Express that the appointment of a Dalit in a state with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Extortion case: Tihar probe finds officials helped conman block CCTV, 9 in the dock

**MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19



Sukesh got favours from jail officials: probe

THE TIHAR Jail administration, after an internal probe into an extortion racket allegedly run by conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar from Rohini jail, has initiated a proposal for departmental action against nine officials after finding negligence on their part.

Confirming this, DG (Prisons) Sandeep Goel told *The Indian Express*, "We have already sus-

pended six jail officials." Sukesh, who has been in Tihar and Rohini jails since 2017 for his alleged involvement in the Election Commission bribery case, was arrested last month from Rohini jail for allegedly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

CITY TO RECOVER

BY MANISH SABHARWAL AND RAJIV MEHRISHI

PAGE 8

EXPLAINED



EXPERT EXPLAINS  
WHY FRANCE IS UPSET WITH AUSTRALIA PAGE 11

## Amid new Afghanistan reality, Saudi foreign minister meets Jaishankar

**SHUBHAJIT ROY**

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

AMID A drastically altered environment in the larger region, with the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan a month ago, Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, on Sunday met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi and discussed the situation in the country.

After the meeting, Jaishankar said they had a "very useful exchange of views" on the issue of Afghanistan, along with the Gulf



Jaishankar with his Saudi Arabian counterpart. PTI

and the Indo-Pacific.

"A cordial and productive meeting with Saudi FM HH

@Faisalbinfarhan. Discussed our

cooperation in the political, security and socio-cultural pillars of our strategic partnership," the External Affairs Minister tweeted.

Saudi Arabia, which was one of three countries to have recognised the Taliban in its previous regime between 1996 and 2001, has, since mid-August, been extremely calibrated about its statements on Afghanistan.

The intent is to create a unified farmer service interface. The unique ID will enable them to seamlessly avail various Government schemes and credit facilities, and help the Centre and state governments in better planning of procurement oper-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

**PAGE 1  
ANCHOR**

## For India slot, gymnast thanks her uncle & his homemade mat

thanks her supportive "Mama" (uncle) – and the special equipment he put together to pull her through the pandemic in remote Pedali.

During the lockdown, Talekar wondered if it was curtains on her career, after narrowly missing out on India selection six times by scores as low as 0.5 points in trials since 2013. That's when Gophan, who is an environment activist and has been distributing cloth bags for free for years, fashioned a landing mat out of rags, and castaway stage curtains and flags.

"The stadium where I train had hosted a Marathi Natya Sammelan some time back, so



Shraddha Talekar trains on locally made gymnastics apparatus at her home at Pedali village. Express



have happened, if not for the summer camp. She was a late-starter at the age of nine and, though blessed with natural agility, could not bag medals in the junior category where most elite gymnasts firm up their career decisions. "My first competition in the sub-junior school nationals was on an open ground at Hubli in West Bengal. It was the best sight of my life, watching so many gymnasts compete even though I didn't win a medal," she says.

Facilities were primitive but for Talekar that was no less than a once-in-a-lifetime "visit to Disneyland", she quips. Her first success came in 2011 with the

state team gold at 12th National Games.

Trained at a state sports school, where movements on apparatus were broken down with weekly targets, Talekar won the Uneven Bars national gold in 2018. "I had watched so many gymnasts leave the sport and get married or start office jobs. The anxiety of never making an international team used to affect my performance in competitions and a few times cost me selection. I'd often go back home, half expecting to be told, 'now, enough'. But my parents surprised me by telling me to first fulfill my dream of going to the World Championships, and not

bother about marriage," she says.

Talekar grew up in a joint family with her homemaker mother and father, who worked in a rice mill in the village. "My mama (uncle) was a karate player, so he told my mother that my ambition had to be the World Championship or all these years were a waste. My brother is a trekker and free-spirited, so he was supportive. Plus, after Dipa Karmakar (Commonwealth medallist and first Indian female gymnast to compete in the Olympics), everything has changed in India and how we look at gymnastics," she says.

But to do a Karmakar, Talekar

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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Indian Express ★★★★ 4.6

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Virat Kohli reclaims top position in ICC Test Batting Rankings

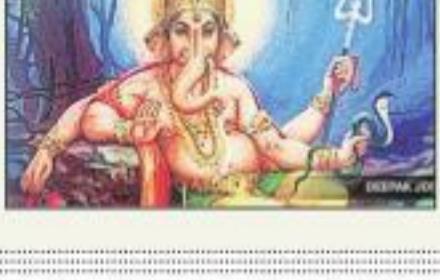
Scan this QR code to download the app

**CHANDNI CHOWK'S NAME COULD HAVE COME FROM THE CANOPIES OF ITS SHOPS**

Streetwise Kolkata: Historical records of the city show that Chandni Chowk is among the oldest bazaars of the city, integral to its busy business district.

**TECH****IPHONE 13: 6 FEATURES APPLE MISSED OUT**

Here are six features that the Apple iPhone 13 series is still missing

**PHOTO GALLERY****GANESH CHATHURTHI CELEBRATIONS**

Different shades of the celebration across the country

# EXPRESS AUDIO

## How alternate realities really work

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

How does information warfare shape our realities? Has the problem of alternate realities worsened now? Does fake news or WhatsApp forwards create the problem or only add to it? And to what extent does fact-checking help?

**FROM PAGE ONE****Behind choice**

already done that," a Congress leader in Punjab said.

With Channi's elevation, the high command has also ensured that state Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu is kept under check while allowing him to emerge as the party's fat face. It hopes that the elevation of a Dalit leader will not be challenged by various factions and their leaders who were eyeing the top post.

And yet, the decision on Channi came after every Congress leader of some stature in Punjab had entered the fray through the day. Sources said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's initial choice was former PPCC president Sunil Jakhar before the Sikh versus Hindu hurdle came up.

Sidhu was not agreeable either to giving Jakhar the top job, perhaps fearing that the veteran would emerge as a new power centre. Jakhar's name was proposed strongly by veteran leader Ambika Soni, too. Sources said she had conveyed her objection on Friday itself to Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

As a compromise formula, the leadership then turned to Soni who declined the offer. In fact, the 79-year-old Rajya Sabha MP, an old Gandhi family loyalist with sharp political acumen, sprang a surprise by going public. "I have said no. The party's exercise (to find a new CLP leader) is on in Chandigarh. The general secretary is there. So are the two observers. They are talking to each and every MLA and seeking their opinion in writing," Soni said after a meeting with Rahul Gandhi.

(WITH KANCHAN VASDEVIN CHANDIGARH)

**Jathedar**

The Congress retreat from one of the possibilities before it, even as it embraced another, may have made explicit the unstated assumption of Punjab politics — that the CM in a Sikh majority state will always and only be a Sikh. In the process, it may have hardened a line.

But hours before its decision Sunday, Giani Harpreet Singh, acting Jathedar (high priest) of the Akal Takht, the youngest to hold the office so far, opened up a significant new space.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* at his office at Talwandi Sabo — he also serves as the Jathedar of Takht Damdama Sahib — on the possibility of a Hindu CM for Punjab, he said: "Behtar insaan chahiye (should be a good person), achchai pehle number pe (human goodness is the primary consideration). Sikhs hona Hindu hona secondary hai (whether Hindu or Sikh is secondary)."

For many, though, the Jathedar said, "face matters". "A Sikh CM matters for the aam public... speaks of Punjab's *pehchaan* (identity)... just as Hindus take pride when (one among them) does well in US (politics)..."

It is not as if "Hindu" and "Sikh" have been walled off from

each other in Punjab politics. Even though no Hindu has become CM, all parties, Congress, SAD and AAP, fashion themselves as catch-all parties, and in alliance or singly, court all castes and communities.

(For now, the BJP has pushed itself into a lonely corner, after the Modi government brought in the farm laws which also led to its break-up with the SAD).

In 2012, the SAD, as part of its attempts after the Moga declaration of 1995, to shift from a panthic agenda to one that speaks of Punjabi identity and Punjabiyat, for the first time, nominated 12 Hindu candidates — nine won.

That the BSP has an average 4 per cent vote in a state with a total Dalit population of nearly 32 per cent, also speaks of a politics of cross-cutting cleavages.

And yet, Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh's expression of openness is an important step towards blurring faultlines — it comes from someone who occupies Sikhism's highest religious and highest temporal seats.

The Jathedar's comment also comes in a fraught context: The farmers' movement against laws brought in by a BJP-led Centre may be creating a two-toned predicament in Punjab — on the one hand, it is drawing people together, across communities, rallying Hindu traders to the cause of Sikh peasants, against a Centre perceived to be obstinate and unyielding.

On the other, it is also stoking fears of a BJP-led assault on Sikh identity, with perceptions of an endangered MSP reviving not just older resentments against the Centre, but also spectres that feed on the Sikh consciousness of being a majority and also a minority — a majority in the state, a minority outside it.

The Jathedar, too, spoke of rising dangers: Incidents of "be-adabi" or sacrifice — "kaun log hain, uske peeche kaun si saazish mein hai" (who are the people who do it, what are the conspiracies behind them); interference by the RSS — "anyone who believes in one religion should not interfere in another". And an overbearing and insensitive Centre — "Sikh issues are not so big that the Centre cannot solve them, but since 1947, Centre has not been serious about fulfilling the promises made to the Sikhs, to keep them safe and protected... Centralisation of power is always damaging to the country, state governments are becoming like municipalities".

And yet, on the farmers' agitation, he made a distinction that softens the edge — it is a "kisan aandolan, not a dharma (religion), even though most farmers are Sikhs". The solution, he said, can only come "baatheet ke zariye (through dialogue)". Because "jo movement lambi chal jaati hai, us mein dikkatein aa jaati hai (if a movement stretches too long, it runs into troubles)".

**Gehlot OSD**

connected with the events in Punjab, after being given political colour and interpreted wrongly."

Sharma also said that he was apologising in case his tweet hurt the sentiments of the party, the government and the high command as it was not his intention to do so.

When *The Indian Express* reached out to Sharma, he declined to comment further, and cited the contents of his resignation letter for reference.

A decision on Sharma's resignation letter is yet to be taken, said sources.

This, however, is not 45-year-old's first brush with controversy.

During the political crisis in the state last year, Sharma, as OSD (communications) to Gehlot, faced BJP allegations of being complicit in conspiring and circulating allegedly fake audio recordings of BJP leaders.

Earlier this year, Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat had lodged an FIR

**Cong picks new Punjab CM**

several leaders including the two aspirants, Sidhu and Randhawa.

Sources said Randhawa opposed Jakhar's elevation arguing that a non-Sikh should not be CM of a Sikh-majority state. The Congress committee of observers heard him out, but did not finalise his name. An emissary of the Congress high command later visited Randhawa at his residence and conveyed to him that he should withdraw from the race.

Meanwhile, some TV channels had announced that Randhawa would be the next CM, and celebrations had broken out in his constituency. Randhawa's supporters, including his father-in-law, distributed laddoos, and firecrackers went off in his in-laws' village. Several MLAs reached

his residence, and government officials were seen waiting with bouquets outside the house.

In a long meeting, Sidhu is learned to have told the observers that if a Jat Sikh was to be chosen, it should be him. The name of Cabinet Minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu was discussed as PPCC chief in the event of Sidhu becoming chief minister, sources said. Sidhu is learned to have suggested the name of party MP Dr Amar Singh for the post.

After the meeting, a visibly upset Sidhu left the hotel where he met the observers. He refused to speak to reporters. Sources said he left for Delhi, threatening to resign.

Former Cabinet minister Manpreet Singh Badal intervened at this point — he learnt to have called up Rahul Gandhi

to advise him to defuse the crisis by naming a Dalit who would be acceptable to Sidhu.

It was after this, that Sidhu returned. After being declared the CM designate, Channi went to Manpreet's house. Manpreet accompanied Channi when he went to meet the Governor.

Through the day, the frontrunners for the job kept changing — after Jakhar on Saturday, it was Raja Sabha MP Ambika Soni on Sunday morning. Soni, however, told reporters that she had declined the offer, and that in the party's tradition, a Sikh should be made CM.

Two Congress leaders rang Jakhar to offer him the post of deputy chief minister after he lost out in the race to be CM. Jakhar refused, sources said.

After the announcement, Amarinder congratulated

Channi. "My best wishes to Charanjit Singh Channi. I hope he's able to keep the border state of Punjab safe and protect our people from the growing security threat from across the border: @Capt\_amarinder," Raveen Thukral, media adviser to Amarinder Singh, tweeted.

Rahul Gandhi posted on Twitter: "Congratulations to Shri Charanjit Singh Channi Ji for the new responsibility. We must continue to fulfill the promises made to the people of Punjab. Their trust is of paramount importance."

Sidhu tweeted: "Historic!! Punjab's first Dalit CM-Designate ... Will be written with Golden letters in History. A tribute to the spirit of the Constitution and the Congress!! Congratulations @CHARANJITCHANNI Bai!"

stake in the third largest private telecom company. This, at a time, when the government has decided to privatise state-owned banks, insurance companies, and sell its national carrier Air India.

The official said the decision entailed political signalling to the corporate sector too — that the government not only wanted to protect its dues from companies and probably make some capital gains in the medium-term, but also to tell dominant players that it was not in favour of a duopoly and its adverse impact on consumers.

Similarly, introducing an amendment to the Income-Tax Act for doing away with the retrospective tax of 2012, Modi had to defend his own government's inaction for seven years since it came to power in 2014.

**Database**

and once we are ready with the database of 8 crore farmers, we will launch this," the official said.

"So far, the database has been prepared for 11 states, including Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. The remaining states, including Telangana, Kerala and Punjab, will be covered in the coming months," he said.

For this, Aggarwal said, a database is being created from existing schemes such as PM-Kisan, Soil Health Card and PM Fasal Bima Yojna. "All farmer data in Central schemes will be linked to land record details available with state governments. Aadhaar will be used as a deduplication mechanism," he said.

Besides, linkage of land parcels through a Geographical Information System (GIS), where maps are digitised by states, will be used. According to Aggarwal, GIS data of land parcels will help farmers get precise advisories.

The plan to issue such an ID to farmers, and the creation of a database, was discussed during the Chief Ministers' Conference earlier this month. On September 6, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar had said that his Ministry has created a database of 5.5 crore farmers.

**Gymnast**

had to be in top shape. For a long time, she had ankle issues. Besides, the webbing of her big toe had a ping-pong-sized gap, a result of repeated stress on the feet and dislocation. She used the lockdown to strengthen her legs and lug around home-made equipment — baby bars, improvised foam mat and a locally carved wooden balance beam-top.

Meditation-backed visualisation and extensive strength work also helped in making the transition to real apparatus smooth once gyms reopened. During the trials at Delhi's Indira Gandhi Stadium, her double pike dismount on the bars "felt seamless" and that showed in the points — 44.25 to go up to third in all-around standings.

Though the two Olympic gymnasts, Karnikar and Pranati Nayak, are out of action due to injuries and rehab, Talekar reckons she is at the peak of her own game. "It's about staying motivated despite age and learning from younger gymnasts, too. I really look up Uneve Bars Olympic champion Nina Devi.

Even as January 2021, following protests by farmers in Punjab and Haryana, and slogans like "hum do, hamare do" — alleging crony capitalism — gaining some traction, the government put on hold the farm laws for 18 months, effectively putting them in deep freeze. It was very similar to the dumping of the land acquisition law in February 2015 sparked by the *suit boot ki sarkar jibe*.

It is in this backdrop that the telecom package gains significance. An official, who did not wish to be named, said that the interest dues of Vodafone India Ltd will enable the government to pick up a substantial 30 per cent

**Had rebelled against Amarinder Singh**

present at the virtual meeting of the Cabinet a day later, and even thanked the chief minister for taking steps that benefited Scheduled Caste students.

While this triggered speculation that he may be taking a step back, Channi continued to rally support against Amarinder. He was a signatory to the letter that called for a meeting of the Congress legislature party that precipitated Amarinder's exit.

Ironically, it was Amarinder who had paved the way for Channi's return to the party in December 2010, three years after he had rebelled against the Congress nominee for the Chamkaur Sahib seat in the Assembly elections of 2007.

Channi fought and won the seat as an Independent, and went on to become an associate member of the Shiromani Akali Dal in the Assembly. He was considered close to PPP's Manpreet Badal, a minister in

the Amarinder cabinet.

After his return to the Congress, Channi reportedly made efforts to get in touch with Rahul Gandhi through senior Congress leader CP Joshi.

For a long time, Channi minded his own business, taking care not to get mired in the party infighting. He stayed neutral when Amarinder fought to oust Partap Singh Bajwa from the post of PPCC chief in 2015.

It is perhaps due to his non-aligned stance that he was made Leader of Opposition from 2015 to 2016 during the SAD-BJP regime.

Channi's present tenure as a minister saw controversy after a woman IAS officer accused him of sending her an "inappropriate" text message in October 2018.

Amarinder later confirmed the development by saying the minister had apologised, and the matter had been sorted out. The state women panel

with the Crime Branch of the Delhi Police, listing Sharma as an accused in connection with the alleged tapping of phones during the political crisis in Rajasthan.

Thereafter, the Delhi High Court had prohibited the Delhi Police from taking any coercive action against Sharma until further orders. In July this year, the Delhi Police summoned Sharma in relation to the phone tapping case. Sharma had replied to the summons but didn't go to Delhi.

**Jaishankar**

interference", according to a statement by the Saudi Foreign Ministry.

This statement from Riyad was perceived as a message to the regional players, including Pakistan and Iran, along with China and Russia.

But when it comes to the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia is not the power that it was 25 years ago. While post-9/11, Saudi businessman turned al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden caused reputational damage to the Saudis, in recent years, more recently, Qatar had stolen the show as a negotiating venue for America's talks with the Taliban.

Saudi Arabia, however, enjoys a special relationship with Pakistan as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has engaged with India's neighbour in recent years.

The Saudi Foreign Minister had visited Pakistan in the last week of July, before Kabul was taken over by the Taliban.

New Delhi is hoping that Riyad will be able to exercise its influence over Pakistan in controlling the Taliban.

From India's perspective, Saudi Arabia has emerged as an

important partner in the Gulf as both have expanded their bilateral ties in political, economic and strategic fields.

**Extortion case**

extorting Rs 200 crore from former Ranbaxy promoter Shivender Singh's wife Aditi Singh. A fresh FIR was again registered against him by the Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) for allegedly duping the wife of Shivender's elder brother, Malvinder Mohan Singh, of Rs 4 crore. Sukesh was re-arrested under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

Sources in the jail department said senior officials initiated the internal inquiry to verify allegations levelled by Sukesh during questioning.

"During the inquiry, the jail administration found that Sukesh was using mobile phones and was helped by prison officials. They also found he was given extra favours... While in jail, he used his bedsheet as curtains for his barrack to avoid being caught on CCTV," said a source.

So far, the EOW has summoned six jail officials, including two arrested jail superintendents, and has questioned them thrice.

Teen found hanging: Kin allege murder, police say no foul play

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

A 17-YEAR-OLD boy was found hanging from a tree in Northwest Delhi's Shalimar Bagh Saturday. While police said he committed suicide, family members alleged that their neighbours killed the boy.

Police, however, haven't found any evidence of foul play in the matter yet and are awaiting the post-mortem report.

Police received a call about the incident around 7.30 am on Saturday. A senior officer said, "The spot was inspected and the body was shifted to BJRM Hospital; there were no external injuries. Meanwhile, the family was contacted and the body was handed over to them."

Police claimed the family initially didn't make any allegations but later refused to cremate the body. They said their son was friends with the neighbour's daughter and alleged her parents objected to this and killed him.

"The family took the body and demanded action against the girl's family. We have registered a case and are conducting an enquiry," said the officer.

#### POLICE SUSPECT TRUCK HIT CAR

## 26-year-old MNC employee killed in Gurgaon hit-and-run, 2 injured

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA  
GURGAON, SEPTEMBER 19



Police said the impact of collision was such that the car was dragged for over 50 metres before it turned turtle.

Police said around 1 am, Bhawna and Smriti went to pick up their friend and were returning home when an unidentified truck hit their car on the passenger's side.

In the FIR registered at Sector 53 police station, Bhawna, who is the complainant, said, "My

friend Tanvi was visiting Gurgaon to shop for my wedding. She had gone to her friend's place in Nirvana Country and got late. I got a call from her, asking me to pick her up. At 1 am, Smriti and I went in my car. The three of us were returning home when suddenly a big truck, at high speed, hit my car from the left side. As our car was dragged to the Chowk, my friend and I sustained several injuries and then lost consciousness."

Police said Bhawna was driving the car, Smriti was in the passenger seat and Tanvi sat behind.

A police officer privy to the investigation said, "Passersby rushed the women to a private hospital in Sector 51, where Smriti was declared dead on arrival. The other two women sustained minor injuries to their face and head; they are undergoing treatment and reportedly stable. The accused driver is yet to be identified. From the tyre marks at the accident spot, it appears that the car was dragged for over 50 metres."

Police said the car was completely mangled after the collision. In their statement, the in-

jured women told police that they could not note down the registration number of the vehicle.

Police said Smriti's body will be handed over to the family after a post-mortem.

Bhawna's father, Dr Shyam Lal, said, "I got a call from my daughter at 2.32 am, informing me of the incident. She and Smriti are first cousins and were sharing a rented place in Sushant Lok. Their friend, Tanvi, who is settled abroad, had extended her stay here for my daughter's wedding on October 14. They went to pick Tanvi up as it was late at night for her to take a cab. They told me that after the collision, commuters rushed them to hospital as they had fainted and were in shock."

Our family was looking to arrange a match for Smriti too." Police registered an FIR against the accused under IPC sections 279 (rash driving), 304A (death by negligence), 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 338 (causing grievous hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) at Sector 53 police station on Sunday.



#### CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

TOTAL CASES		Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	16,426	16,161	
TCU BEDS	3,566	3,484	
Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Sept 18	41	44	68,624
Sept 19	28	45	63,302
<b>Total</b>	<b>387*</b>	<b>14,13,025</b>	<b>25,085</b>
			2,69,53,206

\*Total active cases

## Citing corruption, Delhi BJP expels 3 councillors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

AHEAD OF the municipal polls in the capital, the BJP's Delhi unit expelled three sitting councillors from party membership for six years over complaints of "excessive financial corruption". One of the councillors, Pooja Madan, joined the AAP hours later.

State unit president Adesh Gupta wrote to the three councillors — Rajni Bablu Pandey from New Ashok Nagar, Pooja Madan from Mukherjee Nagar (Ward N-15), and Sanjay Thakur from Said-ul-Ajabi — informing them of the party's decision.

"This is to inform you that owing to several complaints of excessive financial corruption from the people, you have been suspended from Bharatiya Janata Party's membership for a period of six years. You have been informed of these complaints many times in the past and have been asked to correct your corrupt behaviour, but no improvement was seen. Therefore, you are expelled from the party for six years, with immediate effect," he said.

AAP had previously made allegations of corruption against Pandey and Thakur. AAP's Timarpur MLA Dilip Pandey, who was present at Madan's joining, said that allegations against her were levied only because she was not given a chance to defend himself. "The building mafia opposes me, some people in my own party are against me," he said.



One of the councillors, Pooja Madan, joined the AAP hours later in the presence of Timarpur MLA Dilip Pandey (centre)

financial corruption against these councillors, what were they waiting for? The BJP has CBI, ACB, Vigilance Department of the MCD, the entire central government and even the L-G. Even then, they haven't submitted even a single complaint to the authorities... After five years of governing the MCD, the BJP is now taking cosmetic action against these councillors... real action would constitute getting them investigated," he said.

Rajni went to the party office on Sunday afternoon to "get clarity on the action taken against her", her husband Bablu Pandey said. Thakur said he was not given a chance to defend himself. "The building mafia opposes me, some people in my own party are against me," he said.



The entry charge at the executive lounge is Rs 150, after which passengers would be charged a tariff of Rs 99 per hour. Abhinav Saha

## Shower rooms to reclining seats: Lounge at New Delhi railway station now open

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

COMFORTABLE RECLINER seats, shower rooms, a business centre, buffets — the executive lounge at the New Delhi Railway Station, recently inaugurated by IRCTC, is slowly drawing in passengers.

The lounge, designed on the lines of those at airports, is located on the first floor near platform 1. The entry charge is Rs 150, after which passengers would be charged a tariff of Rs 99 per hour. For this charge, travellers can access the normal seating zone, charging points, free WiFi, and are given complimentary coffee. Those who opt for the recliner chairs have to pay Rs 500 for two hours.

The buffet ranges from Rs 250 to Rs 350, depending on whether it is vegetarian or non-vegetarian, while the shower and change costs Rs 200.

The lounge also has a business centre for those who need to use a computer and require printouts; this costs Rs 100 an hour.

There are signages directing passengers to the lounge. These, however, are only in English but a Hindi board will be put up soon. It has a capacity of 120 people at a time. Once it exceeds this, entry is stopped.

This is the second lounge of its kind in Delhi. The first was at Platform no 16 of the station, which has been operational since 2016. Other such lounges are present at Agra, Jaipur, Sealdah, Ahmedabad, and Madurai railway stations.

Among those at the lounge on Sunday was Piyush Ranjan (38), who traveled from Amritsar to Delhi and had a few hours to kill before his train to Ansals. Deciding to meet a friend here, he said the area was perfect for travelers like him who have to stop at Delhi for a while. However, he faced some trouble locating the lounge and had to ask for directions.

Another group who was traveling from Pune to Dehradun via Delhi decided to spend their three hours in the lounge. Sakshi Pital (20) said they opted for the package, which included food and seating.

The travelers, however, thought the prices were slightly on the higher side, especially for the recliner seats.

Lounge manager Sunil Goswami said they have seen around 200 passengers since the inauguration on September 16, with numbers are increasing gradually as word spreads. He had managed the lounges in Jaipur and Agra when they started, which are full on most days.

The lounge also has an open kitchen that serves Indian, continental, and Chinese. Sunil said the menu keeps changing. On Sunday, there was idly, dosa, soup, dal, paneer, salad, and gubab jamun.

A bakery is in the making and as of now, the section sells packed food items such as beverages and chips which can be seen in any other IRCTC canteen.

A new food court has also been inaugurated at platform 16 and has been drawing a sizable number of customers. Open 24x7, it has several food outlets such as Haldiram's, Wow Momo, KFC, Roll Station among other popular joints.

Last week, *The Indian Express* had reported that Singh posted a purported confession letter on Facebook in which he admitted to the crime and claimed he and Khalsa were going to kill themselves. Police have recovered the note as well.

DCP (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said, "We received information about Singh's movement and suspected he was changing his hideout again. A team was deployed near the Jammu border and the accused was apprehended with his pistol."

During questioning, Singh told police that there had been differences between him and

## Former J&K MLC's murder: 1 arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19



Harmeet Singh was arrested from Jammu on Sunday

Wazir for three years over Gurdwara work. However, it was Khalsa who allegedly instigated him to kill Wazir.

On August 22, Singh went to Delhi to get a Canadian visa for his son and stayed at Khalsa's apartment. A week later, Khalsa invited Wazir home — who had to catch a flight to Canada — and asked Singh to move to a hotel.

"On September 3, Khalsa went to meet Singh at the hotel and told him that Wazir is planning to 'eliminate' his son and has hired gangsters from Punjab and Haryana. Khalsa insisted that Wazir was planning to kill Singh's entire family in Jammu and flee to Canada. He then took Singh to his apartment," said DCP Yadav.

At the apartment, two other men, Rajender Chaudhary and Khalsa, who were arrested earlier this week, were present. According to Singh's statement, police said Khalsa gave him a pistol and took him to Wazir's room. Singh then allegedly fired at Wazir's head and all four men fled the house.

Police also found that Khalsa "forced" Singh to write a three-page suicide note and put his thumb impression on it.

**Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited**  
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The Tender document may be downloaded from AIC website <https://www.aicofindia.com/> and E-tender portal <https://aicofindia.auctiontiger.net/EPROC/>. The last date for submission of Bid is 11.10.2021 till 01:00 PM.

Chief Manager (InfoTech Dept.)

H0/21-22/A12

**भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान खड़गपुर**

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KHARAGPUR  
खड़गपुर-721302/KHARAGPUR-721302

**Advt. No.: R/13/2021**

**Dated September 10, 2021**

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**04.10.2021**

**कुलसंचय/Registrar**

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the public at large that SHREE VARDHAMAN DEVELOPERS PRIVATE LIMITED, a company incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 having CIN U70101DL2005PTC142029 and having its registered office at 301-311, Indraprakash Building, 21 Barakhambha Road, New Delhi- 110001 ("Company" or "the Borrower") has availed term loan facilities from XANDER FINANCE PRIVATE LIMITED, a company incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 and registered with Reserve Bank of India as a Non-Banking Financial Company and having its registered Office at 101, 5 North Avenue, Maker Maxity, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East, Mumbai - 400 051 ("Lender") and in order to secure the payment/ repayment and discharge all its obligations with respect to the term loan facilities, amongst other securities, the Company/the Borrower has mortgaged all its rights, title and interest with respect to (1) land admeasuring 2 acres situated at Sector 2, Village Sohna, Tehsil Sohna, Gurgaon, Haryana, details of the land is set out in the Part A of the Schedule below ("Borrower Project Land"); (2) all development rights of the Borrower with respect of the land admeasuring 8.725 acres at Sector 2, Village Sohna, Tehsil Sohna, Gurgaon, Haryana (details of the land are set out in Part B of the Schedule below) ("Collaborator Project Land"); and (3) plotted land units listed in Part C of the Schedule below forming part of the Borrower's Project Share of Plots in the underlying Collaborator Project Land and the Borrower's Project Land ("Mortgaged Property") along with hypothecation of all the receivables arising therefrom, in favour of IDBI Trusteeship Services Limited (acting as the security trustee on behalf of and for the benefit of the Lender).

The said mortgage, charge and hypothecation over the Mortgaged Property in favour of IDBI Trusteeship Services Limited (acting as the security trustee on behalf of and for the benefit of the Lender) is duly registered with the concerned Registrar of Companies and duly recorded with Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest.

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#### Schedule PART-A

## HARDLOOK

# When trouble calls

With thousands of 'call centres' cropping up in Delhi to dupe US citizens, police are having to grapple with tech savvy fraudsters and sophisticated modus operandi

## BUSTED THIS YEAR

Districts / Units	Fake call centres uncovered	No. of arrests
East	1	26
Northwest	4	12
South	4	88
Dwarka	1	8
West	8	97
Outer	3	28
Rohini	3	39
Shahdara	7	126
Southeast	2	8
Outer north	1	32
Cyber Cell	8	186
Crime	2	94
Branch		
Total	44	744

mains a huge task, officers said.

There have been reports of similar rackets being run across the country, but the scale of what's unfolding in the national capital is unprecedented, said officers. Though close to 350 alleged racketeers have been arrested so far and around 500 questioned, many such 'call centres' remain operational.

According to senior officers, West Delhi in particular provides a fertile ground for such illegal tele-fraud as there are several property owners who, without proper background checks, provide infrastructure and even equipment to run a scam of this nature. Some even offer 'ready to shift' office spaces where they charge Rs 1 lakh per computer seat. Officers estimate more than 1,000 such call centres are operational across Delhi, in areas such as Pitampura, Rohini, Shalimar Bagh, Moti Nagar, Kirti Nagar, Rajouri Garden, Janakpuri and Tilak Nagar.

Officers said connivance of policemen with owners of call centres has also been found in several instances.

In the past nine months, 35 such call centres have been busted in Delhi. This year on, however, district police teams are working dedicatedly to address the issue. This comes after

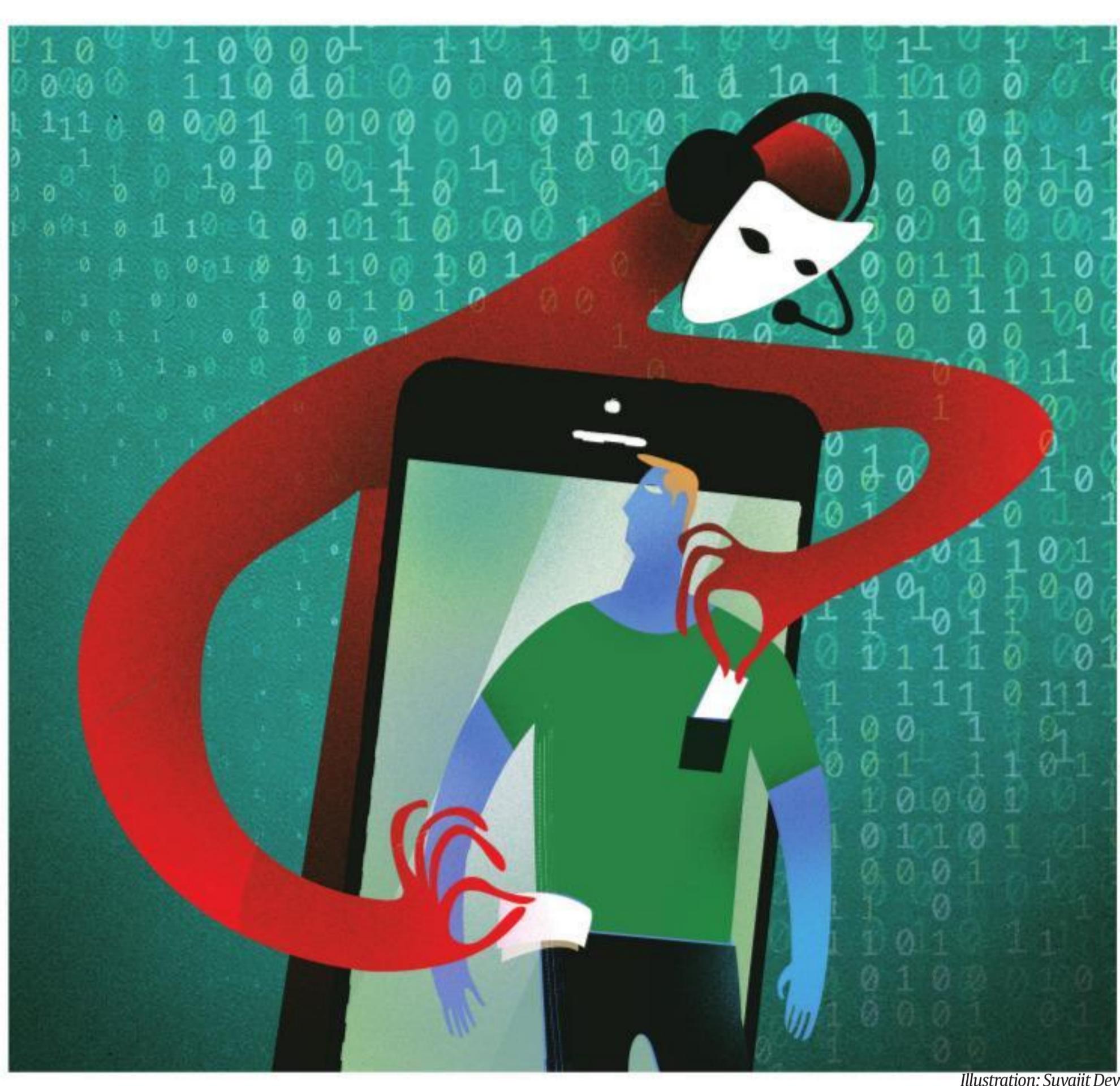


Illustration: Suvajit Dey

The Delhi Police headquarters issued an ultimatum that departmental action would be taken against local staff if any such call centre is found in their area.

#### The MO

The 38-year-old said he used to work with a BPO in Gurgaon, and though everything was done by the book there, his three years on the job helped him

space, they take action.

learn about the system and how it can be gamed. "In the US, every citizen has a social security number (SSN). It is a nine-digit number that the government issues to all US citizens and eligible US residents and uses it to keep track of their lifetime earnings

and the number of years worked. Many scams revolve around their SSN and in making them believe they are in trouble. People in the US have a lot of respect for the law – unlike in India, they get scared if they get a call from a law enforcement

agency. And that's how we in India are taking advantage of this and cheating them of thousands of dollars every day," he said.

DCP (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said the fraudsters usually choose a secluded place to open a call centre as they have to operate at night.

The 38-year-old said after leaving his Gurgaon job, he opened a call centre and hired 10 persons: "Only some laptops, the internet, and a table-chair are required. Our main callers are 10-15 persons, while others are learners and they switch jobs after some time. We pay more to experienced employees as they also train these youngsters. Nowadays, call centre owners also keep changing offices to avoid arrest."

Police said the calls are not made using a software to mask the caller's number. "Initially, a recorded message tells the person that law enforcement agencies have found a discrepancy while scanning their tax forms or found that their bank accounts were used in a crime, especially by drug cartels in Mexico or Colombia. They are then asked to press a number to talk to an officer, and as soon as they do, the fraudster sitting in a call centre in Delhi receives a call. He starts interacting with them to extract more details and, sometimes, even sends a fake warrant. The person is informed they have been fined thousands of dollars which, if not paid, would lead to legal repercussions. They are given a choice: face arrest or accept an 'alternative dispute resolution' to avoid facing any legal hurdle," said a senior officer.

The 38-year-old elaborated: "If the person agrees to pay the 'fine', he or she is told to do it only through gift cards or crypto currency.

The person, for instance, is made to buy iTunes gift cards worth thousands of dollars and share the details with the caller. The fraudster then shares the details of the gift card with an associate in the US, who in turn shares it with a broker.

Eventually, the fraudster in Delhi gets 70-80% of the value of the gift card through hawala channels, while their associates in the US keep the rest as their cut. If someone is not able to pay the fine in full, they are told to pay in installments."

In some cases, fraudsters send several links to people they have identified which, if clicked, adversely affect their computer. DCP Meena said they recently arrested 12 people. "During questioning, they revealed that they send fake pop-ups such as 'ransomware detected', 'security warning', etc to US residents on their computers through pop-up vendors. The fake pop-ups provide a phone number for technical support, which links to the call centre in Delhi. The fraudsters then extort money in the guise of providing technical help," he said.

The Indian Express scanned statements of over 30 employees of such call centres arrested by the Delhi Police and found a pattern: All of them had uploaded their CVs on job portals, from where those running the call centres reached out to them.

"They told police they were asked to come for an interview to a coffee shop or a fast-food joint where a person would ask about their qualifications and tell them to get trained at their call centre for English speaking," said an officer.

The 38-year-old said there was a time when police were only arresting owners of such call centres, but nowadays, they have started picking up the employees too. "As a result, before joining, the men and women ask the owner to give an assurance that they would be protected from arrest, and also ask about their contacts in the police department. But since there isn't a particular complainant in many of these cases and police have made suo motu arrests, many of those arrested get bail within a month. After coming out, some join another such establishment in Delhi while others leave for another city," he said.

## NOTICE BOARD

### CORPORATE ASSOCIATE DIARY EVENTS, HONOURS



#### TRAIN SERVICE – CONCOR

CONCOR strengthens its reachability by connecting East & West, starts the train service from Shalimar to Turbhe. The first train departs from Shalimar on 15/09/2021 with full container load.



#### HINDI DIWAS - ITPO

'Hindi Diwas' was celebrated at India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) at Pragati Maidan, ND. The celebration was marked with distribution of the Awards along with the motivational Hindi books.



#### AWARDS – BHEL

BHEL has celebrated Utkrishtita Utsav & the "Excel Awards" were conferred on meritorious employees. Dr MN Pandey, MD of Heavy Industries, graced the occasion & presented the awards. Dr NS (CMD – BHEL) was present on the occasion.



#### APPOINTMENT

DTL Dr Sanjay Kumar Lal, an officer of 2001 batch of IRS, has recently joined Delhi Transco Limited as Director (Finance). He has done his Doctorate from prestigious IARI, Pusa, Delhi. He is also a Law Graduate. Dr Sanjay Kumar Lal has a vast experience in the field of Taxation, Account and Finance. He has worked in various capacities in the IT Department in its different wings such as Investigation, International Taxation, headquarters etc. He has also rendered his services in the M/o Finance. Before joining Delhi Transco Limited, he was posted as Commissioner (OSD) at Ghaziabad in the IT Department.



#### WORKSHOP – NIOS

NIOS & Vidyam Bharati Institute of Higher Education jointly organised 2 days National Workshop on 'National Education Policy 2020: Implementation, Strategy & Progress' at Kalyan Singh Auditorium, Noida, NIOS. Dr S Sarkar, MoS Education, was the chief guest.

## Man dupes people of Rs 2.5 crore by offering fake jobs in Railways, held

### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

A 43-YEAR-OLD man who allegedly posed as an IAS officer and cheated over 40 people under the pretext of offering them a job in the Indian Railways has been arrested.

Police said the accused, Mohammad Raghib Firoz, and his two associates have been running the 'fake job' racket for years and cheated people of more than Rs 2.5 crore in the last eight months. Tolure their victims and make the job appointment look genuine, the men even held seminars, and conducted medical tests and training sessions in Delhi and Dehradun for three months. They took money from their targets on the pretext of registration and training fees.

One of the victims, who refused to be named, said he lost more than Rs 2 lakh in January. He said, "I worked as a data entry operator and lost my job because of the pandemic. I was searching for jobs online when I found an ad for a job in the Railways last year. After a test and interview, I was promised a job in the PR department. I even went to Paharganj and to a hotel in Dehradun for training. I didn't tell my parents and took a loan from friends for the job. When I returned home, I realised the job didn't exist."

Police said "Firoz is the kingpin and has been on the run for months. He was arrested from Greater Noida". During questioning, the accused revealed that they put ads on the internet and tried luring their neighbours to apply for the fake job.

The Economic Offences Wing had already arrested Firoz's associates, Brij Kishore and Sachin Kumar, in the case. During investigation, they found that the accused were printing fake appointment letters and conducting medical tests.

Additional CP (EOW) R K Singh said, "It was when the victims reached the DRM office in Jamshedpur where they would start working with senior officers," said a police officer.

## BRIEFLY

### Two roads in Patparganj renamed after Uttarakhand personalities

New Delhi: Two roads in Patparganj Vidhan Sabha were renamed after freedom fighter Veer Kesari Chand and folk singer Hira Singh Rana, both of whom

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and who were from Uttarakhand. C-Block Marg No. 4 in West Vinod Nagar has been renamed Hira Singh Rana Marg; the road from Vinod Nagar Red Light to Silver Line Hospital has been renamed Amar Shaheed Veer Kesari Chandra Marg. Area MLA and Deputy CM Manish Sisodia was present at the ceremony.

### Work to lay drains begins at Naraina

New Delhi: Work to lay drains and subsequent road reconstruction was started at Naraina Sunday. Area MLA Raghav Chadha inaugurated the work and said it will be completed in a timely manner. The cost of the project is Rs 4 crore. The issue of waterlogging and poor roads have been raised by residents of the area several times. ENS

### Vehicle owners must carry PUC certificates'

New Delhi: Ahead of winter when pollution levels are likely to rise in the capital, the transport department of the Delhi government has asked vehicle owners to carry valid pollution under control (PUC) certificates to avoid punitive actions. PTI



#### MOU – PNB

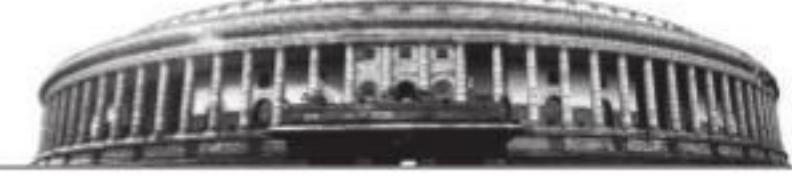
PNB entered into a strategic co-lending alliance with ICCL & IHFL for MSME & Priority Sector Housing Loans respectively. S Krishnan, MD & CEO informed that the co-lending model will improve the flow of credit to the un-served & under-served sector.



#### MOU – PNB

PNB has entered into a Co-Lending arrangement with IIFL Home Finance Limited. The MOU was signed by AK Goel (GM – PNB) in the presence of SK Saha (ED-PNB) & SK Dixit (CGM – PNB).

# GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## FINAL CALL

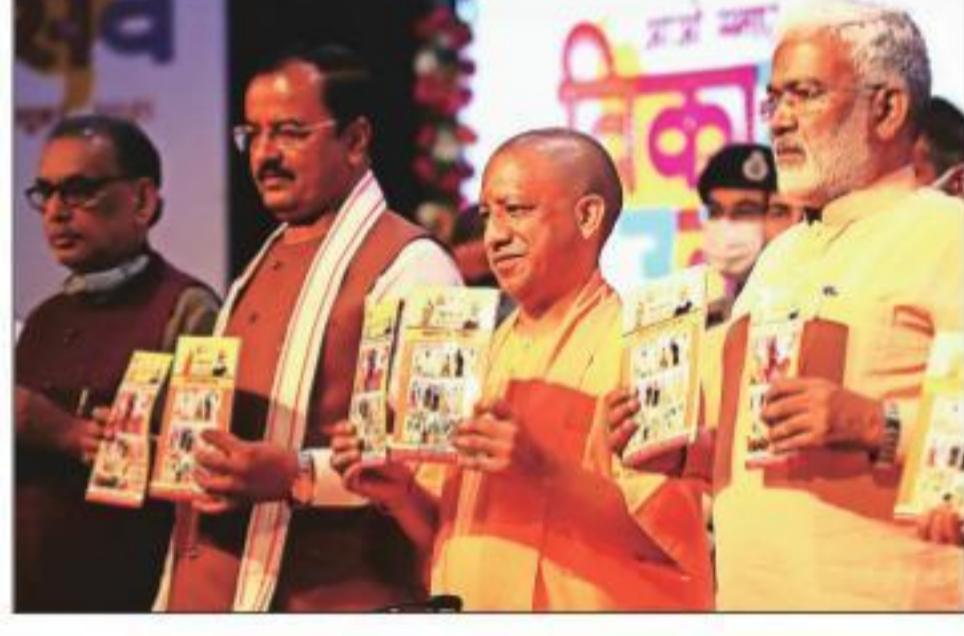
THE SUPREME Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana last week decided to transfer 28 high court judges, five chief justices of high courts apart from appointing eight new chief justices of high courts. However, in the 28 transfers of high court judges, 25 are known and the remaining three transfers are yet to be finally vetted by the collegium. With CJI Ramana travelling to Bangalore over the weekend to attend the memorial held for former Supreme Court judge Mohan Shantanagounder, the remaining transfers are likely to be decided this week.

## NAGALAND FOCUS

AT A time when the BJP is looking at the emergence of the all-party government in Nagaland with some concerns about its own political future in the state, the central government appears to have become active with its development projects in the state. Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar was in Nagaland for two days last week – he celebrated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday there – inaugurating new institutions. He inaugurated the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology in Chuchuyimlang, a software technology park in Kohima and an entrepreneurial development centre in Kohima. He said these centres would ensure thousands of jobs for the youth in the insurgency-hit state in two years.

## PROGRESS, FINALLY

THE NEW National Education Policy talks about promoting multilingualism in school and higher education. For this, the government had wanted the IITs and IIMs to start offering their programmes in regional languages. After the initial meeting on this issue last year, at which the IITs had expressed reservations about the idea, there has been no development on this front. It appears that now one of the IITs has come around the idea and is planning to offer one programme in a regional language. However, this will not be for the face-to-face format. The IIT will introduce it for an online programme. Ministry officials are tight-lipped about which IIT it is and are saying an announcement will be made soon.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday at an event in Lucknow on the completion of four-and-a-half years of the BJP government. Vishal Srivastav

## UP has seen complete transformation under BJP rule: Adityanath

MAULSHREE SETH  
LUCKNOW, SEPTEMBER 19

PRESENTING A "report card" of the four-and-a-half years of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh ahead of the Assembly elections, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday claimed that the state has undergone a "complete transformation" and its perception before the country as well as the world has changed as there have been no riots since 2017 and strict actions have been taken against the mafia and criminals during his rule.

The chief minister also claimed that his rule would be remembered for "surkash" (safety) and "susashan" (good governance) for both women as well as for the industry. "The four-and-a-half years' rule of Uttar Pradesh will be remembered for security and good governance... In the past, mafias under the patronage of the government used to create an environment of fear, and riots were rampant in the state... Now, the investors' confidence in the state is growing and UP has emerged as number two in the country in terms of ease of doing business," the chief minister said, adding that his government's priority is

to provide security and safety to women.

He said criminals were being firmly dealt with irrespective of their caste, religion and social status to provide a safe and secure environment in the state.

Drawing a comparison with the previous Samajwadi Party government, Adityanath hit out at the Opposition party over the law and order and accused it of indulging in corruption and nepotism in government jobs.

"You all have seen the scandals that took place between 2012 and 2017. It's not very long ago. In the previous government, there used to be communal clashes every 3-4 days. But in the last four years, there has not been a single incident of riot," he said.

"Before 2017, transfer and posting of officials had become a business and open auction used to happen for the posts," the CM said, adding that no one can make such allegations on his government.

"Whenever new government vacancies were announced, members of a family used to go across the state to extort money. But in our four-and-a-half years of rule, there has been no allegation of any kind of extortion or bribery in filling up of vacancies," the chief minister said.

Counting was still going on but

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e-paper.indianexpress.com

## YSR Congress wins big in zila and mandal polls in Andhra

SREENIVAS JANYALA  
HYDERABAD, SEPTEMBER 19

THE YSR Congress party Sunday won the majority of the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituencies (ZPTC) and Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituencies (MPTC) in Andhra Pradesh, completing a clean sweep of victories in elections at all levels – Parliamentary, Assembly, Municipal and Panchayat – since coming to power in May 2019.

The counting of votes for ZPTC and MPTC elections, which were held in April, was taken up Sunday. On Thursday, the Andhra Pradesh High Court which had directed the State Election Commission (SEC) not to announce results following a petition filed by Opposition parties, had given permission to the results.

Counting was still going on but

CM  
VS Jagan  
Mohan  
Reddy



Chief  
Minister  
Y S Jagan  
Mohan Reddy

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said that delivering governance at the doorstep through the Village and Ward Secretariats and volunteers system, and fulfilling all the promises made during elections has delivered the results for the YSRCP.

Out of the 660 ZPTCs, elections were not held in 8 ZPTCs for multiple reasons. In 126 ZPTCs, candidates were elected unanimously, while 11 candidates died while waiting for results to be declared. About 2,050 candidates contested in the remaining 515 ZPTCs.

In 10,047 MPTCs, elections were not held in 375. The YSRCP won 2,371 unanimously while 81 candidates died after polls were held. Results were declared today for 7,220 MPTCs for which over 18,700 candidates had contested. YSRCP won 17 of the 19 MPTCs in Kuppam mandal where N Chandrababu Naidu has been elected from.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
DEHRADUN, SEPTEMBER 19

IN THE run-up to the Assembly elections in Uttarakhand, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday promised that if his party came to power in the hill state, it will provide jobs to every unemployed youth, and unemployment allowance of Rs 5,000 per month will be given to one unemployed youth in every family until he is provided employment.

Kejriwal made six promises related to employment to Uttarakhand during his visit to Haldwani on Sunday.

Before leading a "Tiranga Sankalp Yatra", Kejriwal spoke to reporters and said the AAP government will ensure that 80 per cent jobs both in government and private sectors will be re-

served for local youths. He said 1 lakh government jobs will be created within six months if his party comes to power.

He said a separate ministry will be created to work on the issues of employment, prevent migration of youths and create a favourable atmosphere in the state for those people who want to return to their native places.



Sunil Jakhar with Punjab CM-designate Charanjit Singh Channi. Archive

Pushed out of race for top post, Jakhar declines to be deputy CM

KANCHAN VASDEV  
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 19

WITH CONGRESS making it clear that they may appoint two deputies for Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, at least one of the leaders party reached out to for the post declined the offer.

Former state Congress chief Sunil Kumar Jakhar, who was in the reckoning for chief minister's post, Sunday refused to be appointed as a deputy CM.

A Congress central observer had called up Jakhar before the party announced Channi's name. Jakhar refused to accept the offer. Later, another senior leader from Delhi called him with the same offer, but Jakhar did not budge.

The party affairs in-charge for Punjab Harish Rawat told news agency ANI that there was "a mutual feeling" that there should be two deputy chief ministers.

Having named a Dalit Sikh as CM, Congress wants at least one Hindu leader as deputy. Senior MLA Brahm Mohindra, a Hindu face who was the Local Bodies Minister in Amarinder's Cabinet, may be named a deputy CM.

Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, who also in the running for CM's post and was looking after the jails portfolio may be named the second deputy CM.



Punjab CM-designate Charanjit Singh Channi, with Congress leaders Navjot Singh Sidhu and Harish Rawat, submits a letter staking claim to the Chief Minister's post to Governor Banwarilal Purohit at Raj Bhawan in Chandigarh on Sunday. PTI

## Dalit groups on Channi: Poll stunt, Cong wants our votes

RAAKHI JAGGA  
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 19

THE CONGRESS move to make Charanjit Singh Channi as Punjab's first Dalit Chief Minister did not entertain the Dalit unions which termed it an election stunt and said the party was trying to kill two birds with one stone since he is both a Dalit as well as a Sikh.

The state has a total of 31.9% Scheduled Caste population as per the 2011 census while 31.3% are other backward classes (OBCs). Both sections together form 63.2% of the total population.

"It is merely an election stunt. Channi is a Dalit as well as a Sikh. Punjab will go to polls in another four-five months and code of conduct will be imposed 40 days before the elections. So what can the new face do? He will just say I am a new person, trying to understand things," said Zora Singh Nasrali, president of Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union.

"Our seven mazdoor unions of Punjab have formed a common front as village and farm labourer associations' Sanjh Morcha. Our proposed meeting is on September 23 in CM house with special secretary to CM and Lal Singh, Mandi Board chairman. So let's see as who will entertain us now. They may find an excuse to postpone this meeting too. All other protests going on in Punjab will also get stalled for the time being as the CM has changed," Nasrali said.

Tarsem Singh Sewewala, general secretary of the same union, said, "Till the time policies are not changed, a Dalit CM or a Jat Sikh CM will not make any difference. Now we will ask the newly chosen CM to chair the September 23 meeting with our Sanjh Morcha.

This will be a litmus test for him and will show how caring he is about Dalits."

Bhagwant Samao, president of Mazdoor Mukti Morcha, Punjab, said, "Shiromani Akali Dal did an

### THE BREAK-UP

31.9%  
SC population  
31.3%  
OBC population  
Jat Sikh population: 25%

34 seats out of 117 in Vidhan Sabha reserved for SCs

SC population living in rural areas: 73.3%  
SC population living in urban areas: 26.67%

Farm labourers: 15 lakh (approximately)

### DOABA

Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr and Kapurthala districts form Doaba region; has highest Dalit population

Dalits 19.48 lakh | Ravidassias 11.88 lakh | Valmikis 4.56 lakh

Other Dalit communities: 3.04 lakh

Total population 52.08 lakh

All figures as per 2011 census

## BJP raises harassment row, AAP welcomes Dalit face

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 19

IN FIRST reactions to Congress naming Charanjit Singh Channi the next Punjab chief minister, BJP on Sunday raked up a controversy when an IAS officer in 2018 had alleged that he had sent her an inappropriate text. While main opposition Aam Aadmi Party welcomed the appointment of Channi, a Dalit, to the top post, the Shiromani Akali Dal did not issue any statement.

BJP IT department head Amit Malviya, in a tweet, said, "Congress's CM pick Charanjit Channi faces action in a 3-year-old MeToo case. He had allegedly sent an inappropriate text to a woman IAS officer in 2018. It was covered up but the case resurfaced when Punjab Women's Commission sent notice. Well done, Rahul."

While SAD did not react officially, party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal had on Saturday said that change of guard won't save Congress.

The issue had resurfaced in May this year when Punjab Women's Commission chairperson Manisha Gulati threatened to go on a hunger strike if the state government failed to apprise her within a week of its stand on the "inappropriate text" message allegedly sent by Channi, who was then a minister in the Capt Amarinder Singh government. Gulati had said she had written to the chief secretary seeking the government's action taken report.

The AAP congratulated Channi on being named new Punjab CM and said that hopes he will fulfill all the promises made by the Congress in 2017, as party has not been able to deliver on a single promise in the last four-and-a-half years."

Chhattisgarh ex-minister dies by suicide

Raipur: A former minister and BJP leader from Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district was said to have died by suicide on Sunday. According to the police, BJP leader Rajinderpal Singh Bhatia was found hanging at his residence in Churia on Sunday evening. Bhatia lived with his younger brother and his family. He was alone in the house on Sunday and when the family members returned, they found him hanging from the ceiling fan in his room," said a senior officer aware of the details of the case. "We are questioning the family members too."

Bhatia, a three-term MLA from Khujji in Rajnandgaon was transport minister in BJP government's first tenure after the state was formed (2003-2008). Sources said Bhatia was keeping unwell and had post-Covid complications. "He had been complaining about his health," the officer said.

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal during a rally in Haldwani, Uttarakhand on Sunday. PTI

### UTTARAKHAND

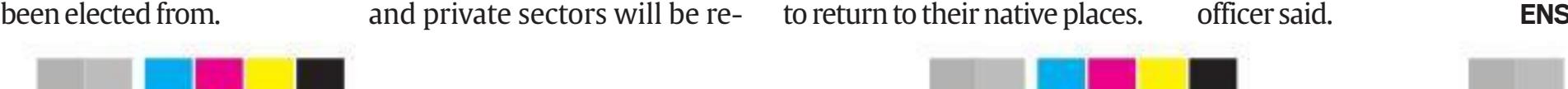
## Kejriwal vows allowance for unemployed youth

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
DEHRADUN, SEPTEMBER 19

IN THE run-up to the Assembly elections in Uttarakhand, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday promised that if his party came to power in the hill state, it will provide jobs to every unemployed youth, and unemployment allowance of Rs 5,000 per month will be given to one unemployed youth in every family until he is provided employment.

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served for local youths. He said 1 lakh government jobs will be created within six months if his party comes to power.

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ENS



## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## CHANNI'S CHALLENGE

New Punjab CM has four months to revive governance, lead a divided party to polls. He has high command to thank — and blame

**I**T TOOK FOUR years and eight months for the Congress to figure that Amarinder Singh is disconnected with the electorate and legislators, that governance in Punjab is a failure, and that Dalits may need to be empowered by offering high public office. As early as in 2017, soon after the Congress swept the polls, winning 77 out of 117 seats, 33 legislators had written a letter to Singh demanding action in drug cases. It was ignored and later, MLAs began to complain that the CM had become inaccessible and a course correction was necessary to address public grievances. It is only in the past five months that the party woke up to the fact that one of the three big states where it runs a government may be slipping from its hold. With dissenting voices increasing by the day, the Congress was compelled to look beyond Singh, its tallest leader in Punjab — Singh resigned on Saturday and on Sunday, the party chose Charanjit Singh Channi as Captain's replacement. The burden of winning the elections is now on Channi, who has four months to prove his leadership credentials.

Channi, 58, will be the first Dalit to be sworn in as CM of Punjab, a state where Dalits constitute at least 32 per cent of the population. On paper, it is an astute move by the Congress for he ticks the religion and caste boxes and has experience in government. But does Channi have the time to recover the ground lost under Singh and win the trust of the public? The Congress had won the 2017 elections with a host of promises. It had promised to investigate allegations of corruption under the previous Badal regime, take action in the sacrilege issue, end illegal sand mining, crack down on the drug mafia and so on. The crises in industry, education, agriculture called for state intervention, which the Congress had outlined during the 2017 campaign. The Singh government ignored these concerns despite frustrated legislators frequently flagging them to the party leadership. The high command, perhaps intimidated by Singh's stature and refusal to play ball, preferred to kick the can down the road to the state leadership, which was even less inclined to call the CM to account. Clearly, the internal checks and balances of the party had failed in gauging the crisis. The high command, instead of calling its CM's attention to the governance crisis, sought to undermine his leadership by appointing Navjot Singh Sidhu, who had fallen out with Singh, as party chief. Channi now has to put the government back on the rails and find backing from a faction-ridden party with ambitious leaders.

Singh has said that he feels humiliated by the Congress decision and would keep his options open. He has in the past rebelled against the party, joined the Akali Dal, and even floated his own outfit. Twice CM, Singh is no pushover: He has influence among legislators and within the party. The challenge for the Congress in Punjab has got more complicated than before.

## HUNTINGTON'S GHOST

A shared secular interest in keeping India down is driving China-Pakistan alliance — not a convergence of Confucianism and Islam

**I**NA LECTURE last week, the chief of defence staff, General Bipin Rawat, touched upon the idea of "clash of civilisations", propounded at the end of the Cold War three decades ago by American political scientist, Samuel Huntington. Clash of civilisations was certainly not the main focus of Rawat's speech. It was about India's defence reforms that have acquired a new urgency under the NDA government. The reference to the idea was in his opening remarks about the geopolitical imperatives of India's defence reform. Given the massive political and religious baggage associated with the idea, it inevitably drew attention at home and abroad. Rawat was not making the claim himself but pointing to Huntington's thesis on the inevitable confluence of Confucian and Islamic interests.

What is said in Delhi does not stay in Delhi these days. It travels quickly and is easily distorted. The media headlines on Rawat's speech in India, unsurprisingly, drew attention in Beijing and it reportedly came up in the Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi's conversation with India's external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar when they met on the margins of a regional summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Jaishankar affirmed that "India does not subscribe to any clash of civilisations theory". Although the controversy seems rooted in a misperception of what Rawat had said, it is a reminder to officials in high positions not to wade into grand theologies about how the world works. It is one thing to discuss these ideas in universities and think-tanks and entirely another for policymakers to throw them around casually. Huntington argued that after the collapse of communism, the main international contradiction will be between different religious identities rather than nation-states. Although religious identity has indeed gained ground across different geographies, it has by no means become the main locus of international conflict. On the contrary religion has become a divisive force. In West Asia, the resurgence of Islamist ideology has only sharpened conflict among, and within, various Muslim societies. In the last few years, we have seen more Islamic countries make up with Israel, rather than embark on a final confrontation with the Jewish state in Israel.

India's military planners are right to focus on the two-front military problem that it confronts with China and Pakistan. But what brings China and Pakistan together is not some grand convergence between Confucianism and Islam, but a shared secular interest in keeping India down. China's influence in West Asia is certainly growing as Rawat noted. But that is true of every region in the world — from Europe to the South Pacific, and from Africa to the Arctic. That is a consequence of China's economic and military weight, and not the power of its civilisation.

## FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



MANISH SABHARWAL AND RAJIV MEHRISHI

## City to recover

Covid reinforces that good urbanisation is our most powerful technology for poverty reduction

NOBEL LAUREATE PAUL Romer describes technology as a different recipe rather than more cooks in the kitchen. Using his framing, cities are a technology for poverty reduction; New York City's GDP equals that of Russia with 6 per cent of the people and 0.00005 per cent of the land. Covid has catalysed a naive or hypocritical romanticism of villages that believes cities are undesirable technology because of their hostility to migrants, infection hotspot tendency, and diminished centrality to the future of work due to digitisation. We disagree: Covid is an opportunity to catalyse good urbanisation by empowering our cities with more power and funds.

The post-Covid debate of cities as "desirable or undesirable" technology mirrors a 1960s debate about food chronicled in the wonderful book *The Wizard and the Prophet* by Charles Mann. Norman Borlaug — the wizard — is a Nobel-winning scientist who believed science and technology will overcome challenges and he kickstarted the agricultural Green Revolution. William Vogt — the prophet — believed that prosperity would lead humans to ruin without cutting back and he kick-started the environment movement. One says innovate; the other says retreat. But cutting back on urbanisation would hurt the three transitions — farm to non-farm, informal to formal, and school to work — that are raising per capita incomes. India's problem is not land (if we had Singapore's density all our people could fit into Kerala), labour or capital (we are the world's largest receiver of diaspora remittances and FDI). Our challenge is the productivity upside of good urbanisation. And if 50 per cent of our population in rural areas generate only 18 per cent of the GDP, they are condemned to poverty.

Urbanisation gets a bad name in rich and poor countries because megacities — 10 million-plus populations — are unpleasant places to live for people who are not rich or powerful. Twenty-six of the world's 33 megacities are in developing countries because their rural areas lack rule of law, infrastructure and productive commerce. Migrants that left our cities during the first lockdown last year are back because they were not running towards cities, but running away from sub-scale economic

wastelands — estimates suggest that 2 lakh of our 6 lakh villages have less than 200 people. But there is no denying that even our non-megacities have inadequate planning, non-scalable infrastructure, unaffordable housing, and poor public transport.

Megacities are not cursed. Tokyo has a third of Japan's population but planning and investments have ensured that essential workers like teachers, nurses, and policemen don't commute two hours. The most insightful metric for city quality came from Italian physicist Cesare Marchetti who suggests that 30 minutes has been the most acceptable — or shall we say civilised — commute through history (even as the method changed from walking to horses to bicycles to trains to cars). The Marchetti constant is almost impossible in Bengaluru where taxi and auto speeds average 8 km/hour.

The golden rule in government is those with the gold rule; the annual spend of our central government is about Rs 34 lakh crore and of 28 state governments is about Rs 40 lakh crore. But the 15th Finance Commission estimates our 2.5 lakh plus local government bodies only spend Rs 3.7 lakh crore annually. This apartheid has many reasons. First is power; local government is curtailed by state government departments in water, power, schools, healthcare, etc (property tax collection would be 100 per cent if municipal bodies supplied water). The second is independence — only 13 per cent and 44 per cent of the budget of rural and urban bodies was raised themselves. The third is structure — a Union ministry controlling finance and governance of the states would be unacceptable at the Centre but the Department of Local Self Government in the states has almost unlimited powers (suspension/removal of mayors and other elected representatives or supercession of elected local bodies is almost routine in most states). Fourth, having separate central rural and urban ministries distorts policy. Finally, the lack of power and resources sets off a vicious cycle of decline because ambitious and talented individuals aren't attracted to city leadership. But most Chinese premiers since 1978 apprenticed as mayors just like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajendra

Good urbanisation is also crucial to delivering economic justice for women, children and Dalits. Poor quality urbanisation has meant men-only migration, leaving the women with all the hard labour of farm work, raising the children, and looking after in-laws, while having virtually no recourse to health services, or to even emotional support of the spouse. Village children going to abysmal-quality government schools without bilingual possibilities places them at a disadvantage in English-dominated entrance tests for professional courses and civil services.

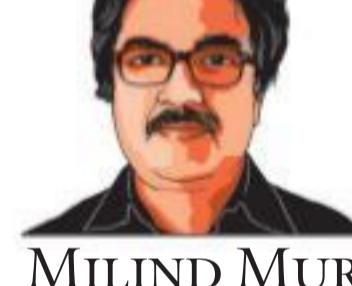
Prasad and Chittaranjan Das did in 1924.

India's local government challenge reflects what historians call path dependence; unlike others, our democracy didn't evolve bottom-up with local government rolling up into state governments that came together as a nation. India inherited a nationally centralised structure (a must for a colonial power) and princely states (with legitimacy, structures and resources) got strong powers in the constitution. Consequently, empowering local governments has been seen as a "favour" that involves "sacrifice", and city leadership is either unelected with power (bureaucrats) or elected with limited power and unreasonable conditions (candidates are only eligible for one term in 30 years because of the six-category reservation-by-rotation policy for SC man, SC woman, ST man, ST woman, General man, General woman).

Good urbanisation is also crucial to delivering economic justice for women, children and Dalits. Poor quality urbanisation has meant men-only migration, leaving the women with all the hard labour of farm work, raising the children, and looking after in-laws, while having virtually no recourse to health services, or to even emotional support of the spouse. Village children going to abysmal-quality government schools without bilingual possibilities places them at a disadvantage in English-dominated entrance tests for professional courses and civil services. Though not great by any standards, the quality of both healthcare and education in cities remains better than villages by miles. Most painfully, Dalits in villages are often denied the dignity that urban anonymity provides.

Good urbanisation — getting power and funds to cities — needs chief ministers to sacrifice self-interest. Their reward will be undying dues of millions waiting for high-quality jobs and opportunities. India is lucky that Norman Borlaug prevailed over William Vogt in the food technology debate. As the post-Covid urbanisation debate gains momentum, we hope the wizards will again prevail over the prophets.

Sabharwal is vice-chairman, Teamlease Services; and Mehrishi is a former civil servant



MILIND MURUGKAR

THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT August 14 would be the day to remember the horrors of Partition is a manifestation of a new idea of India. This India believes in reliving historical wounds rather than getting over them.

Despite the already evident horrors of Partition, India celebrated its first Independence Day with high hopes. That India believed in a clear separation between religious identities and our identity as Indians. This view acknowledged the legacy of our ancient civilisation and also recognised that people of all religious identities participated in the freedom movement that led to the modern Indian state.

This doesn't mean that this idea of India was rooted in a naïve understanding of the Hindu-Muslim relationship. It was aware of the complexity of this relationship — beautiful syncretism existing cheek-by-jowl with extreme conflicts and prejudices. However, without carrying the burden of history, it envisioned a modern India based on the value of individual dignity as enshrined in the Constitution, emphasising cultural convergence despite the tensions. In this view, modern India was not just a country that used modern science and technology. It was to be an India where everyone had the same inherent dignity regardless of her religion or any other identity.

It was an audacious dream for a country just partitioned along religious lines. In the past

## AN INSECURE NATIONALISM

Partition Day signals idea of India uncomfortable with history's complexities

Despite the already evident horrors of Partition, India celebrated its first

Independence Day with high hopes. It believed in a clear separation between religious identities and our identity as Indians. This doesn't mean that this idea of India was rooted in a naïve understanding of the Hindu-Muslim relationship. It was aware of the complexity of this relationship — beautiful syncretism existing cheek-by-jowl with extreme conflicts and prejudices.

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decades, this dream survived several jolts. But in recent times, it has been virtually shattered. The nationalism borne out of the Independence movement and the idea of India it championed, is now on the verge of political defeat. Since the regime change in 2014, the process has intensified. Today, a new idea of India is casting its spell on the majority community.

The question is: Can this India ever be free?

This is a legitimate apprehension because it is built upon shaky foundations.

The cultural nationalism of the RSS-BJP that forms the basis of this idea of India seeks its roots in medieval times when India was not a nation-state. Therefore, for this version of nationalism, Christianity and Islam and the accompanying cultures and lifestyles have come from "outside" — hence, they are foreign. Conflicts in medieval history are at the heart of this nationalism.

Where there is controversy about exactly what happened even in recent history, it is very difficult to talk with certainty about medieval history. And, how complicated is that history where the military constantly shifted its loyalty from one king to the other. This leaves scope for constructing history primarily based on one's political ideology.

Just as Marxist historians look at everything through the lens of class, people influenced by the Sangh-BJP's cultural nationalism tell us how cruel every Muslim king was. They do so by selectively imposing today's value

system on the medieval past.

Once Islam and Islamic culture are considered "external", their every sign is a sign of the victory of these "foreigners" over the Hindus. Gandhi-Nehru-Patel's idea of India never felt the need to change the name Aligarh to Hargirah. But this new idea of India can never be secure and open.

Muslims have been part of this country for hundreds of years. And the fact that the impact of Islamic culture will remain in all spheres of Indian life will always vex the Sangh-BJP. No matter how much and how long the BJP-RSS enjoy political power, even under a leadership similar to the present one, this nationalism will remain entrenched in medieval history and will continue to suffer the pain of an imagined medieval "defeat".

Any form of nationalism bears the danger of becoming hostile to democratic principles. But a theoretically constructive possibility of nationalism is that it can also be useful for building social cohesion and brotherhood. But the Sangh-BJP's cultural nationalism is intrinsically incapable of doing this.

This India cannot be at peace with itself. By announcing the Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, the Prime Minister has shackled it all the more with the chains of history.

Murugkar writes on economic and social issues

## SEPTEMBER 20, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

## PM ON NUCLEAR TESTS

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi has said that India would carry out Pokhran-type nuclear tests if necessary but would not manufacture the atomic bomb even if Pakistan did so. Mrs Gandhi emphasised that India was developing nuclear capacity solely for developmental purposes. She spelt out India's nuclear policy in an interview to a correspondent of the *Age* magazine in Australia. Asked how long it would take India to change from nuclear energy for peaceful purposes to developing a bomb should the need arise, the PM said that this was a question that scientists would be able to answer. She said that India had to consider what was the real danger before it, that type of war or more

conventional warfare. Referring to Pakistan's proposal for immediate talks for mutual non-use of force, Mrs Gandhi said India had been repeatedly making the offer of a "no-war agreement" to Pakistan.

## ANTULAY'S FATE

THE FATE OF Maharashtra Chief Minister A. Antulay remained undecided till late on the night of September 19 despite the fact that Mrs Indira Gandhi had received the report of her emissary, External Affairs Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao. After her meeting with Rao, Mrs Gandhi summoned some of her ministers including Home Minister Giani Zail Singh, Industry and Labour Minister N. D. Tiwari and the Petroleum Minister P. C. Sethi.

Meanwhile, N. M. Tike, Maharashtra labour minister, came to Delhi and went back to Bombay. During his brief stay, he met S. B. Chavan, Union Planning Minister.

## VIOLENCE IN BARODA

AT LEAST THREE people were killed in a fresh wave of violence in Baroda on September 19. They were stabbed to death in assaults at dawn near the Wadi vegetable market, Bharati High School in Buranpura and Jayatara building. District magistrate Ashok Chawla said that the situation in the city did not require calling for help from the army or requisitioning additional police force. Over 170 persons have been rounded up as a preventive measure.



# THE IDEAS PAGE

## The Mandal-Mandir equation

BJP's growing investment in caste politics is reflected in the composition of the Modi cabinet and stance on OBC reservation. Its challenge is to balance caste aspirations and its core Hindutva appeal



CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT  
AND PRANNV DHAWAN

THE GROWING INTEREST of the Modi government in reservations for OBCs — as evident from its defence of the 127th amendment analysed in our last op-ed — is somewhat counterintuitive. After all, the Sangh Parivar considered caste-based positive discrimination detrimental to the nation's progress as it was implemented at the expense of merit. Its opposition to quota policies and politics was most obvious when V P Singh announced the introduction of a 27 per cent quota for OBCs, as recommended by the Mandal Commission. One editorialist even wrote in *The Organiser*: "The havoc the politics of reservation is playing with the social fabric is unimaginable. It provides a premium for mediocrity, encourages brain drain and sharpens caste divide." However, by defending merit, *The Organiser* was also defending upper castes, to whom reservations posed a clear threat. Another columnist, for instance, wrote of "an urgent need to build up moral and spiritual forces to counter any fallout from an expected Shudra revolution".

To counter this revolution — in other words, to orchestrate a counter-revolution — Hindutva, and more precisely the mobilisation in favour of the (re-)building of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, was chosen as a trump card — as evident from the launch of LK Advani's *rath yatra* soon after V P Singh's announcement. This strategy was rather effective. The Hindutva repertoire helped the BJP promote religious identity (and communal polarisation) at the expense of a sense of caste belonging.

But the Ram Mandir battle has been won in the court and may, therefore, lose some of its mobilisation power. Caste plays such a pervasive role in society that the Modi government obviously cannot neglect it, especially in respect of OBCs, who represent more than 50 per cent of the voters.

The BJP, in spite of its rejection of caste politics, never fully ignored it and the Modi government, despite introducing a 10 per cent quota for the economically weaker sections, is no exception. The party has probably never invested so much in OBC politics under Narendra Modi since K N Govindacharya's defence of "social engineering". Modi's election campaigns in 2014 and 2019 are cases in point, when he emphasised his plebeian background while campaigning in Bihar and UP in particular. In Kannauj, in April 2019, he emphasised that his family belonged to a "most backward caste".

But BJP focuses only on some OBC jatis. In UP, the party has turned mostly to non-Yadav OBCs to cash in on the resentment of these castes vis-à-vis the Yadavs, whom they often see as dominant, either because of their long association with the SP (which governed the state three times after the Mandal movement) or because of their capacity to corner reservations. Whereas 27 per cent of the SP candidates were Yadavs



CR Sasikumar

in 2019, according to the data set SPINPER initiated by TCDP (Ashoka University) and CERI (Sciences Po/CNRS), Yadavs represented only 1.3 per cent of the candidates of the BJP which, on the contrary, gave tickets to 7.7 per cent Kurmis and 16.7 per cent "other OBCs," who often came from small caste groups. This strategy translated into votes, according to the Lokniti-CSDS: While 60 per cent of the Yadavs voted for the SP-BSP alliance, 72 per cent of the "other OBCs" supported the BJP, showing that the OBC milieu was now polarised along jati lines, irrespective of class. Indeed, "poor" Yadavs and "rich" Yadavs voted for the SP-BSP alliance in the same proportions — but that was not sufficient. For the first time in the history of independent India, "lower OBCs" had more MPs than "upper OBCs", not only in UP, but in the whole of India.

The recent ministerial reshuffle of Modi's government followed the same logic. The BJP emphasised that never before had OBCs, SCs and STs been so well represented in the country's executive, as after 36 new faces were inducted, 47 ministers and MoS now belonged to these categories. Certainly, the overall presence of upper castes in the council has come down from 47 per cent in 2019 to 32.5 per cent, but upper castes are still in a majority among the Cabinet ministers. They occupy 16 out of the 31 cabinet berths — controlling portfolios such as home, defence, finance, external affairs, etc. There are many Brahmins (6), Rajputs (4), Vaishyas (2), Khatri (2), Bhumiya (1) and Kanait (1). Besides these, dominant intermediate castes like Marathas (2), Patels (2) and Reddys (1) have secured token representation in the Cabinet leaving only two, three and five berths respectively for SCs, STs and OBCs. Secondly, among the OBCs, there are only two Yadavs; and, among the SCs, one Jatav, a group associated with the BSP in UP. In fact, the profile of the seven leaders from UP inducted in August is very revealing: One was Brahmin, two Kurmis, one Gaderia, one Lodhi, one Kori and one Pasi — no Yadavs or Jatavs.

The profile of the BJP candidates for next

The BJP emphasised that never before had OBCs, SCs and STs been so well represented in the country's executive, as after 36 new faces were inducted, 47 Union ministers and MoS now belonged to these categories. Certainly, the overall presence of upper castes in the council has come down from 47 per cent in 2019 to 32.5 per cent, but upper castes are still in a majority among the Cabinet ministers. They occupy 16 out of the 31 cabinet berths — controlling portfolios such as home, defence, finance, external affairs, etc. There are many Brahmins (6), Rajputs (4), Vaishyas (2), Khatri (2), Bhumiya (1) and Kanait (1).

year's UP election should reconfirm this strategy which shows that, in fact, the party never lost sight of caste politics, even vis-à-vis the state, where the temple issue is supposed to make the larger impact. But will it work in 2022 like in 2017? While these electorally motivated attempts at superficial inclusion can improve the BJP's prospects, the denial of the CM post to Keshav Prasad Maurya is fresh in people's memory. The anxiety of these communities is exacerbated by the fact that the social justice commission's report on sub-classification has not yet been implemented, even as there are widespread protests against the improper implementation of quotas in public recruitment.

A new variable needs to be factored in: The demand for a caste census that is uniting different caste groups and parties, including the JD(U) and the RJD. This unity may be very shallow, but the Mandal moment was also very ephemeral — and still had lasting effects. BJP's OBC MPs from the Hindi heartland like Sanghamitra Maurya and Sushil Kumar Modi have gone beyond the BJP's official stance to demand the caste census. The latter was instrumental in taking the all-party delegation from Bihar to meet the PM.

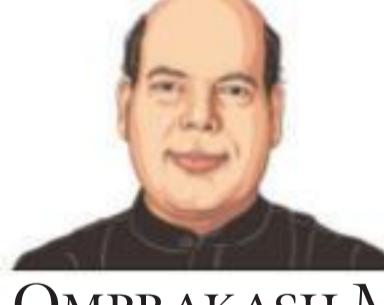
At the same time, BJP's upper-caste leadership appears to resent the party's recent overtures to OBCs. After the passage of the 127th Amendment, they raised the pitch for establishing a "Savarna Aayog" to look into the grievances and complaints of the Savarna castes in BJP-ruled MP and HP.

These incipient signs of struggle within Hindutva's social alliance alert to the fact that BJP's key challenge, amidst the crucial battle for UP, remains this: How to adequately mollify the aspirational OBCs' claims for political power without dismantling the social oligarchy that forms its core support base.

*Jaffrelot is senior research fellow at CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS, Paris and professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at King's India Institute, London ; Dhawan is a student of National Law School of India University, Bengaluru*

## A hollow act

Under the CAA, refugees are ineligible for protection unless they are already in India



OMPRAKASH MISHRA

BJP PRESIDENT J P Nadda was joined by Union cabinet minister Hardeep Singh Puri, in showering praise on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. The occasion was the evacuation of stranded Indians in Afghanistan against the backdrop of the Taliban's ascendance to power in Kabul. With the help of the American forces stationed at the Kabul airport, the government of India could successfully evacuate a good number of its nationals. No less important was the evacuation of some Afghan nationals from the Hindu and Sikh minority communities in that country. Unfortunately, we see motivated propaganda to claim how their evacuation attests to the justification for the CAA. There is no way that these people would be given Indian nationality under the CAA. After all, the provisions of the Act are meant for those who have been in India since before December 2014. The CAA was never meant to help asylum seekers and protect persecuted people. Moreover, the government has been unable to frame rules for the implementation of the much-touted CAA despite the passage of 20 months. Also, there is absolute silence on the constitutionality of the CAA from our judiciary.

In the absence of refugee-specific legislation, the reception, admittance and treatment of refugees in India is conditioned by ad hoc policies adopted by the government to deal with specific circumstances. Thus, among several communities, we have hosted Tibetans, Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka, persecuted Chin and Afghan refugees and the minority Chakmas

from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). India had received worldwide admiration for its singular support to the huge numbers of people fleeing violence and persecution from then East Pakistan in 1970-71. The decision to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955, was initially thought by unsuspecting people to be benevolent. It was supposed to be the right step, consistent with broad Indian traditions and practices to stand up for persecuted people. However, it was made clear by the government that it does not propose any changes that are consistent with the understanding and interpretation of the term "persecution". Rather, a discrimination-filled and narrow interpretation of persecution has found its way into a legislative Act, in direct contravention of the provisions on equality in the Indian Constitution.

The government has attempted to deflect criticism over the discriminatory CAA by arguing that it is about inclusion. Persecuted minority communities — Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, Jains and Parsis — from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan would get necessary protection. The government has reasoned that since the three countries named are dominated by Muslims, it would not be necessary to consider Muslims as being persecuted in these countries. This interpretation of persecution has no parallel in the civilised world. The term persecution stands in complete harmony with the understanding of non-discrimination. The definition of a refugee in Article 1A (2) of the United Nations Convention on the

Status of Refugees, 1951, involves people who are unable to avail the protection of the state of which they are nationals and are forced to flee outside their countries' borders due to a "well-founded fear of persecution" based on their "race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion". In fact, the worldwide refugee protection principle is premised on non-discrimination and, therefore, any rudimentary understanding of international law militates against a piece of legislation that prioritises discrimination amongst people based on religious persuasion in its definition for "persecution".

The government also claimed that the CAA is about conferring citizenship. It does not intend to take away citizenship from Indian nationals. However, it would be difficult to find a precedent for a national legislative measure attempting to accord sanctuary and protection to a class of people retrospectively. A policy for persecuted people from foreign countries is invariably for the intended beneficiaries who need protection. Under the CAA, no one is eligible to be accorded protection unless they are already here in the country. For example, a group of Hindus from Bangladesh or Christians from Pakistan or Sikhs from Afghanistan would not get any protection from the CAA should they reach India and seek its protection. The question of refuge and protection for persecuted minorities, such as the Rohingyas from Myanmar or the Hazaras from Afghanistan, or asylum seekers from different other countries on the

The writer is professor of international relations, Jadavpur University; and TMC spokesperson

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"If New Zealand can be spooked by what has since then emerged to be a routine threat advisory by Rawalpindi's IG Police, the PCB should harden its stance when it sends teams for tours abroad."

—DAWN

## Unblock the system

Issue of appointments to tribunals must be addressed to speed up insolvency resolution, restore confidence of creditors



CHITRANSHEL SINHA

WHILE HEARING A challenge to the Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021, the Supreme Court came down heavily on the government of India. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana observed that National Company Law Tribunals (NCLT), and the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) are hamstrung by vacancies not being filled on time.

The government has lauded the role of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC), for improving India's ranking on the "Ease of Doing Business" index over the last couple of years. However, the SC's observation is spot-on as vacancies in the tribunals have slowed down insolvency resolution due to the huge pendency of cases.

When the SC made its observations, the NCLT had only 30 members against a total strength of 63. The NCLAT had a sanctioned

strength of a chairperson plus 11 members but its functioning strength was of eight members.

Both the NCLT and NCLAT have been without chairpersons for six and nine months respectively.

On September 11, the government appointed 18 more members to the NCLT — 8 judicial and 10 technical.

The same day, the NCLAT got another acting chairperson with the retirement of the last incumbent.

These vacancies are concerning because as of May 31, 13,170 insolvency petitions were pending before benches of the NCLT.

Of these, 2,785 petitions have been filed by financial creditors and 5,973 by operational creditors.

More than 70 per cent of petitions were pending adjudication for over six months as of May 31.

While the number of petitions filed by operational creditors is likely to reduce because of the increase in default threshold from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1 crore, petitions by financial creditors are only likely to rise now that the moratorium on filing fresh petitions has been lifted by the government.

As far as the NCLAT is concerned, 1,000

appeals under the IBC were pending adjudication as on May 31. While the IBC was enacted with an object of time-bound resolution of debts, pendency of appeals in cases where corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) has been commenced

against companies only delays the final resolution to much beyond the ideal period of about a year.

The IBC created an institution called an information utility to be the repository of information on debts and defaults in India.

The sole utility in India at present is the National E-Governance Services Ltd.

(NeSL). According to the evidence provided by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance in August, NeSL data as of May

31 shows that the number of debtors in India stood at 93.02 lakh. The amount of

underlying debt is Rs 136 lakh crore. While NeSL has issued 41,094 default certificates, the number of defaults is likely to be much higher as not all creditors report debts and defaults to NeSL as it is not mandatory to file default certificates issued by it with the NCLT while filing petitions to commence CIRP.

While financial creditors are facing criticism for taking haircuts as high as 90 per cent against their claims, resolution applicants take a higher risk if the process is uncertain and if there is no fixed time for transfer of control of a corporate debtor to the successful applicant. A longer approval period would entail greater value erosion of a corporate debtor which would be an unattractive proposition for any prospective resolution applicant. This uncertainty can be cured by a faster approval process by the NCLTs by the creation of more benches and filling up of current vacancies.

The standing committee on finance noted that a high number of NCLT judgments gets overturned on appeal, underlining the dearth in expertise and training of members.

Therefore, while filling up vacancies, the members being appointed must have sufficient domain expertise.

The Indian economy is recovering from the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the downturn, financial institutions and banks have suffered higher defaults than usual, impacting the robustness of the system.

Lending has decreased during this time and can only be encouraged now by shoring up the mechanism under the IBC to inspire confidence in creditors.

The SC had granted time to the government till September 13 to take substantial steps in this regard, which was partially complied with by appointing 18 members.

The government, however, failed to avoid embarrassment as on September 15, the CJI

expressed his anger at the appointment process which had ignored candidates recommended by the selection committee.

In response to the court's admonition, the Attorney General assured that the appointments will be reconsidered within two weeks.

Thus, the vacancy in NCLT is now back at 33.

To underline the gravity of the situation,

on September 16, the SC came down heavily on the government for premature termination of the tenure of the acting chairperson of the NCLAT and threatened to stay the Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021.

The government conceded to allow the chairperson to continue till September 20 to enable him to pronounce the judgments he was writing when his tenure was terminated arbitrarily.

Unless the government now addresses the SC's concerns, there is a real risk of the court taking matters into its own hands by making appointments itself, or by taking harsher steps like transferring jurisdiction under the IBC to high courts.

One hopes that the situation is resolved quickly to make strict time-bound insolvency resolutions a reality.

*The writer is an advocate on record, Supreme Court and partner, Dua Associates*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SAFEGUARD RIGHTS

THIS REFERS TO the article 'The partisan state' (IE, September 18). The recent spate of income tax raids and incarcerations points to a disquieting trend of suppressing minorities and dissenters. Sharp distinctions between the majority on the one hand and dissenters and protesters on the other, have been noticed in many instances. In response to any criticism on the nature of Indian democracy, the state has paradoxically strengthened its repression. The judiciary must step in to safeguard citizens' rights and render justice.

*Ila Railkar, Mumbai*

### SELECTORS' CALL

THIS REFERS TO the editorial 'Perfect stroke' (IE, September 18). Virat Kohli's move was not entirely a surprise but what remains exciting is that he has not relinquished captaincy in ODIs. Perhaps the 2023 ICC World Cup in India is too massive a brand for Kohli to ignore. Captaincy is usually split between red-ball and white-ball cricket but with Kohli preferring this choice of both Test and ODI leadership, he is only leaving the crumbs for the imminent captain in T20s. But that will happen only if Kohli decides to remain a pure batsman or the selectors intervene. No individual should be given liberty to step down of his own choice except in case of highly personal reasons and only selectors should decide on who should be the captain.

*Sanjay Chopra, Mohali*

### RETHINK NMP

THIS REFERS TO the article 'Assets and liabilities' (IE, September 18). The NDA government considers itself infallible. Instead

of admitting to its mistakes, it goes on justifying them, even more. Its decision to monetise the nation's assets seems to have resulted more from its own acute financial compulsions than any other plausible reason. According to even neutral economists, this unexpected monetisation will render thousands of people jobless. The writer is right that if the private sector is indeed capable of exploiting the public infrastructure assets profitably, then leasing out to it only the worst performing infrastructure assets will be a useful option.

*Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur*

### IMPERFECT PICTURE

THIS REFERS TO the article 'The mandate and the

## BRIEFLY

UTTAR PRADESH  
NEET racket mastermind identified: police

Lucknow: A week after Varanasi police busted a NEET racket and arrested a BDS student of BHU and an MBBS student of the King George Medical University for their involvement in the racket, the senior police officials on Sunday claimed to have identified the mastermind of the racket that was working in at least four states. The man, earlier known by the alias of PK, is identified as Patha resident Neelash Singh and is absconding. "The person reportedly fled on September 14 along with his family members," said Varanasi Police Commissioner A Satish Ganesh. ENS

CHHATTISGARH  
9 of a family killed in road accident

Raipur: Nine people from the same family died in a road accident in Kondaigaon district on Sunday, police said. They were travelling in an autorickshaw that collided with an SUV near Bongaon turn under Farasaon Police Station limits. More than 10 people were in the autorickshaw and were returning to their native Pande-aathgaon after attending a funeral, an official said. ENS

WEST BENGAL  
Chit fund probe: Bhunia gets CBI summons

Kolkata: The CBI on Sunday summoned West Bengal minister Manas Bhunia for questioning in connection with its probe in the ICORE Chit Fund case. Bhunia has been told to appear at the CBI office at 11 am Monday. The summons came a week after the agency questioned his ministerial colleague Partha Chatterjee. ENS

## Hindu man travelling with Muslim woman attacked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 19

A HINDU man who was dropping his Muslim woman colleague home on his two-wheeler was stopped and assaulted in Bengaluru by two men who questioned why she was travelling with a man from a different faith.

The men, who were later arrested by the police, forced the woman to get off and take an auto rickshaw home.

The incident took place on Friday evening near the Dairy circle when the miscreants stopped their bike and started questioning the woman, who was wearing a burqa.

They assaulted the man, forced the woman to share her family members' numbers and called them to abuse them.

TORA AGARWALA  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

A MONTH after the Opposition in Nagaland joined hands with the government, the state's legislators have decided to call themselves the United Democratic Alliance (UDA).

On July 19, the Opposition Naga People's Front (NPF) submitted a letter to Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, requesting for an all-party government to help reach an early settlement of the Naga political issue. Later, in August, the Rio-led People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) — which comprises the National Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) and the

BJP, with support from two Independent MLAs — passed a joint five-point resolution with the NPF, stating that all the political parties shall "aim at promoting the Naga Peace Talks with a positive approach in the greater interest of achieving peace".

Subsequently, late on Saturday, Rio tweeted, "The nomenclature of United Democratic Alliance (UDA) for the Opposition-less government in Nagaland has been unanimously



## BIDDING BAPPA GOODBYE

The Lalbaugcha Raja Ganesh idol is taken for immersion in Mumbai. A total of 19,779 idols of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Gauri were immersed till 9pm on Sunday in various water bodies in Mumbai as curtains came down on the 10-day Ganpati festival. The festival was held amid various restrictions imposed for the second year in a row in the wake of the pandemic. This year, the Brihamumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) set up artificial lakes at 173 locations in the city, as well as idol collection centres and mobile immersion sites at various places to avoid crowding, a BMC official said. Ganesh Shirshek

## 3 held for threat to BJP leaders: 'Didn't spare Mahatma, think we'll spare you?'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 19

(From left) Right-wing activists Rajesh Pavitran, Dharmendra Suratkal and Prem Polali were arrested based on complaint by the Hindu Mahasabha state president. Courtesy: Mangaluru police

On Sunday, Mangaluru city police commissioner N Shashi Kumar said Suratkal, along with Rajesh Pavitran and Prem Polali, was arrested on the basis of a complaint filed by Hindu Mahasabha state president L K Suvarna.

The accused have been

booked under IPC Section 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy), 153(A) (promoting enmity), 505 (2) (public mischief), 506 (criminal intimidation), 465 (forgery), and 149 (unlawful assembly).

The Karnataka government has been implementing a 2010 Supreme Court order for the re-

moval of all illegal structures built after September 29, 2009 in public places. The implementation of the court order is being monitored by the Karnataka High Court.

However, the demolition of the Nanjangud temple has caused a political furore in the state, with severe opposition to the drive.

Former CM and Congress leader Siddaramaiah questioned the BJP's commitment to Hindus and blamed the state government for carrying out the demolition without consulting locals. Mysore MP and BJP leader Prathap Simha, meanwhile, claimed that only temples were being targeted.

Following the adverse reactions, CM Bommai last week called a halt to the demolitions and said that his government will examine the court orders and issue fresh directives to the districts. The state government also issued a notice to district officials in Mysuru.

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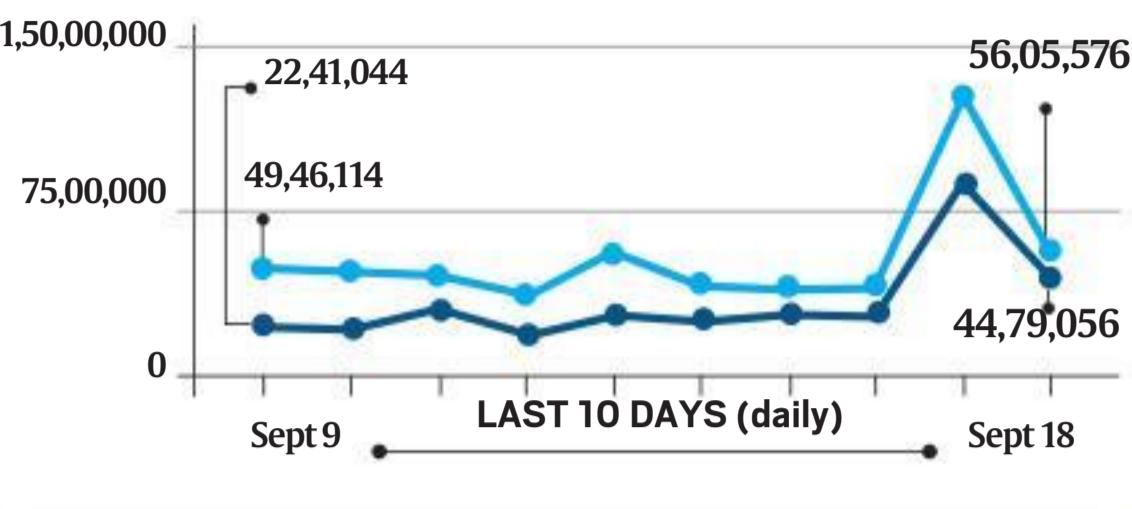
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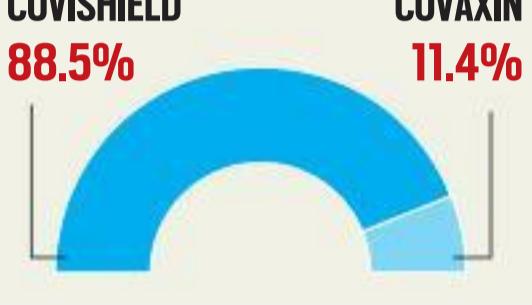
## CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

TOTAL VACCINATED IN INDIA (at least one dose)  
60,10,46,450

■ First dose ■ Second dose



**TOTAL DOSES**  
**80,43,72,331**  
(Sputnik V's 8,84,188 doses not represented in pie)

**DOSES ON SEPT 18 1,00,84,632****SEPT 17: 2,18,61,955 (1st doses: 1,28,33,969; 2nd: 90,27,986)**

Note: The Sept 18 figures in these graphs are based on the government updates on Sept 19

## THIS WORD MEANS

## HUMBOLDT PENGUIN

Two chicks born this year in Mumbai's Byculla Zoo. How are Humboldts different from other penguins?



Humboldt penguin chick Oreo, born to Flipper and Mr Molt on April 1. BMC

LAST WEEK, Mumbai's Byculla Zoo announced the addition of two new Humboldt penguin chicks this year (*The Indian Express*, September 16). Oreo was born to Flipper and Mr Molt on May 1; and an as-yet unnamed chick to Daisy and Donald on August 19. The two join seven adult Humboldt penguins at Byculla Zoo — Popeye, Flipper, Bubble, and the new parents.

Humboldt penguins are a medium-sized species among at least 17 species.

The exact number of distinct species is debated, but it is generally agreed that there are between 17 and 19 species, according to the Smithsonian Institute.

The largest, the Emperor penguin, stands at over 4 ft tall while the Little penguin has a maximum height of 1 ft. Humboldt penguins have an average height of just over 2 ft.

Penguins are divided into six genera (see table). The Humboldt penguin (*Spheniscus humboldti*) belongs to a genus that is commonly known as the 'banded' group. Humboldt penguins are endemic to the Pacific coasts of Chile and Peru. They are so named because their habitat is located near the Humboldt Current, a large oceanic upwelling characterised by cold waters.

Humboldt penguins have large, bare skin patches around their eyes, an adaptation to help keep them cool, according to the Smithsonian Institute. Their breeding season in the wild is either March-April or September-October depending on the location of the colony. "The Humboldt is one of the most popular zoo penguins due to its ability to withstand warmer climates," the Institute says on its website.

At Byculla, the seven adult penguins were brought to the zoo in 2016 from Seoul. The unnamed chick is being looked after by its parents Flipper, the oldest fe-

male penguin at the zoo, and Mr Molt, the youngest among the males, through a process called 'brooding'. Its sex is yet to be known.

Source: Smithsonian Institute

## PENGUIN SPECIES

Genus	Species
Crested group ( <i>Eudyptes</i> )	Macaroni, Royal, Fiordland, Rockhopper, Snares Crested, Erect-Crested
Banded group ( <i>Spheniscus</i> )	Humboldt, Magellanic, African, Galapagos
Brush-tailed group ( <i>Pygoscelis</i> )	Chinstrap, Gentoo, Adélie
Large group ( <i>Aptenodytes</i> )	Emperor, King
Yellow-Eyed ( <i>Megadyptes</i> )	Yellow-Eyed
Little ( <i>Eudyptula</i> )	Little (or Fairy)

Source: Smithsonian Institute

the CM, the Congress party has undertaken a reform towards a more equitable distribution of power.

## The Dalit factor

At 32%, Punjab has one of the highest populations of Dalits in the country. Some researchers say this number is likely to go up to 38% once the results of the latest census are out. Although Jat Sikhs constitute only 25% of the population, they have traditionally monopolised political power in the state. While the Congress has 20 Dalit MLAs — the 117-member Assembly has 36 reserved constituencies — only three of them were included in the Cabinet. With a Jat Sikh as the PCC chief in Navjot Singh Sidhu, and a Dalit as

Channi will be the first Dalit CM of a state where this post has often gone to Jat Sikhs. A look at five of the various factors that likely influenced Channi's selection:

the CM, the Congress party has undertaken a reform towards a more equitable distribution of power.

## Counter to Opposition

Both Shiromani Akali Dal, which has joined hands with Bahujan Samaj Party, and the Aam Aadmi Party, which has the highest number of Dalit legislators at 16, have been promising a Dalit as Deputy Chief Minister if they come to power. By installing Channi, the Congress has upstaged the entire Opposition.

## A Sikh face

Channi is not only a Dalit but also a Sikh. Veteran Congress leader Ambika Soni had earlier shot down the proposal to install former PPCC chief Sunil Kumar Jakhar as the Chief Minister, saying a Punjabi sardar (state) cannot have a Hindu CM. Opposing his candidature, Jails and Cooperation Minister Sukhwinder Singh Randhawa too had said he wouldn't be able to face posterity if he allowed a non-Sikh to become the CM, thus setting a precedent that may be difficult to

overturn. With Channi at the helm, it addresses such concerns.

## Acceptability in party

The Congress expects that Channi, known for his political acumen, will be able to negotiate the warring camps in the party. He is close to the 'Majha camp' of three ministers that had started marshalling legislators against Captain Amarinder Singh. Party members feel he is also unlikely to upset Navjot Singh Sidhu.

## Mass appeal

A grassroots politician from the small hamlet of Kharar, who rose through the ranks after starting out as a student leader, Channi is known for appealing with the masses. He has also been upgrading his skills all his life while pursuing a career in politics. As Minister for Technical Education, he was behind the job fairs and opening of new colleges and skill centres. The party hopes he will be able to give jobs and education the required push in a state, which is seeing an exodus of youngsters.

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## Why Planet Nine hunters believe they now know where to look

ASWATHI PACHA  
KOCHE, SEPTEMBER 19

IN 2016, planetary scientists Konstantin Batygin and Michael E Brown, both from the California Institute of Technology, published a paper in *The Astronomical Journal*, claiming evidence for a giant planet in the far reaches of the Solar System. Five years on, Batygin and Brown have published a new paper in which they say they know where to look for what has come to be known as Planet Nine.

## What is Planet Nine?

It is predicted to be the ninth planet of our Solar System. (Pluto was once considered a planet but was reclassified as a dwarf planet in 2006.) Planet Nine, estimated to be several times as massive as Earth, is believed to be orbiting the Sun beyond Neptune.

A series of studies over the last few years have provided evidence that it exists by noting its influence on other objects. Planet 9 itself, however, continues to elude scientists.

## What is the evidence?

In their 2016 paper, Batygin and Brown argued that Planet could be responsible for the peculiar alignment of objects in the Kuiper belt, an expansive field of icy debris on the outskirts of the Solar System.

"The most distant objects that we know of in the solar system are being slightly tugged by some gravitational effects; as far as we can tell, the only plausible explanation is a giant planet out there," Dr Brown said in an email to *indianexpress.com*.

Batygin, incidentally, was one of the researchers who had helped reclassify Pluto and is the author of the book *How I Killed Pluto and Why It Had It Coming*.

In 2016, Batygin had said in a press re-

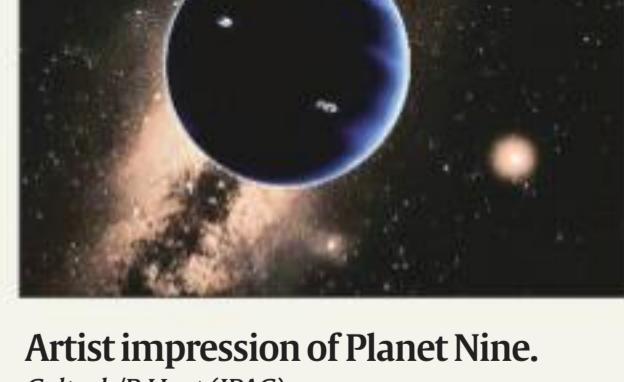
lease: "Although we were initially quite skeptical that this planet could exist, as we continued to investigate its orbit and what it would mean for the outer solar system, we became increasingly convinced that it is out there," Batygin said in a release in 2016.

Also in 2016, another Caltech team calculated that it is the influence of Planet Nine that is causing the skew of the Solar System — the Sun's equatorial plane is aligned six degrees off from the orbital plane of the planets. Other studies, too, have calculated that the observed behaviour and alignment of various objects can only be possible if Planet Nine exists.

In 2019, Batygin and Brown published a pair of papers on Planet Nine's orbit and influence on other objects.

## What is the new finding?

Last month, Brown tweeted that he has 'the treasure map' to find Planet Nine. "Five

Artist impression of Planet Nine.  
Caltech/R Hurt (IPAC)

and a half years after our proposal of the existence of Planet Nine, we have finally accomplished what is perhaps the most important task in aiding the search: we now know where to look," he wrote in his blog.

The new paper calculates the planet's orbital path. "The paper [finally!] takes all

of the observations of the outer solar system and tries to invert them to learn about the orbit and mass of Planet Nine in a meaningful way," Brown tweeted.

The paper, posted on the preprint server *arXiv*, calculates Planet Nine at 6.2 Earth masses, and also details Planet Nine's semi-major axis, inclination, and perihelion.

The data only tells us the orbital path of Planet Nine, but not where in the orbital path it is, Brown said. "It is more likely to be at its most distant point from the sun, but only because it travels more slowly there. But this is where you should be looking," he tweeted.

Asked how Planet Nine might have formed, Brown said: "Our best guess is that it formed in the vicinity of Uranus and Neptune and eventually got too close to Jupiter or Saturn which flung it out into the outer reaches of our solar system."

He said the Vera C Rubin Observatory, currently under construction in Chile, will fur-

ther help the hunt for Planet Nine. "The observatory will scan the skies night after night and eventually uncover many things, including — we hope — Planet Nine," Brown said.

## Is everyone convinced that Planet Nine exists?

Since 2016, studies have variously concluded that there is more and more evidence of Planet Nine's exist, or that it does not exist, or that it may in fact be a black hole. A paper published last year in *Physical Review Letters* argued that the unknown object causing anomalous orbits of the trans-Neptunian objects could be a primordial black hole.

Another study published in 2018 in *The Astronomical Journal*, on the other hand, cited fresh evidence for the existence of Planet Nine. It noted that a trans-Neptunian object called 2015 BP519 had an unusual trajectory because it was affected by Planet Nine's strong gravity.

Must be realistic about India's position in global markets... Our plan is a calibrated fiscal expansion that will support the economy at a time of acute need, which is why we are not at 3%, but budgeted 6.8% deficit



## WHY TV SOMANATHAN

As the country's top bureaucrat in the Finance Ministry, Somanathan has been at the centre of the government's measures to revive the country's Covid-hit economy. From the Atmanirbhar Bharat stimulus packages to the Centre's Capex push for economic revival, the 1987-batch Tamil Nadu-cadre IAS

officer has been at the helm of major government schemes. The Expenditure Secretary was earlier director at the World Bank in Washington DC and holds a PhD in Economics from Calcutta University. Earlier, he has also held positions as additional secretary and joint secretary in the Prime Minister's Office



"(On taking payment of telcom cos' statutory dues in equity) It's a very peculiar circumstance. It is an attempt to protect the future of the telecom sector, while also preserving the ability to collect govt's dues"

**SUNNY VERMA:** Since the lockdown last year, the government has taken a series of important decisions, including the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), spending on infrastructure, formation of India's first-ever 'Bad Bank' and the package for the telecom sector. Is there a strategy at play?

Yes, there is a strategy. It's not as it has happened in the past couple of months. If you look back, it's a continuation of things that started from late 2020 onwards, with the first set of Atmanirbhar Bharat announcements, which had, among other things, the mining sector, farm sector changes... Then there was the second set (of Atmanirbhar Bharat measures), then the third set, then the Budget. Asset management and the bad bank decisions were announced in the Budget and are being executed now. So yes, there is a broad strategy towards building a stronger Indian economy with an emphasis on core domestic manufacturing — building the capabilities that we don't have and preserving the capabilities that we have. There is a consistency... It's a continuum of things that form a cogent strategy.

**SUNNY VERMA:** And are you satisfied with the economy's recovery so far?

It's a good recovery but we have a long way to go. We are not yet past the 2019-20 figures in terms of actual, absolute levels of real GDP... On the whole, the recovery path has been good, better than many people expected, and I am reasonably satisfied.

**SUNNY VERMA:** But isn't there more scope to push the spending, capital expenditure to give a thrust to the economy?

We provided for a much higher capital expenditure in the Budget. The challenge is going to be utilising that. There is a considerable increase... The last figure that I had was about 15% up year-on-year, and it is also up on 2019-20. So capital expenditure from the government is high. It's not as high as the Budget estimates would indicate, but we have had two very difficult quarters. So I think it will begin to pick up speed in the remaining two quarters. So on capital expenditure I am optimistic that we will reach our quite ambitious Budget targets and there will be absolutely no restriction of any kind from the Finance Ministry's side on capital expenditure. The issue will be the ability of user departments to utilise the available provisions, because capital expenditure is not the signing of a cheque. It may require land acquisition, construction, environmental permission... many steps to be taken before the cheque can be signed. From our side, the money is available. The departments are doing their best and we are actively reviewing the progress... and there is considerable progress. The increase that we have seen in the first two quarters despite the second wave is a good sign and I am quite hopeful that it will be even better in the remaining two quarters.

As far as room for more fiscal spending, glide path is concerned... When you use the expression 'glide path', in your mind you have a paper plane or a glider that you throw at a particular height and by gradual gravitational pull it comes down automatically and lands gently. Fiscal deficits have no automatic downward gravitational pull. If anything, they have an upward path. If they are not actively pulled down, they don't glide. So glide path is a loose terminology that, as a fiscal manager, am not very happy with because it implies that if you start at 6.8% (fiscal deficit) it will automatically glide down to 4%... No. If you push it up, it will stay up. So we have to be very careful about how we manage fiscal deficits. We must be realistic about where India stands as a country in terms of global markets. We are following carefully, calibrated fiscal expansion. It's an expansion which we want to sustain, without the kind of difficulties that we faced in the end of 2009-10, which led to 2012-13... So we don't want the expansion of these two years to lead to a situation where we are out of control or we have lost macroeconomic stability. That is a delicate balance... So we are planning for a calibrated fiscal expansion that will provide support to the economy at a time of acute need, which is why we are not near 3%. We are at a budgeted deficit of 6.8%.

In the Budget we had said that the... 4% fiscal deficit for states would have a component linked to capital expenditure target. Several states have met those targets and others have till March 31 of this fiscal year to meet the targets. That is part of what was announced in the Budget. It is not a reduction of the Central government's capital expenditure. It is an attempt to push the state's own expenditure in the direction of infrastructure and capital spending... This is part of the 1% extra fiscal deficit.

**ANIL SASI:** On the retrospective tax amendment, we gathered that the decision to move on it was taken after the two arbitration awards (Vodafone, Cairn) came in. But why wait for the conclusion of an arbitration process to start something that is perhaps right?

I would say this: until you lose the arbitration award it is not very clear that you have done something that you shouldn't do. Hypothetically, if the arbitration award had said that Vodafone has to pay, then it is really good for us to give up taxpayers' money without even that attempt to see if it's actually, judicially or arbitrarily, determined that they were right in making that claim. Why should we give up that claim? It is public money. That, I think, was the logic...

# 'We are pulling out of the worst... Problem with stimulus is it's easier to start a spending programme than to stop it'

Finance Secretary TV Somanathan explains the recent telecom reforms; insists revival of economic activity will create demand; and says that on capital expenditure, he is "optimistic" about reaching Budget targets and that there would be "no restriction" from the Ministry



TV Somanathan with Senior Assistant Editor Sunny Verma in *The Indian Express* newsroom. Abhinav Saha

but there is also enhanced expenditure. The government is prioritising expenditure on the poor and there we are not being constrained by fiscal mathematics. We will make sure they are protected and the government is the only agency that can protect them. For more than that, we have to look at what is prudent and something that will not create a future crisis that will simply 'glide down'.

**ANIL SASI:** The government's Final Consumption Expenditure in the first quarter, as per GDP numbers, was lower on a year-on-year basis. Why has it gone down? Also, you have started incentivising states that have met their expenditure targets. Can this be interpreted as a move to push things more towards the states?

The government's Final Consumption Expenditure is a result of elevated levels last year. It is not because of reduced levels this year. Last year, this was the time of the lockdown and there was the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, so there were a lot of special (measures). For example, there was a transfer to Jan Dhan accounts. So government expenditure in the first two quarters of last year was unusually elevated. This year it is returning to a more normal pattern.

In the Budget we had said that the... 4% fiscal deficit for states would have a component linked to capital expenditure target. Several states have met those targets and others have till March 31 of this fiscal year to meet the targets. That is part of what was announced in the Budget. It is not a reduction of the Central government's capital expenditure. It is an attempt to push the state's own expenditure in the direction of infrastructure and capital spending... This is part of the 1% extra fiscal deficit.

**ANIL SASI:** On the retrospective tax amendment, we gathered that the decision to move on it was taken after the two arbitration awards (Vodafone, Cairn) came in. But why wait for the conclusion of an arbitration process to start something that is perhaps right?

I would say this: until you lose the arbitration award it is not very clear that you have done something that you shouldn't do. Hypothetically, if the arbitration award had said that Vodafone has to pay, then it is really good for us to give up taxpayers' money without even that attempt to see if it's actually, judicially or arbitrarily, determined that they were right in making that claim. Why should we give up that claim? It is public money. That, I think, was the logic...

**LIZ MATHEW:** We keep hearing about legacy issues from ministers and

officials. What exactly are the economic legacy issues for the government now?

I don't think at this point I would like to separate legacy and non-legacy issues. The government of the day tackles all the issues that are with us today.

**SANDEEP SINGH:** While you are allocating funds for the poor, what are you planning on doing for the middle segment, which is responsible for creating demand?

The revival of economic activity will bring a considerable amount of demand in its wake. There are people who think that demand should be stimulated... The problem with stimulus in a vibrant democracy is that it is easier to start a spending programme than to stop it, and then you may lead yourself into a situation where you are spending where you don't need to spend. So it is a calibration that is quite difficult to pull off. I think demand is reviving because economic activity is reviving. Already you see sectors where the demand outstrips the supply, such as the auto sector... So demand is being considerably revived — more for goods, a little less for services. Shortage of demand for services is not so much a function of the economy, it is a function of the health situation. So as and when mask mandates and closure of service establishments begin to recede with increased vaccination, the demand will come back. A lot of sectors that have spending power are not necessarily left impoverished in the pandemic...

As the health situation improves, one can expect fairly good recovery... The indirect tax numbers, which are a reflection of the demand, are looking healthy. The GST, excise, customs, they are looking better than I might have guessed in the middle of the second wave. I think we are pulling out of the worst of the situation quite fast.

**ANIL SASI:** On the retrospective tax amendment, we gathered that the decision to move on it was taken after the two arbitration awards (Vodafone, Cairn) came in. But why wait for the conclusion of an arbitration process to start something that is perhaps right?

I would say this: until you lose the arbitration award it is not very clear that you have done something that you shouldn't do. Hypothetically, if the arbitration award had said that Vodafone has to pay, then it is really good for us to give up taxpayers' money without even that attempt to see if it's actually, judicially or arbitrarily, determined that they were right in making that claim. Why should we give up that claim? It is public money. That, I think, was the logic...

**LIZ MATHEW:** We keep hearing about legacy issues from ministers and

**PRANAV MUKUL:** One of the measures announced as part of the telecom reforms was that the government would be able to take payment of statutory dues in equity. How does that play out? Also, on the one hand the government is trying to monetise its assets and on the other you are taking a stake in a company, when you already have a State-owned enterprise.

This is a very context-specific measure. First of all, there are no other sectors where you would find non-tax dues of this magnitude. These are not tax dues. This is a non-tax levy of the government. It is extremely unusual for this magnitude of non-tax levies to affect the existence or survival of an enterprise in any other sector.

Secondly, there is a history of disputes, which have been decided by the courts in a particular way. So it is not as if there was clarity on the amount of these dues over the period in which these dues have accumulated. So in a sense there is an element of uncertainty which was present, which was judicially determined quite recently, which provides a large liability, which may not have been contemplated, rightly or wrongly, by the enterprises there.

Thirdly, it's an infrastructure sector where the presence of competition is vital. So it is not unprecedented for governments to intervene in the survival of private sector enterprises in situations where the disappearance would affect levels of competition. For example, the US government gave Chrysler a bailout in 1979 because they didn't want only Ford and General Motors to be the car manufacturers in the US... In India also we have several instances, starting from Satyam, where innocent bystanders could get affected by a situation. We have chosen to take a decision that balances public interest in many dimensions. It is not necessarily a precedent that will be done to other

enterprises. The circumstances of each case may be different. This is a very peculiar circumstance, where the preservation of competition and the protection of huge amounts of government dues were best served by this particular mode of operation... So this is an attempt to protect the telecom sector, create a vibrant telecom sector for the future, while also preserving the ability to collect government's dues.

**PRASANTA SAHU:** What is your assessment of the revenue situation?

It is looking better than we had anticipated a few months ago, both on the direct side and indirect tax side. Year-on-year it is up 15%, and not 36%, which is the Budget estimate. We want it to be 36%... This much I will say, it is not because of curbs on capital expenditure... So yes, the situation on the revenue side is looking good.

**PRAVIDYANATHAN IYER:** The pandemic has worsened inequalities, globally and in India. How do you look at it in terms of ensuring government benefits reach the poor? Is it just in terms of food grains or much more substantial?

The inequality has two elements to it — the bottom end and top end. I am looking more at the worsening of the bottom end rather than the enrichment of the top end. As a short-term palliative, we have used the food and these immediate emergency measures. So we are not completely out of the woods in terms of saying we have seen the end of the pandemic. In the short term, the government machinery has limitations on what it can do... What we are likely to see, as we come out of this situation, are a lot of programmes that are targeted to help the poor — so you will see a big thrust on drinking water and sanitation, urban and rural housing. So these are ways in which inequalities are addressed, not necessarily only through income transfers. Some of those programmes are announced and in operation, some more are likely to come. These are all means by which you would improve the lot of the weakest within the capacity constraints of the government machinery... The government is focused on doing things that are feasible and will actually reach the targeted groups. I am not saying we have all the answers. We have some answers but we may need to do better. You will see more efforts as we come out of this so-called emergency-like situation that we have been in for a year and a half. As we get to a more normal situation, we will be able to do a little more.

At the top end, the government has already reversed the policy of capital gains being tax free, which is an important step

on inequality. Internationally, asset price inflation is the main cause of inequality at the top end. Of course, there is a grandfathering of gains up to 2018. But gains accruing after that are now taxable. Progressivity in tax rates has also increased in the last few years in the individual income taxes.

**PRAVIDYANATHAN IYER:** Last 3 months have seen a barrage of measures and many of them are different from the government's stated position or action so far — be it Bad Banks or retrospective tax. What has led to this change?

It's not in a short span, it's over a year and a half. I would connect this in a continuum starting from May 2020's Atmanirbhar reform and if you see, all of them have been in one direction... It's part of consistent efforts to get to an Atmanirbhar Bharat... It is in a broad sense towards reviving India's capabilities as an economy. I think it is a carry-forward from the Budget. There were some interruptions due to Covid second wave, but we are returning to longer-term priorities.

**SUNNY VERMA:** Privatisation was a change that was introduced in the Budget. Where are we on that front?

You would have seen that the bids for Air India have been received. A lot of work had to go into that... The fact that we have received two bids is a good sign and we are quite hopeful that we will see success there. Others are to follow. LIC is a stakes sale, not privatisation. That is an advanced stage of privatisation. It's a classic corporation. It's not a company under the Companies Act. So even its accounting methodology, standards, everything was different. A lot of progress has been made on LIC.

**AASHISH ARYAN:** A four-year moratorium on AGR (Adjusted Gross Revenue) and SUC (Spectrum Usage Charge) payments was announced in the telecom reforms. For 2021, the budgeted estimates were Rs 53,988 crore. It looks like telecom companies will opt for this. So this goes out of the estimates for the next four years. How much hit would the government take?

We will have to see how many companies opt for the moratorium. It is NPV (net present value)-protected at its own internal rate of return. Some of those rates of interest are higher than today's borrowing rates. So not everyone would automatically opt for the moratorium. The offer is open to all. We have to manage the cash flows. But hopefully, if we get better spectrum receipts because of a healthier spectrum market; we will see some offset there.



"As a short-term palliative (to help poor post Covid), we have used food etc... Govt is focused on doing things that are feasible. When we come out of this emergency-like state, we will be able to do more

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

TOP OF THE  
WORLD

Lava shoots up after the eruption of a volcano on the Canary Island of La Palma. Reuters

CANARY ISLANDS

Lava shoots up from volcano on La Palma

A VOLCANO erupted on the Spanish Canary Island of La Palma on Sunday, sending jets of lava and a plume of smoke and ash into the air from the Cumbre Vieja national park in the south of the island. Authorities had begun evacuating the infirm and some farm animals from the surrounding villages before the eruption at 3.15 pm on a wooded slope in the sparsely populated Cabeza de Vaca area, according to the islands' government. Immediately after the eruption, the municipality urged residents in a statement to "exercise extreme caution", and stay away from the area and off the roads. **REUTERS**

PAKISTAN

Policeman escorting polio team killed

GUNMEN ON a motorcycle Sunday shot dead a police constable guarding polio vaccination workers in rural northwest Pakistan, police said. Senior officer Khalid Suhail said the attack happened in the village of Dhal Behzadi about 75 kilometres south of Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Members of the vaccination team were unhurt, he said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the assault. The attack came on the third day of a five-day polio vaccination drive across the province. **AP**

WEST ASIA

Israel captures last 2 escaped Palestinians

ISRAELI FORCES on Sunday caught the last two of six Palestinians who tunneled out of a maximum security Israeli jail nearly two weeks ago, in an escape that embarrassed Israel's security establishment but delighted Palestinians. The two members of the Islamic Jihad group were apprehended before dawn from a house in the Palestinian city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank. Israeli Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai said. **REUTERS**

# THE WORLD

## Australia: France knew of 'grave' submarine concerns

ROD MCGUIRK  
CANBERRA, SEPTEMBER 19



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison

FRANCE WOULD have known Australia had "deep and grave concerns" that a submarine fleet the French were building would not meet Australian needs, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Sunday after the contract's cancellation set off a diplomatic crisis.

France accused Australia of concealing its intentions to back out of the 90 billion Australian dollar (\$66 billion) contract for French majority state-owned Naval Group to build 12 conventional diesel-electric submarines.

US President Joe Biden revealed last week a new alliance including Australia and Britain that would deliver an Australian fleet of at least eight nuclear-powered submarines.

Morrison blamed the switch on a deteriorating strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific. He has not specifically referred to China's massive military buildup, which has gained pace in recent years.

"The capability that the Attack class submarines were going to provide was not what Australia needed to protect our sovereign interests," Morrison said.

"They would have had every reason to know that we have deep and grave concerns that the capability being delivered by the Attack class submarine was not going to meet our strategic interests and we have made very clear

AP

that we would be making a decision based on our strategic national interest," he added, referring to the French government.

France responded to the contract cancellation, which Morrison has said will cost his government at least AUS2.4 billion (\$1.7 billion), by recalling its ambassadors from Australia and the US.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian denounced Saturday what he called the "duplicity, disdain and lies" surrounding the sudden end of the contract and said France was now questioning the strength of the alliance.

China has denounced the sharing of such US and British nuclear technology as irresponsible.

France won the contract in 2016 over offers from Germany and Japan. The Shortfin Barracuda was to be a nuclear submarine design adapted to be powered by diesel on the surface and battery underwater. Japan was particularly disappointed because then-Prime Minister Tony Abbott had promised the close defense ally the contract before he was deposed by his own party in 2015. **AP**

A Space X capsule carrying four people parachutes into the Atlantic Ocean on Saturday. **SpaceX via AP**

## Trailblazing tourist trip to orbit ends with splashdown

MARCIA DUNN  
CAPE CANAVERAL, SEPT 19

FOUR SPACE tourists safely ended their trailblazing trip to orbit Saturday with a splashdown in the Atlantic off the Florida coast.

Their Space X capsule parachuted into the ocean just before sunset, not far from where their chartered flight began three days earlier.

The all-amateur crew was the first to circle the world without a professional astronaut.

The billionaire who paid undisclosed millions for the trip and his three guests wanted to

show that ordinary people could blast into orbit by themselves, and Space X founder Elon Musk took them on as the company's first rocket-riding tourists.

"Your mission has shown the world that space is for all of us," Space X Mission Control radioed.

"It was a heck of a ride for us ... just getting started," replied trip sponsor Jared Isaacman, referring to the growing number of private flights on the horizon.

Space X's fully automated Dragon capsule reached an unusually high altitude of 585 kilometres after Wednesday night's liftoff. Surpassing the International Space Station by

160 km, the passengers savored views of Earth through a big bubble-shaped window added to the top of the capsule.

The four streaked back through the atmosphere early Saturday evening, the first space travelers to end their flight in the Atlantic since Apollo 9 in 1969.

Within a few minutes, a pair of Space X boats pulled up alongside the bobbing capsule. When the capsule's hatch was opened on the recovery ship, health care worker Hayley Arceneaux was the first one out, flashing a big smile and thumbs up.

All appeared well and happy. **AP**

## Constitution Day in Nepal sees major protests

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, SEPTEMBER 19

NEPAL OBSERVED its seventh Constitution Day with subdued official ceremonies amid growing protests and calls from some quarters for major constitutional amendments, and from others for a return to the constitution of 1991 which allowed for a constitutional monarchy.

A major procession in Kathmandu was taken out by those who demanded that the 1991 constitution be restored. Protesters marched with the national flag and pictures of former King Gyanendra and Queen Komal. They also burnt the current constitution.

Another group — Brihat Nagarik Samaj — demanded major amendments to the present constitution to ensure that the identity and rights of different ethnic groups are better protected.

The government also came in for widespread criticism over those it chose to honour with awards, with some prominent figures refusing to accept them.

Led by senior Nepali Congress leader and former Kathmandu mayor P L Singh, half a dozen journalists also refused to accept awards, with some saying that there was no transparent method applied to the selection of the awardees.

P L Singh, the man who liaised with the international community during the movement for democracy in 1990, also said: "I refuse to accept this medal as I have not so far accepted the current constitution that was arbitrarily imposed upon the country."

Emal Ahmadi is the brother of Zemari Ahmadi, who was killed in a drone strike last month along with nine family members. **NYT**



Afghan women participate in a demonstration in Kabul on Sunday.

## PAK CLERIC BOOKED AFTER TALIBAN FLAGS HOISTED AT WOMEN'S SEMINARY

**Islamabad:** Pakistan police have registered a case against a prominent cleric and several others after the flags of the Afghan Taliban were found hoisted on the top of a women's seminary here run by him, according to a report on Sunday. The flags were spotted on the rooftop of the Jamia Hafsa, a women's madrasa in the capital, on Saturday. Dawn newspaper reported. A case was registered against Maulana Abdul Aziz — who is the cleric of the Lal Masjid — and his collaborators, as well as seminary students under the Anti-Terrorism Act and different sections of the Pakistan Penal Code, the report said. **PTI**

ing for the participation of women in public life. "A society in which women are not active is (sic) dead society," one sign read.

The protest lasted for about 10 minutes. After a short verbal confrontation with a man, the women got into cars and left, as Taliban in two cars observed from nearby. Over the past months, Taliban fighters had broken up several women's protests by force. **AP**

## Taliban-run Kabul municipality tells female workers to stay at home

Jalalabad: Another blast targets Taliban

KATHY GANNON  
KABUL, SEPTEMBER 19

FEMALE EMPLOYEES in the Kabul city government have been told to stay home, with work only allowed for those who cannot be replaced by men, the interim mayor of Afghanistan's capital said Sunday, detailing the latest restrictions on women by the new Taliban rulers.

Witnesses, meanwhile, said an explosion targeted a Taliban vehicle in the eastern provincial city of Jalalabad, and hospital officials said five people were killed in the second such deadly blast in as many days in the Islamic State stronghold.

The decision to prevent most female city workers from returning to their jobs is another sign that the Taliban, who overran Kabul last month, are enforcing their harsh interpretation of Islam despite initial promises by some that they would be tolerant and inclusive.

In their previous rule in the 1990s, the Taliban had barred girls and women from schools, jobs and public life.

In recent days, the new Taliban government issued several decrees rolling back the rights of girls and women. It told female middle- and high school students that they could not return to school for the time being, while boys in those grades resumed studies this weekend. Female university students were informed that studies would take place in gender-segregated settings from now on, and that they must abide by a strict Islamic dress code.

On Friday, the Taliban shut down the Women's Affairs Ministry, replacing it with a ministry for the "propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice" and tasked with enforcing Islamic law.

On Sunday, just over a dozen women staged a protest outside the ministry, holding up signs calling

## First tied to ISIS, then to US: Family in drone strike tarnished twice



Emal Ahmadi is the brother of Zemari Ahmadi, who was killed in a drone strike last month along with nine family members. **NYT**

thought to be preparing a bomb.

In fact, the car belonged to Zemari Ahmadi, an aid worker, who was going about his daily work for a Pasadena, California-based food charity. When he returned home, the missile struck, killing 10 people, seven of them children.

That the Americans tied this target to the Islamic State group posed a serious threat to family members and close associates because the Taliban treat the Islamic State group as mortal enemies and have been in competition with them for fighters and influence in Afghanistan for the past three years. So the Ahmadi family was eager to erase any thought that they might be connected to the extremist group.

While the United States is no longer seen as a battlefield enemy of the Taliban in the way that it was before the militants effectively took over the Afghan government on Aug 15, the Taliban still view any American non-profit groups operating in the country with deep suspicion.

In trying to clear the family name of connections to ISIS, it was revealed that Nutrition and Education International, Ahmadi's employer, was preparing the paperwork to make it possible for him to emigrate to the US. **NYT**

UKRAINE

## THOUSANDS MARCH FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Thousands of people including soldiers and diplomats marched peacefully through the Ukrainian capital on Sunday in an annual gay pride parade despite some opposition to an event called off last year because of the Covid pandemic. Organisers said about 7,000 attended the Equality March this year.



**SNAP POLLS MEANT AS SHOW OF STRENGTH HAS ALLOWED OPPONENTS TO HIGHLIGHT HIS WEAK POINTS**

## Trudeau seeks fresh start, but many voters see a power grab

IAN AUSTEN  
BURNABY, SEPTEMBER 19

OUTSIDE A TV studio in a Vancouver, British Columbia, suburb where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada was recording an interview days before the country's election, a man shouted insults, mostly obscene, about Trudeau and his family while blasting Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It" from a stereo on a cart.

Heckling is something Trudeau has always faced, but this time the attacks have new bite. After six years in office, opposition party leaders have accused Trudeau of putting his personal and political interests before the nation's good — of which the snap election being held Monday is the most recent example. They also have had rich material to attack him on over controversies involving a contract for a charity close to his family, and a finding that he broke ethics laws by pressuring a minister to help a large Quebec company he

sunny ways" and presented himself as a new face is now the political establishment, with a track record and missteps for opponents to criticise. Even if the Liberal Party clings to its hold on Parliament, as observers expect, this bruising election campaign has done him no favours.

Ben Chin, the prime minister's senior adviser, said that no politician could have sustained Trudeau's initial popularity.

"If you're in power for six years or five years, you're going to have more baggage," Chin said.

For much of his time in office, opposition party leaders have accused Trudeau of putting his personal and political interests before the nation's good — of which the snap election being held Monday is the most recent example. They also have had rich material to attack him on over controversies involving a contract for a charity close to his family, and a finding that he broke ethics laws by pressuring a minister to help a large Quebec company he

boarded his campaign bus.

Trudeau has many achievements since 2015 to point to. His government has introduced carbon pricing and other climate measures, legalised cannabis, increased spending for Indigenous issues and made 1,500 models of military-style rifles illegal. A new plan will provide day care for 10 Canadian dollars a day per child.

But as Election Day nears, many Canadians are still asking why Trudeau is holding a vote now, two years ahead of schedule, with Covid infections on the rise, taxing hospitals and prompting renewed pandemic restrictions in some provinces or delaying their lifting in others. Also criticised was



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a campaign event in Quebec City. Voting will take place on Monday. **Reuters**

criminal sanctions.

And for every accomplishment

Trudeau cites, his opponents can point to unfulfilled pledges.

One rally in Ontario where protesters significantly outnumbered the police was shut down over safety concerns, and at another in the same province, the prime minister was pelted with gravel as he

he called the vote the same weekend Afghanistan fell to the Taliban, when Canadian troops were struggling to evacuate Canadians as well as Afghans who had assisted their forces.

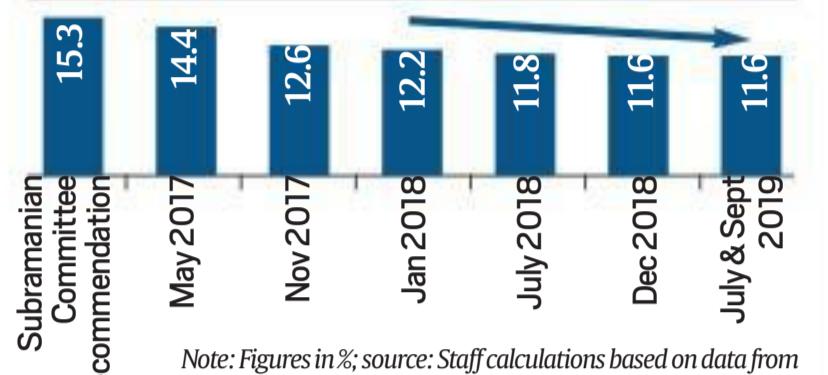
Trudeau has said that he needs to replace his plurality in the House of Commons with a majority to deal with the remainder of the pandemic and the recovery that will follow — although he avoids explicitly saying "majority".

The Liberal Party's political calculation was that it was best to strike while Canadians still held favourable views about how Trudeau handled pandemic issues, particularly income supports and buying vaccines. **NYT**

TAXATION WATCH  
GOODS & SERVICES TAX

**Course correction mode:** Council looks to fix duty structure, boost revenues

## WEIGHTED AVERAGE (EFFECTIVE) GST RATE



Note: Figures in %; source: Staff calculations based on data from CBIC and minutes of GST Council meetings, RBI report, Sept 2019

## AANCHAL MAGAZINE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

TAKING NOTE of the revenue trend dipping below the revenue neutral rate levels, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council will now be looking at a series of measures including rate rationalisations to correct the inverted duty structure and to take steps to augment revenues. The move comes after four years of the rollout of the indirect tax regime, with the acknowledgement that a series of rate cuts across these years and spanning over 500 items has resulted in a strain on finances of both central and state governments with lower-than-expected revenue buoyancy and an inverted duty structure for many items.

The Council will now be on a course correction mode as it seeks to correct the inverted duty structure for items such as footwear and textiles sectors beginning January 1. An inverted duty structure arises when the taxes on output or final product is lower than the taxes on inputs, creating an inverse accumulation of input tax credit, which, in most cases, has to be refunded. Inverted duty structure has implied a stream of revenue outflow for the government prompting the government to relook the duty structure. The decision on inverted duty structure was deferred in June last year as the Council did not agree on the timing of the rate rationalisation to be done during Covid.

The GST rate on footwear worth up to Rs 1,000 was reduced to 5 per cent earlier, while those above this value attract 18 per cent. Inputs for footwear such as in-soles, heel cushions attract 18 per cent GST. Footwear is now likely to have a uniform rate of 12 per cent, irrespective of prices, sources said. Textiles, which currently are in the 5 per cent GST slab for fabrics and man-made yarns are in the 18 per cent slab, is also likely to attract a 12 per cent tax rate with exceptions for some categories such as cotton products.

The anomalies in revenue stream arising out of earlier rounds of rate rationalisation were noted in the 45th GST Council meeting held in

Full report on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## BRIEFLY

## Ration card

New Delhi: Services related to ration card, such as applying for a new card, updating details and seeding with Aadhaar, will now be available at over 3.7 lakh common services centres.

## Gadkari on airbags

New Delhi: Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said that small cars should also have an adequate number of airbags.

## Harley-Davidson

New Delhi: Hero MotoCorp is going full throttle to launch a Harley-Davidson model with retro styling, Hero MotoCorp CFO Niranjan Gupta said. PTI

Lucknow on Friday. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman after the meeting said that the revenue neutral rate has fallen to 11.6 per cent from 15.5 per cent.

"The Revenue Neutral Rate of 15.5 per cent coming down to 11.6 per cent is because of course, the Council in its wisdom probably over the years had reduced the rate of many many items and not just the reduction but the resultant reduction due to the inversion have resulted, net, in the collection coming down from the revenue neutral levels. As a result we feel that the overall collection has come down. We also feel why it has come down. But if we all put together we can all see that we are far below the revenue neutral rate," she said.

Two GoMs will be formed to look at inverted duty structure and compliance measures through e-way bills, composition schemes.

A September 2019 report by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had noted that the rationalisation of rates by the GST Council has brought down the effective weighted average GST rate from 14.4 per cent at the time of inception to 11.6 per cent. It, however, said that enhanced buoyancy has been achieved by widening the tax base and removing distortions.

The GST Council had, within one year of the July 2017 rollout of GST, reduced rates for every four items. The rate cuts on over 350 items out of total 1,211 items in the five broad categories of zero, 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent under GST were estimated to have resulted in a revenue loss of about Rs 70,000 crore in a year.

At the time of fitment of goods and services in the various GST slabs in May 2017, the government had said about 7 per cent of the total 1,211 items were exempted, 14 per cent of the items were kept in the 5 per cent tax slab, 17 per cent were in the 12 per cent tax slab. About 43 per cent of items were in 18 per cent tax slab, while only 19 per cent were in the 28 per cent tax slab. Now, only about 3 per cent of the total 1,211 items remain in the peak 28 per cent slab.

Full report on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## US trade official called Mastercard ban draconian'

REUTERS  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

A SENIOR US trade official privately criticised India's July decision to ban Mastercard Inc from issuing new cards, calling it a "draconian" move that caused "panic," according to US government emails seen by Reuters.

Lynch, spokesperson for the Office of US Trade Representative and the US Embassy in New Delhi did not respond to requests for comment. The RBI did not immediately respond. A Mastercard spokesman told Reuters, "We've had very constructive engagements with the Indian and US governments." REUTERS

## KOCHI-LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS SUBMARINE OPTICAL FIBRE CONNECTIVITY

## Sea cable tender bid 'rigged': Panel to decide project fate

Domestic cos allege bid conditions rigged to meet tech supported by only 1 firm

AASHISH ARYAN  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

THE EMPOWERED Technology Group (ETG), led by the Principal Scientific Advisor to the government, is likely to meet soon to decide on the fate of Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands (KLI) submarine optical fibre connectivity after domestic companies alleged that the bid conditions were "rigged" to meet the technology supported by only one company, sources said.

The ETG, which also has the Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, the Chairman of Space Commission, the Chairman of Defence Research and Development Organisation, the Secretaries of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the Department of Communications and the Department of Science and Technology, was scheduled to meet last week, sources said.

The meeting, however, had to be postponed after the NITI Aayog and the office of the National

As per Tema, the BSNL bid includes a condition that the technology must be repeater based tech, which is available only with 3 companies across the globe

Security Advisor sought more clarification on the present capabilities of domestic companies, along with the details of the KLI submarine optical fibre connectivity tender.

Domestic companies, under the umbrella of Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (Tepc) and Telecom Equipment Manufacturers Association of India (Tema) had made representations to Neeraj Sinha, the senior advisor for digital communications at NITI Aayog, who sought to know from the two industry bodies the capacities of Indian firms.

In a reply to the emailed representations of the two industry bodies, Sinha had sought to know

the maximum length of submarine optical fibre cable that, so far, has been produced in India by indigenous companies, the total production capacity of the cables, and the time as well as cost required to commission a new plant near the Indian coast line. The Indian Express has reviewed a copy of the emailed conversation. In its reply to Sinha, Tema has claimed since the Department of Telecommunications (Dot) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), which is the executing agency for the KLI project, were insisting that bidders must have at least 10-12 years of experience in manufacturing and laying submarine optical fibre cable, it was impossible for the domestic companies to even think of placing a bid.

The KLI submarine cable connectivity project was approved by the Cabinet in December 2020 with an outlay of Rs 1,072 crore and is expected to be completed by May 2023.

Domestic companies, which manufacturer optical fibre cable and other related equipment, however, have alleged that the bid

conditions were so changed that no international or domestic player, except NEC India, a Japanese company's Indian subsidiary, could bid in the project.

In an August 31 letter sent to the S Gopalakrishnan, the additional secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, Tepc claimed that despite objections from the ETG about the capital, operation and maintenance costs of the project, the Dot's High-Level Committee ignored to closing adjustments.

As part of the scheme, Eureka Forbes Ltd, a 100 per cent subsidiary of Forbes & Company, will be demerged into a standalone company and then listed on the BSE.

According to industry body

Tema, the BSNL bid includes a condition that the technology must be repeater based tech, which is available only with three companies across the world.

The said 3 companies normally work in tandem or, in other words, they work in their own regions i.e. NEC works in Asia whereas the other two companies don't bid in Asia. Therefore, by adding a single repeatered segment, BSNL has ensured that no competitor, either from Indian company or from any other country, could bid in the tender," Tepc alleged in its August 31 letter to the PMO.

## 3 KEY POINTS

1 As part of the scheme, Eureka Forbes Ltd, a 100 per cent subsidiary of Forbes & Company, will be demerged into a standalone company and then listed on the BSE.

2 After the listing of EFL, US-based Advent will purchase up to 72.56 per cent of the company's then outstanding stock on a fully diluted basis from SPG. Advent is subject to closing conditions and receipt of relevant approvals.

3 Advent will thereafter make an open offer in compliance with applicable regulations. The transaction is subject to closing conditions and receipt of relevant approvals.

Eureka Forbes is a leader in the health and safety solutions space in India, with a presence in water purification through its brand Aquaguard, vacuum cleaning (Forbes) and other emerging categories. The company has built a multi-channel network with a unique direct sales business, strong retail presence in over 20,000 outlets, and a fast-growing e-commerce channel.

"We look forward to working with Marzin Shroff and his team to guide EFL's next phase of growth and solidify its market leadership," said Shweta Jahan, managing director, Advent India PE Advisors. In India, Advent has made four consumer investments, including Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals, a leading supplier of consumer electrical goods, Dixy Textiles, a leading men's innerwear brand, Enamor and DFM Foods, a leading producer of packaged savory snacks. Advent has invested \$56 billion in over 380 firms in 42 countries, and as of March 2021, had \$75 billion in assets under management.

"This transaction also reflects our stated objective and strategy of significant de-leveraging and focusing on our core competencies and businesses. We firmly believe they (employees) will benefit from this transaction," said Jai Mavani, executive director, Shapoorji Pallonji and Company.

"Over the past 14 years, Advent has invested or committed \$2.2 billion in 16 companies with headquarters or operations in India across sectors such as con-

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"More than 1 crore unorganised workers registered at e-Shram portal, which is India's first national database on unorganised workers, the ministry said in a statement. The drive to facilitate registration of migrant workers at e-Shram portal received huge attention since its launch on August 26, 2021, it added.

In almost 24 days, over 1 crore workers have registered at the portal, according to the statement.

This is the first-ever concentrated step towards generating a comprehensive database of unorganized workers from different sectors like construction, apparel manufacturing, fishing, gig and platform work, street vending, domestic work, agriculture and so on

e-Shram: Over 1 cr informal workers registered

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

OVER 1 crore unorganised workers have registered themselves at e-Shram portal, the labour ministry said on Sunday.

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vamping the rules around online data collection. Apple, citing the mantra of privacy, has rolled out tools that block marketers from tracking people. Google, which depends on digital ads, is trying to have it both ways by reinventing the system so it can continue aiming ads at people without exploiting access to their personal data.

Jeff Green, CEO of the Trade Desk, an ad-tech company in California, which works with major ad agencies, said: "The internet is answering a question that it's been wrestling with for decades, which is: How is the internet going to pay for itself?" The fallout may hurt brands that relied on targeted ads. It may also initially hurt tech giants like Facebook — but not for long. Instead, businesses that can afford to track people but still need to advertise are likely to spend more with the largest tech platforms, which still have the most data. NYT

Instead, brands splashed their ads across websites, with their promotions often tailored to people's specific interests. In exchange, people were tracked from site to site by technologies such as "cookies," and their data was used to target them with relevant marketing.

Now that system, which ballooned into a \$350 billion digital ad industry, is being dismantled. Driven by online privacy fears, Apple and Google have started re-

## MARKET WATCH

## M-CAP OF FOUR MOST-VALUED COS JUMPS

New Delhi: Four of the top-10 most valued companies together added Rs 65,464.41 crore to market valuation last week, with Bharti Airtel and SBI emerging as the biggest gainers. During the last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 710 points or 1.21 per cent. PTI

## AT ENTERPRISE VALUE OF ₹4,400 CRORE

## Advent to acquire majority stake in Eureka Forbes

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 19

ADVENT INTERNATIONAL, a global private equity investor, has signed a definitive agreement with Shapoorji Pallonji Group (SPG) to acquire a majority stake in Eureka Forbes Ltd. The transaction values Eureka Forbes at an enterprise value of Rs 4,400 crore, subject to closing adjustments.

As part of the scheme, Eureka Forbes Ltd, a 100 per cent subsidiary of Forbes & Company, will be demerged into a standalone company and then listed on the BSE.

After the listing of EFL, US-based Advent will purchase up to 72.56 per cent of the company's then outstanding stock on a fully diluted basis from SPG. Advent is subject to closing conditions and receipt of relevant approvals.

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In almost 24 days, over

# Kohli's unburdening continues, this IPL to be his last as RCB captain

**SANDIP**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

THE TWO-MONTH stint in UAE will be the last for Virat Kohli as a T20 captain. Two days after he announced his decision to quit as his country's T20 captain after the World Cup, he has decided to renounce captaining his franchise side, Royal Challengers Bangalore, post this edition of the Indian Premier League.

In a 2.9-minute video posted on the RCB Twitter handle, he said, with a crisp smile on his face: "This will be my last leg in the IPL as captain of the RCB. I will continue to be an RCB player till I play my last IPL game. It was something that was on my mind for a while, as I had recently announced stepping down from T20 captaincy (of the country) to manage my workload."

Easing the workload, he felt, would keep him fresh for the challenges in what could be the final stretch of a glorious career. "I want to be able to be committed to the responsibilities that I am fulfilling and I feel I needed the space to be fresh, to regroup and be absolutely clear in how I want to move forward. This is just a little halt, it's not the

end of the journey," he said.

It would end a rather underwhelming stint as Bangalore skipper, unless of course he could salvage the season by winning the trophy and leaving on a high.

But otherwise, his eight-year tenure was of cringing underachieving, despite having some of the biggest names in this format like AB de Villiers and Chris Gayle.

He could partly blame an imbalanced squad, unfortunate injuries and untimely loss of form. But he can't wash his hands off the abysmal 60-65 win-loss record, irrespective of all the conspiring circumstances.

The closest he came to landing the trophy was in 2016, driven by himself with staggering 973 runs, but it eluded him. They reached two play-offs, in 2015 and 2020, but his captaincy drew flak.

Partly, the real reason Kohli the leader is not as appreciated as Kohli the batsman, despite being the most successful Test and T20 captain of his country, stems from his middling record as RCB's captain. People tend to twin the tales, and read them as the same narrative. The Rohit Sharma-versus-Kohli captaincy debates begin from IPL.

But then both India and RCB need the outer limits of Kohli the insuperable bats-



Despite having some of the biggest names in T20 cricket in the side, Virat Kohli has not been able to lead RCB to an IPL title yet.

"This will be my last leg in the IPL as captain of the RCB. I will continue to be an RCB player till I play my last IPL game. It was something that was on my mind for a while, as I had recently announced stepping down from T20 captaincy (of the country) to manage my workload."

**VIRAT KOHLI**

man, than Kohli, the uber-aggressive skipper. Even without being a captain, Kohli would continue to bring intensity and aggression onto the field. Maybe, he could turn out to be more intense than ever before, as if a heavy millstone is off his neck. It could liberate him. It could elevate his batmanship to hitherto untouched peaks, beyond the lofty peaks that he himself had scaled.

## Emotional investment

While forsaking captaincy of his country alone would not have mattered much in terms of unburdening, there is relatively less pressure leading your country in a T20 game,

unless it's the World Cup, leaving T20 skipper-ship altogether infuses more sense and purpose. The pressure, the emotional investment and rigours, of leading the franchise is significantly higher than leading the country. There is a lot more at stake, especially for an aspirational club like RCB, who are so desperate for landing the trophy.

And unlike the World Cup that knocks once in four years, the IPL is an annual affair. Moreover, he not only has to lead the side for two months of the Indian summer, but would be constantly involved in auctions, pre-season, commercials and camps. And, of course, the nerve-wracking scrutiny.

Those are distractions, or negativity, that Kohli wants to steer clear off in his endeavour to enhance his batmanship. The last two years have been dismayed by his dizzying standards—he hasn't registered a hundred for nearly two years.

If he cannot reacquaint with his own heavy-scoring ways sooner, he perhaps never would. By calling time on his T20 captaincy, he's trying to buy time to win back the lost form. It could turn out to be a win-win for the country, franchise side, and importantly Kohli himself. As he said, a halt, a necessary one, before a long journey.

# CSK off to a flying restart

As IPL resumes following break, Chennai beat Mumbai by 20 runs after Gaikwad's 88 n.o. steadies ship



Fast bowler Josh Hazlewood celebrates dismissing Mumbai Indians' stand-in skipper Kieron Pollard in Dubai on Sunday. iplt20.com

## EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game

### Raina gets quick relief



Suresh Raina looked uncomfortable during his short stay. iplt20.com

It was relief that screamed on Suresh Raina's face after he mis-sliced what looked like a jailbreak attempt to escape his six-ball torment. The stroke was hideous (to underestimate it). Raina just backed away, all three stumps in full view, and just slammed his bat at the ball, in hope that it would somehow miss everything, or like two balls before, brush his edge to the boundary. But this ball was fuller and shaping away from him. He was perhaps

anticipating a short ball. The blind slash ballooned airily into the point's hands, putting an end to his misery.

The previous five balls were Raina-Down-Under throwback, where his old weakness against the short-pitch ball into his body was ruthlessly re-examined. He was hopping and hustling at the crease. He seemed genuinely spooked out, and in the end, it was relief that his mental agony was not prolonged.

### Stunned Boom goes bust



Rarely does a batsman smear Jaspit Bumrah over long-off. Ruturaj

Gaikwad accomplished it, without straining a sinew. Bumrah floated a full ball slower ball outside the off-stump, not the floaty, dipping devil that hoodwinked Shaun Marsh, but wide of the off-stumps, giving Gaikwad the room to swing his arms through the line. A neat, fluid swing of the blade and the ball floated into the stands, after alluring the boundary riders for a majority of its journey.

Gaikwad could not believe what he had achieved, as the ball wafted into the stands, he gaped his mouth in disbelief and looked genuinely in trance. For the majority of the innings, his batting looked as if in a trance too. It's not every day that a batsman metes out such treatment to Bumrah.

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## BRIEFLY

**Manny to run for presidency**

Manila: Philippine boxing icon and senator Manny Pacquiao says he will run for president in the 2022 elections. Pacquiao accepted the nomination of his PDP-Laban party at its national convention on Sunday, saying

that the Filipino people have been waiting for a change of government. "I am a fighter, and I will always be a fighter inside and outside the ring," Pacquiao, 42, said in his speech. "We need government to serve our people with integrity, compassion and transparency," he added. Pacquiao is the president of the PDP-Laban faction led by him and Sen. Aquilino 'Koko' Pimentel III.

### Gokulam Kerala, Army Red in quarters

Kolkata: Defending champions Gokulam Kerala FC and Army Red entered the quarterfinals of the 130th Durand Cup football tournament from Group D here on Sunday, beating Assam Rifles 7-2 and Hyderabad FC 2-1 respectively. The Army Red team became the second Services side after Army Green to progress to the tournament's knockout stages. The simultaneous final group fixtures were extremely contrasting in nature. While the game between the Reds and ISL side Hyderabad FC at the Vivekananda Yubabharati Krirangan (VYBK) was tight and cagey in nature, it rained goals at the Kalyani Stadium where Assam Rifles and Gokulam Kerala squared off.

### Thapa storms into semis of boxing nat'l's

Bellary: Five-time Asian Championships medalist Shiva Thapa entered the semi-finals of the 5th men's Boxing Nationals with a thrilling win over Ankit Narwal, here on Sunday. The Assam boxer showed great footwork and used all his experience to put pressure on his RSPB opponent with precise punches. Though Thapa faced a stiff challenge, he did not let the momentum slip and completed a 4-1 win in the 63.5kg quarter-final. For RSPB, Sachin and Varinder Singh (60kg) emerged victors in their respective quarter-finals.

PTI & AP

# A Noble gesture

After coming on as a 94th-minute substitute only to take a penalty, West Ham midfielder misses to hand Manchester United a 2-1 win in EPL

REUTERS  
LONDON, SEPTEMBER 19

WEST HAM United manager David Moyes said it was his decision for substitute Mark Noble to take the missed penalty in the 2-1 defeat by Manchester United in the Premier League on Sunday.

Jesse Lingard snatched all three points against former club West Ham with a vicious 98th-minute strike into the top corner after Cristiano Ronaldo had cancelled out Said Benrahma's opener in the first half.

The visitors had to cling on for the victory and were left off the hook when goalkeeper David de Gea saved the 94th-minute penalty from Noble, who Moyes hauled on from the bench immediately after Luke Shaw had been penalised for handball.

Noble had only missed four of 42 career penalties before Sunday and Moyes said he had no regrets about the decision. "Not at all, Mark Noble is one of the best penalty takers we've got, it was my decision. Sometimes they go your way sometimes they don't but you have to take the decisions," Moyes told a news conference. "I thought we had a really good penalty taker on the bench and if someone else had taken it and missed I'd have been more disappointed had I not taken that decision. That's what happens, decision taking can either be right or wrong."

Moyes said England coach Gareth Southgate's ill-fated decision to bring on Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho to take penalties in the Euro 2020 final shootout defeat to Italy had gone through his mind. Moyes had also considered De Gea's poor record at saving penalties — the Spaniard had failed to save any of the previous 40 spot-kicks he had faced -- before making the decision.

"It went through my mind quickly and I asked Mark and he said yes," Moyes added. "I felt that because of his record he was most suited. Mark Noble has an incredible record at penalties so I'm thinking Mark has come on, De Gea's not saved many and hopefully this is the answer."

It was the first time De Gea had kept out a penalty since April 2016, having let in the previous 40 spot-kicks he had faced including 11 in the shootout in last season's Europa League final loss to Villarreal.

"It was the last minute, I made the save. Going through my head was 'save the ball'. It's a massive three points for us," De Gea said. "It was a really tough game, both teams had good chances, again a great goal from Jesse.



West Ham United's Mark Noble takes a penalty, which he eventually missed, against Manchester United in a Premier League match on Sunday. Reuters

### JINX BROKEN

5 Number of years after which David de Gea saved a penalty for club and country. The last time he saved one was in April 2016. Since then, he conceded 40 consecutive penalties before saving Noble's shot on Sunday.

### HOW THEY STAND

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Chelsea	5	4	1	0	11	13
Liverpool	5	4	1	0	11	13
Man Utd	5	4	1	0	9	13
Brighton	5	4	0	1	3	12
Man City	5	3	1	1	10	10

In the dressing room we said the three points were the most important thing."

### Lingard redemption

There was also a sense of redemption for Lingard, whose stray pass had given away Young Boys' last-gasp winner in the Champions League on Tuesday. "Mistakes happen in football, you have to overcome those things," said Lingard, who scored nine Premier League goals for West Ham last sea-

son after joining on loan. "I got a brilliant reception. I had a good time here but I have to move on with Man United and do my best," he added.

Both sides showed signs of tiredness after their European exploits, with West Ham winning 2-0 on Thursday in their opening Europa League game away to Dinamo Zagreb.

Moyes's side took the lead when Algerian midfielder Benrahma tried his luck from the edge of the area and his shot flew into the net off the back of Raphael Varane. But the visitors responded strongly and levelled when Ronaldo struck a fourth goal in three games since returning to Manchester United, netting twice against Newcastle United and once in the 2-1 defeat at Young Boys.

The Portuguese had another chance in the second half before Lingard's strike when he was again played in by Portugal team mate Fernandes but Fabianski thwarted the attempt with his legs.

### Chelsea beat Tottenham 3-0

Chelsea's dominant second-half performance earned a 3-0 win at Tottenham Hotspur thanks to goals by Thiago Silva, N'Golo Kante and Antonio Rudiger as the Blues moved joint top of the Premier League.

The emphatic scoreline did not look likely in the first half as the hosts shaded it, but Chelsea took complete control after the break to send out an ominous warning in the title race.

During his free time, Amlan likes to knock around the football in his room since play-

Football's loss is athletics' gain as Amlan bags 200m title

ANDREW AMSAN  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

ASSAM SPRINTER Amlan Borgohain won the 200m title with the second-best timing on Indian soil at the Open Nationals, Warangal, on Sunday. But it came at a price. The 23-year-old, who clocked 20.75 seconds, to finish comfortably ahead of Balakumar Nitin (21.06) and Nalabothu Shamgha (21.12), had to give up on his first love, football, before taking up athletics seriously.

"I was getting injured very often while playing football and my mum did not like it. You know how moms are, right?" says Amlan whose 20.75s is also the fifth-best all-time run by an Indian. Troubled by the sight of her son's frequently bandaged ankles, she decided it was time to put her foot down.

"My mom asked me to either switch to a different sport or quit entirely. Playing football wasn't an option anymore. It was a tough decision to make," recalls the Cristiano Ronaldo and Sunil Chhetri "superfan". A contactless sport like running was an easy choice to make, and after his first school meet he realised this new discipline matched the adrenaline kick football gave him.

Just when Amlan was looking for a mentor to help him progress to the next level, he was spotted by James Hillier, the head coach at Reliance Foundation Odisha Athletics High-Performance Centre at Bhubaneswar during a competition in July 2019.

### The gamble

The first thing Hillier noticed: "He was a little chubby." But the seasoned English coach, who has mentored the likes of Rio Olympics 400m relay bronze medalist Emily Diamond, saw something special in him. "It is sometimes hard to describe. I just knew there was something special about him. I have been doing this for a long time. His timings were not great but I knew he had potential. I decided to take the gamble," says Hillier.

After further assessment, Hyderabad-based Amlan was inducted into the training centre at Bhubaneswar in early 2020. Amlan, who arrived at the centre with a personal best of 21.89s, has immensely impressed his English coach but Hillier feels there is still a lot of room for improvement.

"He arrived with a 13 percent body fat and now it's seven (the same as his idol Ronaldo's). His muscle mass has also increased. There are no specific areas but I would say we will work on every aspect. I will not give you a number as to how much he can improve because that is like limiting his potential," says the 43-year-old coach.

During his free time, Amlan likes to knock around the football in his room since play-



Amlan Borgohain clocked 20.75 seconds, to win the 200m title. It's the second-fastest timing on Indian soil.

"(He Amlan) arrived with a 13 percent body fat and now it's seven (the same as his idol Ronaldo's). His muscle mass has also increased. There are no specific areas but I would say we will work on every aspect. I will not give you a number as to how much he can improve because that is like limiting his potential."

JAMES HILLIER  
AMLAN BORGHAJIN'S COACH

ing his favourite sport on the ground is still off-limits due to fear of getting injured. "You can say football is banned for me right now. I but I watch a lot of football," says Amlan who also spends a lot of time reading motivational books and watching TED Talks.

"I like to know about people's struggles and how they come up from them. It inspires me a lot," says the chirpy youngster, who approves of Cristiano Ronaldo's return to Old Trafford. "I still have that old Ronaldo United jersey," says Amlan, who also bagged the 100m silver on Saturday.

But there's another jersey that Amlan would absolutely love to add to his collection. "When Sunil Chhetri came to Hyderabad for a match I got to meet him as a fan. I did not get to sit down and talk with him. If that happens that would be like a dream come true. I know everything about him, his story, his struggle. I won't ask him any questions but just say one thing to him, I'm a big fan".

Amlan may not have any questions to ask but rest assured a request for a signed jersey would be on the cards if and when he meets the India football skipper.

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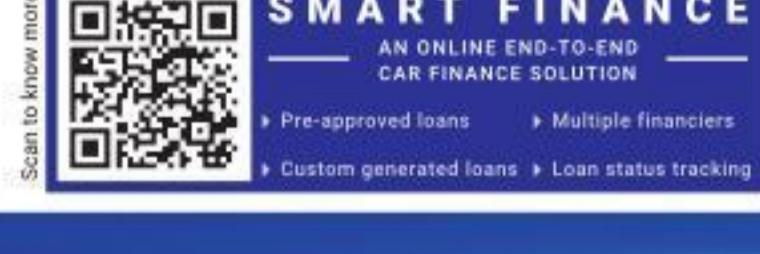
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