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SALUTE THE SOLDIER

MARTYRDOM On 13th SEPTEMBER
SEPOY GOKAL SINGH, VrC
(Hero of Nathula Operations - 1967)



We salute and pay homage to our beloved and gallant soldier Sepoy Gokal Singh, VrC, who displayed exemplary valour and courage while defending the nation against Chinese aggression during the Nathula operations on 13 Sep 1967. We, the Akhaura Tigers are proud of his bravery and his act of heroism will always inspire the platoon to emulate the example set by him. May the soul of this brave martyr rest in peace.

Commanding Officer & All Ranks,
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'In UP, Brahmins, Dalits face many issues. The way murders are happening... If someone complains, they face inquiry'

SATISH CHANDRA MISRA
NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY,
BSP, RAJYA SABHA MP

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THE IDEAS PAGE

STONES OF SABARMATI

BY YOGINDER K ALAGH

PAGE 9

Earlier, ration for poor went to those who said 'abba jaan': Yogi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, SEPTEMBER 12

SLAMMING PREVIOUS state governments for what he said was their "casteist and dynast mentality" and "politics of appeasement", UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Sunday said that before 2017, those saying "*abba jaan*" used to digest ration meant for poor but now everyone benefited equally from development under his administration.

Speaking at events to lay the foundation stone and inaugurate development projects in Kushinagar, the Chief Minister said that construction of the Ram temple at Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya started only when the BJP came to power at the Centre and in the state — and asked if the SP, BSP or Congress would have built the temple.

Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Adityanath said he has changed the country's "political agenda", which was earlier limited to caste, faith, religion, place, language and family. "As a result, people from every class are getting the benefits of development. Today, there is development of everyone and appeasement of none. Earlier, when there was politics of appeasement, there wasn't development but riots, corruption, anarchy, terrorism, oppression and injustice," he said.

"Today, you are getting ration. Were you getting this ration before 2017? Because back then, those saying '*abba jaan*' used to digest the ration. Back then, the ration meant for Kushinagar used to reach Nepal and Bangladesh. Today, if someone tries to swallow ration for the poor, he will end up in jail. We are working with this commitment," Adityanath said.

"Earlier, those saying '*abba jaan*' used to loot jobs meant for the poor... In the last 4.5 years, we have given jobs to 4.5 lakh youth. These women constables standing here got their appointment during this time. None of them

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

TOP VACANCY FILLED IN A DAY

First-time MLA Bhupendra Patel is BJP's surprise pick as Gujarat CM

Kadva Patidar leader will take oath today; thanks Modi, Amit Shah and Anandiben Patel

PARIMAL DABHI
GANDHINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 12

A DAY after the abrupt resignation of Vijay Rupani as Gujarat Chief Minister, with just 14 months to go for the state polls, the BJP Sunday sprang another surprise by picking first-time MLA Bhupendra Patel for the top job.

Party leaders told The Indian Express that 59-year-old Patel's name was proposed by Rupani at the BJP legislature party meeting and seconded by outgoing Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel. Bhupendra Patel, who represents Ahmedabad's Ghatlodia constituency, will take the oath of office Monday and is expected to announce the new Council of Ministers "in a day or two".

Following Sunday's decision, Patel staked claim to form the state government after meeting Governor Acharya Devavrata in the evening. An official release stated that the Governor has invited Patel to the Raj Bhavan for the swearing-in Monday afternoon. A BJP release said Union Home Minister Amit Shah will attend the ceremony.



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

THE SHRINKING CM
BJP leadership replaces one more chief minister, trend of overweening high command takes hold [PAGE 8](#)

Patel belongs to the Kadva sub-group of the influential Patidar community, and is the first Chief Minister from this segment. Party leaders said he ticked most of the boxes for the BJP ahead of the 2022 Assembly elections for which state party chief C R Paatil has set an ambitious target of winning all 182 seats.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Engineer, corporator, MLA in 2017 to CM: Swift rise for Patidar leader

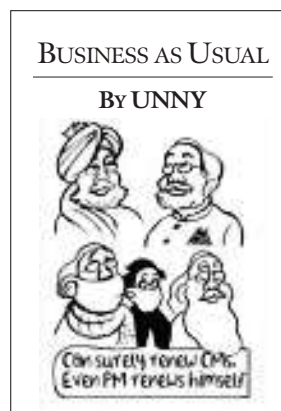
RITU SHARMA
AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 12

AMONG THE earliest congratulatory messages for Bhupendra Patel, who was named Gujarat's new Chief Minister on Sunday, was from the Vishwa Umiya Foundation, a body of Kadva Patidars. Patel's elevation to the top job — he is the first from the Patidar sub-group to be Chief Minister — is crucial to the BJP's plans to woo the community

that has over the years drifted away from the party.

In fact, Patel, 59, is one of the trustees of Sardardham, the Patidar community organisation that hosted the programme where Prime Minister Narendra Modi was chief guest on Saturday, after which Vijay Rupani quit his job.

Patel, under whose leadership the 2022 assembly elections will be fought, fought his first major election in 2010 as corporator from the Ahmedabad Municipal



Business As Usual
By UNNY
New Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel (second from right) is greeted by outgoing CM Vijay Rupani in Gandhinagar Sunday. *Nirmal Harindran*

Corporation (AMC). There too, he had a swift rise to the top post — he became standing committee chairperson in the AMC in his first stint as corporator.

Patel is a first-time MLA from Ghatlodia, the Assembly constituency vacated by former chief minister Anandiben Patel after she was appointed Madhya Pradesh Governor. In the 2017 Assembly elections, Patel defeated Congress candidate Shashikant Patel by over one

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India acknowledges: Taliban hold positions of power, authority

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

IN ITS first clear and official reference to the Taliban as a state actor, India acknowledged in a joint statement with Australia Sunday that the group holds "positions of power and authority across Afghanistan".

This reference is a step forward for the diplomatic establishment, but falls short of officially recognising the Taliban administration as the government of Afghanistan. Sources told The Indian Express that Sunday's formulation was arrived at after "much debate and deliberation" over the last week after the Taliban announced its Cabinet.

On Saturday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had described the Taliban as the "dispensation" in Kabul during his remarks after the 2+2 talks with Australia involving Foreign and Defence ministers.

Sunday's joint statement said: "(The) Ministers also expressed deep concern about the situation in Afghanistan. Ministers called for the Taliban to guarantee safe passage for foreign nationals and Afghans

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EXPLAINED



EXPERT EXPLAINS
TERROR THREAT THAT PERSISTS
[PAGE 7](#)

WORLD

TALIBAN SAY WOMEN CAN STUDY IN UNIV BUT CLASSES MUST BE SEGREGATED
[PAGE 12](#)

Al-Zawahiri appears in 9/11 video; no mention of takeover by Taliban

BEIRUT, SEPTEMBER 12

AL QAEDA leader Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared in a new video marking the 20th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, months after rumours spread that he was dead.

The SITE Intelligence Group that monitors jihadist websites said the video was released Saturday. In it, al-Zawahiri said "Jerusalem will never be Judaized" and praised al-Qaeda attacks, including one that targeted Russian troops in Syria in January.

SITE said al-Zawahiri also noted the US military's withdrawal from Afghanistan after 20

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EXPLAINED
E Not proof that he is still alive
RUMOURS of Al-Zawahiri's death have circulated since late last year. The video does not necessarily suggest a recent recording — even though it appeared online on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, it made no mention of the Taliban's return to power in Kabul. He mentioned the US withdrawal, but that was decided back in February 2020 itself.

Haryana govt panel suggests re-defining the Aravallis to shrink protected area

SUKHBIR SIWACH
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 12

INSISTING THAT revenue records only identify '*Gair Mumkin Pahar*' (uncultivable hilly areas) and make no mention of 'Aravalli', a high-level committee of the Haryana government has asked officials to identify the areas under Aravalli on the basis of a 1992 notification of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), which only covers the areas of the old Gurgaon district (currently Gurgaon and Nuh).

Environmentalists say that by that definition, the provision of the National Conservation Zone (NCZ), which places restrictions on construction activity, will not be applicable to Aravalli areas in Faridabad.

A state-level committee led by Haryana Principal Secretary (Town and Country Planning) A K Singh had met on August 9 "for ground-truthing of NCZ in Haryana Sub-Region of National Capital Region".

The Indian Express has learnt that at the meeting, some of the districts, while identifying areas under NCZ, considered areas



Environmentalists fear an unchecked real estate boom if protection is lifted. *Archive*

recorded as 'Gair Mumkin Pahar' in revenue records as Aravalli. The Faridabad District Level Sub Committee (DLSC) proposed 9,357 hectares, Mahendragarh 22,607 hectares and Palwal 3,369 hectares as NCZ.

While asking districts to review their recommendations keeping in view the 1992 notification by the Union Environment Ministry, the committee said, "It was observed that the MoEF&CC, being the only legally competent authority, has rightly, in its wisdom issued notification (in 1992)... for the then Gurgaon and Alwar districts only. Moreover, in case, the said Ministry at any stage considers drought. No Englishwoman had

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Emma Raducanu of Britain defeated Leylah Fernandez of Canada to win the women's singles final on Saturday. *AP*

Teen immigrant's dream ride: from Pune title 2 yrs ago to US Open crown

SHAHID JUDGE
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 12

THE SMILE on Emma Raducanu's face only got bigger as the chorus of *Sweet Caroline* blared across the Arthur Ashe Stadium in New York. She joined in singing Britain's enduring sporting anthem as Union Jack-clad fans on the upper tiers swayed to the soundtrack reserved for their revered champions across sport. It was the most British celebration you could imagine to mark Raducanu's 6-4, 6-3 win over Canadian Leylah Fernandez in the US Open final.

It also ended a 44-year title drought. No Englishwoman had

won a tennis Major since Virginia Wade topped Wimbledon in 1977. It would take something spectacular, someone beyond anybody's wildest imagination, to break that streak. Raducanu, an 18-year-old with barely any experience on the WTA Tour, fit that billing. Her biggest title until now had come at a Futures event at the Deccan Gymkhana courts of Pune in 2019 — she spent three weeks in India, even playing an ITF tournament in Solapur. The Cinderella story, though, was realised in the early hours on Sunday at tennis' grandest 23,000-seater.

At a time when Brexit

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

INSIDE



VARUN TO UP CM: HIKE SUGARCANE PRICES, DOUBLE PM-KISAN FUNDS
[PAGE 6](#)

Daylight killing of S-I by militant is caught on Srinagar CCTV camera

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 12

A POLICE officer died of injuries shortly after he was shot at point-blank range by suspected militants in Srinagar on Sunday afternoon.

Meer Arshad was a recent recruit in J&K Police and was serving his probation as a Sub-Inspector. His killing evoked strong criticism from the mainstream political parties in the Kashmir Valley.

Militants shot at and wounded Meer at Khanyar neighbourhood of old Srinagar city. CCTV camera footage of the incident showed a suspected militant appearing from behind Mir and opening fire at him from point-blank range using a pistol. As Meer falls down, the suspected militant escapes



The spot where J&K Police S-I Meer Arshad was critically injured in the attack on Sunday. *Shuaib Masoodi*

from the scene.

Meer was critically wounded in the shooting incident and was immediately taken to Sheri

Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Srinagar where he died of his injuries.

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PAGE 1 ANCHOR

AISHWARYA MOHANTY
KORAPUT, SEPTEMBER 12

ON A Wednesday afternoon, it's all quiet at the primary school in Phattuseneri village in Kotia gram panchayat in Koraput district. The school, with a map of Odisha on one of its walls, is shut — it is open only two days a week owing to the pandemic — but the students are away, at the nearby Telugu-medium Mandal Parishad primary school.

The Telugu-medium school, propped up by bamboo poles and an asbestos roof, came up five months ago. All around the temporary structure are banners and posters announcing

schemes of the Andhra Pradesh government. As a group of children recite numbers in Telugu, the teacher, A Ganesha, says, "There are seven students enrolled in Class 1 in this school. The same students are enrolled in the Odia-medium school as well."

Phattuseneri is one of 21 villages in Kotia gram panchayat that lie at the centre of a long-standing border conflict between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

On August 31, the Supreme Court advised both the state governments to resolve the border dispute after Odisha filed a case of contempt in the apex court over Andhra's decision to conduct rural elections in six villages in the region. The bench of Justices AM

Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna granted both states six weeks to hold political discussions to resolve the dispute.

But on the ground, little has changed, with both states only intensifying their interventions through social schemes. Two weeks ago, a team from Andhra Pradesh arrived here and conducted *bhumi puja* for an *anganwadi* centre, an *arogya* centre, a farmers' hall and a panchayat office, besides carrying out a plantation drive. That prompted a team from Odisha to rush to the spot a day later.

It's this tug of war that has dominated the lives of people and officials in these parts. In Phattuseneri, while elec-



At Phattuseneri, there are schemes announced by both the Odisha and Andhra governments. *Aishwarya Mohanty*

tricity is provided by the Andhra Pradesh, both the governments provide drinking water and make it a point to advertise the same through banners and hoardings on water tanks.

Around 5 km from Phattuseneri are two villages — called Upura (Upper) Sembi and Tala (Lower) Sembi in Odia and Yeguva (Upper) Sembi and Takkuva (Lower) Sembi in Telugu — where some people have Aadhaar cards from Odisha and the others from AP.

"Both the states have been fighting over this region. Often, development work gets stopped because of their tussle. At the end of the day, we are okay being part of whichever state that

provides us better opportunities," says Pilku Tadingi, 27, of Upura Sembi village, speaking in Odia. His Aadhaar card identifies him as being from Upura Sembi village, Koraput district, Odisha.

Three houses away, in the same village, is Tadanki Sriram, 26, whose Aadhaar card says he is a resident of Yeguva Sembi, Sariki, Vizianagram district, AP.

Around 12 km from here, in Madkar village, each generation speaks a different language. Babula Tadingi, 18, a first-generation learner, speaks Odia, one of the few who can. Others speak Kui, a language of the Kondh tribe. The younger children speak fluent Telugu, with many being enrolled in Telugu-medium res-

idential schools in Salur.

Officials say contradictions also arise while identifying beneficiaries for government schemes. For instance, the Rana and Dora communities have tribal status in Andhra Pradesh, while they are in the OBC category in Odisha.

Apart from laying foundation stones for various projects, the AP government has also been conducting citizen redressal and veterinary camps, distributing land pattas and extending welfare schemes. The Koraput district administration has often resorted to barricading the border areas and deploying police officials to prohibit "unwarranted entries".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Kolkata

EXPRESS AUDIO

Do electric cars have a future in India?

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Vikram Gulati, Country Head & Sr V.P at Toyota Kirloskar Motor, joins Nandagopal Rajan to discuss the future of EVs in the Indian market. From the automobile market's shift towards electrification to the issue of charging, the duo discuss all of it

Kolkata

5 WEST BENGAL



CPI(M)'s candidate for Bhabanipur Assembly bypoll Sreejib Biswas (left) campaigns on Sunday; Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's brother Kartick Banerjee on the campaign trail for the TMC chief in Bhabanipur. Express

POST-POLL VIOLENCE

CBI arrests 11 in two cases over weekend

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 12

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday arrested seven people in connection with a case of alleged post-poll violence in West Bengal. The arrests came a day after the central agency held four people in a separate case, said officials.

The latest arrests were made in connection with the investigation into the murder of a BJP worker in Cooch Behar district.

The alleged victim, Hardhan Roy, was found in a pool of blood near a river on May 3, a day after the Assembly election results were declared.

The four people arrested on Saturday were taken into custody for the alleged murder of Trinamool Congress (TMC) supporter Sahinur Ahmad in

Cooch Behar's Tufanganj area.

Ahmad and his friend were allegedly assaulted by BJP supporters following the declaration of the election results, and later succumbed to his wounds.

Since the Calcutta High Court last month ordered the CBI to investigate cases of heinous crimes reported during the alleged post-poll violence, the agency has registered 34 FIRs and four charge sheets.

While the latest charge sheet was filed in court in Krishnanagar in Nadia district in connection with the killing of a BJP worker, the rest were registered in the districts of North 24 Parganas (Bhatpara) and Birbhum (Nalhati and Rampurhat).

The High Court order on the CBI probe came on August 19, over a month after a team of NHRC submitted its final report on the alleged violence that the BJP has blamed on TMC.

BHABANIPUR ASSEMBLY BYPOLL

'She grows up, fights': BJP candidate hits back at Hakim over 'young girl' remark

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 12

THE TRINAMOL Congress (TMC) and the BJP on Sunday exchanged words after senior state minister Firhad Hakim called the BJP's Bhabanipur by-poll candidate Priyanka Tibrewal a "young girl", and claimed that she had been pushed into the electoral battle against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The by-election is scheduled for September 30.

At an interaction with the people of Bhabanipur on Sunday morning, Hakim said, "Priyanka Tibrewal is a young girl. She was defeated earlier in state Assembly polls from Entally. As there were no senior BJP leaders ready to contest against Mamata Banerjee, the party has pushed this young girl into the battlefield. My sympathy goes out to



BJP's Bhabanipur bypoll candidate Priyanka Tibrewal paints the party symbol — lotus — on a wall as state party chief Dilip Ghosh looks on, on the campaign trail on Sunday. Express

her as she will be defeated in the by-poll."

The minister said everyone in the constituency, which is a TMC bastion, had told him that they

would vote for Banerjee. "I don't have to tell them to vote for Mamata Banerjee. They are saying that they will vote for her. Mamata Banerjee lives in their

hearts," Hakim added.

Tibrewal a lawyer who moved court about alleged attacks on BJP workers after the Assembly poll results were declared on May 2. She played an instrumental role in securing a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe in the matter.

Responding to Hakim's dig, the BJP candidate told reporters while campaigning, "A young girl doesn't forever remain a young girl. She grows up and faces challenges. Of course, my rival Mamata Banerjee and her party campaigner Firhad Hakim are much older than me but I am here to fight the battle and save democracy. I want to save people from the terror of Trinamool."

Meanwhile, Left Front candidate Shreejib Biswas also campaigned in Bhabanipur, and vowed to defeat both the TMC and the BJP.

'CONVERT 4 TRAIN COACHES INTO NETAJI MUSEUM'

Kolkata: Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's grandnephew Chandra Bose has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convert four rail coaches into a mobile museum containing pictures and information about the freedom fighter. Chandra Bose, a BJP leader, said he had written a letter to PM Modi, who is in charge of the committee managing Netaji's 125th birth anniversary celebrations. Bose tweeted "Celebrating #NetajiSubhasChandraBose's #125thbirthanniversary convert a train into a mobile museum for people across the nation to know about the contribution of #IndianNationalArmy." PTI

Brothers held for Parnasree double murder

'Accused killed cousin for jewellery'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 12

THE KOLKATA Police on Sunday arrested two cousin brothers of a schoolteacher who was found murdered earlier this week along with her son in their flat in the Parnasree locality of Kolkata's Behala area. Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Murlidhar Sharma said, "The two accused confessed after prolonged interrogation. Both of them are the cousins of the deceased woman."

The police said that Sanjay Das (44) came up with the plan to murder his cousin Susmita Mondal (45), and killed her and her teenage son along with his brother Sandeep (32). According to investigators, Sanjay owed a lot of people money after taking several loans for his son's marriage. He used to maintain CCTV cameras at a mall in Dharmatala, and did not earn much in the past year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sandeep too was not doing well financially and was struggling to repay loans.

The police said Sandeep used to regularly visit Susmita, and noticed that she owned a lot of gold jewellery. During questioning, he told interrogators that Susmita's husband Tapan was financially well-off.

JCP (Crime) Murlidhar Sharma said the brothers eyed Susmita's jewellery since they wanted to sell it and repay some of their loans.

On the afternoon of September 6, the two came to visit the victim. They chatted with Susmita, ate cakes and biscuits, and drank tea while her 13-year-old Tamojit was in another room attending an online class. Sensing an opportunity when Susmita once went to the kitchen, one of the accused stabbed her with a knife.

The 45-year-old fled towards her bedroom, but the accused managed to kill her. Hearing the commotion, Tamojit came out of his room and witnessed his mother being murdered by his uncles. They killed him and escaped with some of Susmita's jewellery, said the police.

At night, after returning from work, Tapan found the door unlocked, and raised alarm. He then found his wife and son's bodies.

The police said they suspected that the victims knew their killers since there were no signs of forced entry, and because of the teacups on the table. They also found some pieces of clothing with bloodstains. After preparing a list of Susmita's relatives and acquaintances, they traced all the calls made in the area during the estimated time of the murder. Sanjay and Sandeep's names then cropped up. Officials said Sandeep was arrested from his home at Shyampur Maheshala area and brought to the Lalbazar police headquarters. During interrogation, he confessed to the crime, the police said.

Civic volunteer among 3 held for Maniktala killing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 12

A CIVIC volunteer is among three people arrested on Sunday for allegedly killing a 35-year-old man whose body was found in an autorickshaw in Kolkata's Maniktala locality four days ago.

The police said the victim, identified as Amarnath Prasad alias Pappu, was beaten to death. His body was found in the autorickshaw in the Bagmari Basak Bagan area at 10 am on Wednesday.

The police then filed a case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

"35 years old Amarnath was found in an unconscious state, seemingly dead, in an autorick-

shaw. He was later declared dead. The body was sent for autopsy," said a police official.

Sources in the police said several local residents claimed that Prasad was severely beaten on Tuesday night as he was suspected of being a mobile thief in the Ganguli Para neighbourhood. Though there were no major signs of external injuries, he suffered severe internal injuries.

On Thursday night, after scouring a lot of CCTV footage, the police, with the help of locals and some footage, identified the accused.

Among them was Jagannath alias Vicky, who is a civic volunteer in the Entally police station area. The police said they were trying to find out if the accused were involved in other crimes.

MALDA

Migrant worker lynched on suspicion of being thief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MALDA, SEPTEMBER 12

A 24-YEAR-OLD migrant worker, who had returned home in Malda district from Nagpur, was beaten to death by a mob suspecting him to be a thief, police said on Sunday.

A group of people of Pipultala village under Harishchandrapur police station caught Pratap Mandal, tied his hands and legs with ropes and iron chains and severely assaulted him on Friday night.

Mondal, a resident of neigh-

boursing Malior village, was first taken to a local hospital from where he was referred to Chachal Super Speciality Hospital and he succumbed to injuries there on Saturday night.

His body was sent for post-mortem examination on Sunday.

Inspector in-charge of Harishchandrapur police station Sanjay Kumar Das said investigations are on and the culprits will not be spared.

His mother Sanju Mondal claimed her son was not a thief and demanded exemplary punishment for the killers.

NOTICE FOR INVITATION OF E TENDER (NIT) - YEAR 2021-22

Vivekanand Medical Foundation & Research Centre, Latur, Maharashtra invites Tenders for purchasing Medical Equipments as mentioned in the below table for Vivekanand Cancer Hospital. The tender Would be publish on 16th September, 2021 at 10 AM IST.

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4.	Camera Head and Ureteroscope	01

To view further details of the tender, interested bidders should visit <https://mahatenders.gov.in>.

Tender Submission would be online on <https://mahatenders.gov.in> and deadline to submit the Proposal is 7th October, 2021 at 2 PM IST.

Administrator
Vivekanand Medical Foundation & Research Centre



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Entries are invited for the year 2020 only | To apply, log on to www.rngfoundation.com/awards

EXPRESS NETWORK

Jharkhand political feud gets messier: Marandi adviser is arrested for rape

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, SEPTEMBER 12

A CLOSE aide of BJP leader Babul Marandi was arrested on Sunday morning for allegedly raping a 20-year-old domestic help, top sources in Jharkhand Police said.

Days after he was booked on August 16 for committing the alleged crime at his residence in March 2020, Sunil Tiwary, political adviser to former chief minister Marandi, had told The Indian Express that he feared for his life, and that the FIR against him was “politically motivated”.

Ranchi Senior Superintendent of Police Surendra Jha declined to comment on Sunday.

Tiwary’s arrest is the latest episode in the messy ongoing political feud between the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and opposition BJP.

The CBI has submitted a preliminary enquiry report in a case of alleged disproportionate assets against Chief Minister Hemant Soren that has been taken up by the Lokpal. A case of rape against the chief minister is pending in Bombay High Court, and Tiwary has filed a plea in the Supreme Court seeking a court-monitored probe in the matter.

The Soren government also came under criticism by the BJP recently after it decided to allot a room for namaaz in the Assembly. Protesting BJP leaders including Marandi and Rajya Sabha MP Deepak Prakash were lathi-charged by police.

Tiwary, who handled Marandi’s social media outreach, came to the limelight after the former chief minister merged his Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajjatantrik) party with the BJP, and was chosen leader of the legislature party.

Tiwary had said earlier: “I do what Babulaji asks me to do. I am his political adviser, and I filed the plea (in the Supreme Court) at his instance. The CM thinks that the complaint to the Lokpal of India on the alleged disproportionate assets of the Soren family is my doing, which is not the case.”

The Jharkhand Speaker had refused to give Leader of Opposition status to Marandi, and proceedings were initiated on the alleged violation of the 10th

Schedule of the Constitution (the so-called anti-defection law) by Marandi after he merged his party with the BJP.

On May 3 this year, a woman police officer, Rupa Tirkey, died allegedly by suicide in Sahebganj district. Tirkey had been investigating a case against a person with links to one Pankaj Mishra, who is seen as being close to Chief Minister Soren. Supported by the BJP, Tirkey’s family petitioned Jharkhand High Court seeking a CBI investigation into the case — and on September 2, the BJP hailed the court’s decision granting the plea.

Days later, on September 9, the government decreed that Mayors of Jharkhand’s nine municipal corporations cannot convene or set the agenda of meetings. In response, Asha Lakra, the BJP’s Ranchi Mayor, called a press conference to allege that the Jharkhand Municipal Rules, 2011, were being violated.

All these incidents are seen as part of a larger political tussle between the BJP and JMM. However, the arrest of Tiwary has escalated the issue to a new level, sources on both sides said.

After the FIR against Tiwary was registered last month, Marandi told reporters that the government was “acting in a conspiracy, with malicious intent and irresponsibly... and the police has become a tool of the government”.

On the allegation of rape against Soren, he told The Indian Express: “There was a video purportedly shot by the victim of the rape in which she allegedly said that her life may be in danger, and if something happened to her then I, Tiwary, and others would be responsible. I don’t have anything to do with the woman, still my name was dragged into this... So I asked my adviser Tiwary to become an intervener in the on-going case into the rape allegation against the CM in the Bombay High Court.”

However, since the case in the Bombay High Court was moving slowly, he had advised Tiwary to file a petition in the Supreme Court seeking a court-monitored probe by the CBI, Marandi had said. He alleged that the Soren government was “intolerant to any criticism”, and that was “one of the reasons for the escalation of the problem”.

BJP urges Centre to bring in law to deal with ‘love jihad’

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

WITH A Kerala Catholic bishop’s claim of “narcotics jihad” becoming a political flashpoint, the BJP on Sunday said the allegation echoed the voice of the Christian community in the state and sought the intervention of the Centre to bring in a law to deal with “narco-terrorism and love jihad”.

Meanwhile, the Kerala unit of the BJP has written to Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking Central intervention “to prevent jihadi activities and protection to Palai bishop Joseph Kallarangatt and Christian community”.

In a statement, BJP spokesperson Tom Vadakkan said, “The intervention by Bishop, His excellency Joseph Kallarangatt of Pala, Kerala during sacred worship is not just a wakeup call for his dioceses, it is the voice of the community who are victims of love jihad and the fallout of narco-terrorism. The cases of love jihad and drug abuse victims are ramping up.”

Vadakkan alleged that the Kerala government has not taken cognizance of narco-terrorism and love jihad despite inputs from investigative agencies. He claimed that the bishop council has raised the issue following inputs from devotees of different churches, alleging that young girls are being lured and fall prey to “love jihad” and “later end up in foreign jails”. He said: “This has to be accounted as human trafficking.”

“The rising drug abuse in different communities has affected peace within families and has created socio-economic disorder of

disastrous levels,” Vadakkan claimed. “My appeal to the Central government is to bring central legislation to book such elements, and bring in fast track courts to deal with narco-terrorism and love jihad.”

Kerala BJP general secretary George Kurian, who is a former vice-chairman for the national commission for minorities, wrote to Shah Sunday, claiming that “jihadi elements” in Kerala get whole-hearted support from the CPI(M) and Congress. “Many of the jihadi elements are active workers of CPI(M) and Congress. This has rendered the situation volatile. I request you to intervene in the issue and take steps to protect the bishop and the Christian community in Kerala,” his letter said.

Kurian also claimed the reaction to the bishop’s statement is a reflection of the “insecurity” among Christians and Hindus.

Bishop Kallarangatt had on Thursday triggered a controversy, saying Christian girls were largely falling prey to “love and narcotic jihad” in Kerala, and wherever arms cannot be used, extremists were using such methods to destroy the youth belonging to other religions.

The statement triggered a controversy in the state, with public demonstrations from both the Christian and Muslim communities. The ruling CPI(M) and the main opposition Congress have expressed their displeasure over the remark. CM Pinarayi Vijayan maintained that there was no need to give a religious colour to narcotics, while Leader of the Opposition V D Sathesnan accused the Sangh Parivar of trying to spark communal tension.

Cong ‘group of 23’ should be a closed chapter now: Moily

Favours induction of Prashant Kishor in Cong, says his entry is part of reforms

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

IN A setback for the G 23 grouping in the Congress, former law minister M Veerappa Moily, who was a signatory to the letter the leaders had written to party chief Sonia Gandhi last year, on Sunday said he “hates” the word G 23 now and argued that some of the leaders are “misusing” the G 23 by “keeping it alive” through meetings and remarks in the media.

Moily also favoured the induction of poll strategist Prashant Kishor into the Congress and said his entry is part of the reform measures that Gandhi is slowly unveiling.

Moily said the 23 senior leaders, including him, had written to Gandhi to reform the party and not to weaken the party. He said the exercise has fructified as Gandhi has begun initiating reforms in the party and the G 23 should now be a “closed chapter” and not “institutionalised”.

The Indian Express contacted many leaders of the G 23 grouping but they refused to react. One



M Veerappa Moily

leader said: “There has never been any institutional arrangement. G 23 was a name given by the media... because there were 23 signatories.... You can only dissolve and dismantle something which existed.”

Moily said there is no such institution like G 23.

“That time it [the letter] was

[written] to initiate certain reform measures by Sonia Gandhi... and she is now taking that step. She has also held discussions with Prashant Kishor. She has reorganised the party in many places. She has taken decisions. So she is marching forward. What do you want? It [the letter] was not intended to change the

leadership at the centre. No. She is a dynamic leader and led the party for 18-19 years. She is well experienced and now the interest she is taking will definitely lead to reforms which we desire.”

“Then why should we again and again pitch that idea. Let us stop it and allow her to take major decisions. Even for reforming the party, consulting Prashant Kishor...,” he said.

Asked what reform measures Gandhi has taken, he said, “She has taken a number of measures... through AICC appointed some observers, appointed secretaries and also she is discussing with Prashant Kishor to reorganise the party and bring back real life into the party. That is why allow her... this is the time to strengthen her hands.”

Reminded that demands like constitution of the Central Parliamentary Board for “collective thinking” and election to the central election committee have not been met, he said, “What is important is to initiate steps to reorganise the party. I don’t want to pick up one by one... points and say minus-plus. She is taking ini-

tiative and I think it is taking good shape... I don’t want to analyse each point. I know what it is. Definitely in a couple of months you will see the results.”

When pointed out that there were reports that some of the G 23 leaders were not happy at the prospect of Kishor joining the party and given some key election and campaign related responsibility, he said, “I am not happy with always picking up that G 23. G 23. I hate that word. There is no such G 23. All of us are anxious to strengthen the hands of Sonia Gandhi. We should stop talking about G 23.”

On Kishor’s induction, he said, “I welcome. It is a good initiative. It is one of the major initiatives. The party needs reforms, the party needs some changes at the grassroots level and Kishor has proved that he is capable of reorganising the party for success. That is enough for us.”

“G 23 should be a closed chapter... I don’t think it was meant to attack the leadership. It was meant to strengthen the leadership. That is the difference.”

GUJARAT RESHUFFLE



A NOW-FAMILIAR SILENCE: Vijay Rupani’s residence in Rajkot on Sunday. Chirag Chotaliya

Shah has given remote control to Anandiben, says Cong

VAIBHAV JHA
AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 12

SOON AFTER the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced first-time MLA from Ahmedabad’s Chatlodia constituency, Bhupendra Patel, as the next chief minister of Gujarat on Sunday, Congress state unit claimed that the “remote control (for power)” has been given to Anandiben Patel from Amit Shah.

Former chief minister of Gujarat, Anandiben Patel, had to resign in 2016 in similar way Vijay Rupani did on Saturday.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Congress leader Paresh Dhanani, leader of opposition in the Gujarat Assembly, said, “The government in Gujarat will be remote-controlled like before... only the power centre has shifted. Now the remote is with Anandiben Patel after it was taken from Amit Shah. Only the face has changed but the problem persists.”

“We initially thought Amit Shah might himself take the command of Gujarat but the kind of wound BJP gave to the people of Gujarat through years of misrule and Covid mismanagement in which three lakh people died, even Shah was scared to take charge. That is why he has now given the remote control to Anandiben,” he added.

When asked if choosing 59-year-old Bhupendra Patel as the chief minister is seen as BJP’s efforts to woo the Patidar voters ahead of assembly elections 2022, Dhanani said, “The BJP has made Gujarat hollow from within through years of misrule. Now they are dependent on communalism and casteism...”

Won’t be ousted as long as people love me: Nitin Patel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 12

OUTGOING DEPUTY Chief Minister Nitin Patel on Sunday said that as long as he receives the love of the people, he will not be “ousted”.

Speaking at an event in Mehsana after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced Bhupendra Patel as Gujarat’s new chief minister, Patel congratulated the successor of Vijay Rupani and dismissed media reports speculative of him being considered for the CM post.

In 2016, too, when Anandiben Patel resigned from the top post, Nitin Patel was among the front runner to be the CM, but then party president Amit Shah had his way to get Vijay Rupani as the CM.

In 2017, when Rupani was re-



Nirmal Harindran

Deputy CM Nitin Patel leaves the BJP headquarters in Gandhinagar on Sunday.

elected as the chief minister, Nitin Patel expressed his displeasure openly over the allocation of portfolios and refused to take charge of the ones allotted to him. He took charge of them only after the intervention of the top party leadership and allocation of finance portfolio to him. On Sunday, too,

there were speculations that Nitin Patel was unhappy over him not being selected as the CM.

“The new chief minister Bhupendra Patel is my friend, he is among us and he is a karyakarta like all of us. We have worked together in the past and his name has been chosen as the CM by the party. He is my friend, I have inaugurated his office, let anyone think anything about us. The media can speculate anything. I told them (media) in the morning that your job is to speculate, but the decision will be taken by the party,” said Patel.

“I saw media stories about whether I will be ousted now. I want to state that till the time I am in the hearts of the public, karyakartas and voters, nobody can oust me. I have served in the opposition for a long time and have worked for the party for 30 years,” Patel added.

Estranged uncle, Tejashwi in attendance at Chirag event to mark father Paswan’s death anniversary; PM sends letter

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, SEPTEMBER 12

LOK JANSHAKTI Party leader Chirag Paswan Sunday shared space with Rashtriya Janata Dal’s Tejashwi Prasad Yadav and estranged end Pashupati Kumar Paras at his event marking the first death anniversary of his father Ram Vilas Paswan. At the event, Chirag Paswan also read out a letter by Prime Minister Narendra Modi praising the former Union minister’s contributions to Indian polity.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar skipped the event.

It was a family reunion of



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav with LJP MP Chirag Paswan and his family during the event to mark the death anniversary of Ram Vilas Paswan, in Patna on Sunday

sorts for the younger Paswan with almost all the members of the extended family gathering at the SK Puri residence.

Chirag Paswan also spent time with Opposition leader Yadav, who brought several RJD members along with him. Yadav has written to the Bihar Chief Minister seeking a life-size statue of Paswan in Patna.

The Jamui MP expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for the letter and said he expected the same love and affection from him in the future.

The letter, written in Hindi, says: “The political history of independent India will always have a place for (Ram Vilas)

Varun tells UP CM: Increase sugarcane prices, double PM-KISAN funds

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

A WEEK after extending support to the agitating farmers with his tweet, BJP MP Varun Gandhi has written to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath seeking various relief measures for farmers in the state and sought substantial increase in sugarcane prices, bonus on wheat and paddy, doubling the amount of PM-KISAN scheme and subsidy on diesel.

In his letter, which he posted on his Twitter handle, Gandhi suggested that the sugarcane selling price should be increased to Rs 400 per quintal, from the current Rs 315 per quintal in Uttar Pradesh. Farmers, who have been in distress, should be given an additional bonus of Rs 200 per quintal above the minimum support price (MSP) of wheat and paddy, Gandhi said.

Sugarcane is mainly grown in western Uttar Pradesh, which is the epicentre of the farmers’ protest in the state against the Centre’s farm laws.

In the two-page letter to Adityanath, the Pilibhit MP listed out the problems and demands of the farmers and also suggested the solutions. Tagging the letter, the three-term MP tweeted: “I hope issues of the sons of the soil will be heard.”

While the BJP government in the state has claimed that it has cleared more than 80 per cent of dues to about 4.5 million sugarcane farmers, Gandhi pointed out that some dues were still un-



BJP MP Varun Gandhi and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

paid. The state government has claimed that Rs 1,42,650 crore has been given to the farmers in the past four years.

On the day of the farmers’ protest rally last week, Gandhi had tweeted: “Lakhs of farmers have gathered in protest today, in Muzaffarnagar. They are our own flesh and blood. We need to start re-engaging with them in a respectful manner; understand their pain, their point of view and work with them in reaching common ground.”

The BJP MP also sought doubling of the PM-KISAN scheme to Rs 12,000 per annum for farmers, with the state government contributing Rs 6,000 from its own funds. The scheme is an initiative of the Centre through which all farmers get up to Rs 6,000 per year as minimum income support.

In his letter, Gandhi shared the concerns of the farmers over the high charges of electricity and diesel price. He urged the Chief Minister to provide a subsidy of Rs 20 per litre on diesel to farmers and reduce the power prices with immediate effect.

Must do more: Sidhu writes to CM listing demands of farmers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 12

PUNJAB CONGRESS chief Navjot Singh Sidhu on Sunday wrote to Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh highlighting 32 demands put forth by protesting farmers of the state.

The move comes two days after a Congress panel led by the PPCC chief held a meeting with the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body comprising 32 farmer unions.

In the letter, Sidhu wrote: “They [the farmers] demand cancellation of unjust and unfair FIRs registered against the unions due to cases of violence during the agitation in the state. The Congress has supported farmers in every endeavour since the beginning of the agitation, and our government has facilitated the protesting farmers by providing maximum support to their protests against the three black laws and for the legalisation of MSP. Yet, some FIRs have been registered due to untoward incidents and the government could set up a mechanism to consider each case on compassionate grounds and cancel all the unfair cases.”

Punjab Police had registered two FIRs recently — one at Machhiwara and the other at Moga — against protesting farm-

ers ahead of visits of former deputy CM Sukhbir Singh Badal. In both cases, police have claimed that unruly elements had indulged in violence during the protests. In the Moga FIR, some farmer union leaders, including those from Kirti Kisan Union and BKU (Krantikari), have been named. Farmers have been demanding the cancellation of these FIRs.

Secondly, the farmers fear that the demand for land records — ‘Fard’ — to demarcate details of land ownership before procurement, as ordered by the Centre, is unjust, the letter stated. “I personally believe it is unfair and against the interests of a large number of farmers who are sowing crops by taking land on lease. Due to ‘Sanjha Mush tarkha Khata’, with no clear land ownership for decades, the partition of land has not happened in many parts of our state. Many owners of land are now living abroad. This is also an attack on the resilient system of procurement by MSP through arhtiyas and to push the farmers away from APMC mandis towards private markets where no such records are being demanded. Thus, I strongly feel that the Centre is actually propagating ‘One Nation, Two Markets’ with different rules for APMC and private markets. This injustice we must fight against,” Sidhu said.

ble to party workers and would meet people with a smile.

An overwhelmed Chirag Paswan said: “PM has put the gist of my father’s life in his words and has shown great respect for him. The PM’s letter has given us a lot of strength in this hour of sorrow.”

Meanwhile, sources said Union minister Paras may also organise a separate function in the future to commemorate the senior Paswan.

Among those who attended Sunday’s event were Bihar Governor Phagu Chouhan, Bihar Deputy CM Renu Devi, Speaker Vijay Kumar Sinha, and Bihar Congress chief MM Jha.



WORDLY WISE
ENGINEERING WITHOUT IMAGINATION
SINKS TO A TRADE.
— HERBERT HOOVER

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

SHRINKING THE CM

BJP central leadership replaces one more chief minister, trend of overweening high command takes hold

THE BJP HAS replaced yet another one of its chief ministers — the third in two months — before the end of his tenure, for reasons that are not officially stated but ostensibly have to do with balancing caste equations and containing anti-incumbency. The party has chosen Bhupendra Patel, a low-profile legislator with no previous experience in government, as the new Gujarat CM, seemingly in a bid to assuage the politically powerful Patel community ahead of assembly polls in 2022. Vijay Rupani’s poor record in Covid management — the Gujarat High Court had censured the government’s functioning — and his inability to win over powerful social groups, may have gone against him. But his exit, in circumstances that are strikingly similar to his elevation to chief ministerial office in 2016, speaks of a larger trend in the BJP.

Political parties are prone to replacing MLAs in elections to dent anti-incumbency, but a change at the top is usually made when there is a threat of revolt by legislators. However, the BJP has visibly downsized the office of the chief minister in states where it runs the government — even assembly elections are fought in the name of the prime minister. The presidential mode of campaign in the general election, which has coincided with the rise of Narendra Modi in national politics in 2014, has percolated down to assembly elections. Gujarat, where Modi has also been the chief minister, is the best example of this trend: Votes are sought for Modi in elections at all levels — Rupani and the new CM, Bhupendra Patel, were not prominent in state politics until their elevation to the state’s top office. After his ouster from office, Rupani compared the change of chief ministers to a relay race: “I was running. Now I will give the flag to someone else. (Now) he will run,” he said. In Uttarakhand and Karnataka, where the BJP also recently replaced CMs, it similarly preferred legislators with limited influence to party veterans: For instance, in Karnataka, it opted for Basavaraj Bommai, who had joined the BJP only in 2008. In Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, the party did not highlight any state leader during assembly elections and sought votes by projecting Modi’s leadership.

Ironically, this rise of a powerful party centre, reminiscent of the Congress high command under Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, is at variance with the federal approach the BJP had cultivated and nurtured under Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani. That had enabled the party to create a second line of leadership of charismatic politicians in the states. Many of them — Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Uma Bharti, Vasundhara Raje, Raman Singh, Yediyurappa, Kalyan Singh among others — led the party to success in their respective states, which can be said to have laid the ground for the BJP’s spectacular growth under Modi and Amit Shah. The denial of autonomy to state units and agency to state leaders, the preference for faceless runners in a relay race over influential politicians, and the dependence on the high command for electoral outreach, are significant changes in the form and character of the new BJP.

IIT-PLUS

Their success as B-schools is a sign of a more expansive education vision taking root at premier engineering institutions

SIX IITs ARE now among the top 20 management institutions in the country, some even outpacing reputed business schools such as IIM-Indore and IIM-Lucknow — proof that India’s premier engineering schools are not content to remain just that. The signs of a more expansive vision of education, that looks beyond tech to embrace the world of humanities and law, arts and architecture, have been evident at the IITs for a while now. IIT-Kharagpur, for example, opened a medical college in 2018; over a decade earlier, it had set up a school of law focussed on intellectual property. The highest ranked IIT on the National Institute Ranking Framework in the management category, IIT Delhi, started offering MBA programmes in the late 1990s. Over the years, several IITs have gone on to offer courses in humanities, social science and literature as well, arguably in response to a growing realisation that an exclusively technical education can become a stunted one. The transformation has been slow and steady, at a pace decided by the IITs and on their own terms. But it signals an important, welcome change — it is increasingly hard to conceive of education, even professional education, in silos. Indeed, the IITs have been chipping away at a working model of interdisciplinary education, much in the mould of what the National Education Policy envisages a future university ought to be.

This success offers a lesson: Given adequate financial resources and the autonomy to decide their own trajectory, higher education institutions can build on their unique strengths to live up to the ambitious blueprints of policymakers. For example, what is giving the IITs momentum in challenging the best business schools is a focus on research. Where the IITs falter is an old, deep-rooted deficiency — gender diversity. Despite the introduction of supernumerary quotas to increase the intake of women, the IITs remain a largely male preserve — here, they are losing out to the IIMs, which do much better on the count of inclusivity.

For decades now, the IITs have defined success for lakhs of students barely out of school, ready to hurl themselves into rigorous hyper-competitive training to procure a seat at the elite institutions. Some of the features of this regime have been called into question, from the social bias that makes an IIT classroom predominantly male and upper-caste to the rigid walls between science and arts education. Not all of those questions, especially on gender and caste inclusion, have found satisfactory answers. But a widening of the IIT canvas bodes well — for the larger education ecosystem.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



An aatmanirbharta challenge



ASHOK GULATI AND RITIKA JUNEJA

Move to promote oil palm is welcome, but incentive structure that favours rice, wheat must change

LAST WEEK, THE government announced the minimum support prices (MSP) of rabi crops for the marketing season 2022-23. The MSP for wheat is up by 2 per cent while that of rapeseed-mustard is up by 8.6 per cent, perhaps indicating that the government wants to focus more on edible oils/oilseeds than on wheat. This is the right approach given, on the one hand, the bulging stocks of wheat at home and the massive imports of edible oils on the other. But the profitability of MSP over the projected cost (A2+FL) is 100 per cent both in case of wheat as well as rapeseed-mustard. Given that the government has a massive procurement programme for wheat, but a very meagre one for rapeseed-mustard even when the prices rule below MSP, the relative incentive structure remains in favour of wheat. So, we doubt if farmers will switch from wheat to mustard in any meaningful manner to bridge the edible oil deficit.

In this context, it is important to note that Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently announced a Rs 11,000-crore National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm (NEOM-OP), as a part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. This is a bold step to augment domestic edible oil supplies, given that 60 per cent of the edible oil consumed in the country is imported — more than half of this is palm oil followed by soybean and sunflower. In FY 2020-21, edible oil imports touched \$ 11 billion or about Rs 80,000 crore (for 13.5 million tonnes). Despite these imports, edible oil inflation in July 2021 (on a year-on-year basis) was 32.5 per cent.

In this backdrop, the move to promote oil palm is a step in the right direction. It is the only crop that can give up to four tonnes of oil productivity per hectare under good farm practices. But it is a water-guzzling crop, loves humidity (requires 150 mm rainfall every month) and thrives best in areas with temperature between 20 and 33 degrees Celsius. The National Re-assessment Committee (2020) has identified 28 lakh hectares suitable for oil palm cultivation in the country — the actual area under oil palm cultivation, as of 2020, is only 3.5 lakh

Achieving self-sufficiency in edible oil production through the other oilseeds complex would require about adding about 45 million hectares under oilseed cultivation. This is not possible without drastically cutting down the area under cereal crops. The best alternative is, therefore, to ensure proper care of palm oil crop, provide good planting material, better irrigation management, fertilisers and other inputs to raise productivity to four tonnes of oil/hectare.

hectares. A large potential is thus waiting to be tapped. Much of this (34 per cent) is in the Northeastern states, including Assam, followed by Andhra Pradesh (19 per cent) and Telangana (16 per cent).

NEOM-OP aims to bring an additional 6.5 lakh hectares under oil palm by 2025-26, of which 3.25 lakh hectares will be in the Northeast and the remaining in other parts of the country, most prominently in the irrigated tracts of Telangana. Thus, by 2025-26, the government hopes to cover an area of a million hectares under oil palm. We feel the government could have been bolder and attempted to cover 2 million hectares by 2025-26, given the huge deficit in edible oil production in the country. Achieving self-sufficiency in edible oil production through the other oilseeds complex would require adding about 45 million hectares under oilseed cultivation. This is not possible without drastically cutting down the area under cereal crops. The best alternative is, therefore, to ensure proper care of palm oil crop, provide good planting material, better irrigation management, fertilisers and other inputs to raise productivity to four tonnes of oil/hectare.

The NEOM-OP intends to focus on productivity and area expansion by supporting the farmers in the following ways: An input assistance of Rs 20,000-29,000/ha for planting material, additional assistance of Rs 12,500/ha for four years to cover maintenance/opportunity costs of farmers, with no limits on acreage, a Rs 5-crore assistance to industries that plan to set up a five tonnes/hour processing unit, assistance of Rs 100 lakh to seed gardens in the Northeast for 15 hectares (up to Rs 80 lakh in rest of India); and support for vermiculture, irrigation and farm mechanisation. This comprehensive assistance package will, hopefully, attract farmers as well as incentivise the industry to work with agriculturists and augment edible oil production in a globally competitive manner, thereby reducing the import bill.

A critical element of the strategy is the pricing formula for fresh fruit bunches (FFB)

of oil palm. There will be no MSP, but the FFB price for farmers would be fixed at 14.3 per cent of average landed CPO price of the past five years, adjusted with the wholesale price index. This is the most critical part of the pricing policy and the formula needs to be carefully calibrated. However, the litmus test of pricing will be dovetailing it with the import tariff policy to protect the farmers in case landed prices fall below the cost of production. Recently, the effective duty on crude palm oil imports has been slashed against high global prices to 30.25 per cent (including agri-cess at 17.5 per cent and social welfare cess at 10 per cent). The effective duty on refined palm has been slashed to 41.25 per cent. Duties on other edible oils, soya and sunflower, are in the same range. However, effective duty for rapeseed and cottonseed oils ranges from 38.5 per cent for crude and 49.5 per cent for refined oils. It’s this high import duty, at a time when global edible oil prices have gone up by almost 70 per cent (y-o-y), that has caused high domestic inflation (32.5 per cent) in edible oils.

In its 2012 report, “Oil Palm: Pricing for Growth, Efficiency & Equity”, the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices recommended that India should keep an import duty trigger at \$800/tonne — if the import price falls below \$800/tonne, the import tariff needs to go up in countercyclical manner. Thus, import duty needs to be in sync with rational domestic price policy. It is a necessary condition to give a fillip to aatmanirbharta in edible oils. But the sufficient condition would be revisiting the existing incentive structure that unduly favours rice, wheat and sugarcane through heavy subsidisation of power, fertilisers and open-ended procurement. The need is to devise a crop-neutral incentive structure where cropping patterns are aligned with demand patterns, and the crops are produced in a globally competitive manner.

Gulati is Infosys Chair professor and Juneja is Consultant at ICRIER



RAMU RAMANATHAN

WHEN I SPOTTED Sonal Shukla for the first time in the 1980s, I thought she was the best singer in the world. A feisty woman all pumped up and hollering at the top of her voice during a protest in Mumbai. Around her were a ragtag army of women marchers. Her finest moment was the Forum Against Rape movement — spontaneously formed by 49 women who connected over an open letter signed by Upendra Baxi and three others about the injustice in the Mathura rape case judgment by the Supreme Court.

Sonalben was our Odetta (the voice — and what a voice — of the civil rights movement in the USA). Music was in her genes. She was the daughter of Ninu Mazumdar, the musical maestro who composed hundreds of Gujarati songs and ditties. She once told me, “We have truly no roots in the family’s feudal past. No caste, no ‘native place’ to visit, no assets in Gujarat anywhere, no idols at home, no vrat and fasts, no rituals of any kind at home. Our father created musicals based on Sita, wrote stutis to Shiv and garbas of devis, but treated those sources as literature and not religion.”

Unlike her siblings, Shukla inherited very little of the musical notes from her father. But that never deterred her. Sonalben sang her protest songs. Future activists like me joined the chorus. We were shaped by her.

A committed feminist, Shukla’s focus in life — like Savitribai Phule — was “the empowerment of girls from deprived communities.” Her favourite child was Vacha. Born in 1987, Vacha is a tiny library in a municipal

THE SONGS OF SONALBEN

Through libraries and classrooms, Sonal Shukla opened new worlds for women

Her favourite child was Vacha. Born in 1987, Vacha is a tiny library in a municipal school in Santacruz which houses women’s magazines and writing by women. The Vacha idea was simple. Ordinary young girls in bastis could access words and indeed ideas — particularly work songs and work anecdotes — because they shape their lives better than high theory. Shukla and her team published books in which a girl asks: “Is Chyavanprash only for boys?” or “Why must boys not wash utensils?”

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Today, three decades later, Vacha has an outreach in more than 16 bastis in the city. Publishing books in which the *bal-kishoris* document their lives, the centres borrow heavily from Shukla’s work in her formative years. The emphasis is on basic stuff: “The right to food; right to pee; right to complain; the right to walk or cycle on the streets of Mumbai with heads held high; and, the right to laugh.”

When I had asked her what that meant, she said, “We had mothers who told us our daughters are happy at your centre, but please instruct them not to laugh so much when they step out. Some man will then stop them from going there.”

During the pandemic, her work carried on. She reported that the situation in the bastis was “frightening”, with job losses and mounting inflation. Vacha ran classes for six-year-olds in 2020 as schools shut down, and then for Class II students this year. Her forecast for this group of children was dire: “All over the country, millions of children between five and seven are likely to remain il-

literate or semi-literate.”

Besides dialectics and *daaru* with the best minds of our generation (from Angela Davis and Tariq Ali and Praful Bidwai to Flavia Agnes), Shukla’s weekly column in a Gujarati newspaper commanded respect from readers at a time when her Left politics had in some ways been eclipsed by right-wing gobbledegook. Be it her tributes to Dhiruben Patel and Ila Pathak or her analysis of women characters in Gujarati novelist Govardhanram Tripathi’s works, she sang the song of sanity. She analysed Vile Parle, the part of the city in which she stayed most of her life. In fact, she had insights on everything, from secret non-vegetarian joints to rare harmonium players. From Marx to Gandhi.

She corrected me when I mentioned her fondness for Gandhi in a public programme. “Gandhian education, though not always Gandhi, has been dear to me. Even today, I am trying to balance both in Vacha’s scheme of social education in the *bastis* of Bombay.”

By some standards, the planet has made progress when it comes to rights for women. And yet, four decades after the Mathura case, the question to ask is, if an Adivasi minor girl would be raped today, will we find the energy, force and commitment to raise our collective voices?

If only we had time for one more rousing song, Sonalben.

The writer is a playwright and editor of PrintWeek

SEPTEMBER 13, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

TAMIL NADU BANDH

THE STATE GOVERNMENT-sponsored bandh in Tamil Nadu against the atrocities on Tamils in Sri Lanka was almost total and peaceful, barring a few incidents of stone throwing and obstruction of trains in some parts of the state. Except for some central services like post offices, ports, railways and Indian Airlines flights and some essential services like hospitals, chemists, milk supply and the press, all activity was paralysed in the state. State government offices, banks, shops, hospitals were closed. The roads wore a deserted look, except for a few private cars and taxis. A skeleton suburban service was, however, maintained. Chief Minister M G Ramachandran in a statement

thanked the people and parties in the state for making the bandh a success.

ANTULAY’S SUCCESSOR

EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE by the Congress (I) high command to settle the Maharashtra issue before the Prime Minister leaves for her tour abroad. Sources close to the party say that there are no two opinions in the party that A R Antulay has to go. The delay in the final decision is only because of the selection of his successor.

JAGAT NARAIN MURDER

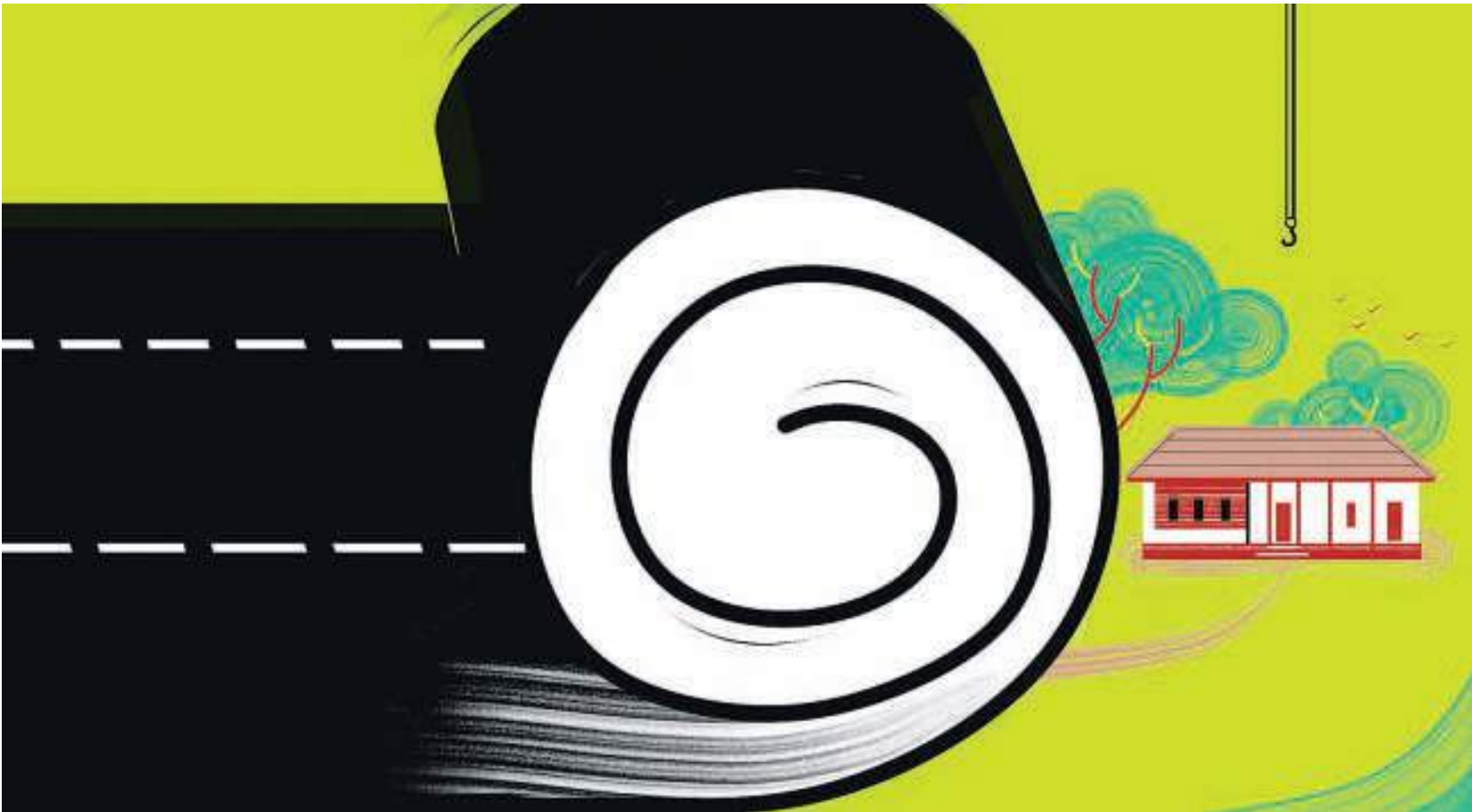
THE PUNJAB GOVERNMENT suspects Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to be the agent

provocateur behind the murder of Lala Jagat Narain. The chief secretary, Paramjit Singh, gave enough indication about Bhindranwale without naming him at a news conference. He, however, neither accepted nor denied direct questions about his role. He said evidence now confirmed that the murder was one of the few planned by “some elements who were planning the elimination of some persons with serious differences with the views they were expressing”.

CHINA DENIES

A CHINESE government spokesman denied all knowledge of a reported intrusion by Chinese troops into India’s remote north-western Ladakh territory.

9 THE IDEAS PAGE



CR Sasikumar

Stones of Sabarmati

Gandhi's Ashram is an abode of peace, a piece of history to be treasured. The nation must respect its heritage, allow it to speak



YOGINDER K ALAGH

STONES SPEAK TO you, unless you are the Taliban destroying the Bamiyan Buddhas with barbaric vengeance. The recent decision to build new structures in the IIM-A, because the corridors are dark and cold, took me back to the mid-Sixties when I was teaching and finishing my thesis at the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. One day, Louis Kahn called all of us — Indian students and teachers — to the School of Architecture. In his dramatic style, he stood in front of a silk curtain behind which we could see a light. He dramatically parted the curtain and we saw the model of the IIM-A. He asked: “First impression?”

I was in the first row and he asked me: “Do you know Ahmedabad?” I said: “Yes sir”. He said: “So?” I blurted out: “It is very un-Indian.” He was infuriated. “What do you mean?” he asked. I knew I was in a soup. I said, “Mine is a poor country. These give a sense of power.” He looked at me, stammered and said: “No. It’s a monastery.” I retired hurt.

In Ahmedabad, the Sabarmati was once a river. Bapu’s ashram was on its banks. When I had a headache on account of all my worldly care — running institutions from a relatively young age — I would go to Hriday Kunj, sit for a few minutes, see his spectacles, writing desk and slippers, feel he was mock-

ing me for trivialising life (“Look at my problems young man,” his twinkling eyes said). I went to the river bank, sat for a while, felt happy again, walked back, ate puri/shak at the cafeteria and went back.

Then there were the riots in March 2002. Chuni Kaka (the Gandhian, Chuni Vaidya) called up to say that he and Narayan Desai were going on a silent march, with a black gag on their mouth, from the Kochrab Ashram to the Sabarmati Ashram, carrying a poster, “Ahmedabad wants peace”. “Would you like to join?” Of course, I will, I said. My son joined too. We were around 40 people to begin with. Ahmedabad was still burning. We didn’t have police protection. But people kept on joining and half way, at the Gujarat Vidyapith set up by Bapu, there were hundreds marching. *Log saath aate gaye aur carvaan banta gaya*. At the ashram, a message of peace was read out, in spite of my protest, in my name — and not Vaidya’s or Desai’s. It was reported the world over.

Many years later, I was to lead the Indian delegation to the first Indo-Pak Planning Commission meeting. At Takshila, the stones speak to you, although the official guide gave it an “Islamic” twist, ignoring my diplomatic demurring, which he dismissed as anti-Islamic propaganda. Later at Nalanda, the stones whispered the same stories.

Meanwhile, Bimal Patel, whose teacher, the American planner of Spanish origin, Manuel Castells, had once invited me to a select meeting of experts to brief the first Prime Minister of Spain after the fall of the Franco regime, gave me a lockdown on his plans for redevelopment of the riverfront. I told him not to plan with a 10-year flood history, and sure enough, crores of rupees of work were

washed away in the next monsoon flood. During this briefing, I also muttered something about my friend, the architect Charles Correa, and that he had not spoiled the Ashram while redoing it. I shudder at the redevelopment now.

At JNU, the stones speak to you in your morning walk. The Aravalli ranges there are short of water. The Rohillas ran away because of thirst. I wasn’t going to run away. So, I got satellite imagery to help us to decide where to dig for water. While planning the Sardar Sarovar dam, we had to dig the foundations to withstand a thousand-year flood.

And now they want to turn the room where Nehru stood up on the midnight of August 14, 1947 and addressed the world — “When the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom” — into a museum. There are such rooms in other countries. Nations treasure their heritage. We are the descendants of Pataliputra. My ancestors include Raja Porus, Prithviraj Chauhan, the persecuted Bahadur Shah Zafar. The Dandi March is my heritage.

The redevelopment of Gandhiji’s birthplace in Porbandar destroyed its simple elegance. A few decades back, a narrow road led to his three-storied brick-and-stone house. There was peace on each floor. You sat there, happy at the journey you had made. Now the *gali* is widened. The shops are gone. The house has been “redeveloped”. It’s sickening if you compare it with the earlier ambience.

We must learn to treasure the stones, each one of which will remind us of their “memory”.

The writer is an economist and a former Union minister



SWAPNA KONA NAYUDU

IN THE AFTERMATH of the recent US withdrawal from Afghanistan, Fariba Nawa, an Afghan-American journalist, said in a tweet, “Congrats that you wrote a book and you have a few Afghan friends on the ground. And now you’re a superstar because you embedded with the TB [the Taliban] or government forces. You were super brave. But you don’t represent us. You don’t have anything [to] lose. We do.” Nawa was responding to writing on Afghanistan by non-Afghans, of scholarly or journalistic expertise from around the world. This damning indictment compels us to ask: What are the ethics of writing about Afghanistan from New Delhi? Of course, I use New Delhi as a signifier term rather than to indicate its precise location, to indicate writing sympathetic to an Indian point of view, reflective of the worlds of policymaking and the academe that often intersect, and have a shared readership.

Due to its longstanding imagery in Indian writing as a frontier state, Indian political writing on Afghanistan to a large extent has always been writing on war. This tendency was deepened by the world wars, which occasioned a closely entwined theorisation of war and empire by South Asian thinkers. The non-violent politics of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and his Khilafat Movement in the 1920s, embodied that consciousness. Afghanistan was a central concern in an exciting tradition of anti-colonial thought and anti-imperial agitation, eclipsed in public memory by populist movements led by Gandhi, but, in actuality,

The way we write on Afghanistan

Point of view of Indian writers mirrors Eurocentric ideas of war and empire

enacted through writing across the British Raj. If the distance between Delhi and Kabul in the 1920s and ’30s is the distance between Gandhi and Bacha Khan, then that history of the takedown of empire should be a fertile source for writing.

Where is that history now and what role does it play in interpreting a contemporary war? And how is it that so much Indian writing disjoins the current political landscape of Afghanistan from the wider context of empire, in its British, Soviet or American iterations? Projects aimed at decolonising political writing have escaped their confines in academia and have gained considerable hold in popular writing. Yet, this present moment is perplexing because it seems that new critical approaches to war are being neglected precisely when they could be tools to evaluate the failure of and sudden abdication by a great power in India’s immediate neighbourhood. How is it possible that mid-20th-century subcontinental writers mounted extraordinarily unforgiving critiques of the imperial project, but despite long strides in the state of the theoretical field, Indian writers now are sliding back into ways of thinking about war that are resolutely imperialist?

There are two overlapping explanations for this reversal — first, the subcontinental anti-imperial tradition has now been lost to the trickle-down, ironically from the West, of Eurocentric ideas about war and empire. The radical vocabulary of modern Indian anti-imperialist thought is eschewed in favour of dominant western so-

cial and political thought, especially on writings concerning war. Eurocentrism is rampant, in what the critical theorist of empire, Tarak Barkawi, calls “the unreflective assumption of the centrality of Europe, and latterly the West in human affairs”. This sort of Eurocentric analysis is materialised in an enchantment with the consequences of the US occupation of Afghanistan for the occupying power.

Second, foreign policy analysis has become a weak substitute for responses to the imperialist, fascist and ultimately capitalist aspects of world order. There is no critique to be made if we remain shackled to the language of strategy, which is ultimately a militaristic language. Indeed, the urge to respond pragmatically goes against the notion that India and Afghanistan share an imperial past and are impaled by it in our statehood, even if not in equal measure. Profound insights have emerged on humanitarian projects in Afghanistan, and on the moral fortitude India should have shown once the US withdrew, but we need more thinking on the relationship between what is happening in Afghanistan now and the neoliberalism India has embraced for itself.

To say that there is an intimate relation between 21st-century neoliberalism of the stripe now seen globally, but rather starkly in India, and America going to war, is possibly now blasé. When the Afghan National Army fell so quickly to the Taliban this past month, it reminded me of the words of an American soldier in Iraq, 2002: “America

is not at war; the Marine Corps is at war. America is at the mall.” The frailty of Afghan institutions and their impending fate must provoke in us a deeper consideration of how a South Asian state has had a disastrous decolonisation forced upon it, with those in power now an unmitigated consequence of the very imperial project that has been displaced.

After the 1960s, Indians have written little about wars that were not India’s to fight. From the 1920s to the 1960s, in a long moment of dense internationalism, writing about Asia, Africa, Latin America meant writing about wars and empire. War writing has since slid into the domain of military history, which is important in its place. But we also need to disentangle the neoliberal militarism that makes war possible but also that becomes validated through war. If we are to write about war as a field where contestation between unequal powers escapes the civility of politics, then in India we only have to look back to our own not-so-distant encounters with empire that remain with us and are unceasing in the social and political effects they produce. Reengaging India’s colonial past in service of the present moment may help us write the history of this war as that of Afghanistan’s war, waged on Afghan soil and on the bodies of Afghan men, women, children.

The writer works on India’s international relations and political thought at Harvard University Asia Center

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The establishment of a Taliban government in Kabul has underscored that far from reasserting its global supremacy, the US looks more vulnerable today; and that the echoes of 9/11 are still reverberating across the region — but will not stay there.” —THE GUARDIAN

It’s still uphill

GDP is unlikely to reach pre-Covid level in ongoing quarter. But uptick in vaccinations could bridge the gap in second half of the year



ADITI NAYAR

THE DISTORTED BASE of last year’s restrictive nationwide lockdown has expectedly obscured the challenges wrought by the second wave of Covid-19 in India in the first quarter of the current financial year. India’s real GDP has expanded by a record-high 20.1 per cent (year-on-year) in the first quarter on the low base. However, a more appropriate assessment of the real recovery can be achieved by looking through a pre-Covid lens — that is, comparing the first quarter of 2021-22 with the first quarter of 2019-20.

The impact of the second wave was a considerable 9.2 per cent compression in the real GDP relative to the pre-Covid level. Incidentally, the corresponding change displayed by other large economies over the same period ranged from a moderate contraction of 3.9 per cent for Italy to a stellar growth of 11.5 per cent for China. The US reported a rise of 2 per cent, benefitting from the earlier coverage of vaccines over a larger proportion of its population.

Coming back to the drivers of aggregate demand in India, both private consumption and investment trailed their pre-Covid levels in the first quarter of the ongoing year by 12 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively. While farm demand remained resilient after a series of healthy harvests, the loss of employment and incomes in swathes of the non-farm rural and urban economy as well as higher medical and fuel expenses, contributed to the overall squeeze in private consumption. Investment plans were put on hold by the private sector amidst the second wave, even though government capital spending, especially that of the central government, put up a healthier performance even as government consumption spending exceeded the pre-Covid level by a healthy 7.4 per cent in the first quarter.

To examine this further, we analysed the performance of Centre and state finances in the first quarter, relative to that of the first quarter in 2019-20.

Let’s first look at the fiscal metrics of the central government. The Centre’s revenue expenditure rose by 7.8 per cent, led by non-subsidy spending. Moreover, its capital expenditure nearly doubled to Rs 1.1 trillion, from the muted Rs 0.6 trillion that had been recorded amidst the parliamentary elections and implementation of the model code of conduct.

Despite this, the Centre’s fiscal deficit declined to a modest Rs 2.7 trillion from the pre-Covid level of Rs 4.3 trillion. This is due to an increase in its revenue receipts, benefitting from the upfronting of the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) surplus of

around Rs 1 trillion to the first quarter of this year, from the second quarter of 2019-20, following a realignment in its accounting year to April-March in line with that of the Government of India. But, the Centre’s overall gross tax revenues have also grown, with rises seen across the board — corporation tax, personal income tax, and excise duty collections.

The considerable rise of 47 per cent in the direct tax collections is at odds with the decline in the GDP in Q1 FY2022 relative to Q1 FY2020. A likely conclusion is that the formal/tax-paying portion of the non-agri economy has gained at the cost of the rest.

For the 19 major states whose data has been published by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), we observe a substantial increase in their revenue spending — Rs 4.9 trillion in the first quarter of 2021-22, relative to the pre-Covid level of Rs 4.3 trillion. This possibly reflects higher social sector spending amid the second wave of the pandemic. These states have also seen their capital spending exceed their pre-pandemic levels.

However, in contrast to the compression observed in the Centre’s finances, these 19 states have seen their fiscal deficit nearly double to Rs 1.1 trillion this year, up from Rs 0.6 trillion the year before. This is because the states’ combined revenue receipts in the quarter were only marginally higher than the pre-Covid level. This can be traced to lower tax devolution from the Centre (relative to pre-Covid levels) and the subdued taxes of the states.

The decline in states’ own taxes, which are predominantly indirect in nature, broadly resonates with the contraction in private consumption this year as compared to its pre-Covid level. In particular, despite attractive home loan rates and cuts in stamp duty rates by some of the states, collections this year were substantially lower than pre-Covid levels, revealing the continued impact of the pandemic on states’ finances. On the other hand, the lower tax devolution in the first quarter, in our view, only represents a timing mismatch, with the budgeted target for the current fiscal modestly higher than the actual devolution in 2019-20.

Looking ahead, GDP will have to grow by 8 per cent (year-on-year) in the ongoing quarter to equalise to the pre-Covid level. Our current forecasts suggest that a continued lag in demand for contact-intensive services may narrowly prevent this from being achieved.

However, the pace of Covid-19 vaccinations has been ramped up since mid-August — this offers the best conceivable insurance to dampen the potency of another wave. If the seven-day moving average of 7.3 million doses/day as of September 5 can be sustained, 64 per cent of adults will have received their second shot before the year draws to a close. This could impart a positive momentum to the economy, pushing it above the pre-Covid level in the second half of the year.

The writer is chief economist, ICRA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ILLEGITIMATE GOVT

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘The government of the Taliban’ (IE, September 10). A government that was installed through the force of violence is, ab initio, illegitimate and cannot acquire legitimacy through the band-aid solution of including women and even Hazaras. Therefore, governments across the globe ought not to keep barking up the wrong tree and instead, unitedly call for democratic elections in Afghanistan, to be supervised by external agencies of high integrity.

Surendra Sundararajan, Baroda

NOTHING NEW

THIS REFERS TO the article ‘Deal with the new Kabul’ (IE, September 10). We should avoid taking the Taliban at their words. Rather we need to judge them by their past heinous record. There seems to be nothing new in their world view. They can change their coat but not their theological beliefs. If our demonising the Taliban goes against our so-called national interests, our canonising them clashes squarely with our own concept of a plural and liberal society we are defending back home against many odds.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

CLIMATE PLAN

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘The other shared crisis’ (IE, September 10). India is home to 1.3 billion people, with the world’s largest youth population and a huge section of aspirational middle-class that is driving the economy. India still has a sizable population under abject poverty. Its developmental needs are paramount, and cannot be compromised. The UN SDGs are already in sync

IDEAS ONLINE

ONLY IN THE EXPRESS

● **LAWYERS AND THE LAW:**
EKAKSHRA MAHAJAN MANDHAR

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with India’s developmental priorities. The country’s National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change has been tasked to work on developing indigenous solutions to the issue of climate change, considering regional and local priorities and challenges. The global community is expected to acknowledge and support the “Indian solutions” to the problem of climate change.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Barasat

A COVER-UP

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘Eight years on, probe finds those killed were unarmed, not Maoists’ (IE, Sept 10). Justice VK Agarwal, who inquired into the “encounter” in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh concluded that none of the eight people killed, including four minors, were Maoists. The report says that the security personnel “may have opened fire in panic”, and it was “a mistake”. This is plausible. But planting evidence to cover up the botched operation is deliberate. And this can’t happen without the involvement of higher-ups. Sadly, this facet of the event only compounds the tragedy.

LR Murmu, Delhi

10

IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

SATISH CHANDRA MISRA, NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY, BSP; RAJYA SABHA MP

“In UP, Brahmins, Dalits face many issues. The way murders are happening... If someone complains, they face inquiry”

Misra defends BSP’s Brahmin outreach and says party stands for *sarv samaaj*; insists BSP has been active and raising issues in Parliament and courts; and says that while the party is ready to back the Cong on issues, it will do so on its terms. The session was moderated by Chief of Bureau & Political Editor Ravish Tiwari

RAVISH TIWARI: After a long period of inactivity, the BSP has sounded the poll bugle in Uttar Pradesh with a series of public meetings. What prompted it?

It’s not entirely correct to say that we started doing this suddenly. For the past one-and-a-half years, public meetings have not been possible because of the pandemic. Despite that, we managed to have 62 meetings in different districts, with at least 200 persons each. While the Brahmins came to my office, similar meetings were held at Behenji’s (party chief Mayawati) place. The moment the Covid-19 cases dropped in UP, we began (our meetings). It’s not that we were silent, the party has been working right up to the booth level, and we are determined to throw out the BJP government in the state.

RAVISH TIWARI: But you can be accused of launching your campaign with caste-based events?

We called it ‘Prabuddha Sammelan (intellectuals’ meetings)’. No doubt, in all my meetings, 90 per cent of the attendees were Brahmins, but there were others too. There were advocates, doctors, engineers... So it wasn’t a ‘*jaatibaad*’ event. In UP, Brahmins and Dalits are facing maximum issues. The way encounters and murders are happening... If someone complains, he faces inquiry. All these people who were suffering urged me to come out... They want 2007 to come back [the last time BSP came to power], they want the brotherhood of the Brahmin and Dalit communities to return. The social engineering... no one ever thought the communities could come together. We formed a majority government.

RAVISH TIWARI: What issues will you raise in the 2022 polls?

Law and order, development, atrocities on women, atrocities on caste lines... People are again talking about Mayawati’s development work, how she handled law and order and did not even spare her own MP... Today one barely sees any development, we only see pages and pages of advertisements. (Mayawati) gave employment to people from all sections. Work on the first Delhi-Noida expressway was started in her time. An enquiry was placed on it after our term, and then the same government inaugurated it! The Congress, Samajwadi Party, everyone protested against the Jewar airport, and today they are all battling for it... Work on Lucknow Metro was started in our time. We ensured the all-round development of 29,500 Ambedkar villages. About 29,000 new primary schools were opened; seven international-level universities were set up... She opened 23 new districts, which came with new roads, hospitals, colleges... She improved the electricity situation in UP... In our five-year term, there was one rape case. Today, we hear of one rape every two hours... So that is the difference. (Mayawati) has put the agenda on the table, and has promised to take UP where it should be... Today we are seeing Rs 300 crore being spent by people to propagate themselves. It is a sin. Teachers are going without salary, people are not getting pensions, and then you are mocking everyone by putting signboards saying that we are giving 5 kg grain each to 15 crore people. But the cost of the bag with photographs of BJP leaders is more than the foodgrains. Is that justified?

LIZ MATHEW: The BJP has also been focussing on Dalit votes in UP, and the party’s caste formula has worked so far. How will you consolidate your vote base in the face of such stiff competition from the ruling party? Also, what do you make of the Bhim Army’s influence among Dalits in UP?

All these people and parties are propped up by the BJP, whether it is him (Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad) or (AIMIM chief Asaduddin) Owaisi. They are hardly going to do any damage to us. They will lose their own seat if they contest an election there. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are behind Behenji like a rock, which ensured that we got 2.62 crore votes in the Lok Sabha elections in 2014. We got no seats but we were the third largest party even then and now too. So people from these castes know who has worked for them. If they are being spoken about now, it is only and only because of her (Mayawati). It is not that she has built the Kanshiram Smarak in Noida, but she has done tremendous work for them... When BJP leaders visit



WHY
SATISH CHANDRA MISRA

With months to go for the crucial UP elections, the BSP has been holding a series of public meetings for Brahmins, hoping to revive the social engineering strategy that propelled Mayawati to power in 2007. Misra, a key strategist and aide for Mayawati, is crucial to the BSP’s gameplan as the party hopes to make a comeback

(Dalit) homes, their food is taken from their own homes, they are just shown eating with them or washing their feet... But these people vote for Behenji. Why? It’s because she doesn’t indulge in these photo-ops. She has taken them out from their huts and given them *pucca* homes... Now, once again we are trying to revive the brotherhood between Brahmins and Dalits. We are a *sarv samaaj* party. We are reaching out to the neglected, whether Brahmin or Dalit.

BHUPENDRA PANDEY: Why have there been so many suspensions and expulsions in the BSP recently, including of senior leaders such as Lalji Verma and Ram Achal Rajbhar?

We don’t follow the philosophy that just because someone is a senior leader, or an MP or MLA, they should not face action for anti-party activity. We fielded Ramji Gautam for the Rajya Sabha polls. In the last minute, some of our party’s MLAs supported the SP candidate. What can be a bigger anti-party activity? Who has made them big leaders? The party.

And so the party is most important. If you look at the careers of people whose names you are taking, you will see that they have been made zero-to-hero by Mayawati. Over the years, many such people have come and gone in the BSP, and this time too, a lot of new

faces are coming.

SHUBHAJIT ROY: The months of April and May saw acute shortage of beds and oxygen and even political leaders like yourself couldn’t hold the government accountable. Why should people trust you with their vote then?

Covid has put us all to shame. Let me tell you my own experience. I have helped at least 2,500 patients in getting treatment. For those one-and-a-half months, I literally did not sleep, trying to manage oxygen etc. We opened a campus for about 2,500-3,000 labourers who could not travel, and arranged for their food. But yes, we were not giving sound bites on TV about it; we were just doing our work. That’s how our party is. The level of Covid

mismanagement in UP is unimaginable. They (the government) started taking action against those who pointed out the mismanagement. We visited the ghats, the cremation areas, and were shocked to see that nearly 100 bodies were being burnt in a line. We even helped in arranging wood for some... Bodies were being washed away in the Ganga... Where did all the money allotted for Covid go? They were blaming the media for showing the bodies. But what the media was showing was less. We were seeing the scenes at hospitals. Many patients died of hunger.

VANDITA MISHRA: We have had many agitations in the recent past — student protests, anti-CAA protests, the farmer agitation, Dalit protests. However, the BSP has not been visible in any of these. People who are in jail today, facing sedition charges, UAPA, they are activists who do not belong to any party. For a party that speaks for the most marginalised, isn’t this a failure?

Our people have always been agitating, but in a different manner. We don’t believe in *tod-phod*. During the Dalit agitations, we were present all over the country. Two of our people died in firing in Madhya Pradesh. In UP, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, over 100 of our people were put in jail... When it comes to cases of sedition, UAPA, we have been fighting for them in court, trying to ensure their release. We don’t do *danga-fasaad* on streets. We don’t stop trains, buses, destroy government property. We protested in Parliament for farmers. Our own members are farmers and they are protesting. When we form the government, we will look at all issues. Tomorrow if you write something, even you will not be spared. It’s an undeclared Emergency.

MANOJ C G: There is much talk of Opposition unity at the national level. Sharad Pawar talks about it, Mamata Banerjee too. Sonia Gandhi held a meeting. But the BSP is not very enthusiastic about these efforts. Even in Parliament, sometimes you attend joint Opposition meetings, sometimes you don’t. The BSP remains absent when some crucial Bills are put to vote.

We are always with the Opposition, I have myself attended meetings. Whether it was the Congress government earlier,

even when we were offering them outside support, or the BJP now, you can see that. But our party takes its own decision on matters, whether something is in national or public interest, on what to oppose and what not. So when the Congress asks us to stand with them in the Opposition, we might oppose the same things and still not stand with them. There are reasons for this, there is a background. We supported them when we had 40-41 MPs altogether, but what did they do? Earlier, when Ashok Gehlot became the Chief Minister in Rajasthan, they took away six of our MLAs even when we were giving them outside support. They did the same this time... The party also did this in Himachal and a few other places... On the one hand, you do all these things to break the BSP, hurt it, and on the other you say that the BSP should stand with you at all times. So we will back them on issues, but on our terms... We are also a national party, one among five national political parties. We have to decide based on our thinking on a matter... You spoke about Bengal... (in the Assembly election) they were all fighting each other. Who was together? So we have to fight you electorally, you poach our MPs and MLAs, same as the BJP... we are not double-faced. We are clear about our stand.

MANOJ C G: If the Opposition comes together and the Congress is not the one leading it, will the BSP join it?

We have not once but several times been part of such unity bids, whether Karnataka or Bengal... But if you think that we will come with you everytime you say so, we can’t do that, either in Parliament or outside. We have an independent identity of own... We have several times raised our voice against the BJP... To say that we have supported the BJP, say on Article 370 (abrogation)... We supported it after a proper decision, that this was in line with Dr Ambedkar’s thinking. Even the BJP was surprised, it did not know we were going to support the move. The thinking was very reasonable — that while J&K has a small number of Muslims compared to the rest of the country, there are restrictions when it comes to marrying people from outside, owning prop-

erty there... Dr Ambedkar’s thinking was simple, that how can there be two sets of rules in a country, he wanted the whole country to be one. He did not support Article 370 even then.

HARIKISHAN SHARMA: In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, you had aligned with the Samajwadi Party to take on the BJP. The BSP remains weak in Uttar Pradesh. In the coming polls, are you considering any alliance?

In this election, whatever party it may be, local or national, we are not going to align with anybody. We have learnt from our experience, we had a bitter experience... No doubt we have a coalition in Punjab, with the Shiromani Akali Dal, which is going very strong. There is no doubt that we will form the government there. But in UP, we are not going to have

We are not going to align with anybody in UP. We have learnt from experience; it was bitter... Our party is No. 1 in UP right now, the BJP is No. 1 only on paper

UP. Of the 1,500 Sanskrit colleges in the state, only 50% are left, because they never paid the funds... The *bhoomi puja* was done in Ayodhya with much fanfare, spending Rs 200-250 crore on August 5, 2020. A year later, there is nothing there. I asked the sadhus there about it, they said, ‘Didn’t you see, 5 bricks were kept and prayers were offered to them. These were later immersed in the Saryu’... Come Diwali, they will claim a record in lighting *diyas*. Why not spend the same money on the poor, give to teachers?

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY: But will you make concerns of Muslims a poll issue?

The concerns that they have are also our concerns. As I already said, whether it is Muslims, Dalits, any caste, we are working for everybody.

AVANEESH MISHRA: At the BSP’s September 7 event (marking the end of the first phase of its Brahmin outreach), a lot of things that happened are usually seen on BJP platforms. The BJP sees it as an achievement of its politics.

You know that two days before our event, the BJP also organised a ‘Prabuddha Sammelan (targeted at Brahmins)’. Before that, they were attacking us, saying one shouldn’t hold events like this, it is wrong... Even the Samajwadi Party is holding such *sammelans* now... It’s another matter that nobody is coming for those. So who is copying whom? They even kept the same name. And as for your claim that the September 7 event showed a changed BSP, rewind to June 9, 2005, when we had gone before the Brahmin *samaj*, the upper caste *samaj*, and brought the Dalits and them together. Mayawati was the chief guest at that event and it attracted close to 5 lakh people. Conch shells were blown even then, she was presented with a statue of Ganesha (like on September 7). Everyone knows what she said, holding that statue, ‘*Haathi nahin Ganes hai, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh hai*’ (Haathi or elephant is the poll symbol of the BSP)... In our Prabuddha meetings across 75 districts, we have worked to remove their (BJP’s) masks and, show their real faces.

BHUPENDRA PANDEY: Mayawati has said that the BSP will not give tickets to any bahubali or leaders convicted in cases (in the context of Mukhtar Ansari). She has always been serious about issues concerning women. Your Mau MP Atul Rai is in jail on rape charges, and recently, both the victim and a witness immolated themselves before the Supreme Court. There has been no reaction from the BSP, nor has the party taken any action against Rai.

...Maybe there are some details you do not know. There is a trial on in the court, where evidence emerged in police investigation that the two of them had tried to blackmail Rai using fraudulent means, including the false proof they had submitted. Police then filed an FIR against the two, and while the investigation was on and they were summoned before the court, they disappeared... The court then said that we have an accused (Rai) in jail, and evidence has now come that the charge against him might be fabricated, so they would have to appear... Then the two of them appeared before the Supreme Court and took that action. It’s not like there was any pressure (from Rai), he continues to be in jail.

RAVISH TIWARI: Won’t a triangular contest in UP, with the BSP not aligning with anyone, help the BJP? Secondly, who will be your main target: Narendra Modi or Yogi Adityanath?

This is an election for UP, not the country. On one side is Behenji and on the other side Yogi. We are fighting this election to defeat the BJP. As for what other parties are doing, we are not concerned about that. We know we will uproot this government, like we removed the SP government in 2007. They had the outside support of the BJP. Everyone knows this well... as to who helped the SP form the government in 2003... The Supreme Court later ruled in our favour on this matter. So our fight at this time is against the BJP... I don’t see any advantage to the BJP from a triangular contest. The BJP would earlier win 40-45 seats, it would again be reduced to the same... Whatever the number, they will definitely not make any gains.

Illustration: Suvajit Dey

11 ECONOMY

COS TRANSFORMING TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS INTO CONNECTIVITY TOOLS

Big Tech recasts ‘wearables’: Privacy concerns may draw regulatory glare

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

WHILE LAUNCHING Ray-Ban Stories — smart glasses for which Facebook partnered with the eye-wear brand — the social networking giant’s CEO Mark Zuckerberg alluded to the product being an “important step” towards a time when “phones are no longer a central part of our lives”. As companies both in the internet and consumer electronics space attempt to harness the wearables technology, the next port of call could seemingly be augmented reality and virtual reality.

In itself, Ray-Ban Stories is a pair of normal wayfarers equipped with a camera, microphone, a set of speakers, and storage and connectivity modules, the product is a part of Facebook’s larger plan of building glasses that augment the world visually and aurally. In September last year, the company had unveiled Project Aria, a research project to help Facebook build the “first generation of wearable augmented reality devices”. Facebook is also working on prototype of neural wristbands that would work along with the AR glasses to translate subtle neural signals into actions using electromyography.

Even as these modernised renditions of traditional products hold the promise to change how internet is used, they come with a huge set of privacy concerns. Some of the initial reviews of Ray-Ban Stories have shown other people failing to realise that the glasses are recording, despite a feature being built in to specifically prevent this. As the use of these products proliferate, it becomes even more imperative to have a data privacy framework in place, which is currently absent in India.

This need was also made evident when just a day after its launch the new Facebook-Ray-Ban product invited attention from the data protection authority in Italy, which has sought clarifications to assess whether the smart-glasses are compliant with privacy laws. The Italian authority said it wanted to be informed on measures Facebook has put in place to protect people occasionally filmed, in particular children, as well as on systems adopted to make data collected anonymous and features of the voice assistant connected to the glasses, *Reuters* reported.

But Facebook is not the only company working in this direction. Augmented reality per se in limited spaces has only limited use-cases. For example, how Microsoft has introduced a “together

NEED FOR PRIVACY LAW

■ As the use of these products proliferate, it becomes even more imperative to have a data privacy framework in place, which is currently absent in India.

mode” as an addition to Teams, which displays all the participants in a call together in a virtual space instead of the grid of boxes that Teams and Zoom offer currently. However, when clubbed with wearables, a digital, three-dimensional layer of the world is created on these devices that would let the users interact with the various aspects of the world digitally as one does today with a smartphone.

Tech companies, for years now, have been working on integrating the connecting device as closely as possible with the human body. And the ideas for this have been coming from the fashion industry. The story of most popular wearable connectivity device — smartwatches — shows the appetite for adaptation to such devices. “India’s smartwatch market is in a boom phase as more and more people are trying out smartwatches be-

cause of the affordability factor. Smartwatches are now replacing traditional watches and complementing smartphone usage as well,” said Counterpoint Research Senior Research Analyst Anshika Jain. In 2016, when Google launched its VR headsets Daydream View, it specifically observed the need for wearable devices to be fashion oriented rather than being bulky electronic items and constructed its products using lightweight cloth and foam material. In 2017, Nokia Bell Labs announced a partnership with Belgian FashionTech designer Jasna Rokegem to design sentient garments that would “act as a smart fashionable augmented skin”.

In the eyewear technology space, too, a number of players have attempted and tried to gain some ground building upon their existing products. Google was the first big-tech company to bring out Google Glass — a futuristic looking pair of eyeglasses promised to give its users an immersive connected experience. Google Glass was available for retail purchase in 2014 but was shortly discontinued. Among the reasons for its failure was a \$1500-price tag (Facebook’s Ray-Ban Stories will be sold at \$299), and a range of privacy and hacking concerns from users.

Amazon has launched a pair of

smart-glasses under its Echo line of products called Echo Frames in 2019. The company launched a second-generation of the smart audio glasses equipped with its digital assistant Alexa earlier this year. Florida-based Magic Leap, a startup backed by Google, AT&T and NTT DoCoMo, released a headset in 2018 that cost \$2,300, but which basically failed to live up to the pre-release functionality claims, with the result that only a few thousand units being up being sold, according to tech-news website *The Information*.

In a 2019 report, PwC predicted that AR and VR have the potential to add \$1.5 trillion to the world economy by 2030, by catalysing productivity gains in areas including health care, engineering, product development, logistics, retail and entertainment while Goldman Sachs forecasts that the market for such technology to be worth \$95 billion by 2025.

Last year, India’s largest telecom firm Reliance Jio announced a new Mixed Reality solution, called Jio Glass. The company stated that the new Jio Glass was designed for teachers and students to enable 3D virtual rooms and conduct holographic classes via the Jio Mixed Reality service in real-time. Apart from this, they can also be used to perform virtual meetings.

MARKET WATCH

FPIs PUMP IN ₹7,605 CR IN SEP SO FAR

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have pumped in a net of Rs 7,605 crore in September so far. As per data from depositories, overseas investors invested Rs 4,385 crore into equities and Rs 3,220 crore in the debt segment during September 1-9. **PTI**

Post SC nudge, govt appoints 31 members to NCLT, ITAT

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

THE GOVERNMENT has appointed 31 members to the Benches of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) after the Supreme Court urged the government to fill vacancies immediately.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the appointment of eight judicial and 10 technical members to the NCLT as well as six judicial members and seven accountant members to the ITAT, according to a communication by the Department of Personnel and Training on Saturday.

The Bench noted that it did not want a confrontation with the government on this issue. The appointments to the NCLT are for five years or until the member reaches the age of 65 while appointments to the ITAT are for 4 years or until the members reach the age of 67.

The Supreme Court had called out the government last week, saying the government had “emasculated” tribunals, such as the NCLT, by not appointing members. The court noted that a “critical situation has arisen” due to the vacancies at the NCLT and the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) with respect to the completion of corporate bankruptcy proceedings.

Seventy five per cent of the

The appointments to the NCLT are for 5 years or until the member reaches 65 while that to the ITAT are for 4 years or until the members reach the age of 67

4,541 corporate insolvency cases that were ongoing at the end of June had crossed the 270-day threshold. The bankruptcy law requires that corporate insolvency proceedings be completed within 330 days, including a 60 day allowance for litigation. Cases that do not yield a successful resolution are required to be sent for liquidation barring exceptional cases.

The Bench had said it expected appointments by September 13, the next date of hearing.

Benches of the NCLT deal with matters pertaining to company law as well as bankruptcy resolution while the ITAT deals with appeals related to income tax matters. The industry has flagged concerns about long pending vacancies at the NCLT as a key reason behind delays in bankruptcy resolution under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

The Standing Committee on Finance had also called out the government on the impact of vacancies at the NCLT, which is also operating without a full-time president, and the NCLAT, which

is operating without a full-time Chairperson.

“There is no respect for the judgments of this court, that is what we are feeling. There is testing the patience of the court...,” Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, heading a three-judge Bench with Justices L Nageswara Rao and D Y Chandrachud, told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

PTI adds

Andhra High Court judge Justice Telaprolu Rajani, Bombay High Court Retired (Rtd) Judge Justice Pradeep Narhari Deshmukh, Madras High Court Retd Judge Justice S Ramathilagam and District Court Judge Deep Chandra Joshi are among those appointed judicial members to the NCLT. The newly-appointed technical members include Principal Commissioner of Income Tax Ajai Das Mehrotra, Retd NHPC CMD Balraj Joshi, Retd Ministry of Panchayati Raj Secretary Rahul Prasad Bhatnagar, Retd Principal Director General of Income Tax Subrata Kumar Dash, Retd Department of Consumer Affairs Secretary Avinash K Srivastava and Retd SBI Chief General Manager Shree Prakash Singh.

Six judicial members have been named to ITAT. They are advocates Sonjoy Sarma, S Seethalakshmi and T R Senthil Kumar, Additional District & Sessions Judges Shatin Goyal and Anubhav Sharma, and Law Officer in SBI Manomohan Das, *PTI* reported.

SECTOR WATCH GLOBAL SHIPPING

How is container crunch sinking international trade?

KARUNJITSINGH
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

THE GOVERNMENT is in talks with exporters to help them deal with an international container shortage that has led to freight rates rising by over 300 per cent in the past year for key shipping routes.



JNPT in Mumbai. *File*

Why is there an international container shortage?

Experts said the reduction in the number of shipping vessels operating as a result of the pandemic have led to fewer empty containers being picked up, leaving many cases in inland depots and stuck at ports for long durations. Long waiting times at key ports, such as those in the US due to congestion, are also contributing to lengthening turnaround time for containers. A sustained global economic recovery has added to the impetus to trade. The lack of availability of containers and the faster-than-expected recovery in international trade has pushed up freight rates.

How is the container shortage impacting Indian exporters?

Indian exporters are facing major delays in their shipments and consequent liquidity issues as they have to wait

longer to receive payment for exported goods. Exporters noted that shipments that used to take 45 days are now taking 75-90 days, leading to 2-3 months of delay in payments that are causing liquidity crunch, particularly for small exporters.

How can the government help address this issue?

Exporters are calling on the government to regulate the export of empty containers. Experts said some countries were willing to pay a premium for empty containers and that this was further adding to the container shortage. They have asked the government to curb the export of empty containers at all Indian ports in line with a move by the Kolkata port to restrict the number of empty cases permitted to be exported to 100 per vessel for a three-month period.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

‘Manufacturing outlook in Q2 improves; cost of doing biz rises’

The outlook for increased manufacturing activities in the second quarter of this fiscal has been significantly improved, though cost of doing business is rising, according to a survey by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry

Hike in production costs, industry respondents attributed to, primarily high fixed costs, higher overhead costs for ensuring safety protocols, and a drastic reduction in volumes due to lockdown, as per Ficci’s latest quarterly survey (Q2) on manufacturing



logistic costs, increased cost of raw materials, power cost, and high-interest rates also factors for the hike

Lower capacity utilisation, high freight charges and other

68% MENTIONED THAT THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO HIRE ADDITIONAL WORKFORCE IN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

After experiencing subdued Q1, the outlook seems to have improved significantly in Q2

High percentage of respondents experiencing the rising cost of doing business and production

Around 58% of participants are expecting a rise in their outbound shipments during the second quarter



Source: Ficci/PTI

Methodology Responses have been drawn from over 300 manufacturing units from both large and SME segments with a combined annual turnover of over 2.7 lakh crore

‘GDP to expand 10% this fiscal; sustaining 7-8% growth key challenge’

New Delhi: The economy is expected to grow around 10 per cent during the current financial year on the likelihood of fewer Covid-linked supply disruptions and buoyancy in the global economy, said Poonam Gupta, director general of think-tank NCAER.

The real challenge, however, would be to sustain a growth rate of 7-8 per cent in years to come, she said.

“We could see annual growth in the ballpark range of about 10 per cent. The reasons for this perceived optimism are: fewer supply disruptions; increased pent-up demand in the traditional and contact-intensive services; and a buoyant global economy.

“Even so, if two pandemic years are taken together, there would be a very small net growth.

In other words, the economy at the end of 2021-22 would be only slightly larger than at the end of 2019-20,” Gupta said.

Gupta is the first woman director general of NCAER. Before joining the think-tank, she was the lead economist at the World Bank. She was also the Reserve Bank of India Chair Professor at NIPFP, and a Professor of Macroeconomics at ICRIER.

On the challenges being faced by the Indian economy, she said the first one is to recover from the impact of Covid and the second is to sustain post-Covid growth rates of at least 7-8 per cent.

India has done rather well during the Covid pandemic, primarily because of the rapid pace of vaccination, Gupta said. **PTI**

Air India transfer of assets to SPV to be TDS, TCS exempt

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

THE GOVERNMENT has exempted taxes on transfer of assets by Air India to SPV Air India Assets Holding Ltd, a move aimed at facilitating strategic disinvestment of the national carrier.

As a precursor to Air India sale, the government in 2019 had set up a special purpose vehicle, Air India Assets Holding Ltd (AIAHL), for transfer of debt and non-core assets of the Air India group.

In a set of notifications, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has said that no TDS shall be deducted under section 194Q in case of transfer of goods by Air India Ltd to AIAHL.

Also, no TDS shall be de-



Air India flight at Mumbai airport. *File*

ducted under section 194-IA of IT Act on payments made to Air India for transfer of immovable property to AIAHL.

The CBDT also said that Air India would not be considered as ‘seller’ for the purposes of deduction of TCS for with regard to transfer of goods by it to AIAHL.

It said that transfer of capital asset under plan approved by central government from Air

India Ltd to AIAHL would not be regarded as transfer for the purpose of income tax.

Last week, the CBDT had allowed new owners of erstwhile public sector companies to carry forward losses and set it off against future profits.

This is an effort towards making disinvestment deals of ailing state-owned firms more attractive for strategic investors.

The government is seeking to sell 100 per cent of its stake in the state-owned national airline, including Air India’s 100 per cent shareholding in AI Express Ltd and 50 per cent in Air India SATS Airport Services Pvt Ltd.

The strategic sale has reached the crucial phase with the September 15 being the last date for putting in financial bids by potential buyers. **WITHPTI**

Zomato to pull plug on grocery delivery service from Sept 17

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12

ZOMATO HAS decided to stop its grocery delivery service from September 17 on account of gaps in order fulfillment leading to poor customer experience, marking its exit from the segment for the second time since last year.

The company also said that it believes that its investment in Grofers will generate better outcomes for its shareholders than in-house grocery efforts.

A Zomato spokesperson said, “We have decided to shut down our grocery pilot... Grofers has found high quality product market fit in 10 minute grocery and we believe our investment in the firm will generate better outcomes.”

BRIEFLY

I-T refunds of ₹70,120 cr

New Delhi: The Income Tax Department on Sunday said it has issued refunds of over Rs 70,120 crore till September 6 this year.

‘Release of DA, DR arrears’

New Delhi: Bharatiya Pensioners Manch (BMS) has sought intervention of the Prime Minister for release of DA and DR arrears for central government staff and pensioners at the earliest. **PTI**

A nick to Apple’s profits could be windfall for app developers

JACK NICAS & KELLEN BROWNING
SAN FRANCISCO, SEPT 12

APPLE HAS taken to calling its iPhone App Store an “economic miracle,” and it has pointed to developers like Zach Shakked as proof. Shakked created an iPhone app that helps companies find trending hashtags on social media. Over the past 12 months, his sales have topped \$5 million.

But one of Shakked’s largest expenses is paying a cut to the world’s richest company. In his case, Apple took nearly \$1.5 million — its fee for letting him run his app on its devices.

Now, Shakked has hope that he could soon keep at least some of that money. On Friday, a federal judge ordered Apple to allow developers to steer their customers off their iPhone apps to pay for their goods or services, which Apple had banned. That is big news for developers like Shakked, because sales completed outside Apple’s payment systems are not subject to its commission of up to 30 per cent.

“It finally feels like the small guys got a win,” Shakked, 25, said. “There’s a sense of justice.”

The ruling in Apple’s yearlong legal fight with Epic Games, maker of the popular video game Fortnite, set off celebrations

POSSIBLE BARRIERS

THERE COULD be a number of barriers to the mandated App Store changes. Apple could ask another judge to temporarily block the order, which is set to take effect in 90 days.



Apple store, New York. *Reuters*

among app developers. From one-person startups to Fortune 500 companies, they have long complained about paying hefty cuts of their businesses to Apple.

The impact of the decision will be most felt by the smallest devel-

opers like Shakked.

“It’s a very big deal,” said Denys Zhadanov, a board member at Zaddle. The court fight has often been framed as a battle between industry heavyweights: Apple, which is worth \$2.5 trillion, versus

Epic, a far smaller company but still one of the few app makers capable of taking on the Silicon Valley titan. Friday’s verdict is not expected to be a big hit to Apple’s bottom line. In fact, the company declared victory, since Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers, of US District Court for the Northern District of California, ruled that Epic had failed to prove that Apple had a monopoly in the mobile gaming market — which would have had a much more serious consequence.

There could be a number of barriers to the mandated App Store changes. Apple could ask another judge to temporarily block the order, which is set to take ef-

fect in 90 days. And both companies could appeal the ruling, a process that could take several years. Apple could also restrict how developers direct customers off their apps to complete transactions, including by making them list Apple’s payment system as an option and barring them from offering discounts for customers who don’t pay via Apple. Such discounts may be necessary to persuade customers to take the extra steps to open a web browser and enter their credit card information, versus simply tapping a button and paying via Apple.

Nevertheless, the tide may be starting to turn against Apple’s tight control over its App Store.

Regulators in Japan and South Korea have forced Apple to tweak how it manages the store, and regulators and lawmakers around the world are also considering measures to curb the company’s influence.

Match Group, maker of dating apps Tinder and Hinge, is on track to pay Apple and Google — which controls a similar app store for phones that run its Android software — more than \$500 million in commissions this year, the company’s single largest expense, said Gary Swidler, Match’s finance chief. The company was already considering ways to use Friday’s ruling to cut down that bill as much as possible, he said. **NYT**

TOP OF THE WORLD



Anne Hidalgo

FRANCE
Socialist Paris mayor enters race for French presidency

PARIS MAYOR Anne Hidalgo said Sunday she would run for president in 2022 on a Socialist ticket, though polls indicate she has little chance of mounting a serious challenge unless she can unite the fragmented left. Hidalgo, who became the first woman to run the French capital in 2014 and is among the few senior left-wing politicians to emerge from President Emmanuel Macron's 2017 redrawing of the political landscape unscathed, is polling at about 8% in April's first round. Macron and far-right leader Marine Le Pen are polling at between 20% and 24%. "Knowing the seriousness of our times and to give hope to our lives, I have decided to be candidate for the French presidency," she said. **REUTERS**

NORWAY

Norwegians begin voting in election centred on oil

NORWEGIANS WENT to the polls on Sunday for the first of two days of voting in a parliamentary election dominated by the widening gap between rich and poor, climate change and how the oil-producing nation should adapt to the energy transition. Opinion polls show the opposition Labour party on course to replace the Conservative-led coalition of Prime Minister Erna Solberg. The man projected to become PM after the Sept. 12-13 ballot, Labour leader Jonas Gahr Støre, has pledged to address inequality by offering tax relief for low- and middle-income families and hiking rates for the rich. **REUTERS**

PHILIPPINES

Strong typhoon cuts power, causes flooding

SEVERAL COMMUNITIES remain flooded and without power after a strong typhoon battered the Philippines' northernmost islands, the authorities said on Sunday, displacing thousands of people. Typhoon Chanthu, which at one point was categorised by the Philippine weather bureau as a category 5 storm, has weakened after powering into the northernmost region, including the Batanes island group, on Saturday, the weather bureau said. "It's one of the strongest typhoons I've felt," said Dennis Ballesteros Valdez, a resident of Sabtang. **REUTERS**



BANGLADESH SCHOOLS REOPEN

Teachers welcome students with roses at a school in Dhaka on Sunday. Bangladesh has reopened schools and other educational institutions after 543 days of closure as its virus situation eases and more people are vaccinated. Almost 97% of the country's teachers and staff have been vaccinated, the government said. Wearing masks, students arrived Sunday morning at schools that were decorated with balloons and ribbons. **Reuters**

UK ditches plan for vaccine passports

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, SEPTEMBER 12

AUTHORITIES IN Britain have decided not to require vaccine passports for entry into nightclubs and other crowded events in England, Britain's health secretary said Sunday, reversing course amid opposition from some of the Conservative government's supporters in Parliament. Health Minister Sajid Javid said the government has shelved the idea of vaccine passports for now but could reconsider the decision if Covid-19 cases rise exponentially once again.

"We've looked at it properly and whilst we should keep it in reserve as a potential option, I'm pleased to say that we will not be going ahead with plans for vaccine passports," Javid told the BBC.

The U-turn came just days after both the government's vaccines minister and the culture secretary suggested that vaccine passports would still be necessary, despite growing opposition from lawmakers.

Other European nations are using similar documents showing peoples' vaccination status as a way to re-open society — although the rules vary widely. Each of Germany's 16 states has slightly different rules on what is required,

EXPLAINED
Criticism from all quarters

THE UK government's plan to require a vaccine passport has come under severe criticism from many within the ruling Conservative party itself, as well as from the Opposition and from trade associations. People in the UK are generally not required carry around identification documents, and the requirement for a vaccine passport to enter pubs or other crowded venues has been seen by critics as a violation of rights, as well as a move that could further hurt performers and the nightlife industry which have already suffered great losses amid the pandemic.

but in general, people are required to show a negative test, vaccine or recovery certificate before being allowed to participate in indoor dining, drinking or dancing.

Passes are required in France when frequenting bars, cafes, restaurants, museums and other places where the public gathers and for long-distance travel on buses, trains and planes.

Japan passes 50% vaccination rate, may ease limits in November

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, SEPTEMBER 12

JAPAN'S GOVERNMENT says more than 50% of the population has been fully vaccinated.

Japan's vaccine rollouts began in mid-February, months behind many wealthy countries due to its lengthy clinical testing requirement and approval process. Inoculations for elderly patients, which started in April, were also slowed by supply shortages of imported vaccines, but the pace picked up in late May and has since achieved 1 million doses per day.

Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura, who is in charge of Covid measures, told NHK public TV's weekly talk show Sunday that about 60% of the population is expected to be fully vaccinated by the end of September, on par with current levels in Europe.

The government is studying a roadmap for easing restrictions around November when a large majority of the population is expected to be fully vaccinated.

The progress of vaccinations has helped reduce serious cases and deaths among older people, but infections from virus variants spread explosively in August among younger generations still largely unvaccinated, severely straining health care systems.

Iran to let IAEA service nuclear monitoring cameras following talks

REUTERS
DUBAI, SEPTEMBER 12

IRAN IS to allow the UN nuclear watchdog to service monitoring cameras at Iranian nuclear sites after talks on Sunday with IAEA head Rafael Grossi, according to the head of Iran's atomic energy body and a joint statement.

The talks with International Atomic Energy Agency chief Grossi were aimed at easing a standoff between Tehran and the West just as it threatens to escalate and scupper negotiations on reviving the Iran nuclear deal.

The IAEA said this week that there had been no progress on two key issues: explaining uranium traces found at old, undeclared sites and getting urgent ac-

IAEA chief Rafael Grossi meets Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation head Mohammad Eslami, in Tehran on Sunday. **Reuters**

cess to monitoring equipment so the agency can continue to keep track of parts of Iran's nuclear programme as per the 2015 deal.

"We agreed over the replacement of the memory cards of the agency's cameras,"

Mohammad Eslami, who heads the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI), was quoted as saying by state media.

"IAEA's inspectors are permitted to service the identified equipment and replace their storage media which will be kept under the joint IAEA and AEOI seals in the Islamic Republic of Iran," the nuclear bodies said in a joint statement.

The IAEA told member states in reports this week that there had been no progress on two central issues: explaining uranium traces found at several old, undeclared sites and getting urgent access to some monitoring equipment so the agency can continue to keep track of parts of Iran's nuclear programme as provided for by the 2015 deal.

SPAIN

VILLAGERS FLEE AMID WILDFIRE

People fled their homes in six more Andalusian towns and villages on Sunday as Spain sent in a military unit to help tackle blazes raging close to a Costa del Sol resort. A wildfire fanned by strong winds has now driven out close to 2,000 people and killed one emergency worker since it erupted on Wednesday in the mountainous Sierra Bermeja above Estepona, a popular tourist spot.

Taliban say women can study in gender-segregated universities

KATHY GANNON
KABUL, SEPTEMBER 12

WOMEN IN Afghanistan can continue to study in universities, including at post-graduate levels, but classrooms will be gender-segregated and Islamic dress is compulsory, the higher education minister in the new Taliban government said Sunday.

The minister, Abdul Baqi Haqqani, laid out the new policies at a news conference, several days after Afghanistan's new rulers formed an all-male government. On Saturday, the Taliban had raised their flag over the presidential palace, signaling the start of the work of the new government.

The world has been watching closely to see to what extent the Taliban might act differently from their first time in power, in the late 1990s. During that era, girls and women were denied an education, and were excluded from public life.

The Taliban have suggested they have changed, including in their attitudes toward women. However, women have been banned from sports and the Taliban have used violence in recent days against women protesters demanding equal rights.

Haqqani said the Taliban did not want to turn the clock back 20 years. "We will start building on what exists today," he said.

However, female university students will face restrictions, including a compulsory dress code. Haqqani said hijabs will be mandatory but did not specify if this meant compulsory face coverings. Gender segregation will also be enforced, he said. "We will not allow boys and girls to study together," he said. "We will not allow co-education."

Haqqani said the subjects being taught would also be reviewed. While he did not elaborate, he said he wanted graduates of Afghanistan's universities to be competitive with university graduates in the region and the rest of the world.

Taliban banned music and art during their previous time in power. This time, TV has remained and news channels still show women presenters, but the Taliban messaging has been erratic. **AP**

Afghans wait in front of a bank in Kabul on Sunday as they try to withdraw money. **AP**

Quandary at UN: Who speaks for Myanmar and Afghanistan?

RICK GLADSTONE
SEPTEMBER 12

MYANMAR'S BRUTAL military coup and the Taliban's triumphal return to power in Afghanistan are among the crises confronting the United Nations as it convenes its annual General Assembly this coming week.

But Myanmar and Afghanistan present a further conundrum for the world's biggest diplomatic gathering: Who is the rightful representative of each country?

The Myanmar junta, which seized power in February and has been widely condemned for a deadly crackdown on opponents, has sought to replace the UN ambassador of the deposed government with a junta loyalist.

The Taliban, the violent, extremist Islamic movement that retook power last month after the American-backed Afghan government collapsed, is also expected to seek diplomatic representation, replacing an ambassador appointed just a few months earlier with one of its own.

The idea that a Myanmar putschist or a Taliban militant on

Ghulam M Isacszai was appointed UN envoy by the previous Afghan government. **Reuters**

a terrorism watch list could become a credentialled UN envoy may sound dumbfounding. But theoretically it is possible — if the government that person represents is deemed legitimate in the eyes of the United Nations.

Envoys from all kinds of political systems, from parliamentary democracies to monarchies to dictatorships, have long worked at the 193-member United Nations, the one place in the world where even governments that reject each other's ideologies enjoy some measure of equal standing. Still, there are standards to verify the legitimacy of both the envoy and the government he or she represents.

Verifying who represents each country at the United Nations falls to the Credentials

Committee, a nine-member group appointed at the beginning of each year's General Assembly. Its work is normally routine, checking each envoy's bona fides to ensure compliance with procedural rules.

The process gets more complicated when the legitimacy of the envoy's government is at issue, and disputes sometimes are referred to the General Assembly.

"It seems this year's Credentials Committee will be called upon to consider not just one, but two, questions of government legitimacy," Rebecca Barber, an Australian research fellow at the University of Queensland, wrote in the Blog of the European Journal of International Law. **NYT**

FBI releases declassified document related to September 11 attacks

MARK MAZZETTI & MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT
WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 12

THE FBI released a newly declassified document late Saturday describing connections that the agency examined between the hijackers and the Saudi government in the years since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, although it contained no conclusive evidence about whether the kingdom played a role in the attacks.

The 16-page report, which was issued hours after President Joe Biden arrived at the World Trade Center memorial in New York, is the first document to be released since the President last week moved to declassify materials that for years have remained secret.

Families of the Sept. 11 victims have long pushed for a deeper in-

The document was disclosed hours after Biden visited the Sept 11 memorial in New York on Saturday. **NYT**

vestigation into any possible role the Saudi government had in the attacks. Biden instructed the Justice Department and federal agencies in recent days to release declassified documents over the next six months after a group of hundreds of affected people — including survivors, emergency medical workers and victims' rel-

atives — told him to skip the memorial event at ground zero this year if he did not move to disclose some of those documents.

The document, which was heavily redacted, describes an interview conducted in November 2015 with a Saudi man, identified only as PII, who was applying for American citizenship. He detailed his work at the country's consulate in Los Angeles and shared anecdotes about his personal interactions with embassy leadership. The document also summarises his contact with people who investigators said had provided "significant logistics support" to two of the hijackers.

Some members of the commission that investigated the 2001 attacks believed that if the Saudi government had any role in the plot, it was likely to have involved consular officials.

But the document released on Saturday provided no new conclusive evidence about the Saudi government's role.

Speculation around the possible Saudi role increased over the years because of the government's refusal to declassify 28 pages of a 2002 congressional inquiry into the Sept. 11 attacks that specifically addressed possible connections between the kingdom and the terrorist plot.

The document was finally released in 2016, and it detailed numerous suspicious meetings between Saudi officials and the Sept. 11 hijackers, and checks from Saudi royals to operatives in contact with the hijackers. It was also an unflattering picture of the kingdom's efforts to thwart American operations against Al Qaeda in the years before the attacks. **NYT**

ARMIN LASCHET, MERKEL'S PARTY'S CANDIDATE FOR CHANCELLOR, SEEMS TO BE DRAGGING THE PARTY DOWN WITH HIM

Germany's election was his to lose, and he might just do that

MELISSA EDDY
FRANKFURT AM DER ODER, SEPTEMBER 12

HIS PARTY is the biggest in Germany. It has won all but three elections since 1950, including the past four. Its departing chancellor is more popular than any politician in the country. And German voters crave stability and continuity.

Armin Laschet, the conservative Christian Democratic Union party's candidate for chancellor, should be riding high. The race to replace Angela Merkel was his to lose.

So far, he appears to be doing just that.

Weeks before Germans vote on Sept. 26 in their most important election in a generation — one that will produce a chancellor who is not Merkel for the first time in 16 years — Laschet is sinking, and he is pulling his party down with him.

The race is still close enough, and Germany's coalition politics so unpredictable, that it would be dangerous to dismiss the conservative candidate. But after recent polls showed Laschet's party dropping to record lows — of 20 per cent to 22 per cent support — his position is so dire that even some Christian Democrats have wondered aloud whether they picked the wrong candidate.

More broadly, Laschet's campaign has prompted queasiness among conservatives who fear they could be seeing a weakness in the party's appeal that has been disguised for years by Merkel's own popularity and is now exacerbated by her inability to groom a replacement.

In 2018, she announced her personally chosen successor, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, a moderate centrist. But even with Merkel's support, Kramp-Karrenbauer had trouble stepping out of the chancellor's shadow and building her own base. She quit in 2020 as leader of the conservatives, leaving the door open for Laschet.

Armin Laschet at a party meeting in Nuremberg. **Reuters**

Laschet had long boasted that if he could run Germany's most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia, where he has

been governor since 2017, he could run the country. But then extraordinary flooding this summer called even that credential

into question, exposing flaws in his environmental policies and disaster management.

"The biggest problem for Laschet is that he has not been able to convince voters that he can do the job like Merkel," said Julia Reuschenbach, a political scientist at the University of Bonn.

She cited images of him laughing as the German president, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, made a somber speech after devastating flash floods that killed 180 people, and posing before a mound of trash to make a statement of his own. "He comes across as uncertain, flippant and unprofessional," Reuschenbach said.

In recent weeks, Laschet has

seen his individual popularity drop below that of his Social Democratic rival, Olaf Scholz, while support for Laschet's party has been in a free fall since late July.

The situation is so dire that Merkel, who had said she wanted to stay out of the race, is now intervening and trying to rally voters for Laschet.

"Let's be honest: It is tight. It will be very tight in the coming weeks," Markus Söder, the head of the conservatives' Bavarian branch, the Christian Social Union, and a formal rival, said at a rally on Aug 20 that was meant to propel Laschet's campaign into a final, intense stretch. "It is no longer a question of how we could govern,

but possibly of whether."

Söder openly challenged Laschet this year for the chance to succeed the chancellor, and he still enjoys a higher popularity rating among Germans than Laschet's.

Germans elect parties, not a chancellor candidate. But over the course of Merkel's four terms in office, her party has enjoyed the so-called chancellor bonus, meaning the willingness of voters to effectively cast a ballot for consistency. Although Merkel remains Germany's most popular politician, her recent attempts to drum up support for Laschet have failed to turn his fortunes around, partly because they have appeared last-minute and halfhearted. **NYT**

Ricciardo wins Italian GP as Verstappen, Hamilton crash



Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton crash out. *Reuters*

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MONZA, SEPTEMBER 12

CHAMPIONSHIP LEADER Max Verstappen and defending champion Lewis Hamilton crashed out of the Italian Grand Prix, which was won by McLaren's Daniel Ricciardo on Sunday.

It was McLaren's first win in nearly nine years, since Jenson Button took the chequered flag in Brazil in 2012. It was also Ricciardo's first win since Monaco in 2018. He finished 1.747 seconds ahead of teammate Lando Norris and 4.921 ahead of Valtteri Bottas, who turned in a strong performance after starting from the back of the grid after a penalty for taking a new engine.

But the biggest talking point of the race came on lap 26. Hamilton had pitted from the lead and returned to the track just in front of Verstappen. The Red Bull driver tried to come up the inside on a turn as the seven-time champion defended his position.

As the two made contact, Verstappen's car catapulted on to the top of the Mercedes as both slid into the gravel. The protective halo ring at the front of F1 car cockpits may have saved Hamilton from serious injury. "That's what you get when you don't leave the space," said a furious Verstappen over team radio.

Both drivers were able to walk away from their cars though Hamilton took a long time getting out of his, only clambering out after Verstappen had long gone.

The stewards will investigate the incident after the race. Ricciardo won the race after a brilliant start allowed the Australian driver to pass Verstappen who started from pole position at turn one.

Behind them Hamilton, who started fourth, managed to pass Lando Norris. But he then attempted to try and get around the outside of Verstappen heading into the second chicane and was instead forced off across the grass, allowing Norris to regain his place. "He (Verstappen) pushed me wide!" Hamilton exclaimed over team radio.

Hamilton was then held up by Norris and

ON THE PODIUM

1. Ricciardo (McLaren) 1:21:54.365
2. Norris (McLaren) +1.747 seconds
3. Bottas (Mercedes) +4.921

DRIVERS' STANDINGS: 1. Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing) 226.5 points, 2. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 221.5, 3. Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) 126, 4. Lando Norris (McLaren) 114, 5. Sergio Perez (Red Bull Racing) 108

could only watch in frustration as Ricciardo and Verstappen stretched their advantage lap by lap. Ricciardo was first to pit, on lap 23, and came out seventh. Verstappen was struggling with his tires and stopped on the following lap.

But a botched pit stop that lasted 11.1 seconds saw him come out in 10th and, to make matters worse for the Dutch driver, Hamilton had in the meantime passed Norris to take the lead. But disaster struck for both drivers shortly afterward.

Daruvala finishes 5th

India's Jehan Daruvala missed out on podium, settling for a fifth place finish in the Feature Race of Formula 2 here on Sunday. Daruvala, who had sealed his second Formula 2 win with a dominating drive in the second sprint race on Saturday, was sluggish from second and clocked 56:41.936.

Oscar Piastri clinched a dominant first Feature Race win, beating Guanyu Zhou to extend his Championship lead. Piastri had been unable to convert pole in the previous round at Silverstone, losing out to Zhou when the lights went out but looked to have learned from the experience and completed the opening lap at the front.

Jumping from third to second off the line, Zhou kept the pressure on throughout the race but was unable to find a way past his title rival.

Biennial WC: Wenger's proposal that has split the football world

MIHIR VASAVDA
SEPTEMBER 12

ASIA AND Africa on one side. Europe and South America on the other.

Some of the game's legends on one side. A few current stars on the other.

At the centre of the incoming storm is FIFA. Feeling the threat of being swept aside is UEFA, the body that controls the game in Europe, the nerve centre of world football.

When coaching great Arsene Wenger proposed the idea of having a World Cup every two years, one wonders if he had imagined that it would split the football world in such a dramatic fashion. On the face of it, this seems like a straightforward debate. But scratch the surface and multiple layers emerge, the most crucial being the enduring power struggle between FIFA and UEFA.

Money matters

FIFA and Wenger, while proposing this idea, said the fans would be more interested in watching 'meaningful' matches, which might be true given that more than a billion people watched the 2018 World Cup final between France and Croatia. They've also claimed that the players would like more chances to play in a World Cup. Critics, however, have constantly pointed at a third element, which they allege is the main motive behind this move. "All about money,"

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said recently. FIFA raised approximately \$6 billion in revenue from the 2018 World Cup. This money was generated by selling broadcast rights, tickets and sponsorship. FIFA hopes that instead of having just one World Cup in four years, conducting two during the same period would double its income.

Power struggle

This is where the clash of power between FIFA and UEFA takes place. FIFA, as the *Financial Times* noted, is 'challenging clubs and leagues' for a larger share of profits as the sport continues to grow. The world body's president, Gianni Infantino, is trying to do so by increasing the number of teams in the World Cup from 32 to 48 and also expanding the Club World Cup.

The UEFA, trying to protect its own financial interests, sees this as a threat to its own competitions for the simple reason that more international matches will directly eat into European club competitions – continental and domestic – thus impacting their revenue.

A World Cup every two years would also have a cascading effect on the continental



Arsene Wenger believes a World Cup every two years will give more players a chance to play in it. *Reuters*

championships like the Euros, which is currently held between two World Cups. According to Wenger's proposal, the Euros will have to change the year when it is held and thus, each season will conclude with a big-ticket event in June. As Reuters explained: "For example, in 2028 there would be a World Cup. In 2029, there would be a European Championship (and similar continental competitions around the world) then in 2030 there would be the next World Cup."

Domino effect

This would, in turn, have an impact on all other competitions.

FIFA has not yet made clear what happens in an Olympic year, or what happens if the World Cup is to be held in a country where the only option is to play the tournament in winter, as is the case with Qatar 2022. Not just football, a major football tournament every summer – and a World Cup every two years – would eat into the market for other summer sports, something which World Athletics president Sebastian Coe underlined last week. "I can see no good reason for it. There may be vested interests here but the summer sports are protective about the landscape as it's hard enough for them as it is to grab space in the traditional or digital media. A biennial World Cup will inevitably start clashing with the Olympic Games too," Coe was quoted as saying by *The Guardian*.

European boycott?

Amidst all this lack of clarity, UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has threatened a boycott. "We can decide not to play in it. As far as I know, the South Americans are on the same page. So good luck with a World Cup like that," Ceferin told *The Times*.

EXPLAINED

Football team manager hacked to death inside Bengaluru stadium

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 12

A 27-YEAR-OLD history-sheeter, who also managed a football team, was hacked to death at the Bengaluru football stadium on Sunday evening.

The deceased has been identified as Aravind Kumar (in pic). According to the police, the incident took place at around 4 pm when

four or five assailants barged into the ground and chased Aravind before killing him inside a changing room for referees in the main stadium.

Players and spectators were shocked to see a man being chased by armed men on the ground. The incident took place minutes before the start of an A Division football game for women in the main stadium.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) M N Anucheth said Aravind was managing a local team and had come to play in a 6-a-side tournament at the BBMP ground opposite KSFA Bengaluru football stadium.

"At about 4 pm, four to five persons surrounded and assaulted him. He then fled from the spot and entered the main KSFA football stadium located opposite the BBMP ground. He went inside a referee's room and locked himself in. The accused persons then broke the door and hacked him to death using deadly weapons," police said.

A case of murder has been registered at the Ashok Nagar police station and two teams have been formed to identify and nab the accused.

Police said gang rivalry was the motive behind the murder and Aravind was a history-sheeter at the Bharathi Nagar police station in east Bengaluru.

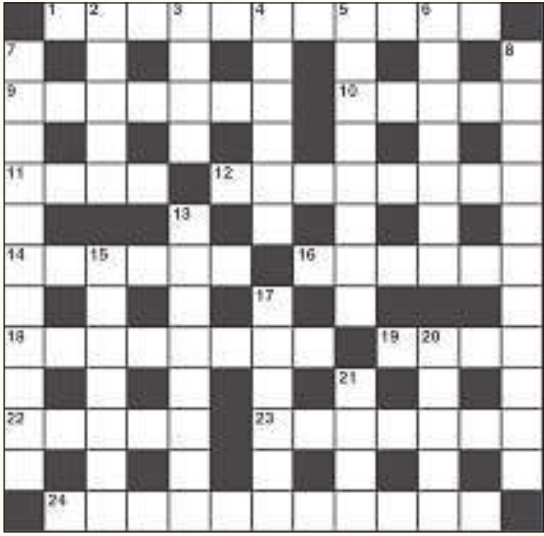
Army Red hold Gokulam

Kalyani: Defending champions Gokulam Kerala were held to a 2-2 draw by Army Red in their opening match of the Durand Cup football tournament here on Sunday.

Gokulam scored through Rahim Osumanu (9th minute) and Sharif Mohammad (70th) while P Jain (30th) and Bikash Thapa (43rd) found the target for Army Red.

The Malabarians started on a positive note, courtesy a spectacular long-range goal from Ghanaian Rahim Osumanu but failed to capitalize in the later stages. Gokulam Kerala goalkeeper Rakshit Daggar got injured after a collision with Army Red's Mukesh Kumar and he was replaced by PA Ajmal. **PTI**

CROSSWORD 4533



ACROSS

- 1 Lose one's grip and decide to take no further action (4,3,4)
- 9 Hurried so curry is spoilt (7)
- 10 A fabulous writer takes a retrospective pose (5)
- 11 It flows out of line (4)
- 12 An event for wine people (4,4)
- 14 Decline with little hesitation (6)
- 16 Impressionist Renoir reproduction? (6)
- 18 Close of play (8)
- 19 I study Russian art (4)
- 22 Not the best man to take care of horses (5)
- 23 Hear Thai wraps chopped lamb dish (7)
- 24 No more stars for stargazers (11)

DOWN

- 2 Country river - a Russian river (5)
- 3 Ring up Winnie (4)
- 4 Call attention to 24-hour period of prosperity (6)
- 5 Crazy people eat them with cheese (8)
- 6 Keep us up to the mark (7)
- 7 Admit the account needs information (11)
- 8 It pays an actor to keep them up (11)
- 13 He likes to make things better for an anagrammatist (8)
- 15 Disport around the photographer's equipment (7)
- 17 Some insult angers the ruler (6)
- 20 Seat of learning? (5)
- 21 I'm a leader of Muslims (4)

Solutions Crossword 4532: Across: 1 Bumper, 4 Crossbow, 9 Rarest, 10 Wayfarer, 12 Nuts, 13 Relay, 14 Race, 17 Short circuit, 20 Posted abroad, 23 Ache, 24 Faint, 25 Sky, 28 Appendix, 29 Humane, 30 Indigent, 31 Zealot. Down: 1 Baroness, 2 Marathon, 3 Easy, 5 Road accident, 6 Soft, 7 Barsac, 8 Warren, 11 Registration, 15 Stood, 16 Limbo, 18 Cocktail, 19 Adherent, 21 Salami, 22 Shaped, 26 Snug, 27 Ruse.

JUMBLD WORDS

Given 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 quip.

The first man gets the __, the second man gets the __. - Andrew Carnegie (6, 5)

CLEER



RETELL



LPOSS



COPPHY



SOLUTION: CREEK, SLOPS, CHOPPY. Answer: The first man gets the shell, the second man gets the oyster. - Andrew Carnegie

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4593

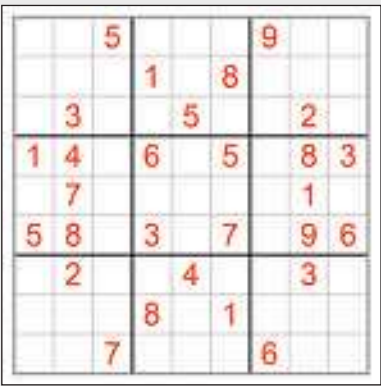
Difficulty Level 5s

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.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4592



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Don't be slow in coming forward, for you deserve to be number one. And neither is there any need to pursue a conventional course. If you follow a hunch then you might find that you reach your destination by a very different and much quicker route.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

You can afford to be quite laid back today, but if you're right in the middle of a professional wrangle or any dispute with authority, check up on the legal angle, and ask whatever questions are necessary to get to the right answer. Don't worry about what other people think, that's their business.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You might believe that money is the most important thing in the world, but you'd be wrong. It's the law that matters most, and you need to be absolutely and perfectly sure of your rights as soon as possible. And then there's a little question of justice and that's your real goal.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

When the circumstances demand, you can always call on your legendary compassion, and it's extremely likely that others will look for your sympathy today. However, in spite of first appearances, the best remedy may be no more than a nice chat with a close friend.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

There is a narrow line to be drawn between keeping your emotional defences up, which is desirable, and cutting other people out, which is not. It's all a matter of being kind to yourself, but maintaining a proper balance all round, acknowledging partners' very real concerns.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept. 23)

It looks as if this might be a very busy week, which is one good reason to take things slowly and conserve your energy today. But, then, it could be the case that, while your plans change frequently, you don't actually achieve a great deal. A child or younger relation requires reassurance.

LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)

If you sense that you're about to hit an emotional turning-point, you're right, which is why this particular time is so vital for making sure that your emotional foundations are firm. You must convince other people that you know what you're doing, and that you can succeed.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

Some people say that life is what happens when we are busy making plans. And right now it's difficult to say what's around the next corner. Your best policy is to be ready for last minute changes and welcome any opportunity to try out something totally new and different.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

You may look back on previous financial blunders and wonder how you were ever so naive. However, according to one of those strange laws of fate, the moment you dwell on the past, someone will take advantage of you again. Focus on everything that's good and things must get better.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

The Moon is making its presence felt again, so take advantage of every single opportunity to exert emotional control, especially at home. Always be flexible, for the moment you lapse into old habits, your actions will rebound on you. And that would never do.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Everything that happened over the last two weeks, and even over the last six months, can be seen as a rehearsal for the coming upheavals and opportunities. Make sure you have all plots and schemes thoroughly worked out in your own mind before going public.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You are still living an inner life that few people can glimpse and fewer still can understand, but the cumulative result of everything that takes place this week should be to give you a sort of inward glow. You should believe in yourself, even when other people can't grasp what you're doing.

BRIEFLY

Inter makes 1st misstep in title defence with draw

Rome: Inter Milan made the first mis-step of its Serie A title defense with a 2-2 draw at Sampdoria on Sunday. The result left the Nerazzurri two points behind Napoli, which extended its perfect start with a 2-1 win over Juventus on Saturday. With nine goals in its opening three matches, Inter has not had trouble scoring after Romelu Lukaku's departure to Chelsea. Barella, a key member of the Italy squad that won the European Championship, has provided assists in all three of Inter's matches this season. But the team missed reliable center back Alessandro Bastoni, who was out with a left thigh injury that he picked up on international duty with Italy. It remains unclear if Bastoni will return in time for Inter's Champions League opener against Real Madrid on Wednesday at the San Siro. **AP**

Asghar Afghan slams Paine in letter over T20 WC comments

Kabul: Former Afghanistan captain Asghar Afghan has slammed Australia Test skipper Tim Paine for his comments that the war-torn country looks impossible to play in the upcoming T20 World Cup, asking him not to "deliver aggressive statements without knowing the circumstances". In an open letter to Paine, Afghan said that his country's team has the right to play not only in the upcoming T20 World Cup but in all ICC organized tournaments/events in accordance with the rules and regulations. Soon after forming the interim government, the Taliban banned women from playing cricket or any others sports, casting doubts over Afghanistan men's Test status. As per ICC rules, all Test playing nations must have a women's team as well. **PTI**

Winner disqualified for wearing wrong shoes for marathon

Vienna: Ethiopia's Derara Hurisa was disqualified for wearing the wrong shoes after winning the Vienna Marathon on Sunday. The 24-year-old Hurisa crossed the line first by three seconds but was later told he had been disqualified because the soles of his shoes were 1 centimeter (0.4 inches) thicker than the maximum 4 centimeters allowed. Organizers said Hurisa had registered another shoe that met race rules, but switched to the shoes he had used in training to run the actual marathon. "I can't say at the moment why he didn't run in the shoes that were specified in the form," race coordinator Johannes Langer said. Leonard Langat of Kenya, who had originally finished second, in 2 hours, 9 minutes, 25 seconds, was declared the winner. **AP**

I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT I HOPE I CAN BE AS STRONG AND AS RESILIENT AS NEW YORK HAS BEEN THE LAST 20 YEARS
LEYLAH FERNANDEZ, after losing the US Open final to Emma Raducanu on September 11

Cinderella story

Main draw qualifier Emma Raducanu wins the US Open final 6-4, 6-3 beating fellow teen Leylah Fernandez

CHRISTOPHER CLAREY
NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 12

WE ADAPT quickly. It's part of the human spirit, whether we are teenage tennis stars or the people who line up and take a seat to watch them in the world's biggest tennis stadium.

Two weeks ago, the vast majority of us had never heard of Leylah Fernandez or Emma Raducanu. Fernandez had never been past the third round in a major tournament and had struggled to find her best form in recent weeks. Raducanu joined the tour in earnest only this summer and had to make it through the off-Broadway qualifying tournament to secure a spot in the U.S. Open.

But by Saturday, when Fernandez, 19, and Raducanu, 18, took to the court for one of the most unlikely Grand Slam finals, we already had a connection. They had boldly worked through the women's draw during this special U.S. Open, which was full of communion between the players and the public after all the distancing of the last year and a half.

By Saturday, those who had been following their unexpected progress already knew about their strengths, their multicultural backgrounds and even their quirks: Fernandez's jig behind the baseline before walking forward to serve, Raducanu's habit of blowing on her fingers between points as if to cool off a very hot hand.

But what was most striking Saturday was how quickly both unseeded players adjusted to this grand occasion, calmly giving thoughtful prematch television interviews, walking past Billie Jean King's quote on the tunnel wall, which says that "pressure is a privilege," and then walking past King herself as they emerged into the late-afternoon sunshine for the biggest opportunity of their short careers. It was all new, but you would not have known it once the ball was in play, as both attacked their groundstrokes and did their best to seize the occasion even after having nearly two full days to think about the occasion once they had won their semifinals.

After the introductions, Fernandez ripped a backhand crosscourt winner on the opening point. Raducanu later pounded a backhand winner of her own to hold serve and win the opening game. Raducanu and Fernandez both held firm, extending rallies with their quickness and defensive skills on the move, smartly sending lob high into the atmosphere when cornered. But just as impressively, they finished points with authority when they had created the space to go for winners.

Their styles contrast in some ways. The left-handed Fernandez uses more spin and enjoys deploying the drop shot. Her technique is more artisanal than textbook, with her hands often far apart on the grip on a two-handed backhand as she improvises on the fly.

The right-handed Raducanu favors more direct power and has fabulous fundamentals that allow her to control the ball even while swinging ferociously. She has a knack for making the tricky shot look smooth and an ability to run around her backhand in a flash and rip an inside-out forehand that Roger Federer could relate to.

But Fernandez and Raducanu are very contemporary tennis talents in their ability to sus-

2 Raducanu's first Grand Slam title has come in her second appearance in the main draw. No other woman in the Open era has played fewer majors before winning one.

tain pace and consistency from low body positions, their knees often touching the court as they counterpunch. Some of their extended rallies were spectacular Saturday as they exchanged backhand bolts with nary a grunt, their sneakers squeaking on the hard court.

Only Raducanu would get that great satisfaction, and although the score of 6-4, 6-3 will look fairly lopsided in the history books, anyone who watched will know that the match was much more tenuous than that.

"These two young women are a gift to tennis, an absolute gift," Andy Roddick, the 2003 U.S. Open men's champion, wrote in a post on Twitter. Roddick was right to shine a light on both players on Saturday. Fernandez is not yet a Grand Slam champion, but she is a world-class fighter who walks between points with the steely determination of someone on her way to break up a bar brawl.

She and her family have sacrificed plenty for her tennis career, and after losing a back-and-forth first set, Fernandez had every reason to still believe in her chances. She upset three players ranked in the top five - Naomi Osaka, Elina Svitolina and Aryna Sabalenka - as well as Angelique Kerber, a former No. 1 in resurgent form. Fernandez had beaten them all in three sets, so when Raducanu took a 5-2 lead in the second set but was unable to convert her first two match points on Fernandez's serve, Fernandez grinned as if she knew something that nobody else yet suspected.

Why should she not have believed in another comeback? But when she got a break point in the next game, she had to wait to play it as Raducanu, who had scraped her left knee while sliding for a shot, took an injury timeout to clean up trickling blood and have the wound bandaged.

The stoppage was well within the rules, but in this thinker's sport of ebbs and flows, it may have made the difference. Raducanu said she was concerned about losing her rhythm, as well. But it was Fernandez who expressed displeasure about the long pause to officials and then pushed a forehand long. Raducanu then saved a second break point with a leaping tap of an overhead.

She was back to deuce with Arthur Ashe Stadium abuzz and presumably most of Britain wide awake, as the match was broadcast in prime time in Raducanu's home country.

This time, she did not flinch, surprising Fernandez with a fine serve down the T that gave her command of the rally and brought her a third match point.

She mulled her options, tossed the ball high and smacked an ace to become the first qualifier in the long history of tennis to win a Grand Slam singles title.

In 10 matches, she never lost a set. "I never thought I would see it, so I'm in shock," said King, who watched from the stands as Raducanu dropped her racket and fell to the court, her hands covering her face. **NYT**



Before the final, Raducanu's return points win percentage was 52 per cent, which was second among all players at the US Open. **AP**

Method to Raducanu's glorious madness

SHAHID JUDGE
SEPTEMBER 12

THE FIRST all-teenage Grand Slam final since 1999 showcased carefree, risk-taking strokes mixed with graceful technique, impressive composure, and with Emma Raducanu and Leylah Fernandez involved, a whole lot of smiles.

Eventually, it was 18-year-old Raducanu who prevailed 6-4, 6-3 over the 19-year-old Canadian in what had been an improbable, but not undeserved, US Open run for both players. The Brit became the first woman from her country to win a Grand Slam title since Virginia Wade took the 1977 Wimbledon crown. She became the first-ever qualifier to reach a Major final, let alone winning it. And the World No. 150 became the lowest-ever ranked US Open champion - the unranked Kim Clijsters won in 2009. Raducanu is projected to climb to the World No. 23 rank on Monday. She went from being a qualifier to a champion without dropping a set. But the longest match she played in the tournament, the final lasting an hour and 51 minutes, wasn't just about mindless ball-striking. Here's how the final was won.

Targeting backhand, then forehand, then both

In the opening exchanges, it was clear that Raducanu had come with a plan to target the left-handed Fernandez's backhand. Even if it

meant taking risks over the higher part of the net, Raducanu would whack the ball to Fernandez's right whenever possible. The play worked for a while as Fernandez could not unleash her angled forehand strokes as often as she would have liked.

By the sixth game though, the Canadian had started to anticipate Raducanu's shots. So, the Brit changed tactics and began hitting to the Fernandez forehand. As the match progressed, she'd vary the direction of her shots and keep the Canadian guessing.

The Righty Serve

Left-handers tend to have an advantage against right-handers not used to facing southpaws - that's arguably what helped Fernandez beat defending champion Naomi Osaka in the third round. The 'lefty' serve - an angled delivery from the ad-court deep into the backhand side of a right-hander - draws the opponent out of position.

However, Raducanu proved that the right-hander serving with a heavy angle into a lefty's backhand could also be advantageous.

Raducanu's early strategy in the match was to aim at Fernandez's backhand. It was something that continued to bother Fernandez. The Brit would often serve wide from the deuce-court, and then down the T from the ad-court.

But she would still throw in a few serves the other way around. Crucially, two points away from the title, with Raducanu serving for the match at 5-3, deuce, she served down the T, and on match point, hit her second ace wide.

Big returns of serve

Before the final, Raducanu's return points win percentage was 52 per cent, second among all players at the US Open. She continued to return with relish against Fernandez as well.

She won 38 of 78 receiving points (49 per cent) in the match (22 of 46 in the first set and 16 of 32 in the second).

The most important returns she made, though, came in the sixth game of the second set. She started the game off with a powerful backhand down the line return winner, and hit another big return to set up the point that was killed off with a forehand winner to go 0-30 up. At 30-40, there was an element of luck involved. Fernandez got hold of a strong first serve that drew a weak and short return. As the Canadian stepped up to slot home, Raducanu guessed right and hit a forehand winner to go 4-2 up - the break that decided the match.

Better numbers

Raducanu finished the match with 22 winners and 25 unforced errors. Fernandez scored 18 winners but had 26 unforced errors. Crucially for Fernandez, her first serve percentage was low - she hit only 45 of her 78 first serves in (58 per cent), and could win just 25 of them (56 per cent). Comparatively, Raducanu made 48 of 70 first serves in (69 per cent), and won 32 points on the first serve (67 per cent).

The Canadian faced 18 break points, saving 14 of them. Raducanu faced nine break points but was broken only twice.

Boxing's absurd summer gets a Trump injection

KEVIN DRAPER
SEPTEMBER 12

IN A single zany sentence, this is how the once-promising summer of boxing ended: Triller, a social video app that is a much less popular version of TikTok, put on a pay-per-view fight between a 58-year-old Evander Holyfield (who hasn't fought in a decade) and a 44-year-old mixed martial artist, Vitor Belfort - and paid former President Donald Trump and Donald Trump Jr. to serve as live commentators, all on the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

The result of the (legally) professional fight is mostly beside the point - Belfort won by a technical knockout in the first round, after the referee stopped the bout because of how clear it was that Holyfield never should have been allowed into the ring - but it served to underscore what could have been.

Earlier this year, Triller won the right to promote Teófilo López's lightweight title defense against George Kamboos Jr. The app paid more than \$6 million for the privilege, after the fight went to an open bid because López and his promoter, Top Rank, could not agree on a deal.

Triller had burst onto the boxing scene last winter, with an exhibition fight between Mike Tyson and Roy Jones Jr. Internet celebrity Jake Paul knocked out a former NBA player, Nate Robinson, on the undercard, and rappers Snoop Dogg, Wiz Khalifa and French Montana all performed



Former MMA star Vitor Belfort, left, knocks down Evander Holyfield during the first round of a boxing match. **AP**

between fights.

An optimist could see an evolution in how boxing was being presented: a brash entrant aiming to attract a new type - and a new generation - of fans to a sport that has been the subject of a thousand obituaries.

The López-Kamboos fight, then, was Triller's chance to show that it was serious. That its foray into boxing was not just an expensive, attention-grabbing marketing strategy for its app - though it was definitely that - and that its flashy presentation would work for real fights, too, and that it had figured out something that traditional promoters like Top Rank and Golden Boy Promotions had not.

As if to punctuate its seriousness, on June 1, Triller announced that it had hired Boxing Hall of Fame announcer Jim

Triller did not reveal how much it had paid Donald Trump, though Ryan Kavanaugh said he was negotiating with Barack Obama to commentate on a future event.

Lamley to call the fight. Cast aspersions on Triller all you want, but Lamley calling a López title bout is a strong way to present a legitimate draw.

Alas, that announcement would be the high point.

The fight, scheduled for June 19, was pushed back to August after López tested positive for the coronavirus. It was moved again, to September, onto the same card featuring Oscar De La Hoya - who has not fought since George W. Bush was president - fighting Belfort.

But that date did not work out - in theory, López will now fight in October - and then, last week, De La Hoya was hospitalized with the coronavirus, in what he said was a breakthrough infection.

No 45's appearance

On a week's notice, Holyfield stepped in to fight Belfort instead. The bout, originally to take place in Los Angeles, was moved across the country to Florida after the California State Athletic Commission refused to sanction it - even as an exhibition. (In Florida, it counted as a pro fight.)

But we are not done yet. On Tuesday,

Triller announced that Trump and Trump Jr. would commentate the fight. The next day, Lamley, objecting to the presence of the Trumps even though they were to be on a separate commentating stream, pulled out.

That is how Triller's big summer showcase, to be voiced by Lamley, became three hours of Trump recalling different boxers he'd known and been friends with, before two depressing top bouts, both over in the first round, each of which featured one washed-up fighter beating another.

"They say there is a lot of people watching," the former president said with a smile between fights. "I can't imagine why." The night was one of Trump's highest-profile, and lengthiest, public appearances since leaving office, and a fairly rare event in light of his suspension from a number of social media sites.

Triller did not reveal how much it had paid Trump, though Ryan Kavanaugh, whose company owns a majority stake in the app, said he was negotiating with Barack Obama to commentate on a future boxing match.

That was a clear bid for publicity, and perhaps a bipartisan hedge in advance of Saturday's fights, which featured such sights as former UFC fighter Tito Ortiz - a vocal Trump supporter who resigned from the city council of Huntington Beach, California, after drawing ire for his anti-mask and anti-vaccination stances - walking to the ring waving a "thin blue line" flag.

Ortiz was knocked out a minute into the first round by another former UFC fighter, Anderson Silva. **NYT**

Harvey Elliott's injury sours Liverpool win over Leeds

REUTERS
SEPTEMBER 12

MOHAMED SALAH's 100th Premier League goal helped Liverpool cruise to a 3-0 victory at 10-man Leeds United on Sunday in a match that was marred by teenager Harvey Elliott suffering a dislocated ankle.

After a lightning-fast start to the game, Salah became the 30th player to join the Premier League's 100-goal club in the 20th minute, tapping home from close range from a Trent Alexander-Arnold cross.

The visitors missed a host of chances to make it 2-0 in the first half, before Fabinho made one count early in the second period to put Jurgen Klopp's side on course for three points in West Yorkshire.

There was a worrying sight later in the half as Elliott needed lengthy treatment on the pitch following a tackle from Leeds' Pascal Struijk, with the hosts' substitute shown a straight red card for the challenge by the referee.

Elliott was taken off on a stretcher, receiving applause from Leeds fans as he was taken down the touchline.

"It is his ankle. I heard it was dislocated and they couldn't put it back and he is now in hospital," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said.

Liverpool regained their composure to add a stoppage-time third through Sadio Mane to put the seal on a victory that



Mohamed Salah became the 30th player to join the Premier League's 100-goal club. **Reuters**

LEEDS UNITED	0-3	LIVERPOOL
Mohamed Salah 20'		
Fabinho 50'		
Lingard 90+2'	Sadio Mane 90+2'	

moved them above Manchester City into third in the standings, while Leeds sit 17th without a win from four league matches this season.