



Will launch party, may ally with BJP, Akali factions: Amarinder



BJP welcomes move, calls Captain 'tallest leader'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 19

OUSTED FORMER Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said on Tuesday that he will launch his own political party and announced that he may ally with the BJP if the farmers' protest is resolved, along with factions of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD).

In a series of tweets, Amarinder's media adviser wrote on behalf of the former Congress CM, who has been in Delhi for the past few days, "The battle for Punjab's future is on. Will soon announce the launch of my own political party to serve the interests of Punjab & its people, including our farmers who've been fighting for their survival for over a year."

He added: "Hopeful of a seat
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

AT LEAST 35 KILLED, KUMAON WORST HIT

Uttarakhand rain toll rises, landslides cut off Nainital

Thousands feared stranded as rain pounds hills; rescue mission on

AVANEESH MISHRA
DEHRADUN, OCTOBER 19

AT LEAST 25 deaths were confirmed in Nainital district on Tuesday as incessant rain continued to batter Uttarakhand, leading to floods, landslides, and massive destruction of property especially in the hills of Kumaon.

The India Meteorological Department's (IMD's) Dehradun centre said two weather stations in Kumaon division had received the heaviest rainfall for any 24-hour period since records began to be kept.

Aggregate data provided by district administrations showed the statewide death toll from incidents related to the rain that began on Sunday had reached 35.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Debris being cleared in Bhimtal on Tuesday. PTI

Worst likely over for state, rains to now shift east: IMD

ANJALI MARAR
PUNE, OCTOBER 19

THE RECORD-BREAKING rainfall that has led to widespread destruction in Uttarakhand over the last couple of days is expected to reduce significantly from

Wednesday, with the state likely to stay dry for the rest of the week, the India Meteorological Department has predicted.

Uttarakhand, as a whole, received about 122 mm rainfall during the 24-hour period between Monday and Tuesday.

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INSIDE



BANGLADESH VIOLENCE: VHP HOLDS PROTESTS IN BENGAL & ASSAM, MORE PLANNED TODAY

PAGE 4

India sticking to LAC protocols, but can review: top officer

KRISHN KAUSHIK
RUPA (ARUNACHAL PRADESH), OCTOBER 19

WHILE INDIA is sticking to the mutually agreed protocols and agreements with China regarding the management of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), this may be reviewed at the strategic level for the future, Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen Manoj Pande said on Tuesday.

"In terms of our larger guidance, strategic guidance in terms of dealing with the situation on the LAC, is to respect the mutually agreed protocols and agreements, and that has been our effort, notwithstanding what has been the action or response from the other side," Lt Gen Pande said.

"Consequent to what happened and what we need to do in the future, is something I reckon is being looked at at the larger level," he added. "It is being looked as to how should be our

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Cong to reserve 40% tickets for women in UP polls, says Priyanka

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 19

STRESSING THAT the prevailing "politics of hate" can be changed by women in politics, AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Tuesday made her first big move in the run-up to the UP polls and announced that 40 per cent of Congress tickets will be reserved for women this time.

"UP mein Congress party 40 per cent ticket mahilaon ko degi. Humari pratigya hai ki mahilayen UP ki rajneeti mein puri tarah bhagidar hongy (Congress will reserve 40 per cent tickets for women in UP. It is our pledge that women will participate fully in UP's politics)," Priyanka said.

However, responding to a question, the Congress leader said she is yet to take a decision on whether she would herself contest the assembly elections slated to be held in a few months.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



worried administration had corralled them into government schools and colleges in vulnerable districts. By Tuesday all of them had either left the Valley or joined work in secure locations.

"Police have been asking labourers to leave for the past few days, but many were not leaving as their payments were stuck. On Sunday night over a hundred labourers were brought here and housed in the government school. They all left by Monday evening," a shop-owner in Baramulla's Chooria tehsil said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Kin held for drink-driving, Cong MLA protests in police station

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 19

POLICE IN Jodhpur have ordered a probe into the circumstances behind a dharna staged by a Congress MLA and her husband inside a police station in the city, demanding the release of a relative who was among those rounded up for alleged drink-driving.

In a purported video clip of the incident, which took place Sunday at the Ratanada police station, Shergarh MLA Meena Kanwar is heard saying: "Baccha mera ghar ka baccha hai... Bacche sabke peete hain, koi baat nahi bacche hain thoda bahut le liya (The child is from my house... Everyone's children drink, it's not a big thing if the child had consumed a little)."

The video clip, which has gone viral on social media,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Priyanka at the UP Congress office Tuesday. Vishal Srivastav

EXPLAINED
E

The challenge

THE CONGRESS'S is a calculated move but also a challenge. In the 2017 elections to the 403-member UP assembly, the party put up 114 candidates, including 12 women. It won seven seats, including two by women.

Techies, real estate agents, bank staff held for bid to steal Rs 5 cr from NRI account

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

A TEAM OF techies, a group of real estate operators, three bank employees, a travel agency owner, a mastermind who described himself as a "doctor" — and a senior banker who succumbed to Covid a few months ago.

These are the key players at



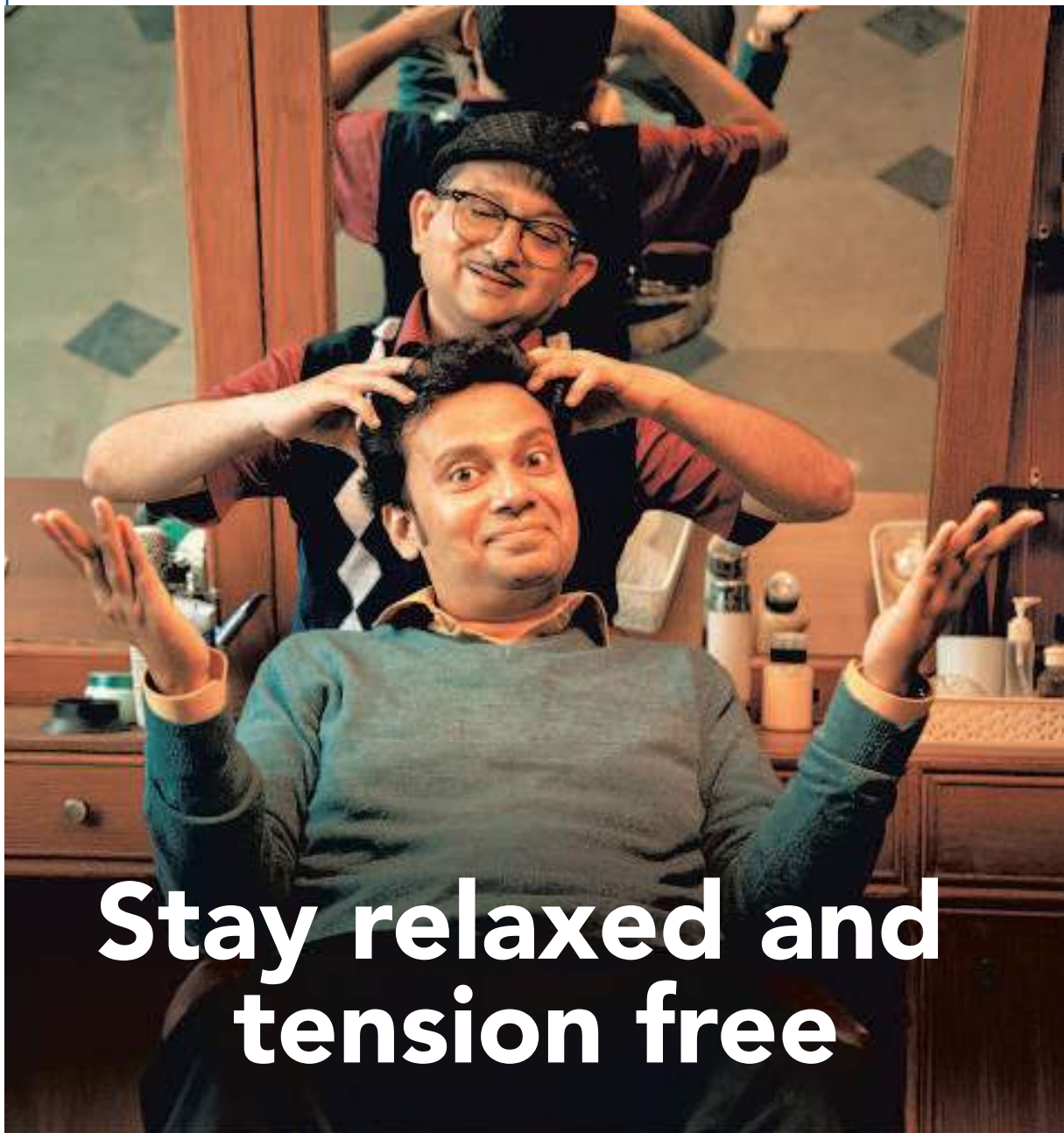
Fraud came to light after Rs 2 crore was withdrawn from the businessman's account. Express

the centre of a complex plan to allegedly steal Rs 5 crore from a prominent NRI businessman's bank account, which had Rs 200 crore in all, according to investigations by the cyber cell of Delhi Police.

Following up on a complaint from HDFC Bank after a sum of around Rs 2 crore was withdrawn fraudulently from the account through cheques in Punjab's Mohali and UP's Ghaziabad, police have arrested three of the bank's own employees and nine others in the case.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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3 WEST BENGAL

Heckled again by 'Trinamool supporters', say BJP MLA and candidate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COOCH BEHAR, OCTOBER 19

A BJP candidate for the upcoming Assembly by-election and a state legislator were allegedly heckled by suspected TMC supporters for the second straight day on Tuesday. The alleged incident occurred in the presence of a saffron party MP during campaigning in Cooch Behar district. The local TMC leadership, however, denied the allegation.

Ashok Mondal, the BJP candidate for Dinhat Assembly by-poll, and Natabari party MLA Mihir Goswami were heckled in the presence of Jalpaiguri's BJP MP Jayanta Roy during campaigning in Nayarhat.

Suspected TMC supporters raised "go back" slogans as the BJP leaders reached the area to campaign for the October 30 by-poll. The police, however, brought the situation under control. Mondal and Goswami had faced a similar situation in the Bamanhat area on Monday.

The BJP alleged that the incidents were engineered to prevent the party candidate from campaigning.

The Dinhat by-poll was necessitated by the resignation of Nisith Pramanik, the winning candidate and Minister of State for Home Affairs, who retained his Lok Sabha seat. The TMC renominated Udayan Guha, who had lost to Pramanik.

Besides Dinhat, by-elections will also be held in Santipur (Nadia), Gosaba (South 24 Parganas) and Khardaha (North 24 Parganas).

End strike, senior RG Kar doctors urge protesters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 19

AS A strike by junior doctors at state-run RG Kar Hospital here entered the 11th day on Tuesday, a team of senior doctors who are part of the hospital administration urged the protesters to end their demonstration.

The appeal came a day after the state health department met the hospital administration and directed them to find ways to get the protesters to call off the strike.

"The [medical] students have already been hit hard by the pandemic. While taking admission in a medical college, a student doesn't check who is the principal. This is a policy matter.

Gariahat double murder: More than 1 person may be involved, says Kolkata police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 19

THE KOLKATA Police suspects that more than one person is involved in the Gariahat double-murder case, and has not ruled out the involvement of people the victims knew, officials said on Tuesday, adding that no arrests had been made yet.

Subir Chaki, a 61-year-old managing director of an engineering firm and resident of New Town, and his driver Rabin Mondal, 65, were found murdered on different floors of the former's three-storey ancestral property in south Kolkata's Gariahat area on Sunday evening. The police said Chaki had told his mother and wife about visiting the house on Kankulia Road to meet a prospective buyer.

Though the police have not yet established the motive for the murders, they have found out that he entered the building shortly after 5:30 pm and his phone was active till 6:17 pm. Sources said that while Subir's mobile phone is missing, Rabin's phone was found near his body.

OCTOBER 30 BYPOLLS

53 more companies of central paramilitary forces reach state

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 19

JUST A week before the by-elections to four Assembly constituencies in West Bengal, an additional 53 companies of central paramilitary forces have arrived in the state to ensure free and fair polling.

Already, 27 companies of central force personnel have moved into these constituencies and have started patrolling the areas ahead of polling on October 30.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has informed the West Bengal government and the Election Commission that altogether, 80 companies of central forces will be deployed across the four segments — Dinhat in Cooch Behar, Shantipur in Nadia, Khardaha in North 24 Parganas and Gosaba in

the South 24 Parganas — to ensure security during the polling hours.

The polling will be conducted through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and will also involve the use of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT). Voters are being asked to take their photo identity cards along as they head to their designated polling stations.

It is understood that the EC has already made all preparations for the October 30 bypolls and as per the rules laid down by the panel, the polling will be webcast live in 50 percent of the booths at each of the four Assembly segments, while the process will be videographed in the remaining polling stations.

The Commission has further informed that polling will kick off from 7 am and continue till 6.30 pm. All booths will be inspected to ensure that proper electricity arrangements

are in place for uninterrupted polling and that the voters exercise their franchise in according with the Covid protocol.

The central forces will conduct regular route marches across the poll-bound segments to assess the situation on the ground and instil a sense of security in voters' minds ahead of the polling day. According to sources, apart from the central force personnel, a quick response team and a micro-observer will be deployed at each booth to ensure free and fair polling.

The Commission said that it will arrange three levels of security to make sure that the polling passes off peacefully.

The four Assembly constituencies are among 30 across 14 states that will go to polls on October 30 along with 3 Lok Sabha seats.

Bypolls in Gosaba and Khardaha became a necessity following the deaths of the sitting Trinamool Congress MLAs, while BJP MPs Nisith Pramanik and Jagannath Sarkar, who contested and won the Dinhat and Shantipur Assembly segments, resigned as MLAs after being asked by their party top brass to remain in Parliament.

In the Bhabanipur bypoll as well as the deferred elections to the Samsergunj and Jangipur segments, held on September 30, Trinamool scored a clean sweep, with party chief Mamata Banerjee surpassing her previous record in terms of the winning margin from her home seat. While 15 companies of central forces kept vigil during the high-stakes Bhabanipur bypoll, another 18 and 19 companies were stationed in Samsergunj and Jangipur to ensure safe polling.

BJP seeks central security cover for its candidates

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 19

A DELEGATION of the BJP leadership in West Bengal on Tuesday met the state's chief electoral officer (CEO), urging him to provide central security cover for the party's candidates for the Assembly by-elections in four seats that are scheduled to be held on October 30.

The delegation was led by BJP Lok Sabha MP Arjun Singh.

The meeting came on a day Ashok Mondal, the BJP's bypoll candidate for the Dinhat constituency in Cooch Behar and Natabari MLA Mihir Goswami were heckled allegedly by supporters of the ruling Trinamool



BJP MP Arjun Singh led a delegation that met CEO

Congress while campaigning. The BJP claimed that it's Khardaha candidate also faced similar protests while out campaigning for the bypoll.

Citing these alleged incidents, the delegation of state BJP leaders demanded that the Election Commission sanction central security for the party's bypoll candidates.

Speaking to reporters after meeting the CEO, Singh said, "We have no faith in the state police and

hence requested central security cover for our candidates."

The EC, which had initially sanctioned 27 companies of central security forces for the October 30 bypolls in Dinhat, Khardaha, Shantipur and Gosaba, brought in an additional 53 companies on Tuesday.

However, the Bengal BJP leaders demanded more central security personnel, claiming 80 companies were not adequate for the bypolls. It its memorandum addressed to the EC, the state BJP leadership stated, "We request an immediate deployment of (another) 30 companies of CAPF per constituency to ensure free and fair polls on October 30."

Speaking to media persons, BJP spokesperson Shamik Bhattacharya said, "We are contesting these bypolls in adverse cir-

cumstances. The state administration totally is working for the ruling party. But we are optimistic about performing well in all four Assembly constituencies."

However, denying all allegations of the BJP, the Trinamool's Dinhat candidate Udayan Guha said, "The BJP has no support in the grassroots. They are facing opposition from the voters and have realised that they are going to lose the by-elections. Hence, they have resorted to this fake claim of violence."

Sitalkuchi in Cooch Behar district saw violence during the Assembly elections earlier this year after central forces allegedly opened fire after coming under attack from locals.

Four persons died in the incident.

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UTTAR DINAJPUR

BJP bandh protesting youth leader's death hits normal life

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA
RAIGANJ, OCTOBER 19

A COUPLE of days after a BJP youth leader was shot dead at his home in Uttar Dinajpur district's Itihar area, an eight-hour strike in the district called by the saffron party disrupted normal life on Tuesday, with roads wearing a deserted look and shops remaining closed. The strike began at 6 am.

The police have said that 37-year-old Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leader Mithun Ghosh died following gunshot wounds sustained during "accidental firing".

He was showing a firearm to two of his associates when the gun went off, according to investigators. The BJP and Ghosh's family, however, accused the TMC of murder, an allegation denied by the ruling party. The police have arrested one person and are looking for another.

Bemoaning the BJP's decision to call the strike, a local trader said most shops in the

district remained closed, and there were fewer pedestrians on the streets. "Heavy rain since the last few days has already hampered business and disrupted normal life. And now, shops had to be shut due to the bandh," he added.

The police have registered an FIR after Ghosh's cousin filed a complaint, alleging that two people with whom the BJYM leader went out on Sunday were involved in the murder.

The police, however, have claimed that according to the initial probe the shots were accidentally fired. "Mithun Ghosh was killed in 'accidental firing'. The accused persons are known to the victim. Mithun was with the accused persons since evening," Raiganj Additional Superintendent of Police Arsh Verma said on Monday.

The police official said Mithun knew Sukumar Ghosh and Santosh Mahat, the two accused. According to investigators, the three dined in a hotel before getting back to the BJP leader's home in Rajgram around 10 pm.

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Online applications are invited by the Maharashtra Agricultural Universities Examination Board, Pune for admission to Ph.D. degree courses starting during Academic Year, 2021-22 in various agricultural streams in the Maharashtra State Agricultural Universities. The online process will commence from Dt. 20/10/2021 and the last date for submission of online applications is Dt. 08/11/2021. For further details regarding Ph.D. Common Entrance Test-2021 candidates may visit the website www.mcaer.org

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Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Punjab National Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus accrued interest, incidental expenses, cost and charges etc. till the date of repayment within 60 days from the date of notice / date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned below.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Punjab National Bank for an amount plus accrued interest, incidental expenses, cost and charges etc. till the date of repayment.

The borrower's / guarantor's/mortgagor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrower	Description of the property mortgaged	a) Date of Demand Notice b) Date of Possession Notice affixed c) Amount Outstanding as on the date of Demand Notice
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CONCLUDING REMARKS

Shaveta Sharma-Kukreja
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SCAN TO REGISTER

NEP 2020 is a huge step forward to transforming India's school education system, with a focus on acquiring 21st century skills of critical thinking and problem solving. The policy accords the highest priority to foundational literacy and numeracy. But the policy was drafted before the pandemic and, unfortunately, the context in which it is being implemented has changed. We need to adapt the policy to our current situation — adopt a blended learning approach so that children continue learning at home and build on some of the innovative learning models implemented during the lockdown.

This edition of IE Thinc will discuss the direction school education has to take to achieve NEP's vision and the role of technology in enabling this change, besides unpacking the impact this might have on the future economy.

The Indian EXPRESS
— JOURNALISM OF COURAGE —

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

India to be part of 4-country forum

EXPRESSNEWSSERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

INDIA, UNITED STATES, Israel and the UAE have decided to form a forum for future economic cooperation and to explore possibilities of joint infrastructure projects in the fields of transportation, technology, maritime security, and economics and trade.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on a five-day visit of Israel, accompanied his Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid in a virtual meeting on Monday with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in which the four leaders also exchanged views on shared issues of concern in the region

“A fruitful first meeting with Israeli APM and FM Yair Lapid, UAE FM Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken this evening...,” Jaishankar said in a tweet after the meeting.

NOT KEEN TO FORCE STUDENTS

Haryana may overturn class 8 exam decision

SUKHBIR SIWACH
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 19

THE HARYANA government is likely to overrule its education board which has decided to hold board examinations for class 8 students from the schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) too.

The government may not force students from CBSE- and ICSE-affiliated schools to appear for class 8 board exams even as the state’s board has decided to hold the exam for all government and private schools. Nearly one lakh students are studying in the schools affiliated to the CBSE and ICSE in Haryana.

A senior Haryana government officer told *The Indian Express* Tuesday: “One board can’t impose its rules on the other board. It’s illogical, it’s not possible.” The Board of School Education, Haryana (BSEH), which is commonly known as “Bhiwani board”, has decided to hold class 8 board exams after a period of 11 years.

The board insisted that students of government as well as private schools appear for the board exams, including those affiliated to the CBSE and ICSE. Associations of private school managements have opposed the move. They insist that the style of teaching, study material and pattern of exam, is different in CBSE and ICSE-affiliated schools. Further they say, a school affiliated with one board, can’t have affiliation with another.

However, officials of Bhiwani board say they can’t discriminate against the students. According to officials, nearly 2.15 lakh students of class 8 study in government schools while nearly 3.50 lakh in private schools. “If some schools are exempted from the board exams, then students from other schools would likely to move to these schools,” says Bhiwani board chairman Jagbir Singh. Singh claims the syllabus all schools -- those affiliated to CBSE, ICSE or Bhiwani board -- is NCERT approved.

“The publishers of the books concerned may be different, not the syllabus. Further, the issue of exams till class 8 is dealt with by

the state concerned even if the school is affiliated to the CBSE or ICSE. The exam-related issues from class 9-12 are handled by CBSE and ICSE.”

But officers in the state government have hinted that “the government doesn’t want any unnecessary controversy on this issue”.

An officer said: “We will take a call in this regard very soon.” The Bhiwani board functions under the administrative control of the state school education department.

Aiming at improvement in the “quality education”, the state government in 2020 had decided to hold board exams for class 8 students. But the exams could not be held in the academic session of 2020-21 because of the corona pandemic. But from the current academic session, the Bhiwani board has decided to hold the exams for class 8. Jagbir Singh says: “We had started saying this thing since July this year. We have observed that the teachers have already started focusing more on the education of class 8 students after this announcement.”

Enhanced rainfall activity likely to continue in Bengal today: Met

EXPRESSNEWSSERVICE
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 19

ENHANCED RAINFALL activity is very likely to continue over the districts of West Bengal on Thursday as well, the weather department said on Tuesday.

Officials said a Low Pressure Area now lies over Bihar and neighbourhood. Strong southerly wind from Bay of Bengal likely to prevail over Gangetic West Bengal tomorrow 20th October, 2021.

According to the weather forecast, thunderstorm with lightning and widespread light to moderate rainfall is very likely to occur over the districts of West Bengal till Thursday.

Weather office has issued heavy rainfall warning for North Bengal. Orange warning has been issued predicting heavy to very Heavy rainfall (07-20 cm) at one or two places over Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Alipurdwar districts.

Yellow Warning has been issued with prediction of Heavy rain (07-11 cm) at one or two places over Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of North Bengal.

“Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Alipurdwar are likely to receive extremely heavy rainfall till Wednesday morning and downpour till Thursday,” said officials.

On Tuesday till 8:30 am Jhalong in Kalimpong received maximum rainfall in 24 hours with 200 mm rainfall in 24 hours followed by Darjeeling which received 170 mm rainfall.

Meanwhile, incessant rainfall in North Bengal has caused landslides at various places disrupting traffic movement.

“There is a major landslide at 29 mile (NH10) which may take long to clear. Goods vehicles should not take that route from Siliguri until further orders. Small vehicles shall be diverted from Coronation Bridge, Teesta, and Rungpo,” tweeted Siliguri Police Commissionerate.

The Siliguri Police Commissionerate has issued an advisory in view of the adverse weather forecast and asked everyone to avoid non-essential travel as much as possible’.

As per sources, one person was killed after a tree fell on a vehicle in Algarah in Kalimpong due to heavy rainfall.

While flight operations remained almost normal, a few flights – at least six – to North Bengal were cancelled.

“Flight operations are normal with slight delays. Due to bad weather at Bagdogra AirIndia and GoAir flights from Delhi, AirAsia from Bangalore & Indigo from Guwahati were diverted to CCU. However they are now airborne. Also due to bad weather of Bagdogra today, several flights got cancelled,” said an official of Kolkata airport.

Kolkata airport witnessed chaos due to sudden cancellation of flight. Several passengers accused private airlines of not informing them timely.

“I had a flight to Gangtok at 11 pm which got cancelled at the last moment then I was suppose

to fly to Bagdogra at 3pm which also got cancelled. Worst was we kept waiting till 5:30 pm and there were no proper communication from the spice Jet people. They later informed us that they will refund our money in ten days as flight got cancelled. We had planned for a family holiday and now we don’t know what to do. We are stuck here at the airport for several hours now. Infact we got our luggage in wet condition,” Aakancha Gupta told express over phone. Other passengers too alleged travel harassment due to bad weather.

Spice Jet had however alerted it’s passenger on its twitter handle at around 9:18 in the morning.

“Due to bad weather in Bagdogra (IXB), all departures/arrivals and their consequential flights may get affected. Passengers are requested to keep a check on their flight status,” read a message on the airline’s official Twitter handle.

Kerala braces for more rain, alert sounded in landslide-prone areas

SHAJUPHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 19

RAIN-BATTERED KERALA is set to receive more rain starting Wednesday, the IMD has predicted. As per the IMD prediction, the Western Ghat belt and eastern hills of the state would be receiving heavy to extremely heavy rains.

Keeping in mind last week’s devastating landslides in Idukki and Kottayam districts, the Kerala government for the first time has begun evacuating people residing in landslide-prone areas in the



Three shutters of Idukki reservoir were opened Tuesday. PTI

eastern hills of the state, while district administrations have readied fishermen with boats to evacuate people from low-lying areas.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called on those residing in river basins and hilly regions to be extremely vigilant. “Chances for

landslide and river overflowing are very high as we have reached the fag end of southwest monsoon. People who are residing at houses, which have been earlier identified as unfit by the state disaster management authority, should immediately move to safer locations. Necessary directions have been given to district administrations to compulsorily shift people from unfit houses and those living very close to riversides,” he said.

The state disaster management authority has sounded an alert in landslide-prone areas in the state.

ATRI MITRA
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 19

THE CRIME rate in the area under railway jurisdiction of West Bengal remarkably decreased since the Covid-19 pandemic began and the subsequent lockdown period, the Government Railway Police (GRP) said.

According to the GRP, the crime rate became nearly half during this period when compared to other previous years.

Train services in the state were suspended since the lockdown period in 2020. Although these were restarted occasionally, train services in the state have not yet returned to normal. It has been observed that the amount of crime in the areas under the control of the railways has been reduced by more than half during the lockdown, the data shows. According to the GRP, instances of theft, robbery and dacoity decreased by more than half in 2020 and again increased in 2021 as the train movement also increased in

726 NEW COVID CASES, 9 MORE DIE

Kolkata: West Bengal reported 726 new Covid-19 cases and 9 deaths over the last 24 hours, a marginal increase from its single-day tally of 690 on Monday. According to a bulletin issued by the state health department, the fresh cases have taken the state’s overall case-load to 15,81,946, while the cumulative toll is now up to 18,998.

At 183, Kolkata accounted for the most cases on Monday, followed by North 24 Parganas at 106. The two districts, along with Howrah and Nadia, also topped the toll on Monday with two deaths each, while South 24-Parganas accounted for another ENS

this period.

Statistics show that a total of 695 such cases were reported in 2020 and up to September 2021, 773 cases were reported. But in previous years - 2019, 2018, 2017 and 2016 – a total of 1,613, 1,940, 2,132 and 2,046 cases were registered. These cases include dacoity, robbery, murder, theft and other law-breaking incidents.

West Bengal has four GRP districts: Howrah, Sealdah, Kharagpur and Siliguri. In these districts, in 2020, Howrah recorded the most cases at 282 and up to September, 2021, Sealdah recorded the highest number of cases at 321.

Other than dacoity, murder, theft and other crime, there were several unnatural death cases across the state, the GRP said. In the past six years, a total of 15,944 unnatural death case were registered across the state. However, in 2020, this number decreased by 50 per cent from the previous year, at 1,564. As of September this year, the number became 1,846.

According to the data, no dacoity happened during this period and only five cases of robbery happened. Crime against women decreased significantly during this period. From 2016-2019 84, 74, 73 and 68 cases were registered which are crime against women. However, in 2020, only 16 such cases reported and this year up to September 2021, only 13 such cases were registered.

The GRP said suspension of train services was the main reason for the decrease in crime rate. A senior officer said, “The railway police was not much engaged in Covid protocol maintenance. So, even when rail movement resumed, number of fleet was minimum and vigilance of rail police was better than usual days. Naturally crime rate decrease for these reason.”

The officer added, “The crime rate in the railway area is much lower than before. The railway police wants to maintain this. That system is being maintained by dividing the area and taking responsibility.”

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala- 147001
Contact Number: 96461-01251, Email id: se-it@pspcl.in
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC035813 Website: www.pspcl.in
Tender Enquiry No. 259/DIT-937/Vat-2 Dated 19.10.2021

Deputy Chief Engineer-IT (A&PM), General Floor, 7-Storey Building, PSPCL Head Office, The Mall, Patiala invites e-tender for Procurement of Microsoft software licenses under RAPDRP project. For detailed NIT & Tender specifications please refer to <https://spcproc.punjab.gov.in> from 19.10.2021, 5:00 pm onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at <https://spcproc.punjab.gov.in>

C38021 9684PB

The Kerala Minerals & Metals Ltd.
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking)
(An ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 & SA 8000 Certified Company)
Sankaramangalam, Chavara - 691 583, Kollam, Kerala, India
Phone : +91-476- 2651215 to 2651217.
Fax : +91-476- 2680101, 2686721.
E-mail : contact@kmml.com, URL:www.kmml.com CIN:U14109KL1972SGC02399

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

No	Tender ID	Items
1.	2021_KMML_446199_1	For the supply of 16" BUTTERFLY CONTROL VALVE
Chavara 19.10.2021 Sd/ DGM(Mtls) For The Kerala Minerals And Metals Ltd		
2.	2021_KMML_445952_1	Strengthening the retaining walls of IOP-2021
For Design, Engineering, Procurement, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of one new Booster Compressor for nitrogen gas at TP Unit of KMML		
3.	2021_KMML_444779_1	
Chavara 19.10.2021 Sd/ HOU(T) For The Kerala Minerals And Metals Ltd		
Our Products: Titanium Dioxide, Titanium Tetrachloride, Nano Titanium, Titanium Sponge, Rutile, Zircon & Silimanite		

REGIONAL OFFICE : KOLKATA SOUTH
33, N. S. Road, 5th Floor, Kolkata - 700001
Phone No. 033 22312720 / 22628138

PREMISES REQUIRED ON LEASE with ON-SITE ATM for NEW ALIPUR (KOLKATA) and BHAGBANPUR (SOUTH 24 PGS.)

Central Bank of India invites tender to Two Bid System (Technical & Financial) for premises in ready possession condition preferably on the ground floor with adequate parking space for their NEW ALIPUR (KOLKATA) and BHAGBANPUR (South 24 Parganas) Branch.

Branch/ Centre	City/ District	Preferred Location	Carpet Area
NEW ALIPUR (KOLKATA)	Kolkata	Within 2-3 KM radius of existing Branch	1200-1800 sq. ft.
BHAGBANPUR (Block Mathurapur-1)	South 24 Parganas	Within 2-3 KM radius of existing Branch	800-1000 sq. ft.

No brokers or intermediaries will be entertained. Priority will be accorded to Government / Semi Govt. bodies or public sector undertakings. Kindly download the formats/ terms and conditions from the website: <http://www.centralbankofindia.co.in> or collect the same from Central Bank of India, NEW ALIPUR, BHAGBANPUR Branch or BSD, Regional Office Kolkata South at above mentioned address during office hours. The last date for submission of offers is 26.10.2021 upto 4.00 p.m.

Bank reserves the right to reject any/ all offers without assigning any reason.

Date: 20.10.2021 Senior Regional Manager

MAHARASHTRA RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(महाराष्ट्र शासन आणि रेल्वे मंत्रालय यांचा संयुक्त उपक्रम)
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of Maharashtra and Ministry of Railways)

Notice Inviting E- Tender

MRIDC/PROJ/e-TENDER/ROB/2021/142

MRIDC is inviting E-bids from the eligible bidders for the work mentioned below:

a. Name of Work: Construction of Road Over Bridges (ROBs) at 3 locations (i.e. Igatpuri - Bhusawal Section at LC 147 - Km 148/27 - 419/01 between Shiroli - Jalgaon Stations, LC No. 95 - Km 205/17-19 between Kherwadi - Odha Station and LC No. 149 - Km 422/04-06 between Jalgaon - Bhadli Station) in lieu of L.C. Gans in Maharashtra area on Bhusawal Division of Central Railway. b. Estimated Cost: ₹ 63,45,58,339/- c. Completion Period: 300 days. d. Last Date and Time for Submission of Bid: 09/11/2021 upto 15:00 Hrs.

Interested bidders who wish to participate should visit MRIDC's official website www.maharail.com or e-bidding portal www.tenderwizard.in/MAHARAIL to bid their offer.

Any Addendum / Corrigendum to this notice will be uploaded on the above-mentioned website only.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: EL/HWH/25/21 (Notice)/443, dt. 18.10.2021. Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah invites Open Tender for the under-mentioned electrical work.

Tender No. : EL/HWH/25/21/3142.
Name of work : Electrical general work for upgradation of Level Crossing Gates in connection with conversion work of Avoiding Lines (Up & Dn) between LLH and TKPR into Passenger Movement lines. **Tender value :** ₹ 6,80,037. **Closing date and time of tender :** 15.11.2021 at 15.00 hrs. The details of tender are available at website: www.ireps.gov.in Tenderers are requested to submit their offer online on the above website. (HWH-152/2021-22)

Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.ireps.gov.in

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE No. 16 UBL 2021-22, Dated: 13.10.2021
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders (IREPS) for the following works:

Sl.	Name of Work	Approx Value
1]	Hubballi Division: Through Fittings Renewal from Km.589-Km.598(9km DN), Km.604-Km.720(116 km DN), Km.526-6-534/00(7.4 km DN), Km.534.7 Km.534.8 (0.1 km DN), Km.535.3 Km.543.9 (8.6 Km), Km.544.8-Km.546.2 (1.4Kms DN), 546.8-554 (7.2 Km DN) & 556.4-559 (2.6Km DN) total for a length of 152.3 Km in Senior Divisional Engineer/West Jurisdiction in Alnavara-Londa-Miraj Section.	Rs. 6,04,28,368/-
2]	Hubballi Division: Supply and installation of portable office cabins at ghat stations Caranzol, Sonalium and Dudhsagar in emergency use for supervisor and labours.	Rs. 49,06,440/-

Last date for submission of bids: Up to 11:00 hrs. of 11.11.2021

For details log on- www.ireps.gov.in Divisional Railway Manager/Works Hubballi

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17-year-old girl held for 'killing 4 family members'

EXPRESSNEWSERVICE
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 19

A 17-YEAR-OLD girl has been detained for allegedly killing 4 of her family members in July over alleged “discrimination” between her and her siblings.

The girl was taken into custody on October 17, after her brother filed a police complaint against her the day before.

Police said the incident took place on July 12 in Issamurda Gollarahatti in Chitradurga district, 200 km away from Bengaluru. They said the girl poisoned her family members’ dinner with pesticide.

According to police, the girl mixed pesticide in Ragi powder before it was cooked into ‘Ragi mudde’. While all the family members ate the ‘Ragi mudde’ for dinner, she ate rice and sambar. Around 11:30 pm, the family members started complaining of stomach ache, vomiting and diarrhea and later succumbed at a hospital in Davangere.

The police have booked a case under IPC sections 302 and 307 and the accused has been sent to a remand home since she is a minor.

The deceased were identified as Thippa Naik (45), his wife Sudha Bai (40), his mother Gundli Bai (80), and daughter Ramya (16).

The elder brother of the accused, Chandrashekar T alias Rahul (20), was shifted to a hospital and survived.

After the deaths were reported, the Bharamasagara police had registered a case of unnatural death. Police said the post-mortem confirmed that the food the victims ate had been mixed with pesticide but they did not have any suspects. Thippa Naik and his family worked in farm lands and did not have any kind of enmity, said a police officer. Chandrashekar, who had moved to his grandmother’s place in Ainahalli, returned to Issamurda Gollarahatti after he recovered and was living with the 17-year-old sister.

BANGLADESH VIOLENCE

VHP holds protests in Bengal & Assam, more planned today

ENS AND PTI
KOLKATA, GUWAHATI, NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

THE VISHVA Hindu Parishad (VHP) organised demonstrations in Kolkata and Assam on Tuesday in protest against the recent violence faced by Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, and announced nationwide protests on Wednesday. They called for the punishment of those who attacked Hindus, and vandalised Durga Puja pandals and Hindu temples.

In Kolkata, apart from holding protests, a VHP delegation submitted a memorandum to the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission on the matter. This came a day after a West Bengal BJP delegation led by Leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari visited the Bangladesh diplomatic mission to register the party’s protest, and the BJP organised statewide protests.

In its memorandum to the deputy high commissioner, the organisation urged the government in the neighbouring country to protect the Hindu community, its culture, and heritage.

The West Bengal unit of the VHP also wrote a letter to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, urging him to take up the matter with the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government and provide all manner of support to Hindus in Bangladesh. On Monday, the BJP had questioned the TMC’s alleged silence on the matter.

In Guwahati, the Bajrang Dal, which is the VHP’s youth wing, organised a protest outside the office of the Bangladesh Assistant High Commissioner. Holding placards demanding justice for the victims, Bajrang Dal members raised slogans against the attacks.

The Sanatan Dharma Aikya Manch, a platform of Hindu or-



VHP workers during a protest in Kolkata Tuesday. Partha Paul

ganisations, organised a rally in Lumding city in Hojai district. It demanded the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, in New Delhi, the VHP announced that nationwide protests would be held on Wednesday. The demonstration in the national capital will be organised in front of the Bangladesh High Commission.

“The incidents of violence against Hindu minorities in Bangladesh have broken all records. While thousands of Hindus have been injured, 10 Hindus have been reported dead till now. Hindu society will not tolerate these inhuman atrocities. A massive protest and demonstration will be held on October 20 in front of the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi at 11 am. Along with this, protests and demonstrations will be held in every district across the country,” VHP joint general secretary Surendra Jain told reporters at a press conference in Delhi.

Appealing to the United Nations to play “a proactive role” and send a peacekeeping force to Bangladesh “to prevent atrocities on Hindu minorities”, Jain added, “Extremists will have to be dealt with in the same manner as was done in 1971. If needed, the government of

Bangladesh should take the help of the government of India. The VHP appeals to the government of India to exert adequate pressure on the government of Bangladesh so that the latter fulfils its obligation to ensure the safety and security of its indigenous minority Hindu population.”

Tensions escalated in Bangladesh last Wednesday after footage of an alleged incident of blasphemy at a Durga Puja pavilion in Comilla, around 100 km from Dhaka, began circulating on social media. Subsequently, incidents of vandalism of Hindu temples and Durga Puja pandals were reported from places such as Hajiganj in Chandpur, Banshkhalai in Chattogram, and Pekua in Cox’s Bazar. On October 14, an ISKCON temple in Noakhali was attacked. At least five people have reportedly lost their lives in the communal attacks while several have been injured.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Tuesday instructed her home minister to initiate immediate action against those who incited violence using religion as the pretext, and asked people not to trust anything on social media without fact-checking.

Migrant workers return to Jharkhand after clashes at Himachal site

OM PRAKASH THAKUR
SHIMLA, OCTOBER 19

FOLLOWING A brawl between two groups of labourers working on the Tidong hydropower project in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh, over 60 migrant workers have returned to Jharkhand while more are on their way back, according to officials.

“So far, a total of 61 workers have returned home in four batches and the process is going on. All the workers are residents of Khunti, Torpa, Bhandgaon and other parts of the state,” the Jharkhand government said in a press statement on Monday. According to site in-charge Prakash Shukla, a total of about 150 workers from Jharkhand wanted to return home.

Police said two groups of labourers – one from Jharkhand and the other from Himachal, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Nepal – clashed following an incident on October 2, when a drunk labourer from Jharkhand allegedly relieved himself near the water tank. When he was reprimanded by the health and safety officer, Ajay Kumar, other labourers from Jharkhand allegedly beat up Kumar. The next day, some labourers from Jharkhand who were allegedly involved in the clash were beaten up by another group of labourers.

“All this happened under the influence of liquor. The police team is in touch with the labourers and the situation is under control,” said Deputy Superintendent of Police, Kinnaur, Naveen Jhalta.

Shukla said the labourers who left had been paid. “If the labourers are alleging that they were confined, they are lying,” he said.

SIMPLY PUT **QUESTION & ANSWER**

IMF outlook & status of jobs

The IMF's latest World Economic Outlook has underlined that employment growth is likely to lag output recovery after the pandemic. Why has job growth been slow, and what are the concerns for India?

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

LAST WEEK, the IMF unveiled its 2nd World Economic Outlook (WEO). The IMO comes out with the report twice every year — April and October — the and also provides regular “updates” to it on other occasions. The WEO reports are significant because they are based on a wide set of assumptions about a host of parameters — such as the international price of crude oil — and set the benchmark for all economies to compare one another with.

What were the main takeaways from the WEO in October?

The central message was that the global economic recovery momentum had weakened a tad, thanks largely to the pandemic-induced supply disruptions. But more than just the marginal headline numbers for global growth, it is the increasing inequality among nations that IMF was most concerned about.

“The dangerous divergence in economic prospects across countries remains a major concern. Aggregate output for the advanced economy group is expected to regain its pre-pandemic trend path in 2022 and exceed it by 0.9 per cent in 2024. By contrast, aggregate output for the emerging market and developing economy group (excluding China) is expected to remain 5.5 per cent below the pre-pandemic forecast in 2024, resulting in a larger setback to improvements in their living standards,” it stated.

There are two key reasons for the economic divergences: large disparities in vaccine access, and differences in policy support.

But possibly the most important takeaway from the WEO this time is about the employment growth likely to lag the output recovery (*Chart 1*).

“Employment around the world remains below its pre-pandemic levels, reflecting a mix of negative output gaps, worker fears of on-the-job infection in contact-intensive occupations, childcare constraints, labor demand changes as automation picks up in some sectors, replacement income through furlough schemes or unemployment benefits helping to cushion income losses, and frictions in job searches and matching,” the IMF stated.

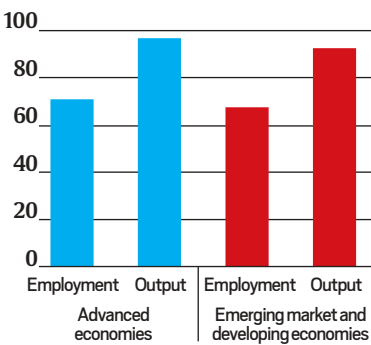
Within this overall theme, what is particularly worrisome is that this gap between recovery in output and employment is likely to be larger in emerging markets and developing economies than in advanced economies. Further, young and low-skilled workers are likely to be worse off than prime-age and high-skilled workers, respectively.

What does this mean for India?

As far as GDP is concerned, India's growth

CHART 1

SHARE OF ECONOMIES EXPECTED TO REGAIN PRE-PANDEMIC EMPLOYMENT AND OUTPUT LEVELS BY 2022



Note: For employment, the bars measure the fraction of countries expected to regain 019 employment by 2022. For output, the comparison is of real GDP between 2019–Q4 and 2022–Q4. Source: IMF

TABLE 3

HOW INFORMAL ARE DIFFERENT SECTORS

Sector	Share in GVA (%)	Share of unorganised/informal sector (%)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	17.2	97.1
Mining and quarrying	2.3	22.5
Manufacturing	16.4	22.7
Utility services (gas, electricity etc)	2.7	5.3
Construction	7.8	74.5
Trade, repair, food services, accommodation	11.8	86.6
Transport, storage, communication & services related to broadcasting	6.4	47.7
Financial services	5.4	11.9
Real estate, ownership of dwellings & professional services	15.6	52.8
Public administration, defence	6.2	0
Other services	8.1	47.9
Total	100	52.4

Source: Computed from National Accounts Statistics, 2019

TABLE 1

INDIA'S EMPLOYMENT LEVELS

Period	Total employed* (in mn)
May-Aug 2019	405
Sep-Dec 2019	407
Jan-Apr 2020	381
May-Aug 2020	372
Sep-Dec 2020	397
Jan-Apr 2021	399
May-Aug 2021	394

* above age 15 Source: CMIE

TABLE 2

HOW INFORMAL IS INDIA (%) (2017-18)

Worker	Unorganised	Organised	Total
Informal	84.5	5.2	90.1
Formal	1.3	7.9	9.3
Total	86.8	13.2	100

Source: Computed from NSS 68th unit level data on employment unemployment, 2011-12 and Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2017-18

Share in GVA (%)	Share of unorganised/informal sector (%)
17.2	97.1
2.3	22.5
16.4	22.7
2.7	5.3
7.8	74.5
11.8	86.6
6.4	47.7
5.4	11.9
15.6	52.8
6.2	0
8.1	47.9
100	52.4

Source: Computed from National Accounts Statistics, 2019

rate hasn't been tweaked for the worse. In fact, beyond the IMF, several high-frequency indicators have suggested that India's economic recovery is gaining ground.

But what the IMF has projected on employment — that the recovery in unemployment is lagging the recovery in output (or GDP) — matters immensely for India.

To begin with, according to the data available with the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the total number of employed people in the Indian economy as of May-August 2021 was 394 million — 11 mil-

lion below the level set in May-August 2019. To puts these numbers in a larger perspective, in May-August 2016 the number of employed people was 408 million. In other words, India was already facing a deep employment crisis before the Covid crisis, and it became much worse after it.

As such, projections of an employment recovery lagging behind output recovery could mean large swathes of the population being excluded from the GDP growth and its benefits. Lack of adequate employment levels would drag down overall demand and

thus stifle India's growth momentum.

Why could employment lag output growth in India?

There are several possible reasons. For one, as mentioned above, India already had a massive unemployment crisis. Labour economists such as Santosh Mehrotra, who is Visiting Professor at the Centre for Development Studies, University of Bath (UK), cite a number of additional issues.

“The first thing to understand is that India is witnessing a K-shaped recovery. That means different sectors are recovering at significantly different rates. And this holds not just for the divergence between the organised sector and unorganised sector, but also within the organised sector,” Mehrotra said. He pointed out that some sectors such as the IT-services sectors have been practically unaffected by Covid, while e-commerce industry is doing “brilliantly”. But at the same time, many contact-based services, which can create many more jobs, are not seeing a similar bounce-back. Similarly, listed firms have recovered much better than unlisted firms.

The second big reason for worry is that the bulk of India's employment is in the informal or unorganised sectors (*Table 2*). The informal worker is defined as “a worker with no written contract, paid leave, health benefits or social security”. The organised sector refers to firms that are registered. Typically, it is expected that organised sector firms will provide formal employment.

So, a weak recovery for the informal/unorganised sectors implies a drag on the economy's ability to create new jobs or revive old ones.

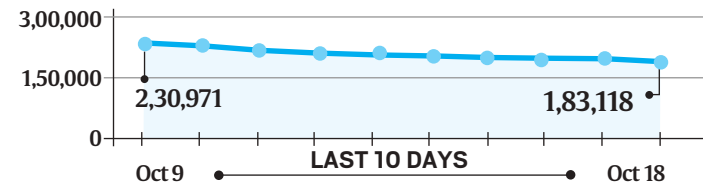
Last week, IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath pointed out that the number of people using the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act provisions was still 50-60% above pre-pandemic level. This suggests that the informal economy is struggling to recover at the same pace as some of the more visible sectors.

How informal is India's economy?

Table 3, sourced from the 2019 paper ‘Measuring Informal Economy in India’ (S V Ramana Murthy, National Statistical Office), gives a detailed breakup. It shows two things. One, the share of different sectors of the economy in the overall Gross Value Added (GVA) or a measure of overall output from the supply side just as GDP is from the demand side. Two, the share of the unorganised sector therein. The share of informal/unorganised sector GVA is more than 50% at the all-India level, and is even higher in certain sectors, notably those that create a lot of low-skilled jobs such as construction and trade, repair, accommodation, and food services. This is why India is more vulnerable.

INDIA ACTIVE COVID CASES

1,83,118



Source: MoHFW

Why global fuel prices are up, how India is impacted

KARUNJIT SINGH

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

AS THE global recovery strengthens, the price of crude oil is at its highest level since 2018, and the prices of natural gas and coal are hitting record highs amid an intensifying energy shortage.

Why are fuel prices rising?

Brent crude breached the \$85 per barrel mark earlier this week on the back of a sharp increase in global demand as the world economy recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key oil producing countries have kept crude supplies on a gradually increasing production schedule despite a sharp increase in global prices. Brent crude has nearly doubled compared to the price of \$42.5 per barrel a year ago. In its latest round of meetings, the OPEC+ grouping reaffirmed that they would increase total crude oil supply by only 400,000 barrels per day in November despite the sharp increase in prices.

The output of the top oil producers — Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the UAE, and Kuwait would still be about 14 per cent lower than reference levels of production post the increase in November.

OPEC+ had agreed to sharp cuts in supply last year in response to the global travel restrictions, but the organisation has been slow to boost production as demand has recovered. India and other oil importing nations have called on OPEC+ to boost oil supply faster, arguing that elevated crude oil prices could undermine the recovery of the global economy.

Natural gas deliveries to Asia hit an all-time high of \$56.3 per mmbtu (metric million British Thermal Unit) for November according to S&P Global Platts. Supply side issues in the US, including disruptions caused by hurricane Ida and lower than expected natural gas supplies from Russia amid rising demand in Europe, have raised the prospect of natural gas shortages in the winter.

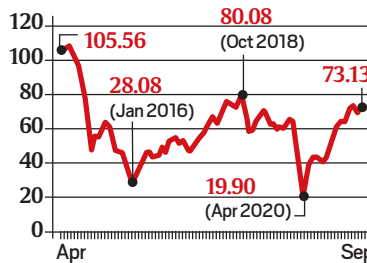
International coal prices too have reached all-time highs as China faces a coal shortage that has led to factories across that country facing power outages. A faster than expected recovery in global demand has pushed the price of Indonesian coal up from about \$60 per tonne in March to about \$200 per tonne in October.

What is the impact on India?

High crude oil prices have contributed to the prices of petrol and diesel hitting new highs across the country in 2021. The price of petrol in the national capital is Rs 105.84 per litre, up Rs 4.65/l over the last three weeks, while the price of diesel is Rs 94.6/l, up Rs 5.75/l over the same period.

India has seen a faster recovery in consumption of petrol than of diesel — petrol con-

CRUDE OIL FOB PRICE (\$/BARREL) FOR INDIAN BASKET



Source: Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell, Government of India

sumption was up 9 per cent in September compared to a year ago; diesel consumption remained 6.5 per cent below 2020 levels.

Diesel accounts for about 38 per cent of petroleum product consumption in India, and is a key fuel used in industry and agriculture.

S&P Global Platts Analytics noted in a report that demand for diesel in India was expected to go up in the next few months as the economic recovery accelerates. However, Platts Analytics predicted that India's total demand for crude oil would surpass pre-pandemic levels only in 2022.

High international gas prices have led to an upward revision in the price of domestic natural gas.

The Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) set the price of gas produced by state-owned ONGC and Oil India under the nomination regime to \$2.9 per mmbtu, up from \$1.79 per mmbtu in the previous six month period.

The PPAC also increased the ceiling price of \$6.13 per mmbtu for gas extracted from ultra-deep water, and high-pressure, high-temperature discoveries from \$3.62 per mmbtu in the previous six-month period.

The increase in gas prices has put upward pressure on the price of both Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), which is used as a transport fuel, and Piped Natural Gas (PNG), which is used as a cooking fuel.

CNG was hiked twice by a total Rs 4.56 per kg this month to Rs 49.8 in the national capital; PNG rose by Rs 4.2 per SCM (standard cubic metre) to Rs 35.11 per SCM.

High international prices of coal have contributed to the crisis at India's thermal power plants by forcing plants using imported coal that could not pass on the higher price to producers, to stop supplying power.

Low coal stocks at a number of coal-fired thermal power plants have led to power outages in states including Punjab and Rajasthan, and have forced states to buy power at above-normal prices on the power exchange.

In spotlight for lynching, the Nihang Sikhs: their history in Punjab, and current status

NAVJEEVANGOPAL

CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 19

A GROUP of Nihangs has claimed responsibility for the brutal murder of a 35-year-old man at the Singhu border farmers' protest site on Friday, allegedly because he had disrespected the Sikh holy book. In April 2020, Nihangs had attacked a Punjab Police party in Patiala and chopped off the hand of an assistant sub-inspector when stopped for a curfew pass in the midst of the lockdown.

Who is a Nihang?

Nihang is an order of Sikh warriors, characterised by blue robes, antiquated arms such as swords and spears, and decorated turbans surmounted by steel quoits. The order can be traced back to the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699, according to Sikh historian Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon. “Etymologically the word *nihang* in Persian means an alligator, sword and pen, but the characteristics of Nihangs seem to stem more from the Sanskrit word *nihshank* which means without fear, unblemished, pure, carefree and indifferent to worldly gains and comfort,” he said.

Is there a count of Nihangs in Punjab?

Scholars say it is difficult to give a specific count, given that Nihang Sikhs are divided into many factions. Broadly, there are three factions: Baba Budha Dal, Tama Dal, and Baba Bidhi Chand Dal. The Budha Dal (basically considered a faction of the elderly) and the Tama Dal (formed as a band of the young) are divided into further factions, including around a dozen factions in the Tama Dal.

Bhai Pritpal Singh, head granthi of the gurdwara Dukh Nivaran Sahib, Patiala, said there are more than 30 factions of Nihangs in Punjab, big and small. According to Rajinder Kaur, Assistant Professor of



Two Nihang Sikhs in a mock sword fight in Ludhiana. Gurmeet Singh

Religious Studies at Guru Nanak College, Budhlada, “Because of a large number of factions and their dynamic nature — they keep moving from one place to another (*chakravarti* or *chalda vaheer*) — it is very difficult to have a specific count of the Nihangs”.

Dr Dhillon said the Nihangs today constitute a small community. In the absence of a central command or leadership, they are loosely organised. They are stationed at their *deras* all year round, but set out on an annual pilgrimage of Anandpur Sahib, Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo, and Amritsar, and take part in religious events and exhibit their martial skills and horsemanship.

Why have Punjab politicians not been very vocal on the Singhu lynching?

“The lynching can never be justified but the issue of desecration of sacred scripture of Sikhs is a very sensitive issue, so politicians have avoided getting into it,” a Sikh scholar said.

“Another factor was that politicians did not want to have confrontation with Nihangs, who leave their homes and have no fear of death.”

What is Nihang Sikhs' role in history?

Nihangs played a major role in defending the Sikh *panth* against attacks and persecution by Mughal governors in the early decades of the 18th century, and then during the invasions of the Afghan Ahmad Shah Durrani between 1748 and 1767. When the Khalsa army was divided into five battalions in 1734, a Nihang or Akali battalion was led by Baba Deep Singh Shahid.

Nihangs also took control of the religious affairs of the Sikhs at the Akal Bunga (now known as Akal Takht) in Amritsar, where they held the grand council (Sarbat Khalsa) and passed the Gurmata (resolution). Their clout came to an end after the fall of the Sikh Empire in 1849; the British appointed a manager (sarbrah) for the administration of the Golden Temple in 1859.

During the militancy years, the then Baba Budha Dal chief Nihang chief, late Baba Santa Singh, fell afoul of the mainstream Sikhs when he, at the instance of Indian government, went on to rebuild the Akal Takht that had been damaged during Operation Bluestar in June 1984. “Some Nihangs, including Ajit Singh Poohla, collaborated with

the Punjab police to eliminate Sikh militants,” Dr Dhillon said.

There were others who supported the militants. Dr Gurmeet Singh Sidhu, professor and Guru Gobind Singh Chair at Punjabi University, Patiala, recounts an instance where a Nihang misled a police party about the movement of alleged terrorists in an area.

What is their source of income today?

The major Nihang factions have under their control a number of gurdwaras, where devotees make offerings. The major factions also have agricultural land, and earn income by renting out shops in their properties. The Budha Dal also runs three schools. “Admission in the schools is purely on merit,” Budha Dal secretary Diljit Singh Bedi said. Asked about income and expenditure, Bedi said, “There are a number of cantonments of Budha Dal in different parts of the state, where the in-charges maintain records of income and expenditure.”

How are Nihangs different from other Sikhs, and other Sikh warriors?

“Nihangs observe the Khalsa code of conduct in its strictest sense. They do not profess allegiance to any earthly master. Instead of saffron, they hoist a blue Nishan Sahib (flag) atop their shrines,” Dr Dhillon said.

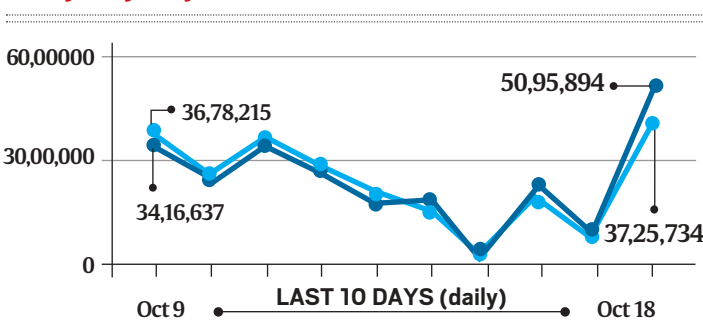
Nihangs use the slogans ‘*chhardi kala*’ (forever in high spirits) and ‘*tiar bar tiar*’ (state of ever-preparedness) for unforeseen events.

“The Nihangs are fond of a drink called *shardai* or *sharbat deg*h (sacrament drink) which contains ground almonds, cardamom seeds, poppy seeds, black pepper, rose petals and melon seeds. When a small measure of cannabis is added to it, it is termed *sukhnidhan* (treasure of comfort). A higher dose of cannabis is what was known as *shahedi deg*, or sacrament of martyrdom. It was taken (while) battling enemies,” Dr Dhillon said.

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

TOTAL VACCINATED IN INDIA (at least one dose)

69,91,16,940



TOTAL DOSES

98,67,69,411

(Sputnik V's 10,42,396 doses not represented in pie)

COVISHIELD

88.4%

COVAXIN

11.5%

DOSES ON OCT 18 98,67,69,411

OCT 17: 13,58,243 (1st dose: 6,57,286; 2nd: 7,00,957)

18,27,872

Number of doses administered in Uttar Pradesh on October 18, the highest for any state.

10,85,365

Bihar
10,45,848
West Bengal

7,52,481

Andhra Pradesh
6,31,609
Maharashtra

Note: The October 18 figures in these graphs are based on the government updates on Oct 19
Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on October 19



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

FLOOD AND FURY

Devastation in coasts and hills underlines ecological fragility, calls for revisiting development paradigms

THIS MONSOON SEASON has given ample evidence of extreme weather events, long foretold by climate science experts. In July, a fortnight of torrential rain left a trail of destruction in the mountains of north India and the coastal parts of Western India. The elements have continued to behave chaotically even as the southwest monsoon retreats from the country and the easterlies are replacing the westerlies. At least 20 people are feared to have lost their lives in another bout of floods in Uttarakhand. In Kerala, incessant downpour in the past four days has swelled rivers and caused landslides, sweeping away homes, bridges and claiming at least 38 lives — worse is feared with the IMD predicting another spurt of rainfall from Wednesday. Both states have issued flood alerts and begun to evacuate people from flood-prone areas. But these states require much more than emergency measures to address and mitigate their climate-related vulnerabilities. Whether in the Western Ghats or the Himalayas, there are pressing reasons for states to rethink development paradigms.

The topography of most hilly regions makes them prone to landslides. Deforestation, quarrying, road construction and other land-use changes that pay short shrift to ecology increase vulnerabilities of such areas during episodes of heavy rainfall. That's why several expert committees have counseled utmost caution in implementing infrastructure projects in both the Himalayas and the Western Ghats. In 2011, for example, the Madhav Gadgil committee recommended that a roughly 1,30,000 sq km stretch spanning Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu be declared an environmentally sensitive zone. The panel headed by one of the country's top ecologists called for strict regulation of developmental activities in this stretch. None of the six states agreed with its recommendations. Kerala, in particular, objected to the proposed ban on mining, restrictions on construction activities and embargoes on hydroelectricity projects. The substantially diluted recommendations of another committee headed by K Kasturirangan — it proposed to whittle down the Western Ghats' eco-sensitive zone by about half of what was earmarked by the Gadgil panel — also did not get much traction in the Western Ghat states.

The Kerala government has opened the shutters of the Idukki dam as the state's largest reservoir is rapidly filling up with heavy rainfall. In recent years, state governments in most parts of the country have been criticised for leaving such decisions till it's too late. Dam operators blame the delay on not being alerted about extreme weather events in time. There's surely a case for greater coordination amongst forecasting agencies and reservoir management authorities. This would ensure the timely opening of dam spillways and create holding capacity in the reservoirs to absorb excess rainfall. With studies and IPCC reports warning about more destructive floods caused by sea-level rise and high-intensity rainfall, the country can ill-afford to delay investments in such disaster management systems.

THE DHAKA CHALLENGE

Anti-Hindu violence requires Sheikh Hasina government to act firmly. A lot more than India-Bangla ties is at stake

THE VIOLENCE TARGETING the Hindu minority in Bangladesh is a disturbing sign of the continuing influence of Islamist groups that have threatened the secular consensus in that country since its birth 50 years ago. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has promised to crack down on individuals and groups behind last week's communal clashes. At least six people died in clashes and temples, residences and businesses of members of the Hindu community, which constitutes over 10 per cent of Bangladesh's population, were damaged. Clearly, the Hasina government needs to act firmly to punish the guilty and restore peace. New Delhi has expressed concern since events in its neighbourhood can potentially resonate at home but any response should be tempered by the understanding that this is a problem, primarily, for Dhaka to address. For, any attempt to step into a matter that involves citizens of Bangladesh is fraught with risk and unintended consequences.

Like most countries in the Subcontinent, Bangladesh has been rolled by communal violence, with Hindus, the single-largest religious minority, facing the brunt — there have been at least 3,600 incidents of violence against Hindus since January 2013. Yet, evidence suggests that the anti-Hindu mobilisations in Bangladesh are more of an aberration. A secular linguistic identity has been the foundational principle of Bangladesh, but a powerful Islamist strand, a leftover of pre-Partition Muslim politics in the Subcontinent, has survived through organisations such as Jamaat-e-Islami in alliance with military dictators and pro-Pakistan forces. The rise of al Qaeda and ISIS has provided additional impetus and new ideological inspiration for the emergence of new radical groups, which have attacked artists, bloggers, Awami League and Communist Party workers, LGBT activists. In 2016, an al Qaeda affiliate bombed a bakery in upscale Dhaka killing 22 people. The current anti-Hindu violence may also bear the imprint of forces that oppose Sheikh Hasina in a political eco-system where there are few spaces for the opposition. Indeed, anti-India slogans have accompanied the targeting of Hindus during Durga Puja.

The fact remains that almost 75 years since Partition, religious polarisation in any part of the Subcontinent has cross-border implications. Governments will have to be vigilant against forces that seek to exploit communal fault lines and stoke minority insecurities to further their own electoral and ideological goals. The violence during Durga Puja, a social event that draws in all religious communities in Bangladesh, set off by the now all-too familiar rumour and and social media fury, is ominous and must be stanchd urgently.

IT TAKES A PARTY-STATE

Chinese authoritarianism seems set on raising children by punishing parents

S PARE A THOUGHT FOR China's adolescents. In the Middle Kingdom, run as it is by a coterie of communists, post-pubescent "acting out" will no longer be considered a step in young people's journeys towards finding themselves. Their acts of rebellion — often manifested in "bad behaviour" — are to be seen as a failure on the part of parents, who will be punished for the misdemeanours of their offspring, according to the draft Family Education Promotion law. In essence, the state is telling young people that their individuality and agency is a myth.

There is a charitable explanation for this paternalism. China, after all, is still ostensibly communist and Karl Marx did say "social being determines consciousness". Perhaps, in a conservative, authoritarian society, punishing parents for their children's misdeeds is the only way for an all-powerful state to force its way into the familial dialectic. It is more likely, though, that a task as important as raising future acolytes for the party-state is too important to be left to parents. It may take a village to raise a child, but in Xi's China, it takes the state to make a citizen.

The proposed law is just the latest in a series of interventions that have seen the state countering what it appears to view as the cultural and political (which are, historically, dangerously synonymous in China) degradation of young people. In the last few months, the education ministry has limited the number of hours children can play computer and online games and the government has been urging young men to "be less feminine". Last year, it issued the "Proposal to Prevent the Feminisation of Male Adolescents" to schools, seemingly to counter the influence of South Korean music and television in the country. Being an adolescent is hard enough. But in China, it looks like young men and women have a harder time of it than most.

Single garment of destiny

Fundamentalists, ironically, recognise South Asia's connectedness: They bank on it to achieve their ends



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

THE VIOLENCE AGAINST the Hindu minority in Bangladesh is an ominous development. But it is also a reminder of one cardinal truth: All of South Asia is "tied together in a single garment of destiny," to borrow Martin Luther King's phrase from a different context. Violence in one place will spill over to another; freedom endangered in one place will inevitably corrode the freedom of others. We have tried to act as if this was not true. But that modus vivendi has been unravelling for a while.

Anti-Hindu violence in Bangladesh is not new. The current violence is strategically timed. It is surely not a coincidence that the violence coincides with targeted attacks on Hindus in Kashmir. The intent is not just local ethnic terror, but a deepening of the communal divide in India. It is tempting to say that this violence is a strategic act by particular organised groups, perhaps with transnational links. It is not organically embedded in society. This is a comforting thought, and can empower us to the extent that it is still important to recognise forces that do not condone such violence. But in South Asia the link between strategic communal violence and organic embeddedness is always a tricky one. Such violence inevitably transforms the fabric of social relationships itself. It is fanciful to think that Kashmiriyat survived terrorism, or that remnants of Bangladeshi pluralism will survive this violence, or that blasphemy laws in Punjab will not play into hands of violent reactionaries, any more than Indian secularism survived the violence of so-called fringe groups. Over time, everywhere in South Asia, violence has fundamentally transformed politics. It is a tiger you ride at your own peril.

The Partition of India could work as a modus vivendi, if three conditions were in place. The first is that the internal conflicts in each of the states would not radically spill over into the other states. This assumption was never literally true. But it was shaken to its core by 1971. Pakistan's horrendous internal conflicts spilled over, and Indian intervention helped the breaking up of Pakistan, creating a syndrome of deep Pakistani insecurity that still haunts the subcontinent. The second assumption was that the successor states behaved, as much as possible, like normal states in relation

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to each other: Pacifying violence, trading with each other, leveraging the advantages of their geographical proximity. They would, like all states, worry about the power of their neighbours. But the fact that they were states would give them enough confidence to deal with each other. Most states in South Asia, however, want to run away from each other. In Pakistan we got a state whose elites were ready to cut off its nose to spite its face, becoming an epicentre of transnational violence from Afghanistan to Bangladesh, and changing its own social character in the process.

But even the absence of these two conditions could, with some difficulty, be managed, if India remained a bulwark against spillover effects. Spillover effects don't just work through retaliatory violence. They work by transforming the ideological climate in other states. The persecution of Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh is a pivotal strand in the mentality that India must be, if not a Hindu state, at least a "Hindus First" state. India could also remain a bulwark against these effects if in response to communalism elsewhere, it reaffirmed its own secularism more deeply. The assumption was that India is large enough to absorb a few pin pricks. Throwing cold water domestically over what our neighbours were doing, even as we tried to contain them internationally, was not a sign of weakness, it was smart strategy. The fact that Hindus are being targeted is not a creation of Hindu nationalism. The targeting of Hindus also has elements of *sui generis* logic. But the ascendancy of Hindu nationalism has profoundly changed how the dynamics of attacks play out. Hindu nationalism looks for pretexts to target Muslims, deepen internal divisions, and construct a seamless spectre of Muslim threat. The official response of the government of India to the violence in Bangladesh may be conventional. But this incident will have deep communal effects. Even if there is no immediate retaliatory violence, the cumulative communal undertones in India will erupt. Which is exactly what those groups who foment violence in Afghanistan, Pakistan or Bangladesh would like.

The spillover effects cannot be contained because, despite differences in political cultures, the ethnic fundamentalisms of these

countries now feed off each other. They will give each other victories. All of these countries, including India, now have hegemonic ideologies at the level of civil society that revel in a vicious coarsening of discourse, are deeply committed to violence, and frankly don't mind disorder if it increases support for society's authoritarian instincts.

This is also of great strategic consequence. Some of Delhi's macho strategic mandarins used to loudly thump their chests and say India can do without South Asia: It was too big and had too much legitimacy capital to have to worry about its neighbours. India's legitimacy capital is slowly eroding as its democracy and secularism corrode. But, strategically, not placing South Asia front and centre was always a myopic view. It was also a mistake in a much deeper sense. The geopolitics of South Asia is not a conventional international relations problem; it is a deep, and increasingly traumatic, psychodrama in a long civilisational history. The international de-hyphenation of India and Pakistan may be considered a big diplomatic victory. But the de-hyphenation we are proud of is practically meaningless when even the ideological currents in most South Asian countries are now so deeply hyphenated.

In a twisted dialectic, fundamentalists, even as they create walls between communities, seem to recognise that South Asia has a connected ideological destiny: They are banking on it to achieve their ends. There are three ways of thinking about that destiny. The first is the current modus vivendi. But the historical conditions for its success are increasingly doubtful. What is replacing it is an intensification of the logic of 1947: Attempts at a deepening communal divide, ethnic cleansing and subordination in different keys, and a cult of violence. Is there a third option — a South Asia with states that reimagine the region not as joined by a murderous competition over community identity but as a new zone of freedom? This is a pie in the sky. But the thought that the only political language that unites South Asia is the deepening of the violence of 1947 is too dreadful to contemplate.

The writer is Contributing Editor, The Indian Express

THE CREDIBILITY REVOLUTION

This year's Nobel winning economists help us intervene more rigorously on poverty



PRANAV PATIL

THIS YEAR'S Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences (the Nobel prize) has been awarded to David Card for his empirical contribution to labour economics and to Joshua Angrist and Guido Imbens for pioneering new methods to analyse causal relationships. The trio invented methods that have led to the so-called "credibility revolution" in empirical economics.

The scope of issues that economists examine has widened over the last three decades as the discipline began exploring answers beyond mathematical models and ideological discourse. Although neoclassical theories are elegant, questions were raised about their real-life evidence. Do economists have credible evidence such that policymakers and the public can take them seriously? Nobel laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo point out that the lack of evidence is one of the reasons economists were considered less credible.

For an evidence-based approach, understanding the causal relationship between different factors, therefore, becomes imperative. A classic example of a causal relationship is the impact of education on lifetime earnings — would one extra year of education increase earnings and by what magnitude? Economists embraced the experimental approach to tackle the credibility crisis and to assess the precise causal effect of policies. Like in medical science, development economists launched smaller randomised controlled trials in the hope of establishing causality between different variables and to investigate which policy interventions were effective. In a randomised control trial, Duflo, along with others tested how monitor-

For an evidence-based approach, understanding the causal relationship between different factors becomes imperative. A classic example is the impact of education on lifetime earnings — would one extra year of education increase earnings and by what magnitude? Economists embraced the experimental approach to tackle the credibility crisis and to assess the precise causal effect of policies. Development economists launched smaller randomised controlled trials to investigate which policy interventions were effective.

ing and financial incentives reduced teacher absenteeism and improved learning in India. Based on experimentally derived causal inferences, economists can recommend more rigorous, objective and rational interventions to solve larger problems like poverty.

However, it is dreadfully challenging to conduct field experiments in many cases. They are expensive, time-consuming and ethically tricky. That is where the idea of "natural experiments" becomes illuminating which rely on random variation without any manipulation by researchers. Card and Alan Krueger designed their famous natural experiment based on the changes in the minimum wage in New Jersey and compared it with Pennsylvania, which has not experienced similar changes. They studied employment in the fast-food industry in the two states before and after the wage changes in New Jersey. Contrary to the predictions of standard economic theory, they found a slight increase in employment in New Jersey compared to Pennsylvania. This finding was a massive blow to conventional supply and demand models. Angrist and Imbens have also designed many natural (quasi) experiments and have been developing a statistical toolkit to precisely estimate the causal effects of policies.

The study of causality is not novel to the research community. However, causal relations were not extensively studied with empirical methods in social sciences. Newton's second law proposes that an object in uniform motion will continue its motion unless some external force is applied. Credibility revolutionists use this very principle to explain economic dynam-

ics. Nonetheless, "causality is no correlation" is the most common catchphrase for these revolutionaries. To distinguish causal links from correlation, economists rely on counterfactuals. For example, in the Card and Krueger study, they show that employment in two states had been evolving in parallel fashion before changes in the minimum wage. Based on that, they assume that employment would evolve similarly in both states without any intervention. Even if they did not observe what would have happened in New Jersey if there was not any intervention, they could observe the counterfactual situation in Pennsylvania.

Since economics closely deals with politics and the market, it is critical to identify which policy interventions are best (and cost-effective). It is worth considering two studies based on two flagship programmes of the Government of India — the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and the Rajiv Gandhi Gramteen Vidyutikaran Yojana. The general assumption that policymakers make is that rural infrastructure programmes would increase farm and off-farm economic activities and reduce poverty. However, recent studies by Sam Asher, Paul Novosad, Fiona Burlig and Louis Preatas point out that while such programmes increase road and electricity connectivity, they do not cause significant economic development even four to five years after completion. It is thus meaningful to examine whether such interventions cause development, to what extent they increase welfare and where they fail.

The writer is a PhD student, Universität Hohenheim, Germany

OCTOBER 20, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

TANK BURST TOLL

AT LEAST 110 PEOPLE have been killed and hundreds marooned when an irrigation tank at Gopinathapuram, 150 km from Mysore, burst following heavy rains. The entire area in the Male Mahadeswara range of hills on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border has been cut off due to collapse of several bridges. The tragedy occurred at 2 am when people in a village of 1,500 were asleep. Standing crops in hundreds of acres of land and livestock were swept away. Rescue teams have been sent but damage to roads have hampered relief measures. According to reports, a tank was under construction and labourers were at work in the

area. The possibility of many more deaths has not been ruled out.

ZIA'S OVERTURE

PAKISTAN PRESIDENT ZIA-UL-HAQ offered to send a written proposal for a no-war pact with India. Addressing a press conference in Peshawar, he said that the proposals made so far have been through diplomatic channels. He said Pakistan would now send a written offer. He said that his country wanted good relations with India but the initiative must come from India. Zia said he was confident that the Indian people and the country's leadership would respond positively.

INDIA-ROMANIA TALKS

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi and Romanian President Nicolai Ceausescu shared the view that there was need for political settlement in Afghanistan and Kampuchea. They expressed concern over the growing militarisation of the Indian Ocean and favoured early end to Iran-Iraq hostilities.

MP OFFICIAL SACKED

THE MADHYA PRADESH government sacked the chief of town and country planning department, K Kaplish, on the charge of "financial irregularities" and "inefficiency".

THE IDEAS PAGE

The foreign policy reset

All signs point towards a recalibration of India’s diplomatic compass, since the tumultuous events in Kabul two months ago



M K BHADRAKUMAR

THERE IS SOMETHING odd about the revelation regarding an international conference on Afghanistan in the second week of November that India plans to host. An unconventional route is being taken, with priority on optics. The conference date remains indeterminate and participation uncertain. Key participants reportedly include the country’s two irredentist neighbours with whom India’s ties remain frozen in cold peace. For the first time, India’s National Security Council is wading into regional diplomacy.

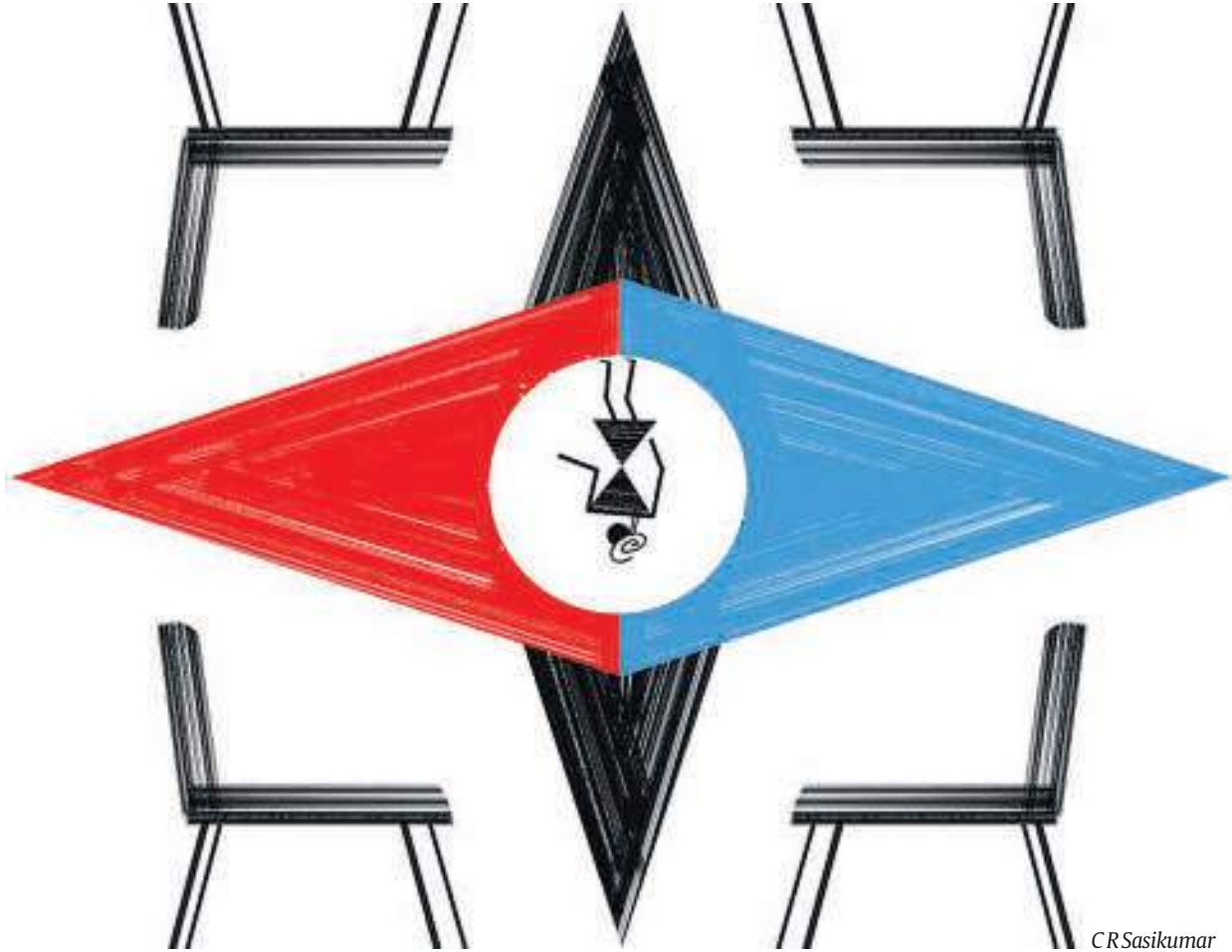
The compass that the Indian organiser is holding and his final destination through the uncertain voyage ahead remains unclear. Indeed, is this conference going to be about Afghanistan at all or about a reset of relations with China and Pakistan? Nor is there any clarity yet whether Taliban officials would be invited, although sans the Taliban, the event risks becoming something of a “Hamlet without the prince”.

That brings us to the big question: Is the Indian ship changing course? The answer is yes and no. All signs point towards a major calibration of the foreign-policy compass in recent weeks since the tumultuous events in Kabul two months ago culminated in the formation of an interim government by the Taliban. To connect the incipient signs so far, as regards the way forward in Afghanistan, India has opted to align with the Anglo-American camp in the international line-up arrayed against the Eurasian axis of Russia, China and Iran.

While the US has an attitude of “You’re either with us, or against us”, vis-a-vis the Taliban, Russia, China, Iran and other neighbouring states give primacy to stability and security of Afghanistan and the region and would prefer to constructively engage with the present authorities in Kabul to ensure that they fulfil their promises and earn their international legitimacy. Being a discontented party, unsurprisingly, India would have more in common with the revisionist powers — the US and the UK.

In reality, all protagonists, of course, know that while the signpost is marking Afghanistan, it is the journey ahead that matters, being an epochal one that would transform the geopolitics of the region. Thus, Delhi has moved up to the centrestage of the Quad. In turn, Washington accepts that the Quad ought to be “inclusive”. Global Britain is knocking at the door.

On its part, Delhi has displayed its comfort level in no mistaken terms with the AUKUS. Broadly, the historical Western experience of the EU and NATO moving in tandem — each with an independent identity notionally but with a shared purposive geopolitical objective to weaken a common enemy — is being replicated with Asian characteristics. A dual containment strategy is unfolding against China and Russia. All this entails India shedding its “Chanakyan” ambivalence. Thus, its short-lived dalliance with Iran is losing its gravi-



CR Sasikumar

tas and India has swung to the other extreme to identify with a new quadrilateral platform in West Asia, with Israel, UAE and the US.

Therefore, when it comes to Afghanistan, it doesn’t really matter anymore whether Russia accommodates India in the “Moscow format” or the privileged grouping known as the “Troika Plus” (comprising US, China and Pakistan). Delhi shrugs its shoulders as its “time-tested” friend, Moscow, bemoans the Quad and AUKUS as deliberate attempts “to undermine the existing mechanisms of interstate interaction, with narrow-format exclusive groups and Cold War- and containment policy-style military blocs... (that) contribute to the destabilisation of the situation in Asia.”

This astonishing zigzagging in India’s regional policy takes the breath away. Perhaps, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar needs to write another book to admit that, verbiage apart, Indian foreign policies are variations on the fundamental theme of countering the rise of China. In the near term, though, this wild swing of the pendulum is going to be keenly felt in the situation surrounding Afghanistan. India lives in its region and the Quad and AUKUS are of no help when it comes to Afghanistan. Pakistan and China are riding high in the Hindu Kush; Moscow and Beijing have erected a Maginot Line in Central Asia which Washington is having a hard time in breaching; Delhi’s much-touted “influence” in Kabul has turned out to be delusional. Its own capacity to shape future events is virtually nil. These are the hard realities.

Meanwhile, another crucial vector has appeared — the impact of the ascendancy of

The historical Western experience of the EU and NATO moving in tandem — each with an independent identity notionally but with a shared purposive geopolitical objective to weaken a common enemy — is being replicated with Asian characteristics. A dual containment strategy is unfolding against China and Russia. All this entails India shedding its ‘Chanakyan’ ambivalence. Thus, its short-lived dalliance with Iran is losing its gravitas and India has swung to the other extreme to identify with a new quadrilateral platform in West Asia, with Israel, UAE and the US.

political Islam in India’s immediate neighbourhood. This affects India’s internal dynamics on the security front and also the election cycle looming ahead.

Enter Pakistan. Suffice to say, Pakistan’s National Security Advisor Moeed Yusuf faces a Hobson’s choice. He’s damned if he accepts Ajit Doval’s invite and goes to India at a time when Kashmiris reject the abrogation of J&K’s special status and when Delhi has not even cared to hide its toxic hostility towards Pakistan. And, equally, Yusuf’s damned if he turns down what the international community would only perceive as an Indian overture to turn a new leaf with its difficult neighbour.

It must be National Security Advisor Ajit Doval’s brainwave to invite his Pakistani counterpart Yusuf to the conference where Delhi hopes to create an equivalent of the *vajrayudha* of the ancient Vedas which would allow India — like it allowed Indra, the ancient deity in Hinduism — to reclaim its rightful place in the Afghan pantheon of gods and demi-gods. Now, make no mistake, there is a divinity in all this as India is fighting Islamic terrorism also to save *dharma* and the universe.

It makes eminent sense that Doval will be chairing the conference. For Doval, the stunning setback in Afghanistan ought to be temporary. And he harbours no illusions, having lived in the real world with life red in tooth and claw. Certainly, he doesn’t have the luxury of intellectualising and writing a book. This is a battle that must be won — either outright or by denying the fruits of victory to the opponent.

The writer is a former diplomat who worked on the Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan desk in the Ministry of External Affairs

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“Whether pre-meditated by provocateurs to destroy our communal harmony, or whether it is a failure of our law enforcement agencies to protect our Hindu and other minority populations, one thing is clear: This has to stop, and it has to stop now.” — THE DHAKA TRIBUNE

Reading the EU fine print

India does not figure prominently in its Indo-Pacific strategy. The Chinese challenge might change that



CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT

LAST MONTH, THE making of AUKUS eclipsed another Indo-Pacific-related announcement: The release of the “EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific”. This is rather unfair because this document is very rich and needs to be analysed in the context of the rapprochement between the EU and India, which culminated in the June EU-India summit, a “turning point” according to some analysts.

Unsurprisingly, the EU strategy in the Indo-Pacific appears to be over-determined by China’s expansionism. “The display of force and increasing tensions in regional hotspots such as in the South and East China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait may have a direct impact on European security and prosperity,” the document says. At the same time, it points out that the EU, “while pushing back where fundamental disagreements exist with China, such as on human rights”, will also “pursue its multifaceted engagement with China”, “engaging bilaterally to promote solutions to common challenges, cooperating on issues of common interest and encouraging China to play its part in a peaceful and thriving Indo-Pacific region”.

If security interests are highlighted in the beginning, they are rather low in the list of the objectives of the EU Indo-Pacific strategy, which are listed as: “Sustainable and inclusive prosperity; green transition; ocean governance; digital governance and partnerships; connectivity; security and defence; human security”. Many paragraphs of the document are dedicated to values, including human rights. One of them says: “The EU will continue to use its restrictive measures (sanctions) regime against individuals, entities and bodies responsible for, involved in, or associated with serious human rights violations and abuses worldwide. In international fora, the EU will work with like-minded Indo-Pacific partners to push back any initiative that undermines the human rights enshrined in customary international law and in international human rights instruments.”

In terms of partnerships, India does not figure very prominently. By contrast, ASEAN is presented as “an increasingly important partner for the EU”. One full section entitled “the centrality of ASEAN” is dedicated to the “strategic partnership” that the EU and the ASEAN have developed over the last 40 years. New Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) are announced with Thailand and Malaysia. However, India appears in the list of the countries which already have an Indo-Pacific strategy and with which the EU is interested in a deeper “engagement”, a list made of ASEAN, Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the UK and US.

However, the document does not mention the role India could play in value-chain diversification, a top priority of the EU since the Covid-19 pandemic in particular. The

“pharmacy of the world” could have appeared as a useful partner of the EU to free Europeans from their dependence on China in that field. The only example of diversification that the document mentions pertains to semiconductors. In this domain, the EU intends to diversify “with partners such as Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan”. Yet, India is mentioned few pages later in a similar perspective when it is said that the EU will help “low and middle-income Indo-Pacific partners to secure access to the Covid-19 vaccine through the Covax facility and through other means” and that, in this context, “India will be a focus for cooperation, including on the quality of active pharmaceutical ingredients”.

By and large, the Indo-Pacific strategy of the EU remains driven by economic considerations and India, whose main asset is geopolitical and even geostrategic, does not figure prominently in it. The document, released in September 2021, emphasises, for instance, that “particular attention will be paid to implementing and enforcing the comprehensive trade agreements with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Vietnam, and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the Pacific States, as well as the EU investment protection agreements with Singapore and Vietnam that are expected to enter into force in the coming years”.

What the French see as India’s main asset, its strategic dimension, is not central in the EU document. Surprisingly, the recent military cooperation between Europeans and India is even put on par with their cooperation with Pakistan: “Over the past year, EU Naval Force Somalia (EU NAVFOR) and Operation Atlanta conducted successful joint naval activities with Indo-Pacific partners, including Japan, Pakistan, India and Djibouti”. And ASEAN also remains the main partner of the EU from the military point of view: “The EU will seek to play a stronger role in the ASEAN security architecture and participate in the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+) structures and the East Asia Summit”. India is listed as the EU’s first partner only in one area: “under the project Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia (ESIWA), which covers counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, maritime security and crisis management. The pilot partners are India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Vietnam, with EU military experts already operating in Indonesia and in Vietnam.”

Thus, the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific is more in tune with the German vision of the Indo-Pacific than with the French one. For Berlin, trade, economic cooperation, human rights and engaging China at the same time — and the ASEAN — matter more than security and India, the two pillars of the French Indo-Pacific strategy. The fact that the German approach prevails in the EU document is a reflection of the influence of Berlin’s *weltanschauung* (worldview) in Europe — something Brexit has accentuated, Great Britain’s Indo-Pacific strategy being similar to France’s. But China’s attitude may force Germany — and the EU — to change their mind in the near future.

The writer is senior research fellow at CERISE Sciences Po/CNRS, Paris



RAMYA SUBRAMANIAM

IN A HISTORIC first for India, three women judges have taken oath at the Supreme Court of India. The Chief Justice lauded this, while observing that at least 50 per cent women should be found at all levels of the judiciary. While the bench is making slow yet definitive progress in this regard, what about the bar?

There is an abysmal lack of data or literature on women in litigation, especially commercial litigation. According to a Vidhi Survey conducted in 2020, the number of women in litigation was maximum in Kerala, at 28.57 per cent, while other cities such as Madras (10.5 per cent), Delhi (22.47 per cent), Bombay (21.51 per cent) showed appalling levels of representation. Therefore, it becomes crucial to examine the representation of women across the bar.

Justice D Y Chandrachud, in a speech in 2012, noted that, as of 2012, only five out of the 294 senior advocates in the Supreme Court of India were women, an abysmal 2 per cent. However, he noted that women in corporate offices and law firms fared better in terms of equality, owing to the gender-neutral trajectories in elite law firms.

While equality in any space calls for celebration, this compels us to examine why this hasn’t been replicated in the courtroom. A definitive reason is a pre-decided pay scale. For a woman fresher entering a corporate office, the pay scale would be more or less decided/demanded based on the male coun-

Bar and bias

Prejudice, discrimination push women lawyers out of litigation. This must change

terpart’s salary as a guiding factor.

However, the stories in corporate offices and courtrooms are like chalk and cheese. The factors deciding pay in litigation are varied, especially in the junior to the middle level of the profession. In a study conducted by Sonal Makhija and Swagata Raha, it was found that clients choose female lawyers so that they can pay lesser amounts in fees. Therefore, with no law governing the pay scale, independent women legal practitioners are strong-armed into accepting a much lower remuneration, thereby making it a difficult profession to sustain in.

Secondly, the common conception is that litigation offers greater flexibility, as one need not clock in a particular number of hours, and can take advantage of court vacations. Further, there is also the option to take on fewer clients. However, this “flexibility” results in a woman’s litigation career being trivialised. This trivialisation, cloaked as flexibility, further pushes women out of the litigation space. They are rarely seen in the courtrooms, and “out of sight, out of mind” is an adage the courtroom swears by.

Further, while there is reservation for women across several public offices, colleges, there is no such requirement for the positions of government pleader, or a public prosecutor, thereby rendering women government pleaders extremely rare.

When “run-of-the-mill” problems such as lack of creches in courts, unusable rest-rooms, non-recognition of maternity leaves are added to the mix, the slightest chance of a woman litigator’s thriving career evaporates ever so quickly.

If one overcomes the above, the story is no better. Most women practising in the courtroom are pigeonholed into practising family law or women’s rights law. At the outset, I must clarify that as noble and important as these areas of practice are, the point to be made is that women are pigeonholed into certain practice areas.

Women are generally seen to be non-confrontational “care-oriented lawyers”, who will be better at understanding the client from an emotional standpoint, but never from an economic or financial standpoint. This also explains the hoard of articles that say women are better mediators — yet another example of sexism neatly packaged as psychology. This presumed character trait is found to be undesirable in litigation, especially a commercial one, in which only a “steely” man can take the reins and make a convincing argument in the courtroom “with his bellowing voice”. The message is clear — women don’t belong in the highly remunerative commercial dispute resolution space. It is a boys’ club.

This perception is only further fortified by the fact that most women who are quoted as “super lawyers” or featured in the

coveted “30 under 30” lists are never commercial litigators. They are often women who have fought for women’s rights or women in corporate law offices. In comparison, there are several men featured in these awards and magazines, who haven’t espoused the cause of social justice, who purely practice commercial law in courts.

Recently, I came across an article featuring three women, Shally Bhasin, Ruby Ahuja and Misha, who were the legal wire-pullers in the protracted court battle between Essar Steel India Ltd and ArcelorMittal. These stories are rarely publicised, rarely spoken about and even rarer to find.

The above situation calls for urgent changes. On a high-priority basis, surveys have to be undertaken by the government across courts to understand and improve the representation of women across the bench. Media houses need to feature, acknowledge and appreciate women in the commercial litigation space. Needless to state, elevating more women to the bench will definitely lead to more women in the bar. Improving facilities for women, especially mothers, will keep in check the attrition rate. While progress might be slow, it is crucial to take one step forward at a time in this direction.

The writer is a dispute resolution lawyer practising in the Madras High Court

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CASTE, TOO

THIS REFERS TO the article ‘Jim Crow Hindutva’ (IE, October 19). The historical narrative of ‘Jim Crow’ illustrates the culture of white supremacy and subjugation of Blacks as slaves in the United States, till three Constitutional Amendments gave them freedom and citizen’s rights. However, the author while comparing this with present-day Hindutva politics and consequent exclusion and discrimination of Muslims to virtual second-class status, has glossed over the oppression and marginalisation of lower castes in the Hindu caste hierarchy, duly sanctioned by some scriptures which are not yet denounced despite constitutional provisions against caste discrimination. It is worth recalling that Jyotiba Phule way back in 1873 drew a parallel between American racism and Indian casteism in his book *Gulamgiri*. He dedicated the book to American abolitionists with the remark: “in an earnest desire that my countrymen may take their example as their guide in the emancipation of their Sudra brethren from the trammels of Brahmin thralldom.”

LR Murmu, Delhi

SPIRITUAL INPUT

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘A new Quad in West Asia’ (IE, October 19). The Abrahamic accords signed last year between various Arab states to normalise relations with Israel, brokered by the US, have been a remarkable development in the historical and geopolitical context of

the Middle East. The political recognition of the need to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue between three Abrahamic religions would go a long way to build global solidarity. As the spiritual home of various eastern religions, India could further widen the scope of the Abrahamic accords.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Barasat

RAHUL’S WISDOM

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Coach dependable’ (IE, October 19). Former Team India’s captain Rahul Dravid, consenting to become Team India’s new head coach, must delight the Indian cricket buff. One expects the Bengalurean to get a two-year contract with a salary package on a par with Ravi Shastri. The Indian side will stand to gain much from his wisdom.

SS Paul, Nadia

GREEN POWER

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Lessons from the shortage’ (IE, October 19). Instead of blaming the lack of investment in the supply-side management of coal, one should look forward to alternative sources of energy. Obligated entities are required to meet the Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPOs) while shifting to greener alternatives. An effort should be made by the government to impose stringent RPO targets, backed by strict penalties rather than raking the coal companies over supply shortages.

Aerika Singh, Chandigarh

8 EXPRESS NETWORK

YSRCP workers ‘vandalise’ TDP offices in Andhra

REENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 19

IN WHAT appeared to be coordinated attacks, ruling YSRCP workers and supporters, armed with iron rods and sticks, on Tuesday targeted TDP offices across Andhra Pradesh Tuesday evening, damaging property and assaulting workers of the opposition party.

Several TDP workers were injured in the attacks at the party offices in state capital Amaravati, Mangalagiri, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, and all the 13 district offices.

Terming the attacks as an attempt to stifle the voice of the main opposition party, TDP national president and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu said law and order has collapsed in the state, and demanded President's rule. He announced a statewide bandh on Wednesday.

Shortly after the attacks, Naidu also spoke to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan, informing them about the attacks by the ruling party workers. He sought from Shah security cover by central forces for TDP offices and leaders and called for President's rule in the state.

YSRCP spokesperson Ambati Rambabu said the attacks were party workers' reaction to "wild allegations against YSRCP leaders and the Chief Minister".

Over the past few days, the TDP has been building pressure on the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government over two issues — mishandling of the severe energy crisis in the state arising out of coal shortage for power plants, and al-

leged rampant cultivation and smuggling of ganja in the state.

TDP leaders, including Naidu, raised questions relating to Telangana Police's operation in Araku Valley of Visakhapatnam district against alleged ganja smugglers. They accused YSRCP leaders of being hand in glove with narcotic smugglers in facilitating cultivation and sale of ganja.

Senior TDP leader and MLC Nara Lokesh, son of party chief Naidu, said, "Our demand for a white paper on the coal and power crisis in the state, and questioning why Telangana Police was conducting an operation in Andhra Pradesh over narcotics supply, has angered the YSRCP leadership. They ordered these attacks on our offices to silence us."

While the TDP accused the police of inaction, DGP D Gautam Sawang said anyone indulging in inciting violence against any party or leader would be dealt with strictly according to the law.

"We are warning political workers of all parties not to indulge in violence. If anyone says anything that incites violence against a particular party of their leaders, they will be dealt with severely," he said. "We will take strict action against those who were involved in today's attacks on the TDP offices. I have deployed additional forces across the state to prevent such attacks."

In his conversation over the phone with Shah, Naidu requested the Union Home Minister for central forces' security for party offices and workers. He said the attacks were premeditated and politically motivated. He alleged that law and order in the state has collapsed under the present regime.

Poonch: Army to go for final assault to flush out militants

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, OCTOBER 19

BARELY A few hours after Chief of Army Staff General M M Naravane concluded his two-day visit of Jammu and returned to Delhi, Army troops on Tuesday evening started preparing for a final assault on militants suspected to be hiding inside the forests at Nar in Bhata Durian area in Poonch district's Mendhar tehsil.

A senior Army officer said they have appealed to local villagers to return to their homes and stay indoors in order to avoid any collateral damage to civilians during the ongoing operation against militants.

Villagers said the appeals, made from loudspeakers of mosques, asked them to drop whatever work they were doing and immediately return to their homes along with their children and cattle.

The operation to hunt down the militants has so far met with little success, with the Army deploying illuminating bombs to light up the forest terrain, as well as para commandos, drones and a helicopter. Police and the Army have cordoned off the area to ensure the militants don't escape.



Army Chief Gen M M Naravane visited the forward areas of Poonch on Tuesday. PTI

Sources said there has been no contact with militants since Saturday morning and that troops have been engaging in "speculative fire" while making tactical advances inside the forests. They admitted that they have not been able to see the militants despite aerial surveillance.

Nine soldiers, including two Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) have been killed in action against militants in the forests of Poonch district since October 11, making it the deadliest encounter in the area in the past 17 years and the longest in J&K since the abrogation of Article

370 in August 2019.

Earlier on Tuesday morning, Army Chief General M M Naravane visited forward areas of Poonch, including Bhimber Gali, from where the militants are suspected to have escaped into the forests of Bhata Durian. Four soldiers were killed on October 14 in an exchange of fire with the militants, who, security forces believes may have been present in the area for as many as two months, after infiltrating across the border.

General Naravane, who was briefed on the security situation and operational preparedness by

General Officer Commanding, White Knight Corps, also interacted with the troops and commanders on the ground in the forward areas.

Police have so far detained eight villagers in the Bhata Durian area, including a 45-year-old woman and her son on suspicion of providing logistical support to the militants.

While Army sources said it was not clear if the incidents of October 11 and 14 involved the same group, a senior police officer said they believe that the militants were acting in tandem, and had changed locations.

In August-September, forces were involved in three encounters in the general area of Rajouri. On August 6, two militants were killed in the Pangai forest of Thanamandi; on August 19, in the same area, two soldiers, including a JCO, were killed in an encounter; and on September 13, one militant was killed in Manjakote in Rajouri. Police sources now believe all these encounters were part of a chain of events.

Additional Director General of Police for Jammu, Mukesh Singh, visited Bhimber Gali on Sunday, and officers expressed confidence about zeroing in on the militants.

Goa minister: Tourists who consume drugs not welcome

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PORVORIM, OCTOBER 19

STATING THAT tourists who consume drugs are not welcome in Goa, state Tourism Minister Manohar Ajaonkar on Tuesday said that the coastal state wants the "richest tourists", and those who respect the local culture.

"We don't want tourists who consume drugs. We don't want tourists who spoil Goa. We don't want tourists who come to Goa and cook food inside a bus. We want the richest tourists. We welcome all tourists, but they should enjoy themselves while respecting Goa's culture," he said. Speaking with journalists after the final session of the Assembly, Ports Minister Micheal Lobo said he will write to the Mormugao Port Trust, which comes under the Centre, to not allow cruise ships found with 'drugs' to dock in Goa.



The Kushinagar International Airport has been equipped to handle 300 passengers during peak hours. Courtesy: PMO

PM to inaugurate Kushinagar airport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KUSHINAGAR, OCTOBER 19

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Kushinagar International Airport on Tuesday with the arrival of around 100 Buddhist monks from Colombo in Sri Lanka, and lay the foundation stone of different development projects at a public event here.

Built at a cost of Rs 260 crore and spread over 3,600 sqm, the airport is crucial for religious tourism as Kushinagar, where Lord Budha attained 'Mahaparinirvana', is one of the four prominent Buddhist circuits. The airport will also serve nearby districts of Uttar Pradesh as well as Bihar.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said the airport would bring employment and tourism opportunities in East Uttar Pradesh.

"The airport will bring immense employment and tourism opportunities and Kushinagar is eager to welcome Sri Lankan delegates and PM Modi on Wednesday. We will be able to send the message of international friendship and compassion to Lord Buddha, all over the world," he said.

The inaugural flight will also bring Buddha relics for an exposition. The delegation from Sri Lanka would comprise Anunayakas (deputy heads) of all four Nikayas (orders) of Buddhism in Sri Lanka—Asgiriya, Amarapura, Ramanya, Malwatta — as well as five ministers of the Sri Lanka government led by Namal Rajapakshe.

The airport has been equipped to handle 300 passengers during peak hours. It will provide direct air connectivity to countries such as Sri Lanka, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, China, Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore.

Govt's action plan: More information & technology officers, GIS-based planning

ANISHA DUTTA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

THE APPOINTMENT of more Chief Information Officers (CIOs) and Chief Technology Officers (CTOs) as data is not being used efficiently; using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping for decision making to increase the country's GDP; setting up a national mentoring platform for start-ups — these are part of an action plan prepared by the Centre.

The Indian Express reported on Tuesday that the Centre has prepared a comprehensive 60-point action plan following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with secretaries of all departments and ministries on September 18.

According to the plan, government organisations need to create capacity for GIS-based planning and leveraging the potential of satellite-based imagery. This, the document states, may be taken up as a campaign under its mission, "Karamyogi".

Saying that data is not being utilised "efficiently", it recommends the appointment of special monitoring officers across departments.

The action plan also emphasises the government's push for digitising all land records by 2023 under the central database called 'Matribhumi'. "Each parcel of land will have a Unique ID

for ease of tracking of transactions. Integration with e-Courts system will provide transparency on title/possession related issues," it states.

According to senior officials, these action points will be assessed periodically — ministries and departments have been asked to appoint nodal officers to review the progress.

While the 60-point plan is targeted at specific ministries and departments, it can be broadly categorised under three heads: leveraging IT and technology for governance; improving business climate; and up-grading the civil services.

"National mentoring platform for start-ups may be set up. Mentors could be a single point of contact for start-ups and entrepreneurs. They may also support in organising initial funding. There are many technical institutions, which could assist such a platform," says the document in its action plan for the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

The plan also directs the culture and tourism ministries to identify and develop 100-200 iconic structures and sites. It says "centres of excellence" may be set up in rural areas through PPP, taking a cue from such centres in Singapore.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Day after quitting Congress, 200 join Trinamool in Goa

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, OCTOBER 19

AS MANY as 200 Congress workers who quit the party on Monday joined the Goa unit of TMC on Tuesday. Among them were Valpoi Block Congress Committee former president Dashrath Mandrekar and former General Secretary of the Congress's Mahila Wing Priya Rathore.

In a statement, the TMC said on Tuesday, "As over 200 Congress workers and several office bearers and grassroots leaders join the Goa TMC and pledge their support, it is confirmed that the Congress under (Goa Pradesh Congress Committee President) Girish Chodankar and (AICC senior election observer for Goa) P Chidambaram has completely collapsed in Goa. People are now fast moving in the direction of the 'New Dawn'." The statement also mentioned at least eight Congress office bearers from the Valpoi Block in North Goa, "dumping" their party to join the TMC.

Former chief minister and sitting Congress legislator Luizinho Faleiro, who resigned from the party last month, had said he was joining the TMC with the aim of uniting the Congress family and to support West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as Prime



Sitting Congress MLA Luizinho Faleiro has joined the TMC last month

Minister Narendra Modi's most formidable opponent ahead of 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Earlier this month, AICC Goa in-charge Dinesh Gundu Rao had said that the TMC and AAP were party to a "big conspiracy" to weaken the Congress. He said that there were two forces at play. "One is the fascist force of BJP, second thing happening in Goa is parties operating here to ensure the BJP wins. They are not working here to win or ensure that the secular front wins."

He said the political parties that had surfaced in Goa had offered money to Congress aspirants, party members and even councillors. "They don't have their own workers, leaders. They are encroaching on the Congress... they are offering money... This is what these parties, who have come to divide the secular vote, are doing. Where is this money coming from?" Rao had asked.

UP Cong exodus continues: PCC vice-president, father quit party

Lucknow: The exodus of senior leaders from the Uttar Pradesh Congress continued on Tuesday as Pankaj Malik, the vice-president of the state party unit, and his father, former MP Harendra Malik, quit the party on Tuesday. The two are prominent faces in western Uttar Pradesh. Claiming that they resigned because of "karyakarta ki andekhi [neglect of party workers]", Pankaj told The Indian Express, "We have been with the party in the worst of times but it was becoming difficult as grassroots workers were not being heard."

ENS

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 19

HOURS BEFORE a function related to his son's wedding, Charanjit Singh Channi accompanied senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to Lakhimpur Kheri. He returned to Chandigarh hours before the wedding, and a few hours to go for the reception function, was at his office chairing a Cabinet meeting. Later the same day, he joined PPCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu's march to Lakhimpur Kheri.

Welcome to a typical day in the life of Channi, who has set a blistering pace for himself as he completes a month in office on Wednesday. The contrast couldn't be more stark given the vir-

tual invisibility of his predecessor Amarinder Singh, which was one of the reasons the veteran was eased out of the CM's post.

"It is difficult to keep pace with him. He can do without sleep for hours. He works in the Secretariat till late, then goes home and keeps calling till 2:30 am with queries. By 5 am, he is again up working on files," a government functionary said.

The CM reportedly plans to tour the state extensively ahead of the coming polls, and has already done a round of the Majha, Doaba and Malwa regions.

A leader said Channi was required to hit the ground running, and has proved up to the task. "Amarinder was a political heavy weight, he had everything going for him... Channi has been pulled



Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi during an event in Chamkaur Sahib town on Tuesday. Courtesy: Twitter

in all directions since taking over, including doing rounds of Delhi to meet the high command, and

handling Sidhu," the leader said, adding that it in the midst of all this, the CM has managed to work

has been at the centre of a political storm since it was introduced in the assembly on July 29.

An RTI application by *The Indian Express* had revealed that a day before the Bill was passed by the House, Monserrate had flagged eight issues in it.

Soon after being passed, Sawant announced that the Bill would be renamed the Goa Bhumi Adhikarini Bill after the BJP's ST Morcha took exception to the name and said that it had hurt the sentiments of the state's tribal population. Meanwhile, the Opposition alleged the Bill, under the garb of giving ownership rights to 'Bhumiputras', sought to regularise unauthorised constructions occupied by migrants and not original Goans.

was discussed in the Business Advisory Committee before the two-day session began. "The government needs to give a clear reply whether it is with the Law Department and will be sent to the Governor for assent," he said.

In response, Monserrate clarified that her reply stands corrected and the Bill was with the state Law Department. Subsequently, CM Sawant said, "As said, it (the Bill) is with the Law Department and will not be sent for (Governor's) assent."

The Bhumiputra Bill aims at giving those residing in Goa for at least 30 years the status of 'Bhumiputra' and to enable them to stake claim to ownership of their house of up to 250 sq m built before April 1, 2019. However, it

EXPLAINED
Govt to allow Bill to lapse

THE GOA government has decided to allow the Bhumiputra Bill to lapse. The government had faced flak from many sections of the society, including from state ministers and the bureaucracy. In the past too, Bills have gone to the Law Department but haven't been sent for the Governor's assent. "This is a full stop," Sawant told *The Indian Express*.





GOLD

₹46,580



RUPEE

₹75.35



OIL

\$84.22



SILVER

₹62,328

Note: Domestic currency market was closed on Tuesday on account of Id-E-Milad; gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Brent crude price as of 10:25 AM EDT

SENSEX: 61,716.05 ▼ 49.54 (-0.09%) NIFTY: 18,418.75 ▼ 58.30 (-0.32%) NIKKEI: 29,215.52 ▲ 190.06 HANG SENG: 25,787.21 ▲ 37746 FTSE: 7,208.40 ▲ 4.57 DAX: 15,498.42 ▲ 23.95

International market data till 1900 IST

FALLING INTEREST RATES OVER LAST 4 DECADES IN ADVANCED ECONOMIES

Investing forex reserves in equities can fetch higher returns: RBI report

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 19

INVESTMENT OF India's rising foreign exchange reserves in equity funds, especially index funds, can fetch higher returns as interest rates which have been on a declining trajectory over the last four decades in advanced economies, have touched their historic lows, a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report has said.

"Investment in equities is considered to be risky, especially for a central bank, which is responsible for safeguarding the reserves. However, investment of a small portion of the reserves in an index fund has the potential to augment the return of the portfolio," said an RBI report on "The low yield environment and Forex Reserves management". Total forex reserves were \$639.51 billion as on October 8, 2021. Investment in S&P 500 across various business cycles and financial booms and busts reveal that the CAGR return in 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, 25 years

and 30 years would have been 13.3 per cent, 11.1 per cent, 7.3 per cent, 5.4 per cent, 7.4 per cent and 8.5 per cent, respectively, it said.

"This implies that if held for a long to very long period of time, despite volatility in the interim, it can not only preserve the capital but also fetch a return much higher than most of the investments," the report said. Incidentally, in May, the RBI had raised the red flag over the question of a "bubble" in the stock markets. "This order of asset price inflation in the context of the estimated 8 per cent contraction in GDP in 2020-21 poses the risk of a bubble," the RBI said in its Annual Report for 2020-21. On August 22, 2020, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said there was a clear disconnect between the sharp surge in markets and the state of real economy, as surplus global liquidity was driving up asset prices worldwide.

In a recent interaction with *The Indian Express* and *Financial Times*, Das had said, "Globally, there is a surplus liquidity and stock prices are very high, and are booming in

GLOBAL TREND



File

■ A number of central banks are making investment in equities in some form or the other.

almost every market, including India... But I wanted to mention is that there is no evidence of high asset prices, namely the high stock prices, feeding into general inflation or general prices."

"There is no evidence to show that the high liquidity is feeding into general prices," Das said. The Sensex has been hitting new peaks and crossed the 62,000 level in intra-day trading on Tuesday. The EME (emerging market economies) stock markets got buff-

feted in August with China's regulatory crackdown and continued to fall in September on concerns relating to China and change in monetary policy stance of several AEs. Stock markets in EMs such as India and Russia, however, notched all-time highs in September and continued to rise in October.

As at end-March 2021, out of the total foreign currency assets of \$536.69 billion, \$359.88 billion was invested in securities, \$153.39 billion was deposited with other central banks and the BIS and the balance \$23.43 billion comprised deposits with commercial banks overseas. All these avenues carry very low interest rates. Gold reserves were worth \$38 billion.

"The return on the S&P 500 equity index funds is comparable to that on gold over a long period of time," it said. A number of central banks are increasingly making investment in equities in some form or the other. Swiss National Bank, for example, has an investment of 20 per cent of its reserves in equities. Further, the regional governments of the major advanced

economies issue bonds which, in many countries, carry the implicit guarantee of the sovereign, the RBI report said.

"They also yield better return than the sovereigns. Reserve managers could invest a small percentage of their reserves in such sub-national debt securities across the developed countries like Germany, Australia, Canada, etc and US agency bonds," it said. Similarly, even the best rated supranational agencies yield better than sovereigns in most of the cases. If reserve managers can go further down the credit curve, then they can earn even higher yield.

Reserve managers usually invest in highly rated sovereigns like G10 countries as they have deep bond markets and meet safety and liquidity criteria of the reserve managers. However, there are some countries which are relatively stable financially, are highly rated and offer better yields than some of the G7 countries, the RBI report said.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

FinMin to PSBs: Festive season ahead, start credit outreach

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

THE FINANCE Ministry has urged public sector banks to start a nationwide credit outreach programme to take advantage of the potential loan demand during the festive season ahead of Diwali.

As the economy "bounces back", banks have been asked to set targets of loans to be sanctioned during the district-wise outreach programme, according to a communication by the Ministry to the banks on Monday.

The move follows Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's instruction in August to state-run lenders to initiate the outreach programme. Over Rs 4.94 lakh crore was disbursed by banks between October 2019 and March 2021 through outreach initiatives undertaken by them. This year, too, sometime in October, there will be a credit outreach in every district of the country. Sitharaman had said in Mumbai in August after a review meeting with state-owned banks.

PRESIDENT, PV BUSINESS UNIT, TATA MOTORS

'Chip shortage global issue, prioritisation to industry key'



Shailesh Chandra with recently launched 'Punch'. Credit: company

TATA MOTORS launched its sub-compact SUV at a starting price of Rs 5.49 lakh. While the company has been witnessing growth in demand for its vehicles, SHAILESH CHANDRA, president, PV business unit, Tata Motors, told SANDEEP SINGH that the challenge will remain on the supply side because of the semiconductor shortage. Stating that the company is considering and actively looking into Punch EV, Chandra said electric vehicles will have a double-digit penetration over the next 5-6 years. Edited excerpts:

the short and long term?

While we are in close coordination with our semiconductor suppliers, we are also trying to see if we can get semiconductors from stockists. We are also seeing if we can create alternate designs where there is use of standard semiconductor chips and also looking to optimise the use of semiconductors ... To some extent we may be able to do this, but we will have to live with structural issue for some time.

There has been growth in demand for your EVs. When do you see EVs achieving meaningful scale and what is the critical factor that could determine its offtake?

One big indicator is what is the penetration in the segment where we have launched the product. If I take Nexon's example, the penetration of Nexon EV is between 15 and 20 per cent. It indicates the promise of this segment and this is at a time when you still have certain barriers to overcome in the electrification journey. We have opened it to a limited number of cities and are getting around 20 per cent penetration. So, there is a huge potential going forward, as you open to more cities and have a country-wide charging network.

There are multiple factors in favour of EVs. I see double-digit penetration of EVs across multiple products in the next 5-6 years.

How do you see the growth of auto industry?

If you see the fundamentals of the passenger vehicle industry, it should deliver growth of 7-8 per cent with normalisation of Covid and semiconductor issues. That should be a healthy growth rate that we should expect over 5 years.

With demand growing, do you feel the need for capacity expansion may arise soon?

We have been seeing consistent growth and saturation of our capacities. There is capacity to support volumes over the coming months. Beyond that, there will be a time when we might have to go for capacity expansion and we will trigger the action at the right time.

Full interview on www.indianexpress.com

SECTOR WATCH
ELECTRIC VEHICLES

From iPhone to EV: How Foxconn is diversifying

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

FOXCONN UNVEILED 3 white label electric vehicles in an effort to showcase its capabilities at a time when global smartphone makers like Apple and Xiaomi, which are Foxconn's customers, have been working on coming out with their own EV models.

3 prototype EVs

Foxconn Technology Group, the world's biggest contract manufacturer for electronics, unveiled three prototype EVs Monday. The unveiling is being pegged as Foxconn's pitch to invite global vehicle OEMs showcasing the Taiwanese company's manufacturing capabilities in the EV segment.

What are Foxconn's vehicle manufacturing plans?

On Monday, the company announced that Taiwan's Yulon

Motors will be its first customer for electric vehicles manufacturing but Foxconn's plans to enter vehicle manufacturing have been in the works. Last month, the firm agreed to an automotive manufacturing plant in Ohio from Lordstown Motors for \$230 million — giving it a booster shot in the areas of automobile assembly capacity, equipment and talent.

EXPLAINED

Why is the timing significant?

Apple has been secretly working on an autonomous automotive project codenamed Project Titan. While Apple is yet to formally announce the project or even decide on a manufacturing partner, CEO Tim Cook had hinted earlier the company has been working on autonomy as a core technology. Xiaomi Corp CEO Lei Jun announced Tuesday the company will mass produce its own cars in the first half of 2024. Full report on www.indianexpress.com

'Gross NPAs of banks likely to rise to 8-9% this fiscal'

Gross NPAs of banks may rise to 8-9% in FY22, well below the peak of 11.2% seen at the end of fiscal 2018, a Crisil report said



Around 2% of bank credit is expected to be under restructuring by the end of this financial year, causing stressed assets — comprising gross NPAs and loan book under restructuring — to touch 10-11% this fiscal

Covid-19 relief measures like the restructuring dispensation, and the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) will help limit rise in banks' gross non-performing assets (NPAs)

Source: Crisil Ratings/PTI

Moody's raises banking sector outlook to 'stable'

Mumbai: Moody's Investors Services has upgraded the outlook on India's banking system from 'negative' to 'stable', amid moderate deterioration of asset quality since the onset of Covid and likely pick-up in credit growth with the economic recovery. Earlier, it had raised India's sovereign rating outlook to 'stable' from 'negative' and affirmed sovereign rating at 'Baa3'.

"The pick-up in economic activity will drive credit growth, which we expect to be 10-13 per

It comes amid moderate deterioration of asset quality and likely pick-up in credit growth

cent annually. Weak corporate financials and funding constraints at finance companies have been key negative factors for banks but these risks have receded," Moody's said in its 'Banking system outlook-India' report. ENS

BRIEFLY

Policybazaar IPO

New Delhi: PB Fintech Ltd, which operates online insurance platform Policybazaar, got Sebi's approval to raise Rs 6,017.50 crore via an IPO. PTI

Russia-Google

Moscow: Russia will seek to fine Google 5-20% of its annual Russian turnover for failing to delete content deemed illegal. REUTERS

RRVL, Ritika deal

Mumbai: Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL), a Reliance Industries arm, has acquired 52 per cent stake in Ritika Pvt Ltd, that owns various Ritu Kumar brands. ENS

Bitcoin ETF

New York: The first US bitcoin futures-based exchange-traded fund began trading Tuesday, sending bitcoin to a six-month high of \$63,337.54. REUTERS

Karad at LIC office

Mumbai: Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad visited the LIC of India central office here. ENS

'Two Ola executives to exit ahead of potential IPO'

REUTERS

BENGALURU, OCTOBER 19

SOFTBANK GROUP-BACKED Ola is set to lose two top executives, according to an internal memo seen by Reuters, ahead of a potential \$1 billion initial public offering.

Chief financial officer Swayam Saurabh and chief operating officer Gaurav Porwal are leaving the company, according to a memo sent to employees by chief executive officer Bhavish Aggarwal.

SEPTEMBER QUARTER

HUL profit rises 8.86%, interim dividend of ₹15

Mumbai: Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) has reported an 8.86 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 2,187 crore in the September quarter of FY22 as against Rs 2,009 crore in the same period a year ago.

Total income rose to Rs 12,837 crore for the quarter as against Rs 11,593 crore in the same period of last year. The board of directors has declared an interim dividend of Rs 15 per share for year ending March

THE EXITS

■ CFO Swayam Saurabh and COO Gaurav Porwal are leaving the firm, according to a memo

Ola did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Aggarwal in the memo also announced several management changes across its mobility, vehicle commerce, and delivery and fi-

nancial services units.

Saurabh, a former CFO of Hindustan Zinc, has been with Ola for seven months while Porwal, who has run the mobility business over the last year, joined the company in 2019. Porwal will be leaving Ola to "pursue other interests", while Saurabh will be pursuing other opportunities, according to the memo.

Ola plans to raise up to \$1 billion through an initial public offering in the next few months, according to recent media reports.

RAJASTHAN URJA VIKAS NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of Rajasthan Undertaking)
Corporate Identity Number (CIN) - U40104RJ2013SSC0048738
Regd. Office - Vidhyut Bhawan, Janpath, Jyoti Nagar, Jaipur-302005
Work Office at: Shed No. 5/4, Vidhyut Bhawan, Janpath, Jaipur- 302005
E-mail: SE.PP.RUVNL@RAJASTHAN.GOV.IN; Website: www.energyrajasthan.gov.in/rvnl
No. RUVNL/ISE(P)/F- TN-04(FY2021-22)/D. 811 Dated 18-10-2021

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Online bids are invited to procure short term power during day hours from December 2021 to February 2022 on short term basis from various Generators/ State Utilities / CPPs / Distribution Licensees / SEBs/ Trading Licensees as per specification under TN-04/RUVNL/FY 2021-22. May visit website [www.msstcecommerce.com/](http://www.msstcecommerce.com/www.energyrajasthan.gov.in/rvnl/) for further details.

www.energyrajasthan.gov.in/rvnl/ for further details.

Raj. Samwad/C/21/7337

Superintending Engineer (PP)

ONGC
EASTERN OFFSHORE ASSET, KAKINADA (A.P.)
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
ONGC, EOA, Kakinada invites Pre-Qualification documents from reputed and interested vendors for providing Consultancy Services for undertaking pre-FEED studies for Cluster III of KG-DWN-98-2 Block. Last Date for Submission of experience documents for Pre-Qualification: 10-11-2021. PQC meet: 25-10-2021 through Microsoft Teams. For further details, please login to our website: <https://tenders.ongc.co.in>

HAR EK KAAM DESH KE NAMM

RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (KARNATAKA) LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of Karnataka & Ministry of Railways)
Regd. office: 1 Floor, Samparka Soudha, Opp. Orion Mall, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru-10
Tel - +91 6364890842 CIN: U60100KA2000PLC028171 Email: jgmelec@kride.in

e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No. : K-RIDE/DL/17/2021. Date: 19.10.2021

e-tenders are invited from experienced agencies for the following work

Sl.No.	Name of Work
1	Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV, AC, 50 Hz, Single Phase, Traction Over Head Equipment for Doubling of Baiyyappanahalli Cabin A (km 205.5) (Excluding) - Hosur (km 159) (Including) Section (62 Track Kilometer approximately) of Bangalore division including any Modification in Existing Overhead Equipment if required.

Last Date for Submission of the above tender is **19.11.2021**.
For details, visit: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> and www.kride.in

Sd/- JGM/Electrical

DIPR/DDU/1900/SPAN/2021-22

OSBI
Stressed Assets Resolution Group(SARG), Corporate Centre, 2nd Floor, The Arcade, World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai - 400005
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
EOIs are invited from Insolvency Professionals registered with IBBI for empanelment with SBI for handling IBC matters. For details on eligibility, other terms & conditions, please visit our website <https://bank.sbi> under "sbi in the news-empanelment of vendors." Interested Insolvency Professional may apply in prescribed format on or before date: 29.10.2021. (IPs already empanelled with SBI need not to apply again)
Place: Mumbai **Sd/-**
Date: 20.10.2021 **Deputy General Manager (NCLT)**

MUNICIPAL BOARD NATHDWARA DIST.-RAJSAMAND (RAJ.)
Sukhadiya Nagar, Nathdwara Dist.-Rajsamand-313301
Email:- np_ntd@yahoo.co.in Ph. 02953-233526
No./M.B.Nath/EOI/2021/6310 Date: 17/10/2021
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - NIT 29
Tender Notice for Selection of Firm/Agency, Experienced Individuals for Following work:-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (In Lakh)	Earnest Money in Rs.	Duration of Operation	Bid Validity
1.	Adventure sports activities at municipal board land near Girdhar Sagar, Nathdwara	25.00	25,000/-	15 Years	180 days

For more details you may visit <http://sppp.rajesthan.gov.in>, <http://eproc.rajesthan.gov.in> Websites.
UBN DLB2122SL0B16638
Raj. Samwad/C/7268/2021-2022
Chairman & Commissioner Municipal Board, Nathdwara

OSBI
UAT&PM Department, State Bank of India, Global IT Centre, Sector-11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400614
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
RFP No.: SBI/GITC/IT-UAT&PM/2021/2022/796 Dated: 20.10.2021
Bids are invited by State Bank of India from the eligible bidders for Procurement of 'PROVIDING MANPOWER RESOURCES FOR USER EXPERIENCE DESIGNING OF DIGITAL APPLICATIONS OF SBI ON TIME AND MATERIAL (T&M) BASIS. For details, please visit 'Procurement news' at <https://www.sbi.co.in> and e-Procurement agency portal <https://etender.sbi/sbi/>
Commencement of submission of RFP: From 20.10.2021.
Last date and time for submission of bids: 20.11.2021 up to 16:00 hrs.
Place: Navi Mumbai **Date:** 20.10.2021 **UAT&PM Department**

10 THE WORLD

TOPOF THE WORLD



Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. AP file

AFRICA

Climate report: Africa's rare glaciers soon to disappear

AFRICA'S RARE glaciers will disappear in the next two decades because of climate change, a new report warned Tuesday amid sweeping forecasts of pain for the continent that contributes least to global warming but will suffer from it most. The report from the World Meteorological Organisation and other agencies, released ahead of the UN climate conference in Scotland that starts Oct 31, is a grim reminder that Africa's 1.3 billion people remain "extremely vulnerable" as the continent warms more than the global average. Yet Africa's 54 countries are responsible for less than 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions. **AP**

ASIA

China, Russia navy ships jointly sail through Japan strait

A GROUP of 10 naval vessels from China and Russia sailed through a strait separating Japan's main island and its northern island of Hokkaido on Monday, the Japanese government said, adding that it is closely watching such activities. It was the first time Japan has confirmed the passage of Chinese and Russian naval vessels sailing together through the Tsugaru Strait, which separates the Sea of Japan from the Pacific. **REUTERS**

USA

FB to pay up to \$14.25 mn to settle employment discrimination claims

FACEBOOK WILL pay up to \$14.25 million to settle civil claims brought by the US government that the social media company discriminated against workers and violated other federal recruitment rules, US officials said on Tuesday. The two related settlements were announced by the US Justice Department and Labor Department. The Justice Department announced last December that it was filing a lawsuit that accused Facebook of giving hiring preferences to temporary workers, including those who hold H-1B visas that let companies temporarily employ foreign workers in certain specialty occupations. Such visas are widely used by tech companies. **REUTERS**

On eve of Moscow talks, Taliban get promise of aid but not recognition

GABRIELLE TÊTRAULT-FARBER
MOSCOW, OCTOBER 19

RUSSIA, CHINA and Pakistan are willing to provide aid to Afghanistan, the Russian foreign ministry said on Tuesday, but Moscow said it was not yet ready to recognise the Taliban government.

The promise of humanitarian aid and economic support came after talks between Russian, Chinese and Pakistani officials, who will be joined by representatives of Afghanistan's Islamist rulers at a meeting in Moscow Wednesday.

But Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Russia was withholding recognition from the Taliban while waiting for them to fulfil promises they made when they took power, including on the political and ethnic inclusivity of the new government.

Critics say the former rebel movement is backtracking on pledges not to sideline women and minorities, or persecute foes. "Official recognition of the Taliban is not under discussion for now," Lavrov told reporters. "Like most of other influential countries in the region, we are in contact with them. We are prodding them to fulfil the promises they made when they

EXPLAINED

Russia seeks to take initiative

WITH THE Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan following the US' chaotic troop withdrawal, analysts say Russia has concerns about instability in the region that could damage its interests. It has been trying to take the initiative to avoid such a scenario, with Russia particularly worried about the possibility of Islamist militants getting a foothold in former Soviet states in Central Asia.

came to power."

In mid-August, the Afghan government collapsed as the United States and allies withdrew troops after 20 years on the ground, leading the Taliban to seize power in a lightning offensive.

Russian officials have tempered expectations for Wednesday's talks. The United States said it would not join this round but planned to do so in the future.

Zamir Kabulov, President Vladimir Putin's special representative on Afghanistan, said last week he did not expect any major breakthrough at the talks.

Taliban promise cash, land to families of suicide bombers

SAMYA KULLAB
KABUL, OCTOBER 19

THE TALIBAN have promised plots of land to relatives of suicide bombers who attacked US and Afghan soldiers, in a provocative gesture that seems to run counter to their efforts to court international support.

The Taliban's acting interior minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, offered the reward to dozens of family members of bombers gathered at a Kabul hotel, Interior Ministry spokesman Saeed Khosty tweeted on Tuesday.

Addressing the gathering Monday evening, Haqqani praised the sacrifices of "martyrs and fedayeen," referring to fighters killed in suicide attacks, Khosty tweeted. Haqqani called them "heroes of Islam and the country," according to the spokesman. At the end of the meeting, he distributed 10,000 afghanis (\$112) per family and promised each a plot of land.

Khosty posted photos of Haqqani, his face blurred, embracing the relatives in a packed auditorium.

The event comes as the Taliban attempt to open diplomatic channels with an international community largely reluctant to formally recognise their rule in Afghanistan. High-profile Taliban meetings with foreign officials have focused on obtaining aid to impoverished Afghans as the United Nations predicts virtually the entire population will slide into poverty because of a severe economic crisis. **AP**



Zalmay Khalilzad

Khalilzad, top US envoy to Afghanistan, stepping down

REUTERS

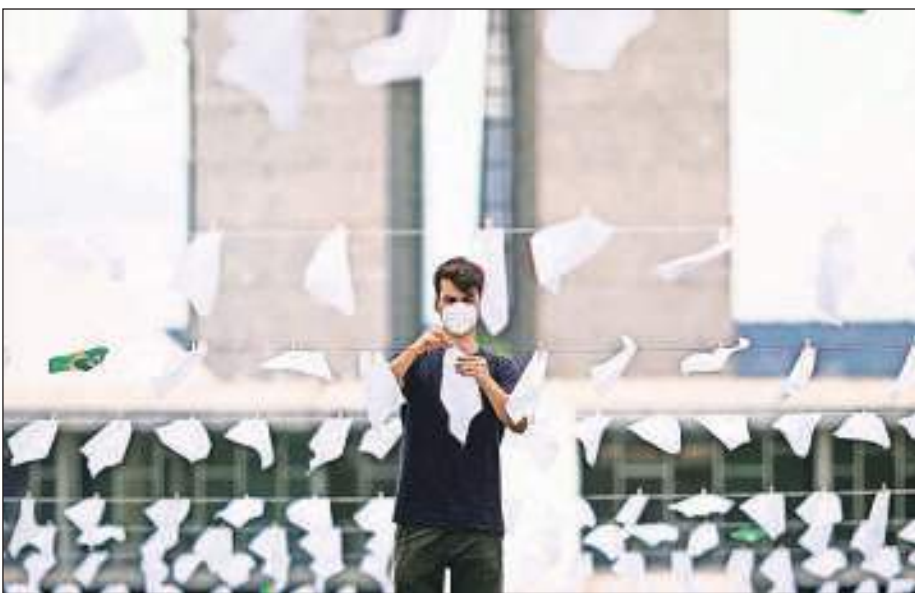
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 19

TOP US envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad is stepping down, the State Department said on Monday, less than two months after the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover of the country.

Khalilzad will be replaced by his deputy, Tom West, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement, noting that West will work closely with the US embassy, which is now based in Doha, on US interests in Afghanistan.

A person familiar with the matter said on condition of anonymity that Khalilzad submitted his resignation on Friday.

His departure follows his exclusion from the Biden administration's first formal talks with the Taliban after the US pullout, held in Doha earlier in October.



White handkerchiefs are tied next to the National Congress in Brasilia, Brazil, on Monday to pay tribute to the country's 600,000 Covid victims. *Reuters*

New cases in children fuel Covid rise in UK after slow vaccine start

ALISTAIR SMOUT

LONDON, OCTOBER 19

THE SPREAD of Covid-19 among children in England is fuelling a rise in cases nationally and causing concern among some scientists that vaccines are being rolled out in schools too slowly, risking the welfare of children and adults alike.

Covid-19 cases in Britain as a whole are much higher than in other European countries and are rising. On Friday one survey suggested prevalence was at its highest level since January, with 8 per cent of secondary school children infected.

Vaccination rates for the age group in England are lagging those in many European countries and even Scotland, which some scientists have attributed to mixed messaging around shots for children, a later start and inflexibility with the rollout. "The worry at the moment is it is clear that the vaccination programme in 12- to 15-year-olds is not going very well,"

Lawrence Young, virologist at University of Warwick, told Reuters, adding that the spread



At a school in Cheshire, England. *Reuters*

of other viruses could lead to a "perfect storm" in the winter for the National Health Service if cases spread to older, more vulnerable adults.

"With all of what that means not only again for schools, but also for overwhelming the NHS... then the worry is that autumn and winter are going to get very, very messy,"

Last month, Britain's chief medical officers recommended that children aged 12 to 15 should be offered a Covid-19 vaccine to help reduce disruption to their education.

Data released on Tuesday showed 209,000 children in state-funded schools were off for Covid-related reasons on Oct 14, with 12.4% of secondary school students absent on the day. **REUTERS**

MEANWHILE

KANYE'S NAME OFFICIALLY CHANGED TO YE

Kanye is now Ye. A Los Angeles judge on Monday approved the request of the rapper to legally change his name from Kanye Omari West to just Ye, with no middle or last name. The petition filed Aug. 24 cited "personal reasons". He tweeted in 2018 that he wanted the change, saying, "the being formally known as Kanye West. I am YE."



AMID COMMUNAL UNREST

Hundreds held in Bangladesh over violence

Hasina tells minister to take action

REUTERS & PTI
DHAKA, OCTOBER 19

BANGLADESHI POLICE said on Tuesday that 450 people had been arrested in the country after attacks against minorities in some of the worst such unrest for over a decade.

At least six people have died, local media reported, as police have fought to restrain angry mobs.

The violence began on Friday when hundreds of Muslims protested in the southeastern Noakhali district accusing Hindus of a blasphemous incident.

Several Hindu religious sites have been vandalised, and homes attacked.

Authorities have filed 71 cases in connection with the violence during the Hindu festival of Durga Puja, a Bangladesh police spokesman said. Investigations were ongoing after the arrest of 450 suspected culprits, he added.

On Tuesday, thousands of members of Bangladesh's ruling party rallied in support of Hindus following the communal violence. "Stop this communal evil, Bangladesh," read one banner held by women supporters.

Elsewhere in Dhaka, several hundred writers gathered, holding up handwritten messages and small posters. "Teach your children to love, not to kill," one said.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina instructed her home minister to initiate immediate action against those who incited violence in the name of religion, and asked people not to trust anything on social media without fact-checking. **AP**



Bangladeshi activists take part in a human chain demanding an end to the communal violence, in Dhaka on Tuesday. *Reuters*

Hasina instructed Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan to remain vigilant and take steps to prevent such incidents from recurring. Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam was quoted as saying by the *Dhaka Tribune* newspaper.

The foreign ministry said in a statement that domestic elements that opposed Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan 50 year ago were still propagating their "toxic narratives to instigate violence, hatred and bigotry".

Communal tensions have long simmered in Bangladesh, whose constitution designates Islam as the state religion but also upholds the principle of secularism.

Hindus make up around 10 per cent of the population.

The unrest is among the worst in Bangladesh since Hasina's Awami League party came to power in 2009.

"Recent attacks on Hindus of Bangladesh, fuelled by hate speech on social media, are against the values of the Constitution and need to stop," tweeted Mia Seppo, the UN's resident coordinator in Bangladesh.

Pak Navy claims it blocked Indian submarine from entering its waters

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 19

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY on Tuesday claimed that its navy blocked an Indian submarine from entering into the country's waters last week.

There was no immediate response from the Indian Navy to the Pakistani claim.

The incident occurred on October 16 when an Indian submarine was detected by a Pakistan

Navy patrol aircraft, the Pakistan military said in a statement.

The navy "detected and blocked the Indian submarine on 16 Oct 21 from entering into Pakistani waters", according to the statement.

It said that during the prevailing security milieu, a strict monitoring watch has been kept by the Pakistan Navy to safeguard maritime frontiers of the country.

The Pakistani military also shared video footage of the purported incident.

An incident of this nature was last reported in March 2019 when the navy had detected and thwarted an attempted entry by an Indian submarine, the statement claimed.

"The Pakistan Navy used its specialised skills to ward off the submarine, successfully keeping it from entering Pakistani waters," PN said in a statement at the time.

It claimed that another reported attempt by an Indian submarine was made in November 2016. **PTI**

Xinjiang official facing US sanctions to head Communist Party unit in Tibet

KJM VARMA

BEIJING, OCTOBER 19

CHINA'S RULING Communist Party has appointed Wang Junzheng, sanctioned by the US, Britain, EU and Canada for his alleged role in the human rights violations against Uygur Muslims in Xinjiang, as the head of its party unit in the sensitive

Himalayan region of Tibet.

Wang Junzheng has been appointed as secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Tibet Autonomous Regional Committee, replacing Wu Yingjie, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Tuesday.

Wang, 58, became China's highest-ranking official to be sanctioned in March over accusations of rights violations dur-

ing his tenure as Xinjiang's deputy party secretary and security chief, the *South China Morning Post* reported.

He served as Xinjiang's security chief from 2019 before starting his most recent role last year as political commissar of the paramilitary Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, while retaining his post as deputy party chief. **PTI**

North Korea tests sub-launched ballistic missile, says South

REUTERS

SEOUL, OCTOBER 19

NORTH KOREA fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) off its east coast on Tuesday, South Korea's military said, pulling Japan's new prime minister off the campaign trail and overshadowing the opening of a major arms fair in Seoul.

The US military's Indo-Pacific Command condemned the launch as destabilising, but judged it did not pose an immediate threat to the United States or its allies.

South Korean and US officials were investigating if the missile was a smaller, previously unseen version displayed last week at an exhibit in Pyongyang, a South



People in Seoul, South Korea, watch news about the North Korea missile test. *Reuters*

Korean military source told Reuters, citing ongoing analysis.

They were also examining whether the missile was fired from North Korea's experimental Gora-class submarine, he

added. The launch is the latest weapons test by North Korea, which has persisted with arms development despite international sanctions over its nuclear weapons and missile programmes.

ZEKE MILLER

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 19

FEDERAL REGULATORS in the US are expected to authorise the mixing and matching of Covid-19 booster doses this week in an effort to provide flexibility as the campaign for extra shots expands.

The upcoming announcement by the Food and Drug Administration is likely to come along with authorisation for boosters of the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson shots and follows the OK for a third dose for the Pfizer vaccine for many Americans last month. The move was previewed Tuesday by a US



A booster shot of Covid vaccine being prepared in Jackson, Alabama. *NYT*

health official familiar with the matter who was not authorised to speak publicly ahead of the announcement.

The FDA was expected to say that using the same brand for a

booster was still preferable, especially for the mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna that have proved most effective against the coronavirus. The agency was still finalising guidance for the single-shot J&J vaccine.

Preliminary results from a government study of different booster combinations found an extra dose of any type revs up levels of virus-fighting antibodies regardless of the brand people first received. But recipients of the single-dose J&J vaccination had the most dramatic response — a 76-fold and 35-fold jump in antibody levels, respectively, shortly after either a Moderna or Pfizer booster, compared to a four-fold

rise after a second J&J shot.

One confusing decision is what Moderna dose to recommend in combination with other brands. Moderna has applied for its booster to be half the original dose, saying that's plenty for people who already received two full-strength shots. But the mix-and-match study used full-strength extra doses, and there's no way to know if a half-dose Moderna booster would trigger as strong a reaction in J&J recipients.

Allowing mixing and matching could make the task of getting a booster simpler for Americans and allow people who may have had adverse reactions to the initial dose to try a different shot. **AP**

THE GANG that kidnapped 17 people with a US-based Christian aid group in Haiti on Saturday is demanding a ransom of \$1 million for each person they are holding, the country's justice minister, Liszt Quitel, said on Tuesday.

Local authorities said the people kidnapped — 16 Americans and one Canadian, including five children — were captured in a suburb of Port-au-Prince, the capital.

"The demand was made to the country chief of the Christian Aid Ministries — they asked for \$1 million per person," Quitel said in a phone interview, referring to the aid group. "Often these gangs know these demands cannot be met and they will consider a counter offer from the families, and the negotiations can take a couple of days sometimes, or a couple of weeks."

As far as he knows, he said, the gang has not issued a deadline for payment.

Haiti has been in a state of political upheaval for years, and kidnappings of the rich and poor alike are alarmingly common. But even in a country accustomed to widespread lawlessness, the abduction of such a large group of Americans shocked officials for its brazenness.

Gangs have plagued Port-au-Prince over the past two decades, but were often used for political purposes — such as voter suppression — by powerful politicians. **NYT**

Djokovic could miss Australian Open due to anti-vaxx stance

‘All areas are a problem’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
OCTOBER 19

NOVAK DJOKOVIC'S Australian Open title defence is in doubt after a government official said that it is unlikely that unvaccinated players will get visas to enter the country.

"I don't think an unvaccinated tennis player is going to get a visa to come into this country and if they did get a visa, they'd probably have to quarantine for a couple of weeks," Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews was quoted as saying by Reuters. "I don't think that the person you indicated (Djokovic) or any other tennis player, let's not personalise it ... or golfer or Formula One driver will even get a visa to get here. If I'm wrong, I'm sure the federal government will let you know."

On Monday, Djokovic declined to reveal his vaccination status and said he was unsure if he would compete at Melbourne Park in January due to the Covid-19 related restrictions. "Things being as they are, I still don't know if I will go to Melbourne," the world No.1 told Serbian daily Blic.

"I will not reveal my status whether I have been vaccinated or not. It is a private matter and an inappropriate inquiry. People go too far these days in taking the liberty to ask questions and judge a person. Whatever you say 'yes, no, maybe, I am thinking about it', they will take advantage."

The 34-year-old — who is tied with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on 20 Grand Slam singles titles — has won the Australian Open a record nine times, including the past three editions.

"Of course, I want to go. Australia is my most successful Grand Slam tournament," he said. "I want to compete, I love this sport and I am still motivated. I am following the situation regarding the Australian Open and I understand the final decision (on restrictions) will be made in two weeks. I believe there will be a lot of restrictions just like this year, but I doubt there will be too many changes. My manager, who is in contact with the Australian tennis federation, tells me they are trying to improve the conditions for everyone, both for those who have been vaccinated and those who have not."

No special arrangements

Andrews, however, said that he opposed special arrangements to let unvaccinated athletes compete in the state.

"On the question of vaccination, no," Andrews told a media briefing. "(The virus) doesn't care what your tennis ranking is, or how many Grand Slams you've won. It's completely irrelevant. You need to be vaccinated to keep yourself safe and to keep others safe."

Melbourne, Australia's second-largest city, has been under a lockdown since August



Novak Djokovic has won the Australian Open nine times, including the past three editions.

to control the spread of the highly infectious Delta variant. Restrictions for the city's five million people will be eased from Friday when 70 per cent of the adult population in Victoria is expected to be fully vaccinated.

Victoria recently included professional athletes in a vaccine mandate covering millions of "authorised workers", without clarifying whether it applied to athletes from overseas or other Australian states. According to the mandate, authorised workers must have their first vaccine shot by October 15 and their second by November 26 or face being banned from their workplaces. "Professional sport is part of those (items on the) authorised worker list and they have to be double-dose vaccinated," Andrews said, adding that Victoria's stance could be a "moot point", given the federal government might not issue visas to unvaccinated athletes.

According to *The Age*, Tennis Australia chief Craig Tiley urged the Victorian government to hold off on a vaccine mandate for athletes, before dropping his opposition to what two government sources said was the strong likelihood that Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton would only permit vaccinated players. "They said we won't get star players and the state government effectively said 'suck it up'. They capitulated," *The Age* quoted a source claiming direct knowledge of the negotiations.

There's also speculation on Djokovic's vaccination status. Earlier this month, pictures emerged of the Serb at a concert in New York's Central Park, which required all atten-

"Things being as they are, I still don't know if I will go to Melbourne. I will not reveal my status whether I have been vaccinated or not. It is a private matter and an inappropriate inquiry."

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

dees to be vaccinated.

Last April, Djokovic made his stance on vaccines known: "Personally I'm opposed to vaccination, and I wouldn't want to be forced by someone to take a vaccine in order to be able to travel."

Former World No.1 Andy Roddick recently questioned whether players would be willing to let go of their personal beliefs in order to play.

"There are some people who are like - 'I have like these beliefs but I could put those to the side if it means I could play in a tennis tournament,'" Roddick told the Tennis Channel. "If we start to look at the timelines... it's October 15th (the date for authorised workers to get the first shot). You figure, at least three weeks between shots, if you're Pfizer, four weeks between shots, if you're Moderna then two weeks. After that you are considered fully vaccinated. So, players are gonna have to start making that decision now."

Tsitsipas' U-turn

In August, World No.3 Stefanos Tsitsipas said that he would only get the vaccination if ATP Tour made it mandatory.

"I don't see any reason for someone of my age to do it - it hasn't been tested enough and it has side effects — as long as it's not mandatory, everyone can decide for themselves," said Tsitsipas, who was the focal point of Greece's 'Stay Home' campaign at the peak of the pandemic last year.

After criticism from the Greek government — "He does not have the knowledge and studies to assess the need for vaccinations" — Tsitsipas revealed his plans to get vaccinated by the end of the year.

"I will get vaccinated this year," he told Antenna TV. "So I can go to restaurants and shops. I support all those who get vaccinated. I am not a doctor; I am a tennis player, so I may not have the most substantiated opinion when it comes to medical issues."

Women's World No.2 Aryna Sabalenka missed the Indian Wells tournament this month after testing positive for Covid-19. The 23-year-old publicly expressed hesitation about the vaccine earlier this year.

"So far I don't really trust it," Sabalenka told reporters in March. "It's tough to say, but I don't really want it yet and I don't want my family to take it. If I have to do it, then of course I have to do it because our life is a travel life."

Indian football coach Igor Stimac calls for a longer season, says quality of league has to be on par with other Asian countries for the team to progress

MIHIR VASAVDA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 19

IGOR STIMAC sounded optimistic, as he always does. But it felt more like an SOS call to those in charge of Indian football.

The chief coach was asked if the national team lacked a quality central defender to partner Sandesh Jhingan, who is playing club football in Stimac's homeland, Croatia. Stimac didn't miss an open goal.

"Not only central defence, all areas are a problem for us," he said. "With pandemic going around, we have a season that won't last for eight-nine months. That's the biggest problem for Indian football. Working like this, where players come to the national team during off-season, it's terrible."

Stimac was spot on with his diagnosis of the main problem facing Indian football — the flawed domestic structure. But it isn't just because of the pandemic. The outbreak of Covid-19 last year might have delayed the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) plans to have a longer season, but it's not a recent problem.

For almost a decade, the unnaturally short domestic season has hindered player development, which has had a cascading impact on the national team.

The Indian Super League (ISL), the country's premier division, lasts for only four months, making it one of the shortest in the world. This is due to multiple factors but primarily commercial. The new season, for instance, will start next month and end in March 2022 and then until the next season begins — in November, going by the recent trend — the players will have nothing to do apart from playing in an odd match in between.

This has put India's footballers at a massive disadvantage compared to the others, so much so that even the countries from South Asia, like Bangladesh who have a proper full season, are starting to trouble the world's 107th-ranked team. At the recently-concluded South Asian Football Championship, which India won after huffing and puffing their way through the initial matches, this was glaring.

Stimac said he did not consider the SAFF title to be a 'special success' but praised the players for their 'togetherness, energy, positive attitude and great mindset.' But wasn't too pleased that the few days he got with the team before the Cup were spent working on their fitness, rather than the tactical aspects of the game.

"We had certain problems in the beginning because we did not have enough preparation compared to other teams. Nepal had two-and-a-half months to prepare. We had only 7-8 days prior to the tournament. Half of the team was without proper competition mode and fitness... Soon, we will have a



Indian football coach Igor Stimac wants the country's premier division the ISL, which lasts four months, to be held over a longer period.

"Not only central defence, all areas are a problem for us."

IGOR STIMAC

normal season like in other countries. We want to get to top 10 in Asia and (for that) we need to have the same quality of league as in the other countries," Stimac said in a media interaction.

The Asian Football Confederation, it is learnt, has given the AIFF time till next year to increase the number of matches clubs play each season, which would automatically increase the length of the season. If the federation fails to do so, India could lose its Asian Champions League spot.

If China can't can India?

Stimac cited the example of China to demonstrate how tough the path will be for India to match other Asian nations before dreaming about qualifying for the World Cup. "China has been spending more than a billion dollars per year in football development. Millions of children in academies, thousands and thousands of foreign coaches, getting foreign players to play for their national team, and still, it's not enough (for them to qualify for the World Cup)," he said. "We are dreaming about going to World Cup one day. It's a huge, massive process because we are not the only ones dreaming about it. Other countries are doing more (than us) in terms of quantity of investments, grassroots, foreign coaches at academies, coaching licensing..."

India's record under Stimac hasn't been particularly impressive but the Croat wasn't too concerned about it. His task, Stimac said,

was to 'reconstruct' the national team by making the players play technically solid football and improve the bench strength.

The process, he underlined, would involve 'suffering', in terms of results but he was satisfied with the progress the team has made under him.

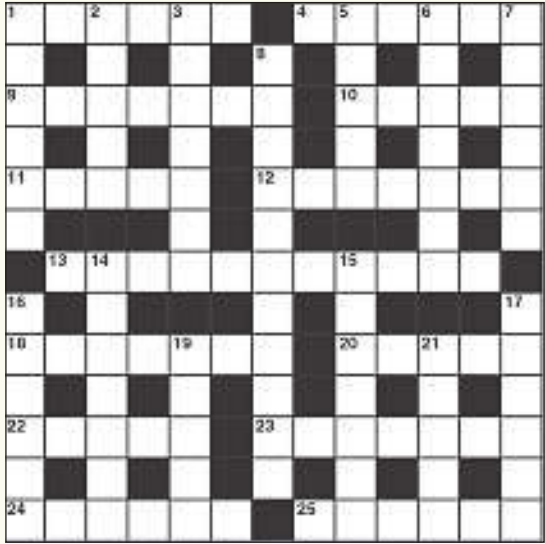
"The only result in which we did not fulfill expectations was against Bangladesh at Salt Lake (1-1 draw). But then, apart from two matches, we could not play our other qualifying matches at home and still, we qualified for the third round," he said. "From this stage now on, we can go one step further which will be playing good football in the third round of qualifiers and making sure India qualifies for Asian Cup."

That, again, will be tricky. The third round of qualifiers, which will be India's final chance to qualify for the 2023 Asian Cup in China, begins in February 2022.

According to FIFA rules, clubs have to release their players for four days for national team duties on dates earmarked for such games. The Asian Cup qualifiers, however, will be played outside the usual FIFA window, which could lead to a tussle between the club and a national team. Stimac said it was important to make sure the dates of the qualifying matches are considered 'a part of the ISL calendar so that the players are released for national team duty.'

"If we are going to succeed in this qualifier which are games to play outside FIFA window, we need to sit down with other stakeholders in domestic competitions (read ISL), how much time the national team players will get for preparation," he said. "Otherwise, we are going to gamble, as simple as that."

CROSSWORD 4565



ACROSS

- Left one extremely out of sorts (6)
- Composer of unusual drive (5)
- He has no choice, poor man (6)
- Sort out the middle of a tune with the composer (7)
- Study I'm making of fabric (5)
- Produce straight lines say (5)
- Speech written on an envelope? (7)
- An engagement in the main (5,6)
- Secret serviceman (7)
- A habit socially acceptable and wise (5)
- French scrip issue (5)
- Try to make a little yarn go a long way? (4,3)
- One motor on fire perhaps (6)
- Mean to overcharge youth leader (6)

DOWN

- Ventilator in a gallery (6)
- Composer of unusual drive (5)
- I arrive all dishevelled in the South of France (7)
- Concluded that many are in need maybe (5)
- Polite man goes to fish (7)
- Concerning a girl that's careless (6)
- To tell the truth one may make it (5,6)
- Stemming from a rebellion (7)
- He may go to an ancient city and sit in ruins (7)
- In pain father is brave (6)
- Extremely good man in church (6)
- It has a shaky reputation as a writer (5)
- A cupful of fruit (5)

Solutions Crossword 4564: Across: 1 Uncouth, 5 Cupid, 8 Funny business, 9 Times, 10 Traders, 11 Potash, 15 Angered, 17 Cramp, 19 Transgression, 20 Ethos, 21 Strings. Down: 1 Unfit, 2 Cinematograph, 3 Ulysses, 4 Haurts, 5 China, 6 Premeditation, 7 Desists, 11 Prattle, 13 Accuser, 14 Adores, 16 Roses, 18 Pines.

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.

___ are just clouds passing over. - Duke Ellington (4,5)

FREAK



GILRSY



KMPIS



HIINGK



Answer: FREAK, SKIMP, CLOUDS, HIKING

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4630

Difficulty Level 1s

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 4629



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Erratic and argumentative alignments are replaced by greater certainty, represented by the restraining grip of Saturn, the celestial school master. You may therefore be subject to a major dose of reality, forcing you to reconsider a number of recent arrangements.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Travel plans should now move along a little more easily. Perhaps it is thanks to Mercury's changing location that you now appear able to make your voice heard above the general din that seems to surround you. You might even come across a cache of secret cash.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Money matters are still to the fore, but now is the time to recognise that enough is enough. Get a grip on your affairs and realise that tradition is more important than strange modern ways of doing things. Also, necessities are a better buy than luxuries.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

In many ways it's still a stable, sensible sort of a time. Everything that is most conservative about your character should stand you in good stead today. Emphasise practical solutions and don't give way to anger or resentment over any recent hurts or slights.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

The Sun is still in an intense mood, and could encourage an indication of simmering family tensions. But your first step is to get on and finish worthwhile activities, rather than complaining about why nothing ever seems to work out. Optimistic Leos should set about domestic repairs without delay.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Social contacts should again be emphasised today, but with a difference. The significant relationships will be those with people who are older, more experienced or more secure than you. Wild spending and extravagance will solve nothing, unless having too much money is a problem.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

The costs of a recent responsibility, perhaps a social obligation, may have alarmed you. However, it looks as if you may have very little alternative but to smile and settle up. But perhaps what's really important is the emotional cost, and all that's needed are a few soothing words.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Even though your life recently has been all about maintaining balance and following the middle way, you may now feel able to swing to extremes. If you take a risk and abandon your normal belief in harmony, then you'll soon see what happens to your chosen long-term plans.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

Today's intriguing developments favour a solution to your business cares and financial woes. The answer lies in long-term investments and savings, not in making a fast buck, going for a quick fix or indulging in any risky enterprise. An older acquaintance could have the best advice.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Even those of you whose life is moving at break-neck speed should slow down today, or at least consolidate the gains you've made so far. Anything that is not secure may be swept away by the long-running dispute between macho Mars and electrifying Uranus.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Risk a confrontation only if you are perfectly happy to incur certain losses. These may be financial or professional but are more likely to relate to a family partnership. Otherwise keep your head down and avoid trouble, while people around you calm down.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You're in exactly the right mood to take up the cudgels on behalf of some noble or idealistic cause. I have two words of advice, though: get your facts straight and don't go behind anybody's back. If you jump in without due consideration, you'll risk massive embarrassment.

