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China to launch artificial lunar lighting in outer space

Beijing trying to catch up with US and Russia

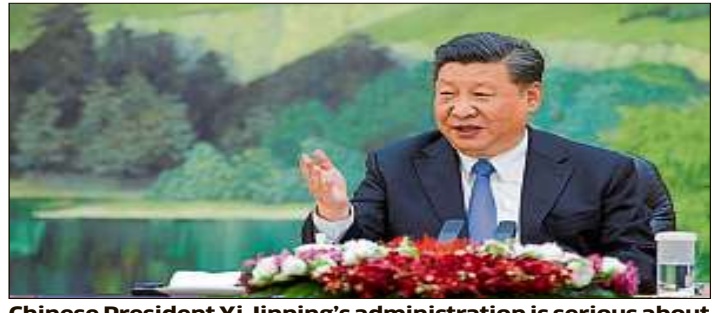
BEIJING, AFP: China is planning to launch its own 'artificial moon' by 2020 to replace streetlamps and lower electricity costs in urban areas, state media reported on Friday.

Chengdu, a city in southwestern Sichuan province, is developing "illumination satellites" which will shine in tandem with the real moon, but are eight times brighter, according to China Daily.

The first man-made moon will launch from Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in Sichuan, with three more to follow in 2022 if the first test goes well, said Wu Chunfeng, head of Tian Fu New Area Science Society, the organization responsible for the project.

Though the first launch will be experimental, the 2022 satellites "will be the real deal with great civic and commercial potential," he said in an interview with China Daily.

By reflecting light from the sun, the satellites could



Chinese President Xi Jinping's administration is serious about the first man-made moon that will be launched from Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in Sichuan. REUTERS

replace streetlamps in urban areas, saving an estimated 1.2 billion yuan (\$170 million) a year in electricity costs for Chengdu, if the man-made moons illuminate an area of 50 square kilometres.

The extraterrestrial source of light could also help rescue efforts in disaster zones during blackouts, he added. AFP was not able to contact Wu nor the Tian Fu New Area Science Society to confirm the reports.

Race for space
 As China's space programme races to catch up with that of the United States and Russia, a number of ambitious projects are in the pipeline, including the Chang'e-4 lunar probe named after the moon goddess in Chinese mythology - which aims to launch later this year. If it succeeds, it will be the first rover to explore the "dark side" of the moon.

China is not the first country to try beaming sunlight back to Earth. In the 1990s, Russian scientists reportedly used giant mirrors to reflect light from space in an experimental project called Znamya or Banner.

Chengdu's artificial moon project was announced by Wu at an innovation and entrepreneurship conference in Chengdu on October 10.

In addition to Tian Fu New Area Science Society, other universities and institutes, including the Harbin Institute of Technology and China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp, are involved in developing Chengdu's illumination satellites.

World at a glance



A US Border Patrol Tactical Unit member gestures to family members after they illegally crossed the Rio Grande river into the United States from Mexico in Fronton, Texas, on Thursday. REUTERS

Pak-origin radical Islamist preacher freed in UK

A Pakistani-origin radical Islamist preacher was freed from a UK jail on Friday after serving less than half of his five-and-a-half-year sentence for inviting support to the Islamic State terror group, PTI reports from London.

Anjem Choudary, 51, was released for his reported "good behaviour" under very strict licence conditions from the high-security Belmarsh prison in south London. Under around 25 strict conditions imposed on him include having to stay at a monitored probation hostel over the next few months, not being allowed to leave London and not being allowed to interact with the media or preach to young people. Any mosque he would wish to attend would have to be vetted by security officials and he will remain under surveillance as part of efforts to ensure he is not allowed to radicalise others. The Metropolitan Police and MI5 intelligence service are expected to be among a host of agencies involved in monitoring him in the community, under surveillance plans that will remain in place until the end of his sentencing period of five-and-a-half years.

Saudi scribe likely dead, says Trump

Turkey searches for remains in forest

WASHINGTON/ANKARA, REUTERS: President Donald Trump said on Thursday he presumes missing Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi is dead and that the US response to Saudi Arabia will likely be "very severe" but that he still wanted to get to the bottom of what exactly happened.

Turkish police are searching a forest on the outskirts of Istanbul and a city near the Sea of Marmara for the remains of Khashoggi more than two weeks after he vanished after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, two senior Turkish officials told Reuters.

Trump, who has forged closer ties with Saudi Arabia and the 33-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, acknowledged for the first time on Thursday that Khashoggi, a US resident and Washington Post columnist, had likely been killed. "It certainly looks that way to me. It's very sad," Trump told reporters before boarding Air Force One on a political trip. In an interview with the New York Times on Thursday, Trump based his acknowledgement that Khashoggi was dead on intelligence reports.

Turkish officials have said they believe Khashoggi was murdered at the consulate and his body chopped up and removed. Riyadh strongly denies the allegations and said it is investigating the disappearance of the journalist, who was critical of Saudi rulers, calling for reforms. Trump spoke hours after receiving an update from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on the results of Pompeo's emergency talks in Saudi Arabia and Turkey this week.

In the New York Times interview, Trump also expressed confidence in intelligence reports that suggest a high-level

Audio tape not shared: Turkey

Turkey on Friday denied giving "any kind of audio tape" from the investigation into the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul to US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo or any American official, AFP reports from Istanbul. "It is out of the question for Turkey to give any kind of audio tape to Pompeo or any other US official," said Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, two days after meeting with the US's top diplomat for talks in Ankara.

Saudi role in the suspected killing of Khashoggi, Trump said, however, it was still "a little bit early" to draw definitive conclusions about who may have been behind it. Pompeo told reporters that he advised Trump that Saudi Arabia should be given a few more days to complete its investigation into the disappearance of Khashoggi, which has caused an international outcry and strained Saudi relations with western countries and corporations.

Trump said he was waiting for the results so that "we can get to the bottom of this very soon". Asked what would be the consequences for Saudi Arabia, Trump said: "Well, it'll have to be very severe. I mean, it's bad, bad stuff. But we'll see what happens." The US considers Riyadh a linchpin in efforts to contain Iran's regional influence and a key global oil source, and Trump has shown no inclination to mete out harsh punishment to the Saudis.



Robert Mahoney, Deputy Executive for the Committee to Protect Journalists, speaks during a news conference to issue an appeal to the UN on the disappearance of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the United Nations in New York on Thursday. REUTERS

Endless strife



Palestinians gather at the Israel-Gaza border fence during a protest calling for lifting the Israeli blockade on Gaza and demanding the right to return to their homeland, in the southern Gaza Strip on Friday. The United States on Thursday downgraded the status of its main diplomatic mission to the Palestinians by placing it under the authority of the US Embassy to Israel. REUTERS

Afghanistan delays elections in Kandahar after Taliban attack

KABUL, AFP: Afghanistan postponed legislative elections in Kandahar province on Friday, after a Taliban-claimed attack on a US-Afghan security meeting killed a powerful police chief and threatened stability across the south.

Saturday's parliamentary ballot would be delayed by one week, a spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani said in a statement, following an extraordinary meeting of the National Security Council.

The Independent Election Commission would announce the new date, he added.

Preparations for the vote

in Kandahar, the Taliban's birthplace, were thrown into turmoil on Thursday when a gunman wearing a security forces uniform opened fire on a gathering of US and Afghan officials.

General Scott Miller, the top US and Nato commander in Afghanistan, escaped unhurt, but Kandahar police chief General Abdul Raziq was killed along with the head of the provincial intelligence unit and an Afghan journalist.

Another 13 people were wounded in the assault inside the heavily fortified provincial governor's compound, including the governor and two

Americans. Voter turnout for the election - which is more than three years late - already was expected to be far lower than the 8.9 million people officially registered, following the Taliban's pledge to attack the ballot.

Raziq's death is likely to deter even more voters from showing up at the more than 5,000 polling centres around the country, which Afghanistan's overstretched security forces have been tasked with protecting.

More than 2,500 candidates are competing for 249 seats in the lower house, which is responsible for making laws and supervising the government.

Hundreds of people have been killed or wounded in poll-related violence so far. At least 10 candidates have been killed.

Despite the threat of violence, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan on Friday urged eligible voters to "exercise their constitutional right to vote".

The poll is seen as a crucial test for next year's presidential election and an important milestone ahead of a UN meeting in Geneva in November where Afghanistan is under pressure to show progress on "democratic processes".

Indian-American awarded for combatting human trafficking

HOUSTON, PTI: An Indian-American woman has been honoured with a Presidential award by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for her extraordinary contribution towards combatting human trafficking in Houston.

Minal Patel Davis, Special Adviser on Human Trafficking to Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, received the "Presidential Medal for Combating Human Trafficking" in the White House last week at a ceremony also attended by President Donald Trump.

"It was unbelievable," said Davis after winning the award, the country's highest honour in the field.

"My parents came here from India. I was the first one

Bhutan holds election for new government

THIMPU, AFP: Bhutan, the Himalayan kingdom jammed between India and China, voted in a national election on Thursday guaranteed to usher in a new ruling party which must boost the economy without compromising the country's fierce independence streak. The country of 800,000 people, famed for its Gross National Happiness index, is holding only its third national election since the monarchy initiated a transition to democracy in 2008.

Streets in the capital were mainly empty for the occasion as authorities declared a holiday for the election. Many voters looked forward to seeing a new government tackling

50,000 Indians took US citizenship in 2017

WASHINGTON, PTI: Over 50,000 Indians were granted the American citizenship in 2017, four thousand more than the previous year, according to the latest official report.

The Department of Homeland Security in its latest annual immigration report said that in 2017, as many as 50,802 Indians took citizenship of the United States.

This is four thousand more than 2016's figure of 46,188 Indian naturalisation and eight thousand more than 42,213 Indian

American citizenship data

707,265 foreign nationals took the oath of American citizenship in 2017.

- Mexico with 118,559 citizenships topped the list among all foreign nationals.
- India was a distant second, followed by China (37,674); the Philippines (36,828); Dominican Republic (29,734); Cuba (25,961).

ship than male (310,987). The report indicates that as many as 12,000 newly naturalised American citizens from India settled in California, followed by New Jersey (5,900), and Texas about 3,700. More than 7,100 naturalised Americans lived in the regions of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

IS seized 700 hostages: Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin says Islamic State militants in Syria have recently seized some 700 people as hostages and are carrying out executions, AP/PTI reports from Moscow.

At an international policy forum in Sochi on Thursday, Putin said "they have been recently expanding their area and took about 130 families hostage, which accounts for about 700 people."

Putin said the militants have put forth demands, which he did not specify, and have warned that they would kill 10 people a day if the demands are not met. "They killed 10 people the day before yesterday," he said. "They are now carrying out their threats." State news agency Tass on Wednesday cited an unnamed "diplomatic-military source" as saying the hostages were seized in a raid on a refugee camp and were demanding Syria free IS members.



Police stand guard next to Severin Krasimirov (21), who was arrested in Germany over the killing of TV journalist Viktoria Marinova, during his first appearance in court in Ruse, Bulgaria, on Friday. REUTERS

Taiwan to push for papal visit

Taiwan said on Friday that it would continue to push for a papal visit to the island after the Vatican turned down its most recent invitation, AFP reports from Taipei.

Vice president Chen Chien-jen made the invitation during an audience with the pope Sunday as Taiwan seeks to deepen ties with its only ally in Europe after the Holy See signed a historic deal with Beijing. The deal last month on the appointment of bishops paved the way for a rapprochement between the Vatican and China. That raised questions over the future of official ties between Taiwan and the Holy See as China makes a concerted effort to poach its dwindling number of allies. The Vatican said on Thursday that a visit to Taiwan "by the Holy Father is not being planned".

Monroe's prayer book for sale

Of the things Marilyn Monroe is best known for, being Jewish is not on the list. But the impending sale of her prayer book - or siddur, as it is called in Hebrew - has piqued interest in the role religion played in the star's cinematic life story, NYT reports.

Monroe is believed to have inherited the book after she married playwright Arthur Miller and converted to Judaism. The book, labeled "Daily Prayers" on its spine, appears to have passed through the Avenue N Jewish Center, the synagogue Miller attended in Brooklyn. "If it didn't belong to Marilyn Monroe," said Jonathan Greenstein, the president of the auction house that will sell the book on November 12, "the book itself would be worth \$50 to \$100 - if that much." It had been estimated to sell for \$5,000 to \$8,000.



Singer Katy Perry poses at the ninth amfAR Gala Los Angeles in Beverly Hills on Thursday. REUTERS

Dawood henchman to face trial

LONDON, PTI: A "top lieutenant" of the D-Company - Dawood Ibrahim's organised crime and terror network - will stand trial in Britain in February 2019 in his extradition case brought by US authorities.

Jabir Moti, alias Jabir Motiwala, was remanded in custody to appear for a case management hearing on November 12, before a three-day trial scheduled between February 25 and 27 next year.

Moti, who appeared before Westminster Magistrates' Court via live video link from Wandsworth prison in southwest London on Friday, is facing extradition to the US on money laundering and extortion charges.

The 51-year-old had been denied bail during previous hearings and did not make any further application for bail on Friday. "As there is no bail application, I am remanding you in custody until November 12," Judge Tan Ikram said. Moti's defence lawyer, Toby Cadman of Guernica law firm, told the court that his client had made an application in court to have his name changed on the case documents to Jabir Siddiq.

He also indicated that Moti's defence intends to depose a number of legal experts as witnesses in the case.

Editorial

Goa's Congress: Party of Pessimists, not Grand Old Party anymore

They could not handle the mandate for setting up a Government and their adversary stole their mandate away. They cannot hold their flock together as they have lost three MLAs in one year since the current Assembly began. And now they are clueless in a disjointed huddle knowing not which way to go.

Meet Goa's Congress Party. The proud organisation of over half a dozen Chief Ministers, ruled the State for over three decades and currently awaiting its Armageddon. The party, despite having reaped the benefits of anti-incumbency wave against BJP despite the NDA at the Centre ran about like a headless chicken failing to capitalise on a decimated BJP. But there is more than the party has lost its bid to power. It is a party that has lost its mojo. Or did it ever have it?

It's been five months since Girish Chodankar assumed Presidency of Goa Pradesh Congress Committee. In these five months, the Man who was supposed to be with squeaky clean credentials and represented the youthfulness of India's oldest party has been a Man at sea. Played down by senior party MLAs, ignored by seasoned Congressmen, exploited by wannabe new leaders and derided by other party leaders; young Chodankar's situation is worse than maybe Abhimanyu in Mahabharat. The similarities are chillingly similar Chodankar like Abhimanyu knows how to get into the battlefield but then he does not quite know how to come out. And oh yes, just as Abhimanyu, Chodankar is being done in by his own party kith and kin.

But then Chodankar isn't quite a martyr. He is a loyalist more adept at leading rallies, making speeches, picketing for a cause and listening to party High Command. In five months, he has not been able to set the Congress house in order. The GPCC Executive Committee is yet to be constituted as Chodankar battles between demands or realpolitik and party organisation. Congress Party as a whole is in a complete state of disarray as all the forty blocks across constituencies await acknowledgement. Their State President has not even visited each Block formally nor do the Block Committees know that whether they exist or not. One of the Block Committee Presidents says that the only call that he gets from GPCC Headquarters in Panjim is that for organising buses and crowd for sabhas and zagors. None of the blocks is engaging head on with numerous illegalities mushrooming in their areas as they 'don't know about their status'. The Congress organisation of present resembles a Nursery School class where everyone complains about everyone to the Class Teacher and nobody moves a muscle 'cos the Class Teacher never told them to. Hello Girish! This is your Congress Party. Recognise it?

See the difference. While Congress, supposedly heir to the status of one of the largest party in Goa is more interested to engage the media through Press Conferences and lofty sound-bites; nascent Aam Admi Party is gaining ground rapidly with just couple of heads appearing in media while the growing cadre files complaints, fights PIL suits and pickets authorities making them work. Congress with its large army resembles more like a cattle farm while AAP seems a galloping bunch of rebels refusing to accept the status quo around. AAP is seeming more like the real Opposition, Dear Congress not your decimated bunch of 14.

Politics is the first ideology then organisation. Politics is the first vision than mission. Your young guns don't have the tact to connect with your party elders nor do your party elders seem to be deriving any confidence from the youth brigade that seems to be frequenting GPCC office as power and publicity marauders. Your character as the voice of the people shows most when your chips are down. A failed bid for power shows that Congress isn't even thinking of the people. It is existing just to make another bid for power. How then is your party any different from the BJP and its power-hungry coalition? Even they don't listen to their party workers. Even they don't care about the people of Goa. Quite a mirror image, isn't it Dear Congress?

comment



Eugene Correia

No doubt, Akbar has chosen to defend himself and have engaged a battery of lawyers to fight Priya Ramani, the journalist who delivered the first blow, and has vowed to fight Akbar.

India snarled by #Metoo movement

India is buzzing with news of some high-profile people in many industries, particularly in the show business and media, caught in the headlights of the speeding #MeToo movement. It has been a year that the campaign to out the powerful men took off in America. The feminist movement has taken wings and flying into many directions. It has hit India with a thunderbolt unlikely seen in the recent past. Each day, more skeletons from the cupboards of men in power are falling out. It's unlikely to end soon.

A conservative society such as India has suddenly gained notoriety because of some men who yielded lot of power then and even now in Bollywood and in media. That a junior minister in the Modi cabinet was being allegedly accused of sexual misdeamours is the hot topic of the day. A former shining star in the firmament of India's media, MJ Akbar, who switched from journalism to politics and jumped from the Congress into the BJP, has now taken recourse to the judicial courts to clear his name from allegations by more than ten female journalists, most of them who worked under him.

exit, as the party wouldn't want to go into the 2019 election with such an ugly baggage. Another media mega-star, Tarun Tejpal, is in the throes of judicial hell for raping a junior reporter in a hotel elevator in Goa. Goa has seen a rise in rapes but, if memory serves me right, the veteran journalist Mario Cabral e Sa had painted Goa as "rape capital" of India in his report for Blitz in the 70s. Nothing has come out of a rape charge against a former Goa minister. Tejpal's case has been lingering for about five years. The wheels of justice grinds slowly in India.

One is never certain of the verdict, just as one verdict in Toronto surprised not just me but many who were following the case closely. It concerns a top star of the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), Jian Ghomeshi, a radio host. He was acquitted of four counts of sexual assault in a sensational trial/ He was represented by a woman lawyer Marie Henein, who was later fiercely disparaged by women's groups for having betrayed the women's cause. Akbar's lead lawyer is also a woman, Geetha Luthra, who already has her hands full with Tejpal's case.

I have watched the American Senate proceedings regarding the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. Despite the solid testimony of the accuser, it seems political considerations by the Republicans provided the needed support to Trump's nominee. In this age of Donald Trump, one can expect such people to come to power, as the president himself has proved to be low on morals. His attacks on some women, especially the TV anchor, Megan Kelly, have been vicious and have cast a pall on the presidency.

On the anniversary of the #MeToo movement, I watched Taruna Burke, its founder, talk of women's revolution and how women have benefitted from it. No wonder Time magazine voted it "The Person of the Year" for 2017. This widespread movement that has shaken the male-dominated bastions.

It brings back memories of the 60s when the feminist movement moved into a fast gear. The notable names that come to mind are of Betty Friedman, whose book, The Feminine Mystique, was a runaway bestseller, and Gloria Steinem, a staunch journalist and feminist activist who stated, "This is no simple reform. It really is a revolution..." Later on came Germaine Greer, the feisty Australian, whose book, The Female Eunuch, was a delight to read.

In this debate of "gender equality" and "women empowerment", I have been going over a book, That's What She Said—What Men Need to Know (And Women Need to Tell Them) About Working Together, by Joanne Lipman, a former editor-in-chief of USA Today. It's a timely book. It has an interesting chapter, We're All a Little Bit Sexist. She talks of "unconscious bias" and "gender-blind" ideals, and quotes researchers that "the only thing women achieved by talking like men was making people hate them." Both men and women need to work together to close the gap.

(Eugene Correia is a senior journalist who worked with Free Press Journal, and The Hindu)



The feminist movement has taken wings and flying into many directions. It has hit India with a thunderbolt unlikely seen in the recent past

No doubt, Akbar has chosen to defend himself and have engaged a battery of lawyers to fight Priya Ramani, the journalist who delivered the first blow, and has vowed to fight Akbar. It could be a nasty affair. It won't be easy for Akbar as more women are ready to testify against him. A banner headline is in the works. Obviously, the BJP pushed for his

I have worked with Akbar at the Free Press Journal, where he edited the Sunday paper, Bharat Jyoti. But as he grew in stature and power, moving from one paper to another, he gained a reputation few other editors have achieved. I have read some of his books and would regular read his column, Byline. Women's "whisper network" hadn't singled anyone.

'Runaway' MLAs

The two 'runaway' Congress MLAs Dayanand Sopte and Subhash Shirodkar who have defected to BJP must realise that they became Congress MLAs because the people voted them to power to serve them and not be opportunists. Such people get elected only for their own gains and not to serve the people who voted them to power. The best way to shame these politicians is to have dharnas in front of their houses and the assembly by the people who gave their precious votes for these shameless MLAs.

Anselm Baretto, Assagao

Arwin Mesquita, Colva

Goa's disgusting politicians

It's really disgusting to what's happening in Goa's political scenario today. No morality, ethics, truth, sincerity, obligation, trust, loyalty anymore!

Most of these politicians are just outright scum; particularly those jumping parties, fighting for senior positions and avenues, to further loot the already burdened taxpayer!

Criminals are condemned and cursed but these specific politicians who loot so much more, destroy health of Goans, cause many deaths, devastate our environment are given so much sympathy when they are ill or face misfortune! How are these guys getting all the best treatment across the globe when the common man receive low grade health care via the disgusting facilities in Goa's Government Hospitals? Does the already burdened

taxpayer deserve all this is the question? I say surely yes because - who voted & revoted these politicals in the first place? Even if the politician was elected say in good faith by respective people then why are these U-turn politicians not questioned and forced to resign! Politicians are nothing but a reflection of the pathetic mentality of majority Goans; who deserve all this rubbish and corrupt Governance!

Tragic accident

It is shocking to read that at least 61 people were killed and 72 injured, after a crowd of Dussehra revellers that had spilled onto the railway tracks while watching burning of Ravana effigy, was run over by a train at Amritsar.

In India one hears of travellers getting killed in large numbers due to train accidents as a result of derailment or collision. This is probably the first time when so many people were mowed down by a moving train. Such a tragedy should have never taken place as the function happens to be an annual feature and the local MLA was present as the chief guest. All precautions should have been in place.

The movement of the trains could have been stopped or even slowed down when the function was in progress. It is understood that the people

who had gathered could not hear the moving train due to the firing of the crackers. In any other country the minister in charge would have immediately tendered his/her resignation owing moral responsibility for such a man-made tragedy. However in India there will be only condolences pouring in from those in power and a probe initiated. This will do precious little to alleviate the pain and suffering of those who lost their loved ones in the tragedy.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Keep distance from railway tracks

It was shocking and sad news about the accident which had happen in Joda Phatak in Amritsar, India where large numbers of people along with their families, friend's, children's and neighbors went for Dussehra to watch the burning of Ravana effigy was run over by a moving train which was on its way to Jalandhar to Amritsar.

We don't understand why they have made such a tall Ravana so close to the railway line where the train moves on their way up and down. We the people always have to study, learn and take care of ourselves because our own safety is in our own hands. We should never sit, walk, step, stand, lay down and click pictures on the railway tracks. We should also see left

and right side of both the tracks while crossing the railway tracks. Had seen many people walking, sitting and clicking pictures on their mobile phone. Clicking pictures on the phone is not important than your own life and we don't want to see your picture on the next day on local newspaper. Remember fast moving trains never stop in between by putting the passenger's life in risk. It is against the Railway rules and laws. Railway accident deaths are horrible deaths, so please take care about yourself and stay far away from the railway route/tracks, you never know when and what time the train will pass on its own way. Remember safety always comes first and it's never takes a break. May their souls rest in peace and we pray that the injured recover quickly.

Ronnie D'Souza, Chandor

Organisers to be blamed

This is heart-wrenching incident that Dussehra celebration turned tragic when speeding train mowed down people who were watching Ravana's effigy going up in flames.

Sixty-one people died and more than 72 people injured. Meanwhile, it is consoling that Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has announced to give Rs 5 lakh to kin of each deceased & free treatment to injured in government & private hospitals.

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Rajnath Singh have also promised all possible assistance. Hope they will make good.

I think the local administration is solely responsible for this tragic incident as they should not have given permission for the celebration near a track. Organisers are also to be blamed for the incident. Why have they arranged a program like this so close to the railway tracks? Why they did not provide a barrier along the track? My deepest condolences and sympathies for the deceased.

QB Malik, New Delhi

What's in a name

Prayagraj is the new name for Allahabad. Will it make a difference? A person or State or even a country is known for its achievements/overall developments. Does a change in name bring out the desired results? In UP, the Mughal Sarai railway station, was renamed as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. Poona changed to Pune, Madras to Chennai, Bombay to Mumbai. Instead of focusing on developments, politicians indulge in wasteful activity like name changing of states, cities, roads etc.

Changed State/road names often make it difficult to locate the address and old habits are difficult to change. Rajiv Gandhi Chowk of Connaught Place (CP), which is still better known as CP only.

It confuses the travelers to find the place on their next/subsequent visits. It effects tourism and state revenue falls.

Popular names must not be changed as it alters history on political grounds. It causes much inconvenience to citizens; one-time avoidable expenditure on printing of stationary like letter heads/visiting card and government to make alterations in their stored data and publications etc.

If the road/State names continue to be changed on political grounds - there be no original name of any State/ railway stations/ road etc. Is that desirable?

Mahesh Kumar, New Delhi

Ordinance for Ram Temple

It was for first time that both President and Prime Minister rather than merely fulfilling formality of burning of effigies of Ravana, Kumbhakaran and Meghnad at Dussehra celebrations in Delhi, very carefully witnessed part of Ramlila with crucial death-bed advice of Ravana to Lashmana that nice thoughts must be implemented soon, rather than to be deferred.

The incident is followed by clear Dussehra message of RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat demanding an early law for construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya. Both incidents clubbed together gives clear indication that central government may soon bring an ordinance for paving way for construction of Ram Temple without even awaiting hearings on the matter at SC.

Madhu Agrawal, Delhi

othervoices

ABOUT THE AIR WE BREATHE

VENAN BONAVENTURE DIAS

Many of us are wondering how cancer is on the rise. We often fail to realise that there are many other causes rather than smoking and radiation which cause cancer. First and foremost we need to understand what type of air we breathe as it is a constant process. Most of the villages in Goa till date burn wood for cooking and heating water and think that it has been there for ages so there is no harm. But the recent research clearly points out at the ill-effects of burning wood.

The smoke that is released from burning contains harmful organic chemicals such as benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, acrolein, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). These are carried to the lungs by fine particles dispersed in the air, which means that a neighbour burning wood can be carried to another home even if its doors and windows are closed. These particles are so small that they can easily get past the defenses of the nasal track and get to the deepest part of the lungs that is the alveoli, where the oxygen needs to be transferred to the blood, thereby ingesting the organic chemicals directly into your body through circulation of blood. The resulting health issues gets worsened due to such ingestion into the blood stream leading to irritation of eye and throat, it also causes asthma, acute bronchitis, heart disease, pneumonia, and chronic lung disease that leads to cancer.

Besides harming the human body, the pollutants released into the air can gradually deplete the ozone layer that protects us from harmful radiations from the sun, thus adding fuel to fire.

The recent signing of memorandum between the Goa Government and Portugal in the areas of sanitation should include the point where the quality of air that we breathe should be given prime importance, as this aspect is completely sidelined, more research has to be made in identifying the air quality in Goa otherwise it will soon match the quality of air in Mumbai and Delhi, as most of the ailments mentioned above can be prevented by taking small steps of avoiding such means of cooking.

Even the open pig toilets have to be demolished with immediate effect and sewage systems have to be implemented, the effluents have to be treated and water recycled to be used for irrigation. Simply by forming a bio-diversity board does not solve all these pertinent issues, a strong will to execute at the grassroots levels can go a long way in creating awakening and awareness of the ill effects of such practices, it is possible through the religious forums and communities.

There are important global conventions that also support the sustainable development goals of prevention of adverse climate change, the landmark declarations on international environmental law are "Declaration of United Nations Conference on the Human Environment" and the "Rio Declaration on Environment and Development" which provides 27 principles intended to guide future sustainable development around the world.

people'sedit

INDISCIPLINED MOTORISTS

JOHN ERIC GOMES

Reference Herald report October 19 on this subject we have recently personally called on and given a seven page detailed complaint to Minister Rohan Khaunte our MLA and I strongly reject the statements of traffic DySP Dharmesh Angle as non factual and incorrect! I walk across the O'Coqueiro junction daily at least once at various times and I have rarely seen anyone challoaned or even sternly warned! In fact I have to invariably berate the cops when standing around there for not doing their duty, but I have found it in vain!

People are indisciplined no doubt and those arrogant few require the "danda"/strict implementation of law with prevention better than cure attitude! I personally witnessed the MLA, DSP and all concerned authorities discussing the essential corrections to be done about 4 months back! Simple things immediately like painting/shifting the stop lines where required, repairing/raising the speed breakers and so on. Bigger things like correctly placing traffic lights etc in due course.

To date hardly anything that has been agreed to has been done, I understand excuse is due to paucity of funds/staff! There are traffic jams daily at the turning into Defence Colony/Kadamba road egress due blocking of access to ChogM road and NH17 to Mapusa, wrong parking and pedestrians have to fend for themselves! Indisciplined vehicles including huge buses and trucks regularly break the red light or go the wrong way as short cut. After all the fuel price rise demands shorter routes?

The other day a huge bus coming from Panjim late evening when dark, broke the red light whilst a lot of us pedestrians were starting to cross, blocked our way by stopping plumb across the zebra line to disembark passengers, and due to this obstruction delay we were caught in the middle as the traffic lights changed and vehicles zoomed on either side of us! Let us not be complaisant until we have a vehicle/bus mowing down pedestrians and then an enquiry and passing the buck for who is responsible like the train tragedy during Dassera celebrations in Panjab! We and the Press have enough evidence to hold the Police, PWD and government authorities squarely responsible for loss of lives and negligence of duty that has forced us to risk our lives whenever we step out due not enforcing rules and implementation of minimum precautions /actions as promised/discussed!

On the trail of lost species

REDISCOVERING
Tracing lost species is crucial to our hope of regaining what has been forgotten of the wildlife and the environment around us, writes **Atula Gupta**



Illustration of Himalayan quail.
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
MIMANT LIEB

For field biologists Mahesh Babu and Ganesh Pallela, it was a routine survey of marine biodiversity along River Godavari in Kakina, Andhra Pradesh when they spotted an unusual shark. It was no longer than three feet and had distinct black markings on its dorsal, pectoral and tail fins. Still, it was hard to pinpoint the exact species as minor morphological differences play a major role in identification. Not taking any chances, and with an imminent feeling that this was not a common sighting, the two asked Anil Mohapatra, a scientist from the Zoological Survey of India, for help. He came back with surprising results—the duo had spotted the critically endangered Pondicherry shark, last seen 39 years ago in India!

Unlike the Pondicherry shark, it would seem impossible to confuse the peacock spider aka the Gooty tarantula with any other arachnid. This peacock of the spider world is not only of a mammoth size but also has a noticeable blue lustre that makes it quite easy to spot. And yet, it took scientists 102 years to rediscover the tarantula after it was first spotted in 1899 in a railway timber yard. It looks like species such as these—the Pondicherry shark and the Gooty tarantula, the pink-headed duck and the Himalayan quail—have lied low, as if deliberately from prying human eyes, hardly observed or documented in the millions of years of earth's existence. While remaining elusive could be a survival instinct, the changing character of the habitats and the ecosystems themselves could place them in more mortal danger than ever before if they continue to stay hidden.

Living in oblivion

There are many animals and plants in India, especially those that have been listed as endangered or critically endangered by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which have also remained elusive for a very long period of time. The pink-headed duck was last seen in 1935 and then again claimed to have been spotted in 2009, but many believe it is already extinct. In 1987, the Zoological



Pondicherry shark

Survey of India received skin samples of the rare Malabar civet. Since then, the civet has not been seen. The Himalayan quail is a medium-sized bird belonging to the pheasant family, with distinctive red or yellow bill and legs, and prominent white spots around the eyes. It has a long covert tail which is longer than most other quails. However, this description is based on 10 specimens that were seen, shot or collected between 1836 and 1876 in India, around Uttarakhand. It has been 142 years since the Himalayan quail was last seen.

In an era of GPS tracking, it might seem unusual that so many species still remain untraceable, but there could be plenty of reasons. According to Asad R Rahmani, former director of Bombay Natural History Society and noted ornithologist, the Himalayan quail for instance was a rarity even during the days when it was seen in Uttarakhand. Same is the case with the pink-headed duck which was uncommon even during the time when its presence around West Bengal, Bihar and Myanmar was fairly known. With lack of scientific studies, greater descriptions of the habitat these species are found in, and probably hunting sprees by locals and colonial empires, these animals and birds have been surviving in virtual oblivion.

Another reason for the continued disappearance could be the absence of a constant field study to track them. In India, for example, the scientific study of the Gooty tarantula and other such giant spiders is relatively recent and began after measures to curb illegal trade of the species were taken in the late 1990s. An international team of experts was brought in during that time to not just search for tarantulas in India, but also train some of the local scientists to continue the work. Efforts like this eventually led to the rediscovery of the peacock spider by San-



Gooty tarantula

“The Lost Species Project, started by Global Wildlife Conservation, has listed 1,200 species, including many from India.”

jay Molur and his colleagues, inside a tree hole, thousands of metres above the ground, completely protected from human interference but finally spotted by scientists who armed with ladders and dental mirrors had the one-point mission of finding the spider again.

What is worrying is that missions like these to exclusively trace a lost species are few and far between as they need huge funding, time and effort. An area cannot be notified as protected unless there is an evidence of a special species existing in that locality. In the meantime, the habitat is vulnerable to being lost forever as urban needs takeover natural landscapes. For marine animals like the Pondicherry shark that was discovered by chance, the threat also comes when fishermen who unknowingly catch and kill them.

Fishermen who spoke to the scientists in Andhra Pradesh confessed that sharks were sometimes sold in the area but they had no idea about this particular one being so rare. The peacock spider has gained quite a reputation in the exotic pet world adding to the list of threats such lesser known creatures might face. While it is still a rarity in the wild, many pet owners in the US have been known to breed them in captivity and sell them, thanks to an unknown and illegal supply of a few spiders from Sri Lanka to the US in the 90s!

Lost Species Project

Fearing deeper repercussions if a species was never found again, like the loss of an entire ecosystem, Global Wildlife Conservation, an international organisation, started the Lost Species Project a couple of years ago. They listed 1,200 species, including many from India, that had been lost for decades or centuries, and are now collaborating with IUCN to find them. The idea is that if we can rediscover these hidden jewels of nature, then there is still hope to regain what we have lost of wildlife and the environment around us.

These near mythic creatures could show us a side of Mother Nature that we might have never known ever.

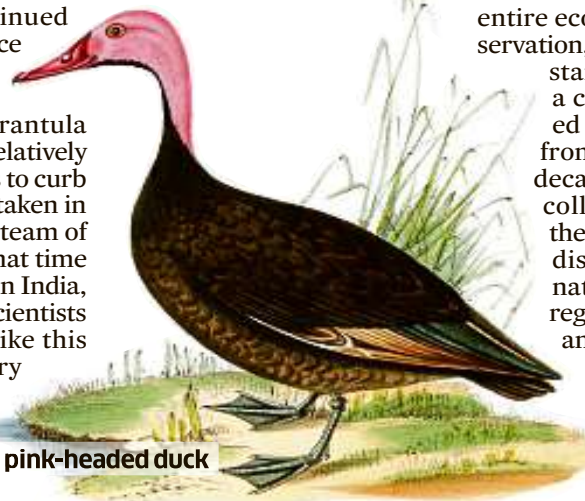


Illustration of pink-headed duck

SNIPPETS

ILIOSACRAL JOINT

What a frog needs to make that leap

Frogs are terrific jumpers. Ask any child who has tried to catch one. Chris Richards, a researcher at Harvard, came to frogs early, as a first-year graduate student. ‘The dynamic role of the iliosacral joint in jumping frogs’, in *Biology Letters*, goes further to explain the evolution and importance of jumping in frogs. The interesting thing about frogs, Richards said, is that the ones that jump do so with power and accuracy.

The question Richards and his colleagues asked was whether the hinge-like iliosacral joint in the pelvis, which is unique to frogs, was necessary for the evolution of frog jumping.

The scientists recorded jumping frogs with high-speed video and measured the forces involved in real jumps. They



created a computer model to fiddle with, modifying the action of the joint, for instance, to see what would happen. Their calculations and virtual experiments suggest that the frog can jump without

such a joint, but not as accurately. There are signs of the joint in frog fossils, Richards said, although it's not clear how mobile that joint was. ‘There's also evidence just looking at the frogs that exist today, which are thousands of species, that this hinge mechanism evolved multiple times independently,’ he added.

What Richards and his colleagues suggest is that jumping evolved first and the flexible joint evolved later for finesse, accuracy and control of the jumping process.

SEEING THROUGH IT

How wet clothes turn translucent

Why do some fabrics become transparent when wet? Cloth, like paper, is made up of discrete strands of fibre with air between them. Light hitting the dry material is somewhat scattered within it, but a good share is reflected to the eye. This renders the material visible.

Compared with the strands in the material, the air has a low refractive index—a measurement of how much light is bent. Water, on the other hand, has a higher refractive index, closer to that of the fibres.

When water or another liquid soaks fabric, the spaces between the fibres are filled with it. There is a smaller change in the angle of light that hits the material, resulting in more internal scattering. Less of that light comes back to the eye.

The result is less visibility for the fabric itself and more for whatever it is covering, whether a body clad in a T-shirt or a table covered by a wet tablecloth.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

3D printed devices that can track

Cheap and easily customisable, 3D printed devices are perfect for assistive technology, like prosthetics or ‘smart’ pill bottles that can help patients remember to take their daily medications. But these plastic parts don't have electronics, which means they can't monitor how patients are using them.

Now engineers at the University of Washington have developed 3D printed devices that can track and store their own use—without using batteries or electronics. Instead, this system uses



a method called backscatter, through which a device can share information by reflecting signals that have been transmitted to it with an antenna. ‘We're interested in making accessible assistive technology with 3D printing, but we have no easy way to know how people are using it,’ said Jennifer Mankoff, a professor in the UW's Paul G Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering. ‘Could we come up with a circuit-less solution that could be printed on consumer-grade, off-the-shelf printers and allow the device itself to collect information? That's what we showed was possible in this paper.’

HOT SPRINGS

The many uses of geothermal fluids

In a study, Dr Trupti Chandrashekar from the IIT-Bombay, and her collaborators from various institutes, have found that hot springs along the Western Ghats evolved from rocks millions of years old, and marine sediments played a crucial role in their evolution.

There is more to hot springs than just the famous spas around them. Geothermal fluids, in general, are used in aquaculture, horticulture, space heating and power generation. ‘Geothermal fluids act as the source and feedstock for geothermal power plants, just like coal for a coal power plant, or wind for a wind power plant. India has an immense potential for geothermal resource development and has the potential to generate over 10,000 MW of power using geothermal resources,’ says Dr Chandrashekar.

The quality, quantity, temperature,

pressure and grading of these fluids decide the type of geothermal power plants that can be built. Geothermal fluids contain a wide variety of dissolved constituents including carbonates, nitrates, zinc, copper and boron. By studying them, scientists decipher the fundamental processes like water-rock interactions, origin of thermal fluids and also environmental impacts of their exploitation.

The Deccan plateau, formed millions of years ago as a result of volcanic activity, has a layer of basalt on top with varying thickness. Below this are sedimentary layers of sandstone, called the Kadalgi sediments. Underneath are rocks formed billions of years ago, called the Precambrian granite and gneiss. Long tectonic faults in the Deccan volcanic flows run in the north-south direction in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, almost parallel to the west coast.

SOURCE: THE NEW YORK TIMES, RESEARCH MATTERS, SCIENCE DAILY

Astronomers tiptoe closer to confirming first exomoon

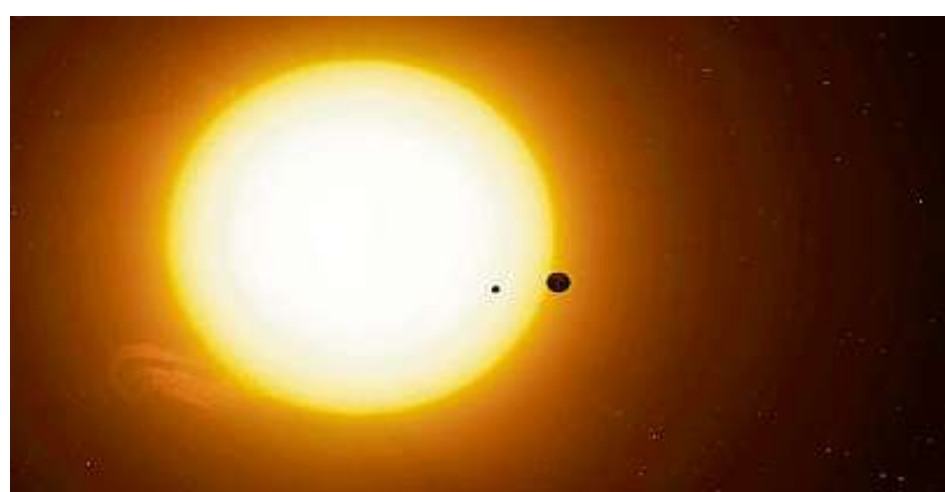
Have astronomers just found the first-ever exomoon, a lunar companion of a planet orbiting another star? Definitely, maybe.

Using data from Nasa's Kepler and Hubble space telescopes, Columbia University astronomers Alex Teachey and David Kipping report the potential signal of a Neptune-size moon around a planet three times heavier than Jupiter, all orbiting a nearly 10-billion-year-old sun-like star called Kepler-1625 b about 8,000 light-years from Earth. Such a large moon defies easy explanation based on prevailing theories. The findings appeared in a study published in *Science Advances*, and follow from the duo's earlier work reported last year that first offered more tentative evidence of the moon.

Profound implications

If confirmed, this discovery would challenge scientists' current understanding of planet and moon formation while bearing potentially profound implications for the prevalence of life throughout the cosmos, revealing once again that when it comes to alien worlds, the universe is often stranger than anyone can suppose.

If our solar system is any guide at all, moons should vastly outnumber planets in the universe, and could make up most of the habitable real estate in any given



BALL OF BEFUDDLEMENT: Artist's impression of the exoplanet Kepler-1625b transiting its star, trailed by a candidate exomoon. NYT

galaxy. Pinning down how—and how often—they form would thus give astrobiologists a leg up on finding life elsewhere in our galaxy. Already, Kipping and Teachey's statistics derived from Kepler data suggest moons are conspicuously absent around planets in temperate orbits around their stars—hinting that most large lunar companions must lurk further out in colder climes, and that habitable moons may be exceedingly rare.

Moons, it is thought, can form in three

ways: coalescing from rings of gas and dust leftover from a planet's formation; from debris knocked into orbit around a planet from a giant impact; or by being gravitationally captured by a planet via rare close encounters with pairs of co-orbiting asteroids or comets. But this newly proposed exomoon fails to fit neatly in any of those origin stories. It appears to be too big to easily coalesce alongside its planet, which itself is too massive and gassy to readily eject debris from any conceivable impact.

Capture via close encounter, although possible, would require an implausibly perfect concatenation of unlikely circumstances. ‘If valid, this would probably open up a new formation scenario for moons,’ says René Heller, a theorist at the Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research in Germany who was not part of the study.

‘Actually, the very existence of the proposed moon would call for a need to rethink our concepts of what a ‘moon’ actually is in the first place.’

For perspective, consider that our solar system's largest moon, Jupiter's Ganymede, is less than half as massive as our sun's smallest planet, Mercury. Kepler 1625 b's moon, by contrast, would be about 10 times as massive as all the terrestrial planets and the hundreds of moons in our solar system combined. This suggests, Heller says, ‘that this moon would have formed in a completely different way than any moon in our solar system.’

Even the study's authors agree their potentially historic claim should give pause—no one has ever conclusively discovered an exomoon before, let alone one so utterly bizarre. ‘This moon would have fairly surprising properties, which is a good reason for scepticism,’ says Kipping, an assistant professor at Columbia who has spent the last decade pioneering the hunt for exomoons. ‘If this was the 10th known

object of its type, we would be calling it a ‘discovery,’ no question. But because it's the first of its kind, it demands a higher level of scrutiny... I can't yet convince myself 100 percent this is definitely real.’

‘We are urging caution here—the first exomoon is obviously an extraordinary claim, and it requires extraordinary evidence,’ says Teachey, the lead author and a PhD candidate under Kipping's wing at Columbia. ‘We are not cracking open champagne bottles just yet on this one.’

Scarcely anything else is known about this potential satellite, save that its estimated size and three-million-kilometre separation from its planetary host would make it appear in that world's skies twice as large as Earth's own moon.

Based on the planet-moon pair's 287-day orbit around its star, Teachey and Kipping have crudely calculated average temperatures there might approach that of boiling water—uncomfortably warm, to be sure, but easy enough for Earth's hardiest microbes to thrive in. Biology's bigger challenge would be the lack of surfaces on both the planet and its moon—expect no aliens there.

‘I don't see any reason why it wouldn't be an exomoon,’ says Peter McCullough, an astronomer and expert on Hubble's instrumentation at Johns Hopkins University who was not involved in the research.

‘Alternatively, I don't see any reason why it would be. Either statement is justifiable.’

A time to kill

Against the exomoon hypothesis, McCullough and other researchers familiar with the results note Hubble's WFC3 instrument is notorious for routinely exhibiting minor, hard-to-pin-down variations in its performance that could mimic the subtle signal of a moon. Furthermore, they point to the latest data release from the Kepler mission, in which new, state-of-the-art analytical methods caused the already borderline signs of the exomoon to fade to insignificance in the Kepler data.

Teachey and Kipping maintain that after spending almost a year being their own harshest critics and trying as best they can to explain away the evidence, their most extraordinary claim remains the most compelling. ‘As far as we can tell, there is no way to kill this signal—there really is a second dip in the star's light,’ Kipping says. ‘A moon is the simplest, most elegant and self-consistent hypothesis—that's why we favour it.’ Kipping says. ‘The time has come to let the community interrogate our findings.’

There is only one way to truly settle the issue: more data.

Lee Billings
The New York Times

Amitabh to pay off loan of over 850 farmers

MUMBAI, PTI: Amitabh Bachchan has revealed he will be paying off loans of over 850 farmers from Uttar Pradesh.

The 76-year-old actor said he previously helped over 350 farmers from Maharashtra by clearing their loans.

"It has been a most satisfying experience to give some to them our countrymen that sacrificed their lives for us... 44 families diversified into 112 entities were given out in my small way from Maharashtra, the brave hearts, the SHAHEED. More needs to be done from other parts of the country too. It shall be done," Bachchan wrote on his blog.

"Over 350 farmers loans that were difficult to pay off, and to prevent them from committing suicide, was paid off some days back too... Earlier farmer loans from Andhra and Vidarbha had been done... Now a list of over 850 farmers from Uttar Pradesh have been identified and their loans amounting to over Rs 5.5 crore shall be taken care of... The assistance from the bank in question assists in its execution and its benevolence," he wrote.

The actor also shared that he will be helping Ajeet Singh, who appeared on KBC Karmveer.

Pricy onions...

The meeting chaired by the secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Avinash K. Srivastava asked National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) to increase supplies and asked states to monitor the situation.

Drought in north Maharashtra and Marathwada hit output. Crop from Karnataka has started arriving but it is not enough. These states account for the bulk of supply in October and November. After that, crop from Rajasthan, Bihar, Punjab and Odisha start arriving.

"Rains were delayed in the onion belt of Nashik, Ahmednagar and Dhule. Moreover, there was almost no rainfall in September, that is crucial for onion," Pune-based agriculture expert Deepak Chavan told DH.

"Kharif is affected and outlook of rabi is also not good," he said, adding that onion as a cash crop is highly price sensitive. "We have to note that the stocks in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh are not enough and also in Maharashtra, there are issues related to storage," said Chandev Holkar of NAFED in Mumbai. He said last week, the wholesale prices in APMCs were between Rs 700 and Rs 800 per quintal, which has increased to Rs 2,000-plus per kg.

Kharif onion is sown during June-July and harvested by the end of September. The rabi crop is sown in late November and early December and harvested in March and April.

Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh cultivate both kharif and rabi onions and it is the rabi crop which keeps the trade going in wholesale markets till the end of August.

Though the government claims that the sown area under the kharif onion crop is higher than last year and its arrival has commenced from Karnataka, farm experts are convinced that shortage of water in the main onion belt has reduced the moisture content in the red balls and lessened their yield.

Of the five states — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana — going to polls next month, only the first two are onion producing states, the rest only consume.

1.25 crore houses built in 4 years:PM

MUMBAI, DHNS: Reiterating its agenda of 'Housing for All' by 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that 1.25 crore houses have been built since the NDA came to power. "We have built 1.25 crore houses in four years (of the BJP-led NDA rule) as against the 25 lakh of the previous (Congress-led UPA) rule," Modi said.

Landslide in China, Arunachal on alert

Administration has warned locals to not venture into Siang river

Sumir Karmakar

GUWAHATI, DHNS: Reports about blockage in the Yarlung Tsangpo river in upper reaches of China triggered by "massive erosion" has created panic in Arunachal Pradesh as it has resulted in drying waters in the Siang river since Wednesday.

Yarlung Tsangpo is called the Siang when it enters Arunachal Pradesh from Tibet region and is known as the Brahmaputra as it flows further in downstream into Assam.

Alarmed by the report from the Central Water Commission, East Siang district administration in Arunachal has issued an advisory asking people not to venture into the Siang for fishing, bathing or

any other purpose as removal of the blockage could result sudden rise in water level in the Siang and flashfloods in the areas.

The advisory said water level in the Siang had reduced by 1.30-meter near Pasighat, the district headquarters on



Yarlung Tsangpo river in upper reaches of China triggered by "massive erosion" has created panic in Arunachal Pradesh.

Wednesday. Congress MP from Arunachal Pradesh Ninong Ering on Thursday sought External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's intervention on the matter.

"As per the latest information received from the Ministry of Water Resources of

China, landslides have blocked the Milin section of the main stream of the Brahmaputra river/Yarlung Zangbo river (about 80 km downstream from the Nuxia Hydrological Station for flood reporting in India) from Tuesday (October 16 to October 17), which will have an impact on the water situation of the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo river in Arunachal," Ering said in his letter to Swaraj and Arun Ram Meghwal, Union minister of state for water resources.

"Even the situation of rivers along Tuting, Yingkiang and Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh is grim. Rivers in these places are drying up rapidly due to the blockage of Yarlung Zangbo in China. It will pose big threat to the downstream dwellers and

will ruin their lives forever," said the letter while requesting their intervention to "protect the land, water, forest and precious lives of Arunachal Pradesh." India and China recently signed a MoU under which China shares flood data

about the Yarlung Tsangpo with India.

"The Chinese side is paying close attention to the blockage of the Yarlung Zangbo River. If there is further information, they must notify us in time," the letter said.

China alerts India.

Beijing has alerted New Delhi after a landslide in Tibet Autonomous Region of China blocked the flow of Yarlung Tsangpo—the headwater of the Brahmaputra River of India, DHNS reports from New Delhi. The Embassy of China in New Delhi on Friday stated that the landslide at Jiala village in Milin county of Tibet Autonomous Region on Wednesday blocked the river and created a "barrier lake". It also stated that Beijing would keep closely monitoring the "barrier lake" and notifying New Delhi the "follow-up developments" through bilaterally agreed channels.

Ayodhya row: Efforts to cash in on issue in full swing ahead of polls

Game plan to stall Ayodhya verdict: Mohan Bhagwat

MUMBAI: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday accused "fundamentalist elements" of devising a game plan to stall the Supreme Court's verdict in the Ayodhya Temple case.

"The place of Janmabhoomi is yet to be allocated for the construction of the temple although all kinds of evidence have affirmed that there was a temple at that place. There is an obvious game-plan of a few elements to stall the judgment by presenting various newer interventions in the judicial process. It is in nobody's interest to test the patience of the society without any reason," the RSS chief said while addressing the annual Vijaya-Dashami rally in Nagpur.

"The construction of the temple is necessary from the self-esteem point of view; it will also pave the way for an atmosphere of goodwill and oneness in the country. This matter of national interest is being obstructed by some fundamentalist elements and forces that play communal poli-

tics for selfish gains," he said. However, he said that despite such machinations, the decision regarding ownership of the land should be expedited, and the government should clear the path for construction of the grand temple through appropriate and requisite law.

On the Sabarimala temple issue, he said that the opinions of stakeholders were not considered by the Supreme Court when announcing the verdict in the case.

"The situation arising out of the recent verdict on Sabarimala temple shows the similar predicament," he said.



Mohan Bhagwat addresses Vijay Dashmi function at RSS headquarters in Nagpur, on Thursday. PTI

He said that the nature and premise of the tradition that has been accepted by society and continuously followed for years together were not taken into consideration.

"The version of heads of religious denominations and faith of crores of devotees was not taken into account. The plea by a large section of women, who follows this tradition, was not heard to," he said.

According to him, the legal verdict has given rise to unrest, turmoil and divisiveness in the society in place of peace, stability and equality.

"The questions such as why only the Hindu society experiences such repeated and brazen onslaughts on its symbols of faith, obviously rises in the public mind and lead to unrest. This situation is not at all conducive for the peace and healthiness of the society," he said.

Further in his speech, he said that the neo-Left doctrine of the "urban Naxals" is a major threat to the society.

DH News Service

Togadia denied nod for Ayodhya programme

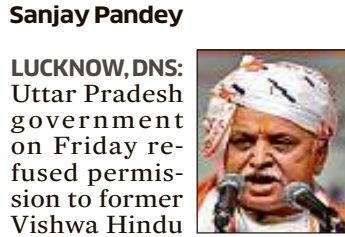
LUCKNOW, DNS: Uttar Pradesh government on Friday refused permission to former Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Praveen Togadia to hold a program in Ayodhya citing security issues.

Togadia, who has been spearheading a campaign for the construction of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya, was scheduled to organise a sit in on the bank of the Saryu river on Monday and Tuesday to press his demand for the Temple.

The saffron leader had given a call for a march to Ayodhya from the state capital on Monday.

The administration in Faizabad district has imposed prohibitory orders in the district and banned all kinds of programs, sources said.

Sanjay Pandey



Pravin Togadia

Adityanath's remarks came while addressing a gathering on the occasion of Dussehra in his home town of Gorakhpur in the presence of seers and saints.

"We should start preparation for the construction of a grand Ram Temple just as we prepare for the enactment of Ram Lila (dramatic enactment of deeds of Lord Rama)," he said.

Adityanath's remarks assumed significance as they came barely a day after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat demanded a law for the Ram

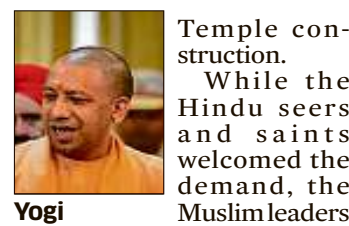
Yogi: prepare for Ram Temple construction

LUCKNOW, DHNS: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday stirred a controversy after he asked people to start preparations for the construction of a "grand" Ram Temple at Ayodhya.

This comes even as RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has made remarks demanding for a law to pave the way for the temple's construction, evoking diametrically opposite reactions in the temple town from Hindu seers and Muslim leaders and clerics.

Adityanath's remarks came while addressing a gathering on the occasion of Dussehra in his home town of Gorakhpur in the presence of seers and saints.

"We will only accept the verdict of the Supreme Court, where the matter is pending... any law for the construction of the Ram Temple will not be accepted to us," Iqbal Ansari, one of the main Muslim plaintiffs in the title suits, said in Ayodhya.



Yogi

Temple construction. While the Hindu seers welcomed the demand, the Muslim leaders made it clear that they would only accept the Supreme Court verdict in the matter. "Mohan Bhagwat's remarks reflect the sentiments of the Hindu community... the central government must enact a law for the construction of the Ram Temple," said Ram Janambhoomi Trust chairman Mahant Nritya Gopal Das in Ayodhya.

Muslim leaders and clerics, however, decried Bhagwat over the remarks saying that it was an attempt to "polarise" people ahead of the next Lok Sabha polls in 2019.

"We will only accept the verdict of the Supreme Court, where the matter is pending... any law for the construction of the Ram Temple will not be accepted to us," Iqbal Ansari, one of the main Muslim plaintiffs in the title suits, said in Ayodhya.

C'garh: GGP-SP to enter into pre-poll alliance

RAIPUR/BILASPUR, DHNS: Gondwana Gantantra Party (GGP) has entered into a pre-poll alliance with Samajwadi Party (SP) in Chhattisgarh, it was announced in Bilaspur on Friday.

Out of the 90 Assembly seats in Chhattisgarh, the SP will contest 20 seats and the GGP 70 seats. GGP-SP alliance's Chief Minister candidate will be GGP chief Heera Singh Markam.

Earlier, the GGP had held talks with Congress and later with Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (Jogi) but no alliance materialised.

The GGP has a large following in the tribal belt of both Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Markam hails from Pali district, Korba. He has been fighting for the rights of Gond tribe and had formed the party in 1991. The GGP has fought

Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh but not registered any major victory although it has has garnered votes.



Marwahi MLA Amit Jogi and daughter-in-law of Ajit Jogi, the Chief Minister candidate of JCC(J)-BSP-CPI alliance in Chhattisgarh, is likely to join the Bahujan Samaj Party.

According to political grapevine, official declaration of according her primary membership of BSP and seat allocation for contesting the upcoming Assembly election are awaited.

As per Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J) party insiders, Richa Jogi became a primary member of BSP late Thursday night.

MP: BJP may not give tickets to 70-80 MLAs

BHOPAL, PTI: The ruling BJP is thinking of not giving tickets to 70-80 MLAs, including some ministers, for the forthcoming Assembly polls in order to tide over anti-incumbency, a party leader said on Friday.



Assembly polls in the state are scheduled for November 28 and counting of votes will take place on December 11.

"The party is seriously toying with the idea of not giving tickets to 70-80 MLAs and ministers," a state BJP leader said. He added that the ruling BJP came up with this idea following reports of public outrage against some MLAs.

Party sources said that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who has been touring the state as part of his 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra', was receiving complaints about non-per-

forming MLAs.

Besides, a recent opinion poll, which showed the Congress returning to power in Madhya Pradesh after a gap of 15 years, has also prompted the BJP to set its house in order, they said.

"There is public outrage against some MLAs but not against Chief Minister Chouhan, who still remains popular with the masses," a Bharatiya Janta Yuva Morcha (BJYM) functionary said.

He said that the BJP stood a good chance of retaining power if new faces are given a chance. The BJP, in the 2013 Assembly polls, had given about 25% tickets to new faces and 75% of them emerged victorious.

In the 2013 Assembly polls, the BJP had won 165 seats in the 230-member House.



Former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and former PM Manmohan Singh after paying their last respects to party veteran ND Tiwari at his residence in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

Mortal remains of Tiwari to be brought to UP

LUCKNOW, PTI: The mortal remains of Congress veteran Narayan Dutt Tiwari will be brought here on Saturday for people to pay their last respects to him.

Tiwari, 93, died at a private hospital in Delhi on Thursday after a prolonged illness.

The body of former Uttar Pradesh chief minister will arrive at the Lucknow airport on Saturday afternoon and will



ND Tiwari

be kept at the Vidhan Bhanwan from 1 pm to 3 pm for people to pay their last respects, an official release issued here on Friday.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his ministerial colleagues will receive the mortal remains at the airport, it said.

Festivity galore



Prime Minister Narendra Modi releases the arrow with a bow to symbolically set on fire the effigy of Ravana during Dussehra celebrations of Luv Kush Ramleela Committee at Red Fort ground in New Delhi on Friday. President Ram Nath Kovind looks on. PTI

Uddhav blasts Modi-Shah again

MUMBAI: Warning that the wave of 2014 has changed, Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday wanted to know why the government was not able to tackle India's economic situation.

"Dollar rates are going up, fuel prices are moving northwards, inflation is not being controlled... Why?... Even when the 11th avatar of Lord Vishnu is with you," Thackeray said targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the customary annual Dussehra rally at the Shivaji Park here.

Recently, a Maharashtra BJP leader has described Modi as the 11th incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

"People of the country are wanting to know, where are 'acche din'... they are asking us," he said, adding that peo-

ple of India has not forgotten jumlas—hitting out at Modi and BJP president Amit Shah.

Ram Temple Thackeray said whether building Ram Temple was a commitment or just a jumla.

"Build the Ram temple at Ayodhya or declare that the promise made before 2014 elections was a jumla," Thackeray said targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah while addressing the annual Dussehra rally at the historic Shivaji Park at Dadar here.

He said that it was a dream of late Balasaheb Thackeray to see that a grand Ram Temple comes up and the Shiv Sena was committed to that cause. "If you cannot build the Ram Temple, tell me... my Shiv Sainiks will build it," he said



THACKERAY: People of the country are wanting to know, where are 'acche din'... they are asking us

amidst thunderous applause. Thackeray also announced that he would visit Ayodhya on November 25.

"From Ayodhya, I would ask the prime minister the same question... When the Ram

In brief

Govt to allow data service in flights

The government is planning to allow internet service in flights and water vessels within Indian territorial boundaries, reports DHNS.

"Voice service will be allowed only after addressing security related issues," said an official in the DOT.

On the line most of the developed countries, India also proposed to allow in-flight connectivity both voice and data services to passengers on flights and maritime transport within the national boundaries.

The Telecom Commission earlier had approved lifting the ban on the use of mobile phones and internet services at cruising altitudes.

Though the Union Home Ministry allowed the data services under IFC (in-flight connectivity), it expressed security concerns on permitting voice service. We will address the issues raised by the home ministry soon," said the official.

Globally, many airlines are offering wi-fi for passengers, but they have to switch off the facility when they enter Indian airspace.

SW Monsoon to withdraw

The Southwest Monsoon will most likely withdraw completely from the country on October 20, the India Meteorological Department said on Friday, reports PTI.

The Southwest Monsoon officially starts on June 1 and ends on September 30. Its withdrawal starts from western Rajasthan from September 1.

The official withdrawal date for the monsoon is September 30. However, monsoon continues to linger on in parts of the country. It takes more than a fortnight for the monsoon to completely withdraw from the country.

What precedes Southwest Monsoon is the Northeast Monsoon that gives rain to several parts of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry.

Zika cases rise to 109 in R'sthan

The number of people infected with Zika virus rose to 109 in Rajasthan on Friday, reports PTI.

According to a spokesperson of the state medical and health department, the nine new cases confirmed were from Jaipur.

However, 91 Zika virus infected patients are healthy now after treatment, he said, adding the department is making all efforts to contain mosquito larvae in the affected area.

Most of the cases have been reported from densely populated Shastri Nagar locality of the state capital.

In view of the rising cases, the Centre on Wednesday rushed an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) team to the state to intensify vector control measures.

The team of experts from ICMR has changed the insecticides which are being used in the city and neighbouring districts to kill mosquitoes that spread Zika, dengue, and chikungunya viruses as a part of the integrated mosquito management programme. Intense fogging and other anti-larvae activities are being carried out in the areas.