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FULL COVERAGE

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EXPRESS AUDIO

Maharashtra: Why the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance seems unchallenged

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

With elections around the corner, this episode dives into how the BJP-Sena and Congress-NCP alliances are faring and why infighting doesn't seem to deter the former

FROM PAGE ONE

J&K HC

were transferred to Jammu & Kashmir High Court. But this year, not a single judge has been sent to the High Court. The last transfer was effected on November 19, 2018 when Justice Rajesh Bindal, from the parent High Court of Punjab & Haryana, was transferred.

Currently, excluding Chief Justice Mittal, there are only eight judges for the two wings in Jammu and Srinagar. Even here, the situation on ground is somewhat different. According to sources, Justice Sanjay Kumar Gupta, who is undergoing medical treatment, is on medical leave from July 1. Moreover, in November, the High Court will witness a further drop in its strength after Justice Rashid Ali Dar retires — it is due on November 17.

Given the shortage of judges, urgent measures are being adopted, as is evident from the official roster of the High Court. In the first half of the day, the Srinagar wing of the High Court has only one division bench comprising Chief Justice Mittal and Justice Rashid Ali Dar; and two single-judge benches — one under Justice Ali Mohammed Magrey and another under Justice Sanjeev Kumar. The division bench hears matters related to criminal appeals, tax matters and PILs. And the two single-judge benches hear criminal and civil writ petitions, including the writs of habeas corpus. In the second half, all four judges sit separately on four single-judge benches.

Similarly, in Jammu, the division bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Dhiraj Singh Thakur sits in the first half of the day; and two single-judge benches, under Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice Sindhu Sharma, sit in the first half of the day. In the second half, all four judges sit separately on four single-judge benches.

While appointing Dar and Sharma, the government had returned for reconsideration the appointment of former Senior Additional Advocate General Wasim Sadiq Nagral. On January 16 this year, the Supreme Court Collegium had then asked the government to "furnish specific information" on the basis of which the proposal for elevation had been returned. It has been over nine months since and the appointment of Nagral remains pending.

Also, in 2018, two judges

view on 4 October 2019. Ind-Ra expects a rate cut in October monetary policy review, however, the extent of cut could depend on the assessment of growth impact of policy measures announced by the government in past few weeks".

Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, ICRA Ltd, termed the performance of core sectors in August 2019 as "disappointingly weak" and indicated that "although the contraction in cement output was partly on account of a high base, this in conjunction with the moderation in the growth of steel output does not bode well for the pace of construction activities in Q2 (second quarter of) FY2020".

"The weak performance of electricity generation in August 2019 was driven by the contraction of 3.5 per cent in thermal electricity generation, in contrast to the moderately healthy expansion of 6.2 per cent in July 2019," she said.

However, with the pickup in rainfall and reservoir storage levels, hydro electricity generation rose by 6.7 per cent in August 2019, after having reported a YoY stagnation in the previous month, Nayar said.

The RBI had projected GDP growth for the current fiscal at 6.9 per cent — in the range of 5.8-6.6 per cent for the first half of 2019-20 and 7.3-7.5 per cent for the second half. This could be further revised downward during its October policy review, given the lower-than-expected June quarter GDP growth.

Last week, the Manilabased Asian Development Bank had cut its growth forecast for India for fiscal 2019-20 to 6.5 per cent from 7 per cent projected two months ago.

Manmohan

regard. He will represent the Sikh community," Qureshi was quoted as saying in Pakistani media reports.

"On behalf of the government, as the foreign minister of Pakistan, I invite him to attend the inauguration of the Kartarpur Corridor," said Qureshi, according to the reports.

Reacting to the reports, sources close to Singh said: "We have not got any invitation. We have only heard about it in the media."

Sources in the Congress indicated that Singh would decline the invitation. He did not visit Pakistan "even once when he was the Prime Minister for ten years", they said.

Pakistan is scheduled to open the Kartarpur Corridor for Indian Sikh pilgrims on November 9, ahead of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak on November 12.

The corridor will connect Darbar Sahib in Pakistan with Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur. Pakistan has agreed to allow 5,000 Sikh pilgrims from India to visit on a daily basis to Darbar Sahib in Narowal through the Kartarpur corridor.

While Pakistani officials have said that over 85 per cent of work on the corridor has been completed, differences remain between India and Pakistan on various issues, including a service fee and the number of pilgrims to be allowed on special occasions and protocol officials to accompany them.

Ayodhya party rules out mediation

Reviewing the progress on August 1, the court announced that the process had failed to make any headway and, five days later, started day-to-day hearing on the appeals. Subsequently, the mediation committee once again approached the bench, saying it had received letters from Zafar Farooqui, chairman of the Sunni Waqf Board, and Dharam Das of the Nirvani Akhara, who had called for resumption of the mediation process.

On September 18, the Supreme Court said that "the hearing of the appeals, which is at a very advanced stage, will continue without any interruption. If, in the meantime, the parties desire to settle the matter(s), including, by resort to mediation by the earlier constituted mediation panel, they may do so and place the settlement before the Court, if reached".

It also made it clear that "the terms and the process of settlement including mediation, if resorted to, will abide by our earlier order dated 8th March, 2019, with regard to confidentiality".

Meanwhile, the bench Monday questioned one of the Muslim litigants on its contention that the legal validity of the actions of Mughal emperor Babur — during whose time the Babri Masjid was said to have been built — had to be judged on the touchstone of the law prevailing then and not in the context of the Shariah law.

The Hindu parties had contended that Babur was an invader and his rights could not be legitimised.

"Are you trying to say that a sovereign is not bound by Quranic injunctions?" Justice Bhushan asked advocate Mohammad Nizam Pasha who appeared for Faizabad resident Misbahuddin.

Pasha said Babur was a sovereign and all land was vested in him and evaluating his actions in the context of Shariah law would not be the proper way. He said the fact that Babur invoked the Quran at times to justify his actions or to motivate his men did not mean that his actions can be judged in the context of Shariah law.

Pasha said a constitutional court today cannot evaluate the validity of the actions of a sovereign 500 years ago and

Assam's neighbours intensify border checks

in Assam nor be allowed to enter into any other state. We do not want to free only Assam from infiltrators but free the entire country from intruders; and, when I say the entire country, the states of North East India are included in that."

Last year after the draft NRC was published, the powerful Khasi Students Union (KSU) had set up check gates on their own alleging that state was not doing enough checking. Later, these check gates were withdrawn when state police intensified checks.

In Mizoram, Home Minister Lalchamliana had said in September that ILPs will not be issued to Assam residents whose names did not figure in the NRC.

The ILP is based on the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act (BEFR), 1873, and it is a special permit that is required by "outsiders" from other regions of India to enter the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram.

In Kolasib district, which borders Assam, police say that non-ILP holders are detained every day and people from Assam without names in NRC are granted an ILP.

Kolasib SP, Vanlalafaka Ralte, told The Indian Express, "Our checking has intensified after the NRC publication and ILP is not issued to those from Assam who do not have names in the NRC."

"Everyday, 10-15 people without ILP attempting to enter Mizoram are caught. You can calculate from that the total number since September 1."

Nagaland officials confirmed that they too have intensified checks and people from Assam are asked for proof of their names in the NRC before issuing an ILP. "If they do not have, they can give some other valid ID also. But there has been no case of suspicious people from Assam not on the NRC trying to enter Nagaland," a senior official.

Abhijit Sinha, Principal Secretary (Home), Nagaland, told The Indian Express, "Our checks and monitoring have been intensified and manpower required has also been increased. Post the publication of NRC in Assam there were apprehensions that there could be movement of illegal immigrants into Nagaland. As of now, the flow has been normal."

In an order dated September 2, Sinha had said that any usual influx of people without valid document has to be immediately brought to the notice of the district administration and that village and town authorities need to maintain strict vigil "against influx of people from outside the state in violation of the existing rules/norms."

material witnesses have been approached by the accused "not to disclose" any information regarding him and his son Karti.

"This court cannot dispute the fact that the petitioner has been a strong Finance Minister and Home Minister and presently, Member of Indian Parliament. He is a respectable member of the Bar Association of Supreme Court of India. He has long standing in the Bar as a Senior Advocate."

"He has deep roots in the Indian society and may be some connection abroad. But the fact that he will not influence the witnesses, directly or indirectly, cannot be ruled out... Moreover, the investigation is at an advanced stage... therefore, this court is not inclined to grant bail," Justice Kait said.

He did not, however, agree with the SG's contention of Chidambaram being a flight risk or the possibility of tampering with evidence. "...there is no evidence on record that the petitioner tried to flee from India. The situation of 'Flight-Risk' is possible only if no lookout notice is issued or an accused is not so popular and can leave the country based upon forged passport in the name of other persons..."

On the possibility of evidence tampering, he said it is not in dispute that documents relating to the present case are in the custody of the prosecuting agency, Government of India and the court. "Moreover, the petitioner is not in power, except he is a Member of Parliament. Therefore, in my considered view, there is no chance of the petitioner tampering with the evidence," he said.

Probing charges of corruption in the INX Media case, the CBI had arrested Chidambaram on August 21 night. The next day he was remanded in CBI custody. He is now in judicial custody in Tihar Jail till October 3.

Classifieds

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(MCZMA) to the MoEF for consideration. The MoEF cleared the project based on the pre-done EIA, not deliberating over the MCZMA-forwarded list of four options.

All this took place amid a flurry of correspondence from the state government, including from the Chief Minister, to the MoEF, pushing for permission stating that a "bhumi puja" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already been finalised.

Work on the statue is currently halted after a Supreme Court stay in January 2019 on a special leave petition filed by the Conservation Action Trust (CAT) that challenged MoEF's decision.

According to documents obtained by The Indian Express under RTI, after the MoEF issued a draft notification on December 11, 2014, allowing construction of memorials/monuments and allied facilities in CRZ-IV areas, the state PWD was required to submit a justification for locating the proposed statue in CRZ area, along with details of alternative, with relative weightage for each on various parameters.

The PWD had to submit this "weightage matrix" of all options to the MCZMA which had to recommend a particular site from the list to the MoEF.

The central ministry then puts it to an in-house expert appraisal committee, which takes the call on giving the government permission to prepare an EIA under the Terms of Reference (ToR) set by the ministry. The final clearance is given after ascertaining compliance with the ToR.

Accordingly, on January 20, 2015, the PWD submitted a list of nine possible sites, along

Chidambaram

registered an FIR in May 2017, alleging irregularities in the FIPB clearance granted to the INX Media group for receiving overseas funds in 2007 during Chidambaram's tenure as Finance Minister — and said: "During investigation, as per 'Sealed Cover', it is revealed that Indrani Mukerjee and Peter Mukerjee (accused) met the petitioner even before the filing of application before FIPB Unit during which the petitioner assured them regarding the FIPB approval and, in lieu thereof, directed that the business interest of his son Karti Chidambaram, who is also an accused, should be taken care of and certain overseas transactions should be made in his favour."

"It is also on record that large sums of monies has come into and/or controlled by the co-conspirator Karti P Chidambaram during the relevant period for the favours shown by the petitioner to INX Media," the order noted.

Holding that the "order of remand, for judicial custody, of the trial court is justified", Justice Kait said: "It cannot be disputed that if the case is proved against the petitioner (Chidambaram), the offence is on the society, economy, financial stability and integrity of the country."

"It is a fact that the entire community is aggrieved if the economic offenders, who ruin the economy of the state, are not brought to book as such offences affect the very fabric of democratic governance and probity in public life," he said.

Justice Kait also considered the submission of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that two

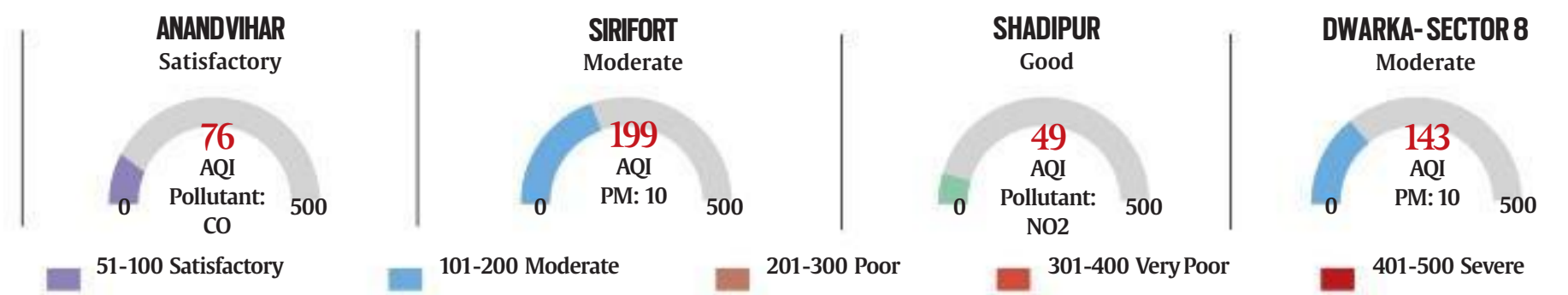
Sabarmati

"In addition, the toilets themselves get some maintenance, and there is rural employment generated in emptying the pits and making the manure available," Deshpand said. For the October 2 function, the Akola ZP used an in-house IT engineer's Clipart skills to design a label with a logo depicting the shape of the Indian squatting toilet and maize growing around the pit.

The label describes the process of making and using Sona Khaad. The glass jars, the kind used to pack ghee or pickle, were procured from Vadodra; packaging was designed locally with the 'Maha Sona Khaad' branding and the total project cost kept at approximately Rs 3 lakh — the manure was free, the main costs were the bottles, packaging and transportation.

A dilapidated complex in Akola was used to spread out the collected manure on mats where it was dried using fans and halogen lights as rains continued. In all, 10,240 jars were packed into cartons and despatched in a truck.

Prasad, who followed the Rabi 2018 experiments by the Directorate of Onion and Garlic research near Pune in which Sona Khaad was used on onion fields before transplanting, said that initial assessments showed higher presence of nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (NPK) in the onions, as well as improved yield. "Mahasona Khaad is evidence of a cleaner India, achieved by millions of its poor citizens. It contains decomposed material that may have otherwise caused diarrhoea and killed millions of children. These bottles show that the value chain of sanitation is now complete," he said.



CALL CENTRE HAD 300 EMPLOYEES, RAID UNDERWAY

Clinic promised couples male child through IVF abroad

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

A CENTRAL inspection team has blown the lid off what appears to be a major sex selection racket running from the heart of Delhi. The team Monday conducted a raid on a clinic in Karol Bagh offering gender identification services and found around 300 computer systems allegedly used to make calls to couples who wanted a child. The team, comprising officers from the Delhi health department, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National Commission for Women (NCW), were at the centre till late Monday night. According to officials, the clinic operated out of a call centre where 300-odd people would offer in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) to people in India and promise to take them to coun-

EXPLAINED
E. Violation of law

THE Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994, was enacted to prevent sex-selective abortions. It banned hospitals, nursing homes and clinics from using ultrasonography or any other technique to determine the gender of an unborn child. Using ultrasound to determine and communicate to the parents the sex of the foetus is an offence, which can lead to a 3-year jail term and a Rs 10,000 fine.

tries like Thailand, Singapore and Dubai, promising a male child. The raid was conducted after the Health Ministry received a complaint about the centre offering illegal sex selection services. A decoy couple was sent to the centre, and they were asked to pay Rs 8.5 lakh for a 15-day package in Dubai. "The centre would guarantee a male child by identifying the gender of the foetus. The couples were allowed to select the sex of the child before leaving the country. We had received a complaint from the Health Ministry after which we planned a raid," said Dr Nutan Mundeja, director, Directorate of Family Welfare, Delhi government. Sex selection is banned in India but allowed in countries like the US, Mexico, Thailand, Singapore and Dubai. But identifying the child's gender through IVF and other technologies such as pre-implan-

tation genetic diagnosis, pre-implantation genetic screening and sperm-sorting has emerged as the next challenge towards curbing female infanticide, said officials. "A new trend is emerging called reproductive tourism. There are IVF centres abroad that offer sex selection services. Couples who are either unable to conceive or want a male child are being approached. We will seal this centre by midnight," said Dr Nitin Kumar, special programme officer of PC-PNDT, Delhi government. The state PC-PNDT cell maintains a record of all centres and machines that provide ultrasonography services. The cell, on an average, conducts 1-2 raids a month, depending on availability of officers. As per the process, officials from the department receive a tip-off from informers, and a decoy is pulled in to contact the lab/doctor involved.

Two held for kidnapping baby

New Delhi: A 29-year-old woman and a man allegedly kidnapped a 12-day-old baby from her mother in Delhi on September 17.

Police said the victim and the accused knew each other, and the accused took the baby on the pretext of taking care of her.

Atul Kumar Thakur, DCP (South), said the duo was arrested and the baby was returned to her mother. **ENS**

42-yr-old woman who died is case study against commercial surrogacy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

RAISING RED flags on the impact of commercial surrogacy, doctors at AIIMS have published a case of a 42-year-old woman who died in the 17th week of her pregnancy owing to a medical history of tuberculosis, hydrocephalus and depression. The surrogate, carrying twins, was referred to AIIMS in September 2018 from a private hospital for medical termination of pregnancy (MTP). The case has been published in *RFP Journal of Hospital Administration*, and highlights the need for stringent surrogacy laws. The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019, which has been introduced recently, seeks to completely ban commercial surrogacy in the country. It also provides for the constitution of surrogacy boards at national and state levels. "Her body was brought to the mortuary of department of forensic medicine & toxicology for post-



Doctors at AIIMS published the case of a surrogate mother who died owing to medical complications

mortem. The surrogacy regulation law 2018 was also framed to regulate commercialisation of surrogacy. In this case, a financially challenged woman became a surrogate without providing previous disease history, which later led to complications. The woman died due to non-compliance of surrogacy regulatory laws," said Dr Abhishek Yadav, assistant professor, department of forensic

medicine and toxicology, AIIMS. Surrogacy is a contract in which a woman bears a child for another couple; the child may be genetically linked to her in case she donates her ovum. According to doctors, for a woman to be chosen as surrogate, she has to undergo inquisitive laboratory and medical examination, provide any past history of medical conditions and family history of diseases.

The investigation further revealed that during the second trimester, she was admitted to a private hospital for treatment of vomiting. She gave a history of consuming 15-20 antidepressants and was advised to undergo genetic counselling. But her condition worsened and she had to be shifted to the emergency, where she died. "As per the guidelines of ICMR, which were followed before the approval of Surrogacy Regulation Bill, she was not a suitable surrogate to carry foetus. Still, somehow, she was chosen to carry babies," added Dr Yadav. According to the new bill, a certificate of essentiality should be issued after securing a certificate of proven infertility of one or both members of the intending couple from a district medical board; an order of parentage and custody of the surrogate child passed by a magistrate's court; and insurance coverage for a period of 16 months covering post-partum delivery complications for the surrogate.

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**- Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi**



DAYS AFTER SC PANEL ORDER

Puri says will change Master Plan to accommodate gyms

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

UNION HOUSING and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri Monday said gyms will be accommodated in the new Master Plan for Delhi, which is under deliberation at the moment. At a public event, Puri said: "We will change the master plan of Delhi to accommodate gyms; won't allow for encroachment of land."

This comes days after the Supreme Court-appointed monitoring committee ordered sealing of all fitness centres, gyms and yoga and meditation centres which opened after August 12, 2008. The Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) 2021 does not allow fitness centres outside of DDA



He also said encroachment will not be allowed

market complexes or shopping malls. However, an amendment in 2013 had declared gyms and centres that came up before August 12, 2008, as legal.

Brijesh Goyal, national convener of the Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI), had written to the Ministry of Housing and

Urban Affairs asking for an extension of the deadline.

"We haven't started working on it yet," said a senior official of the Delhi Development Authority on amending MPD 2021 to accommodate gyms.

The cut-off for gyms and fitness centres in residential areas, as per DDA notifications, was extended twice from the earlier date of September 6, 2006, to February 2, 2007, and then to August 12, 2008. As per the recent order by the SC monitoring committee, gyms and fitness centres are not permissible after this cut-off as per MPD 2021, "irrespective of the status of the road, that is, commercial, mixed land or non-notified".

Many stakeholders have asked for an extension of the

deadline, including Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor. "The impractical Master Plan allowed car showrooms in residential areas although a family buys a car once in years, but doesn't allow gyms which are used by a large number of people. We have requested the minister to extend the deadline and give them relief," said Kapoor.

In a statement, he claimed discrepancies left by the then Congress government while bringing the MPD 2021 is the cause for the sealing threat, and that the Centre should bail them out. Goyal had, meanwhile, cited the example of restaurants: "It has come to my knowledge that the DDA has given relaxations to restaurants on ground floors...The DDA can give us relaxations too."

Kasturba Gandhi Marg project won't hurt green cover: Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

UNION MINISTER of Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri said no trees will have to be cut for the redevelopment of Kasturba Gandhi Marg GPR project, which was inaugurated by him Monday.

The residential complex will be constructed by the Central Works Public Department (CPWD), at a total cost of Rs 2,428 crore, in two phases.

Puri Monday tweeted, "This state-of-the-art low-carbon footprint redevelopment project will have a 30% green cover. The plans have been made in such a way that no trees will be cut. In fact, 186 trees will be re-located using modern technologies as has been successfully done elsewhere."

Earlier in the day, while laying the foundation stone for the project, he said: "I assure all stakeholders that all the redevelopment work will happen without compromising on green cover. The ministry's effort is in the direction of increasing green cover."

Green space would constitute 33 per cent of the total area, he said.

Director General of the CPWD, Prabhakar Singh, said the focus will be on eco-friendly development, and that the 186 trees coming in the alignment of building towers will be transplanted within the campus.

Organic waste composts, harvesting systems, rooftop solar panels of 800 KW capacity and MBBR technology-based sewage treatment plants would be put in place, Singh added.

Historians float petition for clarity on Central Vista

New Delhi: A petition was floated on the website *change.org* on September 27, calling for the cancellation of tenders for the Central Vista redevelopment project. Historians Narayani Gupta and Sohail Hashmi are among the three who started the petition, which has garnered around 3,000 signatures. Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of Urban Development, had announced the plan for the redevelopment of the Central

Vista by 2024, which includes the Parliament, Rajpath, and many government buildings.

The petition argues that the proposal has been "initiated without consulting stakeholders and public at large". "In the 1980s, there was an open competition asking for designs for the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. It was a democratic process. There is lack of clarity as to which areas would be redesigned," said Narayani Gupta. **ENS**

OBITUARY

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PANEL TO FINALISE CONTOURS

Government plans penicillin revival to fight rheumatic fever

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

IN A bid to fight drug resistance and tackle rheumatic heart disease, the Government of India is planning a revival of penicillin, one of the oldest antibiotics known to man. Not many organisms have developed resistance to it yet.

Penicillin went out of production in India because of unrealistic price control, officials said. The government is now planning to procure penicillin centrally for three years and give it to all children between 5-15 years who have a sore throat, at least once. The drug will be dispensed through primary health centres or administered by ASHAs.

A committee has been formed with officials from the department of health research to finalise the contours of the plan to tackle rheumatic fever and heart disease burden and revive penicillin.

A senior health ministry official said, "We are looking at a plan to deal with rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease load and are trying to revive penicillin availability because it is the cheapest option for rheumatic fever treatment. We are exploring various options including talking to the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority to take it off the price control list. Also, to kickstart production, we are looking at procuring the medicine centrally — enough stock for three years so that manufacturers are encouraged to restart production."

Penicillin, discovered in 1928,

is still the first line antibiotic in many western countries, but it gradually went out of the Indian market even though some of its more expensive derivatives continue to be prescribed.

Population-based studies indicate the prevalence of rheumatic heart disease in India to be about 2/1000 population. However, surveys conducted in school children in the age group of 5-16 years by ICMR gives overall prevalence of 6/1000. Rheumatic fever is endemic in India and remains one of the major causes of cardiovascular disease, accounting for nearly 25-45% of acquired heart disease. Not all sore throats go on to become rheumatic fever with severe joint pain or affect the heart in a disease that eventually leaves no option but to replace the heart valves — a condition known as rheumatic heart disease. However, doctors say, it is better to give an antibiotic dose and nip the possibility in the bud.

Dr Arun Singh, advisor to the Ministry of Health, said: "Penicillin is one of the oldest antibiotics and in many western countries still remains the first antibiotic. Yet in India it has almost gone out of the market because of price control. The prices were kept so low that manufacturers stopped making the drug. On the other hand, India has a high burden of rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease — the latter often goes undiagnosed and leads to many maternal deaths at the time of childbirth. The first presentation often is a sore throat, so we are looking at giving a course of penicillin to all children between 5-15 years once."



EXPRESS TRAVEL

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the Delhi-Meerut Expressway phase-III, Monday. The 82-km-long expressway connects Delhi with Meerut in western UP. *Abhinav Saha*

Kerala best, UP worst performer in NITI school education index

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

THE NITI Aayog on Monday released its first School Education Quality Index (SEQI) report, in which Kerala emerged as the best performing state, while Uttar Pradesh was the worst among the larger 20 states in the country.

Aimed at assessing the quality of school education in states and Union Territories, the SEQI is based on 30 indicators grouped into two broad categories — 'outcome' and 'governance processes aiding outcomes'. States and UTs have been ranked in the index based on their overall performance in the reference year of 2016-17.

The list does not include West Bengal as the state did not participate in the exercise.

Titled 'The success of Our Schools: School Education Quality Index 2019', the report was released by NITI Aayog vice-

chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar and CEO Amitabh Kant.

According to the report, among larger states, Kerala topped the list with a score of 0.766 in overall performance, with Rajasthan second with a score of 0.729.

Uttar Pradesh was the worst performer with a score of just 0.364, and ranked at the last place on the list. The other big states with dismal performance are Jammu and Kashmir (0.411), Punjab (0.411), Bihar (0.420) and Jharkhand (0.439), ranked at 19th, 18th, 17th and 16th place respectively.

The report has ranked eight smaller states and the seven Union Territories separately. As far as the smaller states are concerned, Manipur topped the list with a score of 0.688, followed by Tripura (0.645) and Goa (0.584), with Arunachal Pradesh (0.246) the worst performing state.

Among Union Territories, Chandigarh topped the list with a score of 0.829, followed by

OVERALL RANKING: LARGER STATES

| Rank | States | Index Score |
|------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 | Kerala | 0.766 |
| 2 | Rajasthan | 0.729 |
| 3 | Karnataka | 0.696 |
| 4 | Andhra Pradesh | 0.679 |
| 5 | Gujarat | 0.62 |

SMALLER STATES

| Rank | States | Total |
|------|----------|-------|
| 1 | Manipur | 0.688 |
| 2 | Tripura | 0.645 |
| 3 | Goa | 0.584 |
| 4 | Mizoram | 0.498 |
| 5 | Nagaland | 0.486 |

Dadra and Nagar Haveli (0.586) and Delhi (0.490). Lakshadweep was the worst performing UT with a score of 0.319.

Initially, the NITI Aayog had planned to prepare this index along 33 parameters, but due to a lack of reliable data, it had to drop at least three indicators. Highlighting the credibility of the education data in the country, NITI officials said some indicators have been dropped due to inconsistencies in data submitted by States/UTs.

A similar index was released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in April. However, officials at NITI Aayog said that the SEQI is a subset of a Performance Grading Index (PGI) released by the MHRD, and the only difference between the two indices is that SEQI accords a higher emphasis to learning outcome, whereas the PGI accords a higher weightage to input and infrastructure. PGI measures the quality of the school education on the basis of the 70 parameters, and is a tool to provide insights on the status of school education in states and UTs.

Woman 'throws' 2-yr-old granddaughter out of sixth-floor flat, arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 30

THE POLICE arrested a woman on Monday for allegedly killing her two-year-old granddaughter by throwing her out of the window of a sixth-floor apartment in Malad East last week.

Police said the incident occurred between 5.30 am and 5.45 am on Saturday when the baby, Jiya Ansari, was home with her parents, grandparents, aunt and a cousin. The sleeping family was woken by neighbours, who spotted Jiya lying motionless and bleeding on the ground. They rushed her to a nearby hospital where doctors declared her dead on arrival.

Investigators who visited the home allegedly noticed that the front door and kitchen window from where Jiya had fallen were both shut. "The manner in which

Jiya's body was found also suggested that she been thrown out," said an officer of Kurar police station. This led police to suspect that someone in the house had thrown Jiya out of the window, the officer added.

Balasaheb Salunkhe, senior inspector, Kurar police station, said an investigation revealed that Ruksana Ansari had never warmed to her granddaughter. "The accused was not fond of her granddaughter and would become constantly irritated when she played at home. Twenty days ago, she had even fought with her son and daughter-in-law over the issue and left their home," said Assistant Inspector G S Charge.

Charge said Ansari had returned on Friday after staying with another son for a few weeks. "Even after she came back, the anger she felt towards her granddaughter did not go away," he said.

ASSAM

Case against Wipro over labour law 'violation'

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, SEPTEMBER 30

THE OFFICE of the Labour Commissioner in Assam lodged a case against Wipro at the CJM court in Guwahati based on a two-year-old complaint by a group of eight data-entry operators working on contract for the NRC through the IT company, officials said on Monday.

"The case has been registered against Wipro for violating the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act of 1970 because they had not obtained the required license," said Labour Commissioner Narayan Konwar.

In September 2017, eight data-entry operators had lodged a complaint saying that they were not paid the minimum wages. An official of the commissionerate said that the operators had alleged

a payment of around Rs 5,000 per month, much less than the minimum for a "skilled worker".

"While investigating this, we landed upon the fact that Wipro didn't have the license in the first place. So we filed a case. We are investigating into the allegation of violation of minimum wages," the official said.

The Labour Commissioner's office expects a list from complainants on October 14 regarding the total number of such contractual data-entry employees working for the NRC and their current salaries.

"Wipro abides by the laws of every jurisdiction where it does business and adheres to the highest standards of integrity and fairness in its employment and labour practices. The company does not comment on pending litigation," the company said in a statement.

I'm 95 years old and I have never seen such low electricity prices. And there is 24x7 electricity. What an amazing achievement!

- Charan Singh
Dhichau Kalan

24x7 ELECTRICITY

LOWEST BILLS*

* In comparison with Cities/States like Noida, Mumbai, Punjab and Bengaluru

** The bill amounts are from specific consumers. The bill from Noida of 202 units is of 4KW sanctioned load and is from April-May 2019. The bill of Bengaluru of 175 units is of 3KW sanctioned load and is from August-September 2019. The bill from Mumbai of 164 units is of 0.97 sanctioned load and is from May-June 2019. The bill from Punjab of 188 units/month is of 1.76KW sanctioned load from June-August 2019. The bill amount for Delhi is based on an assumption of 2KW sanctioned load

Power Department, Government of NCT of Delhi

DELHI NOW HAS LOWEST BILLS

| Upto 200 units/month | | |
|----------------------|-------|--------|
| City | Units | Bill** |
| Delhi | 200 | 0 |
| Noida | 202 | 1374 |
| Mumbai | 194 | 1244 |
| Bengaluru | 175 | 1272 |
| Punjab | 188 | 1357 |

दिल्ली ने कर दिखाया

Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister, Delhi

