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Sep 14, 2017, 00.10 PM IST

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Modi, Abe inaugurate India's first high-speed rail project



Uprooted trees point to the lack of focus on urban tree management

By [Naveen Menezes](#), ET Bureau | Updated: Sep 12, 2017, 11.22 AM IST



BENGALURU: Over the past five months, around 440 trees in the city have fallen due to rain. While 121 trees fell due to just one thunderstorm on May 21, record rainfall in the first week of September saw 195 trees uprooted. The numbers of fallen tree branches are, no doubt, much bigger.

0
Comments

While concern has been raised towards flooding of homes and damage to roads, attention towards urban tree management -or the lack of it -has not received the attention it deserves.

Last week, three members of a family were crushed by a huge tree that fell on their car. Scores of vehicles, parked on roads, have been damaged by falling branches. East and South Bengaluru have reported highest number of

tree falls at 149 and 129 respectively.

"It's not just the old and huge trees, even small trees were uprooted. The maximum tree fall was in places such as Basavanagudi, NR Colony, Sri rampura, Koramangala, BTM layout, JP Nagar and Jayanagar. Over 20 trees fell only on Bull Temple Road," Appu Rao, deputy conservator of forest, **BBMP**, told ET.

While concern has been raised towards flooding of homes and damage to roads, attention towards urban tree management -or the lack of it -has not received the attention it deserves. Dr AN Yellappa Reddy, environmentalist and former IFS officer, blamed it on the way roads and pavements are concreted and asphalted. They are, he said, choking the trees. "Trees are a living entity. They need 400-500 litres of water every day. With no urban tree management, not even a drop of water can get into the tree's root system. This is why trees with weak roots are getting uprooted with slightest winds," he said.



He urged the BBMP to come out with an urban tree management policy. "Even the citizens should be compelled to do minimal things such as watering the plants," he added.

Prof TV Ramachandra of the [Indian Institute of Science](#) wondered whether the BBMP had any survey on trees before the arrival of [monsoon](#). "Weak trees are not identified and branches are not pruned. Even though the roots are cut to make way for infrastructure projects, no action is being taken against the erring officials," he said. At a

time when the city is "becoming oxygen-defecit" with only 14.78 lakh trees, more trees is the need of the hour, he said.

SPOTLIGHT

Corporate Corridor



Amazon bets big on fashion, sets up studio in India

Amazon India announced launch of its fashion imaging studio, BLINK, as the domestic arm of the US online retail giant looks to cash in on the high-margin fashion category.

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Modi, Abe inaugurate India's first high-speed rail project

ECONOMICTIMES.COM | Updated: Sep 14, 2017, 12:55 PM IST



PM Modi and Japanese PM Shinzo Abe lay foundation stone of India's first bullet train

Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) and his Japanese counterpart [Shinzo Abe](#) on Thursday laid the foundation stone of the ambitious Rs 1.08 lakh crore (\$17 billion) Ahmedabad-Mumbai high-speed rail project.

Total cost of the project is expected to be around 1.1 lakh crore. The 508 km high-speed rail link to [Mumbai](#) is seen as a centrepiece of PM Modi's efforts to demonstrate India's

7
Comments

y to build high-tech projects. The project, which is expected to be sioned by 2022, will have a dozen halts. A 21-km-long tunnel will be veen Boisar and BKC in Mumbai, seven km of which will be under the

bullet train would run at an average speed of 320 km per hour and at a maximum speed of 350 km per hour. It will stop at 12 railway stations on the route but only for 165 seconds each. The train would have two categories of seats--executive and economy--with the prices comparable with the base AC 2-tier fare of the Rajdhani Express.

The railways would run about around 35 bullet trains when it starts operation with about 70 trips per day. The number of trains would be increased to 105 trains in 2050.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Union Railway Ministry have inked a memorandum of understanding for the 508-km corridor, with Japan to partially fund the project.

Chief minister of Gujarat, Vijay Rupani, Union railway minister, Piyush Goel, also spoke on this occasion. Railway minister Piyush Goyal said Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train will be a symbol of brotherhood between India and Japan. Its a golden day for Gujarat says Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani. He also said PM Narendra Modi wants the bullet train to start a year ahead of schedule on 15 August 2022 - when India completes 75 years of independence

India's first high speed rail project inaugurated by PM Modi & Japanese PM Shinzo Abe in [Ahmedabad](#). Japan is committed to the scheme of 'Make in India' said Japanese PM Shinzo Abe. If we work together nothing is impossible: Japanese PM Shinzo Abe on India-Japan partnership. Japanese PM also said "I really like Gujarat & I really like India. I will do whatever I can for India".

Prime Minister Modi began his speech by thanking PM Abe for taking special

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NEXT STORY

22 drown as boat capsizes in Yamuna river

PTI | Updated: Sep 14, 2017, 12:23 PM IST



As the police the boat was found, which could be one of the reasons for the tragedy.

BAGHPAT (UP): At least 22 people drowned and many others were missing after an overloaded boat capsized in the Yamuna river on Thursday in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat district.

The boat carrying 60 people capsized and 22 persons drowned, District Magistrate Bhawani Singh said

Police and PAC personnel have fished out 22 bodies so far while 10 others have been

6
Comments

is on to trace others.

told the police the boat was overcrowded, which could be one reason for the tragedy.

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Yamuna Boat Drown

Yamuna

Boat Capsized

Baghpat

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Bangalore's treated waste water to revive 44 Chikkaballapur tanks

ET Bureau | Updated: Sep 14, 2017, 11.16 AM IST



Low on water, Chikkaballapur districts produce 11 lakh litres of milk a day and are home to the second largest milk union in Karnataka.

1
Comments

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is scheduled to commission a big-ticket project on September 18 at Chikkaballapur, 50 km from Bengaluru, which will use the water flowing out of the city to strengthen the water table in the neighbouring district.

The `943-crore project involves taking the treated water from the Hebbal and Nagawara tanks of Bengaluru to 44 minor irrigation tanks of Chikkaballapur -a parched district where farming is dependent on seasonal rainfall.

The uniqueness of this project is since Independence nowhere in the country has treated waste water been used to revive irrigation tanks. Only some developed countries have done it. We are trying it out here," said Chikkaballapur MLA K Sudhakar (Congress). The district, he said, will get about 100 crore litres (thousand million cubic feet) of water and he expects the tanks to get water by December next year.

The project will take the treated water to Kandavara Kere -the up stream tank in Chikkaballapur -through a combination of elevated pipes and canals from the city. Spread over 330 acres, the tank, once the largest lake in Chikkaballapur, is likely to return to its glory days, he said. Once the Kandavara tank is filled, the MLA said, water flows into rest of the minor irrigation tanks.

Although low on water, Chikka ballapur and Kolar districts produce 11 lakh litres of milk a day and are home to the second largest milk union in Karnataka. The districts also supplies milk to Bengaluru and other places.

Four-fifths of the people in the district, Dr Sudhakar said, live in rural area. A severe shortage of rainfall has left 1,981 tanks, the lifeline of the district, without much water in the past 10 years.

Once Kandavara Kere gets filled, it will lead to the revival of 25 tanks in Chikkaballapur taluk and 22 others across neighbouring taluks. "Water will flow into this lake from Bagalur via Jala Hobli. Farmers will not receive water directly but through recharging of borewells across the taluk," Dr Sudhakar said.

According to official figures, the exploitation of groundwater has weakened the water table in Chikkaballapur district and the water table has sunk to about 366 metres below the ground at several places.

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First Lady leaves Rashtrapati Bhavan staff in a dilemma

By [Rumu Banerjee](#), TNN | Sep 14, 2017, 10:49 AM IST



ent's secretariat was impeded when First Lady Kovind wanted to write a letter to the wives' welfare association of a paramilitary force....

1
Comments

NEW DELHI: The President's secretariat was recently stumped when First Lady [Savita Kovind](#) wanted to write a letter to the wives' welfare association of a paramilitary force. The dilemma for the staff- there was no prior template for such a communication.

"It was a ceremonial letter being sent by the First Lady to the [CISF](#) wives' welfare association. The rule is that precedent is followed, so a search for a similar correspondence by the previous First Lady was launched. However, no such correspondence

available," said an official.

er First Lady was Pranab Mukherjee's wife Suvra who passed away in er ailing for some time. Just before Mukherjee, Pratibha Patil was the president. Her predecessor was A P J [Abdul Kalam](#) who was bachelor.

Sources said the staff had to finally rely on correspondence by Usha Narayanan, wife of former President [KR Narayanan](#). "Correspondence by [Usha Narayanan](#) was used as a template for the letter finally. The letter to the CISF wives' welfare association is part of the ceremonial correspondence that the First Lady has been penning in the past one month," said the official.

Narayanan, who was India's 10th President, entered the [Rashtrapati Bhavan](#) in 1997. He became vice president in 1992.

Officials, who had been part of Mukherjee's team during his presidency, admitted that the First Lady had been ailing for some time. "But in the first few years of the presidency, the First Lady was active and participated in the activities. She also corresponded with several dignitaries, including Michelle Obama," reminisced a former official of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Sources say the current First Lady has kept a low profile, and has been participating only in those activities where her role is required.

Rajvanshi Devi, wife of India's first President Dr Rajendra Prasad (from 1950 until 1962) kept a very low profile and even stayed away from public events. Sources said Saraswati Bai, wife of India's 4th President VV Giri was the first one to take a more public role as the First Lady. She attended and hosted events and became a recognizable public figure.

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After floods, comes drought: 235 districts face monsoon deficit of 20% or more

By [Amit Bhattacharya](#), TNN | Sep 14, 2017, 10:28 AM IST



ish, Haryana and Madhya e the hardest hit states, in deficits of 31%, 28% and ctively....

4 Comments

NEW DELHI: Around 235 districts across the country face the prospect of [drought](#) this year as the [monsoon](#) appears headed for a below-normal performance, with the season's deficit currently at 6.2% of normal.

These districts, accounting for 37% of India's 630 districts for which rain data is available, have monsoon shortfall of at least 20%, with nine show acute deficits of 60% or more, data from the [India Meteorological Department](#) reveals.

ty of the distress districts lie in the hinterland, in a swathe running [Punjab](#), Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Vidarbha. UP, and MP are the hardest hit states, showing rain deficits of 31%, 28%, respectively.

The deficits have grown gradually since the end of July, when the monsoon started failing in central and north India. The first two months of the season, June and July, ended with a countrywide rain surplus of 2.5%. Monsoon's performance since August 1 has been a dismal 17% below normal (till September 12), with good rainfall being mainly restricted to south and northeast India.

"A number of factors worked against the monsoon since July-end. There have hardly been low-pressure circulations since then and conditions in the Indian and Pacific oceans have been unfavourable," said D Sivananda Pai, head of IMD's long range monsoon forecasts.

IMD had forecast normal monsoon this year at 96% of the long period average, which it updated to 98% in June.

Poor distribution of rainfall has added to the distress. As many as 110 districts have had excess or 'large excess' (over 60% of normal) rainfall. In addition, heavy rain spells in Gujarat, [Rajasthan](#) and catchment areas in the Himalayas (particularly in Nepal) caused the worst [floods](#) in the country in 10 years.

Ironically, states such as UP have seen both flood fury as well as the prospect of drought. The monsoon deficit in west UP stands at 37%, highest for any subdivision in the country. Of the state's 72 districts, rainfall has been deficient

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Indian offshore wealth parks itself in tax havens of Asia

By [Subodh Varma](#), TNN | Updated: Sep 14, 2017, 10.04 AM IST



NEW DELHI: Offshore wealth held by Indians in tax havens has surged nearly 90 per cent since 2007 to \$62.9 billion (about Rs 4 lakh crore) in 2015. That's about 3.1 per cent of the country's GDP in 2015, the latest year for which data is available.

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Comments

Over 53% of India's offshore wealth is now held in tax havens like Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Bahrain and Malaysia, with Swiss banks holding only 31%...

Also, contrary to popular belief, [Switzerland](#) is no longer the preferred destination. Over 53 per cent of this Indian wealth is now held closer home in [Asian tax havens](#) like Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Bahrain and Malaysia.

[Swiss banks](#) hold 31 per cent of Indian wealth, down from around 58 per cent in 2007.

This trend has emerged from analysis of data released for the first time by the Basel-based Bank of International Settlements (BIS) on bilateral foreign holdings. Till last year, BIS, which is the nodal data clearing house for all international financial transactions, did not disclose the country of origin of the data.

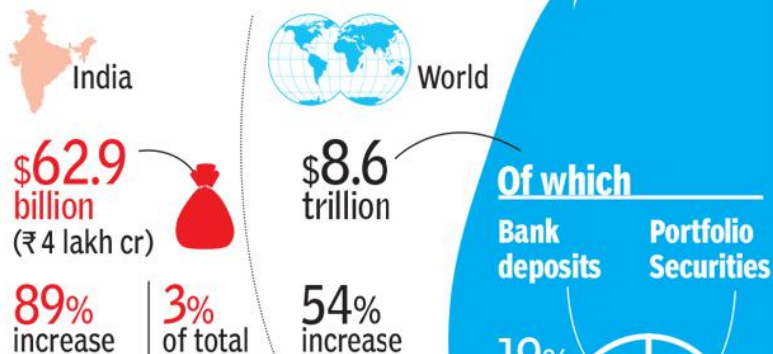
Analysing the new data for an NBER paper, economist Gabriel [Zucman](#) of UCLA and his colleagues Annette Alstads198ter of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences and Niels Johannesen of the University of Copenhagen calculated that total offshore wealth in the world was \$8.6 trillion, which is about 11.6 per cent of world GDP. It is up 54 per cent since 2007. Non-financial assets like art or real estate are not included in these figures.

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ASSETS ABROAD

Offshore Wealth, 2015



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Opposition wants New Delhi, state government to walk the talk in J&K

By [Hakeem Irfan](#), ET Bureau | Updated: Sep 14, 2017, 10.02 AM IST



The state's ruling coalition partner PDP may be hopeful of a resolution of the Kashmir issue and Article 35 (A) after recent assurances by Home Minister [Rajnath Singh](#), but the Opposition is skeptical about its implementation. They feel that both New Delhi and the state government have consistently failed to walk the talk earlier.

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Comments

Opposition parties have stated that the PDP-BJP coalition has failed to implement the Agenda of Alliance they had agreed upon in the state and are "moving goalposts" in intervals to "confuse people and avoid accountability".

Opposition parties have stated that the [PDP-BJP coalition](#) has failed to implement the Agenda of Alliance they had agreed upon in the state and are "moving goalposts" in intervals to "confuse people and avoid accountability".

They demanded that New Delhi should take "bold steps" to address the Kashmir issue and also file the affidavit before the [Supreme Court](#) defending Article 35 (A) to clarify their "good intent" and address the trust deficit.

"This government has come up with 30 formulas in the last three years. Time has proved them wrong earlier. Let us see if they will walk the talk this time," State Congress president Ghulam Ahmad Mir told ET.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who was on four-day visit to the state, had said that New Delhi was open for dialogue and would never hurt the sentiments of the people of the state. Besides this, Singh said five Cs — compassion, communication, co-existence, confidence building and consistency — were needed to resolve the Kashmir issue. This reach-out was an extension of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's August 15 statement that Kashmiris needed hugs and not bullets and abuses.

"These statements may have been made with the right intent and in the right direction, but things need to be implemented on the ground, which is not happening till now. As a starter, let the government file the affidavit defending Article 35 (A) in court and clear the position," senior National Conference legislator, Ali Muhammad Sagar told ET.

The PDP-BJP government has faced flack for the continuing volatile situation in the state amplified by the NIA crackdown on Hurriyat leaders, activists and controversial businessmen.

"New Delhi needs to revisit the whole process and the wrong policies that have shattered the confidence of the people of Kashmir, thereby resulting in massive alienation. The gap between Kashmir and the rest of the country has greatly

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M Venkaiah Naidu orders audit of Rajya Sabha TV expenditure, manpower

By [NIDHI SHARMA](#), ET Bureau | Sep 14, 2017, 08:33 AM IST



NEW DELHI: [Rajya Sabha](#) Chairman [M Venkaiah Naidu](#) has ordered expenditure and professional [audit](#) of [Rajya Sabha TV](#) (RSTV) after discovering that huge costs — to the tune of Rs 60 crore annually — were incurred by the government-owned channel.

red-flagged an expenditure of Rs 62.5 crore — spent on producing a feature film 'Raag Desh', directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia and released in July

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Comments

Naidu has red-flagged the expenditure incurred by the channel on renting office premises, hiring cabs and producing a feature film. Since the launch of the government-owned channel in August 2011, the channel has incurred an expenditure of Rs 375 crore — working to

Rs 62.5 crore annually. The statistics provided to the Rajya Sabha reveal that RSTV pays Rs 25 crore as an annual rent to hire NDMC premises in Talkatora Stadium. Naidu has directed RSTV to find out if making a one-time investment and buying an office space would be more economical than spending Rs 25 crore annually.

Naidu has also red-flagged an expenditure of Rs 12.5 crore — spent on producing a film 'Raag Desh', directed by [Tigmanshu Dhulia](#) and released in July this year. These facts came before the Rajya Sabha Chairman during a review exercise on Wednesday.

A source present in the meeting told ET: "Naidu has questioned why a TV channel which was mandated to cover Rajya Sabha proceedings, news and official functions would get into producing a feature film."


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With Specific Instructions

Since the launch of RSTV in August 2011, the channel has incurred an expenditure of ₹375 crore

Naidu has directed RSTV to find out whether making a one-time investment and buying an office space would be more economical than spending ₹25 crore annually



RSTV, which has 290 employees against a sanctioned strength of 416, has been asked to find out possible areas of rationalisation of expenditure and manpower

NAIDU ALSO ASKED OFFICIALS TO EXPLORE A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH PRASAR BHARATI

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PM Narendra Modi hosts Gujarati style dinner for his Japanese counterpart

By [Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury](#), ET Bureau | Updated: Sep 14, 2017, 08:45 AM IST



Leaders will have bilateral talks at Mahatma Mandir, a convention centre designed around Gandhian philosophy.

NEW DELHI: A mouthwatering Gujarati vegetarian platter cooked to spicy perfection and served in shiny copperware was presented to Japanese PM and his wife as PM [Narendra Modi](#) on Wednesday night hosted the visitors for dinner at Ahmedabad's famous Agashiye terrace restaurant.

The restaurant, known for its splendid view and kosher Gujarati cuisine, prepared a vegetarian thali for the special guests. The spread included more than 30 items. Melt-in-the-mouth khaman

1
Comments

raspatra and gota fritters, mushy rice khichdi, saucy kadhi, a bitter and onion sabji called bharela karela-dungri, and flatbreads such as dhokla and roti, besides the deep-fried puri.

There will also be accompanied by curries such as sev-tomato, mixed-vegetable bhajiyas, a garlicky potato dish called lasaniya bateta, and an assortment of dals, yoghurt raita and srikhand besides cool masala butter milk. For dessert, ghee-roasted gram flour sweet mohanthal, halwa and juicy jalebi were on the menu.

The restaurant had two government-appointed chefs from the respective countries to supervise what was cooking.

'Agashiye' in Gujarati means on the terrace. This stunning [Gujarati Thali](#) restaurant from the House of Mangaldas heritage hotel is spread over two huge terraces interconnected by a smaller one that houses a wooden cottage. Agashiye is an iconic restaurant in Ahmedabad. It celebrates Gujarati food and Agashiye is ranked as one of the top restaurants in Ahmedabad.

The menu changes daily at Agashiye. The food is usually served in a kansa thali and the meal generally starts with a choice of Indian breads and ends with rice. Located in the city's old eastern suburbs, Agashiye overlooks the Sidi Saiyyed mosque, famous for its intricate jali or stone lattice work.

Lunch on Thursday will be a vegetarian fare too. The two leaders will have bilateral talks at Mahatma Mandir, a convention centre designed around Gandhian philosophy.

Gujarat Chief minister [Vijay Rupani](#) will host a banquet for the two prime ministers on Thursday night before Abe departs for [Tokyo](#) around 930 PM.

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Lawyers demand filling up of vacant Calcutta High Court judges post

PTI | Updated: Sep 14, 2017, 01:24 AM IST



sanctioned strength of the Calcutta High Court is 72 but present only 31 judges," Bar Association president Uttam Majumdar said.

KOLKATA: Lawyers today submitted a memorandum to West Bengal Governor K N Tripathi demanding immediate steps for filling up vacant posts of judges at the Calcutta High Court.

The memorandum by the Bar Association of the high court sought the governor's intervention to urgently address the problem and "appropriate steps to fill up all vacant posts of judges of this high court as per its sanctioned strength."

1
Comments

"While the sanctioned strength of judges at the High Court is 72 there are at present only 31 judges," Bar Association president Uttam Majumdar said.

The number will dwindle to 25 in December after the retirement of some more judges, he said.

"In the last three years no judges were appointed in High Court, Calcutta, except one," the memorandum said.

A large number of lawyers marched from the high court to the Raj Bhavan, where their representatives submitted the memorandum to governor Tripathi.

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Bar Association Of The High Court

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