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PANDORA PAPERS - PART II

AN INVESTIGATION BY THE INDIAN EXPRESS WITH INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS

Nirav Modi sister's trust offers its Swiss account funds to Govt

Purvi Modi's offer to remit Rs 275 cr is being considered as part of pardon plea


The Indian Express report of October 4 on Purvi Modi

KHUSHBOO NARAYAN
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

THE DEPOSIT Trust whose details were revealed in the Pandora Papers investigation by *The Indian Express* and in which Purvi Modi, sister of fugitive diamond jeweller Nirav Modi, is a settlor, has offered to remit about Rs 275 crore lying in its Swiss bank account to the Indian Government, sources said.

A settlor is an individual or party who establishes the trust by placing a particular asset.

Purvi Modi's offer, furnished as part of her full disclosure re-

quirement as a condition for her pardon, is being considered by the Government, sources told *The Indian Express*.

On October 4, *The Indian Express*, as part of its investigation into the Pandora Papers, had reported that a month before Nirav Modi fled India in January 2018, Purvi Modi set up Brookton Management Ltd in the British Virgin Islands to act as a corporate protector of The Deposit Trust formed through the Trident Trust Company, Singapore.

Purvi, in the incorporation form for BVI companies,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

All three Salgaocar brothers set up offshore trusts, firms

KHUSHBOO NARAYAN
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

ALL THE three brothers of the Salgaocar clan, Dattaraj Salgaocar, the late Anil Salgaocar and Shivanand Salgaocar, set up offshore trusts and companies, reveal The Pandora Papers documents investigated by *The Indian Express*.

According to the documents maintained by Asiatic Trust Services, Dattaraj Salgaocar, owner of VM Salgaocar Group, is shown as the beneficiary of The Annemecore Trust in New Zealand. As per the trust deed, Annemecore was set up on July 4, 2011, with Mirabaud Trust (New Zealand) Ltd as its trustee.

On July 26, 2011, the Mirabaud passed a resolution

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2


FIRST PERSON

 President Ram Nath Kovind receives a Guard of Honour at Leh Air Field, Ladakh, Thursday. *PTI*

India accepts Russia's invite for talks with Taliban next week

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

INDIA HAS accepted a Russian invitation to join the Afghanistan talks in Moscow on October 20.

The Taliban, who captured power two months ago, have also been invited to the talks and this will bring them face-to-face with India, which evacuated its diplomatic staff from the country after the regime change there.

Confirming the Indian participation, Arindam Bagchi, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, said Thursday: "We have received an invitation for the Moscow format meeting on Afghanistan on October 20. We will be participating in it."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
EXPLAINED
A seat at the table

THE US exit from Afghanistan has had Russia, China and Pakistan seeking larger roles there, even as India calibrates its position. The Russians had indicated earlier that India could play a role "post-conflict" — a term they reserved for the US departure.

CHINA-BHUTAN 3-STEP ROADMAP
PAGE 6

Same militants suspected as 2 more Armymen killed in Poonch

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, OCTOBER 14

A JUNIOR Commissioned Officer and a jawan were killed in Mendhar area of Jammu's border district of Poonch in a fierce gunfight between militants and Army troops that was still on late Thursday night. Sources said the militants were suspected to be part of the same group which killed five Army soldiers in an encounter on Monday in the district.

Monday's encounter, along the Mughal Road linking Poonch to Shopian in south Kashmir, was the worst in the area in 17 years. Security forces had launched a massive search following the encounter, and it was during combing operations in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
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Can't apply innocent until proven guilty, says NCB, Aryan stays in jail

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

AFTER HEARING arguments over two days, a special court on Thursday reserved its order till next week on the bail applications of Aryan Khan, the son of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, his friend Arbaaz Merchant and model Munmun Dhamecha, arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on October 3.

With the courts shut till Tuesday, the matter will come up next on October 20.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh, the senior most law officer of the Union government in Maharashtra, appearing for the NCB, argued that there was need to take a "serious view" of drug abuse among youngsters, and that the principle of in-


Aryan held on Oct 3. Next hearing will be on Oct 20

nocent until proven guilty does not apply under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

"The present applicant (Aryan) is not a consumer for the first time. The evidence placed before the court shows that he is a regular consumer of contraband for the last few years.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Health Ministry raises alert over Covid team vacancies: 'Acute stress'

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE UNION Health Ministry has raised concern over vacancies in nine senior officer posts in its Covid team, saying this had put it under "acute stress".

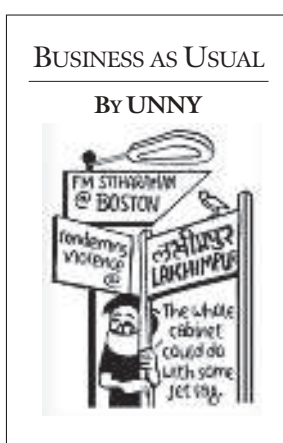
In a letter dated October 13 to Deepthi Umashankar, Establishment Officer and Additional Secretary, DoPT, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said, "As you are aware that even though the pandemic of Covid-19 is declining, however we cannot let our guard down. At this crucial juncture, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is required to put in extra efforts to ensure full preparedness across the country. Vacant positions of one Joint Secretary and eight DS (Deputy Secretaries) / Directors have put this ministry

under acute stress."

Bhushan sought "early and timely action" to fill up the existing vacancies "and also the vacancies arising in the coming weeks".

This is the second time in two months that Bhushan has highlighted vacancies in the Health Ministry. On August 12, he had written to the DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training) about the unfilled posts of additional secretary, joint secretary, director and deputy secretary under the Central Staffing Scheme of the Central Secretariat Services (CSS) in the Health Ministry.

Asked about the letter,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
CBSE BOARDS: FIRST SET TO BE OFFLINE
PAGE 7


Iran slams Adani Ports ban as unprofessional

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

DAYS AFTER a massive drug haul at the Mundra port in Gujarat made the Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) issue a trade advisory stating that it will not handle any container cargo originating from Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan November 15

onward, Tehran has conveyed its displeasure to New Delhi, calling the banning of its consignments as an "unprofessional and imbalanced move".

This was conveyed Wednesday by Iranian police and narcotic drug control officers to their Indian counterparts.

The National Investigation Agency is probing the case

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

After red flags, PNB Housing Finance calls off its Rs 4,000-crore Carlyle deal

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE CONTROVERSIAL move by US-based Carlyle group, including former MD of HDFC Bank and a senior advisor at Carlyle

Aditya Puri, to acquire a stake in PNB Housing Finance has come to an end with the board of the home mortgage company deciding not to proceed with the preferential issue.

As *The Indian Express* had reported in June, this transaction had been red-flagged by minor-

ity shareholders and the links of many PNBHF board members to Carlyle had raised questions of conflict of interest.

PNB Housing has terminated the share subscription agreements executed with Pluto Investments, an affiliated entity

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Festival glitter lures crowds, Covid task force chief raises a red flag: Watch out

PAGE 1 ANCHOR
KAUNAIN SHERIFF M & AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, PUNE, OCTOBER 14

THERE WERE few masks, no thermal screening at entry points and zero social distancing.

The images of crowds thronging Delhi's popular Sarojini Nagar market Thursday for the festival season, which will run till the end of the year, have revived fears of another Covid surge.


 At Sarojini Nagar market in New Delhi Thursday. *Abhinav Saha*

In fact, the chief of India's Covid task force has already issued a grim warning.

"India has administered at least one vaccine dose to almost three-fourths of its adults. We need to achieve saturation coverage with two doses at the earliest. But, at this juncture, we also need to continue to follow all preventive precautions. Vaccine alone is not enough. There cannot be large gatherings. Let us celebrate festivals at home with the family. We cannot lower the guard and have to adopt Covid-appropriate behaviour. We

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12
WORLD STUDENT'S DAY

A RED initiative appears in today's edition of *The Indian Express*. This page is an initiative of the marketing solutions team of The Indian Express Group and contain content paid for by advertisers. This page should be read as an advertisement

GOVT & POLITICS
SIDHU SAYS WILL ABIDE BY WHAT THE PARTY SAYS, DECISION TODAY
PAGE 6

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EXPRESS AUDIO
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Dr VS Chauhan talks about the significance of the malaria vaccine, and what the development means for India

FROM PAGE ONE

Nirav sister's trust

declared that the source of funds to be infused into Brookton was salary and her personal earnings as the creative director of Firestar, the firm accused of defrauding Punjab National Bank (PNB) through fraudulent letters of undertaking (LOUs).

However, Purvi Modi's lawyer, Mishra had denied the allegations and declined comment saying that the money laundering case is sub-judice.

Sources said Purvi Modi is said to have given a no-objection letter for remitting about Rs 275 crore lying in the bank account of The Deposit Trust.

The remittance by Purvi is being

done as she was allowed the tender of pardon on conditions of making full and true disclosure to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that is probing a money laundering case against Nirav Modi.

According to sources, the Indian government is considering Purvi Modi's application and is in talks with the Swiss authorities for repatriation of funds.

Emails to Purvi Modi's lawyer on this offer did not elicit any response.

On January 4, a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court passed an order on applications made by Purvi Modi and her husband Maiank Mehta allowing grant of tender of pardon under Sections 306 and 307 of Cr.P.C., on condition of making full and true disclosure.

Both Modi and Mehta were earlier named as an accused in the ED case against Nirav Modi. The court also allowed Purvi and Maiank to be marked as approver in the case.

Subsequently on July 1, the ED said it recovered Rs 17.25 crore from an account of Purvi in the UK, which was opened by Nirav Modi. This, the agency

said, was done after Purvi disclosed the information to the probe agency.

Nirav Modi and his uncle Mehul Choksi, are accused of routing transactions of about Rs 13600 crore through fraudulent LoUs of PNB.

Modi left India in the first week of January 2018, before the PNB scam came out in public. In March 2019, Modi was arrested in the United Kingdom and is currently lodged at Wandsworth prison in London.

In April, the UK government approved the extradition of Modi to India. Earlier on February 25, a UK court had ordered Modi's extradition holding that the evidence against Modi was prima facie sufficient to order his extradition to India to face charges.

In July, Nirav Modi, moved the UK high court for an oral hearing with a renewed "leave to appeal" application for a judge to determine if it can proceed to a full appeal hearing against extradition ordered by a lower court.

Subsequently in August, the UK high court allowed Modi to appeal against extradition to India on grounds of mental health.

So far, the ED has seized assets worth Rs 2400 crore belonging to Modi in India and abroad.

Salgaocar brothers

stating that the settlor of the trust had transferred "her entire interest in a Panamanian company, Castelnor

Services Inc. to the trust". The resolution did not name the settlor of the trust.

On September 23, 2011, the trustee passed another resolution to dissolve Castelnor Services, the wholly owned company of the trust, and distribute the money lying in a Swiss bank account of Castelnor to Dattaraj Salgaocar.

A notice by the trustee of Annemcore Trust to the Inland Revenue Department of New Zealand reveals that after the distribution of the money to Salgaocar, the trust was dissolved in January 2012.

According to the Pandora Papers, Shivanand Salgaocar, too, has set up three companies: Kayler International Limited in the BVI; Indochina Alliance Limited in Samoa and Citigrand International Ltd in Hong Kong through Asiatic Trust Services.

While Indochina Alliance was set up in 2005 with Shivanand Salgaocar as its beneficial owner, Kayler International and Citigrand International were both set up in 2004. The beneficial owner of Kayler is Shivanand and his wife Ranjana, while the owner of Citigrand is Shivanand's daughter Swati Salgaocar.

The director of all the three companies is Samoa-based Westco Directors Limited. All the companies have linked foreign bank accounts.

For instance, both Kayler International and Citigrand International sought to open bank accounts with the Bank of East Asia Ltd in Hong Kong, while Indochina Alliance opened an account with Deutsche Bank, Singapore.

Kayler International, records show, was set up to hold investments, while the business of Citigrand International is to undertake "trade activities involving export of materials from India, China and receive trade commissions."

Shivanand Salgaocar, the chairman and managing director of Vimson Group that has interests in mining and real estate, has been earlier named in the "Offshore Leaks" structured data released by ICIJ in 2013. In that, Salgaocar was linked to a Hong Kong-based firm Jade Sky International Ltd.

Apart from Shivanand, six firms set up by his brother, the late Anil Salgaocar, show up in the Pandora Papers. These BVI firms are: Crown Bright Trading Ltd; General Harvest International Ltd; Ling Tao Trading Limited; Nickon Enterprises Limited; Sing Ling Tao Resources Limited; and Horizon Villa Investments Limited that were incorporated with the help of Mossack Fonseca (MF) as earlier reported by The Indian Express (in 2016 Panama papers) are now being managed by Panama-based corporate services provider, OMC Group.

The Pandora Papers show that as early as 2005, Anil Salgaocar resigned from the six firms and transferred his stake to his former business partner Darsan Jitendra Jhaveri. In 2015, Salgaocar initiated legal proceedings against Jhaveri in Singapore claiming that Jhaveri held extensive assets on trust for him and had failed to account for them. Anil Salgaocar passed away in 2016 but his wife Lakshmi Salgaocar, who is the administrator of Salgaocar's estate, is now fighting the legal battle with Jhaveri.

Emails to Dattaraj Salgaocar and Shivanand Salgaocar did not elicit any response. The office of Dattaraj Salgaocar said he is out of the country till the end of October. Email and calls to the official spokesperson of Vimson Group remained unanswered. Phone calls and text messages to Sameer Salgaocar, son of late Anil Salgaocar did not elicit any response.

Poonch shootout

Bhata Durian forests, adjoining the area of Monday's encounter, that Armymen came under fire from militants.

The soldiers killed in Thursday's encounter were yet to be identified. This was the first contact of the security forces with the militants since Tuesday, when there was an exchange of fire for around 15 minutes.

With the encounter still on, vehicular traffic between Bhimber Gali and Surankote along the Rajouri-Poonch national highway has been suspended. More reinforcements have been rushed to the area.

Officials earlier said the militants, believed to number around four-five, could be part of a group that infiltrated into the Union Territory from across the Line of Control in August, and were on their way to Shopian. They were intercepted by police and security forces in the Pangai area of Rajouri district along the Mughal Road. While two militants were killed on August 6, another was shot on August 19.

Talks with Taliban

It is likely that the MEA will send a Joint Secretary-level officer to the meeting – a final decision is yet to be made.

Last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin's special representative on Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, said Moscow had invited representatives of the Taliban to international talks on Afghanistan on October 20.

The talks follow a G20 summit on Afghanistan – it was held on October 12 -- to help the country avert a humanitarian catastrophe in the wake of the power shift there.

India's ambassador to Qatar, Deepak Mittal, had met Taliban representatives in Doha towards the end of August, and the meeting in Moscow will be the second for the Indians.

After Kabul's fall in August, India raised questions on the lack of inclusivity in the new Taliban regime, rights of minorities, women and children, and also voiced concern on terrorism emanating from Afghanistan.

In March this year, Moscow hosted an international conference on Afghanistan in which Russia, United States, China and Pakistan released a joint statement, calling on the then-warring Afghan sides to reach a peace deal.

The statement also asked the Taliban not to launch offensives in spring and summer. But as the US and its allies began withdrawing their troops after 20 years on the ground, the Taliban seized power in a lightning advance that led to the collapse of the Ashraf Ghani government.

Russia is concerned about the impact in the wider region. Moscow has moved to engage the Taliban, but has stopped short of granting recognition to the group which is banned as a "terrorist" organisation in Russia.

Unlike Western countries that rushed to evacuate diplomats following the fall of Kabul on August 15, Russia has kept its embassy there open.

Health Ministry

a Health Ministry official, who refused to be named, said: "Each ministry gives the list of vacancies every month to the DoPT. Otherwise how

would they fill the vacancies?"

With his October 13 letter, Bhushan shared a list of 11 officers who have moved out of the ministry or are about to do so. On the top is Vandana Gurnani, Additional Secretary and Mission Director, National Health Mission, who went on one-year study leave in September 2021. The others include Joint Secretary Nipun Vinayak, who looked after oxygen supply during the severe Covid second wave and was repatriated prematurely to his Maharashtra cadre on August 31; and Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal, who has been the face of the ministry at Covid briefings and completes his tenure with the Health Ministry on November 28.

Bhushan also named Bindu Tewari, an IRSME (Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers) official working in the Ministry as Director, who was repatriated to her parent cadre on July 7; and N Yuvaraj, who was moved out as Director from the Health Ministry to Joint Secretary in the Department of Pharmaceuticals.

Besides them, Mahatme Sandeep Namdeo, posted in the Ministry as Deputy Secretary, is now Private Secretary to Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister for Communication; Yatish S G, another Deputy Secretary-level officer, was permanently repatriated to his parent IRTS cadre on September 13; and Vidushi Chaturvedi, Director in the Health Ministry, is "awaiting approval" for her selection as Deputy Director General in the UIDAI.

CSS officers Vandana Jain and SK Jha, both Directors in the Ministry, have got promotions as Joint Secretaries. While Jain is Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry, Jha has moved to the Department of Revenue, relieved with effect from August 26.

Another CSS officer and Director, Health Ministry, N B Mani, died during the second Covid wave.

Adani Ports

relating to the seizure of 2,988.21 kg of heroin at Mundra port by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. The heroin was seized from two containers that were declared as containing "semi-processed talc stones". The cargo had landed from Afghanistan via Iran's Bandar Abbas port.

In a statement, the Iranian embassy in New Delhi said police and narcotic drug control authorities of India and Iran discussed and examined their "shared concerns and challenges resulting from a surge in illicit drug trafficking in the region and the ways and means of mutual cooperation and exchanges as part of the expected outcomes in this respect".

It said "for many decades, narcotic drugs production and its organised trafficking from Afghanistan has posed a major threat to Iran, our region and the rest of the world, necessitating a non-stop and united struggle as well as a genuine cooperation and partnership among all countries against this global issue".

As an immediate neighbour of Afghanistan, Iran said it has also been "significantly impacted by other developments" in Afghanistan. It listed three major factors behind the "considerable rise of narcotic drugs production and trafficking" -- "occupation of Afghanistan by foreign forces", "infighting between various groups" and "severe poverty".

Describing the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan as the "main root causes" of the surge in "chaos, insecurity and exacerbation of illicit drug trafficking" in the region, the statement said these are "usually ignored or underestimated".

It said Iran has "suffered from many trade restrictions and unjust sanctions" and is once again "being targeted unfairly through denial of trade" and banning its consignments is "an unprofessional and imbalanced move" – a reference to the APSEZ trade advisory effective November 15.

Calling the meeting with Indian officials a "successful dialogue", the Iranian statement said "positive outcomes" would be a "better arrangement for deepening our cordial relations".

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New Delhi

3 THE CITY



		Total		Vacant
TOTAL CASES		14,39,311		16,922
		HOSPITAL BEDS		3,854
		ICU BEDS		3,788
	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Oct 13	31	58	0	65,548
Oct 14	28	29	0	61,012
Total	337*	14,13,885	25,089	2,84,99,638

*Total active cases

DU ADMISSIONS: 48,582 HAVE PAID FEES SO FAR

SRCC, Ramjas may have seats open in 3rd list; mixed bag in other colleges

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

AS APPROVAL of admissions against the second list drew to a close on Thursday, popular colleges at Delhi University present a mixed bag of opportunities for aspirants — some colleges may see many of their courses potentially closing while some are likely to have many seats up for grabs in the third list.

SRCC is likely to remain open in the third list for both its courses. There are 626 seats for BCom (Honours) and 155 seats for Economics. As of Thursday evening, 275 applications had been approved for BCom (Hons) and 87 applications approved for Economics with some of these applicants yet to pay their fees.

Candidates whose admissions have been approved by colleges in the second list have till 5

pm Friday to pay their fees, only after which their admissions will be finalised. The third list will be released on Saturday, October 16.

Students are likely to have opportunities in Ramjas College where, as of Thursday evening, 600 admissions had been completed with fee payment against its 1,673 sanctioned seats. In the second list admission cycle, the college had seen around 100 withdrawals.

“We had kept BA (Honours) Political Science open in the second list with a 100% cut-off again for unreserved seats and that should be closing for the third list. Botany might also close for some categories now. There are around 150 approved applications yet to pay their fees and we’ll know the full situation at the end Friday. We have tried to go about our admissions in a controlled way because we don’t want to disturb the student-



The third list will be released on Saturday. Archive

teacher ratio. We will continue to be cautious with cut-offs,” said principal Manoj Khanna.

At Kirori Mal College, principal Vibha Chauhan said the college had filled just over 50% of the seats after admissions on the basis of the second cut-off. “We have filled around 750 admissions so far. In BCom (Hons), we

have slightly over-admitted students but we’ll have to wait and see what happens after the third cut-off. In the last cut-off we had closed admissions to English, but we saw several withdrawals this time and so we will open it again in the third list. Maths, Political Science and some BA programme combinations will also be open,” she said.

The college has 1,400 seats in total. Chauhan also said the third cut-off will dip marginally: “We don’t know how many students will qualify if we dip too much so we will only reduce it marginally.”

At Miranda House, all science courses were closed for unreserved seats in the second list and only four arts courses were open. According to principal Bijaylaxmi Nanda, a few seats — mostly in reserved categories — will continue to remain open in the third list for Economics,

Sociology, History and some BA programme combinations.

Hansraj College had seen 698 admissions for its 1,714 seats after the first cut-off list. Now the college has completed 1,234 admissions so far. The course which has seen the best response in the second list is BCom (Hons) for which 205 admissions have taken place as opposed to just 16 in the first list.

In the meantime, Hindu College which was only open for a handful of courses in different categories has seen its over-admissions swell up to 1,845 approved admissions against its 975 seats.

As of 6.50 pm on Thursday, the university had received 1,18,878 applications under the first and second lists. 48,582 admissions have been completed with fee payments and another 10,591 have been approved by principals across colleges.

Accused in Gurgaon student murder held; shot dead cab driver in 2016, say police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, OCTOBER 14

SIX DAYS after a 21-year-old student in Budhera was shot dead allegedly by a fellow student on campus, police Thursday arrested the shooter in the case from Delhi.

Police said the accused is a 21-year-old student. He was arrested by the Crime Branch’s sector 10 unit from Najafgarh, where he had come to collect money from his father.

ACP (Crime) Preet Pal said, “The case was transferred to the Crime Branch on Tuesday. The prime accused, who had shot the victim, has been arrested. He will be produced in court and taken on remand. During remand, we will question him about the motive and ascertain the involvement of other accused in the crime.”

On October 8 around 12.30 pm, Vinit Kumar, a fourth-year student of Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS),



The victim, Vinit Kumar, was a final-year student

was shot dead near the parking area while walking to his hostel with a group of friends.

Apart from the main accused, police had booked three other students of the university on charges of murder. Preliminary probe revealed that a dispute over the victim’s close friendship with the shooter’s woman friend, who is also an accused in the case, was the alleged reason for the murder.

A senior police officer, requesting anonymity, said the accused was booked for allegedly

murdering a cab driver in 2016 in Delhi’s Mundka.

“In April 2016, when he was a juvenile, he and another minor were apprehended for allegedly shooting dead a cab driver after an alleged argument in Mundka. The gun used in the crime belonged to his father. That case is sub-judice. He is short tempered; in this case, he shot the victim over a dispute regarding his friendship with a woman in college,” said the police officer.

Police said his family had to leave their village in Jhajjar after facing a social boycott from villagers due to certain disputes, following which they settled in Najafgarh.

Police said after the murder, the shooter had been hiding at a relative’s house and had changed locations to evade arrest. “He had switched off his mobile phone on the day of the murder. The dispute had been brewing between the victim and accused for the past few months,” said the police officer.

BRIEFLY

Scuffle at BK Dutt Colony

New Delhi: A group of people staged protests and allegedly clashed with police during a religious procession in South Delhi’s BK Dutt colony. Nobody was injured, said police. The incident took place Thursday evening when a group of people were walking in the Karbala area of Jorbagh. DCP (South) Benita Mary Jaiker said, “There was a *tazia* at Karbala. We had closed many gates in the area and roads to control and restrict the crowd. However, a lot of people gathered and tried to pass through the gate. Police controlled the gathering and dispersed everyone. There was no violence... the event went on peacefully.” A video of the incident was uploaded by BJP Delhi vice-president Sunil Yadav. In his tweet, Yadav alleged a group of people created ruckus on Maha Navami.

‘Need more time for public hearings on DDA master plan’

New Delhi: A group of NGOs that have started a campaign called ‘Main Bhi Dilli’ has demanded that the DDA provide give more time for public hearings for the Delhi Master Plan 2041. It also said hearings should be held physically as many people do not have access to internet. A senior DDA official said they will increase the present two-day hearing schedule, if the need arises. **ENS**



At Janpath on Thursday. The crowd was significantly less as compared to that in Sarojini Nagar. Abhinav Saha

CHALLANS FOR COVID VIOLATIONS SEE DIP

At markets, footfall up — guard down

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

MARKETS ACROSS the capital have reported a rise in footfall amid the festive season, but Covid restrictions were largely absent at most.

The Indian Express visited popular shopping hubs on Thursday and found that several customers and hawkers were not wearing masks properly and thermal screening was not being carried out.

At Sarojini Nagar, market president Ashok Randhawa said the crowd is back after a gap of almost a year and a half. “However, it is yet to match the festive rush during pre-Covid days,” said Randhawa, as he displayed his latest jeans collection to a customer.

While he is happy that rising footfall will boost business, the

absence of Covid protocol among shoppers and owners alike worries him. “We have been regularly asking the administration to increase patrolling by civil defence volunteers, and to control the problem of illegal hawkers encroaching pavements, but nothing significant has happened,” said Randhawa, who also owns a garment store.

Delhi has been recording around 30-40 Covid cases per day on an average over the past month. The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) had decided to allow “muted” celebrations of festivals such as Durga Puja, Ramlila and Dussehra but did not allow any fairs and food stalls to be put up. Restrictions in markets, however, were eased months ago but with conditions such as mandatory use of masks, thermal screening, and social distancing.

At the popular Janpath mar-

ket in the heart of the city on Thursday, though, thermal screening was absent and several people did not wear masks properly despite the presence of civil defence volunteers. However, the crowd was significantly less as compared to that in Sarojini Nagar.

North Delhi’s popular Karol Bagh market presented a similar picture. “While shops still maintain Covid protocol, vendors mostly violate rules,” claimed a shopkeeper.

At Yashwant Singh Place market, a shopkeeper said: “The footfall in the market has reduced drastically post Covid. So social distancing is automatically maintained here.”

Markets like South Extension and Connaught Place are better placed as there is a clear demarcation between hawkers and shops and shoppers were seen adhering to guidelines. Atul Bhargava,

president of the New Delhi Traders’ Association, said shoppers are largely following rules.

Even as crowds increased, the number of challans issued for violating norms has been dipping. While 1.46 lakh challans were issued over the past month, they are down from around 5,500 per day in mid-September to around 4,500 now.

The Durga Puja pandals, meanwhile, were better managed. Pandals in CR Park’s Kali Mandir and D block park had separate entries and exits, following DDMA guidelines. Visitors sanitised their hands at the entry points and thermal screening and masks were mandatory. Visitors entered in a line, paid their respects to the Goddess, and walked out in a line. “Bhog was home delivered and all rituals were screened live on social media,” said an organiser.

Ravana effigy makers say poor sales due to Covid, cracker ban

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, OCTOBER 14

WITH SOCIAL gatherings restricted and a ban on sale, storage and use of crackers, Ravana effigy makers in Gurgaon said their sales have been poor for a second consecutive year.

“Business is down. Unless there is a prior booking, we are only making smaller effigies of five or ten or 20 feet size. *Bada order nahi mila iss bar* (Did not get orders for larger effigies this year). In the last month, I have sold only one 30-foot effigy. There is a restriction on social gatherings and the scale of Ramlila in the city is not what it used to be during the pre-Covid times,” said Rinku Raj, a bamboo chick maker, who has been making effigies in Sector 14 since 2014.

“In the last two days, the demand has picked up from villages at Manesar, Pachgaon, Nathupur



The stretch from Sector 12-14 on Gurgaon’s MG Road is lined with effigies. Express

and some residential colonies, but revenue is considerably lower than earlier,” added Raj.

A day ahead of Dussehra, the stretch from Sector 12-14 on MG Road is lined with effigies — some complete, some partially built — of varying sizes, while craftsmen

sit on the road side, carefully measuring and handcrafting bamboo frames and painting heads of Ravana effigies. Bamboo strips, wires, glue and stacks of paper line the pavements.

The craftsmen said the market rate for effigies typically ranged between Rs 500 and 1,000 per feet depending on the piece, but they were selling it at reduced prices to clear the stock. “It is like a lottery,” said Pradeep Kumar, displaying a 35-feet high effigy of Ravana, which took him a week to create. With a day to go for Dussehra, it remains unsold. “I am hoping someone will purchase this one. Otherwise, I will take it to my colony in Sector 14 and set it on fire tomorrow,” he said.

Kumar, originally from Badaun district in UP, has been making effigies in Sector 14 for over a decade. At other times of the year, he works as a bamboo chick maker and drives an auto to supplement his income.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, OCTOBER 14

AFTER OVER 150 ‘partners’ from spa and salon verticals protested against Urban Company’s policies last week, demanding better pay, safer working conditions and social security benefits, the home services marketplace Thursday slashed its commission cap by 5%.

In a 12-point programme aimed at improving partner earnings and livelihood, Urban Company Thursday said it was reducing the highest commission slab from 30% to 25%. “Earlier, commissions ranged from 8.5% for small orders to 30% for high-ticket orders. Commissions will now range from 8.5% to 25%,” it said in a statement.

Among other key actions the company said it would undertake include removing temporary blocks on partners, marginal increase in prices of high demand



The Indian Express report dated October 12

services, reducing maximum cap on monthly penalties per partner in a month to Rs 1,500 (instead of Rs 3,000) and regarding product pricing and deductions. The company further said it will transfer the entire amount collected from customers to partners for last-minute cancellations.

On October 8, a majority of women partners from the two verticals had gone on a day-long strike outside the company’s office at Udyog Vihar. They alleged

that the company had incrementally hiked commissions arbitrarily, which was cutting into their payouts.

A beautician, requesting anonymity, said, “The company has announced some new initiatives after the protest. In the last few days, there have been consultations between partners and company representatives regarding our demands. We’ll discuss in the coming days and decide the future course of action.”

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Arvind Kejriwal,
Chief Minister, Delhi

5 THE CITY

NEIGHBOURING STATES HAVE ALLOWED CELEBRATIONS: CM

Allow Chhath celebrations in city, Kejriwal writes to Baijal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday wrote to L-G Anil Baijal asking him to call a Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) meeting and give permission to hold Chhath celebrations in public.

Citing the low Covid case count in the city, Kejriwal wrote, "Delhi's Covid situation has been in control for the past three months. I think we should allow the celebration of Chhath, keeping in mind the Covid protocol. Neighbouring states such as Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan too have allowed Chhath celebrations keeping in mind appropriate restrictions. I request you to call a DDMA meeting soon and allow the celebrations."

Baijal is the chairperson of the DDMA, which last month passed directions that Chhath celebrations will not be allowed



CM Kejriwal cites low Covid case count in city

in public.

Over the past few years, Chhath has gained prominence as Delhi's Purvanchali population has risen. While it is predominantly celebrated by people from Bihar and UP, others have also started celebrating it in recent times. Over 30% of Delhi's population, it is estimated, has roots in the Purvanchal belt. Out of the 70 assembly constituencies in Delhi, 16 have a majority of Purvanchali population.

EXPLAINED
E Chhath politics in the capital

Recognising that Delhi now has a sizable Purvanchali population, governments in Delhi have been setting up ghats for celebration for several years now. The Aam Aadmi Party government claims to have increased the number of official Chhath ghats from 72 before 2015 to 1,200 in 2019. Chhath celebrations were not allowed in 2020 because of Covid. While the opposition wants to corner AAP over the issue ahead of municipal polls, AAP is keen on making the Centre or the L-G take a stand on allowing celebrations.

Earlier, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had written to the Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, asking him to hold a meeting with experts and pass guidelines to celebrate Chhath. This was preceded by protests by the Delhi BJP and the declaration that the municipal corporations in the city, which are governed by BJP, would make arrangements at ghats to celebrate the festival. On Thursday, members of the Delhi Congress also held a protest outside the CM's residence.

According to sources, while the government was wary of allowing gatherings, which generally tend to be large, it did not want to anger the electorate months before the municipal polls next year.

"This is why the deputy CM wrote to the minister asking for directions. The CM has also written to the L-G, asking that a final decision be taken in the DDMA meeting," a party leader said.

South Delhi residents can book parking slot via new app; bid to ease congestion

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

SOUTH DELHI residents will now be able to book a parking slot through a new app that will provide real-time information of parking sites under the South MCD. The app, called 'MyParking', was launched by Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Thursday.

Using the app, residents can book in advance or on the spot. The app also provides flexibility

in selecting slots.

It also has features like digital parking solutions, option of paperless check-in and check-out of vehicles, shared parking for safety and recall, and display of amenities and facilities in and near parking locations.

SDMC operates 145 surface parking sites across its four zones, besides six multi-level parking sites and two automated parking sites.

During the launch, Thakur said the app provides information about the total capacity of

vehicles to be parked in the SDMC parking sites, space used for parking, and space available for parking in each site.


SDMC Mayor Mukesh Suryan said the application would also help reduce pollution from vehicles by minimising the time spent searching for parking sites.

This app has been developed by the Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL) with SDMC to digitise all authorised parking under the municipal limits of the civic body.


SDMC Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti said the app will also be integrated with the Vahan app, Fast TAG, e-Challan and other government initiatives.

BECIL will also set up and run a dedicated call centre for citizens as a customer care unit to address queries and issues related to the use of the app. The call centre will also handle complaints and grievances.


The application can be downloaded for free on Android and iOS platforms.



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6 GOVT & POLITICS



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STAYING SAFE

THE MEETING of the Congress Working Committee, to be chaired by Sonia Gandhi on Saturday at the AICC headquarters, will be the first physical get-together of the top Congress leadership in nearly two years. Although the pandemic numbers are on the decline, the party is taking adequate precaution. All the members, it is learnt, have been asked to undergo RTPCR tests. All staff members who are to be present at the AICC headquarters to help smooth conduct of the meeting and members of the communication department too have been asked to undergo Covid tests.

NOT IN SYNC

NAVJOT SINGH Sidhu was to meet top Congress leaders K C Venugopal and Harish Rawat at the AICC headquarters at 6 pm Thursday. At least, that is what Rawat had tweeted on Tuesday. Sidhu himself reached late for the meeting. And when he arrived, both Venugopal and Rawat were not present at the AICC headquarters. Rawat reached after some time and then came Venugopal. While Sidhu gave the customary "I have faith in the party leadership and will abide by its decisions" comment after the meeting, Venugopal was said to have left the meeting looking much hassled. For many, it was perhaps an indication of what had transpired inside.

THE VETERAN

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Thursday met former Jan Sangh MLA from UP and BJP's oldest worker Bhulai Bhai at UP Bhawan. Bhulai Bhai is 106 years old. Following the meeting, in which the Defence Minister warmly hugged the former MLA and had a long chat with him, Singh tweeted that he had a wonderful experience meeting Bhulai Bhai and that his simplicity was inspiring. He also wished him good health.

Shah calls for 'full majority' govt in Goa, raises Ram Mandir, Art 370

MAYURA JANWALKAR
DHARBANDORA, TALEGAON,
OCTOBER 14

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah told BJP workers in the state on Thursday to help the party achieve absolute majority in the coming Assembly elections scheduled early next year.

Addressing a BJP workers' gathering in Talegaon, Shah said, "Everybody talks about the double engine government... This time, we don't want a government of few bogies. We want a full majority government on our own symbol.

"Had Modji not got a full majority, could we have built the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya? Could we have nullified Article 370? Could we have led the country on the path of development in just seven years," Shah asked party workers gathered at the Talegaon Community Centre.

The minister said the party will turn Goa into a "model state" if it won absolute majority.

Earlier in the day, while speaking at the bhumi puja of National Forensic Sciences University campus in Dharbandora in South Goa, Shah said, "I am predicting that BJP will form a government with absolute majority."

Remembering late defence minister Manohar Parrikar, Shah said, "Under the leadership of Modi-ji, Parrikar-ji gave our three armed forces the gift of One Rank One Pension... For many years, extremists would cross our borders and spread terror... But with our surgical strikes, we showed the world that India's borders are not to be challenged."

Shah said the state and Central governments had brought about development. He also commended Chief Minister Pramod



Union minister Amit Shah lays the foundation stone for the third campus of the National Forensic Science University at Dharbandora in Goa on Thursday. *PTI*

Sawant for achieving 100 per cent vaccination of the eligible population in Goa, and said the state government's handling of the pandemic was among the best in the country.

Taking a swipe at AAP, Shah said, "Some people come here and say we will do this for free and that for free. What do they think Goais?"

Shah said the forensic university about to start in Goa will help improve conviction rates, generate employment opportunities for Goan youth and meet the shortage of manpower in the field.

There should be forensic teams at the district level across 600 districts in the country, he said. "For this, we will need 30,000-40,000 forensic scientists. Where will we get them? On one side, there is unemployment, on the other, there is shortage of skilled manpower. Only education is the answer to both and that is why the forensic sciences university was established," he said.

Shah takes dig at Manmohan, says Modi has enhanced value of Indian passport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
TALGAON, OCTOBER 14

ADDRESSING BJP workers in Talegaon, Union minister Amit Shah mentioned former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh more than once in his speech.

"During the Congress government, it was such a coalition that it was laughable... each minister considered themselves the Prime Minister but no one thought of the helpless PM as the Prime Minister," Shah said.

The Union minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was responsible for enhancing the value of the Indian passport. "Now when you show the Indian pass-

port, foreign officials smile and ask if you have come from the country of Modi... Modi has done this job of enhancing the value of the Indian passport. Atal-ji left India at number 11. It didn't even climb one position in the Congress government. *Manmohan-ji ke swabhaav ke anusar* (In tune with Manmohan's nature)... with Modi's arrival it was either at number five or number six," Shah said.

The minister said that under Modi's leadership, the government had given a fitting reply to those trying to infiltrate the Indian border. "It happened earlier during Manmohan Singh-ji's tenure too. There would be no answer from the government."

Bhutan, China sign pact on border talks, India takes note

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

INDIA ON Thursday said that it "noted" the agreement between Bhutan and China on a "three-step roadmap" to expedite negotiations to resolve their boundary dispute.

The signing of the pact came four years after the Indian and Chinese armies were locked in a 73-day standoff at the Doklam tri-junction after China tried to extend a road in the area that Bhutan claimed belonged to it.

"We have noted the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Bhutan and China today. You are aware that Bhutan and China have been holding boundary negotiations since 1984. India has similarly been holding boundary negotiations with China," the Ministry of External Affairs' official spokesperson, Arindam Bagchi, said.

In a statement, Bhutan said its Foreign Minister, Lyonpo Tandi Dorji, and China's Assistant Foreign Minister, Wu Jiahua, on Thursday signed the MoU on the "three-step roadmap" for expediting the Bhutan-China boundary negotiations. "The

MoU on the three-step roadmap will provide a fresh impetus to the boundary talks," the Bhutanese foreign ministry said.

It is expected that the implementation of this roadmap in a spirit of goodwill, understanding and accommodation will bring the boundary negotiations to a successful conclusion that is acceptable to both sides, it said.

"The negotiations which have been conducted in a spirit of understanding and accommodation have been guided by the 1988 Joint Communiqué on the Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the Boundary and the 1998 agreement on the maintenance of peace, tranquility and status quo in the Bhutan-China Border areas," the Bhutanese foreign ministry said.

"During the 10th Expert Group Meeting in Kunming in April this year, the two sides agreed on a three-step roadmap that will build on the 1988 Guiding Principles and help to expedite the ongoing boundary negotiations," it said.

Bhutan shares an over 400-km-long border with China and the two countries have held over 24 rounds of boundary talks in a bid to resolve the dispute.

WITH PTI

Global Hunger Index: India slips to rank 101, behind Pak, Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

INDIA HAS slipped to 101st position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th and is behind its neighbours Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Eighteen countries, including China, Brazil and Kuwait, shared the top rank with GHI score of less than five, the website of the GHI that tracks hunger and malnutrition said on Thursday.

Report, prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welt Hunger Hilfe, termed the level of hunger in India

"alarming".

In 2020, India was ranked 94th out of 107 countries. With 116 countries in the fray, it has dropped to 101st rank. India's GHI score has also decelerated -- from 38.8 in 2000 to the range of 28.8-27.5 between 2012 and 2021.

The GHI score is calculated on four indicators -- undernourishment; child wasting (the share of children under the age of five who are wasted i.e.; who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition); child stunting (children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition) and child mortality (the mortality rate of children under the age of five).

India gets re-elected to UNHRC for 2022-24 term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UNITED NATIONS, OCTOBER 14

INDIA WAS re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council for the 2022-24 term on Thursday with an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, with New Delhi's envoy here describing it as a "robust endorsement" of the country's strong roots in democracy, pluralism and fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The 76th UN General Assembly held elections on Thursday for 18 new members of the UN Human Rights Council who will serve for a period of three years, starting in January 2022. India got 184 votes in the 193-member assembly, while the required majority was 97.

"It's a robust endorsement of our strong roots in democracy, pluralism and fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution. We thank all UN Member States for giving us a strong mandate," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Dr T S Tirumurti said.

India's term was set to end on December 31 2021. For election for the term 2022-2024, there were five vacant seats in the Asia-Pacific States category -- India, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Qatar and UAE.

India's Permanent Mission to the UN tweeted: "We will continue to work for promotion and protection of Human Rights through #Samman #Samvad #Sahyog."

Sena to sound poll bugle for BMC polls at Dussehra rally

VISHWAS WAGHMODE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

CHIEF MINISTER Uddhav Thackeray is expected to sound the poll bugle for the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and other local bodies' elections at the annual Dussehra rally on Friday. The Shiv Sena chief is expected to take on the BJP on multiple issues, ranging from state to national politics, and speak on the development issues in Mumbai and Maharashtra.

Shiv Sena sources said a presentation on various development works undertaken in Mumbai in the past five years will be made. "The presentation will show that we not only make promises but



CM Uddhav Thackeray pays tribute to Sena founder Bal Thackeray, in Mumbai. *Twitter/OfficeofUT*

also fulfill them," said a Sena functionary, adding that it will underline the party's tagline "Karun Dakhvale (we did it)".

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut

said Thackeray will give a befitting reply to political opponents who were engaged in a campaign against the party over the past few months.

Maharashtra minister arrested for abduction, assault; released on bail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

A YEAR and a half after a Thane-based engineer was allegedly kidnapped and beaten at state Housing Minister Jitendra Awhad's residence, the Thane police arrested Awhad on Thursday. The minister was produced in court and released on bail.

According to the police, the victim, Anant Karmuse (40), had alleged that in April last year, 10-15 men, including two police constables



Jitendra Awhad

bles, abducted him from his Ghodbunder Road residence and took him to Awhad's bungalow, where he was beaten up for a social media post. It was stated that Karmuse had been uploading allegedly objectionable social media posts on Awhad's family members

and NCP leaders for two years.

The police had arrested five persons at that time.

Following the incident, the BJP had demanded that Awhad be dropped from the Cabinet.

"On Thursday evening, Awhad appeared before Vartak Nagar police station in connection with the case registered against him and others... after recording his statement, he was produced in Thane court and then released on a bail bond of Rs 10,000 cash and one surety," said an official.

Sidhu meets Cong leaders, says will abide by party decision

KANCHAN VASDEV
& MANOJ CG
CHANDIGARH, NEW DELHI,
OCTOBER 14

OVER A fortnight after he resigned as Punjab Congress president, Navjot Singh Sidhu raised his issues at a meeting with senior party leaders at the Congress headquarters in Delhi on Thursday. He was summoned to the capital by AICC general secretary in charge of organisation KC Venugopal, and party general secretary in charge of Punjab Harish Rawat.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* after the meeting, Rawat said Sidhu told them that he would abide by the party leadership's decision. "The direction from the party leadership is clear. He has been given the responsibility to strengthen the Congress in Punjab and inject enthusiasm," Rawat said. He said Sidhu will make an official announcement on Friday.

Speaking to reporters, Sidhu said: "I have raised my concerns... I have full faith in the Congress president, Priyanka ji and Rahul ji. *Jo bhi nirnay lenge, woh Congress aur Punjab ke hit mein hoga* (Whatever decision is taken will be for the benefit of Congress and Punjab). I will abide by whatever they say."

Earlier in the day, speaking at *The Indian Express* Idea Exchange, Rawat said: "I think he has discussed the issues which he raised -- he has discussed it with the Chief Minister. On one issue, they have come to an understanding; on another issue, we will try to thrash out. I am quite hopeful. He has not pressed for the acceptance of his resignation."

"His resignation is only on Twitter. We have seen it in the newspapers... He is very active on Congress issues. Recently in Lakhimpur, (on) the farmers' issue... he was part of a march to Lakhimpur and courted arrest also... So he is doing his political work," Rawat said, when asked whether he was confident that Sidhu would continue as the state Congress chief.



Sidhu after meeting KC Venugopal and Harish Rawat in Delhi. *Tashi Tobgyal*

EXPLAINED
E Time running out

EVEN A month after the replacement of Amarinder Singh as Chief Minister, the Congress is still on fire-fighting mode in Punjab. While the elections are approaching, the party is nowhere near finalising even its election management committees.

Following Sidhu's meeting with party leaders, a Congress source said: "Today, he has told the party about his issues. All this while, he was raising the issues largely on Twitter. We have heard him out. The party will soon make an announcement on his future." Sources said Sidhu has been asked to deal with the general secretary in-charge, instead of calling up Rahul and Priyanka directly. The party also sent out a message by appointing Siddharth Chattopadhyaya as Vigilance chief in Punjab. Sidhu was pushing for Chattopadhyaya to be the state DGP.

According to sources, Sidhu wanted an assurance that he should be the Congress's next CM face in Punjab, "He does not say it in as many words but the pressing issue is that he wants to be the next CM face," said a party leader.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Amid war of words, Channi meets Amarinder

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 14

AMID A war of words between the state Congress and former CM Capt Amarinder Singh over the Centre's decision to enhance jurisdiction of BSF in Punjab, and PPCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu being summoned to Delhi by the party high command, Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi called on his predecessor at the latter's farmhouse Thursday.

While a leader close to Channi called it a "personal visit" which had no bearing on the state of affairs between Amarinder and Congress, another leader claimed he was trying to garner support for himself against Sidhu, who was not accepting his authority as CM.

Meanwhile, former PPCC chief Sunil Jakhar continued with his barbs over the CM's meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, saying that the CM "had unwittingly handed half the state to the



Charanjit Singh Channi

CM: Simplify land rules, form panel

Chandigarh: Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi Thursday directed the state Chief Secretary to constitute a committee to simplify land ownership rules. He said the initiative would go a long way to streamline the existing procedure of 'gir-dawari and jamabandi' that will protect the people from sheer exploitation through illegal practices. **PTI**

Centre", "I used the word unwittingly because Channi is new to the job," he told *The Indian Express*.

In poll-bound UP, Vishwakarma Vatikas for EBC artisans

ESHAROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE CENTRAL government will set up Vishwakarma Vatikas at Hunar Haats (talent fairs) in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh to showcase traditional skills and craftsmanship, officials said Thursday.

Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Arjun Ram Meghwal will inaugurate the first such Vishwakarma Vatika and Hunar Haat in Rampur district -- which has a population of over 50 per cent Muslims -- on October 16.

The move is being seen as a strategy to cater to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) ahead of the UP elections -- specifically the Pasmanda Muslims or Dalit Muslims belonging to the 'Arzal' class as well as Hindu communities which form the Extremely Backward Classes in the state.

According to BJP sources, the Haats will now focus on communities such as Kahar, Kewat-Mallah, Kumhar, Kundja, Gujjar, Gaddi-Ghosi, Qureshi, Jogi, Mali, Teji, Darji, Nut, Banjara, Badhyi, Chudidar, Momin-Julaha, Mansuri, Dhuniya, Rangrej, Lohar, Halwai, Hajjam, Dhobi, Bhishti, Mochi, Rajmishri etc.

Minister Naqvi told *The Indian Express*: "The Vishwakarma Vatikas will be set up at Hunar Haats to promote and preserve traditional skills of artisans and craftsmen where they will also be displaying how India's traditional exquisite and elegant indigenous handmade products are made. Prime Minister Modi has also talked about these artisans in his *Mann Ki Baat* address and he has talked of the need to concentrate on their upliftment."

However, sources in the BJP said the move will be "politically advantageous" for the party ahead of the UP Assembly elec-

tions. "The Pasmanda Muslims form approximately 30 per cent of UP's population. Aside from the Muslims -- these are common castes among the Muslims and the Hindus. While many of the lower caste Hindus may have changed their religion to Islam, the caste remains the same. So, potters, carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths -- are common in both religions. This is who we are concentrating on, as these communities are neglected by both the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samajwadi Party," said a BJP leader.

The ministry will organise four major Hunar Haats with

Vishwakarma Vatikas in Rampur, Lucknow, Agra and Prayagraj, and these will conclude before elections are announced, said sources.

Vishwakarma Vatikas will be set up as exclusive enclosures within Hunar Haats to showcase the work that is done by these EBC communities, with demonstrations and sale of their products.

When artisans are called to participate in Hunar Haats, the government provides them a daily allowance of Rs 1,500, train fare, a companion to guide them and transportation cost for their products. The artisan also gets to keep the entire proceeds of sale.

The BJP launched a drive targeting OBCs in particular in Uttar Pradesh earlier this month and plans to conduct over 200 rallies across the state. The party has performed well electorally among these communities and their vote share has been on the rise steadily since 2014. Prime Minister Modi earlier announced 27 per cent reservation to the OBCs in NEET and in a recent expansion of the Yogi Adityanath cabinet, three OBC leaders were inducted among the seven new faces. The OBC community constitutes around 54 per cent of the total UP population.

Bommai sparks row with moral policing remark

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 14

KARNATAKA CHIEF Minister Basavaraj Bommai has triggered a controversy by seeming to justify acts of moral policing carried out by vigilante groups in Dakshina Kannada region of the state.

Responding to a question on the growing incidents of moral policing by right wing vigilantes, purportedly to prevent inter community relationships, Bommai said on Wednesday: "This is a sensitive issue. We all have responsibilities in a society. There are multiple sentiments in a society and people will need to function in a manner that does not hurt sentiments. When sentiments are hurt there will normally be action and reaction".

Bommai was speaking to reporters at the Bajpe airport in Mangaluru. "The responsibility of the government, apart from maintaining law and order, is to preserve social harmony. Everyone must cooperate. Some youths need to ensure that the sentiments of their society are not hurt. This is a social issue and we need morality in society. We cannot live without morality," he said. "Peace in society and relationships are dependent on morality. When there is no morality there will be action and reaction. There is a responsibility on everyone and not just one section of society," he said.

Reacting to his statements, Congress leader and former CM Siddaramaiah tweeted: "Is your loyalty towards our Constitution or towards Manu Smriti? ...You have accepted your incapability to maintain law & order by justifying moral policing by a few anti-social elements. Please resign & save Karnataka... Innocent women are being targeted in the name of moral policing. The government is trying to protect anti-social elements instead of putting them behind bars.



Basavaraj Bommai

Appeasing RSS may be necessary to save your position, but you should not stoop this low."

In a series of tweets, Siddaramaiah said: "Mr @BSBommai, whenever women are subjected to moral policing henceforth, can the people of Karnataka assume that you are the true reason for the crime? It is more criminal to encourage & incite violence, and protect the perpetrators... Do you have any plans to dissolve the police department, and hand over the law & order to RSS? Or are you planning to establish Jungle Raj? "

A group of 56 advocates, retired judges and social organisations also condemned Bommai's remarks in an official statement. "Your statement that social morality is to be protected is not an innocent message. It sends out a dangerous message that as far as you are concerned, it is okay to use violence to enforce what some people see as morality," said the statement endorsed by several signatories, including former Karnataka High Court Judge H Nagamohan Das.

"These acts of violence affect the dignity of the youth and instil fear in them. It condemns minorities and Dalits to lead the life of second-class citizens. It also conveys the message that women have no right in choosing their partners. It is an attack on all women in fact. It also fills the minds of many youth among the majority community with hate," said the statement.

At SCO meet, Rajnath hails Indira for leading India during war time

ESHAROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

POINTING TO former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and former President Pratibha Patil as examples of women empowerment in India, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Thursday said it is for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation nations "to ensure regional stability, promote peace, ensure gender equality and work towards betterment of the entire region".

Addressing the inaugural session of an international seminar organised by the SCO – a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance headquartered in Beijing – on the 'Role of Women in the Armed Forces', the minister said, "Indira Gandhi not only led the country for a number of years, she also did so during times of war... more recently... Pratibha Patil was the President of India and the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces."

Singh further announced that from next year, women shall be able to join the national Defence Academy, "India's premier tri-service pre-commissioning training institute".

"India remains deeply committed to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and its charter. We have long standing and natural linkages throughout history to all the countries in this unique grouping. Our shared culture, ethnic, civilisational and geographical past has only been reinforced by our warm relationships and close ties. I have no doubt that this augurs well for a mutually fulfilling relationship in the future."

The minister said India's "approach to the induction of women in the police, central police, paramilitary and armed forces has been progressive. We have taken the evolutionary path of moving from support to combat support and thereafter to combat arms within the armed force."

Singh said that the role of women in ancient Indian literature has never been confined by gender stereotypes and that this literature is "replete" with examples that reinforce equality and feminism. "It therefore comes as no surprise that a number of women have reached the rank of Lieutenant General and equivalent within the Indian Armed Forces, leading their men and women under the most challenging conditions."

The minister said the "changing character of war" is "bringing threats from our borders to within our society and amongst the people". "Terrorism is just the most obvious and diabolical manifestation of this reality... It has been employed as a weapon of choice by non-state actors and irresponsible states alike for the furtherance of their political objectives. SCO as an organization has unequivocally rejected terrorism in all its manifestations and forms," he said.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with CDS Gen Bipin Rawat at a BRO event in Delhi on Thursday. Amit Mehra

Sela tunnel work on track

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Thursday conducted the final breakthrough blast of Sela tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday remotely from the National War Memorial in Delhi.

The tunnel, expected to be completed by June 2022, goes through Sela Pass and is expected to cut down the distance to China border through Tawang by 10 km. It is being constructed at a height of over 13,000 feet.

"Apart from strengthening our national security, this tunnel will strengthen the social and economic conditions of the region by bringing a transformative change in public transport. Built with state of the art features and technology, the tunnel will prove to be the lifeline of not only Tawang, but the entire state," Singh said. The Sela tunnel would cut down by at least an hour the travel time between the Army's 4 Corps headquarters at Tezpur in Assam and Tawang.

It would ensure that National Highway 13 remains accessible in all weather conditions.



CBSE first term exam schedule to be out Oct 18

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE DATE-SHEET for the first term of CBSE class 10 and 12 examinations, scheduled for November-December, is set to be released by the Board on October 18, it is learnt.

The Board had announced in July that instead of conducting one annual examination at the end of the year this academic session, it would divide the syllabus in half and tests for each half would be conducted in two-term examinations. The first term examinations will be held offline in November-December in 90-minute, objective type formats.

To optimise the examination schedule, the Board communicated to schools on Thursday that it has decided to divide the subjects for both classes 10 and 12 into major subjects - offered by almost all affiliated schools - and minor subjects - offered by fewer schools.

The major subjects will follow a common fixed exam schedule like usual years after the minor subject exams are completed. The Board has created groups of schools which offer particular minor subjects and will create separate time tables for these so that different schools may conduct different exams on a given day. This has been done because the Board is offering 114 subjects in class 12 and 75 subjects in class 10 and has estimated that following the earlier system of a common schedule for all schools will result in the examinations taking up at least 45 days.

EXPLAINED
A need for flexibility

AFTER CBSE was forced to cancel the 2020-2021 annual examinations due to the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, it decided to create a two-term system to allow more flexibility. By breaking up the syllabus in two parts, the Board has created options to choose from in the event of another complete closure of schools.

Since the exams are being conducted in the middle of the academic year, the Board is trying to "avoid learning loss".

There are 19 major subjects for class 12 and 9 major subjects for class 10. The reading time for the exams have been increased from 15 minutes to 20 minutes.

The second term examination is scheduled for March-April 2022. Students will not be considered 'pass', 'compartment' or 'essential repeat' after the first term exam as their final result will only be declared after the second term exam.

Bengal assault case: Vijayvargiya, two others granted anticipatory bail

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court on Thursday granted anticipatory bail to BJP leaders Kailash Vijayvargiya, Jisnu Basu and Pradeep Joshi in a case of alleged assault on a woman and criminal intimidation. The interim bail will remain effective till October 25, the vacation bench ordered, adding, the petitioners will not tamper with the evidence and intimidate witnesses in any manner. The petitioners had challenged an order of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Alipore, that directed registering an FIR against them.

PTI



When goodness wins

Celebrated across the country in various ways, Dussehra marks the end of Navratri and the resetting of our lives

OCTOBER marks the beginning of the festive season and as we head towards autumn and winter, it is a time for reflection, reorienting our inner selves, harmonising ourselves with the universe, renewing and resetting our lives. Navratri or the nine nights are all about this contemplative phase, connecting with the divine manifested as the sacred feminine, which ends in the celebratory God-realisation of Dussehra or Vijaydashmi.

Dussehra is the grand finale of the Navaratri celebrations and is observed on the tenth day in the Hindu calendar month of Ashvin or Kartik, the sixth and seventh month of the Hindu luni-solar calendar respectively, which typically coincides with the months of September or October.

It is one of the most important and revered Hindu festivals in India, celebrating the triumph of good over evil. It is observed for different reasons and celebrated differently in various parts of India. In the southern, eastern, north-eastern and some northern states of India, Vijaydashami marks the end of Durga puja, commemorating Goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura to restore and protect dharma. In the northern, central and western states, the festival marks the victory of Lord Rama over the demon king Ravana.

Vijaydashami celebrations include processions to a river or waterfront where the clay statues of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesha and Kartikeya are immersed amid music and chants. Symbolically, the devotees imbibe the goodness of divinity and purify themselves while vowing to uphold the goddess' way till she returns the next year. Elsewhere, towering effigies of Ravan, symbolising evil, are burnt with fireworks on the evening of Vijaydashami, marking the destruction of evil. This festival also starts the preparations for Diwali, the festival of lights, which is celebrated 20 days after Dussehra.

At many places in northern India, the fervour for Dussehra is built through Ramlila, or the brief version of the story of Rama, Sita and Lakshman, which is enacted over nine days. These days some of these have gone digital and even use guided laser to depict episodes. Old cities like Varanasi still uphold tradition as live performance artists depict the Ramayana on stage every evening for a month.

In south India, Vijaydashami is celebrated in a variety of ways, including worshipping Goddess Durga, lighting up temples and major forts, such as the palace at Mysore, and displaying colourful figurines. Mysore has traditionally been a renowned centre of Dussehra-Vijaydashami celebrations.

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BRIEFLY

BIHAR

1 lynched, two arrested after priest shot

Darbhanga: A 45-year-old priest was shot over a dispute over a mobile phone in Darbhanga district on Thursday. One of the alleged assailants, identified as Pulkrit Singh, was lynched and two others were arrested. The incident took place when four armed men barged into a temple and shot priest Rajeev Kumar Jha and injured a devotee. The injured devotee, identified as Shambhu Choudhary, has been hospitalised and his condition is stated to be stable. **PTI**

UTTARAKHAND

Kedamath, Yamunotri to close on Nov 6

Dehradun: The date for the closure of Badrinath will be announced on Friday on the occasion of Vijay Dashmi as is done traditionally, Uttarakhand Chardham Devasthanam Board media incharge Harish Gaud said. Closure of the Himalayan temples will mark the end of the annual Chardham Yatra, which had a delayed start for the second consecutive year last month due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over one lakh pilgrims have visited Chardham so far this year. **PTI**

MAHARASHTRA

Actor Armaan Kohli denied bail in drugs case

Mumbai: A special NDPS court in Mumbai on Thursday rejected the bail plea of Bollywood actor Armaan Kohli in a drugs case. Judge AA Joglekar rejected the bail plea. A detailed order was not available yet. Kohli was arrested on August 29 following a raid by the NCB at his residence during which banned drugs were allegedly seized. **PTI**

RAJASTHAN

Man arrested in Jodhpur for 'spying for Pak'

Jodhpur: An employee in the chief engineer office of the Military Engineer Service in Jodhpur was arrested for allegedly spying for Pakistan, police said on Thursday. Gajendra Singh, aged around 35 and a resident of Sirohi district, was in touch with a Pakistani woman through WhatsApp. He was passing on information of strategic importance to her, DGP, Intelligence, Umesh Mishra said. Singh, who is a photostat operator, would click photos of important files on his mobile phone and share them with the Pakistani woman, Mishra said. **PTI**

LAKHIMPUR KHERI DEATHS



Police re-create the sequence of events that took place on October 3 in Tikonia village, on Thursday. **PTI**

Union MoS Mishra's son taken to crime spot with other accused

MANISH SAHU

LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 14

THE UP Police's Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the killing of eight people in Lakhimpur Kheri, including four farmers, on October 3 brought main accused Ashish Mishra, who is Union MoS Ajay Mishra's son, and three others arrested in the case to the site of the incident on Thursday to re-create the crime scene with the help of three vehicles and dummy bodies.

The accused were also taken to MoS Ajay Mishra's village Banveerpur, around 2 km from



Ashish Mishra

the spot. Ashish Mishra has claimed that he was attending a wrestling event at the village when the incident occurred while farmers say the Minister's son was behind the wheel of one of the vehicles that hit a group of farm protesters that day. Four farmers were killed in the incident and four others in the violence that followed.

The re-creation was done before the three-day police custody

of Ashish Mishra ends Friday morning. Late Thursday, Mishra was sent to the district jail, with the SIT likely to approach the local court again for further police custody of the accused.

Thursday's exercise was done under tight security with the area cordoned off. But police sources told *The Indian Express* that during the process, all the accused except Ashish were asked to step out of their vehicle and questioned about their presence at the spot on the day of incident.

Sources said Ashish was not asked to step out as he had denied his presence there at the time of the incident.

But in Banveerpur village, defence counsel Awadesh Kumar Singh said, "all accused, including Ashish Mishra, were brought down from the vehicle". "SIT officials asked them several questions, including about the roads that lead to the incident site and to the Minister's house," Singh said.

Ankit Das, who is a nephew of former Congress MP, the late Akhilesh Das, is a businessman. Lateef has been identified as Das' security guard.

"During investigation, it came to light that Das, Lateef and Bharti were travelling in one of the SUVs involved in the incident," an SIT official said.

TRACKING THE SECOND SURGE

592 DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN

NEW CASES: 16,446
ACTIVE CASES: 2,03,911
TOTAL VACCINATION: 96,82,20,997

DAILY DEATHS 379
TOTAL DEATHS 4,51,814
WEEKLY CFR 0.98%
OVERALL CFR 1.34%



TESTS TODAY: 13,53,798 | TOTAL TESTS: 58,90,18,323
WEEKLY POSITIVITY: 1.35% | OVERALL POSITIVITY: 5.78%

STATES REPORTING MOST CASES

STATE	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	WEEKLY POSITIVITY	TOTAL VACCINATION
■ Kerala	9,246	96,342	11.09%	3,69,69,436
■ Maharashtra	2,384	29,560	1.72%	9,00,63,199
■ Tamil Nadu	1,259	15,451	0.93%	5,25,37,833
■ Mizoram	1,028	12,701	14.42%	11,85,914
■ Andhra Pradesh	540	6,588	1.43%	4,58,77,081

STATES REPORTING MOST DEATHS

STATE	TODAY'S DEATHS	TOTAL DEATHS	WEEKLY CFR	OVERALL CFR
■ Haryana**	174	10,049	197.73%	1.30%
■ Kerala	96	26,746	0.70%	0.57%
■ Maharashtra	36	143,302	1.85%	2.19%
■ Tamil Nadu	20	35,853	1.02%	1.35%
■ Andhra Pradesh	10	14,286	0.71%	0.70%

Note: Data as on Oct 14; vaccination numbers as of Oct 13. Deaths include those from previous days. **Haryana added 174 deaths today as a result of a data reconciliation exercise

UP BJP leader says PM should dismiss Union MoS Mishra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BALLIA, OCTOBER 14

BJP LEADER Ram Iqbal Singh on Thursday accused Union MoS Ajay Mishra of being behind the Lakhimpur Kheri violence and sought his sacking by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said questions are also being raised about the Prime Minister for not sacking the minister.

Singh alleged that Mishra was behind the Lakhimpur violence. His "threatening statement" added fuel to the fire, he said.

"He should have apologised to farmers but he only tried to defend his son. He has not regretted the incident yet. This incident is a blot on humanity," Singh, a BJP state executive member, told reporters. "His son crushed farmers to death under his car. He was arrested after the intervention of the Supreme Court, but even today the minister is sitting on the chair. In such a situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi should sack him immediately," he said.

In response to a question, Singh said that the image of the BJP government has been "tarnished" by the Lakhimpur incident and the Gorakhpur businessman's murder case.

He said that BJP workers have also been killed in the Lakhimpur incident and the government should take care of them. "Activists across the state are angry due to the callousness of the government on this incident. Like the farmers, the government should also provide financial assistance to the relatives of the deceased workers and a job to their family members," he said.

The former MLA claimed that the condition of dedicated party workers in the BJP has become like "bonded labourers".

Son-in-law framed by NCB, seizures done at agency office: NCP's Malik

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

NCP LEADER Nawab Malik on Thursday alleged that his son-in-law Sameer Khan and two others had been "framed" by the NCB in connection with a narcotics case in January this year.

His comments came a day after the detailed bail order passed by the special NDPS court while granting Khan and two others bail last month was made available on Wednesday.

In the order, the court has observed that no case for illicit drug trafficking and conspiracy was made out.

In a press conference on Tuesday, Malik showed photographs of seizures that the NCB alleged were made at his son-in-law's residence, but which, he claimed, were actually carried out at the NCB office.

Malik showed photographs of a chair and flooring seen in these photographs of drug seizures. He then showed photographs of the chair and flooring seen in the NCB office to indicate that the seizures were done at the NCB office.

Malik claimed that when this was pointed out to the NCB, the agency said that the seizures were done at the scene of crime.

Malik further claimed that while the NCB had claimed to have found 200 kg of ganja, the chemical analyst's report had proved that it was not ganja, but herbal tobacco.

"It is shocking that an anti-narcotic agency like NCB cannot distinguish between ganja and tobacco," he said.

Malik added that anti narcotic agencies have kits that instantly prove whether a substance is a



NCP leader Nawab Malik at a press conference in Mumbai on Thursday. **Amit Chakravarty**

narcotic or not, and wondered how they could not find out that the substance seized was not a narcotic.

"This is clear cut framing of people by NCB and from day one I have been saying that they have been indulging in 'farziwada' (fake cases)," Malik alleged. He added they will soon be approaching the Bombay High Court to quash the case.

When contacted about the allegations, NCB zonal director Sameer Wankhede said, "We are preparing to approach the Bombay High Court against the bail. I cannot comment on the matter as it is currently sub-judice."

Sources from the NCB, however, said that the court had granted bail to Sameer Khan and had not discharged him from the case.

An NCB official said that even if as per the court bail order there is 1.1 kg ganja recovered, it is an intermediate quantity that is punishable with 10 years behind bars. On questions about the ganja being seized at the NCB office instead of the crime scene, an official said that they will reply to that allegation to the court.

Elgaar Parishad case: Bombay HC gives Varavara Rao till Oct 28 to return to jail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14



Varavara Rao

THE BOMBAY High Court Thursday gave Elgaar Parishad accused Varavara Rao until October 28 to return to jail. The octogenarian, who had been granted medical bail for six months on February 22, had earlier been allowed extension until October 14.

Rao had sought further extension and permission to shift to his residence at Hyderabad in Telangana, citing ill health and high expenses in Mumbai.

A division bench of Justice Nitin M Jandam and Justice Sarang

V Kotwal could not hear Rao's plea due to paucity of time and said it will hear the petition later this month. However, the bench extended until October 28 the earlier interim order giving Rao until October 14 to "surrender".

Rao's plea stated that the six-month period following his release ended on September 5 and he continues to suffer from ailments that require treatment.

The 81-year-old's petition

CBI busts recruitment racket in CRPF's CoBRA unit; 5 booked

New Delhi: The CBI has busted a recruitment racket by booking five CRPF constables posted at the headquarters of its elite CoBRA force for allegedly taking bribes to get failed candidates selected in the anti-Maoist commando unit, officials said on Thursday.

The agency's action came on a complaint from the CoBRA headquarters, which alleged that some constables, who underwent pre-induction training at the CoBRA

School of Jungle Warfare and Tactics, had alleged a "criminal network" was operating, which took bribes from failed candidates to get them selected, they said.

The agency has booked constables general duty Sashi Kanwar, Rahul Rath, Manoj Kumar, Mohit Kumar Rath, Velu Murugan and former constable Sandeep Kumar, they said. CBI conducted searches at premises of the accused in Delhi, Haryana and UP. **PTI**

PMC bank fraud case: HC rejects Wadhawan's medical bail plea

OMKAR GOKHALE

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

THE BOMBAY High Court on Thursday rejected the medical bail plea of HDIL promoter Rakesh Wadhawan, arrested on charges of money laundering in the multi-crore Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank Limited fraud case.

The court was informed that a dual-chamber pacemaker implantation had been successfully carried out on Wadhawan and that arrangements were being made to prepare a cardiac care unit (CCU) at the BMC-run KEM Hospital, where he was shifted from Arthur Road Jail last month.

Wadhawan underwent pacemaker surgery at KEM hospital due to emergency reasons.

Justice Sambre, while rejecting the plea, granted liberty to Wadhawan to approach the lower court to seek relief in case of emergency, if certain facilities including cardiac-ICU required are not made available to him at the BMC-run KEM hospital.

Wadhawan, in his plea, had said the government hospitals do not have sufficient facilities to treat him.

Wadhawan has been named as an accused by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Economic Offences Wing of the Mumbai Police in the PMC Bank fraud case.

Off govt records, debt trap fuels migration from Kalahandi

AISHWARYA MOHANTY

KALAHANDI, OCTOBER 14

JEMANA K bursts into tears on being reminded of her loans. "My mother has been disturbed ever since a loan collection agent knocked at our door and abused her," the 50-year-old's daughter, Ranjata, says.

Naik is an ASHA worker in Pokhrighat village of Odisha's tribal-majority Kalahandi district. Early last year, she borrowed Rs 30,000 from a private micro-finance company for her elder son's wedding. Months later, with Covid-19 curbs squeezing the family's income to just the Rs 50-70 her husband earns every day from grazing cattle, she took another loan of Rs 25,000.

Both loans were taken at an interest of 23.78 per cent, and Naik's family is now caught in a debt trap.

It is also among several families in the district whose earning members have migrated for the first time to other states to help their families repay loans taken during the Covid-19 year. "Two of my brothers are daily wage workers in Kerala," Ranjata says.

According to district officials and residents, most of these loans were taken for weddings, medical treatment and post-monsoon house repairs. "We have received inputs that people in many villages are relying on these micro-finance companies and we have been trying to reach out to assist them," says additional district magistrate, Kalahandi, Sarat Chandra Srichandan.

"The loss of income due to restrictions on movement during the pandemic and very few work opportunities at the village level are the main reasons. Many families had to rely on loans to make



Jamik (extreme left) with family at his house. **Aishwarya Mohanty**

up for the loss of income. This has led to an increase in migration for work from the region," says Sameet Panda, co-convenor of Odisha Khadya Adhikar Abhiyan, a Right to Food activist who conducts regular visits in this region.

This migration, however, does

not reflect in official records, making it difficult for officials to track this trend on the ground. For instance, records show that 4,171 people from the district migrated to other states for work between 2018 and 2021. However, during the pandemic last year, the district

recorded the return of 40,982 migrant workers from various states.

In Niali village of Lanjigarh block, 17-year-old Bulu was the first from his family to move out of the state for work. "We were unable to pay the installments for a loan of Rs 30,000 that we took to rebuild our house after heavy rains. I had no work during the pandemic, and we are a family of seven. To repay that loan, I had to take another loan and our house is still incomplete," Bulu's father, Janik (34), says. "Bulu left for Hyderabad in September to work in a garage. What other choice do we have?" he asks.

Kalahandi has 19 public sector banks operating across 13 blocks and catering to a population of 15.8 lakh. But according to local officials and residents, private micro-finance is easily accessible.

"Visits to government banks are tedious. In the case of microfi-

nance companies, the loans appear lucrative because small amounts are sanctioned. We don't have to travel anywhere... the agents come to the village. We can take multiple loans and pay them over a long period," says Subha Bag, a 30-year-old from ASHA worker Naik's Pokhrighat village.

The tenure of micro loans in rural areas are usually for a minimum of 20 months with installments to be paid every fortnight. The loans are easy to avail, and provided with hardly any collateral, although delays in payment lead to heavy fines.

Public sector banks have been trying to reach the rural population with multiple loan schemes, says a senior banker involved with operations in the region. "The interest rate is as low as 4 percent in some of them. But it is true that there are connectivity issues in some blocks... making routine

procedures a tiring affair," he says.

Officials say they are aware of private microfinance companies, but there is no official assessment on the number of such lenders. "In most cases, these are companies which don't operate from here but have an employee stationed in the district," says Srichandan, the additional district magistrate.

Bag warns that once families fall into a debt trap, there is hardly any option but to approach the private lenders again. "I first took a loan of Rs 40,000 and then another of Rs 26,000 to pay the first one. I have more than 27 installments to pay. Initially, I had to pay Rs 700 every 15 days. We thought we could manage and took the loan to construct another room," she says.

"But now, the room is yet to be constructed. And my husband left for Kerala in August to rescue the family's finances."

Pune land grab case: Khadse’s wife gets interim arrest protection

OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

GRANTING INTERIM relief from arrest to Mandakini Khadse, wife of NCP leader Eknath Khadse who has been booked by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a Pune land grab case, Bombay High Court directed her to appear before it every Tuesday and Friday between 10 am and pm from October 17 till further orders. The court instructed her to cooperate with the ED.

The court said that in the event of arrest by ED, Mandakini will be released on bail on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 50,000 and sureties in the like amount. The matter was posted for further hearing on December 7.

The court also directed Mandakini not to influence the prosecution witnesses or tamper with evidence while granting liberty to ED to mention its grievance before HC in case the applicant fails to attend the agency office as directed. The court also said that the respondent ED is at liberty to file an affidavit in reply to the anticipatory bail application.

Maharashtra govt increases local MLA funds to Rs 4 crore

Mumbai: The state government has hiked the legislator local area development fund from Rs 3 crore to Rs 4 crore.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who is also the finance minister, had made this announcement in the 2021-22 Budget speech. This move will put an additional burden of roughly Rs 350 crore to the state exchequer.

In the previous budget, the state had increased the legislator local area development fund from Rs 2 crore to Rs 3 crore, but it was not released till last month due to a drop in revenue caused by the pandemic-induced lockdown. In the 14 months of the MVA government’s tenure, MLA funds have been increased by 100 per cent.

NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESOURCE AND CO-ORDINATION HUB (NATIONAL E-HUB)
PRADHAN MANTRI YUVA YOJANA
(Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India)

RFP for empanelment of Agency for Content Creation & operationalization of Social Media Channels

National E-Hub, PM-YUVA on behalf of NIESBUD (National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development) invites sealed Request For Proposal (RFP) from reputed agencies for empanelment, to undertake Content Creation & operationalization of social media channels.

The RFP Document, containing the details of qualification criteria, submission requirement, brief objective & scope of work, can be downloaded from the NIESBUD website <https://niesbud.nic.in/>

Interested agencies having relevant work experience may submit their RFP by **11:59 Hrs of 04.11.2021 to PM -YUVA, National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), A-23, Sector – 62, Noida – 201309**

THE AMBALA DISTT. CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' UNION LTD. AMBALA

DISTRIBUTOR REQUIRED FOR VITA MILK & MILK PRODUCTS

Applications are hereby invited from interested parties having facility of Refrigerated/ Insulated Vehicles, Good Network and preferably having experience in Sale of Milk & Milk Products may send their application for allotment of Distributorship for below mentioned areas.

- Mohali (Punjab)
- Ponta Sahib (Himachal Pradesh)
- Baddi (Nalagarh, Batoli, Dabni, Industrial area Phase-2, Katha Industrial Area, Thana Industrial Area, EPIP-1, Saini Majra) Himachal Pradesh.
- Ambala Cantt. (Bihta, Kesri, Mohra, Durana, Sahpur, Kuldeep Nagar, Nagla, Tandwal, Rao Majra) Haryana.
- Zirakpur (Punjab)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- Applicant should be permanent resident of same Area supported by proof of I.D. Aadhar Card, Water Electricity Bill, Age Limit 18-55 years.
- Financially sound and Experience- Minimum annual turnover of Rs. 1.00 Crore and experience with related business.
- He/She shall have own godown facility with minimum 700-1000 sq.ft. area.
- He/She shall have minimum fleet of 1-2 Insulated/ Refrigerated Vehicles.
- He/She shall have adequate Field Staff.
- He/She shall have Food License at the time of commencement of Distributorship.
- He/She shall not disturb the sale point of existing Distributors.

Application form may be acquired from Milk Plant Ambala from 11.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. on any working day against cash payment of **Rs. 500/-**. Last Date for Submission of Application form is **08.11.2021 by 4.00 P.M.** along with Demand Draft of **Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rs. One Lac only)** favoring **“The Ambala District Coop. Milk Producers Ltd. payable at Ambala”**.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer,
Milk Union, Ambala.

5205/HRV

After attacks, Valley mosques relay messages of solidarity

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 14

OVER THE last week, some mosques in the Valley have started broadcasting messages of solidarity and unity with the minority community in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) following the “targeted attacks” in which four persons have been killed so far. The Kashmiri Hindus living in the Valley have welcomed the step, and hoped that more mosques would follow.

“The role of these masjid committees over the last few days is commendable,” said Sanjay

Seven judges appointed to three High Courts

New Delhi: Seven judges, including four advocates, were appointed to three high courts on Thursday. Those appointed included four advocates and three judicial officers, the Department of Justice in the Law Ministry said.

While four judges were appointed to the Patna High Court, two were appointed to the Bombay High Court. One judge was appointed to the Allahabad

Tickoo, president of the Kashmir Pandits Sangarsh Samiti. “The messages of reassurance from the masjids have sparked a new ray of hope of understanding and community bonding,” he said.

“I once again humbly request all masjid committees in Kashmir Valley to give some time after Friday prayers to emphasise the value and importance of Kashmiri society, with respect to social and moral security of the minorities living here,” Tickoo said.

It began last Friday, when two mosques in Srinagar Old City asked its worshippers to stand by members of the minority community and ensure that they feel confident of their support. Since then, other mosques too have relayed similar messages.

On October 5, a prominent Kashmiri businessman, M L Bindroo, and a street vendor from Bihar, Virendar Paswan, were killed in separate attacks. Two days later, Supinder Kour, a Sikh principal of a government higher secondary school, and her colleague Deepak Chandra, a resident of Jammu, were killed inside their school in Srinagar.

According to unverified reports, The Resistance Front (TRF), a militant outfit, claimed responsibility for these killings.

High Court, according to the list issued by the Law Ministry.

A total of 14 new judges were on Wednesday appointed to three high courts, a day after a record 17 appointments across three other high courts. Between August 8 and September 1, the apex court collegium had processed over 100 names recommended by various high courts and had finally sent 68 names to the government for appointment as judges to 12 high courts. Later, more names were sent to the government. On October 11, three advocates and two judicial officers were elevated as judges of Rajasthan High Court.

In a separate development, seven judges were on October 11 transferred to different high courts. On October 5, as many as 15 judges of 11 high courts were transferred.

TATA POWER RENEWABLE ENERGY LIMITED				
C/O The Tata Power Company Limited Corporate Center A Block, 34 Sant Tukaram Road, Carnac Bunder, Mumbai - 400 009, Maharashtra, India. CIN: U40109MH2007PLC168314				
EXTRACT OF FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021				
(Amount in ₹ crore)				
Particulars	Quarter ended on 30.09.2021	Quarter ended on 30.09.2020	Year ended on 31.03.2021	
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	
1 Total income from operations	342.83	290.52	1,113.20	
2 Net Profit for the period before tax	74.59	5.00	17.93	
3 Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax	47.92	3.09	12.47	
4 Total comprehensive income	47.80	2.95	11.95	
5 Paid-up equity share capital (Face value of ₹ 10 each)	1,045.11	1,045.11	1,045.11	
6 Reserve excluding revaluation reserve	182.52	101.25	111.16	
7 Net worth	5,122.63	5,041.36	5,051.27	
8 Outstanding debt	6,702.97	6,786.32	6,674.46	
9 Debt equity ratio *	1.31	1.35	1.32	
10 Basic Earnings per share (EPS) (₹) *	0.46	0.03	0.12	
11 Diluted Earnings per share (DPS) (₹) *	0.46	0.03	0.12	
12 Debenture redemption reserve	99.05	112.19	99.05	
13 Debt service coverage ratio *	1.92	1.55	1.37	
14 Interest service coverage ratio *	1.63	1.04	1.04	
Notes :				
1. The above results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on 14 th October, 2021.				
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (as amended). The full format of the financial results is available on the website of the stock exchange www.nseindia.com and on the Company's website www.tatapowerrnewables.com .				
3. For other line items referred in Regulation 52(4) of SEBI (Listing obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, pertinent disclosures have been made to the National Stock Exchange and can be accessed on URL www.nseindia.com .				
* In Case of quarterly numbers, Ratios have not annualised.				
For and on behalf of the Board of Directors				
Place : Mumbai	Praveer Sinha			
Dated : 14 th October 2021	Chairman			

अजमेर विकास प्राधिकरण, अजमेर

धनतेरस के अवसर पर अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय तीर्थ स्थल पुष्कर में होटल हेतु 12 एवं 1 व्यावसायिक भूखण्ड खरीदने का सुनहरा मौका

पुष्कर बस स्टेण्ड से मात्र 3 किमी. तथा ब्रह्मा मन्दिर से 1.5 किमी. ग्राम-गनाहेडा में प्राईम लोकेशन पर स्थित भूखण्ड डेस्टीनेशन वेडिंग, थीम वेडिंग, प्राकृतिक छटाओं के बीच सैर सपाटा, देशी-विदेशी सैलानियों के लिए उपयुक्त स्थान क्षेत्रफल : 1262.77 वर्ग मीटर से 3467.71 वर्ग मीटर तक प्रारम्भिक बोली मात्र रु. 5500 / – प्रति वर्ग मीटर से शुरू, खुली स्पर्धा ई-नीलामी के माध्यम से नीलामी दिनांक 03.11.2021 [रेरा पंजीयन संख्या RAJ/P/2020/1371]

नीलामी के नियम व शर्तों के लिए अजमेर विकास प्राधिकरण, अजमेर की वेबसाइट Website-urban.rajjasthan.gov.in/ada देखें।

भूखण्डों की अधिक जानकारी के लिए कॉल करें :- 6377531554 ऑनलाईन नीलामी की प्रक्रिया के बारे में कॉल करें :- 9828078227

टोडरमल लेन, सिविल लाईन्स, अजमेर — 305001

राज.संवा.नं/सी/21/7164

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान एवं प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Advertisement of Empanelment of Urdu Translators

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is expanding the panel of Freelance Urdu Translators for the purpose of translation of Teaching Learning materials of NCERT.

Therefore, all candidates are requested to fill the proforma. The proforma may be downloaded from www.ncert.nic.in

The application may be sent within 30 days from the publication of the advertisement on the address given below. To get the link of the proforma, scan the QR Code.

Section Officer
Technical and Coordination Section
Publication Division, NCERT
Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi- 110016
Ph.: 011-26852261, Email: pd.ncert@nic.in

davp 21104/11/0007/2122

GUJARAT
Woman tortured, killed for being ‘possessed’; 3 priests among 5 arrested

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
RAJKOT, OCTOBER 14

FIVE MEN were arrested Thursday for allegedly murdering a 25-year-old woman after torturing and branding her claiming that she was possessed by a spirit during Navaratri celebrations at a shrine in Okhamadhi village in Dwarka district on Wednesday.

The five, including three community priests and the brother-in-law of the woman, have been booked for murder with police saying the men assaulted the victim and branded her to exorcise the “evil spirit”.

According to an FIR registered at Dwarka police station, Ramila Solanki (25), wife of casual labourer Vala Solanki, started

GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EXCISE
L-BLOCK, VIKAS BHAWAN, I.P. ESTATE, NEW DELHI

NO:F.10 (56)/96-97/IMFL/EX/PF/1341-1359 Dated: 13.10.21

ORDER

In pursuance of the provisions of Rule 52 of Delhi Excise Rules, 2010, it is hereby ordered that following dates shall be observed as “Dry Day” in the National Capital Territory of Delhi by all L-1, L-1F, L-2, L-3, L-4, L-5, L-6, L-6FG, L-6FE, L-8, L-11, L-14, L-18, L-23, L-23F, L-25, L-26, L-31, L-32, L-33, L-34 and L-35 licensees and opium vends located in Delhi.

Sl. No	Occasion	Date	DAY
1	Dussehra	15.10.2021	Friday
2	Milad-un-Nabi or Id-e Milad (Birthday of Prophet Mohammad) *	19.10.2021	Tuesday
3	Maharishi Valmiki's Birthday	20.10.2021	Wednesday
4	Diwali (Deepavali)	04.11.2021	Thursday
5	Guru Nanak's Birthday	19.11.2021	Friday
6	Guru Teg Bahadur's Martyrdom Day	24.11.2021	Wednesday

The licensees shall not be entitled to any compensation on account of any changes effected in the above list.

The restriction of sale on liquor on dry days mentioned above shall not apply to the service of liquor to residents in case of hotels having L-15 license.

All the licensees shall exhibit this order at some conspicuous place of their licensed premises.

The business premises of a licensee shall be kept closed on dry day.

Sd/-
(ARAVA GOPI KRISHNA)
COMMISSIONER (EXCISE)

DIP/SHABDARTH/0359/21-22

Dalit woman gangraped, assaulted after tiff over collecting wood: police

Shivpuri: A 38-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly raped by three men in the presence of her husband in a forested area in Shivpuri district of Madhya Pradesh, police said Thursday.

The accused also assaulted the couple, leaving the woman with a broken arm, district superintendent of police Rajesh Singh said.

A police officer from the station where the case was filed said the couple was collecting firewood in a jungle when three persons arrived and an argument broke out over the wood.

The trio then raped the woman, the complaint said. Police on Thursday questioned some suspects and probe was on, officials said.

SWAMI DAYANAND POST GRADUATE INSTT. OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES, PGIMS, ROHTAK
ADMISSION NOTICE
FOR VACANT/LEFT OVER SEATS IN B. PHARMACY (1st Semester) 2021-2022

Refer to websites: www.uhsr.ac.in and www.pgimsrohtak.ac.in for Institutional level Counseling for admissions in Bachelor of Pharmacy semester 1 at Swami Dayanand Post Graduate Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pt. B.D. Sharma PGIMS, Rohtak.

Last date of applications is **22.10.2021**.

5225/HRV

MAHARASHTRA METRO RAIL CORPORATION LIMITED
(A joint venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Maharashtra)
“Metro Bhawan”, VIP Road, Near Dikshabhoomi, Ramdaspath, Nagpur-440010.
Telefax : 0712-2812300, Website : www.mahametro.org

ADVT NO: MAHA-Metro/HR/06/2021 Date: 15th October, 2021

Requirement of experienced employees from Metro Rail / Railway / Railway PSU's on Contract / Deputation basis for the period of Five Years for O & M Wing of Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited for Navi Mumbai Metro Line-1.

Sr. No.	Post Name (Post Code)	No. of Vacancy	Pay-Scale (IDA) in ₹
1.	Additional General Manager (O & M)-E6	01 (UR-01)	1,00,000-2,60,000/-
2.	Joint General Manager (Maintenance)-E5	01 (UR-01)	90,000-2,40,000/-
3.	Joint General Manager (S & T and AFC)-E5	01 (UR-01)	90,000-2,40,000/-
4.	Manager (Rolling Stock & Depot Equipment)-E2	01 (UR-01)	60,000-1,80,000/-
5.	Manager (Electrical)-E2	01 (UR-01)	60,000-1,80,000/-
6.	Manager (Civil & Track)-E2	01 (UR-01)	60,000-1,80,000/-
7.	Assistant Manager (Civil & Track)-E1	01 (UR-01)	50,000-1,60,000/-
8.	Assistant Manager (Rolling Stock & Depot Equipment)-E1	01 (UR-01)	50,000-1,60,000/-
9.	Assistant Manager (Electrical)-E1	01 (UR-01)	50,000-1,60,000/-
10.	Chief Controller-S4	03 (UR-02, OBC-01)	46,000-1,45,000/-
11.	Senior Section Engineer-S4 (Traction Power Controller)	01 (UR-01)	46,000-1,45,000/-
12.	Senior Station Controller/ Senior Train Controller / Senior Traffic Controller-S3	08 (UR-04, OBC-02, SC-01, ST-01)	40,000-1,25,000/-
13.	Junior Engineer-S1 (Electrical)	04 (UR-03, OBC-01)	33,000-1,00,000/-
14.	Junior Engineer-S1 (Signal & Telecom)	04 (UR-03, OBC-01)	33,000-1,00,000/-

Important : (1) Eligibility qualification/experience, maximum age limit, details of how to apply etc. for the above advertised posts are available on MAHA-Metro website-www.mahametro.org/career. (2) The complete filled application form should reach General Manager(HR) at this office latest by **08.11.2021**.

General Manager (HR), MAHA-METRO

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Auction Notice

Auction of Lot No. 1, KM.1361/22-24 TO 1374/33-1375/01, 133 Nos trees, Lot No. 2, KM.1284/0 TO 1296/15-17, 284 Nos trees, Lot No. 3, KM.1343/01-3 TO 1360/3-7, 246 Nos trees, Lot No.4, KM.1298/18-20 TO 1320/18-20, 113 Nos trees & Lot No.5, KM.1296/22-24 to 1323/4-6, 141 Nos dangerous trees under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway Bareilly will be auctioned in the office of Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway Bareilly. All the interested bidders are invited to participate in this auction.

Auction place: - Office of the Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway / Bareilly on date :- 09.11.2021 at 11:00 AM

1.	All the bidders will deposit cash Rs 100/- (for the lot, interested by bidder) in the office of Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway/ Bareilly which will not be refunded and shall also deposit Rs 8000/- (for the lot, interested by bidder) in favor of Sr. Divisional Finance Manager Northern Railway Moradabad as a Demand Draft of SBI or Other Nationalized Bank.
2.	All the bidders who will take part in auction will also have proper knowledge of Auction rules and others allowances.
3.	Successful bidders will deposit the Demand Draft of SBI or Other Nationalized Bank in favour of Sr. DFM/MB or station earning in cash on same day with following rate:- (for the lot, interested by bidder)
a	10% amount of selling price or minimum amount Rs 25,000/- whichever is maximum on purchase of more than Rs 1,00,000/-
b	Balance amount will be deposited within 10 days including the date of auction.
c	GST @ 18% will be deposited on total within 10 days including the date of auction.
4.	The work should be completed within 60 days including the date of auction.
5.	Railway has right to close the work any time. In this situation the balance amount will be returned without interest.
6.	Complete Details of tree with locations will be available in the Divisional Office Moradabad.
7.	Bidders are requested to quote their rates according to the tree locations.
8.	Trees will be delivered and handed over in the presence of SSE/works, ISA and RPF.
9.	If the balance amount is not deposited within 10 days including the date of auction, then initial deposited amount will be forfeited.
10.	Bidders will not make any Kutcha/Pakka construction in the land of Railway.
11.	Bid will not be quoted below the base price.
12.	Demand draft will be deposited in the office of Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway/ Bareilly from 09:00 am to 10:30 AM. After that no demand draft will be accepted.
13.	The approval of tree cutting must be taken from the Forest Department by the buyer. Tree cutting charges will have to be borne by he buyer himself only as per the charges given below. Tree cutting approval will be given by this office after the submission of receipt fee paid to Forest Department to the Division. Lot No.1, KM.1361/22-24 TO 1374/33-1375/01, Rate of cutting charges Rs. 17290/-, of Total trees = 133 Nos. Lot No.2, KM.1343/01-3 TO 1360/3-7, Rate of cutting charges Rs. 31980/-, of Total trees = 246 Nos Lot No.3, KM.1284/0 TO 1296/15-17, Rate of cutting charges Rs. 45540/-, of Total trees = 284 Nos Lot No.4, KM.1296/22-24 TO 1323/04-06, Rate of cutting charges Rs. 22660/-, of Total trees = 141 Nos

Note:- Each lot will be auctioned separately.
No. W/SW/Store/Tress/MB/21-22 Dated - 14.10.2021 2347/2021

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SPEEDING UP

Success of Gati Shakti digital platform will depend on breaking bureaucratic silos, ensuring states' participation

ON WEDNESDAY, PRIME Minister Narendra Modi launched PM Gati Shakti, a National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity. The scope of the government's latest initiative is expansive, the targets ambitious. It will integrate road, railway, airport and multi-modal connectivity projects across the country, incorporating a range of existing infrastructure projects of the government such as Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, dry/land ports, and UDAN. It promises to greatly enhance the national highway as well as the electricity transmission networks, increasing the cargo handling by railways and the cargo capacity at ports, and also setting up mega food parks, defence corridors, and electronics manufacturing clusters. Considering the multiplier effects, timely implementation of such infrastructure projects, especially at the current juncture, could provide a notable boost to the economy.

The intent behind the initiative is straightforward. As public sector projects in India are marred by inordinate delays and cost overruns, there is a need to coordinate the planning and execution of infrastructure connectivity programmes across the country and speed up implementation in order to bring down logistics costs. This could lower the inefficiencies in supply chains in India. A recent report by CII and Arthur D Little had estimated the logistics costs in supply chains in India at 14 per cent of GDP. In comparison, the report had pointed out that such costs amounted to only 8-10 per cent of the GDP in the US and Europe and 9 per cent in China. In the case of South Asian countries like Vietnam and Malaysia, though the cost structures are similar to those existing in India, they fare better on the World Bank's logistics performance index. While India scores 3.18 on the index, Vietnam and Malaysia score higher at 3.27 and 3.22 respectively. Logistical inefficiencies not only cause delays, but also add to manufacturing costs and lower the competitiveness of Indian exports.

Considering not only the multiplicity of approvals required from varied departments, but also the typical inter-ministerial delays in the entire process, the need for a coordinated approach to streamline the process and minimise the bottlenecks cannot be emphasised enough. By bringing together 16 ministries to help remove the hurdles in project implementation, the Gati Shakti digital platform could provide an effective mechanism for closely monitoring the public sector infrastructure projects. This technology-led integrated approach could help align all stakeholders, ease the problems with attaining clearances, and bring about greater coordinated action across government departments. But there are concerns. For one, the effectiveness of a platform in ensuring better coordination among ministries is debatable — breaking down bureaucratic silos may prove to be harder than expected. Then, critical to the success of some of these infrastructure projects will be the participation of state governments. The Centre will need to devise political interventions and ways to coax and incentivise state government participation and cooperation.

YOUNG COMMANDER

Vijay, the latest Tamil actor to star in politics, will have to convince voters that he has the stamina to stay in the frame

THE RESULTS OF rural local body polls in nine reorganised districts in Tamil Nadu could hint at the arrival of a new star in state politics. Candidates fielded by fans of Vijay, seen as a youth icon and next only to Rajinikanth in fan following, have had a 68 per cent strike rate, winning 115 of the 169 seats contested. These numbers suggest that voters are willing, once again, to try out the new. Since winning the assembly elections in May, the DMK has consolidated its support — it swept the local bodies' polls — while the AIADMK is still to find its footing after losing office. Chief Minister MK Stalin's welfare agenda and populist stance on issues such as the NEET have further endeared him to the public and diminished the Opposition. It is this space that "Ilaya Thalapathy (young commander)" Vijay may be eyeing — at 47, he has age on his side unlike Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan, superstars who joined electoral politics after 60.

Vijay, too, is using his fan base to test the political waters — it was All India Thalapathy Vijay Makkal Iyakkam, the Vijay fans' association, that fielded the candidates in the local polls. In the 1970s, MGR built the AIADMK by turning his fans into party cadres. Rajinikanth had hoped to do the same but he withdrew from politics even before entering the electoral fray. Haasan, who rivalled Rajinikanth in fan base in the 1980s, turned a niche actor-director in the 1990s and has fewer fans to work for him. Other stars rode with established political groups (Napoleon, Khushboo) or leaned on caste/community support (Sarith Kumar, Karthik). The exception is Vijayakanth, who set himself up as a Dravidian alternative to the DMK and AIADMK. He polled nearly 10 per cent votes in the 2006 assembly elections, a year after forming the DMDK. That performance helped him to manipulate electoral alliances and claim seats disproportionate to his influence. But the DMDK is today a shell of what it was a decade ago.

It is clear that mere box-office pull is not enough to win over voters, and keep them there. MGR was successful because he, over the years, carefully plotted his political entry by using cinema as a medium for messaging and the DMK platform to claim an ideological lineage. The challenge for Vijay, or any other new entrant, would be to convince voters that they have the political vision and stamina to take on the Dravidian behemoths in elections and stay the course. There is no straight path from the box office to the ballot box, not even in Tamil Nadu.

CAPTAIN KIRK FLIES AGAIN

Commercial space race doesn't hold a candle to world promised by 'Star Trek'. But William Shatner's joy at lifting off is contagious

IN THE FEW minutes that William Shatner left the planet, he didn't "discover new life and new civilisations" nor did he "boldly go where no one has gone before". But the 90-year-old Canadian actor, best known for playing Captain James Tiberius Kirk in the original *Star Trek* series and then reprising the role in multiple shows and movies over the decades, was visibly overjoyed after his 11-minute trip on New Shepard, the rocket run by Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin.

Shatner's character has been a staple of science fiction, inspiring generations of people — including, reportedly, a young Bezos — to take an interest in science, engineering and astrophysics. And despite the glaring differences between the fictional USS Enterprise and New Shepard, the unmitigated joy that Shatner expressed is probably the best advertisement for the Amazon founder's commercial space venture: "What you have given me," Shatner reportedly told Bezos after the flight, "is the most profound experience possible". Shatner is the oldest person to have travelled beyond the earth's atmosphere.

In the future that *Star Trek* envisioned, the boundaries between nation-states had dissolved, there was no poverty, all people were treated with respect and space exploration was not a business venture. The current competition for cornering the commercial space flight market and the space programme is far less exhilarating. It seems to be dominated — and diminished — by the cynical concerns of profit and the strategic interests of great powers. The high hopes put in place by yesteryear's futurists have been left by the wayside, in ways big and small. The way Jeff Bezos is seen interrupting nonagenarian Shatner as he talked of his once-in-a-lifetime experience is not incidental. No, the space race today certainly isn't *Star Trek*. And yet, not even the best fiction can match the moment of enchantment that New Shepard brought to Shatner.

In Valley, no return to '90s

Kashmir's composite heritage is robust. Terror of past weeks may open up new window of reconciliation



AMITABH MATTOO

AS WAS ONLY to be expected, the recent macabre targeted killing of members of the minority communities has generated widespread panic in Kashmir. Much of Srinagar has also been overwhelmed by a sense of déjà vu — a frightening reminder of the 1990s when select killings and an overwhelming fear had led to the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley. But this is not the 1990s. And despite the deep angst within the Kashmiri Muslims over government policies, we may be beginning to see a new sliver of hope: The possibilities, finally, of a real reconciliation between the two communities that cohabited (despite the historical ups and downs in the relationship) the same space for centuries. Ironically, then, the terror of the past few weeks may have opened up a new window of opportunity.

I write today, not as an academic but a resident of Srinagar, who spent most of the last few weeks in the city seeking to understand the sentiment on the ground. What follows, therefore — at its most pedestrian — is street gossip and, at its most uplifting, vox populi.

For the most part, my day began — until the killings — by following a familiar routine — walking to the Shankaracharya temple on the hill from Gupkar Road. Gupkar is the meandering gateway to the vistas of the Dal Lake, which runs from the desolate offices of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) at Sonwar to the fading charms of erstwhile royal palaces on the banks of the lake. It is here that security agencies are nested in close comfort with the political and business elite, and where interrogation centres have morphed into "haunted" guesthouses.

The Shankaracharya hill gives you a breathtaking view of the densely packed city, with its shrines, temples and churches, but the hill is also a reminder of the city's ancient roots and atavistic heritage; the non-dualist Shaivism of Kashmir, but also the earlier Mahayana Buddhism and the later Sufi Hallaji passion. Adi Shankara's Advait captured in *Nirvana Shatakam* ("I am consciousness, I am bliss, and I am Shiva. I am Shiva")

The killing of Makhan Lal Bindroo, the Pandit pharmacist, invited real shock from all sections of Kashmir's civil society for a number of reasons. Bindroo had stayed in Kashmir through the troubled years, had a deep personal connection with his customers, and enjoyed the confidence and trust of the people enough to persuade his accomplished endocrinologist son to return to Srinagar to serve the people. Bindroo's was also a success story: From a small chemist shop to a fancy pharmacy with a clinic, he was proof that a Kashmiri Pandit could be successful in Srinagar without compromising on his faith or lifestyle. When his daughter Shraddha Bindroo spoke to the media (after her father's killing), she spoke with courage but without rancour; a remarkable testimony to her Kashmiri upbringing.

seems to blend seamlessly with Mansoor Al Halla's *Ana Al-Haqq* ("I am truth") as you absorb the sounds and smells of the city. And as you reach out to the steady stream of visitors on that gentle trek, it is clear that Kashmir's composite heritage is robust and alive on the hill. But not just there.

Once a single coffee shop was a luxury on Residency Road, today cafés and coffee shops jostle for space in virtually every neighbourhood. Srinagar may not be a smart city but it is home to a remarkably talkative and reading society (a women's collective, a Kafka society, a Brecht playhouse, etc) where former residents return to pay homage and find inspiration — from the opinion editor of *The New York Times* to the former head of Twitter India. And in all that talk, there is space — space for Kashmiri Pandits to come back and for the two still separate civil societies to argue, to disagree and to build trust, perhaps even on the terms of engagement.

Was 1990 then an aberration? In an almost *Rashomon*-like cinematic imagination, the Kashmiri Pandit exodus of the 1990s invites multiple narratives that are embedded in Manichaeism. What is not disputed is that the departure led to a gulf between the two communities, which has still not been bridged; polarised narratives only reflect a sharp divide and the return of the Pandits remains, admittedly, an elusive project. Today, there are just a few thousand Kashmiri Pandits who did not leave during these troubled years, other than those who live in camps (in Sheikhpora, Varmul, Hal, Vesu and Mattan) under a special employment package scheme of the Prime Minister.

But there is the possibility of recovering the sentiment that helped the Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims live in relative harmony. It is possible for Kashmiri Pandits to return with respect in the foreseeable future but it is critical to do so organically in constant dialogue with Kashmir's civil society. Through talking, talking and more talking. The killings may have then unleashed a positive force that the new militant outfits could never have imagined or believed possible.

Consider this. The killing of Makhan Lal Bindroo, the Pandit pharmacist, invited real shock from all sections of Kashmir's civil society for a number of reasons. Bindroo had stayed in Kashmir through the troubled years, had a deep personal connection with his customers, and enjoyed the confidence and trust of the people enough to persuade his accomplished endocrinologist son to return to Srinagar to serve the people. Bindroo's was also a success story: From a small chemist shop to a fancy pharmacy with a clinic, he was proof that a Kashmiri Pandit could be successful in Srinagar without compromising on his faith or lifestyle. When his daughter Shraddha Bindroo spoke to the media (after her father's killing), she spoke with courage but without rancour; a remarkable testimony to her Kashmiri upbringing.

Consider also this. The most remarkable example of Kashmiri Muslims seeking to reassure and reach out to the minorities is the first citizen of the city, Srinagar's Mayor, the remarkable Junaid Mattu — who I have often disagreed with in the past. This time, however, I was deeply impressed by his clarity and his unambiguity when I met him in person. He has since said: "We will have to stick our necks out and stand as shields to give our minority communities a sense of safety and belonging. This is not the time for conspiracy theories and nuanced condemnations. This is the time to call a spade a spade."

The onus of beginning a fresh process of confidence-building rests on the leadership of the two communities. The best the government can do is neither interfere nor be seen as directing the process. Anecdotaly, it is also clear that Kashmiri Pandit forums like the Global Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora (GKPD), for one, are ready to take steps to begin a dialogue and take concrete steps to recover a common bond. This is an opportunity, if missed, that may never come back again.

Mattoo is professor at JNU and an honorary professor at the University of Melbourne. He is currently on sabbatical, dividing time between Srinagar and Melbourne



GURU PRAKASH PASWAN

DECADES AFTER INDEPENDENCE, one thought process dominated the domain of public policy, ranging from poverty alleviation to envisioning a global third front in the form of NAM for maintaining strategic autonomy in the comity of nations. The Nehruvian consensus is more or less responsible for the present state of affairs in our society and the nation at large. The vestiges of the Nehruvian consensus — like the unresolved border dispute with China and the creation of a permanent adversary in Pakistan — have hectored the country's leadership for the last four decades. It was Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who, in one of his letters in 1961 to the chief ministers of different states, spoke on reservation in government jobs. One must go through the letter to realise Nehru's annoyance and his belief that affirmative action would dilute merit and impact the efficiency of governance.

"I dislike any kind of reservation, more particularly in services. I react strongly against anything which leads to inefficiency and second-rate standards. I want my country to be a first-class country in everything. The moment we encourage the second-rate, we are lost. The only real way to help the Backward group is to give opportunities of good education... But if we go in for reservations on communal and caste basis, we swamp the bright and able people and remain second-rate or third-rate. I am grieved to learn of how far this

THE MEANING OF CM CHANNI

Congress still believes in tokenism when it comes to Dalits

Having a Dalit as a placeholder chief minister is not a new page in the Congress's textbook of appeasement and ceremonialism. Damodaram Sanjivayya in Andhra Pradesh, Bhola Paswan Shastri in Bihar and many others have been used in the same manner. The moment Channi as CM had the audacity to exercise autonomy in the selection of officers and ministers, the state leadership of the party had a problem.

business of reservation has gone based on communal considerations. It has amazed me to learn that even promotions are based sometimes on communal and caste considerations. This way lies not only folly, but disaster. Let us help the backward groups by all means but never at the cost of efficiency. How are we going to build our public sector or indeed any sector with second-rate people?"

A critical analysis of the policies of the leaders who are no longer with us is important for the enrichment of the public discourse. Although much literature is available on the life and times of Nehru, there is a considerable shortage of academic work on the impact of his politics on the idea of social justice. The recent chaos in Punjab politics can be attributed to this mindset of the founding fathers of the party.

Having a Dalit as a placeholder chief minister is not a new page in the Congress's textbook of appeasement and ceremonialism. Damodaram Sanjivayya in Andhra Pradesh, Bhola Paswan Shastri in Bihar and many others have been used in the same manner. The moment Channi as CM had the audacity to exercise autonomy in the selection of officers and ministers, the state leadership of the party had a problem. It is an open secret that Channi's elevation was an outcome of the conflict between senior state Congress leaders and he was chosen as a compromise candidate. This mindset is deeply problematic.

The interaction between Nehru and B R Ambedkar is also a matter of intense scholarly research. Congress party had the space for someone like MA Jinnah, who was elected from Bombay, but Ambedkar had to go to present-day Bangladesh to be elected to the Constituent Assembly. Babu Jagjivan Ram is also a case in point. Noted strategic commentators like Henry Kissinger and Gary Bass have placed Jagjivan Ram as one of the most hawkish defence ministers of his time for the phenomenal role he played in the remarkable victory in the 1971 war. But the credit was given to Indira Gandhi, without even a footnote about Jagjivan Ram's stellar role.

The Congress has failed to reconcile with the emerging realities and aspirations of the Dalits and the marginalised. The party is stuck in a time warp, engaging in the politics of selective appeasement and symbolism. With Dalits increasingly becoming relevant shareholders in power politics, their concerns and challenges have also evolved. The new Dalit narrative is beyond the sheer optics of placeholder CMs and fulfilling the diversity quota. Under the visionary leadership of PM Narendra Modi, there is space for everyone, regardless of identity. New India will be inclusive, equitable and resolute about realising the vision of the makers of our Constitution.

The writer is assistant professor, Patna University and national spokesperson, BJP



OCTOBER 15, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

PUNJAB FIRING

SANT JARNAIL SINGH Bhindranwale, arrested in connection with the assassination of Lala Jagat Narain, will be released on October 15, according to Akali sources. The state government will also announce on October 15 a judicial inquiry into the police firing on Chowk Mehta on September 20, the burning of two buses in Ohandu Kalan, the lathicharge at Amritsar Khalsa College and the firing at Madhuban near Karnal before the talks between the Akalis and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi begin on October 16. There will be two separate judicial inquiries — one by the Punjab government and the

other by the Haryana government — into the firing incidents. These were the two pre-conditions set by the Akalis for talks with Mrs Gandhi. The Akalis, who arrived in Delhi on October 13, conveyed their wishes to the prime minister through Congress-IMP from Patiala Amrinder Singh.

COP VS COP

A CONSTABLE OF the Central Reserve Force (CRPF) was shot dead by another constable of the Andhra Pradesh Special Police (APSP) at Kurnool on October 13. According to preliminary information received at Hyderabad, the striking APSP man was

asked to surrender his arms when he shot dead the CRPF constable. Following the incident, a company of the CRPF was sent to Kurnool from Hyderabad. Three companies of the CRPF and one of the BSF are already stationed at Kurnool. The shooting was the first violent incident during the six-day-old strike by the Andhra Pradesh Non-gazetted Officers Association.

MUBARAK IS PRESIDENT

FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT OF Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, was proclaimed the country's new President on Wednesday at a brief swearing-in ceremony in the parliament.

THE IDEAS PAGE

In search of home

In Nobel prize winner Abdulrazak Gurnah’s novels, migration is not a single act, but a continuing process in which ordinary people are caught between the memory of violence past and present



DILIP M MENON

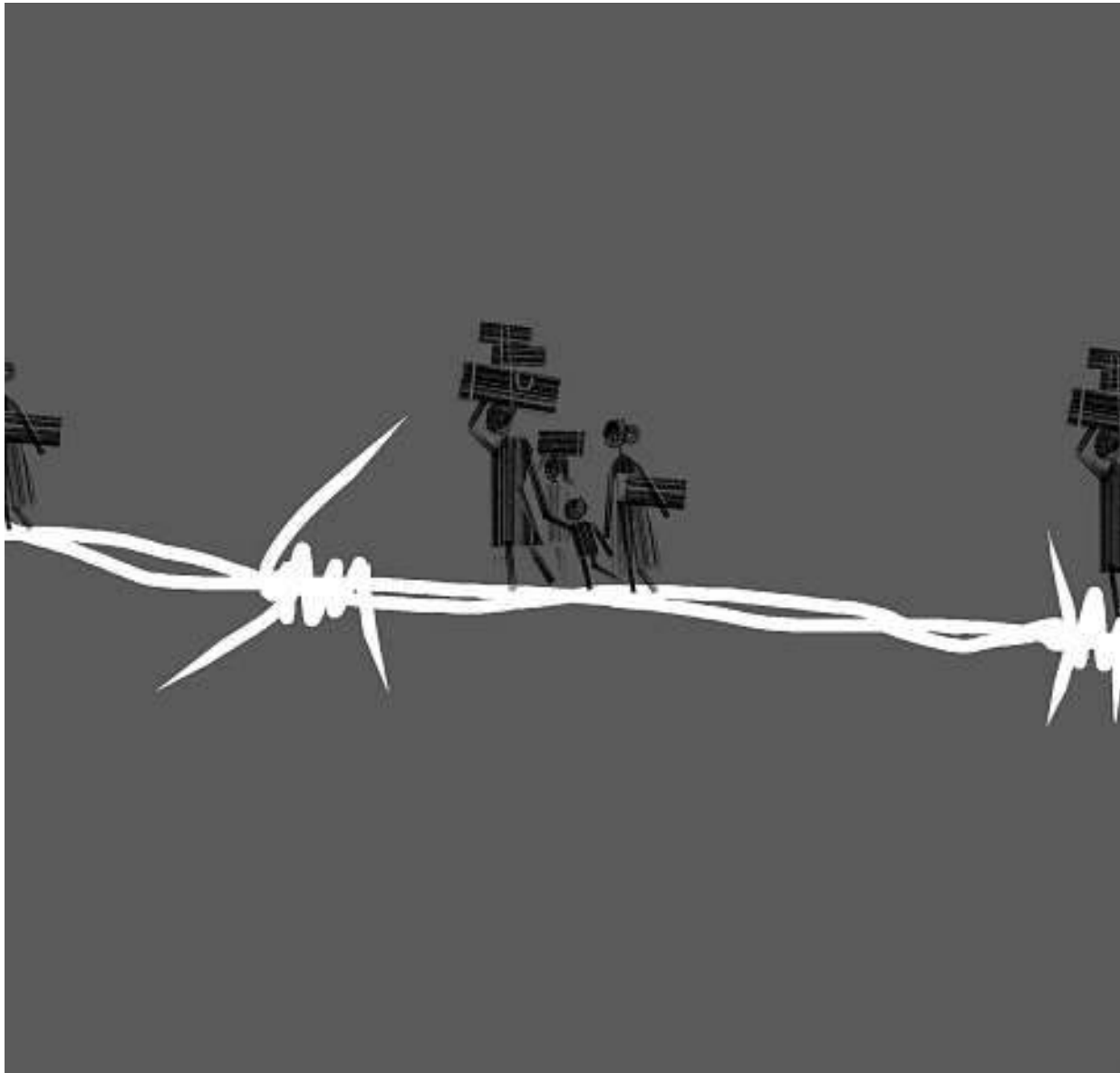
ON THE NIGHT of January 11-12, 1964, one month after Zanzibar gained independence, the Arab sultan and his elected constitutional government were overthrown by forces claiming to represent the African racial majority. There were reprisals and pogroms against Arabs and South Asians, resulting in the death of around 20,000 people. Zanzibar’s much vaunted cosmopolitanism came face to face with the repressed memory of slavery and the slave trade. It had been one of the main slave trading ports and, in the 19th century, about 50,000 slaves passed through the slave markets here. The new rhetoric pitted the African against the Arab. Abdulrazak Gurnah, of Arab heritage, fled Zanzibar in 1967 to England along with his brother, to land in the middle of racial hatred in a country coming to terms with imperial decline and its increasing irrelevance.

In 1968, Enoch Powell was to make his infamous “rivers of blood” speech as he predicted a violent and sanguine future for Britain with what he and other conservatives saw as a rising flood of immigrants. Gurnah’s oeuvre reflects these histories of the Indian Ocean world, colonialism, migration, violence and race. What does it mean to belong somewhere, and does the migrant live a life that can only be about coping, with a persistent memory of violence past and present?

In Gurnah’s novels, migration is not a single act. It is an ongoing process with individuals constantly caught between worlds, bearing the scars of former degradation and continuing secrets. It is a state of suspended animation. As Hannah in *The Last Gift* lashes out at her mother and asks, why do these “vile, immigrant tragedies” continue to haunt people? These are ordinary people without tremendous psychic resources, who muddle through, and there is the promise of redemption that lies in suggestions of a life beyond the space of the novel.

Gurnah leaves open windows in each of his novels, suggesting possibilities of healing through return, new meetings, and possible resolutions. However, return too is fraught with the possibility of disillusionment as much as a sense of not fitting in. In Gurnah’s *Admiring Silence* as much as *By the Sea*, what the returning migrant is confronted by is a sense of unbridgeable distance, born as much out of estrangement as the guilt of leaving. In the former novel, the presence of persistently blocked toilets becomes a metaphor for the stagnation as much as the squalor of the post-colony. The central character in *Admiring Silence* lies to his white partner about his country and himself to win for himself a sense of self-esteem as well as to solicit affinity. It is his way of managing and of coping.

There is no bedrock here, no haven from the heartless world. Families are fragile entities and consist as much of inner tensions as the fact that one belongs to them contingently. One may be taken in as a foundling, and subjected to an authoritarian patriarchy. On the other hand, as Gurnah says, “even



CR Sasikumar

love can be crushing”, as families make demands on individuals; fierce chains of required loyalty or obedience bind one. Menace attends every moment, and the child is the prime candidate for prospective violence. So too the young women, who are manipulated and begin to acquire a mere “mercantile worth”. In *Departure*, the childhood of the protagonist is short and brutal. In *Dottie*, the eponymous character “comes through” but her siblings do not. Yusuf in *Paradise* survives, but luck matters as much as individual resilience or resourcefulness. There is none of the sentimentality associated with the bourgeois fiction of the family as a unit which, despite all its problems, provides a space of return. There is no “there there” in Gurnah’s world of immigrants.

The Indian Ocean world impinges on the consciousness of characters, in which being Muslim is less about religion and more about a cultural cosmopolis — the world of *Arabian Nights* and tales of the trickster Abu Nuwas. It is a world that takes in Palestine, the Swahili coast from Somalia to Mozambique, and Aden, Kerala and Bombay. Madagascar, an African island, seems to belong to another planet in this world determined by monsoon winds and historical networks. The Indian Ocean is both vast as well as familiar in its micro-worlds.

There is no bedrock here, no haven from the heartless world. Families are fragile entities and consist as much of inner tensions as the fact that one belongs to them contingently. One may be taken in as a foundling, and subjected to an authoritarian patriarchy. On the other hand, as Gurnah says, ‘even love can be crushing’, as families make demands on individuals; fierce chains of required loyalty or obedience bind one.

Colonialism impacts on this world and creates new hierarchies and disruptions. In *Afterlives*, we get a parable from a German colony in southern Africa during World War I. We know by now that colonial wars involved the large-scale carnage of colonial troops from Africa and Asia and Flanders usually forget this fact. An *oberleutnant* develops an affinity for Hamza, his orderly, and tries to civilise him through cultivating a love for Schiller’s poetry. This misguided humanism is rooted in the hardness of racial difference and the impossibility of friendship between unequals. As Gurnah shows, the ideological mindset of superiority can only exude condescension, not affinity.

Abbas in *The Last Gift* has the sense of coming from a tiny place, he remains frightened of the world with its vastness. This sense of men from small places trying to find a home in the world is a theme that runs through Gurnah’s novels. However, despite the scars, the memories of violence, and the fragility of relations, they come through in the end.

Menon is professor of history and Mellon Chair in Indian Studies at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

A stronger and finer frame

For a bureaucracy that takes India through next 75 years, reforms are needed



SRIVATSA KRISHNA

REFORMING INDIA’S bureaucracy is a “mission impossible”, similar to the punishment meted out by Zeus to Sisyphus, of endlessly rolling a boulder up a hill. While justifiably criticising the bureaucracy for many of its ills, we often forget that, like in every other profession, the bureaucracy has its share of the good, the bad and the ugly. To believe that any other profession is the epitome of goodness or competence, and thus can replace the bureaucracy misses the wood for the trees. India’s civil services have some of the best and brightest as also some of the worst, just like in any collection of people. And they are sitting atop a prickly, unionised, rules-obsessed, obdurate lower bureaucracy. However, the bureaucracy that took India through the last 75 years can’t be the one to take it through the next 75 — we need a proactive, imaginative, technology-savvy, enabling bureaucracy.

Today, we have a lot for which to thank the bureaucracy. This is often forgotten in the anger against it, some of which is indeed justified. But for the civil services, and the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in particular, the country could not have been held together post-Independence, and much of the impressive nation-building across sectors happened because of their dedication and commitment. It is also forgotten that the bureaucracy, unlike the private sector, is a creature of the Constitution and is bound by multiple rules, laws, and procedures. Many of these are well past their expiry date and the Modi administration has done stellar work

in doing away with over 1,500 of them.

As per estimates compiled by the Institute of Conflict Management, the government of India (GOI) has about 364 government servants for every 1,00,000 residents, with 45 per cent in the railways alone. About 60 per cent and 30 per cent are in Groups C and D, respectively, leaving a skeletal skilled staff of just about 7 per cent to man critical positions. Thus, the complaint that India’s bureaucracy is grossly is factually incorrect. In fact, we are bitterly understaffed. That we need not be in many sectors is well-recognised — leave them to the markets — and politicians must get bureaucrats out of business, in more ways than one.

Further, faced with extensive judicial overreach (both justified and unjustified), reporting to an often rapacious, short-sighted political executive, and a media ever ready to play the role of judge, jury and executioner, the bureaucracy has in large part found comfort in glorious inaction and ensuring audit-proof file work. Faced with such incentives, roughly half the bureaucracy becomes “the Wall”. Twenty-five per cent is willing to do anything for the right bribe, with another 25 per cent focusing on ensuring outcomes in extremely difficult circumstances.

How to increase the officers’ willingness to take decisions? One possible solution is to legally prevent enforcement agencies from taking punitive action, like arrest for purely economic decisions without any direct evidence of kickbacks. Instead, a committee of experts with commercial experience consti-

tuted by the government should suggest whether it’s corruption or just a decision gone wrong.

Despite PM Modi’s ability to get things done, some parts of the bureaucracy have been obstinate, eschewing fast progress. For example, the progress of last-mile connectivity and electronics for BharatNet, the recapitalisation and reform of failing banks, the distribution and transmission sectors and the privatisation of space are moving, although slowly. Some of this is due to a bureaucracy obsessed with accountability to processes and not to results. When an outstanding IAS officer like Pradip Bajjal is pulled out of his hospital bed to be produced before the courts after the CBI closed an outlandish case against him, even the best officers become timid and cautious, lest something returns to haunt them years after retirement.

Modi’s toughest challenge is to change an inactive bureaucracy to one that feels safe in taking genuine risks. Lateral entry needs to expand to up to 15 per cent of Joint/Additional and Secretary-level positions in GOI. Areas such as bad banks recapitalisation, new development credit institutions and perhaps a sovereign fund for India, privatisation of everything that the government shouldn’t be in, renewable energy, electric vehicles, climate change, global trade negotiations and information technology, to name a few, are where problem-solving professionals are needed.

Changes in recruitment procedures, like the interview group spending considerable

time with the candidates and not deciding based on a half-hour interview, along with psychometric tests, will improve the incoming pool of civil servants. Most importantly, after 15 years of service, all officers must undergo a thorough evaluation to enable them to move further, and those who do not make it should be put out to pasture. Give them full salary till they hit retirement age.

Lastly, every modern bureaucracy in the world works on technology-enabled productivity and collaboration tools. India procures about \$600 billion worth of goods and services annually — can’t all payments be done electronically? Why not automate India’s \$90 billion utility bills market at a time when UPI transactions worth Rs 6 trillion happen every month? Can we not try to automate every major touchpoint between the government, citizens, and businesses?

India cannot hope to get to a \$5-trillion economy without a modern, progressive, results-oriented bureaucracy, one which says “why not?” instead of “why?” when confronted with problems. Make no mistake, despite working in a difficult, complex ecosystem, about a third of civil servants are doing exceptional work, better than their peers in the corporate sector. The challenge remains to realign incentives institutionally, to move those who are honest yet don’t perform, send home those who steal/are non-performers and imbue more technology throughout the system.

The writer is an IAS officer. Views are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“Something has to give: either our already austerity-hit public services, or Mr Sunak’s budget plans. For the sake of the country, the chancellor should revise his plans.”

— THE GUARDIAN

Crisis of compassion

Prolonged incarceration of activists, human rights defenders indicts criminal justice system



GHAZALA JAMIL AND MANOJ KUMAR JHA

WHILE RELEASING prisoners in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the high-powered committee mandated by the Supreme Court of India to decongest prisons did not invoke the health vulnerabilities of prisoners but recalled the crimes they were accused of committing. It is also common knowledge that the experience of incarceration in Indian prisons does not depend on the crime individuals are accused of committing, but on the social status and power of the prisoners.

Both these seemingly unconnected realities reflect one principle — that legal practices and discussions in the public sphere continue to privilege the principle of retribution as justice over rehabilitation. This lack of compassion may arise from the fact that a disproportionate number of prisoners in Indian prisons come from Muslim, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. Because of the abject poverty and powerlessness of most of the accused from these groups, they have little access to quality legal representation or aid. They languish in prisons without bail for periods even longer than the punishment mandated by the law they are accused of violating. Many suffer continued incarceration even after securing bail, simply for the lack of surety or inability to pay cash bail.

The lack of compassion is not only a feature of the criminal justice system. Withholding compassion from certain categories of human beings has become a hallmark of majoritarian nationalism. This was transmitted from the government to the digital public sphere, and manifested as mob violence in public spaces. Unfortunately, even judicial decisions have often revealed a similar lack of compassion.

The current government will go down in history for its chilling ability to stare down protest and crush dissenters. For example, in October 2015, the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) students called off their strike of 139 days after failing to elicit a response from the government. Since then, citizens, especially students and human rights defenders, have been damned for their opinions on how they or their fellow citizens should be treated. Rohith Vemula’s “crime” was that he dared to protest against injustice in spite of his social identity. Despite protests over JNU student Najeeb Ahmed’s disappearance, there was no impression of a fair investigation. Since 2019, the repression of dissent has become more pronounced and intensified. On practically any issue, peaceful protesters are met with a ruthless attitude from the police and vigilante supporters of the government. In some instances of Muslims being lynched, assailants were garlanded, feted in public, and rewarded.

Before long, it was not just charges of sedition and defamation, allegations of offences such as incitement, rioting, damage to public property or attempt to murder were made

against dissenters. Unlawful custody, custodial torture, and criminal intimidation by police and investigative agencies appear to have become a norm too. Remarkably, protesters too demonstrated a total lack of fear of any brutality. The allegations of the police’s inhumane and humiliating treatment of protesters such as Sadaf Jafar or Nodeep Kaur seem to render protestors fearless. By remaining undaunted, by speaking up fearlessly, by not retracting their dissent at any cost, activists like Dr Kafeel Khan were able to unmask the true face of this regime.

It bears pointing out that the only “offence” youth and student activists like Sharjeel Imam, Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita, Meeran Haider, Asif Tanha, Safoora Zargar, Gulfisha and Umar Khalid committed is making speeches of dissent against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, a law they considered immoral and discriminatory.

In this dystopian narrative, those who dared to protest were accused of violence but those who engaged in arson and killings were propped up as the righteous. The anti-CAA-NRC protesters were charged with what was essentially anti-Muslim violence in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. Dalit intellectuals and activists who participated in the Bhima Koregaon event were linked with anti-Dalit violence, and human rights defenders have been accused of hatching a plot to assassinate the Prime Minister. A mind-boggling, logic-defying framing was used to book and imprison Dalit and Muslim activists and anyone who expresses solidarity with them.

The deplorable conditions inside Indian prisons, ranging from violence, torture, custodial deaths and rape, poor quality of food and healthcare, have been documented. Prison authorities and personnel routinely inflict unlawful punishment on prisoners, a majority of whom are undertrials. Human rights activists and lawyers have been at pains to demarcate categories of prisoners that might be considered as deserving of judicial compassion. In such a scramble for the painfully limited quota of mercy, activists who also dabbled in electoral politics like Khalid Saifi, Shifa-ur-Rahman, Ishrat Jahan and Tahir Hussain often fall out of the categories of the worthies. Extraordinary laws such as NSA and UAPA facilitate unjustified prolonged incarceration of individuals from marginalised communities. By the time these students and human rights defenders would be able to establish their innocence in higher judiciary and secure acquittals, years would pass away. Who would be responsible for heaping physical torture, humiliation and years of incarceration on these young students and activists, who otherwise could be acquiring and creating knowledge, helping and providing a healing touch to their fellow citizens?

Where the norm ought to be bail not jail, unfortunately, violation of human rights of incarcerated individuals seems more a norm rather than an anomaly.

Indian prisons have alarmingly high occupancy rates, mass incarceration of the poorest and powerless — this was a problem already crying for attention. Taking cognisance of this problem will be an opportunity to rethink and reframe the debates on the protection of rights of the accused persons.

Jamil teaches at CSLG, JNU; Jha is a Member of Parliament and teaches at University of Delhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

J&K VIOLENCE

THE RECENT EVENTS in Jammu & Kashmir have filled me with deep sorrow. My heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed in the utterly condemnable murder of several innocent civilians drawn from all three religions in the Valley, to the families of the five brave army personnel in Rajouri who gave up their lives in defence of the nation and, let me say, to the parents of the misguided young men who took to the gun and, inevitably, perished by the gun. These events highlight the necessity to strengthen our security apparatus and public vigilance at all levels which, I am sure, is being done.

They also point to the importance of restarting the political process as early as possible. While the LG and UT administration are doing their best, this cannot be a substitute for a freely-elected legislature and a full-fledged popular government. The delimitation process should not be unduly prolonged, and I would request the Commission to fix its own time schedule for completing the exercise. Once that is done and statehood is restored to J&K, the process of free and fair elections can begin, resulting, hopefully, in a stable government within the next few months. This seems to me to be the only logical and practical way of proceeding.

Karan Singh, Delhi

CITIZENS’ RIGHTS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial ‘Beneficiary

and citizen’ (IE, October 14). The patronising manner in which the government speaks of the rights of people as benefits, smacks of noblesse oblige. There is a pervasive feeling that questions on fundamental rights of the people, such as freedom of expression, right to civil liberties, should not be raised so long as basic economic needs are met. While there is no doubt that considerable progress has been made under several development schemes, the government must understand that in a democracy, right to liberty, equality and fraternity are just as important as *roti, kapda aur makaan*. After all, man does not live on bread alone.

Hemant Contractor, Pune

THIS REFERS TO the editorial ‘Beneficiary and citizen’ (IE, October 14). PM Modi’s saying that human rights matter after basic needs are met is based on the false assumption that two are different. Separating one from the other is like taking the soul out of the body. It is sad that while addressing the 28th Foundation Day function of National Human Rights Commission, he remained tight-lipped on the Lakhimpur violence. But he chose the same occasion to air views separating human rights and basic needs, pontificated on “selective outrage” and indulged in his favourite theme: Opposition-bashing. As PM of a democratic country, he must understand that human rights are indeed part and parcel of basic needs and cannot be put on the backburner in any condition.

Samiul Hassan Quadri, Bikaner

FROM PAGE ONE

New Delhi

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Rush of new investors, and market veterans' concerns



SANDEEP SINGH

IF THE Sensex regularly breaching new milestones has enthused investors and attracted new ones, it has now also started causing anxiety among many. While seasoned investors recognise corrections as part of a healthy market movement, they are now concerned how a large number of "new investors" would react if the markets were to fall by 10-15%. Also, would a panic reaction lead to a loss of capital

for them and aggravate the fall?

Investor growth

Equity markets have witnessed a large influx of retail investors over the last 18 months — both in mutual funds and direct equity. The number of investor accounts with Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) has more than doubled from 2.12 crore in March 2020 to 4.64 crore in September 2021. In fact, more than half of the additional 2.52 crore accounts — 1.3 crore — have come in the last six months between April and September 2021.

Even NSDL added nearly 27 lakh accounts between April and September 2021, taking the total accounts to 2.37 crore.

Heads of broking institutions say a large number of these new investors are individuals in their 20s and a large number of them

are trading in futures and options, which is a more risky segment. Most of them are inexperienced and don't understand equity markets too well. A financial services leader in Kerala shared an anecdote: recently, after booking for an electrician on an app, he called the electrician to check when he would come. The electrician said he would only come around 4pm. Why so late? "Until 3:30, I trade in the stock market."

This trend is discomfiting, say market participants. Besides the rise in Sensex and scaling of fresh milestones — thrilled new investors often like to boast about their newly acquired money-making skill — other factors too have played a part in their entry in the markets. One factor has been the ease of access to stock market investing through mobile apps and discount brokerage. However, having ease of access should not be mistaken for having

investment expertise, seasoned investors say.

If markets fall...

With these new investors only having experienced the big upswing in the markets over the last 12 months, even seasoned fund managers at leading mutual funds seem concerned — more so by the risky bets the new investors have been taking in futures and options trade.

"Many new investors are taking positions in the F&O market and are not aware of the risks of that segment," said the CEO of a leading mutual fund, expressing concern over how they may behave at the time of a correction. While investors need handholding at times of correction, experts feel panic selling may have a cascading impact and exacerbate the fall in the markets.

After big absolute numbers such as the

Sensex scaling 50,000 and 60,000 had drawn in the new investors, these numbers going down may also create a scare. In absolute terms, a 10% fall from levels of 60,000 — or about 6,000 points — would appear, to inexperienced investors, to be much bigger than a 10% fall when the Sensex was at 10,000.

Dos and don'ts

Although the capital markets regulator Sebi has enhanced surveillance mechanisms to detect insider trading and unfair trading practices in the market in a bid to protect the interests of retail investors, it is important for retail investors to be cautious where they invest and how they invest. Investments based on WhatsApp messages should be avoided, and one should enter stocks as an investor and not as a day trader.

Retail investors must understand that if

there is a correction, it could be on account of global or domestic factors and could last for a week or a month or longer. The market may recover soon if the underlying fundamentals of the economy remain strong — which holds true for India — and investors must avoid pressing the panic button. If there is a fall, seek professional advice on how to navigate it.

One should follow the basics at all times — study and understand the business of the company, its promoter and its financial strength. If one has invested in a fundamentally strong company, it will bounce back along with the markets as in the past.

Investors must understand that ease of access to investment doesn't mean they don't need advice. They must seek professional advice, handholding and guidance, and should have rational return expectations from equity investment.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

BSF powers and jurisdiction

Its jurisdiction has been extended in three states and reduced in Gujarat, all up to 50 km within the border. What powers does BSF enjoy? Why was the revision made, and why are Punjab and Bengal opposing it?

DEEPTIMANTI WARY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE MINISTRY of Home Affairs (MHA) has extended the jurisdiction of the Border Security Force (BSF) up to 50 km inside the international borders in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam. The BSF's powers — which include arrest, search and seizure — were limited to up to 15 km in these states. At the same time, the Ministry has reduced BSF's area of operation in Gujarat from 80 km from the border, to 50 km.

The move, announced by a gazette notification on Monday, has been criticised by the Punjab and West Bengal governments, which have called it an attack on the federal structure and an attempt to curtail the rights of the state police.

What does the notification say?

It amends the schedule of an earlier notification of July 3, 2014 in terms of the BSF's jurisdiction, which it outlines as: "the whole of the area comprised in the States of Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya and Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and so much of the area comprised within a belt of fifty kilometres in the States of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal and Assam, running along the borders of India".

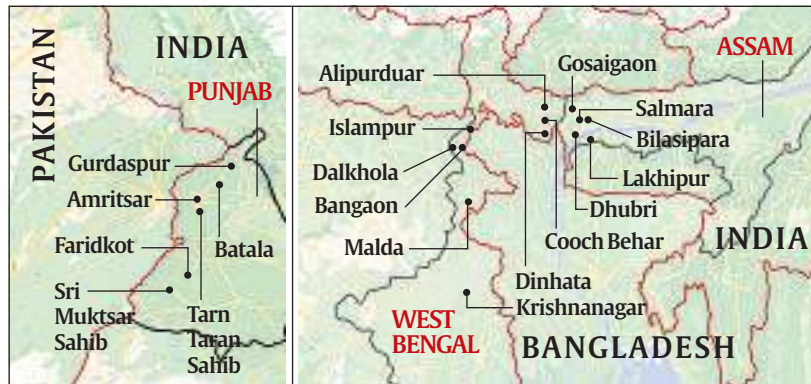
The government said it was exercising the powers under the Border Security Force Act of 1968.

In its 2014 notification, the MHA had outlined BSF's jurisdiction as "the whole of the area comprised in the States of Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya and so much of the area comprised within a belt of eighty kilometres in the State of Gujarat, fifty kilometres in the State of Rajasthan and fifteen kilometres in the States of Punjab, West Bengal and Assam, running along the borders of India".

What kind of powers can the BSF exercise in this jurisdiction?

Its jurisdiction has been extended only in respect of the powers it enjoys under Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and the Passport Act, 1967. BSF currently has powers to arrest and search under these laws.

It also has powers to arrest, search and seize under the NDPS Act, Arms Act, Customs Act and certain other laws. Its jurisdiction under these laws has not been changed, meaning its powers under these will continue to be only up to 15 km inside the border in



The international borders in the three states where BSF's jurisdiction has been enhanced. While the places marked here are within 50 km of the respective borders, this is not meant to represent the BSF's jurisdiction. The BSF does not mark its jurisdiction on a map.

Punjab, Assam and West Bengal, and will remain as far as 80 km in Gujarat.

Why and when were these powers given to BSF?

In 1969, the BSF first got powers to arrest and search under the CrPC with respect to certain laws such as the Foreigners Act, The Passport Act, forex laws and Customs Act. BSF sources said even before 2014, they had a jurisdiction of 15 km inside the border in several states.

"At that time, border areas were sparsely populated and there were hardly any police stations for miles. To prevent trans-border crimes, it was felt necessary that BSF is given powers to arrest. While police stations have now come up near the border, they continue to be short-staffed," a BSF officer said.

Why has the government extended the jurisdiction?

Sources said the objective of the move is to bring in uniformity and also to increase operational efficiency. "Earlier we had different jurisdictions in different states. This has been done to bring uniformity to our jurisdiction," BSF IG (Operations) Solomon Yash Kumar Minz said.

Sources said BSF often gets information relating to crime scenes that may be out of their jurisdiction. "In West Bengal at times we get information that smugglers have gathered over 100 cows in a village and will take them to the border late in the night. If we act immediately, we can get all the cattle at one place. When they come to the border, they will be scattered and running," an officer said.

MHA sources said the move was also necessitated due to increasing instances of drones dropping weapons and drugs in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. However, the kind of drones spotted so far do not have a range beyond 20 km.

There has been no official explanation for why BSF's jurisdiction has not been increased under the Arms Act, Customs Act and NDPS Act, which cover most of the smuggling offences on the border and deal with far greater offences.

An officer, who served in West Bengal, said this may have happened as central agencies have jurisdiction in these matters. "If BSF catches drugs beyond its jurisdiction, it can always involve the Narcotics Control Bureau, or in case of arms, the National Investigation Agency. In other matters, there may be issues with the local police," the officer said.

Will it impact police jurisdiction?

At a basic level, the states can argue that law and order is a state subject and enhancing BSF's jurisdiction infringes upon powers of the state government.

In 2012, then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi had opposed a central government move to expand BSF's jurisdiction. He had written to then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, accusing the Centre of weakening the country's federal structure, and calling the move an attempt to "create a state within a state".

About the new provisions, Minz said: "This is not an attack on the federal structure. Rather this is going to complement the efforts of the local police. It is an enabling provision. It's not that the local police can't act

within the jurisdiction of the BSF. It's just that sometimes we don't have enough time and so BSF has been empowered to act till a greater distance and in turn strengthen the hands of the state police," Minz said.

Asked if there could be issues with local police, Minz said, "We do everything in coordination with our sister agencies... We will inform the local police even now. The state police have better knowledge of the ground... There is no conflict with the state police here. In coming days, the state police will feel happy about these changes as they will find their state is more secure."

Another officer pointed out that BSF cannot prosecute offenders in any case. "We can't file chargesheets. We have to hand over every arrested individual and every seized item to the state police or Customs... There have been instances when people have been caught and the defence has argued it was outside the jurisdiction of BSF, and the accused have been let off," the officer said.

He pointed out that in the Northeast, BSF's jurisdiction runs throughout the states (other than Assam). "Does it mean state police are unable to function there?"

How will it be implemented?

Until now, state police and border forces have been working in tandem with minor, occasional differences. Now, with the issue taking political colour, implementation could be tricky if there are difficulties in coordination in future.

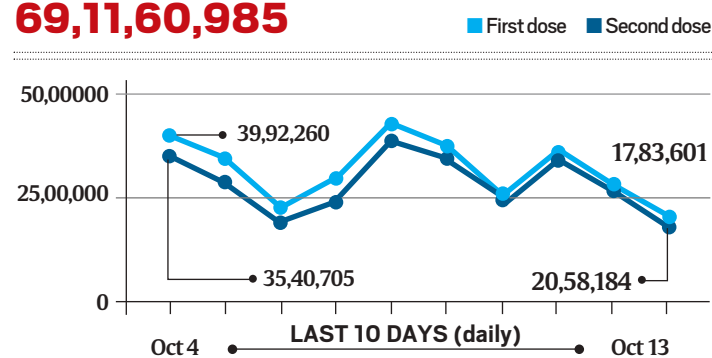
For example, be it the earlier 15 km or the enhanced 50 km, the BSF jurisdiction is not marked on a map. Sources said it is largely based on understanding between police and BSF. "If a problem arises, maybe we will devise a way to mark our jurisdiction. Currently it is a rough estimate as to which village or town is how many kilometres from the border," a senior BSF officer said.

Another officer, who has served in Punjab, said local police often have poor understanding of the BSF jurisdiction. "Once, in Punjab, smugglers fired upon BSF over 150 m inside the Indian border when intercepted. In retaliatory fire, the smugglers were killed. The police began arguing why we had killed them when they were inside the border. It had to be explained that jurisdiction of BSF ran much deeper, and it was self-defence," the officer said.

He said the BSF hasn't even properly utilised its powers within 15 km. "No one goes even that far. No BSF officer wants to take up cudgels with the state police unnecessarily. After all if you can't prosecute, you actually have no power," he said.

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

TOTAL VACCINATED IN INDIA (at least one dose)
69,11,60,985



TOTAL DOSES
96,82,20,997

COVISHIELD 88.3% **COVAXIN** 11.5%

(Sputnik V's 10,25,435 doses not represented in pie)

DOSES ON OCT 13 **38,41,785**

OCT 12: 54,01,163 (1st dose: 35,70,778,091; 2nd: 34,22,898)

7,29,483
Number of doses administered in Maharashtra on October 13, the highest for any state

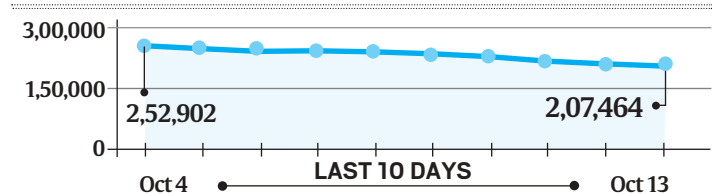
5,23,326
Karnataka

3,24,409
Uttar Pradesh

4,06,443
Andhra Pradesh

2,72,571
Gujarat

INDIA ACTIVE COVID CASES **2,07,464**



INDIA TOTAL CASES **3,40,20,730**

Note: The October 13 figures in these graphs are based on the government updates on Oct 14
Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on October 14

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Customs duty waiver on edible oil imports: will it help control prices?

PARTHA SARATHI BISWAS
PUNE, OCTOBER 14

ON WEDNESDAY, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal announced that the government has decided to waive customs duty on import of crude sunflower, palm and soyabean oil, a move aimed at controlling their prices.

Consumption & imports

Of the 20-21 million tonnes of edible oil that India consumes annually, around ₹4-15 mt is imported. India is second only to China (34-35 mt) in terms of consumption of edible oil. Palm oil (45%) is the largest consumed oil, mainly used by the food industry for frying namkeen, mithai, etc, followed by soyabean oil (20%) and mustard oil (10%), with the rest accounted for by sunflower oil, cottonseed oil, groundnut oil etc. Crude and food-grade refined oil is imported in large vessels, mainly from Malaysia, Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia etc.

Given the heavy dependency on im-

ports, the Indian edible oil market is influenced by the international markets. Home-grown oilseeds such as soyabean, groundnut, mustard, cottonseed etc find their way to domestic solvent and expellers plants, where both the oil and the protein-rich component is extracted. The latter is an exportable commodity.

Prices and politics

Prices of edible oil have been rising across the country in the last few months. Data collated by the Price Monitoring Cell (PMC) of the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs show that most edible oils are trading between Rs 130-Rs 190/litre.

Given the fact that elections are scheduled in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Goa and Uttarakhand early next year, high prices of edible oils are the last thing any government would like to face the electorate with. Also, the festive season will see increased buying of edible oils.

The government has not only abolished the basic customs duty on crude palm, soy-



The duty waiver is the latest in a series of government interventions. Express

abean and sunflower oil, but also slashed the agri cess levied on these until March 31, 2022. This comes days after the Centre authorised the states to impose a stock limit on oilseeds and oil to control prices.

The government has been slashing duty rates on both crude and refined oils since February. This will be the fifth such inter-

vention to control prices.

Impact on prices

Industry sources say consumers might not see a drastic reduction immediately in prices of edible oil. Atul Chaturvedi, president of Solvent Extractors Association of India, said in a statement that the total benefit of duty reduction may not fully accrue to the consumer.

"The impact of the duty reduction on Crude Palm oil is about Rs 14,000/- while on crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower seed oil is about Rs 20,000/- per tonne. In fact, today after the announcement the duty reduction, the Malaysian Market has gone up by about RM 150 to 170 per tonne. Also, the rumours in the market in the last few days have already discounted the domestic price to some extent. The refined oil may further reduce by Rs. 6 to 8 per kg," his statement read.

B V Mehta, executive director of the Association, said international prices are high and show no immediate sign of cooling down. Be it the production of palm in

Indonesia and Malaysia, or soyabean in Argentina/Brazil, or sunflower in Ukraine, chances of immediate improvement of supplies are slim. "Market sources talk about improvement in supplies post December-January when prices would cool down significantly," he said.

Impact on farmers

With harvesting already underway or set to start post-Dussehra, mandi prices of all major oilseeds are going to be affected adversely. Thus, the average traded prices of soyabean in Latur's wholesale market in Maharashtra dipped by Rs 300/quintal on Thursday. The oilseed had traded around Rs 5,600/quintal on Wednesday but after the announcement, the price dipped to Rs 5,300/quintal. The average trade prices of groundnut in Gujarat, too, has dipped.

Heavy rainfall in September has already caused crop loss to farmers in Maharashtra. Groundnut growers in Gujarat suffered from moisture stress prior to August and reported a loss in yield. The reduction in duty is ex-

pected to affect the earnings of oilseed growers across the country.

Soyabean growers, in fact, have complained of a double whammy as the Centre had earlier allowed import of genetically modified soyameal cake to help the poultry industry. After that decision was taken, soyabean prices across the country dropped by more than Rs 4,000-5,000/quintal. Farmers fear the present decision will hit their earnings further.

Long-term implications

Over the last few years, the government has taken a series of steps to remove India's import dependency on pulses, and tried to do the same for oilseeds through national missions. However, frequent market interventions that ultimately bring down prices, the industry said, would backfire on the government and veer farmers away from growing oilseeds. "We need continuity in prices to help farmers stick to oilseeds or pulses. Otherwise domestic production is not going to pick up," said a trader from Latur.

TOP OF THE WORLD



The Bill is one of a slew introduced in the US Congress aimed at reining in tech firms

USA

Big Tech to face new bipartisan antitrust Bill

A BIPARTISAN group of US lawmakers, headed by Senators Amy Klobuchar, a Democrat, and Republican Chuck Grassley, plan to introduce a Bill that would bar Big Tech platforms, like Amazon and Alphabet's Google, from favouring their products and services. The Bill is one of a slew introduced in this Congress aimed at reining in tech firms, including industry leaders Facebook and Apple. Thus far none have become law although one, a broader measure to increase resources for antitrust enforcers, has passed the Senate. This Bill, which Klobuchar's office said would be introduced next week, would be a companion to a measure which has passed the House Judiciary Committee. **REUTERS**

USA

GOP reports record fundraising for House campaign

THE REPUBLICAN fundraising committee dedicated to flipping the House in next year's midterm elections said Thursday it raised more than \$105 million this year through September. The record haul for the nine-month period marks a 74% increase over last cycle and includes \$25.8 million raised in the third quarter of the year. The group said it now has \$65 million cash on hand, nearly triple what it had at this time four years ago. The numbers are a sign that Republicans are energised heading into midterms, as Joe Biden's popularity wanes. **AP**

BRITAIN

Police chief quits after comments on murder victim

A BRITISH police chief resigned on Thursday after sparking an outcry with comments he made about how women should be more "streetwise" when he spoke about the abduction, rape and murder of a woman by a police officer. Philip Allott stepped down as North Yorkshire police, fire and crime commissioner after being accused of misogyny and victim blaming for comments he made after the sentencing of London police officer Wayne Couzens. Couzens was convicted of tricking Sarah Everard into his car, then raping and murdering her. **AP**

Bow-and-arrow attack that killed 5 in Norway being treated as act of terror

Suspect in attack at Kongsberg town is a Danish man who had been flagged as radicalised: police

PAAL NORDSETH, JAN M OLSEN & MARK LEWIS
KONGSBERG, OCTOBER 14

A DANISH man suspected of killing five people with a bow and arrow and possibly other weapons while randomly shooting at strangers in a small Norwegian town appears to have committed an act of terrorism, authorities in Norway said Thursday. The Wednesday night attack at a supermarket and other locations in downtown Kongsberg, a town of about 26,000 residents not far from Norway's capital, left the country stunned as police released some details, including that officers made contact with the 37-year-old suspect but he initially escaped. "From what we know now, it is reasonably clear that some,



At the scene of the attack in Kongsberg, Norway. An arrow (right) seen on a wall after the attack. AP

probably everyone, was killed after the police were in contact with the perpetrator," regional police chief Ole B. Saeverud said Thursday. The victims were four women and one man between the ages of 50 and 70. Three other people were injured, police said. Mass killings are rare in low-

crime Norway, and the attack immediately drew comparisons with the country's worst peacetime slaughter a decade ago, when a right-wing domestic extremist killed 77 people with a bomb, a rifle and a pistol. According to police, the suspect in Wednesday's attack



walked around downtown Kongsberg shooting arrows. Police were alerted to the attack around 6.15 pm and arrested the suspect about 30 minutes later. Regional prosecutor Ann Iren Svane Mathiassen, told AP that after the man's arrest, he "clearly described what he had done. He

admitted killing the five people."

Norway's domestic security agency, known by its acronym PST, cited various aspects of the attack to explain its belief that the suspect's actions "currently appear to be an act of terrorism."

"Attacks on random people in public places are a recurring modus operandi among extremist Islamists carrying out terror in the West," the agency said. It said "the most probable scenario" for such an attack in Norway "is an attack carried out by one or a few perpetrators with simple weapon types, against targets with few or no security measures."

The man arrested Wednesday had been on the security agency's radar, but the agency did not say why. Police described him as a Muslim convert who was previously flagged as having been radicalised. **AP**

At least 46 killed in Taiwanese apartment building inferno

HUIZHONG WU
KAOHSIUNG, OCTOBER 14

AT LEAST 46 people were killed and another 41 injured after a fire broke out early Thursday in a decades-old mixed commercial and residential building in the Taiwanese port city of Kaohsiung, officials said.

Neighbourhood residents said the 13-story building was home to many poor, elderly and disabled people and it wasn't clear how many of the 120 units were occupied.

Witnesses said they heard something that sounded like an explosion at about 3 am when the blaze erupted in the building's lower floors, which housed a closed movie theatre, abandoned restaurants and karaoke clubs.

Lin Chie-ying said she was awoken in her home across from the fire by the sounds of ambulances and fire trucks.

"I thought our home would burn up too," she said.

The apartment building is one of many in the Yancheng district, an older part of Kaohsiung, a city of some 2.8 million people in southwestern Taiwan.

"For the families and Yancheng, I feel incomparable pain and I blame myself deeply," Mayor Chen Chi Mai said at a news conference, bowing in apology. "Here I want to express my deepest sorrow to all the wounded and those who died, as well as their families and all the residents."

It took firefighters until after 7 am to extinguish the blaze. Many of the upper floors appeared not to have been damaged directly.

Late in the day, the smell of smoke still lingered throughout the area and the sound of shattering glass rang. Construction workers were raised on a crane to break out the remaining glass from window frames with a crowbar to remove further hazard. **AP**



Firefighters battle a blaze in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, on Thursday. AP

US elected back to UN Human Rights Council after Trump era

MICHELLE NICHOLS
UNITED NATIONS, OCTOBER 14

THE UN General Assembly on Thursday elected the United States to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council, more than three years after the Trump administration quit the 47-member body over what it called chronic bias against Israel and a lack of reform.

The United States, which was unopposed, received 168 votes in

the secret ballot by the 193-member General Assembly. It begins a three-year term on January 1 — pitting Washington against Beijing and Moscow, who began council terms this year.

US President Joe Biden took office in January pledging that human rights would be the center of his foreign policy and his administration has not shied away from criticising China over Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Taiwan and calling out Russia.

Under Trump, the US quit the council over what it called chronic bias against Israel and a lack of reform

But a Reuters review of the Biden administration's record so far showed concerns over human rights in other countries had several times been pushed

aside in favour of national security priorities and engagement with foreign powers.

"The US will have an opportunity to demonstrate just how serious the Biden administration is about making human rights central to its domestic and foreign policies," said Human Rights Watch UN Director Louis Charbonneau. "With a lot of missteps so far, they should use their time on the council to promote human rights among friends and

foes alike."

US Ambassador to the United Nations in New York, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said Washington would initially focus on "what we can accomplish in situations of dire need, such as in Afghanistan, Burma, China, Ethiopia, Syria, and Yemen."

"Our goals are clear: stand with human rights defenders and speak out against violations and abuses of human rights," she said in a statement. **REUTERS**

EXPLAINED Judge at centre of controversy

THE SHOOTOUT in Beirut took place while people were heading to a protest against the judge who is leading the probe into the 2020 Beirut blast. Judge Tarek Bitar, who was appointed in July, is the second judge to head the investigation. He has summoned a number of powerful politicians and military officials as part of the probe. This has caused tensions for weeks, with some blaming the judge for politicising the probe, while others say the political elite, backed by militias, is trying to derail the investigation.

REUTERS
BEIRUT, OCTOBER 14

AT LEAST six Shias were shot dead in Beirut on Thursday, in an attack on protesters who were heading for a demonstration called by Hezbollah to demand the removal of the judge investigating the explosion that ripped through the city's port last year.

The Iran-backed Hezbollah and its ally, the Shia Amal Movement, accused the Lebanese Forces (LF), a Christian party with close ties to Saudi Arabia, of mounting the attack, which took place on a frontline of the 1975-90 civil war. The shooting marks the worst civil violence in Beirut since 2008, and highlights a deepening crisis over the probe into the catastrophic August 2020 explosion that is under-

mining government efforts to tackle one of the most dramatic economic meltdowns in history.

LF leader Samir Geagea, whose group had a powerful militia in the war, condemned the shooting and said it was the result of uncontrolled weapons in society, saying civil peace must be preserved.

In scenes reminiscent of the war, local television stations broadcast footage of bullets bouncing off buildings and people running for cover. One of the dead was a woman who was struck by a bullet while in her home, a military source said.

At a nearby school, teachers instructed infant children to lie face down on the ground with their hands on their heads, a Reuters witness said. A lifeless body was dragged from the street by bystanders in footage broadcast by al-Jadeed TV.

CANADA

METEORITE LANDS ON WOMAN'S BED

Ruth Hamilton was fast asleep in her home in British Columbia, Canada, when she awoke to the sound of her dog barking, followed by "an explosion". She jumped up, only to see a hole in the ceiling. She called 911 and, while on the phone with an operator, noticed a large charcoal gray object between her two floral pillows. A meteorite, she later learned. The rock the size of a large man's fist, weighing more than 1 kg, had barely missed Hamilton's head.



4 killed after attack on temples in Bangladesh during Durga Puja; paramilitary called in

ANISUR RAHMAN
DHAKA, OCTOBER 14

A NUMBER of Hindu temples in Bangladesh were vandalised by unidentified people during Durga Puja celebrations, prompting the government to deploy paramilitary forces in 22 districts after four people were killed and many others injured in riots, media reports said on Thursday.

A home ministry spokesperson said the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) troops have been deployed to stop the spread of violence.

The elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and the armed police were also ordered to be on guard with the BGB in 22 of the 64 administrative districts and elsewhere, he said.

According to media reports, three people were killed during clashes between a mob and the police at Hajiganj sub-district in Chandpur, bordering Cumilla on Wednesday while a fourth person succumbed to injuries later.

Authorities enforced a ban on rallies in Hajiganj. Officials said two people were critically injured in the clashes.

Police said a number of officers were injured as the mob attacked them and vandalised government vehicles.

They, however, did not specify whether the casualties were caused due to police action. Media reports had said police opened fire on a mob of over 500 people.

According to officials, police were alerted about an alleged blasphemy incident at a Durga

Puja pavilion in Cumilla, about 100 km from Dhaka, after which a probe was launched.

However, violence erupted as mobs attacked temples in parts of Cumilla, neighbouring Hajiganj, northwestern coastal sub-districts of Hatia and Banskhal while social media was used to instigate communal tensions.

Hindu religious leaders called the violence a plot to disrupt Durga Puja celebrations, and demanded action against those responsible, as well as protection for Hindu temples and establishments.

A particular group committed the blasphemy at the pavilion to stop the Durga Puja by staging protests, secretary of Cumilla district puja celebration committee, Nirmol Pal, said.

Police said they have so far detained 43 people in connection with the violence. People who posted the first video on the Cumilla puja venue on social media were also under custody.

"Investigations are underway and we are identifying the culprits also using security camera footage," Deputy Inspector-General Anwar Hossain told the media in Cumilla.

The ruling Awami League's general-secretary and Road Transport Minister Obaidul Qader said that "fanatic elements" staged attacks on Hindu temples at 10 to 12 places with a political motive.

"But our government led by (Prime Minister) Sheikh Hasina will not let them proceed with their evil design," he said while visiting a puja pavilion at the Ramakrishna Mission in Dhaka. **PTI**

Pakistan Airlines suspends Afghan operations citing interference by Taliban

SYED RAZA HASSAN
ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 14

PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL Airlines (PIA) suspended flights to the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Thursday after what it called heavy handed interference by Taliban authorities, including arbitrary rule changes and intimidation of staff.

The suspension took place as the Taliban government ordered the airline, the only international company operating regularly out of Kabul, to cut ticket prices to levels seen before the fall of the Western-backed Afghan government in August. "We are suspending our flight operations to Kabul from today because of the heavy handedness of the authorities," a spokesman said.

Earlier, the Taliban warned PIA and Afghan carrier Kam Air that their Afghan operations risked being blocked unless they agreed to cut ticket prices, which have spiralled to levels out of reach for most Afghans.

With most airlines no longer flying to Afghanistan, tickets for Islamabad have been selling for as much as \$2,500 on PIA, according to travel agents in Kabul.

The Afghan transport ministry said in a statement prices on the route should "be adjusted to correspond with the conditions of a ticket before the victory of the Islamic Emirate" or the flights would be stopped. **REUTERS**



A Pakistan International Airlines passenger plane in Islamabad. Reuters

Taliban delegation lands in Turkey for high-level talks

Ankara: A high-level delegation from Afghanistan's new Taliban rulers has arrived in Turkey for talks with Turkish officials, the Foreign Ministry said Thursday.

The meetings in Ankara would be first between the Taliban and senior Turkish government officials after the group seized control of Afghanistan. The visiting delegation is led by Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting foreign minister, according to a Taliban spokesman.

The visit comes after Taliban leaders held a series of meetings with the US and European Union representatives in Doha, this week.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at a virtual meeting between the Group of 20 most powerful economies that the international community should keep the channels of dialogue with the Taliban open. **AP**

WHO says it may be 'last chance' to find Covid origins

REUTERS & AP
GENEVA, BEIJING, OCTOBER 14

THE WORLD Health Organisation said Wednesday its newly formed advisory group on dangerous pathogens may be "our last chance" to determine the origins of Covid-19 and urged China to provide data from early cases.

The first human cases of Covid-19 were reported in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019. China has repeatedly dismissed theories that the virus leaked from one of its laboratories and has said no more visits are needed.

A WHO-led team spent four weeks in and around Wuhan earlier this year with Chinese scien-



The first Covid cases were reported in Wuhan. Reuters

tists, and said in a joint report in March that the virus had probably been transmitted from bats to humans through another animal

but further research was needed. WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said the investigation was

hampered by a dearth of raw data pertaining to the first days of the outbreak and has called for lab audits.

The WHO on Wednesday named the 26 proposed members of its Scientific Advisory Group on the Origins of Novel Pathogens. They include Marion Koopmans, Thea Fischer, Hung Nguyen and Chinese animal health expert Yang Yungui, who took part in the joint investigation in Wuhan.

China's Foreign Ministry on Thursday warned against what it called possible "political manipulation" of the renewed probe by the WHO, while saying it would support the international body's efforts.

"We hope that all parties concerned, including the WHO secretariat and the advisory

group, will effectively uphold an objective and responsible scientific attitude," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said.

He said China would "continue to support and participate in global scientific tracing and firmly oppose any forms of political manipulation".

Beijing has repeatedly questioned whether the virus did indeed originate in China, and has called for investigations into US military laboratories without providing any solid evidence.

China has largely stamped out cases of local transmission of Covid-19 infections through mask wearing, quarantining and electronic case tracing, along with sometimes draconian measures including lockdowns and mandatory mass testing.

Microsoft shutting down LinkedIn app in China amid increased scrutiny

MATT O'BRIEN
OCTOBER 14

MICROSOFT IS shutting down its main LinkedIn service in China later this year after internet rules were tightened by Beijing, the latest American tech giant to lessen its ties to the country.

The company said in a blog post Thursday it has faced a "significantly more challenging operating environment and greater compliance requirements in China".

LinkedIn will replace its localised platform in China with a new app called InJobs that has some of LinkedIn's career-networking features but "will not include a social feed or the ability to share posts or articles."



The company said it faced a 'significantly more challenging operating environment and greater compliance requirements in China'

LinkedIn in March said it would pause new member sign-ups on LinkedIn in China because of unspecified regulatory issues. China's internet watchdog in May said it had found LinkedIn as well as Microsoft's Bing search

engine and about 100 other apps were engaged in improper collection and use of data and ordered them to fix the problem.

Several scholars this year also reported getting warning letters from LinkedIn that they were sharing "prohibited content" that would not be made viewable in China but could still be seen by LinkedIn users elsewhere.

Tony Lee, a scholar at Berlin's Free University, told the AP in June that LinkedIn didn't tell him which content was prohibited but said it was tied to the section of his profile where he listed his publications. Among his listed articles was one about the 1989 crackdown on protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square and another comparing Chinese leader Xi Jinping with former leader Mao Zedong. **AP**

SECTOR WATCH
POWER

‘Inexcusable’ to cut supply: Centre to gencos importing coal as blackouts rise

KARUNJITSINGH
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE POWER Ministry has called out thermal plants using imported coal that have stopped operations due to high international coal prices, saying it is “inexcusable” for a generator to not offer power as per power purchase agreements (PPAs). Most plants fueled by imported coal have stopped operations as a sharp hike in global coal prices has made supply of power at contracted rates unviable.

This is further contributing to the problem of low coal stock at thermal power plants using domestic coal which has led to plant outages and forced states to buy power on exchanges with some states having to impose rolling blackouts.

“Not stocking fuel stocks or not giving availability on any pretext is inexcusable. Such conduct on the part of a seller should be immediately responded to by the procurer sternly by using all possible contractual and other available legal interventions at the level of state government,” Power Secretary Alok Kumar said in a meeting on October 7, according to minutes of the meeting reviewed by *The Indian Express*.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Tata Power, Essar Energy, Adani Power and the Central Electricity Authority (CERC) besides representatives of the Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Punjab governments. States facing power shortages have been forced to purchase power on exchanges at rates far higher than contracted in PPAs with the average market clear-

Most plants fueled by imported coal have stopped operations as high coal prices has made power supply at contracted rates unviable

ing price on the day ahead market at the India Energy Exchange hitting Rs 13.87 per unit on October 14 up from Rs 3.05 per unit a month ago.

All operators of thermal power plants using imported coal cited issues of high global prices and inability to transfer the cost of higher coal to the procurers under existing PPAs.

Tata Power said none of its units at the 4,000-MW Mundra power station had been operational since September 18 as supplying at rates agreed under existing PPAs would lead to under-recoveries of Rs 2.5 per unit (kilowatt-hour), which is higher than losses of fixed costs at Rs 0.90 per unit. The Gujarat government has since, however, agreed to accept supply from the Mundra plants at Rs 4.5 per unit which is higher than mentioned in the PPA, according to state officials.

Essar Gujarat, which operates a 1,200-MW plant, and Adani Mundra, which operates a 4,650-MW plant, both running on imported coal, too cited issues of inability to pass on the rise in cost of imported coal. The price of Indonesian coal has jumped from about \$60 per tonne in March to over \$200 per tonne due to a coal shortage in China.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

GOVT EXPECTS INVESTMENT OF ₹3,345 CR OVER 4-5 YEARS

Foxconn, Nokia, 29 others get DoT nod for telecom PLI

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE DEPARTMENT of Telecommunications (DoT) on Thursday approved production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme proposals of 31 companies including global conglomerates such as Foxconn, Jabil, Nokia, Rising Star and Commscope for production of telecom and networking products in India.

Domestic micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) such as Coral Telecom, STL, Lekha Wireless Solutions, Systrome, Synegra’s plan for the telecom equipment manufacturing PLI were approved, while the plans submitted by Dixon, Tejas Networks, VVDN Technologies, among others, were given the go ahead in non-MSME sector.

The government expects an investment of Rs 3,345 crore in the PLI scheme over the next 4-5 years, with incremental sales of up to Rs 1.82 lakh crore during this period, which are likely

EXPLAINED
How does the scheme work?

LIKE THE other production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes, the incentives for companies in the telecom and networking equipment manufacturing space would be on achievement of a minimum threshold of cumulative incremental investment and incremental sales of manufactured goods net of taxes.

to create 42,000 job opportunities, an official release by the DoT said.

Earlier this year in February, the Union Cabinet had approved a Rs 12,195-crore PLI scheme for domestic manufacturing of telecom and networking products such as switches, routers, radio access network, wireless equip-

ment and other internet of things (IoT) access devices.

Eligible MSMEs will get an incentive of 7 per cent for the first and the second year, followed by an incentive of 6, 5, and 4 per cent in the third, fourth and fifth year, respectively.

Other companies, which do not fall under the MSME category but are eligible, will receive an incentive of 6 per cent for the first two years, 5 per cent for the next two years and 4 per cent in the fifth and final year.

The minimum investment threshold for MSMEs has been kept at Rs 10 crore, while for other companies it has been kept at Rs 100 crore. The scheme, which will be operational from April 1, will run over the next five years with a total outlay of Rs 12,195 crore for providing these incentives.

Like the other PLI schemes, the incentives for companies in the telecom and networking equipment manufacturing space would be on achievement of a minimum threshold of cumula-

tive incremental investment and incremental sales of manufactured goods net of taxes.

In April last year, the Central government had for the first time notified the PLI scheme for mobile phones and allied component manufacturing. As part of the scheme, companies that set up new mobile and specified equipment manufacturing units or expanded their present units would get incentives of 4 to 6 per cent, with the total outlay for the scheme amounting to Rs 41,000 crore.

In November, the PLI scheme was expanded to include 12 more sectors such as automobile and automobile components, pharmaceutical drugs, textile products, food products, high efficiency solar photovoltaic modules, white goods such as air conditioners and LED bulbs, and speciality steel products.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said in the Budget for 2021-22 that the total outlay for PLI schemes in these 13 sectors over the next five years would be Rs 1.97 lakh crore.

‘Online retailers post 23% growth in festive sales so far’

Rs 32,000 crore (\$4.6 billion) of goods have been sold online by brands and sellers in the first week of festive sales this year, a growth of 23% over 2020, a RedSeer report said

\$4.8 billion

RedSeer’s pre-sales prediction

Fashion makes comeback:

After a poor showing in last year’s festive season, customer demand for fashion was back this year with affordable models and new platforms targeting tier II users

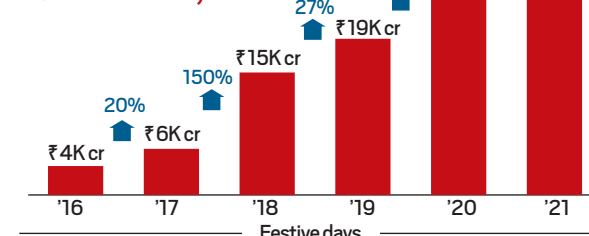
Mobiles’ strong showing:

Rs 68 crore of mobiles were purchased every hour during the festive season sale across e-commerce platforms

Faster deliveries: E-commerce platforms were able to shave an average of 5 hours on delivery timelines to customers, with better warehouse planning and streamlined supply chain

Positive adoption: Festive sales proved that brands and sellers online have reason to be bullish, with increased adoption in Tier II+ cities and newer customers coming online for first time

E-TAILING CHECKOUT/GROSS SALES (FESTIVE SEASON – WEEK 1; FOR OVERALL INDIAN ONLINE RETAIL)



Note: For 2021, sale period is considered to start from October 2 till October 10; sales figures include estimates for overall e-commerce in India

Tier II continues to show up:

Tier II population continues to show up on different platforms, largely

enabled by various affordability schemes and bank tie-ups

Source: RedSeer

BRIEFLY

Fuel price hike

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices on Thursday were again hiked by 35 paise a litre, after two days of lull, sending retail prices to their highest ever levels. In Delhi, petrol rose to a record Rs 104.79 a litre and diesel reached Rs 93.52.

IBBI chairperson

New Delhi: Navrang Saini, Whole Time Member of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), has been given additional charge as the Chairperson. The post fell vacant after MS Sahoo retired after a five-year tenure on September 30.

Eol by SECI

New Delhi: State-run Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) has invited expression of interest (Eol) for 1,000 MWh battery energy storage system (BESS).

PV wholesales

New Delhi: Passenger vehicle (PV) wholesales saw a 41% year-on-year fall in September as semiconductor shortage hit production, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said on Thursday.

WPI inflation

New Delhi: Wholesale price (WPI)-based inflation eased to a six-month low of 10.66 per cent in September, on moderating food prices even as crude petroleum witnessed a spike.

Voda retro tax

New Delhi: The CBDT has notified ‘Relaxation of Validation (Section 119 of the Finance Act, 2012) Rules, 2021’, to facilitate settlement of the retrospective tax dispute with UK’s Vodafone Plc. **PTI**

Two more nations, 1 group express FTA interest, says Goyal

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

COMMERCE AND Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday two additional countries and a trading bloc have shown interest in negotiating Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with India but didn’t disclose their names.

“We are negotiating FTAs with the UK, the EU, UAE and Australia and in the last three days, two more countries and a group have shown interest that they want to start talks for FTA,” Goyal said in a press briefing. India is looking to complete interim trade agreements on key issues with the UAE and Australia by the end of the year. “When there is intelligent planning, projects will be completed in time... timely completion



Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. *PTI file*

of projects will also prevent cost overruns of thousands of crores,” Goyal said on the PM Gati Shakti portal. Goyal added a number of BJP-NDA ruled states had already expressed interest in learning more about the portal and that the government had not yet decided when the portal would be made open to the public.

Over 2 cr ITR filed; new portal substantially stabilised: CBDT

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE INCOME tax department on Thursday stated that a number of technical issues in the new income tax portal have been resolved and the performance of the portal has substantially stabilised. With this, over two crore income tax returns (ITRs) have been filed so far for the financial year 2020-21.

“The e-filing portal of the Income Tax Department (www.incometax.gov.in) has marked receipt of more than 2 crore Income Tax returns as on 13th October 2021. The new portal was launched on 7th June, 2021 and in the initial period taxpayers had reported glitches and difficulties in the functioning of the portal. A number of technical issues have since been resolved and the performance

ISSUES SINCE LAUNCH

■ The new income tax portal, www.incometax.gov.in, which was launched on June 7, has been facing glitches since its launch

of the portal has substantially stabilised,” it said.

The new income tax portal, www.incometax.gov.in, which was launched on June 7, has been facing glitches since its launch. The Finance Ministry had on August 23 “summoned” Infosys CEO Salil Parekh to explain the issues resulting in disruption of the portal developed by the software major. In the meeting with Parekh on August 23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had expressed “deep disappointment” over

persisting glitches for more than two months after portal launch and has given a deadline of September 15 to Infosys to resolve the issues.

The tax department on Thursday urged taxpayers to file their ITRs for Assessment Year 2021-22 at the earliest. “The income tax department strongly urges all taxpayers to view their Form 26AS through the e-filing portal to verify the accuracy of the TDS and tax payments and avail of pre-filing of ITRs. All taxpayers who are yet to file their income tax returns for AY 2021-22 are requested to file their returns at the earliest,” it said.

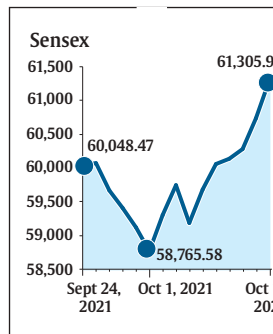
More than two crore ITRs for AY 2021-22 have been filed on the portal, of which ITRs 1 and 4 constitute 86 per cent,” it said. Over 1.70 crore returns have been e-verified, out of which 1.49 crore are through Aadhaar based OTP, it said.

Festive mood: Sensex flies past 61,000 on earnings optimism

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

THE SENSEX on Thursday soared 569 points, or 0.94 per cent, to close above the 61,000 mark amid favourable inflation data and bullish fervour in IT stocks, following strong earnings corecards by sector majors. The Sensex shot up to a new peak of 61,305.95 and the NSE Nifty index gained 177 points, or 0.97 per cent, to 18,338.55.

The domestic market was in an upbeat mood during the week led by strong buying in the auto, metal, energy and banking sectors. The auto sector outperformed other sectoral indices on expectation of demand revival during the festive season and banking stocks followed the trend owing to strong business preview numbers and favourable credit growth data



ahead of earnings season, said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

The IT sector remained under pressure at the beginning of the week following a weak start to the earnings season, but regained momentum as most sector majors reported better-than-expected earnings. September retail inflation fell sharply to 4.35 per cent against

Why didn’t Invesco disclose RIL merger plan earlier: Goenka
ZEEL MD-CEO hints at taking legal recourse against largest investorENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

ZEE ENTERTAINMENT Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) MD and CEO Punit Goenka on Thursday questioned Invesco Developing Markets Fund, ZEEL’s largest investor, for not disclosing the Reliance merger plan earlier and not following good corporate governance.

“Why didn’t Invesco make its plans public earlier? Does good corporate governance only apply to corporates and not their institutional investors?” Goenka said in a statement. Coming down on Invesco, he said, “I acknowledge the stance that has been taken by Invesco, but communications pertaining to such proposals are always well-documented, and they speak to the contrary.”

Hinting that he will take legal recourse, Goenka said, “I too have a lot of points to put across, but I firmly believe that there is a right time and place for it. Our lawyers will do the needful in the court of law, as deemed necessary.”

“As a law-abiding citizen and a representative of a responsible corporate citizen, I have and repose complete faith in the Indian judicial and regulatory system and hence I am most certain that these questions will be answered for all of us,” the ZEEL MD and CEO said.

On Wednesday, Invesco revealed that the Reliance group had negotiated with Zee group promoter family and Goenka for a takeover or merger deal for ZEEL, and admitted that its role “was to help facilitate that potential transaction and nothing more”.

“We will ensure that no one maligns the intrinsic value of this company for their own benefit, and I continue to pursue this in the best interests of all our shareholders, and at immense personal costs,” Goenka said, adding “In this situation, it is not about one versus the other. The shareholders and management of a company

are two sides of the same coin.”

Goenka said it is all about increasing the value of that coin together, for betterment of all shareholders and the company at large. “Under the guidance of the board and in line with the advice sought from our legal counsel, I will continue to take the required steps to safeguard Zee and its future. Ultimately, truth is mighty and my hope is that in the end, it is only truth and justice that will prevail.”

“I will withstand any amount of pressure to preserve ZEE’s intrinsic value and ensure that nothing impacts the returns being delivered to all the shareholders,” Goenka said.

In a note to the ZEEL board earlier, he had said that the valuation attributed to entities belonging to the strategic group was inflated by at least Rs 10,000 crore. “During my briefing to the board, I emphasised on the points pertaining to the proposal from Invesco. My attention was on the imbalance observed in the valuation and how it was not in the best interest of our shareholders. The only reason I did not agree to the proposal was because the shareholder value was getting compromised”.

Unfortunately, the way the current situation is unfolding is what disappoints me, he said. “My demeanour is not to indulge in an ill-natured fight. Such battles are best handled by legal experts. All I am contending for, is to preserve the future of this company, and not my position,” Goenka said.

RBI Dy Guv: Banks will have to prepare for capital account convertibility

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

RESERVE BANK of India (RBI) Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar on Thursday said market participants, particularly banks, will have to prepare themselves to manage the business process changes and the global risks associated with capital convertibility.

“India has come a long way in achieving increasing levels of convertibility on the capital account,” Sankar said at a conference organised by Foreign Exchange Dealers’ Association of India. “It has broadly achieved the desired outcome for the policy choices it has made, in terms of achieving a stable composition of foreign capital inflow. At the same time, India is on the cusp of some fundamental shifts in this space with increased mar-

ket integration in the offing and freer non-resident access to debt on the table,” he said.

“The rate of change in capital convertibility will only increase with each of these and similar measures,” Sankar said. “With that comes the responsibility to ensure that such flows are managed effectively with the right combination of capital flow measures, macro-prudential measures and market intervention...” he said.

Convertibility refers to the ability to convert domestic currency into foreign ones and vice versa to make payments for balance of payments transactions. “Current account convertibility is the ability or freedom to convert domestic currency while capital account convertibility is the ability or freedom to convert domestic currency for capital account transactions.”

Vaccines: US committed for easing WTO rules

Geneva: US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said Thursday the Biden administration remains committed to an easing of rules that protect the technology behind Covid vaccines so that they can be produced more widely.

But she insisted “we cannot will something into being” in negotiations on the issue at the World Trade Organization (WTO) — because any such move requires all its member states to come on board. The top US trade negotiator also said consensus was possible on several trade and health proposals at a major meeting next month.

The WTO is under pressure to clinch its first multilateral trade deal in years at the November 30-December 3 meeting. **AGENCIES**

‘Looks like a different generation now in India... tall and fitter athletes’

Russian-born coach Bukharina on strengths and weaknesses of Indian athletes

ANDREW AMSAN
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

AT THE recently concluded 400 metre nationals in New Delhi, a young runner walked up to chief coach Galina Bukharina seeking some “general advice”. Galina looked perplexed. “How can I give you advice without knowing anything about you?” replied Galina with a genial smile.

The 76-year-old Russian-born coach, known for her no-nonsense approach, wanted to watch the athlete first before offering any tips. The next day, Galina closely observed the athlete during her finals and helped her with specific advice.

After a two-decade coaching stint in the United States, Galina took up the job of India’s chief 400m coach. But much before that she was part of the Soviet Union women’s 4x100m bronze-winning team at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico. And two decades later, Galina coached the Soviet Union women’s 4x400m team to gold at the 1988 Seoul Olympics with a world record timing of 3.15.17s, which still stands.

The coach, with 47 years of experience, spoke to The Indian Express about the challenges she faced, the loss of form and injury to members of the women’s relay team before the Tokyo Olympics and about spotting talent.

It has been a tough year for you...

It has been a tough two years for the whole world but India especially. In the USA, all athletes, all universities competed. But for 21 months in the Olympic cycle, we did not have any competition. We could not go anywhere and had to stay in Patiala due to the Covid-19 situation. Seeing the same faces and following the same routine everyday can get stressful. Few people were down with Covid and some had injuries. But we still managed to keep the core of the men’s team but we completely lost the women’s team.

What went wrong with the women’s 4x400 metre relay squad?

In February, the key runner Anjali Devi got injured. The whole team sort of fell apart after that. Everyone was upset. After that, Anjali decided not to undergo surgery, which was a wrong call. With surgery, she could have recovered much faster.

You still spend a lot of time reading. How important is that?

Some coaches think they know everything. You have to keep learning all your life. There are so many new techniques to training. The internet is completely open and you



Bukharina had won bronze with the Soviet Union at the 1968 Olympics, and then coached the women’s 4x400m team to gold in Seoul 1988. *Andrew Amsan*

can get everything from there. I am on the internet everyday checking not only track and field but other sports too. I started coaching in 1974, so its 47 years now and I am still learning. I need different ideas from different people. It helps in training athletes who are recovering from injuries. I would rather go on the internet to watch some competition on loop than watch some soap opera.

You watched every race from the first heat to the last finals of the two-day 400m nationals. What did you observe?

I was at the Khelo India competition three years ago. It looks like an absolutely different generation now. A lot of tall and fitter athletes. If you see the Under-16 girls, they look taller and fitter than the U-18 women. It shows that the next generation of Indians are getting taller and fitter. It is a coincidence that before I came here, I was in Russia to get my employment visa. I was at the stadium to attend a competition of the same age group and here it was much better.

Did you notice any mistakes or flaws in the youngsters?

I just observed a lot of coaching mistakes. If you are bringing athletes to the national level and if they do not know how to get into the starting blocks, it’s the coach’s mistake. A lot of kids were setting the blocks by hitting on them with their heels. It is a very bad mistake that the coaches should not allow. The blocks are made out of steel and athletes have to realise that they are not hitting the blocks but their Achilles. In a few weeks,

it will hurt.

Another common mistake that I observed was that a lot of athletes were going into the blocks with their legs and that’s absolutely incorrect. If you go on the internet, you will see how all top athletes go into the blocks. They first set their arms and then move back to set their legs into the blocks.

How was your short post-Olympic vacation in the US?

I had some health problems. I had osteoporosis, some generative changes in my spine. It was near the neck region and because of that, I had trouble moving my right arm. I had two spine injections and that’s all my vacation was.

I did a lot of exercises to restore movement in my arm. I am 76 now. I am not getting younger or healthier.

What have you learnt about India in the last four years?

In the USA, I saw how youngsters wait to turn 18 to get out of the house. Here I saw how much kids are attached to their families.

Once Dharun’s (Ayyasamy) mother fell ill with Covid, he didn’t even take one second and left the camp to be with her. (MR) Poovamma’s family follows her everywhere. I know that kids who have so much love for their families cannot ever think of doing anything evil. My daughter is partially like American kids. I am living in Patiala and everyone who works in the camp is so proud of their family.

Players are the first to take blame, feels Chhetri

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
OCTOBER 14

HE MIGHT have bailed India out almost every time he’s stepped on field, but India’s talisman Sunil Chhetri has said football players are the ‘first ones to take the blame’ for the national team’s recent poor run against sub-continental lightweights.

After touching a high against Qatar, where India came back with a draw in the joint qualifier of 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup, Chhetri & Co. have struggled to beat teams like Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal and even the lowest-ranked Asian team, Sri Lanka.

On Wednesday, thanks to Chhetri’s brace and a goal from his strike-partner Manvir Singh, India defeated hosts Maldives in a must-win match of the South Asian Football Championship to reach Saturday’s final, where they will take on Nepal.

Chhetri was relieved after the team turned around its torrid start to the campaign but said the inconsistency was ‘unacceptable’.

“The first ones to take the blame is us players. I can name five games that we should have won. After (a draw against) Qatar, you go and don’t win against Afghanistan, against Bangladesh... then there is no one else to be blamed,” Chhetri said in an online media interaction on Thursday.

“The number of chances we missed... Not scoring against Sri Lanka was unacceptable. We missed a lot of chances against Nepal also. We were not playing against the Qatars and Japans and UAEs of the world.”

India have only won five out of the 21 matches under coach Igor Stimac.

Chhetri said the morale of some of the younger players had been affected after the recent results but the performance against Maldives, in front of a hostile crowd, has lifted the spirits.

India defeated the home team 3-1 and looked in control for a major part of the match, something that had been lacking so far.

No natural No 9

The 37-year-old, who now has 79 international goals to his name, said Manvir could possibly be his successor in terms of goal-scoring.

But he empathized with the striker’s situation, given that he plays a different role for his club, ATK Mohun Bagan.

“I am banking on Manvir when I am done. He is a beast, a machine, in every training test we have, he will be in the top three. The problem is he plays at the right side for ATK Mohun Bagan in ISL but as No. 9 in the national team. “He is young and so he is unable to adapt (from one position to another)



Chhetri has scored 79 times in 124 international matches. *AIFF/Twitter*

Win dedicated to injured Farukh

Male: The Indian team dedicated its win over Maldives to striker Farukh Choudhary, who was forced out of the SAFF Cup due to an ACL injury. After the 3-1 win, the team remembered the 24-year-old Choudhary, who got injured in the 1-0 win over Nepal, by wearing a jersey with his name on it, and sang “We love you, Farukh.” Choudhary has played 14 times so far for the national team. **PTI**

and so at times, he is off. He will learn with experience. He is our weapon,” Chhetri said.

The captain spoke highly of young players Apuia, Suresh Wangiam, Liston Colaco and Rahim Ali but said the country needs a player who is at a higher level than he is at the moment for the national team to improve. At present, India is staring at a serious who-after-Chhetri problem, given that he is the only player to consistently find the back of the net.

“We don’t need Sunil Chhetri, we need better players than me. We got to be better than this. Apuia, Suresh, a lot of youngsters are doing well. For our nation to do well, we will need to have a better team than now,” Chhetri said.

“We have to evolve, get better than before. If you are only concerned about scoring, don’t worry, it’ll come.

“The (goal-scoring) stats are not very positive, but there are youngsters who are coming in and it will happen.”

BRIEFLY

Avani level with seasoned golf pros

Chandigarh: Amateur Avani Prashanth overcame a string of bogeys on the front-nine to stay in touch with seasoned professionals Vani Kapoor and Amandeep Drall and share the lead after two rounds of the 10th leg of the Hero Women’s Professional Golf Tour. Drall (68-74) had an off day with three bogeys on the front-nine against just one birdie on the back, while Vani Kapoor (72-70) showed form and rhythm of the old with six birdies against an opening double bogey and two bogeys, including a late one on 17th, for a round of 2-under 70. Vani, who has been trying to re-discover the form that made her a dominant force on the domestic circuit, was in a terrific run through the second round. On the back nine, after a bogey on 10th she reeled off three birdies in a row from 12th to 14th but dropped a shot on 17th. Avani had four bogeys against three birdies in her card of 73. **PTI**

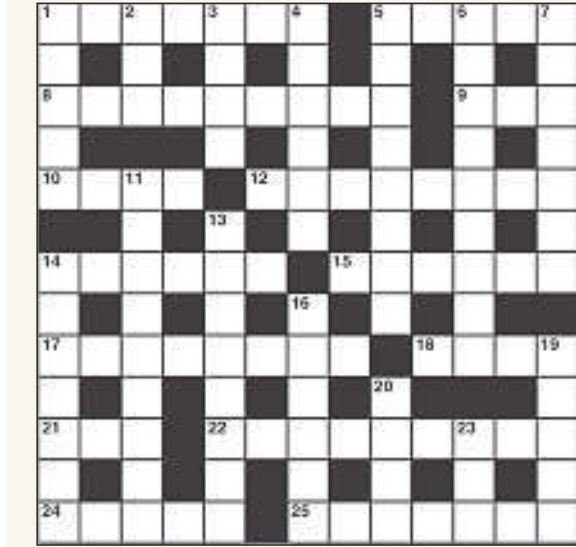
Women’s team to play Swedish clubs

Manama: Buoyed by the win against higher-ranked Chinese Taipei in the last match of its international tour, the Indian women’s football team will play against two Swedish sides later this month as part of its preparations for next year’s Asian Cup in the country. The team will play against two top tier 1 sides Hammarby IF (October 20) and Djurgarden IF (October 23) in Sweden. India head coach Thomas Dennerby was earlier at the helm of both the clubs. The team has already played four international friendlies in their current tour abroad. **PTI**

Dharma holds on to lead in Jaipur Open

Jaipur: Bengaluru’s M Dharma held on to the lead on the third day of the Jaipur Open golf tournament, carding a five-under 65 on Thursday. The two-time PGTI winner (62-62-65), who was the overnight leader by three shots, ended day three with a two-shot lead, moving his total to 21-under 189. He’s on course to winning his first title in four years. His regular partner and good friend meanwhile Khalin Joshi (61-66-64) moved from overnight tied second to sole second at 19-under 191 following his 64 in round three. **PTI**

CROSSWORD 4561



- ACROSS**
1 Direction to carry on packing (7)
5 A bad time to sell wild plums (5)
8 Going close to breaking the law (9)
9 Girl to take your hat? (3)
10 Sounds like the end of the story (4)
12 MP’s excuse for absence is weakened (8)
14 Shut up (6)
15 Paradoxically sinks money in a new company (6)
17 This way won’t get you anywhere (3-2-3)
18 Side of fresh meat (4)
21 Animal seen in the menagerie (3)
22 Engaged in current affairs? (2,3,4)
24 Praise for former duty we hear (5)
25 Number in coma possibly wandering around (7)
- DOWN**
1 Fire new growth (5)
2 Lout of a sort (3)
3 It’s socially acceptable in a worker – a relative (4)
4 Variation in game puzzles people (6)
5 Sallying out in a remarkable way (8)
6 The printer draws his capital from it (5,4)
7 A deity father’s seen around Eastern temples (7)
11 I’ll get him prepared for publicity’s glare (9)
13 Disposal of property not subject to tax – it’s voluntary (4,4)
14 Smoke and produce an angry reaction (7)
16 Unrestrained desire to get on (6)
19 Operatic heroine many imitate (5)
20 It describes time at school (4)
23 We would shortly be married (3)

Solutions Crossword 4560: Across: 1 Diameter, 5 Amid, 9 Apart, 10 Prisons, 11 Poor relation, 13 One-way, 14 Sprout, 17 Paving stones, 20 Silence, 21 Image, 22 Deal, 23 Stagers. Down: 1 Dear, 2 Abalone, 3 Entertaining, 4 Espied, 6 Maori, 7 Disunite, 8 Disapproving, 12 Composed, 15 Operate, 16 Assent, 18 Villa, 19 Sews.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

___ is the ___ of philosophy, but not always of philosophers. – John Collins (5,6)

OWEOR



COUTHY



IUTTT



ABERBJ



SOLUTION: WOEOR; COUTHY; IUTTT; TOUCHY; JABBER

Answer: Truth is the object of philosophy, but not always of philosophers. – John Collins

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



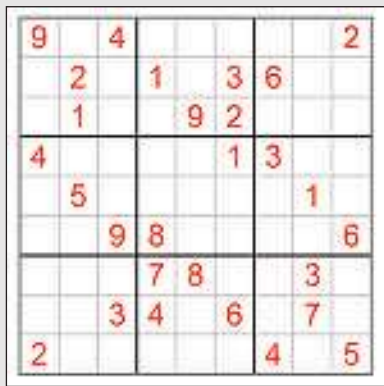
SUDOKU 4625

Difficulty Level 2s

Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4624



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

The Sun’s relationship with Pluto is creating opportunities in the financial sphere, but only if you are prepared to take risks. Much depends on your confidence; if you believe in yourself success will be more likely. In love, play your adventurous cards.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Your current relationship with the Sun has become something of a regular event, although you will feel no less hot and bothered for all that. It is actually a superb day to get to the root of long-term problems. Once you’ve got a view of the bigger picture, you can sort out daily questions.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

There really is little doubt that if you persist in refusing to make improvements in your working conditions, you’ll live to rue the wasted opportunity. Get to the heart of the matter if partners come to you with their difficulties. In fact, your laser-beam intuition will spot the problems other people miss.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Today’s planetary patterns are pretty well perfect for all affairs of the heart, if a little intense. You are in the right mood to be swept off your feet, but there’s no reason why romance should be the one and only outlet for your energy.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

The pressure for change at home is still strong but only you can decide whether imminent alterations are really desirable. Don’t shrink from emotional complications as there is very little to be gained from sparing partners’ feelings. It’s time to face up to the truth.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

It is not exactly correct to say that current financial conditions are entirely favourable yet. But, if you make sufficient effort to familiarise yourself with the issues, you will stand a much better chance of securing a good deal. Get a move on with a domestic plan, otherwise you might run out of time.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Please apply all your native wit to the not inconsiderable problems that are circulating at the present time. Emotional undercurrents can be disturbing, but never were your logical skills as necessary as they are now. You will be able to develop your romantic hopes only by disregarding certain restrictions.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

However determined you are to stick to prearranged plans, circumstances will conspire to push you off course. Perhaps partners will show themselves to be unwilling to accept your view as completely correct. Why not do yourself a favour and look for the grains of truth in their criticism.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

You cannot be called a suspicious person as a rule, but at the moment there does appear to be a lot going on behind your back. Pay no heed to people who seem to be determined to do you down, but carry on your own affairs with your usual honesty and integrity. **CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)** Whatever you do, even if you try to keep it to yourself, is bound to end up in the public domain. Focus your energy on your long-term hopes and wishes, putting day-to-day affairs on one side. What you really need to do now is get on with a personal, creative goal.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Planetary activity in intriguing sectors of your chart advises you to set your sights high. Forget all that you’ve read about Aquarius being an egalitarian and democratic sign, and go all out for personal advancement and promotion. If at first an invitation seems strange, that is no reason to rule it out completely.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Your ambitious and far-seeing nature must be satisfied, even if you’ve a lot on your plate today. Cultivate your adventurous side and plan an exciting break. Far-off countries seem to beckon, but with so much choice, where should you go? Probably somewhere where you can be alone.

Picture tells the KKR story

After Kolkata Knight Riders' win against Delhi Capitals in the Qualifier 2, the team posted a picture on its social media – Venkatesh Iyer, Shivam Mavi, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Shubman Gill, Nitish Rana & Rahul Tripathi celebrating in the dressing room. Youth has formed the bedrock of KKR's turnaround in the 2nd phase. SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY writes

VENKATESH IYER

AGE – 26, MATCHES – 9, RUNS – 320

The find of the season arguably, providing KKR with rollicking starts without fail. A breezy hitter, with composure and brains to match, he has barely resembled a rookie. Spin or pace, yorker or googly, he could flay any ball beyond the boundary. His signing this year was a result of KKR's thorough scouting in last season's Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. According to a KKR functionary, it was head coach Brendon McCullum's decision to include him in the playing eleven, as the IPL moved to UAE. What Iyer needed was assurance – something veteran coach Chandrakant Pandit offered him by making the southpaw open for Madhya Pradesh. Similarly, McCullum and Eoin Morgan assured that he wouldn't have to look over his shoulder, resulting in Iyer playing fearless cricket and scoring some valuable runs in his nonchalant style. If the signs are to be trusted, it could be the start of a special alliance.

KAMLESH NAGARKOTI

AGE – 21, MATCHES – 1, WICKETS – 0

With the massive riches in their bowling department, he barely got a game this season. But he has age on his side to justify the price tag of Rs 3.2 crore he commanded in the 2018 auction. Like Mavi, he was crippled by injuries in his first two seasons, but has been slogging hard in the nets. There is a video on the KKR Insta, in which he's shown almost breaking Dinesh Karthik's toes with a fiendish yorker that has Karthik on the ground. He still has serious pace, from a whippy action, and with a bit more refining and grooming, he could evolve into a prolific bowler for both club and country. Eden Gardens' seam-friendly pitches played a part in roping in two tearaway quicks and if normality returns next year, Nagarkoti and Mavi could be a difficult pair to handle on the home patch.

NITISH RANA

AGE – 27, MATCHES – 16, RUNS – 383

A destructive player of spin bowling and medium pace, Rana was scared of extreme pace. But despite knowing this vulnerability of Rana, KKR bought him in 2018. The franchise knew that it had someone in its set-up to provide the required course correction. Rana needed to be fearless and the KKR team motivator Mike Horn worked his magic. "When I was young, I used to get scared of pace. When I personally met him (Horn) and attended his lectures, I realised he was just not afraid of failures. He knows only how to gain (from them). I tried to absorb this quality from him," Rana told kkr.in two years ago. Now, Rana is one of the team's undroppables and has chimed in with some valuable knocks in the past couple of years. Given their spin-bowling riches, his off-spin has gone under-utilised, but he does have the knack of breaking partnerships.



SHIVAM MAVI

AGE – 22, MATCHES – 8, WICKETS – 10

One of the brightest, and quickest, pacers in India, Mavi enjoyed his best season so far in his three years with KKR. Injuries had eaten up most of his last two years after he was snaffled for Rs 3 crore in 2018, but fit and furious, he delivered his promise this season, bowling with verve, hurrying batsmen with pace and bounce. He bowled with considerable discipline too – maintaining an economy rate of 7.13, a steady dip from 8.15 and 9.64 in the last couple of seasons. His average had plunged from 54 to 24 and now 20. He has added more strings to his bow, like a slower ball and off-cutter, besides enhanced sharpness. Despite his string of injuries, Mysore had said that the franchise was ready to play the waiting game and it wasn't a misjudgement. Still teething in, he could be a genuine force in the future.

SHUBMAN GILL

AGE – 22, MATCHES – 16, RUNS – 427

A lot of eyebrows were raised when KKR forked out Rs 1.8 crore at the 2018 auction to snap up the youngster from Punjab. But they might have ended up signing the most talented young batsman in the country, the one to flag-bear the country's batting heritage. KKR had brought him as Gautam Gambhir's replacement and he is proving to be one. In the words of franchise CEO Venky Mysore, they needed someone who could provide solidity and aggression at the top. The latter value he brought in tons, though consistency was not his forte. But once he was given a settled role, as opener, he grew on the job, became reliable and aggressive. He still has self-destructive tendencies – Gill had been inconsistent at the start of the season, but the KKR management didn't lose faith in him. It seems only a matter of time before he becomes KKR's batting spearhead.

RAHUL TRIPATHI

AGE – 30, MATCHES – 16, RUNS – 395

The star man of the moment after doing a Javed Miandad in the playoff, Tripathi loves to hit sixes – he hit six sixes in an over on two occasions in local cricket – apart from solving maths puzzles. Steve Smith played a part in his development, promoting him up the order while captaining the now-defunct Rising Pune Supergiant in 2017 before KKR signed him at the 2020 auction. There have been times when people have wondered about his role and utility, but no longer. The big brother in the pack, flexibility is Tripathi's forte, his ability to bat in any position and adapting his game to the situation so vital to KKR this term. He could open or bat in the middle order, give thrust in power-play or provide the ballast at the death. He gives KKR tactical flexibility, and don't forget the runs he could stop and the difficult catches he could pluck.

PLAYING TONIGHT

IPL final

CSK vs KKR, 730pm,
Live on Star Sports Network

A been there, done that IPL final

World Cup winners Eoin Morgan, MS Dhoni lead youthful KKR and ageing CSK in the title-clash

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY

KOLKATA, OCTOBER 14

LAST YEAR'S IPL had left the two finalists with a straightforward task: Chennai Super Kings had to make their seniors relive their youth and Kolkata Knight Riders had to make their youth mature quicker. Luckily, both have astute white-ball captains, both world-cup winners, and both with former New Zealand captains as head coaches.

MS Dhoni is leading a team that knows how to win but which had stumbled last year when according to its coach Stephen Fleming was "an ageing team". Eoin Morgan is leading a young team that had a captain resign midway last season and which by its coach Brendon McCullum's assessment was "paralysed by fear" in the India leg of the tournament. Dwayne Bravo, Faf du Plessis, Robin Uthappa, and even Dhoni himself on a rare occasion have rewound their clocks while Kolkata's youngsters have enjoyed making their presence felt in the arena.

Considering Chennai were in top 2 at the end of the India leg of the tournament, Kolkata's job of turnaround in the Dubai leg was arduous but one they have accomplished with great aplomb.

But above all, the IPL final in Dubai on Friday is a contest between Chennai's batsmen and Kolkata's spinners.

CSK batsmen vs KKR spinners

Go back to the group league fixture between the two sides in Abu Dhabi, where CSK chased down 172 to win by two wickets. KKR played two spinners in that game and although Sunil Narine took three wickets, he conceded more than 10 runs per over. Varun Chakravarthy as usual was miserly, going at less than six runs per over. KKR have now brought in Shakib Al-Hasan as their third spinner, perfecting the middle-overs choke in the Eliminator and Qualifier 2. But there's a catch, pitches in Sharjah had been tailor-made for KKR's style of bowling. The pitch for the final in Dubai is likely to be more batting-friendly.

Economy-rate of the three KKR spinners have been wonderful, all conceding less than seven runs per over. Up against them, however, would be a group of batsmen who trust their footwork and the ability to read spin off the hand.

Once again, revisit the Abu Dhabi game and the way Ruturaj Gaikwad and Faf du Plessis neutralised Narine. Gaikwad charged down the track against the spinner at the outset, forcing him to drag back his length. The psychological battle won, Gaikwad pulled Narine over long-on. The two CSK openers, who have 1,150 runs between them in this IPL, also prefer to play straight, reducing risk factors. Gaikwad is the anchor, while du Plessis is the enforcer.

Robin Uthappa at No.3 could still be an impact batsman on surfaces that allow hitting through the line. Delhi Capitals bowlers learnt it the hard way in the Qualifier 1, as promoting him at No.3 was a tactical masterstroke from Dhoni. The CSK skipper pre-empted a good pitch for the knockout game, giving Uthappa two matches in the lead-up to bed in before



Under MS Dhoni's captaincy, CSK have won three IPL titles. ipl20.com

unleashing him at No.3. Batsmen to follow, until Ravindra Jadeja as the finisher, are good at devouring slow bowling on good batting pitches and therein lies KKR's biggest challenge. Dhoni's blazing finish against DC complicates matters for the opponents.

A fingers-crossed emoji from a KKR official on WhatsApp dropped a hint about the prevailing anxiety. Officials don't take the field and are expected to be tense. KKR haven't played an IPL final since 2014. CSK, on the other hand, would be playing their ninth final in 12 attempts. It would be imperative for Morgan's troops to be tension-free and not get overawed by the occasion.

KKR have 2014 to fall back on to draw inspiration, when they had two victories from the first seven matches followed by an all-win record thereafter to lift the trophy. KKR have been playing a specific brand of cricket that saw them enjoy a reversal in fortune during the second phase of the tournament in UAE.

Not that their game was Sharjah-pitch specific, for they won matches in Dubai also. But the slow and low Sharjah decks aided the six-metre length and stump-to-stump line of their spinners. Varun, Narine and Shakib are good enough to change the template if the conditions demand it. But against CSK, their degree of difficulty would be higher.

To draw a football analogy, CSK resemble the last great Alex Ferguson's Manchester United side of 2012-13, when an ageing team took motivation from the last season's hurt and romped to the Premier League title. Like that United side, CSK's 'Dad's Army' learnt from their 2020 mistakes of changing team combinations too frequently and this time, a settled unit would probably be playing together for one final time.

A full auction is scheduled next year and some CSK players like Suresh Raina seem to have run their race. Dhoni himself has kept his retirement decision open-ended, although the CSK management is confident of a Chepaak farewell.

From CSK's perspective, apart from cancelling out the middle-overs choke, breaking KKR's opening partnership early would be the key. Venkatesh Iyer and Shubman Gill have gelled brilliantly and their good form immensely contributed to the team's upsurge. Deepak Chahar, a little off-colour of late, will have to regain his Powerplay mojo. KKR would counter CSK's experience through collective effort, their biggest strength.

India to face Denmark in QFs of Thomas Cup, women out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AARHUS (DENMARK), OCTOBER 14

THE INDIAN women's badminton team crashed out of the Uber Cup after losing to Japan in the quarterfinals here on Thursday while the men completed their group engagements in the Thomas Cup with a defeat to China. The men's team, which is already through to the quarterfinals, suffered a 1-4 defeat in their last group match, setting them up against Denmark in the last-eight stage on Friday.

Competing without top stars like Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and hampered by the injury-forced ouster of Saina Nehwal, the Indian women were outplayed by their Japanese opponents, who claimed the tie by establishing a 3-0 advantage.

Malvika Bansod was no match to world No.5 Akane Yamaguchi as she lost 12-21 17-21 in the first match that lasted 34 minutes. The pair of Tanisha Carsto and Rutaparna Panda then suffered an 8-21 10-21 defeat against the duo of Yuki Fukushima and Mayu Matsumoto as Japan took a 2-0 lead.

It was the same story for Aditi Bhatt as she was outplayed 16-21 7-21 in just 29 minutes in the second singles by Sayaka Takahashi as Japan sealed the best-of-five tie. In the Thomas Cup match, only the doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty could manage a win in the men's team championship tie as they beat He Ji Ting and Zhou Hao Dong 21-14 21-14 in a 41-minute contest.

The win by Rankireddy and Shetty duo



Sameer Verma gave a tough fight to China's Lu Guang Ju but lost his singles match 21-14 9-21 22-24. AP

boosted the confidence of the Indian team after a struggling Kidambi Srikanth began the day for India with a 12-21 16-21 loss to Shi Yu Qi in 36 minutes.

Sameer Verma gave a tough fight to Lu Guang Ju but eventually lost his singles match 21-14 9-21 22-24 after one hour and 23 minutes as India trailed 1-2.

The other doubles pair of M R Arjun and Dhruv Kapila went down fighting 24-26 19-21 to Liu Cheng and Wang Yi Lyu in 52 minutes before Kiran George lost to Li Shi Feng 15-21 17-21 in the 43-minute singles match.

The defeat against China was the first for the men's team in the tournament. It had beaten the Netherlands 5-0 on Sunday before notching up a victory against Tahiti by an identical margin on Tuesday to qualify for Thomas Cup quarterfinals for the first time since 2010.

Raut talks about the walk, says it is 'sport not war'

SHIVANI NAIK

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

HAVING WALKED, Punam Raut will happily talk about it now. The Sophie Molineux floater in the recent pink-ball Test against Australia, bounced more than she expected and took a whiff of wood around the base of the bat handle before being caught by the keeper.

The commentator was incredulous when Punam started walking back, easing her hand out of the glove, and said in four different surprised tones he could summon that she's "oh, she's walked....has she walked? ..whoa, she's walked...."

Raut is equally staggered thinking back. "I was so sure the umpire would give Out. Because it was Out!" she starts. "There was definitely a noise, though it was a faint top edge. I was so sure he'd give out that I didn't even look back the first few steps. It's happened a few times in domestic cricket that I was given Out when I wasn't. But this has never happened in my life. I don't know how the umpire didn't give it Out," she breaks into a still-astounded laugh. The Test match was played without the Decision Review System (DRS) and the Australian players' appeal to the on-field umpire seemed to have gone in vain till Raut walked. "I mean, why would anyone walk if they didn't nick?" she continues, trying to pierce through the kerfuffle caused and debates of 'spirit of cricket' dredged up in the aftermath.

"Spirit of cricket has to be there, right? We hardly get a chance to play (Tests), so I think we tend to forget why we enjoy playing this sport, why we compete. You don't want to cheat just to seal your spot," she



Punam Raut had walked without waiting for umpire's decision in the pink-ball Test against Australia.

says. "See, I might forget the spirit here, but I truly believe, the same situation returns in life when maybe I'll be given Out when I'm not. I'd like to be clear about 'fair and unfair' and do things correctly. Plus, it's just a sport, not war."

She has sympathy for the umpires too, though she's still stunned she didn't see a raised finger, amid the appeals of the three close-in fielders and bowler. "It's tough for umpires, they can't see everything and sometimes batters don't walk despite knowing. Hence DRS was brought in for the Not-Outs. But in my head, what's Out is Out," she declares.

Raut of course understands thin margins

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PUNAM RAUT

and cut-throat competition and not giving an inch. And what she owes to the team. "Of course I understood the disappointment of team-mates. Noone likes losing wickets. That's why I didn't express anything to them when some asked if I was sure it was Out, even when I was sure I was," she says delicately.

It was a good left-arm ball, she asserts, drifted in, straightened and shot up higher than she reckoned, and the bat face opened more than she'd want.

It wasn't unprecedented. "I've seen Sachin (Tendulkar) walk. Once, Dhoni didn't even look at the umpire and started walking back," she recalls. "A wrong decision in a World Cup semi or final can cost a team dear so I know it's a big moment. But what's Out was Out," she asserts about the overspun straighter one.

The Strike-Rate

It is in white-ball cricket, notably the upcoming ODI World Cup where Raut is now

focussed. There are mutterings about her strike-rate in limited overs cricket.

Raut, though, wants to stay "practical" and maintains the biggest currency in sport stays 'winning a match.'

"I know people love to watch only boundaries and sixes in ODIs and T20 and not a cheeky single or double or rotation of strike. But I'm sure they like to watch batters win matches as much as aggressive players. And if playing with caution or according to the situation is going to help the team win, and there are 50 overs available, we should consume all 50 overs," she says.

She recalls an India-Pak group game in the 2017 World Cup, where India hurtled to 160-odd. "It was a pressure game against Pakistan because criticism if we lose can be next level. Batting first we made the mistake of trying to play aggressively on a pitch not assisting that kind of play. That was a lesson for me," she says. She top-scored with 48 but it rained.

The strike-rate dissing doesn't faze her as much now, being a 'veteran of comebacks' at 32. After being out in the cold for a year, Raut had made a comeback ahead of the last World Cup, and continues drawing inspiration from her father who she says never had it easy in his life in Mumbai.

"Whenever I was attempting comebacks, he told me straight that he wanted to see the same drive and determination of the 'u19 Punam'. He was talking about being a fighter. He would know the effort I was putting in because I would train and drop off to sleep from exhaustion. He says, whenever you give excuses for failure, that's bad form. If you don't make excuses, then I know you are on track putting effort," she says.