



A video grab of the incident in Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh on Friday. Two men have been arrested

JASHPUR, CHHATTISGARH

Car ploughs through Durga Puja procession: One killed, 16 critical

GARGI VERMA
RAIPUR, OCTOBER 15

IN SCENES reminiscent of the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, a man was killed and 16 others critically injured after a speeding car ploughed through a procession in Chhattisgarh's Jashpur district Friday. People were on their way to immerse a Durga idol when the incident took place.

Jashpur police said two men, Babloo Vishwakarma (21) and Shishupal Sahu (26), residents of Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh, were arrested after the incident in Pathalgaon, 113 km from the

district headquarters. Their vehicle was damaged by local residents who chased it, police said.

A video clip that did the rounds of social media showed the car mowing down people and speeding away. Others in the procession chased and stopped the vehicle, before damaging its windshield and windows.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, in a Twitter post, called the incident "sad and heart-rending".

"The accused have been immediately arrested. Action has also been taken against police officers found prima facie guilty. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

BANGLADESH TEMPLE ATTACKS

Delhi calls up; Hasina asks India to guard against any reaction

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15**Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina**

NEW DELHI has exchanged notes with Dhaka on the attacks on Hindu temples and Durga Puja venues in Bangladesh on Thursday, including the possibility of extremist elements trying to stir up communal tension. In a speech on the occasion of Durga Puja Thursday, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hoped that India would take steps against any reaction at home, as it could have a fallout in Bangladesh.

Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami as well as the four consulates in Bangladesh have been in touch with officials, sources said.

According to officials, there was an alleged blasphemous incident at a Durga Puja pandal in Cumilla, about 100 km south-east of Dhaka, which has led to attacks on temples and pandals. In the resultant violence, four people have died and several have been left injured, including police personnel.

Associated Press reported that on Friday, thousands of people protesting against the alleged blasphemy clashed with police **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

MS Dhoni led Chennai Super Kings to their fourth IPL title on Friday, defeating Kolkata Knight Riders by 27 runs in Dubai. **PTI REPORT, PAGE 14**

ASSAILANTS ACCUSED MAN OF DESECRATION, POLICE SAY ONLY A CLAIM

Nihangs key suspects after Dalit Sikh man tortured, lynched at site of farm protests

Detentions made, police file murder FIR; Khattar orders 'strictest possible action'

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA, AMIL BHATNAGAR, KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR & VARINDER BHATIA
SINGHU BORDER, TARN TARAN SAHIB, CHANDIGARH, OCT 15

IN A macabre incident that cast a shadow on the ongoing farmer protest at Singhu on the Delhi-Haryana border, a man's hand was chopped off before he was killed and the body tied to a metal barricade, allegedly by a group of Nihangs, at the protest site early Friday.

Police said a preliminary probe suggested that the Nihangs killed 35-year-old Lakhbir Singh, a Dalit Sikh resident of Cheema Kalan village in Punjab's Tarn Taran district, because they suspected him of desecrating the Guru Granth Sahib — a claim the police said had not yet been corroborated.

As video clips of the grisly incident did the rounds of social media and outrage mounted, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, which has been spearheading the protest ever since farmers first showed up at the border site last November, sought to distance itself from the incident. Condemning the killing, the SKM promised to cooperate with police and said it had "no relation" with the attackers or the victim.

Haryana Chief Minister **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

THE EDITORIAL PAGE**DAYLIGHT LYNCHING**

Those who killed a Dalit Sikh at site of farmers' protests must face the law. Thugs can't hijack Punjab's hard-won peace **PAGE 8**



Police near the site where the body was found at the Singhu border on Friday. Amit Mehra

RELATED REPORT, PAGE 3

Murdered man was daily wageer from Tarn Taran, father of three

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, OCTOBER 15

LAKHBIR SINGH, the 35-year-old man who was killed at Delhi's Singhu border Friday allegedly by a group of Nihang Sikhs, was a daily wage labourer in Punjab's Tarn Taran district and never involved with the farm protests, according to a family member and the sarpanch of his village.

They said Lakhbir was separated from his wife and children for the past five years and stayed with his sister in Cheema Kalan village. He was last seen in the village on Tuesday.

"Around five years ago, we

**Lakhbir Singh**

had started Lakhbir's treatment for drug addiction at the Government hospital in Tarn Taran. His family was very disturbed due to this. We fear that he might have been lured into **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Lynching as religion, caste simmer; wary political leaders silent

MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 15

THE DEAFENING silence of the political establishment, in both Punjab and Haryana, over the lynching of a Dalit Sikh by a group of Nihangs at the Singhu border for the alleged desecration of their holy text speaks volumes about the fault lines it exposes — and hardens.

In the run-up to the Assembly polls in Punjab, religion has become a hot potato along with caste. Only last week,

the Akal Takht head priest Giani Harpreet Singh, had warned against what he called were the dangers of forced conversions by Christian missionaries in the border belt. Dalit activists had blamed it on the poor representation of SCs and STs in the Sikh clergy.

This concern was raised just weeks after the elevation of Charanjit Singh Channi as the first SC chief minister of the state.

It was in April that PPCC president Navjot Singh Sidhu brought desecration of the holy Guru Granth Sahib to the political **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Prashant Kishor should join Cong first, then give ideas, says Rawat

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15**TMC not helping Opp unity in any way: Rawat**

AS SUSPENSE continues over poll strategist Prashant Kishor's plans regarding the Congress, senior party leader and CWC member Harish Rawat has said he is welcome to join "as a worker" but cannot insist that the party should function in a particular manner after joining. The party cannot be "mortgaged" to a certain person or certain individual, however capable

he is, Rawat said. Speaking at an Idea Exchange session of *The Indian Express*, Rawat, an AICC general secretary, also expressed **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

CWC MEETING TODAY **PAGE 5**

**THE IDEAS PAGE** **PAGE 9****OPENING ARGUMENT**
By **MENAKA GURUSWAMY**
Fortnightly column begins today**PANDORA PAPERS - PART 12**

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

Held for fraud, DHFL promoters Wadhawans bought business jet, floated offshore companies

My clients in custody, not in position to answer questions, says lawyer

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

THE PANDORA Papers contain fresh leads for Indian investigation agencies probing the scam involving Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL).

DHFL promoters Kapil Wadhawan and his brother Dheeraj Wadhawan

were put behind bars last year and owe Indian banks more than Rs 88,000 crore. The Wadhawans are still in jail — Kapil Wadhawan had offered a settlement to lenders, saying his personal and family assets are worth Rs 43,000 crore.

But what the Wadhawans have not disclosed is that since 2006, they incorporated a string of offshore companies,

NAME OF COMPANY: V&M Aviation Limited	
CURRENT DIRECTORS:	DATE OF APPOINTMENT
Dr. Ritu Sarin	12th September, 2017
Kapil Wadhawan	27th June, 2019
CURRENT OFFICER: Secretary	DATE OF APPOINTMENT
Dr. Ritu Sarin	18th July, 2018
CURRENT MEMBERS:	NO. OF SHARES HELD
Tarn Taran Limited	1:2
We, Trident Trust Company (PVT) Limited, being the Registered Agent/Registered Office of the above Company, at Trident Chambers, Wadhawan Gate 1, P.O. Box 146, Road 104A, Fort St. George, Chennai 600 009, India, certify that according to our records the above information is correct.	
ROAD TOWN, TORTOLA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	

Wadhawans listed as directors of V&M Aviation Limited

via the Trident Trust (BVI), registered mostly in Tortola, the British Virgin Islands, and one in the Bahamas.

The flagship BVI entity of Kapil Wadhawan and Dheeraj Wadhawan is V&M Aviation and records investigated by *The Indian Express* show that the brothers were in business with the Trident Trust at least until February 2017.

A majority of payments/annual charges/agreements have been settled for the Trident Trust by Dubai-based Wadhawan International Investments. There **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

ALS Alternative Learning Systems

IAS RESULTS 2021

Total Selection **156**

4 in top 10

10 in top 50

ADMISSION OPEN FOR **IAS Exam 2022**

GS Strategist

Main Paper-I, II, III, IV + ESSAY + PRELIMS + CSAT

By Jojo Mathew, Manoj Kumar Singh, Manish K Gautam, & other Experts

Batch Begins with ORIENTATION

By Manish K Gautam By Jojo Mathew

KAROL BAGH

18 Oct (8:00-10:30AM)

SHALIMAR PLACE

18 Oct (4:30-7:30PM)

GS 600+

for Main Exam 2021

By Jojo Mathew, Manish K Gautam & other Experts

- An advanced course for power lifting your performance in Main Exam 2021
- A perfect blend of GS Main Test Series and GS Crash Course for Main to cover GS syllabus for all 4 papers through 600+ Questions and Answer discussion

KAROL BAGH

17 Oct (2:00-5:00PM)

सामान्य अध्ययन

EXTENSIVE Main Paper-I, II, III, IV + ESSAY + PRELIMS + CSAT + Interview

ORIENTATION सत्र द्वारा **मनीष कुमार गौतम**

के साथ **बैच प्रारंभ** **SHALIMAR PLACE** **18 Oct (11:30-2:00PM)**

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS LTD

SHALIMAR PLACE: A-Block, Plot-II, Above Passport Office, Shalimar Place, Near Haiderpur Metro Station, Delhi-88

KAROL BAGH: 20, Pusa Road, Opp Metro Pillar No 97, Karol Bagh Metro Station, Delhi-5

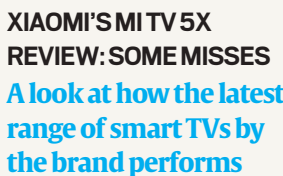
DR MUKHERJEE NAGAR: B-19, ALS House, Commercial Complex, Dr Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-9

Register online @ **www.alsias.net**

ALS ADMISSION ENQUIRY— 9891591133, 9891990011, 9891601133, 9999648884



TECH



NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Dr V S Chauhan talks about the significance of the malaria vaccine, and what the development means for India.

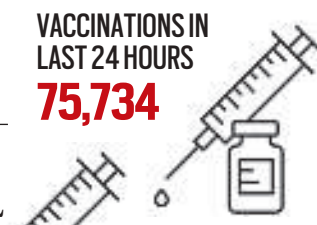
Expressing affection and respect for Mamata Banerjee, he said, "We were together in the Youth Congress and in Parliament for a long time... The way she gave a fight to (Narendra) Modi and Amit Shah in (the West Bengal) elections, I have respect for that... (But) she should understand that in certain states where her party has no presence, she should not, during election time, take away some persons from the Congress and give her or him some position. By doing that you are weakening the Congress in Goa and the Northeast. It is not going to help Opposition unity in any way. This is my personal feeling."

New Delhi

3 THE CITY



VACCINATIONS IN
LAST 24 HOURS
75,734



TOTAL CASES 14,39,337		Total		Vacant
		HOSPITAL BEDS	17,150	16,923
		ICU BEDS	3,854	3,792
	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Oct 14	28	29	0	61,012
Oct 15	26	36	0	59,653
Total	327*	14,13,921	25,089	2,85,59,291

*Total active cases

HC SAYS VENDORS EXCEED LIMIT 'No more than 80 vendors at Sarojini Nagar'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

OBSERVING THAT its order directing the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and Delhi Police to ensure removal of illegal encroachers from Sarojini Nagar Market has not been complied with, the Delhi High Court has issued a contempt notice to the local Executive Engineer and further directed the authorities to ensure that no goods are left at the place at the end of the day.

"The Delhi Police shall seize all such articles and goods which are found lying in Market area on a daily basis with the assistance of the officers of the NDMC," said the division bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh in an order.

The court said that not more than 3-4 informal vendors are to be permitted for every 10 shops in a market under the Master Plan but the number of vendors in the market has exceeded the limit. "Since there are 200 shops in the Sarojini Nagar Market, 60-80 vendors may be permitted," it said.

NDMC and Delhi Police on September 13 were directed by the court to ensure that illegal encroachments are cleared from the market and that they



The court observed its order directing removal of illegal encroachers from Sarojini Nagar Market has not been complied with. *Abhinav Saha*

do not return.

Since the order has not been complied with, the court asked the Executive Engineer M.L. Toppo to show cause as to why action against him under the Contempt of Courts Act should not be taken.

"Reply to the show-cause notice be filed within 10 days. On the next date, Mr M.L. Toppo should remain personally present during the hearing," said the court, while also directing the NDMC to file a status report within two weeks on Sarojini Nagar Market.

To counter namaz in open, Gurgaon residents show up with mic, sing bhajans

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, OCTOBER 15

FOR THE fourth consecutive week, a group of residents Friday objected to namaz being offered in the open at Gurgaon's Sector 47 as police shifted the prayer site by 100 metres from its original spot.

Prayers were offered amid heavy police presence as at least 70-80 people, carrying placards, raised slogans and tried to march towards the site. Police created a security cordon and stopped them.

Police had earlier asked members of the Muslim community to reach the site from the Subhash Chowk side to avoid a confrontation. Aman Yadav, ACP Sadar, said, "Prayers were offered peacefully. In the last week, we have held meetings with representatives of both communities and we are working towards resolving the issue."

At 12.40 pm, residents gathered near the site and sang religious songs and bhajans using a mic and a portable speaker. They also raised slogans against the government for failing to stop namaz in public places.

The Sector 47 site is among the list of 37 designated sites where prayers could be offered in the open, that was 'negotiated' by the administration after consultations with representatives of two communities, after several disruptions were reported in 2018. Residents claimed the arrangement was not permanent and permission was granted only for a day.

Taufiq, who has been coming to the site for three years, said, "This has only become an issue in the past few weeks. Some people who are trying to gain political mileage from this are creating a ruckus."

In a letter to the police commissioner earlier this month, the Gurgaon Nagrik Ekta Manch (GNEM), a citizens' forum, claimed that prayer sites in three sectors have been shut in the last few months.

Lynching leaves Singhu site on edge: 'There was commotion... when crowd thinned, we saw the body'

AMIL BHATNAGAR &
PAYNEET SINGH CHADHA
SINGHU, OCTOBER 15

THE EARLY morning lynching of a man at Singhu border put the protest site on edge, with people spending the day piecing together what had led to the brutal murder.

When *The Indian Express* visited on Friday, a large number of people had gathered outside Gurdwara Moyan di Mandi, situated roughly 100 metres from the main stage towards Sonepat. Several farmers sat on cots and chairs discussing what had transpired, as police teams investigated the scene of the crime.

Farmers said the victim, Lakhbir Singh, came to the protest site "three-four days ago" and had told people he was here "for sewa".

"He would sleep near the main stage and, during the day, do sewa at the gurdwara. He also prayed there and managed to gain the trust of people," said Sukhjeet Singh, who claimed to be an eyewitness.

He claimed that Lakhbir went to the gurdwara around 3.30 am. It was when he was



At the Singhu protest site on Friday. People spent the day piecing together what had led to the brutal murder. *Amit Mehra*

walking away that dozens of people gathered on the narrow stretch and caught hold of him.

"There was a lot of commotion and when the crowd thinned out, we could see his body with brutal injuries. It all happened very fast," said Karam Singh, a protester from

Rajpura.

Through the day, discussions ranged from the brutality of the incident to whether there was a "conspiracy to create disharmony". But many acknowledged that the incident could snowball and prove to be a setback for the movement, particularly at Singhu, where protesters have stayed put since November last year.

The Nihang Sikhs initially refused to hand over the body to the police and insisted on cremating him. After parleys and conversations with a Nihang leader from Fatehgarh district that lasted close to an hour, protesters allowed police to take the body.

The Nihangs had arrived weeks after the farmers first began protesting at Singhu in November last year. They claim to be the first line of "defense" among protesters, and have placed their horses, tents and a gurdwara right next to security establishments on the Delhi border.

On SKM's statements distancing themselves from Nihang Sikhs and the incident, a Nihang leader said, "They can say what they want. We are not governed by anyone."

Delhi girl is topper among women in JEE Advanced

ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

DELHI GIRL Kavya Chopra (17) emerged as the female topper in the IIT-JEE (Advanced) results announced Friday. She had earlier secured full marks (300) in the IIT-JEE Main exam held in March. In JEE (Advanced), she scored 286 out of 360 marks, with an overall rank of 98. However, she holds the top rank among women.

An alumna of Delhi Public School, Vasant Kunj, Chopra said she wants to pursue Computer Science from IIT-Delhi. "I live in Delhi, so I think location-wise IIT-Delhi will be convenient for me. Also, it is one of the best IITs in the country. And as far as Computer Science goes, I have been very inclined towards Maths since childhood. So I want to continue in that direction and Computer Science came closest to it," said Chopra, who lives in Rajouri Garden.

Chopra's interest in Maths stems in part from the influence of her mother, a Maths teacher at DPS Vasant Kunj. Her father works as a Project Manager at IBM. She also has a younger brother who studies in Class IX.

Chopra scored 97.6% in the CBSE Class X exams and partici-



Kavya Chopra (17) said she wants to pursue Computer Science from IIT-Delhi

pated in several maths and science Olympiads while in school. Despite having consistently performed well in academics, Chopra said she never overexerted herself while preparing for exams and believes those who didn't clear should not get bogged down.

"I don't think one needs to study all day. It doesn't work. One should study as much as they can but do it efficiently. It becomes counterproductive if you study for a longer number of hours because then efficiency is reduced as you go on. I used to study between 7 and 8 hours a day, not more than that," she said.

"I'm still trying to figure out

what I will do after studying Computer Science. I think it's okay to take time and figure things out. Everyone in their life, at some point or the other, faces this roadblock that you are at a total loss of what you want to do. That is okay. Even if you haven't cleared JEE, it's not the end of the world. There are a lot of opportunities waiting. You can always do well in college," she said.

Chopra had joined BITS Pilani, her backup plan, in case she didn't clear JEE (Advanced).

For many of her age, social media can be a distraction, but Chopra said she was never "drawn much to it". She also said Covid didn't affect her preparation. "My teachers at the Allen career institute made sure I didn't experience any loss during the online preparation. Nothing was lacking," she said.

Besides academics, Chopra is interested in books and music. Mystery novels by Agatha Christie and the Nancy drew series are among her favourites.

A total of 41,862 candidates have qualified for JEE (Advanced) 2021, of which 6,452 are women. Mridul Agarwal from Jaipur emerged as the overall topper with Rank 1 in the common rank list by scoring 348 out of 360 marks.

MORE REPORTS ON P7

2 held for cheating retd labour ministry officer, wife of Rs 5 cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

THE ECONOMIC Offences Wing of the Delhi Police arrested two men for allegedly cheating a retired Labour Ministry officer and his wife of Rs 5.24 crore in Dwarka.

Police said the men own a firm called Ecounsellor Webtech Private Limited and promised the couple that they would get high returns on their investments, but allegedly fled with the money.

The retired officer is aged around 80 and is visually impaired. Police said he and his wife had sold all their property in Delhi and wanted to shift to the US to settle with their children. They came in contact with the two accused, Ankit Thakur

Police said the elderly couple had sold all their property and wanted to shift to the US to settle with their children. They came in contact with the accused, who asked the couple to invest in their firm

(29) and Vinod Arya (28), who told the couple that they should invest their money in the company, which is into website development, and promised high returns.

According to police, the accused took advantage of the fact that the old man was visually impaired and didn't know much

about the firm.

RK Singh, Additional Commissioner of Police (EOW), said, "The couple wanted to sell all their properties and move in with their children who are already working in the US. They pulled in their life savings and the money they got after selling their properties. During this time, they met the accused who offered to help the couple by investing the money. They also promised easy high returns. But the couple were cheated."

They received cheques from the two men and later found these were bogus.

During investigation, mobile details and bank accounts of the victim and accused were analysed. Thakur and Arya, both college dropouts, were traced in Delhi and arrested, said police.

Ten years of giving truth the standing ovation it deserves.

Last date extended.

Entries open till October 31, 2021.

For details, log on to mumbaiexpressclub.com



MUMBAI
PRESS CLUB

RedInk

AWARDS
10TH EDITION

HONOURING EXCELLENCE
IN INDIAN JOURNALISM

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF WIND ENERGY
(Under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India)
Velachery - Tambaram Main Road, Palikarai, Chennai - 600 100.

National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) is the technical arm of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Govt. of India in the field of Wind Energy. **NIWE** plays a proactive role in the development of Wind Energy especially in Wind Resources Assessment, Testing/Type Certification of Wind Turbine Generators, Research & Development and Information & Training Services.

Applications are invited for the following posts;
I. Deputation falling which by Direct Recruitment

Sl. No	Name of the Post, Post Code, Level of Pay Matrix in 7th CPC	No. of Posts	Reservation for Direct Recruitment
1	Additional Director (Finance & Administration) Level 12 of 7th CPC	1 Post	UR
2	Executive Assistant - EA Level 6 of 7th CPC	1 Post	EWS

II. Direct Recruitment

Sl. No	Name of the Post, Post Code, Level of Pay Matrix in 7th CPC	No. of Posts	Reservation
1	Junior Executive Assistant-JEA Level 4 of 7th CPC	1 Post	OBC

Further details regarding **qualification, experience, age limit, other terms & conditions** and the format of applications are available in the website: <https://niwe.res.in>
It is noted that the post will be on project mode basis, not a regular one, till approved by Ministry of Finance and the Recruitment Rules (RRs) of NIWE is under revision.
Last date for submission of application is 21 days from the date of publication in the Employment News (Deputation and Direct Recruitment).

Division Head (Finance & Administration)
Additional Charge

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!

CANCELLATION & DIVERSION OF TRAINS

In order to upgrade the infrastructure, Railways will undertake the Pre-Non-Interlocking & Non-Interlocking work at Degana-Phulera section of Jodhpur Division in connection with commissioning of Doubling work between Degana-Borawar stations. To execute this work suitable traffic blocks of different durations will be taken upto 28.10.2021. During this period following trains will be affected on the dates shown against each:-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS	
Train No. & Name	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
04740 Bikaner-Delhi Sarai Rohilla Superfast Special	19.10.2021 & 26.10.2021
04812/04811 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Sikar Jn.-Delhi Sarai Rohilla Exp. Special	20, 22, 27 & 29.10.2021
04739 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Bikaner Superfast Special	22.10.2021 & 29.10.2021
02463 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Jodhpur Express Special	20.10.2021 & 27.10.2021
02464 Jodhpur-Delhi Sarai Rohilla Express Special	21.10.2021 & 28.10.2021

DIVERSION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Diverted Via	Date (from the Originating Station)
04853 Varanasi-Jodhpur Express Spl.	Phulera Jn.-Ajmer Jn.-Marwar-Jodhpur Jn.	18, 20, 23, 25 & 27.10.2021
04854 Jodhpur-Varanasi Express Special		21, 23, 25 & 28.10.2021
04863/04864 Varanasi-Jodhpur-Varanasi Express Special	Phulera Jn.-Ajmer Jn.-Marwar-Jodhpur Jn.	19, 22, 24 & 26.10.2021
04865 Varanasi-Jodhpur Express Spl.	Phulera Jn.-Ajmer Jn.-Marwar-Jodhpur Jn.	21.10.2021
04866 Jodhpur-Varanasi Express Spl.		20.10.2021 & 27.10.2021
04739 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Bikaner Exp. Spl.	Jaipur-Ringsar-Sikar Jn.-Churu-Bikner Jn.	24.10.2021
04740 Bikaner-Delhi Sarai Rohilla Exp. Spl.		23.10.2021

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Visit RailMadad website
www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in

Download RailMadad app.

RailMadad Helpline No. **139**

Please join us on

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Your Convenience-Our Concern

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

23/6/21

5 GOVT & POLITICS

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



EYE ON UP POLLS

THERE HAS been much speculation on whether Imran Masood, a prominent minority face of the Congress in western Uttar Pradesh, will leave the party. For he had earlier this month said that Samajwadi Party was the only option to defeat the BJP in the state and that all parties should “come along with it”. He had argued that despite all the hard work, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is “failing to consolidate votes or get votes” in favour of the party. Amid all this, Masood was on Friday named as one of the members of the Election campaign committee announced by the Congress. It appears the party leadership believes he will not switch sides.

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

DURGA PUJA knows no boundaries. Not just in India, the festival is celebrated overseas as well. In Russia, Indian Ambassador D B Venkatesh Verma along with the Moscow Durga Puja Committee released a book on the auspicious occasion of Vijaya Dashmi, chronicling 30 years of Durga Puja in Russia. The Indian envoy was impressed by the scale of festivities in Moscow that have been taking place for the past three decades.

WEAPON WORSHIP

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Friday attended the Ayudh Puja organised on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami. On this occasion, Singh himself worshiped and inspected weapons. “There is a long tradition in India of ‘Ayudha Puja’ on the occasion of Vijaydashami,” he tweeted, tagging photographs of him holding guns.

Badal Sr urges all parties to fight Centre’s BSF move

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 15

SAD PATRIARCH and former Punjab CM Parkash Singh Badal on Friday called upon all political parties in the state to “stop fighting among themselves and wage a united fight against the Centre’s move to turn Punjab into a Union Territory through the back door by handing it over to the Central security forces such as the BSF”.

In a written statement, Badal said, “This move will fur-

ther weaken the already endangered federal structure of the country and will reduce the state government to the status of municipality. This will be a severe blow to the pride and dignity of Punjabis...If we don’t stop our mutual fights for petty stakes, the Centre will merrily take advantage of our weaknesses.”

He said that “there is also strong ground to believe that the Centre might be preparing to rob the state of its legitimate rights on its river waters to crush the farmers’ movement.”

Cong announces UP committees, P L Punia to head campaign panel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 15

THE ALL India Congress Committee has announced poll panels for the upcoming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh.

While former MP P L Punia has been given charge of the election campaign committee, Rajesh Mishra will head the election strategy committee to Rajesh Mishra and former MP and former state party chief Nirmal Khatri will lead the election co-ordination committee.

The Congress has reannounced the formation of an election manifesto committee under former Union minister Salman Khurshed. It also decided to form a “chargesheet” committee under Acharya Pramod Krishnam, who had contested last poll as Congress candidate but was recently seen riding with Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party chief Shival Singh Yadav during the latter’s rath yatra.

With some office-bearers leaving the party and others showing signs of resentment, the Congress has also expanded the state unit by giving approval to the appointment of three new vice-presidents, 12 general secretaries and 31 secretaries, among others.

The 20-member election campaign committee, which would be chaired by Punia, would have former Union minister Pradeep Jain Aditya as its convenor, along with a mix of veteran and new faces within the party.

CWC meets today, Cong leaders say this is no time for party polls

MANOJ CGG
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

AHEAD of the first meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) in five months on Saturday, the chances of the party announcing organisational elections, including to the post of party president, seemed bleak. On the eve of the meeting, several Congress leaders, including members of the Group of 23 who have been seeking sweeping changes in the party structure, argued that the party should not go in for polls now and should focus on the forthcoming Assembly elections in five states.

The G-23 leaders also indicated that they would not oppose if the high-powered body decides to put off organisational elections once again in view of the elections. Many members of the CWC whom *The Indian Express* spoke to favoured the continuation of Sonia Gandhi as interim president.

“There will be continuously elections in one or the other state or group of states till 2024. I think the party’s priority should be to win these elections or consolidating our position, instead of thinking of these issues...there are bigger challenges before the nation... But any-



Preparations for the CWC meeting in Delhi. Anil Sharma

way, if the party feels there should be elections, we are ready for elections also,” CWC member Harish Rawat told *The Indian Express*.

Some of the leaders of the G-23, however, added that the CWC can decide the timeline for holding the membership drive, which was last held in 2016-17, in the run up to the organisational elections.

“We have not had a membership drive for five-six years. So how can we hold organisational elections?...But the coming Assembly elections are the priority,” a G-23 leader said.

“It’s useless to hold elections at this point, who will hold the party together? Till the point Sonia Gandhi is there, the party is on

track, functioning. When she steps down, even that will stop. Right now, in every state, there is confusion... So at such a time, everybody has faith in Sonia Gandhi, she is a unifying force,” another senior leader, who is considered loyal to the family, said, on the question of electing a new president.

The CWC is expected to adopt a couple of resolutions, and many leaders felt the lead taken by Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident will come in for wholesome praise.

An AICC office-bearer wondered if anything would emerge from the meeting apart from this. With permanent invitees, special

Sidhu meets Rahul; Rawat says he will stay Punjab Cong chief

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 15

NAVJOT SINGH Sidhu has withdrawn his resignation as Punjab Congress chief and will soon resume his duties, party general secretary in-charge Harish Rawat said Friday after the cricketer-turned-politician met Rahul Gandhi in Delhi and was “assured” that whatever concerns he had will be sorted out.

Sidhu’s meeting with Gandhi came a day after he met AICC general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal and Rawat at the AICC headquarters. Rawat was also present during Sidhu’s meeting with Gandhi, which stretched on for one-and-a-half hours.

After the meeting, Sidhu told the media: “Whatever concerns I had, I shared those with Rahul ji. All those concerns are sorted out”. He refused to speak anything about his resignation. He later tweeted: “I have shared my con-



Sidhu’s meeting with Rahul came a day after he met Cong leaders K C Venugopal and Harish Rawat

cerns with @RahulGandhi ji, was assured they will be sorted out.”

Rawat, on the other hand, told the media that Sidhu told Gandhi that he has withdrawn his resignation. “Sidhu shared his concerns with Rahul Gandhi and he was told that those would be taken care of. He assured Rahul Gandhi that he has withdrawn his resignation and will resume his duties as the PPCC chief,” Rawat told the media after the meeting.

Sidhu had stepped down as Punjab Congress chief on September 28 and posted his resignation letter on Twitter. The party leadership had not decided on his resignation yet.

Sources in the AICC said that Sidhu was kept waiting at Punjab Bhawan for the meeting which took place at 8 pm. It is learnt that Sidhu was told that he would have to deal with general secretary in-charge Rawat and would not have a direct line to Gandhi siblings. The party top leadership, it is learnt, was miffed with Sidhu for tweeting his resignation and hitting out at Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi’s government on social media.

The party leadership had been waiting for Sidhu to announce a withdrawal of his resignation. At least three rapprochement meetings took place with Sidhu — first in presence of AICC observer Venush Chaudhary, second with Venugopal and Rawat, and on Friday with Gandhi and Rawat.

EXPLAINED 2 years of uncertainty

IT’S been two years since Rahul Gandhi resigned as Congress president and Sonia Gandhi was brought back to the helm as an interim arrangement. Many leaders believe she should continue while a large section is hoping for the return of Rahul. Whatever the decision, it is time the grand old party put its house in order as another set of crucial elections loom.

invitees, CMs, all speaking, the refrain “will be over-repetitive”, the leader said. “Everyone will be keen to impress Sonia Gandhi, Rahul and Priyanka... I don’t know what constructive thing will come out” Another leader said that it would be the resolutions that are adopted which would be the most significant thing at the meeting, apart from “the stand we take on crucial issues”.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Manmohan at AIIMS: Cong slams Mandaviya for ‘photo-op’

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday slammed Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya for allegedly taking a photographer along while visiting former prime minister Manmohan Singh at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, saying that for the BJP everything is about a “photo-op”.

The party also demanded that the Health Minister apologise.

The Congress’s attack came after the former PM’s daughter, Daman Singh, accused the minister of getting a photographer against the wishes of the family.

Congress’ chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said for the BJP people everything is a “photo-op”.

Singh was admitted to the AIIMS here on Wednesday evening after he complained of weakness following fever. The 89-year-old leader has been admitted to a private ward in the cardio-neuro centre and is under the care of a team of cardiologists. **PTI**

‘Distressing... have some shame’: Shah targets Savarkar critics

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

DAYS AFTER Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the demonization of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar would not be tolerated any more, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said it was distressing to see people questioning the patriotism of the Hindutva icon. He said the title of Veer was bestowed upon Savarkar by 130 crore Indians to acknowledge his courage and patriotism.

“Veer Savarkar was not given the title of Veer by any government but by the 130 crore Indians to acknowledge his courage and patriotism. Some people are raising questions on his life today. It is very distressing,” Shah said in his address to a gathering at Port Blair cellular jail in Andaman and Nicobar.

“You are questioning the patriotism of the person who was sentenced to two life imprisonments. You are questioning the courage of the man who jumped from a steamer and decided to fight for India’s freedom and go to France... the man who endured the tyranny of manually pressing



Uddhav at Shiv Sena’s Dussehra rally in Mumbai. Express

Uddhav: Threat to Hindutva from ‘neo-Hindus’

Calls for debate on federal structure

VISHWAS WAGHMODE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF Minister and Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said the BJP was behaving “like a jilted lover throwing acid on Maharashtra”, and called for a debate on Centre-state relations.

He said the threat to Hindutva was from “neo-Hindus” who have “used Hindutva to come to power but are now adopting Britishers’ divide and rule policy”.

Thackeray was speaking at the party’s annual Dussehra rally.

“What are the rights of the Centre and of the states? At the time of making the Constitution, questions were raised... asking whether the states will have to bow down to the Centre. Babasaheb Ambedkar had firmly said that like the Centre, the states too have sovereign rights and will not have to bow down to the Centre. In three scenarios such as an emergency, foreign affairs and invasion by foreign powers, the Centre has powers to interfere in state affairs,” said Thackeray.

“If the Centre interferes in the working of the state, it will be unconstitutional. Let there be an open discussion on the federal structure... I want the opinions of intellectuals and constitutional experts on this issue... But if the Constitution has given us sovereign rights as the Centre, then the Centre’s daily interference should not happen and cannot be tolerated. Now the time has come for all

the states in the country to decide on this,” the Shiv Sena chief added.

Thackeray further said that Hindutva is under threat from the “neo-Hindus”. “The threat to Hindutva is not from others but from the ‘neo-Hindus’... Those who have used the ladder of Hindutva to come to power. They are now adopting the strategy of the British of divide and rule to retain power and enjoy the fruits of power,” he added.

He hit out at the BJP, alleging that they were defaming Maharashtra by showing that drugs are only caught in Maharashtra. “The court has directed officials to probe the Mundra port where drugs worth crores of rupees were found. You merely find a pinch of ganja while my police bust drugs worth Rs 150 crore... You catch a celebrity and beat drums over it, click pictures,” said the CM.

“At a time when companies are leaving China, Maharashtra is trying to attract them and take the state forward... They (BJP) are throwing acid on us like jilted lovers,” said Thackeray.

Taking a dig at the BJP over the recent statements of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on V D Savarkar, the Sena chief said the BJP hasn’t understood Savarkar and Gandhi both. “We are celebrating the Amrut Mahotsav... but these people were not part of the Independence movement”.

He asked the BJP not to hide behind Central investigative agencies to target the opposition.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

PM: New CM a silent worker... Gujarat will see all-round development under him

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
VADODARA, OCTOBER 15

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Friday praised Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and expressed confidence that under him, Gujarat would see “all round development at top speed”, referring to the newly-appointed CM as a “silent worker” who has held public offices for over 25 years.

Modi was virtually addressing a gathering at an event organised by the Saurashtra Patel Seva Samaj for the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the first phase of a hostel — that will accommodate 1,500 students in Surat.

“I am acquainted with Patel for over 25 years as a party worker. It is a matter of pride that he is a CM who is as technologically savvy as much as he is connected to his roots. His



CM Bhupendra Patel addresses the event in Surat, with PM Narendra Modi virtually present. Hanif Malek

experience will help Gujarat in development... In these 25 years, he has grown from the ground. His experience will drive Gujarat’s development to top speed.”

Referring to Patel’s family as being “spiritual”, Modi said that

it was a matter of pride that Patel had an unblemished track record. “Gujaratis should feel proud that even after being in public life and holding high positions for 25 years, there has not been a single controversy or alle-

gation against him... He doesn’t speak much... his father was deeply connected to spiritual teachings. Being a man of such values, Gujarat will make all round progress under his leadership... It is my request to all of you to undertake a pledge to contribute in some way to Gujarat as part of the ongoing Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav...”

Expressing confidence that India would soon emerge as the strongest economy, the PM said, “The speed at which our economy has revived after the Covid-19 crisis, the world has a lot of expectations from India. An international organisation has recently said that India will become the world’s fastest growing economy. I am confident Gujarat, as always, will do its best and contribute to the nation building.” **FULL REPORT ON**
www.indianexpress.com

As TMC opens office, Goa CM says Cong main Opp

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, OCTOBER 15

AHEAD of the Goa assembly elections early next year, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) opened its office in the state on Friday and inducted women leaders even as state Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said the Congress was the main Opposition for the BJP in the state.

TMC is the latest entrant in the arena that already has, apart from BJP and Congress, parties such as AAP, Goa Forward Party (GFP) and Maharashtratrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP).

“I would say the Congress



Sawant marks the RSS foundation day and Dussehra in Bicholim. ANI

party is our Opposition. It is a national party and it has been in the state,” Sawant told a news channel on Friday. Taking a potshot at the TMC that entered the state with the slogan ‘Goenchi navi sakal (Goa’s new dawn)’ and the GFP, Sawant said, “Let anyone’s dawn come, let anyone’s dusk come, let anyone go forward or backward. A lot of parties are coming here. Let them come.”

Sawant also said that the anti-incumbency factor did not worry him because he has served as the CM only for three years though the BJP rule has lasted a decade.

The TMC opened the party office in Panaji on the occasion of Dussehra. It also announced the

induction of women leaders, including Diskshan Talavanekar, former executive committee member of the BJP Goa Mahila Morcha, and social activist Swati Kerkar, earlier associated with the AAP and the Congress. The party also inducted activist Jayesh Shetgaonkar who runs the ‘Goa Against Coal’ campaign.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to interact with beneficiaries and stakeholders in the state government-run Swayampurna Goa scheme on October 23. The Chief Minister is expected to review the scheme and interact with its beneficiaries, for “identification and selection” for the interaction with the PM.

Seeking to spread wings, JJP asks EC to reserve party symbol in 6 states

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 15

SEEKING to spread wings in states outside Haryana, the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) has written to the Election Commission of India requesting to reserve its party symbol — the

key — in the upcoming Assembly polls in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Gujarat. The party has also made the same request for municipal polls in the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

Currently, the JJP, led by Dushyant Chautala has 10 MLAs in the 90-member Haryana

Assembly.

Party president Ajay Chautala, said, “JJP has asked EC to reserve our party symbol for Assembly polls in six states. We have apprised EC that our party fulfils all the requisite norms for the upcoming Assembly polls and thus demand that our symbol — the key — should be allotted to us.”



New Delhi



BRIEFLY
UTTAR PRADESH
11 die after tractor-trolley overturns

Jhansi: At least 11 people, including four children, were killed on Friday after their tractor-trolley overturned when the driver suddenly applied the brakes to avoid an animal, police said. Six people were also injured in the accident that occurred in Chirgaon area. A senior policeman said around 30 families from Madhya Pradesh's Pandokhar were going to a temple in Erach in the tractor-trolley. The injured people have been hospitalised, he said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in a statement, expressed grief over the mishap and directed officials to provide adequate medical treatment to the injured. **PTI**

ASSAM
Students force teacher to kneel over fee hike

Jhansi: Atinsukia: A teacher was allegedly forced to kneel and apologise before her students who were protesting against a fee hike in Assam's Tinsukia district. The district administration has ordered a magisterial-level enquiry into the incident, which took place on October 11. A video of the woman kneeling with folded hands has been shared widely on social media. It has sparked condemnation by the opposition Congress. A senior leader of the All Assam Students Union, who was among the protestors, has been expelled from the organisation. He allegedly instigated the students of Philobar Senior Secondary School. **PTI**

RAJASTHAN
Cop son 'drives car off road'; 1 dead, 2 hurt

Jodhpur: One person was killed and two others were injured when a speeding car allegedly hit multiple vehicles in Jodhpur, police said Friday. The incident took place late Thursday night on Chopasni Road. The deceased was identified as Sadakat Ali, who was sitting on a scooter parked off road, police said. The car was allegedly being driven by the son of a police inspector at a very high speed, they said. Zaid Ali (18) had borrowed the car from his neighbour and had gone on a drive with his friends, said police. On his way back home, he lost balance as he jumped speed breakers near a private hospital, they said. "The car hit a street-side vendor, then a scooter, and finally a motorcycle," said an officer. **PTI**

PM push to Atmanirbhar Bharat: Goal is to make India major military power

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

THE GOAL of the Atmanirbhar Bharat, or self-reliant India campaign is to make India one of the biggest military powers in the world by developing a modern military industry in the country, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday as he inaugurated seven new Defence Public Sector Units (DPSUs). The units have been carved out of the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) which became defunct at the end of September.

"Atmanirbhar Bharat abhiyaan ke tahat desh ka lakshya bharat ko apne dum par duniya ki badi sainya taakat banana ka hai, bharat mein aadhunik sainya institute ke vikaas ka hai. (Under the self-reliant India campaign, country's goal is to make India a major military power on its own, and to develop a modern military industry)," he said.

The seven new DPSUs, that commenced business from October 1, are: Munitions India



PM Narendra Modi inaugurates seven new defence companies via videoconference Friday. *ANI*

Limited (MIL); Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVANI); Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWE India); Troop Comforts Limited (TCL) (Troop Comfort Items); Yantra India Limited (YIL); India Optel Limited (IOL) and Gliders India Limited (GIL).

The PM said that as India entered its 75th year of Independence, the country is making "new resolutions to build a new future".

"The decision to revamp 41 Ordnance Factories and the

EXPLAINED
Need for innovation

WHILE THE goal of self-reliance in defence is noble, making these seven new DPSUs as the Atmanirbhar engine in defence will require more than just restructuring of the now defunct OFB. They would need to instill a culture of innovation to meet the needs of future, something that has eluded the existing DPSUs.

launch of seven new companies is a part of this resolution journey of the country. This decision was pending for the last 15-20 years...the ordnance factories, with over 150 years of experience, were once counted among the most powerful institutions in the world".

"After Independence, we needed to upgrade these facto-

ries, adopt new age technology. But they were not given much attention, and over time, India became dependent on foreign countries for its strategic needs," he said.

Today, he said there is "more transparency, trust, and technology driven approach in the defence sector of the country than ever before" and added that "many major reforms have happened in the defence sector".

He urged the new companies to focus on innovation and research, saying, "you not only have to match the world's biggest companies, but also take the lead in future technology. So, it is important that you think new, and give maximum opportunity to research oriented youth."

Modi said that the seven new DPSUs have been given orders worth Rs 65,000 crore. All of these are indents pending with the OFB which have been converted to more accountable contracts.

Trying to placate the employees of these companies as

many unions opposed the corporatisation of OFB, Modi said under the new arrangement "the talent that we have in our ordnance factories, who want to innovate, will get complete freedom to showcase their talent... With your expertise, the products that you will show by making them will not only increase the capacity of India's defence sector, but will also remove the gap that had come after Independence."

Speaking before Modi's video message was played, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the idea behind corporatisation of the OFB by dividing its 41 factories among the seven new DPSUs is "to promote self-reliance in order to improve the functioning, and defence preparedness of the armed forces". He said the "objective of this restructuring is to transform ordnance factories into productive, and profitable assets; improve expertise in the product range; increase in competitiveness; and enhance the quality and cost-efficiency".



An idol of Durga is immersed in the sea off Mumbai on Friday evening. *Amit Chakravarty*

INTO THE SUNSET

Man-eater that killed four in Nilgiris trapped

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UDHAGAMANDALAM
(TAMIL NADU), OCTOBER 15

AN ELUSIVE man-eating tiger that killed four people in Tamil Nadu's Nilgiris district has been trapped after being shot with tranquilizer darts twice in the last 14 hours, forest officials said on Friday.

The tiger had been a menace to residents of Gudalur and Masinagudi areas. Its most recent victim was an 85-year-old man. It had also killed over 20 head of cattle and goats, said the officials, who have been trying to trap it since September 25.

Though there were reports of forest officials receiving orders to shoot the tiger, code named T23, wildlife activists approached the Madras High Court which directed the officials to trap the animal without killing it. The court, passing interim orders last week, asked the officials to see to it that few people enter the forest to capture the big cat.

Top Maoist leader RK dies; wife says suffered from kidney ailment

REENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 15

TOP MAOIST leader Akkiraju Haragopal, alias RK, died in the forests of south Bastar in Chhattisgarh on Wednesday, his wife said on Friday. A Sirisha attributed his death to renal failure.

Sirisha, who resides in Tangutur town of Andhra Pradesh's Prakasam district, said: "I received information from a party member that he died on Wednesday and his last rites were performed on Thursday. He was suffering from kidney disease but he could not consult a doctor as police kept hospitals under surveillance. He died because he was denied treatment this way."

Maoist Central Committee spokesperson Abhay said in a statement that RK died in the early hours of October 14.

Special Intelligence Branch officials say the CPI-Maoist Central Committee Member and in-charge of Andhra Orissa



Akkiraju Haragopal alias RK died in Bastar. *File*

Border Special Zonal Committee was an Arts graduate who worked as a teacher for a short while before joining the erstwhile People's War Group (PWG) about 30 years ago.

He rose through the ranks, operating first in Guntur district and then moving to the Nallamala forests.

He was involved in several attacks on police stations, looting arms and ammunition and went underground.

He was also allegedly involved in the March 2000 killing of Telegu Desam Party minister A Madhav Reddy whose vehicle was blown up on the Ghatkesar overbridge in his native Bhongir in Nalgonda. RK was later appointed secretary of Andhra

Searches at firms linked to Ajit Pawar: I-T says Rs 184 cr in unaccounted income

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15

THE INCOME Tax (I-T) Department on Friday said it unearthed unaccounted income worth Rs 184 crore after its searches on October 7 at premises of two real estate groups in Mumbai linked to the family of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

Without naming Pawar or his kin, the tax authority said the evidence gathered by it during the searches carried out at about 70 premises spread across Mumbai, Pune, Baramati, Goa and Jaipur revealed "several prima-facie unaccounted and benami transactions".

"Incriminating documents evidencing unaccounted income of about Rs 184 crore of the two groups have been found," said the tax agency in a statement on Friday.

On October 7, the tax department had carried out searches on a firm where Pawar's son, Parth, is a director; a few firms owned by Pawar's sisters; two real estate firms linked to Pawar; and premises of directors of four sugar mills across the state reportedly indirectly linked to the Pawar family.

At the time, Pawar had said he had no problem with the searches against him but was upset that his sisters were being involved. "We pay taxes every year. Since I am the finance minister, I am aware of fiscal discipline. All entities linked to me have paid taxes," he had said.

"I am upset because (premises of) my sisters, who got married 35-40 years ago, have been raided. If they were raided as Ajit Pawar's relatives, then people must think about it... the way the agencies are being used," he said, adding that the tax department was in a better position to say if there was a political angle



Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar

to the searches.

The I-T department said in its statement Friday that the two real estate companies infused unaccounted funds across several companies through "suspicious" transactions with the "involvement of an influential family of Maharashtra".

"The search action has led to identification of transactions by these business groups with a web of companies which, prima facie, appear to be suspicious. A preliminary analysis of the flow of funds indicates that there has been an introduction of unaccounted funds in the group by way of various dubious methods like introduction of bogus share premium, suspicious unsecured loans, receipt of unsubstantiated advance for certain services, collusive arbitration deals out of non-existent disputes, etc. It has been observed that such suspicious flow of funds has taken place with the involvement of an influential family of Maharashtra," said the statement.

According to the agency, the unaccounted funds have been used for "acquisition of various assets such as an office building at a prime locality in Mumbai, flat in posh locality in Delhi, resort in Goa, agricultural lands in Maharashtra and investments in sugar mills".

"The book value of these assets aggregates to about Rs 170 crore," said the tax authority.

Apart from this, the department seized unaccounted cash worth Rs 2.13 crore and jewellery worth Rs 4.32 crore from the two companies during the searches.

Court rejects plea to cancel 'look-out' against ex-CFO of firm linked to Nirav

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15

ASPECIAL court on Thursday rejected an application seeking to cancel a look-out circular (LOC) issued against the former chief financial officer of a firm linked to fugitive jeweller Nirav Modi.

Ravi Gupta, who was named as an accused in the Punjab National Bank (PNB) 'fraud' case, had sought to cancel the LOC against him, stating that it was preventing him from travelling abroad for his work.

Gupta said that he had cooperated with the CBI probe and had appeared before the agency 31 times. He pointed out that he had neither been arrested in connection with the case nor chargesheeted. Gupta said he was shocked to learn of the LOC and had requested CBI to cancel it, but it was not done.

CBI opposed Gupta's plea, stating that Firestar International Ltd and Firestar Diamond International Pvt Ltd, linked to Modi, had cheated PNB of Rs 321.88 crore. The agency pointed out that Gupta had held a key position in the first company. It said that the investigation was still on and there was a likelihood of him fleeing the country.

The CBI also said that the court did not have the jurisdiction to cancel the LOC. The court agreed with the CBI's contention, stating that the LOC was not issued by the court but by an investigating officer during investigation.

"...issuance of the LOC is purely action with the object of securing the presence of suspect/accused as it is an executive action... In my opinion, this court is not having any inherent jurisdiction to cancel the same. No doubt, the LOC can be cancelled by the court but only when it has been issued by the court. Herein, the LOC under challenge is not issued by this court," said Special Judge A S Sayyad.

Govts should return temple property; need population policy: RSS chief

At annual Dussehra address, Bhagwat flags 'unregulated' streaming content, 'clandestine' Bitcoin and drug trade

VIVEK DESHPANDE
NAGPUR, OCTOBER 15

RASHTRIYA Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat Friday called upon governments to return all temple property under their control to "Hindu society" and repeated the organisation's demand for a population policy to tackle what it claims is a "demographic imbalance".

Addressing RSS volunteers at the annual Vijaya Dashami programme in Nagpur, Bhagwat said most Hindu temples in India are controlled by the government. "Many temples in India are also run by trusts. In both cases, we find instances of good and bad management," he said. "It is necessary and only

reasonable that the operating rights of Hindu temples be handed over to the Hindu devotees and the wealth of the Hindu temples is utilised for the worship of the deities and the welfare of the Hindu community only," he demanded.

Bhagwat did not speak about the Lakhimpur Kheri incident where a motorcade allegedly led by a Union Minister's son mowed down four farmers. He said, without mentioning any particular incident, "Different kinds of topsy-turvy (*ulte-sidhe*) incidents happen in a vast country like ours. But we should adopt a language that will unite the people and not divide them."

The RSS chief called for a population policy that could be used for the next 50 years. "We will have to be sure of the needs



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat during his Dussehra speech in Nagpur on Friday. *ANI*

of the population then and the requirements of the young population necessary to take care of the older ones. But along with the balance of population, we will also have to take care of the

growing demographic imbalance being observed over the last few years," Bhagwat said.

Reminding the government of the RSS resolution of 2015 in this regard, Bhagwat said: "In the

present circumstances, news of persecution of native Hindus, growing criminalisation and a mounting pressure on them to escape their areas where an imbalanced population growth have surfaced. The violence that broke out following the elections of West Bengal and the pitiable condition of the Hindu people there can also be attributed to the appeasement of barbarous elements by the government and population imbalance."

"A policy that is applicable to all groups in the same fashion is imperative. 'Infiltrators' must be deprived of citizenship," he said.

The RSS chief also claimed Jammu and Kashmir has begun reaping the benefits of the repeal of Article 370. "But extremists have started targeted violence to disturb peace and lower the

public morale. Government must efficiently deal with them," Bhagwat said. He, however, emphasised: "Efforts must be made to win the hearts of the people."

Without explicitly referring to the Aryan Khan case, Bhagwat called for strict curbs on the drug trade. "We know to which countries the money from the drug trade can be traced. We must deal with it firmly." The RSS chief also expressed concern on the contents on streaming platforms, saying: "Nobody has any control on it. Our children are watching it."

On Bitcoin, he said: "No country has control over Bitcoin. Clandestine, uncontrolled currency like Bitcoin has the potential to destabilise the economy of all countries and pose a serious challenge."

DRAWS TEMPLE LINK TO OLYMPIC MEDALS

Nagpur: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat sought to connect the success of Indians in the Olympics and Paralympics to the elation sparked by the Ram temple construction. "The sense of self appears to be on the rise. Recently, it was seen when volunteers went about collecting donations for Ram temple. That elation is finding expression," Bhagwat said, and went on to discuss the Olympics and Paralympics success in the same vein. Bhagwat asked: "Where has the enthusiasm behind this success come from? Clearly, they have now developed a sense of doing something for the country." **ENS**

KARNATAKA

Assembly panel to order survey on Christian missionary work

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 15

A HOUSE committee of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on backward classes and minorities has decided to order a survey on Christian missionary work in the state to identify “unauthorised” people involved in the work.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the House committee on October 13 chaired by BJP MLA Goolihatti Shekar, who had raised the issue of religious conversions in the Assembly on September 21 and alleged that his 72-year-old mother had converted to Christianity in Chitradurga district. “We want to find out the number of authorised and unauthorised people engaged in church work,” he said.

The BJP government in Karnataka is known to be testing the ground for the introduction of an anti-conversion Bill. “We are



Decision was taken at a meet chaired by BJP MLA Goolihatti Shekar

serious about bringing in an anti-conversion law. We are looking at similar laws in other states and will decide,” Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said during a recent visit to the communally polarised Mangaluru region.

Over the past two months, there have been several incidents of right-wing groups disrupting prayer meetings organised by small Christian groups — especially in Dakshina Kannada region — on the basis of allegations of conversions being carried out at

the meetings. Police cases have been filed in this regard in Dakshina Kannada in recent weeks. According to Shekar, who is from Hosadurga region of Chitradurga district, directions have been issued to authorities in three backward districts of the state — Yadgir, Chitradurga and Vijayapura districts — to check on “conversion activity”.

“Officials have been asked to check along with the police on conversion activity in these districts. Officials have been asked to initiate stringent action when reports of conversion activity are received,” he said.

The committee is also looking at ways of preventing Scheduled Caste persons who convert to Christianity from availing reservation benefits, Shekar said.

On September 21, Shekar had moved a motion in the State Legislature against alleged widespread conversions in the state and stated in the Assembly that his 72-year-old mother had con-

verted to Christianity in his hometown. He sought curbs on conversions. A few days before the meeting of the House committee, Shekar reported that 10 persons in his village, including his mother, had reverted to Hinduism.

Besides prevention of cow slaughter, inter-religious relationships and protection of Hindu culture, the BJP’s agenda includes prevention of conversions. In 2008, when the BJP was in power in Karnataka for the first time, Bajrang Dal activists carried out coordinated attacks on some churches in Mangaluru region, alleging that conversions were being carried out.

“There is an economic and social backdrop against which conversions occur. Many places where conversions are being alleged, like Chitradurga, are backward regions with a large SC population. The way to address the issue is through development, creation of jobs...” said a senior state official.

MAHARASHTRA

Be sensitive to conditions of shelter homes for children, says HC

OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15

THE AURANGABAD bench of the Bombay High Court recently asked Maharashtra government to be sensitive towards conditions of observation homes, where children in conflict with law are lodged, as well as of state-run shelter homes for special children.

The court warned officers of the concerned department of strict coercive action in case they fail to collect and provide data and the state of affairs of such institutions across Maharashtra, as directed in its September 23 order.

A division bench of Justice Sanjay V Gangapurwala and Justice Rajesh N Laddha was on October 7 hearing a suo motu PIL it had initiated last year, in which amicus curiae Akshay Kulkarni, assisting the court, had informed the HC that those in charge of shelter homes for special children in Jalna were “turning a blind eye” to observations made by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) in regard to unhygienic conditions.

On August 20, the HC asked assistant government pleader AR Kale to take instructions from concerned law enforcement machinery on whether Jalna Police has probed financial illegalities and irregularities in such homes.

The court also noted that while it had not merely sought a number of Shishugruhas and Balgruhas in the state, inspection reports are also expected to be placed on record and that information is not being provided.

It added, “I find that the officers concerned are avoiding to place on record the information as sought, we would not hesitate to take action against those officers concerned.”

Govt rubbishes Global Hunger Index ranking, questions methodology

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

THE MINISTRY of Women and Child Development said on Friday that the Global Hunger Index (GHI), which dropped India to the 101st position from the 94th in 2020, was “shocking” and “devoid of ground reality”.

In its findings released earlier this week, GHI said India trails behind neighbours Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Of the 116 countries ranked this year, eighteen countries, including China, Brazil and Kuwait, share the top rank with a GHI score of less than five. The report, prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welt Hunger Hilfe, termed the level of hunger in India “alarming”.

“It is shocking to find that the Global Hunger Report 2021 has lowered the rank of India on the basis of FAO estimate on proportion of undernourished population, which is found to be devoid of ground reality and facts and

suffers from serious methodological issues. The publishing agencies...have not done their due diligence before releasing the report,” said the Ministry, calling the methodology used by the agencies unscientific.

“They have based their assessment on the results of a ‘four question’ opinion poll, which was conducted telephonically by Gallup. The scientific measurement of undernourishment would require measurement of weight and height...The report completely disregards Government’s massive effort to ensure food security of the entire population during the Covid period, verifiable data on which are available. The opinion poll does not have a single question on whether the respondent received any food support from the Government or other sources,” it said.

It also raised questions on improved rankings of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, which seem to be unaffected by the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15

THE JAMMU and Kashmir (J&K) Police said two militants were killed in separate encounters in Pulwama and Srinagar on Friday. Police said they were both affiliated with The Resistance Front (TRF).

The militants have been identified as Shahid Bashir Sheikh and Tanzeel Ahmed, both residents of Srinagar.

Inspector General of Police (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar said that besides two specific killings, the two militants “were also collaborators in recent killings of one chemist and two teachers in Srinagar city.”

On October 5, a prominent chemist, 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 second-

ary school, and her colleague Deepak Chand, a resident of Jammu, were killed inside their school in Srinagar.

PTI

GUNFIGHT IN POONCH STILL GOING ON

Jammu: The gunfight in Poonch district, in which two Army personnel were killed, was still ongoing on Friday night. When last reports came in, the operation was still on in the Mendhar sub-division. “In an ongoing counter-terrorism operation in the general area of Nar Khas forest in Mendhar sub-division, there was an exchange of fire...during the evening hours of Thursday,” a defence public relation officer (PRO) said. Riflemen Vikram Singh Negi (26) and Yogambar Singh (27) were killed in the exchange of fire.

“Since October 8, eight anti-terrorist operations were successfully carried out in Kashmir Valley, resulting in elimination of 11 terrorists,” the IG said.

Shahid Bashir Sheikh was killed in the first encounter in Wahibug area of Pulwama. IGP Kumar said Sheikh was behind the killing of Mohd Shafi Dar, a government employee, on October 2. “One AK rifle along with ammunition was recovered from him,” he said.

Tanzeel Ahmed was killed in the second encounter in Bemina area of Srinagar. Police said he was “given the opportunity to surrender”, but he “fired indiscriminately on the joint search party” instead. He was killed in the retaliatory fire.

Police said the militant’s body was later retrieved from the encounter site. According to police, he was involved in the killing of PSI Arshid Ashraf at Khanyar area of Srinagar on September 12.

Police: Woman killed husband, tried to pass it off as heart attack

Ahmedabad: The Ahmedabad Police’s Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) arrested two people for allegedly killing a 40-year-old man.

Police said Bipin Patel was declared brought dead at the LG Hospital on August 20. They said his wife Deepti (35) claimed her husband suffered a heart attack at home, following which, he was rushed to the hospital.

“...his body was cremated by his wife. The police got suspicious and an investigation was launched. Probe revealed that Deepti and her neighbour Saurabh were in a relationship

since 2018 and six months ago, Bipin found out about the affair and threatened the two. The accused then made a plan... Suthar contacted a colleague, whose wife is a nurse... and asked for sleeping pills... On August 19, Deepti added four sleeping pills in milk and gave it to her husband. Around 1:30 am, Saurabh came to the house and the accused first made the victim wear a face mask and then pasted cellotape over it. The accused then closed the nostrils of the victim, due to which he died... We have arrested both for murder,” said a police official.

ENS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

PADDY RESIDUE burning incidents have dropped by 69.49 per cent in Punjab, 18.28 per cent in Haryana and 47.61 per cent in the eight NCR districts of Uttar Pradesh in the one-month period beginning September 15 from the same period last year, said the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

The data is the result of monitoring of paddy residue burning events from September 15 in the states of Punjab, Haryana and the NCR areas of UP by the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) to curb and abate air pollution during the ongoing harvest season. The CAQM has held a series of meetings with state government officials, including the District Collectors/ District Magistrates of

EXPRESS NETWORK

Over 29% candidates clear JEE Advanced

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

JOINT ENTRANCE Exam (JEE) Advanced, the entrance test for admission to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), has been cleared by 41,862 candidates this year, which translates to 29.54 per cent of the total candidates who took the exam.

Mridul Agarwal from the IIT Delhi zone was the all-India topper this time. Kavya Chopra (rank 98) was the all-India female topper. Agarwal scored 348 out of 360, while Chopra scored 286.

The second and third ranks in the exam have been bagged by Delhi’s Dhananjay Raman and Anant Lunia.

This year, 1,41,699 candidates appeared for the entrance examination, held on October 3. Last year 43,204 (28.64 per cent) of the 1,50,838 candidates had qualified. Of them, 16,061 were offered seats.

A look at figures from 2019 and 2018 shows that the share of qualified candidates was 23.99 per cent and 20.62 per cent, respectively. This year, IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay zones account for 28 qualified candidates each in the top 100. IIT Hyderabad zone has 27, IIT Roorkee zone 13, IIT Kanpur zone 3, and IIT Kharagpur zone 1. IIT Guwahati zone has none.

While the maximum aggregate was 396 in the case of JEE-advanced 2020, this year it was 360. The qualifying marks in the exam, organised by IIT Kharagpur, was the same as last year at 5 per cent in each subject and 17.5 per cent aggregate. Candidates have to satisfy both subject-wise and aggregate qualifying marks to be included in the rank list. The organising chairman of the exam, IIT Kharagpur’s Debashish Chakraborty, said that of the qualified candidates, 6,452 are women. As many as 32,285 women took the exam.

The numbers show that 32.36 per cent male and 19.98 per cent female candidates who appeared in the exam qualified, as against 30.93 per cent and 20.42 per cent in 2020. One transgender candidate qualified, as did 375 candidates with disabilities, 169 (overseas citizens of India)/persons of Indian origin) and seven foreign nationals.

Seats to the qualified candidates will be offered on the basis of counselling by the Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) from Saturday.



Mridul Agarwal secured 348 marks out of 360. Rohit Jain Paras

Rajasthan teen tops exam with highest score ever

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 15

MRIDUL AGARWAL, an 18-year-old from Jaipur, has topped the JEE (Advanced) this year by scoring the highest marks ever — 348 out of 360. Dhananjay Raman and Anant Lunia, both from Delhi, have bagged the second and third ranks respectively.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Agarwal said the Covid-19 lockdown gave him “extra time” to study. “Lockdown helped in giving me extra time. All the time spent in going to and fro, from school to coaching classes to home, was saved. I utilised that extra time to go through study material, and practice more,” he said.

There were other keys to his success. Closer to exams, he and his friends decided to discuss topics at the end of the day. “We would allot time for this. While this happened through the year, as the exams approached, we decided to study during the day, and discuss doubts at night,” he said.

But his “best friend”, he said, was a “mistakes copy” which he maintained throughout the year. “You don’t notice certain things while studying, but when you give mock tests, there are some silly mistakes. I used to lose 10-20 marks in such mistakes. That ‘mistakes copy’ was my best friend till a week or two before the exam. It helped me check all those mistakes in the exam,” he said.

His next target is to pursue

BTech in computer science from IIT-Bombay. Subsequently, he said, he would like to go “to one of the world’s top universities such as MIT”. He said his long-term goal is to make a lasting contribution in the field of “tech development”.

A student of St Xavier’s School in Jaipur, from where he cleared his Class XII this year with 98.2 per cent, Agarwal expressed gratitude to his parents, Pradeep and Pooja Agarwal, for his success.

“When we had offline classes, the entire schedule at home used to revolve around me, be it meals, family outings, or other activities. During the lockdown, when my schedule changed, my mother adjusted accordingly...,” he said.

“JEE is a long and stressful journey with many ups and downs. Sometimes, your rank is low and then up; other times, you don’t understand a subject... At such times, I would sit with my mother for 5-10 minutes, and my stress would go away,” he said. At other times, he said, his father would help him relieve stress, by taking him out for a drive or a walk.

Agarwal said he cut down the time spent on his cellphone. “In every student’s life, there is some distraction at the beginning... I cut down on the time spent on social media, YouTube, and OTT platforms...” he said.

Just two days before the exams, he and his friends decided to go on a trip after the exam. “This was quite a stress buster for me. Planning the trip helped to relieve my stress...” he said.

TN schools will reopen Nov 1, CM Stalin tells Class 6 student

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, OCTOBER 15

A CLASS 6 student in Hosur on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border got a pleasant surprise on Friday when Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin called her up to reassure her that schools across the state are set to re-open on November 1.

“You can go to school again when it re-starts on November 1,” he said after she sought to know when the schools would re-open. Prajna of Titan Township, Hosur, wrote to the Chief Minister recently, seeking to know when she could return to school. She had

HMS Queen Elizabeth leads UK Naval fleet into Bay of Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

THE UK’s Carrier Strike Group (CSG) led by its largest warship HMS Queen Elizabeth sailed into the Bay of Bengal on Friday for the second such voyage in the last three months, in a powerful demonstration of the growing strategic partnership between the two countries.

The British High Commission in India said the CSG will take part in the “most demanding exercise” ever between the UK and India, incorporating elements from all three military services.

HMS Queen Elizabeth and its strike task group had carried out a mega wargame with a number of Indian warships and submarines in the Bay of Bengal in July that featured a range of complex drills.

“The deployment is a powerful demonstration of the UK’s commitment to deepening its diplomatic, economic and security-based ties in the Indo-Pacific region. India is essential in ensuring a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific,” the High Commission said in a statement.

A carrier battle group or carrier strike group is a mega Naval fleet comprising an aircraft carrier, accompanied by a large number of destroyers, frigates and other ships.

British High Commissioner to India Alex Ellis said India is an “essential” partner for the UK in the Indo-Pacific region and that the CSG’s visit demonstrates the deepening of the bilateral defence and security partnership.

The envoy also referred to the resolve by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to work towards shared security and prosperity. “This visit will boost the co-operation of our armed forces and show the living bridge connecting our people,” he said.

First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin said the CSG’s engagement with India showcases the deepening comprehensive strategic partnership.

“Both the Indian and the Royal Navy are blue-water, multi-carrier navies, which places us in a very exclusive club,” he said.

“Our growing interactions are a testimony to the shared commitment to the rules-based international system, a belief in the values of open trade, and in the importance of the freedom of the high seas — a right conveyed on all nations,” he added.

mentioned her contact number in the letter.

The Chief Minister took time off his hectic schedule, and called her up. It was then that he gave her the assurance, an official press release said here.

During the brief chat, Stalin said, “Don’t worry. Obey your teacher’s instructions on maintaining Covid-19 safety protocols. Wear mask, maintain social distancing.” And the parting words were: “Study well.”

Prajna could not believe it was the Chief Minister himself speaking to her. “I wanted to know when my school will re-open. So, I wrote to the Chief Minister,” she said.

Odisha schools to reopen for classes 8, 11; SOPs issued

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, OCTOBER 15

THE ODISHA government Friday announced the reopening of schools for students of classes 11 and 8 from October 21 and 25, respectively.

The School and Mass Education department also issued detailed SOPs for the resumption of physical classes.

No such incidents have been reported from Delhi and two NCR districts of Rajasthan. The first paddy residue burning this year in Punjab was reported on September 16, in Haryana on September 28, and in the NCR area of Uttar Pradesh on September 18. Punjab’s hotspots of paddy residue burning are Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Patiala and Ludhiana which account for 72 per cent of such incidents in the state.

Similarly, the major hotspots in Haryana are Karnal, Kaithal and Kurukshetra, accounting for 80 per cent of the state’s stubble burning incidents.

Out of the 1,795 sites where stubble burning has been reported in Punjab, Haryana and eight NCR districts of UP till Thursday, 663 fields have been inspected by the enforcement agencies, and environmental compensation has been imposed in 252 cases.

9 THE IDEAS PAGE

State, Siri and You

Not just big tech, even the state plans greater deployment of AI, intends to harvest our personal data. The lack of any rights paradigm in this context, or data protection law, is deeply unsettling



OPENING ARGUMENT

BY MENAKA GURUSWAMY

THE DUSSEHRA BREAK gave me a chance to head to the hills. Seven hours away from Delhi, in Uttarakhand, you are surrounded by lush foliage, hills, hiking trails and even rumours of a lurking leopard. It was in this setting that I started Nobel Prize-winning author Kazuo Ishiguro's new book, *Klara and the Sun*, about a place in which children have AFs or artificial friends, machines with AI that were programmed to respond to human beings — as they observed more, they stored more information about their owners and knew how to respond to them.

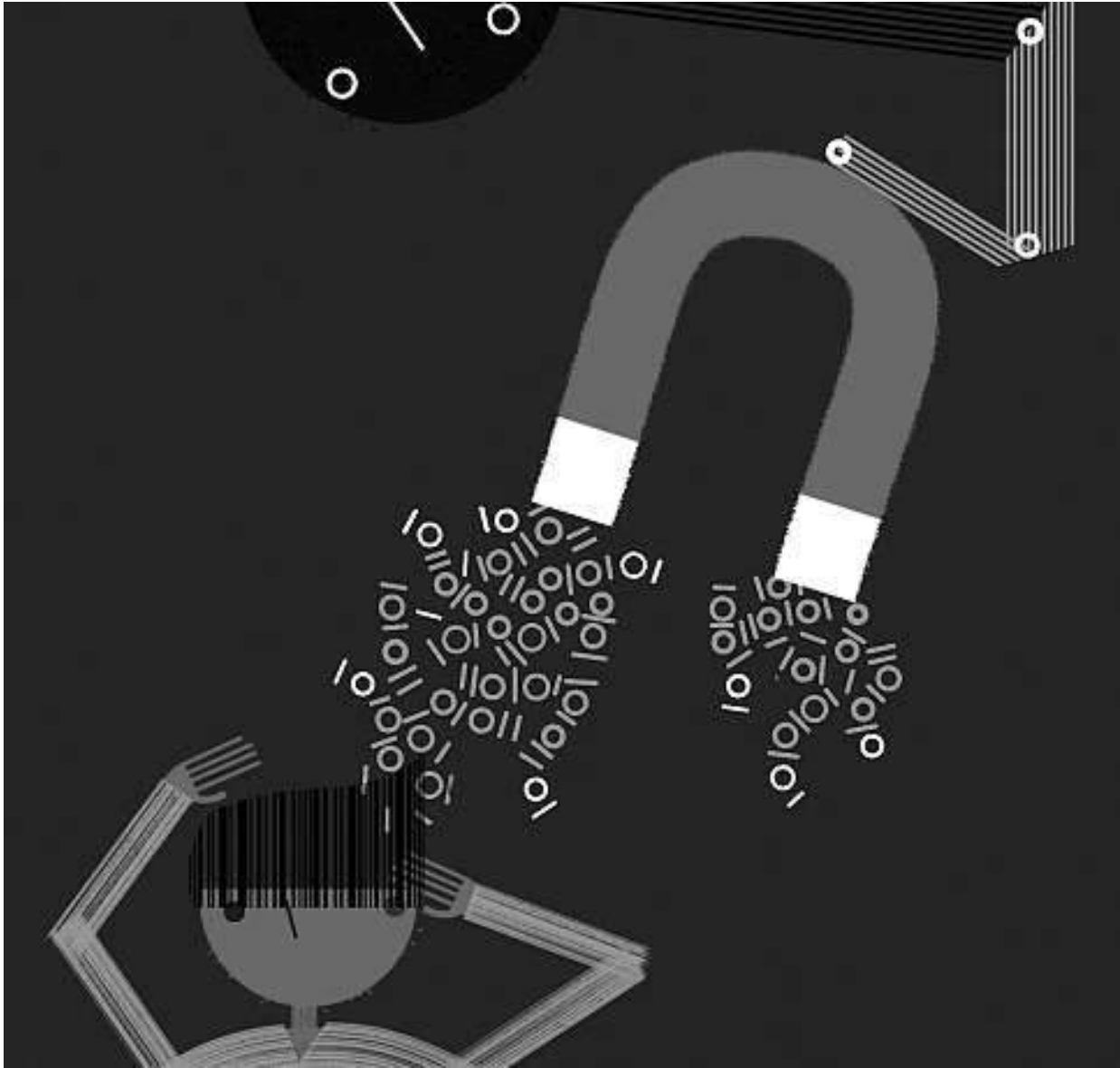
Klara, the AF, could soon mimic the behaviour, speech, walk and all manner of responses of the child she was bought for. The trouble began when the parent started finding Klara more perfect than her child. Ishiguro asks us a deep question: Is love substitutable? For our purposes, the book describes the process of “deep learning” where artificial intelligence programmes are able to absorb information and start demonstrating reasoning of the kind which distinguishes us as humans.

The scenario Ishiguro describes is not science fiction or a far-fetched rendition of the future. As India gingerly moves towards completing the second year of pandemic living, one trend is certain — we will rely more and more on artificial intelligence to get through our day. In 1956, John McCarthy wrote, “Artificial intelligence is allowing a machine to behave in such a way that it would be called intelligent if a human being behaved in such a way.” Siri, which Apple consumers are dependent on, is an example of artificial intelligence. Yet for Siri to be intelligent, to recognise even a cat, Siri's creators said it needed to be fed almost 1,00,000 pictures of cats to spot one when you ask her.

We are now in an era, defined by a Covid-inspired retreat into the digital or virtual world. In the world's largest democracy of 1.7 billion people, increasingly more and more citizens have vital information on themselves stored as part of state or private data platforms. The government collects information for Aadhaar, for vaccinations on CoWin, from our tax returns, from our driving licence and a host of other instruments that enable us to navigate the public world of citizenship.

Private platforms like Facebook, Twitter and a host of others collect what makes us unique — our opinions, our likes and dislikes, our ideologies — on their platforms. Based on this data, algorithms drive news and information that aligns with our beliefs to our Twitter or Facebook selves. Meanwhile, we now consume popular culture on the privacy of our laptops through OTT platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix or Hotstar, instead of going to the theatre. Algorithms on each of these platforms recommend movies or serials we like based on our prior viewing.

But the use of algorithms is not just re-



CR Sasikumar

stricted to movie recommendations. It is being used in many parts of the United States to predict recidivism likelihood amongst prisoners and, therefore, to grant sentences based on machine predictions. With this come biases — after all, the data being fed to create the algorithms reflects the opinions of the programmers feeding the information. For instance, is the zip code of where a person lives likely to indicate chances of committing fresh crimes? If you live in a white neighbourhood, are you less likely to commit a new crime? How does one make the algorithm fair and transparent?

In India, for all this data collection that is underway constantly, in a seemingly irreversible manner, citizens have no rights over their data or protection from its extraction and in general, against its misuse. There is no data protection law in place, even though a Bill is being discussed by the parliamentary committee on information technology. Our only protection at present is the Supreme Court's judgment in *Puttaswamy*, where it ruled that citizens have rights to informational privacy. Yet, in the absence of legislation, this proves difficult to implement.

While the state has unilateral rights to collect and use our data, it has also given itself the ability to regulate private parties. For instance, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 are used to mandate that WhatsApp, which uses end-to-end encryption,

In India, for all this data collection that is underway constantly, in a seemingly irreversible manner, citizens have no rights over their data or protection from its extraction and in general, against its misuse. There is no data protection law in place, even though a Bill is being discussed by the parliamentary committee on information technology. Our only protection at present is the Supreme Court's judgment in *Puttaswamy*, where it ruled that citizens have rights to informational privacy. Yet, in the absence of legislation, this proves difficult to implement.

tion, must enable the identification of the first originator of the information. At present, it is as if the state can have deep learning on its citizens. In turn, we the citizens have no remedies for the abuse of that learning. You can switch off Siri, but not the state.

Our government is thinking about the potential and inevitability of the greater use of AI. The 2018 Niti Aayog National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence points to the greater need for AI in sectors like education, health-care and agriculture. Niti Aayog notes that impediments to the greater use of AI include the lack of access to data, concerns for privacy and security. While noting these concerns, the papers also make clear that the aims of state policy include creating a data marketplace — a “deployable model” in which it seeks to bring “buyers and sellers of data together”.

Amid these plans for greater deployment of AI and harvesting of our data, the lack of any rights paradigm provided by law is deeply unsettling. It violates a constitutional premise that citizens must have their speech, expression, intellectual property and liberty rights protected. In the absence of these protections, the state will continue its deep learning about us and harvest what makes us human and defines our personalities — our personal data.

The writer is a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India. ‘Opening Argument’ is a fortnightly column

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“To promise league tables, and the naming and shaming of practices that offer too many video appointments, is a transparent attempt to bully a hard-pressed frontline medical service.” — THE GUARDIAN

Free to fly high

With Air India's sale, government can shake off allegations of protectionism, rid civil aviation market of distortions, foster fair competition



RAJIV PRATAP RUDY

ON OCTOBER 8, 2021, we achieved a monumental landmark, a culmination of the process that began in 2001 during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government. The Government of India has successfully disinvested 100 per cent of its stake in Air India, 100 per cent in the low-cost airline Air India Express Ltd and 50 per cent in the Air India SATS Airport Services Private Ltd. The resolve and conviction of the government in general, and the Prime Minister in particular, to revitalise India's loss-making PSUs by changing their governance model is reflected through this.

The airline was losing Rs 20 crore each day with its debt having mounted to Rs 65,562 crore by August, 2021. It has lost more than Rs 5,000 crore each year since 2016. Its accumulated losses of Rs 70,875.98 crore resulted in the complete erosion of the net worth of the company. Now, its net worth is a negative Rs 44,000 crore. Air India also has 12,085 employees, including 8,084 permanent employees, while Air India Express has 1,434 employees. It has outstanding employee dues of Rs 1,332 crore as per the Justice Dharmadhikari report with employee benefit expenses being above Rs 3,000 crore each year. Air India also has a fleet strength of 213 as of August, 2021, and incurs huge costs to maintain this fleet.

Covid-19 has had a dramatic impact on the aviation sector. A report by the International Civil Aviation Organisation notes that due to the pandemic, the financial losses of airlines across the world have been around \$370 billion, with airports and air navigation services providers losing a further \$115 billion and \$13 billion respectively. With Air India having to operate charters/Vande Bharat Mission flights, fixed costs had to be incurred even as its revenue stream was impacted due to the discontinuation of flights during the lockdown. The net loss incurred by Air India was about Rs 9,779 crore as per the provisional figures for the year 2020-21, a 22.5 per cent increase from the previous year. Clearly, despite the best efforts of governments over the years, the airline's financial condition continued to worsen in the absence of a competitive operational structure.

The airline's sale also sheds light on the vision of the government when it comes to maintaining competition in the aviation market. We are already seeing a hike in prices of air tickets and at such a point, it would be imprudent to allow any kind of monopolistic tendencies to set in the market. With an airline already commanding more than 50 per cent of the market share, the closure of Air India would have left a space, with a high probability of the already

leading airline taking up a major share of the market, leading to unfair competition.

In 2017-18, Jet Airways had the second highest market share (14.6 per cent), following Indigo (40.9 per cent). After Jet shut down, Indigo commanded a 47.8 per cent market share in 2019-20, which rose to 58.6 per cent as of June 2021. Another airline's exit would have further concentrated power in the market. Moreover, a debt-laden airline only adds burden on the industry, while stretching government finances. Thus, the sale of Air India, which is now to be managed by a more competition-conscious organisation, in a free aviation market, is a welcome move.

Tata Sons has a gargantuan task ahead of it with accumulated losses, non-operational fleets and the after-effects of Covid-19. It will take at least two years for the Tatas to stabilise its operations. We can hope for the airline to operate efficiently post this. There is also a possibility of this sale having an adverse impact on the whole of the Tatas' aviation ventures in the short term. However, synergies between the group's other aviation ventures, Vistara and AirAsia, could play an important role in the long run. The Tatas have a proven history of turning around ventures on the brink of collapse, like Jaguar Land Rover. We need to place our trust in the professional management that the company prides itself on.

There has been a lot of apprehension and anxiety amongst the employees of Air India. Leaving the airline without a viable continuity plan in place would have financially crippled their households. However, the fact that no employee can be retrenched for a year, and that any employee to be released in the second year will be offered a voluntary retirement scheme, along with the government promising to pay off all past dues, brings a sense of relief. With the economy only just starting to show real signs of growth post Covid-19, job security for individuals is an important consideration that cannot be ignored. It is the far-sightedness of the government that has resolved this long-awaited question.

The government can now shed its tag of being the arbitrary protector of a bleeding enterprise, further burdening taxpayers who have put Rs 1,10,276 crore in the airline since 2009-10. From now, apart from the government-backed guarantees and the remainder of debt in the special purpose vehicle, Air India will not pose a further burden on the government's finances.

The government can now shake off the allegations of protectionism which it has carried for the last seven decades, foster fair competition, rid the civil aviation market of distortions, and enhance the opportunity for travel. This is a major step forward towards revitalising the limping tourism sector.

This is a chance for India to expand its aero footprint. Post this sale, we can envision a brighter future for not just the civil aviation market, the employees of Air India and the government, but for the common man as well.

The writer, a Member of Parliament, was former minister of civil aviation

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TROUBLED VALLEY

THIS IS WITH reference to the article ‘In Valley, no return to the ‘90s’ (IE, October 15). The decision to revoke Articles 370 and 35A has opened a can of worms and the intentions of the government to stabilise Kashmir are far from being realised. The events unravelling in the valley and the emboldened militants are feeding upon the mistrust that has developed between the mainstream Kashmiri leaders and the local population. The situation is further obfuscated by fresh terror being ushered from across the border. Private investment hasn't been able to take roots, as was intended for the holistic development of the valley. As if it wasn't enough, the once vibrant economy of Kashmir is in shambles due to the double burden of Covid-19 and the frequent internet shutdowns in the Valley. There exists no solution to the Kashmir conundrum but a meaningful dialogue between Delhi and Srinagar embracing all the relevant stakeholders.

Vinay Saroha, Delhi

NEED FOR SPEED

THIS REFERS TO the editorial ‘Speeding up’ (IE, October 15). The PM Gatishakti National Master plan is as usual high on optics, but can only pick up *gati* (speed) if all concerned ministries show willingness to work together for the larger good. Having all departments under one platform is a great idea but we have seen that even the well-promoted single window clearance could not fetch the desired results. So we should only be cautiously hopeful that this mega scheme gives us the

desired results soon. Regular monitoring and course correction should be the core mantra. Having synergy on paper and in reality are two completely different ball games.

Bal Govind, Noida

THIS REFERS TO the editorial ‘Speeding up’ (IE, October 15). In the current scheme of things many projects are rendered financially unviable as there is an inordinate delay in obtaining clearances from a multitude of agencies under various ministries. Gati Shakti digital platform can be more effective if accountability along with time line is also stipulated. There are allegations of crony capitalism as many big players are able to reap the benefits of such initiatives and is a ploy to help government beneficiaries to secure big ticket projects. The scheme shall be only successful if it could create a mechanism where human intervention is minimum and all clearances and approvals are granted on merit of the case only.

Deepak Singhla, Noida

STRENGTHEN FRAME

THIS REFERS TO the article ‘A stronger and finer frame’ (IE, October 15). Well laid out processes reduce the risk of errors and are necessary. The list of scams that happened because of a failure to adhere to processes is a reminder of the dangers of sidestepping them. Politicians, in their anxiety to get things done, can make mistakes and it is up to bureaucrats to point out the pitfalls if shortcuts are used. What the country needs is not just a nimble bureaucracy but a professional and impartial one which is not aligned too closely with the powers that be.

Hemant Contractor, Pune



ARPITHA KODIVERI

FORESTS ARE DIFFICULT geographies to regulate as they must meet the competing regulatory requirements of conservation, development, and recognition of forest rights. On October 2, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a letter documenting 14 aspects that it seeks to change in the key forest legislation, the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. This law has been instrumental in reducing deforestation as it requires approval from the central government when forests have to be diverted for non-forestry purposes. The regulatory mechanism of forest clearances allows the ministry to deliberate on whether deforestation should be permitted or not and what the conditions should be if such a permit is granted.

An essential part of the forest clearance process is the requirement that forest rights be recognised and the consent of the gram sabha be obtained. The set of issues that the ministry seeks to use as the basis for changing the law are mostly in the direction of deregulation. They show some intent of giving the law more teeth, like the identification of forest areas which are to be maintained as pristine areas for a prescribed period of time.

The Narendra Modi government has been working towards amending, changing, and recrafting environmental laws in India since 2014. Some contentious attempts have been the draft Environment Impact Assessment notification, where it sought to create exemptions to the requirement of environmental

clearances for a set of industries. In 2019, it proposed amendments to the Indian Forest Act, 1927, with disastrous provisions that gave the forest department wide discretionary powers, including the power to shoot at sight. These amendments have been revoked because of sharp criticism from environmental movements across the country.

The amendments proposed to the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 cannot be seen in isolation of these other attempts to remake environmental laws in India. Environmental law has emerged as a space for the Modi government to reengineer the governance architecture to make it more conducive for doing business. The ease of doing business has signified a pathway towards deregulation. Deregulation in this context refers to undoing environmental safeguards and remaking laws in ways that constrain their ability to scrutinise anti-environmental decisions taken by the ministry.

The proposed amendments to the FCA, when seen in this light, work to restrict the scope of applicability of the Act. It does so by critiquing the current definition of forests, which includes land recognised as forest by the government as well as that which comes under the dictionary meaning of forest land based on the Supreme Court decision in the *TN Godavarman* case. It aims to implicitly define what does not constitute forests by creating a set of exceptions to the Act. These exceptions include forests in border areas where

strategic projects need to be built, private land where plantations are to be established, and forest land which was acquired before 1980 for the construction of railways and highways.

The emphasis is on creating an enabling regulatory environment for setting up plantations, as India needs to create a carbon sink. It argues that these plantations will not attract the provisions of the FCA. How then are plantations to be regulated when deforestation occurs? It does not define what the nature of these plantations should be and where they can take place.

The amendments seek to deregulate by reducing scrutiny over certain decisions to deforest like the use of extended oil drilling for the extraction of oil and gas, which the ministry says is environmental-friendly and thus qualifies for a legal exception. There have not been sufficient ecological studies to support this. Indeed, these exceptions enable deforestation as opposed to regulating it.

The proposed amendments are listed as a set of issues without detailing what the amendments are going to be. This makes it difficult for citizens and experts to partake in a public consultation process. The proposed amendments are not translated into other languages and provide a very short window of 15 days to providing comments. This tactic of limiting citizen participation prevents citizen oversight on these anti-environmental decisions.

As I have previously stated, an integral part

of the forest clearance process is the requirement of consent of the gram sabha. This was a hard-won legal gain after many years of struggle by forest-dwelling communities that have been at the forefront of avoiding destructive development projects. The creation of exceptions to the requirement of forest clearances directly results in the cancellation of the application of this progressive legal provision. This will be a step towards undoing a democratic decision-making framework and tilting power towards the state.

The changes being proposed to the FCA need to be done in consultation with forest-dwelling communities whose livelihoods and rights are likely to be affected by the remaking of this law. The ministry as of now has made no such attempts. It becomes imperative that decisions on the identification of forest/non-forest areas be made in consultation with the forest-dwelling communities to ensure that they do not violate any forest rights or that their views are adequately considered if it falls within a community conserved area. In conclusion, the deregulatory approach to changes being made to India's environmental laws needs to be scrutinised. As the climate crisis looms over us, limiting deforestation should guide regulatory decision-making, not compensating with plantations.

The writer is a postdoctoral research scholar, Climate Litigation Accelerator, NYU School of Law

10 THE WORLD

TOPOF THE WORLD



Aung San Suu Kyi

MYANMAR

Lawyer for Suu Kyi says he was issued gag order

THE HEAD lawyer representing Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi said on Friday authorities in the military-ruled country had imposed a gag order on him because they said his communications could cause instability. Myanmar's state media has not reported developments in Suu Kyi's multiple legal cases, filed after she was ousted in a February coup, and her lawyer, Khin Maung Zaw, has been the only source of public information on her trial and her wellbeing. He said in a Facebook post he had been barred from speaking to media, diplomats, international organisations and foreign governments and later posted details of the order. **REUTERS**

BRITAIN

Lab suspended over potentially 43,000 false negative tests

A COVID-19 testing laboratory in England was suspended over concern it has been incorrectly giving negative PCR test results to people who are infected, the UK Health Security Agency said Friday. NHS Test and Trace launched an investigation into a lab in Wolverhampton after reports of people getting negative PCR test results after testing positive on rapid lateral flow devices. An estimated 43,000 people may have been given incorrect negative PCR test results, authorities said. **REUTERS**

KENYA

Suspected serial killer believed killed by mob

A SUSPECTED Kenyan serial killer of children is believed to have been killed by a mob in his hometown days after escaping custody, police said on Friday. Masten Milimo Wanjala, 20, was arrested in July in connection with the disappearance of two children, and police said he confessed to the murder of 10 children in parts of the East African country over the past five years. Wanjala was due to appear in court in Nairobi on Wednesday in connection with the murder of two children but did not appear for the morning roll call. **REUTERS**

US to lift curbs from Nov 8 for vaccinated foreign travellers

DAVID SHEPARDSON

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 15

THE WHITE House on Friday said it will lift Covid-19 travel restrictions for fully vaccinated foreign nationals effective November 8, ending historic restrictions that had barred much of the world from entering the United States.

Announcing the starting date for the new rules on travel into and out of the country, White House spokesman Kevin Munoz posted on Twitter that the policy "is guided by public health, stringent, and consistent".

The White House had announced on September 20 that the US would lift restrictions on air travelers from 33 countries in early November. It did not specify the date at the time.

The unprecedented travel restrictions kept millions of visitors out of the United States from China, Canada, Mexico, India, Brazil, much of Europe and elsewhere; shrunk US tourism; and hurt border community economies. They prevented many loved ones and foreign workers from reuniting with families.

US allies had heavily lobbied the Biden administration to lift the rules.

Restrictions on non-US citizens were first imposed on air travellers from China in January 2020 by then-President Donald Trump and then extended to dozens of other countries, without any clear metrics for how and when to lift them.

Curbs on non-essential travellers at land borders with



The unprecedented travel restrictions kept millions of visitors out of the US. *File*

Mexico and Canada have been in place since March 2020 to address the Covid-19 pandemic.

US international air passenger traffic was down 43% in August and overall passenger air traffic was down 21% over pre-pandemic levels, the US Transportation Department said Friday.

Starting November 8, the United States will admit fully vaccinated foreign air travellers from the 26 so-called Schengen countries in Europe, including France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Greece, as well as Britain, Ireland, China, India, South Africa, Iran and Brazil. The unprecedented US restrictions have barred non-US citizens who were in those countries within the past 14 days.

The United States has allowed foreign air travellers from more than 150 countries throughout the pandemic, a policy that critics said made little sense because some countries with high infection rates were not on the restricted list, while some on the list had the pandemic more under control. **REUTERS**

Blast at Shia mosque in Afghanistan kills 47

Over 70 others injured in suicide attack in Kandahar

SAMYA KULLAB & TAMEEM AKHGAR

KABUL, OCTOBER 15

SUICIDE BOMBERS attacked a Shia mosque packed with worshippers attending Friday prayers in southern Afghanistan, killing at least 47 people and wounding 70, a Taliban official said. It was the deadliest since the US military withdrawal.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the carnage at the Fatimiya mosque in Kandahar province. The attack came a week after a bombing claimed by the local Islamic State affiliate killed 46 people at a Shia mosque in northern Afghanistan.

The sectarian bloodletting has raised fears that IS — an enemy of both the Taliban and the West — is expanding its foothold in Afghanistan.

Hafiz Sayeed, the Taliban's chief for Kandahar's department of culture and information, said 47 people had been killed and at least 70 wounded in the attack.

Murtaza, who like many Afghans goes by one name, said he was inside the mosque during the attack and reported four explosions: two outside and two inside. He said Friday prayers at the mosque typically draw hundreds of people.

Another witness, also named Murtaza, was in charge of security at the mosque and said he saw two bombers. He said one detonated explosives outside the gate, and

Russia: Taliban confirm they will join Moscow talks next week

Moscow: Representatives of the Taliban have confirmed they will take part in talks on Afghanistan in Moscow next week, President Vladimir Putin's special representative on Afghanistan said on Friday. The official, Zamir Kabulov, said in comments published by Russian news agencies that the Taliban had confirmed their attendance at the talks next Wednesday but had yet to announce the members of their delegation.

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

the other was already among the worshippers inside the mosque.

He said the mosque's security personnel shot another suspected attacker outside.

Video footage showed bodies scattered across blood-stained carpets, with survivors walking around in a daze or crying out in anguish.

The Islamic State group, which like Afghanistan's ruling Taliban is made up of Sunni Muslims, views Shia Muslims as



BRITAIN

QUEEN ON CLIMATE: DON'T JUST TALK, ACT

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II said she was irritated by world leaders who talk about climate change but do nothing to address global warming, and added it was still unclear who would turn up at the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow: "We only know about people who are not coming.. It's really irritating when they talk, but they don't do," the queen said.

British lawmaker stabbed to death as he met voters in church

GERHARD MEY & ANDREW COULDRIDGE

LEIGH-ON-SEA (ENGLAND), OCTOBER 15

A BRITISH lawmaker was stabbed to death on Friday in a church by an assailant who lunged at him during a meeting with voters from his constituency, knifing him repeatedly in an attack which politicians described as an assault on democracy.

David Amess, 69, from Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party, was attacked at about midday in the red-brick Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea, east of London.

"David was a man who believed passionately in this country and in its future and we have lost today a fine public servant and a much loved friend and colleague," said Johnson, who rushed back to London from the west of England after the news broke.

There was no detail about a motive for the killing, the second fatal attack on a British lawmaker in their constituency in the last five years, which has prompted questions about the safety of politicians.

Armed police swooped on the church and paramedics fought to save his life on the floor of the church, but in vain.

"Sadly, he died at the scene," police said. "A 25-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of murder and is currently in custody. We have recovered a knife from the scene and are not looking for anyone else in connection with the incident." **REUTERS**



David Amess was one of Britain's longest-serving lawmakers who held regular meetings with voters

John Lamb, a local councillor who was at the scene, said Amess had been stabbed several times.

Colleagues from across Parliament expressed their shock and paid tribute to Amess, one of Britain's longest-serving lawmakers who held regular meetings with voters on the first and third Friday of the month, saying he was diligent in his duties to his local area.

Flags in Downing Street and outside parliament were lowered in tribute.

Amess, married with five children, was first elected to Parliament to represent Basildon in 1983, and then stood for Southend West in 1997. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth for his public service in 2015.

His website listed his interests as "animal welfare and pro-life issues". He was known for his contributions to debates — often about issues relating his constituency or animal rights. In his last contribution in the House of Commons last month, he asked for a debate on animal welfare. **REUTERS**



PROTESTS AS ITALY DEBUTS COVID PASS

At a protest against the Covid Green Pass in Bologna, Italy, on Friday. Protests erupted in Italy as one of the most stringent anti-Covid measures in Europe went into effect, requiring all workers, from magistrates to maids, to show a health pass to get into their place of employment. *AP*

Australian state to end quarantine for vaccinated passengers from abroad

ROD MCGUIRK

CANBERRA, OCTOBER 15

SYDNEY WILL end hotel quarantine for vaccinated passengers when scheduled international flights restart in Australia within two weeks, officials said on Friday, while maintaining some restrictions on foreigners entering the country.

Vaccinated travellers who test negative for Covid-19 before flying to Australia's largest city would be spared 14 days in ho-



New South Wales officials make the announcement in Sydney on Friday. *AP*

tel quarantine from November 1, New South Wales state Premier

Dominic Perrottet said.

The major relaxation of the state's pandemic restrictions, which makes entering Australia easier for some travellers, was announced four days after Sydney came out of a 106-day lockdown.

"We can't live here in a hermit kingdom. We've got to open up and this decision today is a big one, but it is the right one to get New South Wales connected globally," Perrottet said. "It's going to be great for our tourism industry, it's going to be great for tourist operators," he added. **AP**

Israel advances settlements with little US pushback

JOSEPH KRAUSS

JERUSALEM, OCTOBER 15

ISRAEL IS quietly advancing controversial settlement projects in and around Jerusalem without making major announcements that could anger the Biden administration.

On Wednesday, as Foreign Minister Yair Lapid met with US officials in Washington, a local planning committee in Jerusalem approved the expropriation of public land for the especially controversial Givat Hamatos settlement, which would largely cut the city off from Palestinian communities in the southern West Bank.

The same committee advanced plans for the construction of 470 homes in the existing

Another blow to two-state solution

ISRAEL'S LATEST efforts to advance its settlement projects are being described by analysts as incremental moves that open the door for rapid growth in the future. The further expansion of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem could deal a major blow to the already dwindling possibility of a two-

state solution being implemented. The two-state solution, under which the Palestinians hope to establish a state of their own that encompasses the West Bank and East Jerusalem among other areas, alongside the state of Israel, is still seen by the international community as the only realistic way to end the conflict.

east Jerusalem settlement of Pisgat Zeev. Authorities have scheduled a December 6 hearing for another project in east Jerusalem to build 9,000 settler homes in the Atarot area, accord-

ing to Ir Amim, an Israeli rights group that closely follows developments in the city.

A military body has meanwhile scheduled two meetings in the coming weeks to discuss a

US govt to ask top court to halt Texas abortion law

PAUL J WEBER

AUSTIN, OCTOBER 15

THE BIDEN administration said Friday it will turn next to the US Supreme Court in another attempt to halt a Texas law that has banned most abortions since September.

The move comes as the Texas clinics are running out of avenues to stop the GOP-engineered law that bans abortions once cardiac activity is detected, which is usually around six weeks. It amounts to the nation's biggest curb to abortion in nearly 50 years.

The latest defeat for clinics came Thursday night when a



At a march against the Texas abortion ban in Houston earlier this month. *AP*

federal appeals panel in New Orleans, in a 2-1 decision, allowed the restrictions to remain in place for a third time in the last several weeks alone. **AP**

Russia says it pushed US ship away from its waters

VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

MOSCOW, OCTOBER 15

RUSSIA'S DEFENCE Ministry said a Russian warship on Friday prevented a US Navy destroyer from what it described as an attempt to intrude into Russia's territorial waters in the Sea of Japan.

The incident came as Russia and China conducted joint naval drills in the area, and follows other dangerously close encounters involving Russian and Western warships. It appears to reflect Moscow's intention to raise the stakes in deterring the US from sending ships near Russian waters.



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Chafee. *File*

The ministry said the Russian navy's *Admiral Tributs* destroyer closely approached the *USS Chafee* to chase it out of the area near Russian waters. **AP**

DEATH OF A WOMAN IN S KOREA'S AIR FORCE REKINDLES OUTRAGE OVER TREATMENT OF WOMEN BY THE COUNTRY'S MILITARY

‘The only exit’: Where soldiers are dying after sexual assaults

CHOE SANG-HUN

SEOUL, OCTOBER 15

THE SOLDIERS were driving back to the South Korean air force base after dinner and drinks on March 2. In the back seat, Master Sgt. Lee Ye-ram could be heard repeatedly begging her male colleague, Master Sgt. Chang Dong-hoon, to stop sexually assaulting her.

"Can you please stop it," she said, according to the conversation recorded by the car's dashboard camera. What came after was the latest example of South Korea's persistent struggle to rid its military of sex crimes, even as the country tries to recruit more

women amid a shortage of male conscripts.

When Lee reported that Chang kissed and groped her in the car that night, her superiors tried to bury the complaint, according to Defence Ministry investigators. The military did not bring formal charges against Chang until after Lee, 23, took her own life on May 21. Chang has since admitted to the assault and is facing trial.

It has become what some say is a pattern in South Korea: One female soldier after another has taken her own life in recent years after they reported being sexually assaulted in the military. Hundreds of sexual assaults are reported every year. At least four

female victims have taken their own lives in the past eight years, including a navy chief petty officer who was found dead in her apartment in August.

The deaths have forced South Korea's military to accept some long-delayed reforms. In August, the public uproar incited by Lee's suicide prompted the National Assembly to revise a law stipulating that all sex crimes be investigated by the national police and tried in civilian courts as opposed to courts-martial. The move was meant to increase transparency and protect victims, but victims and their families say it is the military itself that needs to change. "The moment a victim reports



"My daughter chose to die rather than succumb to their coercion," said the father of Master Sgt. Lee Ye-ram, who died by suicide in May after being sexually assaulted. *NYT*

the assault, her entire unit goes to work to persuade and coerce her

to bury the problem," said Kim Jong-dae, a former lawmaker

who sat on a civilian-military panel created to recommend solutions to the assaults. "The victim takes suicide as the only exit out of such a situation."

So far, 15 people have been indicted in connection with Lee's case, none of them high-ranking air force police officers or prosecutors accused of delaying the initial investigation. Her family has refused to bury her until the officials are punished, but Defence Ministry investigators have said there is not enough evidence. They wrapped up their work last week.

South Korean society has long understood the need to address widespread gender bias, but

women in the armed forces are seen as particularly vulnerable. The country's 550,000-member military is considered one of its most hierarchical, male-dominant and paternalistic institutions, and former soldiers say women are treated as playthings rather than colleagues.

The issue attracted national attention in 2013 when an army captain died by suicide after being abused by her boss. "I don't want to die" were among her last words, said Kang Suk-min, the family's former lawyer. After the captain's death, her father said he hoped that South Korea would "never again have to see another female soldier die like my daughter."

Eight years later, Lee's father is making the same enraged appeal.

"It's the male-dominant military culture that doesn't treat female soldiers as colleagues that killed my daughter," he said in an interview. "It's the military culture that ostracises the victim of sexual crime, not the predator, that killed my daughter."

The day after her assault, two of Lee's immediate bosses discouraged her from taking her case to the military police. Lee eventually asked to be transferred to another unit, where she said she was treated as a troublemaker.

"I am not sure I can hold on," she told her father in a desperate voice message on May 7. **NYT**



@ieExplained

#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

SIMPLY PUT **QUESTION & ANSWER**

Connecting ministries for infrastructure projects

The newly launched PM GatiShakti — National Master Plan aims at multimodal connectivity and reducing costs. How does it seek to meet these objectives?

KARUNJIT SINGH
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched the “PM GatiShakti — National Master Plan” for infrastructure development aimed at boosting multimodal connectivity and driving down logistics costs.

What is the project?

PM GatiShakti is a digital platform that connects 16 ministries — including Roads and Highways, Railways, Shipping, Petroleum and Gas, Power, Telecom, Shipping, and Aviation — with a view to ensuring holistic planning and execution of infrastructure projects.

The portal will offer 200 layers of geospatial data, including on existing infrastructure such as roads, highways, railways, and toll plazas, as well as geographic information about forests, rivers and district boundaries to aid in planning and obtaining clearances.

The portal will also allow various government departments to track, in real time and

at one centralised place, the progress of various projects, especially those with multi-sectoral and multi-regional impact. The objective is to ensure that “each and every department now have visibility of each other’s activities providing critical data while planning and execution of projects in a comprehensive manner. Through this, different departments will be able to prioritise their projects through cross-sectoral interactions”.

The Prime Minister, while launching the project, said examples of poor infrastructure planning included newly-built roads being dug up by the water department to lay pipes. The GatiShakti platform aims to prevent such situations by addressing the issue of government departments working in silos.

The government expects the platform to enable various government departments to synchronise their efforts into a multi-modal network. It will also offer satellite imagery for monitoring of projects. It is also expected to help state governments give commitments to investors regarding timeframes for the creation of infrastructure.

How will the platform help bring down logistics costs?

Studies estimate that logistics costs in India are about 13-14% of GDP as against about 7-8% of GDP in developed economies. High logistics costs impact cost structures within the economy, and also make it more expensive for exporters to ship merchandise to buyers.

By incorporating infrastructure schemes under various ministries and state governments, including the Bharatmala and inland waterways schemes, and economic zones such as textile and pharmaceutical clusters and electronics parks, the GatiShakti platform aims to boosting last-mile connectivity and bringing down logistics costs with integrated planning and reducing implementation overlaps.

Currently, a number of economic zones and industrial parks are not able to reach their full productive potential due to inefficient multi-modal connectivity.

How will progress under the National Master Plan be monitored?

The National Master Plan has set targets

for all infrastructure ministries. India is targeting an increase in the total cargo handled at Indian ports to 1,759 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) by 2024-25, up from 1,282 MTPA in 2020 — as well as increasing cargo movement on national waterways to 95 million tonnes from about 74 million tonnes in the same period.

The PM said the government was aiming at adding over 200 airports, helipads, and water aerodromes over the next 4-5 years beside nearly doubling the existing natural gas pipeline network, which is about 19,000 km.

A project monitoring group under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will monitor the progress of key projects in real time, and report any inter-ministerial issues to an empowered group of ministers, who will then aim to resolve these.

Are states on board for the GatiShakti portal?

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said the central government had received enquiries

from almost all BJP- and NDA-ruled states about the GatiShakti portal. Goyal said the portal would help states avoid both cost and time overruns, and allow them to provide the benefit of valuable infrastructure to their residents sooner.

How will this impact coordination between ministries for projects?

Currently, any inter-ministerial issues that arise relating to a project are addressed in regular meetings of infrastructure-related ministries. These issues are raised in advance, and then taken up.

Goyal said that through the PM PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation) portal, many issues were resolved even prior to such meetings. He said the GatiShakti portal would help reduce the human intervention required as ministries will be in constant touch, and projects will be reviewed by the project monitoring group in real time.

Citing the example of a tunnel, Goyal said that ordinarily, we may see one tunnel being

made for roads and another for railways; however such a platform would allow the ministries to coordinate, and create one large tunnel which may serve both purposes, saving the taxpayer thousands of crores.

T P Singh, director of the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N), which has built the portal, cited the example of a project to build a railway line, for which the path was changed slightly following a review of the data available on the portal — obviating the need for a forest clearance that may have been required otherwise.

The portal will also highlight all the clearances any new project would need, based on its location — and allow stakeholders to apply for these clearances from the relevant authority directly on the portal.

Goyal said if a railway line is being built, the Ministry of Road Transport may immediately give clearance for an overpass, and the Power Ministry can begin projects to ensure that trains can immediately have access to power on completion of the tracks.

Shillong’s Dalit Sikhs, an old land dispute, and a relocation proposed and opposed

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, OCTOBER 15

A MEGHALAYA Cabinet decision to relocate the Dalit Sikh residents of Shillong’s Them Lew Mawlong area, also called Punjabi Lane, is facing opposition. Sikh groups have called it “illegal” and “unjust”, with Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa saying he would take the issue up with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. On Thursday, a Sikh delegation from Delhi met Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik, seeking his intervention. At the heart of it is a simmering issue between the Sikh residents and the local Khasi community, centred on a decades-old land dispute.

Who are the Punjabi Sikhs of Shillong?

They were first brought to Shillong by the British as manual scavengers and sweepers more than a hundred years ago. Today, the community of about 300-odd families lives in Them Lew Mawlong, located next to Shillong’s commercial hub, lewduh or Bara Bazaar.

Himadri Banerjee, former professor of Indian history at Jadavpur University, who has extensively researched the Sikh community in the Northeast, said the Mazhabis were brought first, with a British military contingent, to work as sweepers. They were followed by the Ramgarhias (carpenters, blacksmiths and masons), and then the Sonjars or goldsmiths, who came after 1947.

Mazhabi Sikhs, the largest of the groups, were recruited by the Shillong Municipal Board (SMB), and many lived in Bara Bazaar. Over the years, their ranks swelled in the SMB, Banerjee said. “We have been staying here for generations,” said Gurjit Singh, president of the Harijan Panchayat Committee (HPC), which represents members of the Sikh Dalit community in Shillong. “In the 1990s, more than 800 members of our community were employed by the SMB, but the numbers have reduced since then.”

Banerjee said younger generations have moved on to professions such as driving or setting up mobile repair shops. Some integration has also happened. “Some Mazhabis speak Khasi, enjoy Khasi food, and a few are even married to Khasis and have converted to Christianity,” Banerjee said.

Why was the plan to relocate them made?

On October 7, the Cabinet approved the proposal, based on a recommendation by a high-level committee set up in June 2018 to find a solution to a decades-old land dispute, following violent clashes between Khasis and Sikh residents the previous month. While the



Twitter/@mssirsra

(Above) A Sikh delegation from Delhi calls on Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik Thursday; (above right) the colony in Punjabi Lane following the violence in 2018.



Abhishek Saha

are permanent employees of the SMB will be relocated to constructed quarters elsewhere in the city. For the other residents, the government was “exploring other locations”.

The government said that while a number of the Sikh residents worked with the SMB, there were many “settlers” in the colony. “We do not know where they came from and thus there is a need to make an inventory of those residing there,” said Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong, who led the committee.

Singh said now only about 20 people (who are close to retirement) were currently permanent employees of the SMB. “The government claims the rest of the people are illegal or unauthorised settlers. But that is baseless... our children and grandchildren have moved into new professions — that does not mean they do not belong here,” he said.

How have the Sikhs reacted?

“We have lived here for 200 years. Time and again, the government tries to move us and our people get scared,” Singh said. The community, however, had not received any official intimation about relocation yet.

Manjinder Singh Sirsa, who had led the delegation from the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee that met the Governor, said the matter was *sub judice*, and the high-level committee had “no power to make such a decision”. He said the relocation plan had “not granted the residents an opportunity to say anything” or taken in their view.

What is the government’s stand?

CM Sangma had earlier said the government was ready to challenge the court order. Governor Malik on Thursday assured the Sikh delegation that “no injustice will be done and the residents will not be removed illegally”.

Tynsong said the government had followed “due diligence”. He the Sikh community should not “get confused” that they were “being thrown out”. “They are people of Meghalaya and we are here to help them,” he said. “We request them to help us make an inventory.”

immediate trigger was something else, the clashes were rooted in the old land dispute.

The government claims the land belongs to the Urban Affairs Department, while the Sikhs say it was “gifted” to them in the 1850s by the Syiem (chief) of Hima Mylliem — one of the chiefdoms in Khasi Hills. Punjabi Lane is part of Mylliem, one of the 54 traditional administrative territories under the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council today.

According to the Cabinet decision, the Urban Affairs Department would take possession of the land from the Syiem of Mylliem (the custodian of the land) within a week. Chief Minister Conrad Sangma said permanent employees of the SMB would be relocated to constructed quarters.

What is the land dispute?

For three decades, sections of society and political organisations have been demanding that residents be shifted out — the primary argument being that a prime commercial area shouldn’t hold a residential locality.

Donald Thabab, general secretary of the powerful Khasi Students’ Union (KSU), said Punjabi Lane was the site of a lot of traffic congestion and needed to be cleared for “public convenience”. “The name Them Lew Mawlong literally suggests that it is the valley area of a market — so it doesn’t make sense for it to function as a residential area. It should be used for alternative constructive purposes such as a parking lot or a commercial space,” he said.

Over the years, there have been proposals to build a parking lot or shopping complexes. The Sikhs have often sought legal recourse against this, maintaining they have “full rights to” the land, and documents to prove it.

In 2018, after the committee was formed, the Sikh HPC filed a petition in the Meghalaya High Court. In February 2019, the court said it was a “civil” matter and needed to be addressed in the civil court. On April 9, 2021, it ordered that status quo be maintained.

Has there been previous conflict between the Sikhs and Khasis?

With the main bone of contention is the 2.5-acre Punjabi Lane, brawls at a local level between residents and Khasis have been reported over the years.

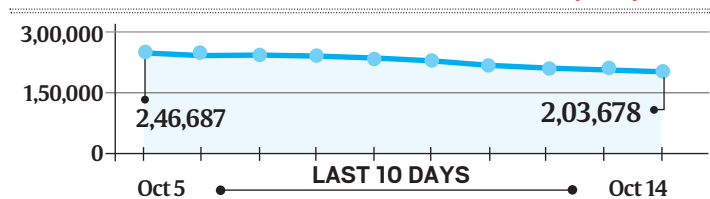
Distrust of the “outsider” — a sentiment expressed among sections of many communities in the Northeast states — also adds to the friction. Banerjee said local Khasis were “initially less enthusiastic” about doing the work the Mazhabis did. “But over time, as Khasis found themselves being squeezed out of a part of the job market, their anxieties manifested themselves in suspicions, hostility, and a hardening awareness of dissimilar identities.”

According to KSU’s Thabab, there was a major clash in 1996 too, which led to the deaths of Khasi youths at the hands of the police.

What are the Sikhs being offered now?

The state government has said those who

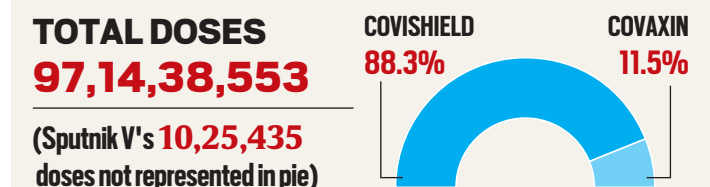
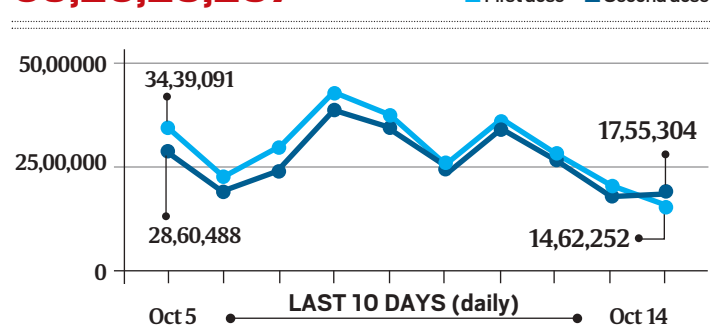
INDIA ACTIVE COVID CASES 2,03,678



Note: The October 14 figures in these graphs are based on the government updates on Oct 15
Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on October 15

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

TOTAL VACCINATED IN INDIA (at least one dose) 69,26,23,237



DOSES ON OCT 14 32,17,556
OCT 13: 38,41,785 (1st dose: 17,83,601; 2nd: 20,58,184)

6,83,258 Number of doses administered in Maharashtra on October 14, the highest for any state	4,56,862 Andhra Pradesh	2,41,990 Odisha
	3,35,521 Gujarat	2,35,892 Uttar Pradesh

SHUBHRA RANJAN
Always Ahead

SCHOLARSHIP TEST ON 3rd OCTOBER 2021

For
GS Foundation Offline Batch

Starting From
18th October 2021

Scholarship Test and Admission is open at all our Regional Centres

For more details: +91-9910812719 | www.shubhrranjan.com

Air India’s art collection: what’s in it, and where does it go now?

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

THE TATA group has reclaimed Air India, but the priceless Air India art collection is not part of the deal and is likely to stay with the government. A look at what is in the collection, and why it is important:

The collection

The ‘Maharajah collection’, as it is called, has over 4,000 works, including by Jatin Das, Anjolie Ela Menon, M F Husain and V S Gaitonde. These were on display across Air India offices, and on its calendars, posters and menu cards. There are posters by cartoonist Mario Miranda as well as ads designed by *The New Yorker* cartoonist Peter Arno, besides paintings, textiles, sculptures, and traditional wooden and bronze artwork.

No official estimate exists of the worth of the entire collection. As the airline expanded, so did the collection. But as computerised booking came in, some of the international booking offices were shut/streamlined, and the artworks were either sent back to Mumbai or stored elsewhere. Mumbai-based art historian and conservation architect Meera Dass, who is working on a book about the archive, said, “The airline always had the culture of being representative of the nation... The collection served that purpose — to present India as an ancient civilisation, but with a modern outlook.”

The collector

Air India bought its first set of six paintings for Rs 87.50 in 1956, from a novice art school graduate, B Prabha. The collection was built over more than six decades after Independence, driven by JRD Tata’s philoso-



One of the paintings in Air India’s collection. Twitter/@airindiain

phy of “putting a little bit of India” in the booking offices of the erstwhile Tata Airlines.

“He (JRD Tata) was a great nationalist and he used the airline’s booking offices outside India to expose the country’s art and artists to the world,” Dass said.

While some of the works were commissioned by the airline and some were bought for as low as Rs 50-500, others were bartered for air tickets to artists travelling abroad. In an interview, M F Husain had said: “They (Air India) would take the paintings and give free air tickets in return. As a result, the artists could travel to Czechoslovakia, Hong Kong, Paris. I did about four or five trips.”

There were other interesting ways of remunerating the artists. An ashtray — a porcelain shell surrounded by a serpent and supported by an elephant and swan — was commissioned to Salvador Dali, to be pre-

sented as a gift to first-class passengers. In return, Dali asked for a baby elephant, which was duly procured from the Bangalore zoo and sent to him.

State of the art

The works haven’t been opened for decades, and it is believed some of them have been lost, stolen or damaged. In June 2017, Jatin Das learned that his 1991 oil painting *Flying Apsara*, acquired by Air India, was for sale on the open market for Rs 25 lakh. Following investigations, a complaint was filed against a former Air India executive for stealing government property. Subsequently, it was reported that the airline was “examining how many more former or serving Air India officials could be in possession of such paintings”.

Last year, just before the pandemic hit, Air India organised a four-day exhibition of

7,000 artefacts and memorabilia in Mumbai.

Dass said that since 2016, there have been serious efforts to create a detailed inventory of all art pieces owned by Air India. While a bulk of the collection is in Mumbai, some works are also in erstwhile Air India offices in New York, Washington, Perth, Rome, Tokyo, Paris, and London. The effort is now to get them back, a tedious process given that they were sent out 30 to 40 years ago.

There are, however, no plans to use the artworks to raise funds. The ministries of Civil Aviation and Culture are working out an agreement to transfer the collection to Delhi and display it at a prominent museum.

“Even though the nation couldn’t afford the airline, we can surely create a dedicated museum to display this landmark collection, which unravels the India story, slice by slice,” Dass said.

THERMAL POWER PLANTS FACING COAL SHORTAGE

Fuel supply from captive mines: 2 NTPC plants get excess coal of Talabira II-III

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

IN LIGHT of the country's thermal plants facing a coal shortage, the Coal Ministry said on Friday it had taken steps to boost supply to the power sector, including diverting supply from captive blocks.

Thermal power plants now have an average of 4 days of coal stock, as against a recommended level of 15-30 days, based on the distance of the plant from the source of coal. The Ministry said state-owned NLC India had begun supply of excess coal from its Talabira-II and -III captive coal blocks in Odisha to NTPC's Darlipali and Lara power plants.

The government had earlier this month notified rules permitting the sale of up to 50 per

EXPLAINED

Non-pithead plants see more crunch

AS MANY as 17 thermal power plants with a generation capacity of 17,050 MW (Megawatts) had zero days of coal stock on October 13, with another 47 plants with a capacity of 58,315 MW having only one or two days of coal inventory. The shortage is more acute at non-pithead plants or plants, which are not located close to coal mines with such plants accounting for 105 of the 112 plants seen to have critical levels of stock i.e., under 8 days.

cent of the coal output from captive coal mines after they met the requirement of the end-use plant linked to the mine. Prior to the notification of amended rules, captive coal mines were

only permitted to supply coal to the end-use plants linked to the mine.

"... both the companies worked together to commence the supply of coal from Talabira

II&III OCP (Open Cast Project) to NTPC (Darlipali & Lara Power Plants)," the Coal Ministry said in a release, adding deliveries have started within 24 hours of the companies receiving directives from the Ministry.

The Ministry has sought to increase the output of coal shipped to thermal power plants across the country as a number of states including Rajasthan and Punjab have faced blackouts due to inadequate power supply from thermal plants.

Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Wednesday cumulative coal supplies to thermal power plants hit 2 million tonnes on that day, compared to a target of 1.9 million tonnes set by the Power Ministry. The Power Ministry has set a supply target of 2 million tonnes of coal from October 20.

The Coal Minister has said there is sufficient stock in the country to meet power requirements.

As many as 17 thermal power plants with a generation capacity of 17,050 MW (Megawatts) had zero days of coal stock on October 13, with another 47 plants with a capacity of 58,315 MW having only one or two days of coal inventory.

The shortage is more acute at non-pithead plants or plants, which are not located close to coal mines with such plants accounting for 105 of the 112 plants seen to have critical levels of stock i.e., under 8 days.

As much as 137.4 GW (Gigawatts) of the total 165 GW of capacity for which coal stocks are monitored daily is currently facing "critical" or "super critical" levels of coal inventory.

Sitharaman, Yellen for 'supportive policies' until firm recovery



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, along with officials, during the India-USA Economic and Financial Partnership meeting. via @FinMinIndia

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

INDIA AND the US have underscored the need for maintaining "supportive policies" until a strong and inclusive economic recovery is "firmly entrenched".

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen acknowledged the devastation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and sought to bolster bilateral co-operation, at the eighth India-USA Economic and Financial Partnership meeting, held in Washington on Thursday. It was also attended by US Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell and Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das, among others.

The joint statement comes amid mounting anxiety globally over potential taper tantrum once the US Federal Reserve begins to scale back its \$120-billion-a-month quantitative easing, with many analysts expecting it to be as early as in November.

In India, however, both the government and the central bank have hinted at an extended period

'Committed to bring economy on path of fiscal consolidation'

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 15

THE GOVERNMENT remains committed to bring the economy on the path of fiscal consolidation in the near-to-medium term, setting the target to reduce fiscal deficit to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has told the IMF.

Meanwhile, in her address to the Development Commi-

tee of the World Bank, she said India has not only faced the COVID-19 crisis with great resilience and fortitude but has also played a major role and "walked the talk" on the global fight against the pandemic.

She also met the Director General of WTO Ngozi Okonjo Iweala here in the US amidst India's proposal for a temporary waiver of intellectual property rights on Covid vaccines and medicines worldwide. **PTI**

of growth-supporting interventions. Sitharaman and Yellen also pledged to boost cooperation in stemming illicit finance, money laundering and terror-funding, and highlighted the need for effective implementation of the standards stipulated by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

During the meeting, both India and the US also agreed on further engagements on financial-sector issues, including cross-border pay-

ments, payment systems and the development of the International Financial Services Centre.

Separately, at the plenary meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the Board of Governors of the IMF, Sitharaman expressed concern over the stark differences in vaccination coverage of low-income and advanced countries and called for addressing vaccine inequity swiftly. **FE**

Will remain accommodative in monetary policy, says RBI Guv



RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. File

"We have therefore decided to remain accommodative in our monetary policy, while being closely watchful of the evolving inflation scenario," Das said. **PTI**

Panel calls for data integrity

Washington: The World Bank-International Monetary Fund Development Committee on Friday urged the bank to take additional steps to "assure the integrity and credibility of data" in the wake of a data-rigging scandal involving its "Doing Business" report.

The panel said in a communique that the multilateral development lender should take steps to create a culture where bank staff feel comfortable reporting wrongdoing. **REUTERS**

SECTOR WATCH
INSURANCE

'Motor cover: Public general insurers lose 30% biz since FY18'

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15

PUBLICSECTOR general insurers have been losing ground to private insurers, especially in the motor segment, with their share falling to 32.6 per cent in August from 36.6 per cent a year ago. On the other hand, the private sector has improved its share to 67.4 per cent in the reporting month from 63.4 per cent in the year-ago period, shows an analysis of monthly data by Care Ratings.

In FY18, public sector players held a market share of 46.5 per cent of the total motor segment premium, while private players had 53.5 per cent. In FY19, the respective share declined to 40.7 per cent for the public sector while it jumped to 59.3 per cent for the private players. The share of public sector players declined to 36.8 per cent in FY20 and further dropped to 34.2 per cent in FY21 while that of private players rose to 63.2 per cent in FY20 and further accelerated to 65.8 per cent in FY21, according to Care report.

Similarly, in FY18, the public sector had a market share of 37.5 per cent of the motor OD (own damage) market, and the private players had it 62.5 per cent, which declined and in-

PVT SECTOR GAINS

■ Private sector has improved their market pie to 67.4 per cent in the reporting month from 63.4 per cent in the same period last year, shows an analysis of the monthly data by Care Ratings

creased respectively to 32.5 per cent and 67.5 per cent in FY19 and further to 28.3 per cent and 71.7 per cent, respectively in FY20.

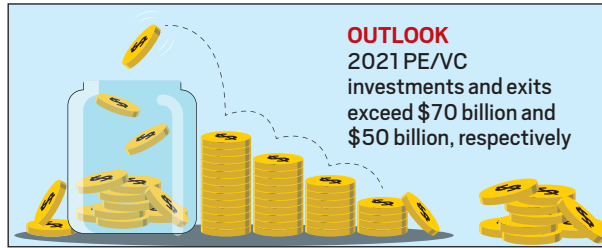
In FY21 the respective shares were 25.5 per cent and 74.5 per cent. In August 2020 the pie was 27.8 per cent and 72.2 per cent and which further declined to 24.3 per cent and 75.7 per cent respectively.

Its only in motor TP (third-party) segment that the public sector have some leeway as they had a market share of 52.7 per cent as against private players' 46.3 per cent in FY18, but within a year they lost that too.

In FY19 it declined to 46.5 per cent and to 42.2 per cent in FY20 while for private players the pie increased to 53.5 per cent in FY19 and to 57.8 per cent in FY20. **WITH PTI**

'PE, VC investments more than halve in Sept to \$4.8 bn'

Investments by private equity and venture capital funds in September more than halved to \$4.8 billion as compared to \$10.9 billion in August, but higher than the \$4.3 billion recorded in the year-ago period, a report by EY and IVCA said



PIPE (private investment in public equity) investments recorded \$1.3 billion across 23 deals in the reporting quarter as against \$1.8 billion across 18 deals in the year-ago period, and \$619 million across 18 deals in the June 2021 quarter

Source: EY and IVCA/PTI

Settlement orders: Sebi forms high-powered advisory panel

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has constituted a four-member high-powered advisory committee on settlement orders and compounding of offences.

The committee will be chaired by Vijay C Daga, retired judge of High Court of Bombay, according to an update with the Sebi on Tuesday.

The other members of the panel are —former law secretary in Ministry of Law & Justice, PK Malhotra; ex-chairman of Deloitte Haskins & Sells LLP PR Ramesh and DN Raval, partner at Raval & Raval Associates.

The panel will work as per the

Under the settlement mechanism, an alleged wrongdoer can settle a pending case with the regulator without admission or denial of guilt by paying a settlement fee

Settlement Proceedings Regulations, 2018 specified by the regulator.

Under the settlement mechanism, an alleged wrongdoer can settle a pending case with the regulator without admission or denial of guilt by paying a settlement fee.

The settlement mechanism is

a tool for ensuring speedy and efficient resolution of disputes.

In September, Sebi had proposed to overhaul the rule governing consent settlements to make the system more effective.

The time limit for filing settlement applications should be reduced from 180 to 60 days.

At present, entities are provided with a window of 180 days to apply for settlement after receipt of the show-cause notice.

"On most occasions, the applicants apply for settlement towards the end of this timeframe. Such delays not only do not serve the purpose of the enforcement process but also impede the expeditious disposal of the enforcement proceedings," Sebi had said in its discussion paper. **WITH PTI**

BRIEFLY
Metropolis buy

New Delhi: Metropolis Healthcare on Friday said its board has approved the acquisition of Hitech Diagnostic Centre and its arm Centralab Healthcare Services for a cash consideration of Rs 636 crore.

Tala fundraise

New Delhi: Tala said it has raised \$145 million in Series-E funding round, led by Upstart with participation from the Stellar Development Foundation. **PTI**

US, crypto

Washington: Putting the crypto industry on alert, the US Treasury Department said the average amount of ransomware deals per month in 2021 was \$102.3 million. Meanwhile, Bitcoin hit a 6-month high above \$61,000, now up 7.59 per cent.

J&J talc

Boston: Johnson & Johnson put into bankruptcy thousands of legal claims alleging its talc-based products caused cancer. **REUTERS**

Second straight hike takes petrol, diesel to fresh record high

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

PETROL AND diesel prices on Friday rallied to their highest ever levels across the country, as fuel rates were hiked again by 35 paise a litre.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 105.14 a litre and Rs 111.09 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 101.78 a litre; while in Delhi, it costs Rs 93.87.

This is the second straight day of 35 paise per litre increase in petrol and diesel prices. There was no change in rates on October 12 and 13. Since the ending of a three-week-long hiatus in rate revision in the last week of September, this is the 14th increase in petrol price and the 17th time that diesel rates have gone up. While petrol price in most of the country is already above Rs 100, diesel rates have crossed that level in a dozen states, including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra

Oil scales \$85

London: Oil prices jumped to a three-year high above \$85 a barrel on Friday, on forecasts of a supply deficit over the next few months, spurred by rising demand due to the easing of travel restrictions. Brent crude futures were up 77 cents, or 0.9 per cent, at \$84.77 a barrel at 11:48 a.m. EST (1548 GMT). US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures rose 87 cents, or 1.1 per cent, to \$82.19 a barrel. The contract is heading for a 3.5 per cent gain on the week. **REUTERS**

Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Kerala, Karnataka and Leh.

Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes. Shedding the modest price change policy, state-owned fuel retailers have since October 6 started passing on larger incidence of cost to consumers. **WITH PTI**

Export curbs on diagnostic kits, reagents removed

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

WITH COVID-19 cases coming down in the country, the government on Friday removed export curbs on all diagnostic kits and reagents including instruments, which are used in detection of coronavirus infections.

India logged 16,862 new coronavirus infections, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 3,40,37,592, while the active cases declined to 2,03,678, the lowest in 216 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday. The death toll climbed to 4,51,814 with 379 fresh fatalities.

The daily rise in new coronavirus infections has been below 30,000 for 21 straight days and less than 50,000 daily new cases have been reported for 110 consecutive days now. "The export policy of all diagnostic kits and reagents (including instruments/apparatus)... is being made free with immediate effect," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said. **WITH PTI**

'Evergrande's \$1.7 bn Hong Kong HQ sale flops'

REUTERS
HONG KONG, OCTOBER 15

CHINESE STATE-OWNED Yue-xiu Property has pulled out of a proposed \$1.7 billion deal to buy China Evergrande Group's Hong Kong headquarters building over worries about the developer's dire financial situation, two sources said.

The collapse of the talks for the landmark building's sale is another setback for cash-strapped Evergrande which has



China Evergrande complex in Beijing. Reuters file

been scrambling to divest some

assets to repay creditors knocking on its doors. With more than \$300 billion in liabilities, it has already missed three rounds of interest payments on its international bonds. Yue-xiu, based in the southern city of Guangzhou, was close to sealing a deal in August to acquire the China Evergrande Centre in Hong Kong's Wan Chai district that serves as Evergrande's local headquarters, said sources.

The spillover effect of China Evergrande Group's debt problems on the banking system is

controllable and individual financial institutions' risk exposures are not big, Zou Lan, head of financial markets at the People's Bank of China, said.

The Swedish electric vehicle unit of China Evergrande Group is in talks with US and European venture capital firms and industrial partners to find new owners, chief executive Stefan Tilk said.

Meanwhile, Xinyuan Real Estate Co avoided a default on a maturing dollar bond on Friday.

New Apple app store rule: S Korea may probe

REUTERS
SEOUL, OCTOBER 15

APPLE WAS on a collision course with South Korea on Friday over new requirements that it stop forcing app developers to use its payment systems, with a government official warning of a possible investigation into the iPhone maker's compliance.

The development comes after South Korea amended the Telecommunication Business Act in August to try to curb the tech majors' market dominance and

Source code exposed: Twitch

Bengaluru: Amazon-owned Twitch said Friday last week's data breach at the live streaming e-sports platform contained documents from its source code. **REUTERS**

stop the big app store operators such as Apple and Alphabet Inc's Google from charging commissions on in-app purchases.

The law went into effect last

month but Apple had told the South Korean government that it was already complying and did not need to change its app store policy, a Korea Communications Commission (KCC) official in charge of the matter told Reuters.

"This goes against the purpose of the amended law," the official said, requesting anonymity as the KCC was still in talks with Apple on compliance. The regulator would ask Apple's South Korean unit for a new company policy giving greater autonomy in payment methods, and if Apple failed to comply, would consider measures

such as a fact-finding probe as a precursor to possible fines or other penalties.

Apple did not immediately reply to a request for comment. Google had informed the KCC that it planned to comply, including allowing third-party payment systems, and would discuss the matter with the regulator starting next week, the KCC official said. Google did not immediately reply to a Reuters' request for comment. Jung Jong-chae, a lawyer specialising in antitrust matters, said Apple had more to lose than Google from the Korean regulation.

BRIEFLY

India to play Nepal for 8th SAFF Cup title

Male: Having endured a topsy-turvy beginning to their campaign before a fine turnaround, seven-time champions India will start title favourites when they take on first-time finalists Nepal in the summit clash of the SAFF Championships on Saturday. The final will be the 12th for India in 13 editions which shows the domination of the Blue Tigers in this regional tournament. The third-place finish in 2003 was the worst performance for them. A win against Nepal will also be head coach Igor Stimac's first trophy after taking charge of the Indian team in 2019. Should the team come good, he will become the sixth coach to win the SAFF Championships title and third foreigner after Jiri Pesek (1993) and Stephen Constantine (2015). **PTI**



Neymar was involved in all four of Brazil's goals in the 4-1 win. *Reuters*

RESULTS

Bolivia	4 0	Paraguay
Colombia	0 0	Ecuador
Argentina	1 0	Peru
Chile	3 0	Venezuela
Brazil	4 1	Uruguay

A day before Tirop's body was discovered, a local marathoner from Kirinyaga had allegedly been killed by her boyfriend. News agency Kenyans.co.ke reported that Edith Muthoni, 27, was killed by her boyfriend of three years Kennedy Nyamu. She had allegedly been trying to search Nyamu's phone suspecting that he had been cheating on her.

SHAHID JUDGE

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4626

Difficulty Level 3s
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.

4			1		8	6		
6							9	8
	8				4			3
					9	5		2
1		5	6					
9			4				8	
3	5							6
		7	5		2			9


Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard; 6s =
Genius


SOLUTION SUDOKU 4625

9	3	4	6	7	8	1	5	2
7	2	5	1	4	3	6	9	8
8	1	6	5	9	2	7	4	3
4	6	2	9	5	1	3	8	7
3	5	8	2	6	7	9	1	4
1	7	9	8	3	4	5	2	6
6	4	1	7	8	5	2	3	9
5	9	3	4	2	6	8	7	1
2	8	7	3	1	9	4	6	5

DAY TODAY


BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
 Appropriately for the time of year, today's planetary picture remains optimistic. Seldom will you have been so determined to get your own way, especially where money is concerned. Pay off debts before relationships are soured. You see, money is a surprisingly emotional issue at the moment.


TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
 You must be free to branch out in a new direction if that is what you want. It's neither fair nor reasonable for other people to hold you back, however noble their intentions. Colleagues are expecting more of you than they should, but just for now, you might have to go along with them.


GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

 Original ideas will fire your imagination, and you'll be ably assisted by the friendly presence of Mercury, encouraging you to come out into the open and put yourself on the line. At the very least you need to understand that partners have the right to know your intentions.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
 You were born with creative talents but you've not always been diligent in expressing them as they deserve. The result could be a rather frustrating period, but one filled with time to make up for lost opportunities. And that means that you'll come out of the present period with hope in your heart.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

 You have the courage to live in the present even though it does seem inevitable that unfinished business from the past must now be cleared up. You'll manage your personal affairs with great personal tact and diplomacy, much more so than other people expect.


VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
 Amid the confusion, you stand alone, able to think clearly and even come up with answers which have eluded others. The key may lie in financial arrangements which may now have to be revised. On the other hand, when partners have made their intentions plain, you might be able to carry on as you are.


LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
 Statements attributed to a close friend may have been an eye-opener as far as you are concerned. Yet the truth is that you may have closed your mind to a major possibility for much too long. If ever there was a time to open up to new alternatives, this is it.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
 Be wary of those who promise you the earth, but don't mislead other people with your own outrageous claims, either. It's essential that you keep your feet planted firmly on the earth, even if this means you abandon an ideal or two. At least, just temporarily.


SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

Although you may feel shaken after recent hurts and slights, you must now begin to reorganise your life. If you are totally honest with yourself, you'll realise that there is more than a grain of truth in partners' criticisms of your behaviour.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
 You may still be in a state of shock or, at least, mildly surprised. This is one of those times when people you trust and love are likely to land bombshells on you. However, if you try to play the little lost innocent, it won't work. So, you'd better play it straight and not take any risks.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
 This is a romantic time for many people, even if they don't have the courage to admit it. You, on the other hand, are frank and honest enough to be totally open about your feelings, a fact which will help put others at ease. That, after all, is one of your great gifts.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

 Everything that has occurred in the past few days has positive potential if only you would recognise it. There is no situation so trivial or insignificant that you can't learn something from it of lasting value. Your financial situation is about to shift, as well, so get ready.

Good old CSK

MS Dhoni's side bounceback from last year's horror season to win fourth IPL title

SYNONYM: Jadeja, Shardul and Faf; class prevails in CSK's title win.

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
OCTOBER 15

MS DHONI's face hardly betrays emotion. Else, it would have had the mea culpa of a dropped catch writ large on it. Dropping Venkatesh Iyer, the man behind Kolkata Knight Riders' upsurge in UAE, on nought threatened to be a very costly mistake, irrespective of a victory target of 193.

And when Shubman Gill got a Spidercam-wire reprieve, with CSK desperately searching for a breakthrough, it felt like lady luck was with KKR in the IPL final.

But CSK had scoreboard pressure to fall back on. Once Iyer got out after scoring a blazing 50 off 32 balls, wickets rained. The 27-run victory to claim the IPL title for the fourth time was pretty comfortable in the end. This has been a story of a stirring comeback by the so-called 'Dad's Army' that were written off after last season.

Jadeja and Shardul

Against a massive total, the KKR openers, Iyer and Gill, were undaunted. Fifty came in the sixth over and KKR had raced to 88 for no loss after 10.

Then, Iyer tried to send a Shardul delivery into orbit but mistimed it.

All eyes were fixed on Jadeja, who couldn't afford to drop the skier. Under such pressure, overcoming a great degree of difficulty, the allrounder took one of the finest catches of the tournament.

Rahul Tripathi's hamstring injury forced KKR to alter their batting order. They were always up against a 10-plus asking rate and with their captain Eoin Morgan woefully out of form, promoting Sunil Narine was their only option.

Narine gave a mighty thud to a short one from Josh Hazlewood and it looked to have enough meat to go over the boundary. But Jadeja, who else, ran back, kept his eyes on the ball and timed his jump to perfection to pluck it out of thin air. Impact-fielding done, Jadeja provided his spin-punch. Dinesh Karthik was removed with a skiddy delivery followed by Shakib Al Hasan's scalp a wide ball later with sharp-spin.

After Iyer's scalp, Shardul dismissed Nitish Rana with a cross-seamer in the same over, a delivery that stopped a bit on the batsman. The key to chase down an imposing total is to take the game deep with enough wickets in hand. Once KKR started to lose wickets in a heap – eight wickets fell between 11 and 17 overs for 34 runs, Morgan's team was out of the game. Shardul finished with 3/38 to take his tournament tally to 21 wickets.

Class prevails

Until this game, during the second phase of the tournament, three KKR spinners, Varun Chakravarthy, Narine and Shakib, had been going at an economy-rate of less than seven runs per over. In the title showdown, both Varun and Shakib were taken to the cleaners, and Narine's 2/26 was the only saving grace. Out of their Sharjah comfort zone, KKR bowlers searched for the right length, going all over the place in the process. Lockie Ferguson, 0/56, was the biggest struggler.

But this doesn't take the credit away from CSK batting. A missed stumping on two notwithstanding, du Plessis' 86 oozed class. Ruturaj Gaikwad, playing the role of an enforcer today, finished the tournament with 635 runs to claim the Orange Cap. Robin Uthappa and Moeen Ali made a mockery of KKR's famed middle-overs choke.

BRIEF SCORES: CSK 192/3 in 20 overs (Faf du Plessis 86, Moeen Ali 37 not out, Ruturaj Gaikwad 32, Robin Uthappa 31; Sunil Narine 2/26) beat KKR 165 for 9 in 20 overs (Shubman Gill 51, Venkatesh Iyer 50; Shardul Thakur 3/38, Josh Hazlewood 2/29, Ravindra Jadeja 2/37) by 27 runs.

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15

THE COACH Mohan Jadhav still remembers the moment when a student informed him that Ruturaj Gaikwad was crying in the back of the dressing room.

He was 13 and had failed in two games which would have propped his selection for the Under-14 camp of the Maharashtra Cricket. Young Gaikwad had arrived at that invitational tournament with seven centuries behind him but in the key selection-trial games, his bat had gone mute.

"He told his friend, 'what's the point of those runs in league games when he failed in the main games'. For him the runs in the big games mattered the most," Jadhav recalls to this newspaper. Jadhav allowed Gaikwad to weep before he pacified him saying that if he does well in the next game, Maharashtra will still pick him. Gaikwad hit 182 and hasn't looked back since.

He still has had to wait out for his chances. Even with Chennai Super Kings. When he



Chennai Super King's Faf du Plessis slammed seven boundaries and three hits over the fence for his 86 of 59 balls. [ip1T20.com](#)

Two catches, two wickets; Jadeja turns the Knight around, owns the big moments

SANDIP G
OCTOBER 15

IT WAS not meant to be Ravindra Jadeja's night. Or so it seemed for the first two hours of the game; he wasn't required to bat, his first two overs were creamed for 25 runs, and a wicket was chalked off for the weirdest of reasons, the miscued ball hitting a near-invisible wire. Yet, it turned out to Jadeja's night in the end. In big games, in big moments, there tends to be his inevitable stamp.

But his first big impact moment itself could have been a heartbreak moment. Venkatesh Iyer's miscue hung in the air for an eternity, furnishing enough time for Jadeja to scamper from extra cover to wide long-off.

Then at the final moment, he seemed to misjudge the catch, the ball dropping shorter than he had judged. But he stretched his hands out, and though he lost his balance, his focus didn't waver. The ball bounced out of his palms, but those fingers didn't quiver. He clung on though half the ball was out of his hands. Jadeja did well to prevent the body slipping fully, a head-on fall would have resulted in him dropping the catch due to the intensity of the body hitting the ground. When finally he fell over, he was in total control of the ball. To pause when one is diving intentionally is hard enough, to do so when one is not in control of the body is subliminal athleticism.

It could have been so easy for him to sulk after that cancelled wicket and surrender to his lucklessness. But Jadeja is built of sturdier armoury. Had he dropped the catch, the match could have slipped out of CSK's grasp. Shardul Thakur seemed al-



Ravindra Jadeja took Dinesh Karthik and Shakib Al Hasan out of the game for CSK. [ip1T20.com](#)

ready living on the edge, having seen edges fly off him and catches elude him. Instead, his persistence with the scrambled seam was rewarded, as he made one hold up after pitching and stop on the batsman without taking the pace of the ball. His scrambled-seam menace was even more noticeable when he had Nitish Rana play a drive to mid-off. Rana was through the shot early, as the ball hung an eternity in the air after pitching. Suddenly, CSK had two wickets in the space of four balls. The match burst open like a monsoon cloud.

Timely intervention

Four balls later, they had a third, that of the potentially dangerous Sunil Narine. The

ball seemed soaring for a six before, invariably, Jadeja intervened at deep midwicket. This time, he did not require any last-minute adjustment or fingers performing emergency jugglery. The catch was measured to perfection – from his short sprint backwards to the one-leg pirouette at the edge of the fence. Had a muscle of his body rebelled, he would have lost balance and stumbled over the rope. But every sinew of his synchronised seamlessly to complete the catch.

Then the luck with the ball turned too. In his fourth over, Jadeja picked two wickets that effectively sealed the game for CSK. Here again, his unflustered character shone through. Many bowlers would have nursed the scars of the battering he had received (three overs for 34 runs), but Jadeja strutted in with the arrogance of a bowler on a hat-trick. Fifth ball, he ejected Dinesh Karthik with what seemed like a rank short ball. But it might have been a cleverly-laid trap. The leg-side boundary was shorter and Karthik would invariably look to pummel a short ball out of the ground. But it came slightly faster than Karthik had gauged and he ended up mistiming one of his staple strokes. It might have been a punt, but Jadeja is not someone who would die ruing that ball.

The second wicket was throwback Jadeja. Flat and fast on middle stump, angling into the body from around the stumps, delivered from wide of the crease. Shakib Al Hasan, like a novice, played the angle and looked to shovel him down the leg for a quick single at best, but the ball was too quick for him, delivered at 103.5 kph, and beat him for pace. Jadeja celebrated ecstatically, like a man who has his name written on the skies, soon to be illuminated by the dazzle of fireworks.

FIFA EVACUATES AFGHAN WOMEN FOOTBALLERS

Football's world governing body FIFA on Friday said it has evacuated almost 100 members of the 'football family', including women players, from Afghanistan after "complex negotiations" and with support from Qatar. "FIFA can confirm, following complex negotiations, it has, with the support of Qatar, evacuated almost 100 members of the football family from Afghanistan, including female players," stated the world body **AP**

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

armour Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game

Cool play & it's all yellow



MS Dhoni finally cracks a smile after winning the final. [ip1T20.com](#)

"CSK CSK" rang out the shouts in the stands in the final over of the chase. In the dug out, Robin Uthappa whose lovely cameo was a factor in CSK's high score but who was off the field, hugged the assistant coach Eric Simons. Dhoni had a smile as his happy players converged on him. Even though the match was long-over, Dhoni, as ever, kept it simple, urging his players to do the basic stuff properly. Shardul Thakur really tested MS Dhoni's patience in the 19th over. Particularly with a slower one that slipped out as a chest-high full toss and

a no-ball of course. Dhoni gave a stare and gave out an angsty "C'mon!". More than 40 runs were needed but Dhoni wasn't resting on his laurels. Two more wickets followed and Dhoni gathered both and sighed. Then a six came and he was now visibly upset and screamed out a few words. And when the final ball was a dot ball, a slower one that he collected, he waved his gloves as if to say, "just keep it simple like this". Still not done, he followed Thakur who was trying to hide in the outfield and had more words to say.

DK, fluffed stumping not OK

It's third time in as many games that **Dinesh Karthik** missed a stumping chance. Off the first ball of the third over of the innings, Shakib Al



Hasan looped one up on a length, sucking Faf du Plessis into a drive but the ball dinked past the inside edge of the bat and slid down leg side but Karthik couldn't gather. It still would have needed Dhoni-like reflexes to pull off the stumping as du Plessis had begun to slide his back foot towards safety but as it transpired, it rolled away for a bye. To make matters worse, Ruturaj Gaikwad swept a four and pulled a six in that over. The good news for the superstitious Kolkata fans is that in the last two games Karthik fluffed a stumping, Kolkata Knight Riders went on to win.

Chewing gum, chewing up the bowler

Even as Deepak Chahar ran in for the first ball of the chase, **Shubman Gill** was chewing his gum.



Batsmen generally chew in between deliveries and only a few - we all know who - do it actively even when the bowler is about to deliver the ball. Just as the ball was released, Gill went down the track and absolutely walloped it over midwicket. Gill loves that shot over midwicket. Many others do play that shot but not many retain shape even when going down the track. Almost as if he is standing on a camera trolley that has been slid forward. Gill somehow manages to stay almost still - no jarring of the lead shoulder, no bobbing of the head and the bat swoops down nice and smooth to create carnage.

This/that, left/right, Iyer/or

Lanky **Venkatesh Iyer** has been the discovery of the tournament. He could strike stadium-clearing sixes, chime in with wickets with all-sorts medium pace, and he could fling bullet throws from the deep with both hands.

He was stationed at cover, and Robin Uthappa dabbed a Varun Chakravarthy ball towards third man. He sprinted a fair distance, intercepted the rapidly travelling ball near the ropes, picked it with his left hand and flung a neat, flat throw in one fluid motion. In the next over, he was standing at deep point when Uthappa hammered one through covers. Iyer blitzed in time to thwart a boundary, gathered it cleanly and bulleted another flat throw to the bowler. Only this time, he used his right hand. There are batsmen who bat left-handed and bowl right-handed.

The other way around. But there are few fielders worth their salt who could be



dexterous with both their arms to file in a hammer throw from the deep.

Who knows, he could bat right-handed and bowl left-handed too. Quiz his school teachers, maybe he could write with both hands.

Sweat and tears: The making of orange cap holder Ruturaj Gaikwad



(Left) With 635 runs in 16 innings Ruturaj Gaikwad finished as the Orange Cap holder. (Above) A young Gaikwad with coach Mohan Jadhav. [ip1T20.com](#)

knee swept-six of Jasprit Bumrah he hit in an IPL game. It's not only others who took time to realise his talent but at times even he doesn't quite recognise his own worth.



When gifs and raves spread in social media about that Bumrah six, Gaikwad didn't quite get the fuss. His close friend Naushad Shaikh, who played for Maharashtra, has a

chuckle about the incident.

"He didn't even realise what a great shot he played initially. It's his favourite shot and he actually plays it often. He called me later to say, 'Sach main yaar, kya shot maara maine! (True mate! What a shot I played!).' Shaikh says.

Surendra Bhavne, former India selector and ex Maharashtra coach, too was dazzled by that shot. "Bumrah ko maara boss!" But he too wasn't surprised by the shot selection and in fact says that it might not even have been a predetermined shot.

"I have asked him before in the past and he has told me that he sort of instinctively goes for it."

Even as Bumrah released the ball full, Gaikwad crouched, bent his knee, and swept it as if it were a full toss from an offspinner.

"Not a single bad-looking or any out-of-place shots," Bhavne says. He then perfectly summed up Gaikwad's batting. "It seems every shot is the most appropriate shot for that ball. And yet, we see him sweeping, charging down the track, pulling, lapping, and the whole array of

shots really - and still, each time it seems it's a perfect shot for that ball. What it tells you is the clarity of thought and calm temperament. There is no rush of blood or pre-determination. And this even in a T20 format. I have seen him in longer forms and can tell you he is brilliant there."

Another facet that impresses and amuses Bhavne is the earnestness. "He almost plays cricket as if it's part of a 9 to 5 job, if you get the idea. In control, does his stuff, works hard, goes home. And comes back the next day to do the same! Very sincere and absolutely no airs about him," Bhavne says.

It has come true this season where he has scored 635 in 16 IPL games and been the main architect for CSK reaching the final.

Eleven years ago, on February 10, Gaikwad had written in his diary: "Sir told us that concentration is very important. Sir also told us that we should not get bored when doing skills or drives. We should become mean, as they say in Marathi. You should become consumed by this activity. This activity should completely obsess your mind because passion creates history."