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By UNNNY

Thanks to World Cup, here is an emoji for 'upset'.

IDEA EXCHANGE

'It's a new virus, it's still evolving, still adapting. We still need to be cautious'

SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN
FORMER CHIEF SCIENTIST, WHO

PAGE 13



Police officers stand guard as people protest Covid-19 restrictions in Beijing, on Sunday. Reuters

RELATED REPORT, [PAGE 12](#)

FIRE IN URUMQI WHICH KILLED 10 TRIGGERED PROTESTS

China Covid protests spread, Xi faces calls to step down

Police, protesters clash in Shanghai; demonstrations in Beijing, universities too

DAKE KANG & HUIZHONG WU
SHANGHAI, NOVEMBER 27

Protesters angered by strict anti-virus measures called for China's powerful leader to resign, an unprecedented rebuke as authorities in at least eight cities struggled to suppress demonstrations Sunday that represent a rare direct challenge to the ruling Communist Party.

Police using pepper spray drove away demonstrators in

Shanghai who called for Xi Jinping to step down and an end to one-party rule, but hours later people rallied again in the same spot. Police again broke up the demonstration, and a reporter saw protesters under arrest being driven away in a bus.

The protests — which began Friday and have spread to cities including the capital, Beijing, and dozens of university campuses — are the most widespread show of opposition to the ruling party in decades. In a video of the protest in Shanghai verified by The



Associated Press, chants sounded loud and clear: "Xi Jinping! Step down! CCP! Step down!"

Xi, the most powerful leader since at least the 1980s, awarded himself a third five-year term in October as leader of the ruling party. Some expect him to try to stay in power for life.

Three years after the virus emerged, China is the only major country still trying to stop transmission of Covid-19. Its "zero Covid" strategy has suspended access to neighborhoods

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE WORLD

**PAK SENATOR HELD FOR TWEETS 'ABUSING' GENERALS****NEPAL: DEUBA'S PARTY EMERGES AS SINGLE LARGEST****KHAMENEI'S NIECE URGES WORLD TO CUT TIES WITH IRAN** [P 12](#)

Adani Kerala seaport: Cops book priests, police station attacked

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOVEMBER 27

FISHERMEN PROTESTING against Adani Group's Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited attacked a local police station Sunday night demanding the release of five men who were taken into custody in connection with Saturday's violence.

Around 30 policemen were injured, several vehicles damaged in the attack as tension prevailed in the Vizhinjam region. The police resorted to lathi charge and burst tear gas shells to disperse the coastal people, including women, who had laid a siege to the police station. A large contingent of police has been mobilised to Vizhinjam and nearby areas.

Earlier in the day, the police booked Thiruvananthapuram Archbishop Thomas Netto, auxiliary bishop R Kristudas, and several priests of the archdiocese, in connection with Saturday's violence during the fishermen protest. The archbishop was made the first accused in the First Information

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Low conviction, high pile-up: J&K taps special units for UAPA cases

NAVEED IQBAL
SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 27

ACCORDING TO the 2021 National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, Jammu and Kashmir accounts for 97 per cent of the total cases filed under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for terror-related offences. On an average, 20-25 such cases are filed under UAPA in J&K daily. But the conviction rate is very low.

To tackle this, as part of a

broader counter-terror strategy, the State Investigation Agency (SIA), on the lines of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), was set up last year, and, more recently, Special Investigation Units (SIUs) have been created in each police district.

The result, according to officials, was that police secured 10 UAPA convictions over the last year. While the corresponding figures for previous years were not available, officials said it was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED Two-pronged approach

WHILE THE State Investigation Agency was set up as a nodal agency to coordinate with NIA and other agencies, the Special Investigation Units, set up in each police district, were tasked with "effective investigation and case building" for UAPA cases.

Another upset at World Cup as Morocco out-run, out-muscle No. 2-ranked Belgium

**SANDIP G**
DOHA, NOVEMBER 27

THE BELGIUM fans could reach out and touch Abdelhamid Sabiri when he lined up behind the free-kick a few yards beside the corner flag. The spot was teasingly close to where the Belgium supporters had encamped, with



Morocco players after the win on Sunday. AP

their drums and bagpipes. So loud was the rattle of mallets on drums that Sabiri would have turned deaf. But he cleared out all the noise from inside and outside and curled the ball to the near post of Thibaut Courtois to give Morocco the 2-0 win.

To beat the Belgians, he needed the alignment of the precise ascent, accurate bend and pinpoint dip. Even if everything fell in place, Courtois is a master who usually reads the intentions of the striker (of the ball) as if he has a secret access code to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PRIVATE BANKS FARED BETTER THAN STATE-OWNED ONES

Small is good: Mudra loan NPAs at just 3.3% in 7 yrs

Banking sector NPAs higher than 6% over previous 6 years

SHYAMLAL YADAV
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

IN OVER seven years since launch, borrowers of Mudra loans — essentially micro and small enterprises — have paid their EMIs (equated monthly instalments) to banks. Non-performing assets of banks for Mudra loans — including those extended during the Covid-19 pandemic when small enterprises were the worst hit — are lower than the average NPAs of the sector as a whole, data ob-

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tained under the Right to Information Act reveals.

Bad loans under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana for all banks (public, private, foreign, state cooperative, regional rural and small finance) since the launch of the scheme on April 8, 2015, added up to Rs 46,053.39

crore as on June 30, 2022. This is just 3.38 per cent of the total disbursements of Rs 13.64 lakh crore under the scheme during the period, almost half of the banking sector as a whole which stood at 5.97 per cent for the year-ending March 31, 2022.

The gross NPAs of the banking sector in the previous six years was much higher than in 2021-22; it was 7.3 per cent in 2020-21, 8.2 per cent in 2019-20, 9.1 per cent in 2018-19, 11.2 per cent in 2017-18 and 9.3 per cent in 2016-17 and 7.5 per cent in 2015-16).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BATTLELINES IN SURAT

Modi rules, BJP is System, AAP more knock than arrival

Cong barely visible in Surat; in tribal belt, it is less than the sum of its parts

**BJP's Surat West candidate Purnesh Modi; Cong candidate from Vyara Poonabhai Gamit; AAP Kamrej candidate Ram Dhaduk****VANDITA MISHRA**
SURAT, NOVEMBER 27

IF THERE is a tweak in the familiar story of the Gujarat election, if this time the 27-year-incumbent is facing a plucky new competitor it cannot ignore, it has a lot to do with what happened in Surat in 2021. Come here to get a closer glimpse of the Gujarat election's newly minted triangle — BJP vs Congress vs AAP.

The Congress's strong showing in 2017 — going up to 77 seats, confining the BJP to 99 — sets off barely a ripple today in this urban



centre where a whole generation of voters has grown up seeing only the BJP's MLAs. But the AAP's performance in Surat's 2021 municipal corporation polls is a talking point, across swathes of voters.

Ever since 27 of its candidates became corporators, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

THE DECISION PAGE

[PAGE 4](#)**PM: CONGRESS SEES TERROR THROUGH VOTEBANK EYE** [PAGE 6](#)

Gehlot shouldn't have used some words, party will take tough calls if needed: Cong

MANOJ CG
INDORE, NOVEMBER 27

DAYS AFTER Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's public outburst against rival Sachin Pilot raised the hackles of the party leadership, the Congress said on Sunday that the veteran leader should not have used "certain words" against the young leader.

While saying that the party needs both Gehlot and Pilot, the Congress also made it clear that it would not shy away from taking "tough (kathor) decisions" in the interest of the party.

Sources in the party said the leadership is seized of the Rajasthan matter but a decision will be taken only after the Rajasthan leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

The yatra will enter Rajasthan in the first week of December and the party leadership is keen that the feud between Gehlot and Pilot does not cast a shadow or disturb it in any way. The leadership has so far ensured that factional differences — in Kerala, Karnataka or Madhya Pradesh — don't overshadow the yatra.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Legal profession was only way to make a difference, says first blind senior advocate

PAGE 1 ANCHOR**MALAVIKA PRASAD**
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

"I KNEW I wanted to be a lawyer since I was nine," says 68-year old senior advocate Santosh Kumar Rungta, who has been visually impaired since childhood. "It was in the third standard that I decided that if I ever want to make some difference in the life of the blind, the only profession

to achieve this is the legal profession."

Rungta made the news last week when Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud told the senior advocate, who was appearing in a matter related to the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission, that he will ask the National Informatics Centre to work with him on making the court's software disabled-friendly.

There is a reason the CJI sought his assistance. Over the last four decades, Rungta has been at the forefront for fighting



Santosh Kumar Rungta, 68

for the rights of people with visual impairments and other disabilities. He was made a senior advocate in 2011 by the Delhi High Court, the first blind lawyer to receive this designation.

His work in court for those with visual impairments began in 1993, when he argued in the Supreme Court — and won — for allowing blind and partially blind candidates to write UPSC exams in Braille or with the help of a scribe. On October 8, 2013, it was in a case argued by him that the apex court directed the government to implement three per

cent reservation for disabled persons in government jobs. In 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Rungta moved the Delhi High Court challenging the non-inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Antyodaya Anna Yojana and the National Food Security Act.

Born to a business family in Kanpur, Rungta says he had problems with his eyesight since birth. "I have had Glaucoma since birth. I could not see in any kind of light and my eyes had to be covered." After losing his father when he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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FROM PAGE ONE

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● Modi rules, BJP is System, AAP more knock than arrival

Kejriwal's party has made its presence felt in this BJP city. It is riding several resentments in Surat.

To begin with, left-over anger from the Patidar aandolan for reservation — the movement has long splintered, its most prominent leader Hardik Patel is now in the BJP, and the politically articulate community is looking at the recently 10 per cent EVS quota with hope, but pending cases and memories of those killed in the agitation are a source of continuing bitterness in the large migrant Patidar population which comes from Saurashtra to work in the diamond and textile industries in Surat. There is worker unrest against working conditions and aam aadmi concerns over price rise, unemployment, corruption, and mounting costs of education. There is also simmering grievance against a ruling party whose long years in power are seen to have made it unresponsive to voter concerns.

At the same time, for all the talk about the new challenger, the impression is of the AAP's knock, more than a sense of its arrival, in Surat.

Many BJP voters profess unflinching support to PM Narendra Modi even as they express dissatisfaction with BJP rule in the state — “Modi nirdosh hai (Modi is not at fault)”, announces Pareshbhai Wekaria, in the brokerage business, outside a bus shelter in the city's Yogi Chowk. On the campus of MTB College, student Mehul Adhir says, “Ram mandir, surgical strike, GST, G-20... sab kuchch hai...” (the BJP has given us everything).

Many say there is a “craze” for AAP among the young, but also that its entry in the Gujarat fray will only help the BJP pull further ahead in a triangular contest. Others speak of the AAP only as an option for nudging the BJP towards greater accountability. This is a state, after all, where the BJP is The System, not just a party.

The BJP System stands on the twin pillars of visible development and visible division. Prosperous because of diamonds and textiles, Surat is also the projected site and beneficiary of projects worth hundreds of crores, from bridges and

● World Cup upset

mind. Here, though, there was only one road Sabiri could have taken to beat Courtois. It was to lift, bend and dip. He did exactly that, and Courtois reacted woefully late to palm the ball into his net. He was unusually leaden-footed and detached.

He was woefully positioned to start with and his reflexes snapped. Even bizarrely, there was no one guarding the near-post. There again was the in-dominatable Romain Saiss as a decoy off-side of sorts to distract the Belgian keeper, but this time he was played on-side and the goal stood. Unlike before the half-time, when Hakim Ziyech's free-kick goal was chalked off because Saiss was in an offside position and interfering with the play.

Sabiri, the Germany-bred Moroccan, knelt to the pitch, offered a prayer and sharpened his ears to the direction of the Belgian voice. He could hear the drop of a pin; the Belgian fans were muted; their players were left ashen-faced. There was time yet to equalise, or perhaps wake up the stifled creativity of Kevin de Bruyne and out-score Morocco — 15 minutes plus an eternity of added time is sometimes adequate.

But instead, Belgium unravelled, making a mockery of the No 2 ranking FIFA has ascribed to them. Morocco, riding the goal-vibe attacked with abandon, threatened to humiliate Belgium, and in the end nicked a second goal in stoppage time off a delicious first-time clip from the boot of Zakaria Aboukhail. The celebrations were quieter, for by then Morocco knew that their famed European opponents had neither the energy nor the imagination to produce what

flyovers to expressways, coastal highway, metro, “world class airport” and bullet train.

Like the prosperity, the social division wasn't created by the BJP, but the party has worked to deepen it.

Sharifa Vijaliwala, Sahitya Akademi award-winning writer and translator, who teaches in Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, remembers how she struggled as a Muslim to find a house in this otherwise hospitable city of migrants even in the 1990s.

“They said, change your name, or live in your own (Muslim) area. I refused to do either... from 1991 to 2009, I stayed in a hostel, as student and then as rector. I got a house only when a messiah-like builder agreed to sell me a flat in a non-Muslim area.” She has always fought back against the bigotry, she says, but she kept all-Hindu names for her brother's four children so that they don't have to fight the battles she has had to. “The topi and tilak have only grown everywhere in Gujarat since 1992”.

With only days to go before polling in Surat Thursday, minister and BJP candidate from Surat West, Purnesh Modi, claims there's no anti-incumbency because the people don't want “appeasement politics” by those who stand with the “Bharat tere tukde gang”, and because people fear that “Taliban jaisa na ho jaaye (Taliban-style rule may come)”.

He dismisses the AAP challenge — the municipal poll results, he points out, have rarely corresponded with assembly outcomes. But this time, he also says, the BJP's booth management has gone more micro than before — “Where there was one panna pramukh (in charge of 30 wards), now there is a committee of five”.

The BJP paints the AAP as a party of one pocket of Surat and one community — the diamond and embroidery hub in Varachha area that is home to most of the Patidar migrants from Saurashtra.

The AAP's 27 corporators in 2021 were from Varachha, of them 23 were Patidars. (Six later crossed over to the BJP, and even though two returned, the AAP is getting its first taste of the great crossover story that has seen the Gujarat Congress steadily bleed leaders

into the more resourceful and predatory BJP).

In his campaign office near Yogi chowk in Varachha, AAP candidate Ram Dhaduk, civil engineer turned activist turned politician, whose campaign's tagline is “Haan main ladoonga (yes, I will fight)”, counters: “It is true that many of those involved in the Patidar aandolan are in AAP today, the old Patidar leadership was with the BJP, the younger generation is with us. But in the last six months, there have been agitations across sections of Gujarat's society — karam-chari unions, farmers, Asha workers, para medical staff, bank employees... The BJP government is on the back foot”.

The AAP's “guarantee card”, which promises 300 units of free electricity, Rs 1,000 to women over 18, and an unemployment allowance of Rs 3,000 to every graduate every month, elicits mixed reactions in a people accustomed to asking dry-eyed questions about money.

Many ask if anything is ever free. But the AAP's “Delhi model” of state-led programmes in health and education also appears to resonate amid the gathering distress at the lower ends of the class spectrum.

A new political line may be tentatively visible in this diamond and textile city — between traders and workers.

“There is nothing new in this election... BJP ke sivay yahan koi dikhai nahin deta (we can see no one here other than the BJP)”, says Jagdish Khunt, vice president, Surat Diamond Association. Rangnath Sharda, director, Federation of Surat Textile Traders Association says “lad ke ya prem se, isi government se lena hai (we can do business only with the BJP government)”.

On the other side is Ramesh Jilariya, president of the Diamond Worker Union. “We have a list of demands since 2008 but the BJP government has done nothing — we get no overtime, no PF...” He holds up a letter — “The AAP has given a written assurance that they will solve our issues if they come to power”.

But that line — between workers and traders — doesn't always hold. At Yogi chowk, Vipul bhai, a

● J&K taps special units

marginally higher this time.

Underscoring the need for specialised investigation units, J&K DGP Dilbag Singh told The Indian Express: “Investigations need to be time bound. Since the normal investigation machinery at the thana level is engaged in law and order and special cases among other duties, important cases would suffer sometimes. Therefore, we looked for solutions to this issue.”

He said that following the creation of the SIA in November last year and the SIUs over the last few months, many cases are in advanced stages of investigation and “we can expect more convictions towards the end of the year.”

Currently, the J&K police are investigating 1,335 UAPA cases, of which 1,214 are in Kashmir. Over the last year, the SIA has taken up 80 cases. Of the 884 UAPA cases under trial in J&K, the SIA is handling 24.

Of the cases under trial, 249 are in the North Kashmir Range (Baramulla, Handwara, Kupwara, Bandipora and Sopore); 223 in South Kashmir Range (Pulwama, Awantipora, Anantnag, Shopian, Kulgam); and 317 in Central Kashmir Range (Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal).

With a huge backlog of cases at the district level, the process of capacity building started about five months back with the creation of SIUs. The 14-member teams, under district superintendents of police (SPs), tasked with “effective investigation and case building” for UAPA cases, were first set up in the five police districts in South Kashmir, followed by Central Kashmir and then North Kashmir. Srinagar district, because of its case load, has two of these specialised units.

A senior official who spoke to

diamond worker, says prices may have risen on its watch, but “BJP Hindutva vadi to hai (at least the BJP is pro-Hindu)”. Anyone who takes on the BJP must compete with it not on one front but two — on its “kaam (development)”, but also its pro-Hinduness, he says.

On the second count, for all its strategic silences, from Shaheen Bagh to Bilkis Bano, and loud promises of pilgrimages, the AAP is widely seen to be not-Hindu-enough.

AAP's Dhaduk speaks of his party's predicament: “They (BJP) put up edited posters of Kejriwal here with a (Muslim) cap... dadhi bana di (painted on a beard)”, he says.

That the Congress is barely seen or heard in Surat in this election is remarkable but not so surprising, perhaps, given that it has seen successive electoral defeats for over two decades in this city.

But even in the tribal belt in the adjoining Tapi district, where the Congress won even as it shrank in the urban centre, and where fears of displacement by the “pariyojana” or project continue to stoke popular suspicion of the BJP, the party seems less than the sum of its blinkered parts.

In Borakhadi village in the constituency of Vyara, four-term MLA and Congress candidate Poonabhai Gamit arrives in a convoy of cars that also carries most of his audience for the small election meeting.

Congress is not bringing out its national firepower, unlike the AAP and BJP — Rahul Gandhi broke away from his Bharat Jodo Yatra only once so far for the Gujarat campaign even as Modi-Yogi-central ministers and AAP's Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann have held meetings and roadshows in the tribal belt. “I will win, even if a big Congress leader does not come, because no one here wants change”, Gamit says.

A splintered Congress campaign that lacks a centre makes even Morbi — where a bridge collapse on the BJP government's watch drew the nation's attention to the tragedy of 135 lost lives — seem far away. “Morbi is not an issue here... I have not seen the bridge, it is 400-500 km from here”, says Gamit.

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Remembering Abbas Moontasir, the Indian basketball legend

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On 16th November, Moontasir died at the age of 80. He was one of India's greatest ball handlers and most charismatic part of the star studded Railways in the 60s and 70s

● NPAs of Mudra loans at just 3.3%

Within the three categories, the NPAs for Shishu loans (up to Rs 50,000) were the lowest at 2.25 per cent of disbursements and the highest for Kishore loans (Rs 50,001 to Rs 5 lakh) at 4.49 per cent. For Tarun loans (over Rs 5 lakh up to Rs 10 lakh), bad loans were 2.29 per cent of disbursements.

The Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency (MUDRA) was launched on April 8, 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide loans up to Rs 10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm, small and micro enterprises. Called the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, loans are given under three categories: Shishu up to Rs 50,000, Kishore Rs 50,001 to Rs 5 lakh, and Tarun from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. Mudra loans do not require any collateral/ security, and hence were perceived to be very risky.

The data under the RTI response received by the Department of Financial Services under the Union Ministry of Finance reveals five interesting trends:

i) Public sector banks accounted for almost 46 per cent

BAD LOAN STATUS

Category	All banks	Govt banks	Private banks
Shishu	2.25%	5.26%	0.95%
Kishore	4.49%	6.64%	1.79%
Tarun	2.29%	3.51%	1.49%

All figures as % of disbursements under the specified category. Source: Department of Financial Services, Union Ministry of Finance

of all Mudra loans in value terms till June 30 this year. They accumulated bad loans of Rs 31,025.30 crore, which is 4.98 per cent of their disbursements of Rs 6,23,279.85 crore. As a percentage of total advances, this is also lower than 5.97 per cent for the banking sector as a whole.

ii) Private banks have far better recovery than public sector banks. For them, bad loans or non-performing assets during the seven-year period stood at Rs 6,469.2 crore, just 1.32 per cent of their disbursements of Rs 4,90,652.6 crore. Private banks were next to public sector banks in terms of their market share in value terms — they accounted for almost 36 per cent of the total disbursements.

iii) Of the total 19.78 crore

beneficiaries (also referred to as loan accounts) across Shishu, Kishore and Tarun categories, only 82.98 lakh loan accounts or 4.19 per cent turned bad. This means only 4 beneficiaries among 100 beneficiaries defaulted on repayments.

iv) Private banks may account for just 36 per cent of the value of loans disbursed, but in terms of the number of loan accounts, they catered to 10.46 crore beneficiaries or almost 53 per cent of the total 19.78 crore loan accounts. What this suggests is private banks gave smaller denomination loans, but their coverage was much wider. This is corroborated by data. The share of private sector banks is very high in Shishu category loans (up to Rs 50,000); of the Rs 4.21 lakh crore

disbursed to over 15.39 crore beneficiaries under Shishu category, private sector banks accounted for almost 60 per cent.

v) On the contrary, public sector or state-owned banks (which in value terms accounted for almost 46 per cent of loans disbursed) covered just 4.66 crore beneficiaries, or under 24 per cent of the total Mudra loan accounts. This reveals that the average loan size for public sector banks was much larger than private banks. The share of public sector in Kishore category disbursements (Rs 50,000 to Rs 5 lakh) was 35.64 per cent, and in Tarun category (Rs 5-10 lakh loans) was much higher at 61 per cent.

According to the RTI reply, regional Rural Banks (RRBs) disbursed over Rs 1.09 lakh crore (8.06 per cent of total) to 1.05 crore customers (5.38 per cent of total) and Small Finance Banks provided over Rs 1.40 lakh crore (10.27 per cent of total disbursement) to 3.61 crore beneficiaries (18.22 per cent of total) as on June 30, 2022. Similar to the public sector banks, the NPAs of RRBs too are high at about 4.22 per cent. For small finance banks, the NPAs were lower at 2.79 per cent.

● China Covid protests spread, Xi faces calls to quit

for weeks at a time. Some cities carry out daily virus tests on millions of residents.

Protests erupted after a fire broke out Thursday and killed at least 10 people in an apartment building in the city of Urumqi in the northwest, where some have been locked in their homes for four months.

About 300 demonstrators gathered late Saturday in Shanghai, most of whose 25 million people were confined to their homes for almost two months starting in late March.

● Kerala

Report. Subsequently, the police took five fishermen into custody in connection with the Saturday's violence in which fishermen came face to face with local Hindu groups, which have been demanding completion of the Rs 7,500-crore seaport, under construction since 2015.

The clergy were booked under various sections of IPC including criminal conspiracy (Section 120-B), rioting (Section 147), criminal trespassing (Section 447), and assaulting public servants to deter them from discharging official duty (Section 353), among other charges. As many as nine cases have been registered against the clergy and 1,000-odd persons, who on Saturday prevented the Adani Group from resuming construction of the port, which has been suspended for the last four months. Action council convener Fr Eugene Pereira claimed that provocation by the police had led to worsening of the situation. “The police have arrested the bishops and the priests in the criminal case, and charged them with conspiracy even though they were not part of the agitation. Saturday's violence was unleashed by the men of Adani (group) with the connivance of police and BJP. We want a peaceful solution to the issue,” he alleged.

● Congress on Gehlot

A clear message to keep differences aside till the yatra is over was sent out to leaders of the Madhya Pradesh Congress too.

Sources in the Congress said Gehlot's sharp offensive against Pilot — he called him a “traitor (gaddar)” who colluded with the BJP — has upset the leadership, primarily because it has come days before the yatra is to enter Rajasthan, and there will be renewed focus on the simmering tussle between the two all through the yatra in the state.

For the first time on Sunday, the party made it clear that Gehlot should not have used certain words. Making it clear that the party values both Gehlot and Pilot, AICC communication head Jairam Ramesh admitted that “there are some differences” between the two, but added that “some words used by the chief minister were unexpected... I was also very surprised. And I can also say that the chief minister should not have certain words.”

The Congress had initially responded cautiously to Gehlot's attack, with Ramesh saying he was a “senior and experienced political leader” and “whatever differences he has expressed” with Pilot “will be resolved in a manner that strengthens the Congress party”. A day later, he called

ing taken away, forced by police into vans, but could not identify them. He said protesters yelled slogans, including one that has become a rallying cry: “(We) do not want PCR (tests), but want freedom.” On Sunday afternoon, crowds returned to the same spot.

In Beijing, a group of about 200 people gathered in a park on the capital's east side and held up blank sheets of paper, a symbol of defiance against the ruling party's pervasive censorship. Postings on social media said there were also protests at 50 universities. **AP**

Gehlot's remarks “unexpected”. Going a step further, he said on Sunday that Gehlot should not have said what he said.

Asked about the possibility of a leadership change, Ramesh said: “Gehlot is a senior and experienced leader of our party. Sachin Pilot is a young, popular and energetic leader. The party needs both of them. There are some differences... but whatever solution that will be found in Rajasthan... the Congress leadership is thinking about it... the way forward will be keeping in mind the interest of the party.”

“Individuals are not important. People will come and go. Veteran leader, experienced leader, young leader, all that doesn't matter. Organisation is supreme. And the issue will be resolved in a manner that strengthens the party. I cannot set a time frame. That the Congress leadership will decide. The only criteria is whether the decision will strengthen the party or weaken it. If tough decisions are to be made... it will be taken. If an agreement is to be arrived at, that will be done. On one side is a senior and experienced leader who has held many posts and on the other is a young, popular, energetic and active leader. We need both.”

● Senior advocate

was barely two, Rungta soon realised that he was treated differently by those around him — “some kind of a charity approach”, as he puts it. “This was a trigger for me. I knew I had to do something to be independent.”

Rungta completed his LLB from Kanpur in 1978 from Dayanand College of Law. The same year, at the age of 24, he became the All India General Secretary of National Federation of Blind. “I also decided to continue my legal studies and pursue LLM from Delhi University's Law Faculty,” he says.

He enrolled with the Bar Council of Delhi in 1982, and began his practice in the city. Since then, he has built a flourishing practice over the past four decades. In court, he always keeps his “ears towards where the bench sits”. “I don't rely on my juniors to ascertain whether the judge has entered the courtroom. I try to understand if the court master is talking, if the lawyers in the courtroom,” Rungta says.

Having relied on Braille notes all his life, Rungta believes that although technological advancements have helped visually impaired lawyers immensely, one cannot completely depend on technology while appearing before courts.

Rungta says that when it comes to mobility requirements for visually impaired persons, human assistance and walking sticks are the most useful. Though ramps are useful for the physically disabled, the construction of pathways with blocks for visually impaired persons sometimes causes more trouble for people that can see. “What is really needed is e-courts to become compatible with software used by visually impaired lawyers. PDF files should be compatible for us. We still don't have sign interpreters for hearing impaired lawyers. For blind witnesses appearing in cases, braille printers should be provided,” he suggests.

Airing of ‘national interest’ content for TV may come into effect on Jan 1

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

COME JANUARY 1, 2023, it may become binding for Indian television channels to air “national interest” content for 30 minutes every day.

Earlier this month, the Union Cabinet approved the ‘Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Television Channels in India, 2022’, under which it became obligatory for channels to telecast content in national and public in-

terest.

Even as the guidelines became effective across the country on November 9, officials from the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B) have said that the channels will be given time to conceptualise and create such content.

After several rounds of meetings with the channels and other stakeholders, the likely implementation date for such content will be set for January 1, 2023, sources told *The Indian Express*.

Before that, there is going to be

another round of meetings between the ministry officials and the stakeholders to give a final shape to the plan, sources added.

As per the guidelines, at least 30 minutes are to be given every day to telecast content pertaining to “public service and national interest”, for which eight themes were given to channels for creation of the content. The rationale behind the move, as per the government, is that airwaves are public property and need to be used in the best interest of society.

The themes given to the chan-

nels include (i) education and spread of literacy; (ii) agriculture and rural development; (iii) health and family welfare; (iv) science and technology; (v) welfare of women; (vi) welfare of the weaker sections of the society; (vii) protection of environment and of cultural heritage; and (7) (viii) national integration.

The government will, from time to time, issue general advisory to the channels for telecast of content in national interest, and the channel shall comply with the same, the guidelines said.

President of Egypt to be chief guest on Republic Day, says MEA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

EGYPT PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah al-Sisi will be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in January, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Sunday.

“This is the first time that the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt will be the Chief Guest at our Republic Day,” the MEA said in a statement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sent a formal invita-

tion to al-Sisi which was handed over to the Egyptian President by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on October 16.

Both countries are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.

Egypt has been invited as a ‘guest country’ during India's presidency of the G20 in 2022-23, according to the statement.

“India and Egypt enjoy warm and friendly relations based on civilisational and deep-rooted people-to-people ties,” the state-

ment said.

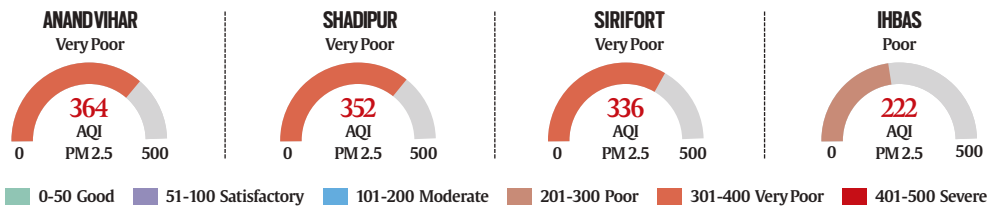
An invitation to be the Republic Day chief guest is highly symbolic from the Indian government's perspective. New Delhi has been weaving a strategy with hospitality to decide its chief guest for the Republic Day. The choice of chief guest every year is dictated by a number of reasons — strategic and diplomatic, business interests and international geo-politics.

India was unable to have any foreign leader as the chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations

in 2021 and 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2022, leaders of five Central Asian countries were invited as chief guests for the Republic Day parade and celebrations on January 26, but they couldn't come due to the Covid-19 pandemic's Omicron wave.

In 2021, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had to cancel his presence at the Republic Day celebrations due to a raging Covid wave in the UK, and India had no Republic Day chief guest in January 2021.



S K Y W A T C H

FORECAST: November 28
Mainly clear sky.
Mist in the morning

MAX: 27
1.4°C below normal

MIN: 8
1.9°C below normal

BMW with ‘VIP number plate’ mows down 50-yr-old cyclist

‘A legend among cyclist groups, used to raise awareness for road accident victims’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

A 50-YEAR-OLD cyclist died after a BMW vehicle, with a “VIP number plate”, rammed into his cycle at Southwest Delhi’s Mahipalpur flyover Sunday morning. Police have arrested the car driver.

The deceased, Subhendu Banerjee, was a businessman from Gurgaon and an avid cyclist. He was riding alone when the car hit him from the rear. Police said he had a helmet on and would cycle every day.

Visuals from the spot show the car sporting a Delhi Cantt Board sticker. However, police said the owner of the car is not a member of the board but a businessman from West Delhi.

According to police, they received a PCR call from Vasant Kunj around 6-7 am. Staff went to the flyover and found both the car and the cycle lying damaged on a



The deceased, Subhendu Banerjee, was cycling alone when he was hit by the car



corner of the road. The car’s windshield was broken while the cycle was completely damaged.

DCP (Southwest) Manoj C said, “On enquiry, it was found that the car’s tyre had burst. The driver could not control the vehicle and hit a cyclist. He rushed the cyclist to a hospital, but doctors declared him dead on arrival.”

A case was registered against the driver, Somveer (31), who has

been booked under sections of rash driving and causing death by negligence. “The offending car has been seized and the driver arrested. The BMW’s owner has been identified as Sunil Chander (40), a resident of Punjabi Bagh who runs a mobile shop. Investigation is at a preliminary stage. Mechanical inspection will be done on the car,” said the DCP.

Police said Somveer had allegedly dropped his owner off and was returning to Punjabi Bagh when he hit the victim. “Sunil said he bought the car second-hand and retained the sticker. We will take necessary legal action and more sections will be added in the FIR after document verification. Sunil also denied his presence inside the car at the time of the accident. We are verifying it,” added the DCP.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

FOR HIS friends, Subhendu Banerjee was a “legend” in the Delhi-Gurgaon cyclist groups who had covered one of the toughest rides, colloquially called the CKB-1,200 km ride. He would cycle almost every day with other cyclists or solo. On Sunday morning, he left his home in Gurgaon’s Sector 49 for a ride but died after a BMW hit him on Mahipalpur flyover.

A member of the Delhi Randonneurs group, the 50-year-old was a businessman who ran a garment manufacturing business in Gurgaon. He is survived by his parents, wife and a 21-

year-old daughter. His friends said his daughter had recently got a job and he was elated.

Neha Raizada, a cyclist, said, “He was an experienced professional rider, all young cyclists looked up to him. When I heard he had covered the CKB ride, I was surprised; it is one of the toughest rides in North India because of the distance and elevation. It starts from Delhi and goes all the way to Nainital and other elevated sites. For us, he was a mentor-like figure in the cycling community.”

Friends called him an ‘endurance cyclist’ who was often spotted on 600 km to 1,000 km rides across states. On social media and cycling apps, he would often share pictures of his rides and route maps. Fellow cyclist

Shilpi Malik (49) said, “He was a strong rider and often led groups on the rides. He was a role model for all of us. He was around 50 but challenged everyone with his long-distance trips on bikes.”

His friends said Subhendu also took up causes to raise awareness about road fatalities and safety for cyclists and pedestrians. According to his friends, he had participated in a road safety awareness event last week on Golf Course Road organised by the district administration, police and an NGO in memory of those killed in road accidents in Gurgaon in the past five years.

Sarika Panda Bhatt, a cyclist, said, “He was a friend... an avid cyclist who would cycle daily. On weekends, we would often go cy-

cling in a group from Gurgaon to Delhi... Today he was riding alone... He had posted on our cyclist group, on WhatsApp, that he would be going for the ride... Last Sunday, he took part in an event to raise awareness for victims of road accidents...”

Gaurav Wadhwa, owner of a bike shop in Delhi and a cyclist, said: “I met his family, they are devastated. He had bought two-three bikes from me, and we also would go for rides.”

Subhendu had been cycling for the past 15 years, often participating in long-distance rides across states, said Hemanshu Khanna (39), a cyclist and a friend. “He had cycled for over 70,000 km and was quite experienced.”

MCD POLLS A WEEK AWAY, PARTIES HIT THE STREETS

In unauthorised colony in North Delhi, what do women want most from MCD? Toilets

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

WHILE BJP national president J P Nadda walked through a narrow lane of an unauthorised colony in North Delhi’s Wazirpur Industrial Area, campaigning for the upcoming municipal polls, 40-year-old Gulabo was unimpressed.

“We never see leaders, even once, after elections are over. Everyone comes here for votes, but there is no one for the poor. Today, a leader has come so some of the garbage has been picked up,” she said. Her husband, like many residents of the area, is a daily wage labourer.

People across the locality flagged the lack of sanitation and clean drinking water as the primary problems affecting them, but women said the biggest issue for them is the lack of toilets.

“I hope whoever comes to power does something for young girls. I have a 15-year-old daughter. The nearest public toilet is 10-15-minute walk away. Every day before school, girls have to stand in a queue and wait there, and they get late for school. It’s also very dirty,” said Sunita (36).

Munni Devi (45), who works as domestic help, stated that many women relieve themselves in the open by the nearby railway lines after dark owing to the lack of toilets.

“I have been living here for 20 years, and this has not changed. Some people with a little more money have made toilets in their homes but for the rest of us, we either have to go all the way to the toilets or go in the open near the railway lines,” she said.

The sitting councillor for the ward is former leader of the opposition in the erstwhile North MCD Vikas Goel from the Aam Aadmi Party.

The long-standing problems of the area is reflected in scepticism in the residents.

“Nobody has done anything here, we do everything by ourselves. The drains are always overflowing, we clean them ourselves. When it rains, they overflow even more and we place bricks on the lane to move in and out of our houses. We don’t get clean water, so we buy drinking water every day for Rs 20-25,” said 31-year-old Sonia Pandey.



For Munni Devi (top) and Sunita, lack of toilets in the area is the biggest issue

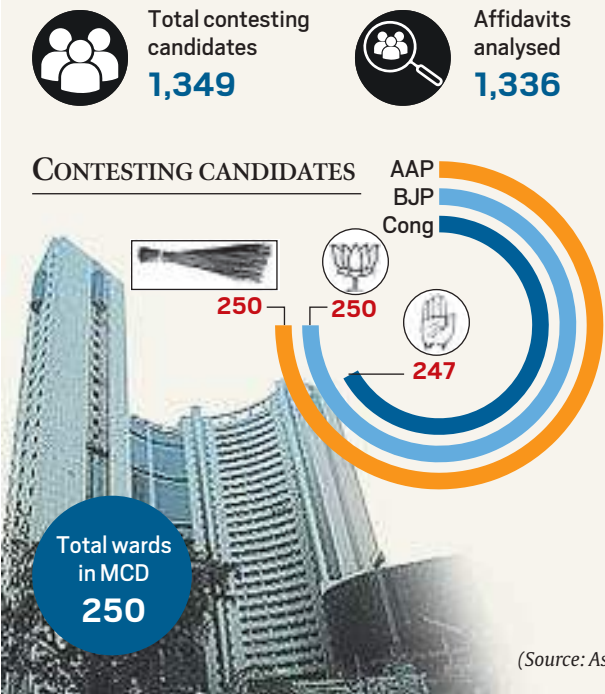
SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

ONE WEEK before the Delhi municipal corporation polls next week, senior Bharatiya Janata Party functionaries and Union Ministers hit out against the Aam Aadmi Party while campaigning across the capital on Sunday with jibes ranging from ‘massage centre in Tihar jail’ to ‘revvi culture’.

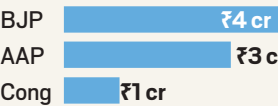
On Sunday morning, BJP national president J P Nadda led a door-to-door campaign in North Delhi’s Wazirpur Industrial Area accompanied by BJP MP Harsh Vardhan. Addressing a public meeting in the area after that, Nadda tore into the AAP, referring to the incarceration of leaders including cabinet minister Satyendar Jain and to leaked video footage showing Jain receiving what appeared to be a massage in his cell.

“Is Satyendar Jain in jail or not? Is he in jail for the last six

CANDIDATE WATCH

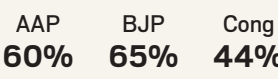


AVERAGE ASSETS OF CANDIDATES*



*Approx

% OF CANDIDATES WHOSE ASSETS ARE ABOVE ₹1 CRORE



DECLARED CRIMINAL CASES

Party	Criminal cases	Serious cases
AAP	18%	8%
BJP	11%	6%
Cong	10%	5%



AAP leader and Deputy CM Manish Sisodia during an MCD poll campaign in Vinod Nagar, Sunday. Gajendra Yadav

In Bhalswa, landfill prime concern for residents: ‘We want better facilities’

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

LIVING NEAR a landfill spread across 70 acres, residents of Bhalswa Dairy are only concerned if their new MCD councillor can provide a cleaner living space, better drinking water and parks.

“Imagine living near a landfill. The water is bad. There can be a fire anytime and it takes a long time to douse them. There are many small factories here. The air is also bad. I run a parlour and want better facilities in the area. I have been living here for more than 20 years... No one has done anything so far,” said Anu Kaur.

On Sunday afternoon, AAP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who came to the area to campaign for the party’s MCD pick Timsi Sharma, pointed to the landfill and said it shows the “corruption” in the BJP-ruled civic body.

“Jiski sarkaar ho, usko parash banaye... We are confident that you will support Arvind Kejriwal in the MCD polls. Our candidates are competent and will work for their betterment. The BJP has not done anything here in the last 15 years. This place has become hell... we will change that,” said Sisodia, addressing hundreds of locals and AAP supporters who lined up in the narrow lanes of Durga Chowk in the area.

Timsi Sharma is fighting the election against BJP’s Divya Jha, district secretary in Northwest Delhi, and Congress’s Sunita Devi. She is supported by her husband Suresh, who has been

an AAP member for 12 years.

The couple have promised to “change the face” of the landfill. “It is a health hazard. I also want to provide better drinking water and parks here... Locals are suffering because of the BJP rule. We will change that,” she said.

Bhalswa Dairy is part of the Jahangirpuri ward, which also includes areas of Shradhanand Colony and Swaroop Colony. Most residents live in small bungalows and the streets are lined with carts and shops. There are two parks in the ward, bereft of trees. Bhalswa landfill is near Durga Chowk while there is a lake near the main road.

Most residents run small businesses — selling milk, groceries, spare car and motor parts. With the landfill right outside the residential area, the groundwater too is highly polluted.

For people who run dairies in the area, the dirty water not only affects them but also their business. Suresh Kumar, who runs a dairy and came to hear Sisodia’s speech, said: “We have cows and some people also have goats. The animals need clean water and a good environment. You see the landfill and the nullah here. The cows get sick. I don’t know if AAP will do anything, but we wanted to see what Sisodia was saying.”

Pooja Soni, a homemaker who lives in Shradhanand Colony, said the area and markets are congested and roads bad. “We have been raising issues about the landfill and roads, but nobody listens. We want someone to fix our problems.”



Her legacy MCD poll theme song, Sheila Dikshit returns as Delhi Cong face

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

MORE THAN three years after her demise, Sheila Dikshit continues to be the Congress’s most bankable leader in Delhi — the tottering party has made her the key face of its MCD poll campaign which highlights the times of “Sheila ji’s Delhi”.

Dikshit had been the longest-serving Delhi chief minister (from 1998 to 2013), following which the grand old party has

been in political wilderness in the national capital. The Congress had failed to win a single seat in Delhi in the 2015 and 2020 Assembly polls as well as the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The Dikshit-led Congress was trounced by the then fledgling Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party in the December 2013 polls, which formed its first government with outside support from the incumbent party. The Congress lost power in the MCD to the BJP in the 2007 polls.

It was under the Dikshit gov-

ernment that the MCD was trifurcated in 2011, although she had mooted this proposal years earlier during her second term as CM, which was strongly opposed by the then Congress-led corporation leaders. This year’s election will be held for the reunified MCD after the BJP-led Centre reversed the Congress regime’s decision earlier this year.

Struggling to revive itself while reeling under factional feuds, the Congress has decided to fall back on Dikshit’s legacy in its MCD poll campaign, project-



Sheila Dikshit had been the longest-serving Delhi CM

ing the vast infrastructure built in Delhi under her government. Last week, the party flagged off 14 vans marked with Dikshit’s photo for campaigning. Like the AAP, the Congress has said it will focus on Delhi’s garbage problem and corruption gripping the MCD if voted to power.

Launching the theme song of the party’s campaign, DPCC president Anil Kumar Chaudhary said: “The song reflects achievements of the Congress during its 15-year rule, and how AAP and BJP together polluted ‘Congress

Wali Delhi’ not only through toxic air and water, but also through its divisive politics... The theme song will be played door-to-door to highlight the achievements of the Sheila Dikshit-led Congress government’s development-oriented governance, and expose corruption, hollow promises and wrongdoings of BJP and Kejriwal governments, at the MCD and in Delhi government over the last 15 and 8 years, respectively.”

Some Congress insiders, however, believe Dikshit was not given her due by the party in the last few

years of her life. After losing to Kejriwal in the New Delhi constituency by over 25,000 votes in the 2013 polls, she was called “short-sighted”. Many believed she underestimated AAP and ruined Congress’s chances by not countering the new party’s narrative strongly. At the time, no one thought a party formed a year ago could win more than a couple of seats in its first election but she, being the party leader, was mostly blamed,” said a party leader.

“When AAP came back with a sweeping majority of 67 out of 70

seats in the 2015 polls, Dikshit seemed bitter and infighting within the party was rife and those considered close to her started to look for other avenues...” said another party leader.

In 2019, Dikshit lost to BJP’s Manoj Tiwari, with the saffron party bagging all seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi. Within months of her defeat, Dikshit returned to the drawing board to launch a fresh bid to revive the Congress in Delhi. She, however, passed away in July 2019 following a cardiac arrest.



VIEW FROM THE GROUND

‘One gets what is in destiny’: Farmers in Saurashtra unwilling to desert BJP

They complain of rising input costs, erratic power supply, but report good crop yields and prices

GOPAL KATESHIYA
RAJKOT, JAMNAGAR,
NOVEMBER 27

THE AUCTIONEER quotes Rs 5,000 per quintal as the base price for groundnut brought by Hansraj Gadihya, and then invites bids from buyers. The farmer sits down in the auction shed of the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) in Rajkot, resignation written on his face. A small bidding war pushes the price up to Rs 5,425. But the bidding soon stops, and the auctioneer announces that Gadihya's lot of 28 quintals of groundnut, grown on a 1.24 hectare field, is sold.

The 45-year-old farmer from Vijaynagar village of Morbi district, seems neither too happy nor unhappy by the outcome. “One gets what is written in one's destiny,” he says.

His total crop this year was double that of last year, when his groundnut was infested by white grub pests. The price he got this year is also higher than the Rs 4,500 per quintal he had got last year, though it's Rs 425 lower than the Rs 5,850 that was announced as the minimum support price (MSP) by the Central government this year.

Gadihya has also taken on lease an additional 1.5 hectares to grow cotton. A few days ago, he sold 22 quintals of cotton, harvested during first picking, at Rs 9,000 per quintal, substantially



Farmers bring groundnut at the APMC mandi, a wholesale market, in Rajkot. Chitral Khambhati

higher than the MSP of Rs 6,080 for the medium staple variety he had grown this year.

“Prices are so-so. A farmer will never be happy about the price he gets for his produce,” he says.

What Gadihya is unhappy about is the unreliable electricity supply to his farm. He still praises Prime Minister Narendra Modi, though. “Modi does work, but we are not getting the hours of supply we are promised. Currently, the government is supplying us power for 10 hours daily as elections are round the corner. But it will stop once the elections are over. The government will again forget us, farmers,”

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elections,” says Rangani, who sold his groundnut crop for Rs 6,300 per quintal.

Rangani has sown cotton in 12 hectares and the crop, he says, looks good. “But cultivation costs have risen by 35 per cent, as pesticides, fertiliser, diesel and labour have all become costlier,” he adds. At the Gondal APMC, Mahesh Dobariya (35), a farmer with 3 hectares in Vinzivad village of Rajkot's Gondal taluka, agrees with Rangani. “However, I will continue supporting the BJP as it provides safety, security, drinking water, etc.”

Groundnut and cotton prices are higher by an average of Rs 500

and Rs 3,000, respectively, over the corresponding prices last year, say traders, mainly due to robust domestic and overseas demand.

“For the past one week, we have started getting power for 10 hours during daytime. But I am fully aware that this is going to stop as soon as polling for Assembly elections is over, though industries will continue to get round the clock supply,” says Dilip Mungalpara (38), a farmer from Khajuri village of Paddhari. He says he will explore new options while casting his vote on December 1, when polling will be held in Saurashtra, Kutch and south Gujarat regions, in the first phase of the Assembly polls.

In almost every public meeting that Modi has addressed in the state over the past five months, he has talked about bringing Narmada waters to Saurashtra for irrigation and drinking purposes, and how residents of the state are today getting round the clock power. The BJP government even claims that Gujarat is a power-surplus state. “While that may be true, the fact is that power supply to farms is not regular. Why should only farmers get electricity at night, exposing them to risks of being attacked by wild animals or bitten by snakes or other poisonous insects while irrigating their crops?” asks Vinu Khakhariya (45), who has a three hectare farm in Moti Veraval village in Lalpur taluka of Jamnagar district.

INTERVIEW: RAGHAVJI PATEL, GUJARAT AGRICULTURE MINISTER

‘Patidars, Kolis are happy; so are farmers and Dalits... All content with BJP govt’

GOPAL KATESHIYA
JAMNAGAR, NOVEMBER 27

GUJARAT AGRICULTURE Minister Raghavji Patel is one of the most senior MLAs in the outgoing Assembly. A six-time MLA, Patel is contesting his 11th Assembly election from Jamnagar Rural. In a wide-ranging interview talks about his ministerial tenure, farmers' issues, Patidar votes, and more.

Excerpts:

What are your achievements as a minister?

The first and foremost achievement is that not a single agitation has been launched against my agriculture department. I am happy that farmers are getting remunerative prices for their produce and, whenever required, we have procured enough crops from farmers at minimum support price (MSP) in a transparent manner. I have not allowed a single incident of irregularities to happen. We are giving farmers up to Rs 3 lakh of crop loans without any interest and the honourable Prime Minister also credits Rs 6,000 every year directly to their bank accounts through the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Yojana. We are ensuring compensation to farmers quickly if their crops get damaged due to any natural calamity. Thanks to all this, I firmly believe, farmers, cattle herders and those rearing cows are very happy with my brief tenure as a minister and with my Chief Minister and you will see it reflect in this election.

Days after you were sworn in as minister, the government launched a survey to assess damage to crops in Jamnagar and Rajkot. Some farmers say they didn't get compensation or adequate compensation.

I am a farmer myself and I am fully aware of issues bothering farmers. Whenever a natural calamity has struck, I have stood by people. I have personally visited affected areas, assessed ground realities and in consultation with officers decided the extent of damage and how we can help the farmers. I am happy that our Chief Minister has given me ample support hence we have been able to timely pay people enough compensation.

The Congress and the AAP have been promising farmers free power during day time and many more things this election. How do you view these promises?

Every political party tries to attract the largest number of voters. For doing that, the party comes out with its election manifesto. What I like is that the BJP doesn't make unrealistic promises. Whatever we promise, we complete in a time-bound manner.



The minister is contesting from Jamnagar Rural. Chitral Khambhati

The first case of lumpy skin disease (LSD) was reported in Kutch in April and yet the disease became widespread by July. Did the government fail to take timely action?

LSD is a viral disease. Our department was active since the first case was reported in Kutch. But because it was a viral disease, it spread. To prevent its further spread, we vaccinated the majority of our eligible healthy cattle population ... There was an outbreak in Rajasthan also but the government there could not vaccinate even 10 per cent of the cattle population. In Gujarat, around 8,000 to 9,000 cattle died, but LSD claimed 71,000 cattle heads in Rajasthan. In Punjab also, 61,000 cattle died due to LSD and vaccination in that state also compares poorly with Gujarat.

The government announced Mukhyamantri Gau Mata Poshan Yojana in the state Budget but started to implement it in September after public protests by many gaushalas (cattle shelters). Why the delay?

This is a historic scheme. Due to Covid-19, there was a huge shortfall in donations received by gaushalas, panjrapols, and other NGOs that take care of cattle. Therefore, they and saints also made repeated requests for help. Consequently, the chief minister, our party president CR Paatil, and we all discussed the matter and came up with the scheme to provide such organisations aid on a regular basis and made provision for it in the budget. While it is true that its operationalisation was delayed due to administrative reasons, it is now being implemented properly.

Do you think Maldharis (community of herdsmen) are angry with the BJP government over the government's handling of LSD, cattle bill, and Gau Poshan scheme?

ment over the government's handling of LSD, cattle bill, and Gau Poshan scheme?

The government did a satisfactory job tackling LSD. So far as the question of paying compensation for the loss of cattle heads because of LSD goes, the issue was dealt with at the relevant time itself and there is no anger over that either as most of the cattle that died were feral cattle. No one produced proper records of them. Those running gaushalas are happy now.

Since 2012, no one has managed to retain Jamnagar Rural. What is the difference between your 2017 bid and the 2022 campaign?

Election results depend on certain circumstances also. I have been associated with his constituency since 1985. Some areas of the Kalavad and Dhrol seats from where I have contested and won in the past were merged into Jamnagar Rural in 2012. So, my contacts, relations and work in this seat are quite old. For 14 years, I served as the chairman of the Jamnagar APMC after winning the election to its board of directors five times with a record number of votes. In the 2017 Assembly election, our Patidar quota stir, along with Alpesh Thakor's Koli-Thakor agitation and Jignesh Mevani's Dalit agitation, was going on. Farmers' protests were going on. They all had a bearing on my constituency also and I lost. Now, no agitation is going on. Patidars and Kolis are happy, and so are farmers. There's no dissatisfaction among Dalits either. All the communities are content with the work done by the BJP government and with Narendra Modi's leadership. There are no issues and therefore, BJP will retain power by winning an unprecedented number of seats.

In BJP's Gujarat push, UP lends a hand

LEENA MISRA
AHMEDABAD, NOVEMBER 27

IN DECEMBER 2002, the Congress, which had governments in several states, had at least six state chief ministers and several national leaders flown into Gujarat to campaign for the Assembly polls.

The elections were being held in the backdrop of the Godhra train burning and the riots, followed by the Akshardham terror attack which investigators had said was “revenge” for the riots. Narendra Modi, then the chief minister, had earned the sobriquet of “Hindu Hriday Samrat (ruler of Hindu hearts)”.

The events of that election added up to a “Hindutva wave” leading the BJP to win 127 of 182 seats, its best performance so far. The Congress's “carpet bombing” of netas — Ashok Gehlot, Vilasrao Deshmukh, SM Krishna, Ajit Jogi, Digvijaya Singh and Sheila Dikshit — created an atmosphere in the party's favour, but did not help the party return to power. In the two-way contest, the Congress won 51 seats, two going to Independents,



Yogi Adityanath in Dwarka on November 23. Chitral Khambhati

and two to the Janata Dal (United).

While the BJP's “carpet bombing” in Gujarat in the past two weeks may resemble the Congress's 20 years ago, the former has many strategic layers. The new feature in 2022 being the huge number of campaigners brought in from Uttar Pradesh, a state that has had a deep link with Gujarat since the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, and where the BJP won the Assembly election in March riding on the slogan of “double-engine sarkar”.

For the first time, an army of at least 160 BJP leaders and workers have landed from Uttar Pradesh

to campaign in Gujarat, right from MPs to district-level leaders that UP leaders say is the biggest deployment so far. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched his campaign from Wankaner near Morbi on a stage flanked by JCB backhoes, banners describing him as “Hindu Hriday Samrat” and crowds hailing him as “bulldozer baba”. He has now conducted several rallies. While Adityanath aggressively argues in favour of the “Gujarat model” for the country in his speeches, on the ground in Gujarat, it is the UP model playing out. Apart from flower-bedecked backhoes being placed at

Adityanath's rally venues, and the campaign riding on the double-engine Sarkar slogan, the BJP manifesto now has also promised to enact the UP-like Recovery of Damages to Public and Private Properties Act that the state ratified last year.

All-star campaigns have been carefully planned out. For instance, Adityanath has addressed rallies in constituencies that the BJP won or lost by narrow margins or seats with a sizable number of Muslim votes. He also did roadshows in constituencies such as the Patidar-dominated Varachha in Surat and Viramgam in support of candidate Hardik Patel. UP Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya has also been holding meetings in areas of Gujarat where migrants from the Hindi heartland have been residing.

An MP from Sitapur district who was part of the campaign pointed out how communities such as house painters were covered. “There are at least 500 families doing colour kaam in Ahmedabad who are from Sitapur,” said the leader.

According to Sitapur district president of the Bhajpa Pichhda

Varg Morcha (BJP OBC cell), Ramjivan Jaiswal, “From UP, 162 BJP workers have been camping here since September and will be here till the election process concludes.”

In 2014, the BJP sent a huge group from Gujarat to Varanasi, mostly Brahmin and Patidar leaders, to reach out to their respective communities and campaign for Modi who was the prime ministerial candidate at the time. Arvind Kejriwal, then having quit as Delhi chief minister after 49 days, contested from the seat but lost to Modi. Former Gujarat MoS (Home) Gordhan Zadaphia was made the party's UP in-charge in 2018 for the Lok Sabha elections the following year.

The MP from UP recalled how the Gujaratis influenced the UP campaign. “It would be very difficult to cover women in door-to-door campaigns as the women would be in purdah and run indoors when our people came to their homes. But when Gujarati women came, they not only covered them in the campaign, but they also conducted a successful rally of women—which is unprecedented for UP”

MEDHA PATKAR SAGA

From Narmada movement face to fighter for many social causes

BJP has accused Medha Patkar of being ‘anti-development’, a charge she denies

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE,
ADITIRAJA &
AVINASH NAIR
MUMBAI, VAODARA,
AHMEDABAD, NOVEMBER 27

IT WAS in 1985 that Medha Patkar, then just 31, left her PhD midway to jump headlong into the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). Mumbai-born Patkar, the daughter of freedom fighter and labour union leader Vasant Khanolkar, had done her Masters in Social Work from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and from her early years got involved in several causes involving generally the “oppressed” and poor.

However, it was the Narmada agitation, which grew into a protest against big dams and the right of the displaced to rehabilitation, later spreading to

other similar projects, that came to define the activist.

It also brought her into direct conflict with the Gujarat government, particularly when it was led by Narendra Modi between 2001-14, with Modi staking the development image of his government on the ambitious Sardar Sarovar dam project. Patkar's appearance at Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra recently, walking shoulder to shoulder with him, was enough for the BJP to drag the activist into the election slugfest.

The dam

The Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal gave its final award in 1979, fixing the Sardar Sarovar dam project's full reservoir level (FRL) height at 138.68 metres, as well as the share of water and hydro power between the riparian states — Gujarat, Madhya



Patkar has been dragged into the election slugfest. File

Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

The construction of the dam began in 1987, backed by funds from the World Bank. By then, the NBA was already spearheading protests against it. Finally, under immense pressure from anti-dam activists, the World

Bank withdrew from the project in 1993. The construction was later halted by the Supreme Court in May 1995.

In 2000, the apex court set a condition of supervised relief and rehabilitation for the dam oustees. By 2004, the FRL had reached 110.64 metres. In March

2006, when Modi was about to complete his first term as CM, clearance was given for raising the dam's height to 121.92 metres. When the Centre sought a review, Modi sat on a hunger strike for 51 hours.

In 2014, just 17 days after it took over at the Centre, the Modi government gave permission to raise the dam's height to its maximum and install sluice gates. In July this year, its waters reached its final Kutch end.

Patkar's role

Along with other activists, prominent leaders and academicians, the NBA relentlessly fought against the Gujarat government, starting with Congress CM Chimanbhai Patel, over the Sardar Sarovar Project. Its contention was that the tribals' displacement from their native habitats caused by big dams and their resettlement elsewhere would leave them devastated.

At its maximum FRL of 138.68 metres, the Sardar

Sarovar dam submerged 37,690 hectares — 11,279 hectares of agricultural land, 13,542 hectares of forests and 12,869 hectares of river basin and wasteland. In all, 193 villages of Madhya Pradesh, 33 of Maharashtra and 19 of Gujarat were affected, with additionally 243 villages partly affected in Gujarat.

The NBA demanded proper rehabilitation of 40,000 people who, it said, were displaced by the dam project, particularly tribals across Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The Patkar-led movement held indefinite fasts, demonstrations and rallies, drawing hundreds of supporters to protests against the Sardar Sarovar dam and other big dams in the Narmada Valley.

Patkar's defence

Patkar has always maintained that it is wrong to call her or her organisation “anti-development”, asserting that she only

fights for the rights of the tribals and people displaced by various projects and never properly rehabilitated. Political parties across divides have also often questioned the source of funds to her organisation.

Apart from the dam-affected people, Patkar has taken up the cause of slum dwellers in Mumbai, accusing land sharks and big developers of forcibly evicting them. It was largely due to her protests that in 2006, the then Congress-NCP government in Maharashtra brought a new housing policy promising affordable houses and slum redevelopment.

In 2007, Patkar joined the Nandigram agitation in West Bengal, which was led by Mamata Banerjee.

In March 2022, she questioned the Silverline semi-high speed railway corridor project being built in Kerala by the Pinarayi Vijayan government-led LDF government. In her late 60s, Patkar is still fighting.

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SMRITIIRANI ATTACKS RAHUL GANDHI: WITH WHICH TYPE OF PEOPLE IS HE LEADING YATRA?

CAPF FIRING: BANTER GONE AWRY, RIFLEMAN BOOKED

5 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



GUJARAT NOSTALGIA

FOR FORMER Union minister and senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad, who is stationed in Gujarat for campaigning, it's a trip down the memory lane. Prasad's connection with Gujarat started in 2003 when he, as the then I&B minister in Atal Bihari Vajpayee government at the Centre, was invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Kailashpati Mishra as the governor of Gujarat. He has been a frequent visitor to party offices across the state since 2007. On Sunday, at the BJP media centre, Prasad was nostalgic as a number of seniors reminisced the time he had spent there, he said.

LEGAL AID HEAD

SUPREME COURT judge Sanjay Kishan Kaul has been appointed the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Aid Services Authority. The Chief Justice of India is the Patron-in-Chief while the second senior most judge is appointed the executive chairman. While Justice Chandrachud held the post of executive chairman for just over two months, his predecessor UU Lalit championed major reforms in legal aid. Justice Kaul is passionate about reforming prisons and has authored significant judgments on bail jurisprudence.

FEW TAKERS

ABOUT TWO months ago, the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) were asked by the government to extend the term of the chairpersons of their respective Board of Governors (BoGs) till it finalises changes to the appointment process. The BoG is the highest decision-making body of the IIMs and since 2018, the IIM Act has empowered the Board with absolute autonomy to appoint its own chairperson, members and the institute director. The IIMs, however, haven't heeded the government's advice and several of them have gone ahead with the appointment/reappointment of chairpersons. A fly on the wall tells us that the Education Ministry's letter is being perceived as being an interference in the IIM autonomy.

Gandhi bust to come up at UN headquarters

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, NOV 27

A BUST of Mahatma Gandhi will be inaugurated as a gift from India to the United Nations during India's presidency of the Security Council next month. It will be the first sculpture of the Mahatma to be installed at the world body's headquarters here. The bust, made by renowned Indian sculptor Ram Sutar, who has also designed the Statue of Unity in Gujarat, will be inaugurated on December 14 during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to the UN for India's Presidency of the Council for the month.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, told PTI in an exclusive interview here that the bust will be placed in the expansive North Lawns of

the UN headquarters.

Notable works of art at the UN headquarters include a section of the Berlin wall donated by Germany, Soviet sculpture 'Let us Beat Swords into Ploughshares' and a life-size bronze statue of Nelson Mandela gifted by South Africa.

The only other gift from India on display at the UN is an 11th-century black-stone statue of 'Surya', the Sun God, donated on July 26, 1982.

The statue, dating from the late Pala period and currently displayed at the UN Conference Building, was presented as a gift by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Then Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar had accepted the sculpture on behalf of the United Nations.

Kamboj said the Gandhi bust will be placed in the North Lawn, a "very prestigious location" in the UNHQ grounds. **PTI**



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and his deputy Tejashwi Yadav at the launch on Sunday

significance for Hindus, and also developed Maqdoom ponds. We have worked for all religions. Now that Ganga water reaches here, it will be available at temples and other religious places besides several educational institutions."

Nitish also targeted the Centre for not approving airport at Rajgir. "A Central team had come here but did not sanction airport here. But we will have our own airport so that people could fly from here to Patna or Gaya," he said. Alleging non-cooperation from Archaeological Survey of India for not develop-

MANN KI BAAT ADDRESS

PM: G20 a big opportunity, delegates are future tourists

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Sunday made a pitch for entire country to "join the G20 in one way or other", saying India's presidency of the international forum for 2023 was a big opportunity.

"You can imagine — India is going to preside over such a big group, such a powerful group, three days from now, i.e. from December 1. What a great opportunity has come for India, for every Indian... We have to make full use of this opportunity and focus on global good, world welfare. Whether it is peace or unity, sensitivity towards the environment, or sustainable development, India has solutions to challenges related to these. The theme that we have given — 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' — shows our commitment to Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," Modi said in his Mann Ki Baat address.

The G20, or Group of 20, comprises 19 countries and the European Union, which together make up two-thirds of the world's population and 85 per cent of its total GDP.

Modi said he had received letters from "many people" expressing their pride at India hosting the G20 summit 2023, and also mentioned a woven flag with the G20 logo that he received from a weaver named Yeldhi Hariprasad from Telangana. "During this period, people from different parts of the world will get a chance to visit your states. I am sure that you will bring the diverse and distinctive colours of your culture to the world, and you also have to remember that the people coming to the G20, even if they come now as delegates, are tourists of the future. I urge all of you, especially my young friends on one more thing, like Hariprasad Garu, you too must join G20 in one way or the other. The Indian logo of G20 can be made, can be printed, in a very cool way, in a stylish way, on clothes," the PM said.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com



Work underway at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. *Abhinav Saha*

G20 venue likely to be ready by January 15

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

AS INDIA gets ready to take over the presidency of the G20 from December 1, works are in full swing at the main venue for the summit, Pragati Maidan.

The redeveloped Pragati Maidan exhibition-cum-convention centre will be ready by January 15, officials said.

While the summit will be held in September 2023, around 200 meetings of officials from 19 countries and the European Union, that comprise the G20, will be held starting December.

The summit and some other meetings in the run-up to it will be held at the redeveloped convention centre.

According to officials, the convention centre works will be completed by December 31 and arrangements for food and beverages will be ready by January 15, 2023.

Around 150 existing structures, including the Hall of Nations designed by architect Raj Rewal and opened to mark 25 years of Independence in 1972, were demolished as part of the redevelopment plan.

With a view of India Gate, the elliptical-shaped convention cen-

tre, built on an elevated podium, is spread over 53,399 square metres. While it has an aggregate capacity of 11,450 people, the convention centre can accommodate up to 7,000 on one floor. This is a big increase from one of the government's other convention facilities in New Delhi, Vigyan Bhawan, which has a capacity of 1,200, an official said.

Of its five levels, one level in the convention centre with a leaders' lounge, dining room and two auditoriums with 900 and 600 capacity each will be dedicated to G20 leaders, according to source. A separate complex of 25 rooms for meetings and seminars will be available for the Prime Minister. A 3,000-capacity amphitheatre, six exhibition halls and parking for 4,800 cars will also be built/constructed.

Helipads on the roof of the convention centre have also been planned for the visiting dignitaries.

The project, which is being overseen by India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) and executed by NBCC (India) Ltd, began in 2017 and was supposed to be completed by 2019. The project deadline was extended a few times due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other reasons.

Jharkhand Police's clean chit to Soren aide Mishra in threat case

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, NOVEMBER 27

JHARKHAND POLICE on Sunday said that they have found Pankaj Mishra — Chief Minister Hemant Soren's representative — and minister Alamgir Alam 'innocent' in their investigation into a threat having allegedly been made in the Barharwa toll plaza bidding case. It assumes significance as this case had been the genesis of Enforcement Directorate's ECIR (equivalent to an FIR) concerning the money laundering case against Mishra.

Mishra is currently under ju-

dicial custody for his alleged role in Rs 1,000-crore illegal mining case. Soren was also questioned by the ED in this case.

"After investigating facts and witnesses, accused Pankaj Mishra and MLA-cum-minister Alamgir Alam have been found to be innocent. Charge sheet has been filed against eight other accused," DIG (Santhal Pargana range) Sudarshan Prasad Mandal said.

The FIR was registered at the instance of one Sambhu Nandan Kumar who alleged he was threatened by Mishra on June 22, 2020, for participating in the bidding for Barharwa toll plaza. Kumar alleged he was told by Mishra over phone

"not to participate" in the bidding process and when he refused, he was attacked by a mob allegedly at Mishra's behest.

According to the ED, the main reason was to gain control of six toll plazas which come under the Barharwa Nagar Panchayat on the route connecting the mining sites.

"Control over these tolls would have enabled Mishra and his accomplices to have dominance in the area... enabling them to easily monitor the number of vehicles and quantity of the mining proceeds being carried out in vehicles and would have also facilitated the collection of levies," the ED had said in its prosecution complaint.

Railways to assess 'intangible benefits' of unviable projects

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

PAVING THE way for more investments into connectivity projects meant for far-flung, backward and hilly areas where creating large connectivity-infrastructure like railways did not make sense financially, the government has decided to give weightage to "intangible benefits" like social, environmental and network effects of such projects.

The policy change gives the government the necessary leeway to justify connectivity projects of new lines, gauge conversion, doubling of lines, etc even if they do not necessarily generate financial returns. This also means Railways will not have to struggle to obtain financial sanction for these projects.

The Ministry of Railways has sent a set of four new project proposals for appraisal to the NITI Aayog, justifying their investment based on this new 'Modified Economic Internal Rate of Return' model. These are: 30 km Kalyan-Murabad new line, 300 km Jalna-Jalgaon new line, doubling of 98 km Ankai-Aurangabad — all three in Maharashtra, and the 100 km Sabarmati-Sarkhej-Dholera new line in Gujarat.

The Niti Aayog considers only projects which entail an investment of over Rs 500 crore. "Many more projects will be taken up on this concept in the future," a Railway ministry spokesperson told The Indian Express. In the

Network effects of projects

RAILWAYS WOULD generally consider projects which offer an internal rate of return of about 12 per cent or more. But there are some projects which may not be financially viable, but can be justified

EXPLAINED

based on benefits which are not immediately visible, for example, the social, environmental or network effects they generate. The new policy aims to give such projects a push.

current financial year 2022-23, Railways has allocated Rs 67,000 crore towards capital spend for new lines, gauge conversion and doubling of lines.

Traditionally, Railways could justify a new project if it offered a minimum internal rate of return of around 12 per cent. This takes into account the project cost, time taken, maintenance, and future prospects. Under the 'Modified Economic Internal Rate of Return' model, a proposed new-line project can obtain a sanction even if its financial rate of return is poor, even 2-4 per cent, simply by being "socially desirable" even if "financially unviable".

"Railways has taken a cue from Metro projects to devise the methodology of calculating the economic rate of return," a senior official said. It was discussed that a capital-intensive system like Metro justifies a lot of its corridor projects by using similar methodology of project appraisal.

The logic is that assessing a

project, like connectivity to a port or a mine may be easy in terms of financial returns, but projects that connect backward areas or faraway places also have a long-term ripple effect in the economy, and those "intangible benefits" need to be factored in as well, the official explained.

As per the toolkit devised by the Railway Ministry, the project assessment would have to answer questions like travel time savings, savings in reduced road stress, increased safety, savings in fuel overall for the country, savings in vehicle operating cost, savings accrued due to reduction in pollution and the like.

It was finalised following a report of a multi-disciplinary committee in Railways set up to devise a comprehensive project appraisal method. The proposals are also required to assess the other benefits including the social and environmental impact of the project and the impact on modal share of the commodity or passengers.

GOVT. OF BIHAR
BIHAR COMBINED ENTRANCE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION BOARD
I.A.S. Association Building, Near Patna Airport, Patna-14.

UNDER GRADUATE MEDICAL ADMISSION COUNSELLING (UGMAC)-2022 for MBBS / BDS / B.V.Sc. & A.H. in Govt. Medical / Dental / Bihar Veterinary Colleges and Private Medical / Dental Colleges of Bihar

Adv. No.- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2022/08 Dated 26.11.2022

आवश्यक सूचना
विज्ञापन संख्या-BCECEB(UGMAC)-2022/07 दिनांक 19.11.2022 के क्रम में UGMAC-2022 से सम्बन्धित सभी अभ्यर्थियों / संस्थानों / सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि तकनीकी कारणों से दिनांक 25.11.2022 को प्रकाशित UGMAC-2022 का 2nd round provisional seat allotment Result को रद्द करते हुए, 2nd round provisional seat allotment Result / Document Verification and Admission कार्यक्रम निम्नवत् पुनर्निर्धारित किया जाता है:

क्र.	कार्यक्रम	पूर्व निर्धारित तिथि	पुनर्निर्धारित तिथि
i.	2 nd Round provisional seat allotment result publication	25.11.2022	28.11.2022
ii.	Downloading of allotment order (2 nd round)	25.11.2022 to 29.11.2022	28.11.2022 to 01.12.2022
iii.	Document verification/Admission (2 nd round)	26.11.2022 to 29.11.2022	29.11.2022 to 01.12.2022

2. विज्ञापन संख्या- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2022/05 Dated 17.11.2022 एवं BCECEB (UGMAC)-2022/07 दिनांक 19.11.2022 को रद्द शर्त एवं नियम बखावू रहेगी।
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The below mentioned borrowers have been issued notice to pay off their outstanding amount towards the facility against gold ornaments on **Dec 08, 2022** as they have failed to repay the dues. ICICI Bank has the authority to remove auction / change the E-Auction date without any prior notice. Auction will be held online - <https://jewel-auction.procuretiger.com> between 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm. For detailed Terms and conditions, please log into given website. In case of deceased borrower, all conditions will be applicable to legal heirs.

Loan A/C No.	Customer Name	Loan A/C No.	Customer Name	Loan A/C No.	Customer Name
Branch Name: Araria	248605000758	Sumit Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Hanuman Nagar	735405000095	Nishant Kumar
254605002086	Sadanand Sah	248605000807	Sumit Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Kadamkuan	334105000831
254605002085	Kiran Devi	248605000816	Sumit Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Kumbhar	329705001059
254605002061	Kiran Devi	248605001273	Nitin Raj	Branch Name: Patna - Kumbhar	329705001060
254605002063	Misena Devi	248605001278	Munna Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Lohia Nagar	735205002353
Branch Name: Arwal (Nagar Parishad)	402505000126	Beant Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Boringroad	040405009982	Anita Singh
748005000318	Sanjit Kumar	Branch Name: Gopalganj	Branch Name: Patna - Kankarbagh	0307050008931	Priyanka Sinha
748005000330	Santosh Kumar Sharma	071005004750	Akhtar Ali	Branch Name: Patna - Lohia Nagar	735205002353
Branch Name: Aurangabad-M.G.Road	133905000184	Anju Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001172	Sourav Kumar
132505002833	Kaushalendra Kumar	133905004276	Munna Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
Branch Name: Barauni	133905004279	Rakesh Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
255605001016	Manju Devi	133905004295	Premilata Kumari	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
Branch Name: Begusarai	267305001123	Pankaj Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
043005004627	Sujit Kumar	Branch Name: Jehanabad	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
Branch Name: Bettiah	370705000701	Brat Kishor Singh	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
071105000995	Vinod Prasad	Branch Name: Khagaria	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
071105002397	Saket Kumar Ray	163305001595	Babita Devi	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
071105003277	Shailash Kumar	163305003401	Rinku Kumari	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
071105003403	Niraj Kumar	Branch Name: Madhepura	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
071105003449	Promod Kumar	258405001350	Kisan Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
071105003491	Sundram Singh	258405001492	Pramod Kumar Prabhakar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
071105003785	Iqbal Firoz	Branch Name: Madhubani	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
071105003881	Sujit Kumar	132805003800	Shakeela Khatun	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
Branch Name: Bhabua	132805003804	Raj Kishor Jha	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
255805001949	Mamta Kumari	Branch Name: Bihaarsharif	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
133105002485	Ashok Kumar Mahto	41505000472	Praveen Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
Branch Name: Chapra - Bazar Samiti	41505000472	Praveen Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
243105002003	Usha Devi	41505000919	Amar Singh	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
Branch Name: Danapur	133405003840	Anand Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
243605001022	Usha Devi	133405005057	Vibha Kumari	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
Branch Name: Darbhanga	133405005057	Sanjay Alam	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
092405002736	Ravi Shankar Kumar	Branch Name: Munger	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
Branch Name: Leharisarai	132905002095	Avinash Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
243705001079	Sonu Kumar Panday	Branch Name: Muzaffarpur	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
Branch Name: Dehri	030605011302	Ravi Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
24390500174	Satish Kumar	Branch Name: Muzaffarpur - Zero Mile	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
243905001991	Bikash Kumar	334505001777	Pankaj Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
Branch Name: Gaya	334505002493	Rashmi Sharma	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
046305005802	Satyajit Kumar	334505002502	Manju Devi	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
046305005802	Satyajit Kumar	Branch Name: Muzaffarpur - Civil Court	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
Branch Name: Gaya - Sheohar Road	133005002622	Nitesh Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
180905001584	Ashok Kumar Upadhyay	133005002622	Nitesh Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
180905001857	Ranjeet Kumar Jha	Branch Name: Narkataganj (Nagar Parishad)	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
180905001871	Pratibha Devi	752105000727	Shubhnarayan Mishra	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173
Branch Name: Gaya-Tekari Road	752105000731	Zabihullah Zabihullah	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
248605000663	Vijay Kumar	Branch Name: Patna - Dujra	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173	Mid Sajid
248605001567	Prakhar Prakash	413505000414	Punam Devi	Branch Name: Patna - Patna City	238305001173

Date : 28.11.2022
Place : Muzaffarpur, Paschim Champaran, Patna, Purbhi Champaran, Purnia, Rohtas, Saran, Sitamarhi, Vaishali, Bhagalpur, Gaya, Kaimur, Madhepura, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Aurangabad, Nalanda, Saharsa, Arwal, Siwan, Araria, Begusarai, Gopalganj, Jehanabad, Khagaria, Samastipur, Sheohar, Munger

Sd/
Authorised Officer
For ICICI Bank Limited

PM: Terror a vote-bank issue for Cong, other power-hungry parties

PARIMAL DABHI
GANDHINAGAR, NOVEMBER 27

LAUNCHING A scathing attack on the Opposition Congress and other “smaller” and “power-hungry” parties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday said that they lack at the issue of terrorism through the eye of vote bank and appeasement.

Addressing a rally in Kheda district, Modi said it was necessary to save Gujarat and the country from such parties, which can be done only by the “double-engine” BJP government.

Referring to the Mumbai terror attack of 2008, Modi said, “What happened in Mumbai was the height of terrorism... Gujarat has also been a target of terrorism for long. Whether it is Ahmedabad or Surat, a number of our brothers and sisters have been killed in serial blasts... Gujarat wants this game of terror to end. The BJP government in Gujarat had taken detailed action on sleeper cells of terror.”

Adding that only the BJP can



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a public meeting in Kheda on Sunday. Nirmal Harindran

save the young generation of Gujarat, the PM added, “We used to nab the terrorists and... the Congress government at Centre used to make efforts to get them released... We kept saying to target terror, but the Congress government continued targeting Modi, not terror. As a result, the morale of terrorists went up and every major city in the country started witnessing

terrorist attacks... a Congress leader even started crying in support of terrorists after the Batla House encounter.”

Attacking the Congress and other opposition parties, the PM went on to say, “The Congress sees terrorism as well through the eye of vote bank and appeasement... now various parties have cropped up and these parties too believe in the politics of shortcut. They are a bit

more power-hungry and are out to do politics of vote bank and appeasement... their lips get locked even after most gruesome terror incident to ensure that certain people do not feel bad or their vote bank does not get disturbed.”

When terror cases reach court, people associated with such parties represent the terrorists, Modi said. Modi also mentioned how some political parties had raised questions even on surgical strike and added that any country that takes terrorism lightly falls in trouble. Modi also referred to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge who is on a tour of Gujarat and said that Kharge has announced that they will show Modi his “aukaat (worth)”.

“Can we have any aukaat? We are straightforward people who stay busy in serving the people. You and I are all the same. Now, he (Kharge) has been sent by Soniaben (Gandhi). Let's see what aukaat he shows us,” Modi said, adding that the Congress had done no good of the Other Backward Class communities in the state.

AAP will implement OPS, says Kejriwal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SURAT, NOVEMBER 27

AAM AADMI PARTY (AAP) convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Sunday that the party will form the next government in Gujarat and implement the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) by the end of January next year.

Addressing media persons at a hotel in Surat days ahead of Gujarat Assembly elections, Kejriwal said, “We will form the government in Gujarat and win over 92 seats. We will implement the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) in Gujarat by January 31, 2023.”

Showing the government notification recently issued in Punjab

to implement the OPS.

“The AAP will form the government in Gujarat. People fear the BJP. The Congress is not on the political battlefield. We will end the outsourcing of employees (practice of engaging workers on contract) in government departments.”

He added that the AAP government, if formed, will increase the wages of Asha workers, homeguards in the police department and others in various government departments.

“Seeing the acceptance enjoyed by the AAP in Gujarat, BJP leaders are unhappy and shocked. As a result, they have started attacking AAP workers,” Kejriwal said, adding that the BJP is staring at defeat in Gujarat.

Kharge on PM visits: ‘Something wrong’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, NOVEMBER 27

NARENDRA MODI would not have become the Prime Minister had the Congress not kept democracy alive, said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in his first political rally ahead of the Gujarat Assembly elections Sunday.

“If the Congress would not have done anything in 70 years, then in this democracy, you would not have become the Prime Minister. This is given by the Congress. We might have lost but kept alive the (Indian) Constitution and democracy. Due to works done by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr BR Ambedkar, democracy is alive in

the country today,” Kharge said in Ahmedabad’s Bapunagar area.

He questioned the repeated visits of Modi to the poll-bound state. “The PM is leaving aside all his national and international work and spending time in Gujarat. This shows there is something wrong here. Why are all their ministers visiting Gujarat?” he said. Kharge also took a jibe at the double-engine government slogan of the BJP. “Your double-engine has failed. One engine is down and the other is not working. That is why you are changing three CMs in five years.”

Gujarat AICC incharge Raghu Sharma and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, too, questioned the repeated visits of PM Modi to the state.

West Bengal BJP MLA seeks new UT from Rarh region

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 27

BJP MLA from West Bengal’s Bankura, Niladri Shekhar Dana, on Sunday said that the state’s Rarh region comprising Purulia, Bankura and parts of Birbhum and Jungle Mahals should be declared a Union Territory (UT).

The MLA said, “Though I am not in favour of dividing Bengal, those who have voted for me are like God to me. We the people of Rarh region are deprived of basic amenities like water, food etc. People here are not getting any benefits of development scheme.”

The Rarh region is considered as a saffron stronghold. Last year, BJP’s Bishnupur MP Saumitra Khan had demanded the creation of Jungle Mahals. The party’s Onda MLA Amarnath Shakha too too had raised the same issue. A senior TMC leader said, “The BJP only knows the divide and rule tactic. Sometimes they demand a separate state in north Bengal and then in the south.”

RAMPUR ASSEMBLY BYPOLL

Police threatening voters, says Azam; DIG rejects allegation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

ACCUSING RAMPUR police of “harassing and threatening” people to not vote for the SP in the Rampur Sadar Assembly bypoll, former MP Azam Khan has said that he has photos and videos as proof but won’t be sharing them now. Police have denied the charge.

Speaking at a late-night press conference in Rampur on Saturday, Khan said, “My right to ask for votes is still intact. I am giving something thought, and I have videos and photos. For some special

Double-engine govt gave Rs 30K cr for Ayodhya: Yogi

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said that the BJP’s “double-engine” government has sanctioned development projects worth Rs 30,000 crore for Ayodhya which will be developed as the most beautiful city in the world within two years.

Adityanath said this while addressing the inaugural session of the Ramayan Mela in the temple city. Later, he also inaugurated a ‘Prabudhjan Sammelan’ (intellectuals’ conference) where he launched 46 infrastructure projects worth Rs 1,057 crore.

Earlier, the CM held a meeting with officials of 12 departments to review the progress of various development projects. Top government officials were present in the city to inspect the sites of development projects and review progress.

On the occasion, the CM also distributed keys, cheques and certificates to beneficiaries of various government schemes.

At the Ramayan Mela programme, he assured local



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the construction site of Ram Temple in Ayodhya on Sunday. Express

“saints” and others that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the UP government were working with all sincerity to make Ayodhya the most beautiful city in the world. He asked the local residents to participate in the city’s development and keep a watch to ensure that funds provided by the government were used timely, equitably and in a transparent manner.

He also appealed to the people to protect the developed projects and keep a watch so that

no one can desecrate those sites.

“Besides developing road, rail and air connectivity, Ayodhya will also be provided waterways. Water transport facility will be developed on the Saryu river and the city will be developed as an export hub,” the CM said.

In the intellectuals’ conference organised ahead of the urban local body polls, Adityanath assured that there will be no shortage of funds for development in Ayodhya. The double-engine government is always in the service of the city, he said.

Mehbooba to BJP: Don’t behave like tribal raiders

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 27

ASKING THE BJP to not behave like tribal raiders, J&K former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti said that “the people of Kashmir know how to shoo away the raiders”. She was speaking at PDP’s first major show of strength since the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status—a convention organised by its youth wing—in Srinagar on Sunday.

“I want to tell the BJP that when the tribal attackers raided Kashmir, the Indian army was not here. It was the Kashmiris who without a weapon or a stick shooed them away,” Mehbooba Mufti said.

Educators’ bid to bring British colonial history to UK schools

DIVYA GOYAL GOPAL
LUDHIANA, NOVEMBER 27

BORN AND brought up in London, with her parents tracing their roots to Kapurthala in Punjab, 44-year-old Sandeep Kaur says she regrets not being taught enough in school about the intertwined history of the country where she lives and the country of her roots. She is now part of a campaign to change this.

“It has only been a couple of years that I have actually come to know — through family, the Internet and other external sources — about the several detailed aspects of British rule in India, the repercussions of Partition, the mass migration, violence, communal riots and the lingering pain that people con-



The group working on 'Partition Curriculum' campaign. Express

tinue to suffer, and most importantly, the level of abuse of power that the British practised at the time,” says Kaur, an associate head teacher at a primary school.

Her two children now have the same experience that she had in school — having to learn about British colonial rule from

external sources. “It is high time for the UK to realise that the division of India was just not about India and Pakistan, but was very much a British story which the younger generation growing up here — those of both British and South Asian origin — need to learn. It is something that is affect-

ing us even today. It is our shared history,” Kaur says.

Kaur is among a group of professionals from the education sector in the UK, including school-teachers, trainers, researchers and others, who have come together to start a campaign aimed at bringing South Asian British colonial history and India’s Partition in more detail into the school curriculum in Britain.

The Partition Education Group mostly consists of schoolteachers who were born and brought up in the UK, but trace their origin to India or Pakistan. Many of the teachers in the group had their parents or grandparents moving to the UK from Punjab years after partition displaced them, and they came to the UK to rebuild their lives. The group is currently in the process of developing a unique

“Partition Curriculum” for primary and secondary classes and plan to introduce it in schools as a pilot project soon.

“Our parents or grandparents came to the UK as immigrants and some still face racial bias here, but then it was all because of Partition and what the British did that they had to move. So many South Asians had to migrate to the UK because they were displaced. I realised that I learnt nothing about this history in school and this needs to change,” Kaur says.

The core group comprises eight education professionals. They also train teachers and make them aware of the campaign, and contact schools to get the Partition Curriculum included in their syllabi.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

293 Kuki-Chin-Mizo refugees from Bangladesh get shelter in Mizoram

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, NOVEMBER 27

AS MANY AS 293 Kuki-Chin Mizo immigrants, who fled after a conflict between Bangladesh Army and ethnic insurgents in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of the neighbouring country, have been sheltered in Lawngtlai district of Mizoram, officials said.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, a state government official said while 272 Bangladesh nationals had sought shelter in Mizoram earlier, 21 more reached the state on Friday night.

“They have been sheltered in Parva village, close to the International Border, where they

were accommodated by the local community. Some NGOs and the Border Security Force (BSF) are extending humanitarian aid provided by the state government and looking after their safety and security,” the official said.

No further influx was reported on Sunday. The official declined to comment on the steps taken by the administration to take care of further influx, if any, and said the issue is being handled by the BSF.

Earlier on Tuesday, Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga expressed sympathy for the refugees from Kuki-Chin-Mizo communities and announced to provide “temporary shelter, food

and other relief as per convenience of the state government”.

Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), an impoverished hilly, forested area, sprawls across 13 thousand sq kms in Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban districts of Bangladesh and shares boundaries with Mizoram in the eastern side, Tripura in the northern side and Myanmar in the south and southeastern front.

Mizoram shares 318 kms of International Border with Bangladesh.

Mizoram is already sheltering over 30,000 people from Myanmar who sought refuge in the state after the military coup in that country in February last.



Govt. of Bihar

PATNA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT No. 30/CME/PMC/2022

SHORT TENDER

Patna Municipal Corporation invites online bids through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in for following works from the bidders fulfilling eligibility criteria's.

SL. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Tender (Non-Refundable) (Paid Through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)	EMD (Paid Through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
1	Request for Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies for supply of parts, installation of parts and repairing of transformers, electric motors and Pumps to Water division, Patna Municipal Corporation.	Rs. 10000.00	Rs.100000

In case of Bank Guarantee, EMD shall be payable in favour of "Municipal Commissioner, Patna Municipal Corporation" payable at Patna.

Key Dates:
Start of online bid/downloading of bid documents : From 3.12.2022 (10:00 Hrs.)
Pre-bid Meeting : 06.12.2022 at 16:00 Hrs. (As per RFP)
Last date of Online Bid Submission : 13.12.2022 till 16:00 Hrs.
Technical Bid Opening date : 14.12.2022 at 16:00 Hrs.

The preferred Company/ agencies would be empanelled through a single-stage two-part competitive bidding process based on evaluation of technical and Financial proposal. The bidders are expected to submit their proposal in accordance with the instruction provided in the RFP. Detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) incorporating instructions for submission of bid and other relevant information's will be available on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in and www.pmc.bihar.gov.in from bid start date.

Amendment/Corrigendum to NIT, if any would be published on website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in only.

Patna Municipal Corporation
Maurya Lok Complex,
Buddha Marg, Patna, Bihar, 800 001
W:www.pmc.bihar.gov.in
Email id:pmcprda@gmail.com/cmepmcprda01@gmail.com
M: +91 8369621936

PR- 11162 (Ni Ni) 2022-23
नरो से बनानी दूरी है, क्योंकि परिवार जरूरी है।
Chief Municipal Engineer
Patna Municipal Corporation

Nitish govt draws ‘cultural policing’ charge from BJP for ‘ban’ on poet

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, NOVEMBER 27

THE NITISH Kumar-led Bihar government’s alleged move to bar noted poet Anamika Jain Amber from participating in the annual Sonepur (Saran) national fair has drawn strong reactions from the BJP, which has accused the state government of “muzzling freedom of expression” and indulging in “cultural policing”. Amber had reached Patna on November 25 but was “not allowed to travel” to Sonepur. Other poets, who had reached the venue, boycotted the Kavi Sammelan (poetry recital event) scheduled for later that day.

The Saran administration and the government have claimed that Amber had nothing to do with the event, with Bihar culture and tourism minister Jitendra Rai saying that she was not invited to it. The BJP has, however, launched a scathing attack on the state administration, pointing to the posters and invitations for the event.

Amber shot to fame during the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections campaign early this year when she wrote a poem in response to popular Bhojpuri singer Neha Singh Rathore’s “UP mein ka ba” song that satirised the BJP government in the state. Amber’s poem, titled “UP mein Baba”, highlighted UP CM Yogi Adityanath, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP’s policies in the state.



Amber shot to fame during the UP Assembly poll campaign

A state government functionary, who did not want to be named, said: “The government had been apprehensive of the contents of her poems, given the background of Amber as a nationalist and pro-BJP poet. The programme was decided six months ago when there was a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Bihar. But it is surely embarrassing for officials to stop such a function, especially at the last moment.” Speaking to reporters in Patna, Amber said: “Bihar government approached me six months ago. But after I reached Patna on morning of November 25, I was asked to stay back. I was told I should travel to Sonepur that evening. Later, I realised I was not allowed to travel to Sonepur, while other poets reached.” Saying that “such a thing happened to her for the first time”, Amber asked if “Bihar government was afraid of what she was going to reveal through poems”. She

claimed Saran administration apologised and said they were under “too much pressure” to ensure she is stopped from coming to the event.

Hitting out at Bihar government, BJP national spokesperson Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain said: “Anamika Jain Amber is a national poet, just because she had written and sung ‘UP mein Baba’ does not make her a lesser poet. What Bihar government did is against the tenets of freedom of expression.”

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Nikhil Anand, the BJP OBC Morcha’s national general secretary, called the move “an act of cultural policing by Nitish Kumar government”. He said: “What is even more annoying is the Bihar culture minister denying that Amber had a programme. Several posters and invitation cards nail his lies. The incident has brought disrepute to the state. Nitish Kumar government should apologise to the poet.”

Calling Amber “a one-dimensional poet,” RJD national spokesperson Subodh Kumar said: “Hearing one side of the story is not good for democracy. But her programme was cancelled in the nick of time. She should have been informed.” The JD(U) refrained from commenting on the matter.

In a Hindi poem posted on Twitter on November 27, Amber made a veiled reference to Sonepur episode. “one who mixes blood of one’s heart into ink, that pen can never be afraid of the powers that be,” she wrote.

One dead, 15 injured as over bridge slab collapses at Maharashtra rly station

SAGAR RAJPUT & JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

A 48-YEAR-OLD woman died and at least 15 others were injured after a slab of a Foot Over Bridge (FOB) connecting two platforms at Balharshah railway station in Maharashtra’s Chandrapur district collapsed on Sunday evening. The Central Railway (CR) has initiated an inquiry to ascertain the cause of the mishap.

According to police, the incident took place at around 5 pm when the slab of the FOB between platform number 1 and platform number 2 collapsed. As a result, at least 15 people using the bridge at the time fell on the railway tracks. A woman among them lost her life. At least two others have sustained serious injuries and were being treated at a private hospital.

A police officer said the slab which fell was 16-feet long and was a pre-cast structure.

The woman who died was identified as Nilima Rangari. She died during treatment late Sunday of head injuries. Another woman identified as Ranjana Khadtad is in a critical condition



Debris of a part of the slab of a foot over bridge after its collapse at Balharshah station in Chandrapur district on Sunday .PTI

while another person, Radheshyam Singh, is yet to regain consciousness.

“Three critically injured persons were shifted to a private hospital,” said a senior police officer, adding that “the three suffered serious head injuries”.

BRIEFLY

ASSAM

State lifts travel curbs to Meghalaya

Guwahati: Assam on Sunday lifted travel restrictions to Meghalaya, six days after being imposed in the aftermath of violence in a disputed area along the inter-state border, police said. Vehicles from Assam are now allowed to enter Meghalaya, a senior police officer said. Cachar SP said police escort and patrolling is being provided at vulnerable areas. **PTI**

JHARKHAND

82-year-old dies during raid, probe ordered

Khunti: A magistrate-level investigation was ordered after an 82-year-old man allegedly died of cardiac arrest on Sunday when police raided his house in the dead of the night in search of his son, an accused in a cattle smuggling case, in Jharkhand's Khunti district, police said. Residents of Rodo village alleged the man died after police pushed him. **PTI**

UTTAR PRADESH

Student death in group clash: FIR against 3

Lucknow: A day after a Class XII student died allegedly during a fight between two groups of students of a private school, the Lucknow police on lodged an FIR against three students. The victim's father is a head constable in UP police. "Postmortem report stated that cause of death could not be ascertained and viscera has been preserved for examination," said DCP. **ENS**

MAHARASHTRA

11-year-old lion dies at Mumbai zoo

Mumbai: The 11-year-old lion, Jespa, which was the last surviving lion born in Sanjay Gandhi National Park, died due to multiple organ failure Sunday. The incident took place two days after a new pair of lions were brought to SGNP from a Gujarat zoo. This is the second lion that died in SGNP in two months. The male lion was ill for the past few years. **ENS**

MAHARASHTRA

US national molested in car, driver arrested

Mumbai: A 40-year-old US national was allegedly molested by a cab driver on Saturday while she was on her way to Mumbai from another district. The incident occurred on JP Road in Andheri while she was travelling in a private cab. She asked him to stop the car and caught him with the help of passersby. Later, police arrested the accused, Yogendra Upadhyay, a Goregaon resident. **ENS**

MAJOR JOLT TO BJP IN PANCHAYAT POLLS

Big gains for INLD in Haryana, AAP too registers impressive presence

SUKHBIR SIWACH

CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 27

JUST DAYS after Adampur bypoll where BJP won the election, the result of panchayat polls for zila parishads declared Sunday is not a good news for the ruling party in Haryana with the party winning just 22 seats out of 102 wards it contested on party symbol.

The elections had taken place in three phases for 411 zila parishad wards in Haryana's 22 districts recently. The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) of Om Prakash Chautala did very well in Sirsa, while Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) too registered an impressive presence in the zila parishad polls. Principal Opposition Congress and Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) of Dushyant Chautala did not contest on party symbol.

BJP has lost all 10 seats in Panchkula, while it could not perform well in Ambala too where only two of its candidates could se-



INLD's Karan Chautala and father Abhay Singh Chautala celebrate with supporters in Sirsa on Sunday. *Express*

cure a win. It has remained behind AAP in Sirsa and Ambala. Kurukshetra BJP MP Nayab Singh Saini's wife Suman Saini too lost in ward-4 of Ambala zila parishad, as an independent candidate Rajesh Devi defeated her by a margin of 236 votes.

ABJP leader said: "We will undertake an assessment as to why it happened. I believe we need to do more work on the ground."

BJP leaders also claim that as many as 151 of the winning independent candidates were backed by the saffron party leaders.

The results have encouraged AAP which has claimed 15 zila parishad wards. In Sirsa district, INLD has emerged as the single largest party by winning 10 out of total 24 seats in zila parishad.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

India's first Buddhist varsity to come up in South Tripura

DEBRAJ DEB

AGARTALA, NOVEMBER 27

SHAKYA GASAN, chief monk of the World Buddhist Pope Association of South Korea, will lay the foundation stone for the International Buddhist University at Manu Bankul in Sabroom of South Tripura district, 90 km from here on November 29, the International Buddhist Confederation Secretary General Dhammapiya said.

The Dhamma Dipa International Buddhist University (DDIBU) is expected to become the first Buddhist-run university in India to offer Buddhist education along with courses in other disciplines of modern education as well. The Dalai Lama has sent best wishes for the international Buddhist university, Dhammapiya told *The Indian Express*, adding that the supreme monk has said it's a good initiative and has wished the

institution success.

"Apart from Shakya Gasan Bhikkhu from South Korea, who would join as chief guest, we shall have Bhikkhuni Mani, who is an eminent Buddhist nun from South Korea. We shall be having guests from Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and from Canada", Dhammapiya said.

Dhammapiya, who is also chairman of Bahujan Hitaya Education Trust, has been instrumental in realizing the Buddhist university project. While construction for the university would be started soon, the authorities are discussing with council of advisors and the government to check out University Grants Commission guidelines to find out when classes can be started.

Preliminary estimates said around Rs. 100 crores might be spent for the project. The entire expenditure would be borne by the Buddhist community.

Gorakhpur BJP MP, 6 others get 18-month jail term in 2008 case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

A LOCAL court in Gorakhpur sentenced BJP MP Kamlesh Paswan and six others to one-and-half year imprisonment in a case lodged in 2008 for staging a protest and attempting to set fire to an effigy of the then chief minister.

Kamlesh Paswan, 46, is an MP from Bangsaan.

"Besides Kamlesh Paswan, six others who have been sentenced are his uncle Chandresh Paswan, a former MLA. They were present in the court when the judgment was given on Saturday," said Special Prosecutor (Gorakhpur) Ambrish Chandra Mall.

"Later in the day, the court released all the seven persons on a personal bond of Rs 20,000 each. The court also directed them

Results not good sign for the party, admit BJP insiders

Chandigarh: "It's not a good sign for us in Haryana," says a senior Haryana BJP leader while referring to the results of elections to zila parishad – which is part of panchayat bodies – declared Sunday. In the polls for Haryana's 46 municipalities too, a few months ago, ruling BJP had succeeded in maintaining a clear edge on its opponents. However, results of panchayat polls are not less than a shocker for BJP in Haryana. A section of party leaders sees it as a sign of "anti-incumbency" with the party in power for the past eight years. The results are more significant as nearly 65% of the population lives in rural areas of the state. The results of Panchkula are more shocking for the party leadership as here it has lost all 10 seats it contested on the party symbol. It happened despite the close proximity

of its areas to the state capital – Chandigarh. Out of over 400 zila parishad wards, the BJP contested 102 seats on the party symbol. But it could take home only 22. However, the saffron party leaders claim that in the remaining seats – where the BJP did not contest on the party symbol – as many as 151 winners are those who were backed by the party. "The results have proved that the base of BJP has further improved in Haryana's rural areas," claims Haryana BJP president Om Prakash Dhanakar.

However, there are not many who buy this argument, especially when it performed badly on those seats where its candidates contested on party symbol. Normally, in such scenarios, political parties field their candidates on party symbols for only those constituencies which are their best bet. **ENS**



The case dates back to 2008 when Paswan was in the Samajwadi Party

to apply for bail on Monday," he added.

In all 11, prosecution witnesses were examined by the court during the trial.

According to police, the case dates back to 2008 when Paswan was in the Samajwadi Party. On January 16, 2008, Kamlesh Paswan and others staged a protest at the gate of a

Gorakhpur hospital over the arrest of Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav and his uncle Shival Yadav.

Following the protest, the road was blocked. Some of the protesters tried to burn the effigy of the then chief minister but police managed to stop them.

The police then used mild force to disperse the crowd after which the situation came under control.

A case was lodged against eight persons, including Paswan, at the Gulhariya police station. The case was lodged under IPC sections 147 (rioting), 341 (wrongful restraint), 435 (mischievous by fire or explosive substance), 511 (punishment for attempting to commit offences punishable with imprisonment for life). Mall said one of the accused died during treatment after which his file was separated from the others.

Rajasthan Cong insulting people's mandate: Pradhan

Jaipur: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Sunday lashed out at Congress in Rajasthan, saying it is insulting mandate the people gave it in the 2018 Assembly elections.

He rubbished CM Ashok Gehlot's allegations that BJP and he had attempted to topple Congress government in 2020, and said it was infighting within the party that led to the crisis. In July that year, Congress high command sacked Sachin Pilot as the deputy CM of Rajasthan as well as Pradesh Congress Committee president after he launched a rebellion against Gehlot.

"Naach na jaane aangan tedha (abad workman quarrels with his tools)," Pradhan said when asked about Gehlot's repeated allegations against him and the BJP. "Pilot is not a BJP worker, but sometimes, we exchange pleasantries. I respect Gehlot too," Pradhan said at an award ceremony during the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad's (ABVP) national convention. **PTI**

ARUN SHARMA

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 27

A SECTION of the Saini community from J&K has hit the roads to protest against government's decision to include them in the list of other castes which are entitled to 4 per cent reservation in jobs and professional educational institutions in the Union Territory.

Last Monday, a number of the Saini community elderly members led by Pritam Singh Saini held a dhama at Delhi's Jantar Mantar to mark their protest. Many community youth held protest at J&K Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Commission's office in Jammu, which recommended to government to include Sainis in the list of other quota-entitled backward communities. "To listen to our views, the Backward Classes Commission has now called us on December 6," said Suksham Saini, president of the youth wing of All J&K Kashtriya Saini Sabha.

Accepting the Commission's

3 children crushed to death by train in Punjab, probe ordered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ROPAR, NOVEMBER 27

THREE CHILDREN were crushed to death by a passenger train near Sri Kiratpur Sahib here on Sunday, police said.

The Punjab government has ordered an inquiry into the incident. The incident took place when four children of migrant labourers were playing near the railway track close to a bridge over Sutlej river, they said.

The fourth child was injured in the incident and was admitted to a hospital, said police.

The boys were in the age group of 7 to 11 years, police added. Punjab School Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains expressed grief and said an inquiry has been ordered into the incident. "In a very sad incident, 3 children have lost their lives in a Rail Accident in Kiratpur Sahib. An enquiry has been ordered. My sincere condolences to the grieved families," said Bains in a tweet.

Former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh sought com-

pensation to the affected families.

"Distraught to hear about the news of a passenger train crushing 4 children causing 3 of them to die on the spot near Sri Kiratpur Sahib today. My condolences are with the family and I urge @PunjabGovtIndia to provide appropriate compensation to the families," said Singh in a tweet.

Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal also expressed grief over the incident.

"Saddened to hear that 3 kids lost their life in a tragic incident near Kiratpur Sahib where a train crushed them to death when they were crossing a railway track. I pray to Gurusahab to grant peace to the innocent souls and strength to the families to bear this irreparable loss," said Badal in a tweet.

Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring tweeted, "Shocked and grieved beyond expression over the tragic death of three children near Kiratpur Sahib who were run over by a train today. My profound condolences to the parents."

Two arrested for Bengal TMC leader's murder

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 27

POLICE HAVE arrested two persons in connection with the murder of a local Trinamool Congress leader from Nadia district who was killed in Murshidabad's Nawada on Thursday last week.

The arrested accused, identified as Sheriful Sheikh, alias Kitab and Saheb Sheikh, alias Matirul Mira Biswas, were sent to police custody for seven days, officials said.

Matirul Biswas, 43, the husband of Narayanpur panchayat pradhan Mira Biswas, was returning from Murshidabad when seven-eight assailants surrounded his motorcycle in the district's Nawada and hurled bombs at him and shot him multiple times.

He had gone to Murshidabad to meet his son. The police suspect that he

was killed over a dispute involving a brick kiln.

According to the police, Khalek Kaviraj, alias Rajkumar, the alleged mastermind of the murder, planned to kill Matirul a few months ago and contacted two contract killers from Jharkhand and Bangladesh, but did not succeed at that time.

He along with three assailants visited the area several times on Thursday before the executing the murder, the police claimed. He is absconding and the police are carrying out raids to nab him, officials said.

The investigators are also examining the footage of four CCTV cameras installed in the area where the killing took place.

Kitab and Sahib were first detained and later arrested after prolonged interrogation. They had several long conversations with Rajkumar before the murder, it is learnt.



Members of Saini community protesting in Jammu. *Express*

recommendations, the J&K government on October 19 issued an order including the Saini community along with over a dozen others in list of "Socially and Educationally Backward" communities. All these communities together are entitled to 4 per cent reservation in government jobs and admissions to colleges.

However, government has now put that order in abeyance. The Saini community in J&K accounts for about 60,000 – 70,000 people, concentrated mainly in pockets along the international border in Jammu, Samba

and Kathua districts. They call themselves Chandravanshi Rajputs and descendants of Maharaja Shoor Sain of Mathura, grandfather of Lord Krishna. Opposing their inclusion, Sainis have questioned Commission's recommendations. "We have filed an RTI seeking what was the criteria applied by the Commission before recommending our community," said Suksham.

He said the community does not fulfil any of the criteria laid down by Mandal Commission for extending reservation.

Dhanbad railway siding firing: Why did CISF fire to kill? Victims' kin look for answers

ABHISHEK ANGAD

DHANBAD, NOVEMBER 26

SITTING AT his house in Dhanbad's Baghmara area, Muslim Ansari, who is in his early 50s, is not able to reconcile with his son's death in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) firing at the Benidih railway siding. His son Ataullah Ansari, 21, and three others were killed in the firing on the intervening night of November 19 and 20 over their alleged attempt to steal coal.

Ataullah had participated in the Agniveer Army recruitment rally in Ranchi in September last year, as per his father who pro-

duced a 'indemnity bond' document as proof. Muslim's other two sons stay out of state, and Ataullah was 'only support' for his father.

Muslim, who works as a mason, said: "My son did not leave any opportunity looking for work. He went to an Agniveer recruitment camp in September last year. He wanted to serve the country," he says, denying the allegations that Ataullah was a 'coal thief'.

He produced a character certificate issued by Dhanbad senior superintendent's office on August 28, before the Agniveer recruitment rally, declaring that there was no case registered against Ataullah. "Even if he was there (at the railway siding), why was he



Locals say mafia lure people to steal coal by offering them up to Rs 500 for a few hours of 'risky work'. *Express*

shot in the head?" he said.

Dhanbad district administration had said people on more than two-dozen motorbikes had come

to the Benidih railway siding that night and attacked the CISF, resulting in the killing of four. A magisterial inquiry is underway.

The administration identified deceased as Pritam Nonia (29), Ataullah Ansari (26) [his Aadhaar card stated his age as 21], Shahzad Khan (32), Shamim Ansari (25), while two others were injured.

Jharkhand Police said that the the mob had pelted the CISF team with stones. The personnel first fired in the air to disperse them, but when the attackers didn't relent, they opened fire. An attempt-to-murder (Section 307 IPC) case was registered on November 20 against the two injured, and others. A murder case was registered on November 24 against the unnamed CISF personnel. However, family members of the victims are not ready to buy this version.

Pritam Nonia's distraught mother Jirwa Devi says her son left behind two sons. "Are you telling me that my son sustained bullet injuries on his chest while someone tried to snatch CISF's weapons? It is a lie," she told *The Indian Express*. Police registered another FIR on November 24 based on a complaint from Nonia's wife, who alleged CISF personnel 'murdered' her husband.

Dhanbad Deputy Commissioner Sandeep Singh and Dhanbad Rural SP Reeshma Ramesan did not respond to the messages and calls.

Vinay Kajla, DIG, CISF, Dhanbad, said: "People riding on 50 odd motorcycles led by

Vishwajit Chatterjee, Munna Yadav and Rajesh Yadav came to assault the Quick Response Team personnel and snatch their weapons." Kajla said that this year alone, more than seven CISF personnel have sustained injuries as a result of stone pelting by 'coal thieves', but only twice the CISF fired in the air.

Locals say mafia lure people to steal coal by offering them up to Rs 500 for a few hours of 'risky work'. At the heart of the entire conflict lies widespread unemployment.

At Tilotanr Basti, family members of another victim, Shahzad Khan, said he worked as a labourer. His father Aslam Khan said: "Even if he was stealing

coal...we were getting rich by it... why was he shot. He was shot in the chest. What should I tell his 2-year-old daughter Zoya." Aslam showed pictures of his son taking part in protests a year back, demanding jobs.

In the same locality, Kamlesh Kumar, whose brother Ramesh Ravidas sustained bullet injuries and is currently under treatment, said: "What will people do if there is no employment? We have been demanding the same for months and we have lost hope." Labour leader Baldev Verma told *The Indian Express*: "What is the point of local employment policy if the locals who are bearing the brunt of pollution don't get jobs."



The IndianEXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

BAIL VS JAIL

The President's caution on overcrowding of prisons is a wake-up call to the executive and judiciary

PRESIDENT DRAUPADI MURMU'S call to the government and the judiciary to address the issue of overcrowding of prisons is significant and a very welcome intervention. "I hear these days that we will have to make new prisons because prisons are overcrowded. If we are moving towards progress as a society, then why do we need new jails. We should be closing down existing ones," President Murmu said Saturday at the National Law Day celebrations organised by the Supreme Court. "I am leaving this issue to the judges here and the law minister. I am not saying anything more. I hope you understand what I have said and what I refrained from saying," she added. President Murmu's remark comes in the backdrop of the sharp exchange on this issue last week between Union law minister Kiren Rijju and the Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud. Rijju had made a case against the higher judiciary's intervention in granting bail and said only trial courts ought to decide granting of bails. In response, the CJI said that higher courts are flooded with bail cases because of a "sense of fear" in the lower judiciary.

The crisis at hand is this: According to the Prison Statistics India 2021, a report published by the Ministry of Home Affairs, between 2016-2021, the number of convicts in jails have decreased by 9.5 per cent whereas the number of undertrial inmates has increased by 45.8 per cent. With three out of four prisoners being undertrials, the problem of overcrowding of prisons is essentially an undertrial issue. As of December 31, 2021, around 80 per cent of prisoners were confined for periods up to a year. The report states that an overwhelming 95 per cent of undertrials released in 2021 were granted bail by courts while a mere 1.6 per cent were released on acquittal by court. It shows that the sluggish pace at which trial courts work to reach a final decision cannot keep up with the increasing number of undertrials.

The Dickensian idea of building more prisons is not the solution, as President Murmu rightly said. The Supreme Court recently asked the government to think "out of the box" and consider a one-time measure to release prisoners in certain cases on the occasion of the 75th year of Independence. While it is imperative for the top court to ensure that its liberal stance on bail percolates to the trial courts, it is also disingenuous to characterise the undertrial crisis as a mere bail issue. The real solution lies in tackling the cause, which is indiscriminate arrest of individuals. From bringing special criminal legislations as populist measures to opposing bail as part of a tougher stance on crime, there are several issues for the government to address. Identifying those who cannot afford bail, even when available, is also crucial. The lawmakers too must urgently respond to this crisis.

MILLET BONANZA

A region-specific strategy and their introduction in mid-day meals in schools, anganwadis could boost millets cultivation

THE UNITED NATIONS has, at India's initiative, declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. This, even as India's own production of these "nutri cereals" — jowar, bajra and ragi and minor millets such as kodo, kutki, kakun, sanwa, cheena and kuttu — has fallen from 23-24 million to 19-20 million tonnes over the last 4-5 decades. The reason: Millets aren't the first choice either of consumers or producers. Kneading dough and rolling rotis is much easier with wheat than with millet flour. Wheat has gluten proteins that make the dough more cohesive and elastic. The resultant breads come out soft, unlike with millets that are gluten-free. The public distribution system (PDS) has made rice and wheat accessible even to the rural poor, for whom these were previous aspirational cereals. For farmers, too, millets are orphan crops. With access to irrigation, they will immediately switch to growing wheat and rice that yield 3-4 times more than jowar or bajra.

That said, cultivation of millets deserves a special push, given their nutritional superiority over wheat and rice — whether in terms of amino acid profile or vitamins, minerals and crude fibre content. They are also harder and drought-resistant crops, which has to do with their short growing season (70-100 days, as against 120-150 days for paddy and wheat) and lower water requirement (350-500 mm versus 600-1,200 mm). The right strategy would be to promote their cultivation in those regions — rain-fed semi-arid and hilly terrains — where they have been well-adapted. One cannot expect farmers in Punjab or coastal Andhra Pradesh to grow bajra and ragi; the yield sacrifices and opportunity costs of diverting irrigated land for these would be far too high. A more realistic approach is to incentivise farmers in western Rajasthan, southern Karnataka or eastern Madhya Pradesh — who are already cultivating bajra, ragi and minor millets — to not shift to rice and wheat. These districts/regions can, in turn, be developed as clusters for particular millets — like Dindori in MP for kodo and kutki.

The same region-specific strategy could be adopted even for boosting consumption. India, according to data for 2021-22, has 14.89 lakh schools with 26.52 crore students. These, plus another 14 lakh pre-school anganwadi centres, constitute a large potential market for millets. The PDS can continue supplying rice and wheat, which are more amenable to nationwide procurement, stocking and distribution. But the schools and anganwadis can serve khichdi, dosas, energy bars and puddings made from locally-sourced millets, along with a daily glass of milk and egg for every child. The need for such wholesome nutrition would be more for children in the very regions that are suited for millet cultivation.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



ASHOK GULATI AND PURVI THANGARAJ

THE TIMING IS perfect for India to take over the G20 presidency. When the chips are down for the US, Europe and even China on the GDP growth front, India is a shining star with a likely GDP growth of 6.8 per cent in 2022 and 6.1 per cent expected in 2023 as per the IMF forecast. Perhaps it is the first time in the last 40 years that India will surpass China (3.2 per cent in 2022 and 4.4 per cent in 2023) in two successive years by a wide margin. That makes India stand tall.

Inflation is not out of control. It's a little higher than the RBI's tolerance band but surely better than in the US, EU, and UK. So, this is India's moment to showcase its economic strategy, along with the culture and motto of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" — One Earth, One Family, One Future. The government's motto of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) could add further to its shine.

But there is one blot that India needs to erase as soon as possible — pollution in its cities. One wonders what the heads of the G20 nations would think coming to Delhi when the country's capital is being branded as the most polluted city in the world. The Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi during November 1-15, stood at 267 compared to Washington DC at 8, and Beijing at 97. Delhi has the poorest AQI amongst the G20 nations.

Delhites feel as if they are being pushed into a gas chamber. The Air Quality Life Index Report (2022) of the University of Chicago claims that Delhites are losing their life expectancy by 10 years. If this is indeed true, then what is the purpose of scoring the highest GDP growth? Mere slogans on LiFE may not remove this blot. It needs urgent and hard policy decisions, with strict implementation, which sometimes may not be politically palatable. But there is no escape from the current situation under a business-as-usual scenario.

If Prime Minister Narendra Modi can retain India's highest growth and significantly improve AQI in the country's cities, it can pay the BJP handsomely in the 2024 elections.

Air of a leader

Its high growth puts India in a good position in G20. But urban pollution must be checked

We know that every winter when the winds calm and particulate matter accumulates, the political blame game begins on stubble burning in Punjab's paddy fields. According to SAFAR (System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research), the largest share of stubble burning to Delhi's AQI this year was 34 per cent (last year it was 42 per cent). Measures aimed at stubble management are not likely to succeed. Unless the paddy area in Punjab is reduced by at least one million hectares, this problem is likely to stay.

And if he can manage to resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict, with support from the very able External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, PM Modi may even get a Nobel prize for peace. Opportunity is knocking at his door to give his best to India and to the world. Only by December 2023, we will know whether he has grabbed this opportunity or let it pass.

We know that the G20 accounts for two-thirds of the world population, about 85 per cent of the global GDP and over 75 per cent of the global trade. Thus, this is the right forum for PM Modi and India to emerge as a responsible world leader, even a *vishwa guru*.

The message that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must be reduced is becoming increasingly loud and clear as climate change has started causing significant damage through heat waves, droughts and floods of increasing intensity and frequency. The COP27 agreement on creating a "loss and damage fund" for compensating developing countries is a good beginning. But the international community is falling far short of the Paris targets, with no viable path to containing global warming to an additional 1.5°C in place.

According to Climate Watch, the biggest GHG emitters in 2019 were China (12.06 billion tonnes of CO2e), the United States (5.77 Bt CO2e), and India (3.36 Bt CO2e). However, in terms of GHG emissions on a per capita basis in 2021, Australia (23.6 tCO2e) tops, followed by Saudi Arabia (20.4 tCO2e), and Canada (20.3 tCO2e). Our calculations show that in terms of total GHG emissions per billion \$ GDP in PPP terms, (tCO2e/ Bn \$ GDP, PPP), South Africa (0.65 tCO2e), Indonesia (0.55 tCO2e) and China (0.44 tCO2e) lead the way in 2021. In terms of per capita emissions (2.4 tCO2e) and emission intensity of GDP, PPP (0.33 tCO2e), India is in a relatively much better position. And India can showcase this to G20 heads, provided it cleans its own cities, starting with Delhi, making it liveable.

What is it that PM Modi and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal can do to make

Delhi liveable? We know that every winter, when the winds are calm and particulate matter accumulates, the political blame game begins on stubble burning in Punjab's paddy fields. According to SAFAR (System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research), the largest share of stubble burning to Delhi's AQI this year was 34 per cent (last year it was 42 per cent). Measures aimed at stubble management are not likely to succeed. Unless the paddy area in Punjab is reduced by at least one million hectares, this problem is likely to stay. The switch away from paddy towards maize, soyabean, pulses, and fruits and vegetables, requires a "diversification strategy" for at least five years, handsomely rewarding farmers with carbon credits, and savings of water and energy.

Vehicular pollution in Delhi is another major cause of poor AQI. A fast-track strategy to promote electric vehicles (EVs) is the answer. Incentivising and even subsidising EVs and charging stations in all parking lots and residential colonies is the way forward.

To control dust, heavy fines must be enforced on builders who do not use water sprinklers multiple times a day at construction sites. All thermal power plants in and around Delhi must be replaced with more renewable energy sources. Solarisation should be made mandatory for all government buildings, schools, as well as public spaces with a minimum specified area. This will help them in self-financing with the help of net metering. Easy access to finance for such renewables would be key.

Learning from other G20 nations on how to improve AQI in Indian cities and saving millions of lives from choking with every breath need to be put on as high a priority as financial stability and growth in this interconnected world.

Gulati is Distinguished Professor and Thangaraj is a researcher at ICRIER. Views are personal



RAHUL BAJAJ AND DAMINI GHOSH

THE SUPREME COURT of India, in *Abhimanyu Partap Singh v. Namita Sekhon* and another, while hearing a claim under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, awarded compensation to an advocate who was rendered permanently disabled after a road accident in 1996. The Court examined the adequacy of the compensation granted by the lower courts and on assessing various relevant factors, concluded that the compensation granted was unjust and unreasonable. The Court reasoned that the earnings of the appellant would be impacted throughout his life by the disability. Relying on the multiplier method, the Court awarded an enhanced compensation.

While the ultimate outcome of the judgment is favourable to the appellant, to arrive at this determination, the Court made some very unfortunate observations that betray its lack of awareness about the current thinking on disability rights. It held that in the era of competition, the appellant cannot compete with "normal men". Worse still, it made the blanket observation that, to be a proficient advocate, "the person must be physically fit as he is required to move frequently to attend the professional work, reaching from one Court to other, and for movements to complete other professional commitments." The Court further noted that the appellant was required to make extraordinary efforts to attend court proceedings and come up to the expectations of a client.

There can be no dispute with the fact that the appellant's disability qualitatively and quantitatively affected his productivity as a legal professional. Thriving as a disabled profes-

ENABLING ISN'T CHARITY

SC ruling frames positive verdict for disabled in problematic language

Thriving as a disabled professional in a world designed for the able-bodied is indeed extraordinarily challenging. However, the Court's disparaging remarks on the capabilities of an advocate with a disability were completely uncalled for. It is one thing to recognise the genuine additional hardship faced by a disabled person. It is quite another to treat them as an object of charity and sympathy. The Court should have only done the former.

sional in a world designed for the able-bodied is indeed extraordinarily challenging. However, the Court's disparaging remarks on the capabilities of an advocate with a disability were completely uncalled for. It is one thing to recognise the genuine additional hardship faced by a disabled person. It is quite another to treat them as an object of charity and sympathy. The Court should have only done the former.

The Court would have done well to remember the observations made by a coordinate bench of the Supreme Court: "A lawyer can be just as effective in a wheelchair, as long as she has access to the courtroom and the legal library, as well as to whatever other places and material or equipment that are necessary for her to do her job well." Further, in its judgment in *Vikash Kumar v. UPSC and others*, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court, while ruling on a plea for the grant of reasonable accommodation by an appellant with a disability, had titled a segment of its judgment as "the language of our discourse". The language of our discourse, it held, "as much as its outcome, should generate introspection over the path which our society has traversed and the road that lies ahead in realising the rights of the disabled." It had pointed out the enduring impact of the use of insensitive language on the way the disabled view themselves and are viewed by society. Such language, it had emphatically noted, "offends the human dignity of persons with disabilities." Similarly, in its concluding observations on India, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had expressed concern about the way the lives of the disabled are compared

with "normal life" and objected to the use of derogatory terminology such as "mentally ill" and "divyangjan."

The Court's problematic observations are also at odds with the fact that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and India's Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016 (RPwD Act), mandate that all public buildings including courts must be made accessible to persons with disabilities. The RPwD Act guarantees the right to access justice to persons with disabilities. Though there are accessibility standards in place for public buildings, they are generally poorly implemented, not regularly inspected or audited by persons with disabilities and dogged by resource deficits.

The Court's admission that practising law as a disabled person is extraordinarily difficult in India should prompt course-correction. The Court should use these observations to reflect on what it has done of late to make its infrastructure (physical and digital) more disabled friendly. It should identify pathways for actionable change and pursue them with sincerity. It should ensure that judges across India are regularly sensitised to the lived realities of the millions of disabled individuals. Such constructive action would smoothen the path for other disabled lawyers and citizens accessing the court system in future. Such a response would also be in tune with the forward-thinking approach on disability that our laws guarantee and that our courts are sworn to uphold.

The writers are with the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy

NOVEMBER 28, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

N-FUEL ISSUE RESOLVED TALKS BETWEEN THE French President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at Rashtrapati Bhawan assumed added dimension with France having accepted the Indian position on the supply of enriched uranium for the Tarapur atomic power plant. France will soon start supplying the nuclear fuel for the Tarapur plant under the 1963 Indo-US agreement as had been suggested by India. It has dropped its insistence on the "pursuit" and "perpetuity" clauses which India found objectionable.

AKALIS REJECT MEETING THE AKALI DAL PRESIDENT, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, has ruled out a meeting

with the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi. He insisted that he will not meet the PM till there is an announcement regarding the acceptance of "our specific demands".

CONGRESS (I) TALKS THE GUJARAT DISSIDENT LEADERS, who had threatened to dissociate themselves from the state Chief Minister, Madhavsinh Solanki, from December 1, have been summoned by the Congress (I) high command for talks.

INDIA IMPORTS WHEAT INDIA HAS MADE another big purchase of US wheat to replenish its depleted food stocks, officials at the Indian embassy said. They reported the signing of contracts with

11 US grain exporting companies for 1.45 million tonnes of wheat valued at nearly \$ 244 million. The latest deal follows India's purchase in August of 2.5 million tonnes of US wheat after bad weather damaged its crops.

BJP FOR RSS THE BHARATIYA JANATA Party warned the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Farooq Abdullah, that any move to ban the RSS in the state would provoke the party for an "intensive agitation". The warning came from the BJP vice-president, Ram Jethmalani, MP, who said, "I am making this statement with the consent of the central party leaders".

Offender vs offence

Juvenile justice law needs to be rationalised so that a person who has sufficient maturity to judge the nature, and consequences of their action does not get blanket immunity from the criminal process



AMAN HINGORANI

THE SUPREME COURT (SC) made an observation in its judgment of November 16 in the infamous Kathua rape-murder case: “... the rising rate of juvenile delinquency in India is a matter of concern and requires immediate attention. There is a school of thought, existing in our country that firmly believes that howsoever heinous the crime may be, be it single rape, gangrape, drug peddling or murder but if the accused is a juvenile, he should be dealt with keeping in mind only one thing i.e., the goal of reformation. The school of thought, we are talking about, believes that the goal of reformation is ideal. The manner in which brutal and heinous crimes have been committed over a period of time by the juveniles and still continue to be committed, makes us wonder whether the [Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children)] Act, 2015 has subserved its object. We have started gathering an impression that the leniency with which the juveniles are dealt with in the name of goal of reformation is making them more and more emboldened in indulging in such heinous crimes. It is for the government to consider whether its enactment of 2015 has proved to be effective or something still needs to be done in the matter before it is too late in the day.”

Indeed, a “child in conflict with law” or juvenile offender could become so hardened — say, on account of exposure to dehumanising poverty and violence that he/she is beyond reform. Such hardening could, of course, occur in children for reasons other than socio-economic circumstances.

At the same time, one feels uneasy at the prospect of handing over children of any age to the police. Sending children, as a matter of course, to adult prisons for heinous crimes (which attract imprisonment of seven years or more) would rule out reformation, let alone rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Rather, the working of our criminal justice system would ensure that such a person would come out (if the person comes out alive) equipped to commit more crimes. Police reforms have yet to take place, notwithstanding the directions of the SC issued in this regard way back in 2006 (*Prakash Singh*). Custodial violence, abuse and torture are rampant. The majority of the jail population in India still consists of undertrials, waiting for years for their trial to commence. One would simply be writing off children if routinely sent to trial by the criminal court like adults.

Let us now consider what our juvenile law says in this regard. The law, contained in successive Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Acts (JJ Acts), places a blanket ban on the power of the criminal court to try and punish a person below the specified age for committing any offence. But then, should a person, who has sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of his/her action, get blanket immunity from the criminal process without the fear of being prosecuted, tried and punished, merely because that person is below the specified age? Under the existing law, such a person, at best, could be subjected to a child-friendly enquiry by a Juvenile Justice Board (JJ Board) and reformation for a maximum period of three years in a correctional home.



C R Sasikumar

The parents of the December 2012 Delhi gangrape and murder victim had challenged before the Supreme Court the constitutional validity of such blanket ban in the JJ Act of 2000, and sought that the juvenile involved should at least be tried by the competent criminal court for the offences against their daughter (*Badrinath*, 2014). With the disclaimer that I was the lawyer for the parents in this matter, I believe that the legal argument was quite conclusive.

The Constitution differentiates the functions of the executive, legislature and judiciary. It falls within the domain of judicial function to try and punish a person committing penal offences — with judicial discretion regarding the award of sentence keeping in view, amongst other factors, the nature and gravity of the offence. It is well settled that the assessment of whether or not an offender has attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of his/her conduct is to be done by the court with the help of experts, and is a judicial function as exemplified by Section 83 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and Order XXXII of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. There are precedents in which the SC has held that Parliament cannot make law to oust the judicial function of courts or even judicial discretion in a matter falling within the judicial function of courts. Thus, the JJ Act 2000 — to the extent it deprived the criminal court of the power to try and to punish a person below the age of 18 years for committing an offence, when such a person could be assessed to have attained sufficient maturity to judge the nature and consequences of his/her conduct — encroached upon the judicial domain and was, therefore, unconstitutional. The current JJ Act, 2015, suffers from the same defect, except that the age of criminal responsibility for heinous offences has been reduced to 16 years.

The SC inter-alia took the view in *Badrinath* that nothing as sweeping and as drastic had been introduced by the JJ Act, 2000 that “sets at naught all the essential features of the criminal justice system and introduces a scheme which is abhorrent to our constitutional values”. Unfortunately, the SC lost an opportunity to rationalise the juvenile justice law — which would have simply required a finding that instead of the conferral of blanket immunity from criminal process upon a juvenile offender, there should be a case-by-case assessment by a competent

It has been overlooked that the fundamental premise of juvenile justice law is that a juvenile offender who lacks such maturity should not be sent to a criminal court to be tried for the commission of an offence, and instead, should be sent to a correctional home for reform and rehabilitation. Conversely, therefore, should the offender have such maturity, he/she must be prosecuted before the criminal court, tried and, if found guilty, punished. The age of the juvenile offender alone cannot, therefore, justify a blanket immunity from the criminal process — rather, the question of such immunity must be assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on the maturity of such offender.

court (and not the JJ Board) as to whether or not such juvenile had attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of his/her action.

It has been overlooked that the fundamental premise of juvenile justice law is that a juvenile offender who lacks such maturity should not be sent to a criminal court to be tried for the commission of an offence, and instead, should be sent to a correctional home for reform and rehabilitation. Conversely, therefore, should the offender have such maturity, he/she must be prosecuted before the criminal court, tried and, if found guilty, punished. The age of the juvenile offender alone cannot, therefore, justify a blanket immunity from the criminal process — rather, the question of such immunity must be assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on the maturity of such offender.

This does not necessarily mean that a “child in conflict with law” who possesses sufficient maturity would be tried with adults. Indeed, Section 23 of the JJ Act, 2015 mandates that notwithstanding anything contained in Section 223 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1973 or in any other law for the time being in force, “there shall be no joint proceedings of a child alleged to be in conflict with the law, with a person who is not a child”. Nor does it necessarily mean that such a child should be housed with undertrials or should serve sentence with convicts. Provisions already exist in the JJ Act, 2015, as to how a child who has attained the age of 16 years could be tried and punished for a heinous offence. The same provisions could be extended to all juvenile offenders, regardless of age or nature of the crime, once it is found by the competent court that any such offender had sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of his/her actions.

If the government appreciates the above observation of the SC and reconsiders the existing juvenile justice law, it should, in my view, amend such law along the lines indicated in this article. Such an amendment would go a long way in providing the requisite balance between the rationales underlying the juvenile justice system and the criminal justice system and realising the objectives professed by both.

The writer is Advocate-on-Record and Mediator, Supreme Court of India and author of Unravelling the Kashmir Knot

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The real question facing the Tory party this winter is not so much whether they can recover but whether, in their current state, they can now hold on until 2024 at all.” — THE GUARDIAN

The workplace issue we hush up

New rule of the UK’s National Health Services should open long overdue conversations on sensitivity towards menopausal women



RINKU GHOSH

SOMETIMES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION seems like an imposition or a grant, drawing moral satisfaction from the tokenism of doing the right thing. Rarely is it thoughtful or felt. This is why last week’s announcement by the National Health Services (NHS) in the UK that menopausal women on their staff will be able to work out of home should their symptoms require it, is about path-finding and working the middle ground in the workplace. NHS chief Amanda Pritchard said that other employers should follow suit to help middle-aged women “thrive” at work and those “silently suffering” should not be expected to “grin and bear it.”

If nothing, such a move has at least been a conversation starter about what has been so far a taboo in the workplace and a reason to “hive off” women than allow them ease of “thriving” Yet, just like pregnancy, the end of a woman’s reproductive cycle is seen as her losing energy, drive, desire, stamina, excitement and capability, in short, a cliff-jumping drop of her value in wisdom and experience. Ironically, this phase, between the mid-40s to the mid-50s, is where you would find most women reaching the top, having battled biases of motherhood, working Sundays to meet deadlines, leaving no questions unanswered on their competence and commitment. And yet when a woman employee crosses the age bar, she has to prove her worth all over again. Is she as good, is she capable of thinking afresh, can she pull long hours? It is never about “is she comfortable?” Sadly, her body of work matters little. And it is this constant pressure to feed expectations that forces even confident women to overwork themselves to stay relevant despite those painful bouts of endometriosis, heavy bleeding, hot flushes, insomnia, fatigue, anxiety, hypertension and palpitations. All of these are terribly debilitating but manageable with a little breathing space.

Physiologically speaking, menopause exposes women to their most severe and unexpected health challenges. As the hormone oestrogen dips, it pushes up bad cholesterol or LDL levels, raising their cardiac risk more than men. They even have higher concentrations of total cholesterol than men. According to the Harvard Medical School, a post-menopausal

woman’s symptoms of a heart attack are “different from a man’s and she’s much more likely than a man to die within a year of having a heart attack. Women also don’t seem to fare as well as men do after taking clot-busting drugs or undergoing certain heart-related medical procedures.”

These elevated risk factors, however, can be reduced if women were to be less stressed about tiring out their bodies to prove a point. Strangely even women in the menopausal period are not concerned about their life risks as they get caught in the vanity trap and worry more about issues related to their body image, sexuality and self-esteem. Some rush into Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT), which is not quite the elixir of youth, and often has deadly side effects like uterine and breast cancer.

Women with endometriosis often have to take of leave of absence because of heavy bleeding that affects their productivity. Author Hilary Mantel described it as “not life-threatening but life-destroying,” one that disqualified her from a 9-5 office job that “narrowed my options in life, and it narrowed them to writing.”

So, the question of gender equity really comes from respecting changes in a woman’s body as much as a man’s. And as many 50-plus start-up owners, women included, become the subject of business reviews, it has been proven that a great idea needs focus, determination, experience, skill and smart application, all functions of the mind really.

However, in India, where motherhood is seen as a major career impediment for women, menopause is a far cry, often bottled up in hushed conversations among women in the office loo. But some countries have at least acknowledged it as a workplace health issue. The UK Parliament commissioned a survey that showed how one in three women were missing work due to menopause. Italy and Australia are debating about including menopause in work ethics norms. In January, the EU Parliament put out a statement, saying, “The failure to address menopause as a workplace issue is increasingly leading to insufficient protection of female workers and the early exit of women from labour markets, and thereby increasing the risk of women’s economic dependence, poverty and social exclusion, contributing to the loss of women’s knowledge, skills and experience, and leading to significant economic losses.”

Considering that women will go through this biological phase at least for eight years in their work life, a little sensitivity to their concerns would matter more than a debate on whether they should be “allowed extra benefits”.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AAP IN GUJARAT

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Winning Gujarat’ (IE, November 26). AAP, after its resounding success in the Punjab elections, is trying to further expand its footprint by denting BJP’s stronghold in Gujarat. Unless the voters in Modi’s home state become suddenly enamoured of the fledgling AAP, the results are a foregone conclusion here. The only point of concern for Modi’s BJP is to ensure that AAP doesn’t get bragging rights by winning enough seats. The results could underline that the road ahead for AAP is a long one, before it can claim to be a national party.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

REWORKING EC

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Securing the EC’ (IE, November 26, 2022). A free and fair election is fundamental to any functional democracy. The Election Commission of India has been entrusted with the conduct of elections to the most significant offices in our democracy, and hence rationality, impartiality, and transparency of the ECI must be protected. The process of appointment has to be institutionalised. The ECI should route its communication with the government through the legislature, so as to allow the requisition of funds and manpower to be approved by lawmakers and not the law ministry alone.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Barasat

EQUALITY MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘A rare, enduring document’ (IE, November 26). National Constitution Day, celebrated since 2015, highlights the importance of the document in the life of every Indian citizen. However, many fundamental

rights and directive principles enshrined in our Constitution are not fully adopted by our executive, while the common populace is unaware of their fundamental duties. The ethos of the Constitution is achieved when principles of justice, liberty and equality are realised by and for all.

Devendra Awasthi, Lucknow

FAILURE WRIT LARGE

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘Rioters given lesson in 2002, led to peace in Gujarat: Shah’ (IE, November 26). Thousands of innocent lives were lost in the senseless violence that occurred in the Gujarat riots of 2002. The failure to timely contain the violence was also fairly evident. Could it be claimed as an achievement by any yardstick or found suitable as a tool to seek votes for the BJP in the upcoming assembly election?

Sushmita Murmu, New Delhi

DRAWING LINES

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Framing the EWS quota’ (IE, November 21). The author raises a pressing problem: There is an absence of jurisprudential or even political consensus on the purpose of reservations in India, leading to obfuscation of narratives and unscrupulous politicking. Affirmative action was envisioned primarily to solve the problem of inadequate representation and social injustice in India, which is a fair cause. However, the recent Supreme Court judgement has blurred the lines and possibly opened the floodgates for further political and social churn around the issue. We must revisit the purpose and limits of reservation as a specialised tool of public policy. Lines must be drawn.

Jai Vikram Singh, New Delhi



AMITABH KUNDU

THROUGH A MAJORITY judgment, the Supreme Court has upheld reservation in government jobs and education institutions for economically weaker sections among forward castes. The argument of the petitioners that affirmative action under the Constitution contemplates social and educational backwardness only and not economic disadvantage, stands dismissed. The verdict, nonetheless, opens a big window for different communities to seek reservation based on this criteria. Given the controversies around the methodology, database, sample size, comparability of information from different sources etc., this opens a Pandora’s box.

While one must now accept that economic criteria as the sole basis for affirmative action does not violate the basic structure of the Constitution, one must analyse whether the eligibility criteria for reservation will enable the genuinely poor to enjoy the benefits. Ravi Shankar Prasad, while defending the Constitution amendment for reservation in general category, had announced on the floor of Parliament that “sixes are hit in the slog overs” in a cricket match. “More sixes will come,” he had asserted. Indeed, sixes are, and will be, hit by the batting side, both at the Centre and the states. There is huge scope for each state to design its criteria for defining economic deprivation to cater to their political

allies. It would, in fact be political freebies to be distributed to the pressure groups.

In the context of reservation for EWS, it can be argued that the children of the poor from the upper castes — vegetable vendors, construction labourers, challenged individuals, self-employed or unemployed widows — deserve reservation at least as much as the children from Dalit households, who have enjoyed high economic and social status, say, for two generations. It would not be surprising if the above stipulation enjoys a large measure of support among a cross-section of political parties and the general population. However, the question is: “Was this the principle based on which this new quota has been proposed and supported by the opposition with some minor dissent?”

Given contemporary realities and institutional infirmities, is it possible to ring fence this 10 per cent quota? The finance minister, while talking about direct tax collection, has often argued that given our democratic structure, it is difficult to work out clear operational criteria to identify the people who must pay taxes. Even after more than five years after demonetisation, the government has not taken action against the account holders who deposited old currency well above their normal cash balance or indulged in other malpractices. Interestingly, the opposition has

made no demand for it. Clearly, they all fear losing their vote bank.

The dearth of will and capacity to target the new quota to the actual poor is evident from the criteria that are likely to be fixed for identifying the potential beneficiaries. Persons from households with annual earning below Rs 8 lakh, possessing agricultural land below five acres, a plot less than 100 yards in a notified municipality or below 200 yards in the non-notified municipal area would be eligible for the reservation. The amendment also allows the states to set income cut-offs to decide who constitutes EWS. They can even relax the criteria set by the Centre. It also allows the states to notify EWS “from time to time on the basis of family income and other indicators of economic disadvantage”, even if they are “adequately represented” in government jobs.

SCs, STs and OBCs account for 70 per cent of the population and are entitled to 49.5 per cent reservation in the government sector. The eligibility issue thus pertains to the remaining 30 per cent or 42 crore people who fall under the general category. Calculations based on available data suggest that about 95 per cent of the people in the general category will be eligible under the proposed criteria.

Given the massive number of eligible people among the upper castes and a small

window of opportunity, it is not difficult to understand who would be the real beneficiaries of the rather generous eligibility criteria. It is very likely that the middle class, those who work in the private sector, where it is difficult to establish the actual income, the unscrupulous who can manipulate the system through false declarations, would grab the benefits, along with political pressure groups. The children of street vendors and agricultural labourers have very little chance to benefit from the new quota.

Indeed, whenever any committee has shown the benevolence of defining poverty with a high cut-off point, the outcome has been the top 10 to 20 per cent among the eligible grabbing all benefits. It is not a level-playing field. And the poor, as defined by the Tendulkar or Rangarajan Committees, stand very little chance of benefiting from the new quota. It is absurd to believe that Muslims would benefit from the quota, simply because they have a higher share among the poor. Very few Muslims would be in the top 20 per cent among those eligible for the EWS quota. The poor do not constitute a vote bank and can be swayed by promises. When they realise who the real beneficiaries are, it will be too late.

Kundu is Senior Fellow at the World Resources Institute

Bihar’s Har Ghar Gangajal scheme for Rajgir, Gaya regions

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, NOVEMBER 27

BIHAR CHIEF Minister Nitish Kumar Sunday launched the first phase of the Har Ghar Gangajal project, an ambitious initiative to provide Ganga water on tap in parched areas of the state.

The scheme will harvest the excess water in the Ganga during the monsoon flooding season, to be treated, stored, and piped to Rajgir, Gaya, and Bodhgaya.

Har Ghar Gangajal scheme

Har Ghar Gangajal is part of the Bihar government’s Jal, Jeevan, Hariyali scheme. In the Rs 4,000-crore first phase of the project, giant pumps will lift Ganga water from Hathidah near Mokama and supply it to about 7.5 lakh homes in the state’s main tourism destinations of Rajgir, Bodhgaya, and Gaya.

The water will be stored in reservoirs in Rajgir and Gaya before being channelled to

three treatment-and-purification plants, from where it will be supplied to the public. The water will travel more than 150 km through pipes from Hathidah.

According to government estimates, the scheme will provide every beneficiary with 135 litres — about two large buckets — of Ganga water every day for drinking and domestic use. During the second phase of the project, Ganga water will be taken to Nawada.

The need for the scheme

The area around Rajgir (in Nalanda district), which was the nucleus of the ancient kingdom of Magadh and is associated with the founders of both Buddhism and Jainism, is rocky and water-deficient. Over the years, unplanned use of groundwater has depleted subterranean reservoirs, lowered the water table, and affected the quality of the water.

The bulk of the urban water supply continues to be through tube wells. A study by the Bihar Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) showed the average



Aerial pictures of the waterlift and treatment plant.
Courtesy Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd

groundwater level in Gaya district had plunged from 30.30 feet in July 2021 to 41.50 feet in July 2022. Data from the Central Ground Water Board’s Year Book for Bihar show the water table in Gaya and Rajgir fell by between 2 and 4 metres between 2014-15 and 2020-21.

Handpumps have been going dry at many places in the region. The district administrations of Nalanda and Gaya have been arranging for water tankers to supply drinking water in the town areas as the scarcity becomes acute in the summer.

Projected twin benefits

The government expects the Har Ghar Gangajal scheme to also help alleviate distress from the annual flooding of the Ganga. Over the years, heavy silting in the riverbed — affecting especially Mokama, Hathidah, Barh, and Lakhisarai — and the release of water from dams in Nepal have resulted in the Ganga spilling over even when the monsoon rainfall over Bihar has not been exception-

ally heavy. The government has assured that the water for the scheme would be lifted only during the four months of the monsoon when the Ganga has excess water.

Working of the system

The project has been described as a “lift-store-tame-treat-supply” system. Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) has been working on the project since 2019, employing about 2,200 people and high-end technology.

A 447-metre approach channel has been constructed in Hathidah on the right bank of the Ganga near the Rajendra Bridge, through which water is taken to an intake-well-cum-pumphouse, which is powered by a dedicated electricity substation with a 7500 KVA transformer, and two smaller 250 KVA transformers.

State-of-the-art online filters have been installed near the intake well to ensure silt-free water enters the pump and pipeline, and there is no erosion in the riverbed.

THIS WORD MEANS

OPEN OFFER, LAUNCHED BY ADANI

Adani Group, owning 29.18% stake in NDTV Ltd, launched an open offer to buy another 26%. Here is how it works

GEORGE MATHEW
& SANDEEP SINGH
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

ON AUGUST 23, Gautam Adani-led Adani Group acquired 29.18% stake in television channel NDTV Ltd, and said it would launch an open offer to buy another 26% in the company.

On November 22, the Adani Group launched its open offer, which will remain open until December 5, 2022.

What is an open offer?

According to the SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Rules, an open offer is made by the acquirer to the shareholders of the target company, inviting them to tender their shares at a particular price. The primary purpose of an open offer is to provide an exit option to these shareholders.

So, in the case of NDTV, as the Adani Group has emerged as a large shareholder and is likely to change the control structure of the company, it has to make an open offer to buy another 26% per cent stake so that minority shareholders willing to exit the company may tender their shares.

When is it triggered?

An open offer is triggered if an acquirer holds more than 25 per cent of the public shareholding in the company.

In August, Adani entities had acquired Vishvapradhan Commercial Pvt Ltd (VCPL), which had lent over Rs 403 crore to NDTV founders led by Pranay Roy. VCPL had lent the amount in 2009-10 in exchange for warrants that allowed it to acquire a stake of 29.18 per cent in NDTV.

Offer price lower than market price

Adani is offering Rs 294 per share for the acquisition of shares under the open offer, whereas the shares of NDTV closed at Rs 386.8 per share on Friday.

SEBI rules say that the open offer price for acquisition of shares under the minimum open offer shall be highest of the 1) the highest negotiated price under the share purchase agreement triggering the offer; 2) the volume-weighted average price of shares acquired by the acquirer during 52 weeks preceding the public announcement; 3) highest price paid for any acquisition by the acquirer during 26 weeks



Adani is offering Rs 294 per share under the open offer. Express file photo

immediately preceding the PA; and 4) volume weighted average market price for sixty trading days preceding the PA.

Since the price was lower prior to the acquisition of the 29.18% shares, the open offer price is in line with regulations. In fact, between January 1, 2022 and Aug 1, 2022, the shares of NDTV traded between Rs 115 and Rs 272. The share prices started rising in August and went on to hit a high of Rs 567 on September 6, post Adani’s acquisition of 29.18 per cent stake in the company.

How many shares have been tendered?

Till Friday, 39.35 lakh shares of NDTV had already been tendered under the open offer. That represents 6.1 per cent of the 6.44 crore shares of the company.

What happens after this?

If the Adanis manage to get the required 26% stake, the group’s total stake will go up to 55.18%, enabling it to take management control of NDTV. If the Adanis fail, they can buy shares from other institutional investors.

The Roys can launch a counter offer if they have the financial muscle. However, as they were unable to repay VCPL, it remains to be seen whether they can do so.



HARISH DAMODARAN

MOST ECONOMISTS advocate the conversion of agricultural subsidies — whether on inputs (supplying fertiliser, power, water at below cost) or outputs (procuring crops at above market prices) — into direct income support.

Such support, in the form of direct benefit transfers (DBT) on a per-acre or per-farmer basis, is seen as transparent and simple to administer. Moreover, it is crop-neutral (only rice, wheat and sugarcane farmers effectively get minimum support prices now) and does not cause distortions in input/output markets.

However, there is one limitation with the DBT schemes, such as the Centre’s Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan), the Telangana government’s Rythu Bandhu and Andhra Pradesh’s YSR Rythu Bharosa — they do not reach tenant farmers, i.e. those who undertake cultivation on leased land.

Left-out beneficiaries

PM-Kisan provides an annual income support of Rs 6,000 to all landholding farmer families in India. Rythu Bandhu extends financial assistance of Rs 10,000 per acre, again to all farmers owning land and without any size limit. Under YSR Rythu Bharosa, farmer families are paid Rs 13,500 per year, which includes Rs 6,000 through PM-Kisan and the AP government’s top-up of Rs 7,500.

The exclusion of tenant farmers — from income support and also zero/low-interest loans, crop insurance, disaster compensation and other agri-related schemes — is significant, given the rising trend of owners no longer directly cultivating their lands.

According to the National Statistical Office’s (NSO) ‘Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households’ survey for 2018-19, 17.3 per cent out of the total estimated 101.98 million operational holdings (i.e. farms) in rural India were on leased lands. The share of such leased-in lands in the total area used for agricultural production was 13 per cent. The NSO’s previous surveys for 2012-13 and 2002-03 revealed the shares of leased-in holdings at only 13.7 per cent (11.3 per cent of area) and 9.9 per cent (6.5 per cent), respectively.

State-wise tenancy

Table 1 shows the incidence of non-owners cultivating land to be the highest for Andhra Pradesh (AP) (42.4 per cent) and Odisha (39 per cent). In Haryana and Punjab, the share of leased-in area is higher than the percentage of tenant holdings. It means that the tenant farmers there operate relatively large holdings, even though they don’t own these lands.

EXPLAINED ECONOMICS

DBT and tenancy

While direct income support makes more economic sense than farm subsidies, its benefits don’t reach tenant farmers. The experience of Andhra Pradesh holds lessons — and raises questions

TABLE 1

STATE-WISE TENANCY

	%OF TENANT HOLDINGS	%AREA LEASED-IN
Andhra Pradesh	42.4	36.4
Odisha	39.0	31.3
West Bengal	29.5	22.3
Tripura	28.5	18.5
Bihar	28.2	25.1
Haryana	21.3	34.7
Punjab	21.1	27.8
Uttar Pradesh	17.9	13.8
Telangana	17.5	11.9
ALL-INDIA	17.3	13.0
Assam	16.4	13.1
Kerala	14.7	13.8
Jharkhand	13.3	7.8
Chhattisgarh	11.4	7.5
Madhya Pradesh	10.9	8.6
Himachal Pradesh	9.6	4.6
Tamil Nadu	9.3	10.9
Rajasthan	7.9	6.1
Uttarakhand	7.3	5.2
Maharashtra	5.6	4.3
Karnataka	4.3	5.0
Gujarat	4.1	3.3
Jammu & Kashmir	1.5	0.5

Source: National Statistical Office; Data is for the 2018-19 agricultural year (July-June)

TABLE 2

DBT SCHEME BENEFICIARIES IN AP FROM JUNE 2019 TO OCTOBER 2022

SCHEME	SECTOR/ TARGET GROUP	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES	AMOUNT (₹ CRORE)
YSR Pension Kanuka	Senior citizens**	62,79,486	59,954.00
YSR Rythu Bharosa	Farmers	52,38,000	25,971.33
Dr YSR Free Crop Insurance	Farmers	44,27,641	6,684.83
Input Subsidy	Farmers	19,02,825	1,612.80
YSR Sunna Vaddi	Farmers	65,65,000	1,282.11
Jagananna Ammavodi	Education	44,48,865	19,617.53
Jagananna Vidya Deevena	Education	24,74,544	8,365.26
Jagananna Vasathi Deevena	Education	18,77,863	3,349.57
YSR Cheyutha	Women	26,39,703	14,110.62
YSR Aasara	Women SHGs	78,74,438	12,757.97
YSR Sunna Vaddi	Women SHGs	1,02,16,410	3,615.28
YSR Kapu Nestham	Kapu women	3,38,792	1,492.00
Dr YSR Aarogyasri	Health insurance	22,33,466	7,338.76
YSR Bima (Insurance)	Informal workers	1,03,171	1,681.93
YSR Vahana Mitra	Auto/taxi drivers	2,74,015	1,032.02
YSR Nethanna Nestham	Weavers	81,783	776.13
TOTAL*		7,37,20,739	1,76,516.62

*Includes other schemes; **Also disabled persons and transgender.

Source: Government of Andhra Pradesh



While the NSO surveys point to a steady increase in tenant farmers — who typically pay fixed cash rents or share of produce to owners — these would, perhaps, be underestimates: farm tenancy agreements are largely oral, unwritten contracts and seldom recorded leases.

The NSO data for Telangana, for instance, shows 17.5 per cent of holdings in the state to be cultivated under lease. But a survey of 7,744 farmers across 34 village gram panchayats in 20 districts reckons the figure close to 35.6 per cent. “One can safely assume that at least 30 per cent of Telangana’s farmers today are tenants,” said Kiran Kumar Vissa, co-founder of Rythu Swarajya Vedika (RSV), a Hyderabad-based sustainable agriculture organisation that conducted the survey during May-June 2022.

The Telangana government has budgeted Rs 14,800 crore for Rythu Bandhu in 2022-23. To the extent this money is being credited to the accounts of non-cultivating landowners, it is depriving the real “rythu” or farmer.

Exclusion errors

A better idea of the costs of exclusion can be had from AP, probably India’s most DBT-advanced state. Between June 2019 and October 2022, the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy government transferred over Rs 176,500 crore to some 7.37 crore people under 26 DBT schemes. These — mainly named after himself or his late father YS Rajasekhara Reddy — target not just farmers, but also women, senior citizens, schoolchild-

ren, unorganised workers and communities such as Kapus and weavers (Table 2).

RSV, during January-February 2022, did a survey of 3,855 tenant farmers in 31 gram panchayats across nine AP districts.

The AP government’s DBT schemes such as YSR Rythu Bharosa, Free Crop Insurance, Input Subsidy and Sunna Vaddi (zero-interest loans) technically also cover tenant farmers. The Jagan government enacted the AP Crop Cultivator Rights law in August 2019. It provides for the issuance of “crop cultivator rights cards (CCRC)” to persons cultivating the lands of owners under agreements with 11-month validity, and countersigned by the village revenue officers concerned. The cards entitle lessee cultivators to benefits under the state’s DBT schemes, besides being “sufficient” for obtaining crop loans from banks.

But the RSV study found just 364 out of the 3,855 tenant farmers — identified through door-to-door surveys in each of the selected villages — to have received CCRCs. Even out of the 364 card holders, only 63 had got Rythu Bharosa benefits and 12 availed bank loans on their leased lands.

“The CCRC requires the landowner’s signature and can’t be issued without his consent. Most owners are hesitant to sign documents confirming they have given lands on lease. They fear that any written agreement makes them vulnerable to lawsuits by tenants claiming rights over the land. Also, what if the ten-

ants take loans against CCRCs and the repayment burden falls on the owners? The new law’s provisions that prevent banks from attaching the owner’s land for any dues don’t seem to make a difference,” pointed out Vissa.

Fixing the tenant problem

AP’s experience holds lessons for DBT. Both AP and Telangana have been trailblazers as far as direct income support to farmers goes. But neither has been able to crack the tenant conundrum.

Agriculture in India is increasingly seeing both “tenancy” (landless/marginal farmers leasing in land to cultivate) and “reverse tenancy” (small landowners leasing out to better-off farmers keen to reap economies of scale). This is natural, as not everyone — including those owning land — may be good at or wants to farm. Farming might ultimately become a specialised enterprise. Leasing can help both tenant and reverse-tenant farmers operate consolidated holdings, while allowing owners to take up non-agricultural employment without risking loss of their lands.

The Narendra Modi government, assuming it returns for a third term at the Centre in 2024, may well seek to expand PM-Kisan’s scale and scope. That would even mean subsidising all existing input and output subsidies under it. But DBT schemes, be it PM-Kisan or Rythu Bandhu, need to find an answer to the tenant problem before that.

Crusades row at Fifa World Cup: a contested past interacts with the present

ARJUN SENGUPTA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

IN THE ongoing Fifa World Cup, some English fans in Qatar stirred up a row by dressing up as St. George.

While the replica chain mails, plastic helmets and toy weapons have long been a popular costume choice for English fans, in Qatar and the rest of the Arab world, these are seen as symbols of a painful past and are considered offensive.

Fifa has since stepped in, announcing on Friday that fans wearing Crusader costumes will be barred from stadia.

Saint George

The first mentions of a figure called St. George appeared in England in the 7th century. However, he rose to prominence during the era of the Crusades as the personification of Christian chivalry. Today, he remains a national symbol for Britain.

The Crusades

The ‘Crusades’ refer to military campaigns waged by European Christian powers between 1095 and 1291 AD, on the call on Pope Urban II, to check the spread of Islam and ultimately, conquer Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims.

Crusaders were rallied from across

Europe, and were promised special favour in the afterlife. In popular history, the Crusaders are seen as chivalrous holy warriors, driven by religious idealism and a quest for adventure.

Jerusalem was taken by the crusading armies in 1099 and, over the next decades, “crusader states” would emerge across the region. These were fiefdoms of various sizes and often with conflicting loyalties.

Over the next century and a half, the Christians would ultimately be unable to hold any of the territories gained, with the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks recapturing the area. Jerusalem fell back into Islamic hands under the famed Sultan Saladin in 1187.

A complex history

In an article for *The Smithsonian Magazine*, historians David M Perry and Matthew Gabriele argued that the history of the Crusades is more complex than the simplistic framing of “religious” wars. A variety of different motivations drove a diverse group of Crusaders, against an equally diverse set of opponents that included Muslims, Jews, pagans, and Orthodox Christians.

In fact, the term “Crusade” did not appear in the English language till the 18th and 19th centuries, when it was used by Victorian historians to historicise prevailing ideas on the “clash of civilisations” be-

tween the East and the West, in this case, Christianity and Islam.

As modern culture took shape under the shadow of colonialism, the history of the Crusades, as popularly known today, ossified into something it simply was not. Battles fought for material gain were recast as Holy Wars.

Though over time, the many layers of history that were hitherto ignored have been explored, this has not percolated into popular culture.

Memory in the Arab world

In the Arab World, the Crusaders are perceived as existential threats to Islam

who were overcome by the Muslims.

Much like in Europe, the Crusades held a place at the margins of Arab imagination for the longest time. It was only in the 19th century, under the spectre of European colonialism and modern geopolitical developments, did they become increasingly significant. Much like the “Clash of Civilisations” theory justified colonial excesses, in the Islamic context, it has been used to justify modern-day form of jihad.

Dabiq, the online magazine of the Islamic State (Daesh) frequently invokes the history of the Crusades, using the perceived hurt of Muslims as a weapon to radicalise its followers.

ECONOMY

PLAN TO UPGRADE ALTIMETER OF ALL AIRCRAFT BY AUGUST 2023

Safe flying: New SOP soon on 5G airwave infra around airports

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK & MIHIR MISHRA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE AVIATION and telecom departments will shortly roll out a plan to ensure safe flight operations around airports with 5G airwave infrastructure. The plan includes telecom companies setting up infrastructure powering 5G networks in the country away from the flight path around airports, carrying low power signals in such areas and a plan to upgrade the altimeter of all aircraft operating in the country by August 2023, top sources told *The Indian Express*.

These are expected to be part of an operational guidelines that the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is currently preparing, after India's aviation regulator flagged concerns about interference that 5G signals could cause, potentially posing a challenge to safe airline operations.

In June, the US Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) an-

nounced a plan that involved these aspects to ensure safe airline operations.

In September, the Indian Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) wrote to the telecom department flagging concerns over the likely interference of 5G C-Band spectrum with aircraft radio altimeters. *The Indian Express* had reported. A radio altimeter is an instrument that provides direct height-above-terrain information to various aircraft systems.

"The DoT is almost ready with an SOP for 5G networks around airports and has indicated that it will address all of DGCA's concerns," a senior government official told this paper. "It is expected to include setting up 5G establishments a bit further away from airports and lowering the power of 5G signals emitted by these establishments so that there is no interference with flights' altimeters."

Airline companies will also be required to upgrade altimeters used in some aircraft being flown in India. *The Indian Express* has also learnt that the company that

EXPLAINED
5G and DGCA concern

THE PRIMARY concern of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) emerges from the fact that these altimeters as well as a part of the 5G telecom services operate in the mid C-Band frequency range.

manufactures it has sought for time till August 2023 to upgrade these devices.

The primary concern of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) emerges from the fact that these altimeters as well as a part of the 5G telecom services operate in the mid C-Band frequency range. Earlier this year, the 6,000-pilot-strong Federation of Indian Pilots had also written to the Civil Aviation Ministry raising similar concerns.

While the 5G network in India

is still in its early days, US aviation authorities have reported about 85 cases of 5G waves impacting flight operations near the airport.

For telecom service providers, the C-Band presents a sweet spot for rolling out 5G services, ensuring coverage as well as high bandwidth, resulting in faster internet speeds. For aircraft operations, the use of altimeters in this band ensures highly precise measurements of the plane's altitude. 5G terrestrial signals typically operate at a very heavy power level compared to flight altimeters.

Queries sent to the DoT did not elicit a response until publication.

The DGCA's issues were in line with concerns raised by the US FAA over the last one year since telecom operators in the US, such as AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile etc, began rolling out 5G services. In the US, an agreement between the FAA and the telecom operators resulted in a delay in rollout of 5G services in the C-Band near airports that were assessed to be difficult for pilots to make visual approaches.

Earlier this year, Air India had

to cancel some of its flights to the US as airlines globally scrambled to reschedule flights amid concerns that the rollout of 5G mobile services in the US could potentially interfere with aircraft navigation systems. Since then, the FAA has issued several directives to airlines to install certain filters or modify their equipment to ensure that 5G airwaves do not interfere with their navigation systems.

The issue of interference with other services has been raised by other industries as well. With the guard band between the 5G telecom and broadcast services narrowing sharply, broadcasters have cited multiple incidents of "disruptions" amid concerns over possible interference and potential outages once full-scale 5G services are launched across the country.

Earlier this month, *The Indian Express* had reported that the broadcasting industry has sent in representations to the government in this regard, citing earlier reports of service disruptions by operators in places, such as Tamil Nadu and parts of West Bengal.

INTERVIEW WITH CEO, PGIM INDIA MUTUAL FUND

'Amid uncertainty, falling risk appetite, India fared better than major economies'



Ajit Menon, chief executive officer, PGIM India Mutual Fund

What has happened to the global liquidity situation?

There was a situation when liquidity was available globally on tap and now, suddenly central bankers the world over are simply looking at taking out that liquidity. While that liquidity went into people's accounts to some extent, the rest of it was sloshing around in banks, moving to hedge funds and private equity (PEs) players. Liquidity is currently getting squeezed out completely. You are going to have asset stress all over, and the largest guys will face the impact.

How badly is this stress going to hit India?

Around three-six months back, people were very concerned about inflation and interest rate hikes, but today they feel that much of that has already got priced in or done. The narrative now is that there could be a soft landing or it could be something where if growth tapers off, you could potentially have the US Federal Reserve cooling off.

When you look at India, we have benefited from the whole thing. Even if we have lost, we have lost less than other emerging economies. There is attention towards India, globally. There's hardly a large economy that can boast of saying that even if the World Bank or IMF says growth is going to be 6.8 per cent and not 7 per cent, the growth is one of the best among large economies.

The high-frequency numbers on GST and toll collections, and credit growth show that India is relatively much better than other economies. The balance sheets of Indian corporate and banks are

very good. Though uneven, monsoons have been okay. So, at least the fundamental foundation that you need to capture what is coming ahead as an opportunity, is pretty much there.

Indian markets have rallied in the past few sessions as concerns over global inflation and growth have eased. Are you still cautious?

We remain cautious on global developments. While the latest inflation number is comforting, central bankers have a very high priority on containing inflation and are unlikely to change their stance based on few data points. As a result, concerns on global recession are real and one should be mindful of the likely impact of this on financial markets including Indian markets. India's economy is relatively much stronger and attracting global flows. We expect this trend to continue.

How is higher inflation going to impact consumers and demand going forward?

Higher inflation has a disproportionate effect on different segments of the market. There is an impact of inflation but given that we have a productive workforce, it will not be much. The Reserve Bank has become very independent compared to before, and its mandate has changed with a target for inflation. It is not the inflation which is dangerous but it is the inflation expectation which is dangerous. If inflation expectation becomes embedded, then it is very difficult to turn the ship back. Today, if you look at the spread in the US or India, it indicates that inflation expectation hasn't gone

through the roof. People believe that there is a pinch but the RBI is taking the right actions.

What are the external sector vulnerabilities for India?

There are some vulnerabilities on the external side as your (forex) reserves are now dropping and the current account deficit, which used to be on an average 1.5-1.8 per cent, has suddenly widened to 2.8 per cent (in Q1 2022-23). This means that the external investor is still not going to come with open arms. It's good to know that the drop in reserves is largely because of MTM (mark-to-market) and not necessarily only because of the outflows. On the other side, FDI inflows, and interest in India seem to be pretty robust. So, when you tick the boxes and try to see them, of course, there is uncertainty and the risk appetite is falling, but from a global point of view, when you look at India, we are far better off where we are.

Will higher interest rates and slowing demand hurt the investment scenario?

So, it might vary depending on the kind of sector and stuff where it might play out more or play out less. When liquidity is getting sucked out of the system by central banks, the crazy evaluations and the ability to throw money at a wall that it will stick somewhere or the other, is now obviously disappearing. People are paying more attention and asking where the quality business is. Where is the cash? Show me the cash which is in the bank!

But, the opportunity is for the first-movers everywhere.

POLICY WATCH

RATE HIKES

CII urges RBI to moderate pace of monetary tightening

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

STATING THAT global "polycrisis" can impact the domestic demand and growth prospects, India Inc has requested the Reserve Bank to slow down the pace of its rate hike in the upcoming monetary policy meet.

The corporate sector has also started to feel the adverse impact of the 190 basis points (bps) hike in repo rate so far in this fiscal, and so moderation in monetary tightening is the need of the hour, Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) said.

The next meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be held from December 5 to 7.

"The domestic demand is recovering well as mirrored by the performance of host of high-frequency indicators, however, the prevailing global Polycrisis is likely to impinge on our growth prospects too.

"Given the headwinds to domestic growth mainly emanating from the global uncertainties, the RBI should consider moderating the pace of its monetary tightening from the earlier 50 basis points," CII, an industry body, wrote to RBI in its expectation on the December monetary policy.

The six-member MPC has

The next meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be held from December 5 to 7

raised repo rate — the rate at which the RBI lends money to banks to meet their short-term funding needs — by 190 basis points (bps) to 5.9 per cent since May this year to check soaring inflation. A basis point is one hundredth of one percentage point.

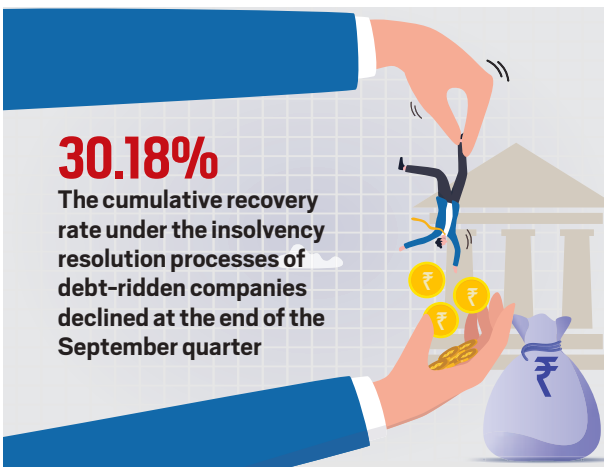
The industry body said while it is in cognisance of the fact that RBI's interest rate hikes of 190 bps so far in this fiscal have been warranted to tame inflationary pressures, the corporate sector has now started to feel its adverse impact.

Analysis of results for 2,000 odd companies in the second quarter (July-Sept 2022) showed that both the top-line and bottom-line has moderated on sequential and annual basis. "Thus, moderation in pace of monetary tightening is the need of the hour," it said. As consumer price-based inflation (CPI), or retail inflation, eased to 6.77 per cent in October from 7.41 per cent in September, many economists expect RBI to hike repo rate by 35 bps.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

Cumulative recovery rate under IBC falls to 30.18%

Only ₹2,43,452.5 cr have been recovered till the end of Q2 FY23, as per an analysis of IBBI data done by Care Ratings



5,893: Companies admitted by various NCLT benches since the implementation of the IBC in 2016. Only 9% ended in resolution

3,008: Operational creditors filed cases, and financial creditors filed 2,531 cases

Source: Care Ratings/PTI

Electoral Bonds: Govt pays ₹9.53 cr as SBI commission, printing costs

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

THE GOVERNMENT has shelled out Rs 9.53 crore of taxpayers' money towards commission and printing costs of the Electoral Bonds (EBs) issued to fund political parties.

A total of Rs 7.63 crore, inclusive of GST, has been charged to the government as commission so far, consequent to the sale of Electoral Bonds in 22 phases, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, said in its reply to the RTI application filed by Commodore Lokesh K Batra (Retd). State Bank of India (SBI) is the only bank authorised

to issue EBs to political parties.

"An amount of Rs 1.90 crore, inclusive of GST, has been levied to the government so far towards printing of Electoral Bonds," the RTI reply said.

The total amount collected by parties through EBs has gone up to Rs 10,791 crore from various anonymous donors in 22 phases since 2018 when the Electoral Bond Scheme was introduced. As many as 93.67 per cent of EBs are in Rs 1 crore denomination.

Ahead of the Assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, political parties received Rs 545 crore in the 22nd sale of anonymous Electoral Bonds (EBs) conducted between

EBs ISSUED TO FUND PARTIES

■ A total of Rs 7.63 crore, inclusive of GST, has been charged to the government as commission so far, consequent to the sale of Electoral Bonds in 22 phases, Department of Economic Affairs, said in its reply to a RTI query

October 1 and 10, according to data available from State Bank of India (SBI). Political parties received EBs worth Rs 389.50

crore from donors in the previous sale in July this year.

As many as 738 EBs worth Rs 542.25 crore were redeemed by parties in the latest phase, SBI said in an earlier RTI reply. Significantly, this amount has been collected by the political parties as Assembly elections in HP are scheduled in November 2022 and Gujarat by December.

According to the provisions of the EB Scheme, only the political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and have secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last general election to the House of the People or the Legislative

Assembly, as the case may be, are eligible to receive electoral bonds. The Supreme Court has adjourned the hearing of a pending plea challenging the EB scheme to December 6. The petitions were filed in 2017 challenging the provisions of Finance Act 2017 which paved the way for these anonymous bonds.

Interestingly, major political parties have not disclosed the amount they received through Electoral Bonds. Further, as the bonds are sold through a public sector bank, the government would come to know who is funding which political party, sources said.

Donors gave Rs 1,056.73 crore in 2018, Rs 5,071.99 crore

in 2019 and Rs 363.96 crore in 2020, Rs 1502.29 crore in 2021 and Rs 2,797 crore in 2022, SBI had said.

Electoral Bonds are purchased anonymously by donors and are valid for 15 days from the date of issue. A debt instrument, these can be bought by donors from a bank, and the political party can then encash them. These can be redeemed only by an eligible party by depositing the same in its designated account maintained with a bank. The bonds are issued by SBI in denominations of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore. Only 25 political parties are eligible for redemption of electoral bonds.

BRIEFLY

FPIs buy

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors have rediscovered their liking for Indian equities, making a net investment of Rs 31,630 crore in November on hopes of an end to the aggressive rate hikes, and positivity about overall macroeconomic trends. **PTI**

Toyota, CNG

New Delhi: Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Sunday announced its foray into the CNG segment, thereby providing more options in both the Toyota Glanza as well as the Urban Cruiser Hyryder model line-up, for customers to choose from. The Toyota Glanza will now be available with a CNG variant in the S & G grades, along with a Manual Transmission powertrain. **ENS**

'Old pension scheme to burden future taxpayers'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

NITI AAYOG Vice Chairman Suman Bery on Sunday expressed concern over the revival of Old Pension Scheme by some states, saying it would burden future taxpayers at a time when India needs to focus on fiscal prudence and promoting sustained growth.

In an interview, Bery also underlined the need for enhancing capital expenditure and creating a space for the private sector through fiscal consolidation.

"I am slightly more worried about the return to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). I think that is more of a concern because the cost will be borne by future taxpayers and citizens, not the present," he said.

The OPS, under which the entire pension amount was given by

the government, was discontinued by the NDA government in 2003 from April 1, 2004. Under the new pension scheme, employees contribute 10 per cent of their basic salary towards pension while the state government contributes 14 per cent.

"I think political parties have to exercise discipline, since we are all working for a common cause of growth of the Indian economy, and for India to become a developed economy, you know the long-term (objectives) needs to be balanced against the short-term (objectives)," Bery said.

Two Congress-ruled states, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, have already decided to implement OPS while BJP-ruled Himachal Pradesh has promised to restore the scheme if voted to power in the state. Jharkhand too has decided to revert to OPS, while AAP-ruled Punjab recently approved the reimplement of OPS.

IDBI to continue as 'Indian private sector bank' post strategic sale

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE GOVERNMENT'S residual 15 per cent stake in IDBI Bank post the strategic disinvestment of the lender will likely be considered as 'public shareholding' and a reasonable period may be given to the potential buyer to comply with minimum public shareholding (MPS) norm, finance ministry said on Sunday. IDBI Bank will operate as an 'Indian private sector bank' after its strategic sale.

Department of investment and public asset management (Dipam) said that the winning bidder will have no restriction on undertaking a corporate restructuring of the subsidiaries of the bank. It also said that certain asset sizes and timing thresholds related to asset stripping would be provided to give flexibility in op-

erations to the successful bidder.

"The aspects in respect of the treatment of GOI's residual shareholding and the appropriate transition period for MPS compliance are under due consideration and would, accordingly, be suitably advised to the Qualified Interested Parties at the request for proposal stage," Dipam said responding to a batch of 167 queries from potential buyers. On October 7, the Centre invited expressions of interest for IDBI Bank and offered to sell a total of 60.72 per cent stake,

DIPAM CLARIFICATIONS

■ The winning bidder will have no restriction on undertaking a corporate restructuring of the subsidiaries
■ On October 7, the Centre

invited expressions of interest for IDBI Bank and offered to sell a total of 60.72% stake, including 30.48% from the govt and 30.24% from LIC

including 30.48 per cent from the government and 30.24 per cent from LIC, along with the transfer of management control. Yet, both the government and LIC will have a 34 per cent residual stake in the lender (19 per cent and 15 per cent by LIC and government, respectively).

According to Sebi, a company is required to have a minimum shareholding of 25 per cent within one year of the merger with/acquisition of a private company or three years after listing. **FE**

Govt can't violate citizen privacy: MoS IT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE GOVERNMENT will not be able to violate the privacy of citizens under the proposed data protection law as it will get access to personal data only in exceptional circumstances like national security, pandemic and natural disasters, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said.

Speaking during an online discussion, the minister said the National Data Governance Framework Policy has provision for handling anonymisation of data -- which is not part of the draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill 2022.

Chandrasekhar also said the proposed Data Protection Board -- which will adjudicate matters related to data protection -- will be independent and will not

have any government officer on the board.

While responding to questions around privacy on Twitter Live on Saturday evening, the minister re-phrased the question of a participant to clarify the stand of the government and provisions in the draft DPDP Bill 2022.

"Let us say that the government wants to essentially violate the privacy of citizens with this law. Is it possible? That's the question. The answer is no. The bill and laws lay out in very clear terms what are the exceptional circumstances under which the government can have access to the personal data of Indian citizens... national security, pandemic, healthcare, natural disaster," Chandrasekhar said.

The draft DPDP Bill has exempted certain entities notified as data fiduciaries by the government from various compliances.

12 THE WORLD

TOPOF THE WORLD



Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. *File*

JAPAN

Onslide since Abe death, PM's rating at new low

PM FUMIO Kishida's public support slipped to a new low in a poll published on Sunday, as a series of cabinet resignations has compounded anger over the ruling party's ties to a controversial religious group. Support for Kishida's cabinet fell to 33.1% from 37.6% a month ago in the Kyodo news poll, his lowest in the agency's surveys since he took office in October 2021. It found disapproval at 51.6%, exceeding 50% for the first time. Kishida's support has been sliding since the July assassination of former PM Shinzo Abe revealed deep ties between ruling politicians and the Unification Church, a group that critics say is a cult. **REUTERS**

SRI LANKA

China's free fuel for Colombo

CHINA SAID on Sunday that it has donated 10.6 million litres of diesel to Sri Lankan farmers and fishermen to facilitate their work in the most affected sectors of agriculture and fishery. The vessel carrying the fuel was received by Sri Lanka's Minister of fisheries Douglas Devananda. "The 10.6 million litres of diesel donation by China will be provided free of cost to 2,32,749 farmers for harvesting 3,42,266 hectares of paddy fields, 20 litres per hectare," the Chinese Embassy in Colombo tweeted. Also 3,796 fishing vessels below 40 feet would receive 1,000 litres per vessel." **PTI**

ETHIOPIA

Kidnappings, looting in Tigray after truce

ALLIES of Ethiopia's federal military are looting property and carrying out mass detentions in Tigray, according to eyewitnesses and aid workers. It raises fresh concern about alleged atrocities more than three weeks after the warring parties signed a truce that diplomats hoped would bring an end to suffering in the embattled region that's home to more than 5 million people. Tigray is still largely cut off from the rest of Ethiopia, although aid deliveries into the region resumed after the Nov. 2 cease-fire deal signed in South Africa. **AP**

Nepal: Prime Minister Deuba's party emerges as single largest in elections

SHIRISH B PRADHAN

KATHMANDU, NOVEMBER 27

THE RULING Nepali Congress led by PM Sher Bahadur Deuba on Sunday maintained its lead as the single-largest party by winning 53 seats in the parliamentary polls.

Elections to the House of Representatives (HoR) and seven provincial assemblies were held on November 20. The counting of votes started on Monday.

The Nepali Congress has won 53 seats and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN-UML) secured 42 seats in the elections. The CPN-Maoist has emerged as the third largest party with 17 seats while the CPN-Unified Socialist has bagged 10 seats.

The newly-formed Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and pro-Hindu Rastriya Prajatantra Party have won 7 seats each. Independent and other smaller parties have emerged victorious



Sher Bahadur Deuba's allies have decided to continue as part of a new govt. *File*

on 21 seats. Out of the total 165 seats under direct voting, the results on 21 seats are still awaited.

The ruling five-party alliance has won 85 seats, against 55 seats won by the alliance led by CPN-UML. The ruling alliance comprises the Nepali Congress led by Deuba, CPN-Maoist led by Pushpakamal Dahal Prachanda, CPN-Unified Socialist headed by Madhav Nepal, Mahantha Thakur's Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janamorchha

Many youth in, seniors out

Kathmandu: Several senior political leaders, including ministers and 60 incumbent MPs, have been defeated while many youngsters have registered victories in Nepal's parliamentary polls.

The RSP which was formed just six months ago by young leader Ravi Lamichhane won seven parliamentary seats under direct election and secured more than one million votes under proportionate method.

Two senior leaders of Madhes-based parties who lost the election are president

of the Janata Samanwadi Party Upendra Yadav and Rajendra Mahato, the senior leader of the Loktantrik Samajwadi Party, the sixth largest political party in Nepal.

Senior leaders of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN-UML), who lost the election include Ishwor Pokharel, Surendra Pandey, Shankar Pokharel and Pradip Gyawali.

Other top leaders who were defeated are CPN-Maoist Centre's Dev Gurung, Pampha Bhushal, and Girirajmani Pokharel. **PTI**

led by Chitra Bahadur.

Deuba and Prachanda met on Saturday and agreed to continue their five-party alliance as part of a majority government. A party or a coalition needs

138 seats for a clear majority. Under proportionate voting, the CPN-UML came first, securing more than 2.5 million votes and the Nepali Congress received 2.3 million votes. **PTI**



ITALY LANDSLIDE: RESCUE ON

Rescuers in Ischia, Italy, on Sunday, the second day after an enormous landslide hit the Italian holiday island. Two bodies have been pulled out of the mud so far, officials said. Giacomo Pascale, the mayor of the neighboring town of Lacco Ameno, said, "We are continuing the search with our hearts broken." *Reuters*

Amid spreading protests in China, a novel symbol of defiance — blank sheets of paper

REUTERS

SHANGHAI, BEIJING, NOV 27

CHINESE PROTESTERS have turned to blank sheets of paper to express their anger over Covid-19 restrictions in a rare, widespread outpouring of public dissent that has gone beyond social media to some of China's streets and top universities.

Images and videos circulated online showed students at universities in cities including Nanjing and Beijing holding up blank sheets of paper in silent protest, a tactic used in part to evade censorship or arrest.

The latest wave of anger was triggered by an apartment fire that killed 10 people on Thursday in Urumqi, a far western city where some people had been locked down for as long as 100 days, fueling speculation that Covid lockdown measures may have impeded residents' escape.

One widely shared video said



A vigil in Shanghai for victims of an apartment fire that killed 10 persons in Urumqi, Xinjiang region, *Reuters*

to be from Saturday, which could not be verified, showed a lone woman standing on the steps of the Communication University of China in the eastern city of Nanjing with a piece of paper before an unidentified man walks into the scene and snatches it

away.

Other images showed dozens of other people subsequently taking to the university's steps with blank sheets of paper, illuminated against the night sky by flashlights from their mobile phones.

A man could later be seen chiding the crowd for their protest. "One day you'll pay for everything you did today," he said.

Similar sheets of paper could be seen held by people gathering on the grounds of Beijing's prestigious Tsinghua University to sing the Chinese national anthem on Sunday.

Protesters were advised to bring a sheet of white paper to at least one planned demonstration, according to tips being shared in chat groups seen by *Reuters*.

Several Internet users showed solidarity by posting blank white squares or photos of themselves holding blank sheets of paper on their WeChat timelines or on Weibo. By Sunday morning, the hashtag "white paper exercise" was blocked on Weibo, prompting users to lament the censorship.

"If you fear a blank sheet of paper, you are weak inside," one Weibo user posted.

NORTH KOREA

KIM'S DAUGHTER CALLED 'MOST BELOVED' CHILD

Kim Jong Un took his daughter to a meeting with missile scientists in her second public appearance, in which state media called her Kim Jong Un's 'most beloved' child, deepening outside debate over whether she is being primed as his successor. Believed to Kim's second child named Ju Ae and about 9 or 10 years old, she was first unveiled to the world last weekend.



SHOCKED, APPALLED: PARTY CHIEF IMRAN

Pak Senator held for 'abusing' Generals

FIR says PTI leader started 'a highly obnoxious campaign against govt functionaries, including General Qamar Bajwa'

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, NOVEMBER 27

PAKISTAN AUTHORITIES on Sunday arrested a Senator of Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party for allegedly using abusive and threatening language against senior military officials.

Azam Swati was taken into custody by Federal Investigation Agency for the second time in less than two months for tweets against army leaders.

An FIR was registered on the complaint of the state through Islamabad Cyber Crime Reporting Centre (CCRC) Technical Assistant Aneesur Rehman. The FIR stated that Swati and three other Twitter accounts — @Wolf1Ak, @HaqeeqatTV_20 and @Azaadi99 — "with malafide intentions and ulterior motives, started [a] highly obnoxious campaign of intimidating tweets [...] against state institutions" and senior officials, including Army Chief General Qamar Bajwa.

Swati on November 26 tweeted that he would go after a senior military official at every forum, the FIR stated.

On November 24, @Wolf1Ak on November 24 stated that "tabdeeli" had to begin by clearing the filth of the "corrupt generals" from the Army, to which Swati replied with "thank you".

Taking to Twitter, Khan said he was "shocked and appalled at how rapidly we are descending into not just a banana republic but a fascist state". **PTI**



PTI Senator Azam Swati. *File*

Army rejects claims about Gen Bajwa, family's assets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, NOVEMBER 27

THE PAKISTAN Army broke its silence on Sunday to reject reports that its outgoing chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa's family members and relatives became 'billionaires' during his six-year tenure, terming them as "misleading" and based on "blatant lies."

According to a report published by the *FactFocus* website, the alleged tax records of Gen Bajwa's family, the current market value of the known assets and business of the army chief, amounted to Rs 12.7 billion.

Following this, the government launched a probe and suspended two officers from service for their involvement in leaking the tax records of Gen Bajwa and his family members.

EXPLAINED Second time in two months

SWATI WAS earlier held in October after a tweet against Bajwa and has alleged he was tortured on behalf of ISI's Maj Gen Faisal Naseer. Days after release, his wife received a video showing them in compromising situation.

AFTER HER ARREST ON NOV 23: REPORT

In video, Khamenei's niece urges world to cut ties with Tehran

REUTERS

DUBAI, NOVEMBER 27

IRANIAN SUPREME Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's niece, a well known rights activist, has called on foreign governments to cut all ties with Tehran over its violent crackdown on popular unrest kindled by the death in police custody of a young woman.

A video of a statement by Farideh Moradkhani, an engineer whose late father was a prominent opposition figure married to Khamenei's sister, was being widely shared online after what activist news agency HRANA said was her arrest on November 23.

"O free people, be with us and tell your governments to stop supporting this murderous and child-killing regime," Moradkhani said in the video. "This regime is not loyal to any of its religious principles and does not know any rules except force and maintaining power."

Khamenei's office did not respond to a request for comment.

The video was shared on YouTube on Friday by her brother, France-based Mahmoud Moradkhani and



Farideh Moradkhani is a rights activist

then by Iranian rights activists.

On November 23, Mahmoud Moradkhani reported his sister's arrest as she was heading a court order to appear at the Tehran prosecutor's office. Farideh had been arrested earlier this year by Iran's Intelligence Ministry and later released on bail.

HRANA said she was in Tehran's Evin security prison. Moradkhani, it said, had earlier faced a 15-year prison sentence on unspecified charges.

Farideh Moradkhani added in her video: "Now is the time for all free and democratic countries to recall their representatives from Iran as a symbolic gesture and to expel the representatives of this brutal regime from their countries."

In 2012, Faezeh Hashemi Rafsanjani, the daughter of late former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, was sentenced to jail for "anti-state propaganda".

Russia to ban its 'surrogacy service' for foreigners

REUTERS

NOVEMBER 27

RUSSIA WILL soon adopt a law barring foreigners from using Russian surrogate mothers, Vyacheslav Volodin, the speaker of the lower house of parliament said on Sunday, the nation's Mother's Day.

Paid surrogacy is legal in Russia, but the practice has been criticised by religious groups as commercialising birth of children.

"Everything must be done to protect children by prohibiting foreigners from using the surrogacy service," Volodin said on Telegram. "We will make this decision at the beginning of December."

He said some 45,000 babies born by surrogate mothers have been taken abroad in the past few years. "Child trafficking is unacceptable," he added.

The Ukrainian government says Russia has forcibly deported more than 12,000 Ukrainian children since invading Ukraine, while 440 have died in the war and hundreds are missing.

Russia denies forced deportations, saying the movement of people into Russia from Ukraine has been to protect civilians from Ukrainian soldiers.

CALLED 'MISS CONTEST', THE PAGEANTS ARE HELD EVEN AT PEDIGREED UNIVERSITIES

'Whole university culture contaminated': Inside Japan's skin-deep beauty pageants

MOTOKORICH & HIKARI HIDA

NOVEMBER 27

YUKI IOZUMI was fretting about how her shoulders might look in a wedding dress.

"I feel like I look too muscular," said the tiny-framed Iozumi, 20, relating how her friends had told her that practicing karate had changed her body. "I think it's not so feminine."

Traditional femininity was her goal. Although Iozumi, a second-year community studies major, wasn't getting married, she was competing in a beauty pageant at Aoyama Gakuin University in

Tokyo — part of a wildly popular, and unabashedly skin-deep, phenomenon at Japanese universities known as "Miss Con."

The pageants, called Miss Contest in full, are staged at numerous campuses across Japan, including at pedigreed universities like the University of Tokyo and Keio University that are considered training grounds for elite political and business leaders.

While beauty pageants persist in the West, what is different in Japan is that they are sponsored by student groups at institutions that proclaim august principles of intellectual achievement and preparation for professional life. The contests also perpetuate a

culture that often places women in rigid gender roles.

In Japan, the Miss Con finalists attract thousands of followers on social media and offers of corporate sponsorship. Some go on to modeling gigs. During the contest campaign period, academics are rarely mentioned.

The pageants are regarded as pipelines for television announcers and "talents" — women who appear on variety, comedy and even news talk shows, where they are valued more for their looks than for their skills or knowledge. Although there are contests for both women and men, it is the women who draw the most attention.



Finalists of the Miss Mister Aoyama pageants in Tokyo. *NYT*

"It is a place where a lot of cute and pretty women are already assembled. We don't even have to

go looking for them," said Tasuku Ito, a talent agency manager at the Furutachi Project in Tokyo.

Beauty is more narrowly defined in Japan than in the West. Women with girlish features, round eyes and rail-thin bodies — those who are considered "kawaii," or cute — feature prominently in television dramas, pop groups, advertisements and even anime.

In recent years, however, some students and faculty members at Japanese universities have begun questioning the basis of such pageants. Critics assail them for imposing stereotypical beauty standards, and say they are inconsistent with the values of a university.

"I personally think that this beauty contest among university

students is simply outrageous, because it promotes physical appearance and the marketability of young women in a Japanese society where that kind of culture and value is already so prevalent," said Hae-bong Shin, a law professor at Aoyama Gakuin and the head of a newly formed gender research center. "The whole university culture is contaminated by that."

At some universities, student organizers have sought to preserve the pageants by shifting the focus toward character and social messaging.

At Sophia University in Tokyo, organizers asked each candidate to select a societal challenge as a

personal theme and post messages on social media. Last year, when Sophia's newly redesigned grand finale was staged online, one female contestant hid her face, trying to convey that beauty was no longer the focus of the event. (She did not win).

But the runner-up last year, Mai Egawa, 21, who is majoring in African studies, said that whenever she posted on social media about her interest in Rwanda, she received comments telling her "you're cute".

"If the people who are watching the contest don't change," she said, "then it's difficult to change the perception of the contest." **NYT**



New Delhi



13

IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

Anuradha Mascarenhas: During the pandemic, you've been among the most significant scientific voices. You still had two more years left in your tenure at the World Health Organisation (WHO) when you decided to return. How was your stint at the WHO and what prompted your return?

When I moved to the WHO at the end of 2017, I was the head of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), and Secretary, Health Research. It was not anywhere in my plans to join the WHO in any capacity. When it came, I felt it would be a good opportunity. The Indian government, too, was very supportive and there was no question of a long-term commitment to the WHO. Now, of course, the way things turned out, I became the first chief scientist and built the science division. Then we were into the pandemic at the end of 2019. So the last three-and-a-half years were really about developing a vision, a strategy, putting in place the processes, and applying all of that to the pandemic.

The pandemic turbocharged the whole science portfolio of WHO and it became very visible and central. Today, health has become the front and centre of every global leader and politician's vision and portfolio. So, in that sense, the WHO's role and image were upgraded to the point where heads of state were, I think, for the first time, coming to the WHO on a regular basis. Earlier it was basically our interaction with the Ministries of Health.

There's never a time when you can say, 'my job is finished, and I can go home'. But I do feel that I've put the science division, and some of the processes on a path where they're very stable, secure and integrated. Now it's time for me to take on a fresh challenge.

Anuradha Mascarenhas: A recent *Lancet* report commented on centralisation of power at the WHO with respect to the Deputy General's office under Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. What was your experience like?

I think it's very easy to make comments about personalities but Dr Tedros should be judged on his achievements. Various leadership styles are different, but if you look at his team's achievements — managing the biggest pandemic we've had in 100 years with very strong global and science-based leadership, plus the moral authority, and the call for equitable equity at every turn — these are unprecedented. Everybody will agree that his leadership during this difficult, highly politicised periods of the pandemic was exemplary.

What he's also been able to do is elevate health, and the health discourse, to the need for investments in health. No previous DG was ever part of the G-20 or invited to G7 discussions. Probably, he was able to do this because he comes with that political background. The third bit is the sustainable financing of the WHO, which has been a huge barrier. Over the last 30-40 years, the core funding of WHO has gone down — less than 20 per cent. The 80 per cent is voluntary funding from countries and from philanthropic organisations, which means that the WHO does not have the full freedom to work on its priorities. The whole move to increase the AC funding, which are the assessed contributions from countries, which now the executive board has agreed to act upon, will increase gradually. This gives more power to WHO to focus on the areas which are otherwise underfunded. Next, putting science at the centre. The rest of the things are a matter of style. And one can always either appreciate them or criticise them.

Anuradha Mascarenhas: Experts tell us that the virus is going to be around but will be less fatal. What, according to you, is the possibility of an impact by future variants? Is there a need for a booster dose?

I've highlighted the need for a booster dose many times. The booster uptake in most countries is too low — I'm talking about the first booster, the third dose, which probably less than 20 per cent of people in India have taken. It's clear now that you need that third dose to give you longer-lasting immunity. And of course, many countries are going into fourth and fifth doses, which we're not recommending. I think we still need to study the duration of protection and need more data. But in terms of what the virus is going to do next, there is still an element of unpredictability. We have been lucky that in the last 10 or 11 months, Omicron has evolved. And we've had about 300 sub-lineages of Omicron, which we are now tracking. Though a majority of them continue to evolve to be more transmissible, every time you get a new strain, it overtakes the previous one, and you get a fresh wave of infections. But that has not translated into increasing deaths. So our vaccines are working. But whether the next variant will end up being more clinically severe, we don't know, we'll have to continue to track it for some time.

It's a new virus, it's still evolving, still adapting. This is why we need to be cautious. And we still need to do the R&D for new, better vaccines that can prevent infec-

tions because the current vaccines are good at preventing severe diseases, not so good at stopping infections or transmission. And this is why we say that the pandemic is not yet finished. The emergency committee had its last meeting in October, and they continue with the public health emergency of international concern.

Kaunain Sheriff M: The countries which have the mRNA technology are now using the bivalent vaccines, which provide immunity to the previous variant as well as Omicron. However, in India, the boosters are predominantly those that have not been tested on Omicron-specific variants. Although we are not seeing an increase in hospitalisations, what is the way forward for India? Do you think that we need to re-engineer our own technologies here?

There is no clear proof that these bivalent vaccines offer better protection. The studies, so far, have shown that they elicit neutralising antibodies, which you expect a booster to do. According to the Moderna results, which just came out, the antibody levels went up by five or six times. But if you give a regular booster with the original strain, the antibody levels go up several-fold. And there are no clinical studies with clinical outcomes to show that the bivalent boosters are better than this. So the concept was that they would broaden the immune response to a wider spectrum of variants. But there is a lot of research going on. I think even in India, the manufacturers are looking at updating their vaccines to include Omicron-specific antigens.

But I don't think that countries that don't have access to the bivalent vaccine boosters are at any big disadvantage as of now. There could be some very minor advantages to having that bivalent booster but the original spike protein is also giving you a broad immunity. What is interesting is that the mix-and-match approach, where you take mRNA with either a subunit protein or adenoviral-based vaccine as a booster, appears to be much better.

Kaunain Sheriff M: We are seeing a significant number of patients, especially the young, complaining of complications after a few months of Covid, presenting blood clots, brain fog, fatigue, and gastrointestinal issues. What is the way forward on long Covid and how do we tackle this at an international level?

I think it has to be tackled locally, and not at the international level. In many studies from high-income countries, they have been able to follow up and document the fatigue syndrome, the neurological syndrome with the fog and not being able to concentrate or work. Then you have respiratory syndrome with breathlessness. But there are other issues which are gastrointestinal besides increased incidence of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and stroke, which seem to be occurring six to 12 months after somebody has recovered. One of the reasons why we don't want people to start taking it very casually and saying it's another cold is because it's not. Because even with an asymptomatic infection, there is a small percentage of people who can have these long COVID symptoms.

What we need is more of a systematic follow-up and studies. Plus, of course, the provision of care for people who are suffering from the symptoms in terms of it... mostly symptomatic rehabilitation, physiotherapy, etc, and guidance counselling, because I think there can be a large burden of this which is not recognised right now. And also, because in India there is a large burden of non-communicable diseases already. The baseline of hypertension and diabetes is very high among young adults and having had a Covid infection could actually trigger some changes. We know that it causes inflammatory changes, that it alters the coagulation pathways and causes vascular thrombosis. There could be the persistence of the virus. These are all possi-

DR SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN

‘It’s a new virus, it’s still evolving, still adapting. We still need to be cautious’

Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, WHO, on quitting the UN agency, the way forward with long Covid, and a desperate need for high-level governance to avoid a future pandemic. The conversation was moderated by Senior Editor Anuradha Mascarenhas



WHY SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN

Soumya Swaminathan, who was appointed World Health Organisation's (WHO) first chief scientist in 2019, has been an important voice in the world's largest health agency. A pediatrician who is globally recognised for her research on TB and HIV, Swaminathan has served as Secretary to the Government of India for Health Research and Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), before taking up the post of Deputy Director General (Programmes) at WHO. With the setting up of a science division at WHO, she has been a pathfinder during the pandemic



Illustration: Sujayit Dey

bilities that people have suggested which could be the causative mechanisms or pathogenetic mechanisms behind long Covid. It's not yet proven, and therefore there isn't a specific treatment for it.

There are reports one sees in the media, where more people seem to be dying of stroke, but those anecdotal things are not evidence. So you need a controlled group that you follow and study.

Kaunain Sheriff M: The vaccines that we are giving are to reduce the severity of the disease but certain platforms like the nasal vaccine can potentially reduce the transmission. Do you think in the next phase, especially of the Covid vaccine development, we need to address the stopping of transmission of the virus?

That would be ideal because then you don't have post-Covid and asymptomatic infections. Also, more than people being ill, now when you test positive, you have to isolate. You're off from work for five days, or your child can't go to school. Or if you end up going, then you're infecting other people. So it does have economic consequences, and therefore a vaccine that can actually prevent infection could be fantastic. It's a long shot. There are very few vaccines that provide that kind of sterilising immunity or transmission-blocking immunity. But it's possible that a combination of injectable and the nasal vaccine may be able to do that. Currently, the WHO Solidarity vaccine trial is testing the Codagenix nasal vaccine that's produced by the Serum Institute of India. It's possible that we will add other nasal vaccines to that trial. There are several nasal vaccines that are in trial now. We need to wait for the results.

Once we develop confidence in these platforms, the next step is to develop a pan-coronavirus vaccine or a universal coronavirus vaccine because you could have, at some stage, another outbreak or pandemic with another coronavirus.

Parthasarathi Biswas: When the vaccines were rolled out, the DG of the WHO was very critical of the advanced countries for hogging vaccines. In the run for vaccines, how are developing countries in Africa placed? Are we looking at a world where COVID will continue in some parts while in others there will be an excess of vaccines?

If you look at global coverage, it's around 70 per cent with the primary course of vaccination, and it is only 25 per cent for the low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). In the LMIC, India's average is also quite high. But you will find that in the low-income countries group, which is a World Bank classification, they are significantly lower than the other three groups. So we're talking only about primary vaccination here, there's no question of boosters. There's a long way to go. Even if you look at coverage for those above 60 and healthcare workers, it is around 30 per cent to 40 per cent in those LICs. There's a lack of health system capacity, manpower, and chronic issues of conflict. Many of these are in conflict countries, so it's very complex. They have made improvements. Through Covax, we set up a vaccine delivery partnership, led by UNICEF and all the other partners, to go to these 34 countries with less than 10 per cent coverage at the end of 2022. The DG's goal was to have 40 per cent coverage of all populations by the end of December 2021, and 70 per cent by June 2022. Now, having worked very intensively, and provided a lot of support — technical, financial — there are now maybe nine or 10 countries left that still have less than 10 per cent coverage. Many of them have now significantly moved up. In some countries, yes, vaccines are now being discarded because of excess stocks, which have not been used. In high-income countries, the US, for example, the coverage is not as high as it could be because they have access to vaccines. It is the vaccine hesitancy and the politicisation of the vaccination programme that has resulted in a very, unfortunately, significant proportion of the American population not being vaccinated. There has

been an analysis showing that 200,000 deaths in the US could have been prevented if those people had taken a vaccine. They had access to it, they just didn't take it. And while the anti-vax agenda may start in one country or be driven by some political ideology, unfortunately, these things have a way of spreading. They are now beginning to even impact routine immunisation coverage in countries in Africa. It's a very dangerous trend.

Rinku Ghosh: A recent report said that climate change and the melting of polar ice caps are releasing more viruses and bacteria into our ecosystem. What is the kind of future you foresee with the multiplication of returning viruses?

Yes, global warming is melting ice caps, which are releasing bacteria, viruses, and fungi that have been under snow. But deforestation, increasing urbanisation, the contact of wild and domestic animals, illegal trade in wildlife, as well as globalisation enable a virus to travel from a remote village to the world in 36 hours today. Because we are connected.

In the case of global threats like climate change and pandemics, we need antimicrobial resistance. No country can do it on its own and hope to be successful. You need a high-level governance of how would you look at these threats. It needs to be a multi-sectoral, multi-department, multi-ministry, and multi-disciplinary approach. Then, you have to narrow it down further and ask what we need in terms of surveillance. Are we doing good animal, environmental and human health surveillance? How do these systems talk to each other? What are the signals that you would pick up as being a warning? For example, the WHO has a system called the Epidemic Intelligence from Open Source (EIOS). It means you use AI to scan the media, grey literature, press and reports and you come up with 4,000 or 10,000 signals in a week. Out of that, somebody has to go through and find which signals are significant enough for us to investigate. Then you investigate a few 100 of them. And maybe one or two of them turn out to be bad ones, which turn into an outbreak or something. That has to be systematically established. Today, using digital tools, you can do a lot of this. Then you need the analytical capacity and the authority to act.

This ability to act has to start from the district level besides being able to communicate very rapidly. So that's a pillar of surveillance. Then you have a pillar of clinical care — what do you need to do if suddenly there's an outbreak of a hemorrhagic illness or a respiratory viral illness? We can learn from states like Kerala that managed Nipah very well. Then, you have a pillar of R&D to have some capacity to develop the countermeasures, whether it's diagnostics or drugs or vaccines. Then you may have a pillar of community engagement and then risk communication. You could think of those verticals but the most important is that it involves all the veterinary, animal, environmental as well as human health, people including social and behavioural scientists, who will be very keen to deal with that community-level approach. So while you can organise it top-down, you also have to build this awareness from the bottom-up.

We cannot stop outbreaks. I think that's beyond the capacity of human beings. But we can act early to prevent them from becoming larger epidemics or pandemics.

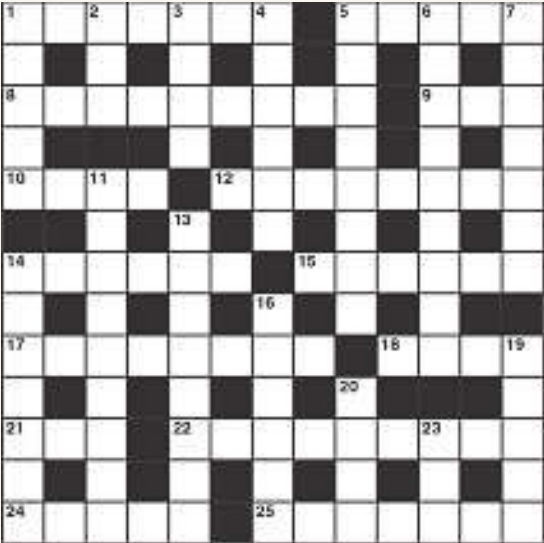
Ankita Upadhyay: As India has reported very few cases of monkeypox, should we still remain vigilant?

Monkeypox is going down globally. We definitely need to continue to monitor. The cases in India, I think, were probably imported cases, with infection acquired abroad. They were detected and isolated. So we were able to break the chain of transmissions. I think that way, it was very good. It shows you why countries need to be alerted. As of now, I think there's not a great worry in India.

Anonna Dutt: India has set 2025 as the deadline to eliminate TB. Is that possible? Does the vaccine have a role to play in this quest for elimination?

In terms of TB, the goals are aspirational. So we may not achieve that exact goal by 2025 because we are far from it. But it's important to set an ambitious goal and try to do everything to achieve it. The main challenge in TB is that we don't have a good vaccine. So we need much more investment. India can do a lot more in developing new vaccines, particularly using the new platform technologies and its capacity in the public and private sectors. There needs to be a global mission led by India and a few other high-burden countries to develop a better TB vaccine. TB is a more complex pathogen than Covid. TB is not a simple biomedical disease. It's very much rooted in poverty and undernutrition. It requires a multi-sectoral approach. But I think India has not only high-level political leadership, but also the resources to find better tools, and also to do more field and implementation research.

CROSSWORD 4910



- ACROSS
1 Step on it before the opening (7)
5 Negotiate for free entertainment (5)
8 Cruel like an ungrateful Frenchman (9)
9 A good starting point for a drive (3)
10 About to include it in the ceremony (4)
12 Went and got married again? (8)
14 The Romans offered one to people with bread (6)
15 A close arrangement for comfort (6)
17 Serious crime publication not for northern readers? (8)
18 They travel fast and their return is celebrated (4)
21 Part of the Baltic you find frozen (3)
22 Try a new road venue (9)
24 Transplanted trees (5)
25 Resonant sound about metal railing (7)
- DOWN
1 To be hesitant is not entirely modest (5)
2 Blade used by a cutter perhaps (3)
3 Chain letters (4)
4 Works for degrees? The ones here have point (6)
5 He's willing to let others succeed (8)
6 Keep in mind what the host will do (9)
7 Foot pedal that could be altered (7)
11 Overworked pupils? (5,4)
13 Not quite free to give the result of the division (8)
14 Dismiss a money handler (7)
16 Fine stuff we drop all over the place (6)
19 A gesture one doesn't care to make (5)
20 Material needed to provide grassy area (4)
23 The charm of the West Indies? (3)

Solutions Crossword 4909: Across: 1 Disaster, 5 Croc, 9 Layer, 10 Pergola, 11 Looking after, 13 Inkpot, 14 Steppe, 17 Poet laureate, 20 Antacid, 21 Evens, 22 Eons, 23 Presidents. Down: 1 Dill, 2 Stylock, 3 Stroke of luck, 4 Expand, 6 Roost, 7 Chairmen, 8 Break the news, 12 Misplace, 15 Pithead, 16 Murder, 18 Eaten, 19 Isis.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.
One single grateful thought raised to heaven is the most _____
-G. E. Lessing (7,6)

LVEEE AFCRTY

ENARR AERFPF

SOLUTION: LEVEE, REKAN, CRAFTY, RRAAPPE
Answer: One single grateful thought raised to heaven is the most perfect word

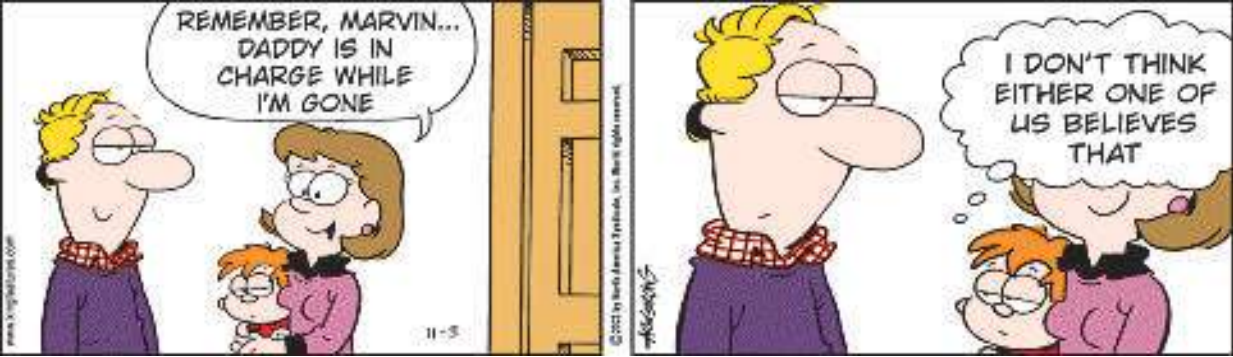
OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 5032

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.

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5031

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

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

5033704Y RFN BIR BAHADUR ALE
On this day 5033704Y Rfn Bir Bahadur Ale of 5/1 Gorkha Rifles made the supreme sacrifice during 'OP CACTUS LILLY-1971' on 28 Nov 1971 in a true act of courage and valour. The brave soldier will always be remembered for his enthusiasm. To this brave heart we pledge that we shall always be guided by his immortal spirit and make his name proud.

CO AND ALL RANKS, 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES

SBI

Anytime Channels, Corporate Centre, 3rd Floor, World Trade Centre Arcade, Cuff Parade, Mumbai - 400 005

CORRIGENDUM - I

RFP No. SBI/ACV/2022-23/003-A Dated: 04.11.2022

In reference to above RFP for Procurement of 6750 Branch Managed CAPEX ATMs under phase XV, a Corrigendum is issued and can be accessed from procurement news on the Bank's website <https://bank.sbi> and portal <https://e.tender.sbi/SBI/>.

Also the Last date and Time for submission of bids is extended upto 3 PM on 03.12.2022.

Sd/-
Deputy General Manager
(Implementation & Rollout)

Place: Mumbai
Date: 28.11.2022

BRIDGE AND ROOF CO. (INDIA) LTD.

(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISES)
CIN No. U27310WB192000103601

"KANKARIA CENTRE", 4th & 5th FLOOR, 2/1, RUSSEL STREET, KOL - 71

Eproc Tender Id : 2022_BandR_752223_1
Ref. : BandR / FGD / EOI

Sub-: NOTICE INVITATION OF "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)" FOR EMPANELMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN FLUE GAS DESULPHURISATION WORKS ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS / CLIENTS AS A TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER / COLLABORATOR AND FORMING A TIE-UP AS PER REQUIREMENT.

Online Expression of Interest (EOI) is invited from Reputed, Resourceful and Experienced Parties meeting prescribed qualifying criteria for FLUE GAS DESULPHURISATION WORKS ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS / CLIENTS AS A TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER / COLLABORATOR AND FORMING A TIE-UP AS PER REQUIREMENT.

Date of Availability of Tender Document in Company's Website as well as CPP Portal: 23.11.2022 and Last Date of submission of Bid (On-Line) is 13.12.2022

Interested Bidders) will have to be enrolled & registered with the Government e-Procurement System, through logging on to <https://eprocure.gov.in>.

Addendum / Corrigendum, if any, shall be hosted in Company's Website: www.bridgeroof.co.in and CPP portal : <https://eprocure.gov.in>.

INTER-UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR ASTRONOMY AND ASTROPHYSICS

(An Autonomous Institution of the University Grants Commission)
Post Bag - 4, Savitribai Phule Pune University Campus, Ganesh Khind, Pune - 7, Phone : 25604100 / 25691414 Fax : 25604699

Copy of Tender Advertisement

(Tenders Published on Web Portals)

The Estate Manager, IUCAA, on behalf of the Director, Inter-University Centre for Astronomy & Astrophysics, Savitribai Phule Pune University Campus, Ganeshkhind, Pune - 411007, invites technical & financial bids from reputed vendors / bidders for "Construction of Creche building and Recreation Centre extension building at S. No. 25/1/1/1/1/2, Aundh, IUCAA, Campus, Pune."

Interested parties may view and download the tender document from the Government Central Procurement Portal <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. It is also available on IUCAA's website at <https://www.iucaa.in/tenders>.

IUCAA reserves the right to reject any of the tenders without assigning any reason.

Estate Manager, IUCAA

ANDHRA PRADESH SCHOOL EDUCATION REGULATORY AND MONITORING COMMISSION

Anjaneya Towers, B-Block, 1st Floor, Near Ibrahimpatnam Police Station, VTPS Road, Ibrahimpatnam-521456

NOTIFICATION

A notification is issued inviting applications for appointment of Members under Section 4 of A.P. School Education Regulatory and Monitoring Commission Act, 2019. For other details, please visit <https://cse.ap.gov.in/applications> with bio-data may be sent within (15) days from the date of notification by registered post to the following address. The Commissioner of School Education, 4th Floor, B-Block, VTPS Rd, Bhimaraju Gutta, Ibrahimpatnam, Andhra Pradesh-521456.

Place: Ibrahimpatnam, Sd/- S.Suresh Kumar, CSE, AP
Date: 28-11-2022
Ro No.: 1386PP/CL/ADVT/11/2021-22

UJVN LIMITED

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone: 0135 - 2763808 & Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

TENDER NOTICE

दिनांक: 26.11.2022

पत्र सं. 867

Office of the Executive Engineer (M&G) Dhalpur Power House, invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below :

Tender No: 08/EE/M&G/DLR/2022-23

Name of work: AMC for Colony Electrical works, Including Operation & Maintenance of Colony Tube well.

Estimated cost: Rs 24,46,924/- (GST Extra)

Date of availability of bid document on website: 27.11.2022

Last date for submission of tender: 20.12.2022 upto 17 Hrs

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvn.com"

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भारतीय कंटेनर लिमिटेड

CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.
(AN AMRATYA UNDERTAKING OF GOVT. OF INDIA)
NSIC New MGB Building, 2nd Floor, Okla Ind. Estate (Opp. NSIC Okla Metro Station), New Delhi-110020

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

CONCOR invites E-Tender in Single Packet System of tendering for the following operation and maintenance works/services:-

Tender No.	CONCO/ELECT/AMCI/MB/MUMBAI/CLUSTER/A-II/2022
Name of Work	SERVICE PERTAINING TO SUB-STATIONS AND ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS AT ICDAURANGABAD MUMBAI-CLUSTER-II MAHARASHTRA
Estimated Cost	Rs. 28,40,283/- (Inclusive of all)
Completion Period	24 Months
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 56,800/- through e-payment.
Cost of Tender Document (Non-refundable)	Rs. 1,120/- (inclusive all taxes & duties through e-payment)
Tender Processing Fee (Non-refundable)	Rs. 1676/- (inclusive all taxes & duties through e-payment)
Date of Sale of Tender (Online)	From 28.11.2022 (11:30 Hrs) to 19.12.2022 (up to 17:30 Hrs)
Date & Time of Submission of Tender	20.12.2022 up to 17:00 Hrs. (E-Tendering Mode Only)
Date & Time of Opening of Tender	21.12.2022 at 11:30 Hrs.

For financial eligibility criteria, experience with respect to similar nature of work, etc., please refer to detailed tender notice available on website www.concorindia.com, but the complete tender document can be downloaded from website www.tenderwizard.com/CCL only. Further, Corrigendum/Addendum to this Tender, if any, will be published on website www.concorindia.com, www.tenderwizard.com / CCL and Central Procurement Portal (CPP) only. Newspaper press advertisement shall not be issued for the same.

GGM (Engg Area-II), Phone No.: 011-41222500

Appeal for Identification

General public is hereby informed that one person **Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** About 45 Yrs., **Height:** 5'9", **Sex:** Male, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Thin, **Face:** Oval, **Wearing:** Maroon Colour Half Shirt, Black Colour Half Pant & Bare Footed, **Place of Recovery:** Found dead in front of Garib Gauskhala, Near Geeta Ghat, Civil Lines, Delhi.

In this regard DD No. 34A, Dated 27.09.2022 has been lodged at Police Station: Civil Lines, Delhi. Any clue come to notice please inform undersign.

SHO
P.S.: Civil Lines, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23815444, 23810633

DP/3242/N/2022

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Tanya Arora D/o Shipra Roy R/o 1868B/13, Second Floor (L/Side), Gali No.13, Govindpuri Extension, Kalkaji, New Delhi-19 have changed my name to Tanya Roy for all future purposes.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE

25th November 2022

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ADVOCATE PRATEEK ALAGH SWASTIK REALTY
9899245244 / 9999952419
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DAY TODAY BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

It's time for second chances, especially if you're regretting any mistakes. Don't expect anything too wonderful today, but, as the week passes, you may begin to deal with old memories and lay certain ghosts to rest. The answers to your questions may be found where you least expect them.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Something rather strange is about to happen. The theme for the week is bringing hidden things into the open, revealing secrets and uncovering the truth. You might be rather surprised by what you find, and you may decide to alter your plans as a result.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Enough has been said about your professional hopes, and also about any involvement in a partner's ambitions. However, at the risk of sounding like a cracked record, I must remind you that from now until another three months have passed, a number of old emotional issues will return to the top of the agenda.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Today's lunar alignments are not exactly restful, partly because your traditional, comfortable habits will be challenged, but also because you might have to shell out a little more money than usual. Yet extravagance is sometimes a cosmic necessity.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

The same set of lunar challenges to your sign happens once a month, regular as clockwork, though the dates vary. When this happens, as it does today, other people are mysteriously motivated to challenge your feelings and decisions. Listen carefully to their good advice, though.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

The Moon will encourage you to imagine that the world lies at your feet. There's a certain magic in the air, which lends you the courage and confidence necessary to succeed. As soon as you decide that something should be done, other people will have to fall into line.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

A little hard work never did anyone any harm. The only trouble with your solar chart is that whenever the Moon favours a businesslike routine, as it does now, you are psychologically inclined to irresponsibility. But, then, as people who are familiar with you know, you are a complicated person.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Keep yourself to yourself if you wish. After all, nobody has any automatic right to pry into your private affairs. The best way to use your planetary energies is first to have as much rest as you need, and then to involve yourself in activities with a charitable slant.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

If you imagined that one particular social liaison had disappeared for ever, think again. There is everything to be gained from reopening old contacts, even those which involve a fair degree of pain or regret. You might soon discover that somebody you thought never cared for you is really rather well-disposed.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Mercury, the celestial trickster, is playing a new role in your solar chart, rewarding all of you who never gave up hope, even when there seemed no chance of success. Over the next two or three weeks, you will have an opportunity, a slight one admittedly, to right a wrong.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Along with many other people, you are about to find that your opinions and attitudes are going to have to change. Any Virgoan survival course over the next month must take into account the need for sincere ideals and spiritual growth. Only the highest standards will do, but then you know that already.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Social contacts are taking you back to the past, and quite right, too. Even if you're taking time off, spare a little thought for professional plans or for another of your favourite ambitions. You don't like time-wasters and you won't be happy if you are forced to squander your energy.

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OTHER RESULTS

Japan	0	1	Costa Rica
Croatia	4	1	Canada

Messi equals Maradona

The Argentine legend scored his eighth goal in 21 appearances against Mexico in a 2-0 win. He has the same number of goals as Maradona in the same number of World Cup matches

2006 WC

1. VS SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO 87'

2014 WORLD CUP

2. VS BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 65'
3. VS IRAN 90+1'
4. VS NIGERIA 3'
5. VS NIGERIA 45+1'

2018 WORLD CUP

6. VS NIGERIA 14'

2022 WORLD CUP

LIONEL MESSI didn't score at the 2010 WC. Argentina reached the quarters where they lost 0-4 to Germany.
7. VS SAUDI ARABIA (P) 10'
8. VS MEXICO 64'



DIEGO MARADONA scored no goals in the 1990 World Cup but Argentina reached the final where they lost to West Germany 0-1.

(Maradona World Cup goals) 1982: 1 vs Hungary 28', 2 vs Hungary 57'; 1986: 3 vs Italy 34', 4 vs England 51', 5 vs England 54', 6 vs Belgium 51', 7 vs Belgium 63'; 1994: 8 vs Greece 60'

FIFA WORLD CUP PREVIEW

SHOWCASE GAME IN A NUTSHELL

GROUP G
Brazil vs Switzerland
9:30 PM IST, Stadium 974
(LIVE ON SPORTS18 AND JIOCINEMA)

The script

Brazil showed their title credentials in their first game of the World Cup, taking a 2-0 win thanks to a brace from Richarlison. The sheer power and depth that their attacking players possess mean that even the absence of Neymar, who'll be missing the next two games after a swollen ankle, will not be as much of a miss as it would have been in previous years. Switzerland on the other hand, did not look convincing in their opener against Cameroon. In Brazil, they go up against a team that has balance in almost all areas of their pitch.

How they line up

BRAZIL: 5-3-2

An injury to Neymar in a previous iteration of the World Cup would have sent Brazil into meltdown, but the number of options that present themselves in the absence of their star attacker reiterates why they are considered the favorites. Arsenal's Gabriel Jesus is expected to come in place at the centre-attacking midfield for a largely unchanged Brazil team from their opening victory over Serbia.

Likely XI: Allison; Danilo, Marquinhos, Silva, Santos; Paqueta, Casemiro; Raphina, Jesus, Vinicius; Richarlison.

SWITZERLAND: 4-2-3-1

After gaining three points in their first match against Cameroon, Switzerland have to be in a conundrum against Brazil. Do you go all out for a positive result, knowing that a win could guarantee a Round-of-16 spot? Or do you take a draw against Brazil and hedge your bets against Serbia, a country that were considered the dark horse to go deep in this edition of the World Cup?

Likely XI: Sommer; Widmer, Akanji, Elvedi, Rodriguez; Freuler, Khaka; Shaqiri, Sow, Vargas; Embolo

The schemer

In their first game, Brazil looked at their most potent when a deep switch from Casemiro would find Vinicius Jr with space to run into. While running diagonally into the central areas of the pitch is a Brazilian trademark, Vinicius brings raw pace to the art in the final third of the pitch. It will be a crucial aspect of Brazil's attack, especially in the absence of their chief creator.

Language of football

■ **Entortar**
■ **Origin:** Portuguese
■ **Translation:** To twist
Entortar means to twist, and in the context of Brazilian football it means to skillfully dribble past another player and leave them 'twisted'. The expression and the action are essential to how Brazilian football operates and at this World Cup, they finally have a team filled with players capable of twisting their opponents.

Other Matches

Cameroon vs Serbia: : 3:30 PM
South Korea vs Ghana: 6:30 PM
Portugal vs Uruguay: 12:30 AM (Tuesday)



EXPRESS AT WORLD CUP

SANDIP G
DOHA, NOVEMBER 27

LURKING UNMANNED, 25 yards from colourfully-attired Mexican goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa, Lionel Messi picked a pass from Angel di Maria from the right wing. And stopped. The world around him too stopped. It always does when Messi has the ball on his left foot. Eighty thousand pairs of eyes at the Lusail Stadium, no matter where they sat or stood, fixed their gaze on the most precious left foot on Earth. So would have millions of eyes around the world. For, the ball falling onto Messi's foot is an event in itself. It's a moment pregnant with infinite possibilities, dimensions, scripts and routes, when Messi takes the human form of destiny; or destiny takes the form of Messi.

That world-stopping first touch cannot be glorified more. It was a touch more beautiful than the goal itself. An ounce heavier, the barging Mexican defenders would have hacked it away. A drop lighter, he would not have found the power.

With the corner of his right eye, he traced the perfect path to beat the countless legs and bodies that would intervene and the lunge of Ochoa in the ball's goal-ward journey. The eyes settled on the bottom corner. The mind settled on a low grass-trimming drive. Twisting his lithe frame a fraction, he let his left foot rip, a boot-snap at the last second imparted the direction.

Like an artist salivating at the marvel of his craft, Messi watched the ball ripple the nets. The world and eyes stopped again, and at the precise moment, Messi tore away into the distance, hands spread out, a few drops of tears rolling down his eyes, roved for di Maria, the provider of the goal and wrapped him with the tightest of embraces. When the festivities were finally over, Messi looked and winked skywards. He would have found his destiny written on the starless sky. He was the lone star in Lusail.

In the dugout, coach Lionel Scaloni covered the tears bursting from his eyes with his palms. "At that moment, half the world would have wanted to hug him," he would say later. His assistant Pablo Aimar wept uninhibitedly. Even Mexican supporters wept. Messi is the single most unifying force in football.

It was such an emotional moment for



Messi's 64th-minute strike is inarguably the most important of the 93 goals he has scored for his country.

Reuters

Argentina, a moment of redemption, a moment of liberation. From the deep abyss of agony and shock, after the Saudi Arabia jolt, Messi lifted them to the peak of ecstasy. Argentina are not yet assured of knockout tickets, might not even qualify, might stumble against Poland. But here was the moment. Here was Messi. Here was the kiss of life. In Messi's own words, "peace of mind". He would say after the match: "It is a weight off our shoulders, a reason for joy and peace of mind because it is all down to us again."

Worth its weight in gold

It would not be the most aesthetic of Messi's goals. It was not the most divine of his goals. But it was, inarguably, the most important of the 93 goals he has scored for his country. A goal that unburdened, if so slightly, the burden of being Messi. A goal that would make him, and the world around him, feel lighter and joyous. A goal of pure cathartic relief.

It's the context that makes the goal. Messi in his last World Cup, as for now; his team and country shocked after the Saudi heist, many teams fail to recover from such defeats;

a timid, tense first-half when nothing clicked. Messi was heavily marked, his feet tied, inspiration smothered.

His attacking colleagues were ponderous and flat, as if the Saudi pain still lingered, as if they felt lost. Argentina and Messi could see the dream and the world crumble in front of their eyes. Lose this match, and there would be no point of return. Messi would slip into the horizon with the eternal regret of not having won a World Cup. A dream Argentina had seen a million times over in the last 17 years, since Messi first wore the Albiceleste shirt, was to turn nightmarish.

His dream was 25 minutes away from slipping away when Messi found the ball at his left foot.

The pressure and burden that would have weighed on his shoulders might have crushed his shoulders. But saw the lease of light twinkling on the bottom corner. His left foot would not betray him; his destiny would not cheat him. He then unfurled the shot that lifted a country and more from the depths of despair.

The goal changed the mood. From doubt-ridden wallowers, they transformed into

ruthless destroyers. Freedom and joy returned to the game, creating more chances and storming Mexico's goalmouth. Even Messi, mostly sombre and grim in the game, began to smile more often. Another goal was inevitable, and the 21-year-old Enzo Fernandez uncorked a fizzing curler past the outstretched arms of Ochoa to become the second youngest goal-scorer for his country after Messi.

The celebrations were wild, the overpowering emotion was one of triumph and not catharsis. He later dwelled on the importance of the goal: "We can't give up now. We have all the finals to play -- we can't make mistakes. We knew we had to win, that another World Cup was starting for us, and we knew how to do it."

The Messi dream has been reignited; the Argentina dream has been revitalised. But the ultimate realisation of the dream will depend on how fast Argentina can revive their 36-match-unbeaten form. But between now and the Poland game, they can dream. And relive the Messi moment, an event in itself. A moment less than a second, but a moment that will live on forever.

Enzo thrives in Messi's shadow with a wonder goal



Enzo Fernandez celebrates scoring the second goal with Lionel Messi.

Reuters

SHASHANK NAIR
NOVEMBER 27

ENZO FERNANDES has been coached by Herman Crespo at Defensa y Justicia, was given the iconic No 13 jersey of Eusebio at Benfica and last night scored the second goal for Argentina in their 2-0 win over Mexico at the Lusail Stadium – all while being 21 years old.

If Lionel Messi's goal released a pressure cooker of tension that had slowly simmered itself up to tipping point at the 80,000-seater stadium, Fernandes' strike calmed the Argentines down.

At a goal up, the Mexicans were dangerous, but the situation they were in, even more so. A defeat would mean Argentina would join hosts Qatar in making an early exit from the tournament. A draw would leave them at the mercy of others. A win would have to be conjured – the magician at hand had already done his bit. And then came a corner in the 86th minute – a short pass to Messi from Rodrigo de Paul.

Who then passed to Fernandes. Fernandes' first touch directly brought him into a conflict zone with two of Mexico's box border police. His next move elicited a squeal of surprise and then a roar of delight from commentator Peter Drury. "Oh, sweet feint... wonderful goal!"

That was how quick it happened. Fernandes ran into Erick Gutierrez – who stood directly in front of the Argentine midfielder and the goal. Gutierrez then got shifted to his right and away from goal in the slickest of shoulder drops a footballer could summon on a pitch. Defender unceremoniously shunted out of the way, Fernandes curled a shot into Guillermo Ochoa's right.

Before Gutierrez or Ochoa could even realise that their hopes of a comeback were swindled away, the Benfica midfielder was already kissing his badge and being mobbed by Messi in front of a swathe of screaming Argentines. It was over.

Fernandes' influence on the game, though, started a lot earlier. A toothless Argentine midfield, led in chief by De Paul, was unable to string together a consistent period of pressure on the Mexicans – pressure that can only be borne through a passing clinic that began when Fernandes was substituted in, in the second half.

This was only his fifth appearance for Argentina but his impact was felt immediately. Argentina for the first time in this tournament, gained in the midfield department. They had a player who could circle the ball across the pitch, understood the perils of being wasteful with it and consistently created

If Lionel Messi's goal released a pressure cooker of tension that had slowly simmered itself up to tipping point at the 80,000-seater stadium, Fernandes' strike calmed the Argentines down.

pressure on the Mexicans with his delivery of the ball. Why would they relegate this player to the bench?

Not knowing about the talent of Fernandes has been a facet that has followed his young career. After 13 years at the River Plate youth system, he broke into the senior team but was quickly shipped out on loan to Defensa y Justicia. It was over there that the legendary Crespo gave him match after match – and that faith culminated in the team winning the Copa Sudamericana in the 2020 season.

"When Marcelo (Gallardo, River Plate coach) told me about Defensa, I took it well because it was a chance to show myself, get some games, compete against first-rate players," Fernandez told Ole. "I was lucky to be

coached by two great trainers like Crespo and Sebastian Beccacece, share a squad with huge players and even better people and pick up two titles which will go down in history.

River Plate then immediately called Fernandez back. At the start of the 2022 season, Fernandes was on form, scoring eight goals and making six assists in 19 appearances – a feat that caught the eye of European scouts. A few months later Benfica managed to win the race to sign the midfielder, giving him the prized jersey of Portuguese attacker Eusebio. And since joining the team, they've played 13 league games, won twelve of them and are yet to lose.

He ranks in the 99th percentile for passes attempted and makes close to 10 progressive passes per game – all the while averaging 2.5 tackles a game. The statistics prove what the eyes see – Fernandez can be a combative midfielder who has excellent passing skills, especially in the third phase.

At this World Cup, finding the right midfield combination for the South Americans was the key. While Lionel Scaloni is still some ways away from that possibility, that second-half midfield performance from his team, especially the Gundogan-esque display from Fernandez in the middle of the Lusail Stadium, is starting to put some more pieces of the Argentine puzzle in the right spot.

PT Usha set to get elected as IOA chief



New Delhi: The legendary **PT Usha** is set to become the first woman president of Indian Olympic Association (IOA) as she emerged as the top post for the elections. The 58-year-old Asian Games gold medalist clinched the fourth-place finisher's 400m hurdles final nomination papers for the year along with her team mates. The deadline to submit the nomination papers for the IOA election is Sunday. IOA elections were held in Mumbai. Umesh Sinha did not submit his nomination papers on Friday and his candidature was not filed. Nominations for the next year's posts on Sunday.

Govers nets hat-trick as Aus thrash India

Adelaide: India could play well only in patches as Blake Govers slammed a brilliant hat-trick to guide Australia to a dominating 7-4 win in the high-scoring second hockey Test here on Sunday. Skipper Harmanpreet Singh struck even before the home team could settle, firing India to a third-minute lead with his precise and powerful penalty corner conversion. India looked threatening up front and Harmanpreet almost converted a second one but the home team began to call the shots soon with Govers and Jack Welch leading the goal spree. The Men in Blue were blown away in the final 15 minutes due to a sloppy defense.

Ravina strikes gold on final day

New Delhi: Reigning Asian champion Ravina displayed splendid tenacity to punch her way to gold in the 63kg category final as India ended the Youth Men's and Women's World Boxing Championships with 11 medals in La Nucla, Spain. Ravina was up against Megan deCler of Netherlands in her final bout. In spite of not getting off to the best of starts, the Indian pugilist utilised her technical ability and quick movement to mount a comeback against her Dutch opponent. The Indian won the bout 4-3 by split decision.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gill has been a consistent performer in ODIs this year, and two eye-catching innings in NZ should further boost his credentials ahead of 2023 World Cup

VENKATA KRISHNA B
NOVEMBER 27

BEFORE WE get down to the analysis, here is a question. Which Indian batter has an average of 72.12 in ODIs this year but hasn't been picked for the upcoming series against Bangladesh? Any batter with such eye-popping numbers will be a mainstay in the squad. Instead, some inconsistency in selection calls – which have become way too frequent in Indian cricket off late – sees Shubman Gill, the batter in question, miss the flight to Dhaka.

In a year when T20I cricket took precedence, ODIs were mostly used to rotate and manage the workload of the first-choice XI. And after the second ODI against New Zealand in Hamilton, a game that was washed out on Sunday, India have played 20 50+over games this year with Gill playing 11 of those, making 625 runs at a strike rate of 104.16. Only Shikhar Dhawan, who is stand-in captain for the series and the only one to feature in 18 ODIs this year, has scored and averaged more in 2022, with 642 runs at a strike rate of 75.79.

As Indigo goes about narrowing down the names for next year's 50-over World Cup, Gill's name will feature prominently in the discussions. Not just going by the two ODIs that he has played on the tour of New Zealand so far, but over the past 12 months, the Punjab opener has looked a class apart. Over the course of the two innings on the tour where he has scored 50 and an unbeaten 45, Gill's assurance has been hard to miss. Be it setting the tempo at the start or asserting the authority later in the innings, he has made it look effortless.

There was a word of support from former India head coach Ravi Shastri, on air as Gill's fluid innings was stopped by a heavy drizzle on Sunday. "His emphasis today (Sunday) was on timing the ball. Sometimes when you are out of your depth, you want to get on with it by trying to hit the ball hard. He was in good control with good footwork. It is great to watch him play. There is something regal about him," Shastri said.

Gill's talent has never been in doubt. Enough has been spoken about it and no doubt there will be more to write and speak about this soft-spoken Punjabi lad who hails from an agricultural background. Right from the Under-19 level to the Border-Gavaskar Trophy triumph in 2020/21, to his exploits



Shubman Gill has played 11 out of India's 20 ODIs this year, making an impressive 625 runs at a strike rate of 104.16. PT

PTI

with the Punjab team in the domestic arena, and to the IPL this year, Gill has set the tone for whichever team he has opened for. And right now, the right-hander is doing it in ODIs, which is bound to keep the likes of Dhawan and KL Rahul on their toes.

Grace and confidence

In an age where power-hitting is the norm among top-order batters worldwide, Gill is different. It isn't that he doesn't go for big hits, but he does so with minimal effort, relying on timing rather than looking to whack the ball. So far in his brief international career, the real struggle Gill has shown is in maintaining intent for a long period. Watch him bat in full flow. For a youngster who looks calm

plenty to admire about his confidence in even playing a forward-defence or just leaning the ball. At times, he even takes those casual walks to punch the ball and ends up with a high-elbow pose that looks so pleasing on the eye. But there are also times when that same intent goes missing and he ends up looking ordinary, like in the one-off Test against England at Edgbaston this year.

There is still plenty to learn, but for now Gill seems to have locked the back-up opener's

slot at the World Cup all for himself. With a new selection panel to come, it is hard to second-guess who will be Rohit Sharma's partner at the top. As the numbers show, there is Dhawan who would be hard to dislodge. If one goes by performance alone, there is no reason to look past him as by virtue of being a left-hander, he brings something different to the table.

And that there is Rahul. Primarily played in the middle order in recent times, where he has made a strong case for himself, it remains to be seen if India will slot him at the top. Out of the 7 ODIs Rahul played this year, six have come as an opener, but none of them came in a XI that included Dhawan and Rohit. The upcoming three-match series against Bangladesh and ones at home against New Zealand and Bangladesh should show whether Rahul fits in the scheme or not.

But in case the selectors make Rahul compete with the rest for the three available middle-order slots, the team management has a reliable opener ready in Gill. Whether he is a first-choice or third-choice, time will tell, but as far as the right-hander goes, he is firmly staying in the present. "I'm not looking that far," Gill said in Hamilton when asked if he was thinking about making the 50-over World Cup cut. "The main purpose and intention is to make the most of the opportunities I get. That is what I'm trying to do – to get more opportunities and score big for the team," Gill added.



Iran tells Klinsmann to quit FIFA job

IRAN COACH Carlos Queiroz lambasted German football icon Jürgen Klinsmann for criticising his team's World Cup conduct, calling his remarks a "disgrace to football" and urging him to quit his FIFA post, as Iran's football federation demanded an apology. In comments as an analyst with broadcaster BBC, Germany's 1990 World Cup winner Klinsmann accused Iran of systematic gamesmanship during their stunning 2-0 stoppage-time win over Wales on Friday and said Queiroz's record with other national teams made him the right match for Iran. "That's their culture and that's their way of doing it and that's why Carlos Queiroz, he fits really well in the Iranian national team," Klinsmann said during an analysis of Friday's match. Queiroz, 69, said no-one could hurt the integrity of his team. "No matter how much I can respect what you did inside the pitch, those remarks about Iran culture, Iran national team and my players are a disgrace to football," he said in a post.

US Soccer removes emblem from Iran flag

THE UNITED States Soccer Federation temporarily displayed Iran's national flag on social media without the emblem of the Islamic Republic as a show of solidarity with protesters in Iran ahead of the two teams' World Cup clash on Tuesday. A now-deleted graphic of the Group B standings posted on Saturday across US Soccer's official Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts displayed the Iranian flag only bearing its green, white and red colours. Iran has been gripped by protests since 22-year-old Mahsa Amini's death in September while in police custody after she was arrested for flouting the country's strict Islamic dress code. The intent of the posts was to show "support for the women in Iran fighting for basic human rights", U.S. Soccer media officer Michael Kammarman told a news conference on Sunday. The banner on U.S. Soccer's Twitter page was also changed on Saturday to feature the flag without the emblem. It was changed back 24 hours later to the banner they had been using during the tournament. Iran's state-affiliated Tasnim News Agency said the



Neymar working "24 hours a day"

NEYMAR IS working "24 hours a day" to try to recover from his ankle injury and play again at the World Cup, Brazil teammate Marquinhos said Sunday. Neymar damaged ligaments in his right ankle in the team's 2-0 opening win over Serbia on Thursday and will miss the match against Switzerland on Monday. He remained hopeful of recovering but team doctors still haven't given a timetable on his return — or said if he will return at all. "He is sleeping in physiotherapy, 24 hours a day," Marquinhos said. "That shows how much he wants to be back with us. We don't know when it's going to happen, but we hope we will have him with us again as soon as possible and in good health mentally and physically."

Iranian Football Federation will file a complaint against U.S. Soccer to the FIFA Ethics Committee for "disrespecting the national flag" of the Islamic Republic.

Saudi Arabia skipper Al-Faraj out of WC

injured Saudi Arabia captain Salman Al-Faraj is out of the World Cup after coach Hervé Renard agreed to let him leave the camp, the Saudi Football Association said on Sunday. Al-Faraj was injured at the end of the first half of the historic 2-1 victory over Argentina in Saudi Arabia's first match in the tournament on Tuesday. He left the stadium on crutches, with an apparent leg injury, and Renard said he did not expect him to participate in any more matches at the finals. "Hervé Renard has given team captain Salman Al-Faraj his permission to officially leave the Green Falcons' camp following the medical team's assessment that he will no longer be fit to play," the national federation said in a statement on Twitter. —*Agencies*

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