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75
आज़ादी का
अमृत महोत्सव



योगी सरकार 2.0

विकास के सेवा, सुरक्षा और सुशासन के



अपराध एवं
अपराधियों के विरुद्ध
जीरो टॉलरेंस
माफियाओं द्वारा
अवैध रूप से अर्जित
रु. 2,200 करोड़
की सम्पत्तियां जब्त

महिला एवं बाल अपराधों में 36 अभियुक्तों को
मृत्युदंड, 1296 अभियुक्तों को आजीवन कारावास,
1203 अभियुक्तों को 10 वर्ष या उससे अधिक सजा
तथा 3676 अभियुक्तों को 10 वर्ष से कम की सजा
महिला अपराधों में सजा दिलाने में
उत्तर प्रदेश देश में प्रथम
56,491 अपराधियों के विरुद्ध गैंगस्टर एक्ट तथा
795 अपराधियों के विरुद्ध एन.एस.ए. की कार्यवाही

गन्ना किसानों को
विगत 6 माह में
रु. 30,697 करोड़
गन्ना मूल्य का भुगतान
अब तक
रु. 1.79 लाख करोड़
का रिकॉर्ड भुगतान

विगत 6 माह में
प्रधानमंत्री किसान सम्मान
निधि से किसानों को
रु. 4,950 करोड़
हस्तांतरित,
अब तक
2.60 करोड़ किसानों को
रु. 48,324 करोड़
हस्तांतरित

36 सिंचाई
परियोजनाएं पूर्ण
23 लाख हेक्टेयर
अतिरिक्त
सिंचन क्षमता सृजित
बाढ़-बचाव की
65 परियोजनाएं पूर्ण
2100 नये राजकीय नलकूपों
के निर्माण की स्वीकृति

250 एडवांस लाइफ
सपोर्ट एम्बुलेंस सेवा,
2270 नेशनल
एम्बुलेंस सेवा एवं
812 नई 108 एम्बुलेंस
सेवा संचालित
मुख्यमंत्री जन आरोग्य मेला में
अब तक **11.37 करोड़**
मरीजों का उपचार

एक जिला-एक मेडिकल
कॉलेज की नीति के तहत
65 मेडिकल कॉलेज संचालित।
22 मेडिकल कॉलेज निर्माणाधीन
हेल्थ ए.टी.एम. का शुभारंभ
अगले 3 माह में प्रदेश के
सभी पी.एच.सी. में हेल्थ
ए.टी.एम. की स्थापना

8.90 करोड़ लोगों
को आयुष्मान भारत
योजना में निःशुल्क
बीमा कवर
पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय
राज्य कर्मचारी
कैशलेस चिकित्सा
योजना प्रारंभ

38 करोड़ से
अधिक निःशुल्क
कोविड टीकाकरण
कोरोना के प्रभाव के दृष्टिगत
15 करोड़ लोगों
को निःशुल्क राशन

विशेष संचारी रोग
नियंत्रण/दस्तक अभियान से
दिमागी बुखार से होने वाली
मौतों पर **95 प्रतिशत**
तक नियंत्रण
नेशनल फैमिली हेल्थ सर्वे
के अनुसार उत्तर प्रदेश में हेल्थ
इंडिकेटर्स में आशातीत सुधार

पॉवर फॉर ऑल के तहत
1 करोड़ 47 लाख
से अधिक घरों का
विद्युत संयोजन
1,21,324 मजूरों
का विद्युतीकरण

‘स्कूल चलो
अभियान’ में
1.92 करोड़
बच्चों का
नामांकन

स्कूली बच्चों को यूनिफार्म,
जूता-मोजा, पाठ्य-पुस्तक
एवं स्कूल बैग उपलब्ध
कराने हेतु प्रति विद्यार्थी
रु. 1200 की दर से
अब तक
रु. 2200 करोड़
ऑनलाइन हस्तांतरित

विगत 6 माह में
35 करोड़
पौधरोपण
अब तक
131 करोड़
पौधरोपण



‘आजादी का
अमृत वर्ष’ में
8097
अमृत सरोवरों
का निर्माण
हर घर नल योजना :
30,000 से
अधिक
ग्राम पंचायतों में शुद्ध
पेयजल की आपूर्ति

स्वच्छ भारत
मिशन में
2.61 करोड़
शौचालयों
का निर्माण
देश में प्रथम

स्वामी विवेकानन्द
युवा सशक्तीकरण
योजना :
17 लाख
छात्र-छात्राओं को
टैबलेट/स्मार्ट फोन
वितरित

नारी सुरक्षा, सम्मान
एवं स्वावलंबन के लिए
मिशन शक्ति अभियान
58,000 बी.सी. सखी
के चयन का निर्णय।
अब तक **46,837** चयनित

प्रधानमंत्री
उज्ज्वला योजना
में
1.74 करोड़
से अधिक
निःशुल्क
गैस कनेक्शन देकर
देश में प्रथम
होली व दीपावली में
निःशुल्क गैस सिलेंडर

45.50 लाख
प्रधानमंत्री आवासों
का निर्माण एवं
पीएम स्वामित्व
योजना में
35 लाख घरों की
का वितरण कर
देश में प्रथम

बुन्देलखण्ड एक्सप्रेसवे
राष्ट्र को समर्पित
5 एक्सप्रेसवे
5 अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट
5 शहरों में
मेट्रो रेल सेवा

प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना में
विगत 6 माह में
2307 किमी. सड़कों का निर्माण
अब तक **12,564 किमी.**
सड़कों का निर्माण
100 सेतुओं का निर्माण
17,474 किमी. मार्गों का
चौड़ीकरण/सुदृढ़ीकरण

1.90 लाख
लघु उद्यमियों को
रु. 16 हजार
करोड़ ऋण वितरित
रोजगार मेलों
के माध्यम से
2.60 करोड़
लोगों को रोजगार
रु. 2.35 लाख
करोड़ की वार्षिक
ऋण योजना प्रारंभ
‘ईज ऑफ लिविंग’
एवं आर्थिक विकास हेतु
नगरीय निकायों का गठन
व नगरीय सीमाओं
का विस्तार

एक जनपद
एक उत्पाद
कार्यक्रम को
वैश्विक पहचान
राज्य से
निर्यात में
80 प्रतिशत
तक वृद्धि

विभिन्न जनपदों में
150 नई बी.एस.-6 बसें
तथा नगरीय क्षेत्र में
700 इलेक्ट्रिक बसें
संचालित
17 शहरों में
स्मार्ट सिटी मिशन
का संचालन
‘ईज ऑफ इहंग बिजनेस’
में अचीवर्स स्टेट

ग्राउण्ड ब्रेकिंग सेरेमनी-3 में
रु. 80,224 करोड़ की
1,406 निवेश परियोजनाएं शुरू
ग्लोबल इन्वेस्टर्स समिट
के आयोजन का निर्णय
ग्राउण्ड ब्रेकिंग सेरेमनी
के माध्यम से अब तक
रु. 3.80 लाख करोड़
का निवेश



डबल इंजन की सरकार - विकास की दोगुनी रफ़्तार

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

6 THE CITY



VACCINATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS	15,335
PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL:	40
OXYGEN SUPPORT	8
VENTILATOR SUPPORT	3

DELHI TOTAL CASES	20,02,938
HOSPITAL BEDS	8,874
ICU BEDS	2,086

Total	Vacant
8,874	8,830
2,086	2,068

NOIDA	Sep 23	Sep 24
Cases	N/A	N/A
Deaths	N/A	N/A
GURGAON		
Cases	34	32
Deaths	0	0

BRIEFLY

Parapet collapses at Delhi's Hindu Rao hospital

New Delhi: A portion of a parapet above the first floor of the operation theatre building at the Hindu Rao Hospital, run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), collapsed on Friday, causing minor damages to cars and motorbikes parked below, officials said. While no injury was reported, doctors working with the hospital complained that similar incidents have happened on the premises previously too.

4 held for cheating foreign citizens

New Delhi: Four men were arrested on September 19 for allegedly running a call centre in Shahdara and cheating foreign citizens on the pretext of providing escort services. Police of the Shahdara Special Staff and Cyber station received information about an illegal call centre being operated near Margnani Chowk, which targeted Australian citizens in particular.

Boy bitten by stray dog

Ghaziabad: A 11-year-old boy was bitten by a stray dog in a gated society in Ghaziabad on Saturday. Residents of the society, Amrapali Village in Indrapuram, later held a meeting regarding the issue of street dogs in the society. CCTV footage of the incident shows the boy walking past the dog, after which it suddenly runs behind him and bites him in the leg.

4 held for robbing CA of 9 lakh

New Delhi: Four men were arrested in the early hours of September 22 in Uttar Pradesh for their alleged involvement in an East Delhi robbery wherein Rs 9 lakh was robbed from the office of a chartered accountant in broad daylight.

Kin held for murdering man

Gurgaon: Over three weeks after the former vice-chairman of Sohna market committee was shot dead in Sadar Bazar, Gurgaon, the Special Task Force of Haryana Police on Friday arrested his brother-in-law for the murder. The accused is a member of gangster Vikram alias Papla Gujar's gang and has a criminal record, police said. **ENS**



A CAB RIDE IN GURGAON

A cab stranded in a waterlogged service lane at Narsinghpur on the Gurgaon-Delhi expressway

Under the weather

Part of road caves in, subway is flooded and wall collapses as Gurgaon records rain through the day

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
GURGAON, SEPTEMBER 24

VISUALS OF a cab stranded in a waterlogged service lane on the Gurgaon-Delhi expressway, with its driver sitting behind the wheel as rainwater came up to his waist and the passenger sitting helplessly on the roof with his suitcase, encapsulated the deluge as rain continued to lash the National Capital Region for the fourth consecutive day, inundating several areas.

A portion of a road caved in, a wall of a house collapsed and a subway was flooded as intermittent rain continued through the day, stopping briefly in the evening.

District administration officials said Gurgaon recorded 59 mm of rainfall between 8 am and 5 pm on Saturday. In the last two days, over 140 mm rainfall was recorded. One of the heaviest spells in September in the city in the past few years has brought the Millennium City to a standstill as the drainage infrastructure struggles to withstand the intensity of rainfall.

Several stretches on the NH-48, including Rajiv Chowk, Hero Honda Chowk and Subhash Chowk, were waterlogged. The carriageway and service lane at Narsinghpur stretch – a low-lying area where water usually accumulates due to topography – on national highway 48 was submerged for hours, slowing traffic movement. Pedestrians, two-wheelers and cars broke down as they waded through 2-feet water that had collected in the service lane. Officials said five pumps had been deployed to pump out the



Pedestrians, two-wheelers and cars broke down and a section of the road caved in during the downpour. *Express*

water, but due to continuous rainfall, it was yet to be drained.

"Because of the slope of the surface drain at Narsinghpur, the rain water used to flow to the culverts before it got scattered, but over time due to habitation and urbanisation, the culverts have been rendered useless. So, when the intensity of rainfall is heavy at this low lying area, it gets flooded," said an official of GMDA, adding that a partial solution to flooding at the stretch on NH-48 lies in the construction of leg 4 of a 5.5 km storm water drain, which will connect Vatika Chowk to railway culvert on SPR, whose tender has been floated.

Following heavy rainfall, a portion of a road caved in beneath Iffco Chowk flyover. Officials said repair work of a sewer line was going on at the spot. The area was cordoned off and repair work initiated, said officials.

In the past, similar cave-ins have been reported at the Iffco

Chowk, a busy intersection on the highway. In May 2022, a trench dug up to shift a sewer line had led to a cave-in on the service lane of Delhi-Gurgaon expressway near Iffco Chowk after heavy rain, while in August 2020, a sizeable chunk of road at Iffco Chowk had caved in after rain and subsequent waterlogging.

Old Gurgaon and low-lying areas such as Basai Chowk, sector 9A, sector 4 and Laxman Vihar remained waterlogged on Friday. In sector 38, a portion of a wall of a multi-storey house collapsed after soil caved in at the basement of an adjacent plot, where digging work was on during rain. Residents of adjacent houses said they had vacated their houses after some cracks developed in the walls. No one was injured. At Uppal South end, water entered houses.

At Rajiv Chowk, the non-motorised underpass/subway was inundated. Officials, however,



said that as per the directions of district administration ahead of monsoon season, all non-motorised transport (NMT) across underpasses in the city are closed for public use during monsoons and the water collected there was the excess water diverted from Rajiv Chowk junction. None of the underpasses reported waterlogging, said officials.

Traffic police issued an advisory requesting the commuters on NH-48 going from Delhi/Gurgaon to Manesar, Rewari and Jaipur to take alternative routes like Golf Course Extension, Vatika Chowk and SPR. "Inner city commuters may follow Rajiv Chowk to Vatika Chowk and SPR. This stretch will be free from water logging and commuters will be able to avoid slow-down of traffic at Narsinghpur on highway and service lanes," the advisory read.

Officials said efforts were on to reduce water logging at

Mayfield Garden junction, Medanta Road, sector 30/31, sector 45/46, Jharsa Chowk, Rajiv Chowk, Signature Tower, Badshahpur drain, Narsinghpur, Hero Honda Chowk, Golf Course Road and Golf Course Extension road.

Officials attributed extensive water logging to the heavy rainfall. A GMDA official said, "Several belts in the city have faced water logging as incessant rain showers continue. Our officials are on the ground to facilitate relief measures and to address waterlogging and flooding issues. Installation of pump sets and tractor mounted pumps for dewatering of waterlogged areas, cleaning of debris from water chutes, road gullies, culverts and drains, diverting the flow of stormwater, rectifying sewer overflow issues, keeping critical key locations safe and motorable, are being undertaken to bring the situation under normalcy."

A hospital's journey: From tales of a disappearing saint to mutiny of 1857

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

CURRENTLY FACING woes of cash crunch and dilapidated infrastructure, Delhi's Hindu Rao hospital is part of the capital's rich history – from the British era to the Tughlaq rule to a Maratha connection.

The hospital is placed on a small hilltop in Delhi's Malkaganj, surrounded by Kamla Nehru Ridge from three sides. It is one of three 'attractions' on the hilltop, the other two being Pir Ghai Hunting Lodge and Observatory and a Baoli.

During the rule of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, the hilltop was a forest area and a hunting zone for the dynast. During hunting outings, he would stay at the lodge nearby, formerly known as kushk-e-

88.

The building was a double-storey structure with a hollow masonry cylinder and is also believed to have been used for astronomical purposes. Later, it took the name of Pir Ghai, which literally means a vanished saint. The name was given to the building after stories of an Islamic saint vanishing into thin air started circulating.

Later, when the East India Company came to Delhi, civil servant William Fraser built a house at the hilltop. Fraser was a Scotsman, Persian scholar, agent to the Governor General in Delhi, and Commissioner of the Delhi Territory during the reign of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar.

After his assassination in 1835, Raja Hindu Rao, a Maratha nobleman from Kolhapur, took over the house, which was eventually converted into a hospital. Hindu Rao was the brother-in-law of Maharaja Daulat Rao Scindia of Gwalior.

"Hindu Rao's house was originally built by my wife's (Olivia Fraser's) ancestor William Fraser," Dalrymple said.

During the mutiny of 1857, Hindu Rao's house became a strategic location for the British as it overlooked Old Delhi and was covered by a forest from three sides.

In 1912, the British government decided to make three temporary hospitals, which included the conversion of Hindu Rao's house into a hospital for the European community. A mansion called Balak Ram Ki Kothi was

converted into a hospital for Indians. The government also passed directions to build an infectious disease hospital at the same time.

According to Delhi Archives records, the British government on October 2, 1912, passed an order through which it decided to convert the two structures into hospitals. Prior to this, Hindu Rao's house was being used by the military authorities as a small nursing home.

"Hindu Rao's house should be taken over from the military authorities for the purpose of a European Hospital. The house known as Balak Ram Ka Kothi, which has been acquired, should be converted into an Indian Hospital and a small infectious disease block should be built on a site to the north of Kingsway Station between Malakpur and

Dhaka," said the order passed by the then Secretary to the government of India, H Wheeler.

As per the preliminary estimates, a sum of Rs 45,736 was decided to plaster and paint the wards.

Interestingly, the British government did not install fans in the hospital, initially stating that since the government will not be in Delhi in summers, fans will not be required, which helped them save a sum of Rs 2,900.

Three nurses were lent from Walker Hospital, Shimla from December 1, 1912 to March 31, 1913. Post Independence, the hospital came under central government and later the Delhi government.

"In 1951, Delhi State Govt. converted this Nursing Home into a General hospital offering basic preventive and curative OPD services with 127 beds for in-patients. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi took over the hospital in 1958 and the Ministry of Health, Govt. of India, designated this hospital as a referral hospital in 1963," states the hospital's website.

According to Dr SK Seth, former Director of Hospital Administration in North MCD, the hospital was known for its major dog bites clinic and as a provider of anti-rabies serum.

"Emergency block, OPD, and college of nursing were added later. Nowadays, due to scarcity of funds, they are unable to keep pace with it. However, the hospital has been providing services to people of North India, including Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan," Dr Seth said.



Hindu Rao's house which was later converted into a hospital

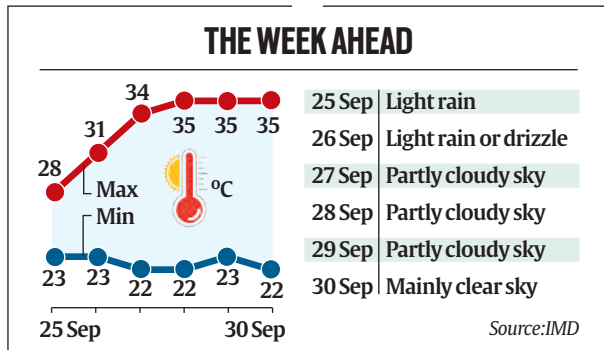
Less intense rainfall likely today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

IN WHAT was the third consecutive day of persistent rainfall over Delhi-NCR, most parts of the city recorded moderate rain.

The Safdarjung weather station, the city's base station, recorded around 10 mm of rainfall between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm. Palam recorded a higher amount of 21.9 mm and Aya Nagar recorded 17.4 mm.

The intensity of rainfall is likely to reduce on Sunday when light rainfall is likely along with thundershowers in a few places. The intensity is set to reduce further on Monday when only very light rainfall is expected, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Dry weather



is set to return to Delhi from September 27 to 30.

An IMD update issued on Saturday said that intense spell of rainfall that would continue over the plains of northwest India on Saturday and Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand over the weekend would reduce sig-

nificantly thereafter. A cyclonic circulation, which is one of the weather systems contributing to the prolonged rainfall spell over northwest India, lay over north-east Rajasthan as of Saturday evening. The cyclonic circulation is likely to persist till Sunday, according to the IMD. A western

disturbance has also been affecting parts of Northwest India.

Till 8.30 am on Saturday, the Safdarjung weather station recorded 145.9 mm of rainfall for September, which is an excess of 25% against the normal of 116.8 mm. The Palam weather station has recorded a larger excess of 68% for the month, having received 170.9 mm of rainfall against a normal of 101.8 mm. However, rainfall for the monsoon season so far still remains at a deficit of around 21% at the Safdarjung weather station.

On account of overcast skies and rainfall, the maximum temperature has remained below 30 degrees for three days. The maximum temperature recorded on Saturday was 27.2 degrees Celsius, seven degrees below the normal.

Eye on dengue, CM chalks out action plan: Involving schoolkids, dedicated hospitals

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

AS THE city records a spurt in dengue cases, Delhi government has chalked out an action plan towards prevention including special homework for school children, 35 dedicated hospitals, case-based monitoring, larval source management and fogging.

Chairing a meeting with state health department officials, CM Arvind Kejriwal Saturday said that to control the rise in cases, school children will be involved in the awareness campaign for better public participation.

"Children in schools will be assigned special homework where they will be requested to inspect

their homes to ensure that there is no water stagnation," Kejriwal said. The CM said that the government is keeping a close eye on dengue cases in Delhi.

"A comprehensive plan has been prepared after our meeting with officials from the Health Department, MCD, NDMC, and other departments. In the coming days, many effective initiatives will be drawn up. This rainy season has lasted longer than usual. The risk of dengue may rise. United, Delhi will defeat dengue this time," said Kejriwal.

The number of dengue cases has increased in the city, and as per MCD data released on September 19, over 100 cases were reported last week. The numbers are expected to increase

in view of the recent spell of rain.

Kejriwal asked all government officials to examine their offices every day to prevent water stagnation where dengue mosquitoes can breed. He added that district-level officers have been directed to spread awareness on prevention of mosquito-borne diseases in their respective areas. All RWAs have been told to go door-to-door in their respective areas to encourage people to follow the recommendations.

The health department officials informed the CM that they are monitoring compliance with the guidelines and issuing challans where there is negligence or violations. Kejriwal also directed the DMs, SDMs, tehsildars, and other officers to visit districts con-

cerned to inspect construction sites and hospitals every Saturday where there is a high likelihood of waterlogging. He said the government will take measures if the recommendations are not followed strictly. In this context, orders have been issued not to allow any form of negligence in hospitals as the breeding of dengue mosquitoes on hospital grounds may result in patients and family members becoming infected with the disease.

According to a state health department official, major activities including perennial anti-larval measures, anti-mosquito measures, breeding source reduction, and ensuring active public participation are being undertaken by the government.



New Delhi



PM: BJP will get another term in Himachal, my second home

AMIL BHATNAGAR
MANDI, SEPTEMBER 24

CALLING HIMACHAL Pradesh his 'second home', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the people of the state have made up their mind to repeat the BJP government on the lines of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Setting in motion party's campaigning ahead of the polls, the Prime Minister was addressing the Yuva Vijay Sankalp Rally rally at Paddal Ground in Mandi through video-conferencing, after he couldn't reach the venue due to inclement weather.

"For decades, in our country, governments were unstable. There was no clear majority. No one knew how many days a government would last. Not only the citizens, the entire world was apprehensive. But in 2014, everyone, including Himachal, voted for a stable, strong government. This gave stability in all aspects of governance," said Modi in his



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the rally in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi via video-conference. PTI

virtual speech.

He said the co-ordination between the state and central governments has strengthened governance and bettered policy making. "For the maintenance of national highways in the state, nearly Rs 14,000 crore were released. This is seven times what the previous government had allocated," he said.

The PM said the state has made invaluable contributions in several fields, including sports, while praising the party's youth wing. Whether sports or the gov-

ernment, BJP's youth leaders are setting an example for the entire country. "From CMs to MLAs, the BJP has the maximum number of youth leaders," Modi said.

He talked about IIT in Mandi, proposed Bulk Drug Park and other developmental projects in the pipeline for the state. Himachal Pradesh is one of the three states which has been chosen for developing the pharma hub, he added. "Tourism sector will get a huge boost in the times to come. Whether it's Kullu shawl, Chamba paintings or Lahauli warm clothes,

all have been given geographical indication (GI) tags. Whenever I meet a foreign dignitary, I gift them something from Himachal so that they know about the state, said the PM. He said he would soon visit Himachal Pradesh to have a face-to-face meeting with the people of the hill state.

Since the 1990s, no party has been able to repeat a government in Himachal. The BJP is trying hard to break the pattern, citing CM Jairam Thakur's governance, and the "lack" of leadership in the Congress.

Prior to the PM speech, slogans such as "Wahan Yogi laaye, yahan Jai Ram laayenge (Brought Yogi in UP, will bring Jai Ram here)" were raised by the youth leaders from the stage. Apart from CM Jai Ram Thakur, party's youth wing national president and MP Tejaswi Surya also addressed the rally.

Despite bad weather, people from across the state had gathered for the rally. As it started drizzling, people used chairs to protect themselves.

EC wraps up Himachal visit

January 8, 2023
Term of the current Himachal Pradesh Assembly ends

TOTAL VOTERS 53,88,409

48 GEN 17 SC 3 ST
68 Total seats

Males 27,23,840

Females 26,64,549

Transgenders 20

54,775 Disabled

1,200 Above 100 yrs

7,881 total polling stations

142 Stations to be handled by all-women staff

■ All aspirants must publish criminal records, which will be in public domain

HAVE A COMPLAINT?

Register it on C-vigil voter app. Action assured in 100 minutes

UNABLE TO ACCESS A POLLING STATION?

Send vote through form 12D

EC TO VISIT POLL-BOUND GUJARAT NEXT

February 23, 2023 Term of current Assembly ends

December 9 & 14, 2017 Went to polls in 2 phases

BJP has been in power in the state since 1998 and the main opposition Congress came close to defeating it in 2017

Congress prevented Manmohan from implementing GST, says Mandaviya

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 24

FORMER PRIME minister and economist Manmohan Singh was stymied by his party (Congress) from implementing the Goods and Services Tax (GST), said Union Minister of Health Mansukh Mandaviya, praising Singh for his acumen in economics and added that it was contrary to how Prime Minister Narendra Modi works, putting nation first and his party later.

Delivering an honorary lecture on "Modi@20: Dreams meet Delivery" at the Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University in Ahmedabad on Saturday, Mandaviya also claimed that PM Modi prioritises the country over winning elections.

The book that was released earlier this year includes the authorship of educationist and Infosys Foundation chairperson Sudha Murty, economist Arvind Panagariya, Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar, spiritual guru Sadhguru and others, has a compilation of chapters talking about Modi as the head of a government for 20 years.



Mansukh Mandaviya

plemented and businesspersons were unsatisfied owing to teething problems faced by any new large-scale policy. In such countries, the incumbent governments did not come to power the next time..."

The health minister added, "Even if Manmohan Singh thought of implementing it, his party said think of something else or we won't form a government the second time. Modiji said 'country first', whether the government comes to power or not (a second time)... but GST has to be implemented for 'one nation, one tax', and he brought it. The country has to be first without compromises."

India is the largest democracy in the world and administration in democracies is a challenge, Mandaviya said and added, "The challenge is such that in democratic systems we have constitutional arrangements... There are political parties at various levels — national, state and regional... and they prioritise winning elections. But PM Modi does not give priority to winning elections, but rather prioritises the country... The country has to be first."

Hailing PM Modi for working "holistically" towards the betterment of all, Mandaviya said, "I went to Uzbekistan two years ago. It broke off from (then) Russia (Soviet Union)... Russia was a communist country. Communist culture believes that communism is the only culture, no other culture exists and such a belief led to its fall..."

Jammu mayor, his deputy quit posts

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 24

JAMMU MUNICIPAL Corporation Mayor Chander Mohan Gupta and Deputy Mayor Purnima Sharma, both BJP members, resigned Saturday at a councillors' meeting where senior party leaders were present.

Sources said resentment had been brewing among corporators over the alleged lack of development works in their respective wards.

The resignations came a day ahead of BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh's visit to the city to attend a meeting of party corporators who will elect a new mayor and deputy mayor. Chugh is also in charge of BJP's affairs in J&K.

Both the mayor and deputy mayor had assumed office in 2018 after the BJP won 43 of the 75 wards in the Jammu Municipal Corporation. The next election to the civic body is scheduled to be held in 2023.

The two officials resigned at a two-hour luncheon meeting called to discuss a change in the offices of mayor and deputy mayor at a private club here. BJP's J&K unit chief Ravinder Raina,

who was present at the meeting, said both Gupta and Sharma offered their resignations.

The development comes after BJP councillors in the party-dominated Kathua and Udhampur Municipal Councils voted against nominees of their own party.

On September 10, the BJP had lost the race to the office of president in Kathua Municipal Council to an independent after a number of its own councillors voted against its nominee. The office of president had fallen vacant following the resignation of Naresh Sharma, a BJP leader, over allegations that he had spoken against party high command.

Similarly, a number of BJP councillors had on September 22 voted for a no-confidence motion against Udhampur Municipal Council president Dr Jogeshwar Kumar Gupta, ignoring party directions to the contrary.

Treat differently abled as equals: Chandrachud

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

SUPREME COURT Justice D Y Chandrachud Saturday called on government and private entities to work towards a more just world for people with disabilities while noting the lack of accessibility for them in public and other spaces.

"Government or private entities must ensure that laws and policies are being complied with. This is of foremost importance. In our individual capacities, the least we can do is accord persons with disabilities the respect they deserve and treat them as equals," he said at the Professor Shamnad Basheer Memorial Lecture on "Making Disability Rights Real: Addressing Accessibility & More".

Justice Chandrachud said that despite laws mandating disabil-



Justice D Y Chandrachud

ity-friendly infrastructure, public transport and other spaces continue to remain inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

Some entities do not even pretend to comply with such laws while others comply with them in a desultory fashion, and only with a view to getting their building and occupancy permits. I have noticed that some ramps are so steep that an able-bodied person cannot walk down without falling

over, let alone a person who uses a wheelchair or crutches," he said.

Pointing to the need to work towards a just society which accounts for the needs of persons with disabilities and provides facilities to accommodate them, Justice Chandrachud said these facilities, which are known as "reasonable accommodations" in legal terms, must not be viewed with contempt or derision.

"It is incumbent on all institutions... governmental or private, and all individuals to do their bit to ensure a more just world for persons with disabilities," he said.

Justice Chandrachud said: "Arbitrary restrictions on the exercise of legal capacity denies persons with disabilities equal protection before law, thereby depriving them of a whole host of rights including civil, political, social, economic, sexual, and repro-

ductive rights." He added that though the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 mandates reservation of at least 5 per cent of the total seats for persons with benchmark disabilities in all government institutions of higher education and other higher education institutions receiving aid from government, most of these do not account for any "reasonable accommodation" that persons with disabilities might require.

On their right to work, he said: "It should not be limited to their participation in the workforce".

"The constitutional precepts of the right to dignity and equality require public and private employers to do more to make their workplaces inclusive and accessible to them," he said, adding that technology can play an essential role in creating inclusive and accessible workplaces.

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8 GOVT & POLITICS

HOUSE PANEL CHANGE SHOCKING, SAY MPs

5 MPs, including one from BJP, urge Speaker to restore Tharoor as Parliament IT panel head

MANOJ CG

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

FIVE MEMBERS of the Parliament standing committee on Information Technology, including an MP from the BJP, have written a joint letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Saturday urging him to restore Shashi Tharoor as chairman of the panel arguing that the Government's decision to change the chairperson in the middle of the 17th Lok Sabha had come as an "utter shock".

Tharoor, too, broke his silence on the Government's decision — communicated to the Congress just days ago — to take away the chairmanship of the panel from the Congress. "I am dismayed by the Government's unusual decision to change a Chairman mid-way through the 17th Lok Sabha.



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor

Parliamentary democracy is ill-served by such intolerance," he said in a Twitter post.

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Congress leader in Lok Sabha, also sent a second letter to the Speaker demanding "honourable treatment for Congress, the principal Opposition party in the Lok Sabha, in keeping with well-established parliamentary conventions."

"While the government may be within its rights to assign the IT Committee to itself, the appropriate compensation for the Congress party should be to restore External Affairs to us, which was taken away from our party in 2019. By convention the principal Opposition party must have at least one of the top four committees," Chowdhury said.

In their joint letter to the Speaker, the MPs, Anil Agrawal (BJP); John Brittas (CPM); Karti Chidambaram (Congress); Mahua Moitra (Trinamool Congress); and T Sumathy (a) Thamizhachi Thangapandian (DMK): said: "The allocation of the Committee is generally decided at the convening of a fresh Lok Sabha and this remains the case until it is dissolved, barring certain exceptional circumstances."

"It comes to us with utter

shock that the Chairpersonship of our Committee has been changed in the middle of the 17th Lok Sabha," they said adding "out of the many Parliamentary Standing Committees, our Committee has always been proactive in conducting frequent meetings, resulting in concrete actions, both during the parliamentary sessions as well as the inter-session period."

"It has been regarded highly across the political spectrum under the able chairmanship of Dr. Tharoor," they said adding the IT Committee, has "provided a forum for building consensus across political parties on issues of emerging technology and its repercussions for citizens."

When contacted, Agrawal, BJP MP from UP, said: "He was outgoing... so I said he did well. That was my spirit... every Chairman who

completes his tenure, every member says he did well and we hope he shall continue." Asked about his name in the letter with Opposition MPs, he said: "I have very good relations (*sadbhav*) with him (Tharoor). But I cannot go against my party's wishes... I came to know about the letter only at about 6-7 pm in the evening. In India, we always speak good about the outgoing. That was my intention."

The MPs said the Committee's work becomes even more important "when our democracy closely mediates information technology on an everyday basis. Shouldering the responsibility to take further the cause of citizen's data and privacy, Dr. Tharoor has not missed a single occasion to critically engage the Committee on IT issues of supreme importance. Withdrawal of the allocation of his role will be

immensely unfortunate for the IT Committee..." they said.

Chowdhury, in his letter, said the "government is reducing Parliamentary Committees to a farce if they are unprepared to deal with a committee Chair doing his work seriously and professionally, and a committee serving as an independent voice expressing views that may not always be to the taste of the government of the day."

"If the government is determined to retain the IT Committee for the ruling party, I am writing to insist that as the principal opposition party we have every right to ask for one of the major substantive committees — Home Affairs, External Affairs, Defence or Finance. At least three of these four have traditionally been chaired by the Opposition," he added.

CONG CHIEF ELECTION PROCESS BEGINS

After Gehlot entry, Tharoor picks up nomination forms

MANOJ CG

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

MAKING IT clear that he is set to contest the Congress presidential election next month, Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor collected the nomination forms soon after the week-long window for filing of papers opened Saturday.

A representative of Tharoor arrived at the AICC headquarters with a letter of authorisation from the Thiruvananthapuram MP. He was handed five sets of nomination papers by Madhusudan Mistry, chairman of the Congress Central Election Authority.

Tharoor will face off with Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot who announced Friday that he will contest the election on October 17. Counting of votes is scheduled for October 19. A candidate needs the signatures of 10 PCC delegates to file one set of nomination papers.

Two other persons came to collect nomination forms but were neither PCC delegates themselves nor claimed to have the support of any. They themselves as Laxmikant Sharma from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh and Vinod Sarati from Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh. Only PCC delegates can contest the election.

Their appearance was reminiscent of Dharti Pakad, who was known to contest unsuccessfully every election, big or small. Congress old-timers recall he had come to contest the party presidential election against Rajiv Gandhi too in the 1980s.

Mistry sat at his office at the AICC headquarters from 11 am, and those close to him said he would be present there every day until September 30, the day the window for filing of nomination papers closes. October 1 is the date for scrutiny of the nomination papers and the last date for withdrawal is October 8. The final list of candidates will be published at 5 pm on October 8.

Meanwhile, Umakant Mankad, veteran Congress leader from Gujarat, wrote a letter to Mistry, alleging irregularities in the election of PCC delegates from the state and demanded postponement of the elections.

The Congress is witnessing an election to the post of the party president after 22 years. With Rahul Gandhi not contesting, the party is looking at the prospect of a non-Gandhi at the helm for the first time in two-and-a-half decades. The last non-Gandhi Congress chief was Sitaram Kesri, from whom Sonia Gandhi took over in March 1998.

PUNJAB RAJ BHAVAN VS AAP GOVT

Governor writes to Mann on his duties, govt says Cabinet decision binding

KANCHAN VASDEV

CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 24

PUNJAB GOVERNOR Banwarilal Purohit Saturday reminded Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann of his duties and said his legal advisors were not adequately briefing him on the same even as the government responded to a Raj Bhavan letter seeking a list on the legislative business for a proposed Assembly session as "unknown to law, beyond the Constitution, contrary to precedent, and legally untenable."

A row between the Raj Bhavan and the AAP government, which began after Governor withdrew an order summoning a special sitting of the Vidhan Sabha called by Mann to table a confidence motion, escalated Friday after Purohit sought to know the legislative businesses to be taken up in an Assembly session proposed for September 27. The CM had reacted to the demand as "too much".

On Saturday, Governor, in a letter to the chief minister said, "After reading your statements in today's newspapers, it appears to me that perhaps you are 'too much' angry with me."

"I think your legal advisors are not briefing you adequately. Perhaps, your opinion about me will definitely change after reading the provisions of Article 167 and 168 of the Constitution, which I'm quoting for your ready reference," Purohit further wrote.



Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit; CM Bhagwant Mann

While Article 167 defines a chief minister's duties towards the Governor, Article 168 speaks about the composition of the state legislature.

The Governor is yet to give his assent for the Assembly session called on September 27.

On Saturday, in a letter to the Governor, the Punjab government said, "The demand for agenda and details, while it is being met herein without prejudice, cannot be a condition precedent for calling/convening of a session nor delay in convening of a session, once decided upon by the Council of Ministers, the decision of the latter being binding on the Hon'ble Governor. Any contrary approach would be unknown to law, beyond the Constitution, contrary to precedent, practice and convention and hence legally untenable."

It further requested the Governor to issue the orders summoning the State Assembly on September 27 "as per decision of the government, as conveyed on 22.09.2022." The reply of the government does not mention that it wants to table confidence motion.

BJP may announce a CM face in Bihar after 2024 Lok Sabha polls

Possibility mentioned at meet presided over by Amit Shah

SANTOSH SINGH

KISHANGANJ, SEPTEMBER 24

THE BJP is likely to announce the NDA's chief minister candidate for Bihar soon after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, well in time for the next Assembly polls in state.

The possibility, a big departure from the BJP's stand of contesting Assembly elections under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was mentioned at the party's core committee meeting in Kishanganj on Friday evening, presided over by visiting Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Party sources said that Shah, who addressed rallies in Seemanchal on Friday and Saturday as part of the BJP's first big events in Bihar after losing power, said he would be visiting other areas of the state soon.

The BJP has been open to alliance with smaller Bihar parties, though there is no word yet on whether channels of communication are open with IJP (Ramvilas) leader Chirag Paswan and Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) leader Mukesh Sahani. What is clear is that the BJP, as of now, is preparing for the NDA to contest



Home Minister Amit Shah at a meet in Kishanganj on Friday.

all 40 Bihar seats in the 2024 polls.

There was also a mention of political analyst Prashant Kishor, who is soon to mark the start of his political venture with the launch of a padyatra on October 2.

Party leaders said it was made clear at the meeting that the BJP does not support making Seemanchal a Union Territory, calling this view "misplaced".

During his Kishanganj visit, Shah also went to a border outpost at Fatehpur and inaugurated buildings of five border outposts

in Kishanganj. He held meetings with top officials of the ITBP, BSF and SSB. With Bihar sharing a border with Bangladesh and Nepal, talk focused on ways to stop "infiltration" from the two countries.

The BJP's core committee also considered the strategy to be adopted for taking on the Nitish-Lalu Prasad combination. The meeting was also unanimous on not "allowing return of Nitish Kumar to the NDA".

While Nitish had taken a stridently different stand from the BJP

EXPLAINED BJP's 'minus-JDU' plan

UNENCUMBERED BY its ally JDU, the BJP will be focusing on strengthening the party from the booth level up, like in Tripura, Manipur and Assam, where it came up from behind to establish a stronghold. During the Kishanganj leg of his Bihar visit on Saturday, Amit Shah visited the Burhi Kali Mata temple in the Muslim-dominated town and conducted an elaborate puja. It is being seen as a clear message to the party's constituency that it would wear Hindutva now on its teeth, even as it accuses Nitish Kumar of "appeasing minorities".

on caste census, leading up to the split between the two, the BJP is unlikely to bow on the issue. Leaders said it was "not feasible" as the same surname could denote separate castes and sub-castes depending on the region.



YATRA ROLLS ON

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Kerala's Thrissur on Saturday. Addressing a rally in Thrissur, Gandhi attacked the Union government over the rise in fuel and cooking gas prices in the country. He accused the BJP and RSS of spreading hate and violence to distract people from burning issues. *ANI*

Focus on law and order, push for infra: UP govt lists achievements

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

LUCKNOW, SEPTEMBER 24

AS THE YOGI Adityan-led BJP government completes six months of its second term on Sunday, officials on Saturday presented a report card highlighting some of its key achievements, such as continuing with bringing amendments in law to gag accused of crimes against women and the offenders under the POC SO Act, intensifying work on infrastructure projects, development of Ayodhya with an aim to make it a smart city along with construction of the Ram temple.

The list of achievements highlights a ground-breaking ceremony wherein Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation of 1,406 projects worth around Rs 80,224 crore. The government is hopeful that these projects would generate employment for over six lakh people, official sources said.

Six new expressways projects are coming up. The government also emphasised its focus on strengthening the air connectivity in the state, with a plan of having 18 airports in the state including five international airports.

To improve health facilities, the government has over the past six months installed health ATMs at all 4,600 primary health centres of the state. The government is also running medical colleges in 65 districts, and AIIMS in Gorakhpur and Rae Bareilly. Also, 22 medical colleges are under construction in the state. In Covid-19 management, Uttar Pradesh claims to have excelled among states, giving more than 38 crore vaccine doses.

The list of the state government's achievements also highlights that 75,190 loudspeakers were removed from religious places peacefully. In Ayodhya district, which is highly sensitive, the government has set up a unit of Special Task Force (STF).

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Mithun repeats: 21 TMC MLAs in direct contact

Kolkata: BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty Saturday reiterated that about 21 TMC MLAs are in direct contact with him.

Addressing a press conference at a BJP office in Hastings area, Chakraborty said the number of TMC MLAs in touch with him had not come down since he first made such a claim.

"I stand by what I had said earlier. About 21 TMC MLAs are still in touch with me," said Chakraborty, who had on July 27 claimed that about 38 TMC MLAs were in touch with BJP, with 21 being in direct contact with him.

TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said, "His claims are far away from reality." **ENS**

J&K TERROR FUNDING CASE

Chargesheet filed against ex-minister, two others

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 24

THE STATE Investigation Agency of Jammu and Kashmir Police Saturday filed a chargesheet in a court here against former minister Jatinder Singh, alias Babu Singh, and two others in a terror-funding case.

The others named in the chargesheet are Mohammad Sharee Shah of Anantnag's Larnoo area and Mohammad Hussain Khatheb of Bhandarwah in Doda district. The latter is, at present, staying in Pakistan.

Shah was arrested from Jammu with Rs 6.90 lakh cash

that was meant to be delivered to Singh for "anti-national activities" and his party "Nature Mankind Friendly Global Party", the chargesheet said.

According to it, Singh was in touch with the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen terrorists and separatists of JKLF (an unlawful association). "These inimical entities had sent this terror fund from Pakistan through their associates for Singh's party," it added.

The agency said Singh was in contact with Khatheb via encrypted apps and had clandestinely visited Dubai to arrange funds. Shah was designated as secretary of this party and he received these funds in Kashmir.

PM mementos auction: Statue of Thambi the horseman big draw; no bid yet for many items

DIVYAA

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

THE CHESS Olympiad is over but its equine mascot is still a popular draw at the auction of the Prime Minister's mementos. At 53 bids so far, a statue of "Thambi" the horseman, the official mascot of the event held recently in Chennai, is among the most sought-after items.

The online auction of over 1,200 items, which had been gifted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is being conducted through the web portal pmmementos.gov.in and will continue till October 2.

The objects up for sale include paintings, sculptures, folk



More than 1,200 items are up for auction.

artefacts and sports memorabilia.

Of the last category, a t-shirt with an autograph of Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games Gold medalist shooter Manish Narwal —

whose base price was Rs 10 lakh — saw the most expensive bid yet at Rs 13.20 lakh. But that was largely an exception, with other sporting items, which have high base prices, receiving a lukewarm response.

Along with Narwal's autographed T-shirt, a red table tennis racket signed by 2022 Commonwealth Games 2022 gold medalist Bhavina Patel has received three bids. Another T-shirt signed by the women's hockey team from the 2022 Commonwealth Games, with a base price of Rs 2.4 lakh, has not got any bid so far.

A model statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose has received four bids so far, the highest being Rs 6.15 lakh. Its base

price was Rs 5 lakh.

A life membership card presented by the National Cadet Corps Alumni Association to the PM has received 29 bids. Starting at a base price of Rs 1,100, the card bid went up to Rs 23,000.

Other PM mementos at the auction include replicas and models of the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya and the Kashi-Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi.

Among the items that are yet to receive bids are a coloured portrait of the PM by Ram Kumar Prajapati (base price Rs 48,600); a watercolour painting of the PM by Vandana Srinivasan from Girinagar (base price Rs 1,600); stole cloth, framed posters of several events, and sculptures and portraits of the PM.

Governors won't support everything states do, we are not rubber stamps: Tamilisai

TELANGANA GOVERNOR **TAMILISAI SOUNDARARAJAN** speaks with **ARUN JANARDHANAN** about her strained working relationship with the TRS government and responds to allegations about Governors working at the behest of the Centre. Excerpts:

How has your stint as governor of Telangana, a non-BJP state, been so far?

I should say that it (TRS) is being dangerously callous... Officers of the rank of the SP have stopped giving me protocol protection for almost a year now. My programmes are also skipped by collectors.

How do you react to the



charge that governors are acting at the behest of the BJP government at the Centre?

Many steps undertaken with goodwill are being misrepresented. It appears that the governments are losing confidence and blaming everyone and everything. What political goal could there possibly be for a governor to visit a flood-affected area?

The charge against a lot of governors who are involved in similar conflicts with state

governments is that they act as BJP-RSS supporters

I cannot comment about other governors or states. We are governors, not BJP or RSS members. The fact remains that no Governor can be have or perform in front of the people like an MLA. We are holding a constitutional position. But they (state governments) are politically biased, so they see us as political workers. But we will not support everything they do, because we are not rubber stamps.

There are concerns that the growing number of disputes

between state governments and governors could result in a governance crisis

One problem I see is the attitude of some CMs who expect quick replies and approval from governors. I cannot talk about individual cases of governors, but the process of clearances is also about obtaining certain legal clarity... when lands are swindled, institutions are overrun with ineligible family and ruling party members, and Cabinet meetings where such decisions are made are attended by five or six family members from the CM's family...



THE EXPRESS
INTERVIEW

FOURTH ARREST IN CHANDIGARH UNIVERSITY VIDEO CASE

Army man held from Arunachal, accused of blackmailing student

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 24

THE PUNJAB Police on Saturday arrested an Army man from Arunachal Pradesh for allegedly blackmailing a woman student of the Mohali-based Chandigarh University who had earlier been arrested for allegedly recording and leaking objectionable videos. This is the fourth arrest in the case.

Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said Sanjeev Singh was arrested from Sela Pass in Arunachal Pradesh where he was posted. He said Punjab Police has also obtained a two-day transit remand of Singh from the court of Bomdila chief judicial magistrate. He will be produced before a Mohali court.

Yadav said Singh has been arrested with support from police in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam as well as Army authorities. An Army official in Delhi said, "During the ongoing investigations by Punjab Police in a sensitive case, it has revealed that a serving Army soldier is likely to have been involved in acts chargeable under sections of the IPC and IT Act. Immediately on receipt of information from the police authorities, all possible assistance was extended to Punjab and Arunachal Pradesh Police to



A Punjab police team with the accused Army man (third from right), arrested in Arunachal Pradesh. @DGPpunjabPolice

arrest the soldier and hand over his custody for further investigations".

He said the Army practices zero tolerance of such acts and will continue to provide all assistance for early conclusion of investigation.

DGP Yadav said the accused Army personnel was suspected of blackmailing the accused woman student. He said based on forensic and digital evidence, a Mohali police team was dispatched to Arunachal Pradesh to arrest the accused.

Apart from the woman student of the private Chandigarh University, police had earlier arrested two other accused from Himachal Pradesh and seized some electronic devices from

their possession.

An FIR was registered at the Kharar (Sadar) police station on September 18 after protests rocked the university campus over allegations that a hostel inmate recorded several objectionable videos of woman students in the common washroom and leaked them online. The university authorities, however, had dismissed the allegations as "false and baseless".

The DGP said an all-women special investigation team of Ludhiana SP (counter intelligence) Rupinder Kaur Bhatti, DSP Rupinder Kaur and DSP Deepika Singh is investigating the case. "The guilty in this case will not be spared and justice will prevail," said the DGP.

Top gangsters with links to Punjab gangs, terror groups arrested: NIA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

THE NIA on Saturday said dreaded gangsters Neeraj Bawana, Kaushal Choudhary and Bhupinder Rana have been arrested, days after the agency had launched search operations at over 50 locations across the country in connection with cases involving Punjab gangs and their nexus with terror groups.

Neeraj Sehrawat, alias 'Neeraj Bawana' of Delhi; Kaushal, alias 'Naresh Chaoudhary' of Gurgaon, Haryana; and Bhupinder Singh, alias 'Bhupi Rana', of Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar in Punjab were arrested on Friday, an NIA spokesperson said.

The NIA had registered an FIR against all three, and had con-

ducted raids last week in connection with two cases it took over from Delhi Police in connection with the Sidhu Moosewala murder, and gangs associated with it.

In a statement, NIA said: "The case relates to involvement of criminal gangs in different kinds of criminal activities, including killings, to terrorise people to extort for running and promoting their criminal syndicates. These gangs were also raising funds for criminal activities through smuggling of drugs and weapons."

The NIA stated that the case was initially registered by Delhi Police's Special Cell against eight accused named, and several others unnamed. The NIA re-registered a case on August 26 and further investigations are in progress, the agency stated.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI
(ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT)
The Executive Engineer (E&M) on behalf of Commissioner MCD invites Expression of interest (EOI) Vide NIT No. EE-E&M/MCD/ENGG./2022-23/10 Dated: 24.9.2022 Tender ID 2022_EDMC_129906 for DESIGN, BUILD and O & M OF INGESTA/PAUNCH WASTE & DUNG PROCESSING UNIT AT SLAUGHTER HOUSE, GHAZIPUR, The EOI details can be seen on website www.mcdonline.nic.in and can be downloaded from the website www.etenders.gov.in. The last date of sale of tender will be 03.10.2022. The press notice is also available on www.mcdonline.nic.in
RO No. 31/DPI/MCD/2022-23 EE(E&M)SS&SN

ICAR-INDIAN VETERINARY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
IZATNAGAR, BAREILLY-243122 (UP)
WALK-IN-INTERVIEW
A walk-in-interview is proposed on **12th October, 2022** to be engage one Senior Research Fellow at Animal Genetics Division, ICAR-IVRI, Izatnagar, Bareilly under Farmer FIRST Programme entitled "Enhancing Livelihood Security of Farming Community through Livestock and Crop Integration using Proven Technologies. For qualifications and other details, candidates may visit the website: www.ivri.nic.in, Qualified candidates may send their bio- data up to **10th October, 2022** through email ranvir.singh1@icar.gov.in

Atal Medical & Research University, H.P.
(A State Govt. University)
(SLBS Govt. Medical College & Hospital Campus, Ner Chowk, Mandi, H.P.)
www.amruhp.ac.in Contact No. 01905-243967
NOTICE
Admission to various MDS courses on the basis of (NEET-PG) MDS -2022 for the Academic Session 2022-23:
Online applications are invited from interested candidates who have qualified NEET-PG (MDS) 2022, for counseling and admission in MDS courses for academic year 2022-23, of Govt./private Dental colleges situated in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The candidates have to fill the online application which is available on the University website from 24th September, 2022 (Saturday). The details are available on the website of Atal Medical & Research University, HP www.amruhp.ac.in. Last date for application shall be 30.09.2022.
Note: University website : www.amruhp.ac.in
WhatsApp No. : 94591-39364,
Email ID : helpdesk.amruhp@gmail.com Sd/-
(Dr. Parveen Kumar Sharma)
Controller of Examinations

BRIEFLY

MAHARASHTRA

Man fires during fight with wife, injures daughter

Pune: An eight-year-old girl was critically injured and is battling for life after her father fired his revolver during a fight with his wife in Pune. Police have arrested the 38-year-old father, who is a real estate developer, and have also seized the weapon. The man has been identified as Pandurang Tukaram Ubhe (38). His daughter Rajnandini, is said to be in a critical condition. DCP (Zone 3) Pournima Gaikwad said, "Primary investigation suggests that the husband and wife were in a fight when the man drew his weapon. He fired it and the bullet hit their eight-year-old daughter, who was standing nearby." A police inspector said, "He has licence for the revolver. We have launched a probe." **ENS**

WEST BENGAL

Man who 'duped' gaming app users arrested

Kolkata: In a major breakthrough, the Kolkata Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested businessman Amir Khan, who allegedly duped people through a gaming application (app), in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad on Friday night. Police said Khan, — arrested by the detective department of the Kolkata Police — was brought to Kolkata on Saturday morning on a transit remand. According to police, Khan had launched a mobile gaming app — E-Nuggets — for duping users. **ENS**

GUJARAT

2 cooks held for sexually abusing tribal students

Surat: The Valsad police in Gujarat on Saturday arrested two cooks of a residential school for allegedly sexually harassing tribal girl students. According to a complaint filed by the school principal, the two cooks also used obscene language with the girl students. The issue came to light after several girl students called up their parents and informed them about the matter. "While talking to the girl students, we have come to know that they had complained about the incident to the school principal around two months ago, but no steps were taken against the accused cooks," the local councillor said. The principal and all seven cooks have been transferred. **ENS**

कार्यालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, हजारीबाग
शुद्धि पत्र
इस कार्यालय के द्वारा आमंत्रित ई-अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना संख्या —RDD/SD/HZB/01/2022-23 पीओआर संख्या 278533 Rural Development (22-23) D में प्रकाशित निविदा में निम्न संशोधन किया जाता है:-
क्र०
3. ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, हजारीबाग / ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रश्न, रॉबी के कार्यालय कक्ष में निविदा शुल्क, अग्रघन की राशि शपथ पत्र की मूल प्रति जमा करने की तिथि एवं समय 07.10.2022 अपराह्न 05:00 बजे तक
4. तकनीकी निविदा खोलने का स्थान, तिथि एवं समय— ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रश्न, रॉबी 10.10.2022 अपराह्न 02:00 बजे ।
निविदा की शेष शर्तें यथावत् रहेंगी । कार्यालक अभियंता
ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, हजारीबाग
PR.NO.278616 Rural Development(22-23):D

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN AYURVEDIC SCIENCES
Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India
J.L.N.B.C.E.H. Anusadhan Bhawan
No. 61-65, Institutional Area, Opp. "D" Block, Janakpuri, New Delhi- 110058
Email: dg-ccras@nic.in , Website: www.ccras.nic.in
Tel: 011-28525852
ADVERTISEMENT-2022
PANCHKARMA TECHNICIAN COURSE
Extension of last date of application up to 10th October, 2022
The Last date for applying in Panchkarma Technician Course conducted by CCRAAS, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, New Delhi at following 4 Training Centres i.e. (1) CARI, New Delhi (10 Seats), (2) NARIIP, Cheruthuruthy (30 Seats), (3) RARI, Jammu (15 Seats) & (4) CARI, Guwahati (10 Seats) affiliated to Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC) - National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has been extended by 10th October, 2022.
Please visit the Council's website www.ccras.nic.in in for the details of the Advertisement, Application Form, Course, How to apply, Course Fee, Age limit and Reservation etc.
davp 17216/12/0016/2223 **Administrative Officer (Estt.)**

Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran Offers Mega e-Auction of Residential and Commercial Properties in Gurugram Zone
On 1st October, 2022
e-Auction Portal <https://hsvpghry.org.in>
e-Auction will start at 10:00 AM
Loan Facility From Leading Banks
Terms And Conditions Applicable
* The competent authority can withdraw any site from e-auction without any notice
*The Bidding is open on Reserve Price and not on Base Price.
*There is no concept of counteroffer now.
*H Price is the final Price.
For any queries email us at eauctionquery.hsvp@gmail.com
In continuation of advertisement dated 03.09.2022, 05.09.2022 and 20.09.2022
Helpline Number: 8360516607 (9 AM to 5 PM), 1800-180-3030 (8AM TO 8 PM)
In case the closing date of EMD is bank holiday in that case the last bank working day will be the last date of close of EMD through challan.

Commercial Properties in Gurugram Zone			Residential Properties in Gurugram Zone		
Sr. No.	Sector, Urban Estate	No. of Plots	Sr. No.	Sector, Urban Estate	No. of Plots
1	10, Gurugram	6	1	10, Gurugram	5
2	10A, Gurugram	8	2	10A, Gurugram	2
3	12A, Gurugram	1	3	12A, Gurugram	1
4	15-I, Gurugram	3	4	21, Gurugram	4
5	18, Gurugram	4	5	22, Gurugram	4
6	21, Gurugram	2	6	23-28A, Gurugram	4
7	37II, Gurugram	27	7	5, Gurugram	2
8	5, Gurugram	2	8	5-VI, Gurugram	1
9	9, Gurugram	11	9	9, Gurugram	17
10	9A, Gurugram	13	10	9A, Gurugram	8
11	JAILLAND, Gurugram	2	11	1-PAT, Plaudi	4
12	PV-1A, Gurugram	6	12	24-25A, Gurugram II	19
13	PV-1A, Gurugram	1	13	38, Gurugram II	10
14	1-PAT, Plaudi	21	14	39, Gurugram II	4
15	24-25A, Gurugram II	9	15	40, Gurugram II	5
16	29, Gurugram II	18	16	42, Gurugram II	8
17	30, Gurugram II	6	17	43, Gurugram II	3
18	38, Gurugram II	5	18	45, Gurugram II	11
19	41, Gurugram II	3	19	46, Gurugram II	1
20	45, Gurugram II	5	20	49, Gurugram II	2
21	46, Gurugram II	3	21	50, Gurugram II	3
22	51, Gurugram II	9	22	51, Gurugram II	6
23	52, Gurugram II	12	23	52, Gurugram II	14
24	53, Gurugram II	2	24	57, Gurugram II	73
25	57, Gurugram II	19	25	6, Dharuhera	5
26	4A, Dharuhera	7	26	18-DEF, Rewari	6
27	6, Dharuhera	2	27	3, Rewari	2
28	1PART-1, Narnaul	14	28	4, Rewari	1
29	3, Rewari	9	29	7, Rewari	29
30	5, Rewari	4			
31	MTSKOSLI, Rewari	4			
32	12-A, Gurugram	50			

Chief Administrator, Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran
e-auction will be available on <https://hsvpghry.org.in>

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India
ZONAL OFFICE, GAYA ZONE
Rajlaxmi Complex Opposite Vishal Mega Mart
A.P Colony, Gaya-823001, Tel. - 0631-2220129/7004419138
Email: zo.gaya@bankofindia.co.in
APPENDIX - IV, Rule 8(1)
Possession Notice (for Immovable Property)
Whereas,
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **BANK OF INDIA** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed in the table hereunder written calling upon the below mentioned borrowers to repay the amount shown in the respective notices mentioned against their names in the table, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrowers/guarantors mentioned below having failed to repay the amount shown in the respective notices issued u/s 13(2) within the stipulated time, notice is hereby given to the aforementioned borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property/ies (Secured Assets) described in the table given below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on the date(s) mentioned against the respective property.
The aforesaid borrowers/guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies mentioned in the table hereunder written and any dealings with the said property/ies will be subject to the charge of the **BANK OF INDIA** for the amount shown in the respective column of the table and interest thereon.

Name of Borrower/ Guarantor	i. Branch, ii. Date & Amount as per Notice u/s 13(2)	Details of property	Date of Possession of Assets
Late Deepak Kumar Ranjan	(i) Purani Godam Branch (ii) Demand Notice Date: 04.10.2021, ₹ 4,31,629/- plus interest from 16.04.2021	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Flat No./Khata No. Ward No. 1(O) & 8(N), Holding No. 50(O) & 100(N), M.S. Plot No. 7013(O) & 754(N) Comprisig Sale Deed No. 1509 dtd 02.02.2015, area 494 sqft. 133.00 decimal in the name of Guarantor Smt. Shyama Devi, In Survey No. .../City: or Town Survey No. Khasara No. Within the registration Sub-district Gaya and District Gaya, Bounded:- North: Durga Prasad, South: Malti Devi, East: Proposed 10 ft. wide road, West: Municipal Nala.	20.09.2022

* With further interest at applicable rate till repayment.
Date: 20.09.2022
Place: Purani Godam
Authorized Officer
Bank of India

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਬੈਂਕ punjab national bank
...सरोवर का प्रतीक ! ...the name you can BANK upon !
CIRCLE SASTRA, ARA
1st Floor, Mahuli Kothi, Near Peer Baba More, Ara-802301
Email- cs8187@pnb.co.in
POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)
Whereas,
The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the **Punjab National Bank**, Circle SASTRA Ara, 1st Floor, Mahuli Kothi, Near Peer Baba More, Ara-802301 under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under Section 13 read with rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated **06.05.2016** calling upon the Borrower **M/S Maa Mundeshwari Enterprises**, Prop. Smt. Poonam Devi, W/O Bhola Singh, R/O- Village Jahanabad, PO+PS- Kudra, District - Kaimur-821108 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 23,94,800.00 (Rupees Twenty Three lakh Ninety Four Thousand Eight Hundred only)** with interest there on from **01.04.2016** within 60 days from the date of notice/date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on this **19th day of September, 2022**.
The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Punjab National Bank of **Rs 23,71,869.21 (Rupees Twenty Three Lakh Seventy One Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Nine and Paise Twenty One Only)** as on **31.08.2022** with further interest and charges from **01.09.2022** until payment in full.
The Borrower's/Guarantor's/Mortgagor's attention is invited to provisions of subsection (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect to time available to redeem the secured assets.
Description of Immovable Property
(1) All that Part and Parcel of Property (Land and Building) situated at— Mauza:-Chilbili, Thana No. 652, Khata No. 129, Plot (Khesra) No. 541, Rev Thana Kudra, District Kaimur. Area-93.75 Decimal. **Sale Deed Number:-4769 dated 20.09.2013.**
Owner/Mortgagor- Smt. Poonam Devi, W/O Bhola Singh, Boundary:- North:-Nij and Vendor, South:- Nij and Vendor, East:- Mukesh Kumar, West:- Nij and Vendor
(Authorised Officer)
Punjab National Bank
Date : 19.09.2022
Place : Arrah

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
ARM BRANCH
HANUMAN NAGAR, PATNA
DEMAND NOTICE
Notice Issued u/s 13 (2) Securitization And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the security interest (Enforcement) rules, 2002. The Caption notice was served upon **M/S Nissa Realtors Pvt. Ltd.** and it's **Director**, Ghar Apna Apartment, Block-B, Opp-DAV School, Near Saguna More, Bailey Road, PS-Danapur, Dist. Patna, Bihar-801503 Registered Office, at B-3/19, Ground Floor, Model Town, Delhi North West, Delhi-110096 by the undersigned being the Authorized officer of CANARA BANK in exercise of powers conferred u/s 13 (2) read with rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s)/ Guarantor(s) listed under here calling upon them to repay the amount mention in respective Demand Notice (s) within 60 days from the date of respective notice as per the details given below as the accounts have been classified as "**NON PERFORMING ASSETS**" As on **30.07.2019** copies of such notice(s) is/are available with the undersigned on any working day during normal working hours. For Due Repayment of the Loan, the following assets have been mortgaged/hypothecated with Canara Bank by the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s). If the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) fail to make payment to the Bank as Aforesaid, the bank shall proceed against the above secured assets under section 13 (4) of the said Act and the applicable rules entirely at risk of the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) as the cost and consequences. The Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) is/are prohibited under the Act to transfer the aforesaid assets whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without prior written consent of the Bank. Any person how contravenes the said Act or Rules made there under shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act. The Notice is issued without prejudice to our rights and remedies at your risk and costs.

Name of Borrower's/ Guarantor's and Legal Heirs	Name of the Owner/ Description of Secured Assets	A) Date of Demand Notice (B) Total outstanding as on 15.11.2019 (As per order of DRT, Patna) OA No.- 7/10/2019, Order Dated- 02.09.2022
(1) M/s NISSA Realtors Pvt. Ltd. (2) Sri Sudhir Kumar Singh (3) Mr. Deepak Singh (4) Mr. Devendra Kumar (5) Mrs. Alka Verma (6) Mrs. Alka Verma (Legal Heir of Late Prabhat Kumar Verma)	(1) Name of Title holder: Late Prabhat Kumar Verma, S/o Ashok Kumar Verma, Discription of the Mortgaged Property: Mauza: Sri Krishna Nagar (Sri Krishna Nagar Housing Colony), Thana: Budha Colony, Paragana: Azimabad, Circle: Patna Sadar, District: Patna. LIG Housing Nagar: LH/149(Part), Municipal Holding No. 233/262, Ward No. 15/25(New), Circle No. 245, Patna, Area: 1263.98 Sq. feet (2.9016 Decimal), Boundaries:- North: LIG Housing No. LH/143, South: 30 Feet Wide Road, East: LIG House No. LH/148, West: Part LIG House No. LH/149. (2) Name of Title holder: NISSA REALTORS PVT. LTD., Discription of the Mortgaged Property: Flat No.- O-1, Block - D, On ground Floor of the Building named Ghar Apna Phase-2, Mahendra Puram Apartment, Area- 1361.00 sq.ft.(Approx) along one covered parking space, Mauza- Keshwarpur, Digha, P-S - Digha, Distt - Patna, Thana No.- 1, Khata No. 2046 & 1919, S.Plot No. 1590X 1585, Boundaries:- North - Flat No. R-1, South - Open Space of Apartment, East - Open Space of Apartment, West - Flat No. P-1 (3) Name of Title holder: NISSA REALTORS PVT. LTD., Discription of the Mortgaged Property: Flat No.- P-1, Block - D, 4 th Floor of the Building named Ghar Apna Phase-2, Mahendra Puram Apartment, Area- 1361.00 sq.ft.(Approx) along one covered parking space, Mauza- Keshwarpur, Digha, P-S - Digha, Distt - Patna, Thana No.- 1, Khata No. 2046 & 1919, S.Plot No. 1590X 1585, Boundaries:- North - Flat No. R-1, South - Open Space of Apartment, East - Flat No. O-1, West - Open Space of Apartment.	(A) 12.09.2022 (B) Rs. 1,32,14,862.34 + together with pendenteite and further interest @15.30% P.A Compound with Monthly

Date: 24.09.2022
Place: Patna
Authorized Officer
CANARA BANK

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India
ZONAL OFFICE : PATNA ZONE
1st Floor, Chanakya Place, R-Block, Patna-800001
Tel.: 0612-2220640/643, Fax: 0612-2223178
POSSESSION NOTICE (for movable/immovable Property) Appendix - IV, Rule 8(1)
Whereas,
The undersigned being the authorized officer of the **BANK OF INDIA** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed in the table hereunder written calling upon the below mentioned borrowers to repay the amount shown in the respective notices mentioned against their names in the table, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower/guarantors mentioned below having failed to repay the amount shown in the respective notices issued u/s 13(2) within the stipulated time, notice is hereby given to the aforementioned borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property/ies (Secured Assets) described in the table given below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 and 9 of the said rules on the date(s) mentioned against the respective property.
The aforesaid borrower/guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies mentioned in the table hereunder written and any dealings with the said property/ies will be subject to the charge of the **BANK OF INDIA** for the amount shown in the respective column of the table and interest thereon.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower	i. Branch ii. Date & Amount as per notice u/s 13(2)	Description of the movable/immovable property	Date of Possession of Assets
1.	M/s Indocity Home Prop: Rimjhim Kumari w/o- Ritesh Kumar	1. Patna Secretariat Branch, Patna 2. 11.03.2022 & ₹ 4484752.76 & ₹ 204869.00 with future interest and incidental charges w.e.f. 31-03-2021	Indocity Home, Chitkohra Chawal Bazar, Beside Golden Plaza Aptt, Anisabad, Patna 800002. Stocks like Making Furniture Material (Products), Machinery, Furniture, etc.	20.09.2022
2.	M/s Styleledge Creation Pvt Ltd (Kavita Sinha w/o Tripurari Kumar, Rimjhim Kumari w/o- Ritesh Kumar)	1. Patna Secretariat Branch, Patna 2. 04.03.2022 & ₹ 2255784.37 with future interest and incidental charges w.e.f. 31-03-2021	B BLUNT SALOON, Shop No-08, 09 & 10, 1st Floor, Faizal Imam Complex, Beside Central Mall, Patna 800001. Stocks like Saloon Spa Material (Products), Machinery, Saloon Furniture, etc.	20.09.2022
3.	Mr. Deepak Kumar and Mrs. Pancha Devi	1. Kaila Branch, Barbigha 2. 02.07.2022 & ₹ 12,10,299/- and interest thereon	All that part and parcel of the property to an admeasurable 1.50 decimal in the name of Mrs. Pancha Devi bearing Khata No-106, Khesra Plot No-161(P), Tazui No.-219, situated at Mauza-Faizullahpur, PS- Barbigha, District- Sheikhpura. Bounded: On the North by Naresh Ram, On the South by Dharmshela Kumari, On the East by Dev Sthal, On the West by Rasta.	19.09.2022

* With further interest at applicable rate till repayment.
Date : 23.09.2022
Place : Patna
Authorized Officer
Bank of India
New Delhi

LETTERS FROM JODHPUR, TONK (RAJASTHAN)

Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot's potential election as Congress president is expected to set off a political churn in Rajasthan, where he is locked in a long-standing tussle with Sachin Pilot. HAMZA KHAN travels to Gehlot's constituency in Jodhpur, where his supporters hope for continuity, and DEEP MUKHERJEE to Pilot's Tonk, which is in the midst of guarded anticipation

‘Even if he steps down, he will decide what changes’: On Gehlot's turf, quiet confidence



Congress workers Ilyas Mohammad, Akhtar Khan, Uday Kishan and Rakesh Kalla at Hari Om Paan Palace in Jodhpur. Hamza Khan

AMONG SOME Congress workers in Jodhpur, there seems to be a consensus, or perhaps it's wishful thinking, that while it is certain that Ashok Gehlot will contest the Congress presidential elections and even go on to win it, he may pull out an ace — and end up retaining the Chief Minister's post too. He will at least ensure that it is handed over to a “like-minded person”, a phrase used to mean someone other than his former deputy Sachin Pilot.

These days, the topic of discussion at the ‘hathais’ or ‘addas’ around tea stalls, paan shops and temples in the lanes in some of the older localities of Jodhpur are concerning Gehlot, considered by his supporters as the city's tallest leader since the time of the Maharajas.

Jodhpur, Gehlot's birthplace and home turf, has sent him to the Lok Sabha five times. He is also a five-time MLA from Jodhpur's Sardarpura Assembly seat.

At Hari Om Paan Palace, Congress corporator Rakesh Kalla, 48, gets emotional as he talks about Gehlot's legacy: “He implemented the One Pension Scheme, gave health insurance up to Rs 10 lakh, started English-medium schools where the poorest can send their children...but if he goes (steps down as CM), Jodhpur will be like a body without a heart.”

All of them share Gehlot's reluctance to step away from Rajasthan — the CM had earlier justified to *The Indian Express* that the one person-one principle laid down in the party's Udaipur Declaration was meant for nominated posts, not elected ones.

“It will be good for the Congress (if Gehlot is elected party president) but *kshati hogi Jodhpur ko* (it will be a loss for Jodhpur),” says Uday Kishan, who runs the paan shop and is a Congress worker.

They're interrupted by an angry Anand Bora, 79, also a Congress worker. “It is this *ji huzuri* (sycophancy) that has brought Congress to where it is now. One should keep their *aalochak* (critics) nearby,” he says, batting for Sachin Pilot as chief minister and Cabinet minister B D Kalla as party state

president. “Change is necessary and old and young need to be taken along,” he says.

Calling Gehlot “Jodhpur's godfather”, Akhtar Khan, also a councillor, says, “BJP has 25 Lok Sabha members, yet he (Gehlot) has more weight than all of them put together”.

Ilyas Mohammad, whose wife Parveen is a Congress councillor, says “the wheels of development will slow down (if Gehlot were to move out of Rajasthan). It will have an impact on the next elections. Whenever any citizen has any work that needs to be done, the CM approves it with a big heart.”

Sitting at the party office in Jaswant Sarai, Congress district president Salim Khan says that, “it is our heart's desire that he continues as CM. And he has indicated that he will indeed present the next state budget.”

Following the developments of the last few days, Khan says that among local Congress workers, “*ek maayusi, ek dar hona laazmi hai* (disappointment and apprehension are only natural).” However, he says, the apprehensions are unfounded since Gehlot is being promoted in the party. “We are familiar with his politics. He is always here even when he may not be here in person. Jodhpur politics won't change, no matter what post he occupies,” he says, while insisting that Gehlot will continue as CM for now.

While the Jodhpur Congress unit has been divided into two units, North and South, it used to be a single unit until 2021, and was headed by Saeed Ansari, now 71, for about 17 years. Ansari says that it is a “proud moment” for Jodhpur and Rajasthan to be sending the next party president. Echoing Khan, Ansari says that the common man will not be affected by the change, “but for those of us who used to have a direct entry into the CM's office, things will change”.

Saying he will “respect whoever becomes the CM”, Ansari adds, “*Par badlav toh jo woh challenge wahi aayega* (the change that happens will be what Gehlot decides). He is sharp, he keeps an eye not only on Jodhpur but all of Rajasthan, especially since elections are due here next year.”

At their home in Shastri Nagar, the industrialist Tatiya family has framed photo-

graphs of their family members with Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, among others.

“There was a time when there were just two trains to Jodhpur — Agra Fort at 8 pm and Delhi Mail at 2 pm. There was a lone private airstrip from the Maharaja era. The water scarcity in these parts was so intense that families often contemplated leaving Jodhpur together. Back then, Gehlot would start doing the rounds at 4 am, checking which areas don't have water and carry out arrangements,” says Kailash Tatiya, 82, who says his relationship with Gehlot goes back “four to five decades”.

The Tatiya family, like many others in Jodhpur, credit Gehlot for changing the face of Jodhpur and for bringing in a number of universities — from the Ayurved University (2003) to NIFT (2010) and AIIMS (2012).

However, BJP district president Devendra Joshi dismisses the Congress's claims, pointing out that AIIMS was announced by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government and came to Jodhpur thanks to senior BJP leader Jaswant Singh.

However, industrialist Kailash Tatiya goes back in history to talk about another “battle” to make his point about why Gehlot is the right man for the top job in the Congress: “Following the division in the Congress party, no one was ready to contest the 1980 Lok Sabha election from Jodhpur, fearing that they would lose. Only Gehlot agreed to contest... that was his first-ever Lok Sabha election, and the Indira Gandhi-led Congress (I) swept to power. Similarly, today no one is ready to take on the top spot in the Congress, and once again, Gehlot has agreed to take on the responsibility. Knowing him, maybe we will see a repeat of things, a change in the fortunes of the Congress, after all.”



‘Will Pilot get a chance to lead at least now?’ Among supporters, a glimmer of hope

IN A busy market adjacent to the Jama Masjid stands an old two-storey building painted in yellow that houses the office of the district Congress committee (DCC) in Rajasthan's Tonk.

A Congress party flag has been hoisted above, and a poster of party president Sonia Gandhi and Rahul has been put up over the building, which also has a government dispensary operating from the ground floor.

But there's no party worker or office bearer anywhere in sight and the gate to the office is locked, with local shopkeepers saying that it remains shut most of the time.

A few hundred metres from the DCC office are posters of Congress leader and Tonk MLA Sachin Pilot, put up by supporters of the former deputy chief minister.

The three and half-year-long feud between Pilot and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has had its bearing on Tonk as well, which hasn't had a district Congress president since July 2020, when all district and block Congress committees were dissolved by the party during the political crisis in the state in the wake of Pilot's rebellion against Gehlot.

Last year, the party finally appointed 13 DCC presidents but Tonk was not among them.

For Pilot's supporters in Tonk, it has been a long wait since December 2018, when, as the Congress's state unit chief, he was projected as the new, youthful face of the party and a strong contender for the CM post. Though Pilot won with a margin of more than 54,000 votes from Tonk, it was Gehlot who went on to be CM.

The upcoming elections for the Congress national president and the speculation that Gehlot may have to relinquish the CM's post if he is elevated to the top post in the party have once again made Pilot's supporters hopeful.

“The Congress party was down to 21 seats (in the 2013 polls). It was Pilot *sahab* who worked hard and brought the Congress to power. People are of the opinion that he should be made CM at least now so that the Congress still has a chance to retain power (in the next Assembly elections),” says Laxman Choudhary Gata, former president of DCC Tonk.

Gata, a Jat leader, was appointed by Pilot — then the Congress chief in Rajasthan — in 2018 to head the Tonk unit of the party. He stayed in the post for two years, until the DCC was dissolved in 2020.

“The election process for the national president that has started now, had this been done earlier, the party would have been strengthened,” says Ali Ahmed, chairman of the Tonk Municipal Council.



Hoardings of Pilot in Tonk to mark his birthday on September 7. Deep Mukherjee

He goes on to list the development works that Pilot initiated — a Rs 400-crore sewerage project, roads built during his tenure as PWD minister, and schools that were upgraded to senior secondary.

Ahmed is the brother-in-law of Saud Saidi, a close associate of Pilot, who was instrumental in garnering support for the 45-year-old leader during his election campaign in Tonk. Saidi himself had contested the 2013 Assembly elections as an Independent from Tonk and came second, ahead of the Congress candidate.

According to local Congress leaders, the over two lakh voters of the Tonk constituency include Muslims (50,000), Scheduled Castes (45,000), Gujjars (32,000) and Jats (25,000).

In the 2018 election, the BJP had fielded former minister Yunus Khan, a close aide of former CM Vasundhara Raje, from Tonk as its only Muslim candidate. However, Khan lost by a huge margin to Pilot.

“Pilot *sahab* should become the CM because he has worked hard for the party. When we voted in 2018, we thought he would become the chief minister. The last three years have gone by with us hoping that he would be elevated to the post someday. The people of Rajasthan, not just Tonk, wanted Pilot *sahab* as CM,” says Shankar Dadiya, who belongs to Pilot's Gujjar community and whose mother, Manbhar Devi, is the sarpanch of Baroni, a gram panchayat that falls in Tonk.

While Pilot's detractors have often tried to label him as a Gujjar leader, his

supporters point to how the former deputy CM, while immensely popular within his community, has worked hard to take *chattis kaum* (all communities) along.

Back in 2020, out of the 18 loyalist MLAs who sided with Pilot, two were Gujjars while the rest were from a large array of castes, including Jats, Meenas, Rajputs, Brahmins, Vaishyas and Scheduled Castes. His supporters point to how, even in the eastern Rajasthan district of Dausa, where Gujjar-Meena clashes had erupted during the quota protests of the mid-2000s, there are MLAs belonging to both the communities who are counted among Pilot's supporters.

For now, Pilot's biggest challenge remains CM Gehlot's grip over the state's politics. Even in the event of Gehlot stepping down as CM to make way for Pilot, the 45-year-old faces a tall order — a majority of the legislators had sided with Gehlot during the 2020 political crisis. Also, Gehlot loyalists have a majority in the council of ministers and at least 10 of the 13 Independent MLAs are supporters of the 71-year-old CM.

Back in Tonk, from where around 5,000 party workers came to Jaipur to mark Pilot's birthday earlier this month, the mood among his supporters is clear — this is his last chance to be CM ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

“*Yeh abhi hua to hua, warna fir nahin hoga*,” says Tonk Municipal Council chairman Ali Ahmed.

A mother's fight: Whatever it takes

Four years after Madhu, a tribal youth, was lynched for allegedly stealing rice at Attappadi in Kerala, the trial in the case began earlier this year. But for his mother Malli, it's a long, weary road to justice. Last week, the 22nd of 27 witnesses turned hostile

SHAJU PHILIP
ATTAPPADI (KERALA), SEPTEMBER 24

OVER THE last four years, Malli has learnt to look out for shadows and strangers. The 68-year-old from Pazhayoor, a remote tribal hamlet at Attappadi in Kerala's Palakkad district, who has been fighting a long, weary battle to ensure that the killers of her son are brought to justice, says she has lost count of the threats she has got from people asking her to drop the case against the accused.

Last week, Malli had gone to the Kochi High Court in connection with an anticipatory bail plea filed by a person who allegedly threatened Malli not to proceed with her son's murder case.

In a case that had shaken up Kerala society, on February 22, 2018, Malli's mentally challenged son Madhu had been lynched to death by a mob that suspected him of stealing rice and curry powder from shops at Mukkali near Attappadi. A few members of the mob had captured the incident on their phones, with one of them even clicking a selfie while Madhu was being beaten up. Though the mob handed him over to the Agali police in Palakkad, he died on the way to hospital.

After the trial in the case began at a special court at Mannarkkad in Palakkad earlier this year — after a delay of four years, during which the trial was suspended on many occasions, three prosecution lawyers pulled out of the case, and 22 of the 27 prosecution witnesses turned hostile — on September 20, the High Court upheld a special court order cancelling the bail of 12 of the 16 alleged accused. The court ruled that the accused had violated bail conditions by contacting “the witnesses over phone on several occasions”.

The cancellation of bail, however, is little solace for Malli, who says the accused are influential people — mostly traders and local taxi drivers — in the hamlet where she lives.

Last month, police had registered a case against a person named Abbas on charges of trespassing into Malli's house and threatening her against proceeding with the case. After a local court dismissed Abbas's anticipatory bail plea, he moved the High Court.

Some months ago, says Malli, two masked men broke into her house at night. “I ran out of the house through the backdoor and hid in a nearby forest. On most days, I am alone at home. The mobile network in our hamlet is very poor. If something happens, I may not even be able to call the local police



Malli (left) with her daughter Sarasu at their home in Attappadi. Shaju Philip

or inform someone,” she says.

Holding her son's photograph close to her chest, Malli adds, “Nobody in our village is with us. Even our own (tribal) people are against us. They are afraid that if they support me and my family, they will face trouble,” she says, sitting on the threshold of her house.

share that money with them,” he said, pointing out Malli's family was relatively better off than many of the other tribal households in what's arguably Kerala's most backward region.

Malli's youngest daughter Chandrika is a police constable and her son-in-law Murugan is an employee with the government's statistics department. Malli's eldest daughter Sarasu works as an anganwadi teacher and her elder-son-in-law, also called Murugan, is a police constable at Attappadi.

“Despite all this, we are not safe. People think we got lakhs as compensation from various sources after Madhu's murder. They want us to part with a portion of that money if they are to testify in our favour. It's true that the government gave us Rs 18.25 lakh, but people say we got crores of rupees... Anyone is free to check our bank details,” she says.

After the trial began in the special court earlier this year, Malli and her eldest daughter Sarasu have made it a point to travel 25 km to the court every day, to watch the proceedings.

Over the last four years, Malli has been shuttling between various courts in Kerala and knocking on the doors of politicians to ensure that the trial into the murder of her

son is on track.

In June this year, she moved the High Court seeking the removal of then special prosecutor C Rajendran, following which the government appointed advocate Rajesh Menon as new prosecutor.

Two weeks ago, Malli met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Thiruvananthapuram, seeking the Centre's intervention to ensure justice for the family.

The four-year delay for the trial to begin had impacted the proceedings. When the court finally took up the case last year, the prosecutors did not turn up and, one after the other, the witnesses turned hostile.

Menon, the public prosecutor in the case, says, “As the trial did not start on time, the accused got enough time to influence the witnesses. Over the last couple of years, with authorities caught up with managing the pandemic, the accused freely interacted with the witnesses.”

Malli's daughter Sarasu says that her mother is determined to fight on. “The case has made my mother a fighter. She was someone who never stepped out of Attappadi, but now, she is ready to travel anywhere and meet any minister to ensure justice for her son... She'll do whatever it takes,” she says.

Across
THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM

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Whether the Congress will get a Leader-cum-President or a Leader and a President, will be known in the next six days. This will be a crucial week for the Congress party as well as for the country... The unusual and obtrusive interest shown in the internal elections of the Congress party may not be entirely unjustified

THERE IS an unusual, almost obtrusive, interest in the internal party elections of the Congress party. Two years ago, nobody in India including the BJP rank and file, and certainly no member of the Congress party, cared tuppence when Mr J P Nadda was 'elected' President of the BJP. Nobody bothered to ask about the 'electoral rolls'. Nobody knew who the Returning Officer was or if Mr Nadda had filed his 'nomination'. Although the BJP was the ruling party and boasted of having the 'largest' membership of any political party in the world, Mr Nadda's election was a non-event.

The extraordinary interest shown by the BJP and the media in the Congress party's elections is proof of two facts: **one**, that Congress-mukt India is a myth and a mirage; it will never happen. **Second**, that the Bharat Jodo Yatra has shook the BJP out of its complacency and has made the media, otherwise dismissive of the Congress, sit up and take notice.

PARTY & THE GANDHIS

The Congress will elect its next President in the month of October. Who will it be, I cannot say. The rank and file, overwhelmingly, want that Mr Rahul Gandhi should take up the office from which he resigned in July 2019. That is their right. However, Mr Gandhi has made it clear that he has no desire to be the Congress President again.

The party leaders may make a valiant last effort to persuade Mr Gandhi to change his mind but, if he does not relent, they must respect the wishes of Mr Gandhi and move on. The electoral college must elect another person as President and draw the curtain on the interim presidency. In my view, the election of a non-Gandhi as Congress President will not mean that the party has abandoned the Gandhis or vice versa.

HISTORY LESSONS

The history of the Congress party has valuable lessons. After the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene, he was the acknowledged leader of the Congress party. He was the tallest among many tall leaders. During the period 1921-1948, 14 different individuals occupied the office of Congress President and among them were giants such as C.R. Das, Sarojini Naidu, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, M.A. Ansari, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Subhas Chandra Bose, Abdul Kalam Azad and Acharya Kripalani. The rank and file of the party, and even non-members, understood the subtle but important difference: that Mahatma Gandhi was the 'Leader of the Congress' and the other person was the 'President of the Congress'. One office/individual did not try to dominate the other.

A similar arrangement was in place in the years between 1948 and 1964:

Jawaharlal Nehru was the acknowledged Leader of the Congress, while seven individuals occupied the chair of the President of the Congress. The period 1965-1984 was no different: Indira Gandhi was the Congress Leader while 8 individuals were Congress President.

In a large political party of a large country, the arrangement makes eminent sense. The Leader's task is to provide leadership to the people, share a vision with them, and inspire them to vote for the party. The President's main function is to fix the nuts and bolts of the organization, keep it in good repair and make it a fighting-fit election machine. The two tasks are complementary. If a party finds one person to perform both tasks, that party is lucky; if it divides the duties between two individuals, that party is practical and wise.

INSPIRE, RE-BUILD

As I said, a leader must inspire. Mahatma Gandhi did so with his novel political thesis of non-violence, non-cooperation, civil disobedience and, ultimately, the Quit India movement. Jawaharlal Nehru fired the imagination of the people with the lofty ideas of non-alignment, secularism and socialism. Indira Gandhi urged the nation to dream big and took bold measures like bank nationalization and housing for all. A B Vajpayee raised the sights of the nation with ambitious projects like the

Golden Quadrilateral. An inspired turn of phrase ("tryst with destiny") or an electrifying slogan ("garibi hatao") or an expansive vision ("insaniyat, jamhuriyat and kashmiriyat") can raise the leader to lofty heights.

By contrast, a party President must be firmly grounded, guarding and nourishing the flock, and taking the hard decisions. The Congress party machinery is in serious disrepair and needs to be fixed urgently. This will require long hours on the road and longer hours with the party workers. The President must keep a close watch on the performance of every unit of the party from the booth to the Block to the District to the State. The President must coddle and chastise the workers, reward and punish the leaders, and replace the obsolete or defective parts of the party machine. That is a 24x7 job, 364 days a year (the President's birthday excepted!). The key to a multi-party democracy and to a functional Parliament is the Congress. Absent the Congress, we may resign ourselves to a one-party State and an illusion of a democracy.

Whether the Congress will get a Leader-cum-President or a Leader **and** a President, will be known in the next six days. This will be a crucial week for the Congress party as well as for the country. On second thought, the unusual and obtrusive interest shown in the internal elections of the Congress party may not be entirely unjustified.

Fifth
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

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All fanatics
are dangerous

LET ME begin by making it clear that I detest fanatics. I particularly detest violent fanatics. So, it pleased me that we finally saw a crackdown on the violently fanatical Popular Front of India (PFI) last week. I have followed the activities of this jihadist outfit since it first came to my notice 12 years ago when its operatives chopped off Professor T J Joseph's hand because they believed he was guilty of insulting the Prophet of Islam. This act of violent fanaticism destroyed not just this teacher's hand but his life. He lost his job, his wife killed herself because she could not handle the constant, jihadist threat under which they lived, and a recent report I read on the News 18 website says that the Professor believes that the 'real culprits' have still not been punished.

Since this horrible act, PFI operatives have been guilty of murdering people they consider enemies of their violent, fanatical interpretation of Islam. They have also been guilty of spreading jihadist ideas across India. So well have they succeeded in this endeavour that young Muslim girls have gone to the Supreme Court to demand the right to wear the hijab in classrooms. Their lawyers argue that it is a question of choice and privacy but also argue that it is a compulsory religious tenet. Which is it?

The hijab ladies are being backed by another group of fanatics who usually go unnoticed because their fanaticism comes from politics and not religion. This group can be loosely clubbed under the category of liberals and leftists although it is an insult to the idea of liberalism to use it for this bunch of fanatics. Leftist non-Muslim ladies are arguing stridently that the women in Iran who are burning their hijabs in public and the women in India who are demanding the right to wear the hijab are fighting the same fight. It is a matter of a woman's right to choose what she wears, they say, without noticing that the religious men who interpret their religion for them take away this choice. They make it compulsory.

It is compulsion that allowed the morality police in Iran to arrest Masah Amini for not wearing her hijab in what they considered the proper way, and it was in their custody that this young woman died. She has become the symbol of the protests that are currently sweeping across Iran. These protests have the support of all my civilized Iranian friends who were forced to flee their country when religious fanatics took over under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. I took a personal interest in what happened in Iran then because it was a time when violent fanatics happened to become leaders of the Sikh religion in which I was born. Having been brought up in a religious Sikh family I wrote in an earlier version of this column that I was ashamed by the violent distortions that had been introduced into Sikhism and immediately became a target.

Receiving death threats is very unpleasant, so my sympathies are with Nupur Sharma although I believe she spoke in the tones of a Hindutva fanatic in a time that is fraught with tensions between Hindutva and jihadi fanaticism. It does not need saying, but cannot be said enough, that fanaticism breeds fanaticism. This is what is happening in India. It is disingenuous to say as that gang of leftist fanatics like to, that political Islam is a direct consequence of the constant attacks on Islam and Muslims that have come to define the rule of Narendra Modi. He seals himself in a cocoon of deafening silence, they like to point out, but allows his ministers, party spokespersons and social media loonies to spread poison without realizing how much damage they are doing to 'Ma Bhaarti'.

Hindutva fanatics are as despicable as jihadi fanatics, but it is wrong to say that it is because Hindu fanatics tore down the Babri Masjid that we have seen the rise of political Islam. Having covered events in the Kashmir Valley for more than 40 years, I can report that radical Islamists started spreading poison in Kashmir before the Babri Masjid was torn down. I was witness to cinemas, bars and liquors shops being closed in Srinagar by jihadists who threw acid on unveiled women. The violent jihadists who participated in the 9/11 attacks and spread terrorism across Europe had nothing to do with India, but it is their influence that has changed the nature of the much gentler Indian Islam we once knew.

So now that we have Hindutva fanatics and Islamist fanatics competing for territory in our country what should happen? In one word: leadership. The Prime Minister can no longer hide in his cocoon of resounding silence he has to speak out against all forms of religious and political fanaticism. He needs to discover that the people who pose a real threat to national security are not the dissidents, journalists, and comedians his Home Minister routinely jails but the fanatics that roam freely in our streets. He alone is in a position to reassure Indian Muslims that his government will not be partisan. Today they are being lured by the ideology of Islamism because they see the Indian state as unfair and unjust. It is not just the fanatics of the PFI who need to be locked up but Hindutva fanatics too.

inside
TRACK

COOMI KAPOOR



GHAR WAPASI?

AKALI DAL chief Sukhbir Badal met Amit Shah recently, triggering speculation that the demoralised Akalis could rejoin the NDA. The BJP believes that if the Akalis join forces with the BJP and Amarinder Singh, it could replace the Congress as the main opposition to AAP. The Congress has been practically comatose after its assembly defeat, what with Navjot Singh Sidhu in jail and former Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi missing in action. Badal's reservation about the proposed alliance is that Amarinder could take precedence over him. However, the BJP's point is that at 80, Amarinder has a limited time left in active politics and a credible alternative is needed in Punjab. Embarrassing stories about Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's misadventures are making the rounds and it is alleged that he is being remote-controlled by Arvind Kejriwal and his aides from Delhi.

ROYAL RELUCTANCE

Amit Shah wants to convince former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje to not contest the Assembly election next year. He has promised that in return for her sacrifice, the party will permit her to stand for the Lok Sabha from her son's constituency of Jhalawar and be made a central minister in the 2024 government. Raje is one of the last BJP stalwarts who has political clout in her own right, irrespective of her party, and she is reluctant to surrender her claim over the chief ministership. She is afraid that if she does not contest the Assembly election, she will be at the mercy of the BJP Big Two for any position she hopes to get at the Centre.

TWO IN ONE?

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot happens to be a skilled magician who has often confounded his political adversaries by pulling a rabbit out of his hat, when cornered. The question being asked in Rajasthan is: will the wily Gehlot manage to have his cake and eat it too? Gehlot wants to ensure that arch rival Sachin Pilot is not appointed his successor as CM, once he takes over as party president. Party veterans believe that Rahul Gandhi would be wise to insist that Gehlot first resign his chief ministership before declaring his nomination for party president. If Gehlot tries to prop up his own candidate for CM, it is to be seen whether the long-suffer-

ing Pilot remain silent or opts for new pastures.

DEFECTION OP CHIEF

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has become Amit Shah's chief lieutenant in defection operations. The latest instance being Goa, where eight out of 11 Goa Congress MLAs were "persuaded" to jump ship. Himanta claims he helps out because, as a former Congressman, he is on friendly terms with many in his old party. (Incidentally, Bhupinder Yadav and Dharmendra Pradhan are two others active in catalyzing defections to the BJP.) In Goa, the mass Congress defection was actually planned for July but it fizzled out because two Congress MLAs backed out at the last moment. This time, all eight were on board. It appears that former chief minister Digambar Kamat has been promised the ticket to fight for the South Goa Lok Sabha seat, which is one of 150 parliamentary seats which the BJP lost in 2019 and has been identified for special attention in the 2024 election. The recent defections are also a victory for Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, whose position gets strengthened since the wings of Vishwajit Rane, the number two in the Cabinet, and Sadanand Tanavade, BJP state president, automatically get clipped.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde spoke to Raj Thackeray on the last day of the Ganapati festival, hoping to form an alliance with the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena before the corporation elections. Though Bal Thackeray's nephew's party has been virtually wiped out, he, nevertheless, is bargaining for high stakes. He wants his wife Sharmila to be sent to the Rajya Sabha and appointed leader of the rebel Sena group in the Upper House. Another demand is for his son Amit to contest the 2024 parliamentary elections and, in case he wins, made leader of the Sena's Lok Sabha group. As a concession, Sharmila will then step down from the Rajya Sabha. Raj assumes that despite his electoral setbacks, he is a prized political catch since the rebel Sena faction gets legitimacy aligning with a Thackeray family member.

OPPN JODO OR TODO

If Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo yatra is intended to unite the Opposition under the Gandhi leadership, party spokesperson Jairam Ramesh should be less acerbic in his comments towards Opposition politicians who express scepticism about the yatra. Ramesh described the CPI(M) as the "A team of the BJP" in smaller states. Another time he warned other parties that the Congress was the "sleeping elephant which has just woken up" and they better beware.

she
SAID

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MANY YEARS ago, on a visit to Tehran, I had chafed against the mandatory wearing of the head scarf and a long coat-like garment up to my knees; just as I did against the compulsory wearing of a head covering and a full-length *abaya* on subsequent visits to Saudi Arabia. I believe the wearing, or not wearing of one or both, neither adds nor detracts from my being a Muslim. I know I am one and save for Allah, no one else has the right to judge me and find me wanting in my *imaan* (belief).

In India, one has been vehemently opposed to the state stepping in and telling women what they cannot wear and, in the instance of Karnataka, expressly forbidding girls from wearing hijab to school when they clearly wish to. Yet, one finds one's self rejoicing at the defiant hijab burning and applauding the bravery of Iranian women in the face of a brutal, repressive state machinery.

On the face of it, this duality is cause for some disquiet till one reaches the heart of the matter. As a practising Muslim woman who does not wear the hijab and who finds the all-enveloping version of it, such as the *chador* or burqa, deeply offensive as a tool of segregation and othering, the only way I can, in all honesty, explain my duality is by insisting on that bugbear of all peoples' protests: the right to freedom of personal choice. Essentially, what is happening in Iran and the reaction of some of us in India to what's happening in Karnataka are two sides of the same coin. What lies at the heart of both is men telling women what they can, or cannot, wear.

Seeing the protests in Iran as a challenge to religion would be as erroneous as seeing the protests against the banning of hijab in Karnataka as a challenge to the state. I believe both are protests against authoritarianism, suppression of masculinity, and deeply ingrained patriarchy. In cutting off their hair or burning their hijab, Iranian women are taking on the might of an authoritarian state that has been telling them for nearly half a century not just to cover their head and wear loose, ill-fitting clothes but precisely how to do so. The Kurdish woman, Mahsa Amini, who allegedly died in police custody, apparently died because she was

Iran to Udupi, a running
thread: Let women choose



Protests in Tehran against the death of Mahsa Amini, who died in police custody. She was detained for allegedly wearing her hijab in an "improper" way. Reuters

wearing her head-scarf 'incorrectly' and needed to be taken, by force, to a 're-education centre' for lessons in modesty.

In the nationwide protests that followed, over 30 people have died and hundreds have been injured in a brutal police crackdown across Iran. International observers see this, dubbed as "Iran's George Floyd moment", being as much a women's movement as a civil rights protest insofar as 22-year-old Amini's death has become a tipping point. The scale and extent of these protests, and the courage and defiance needed for public demonstrations in the face of severe suppression, indicate what may have started as protests against women-centric violence have since turned into protests against a decades-old systemic abuse of human rights.

What we have unfolding before our eyes are two scenarios: In Karnataka, a 'reformist' or 'secular' impulse of a 'progressive' state bent upon removing the outward symbols of backwardness from an

already beleaguered minority that finds itself pushed into a corner by vigilante mobs. And in Iran, an Islamic republic, bolstered by the might of state apparatus, bent upon enforcing what it considers its version of righteous conduct, especially on women, with all the brutality and power at its command. The impulse behind both is men controlling women.

The mob of boys who heckled and bullied a lone hijab-clad girl in Karnataka were not propelled by a reformist zeal or compassion for an oppressed girl from a minority community who had been 'brainwashed' by her 'regressive' family; it was muscular majoritarianism at its worst. By the same token, the moral police in Iran, with the poetic-sounding name *Gasht-e Ershad*, literally meaning 'guidance patrols', are certainly not motivated by 'guidance'.

Both are classic instances of over-reach and a blind, dogged refusal to take into account the concept of choice. The girls in the Udupi school want to wear a hijab. The protesting Iranian women don't. Shouldn't it be left to them?

Jalil is a Delhi-based author, translator and literary historian

National Editor Shalini Langer curates the 'She Said' column

history
HEADLINE

HUMERA KHALID



DECADES AGO, life as I remember it, was easy, happy and stress-free. After the war with Pakistan, things had settled down and I got admission at Presentation Convent School in Srinagar. That is when the ever-so-famous musical, *The Sound Of Music* — a movie with evergreen classical songs set in the picturesque beauty of Salzburg, Austria, and with the sweetest-ever emotional backstory — was showing in the city's Broadway Cinema. The nuns in the school took us to see the morning show. It was possibly one of the most exciting moments of my very simple child-

Srinagar talkies: Popcorn, tears in the dark

hood. We learnt the songs in the movie and practised them to perfection (or so we thought). On lazy afternoons, I would find my thoughts lingering off to the whole theatre experience, whilst continuously practising the notes of the songs.

The nuns at the school had a movie projector where, every once in a while, we would see some documentary or other educational films in the school hall. But the experience of going to a movie hall was an all together surreal one — waiting eagerly for our tickets, the best seats, the unmatched aroma of popcorn that made us float through cinema's alleys.

We watched *Footprints on the Moon* at Broadway Cinema, a movie about astronauts and the first landing on the

moon. For children our age, this experience was nearly as good as landing on the moon itself.

Then came the famous *Mughal-E-Azam* in Srinagar's Regal Cinema. It was a truly mesmerising experience, being a rather long, sad, tragic, musical love story. This one really had us by the storm. I even remember a few drops of tears rolling down the corner of my mother's eyes. By this time, black and white television had slowly entered our lives and thus we watched many Hindi movies on Doordarshan. But in our hearts, we were always waiting for the next cinema experience.

In Shiraz Cinema, which was near our aunt's house, we went to watch a film based on the Hajj pilgrimage.

Occasionally, we would watch films like *Chupke Chupke*, *Bobby*, and other famous Hindi movies. And if we were in luck, we would get a glimpse of the stars — the actors and actresses — since they would frequent Kashmir for screenings and shooting, many of whom we even entertained in our homes. On a good day, we could shake hands and, on even better days, get an autograph or two from the stars.

Going to the movies was always planned and the only entertainment of our student lives. It was like a window into the outside world. While in college, Saturdays were always theatre days, followed by dollops of ice cream and coffee for some. We watched *The Hidden Heart*, a documentary based on the first heart

transplant by surgeon Christian Bernard. It was again an unforgettable experience that made us skip a heart beat or two.

To our regret, our children never experienced any of this magic in Kashmir. All they know of the movies is from what we narrate to them. Now, even as Kashmir prepares to screen movies — at the new, fancy top-of-the-line multiplex, with screens so big and HD-quality images that almost cure my cataract, my best memories will remain those from another era, when going to a movie theatre was a treat to us like no other. A joy, a journey where we travelled without moving an inch.

The writer lives in Srinagar and has sustained her passion for movies through OTT platforms

Flex fuel: Part of plan to cut crude imports, but policy support key

New Delhi

TOP OF THE WORLD



Rev Mpho Tutu van Furth. AP File

UK
Church stops
Tutu's daughter
from officiating
funeral

London: The daughter of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu had wanted to honour her godfather's personal wish: that she officiate his funeral in England after he died last week. But the Church of England stopped the Rev Mpho Tutu van Furth, a priest ordained in the US, from doing so this week because she is married to a woman, she said. "I'm stunned by the lack of compassion," said Tutu van Furth in a phone interview from Shropshire, in central England, on Friday, calling the decision to bar her from officiating at the funeral of her godfather, Martin Kenyon, 92, unkind. "You can't speak a message of welcome and love and live a message of exclusion," she said. **NYT**

PAKISTAN
Govt seeks
to reschedule
Paris Club debt

Islamabad: Pakistan is seeking rescheduling of \$10 billion worth of debt owed to the Paris Club in a move aimed at creating breathing space for the cash-strapped government, according to a media report on Saturday. PM Shehbaz Sharif also requested IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva to provide up-front with the remaining loan of \$3 billion in November, *The Express Tribune* reported finance minister Miftah Ismail as saying. "Given the climate-induced disaster in Pakistan, we are seeking debt relief from bilateral Paris Club creditors," he tweeted. **PTI**

PAKISTAN
Hindu woman,
teens abducted,
forcibly converted

Karachi: A woman and two teenage girls belonging to the Hindu community have been kidnapped with two of them forcibly converted to Islam and married to Muslim men in Pakistan's Sindh province. Meena Meghwar, 14, was abducted from Nasarpur and another teenage Hindu girl was kidnapped while returning home from the market in Mirpurkhas town, police said. In the third instance, a married Hindu woman with three children went missing from Mirpurkhas and later showed up after allegedly converting to Islam and marrying a Muslim man. **PTI**

NIGERIA
Armed bandits
kill 15 people
at mosque

Maiduguri: A gang of armed men killed at least 15 people at a mosque in northwest Nigeria's Zamfara state, residents said on Saturday. The attack in the Bulkyum local government area took place during Friday prayers at the Jumu'at central mosque in Ruwan Jema town, three residents said. "The armed bandits came on motor-bikes while holding guns and moved straight to the mosque and began to shoot sporadically," a resident said. **REUTERS**

VOTING CARRIED OUT UNDER GUN BARRELS: UKRAINIAN OFFICIALS

Russian forces shell Ukraine cities as Kremlin holds votes in occupied parts

AGENCIES
KYIV, SEPTEMBER 24

RUSSIAN FORCES launched new strikes on Ukrainian cities Saturday as Kremlin-orchestrated votes took place in occupied regions to create a pretext for their annexation by Moscow, while hundreds of people were arrested in Russia for protesting a military mobilisation order aimed at beefing up the country's troops in Ukraine.

Ukraine's presidential office said the latest Russian shelling killed at least three people and wounded 19. Oleksandr Starukh, the Ukrainian governor of Zaporizhzhia, one of the regions where Moscow-installed officials organised referendums on joining Russia, said a Russian missile hit an apartment building in the city of Zaporizhzhia, killing one person and injuring seven others.

Ukraine and its Western allies say the referendums underway in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south and the eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions have no legal force. They alleged the votes were an illegitimate attempt by Moscow to seize Ukrainian territory stretching from the Russian border to the Crimean Peninsula.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai



Voting continued on the second day of a referendum in Mariupol, on Saturday. Reuters

said the voting "looked more like an opinion survey under the gun barrels," adding that Moscow-backed local authorities sent armed escorts to accompany election officials and to take down the names of individuals who voted against joining Russia.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Ukrainians in occupied regions to undermine the referendums and to share information about the people conducting "this farce."

Putin on Saturday signed a hastily approved bill that toughens the punishment for soldiers who disobey officers' orders, desert or surrender to the enemy.

Russian police moved quickly to break up protests against mobilisation that were held in several cities across Russia on Saturday, arresting over 700 people.

Russia's defence
ministry reshuffle

Russia's Defence Ministry announced a high-level leadership shake-up on Saturday. In a statement, it said Col Gen. Mikhail Y. Mizintsev — whom Western officials have dubbed the "butcher of Mariupol" — has been appointed deputy defence minister for overseeing logistics, replacing Gen. Dmitri V. Bulgakov, 67, among other reappointments.

Sri Lankans describe
abuse as Russian
captives in KharkivASSOCIATED PRESS
KHARKIV, SEPTEMBER 24

A GROUP of Sri Lankans held captive by Russian forces in an agricultural factory in eastern Ukraine said Saturday that they were beaten and abused for months before escaping on foot as the Russians withdrew from the Kharkiv region this month.

Recounting their ordeal to reporters in Kharkiv, one of the seven Sri Lankans said he was shot in the foot; another had his toenail ripped off and was slammed in the head with the butt of a rifle. Ukrainian officials described their treatment as torture.

"Every day we were cleaning toilets and bathrooms," Dilukshan Robertdiv, one of the former captives, said in English. "Some days Russians came and beat our people." Four of the seven were medical students in the city of Kupiansk and three were working there when Russian forces poured across the border in late February.



Sri Lankan former captives in Kharkiv, Saturday. AP

The group said they were captured at the first checkpoint out of Kupiansk and then taken to Vovchansk, near the border with Russia, where they were held in a factory with 20 Ukrainians.

"They took our passports, other documents, phones, clothes, and locked us up in a room," said Sharujan Ganeswaran, "There were also Ukrainian people with us, and they were questioned and sent in 10 days or a month. With us they never spoke as they could not understand our language." Police said the factory housed a Russian "torture center" — one of 18 in the Kharkiv region.

Louise Fletcher, Oscar winner for 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest', dies at 88

ANITA GATES
SEPTEMBER 24

LOUISE FLETCHER, the imposing, steely-eyed actress who won an Academy Award for her role as the tyrannical Nurse Ratched in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," died on Friday at her home in the town of Montdurasse, in Southern France. She was 88.

The death was confirmed by her agent, David Shaul, who did not cite a cause. Fletcher also had a home in Los Angeles.

Fletcher was 40 and largely unknown to the public when she was cast as the head administrative nurse at an Oregon mental in-



Louise Fletcher with her Academy Award. AP File

stitution in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." The film, directed by Milos Forman and based on a

popular novel by Ken Kesey, won a best-actress trophy for Fletcher and four other Oscars: best picture, best director, best actor (Jack Nicholson) and best adapted screenplay (Bo Goldman and Lawrence Hauber).

Fletcher's acceptance speech stood out that night — not only because she teasingly thanked voters for hating her, but also because she used American Sign Language in thanking her parents, who were both deaf, for "teaching me to have a dream."

At the time "Cuckoo's Nest" was released, Fletcher was frustrated by the buttoned-up nature of her character. "I envied the other actors tremendously,"

she said in a 1975 interview with *The New York Times*, referring to her fellow cast members, most of whom were playing mental patients. "They were so free, and I had to be so controlled."

Although Fletcher's most famous character was a portrait of sternness, she often recalled smiling constantly and pretending that everything was perfect when she was growing up, in an effort to protect her non-hearing parents from bad news.

"The price of it was very high for me," she said in a 1977 interview with *The Ladies' Home Journal*. "Because I not only pretended everything was all right. I came to feel it had to be." **NYT**

Designation of
Afghanistan as
non-NATO ally
terminates: US

Washington: US President Joe Biden has terminated the designation of Afghanistan as a major non-NATO ally, over a year after the Taliban captured power in Kabul. In 2012, the US named Afghanistan a major non-NATO ally, which cleared the way for the two countries to maintain a defence and economic relationship. The designation gave several facilities and concessions to Afghanistan in terms of defence and security-related assistance.

"By the authority vested in me...I hereby terminate the designation of Afghanistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally of the US for the purposes of the Act and the Arms Export Control Act," Biden said in a presidential memorandum to the Secretary of State Antony Blinken. **PTI**

External interference won't
be tolerated: China on TaiwanASSOCIATED PRESS
UNITED NATIONS,
SEPTEMBER 24

CHINA UNDERScored its commitment Saturday to its claim to Taiwan, telling world leaders that anyone who gets in the way of its determination to reunify with the self-governing island would be "crushed by the wheels of history."

The language was forceful but, for Chinese leadership, well within the realm of normal.

"Only when China is fully reunified can there be true peace across the Taiwan Strait," Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, said at the UN General Assembly. He said Beijing would "take the most forceful steps to oppose external interference."



US sending 'dangerous signals' on Taiwan, China's Wang Yi told US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday. Reuters

"The PRC government is the sole government representing all of China," Wang said, referring to China's formal name, the People's Republic of China. "The one-China principle has become a basic norm in international relations."

On Saturday at the UN meeting, the PM of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ralph Gonsalves, spoke about allowing Taiwan to raise its profile in international organisations, including WHO.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN ENDS, VOTING TODAY

Italian voters appear ready to turn a page for Europe

JASON HOROWITZ
ROME, SEPTEMBER 24

GIORGIA MELONI, Italy's hard-right leader, resents having to talk about fascism. She has publicly, and in multiple languages, said the Italian right has "handed Fascism over to history for decades now." She argued that "the problem with fascism in Italy always begins with the electoral campaign," when the Italian left, she said, wheels out "the black wave" to smear its opponents.

But none of that matters now, she insisted in an interview this month, because Italians do not care. "Italians don't believe any-

more in this garbage," she said.

Meloni may be proved right on Sunday, when she is expected to be the top vote-getter in Italian elections, a breakthrough far-right parties in Europe have anticipated for decades.

More than 70 years after Nazis and Fascists nearly destroyed Europe, formerly taboo parties with Nazi or Fascist heritages that were long marginalised have elbowed their way into the mainstream. Some are even winning. A page of European history seems to be turning.

Last week, a hard-right group founded by neo-Nazis and skin-heads became the largest party in Sweden's likely governing



Some fear that Giorgia Meloni, the hard-right politician, will continue policies that have kept women back. NYT

coalition. The far-right leader Marine Le Pen — for a second consecutive time — reached the final round of French presiden-

tial elections this year.

But it is Italy, the birthplace of fascism, that looks likely to be led not only by its first woman

PM in Meloni but the first Italian leader whose party can trace its roots back to the wreckage of Italian fascism. "People have become used to them," said John Foot, a historian of fascism.

The indifference of Italian voters to the past, however, may have less to do with Meloni's personal appeal or policies than with Italy's perennial hunger for change. But there is another force at work: Italy's long post-war process — even policy — of deliberate amnesia to unify the nation that began essentially as soon as World War II ended.

Today that process has culminated in Meloni's arrival on the precipice of power, after several

decades in which hard-right elements were gradually brought into the political fold, legitimised and made familiar to Italian voters.

"The country has not moved to the right at all," said Roberto D'Alimonte, a political scientist, who said voters had little sense or interest in Meloni's history and simply saw her as the new face of the centre right. "They don't see her as a threat."

But in having long preferred to forget their past are Italians setting themselves up to repeat it? The concern is not academic at a moment when war again rages in Europe and democracy appears embattled in many nations around the globe. **NYT**

EXPLAINED
What happens
after the vote

EXIT POLLS should come out the night of the vote, but since voting places close at 11 pm, no official results are expected to be declared until the next day, or even later. But even once the results are known, Italy will not have a new PM for weeks. The new MPs will be confirmed and convened in Rome in mid-October.



POINT OF VIEW

What's your superpower?

Navigating our way through anxiety calls for compassionate curiosity and listening to a counter-voice that is full of love and wisdom



BOOKS

- Review of Swati Ganguly's *Tagore's University: A History of Visva-Bharati*
- Review of Avinuo Kire's *Where the Cobbled Path Leads*
- Review of Selby Wynn's *After Sappho*

The Elon Musketeers

Students, fresh graduates, entrepreneurs, IT professionals, gym trainers. Meet the Indian fans of Tesla chief, space entrepreneur and the world's richest man, Elon Musk

Vidhatri Rao

IT MAY be a long shot but Gopi Gautham, a second-year engineering student at Chandigarh University, wants to invite billionaire Elon Musk as a speaker to his university's Ted X event scheduled for this November. So far, he has made several attempts: first tweeting, asking Musk to "come to India where he has the largest number of fans", then reaching out to his massive online followers in the hope that someone would put in a word to the world's richest man.

So, why does he think Musk, his "inspiration", would be a suitable guest? "*Kuch na kuch to badlega hi agar woh aayenge* (Something or the other will change if he comes to India)... there will be more job opportunities," says Gautham. The 20-year-old who is trying to secure funding for an education-based Virtual Reality (VR) start-up and who sees Musk as an icon, says, "He works, falters, but does not stop working."

Co-founder of fintech company Paypal, owner of Electronic Vehicle (EV) car manufacturing company Tesla, spacecraft manufacturing company SpaceX, founder of infrastructure construction enterprise The Boring Company and co-founder of Neura Link and Open AI. The world's richest man with a strange, mercurial Twitter presence, who decided to buy the platform and back out of the deal. The one with oft-criticised, grand ambitions to go to Mars. These would be common ways to describe Musk. But for Gautham and other fans such as Aditya, a 23-year-old intern in a tech company in Bengaluru, he is a "brilliant innovator, revolutionising the face of technology and changing the world."

The South-Africa born billionaire has acquired a legion of fans from across the world, not just for his products but also for himself. In India, his admirers are mostly male, ranging from students, entrepreneurs, fresh graduates, IT employees to professionals. They can be found on social media, online communities and discussion forums. The most dedicated "Musketeer" (as they call themselves) community is on LinkedIn. The founder of the 23,579-member forum — whose description reads "Is Elon Musk your Role Model? If yes, please join" — is Pune-based Atul Veer, director of engineering at Medly, a pharmaceutical company offering digital services.

Veer started the group in 2012, when he was working on an energy-analytics project. This was the time he realised the "importance of getting rid of fossil fuels at a large scale," which led him to Musk who was "thinking about not just himself or his business but had a holistic and scalable approach. Though not many people believed him, the idea was to support him. We created a professional group, shared articles about him and it grew organically," he says.

However, while these groups do exist, some are individual fans who have themselves amassed a following. Pranay Pathole — Musk's "Twitter friend" — perhaps, his most famous Indian fan, is an example. With over a lakh followers, his feed is dedicated to Musk who "he happens to be in regular touch with." It all started in 2018 when the Pune-based engineer tweeted at the SpaceX founder about wipers in a Tesla car. He received a reply and the conversations have continued ever since.

Musk's appeal, says 23-year-old Pathole, can be traced to the fact that he does not follow corporate templates. "He is not your ideal CEO. Does not rely on his PR Guys". (Due to a lawsuit, Musk cannot tweet about Tesla without consulting his company lawyers. His other tweets — what Pathole describes as part of his "meme lord" personality — are largely perceived to be his).

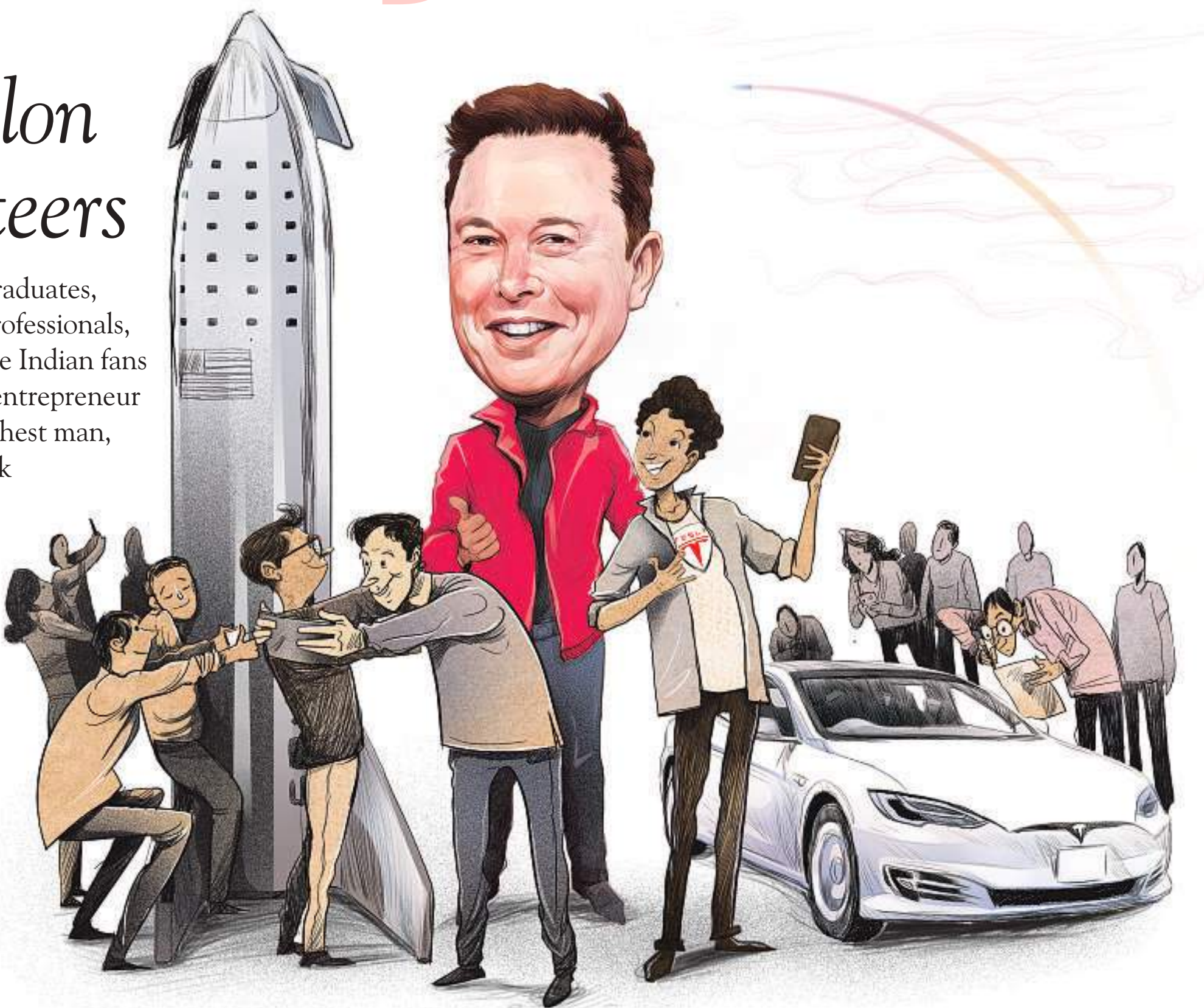


ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

In August, when Pathole landed in the US to study data science at the University of Texas, he did what he had always said he would: meet Musk at Tesla's manufacturing unit in Texas. He took to Twitter to say that he had "never seen such a humble and down-to-earth person."

What makes young India look up to tech biggies as icons? India's interest in software development is no secret, with over 5.2 million developers ready to enter the workforce by 2023. The Central government's initiatives to support start-ups have only added to the innovation aura. Reports mention that more than 80 start-ups get recognised every day in the country, making it the highest rate in the world. Nearly 49 per cent of start-ups are from Tier II and Tier III cities alone.

It's no surprise then that Atharva Madkar, 22, an IIT Guwahati graduate and currently a quantum computing student at the California Institute of Technology, calls himself a big fan. He recalls a time when he would watch Musk interviews religiously every day. "His intention aligns with mine," says Madkar, who runs Forengers, an NGO that conducts plantation drives and undertakes cleaning in and around Pune. Other parts of Musk's operations are equally fascinating for Madkar, who calls Tesla's production capacity mind-blowing. He attributes Musk's personality as a core part of his popularity: "He talks like a normal human being, it is not superficial... I cannot give a rational explanation for his fandom, but I like his approach."

For Hyderabad-based Nishith Rao Koti, Tesla's model of "envisioning the usage of lithium-ion batteries to power cars when nobody was doing so" was fascinating, particularly by someone "who did not have prior experience about it and was trying to make a difference in the entire industry." And this is what draws him to the billionaire.

Koti, a 26-year-old budding entrepreneur who works at a pharmaceutical company, had pre-booked a Tesla when it announced operations in India in 2016. (Tesla registered an office in Bengaluru in 2021 but as of now will not be starting production because it is in a gridlock with the Central government over import duties. Musk's satellite internet access company, Starlink, was also touted to come to India. It even started booking/rendering services but was reprimanded by the government for doing so without a licence.)

"Like most billionaires, Musk is a steadfast believer with a never-give-up attitude,"



COURTESY PRANAY PATHOLE



COURTESY KERBALSPACEPROGRAM.COM



COURTESY NISHITHRAOKOTI

STARSTRUCK

(From left) Pranay Pathole at the Tesla Gigafactory in Texas in August; a poster of space simulation video game — Kerbal Space Program; Nishith Rao Koti

says Koti. According to him, Musk's innate ability to work on Moonshot ideas (where he looks at radical solutions through disruptive technology) further motivates millions across the globe to aim for the stars.

Musk proved it in 2012 with his company SpaceX — started in 2002 — when it became the first private enterprise to send a craft to the International Space Station. This was the time the American space shuttle programme was going through a bit of a downward spiral, being largely dependent on Russian rockets.

However, Musk is not without his critics, especially with people finding him too self-absorbed and his community of followers turning into silos. A final-year Mechanical Engineering student from the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), who requested to stay anonymous, describes himself as an aero-astro maniac.

Calling himself a fan-turned-sceptic, he speaks of how Musk was a poster boy of the New Space movement. He says, "SpaceX and Musk usually took this angle: out with the old, essentially. Re-usability, rapid launch cadence, vertical integration, all these were the magical powers SpaceX possessed (supposedly), and which would breathe life into an ageing and slowing aerospace industry."

As a 14-year-old aerospace nerd, he would play a space flight simulation video game called Kerbal Space Program, and pore over the world of the SpaceX fan forums, on Reddit primarily and on Nasa Space flight — an old school message board about all things aerospace. These forums certainly helped. "With a significant number of genuine em-

ployees of the aero industry consistently contributing with cool insights" this VIT student got a sneak peek into a world which was otherwise blocked to him as an outsider. The idea of Musk "openly tweeting about valves, tanks, pressure ratios, test schedules and costs of the launch business was extremely exciting" as opposed to the earlier "tight-lipped, suit-and-tie executives who would drip-feed PR speak once in a blue moon and maybe a memoir once every other decade about why certain things failed," he says. As a student, he "kept track of SpaceX" engines at one point, and "Musk live tweeting about why engine #3939 exploded" was all wildly exciting for him.

What marked a departure from this adoration was the international Astronautical Congress in Guadalajara, Mexico in 2016, where Musk grandly outlined SpaceX's plan to colonise Mars. "Now it was all about Elon's plans... My hours following SpaceX dropped drastically. It was all Elon's Rocket now, a departure from when the engineers and employees were discussed as the prime contributors. The community was now a total echo chamber," he says.

At the moment, he is not noting down every component of what goes into making a SpaceX rocket, but he still feels like Musk "filled a space in a country which lacked genuine good science communication."

Veer also echoes the thoughts. While he believes in Musk's approach and ideas, he does not agree with the god-like cult following. "It has to be principle-centric and not person-centric," he says.

Others, too, while fascinated by his ad-

vancements, view aspects of his personality with suspicion. Mihir Limaye, a 23-year-old student of MES Institute of Management & Career Courses, Pune, counts Musk's quest for innovation behind his fandom, but acknowledges that "he has too much power and a crazy cult following."

The billionaire has consistently come under flak for his statements and workplace practices. At 3.27 per cent, he had only paid small tax rates — in relation to the increase in his total wealth between 2014 and 2018 — according to a Propublica investigation in 2021. In 2020, Musk repeatedly underplayed the effects of COVID-19 in a bunch of tweets and also kept one of his factories open despite a local "shelter-in-place" order, before going on to halt production. His companies have faced allegations of sexual harassment and poor working conditions. Then came the confusion following his pulling out of the Twitter deal. As the announcement was made, the stock price of the site fell by 11 per cent in July. Twitter called Musk's exit "a model of hypocrisy" in its lawsuit.

However, his followers were quick to point out on Twitter and elsewhere that this was just Musk's "latest move in a long game to demand better business practices from Twitter." Musk told the world that he wanted to buy the company in order to ensure that free speech was followed. He framed it as a moral project, in line with his larger-than-life persona. Despite these, some others, however, choose to focus on his work, rather than his grandstanding.

Most of Musk's fans put down his popularity in large measures to the casual and friendly vibes he appears to send out. Shubham Arora, a gym trainer in Gurgaon, says, "He doesn't show off, gives to charity, and shares his knowledge with the world. That is very important. Our Indian billionaires do not communicate and are not accessible. He is a good person in real life." As a part of the crypto-mining community that waits with bated breath for Musk's tweets on the subject — owing to his massive following, he has immense power to swing the markets — Arora follows his work closely.

Even as controversies swirl around Musk, for his fans he remains the man who made science cool. As Bengaluru-based Aditya sums it up: "Musk's huge personality and non-apologetic, frank behaviour makes him a great influencer and not just an innovator or an engineer."

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

The Wacky World of Ducks

Nearly everything about ducks makes you smile

DUCKS ARE wacky. And, quacky of course. Personally, I think that one of their greatest talents is their ability to make even the most dour, sour and deadly serious watcher (not necessarily a bird watcher) break into an involuntary smile. The other day, I went down to the Yamuna Biodiversity Park and stood by the large water body. Blue and pristine, it was empty except for a family of spot-billed ducks. The little family swam serenely away, their faces made up like Kathakali dancers, with the same wide, amusing smiles stretched ear to ear. They imparted an air of tranquillity to the place, leaving neat V-shaped wakes as they swam.

Nearly everything about ducks makes you smile. First of course, it's their faces, what with that flat beak, some of which can look like a shovel (ah, the duck in question is called the shoveller), others with virulently hued ones that make them look like they've gone overboard with the lipstick (the red-crested pochard, for example). Then there's the way most of them waggle their tails as they swim around, looking pleased as punch. And when some of them want to check what's available just under the surface they upend and rotate slowly, their bottoms high, vivid orange flippers kicking valiantly. Soon enough, they straighten up, eyes twinkling and wag their tails. Those that specialise in providing this kind of entertainment are called "dabblers". The "diving" ducks, also called pochards, are as a rule more dour and serious looking, and have beady eyes — but they can make you laugh, too. The austere attired (in black and white) tufted pochard with its beady golden eye and *shendi* at the back of its head, makes you grin irreverently as it reminds you of well... I'm not saying any more. Check on Google and reach your own conclusion.

Ducks have those flipper-feet which give them that inimitable bottom-wagging waddle, which perhaps only Charlie Chaplin managed to perfect. And there's the quack! It can vary in intensity from a quiet, contented murmur "wak-wak-wak!" as family members keep in touch to a loud, brassy "WAK-WAK-WAK-WAKWAK-WAK!", when tempers short between drakes over a



RANJIT LAL

QUACKINGLY ELEGANT

A gadwall stretching its wings

ducky. Drakes, alas, are not the most chivalrous of suitors. Like hoodlums, they just pile on *en masse* on top of the poor lady — who may well be in danger of being drowned. I saw this happening in the National Zoological Park in Delhi many years ago. It was disgraceful, and she was not a lucky duck!

But there's this too: The Mandarin duck who turns out resplendent in every hue of the rainbow and looking so elite and posh and outrageously Elizabethan, it must have been a crime to even look at one lest he gave you ideas. I wonder how many Mandarin ducks ended up as Peking ducks for trying to subvert the population.

Oh yes, we have shot ducks by the million, something that is considered a "sport". I'm not referring, of course, to "sitting ducks" but those streaking across the heavens sounding exactly like a squadron of fighter jets. Unfairly, we don't use just one slug at a time, but a spray of shot-gun pellets. But ducks swerve and jink and even fly upside down as they evade the guns below. Then all a-flutter they drop down on safer water, straighten up, wag their tails and become sitting ducks again.

Ducks are consumed by many: they have more "red" meat and fat than chickens because their muscles need a constant supply of oxygenated blood during their long-distance flights. Domestic ducks, alas, cannot fly because we have made them overweight and they don't exercise.

While drakes are usually splendidly suited, the ladies usually prefer dappled browns and greys, to merge with the reeds. One way of identifying them is by checking the colour of their "speculum" — the band of usually iridescent colour on their wings. Ducklings "imprint" on their moms when they hatch — actually on the first object they see when they open their eyes, and will follow their mom or the object faithfully all in a row, sometimes stopping traffic as they cross busy highways, adding to their charm. Some ducks nest in the hollows of trees or even in cavities in cliff faces, and the ducklings have to take a flying leap in order to launch. They bounce down like fluffy balls till they hit ground zero or the water, usually perky and undamaged.

Migratory ducks — which hopefully should be arriving soon to our lakes, rivers and water-bodies — fly enormous distances for rest and recreation in winter. So, if you reach a water body on a misty winter morning and find them all asleep with their heads in their wings even until mid-day, let them rest, even if you have reached here at the crack of dawn and have frozen your butt off.

Navigating our Way in the Age of Anxiety

The art of compassionate curiosity in the face of adversity



IMAGINE

BY SHELJA SEN

DOESN'T IT strike you as strange that we might have survived a pandemic but our lives are back on the pre-2020 treadmill as if the last two years did not happen at all? No wonder we are hearing so many stories of stress, worry and anxiety. Just in the last one week, I have met children and young people who have talked about their fears — of being ridiculed, of what people think of them, of not finding love, of not getting into a good college, of not finding the right job, of being overlooked, of the climate crisis, of not having enough money, of not having the right body, of being irrelevant. It is a never-ending list and the repeated themes come down to "not doing enough, not being enough," and therefore, always being "less, lonely and a loser."

Before we start rolling our eyes and throwing up our hands at, "kids these days," let me clarify, this is just not the children, it is all around us. Go back to the list and think of how many people you know who might be struggling with the same. And if you read my column regularly, you will know where I am going with this — the problem is not the youth, the problem is the socio-cultural context that defines who is worthy and who gets pushed to be "less, lonely and a loser." It is not easy growing up in a society which has stringent requirements of success and is quick to push labels of failure onto us.

As a response to what I am hearing and experiencing every day, I decided to put down the collective wisdom of the people I have worked with over the years and what they have found helpful when anxiety strikes:

Name it: Anxiety tricks us into believing that there is something wrong with us — that we are not smart enough, not worthy enough or maybe just not trying hard enough. When actually we need to turn the lens on the society which propagates anxiety rampantly by creating pressure on us to act, look, and perform in a particular way. We end up locating the problem within ourselves and churning with, "My friends do not call me because they think I am boring", "I am ugly, so nobody will find me attractive!" Before we know, we are speaking its language and believing it is true. What name would you give these fears? One person called it "noise", while another called it "jitters". It might be a better idea to use a noun rather than a verb or an adjective.



ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

It is not me: By naming it, we are able to create a distance between ourselves and the problem and not internalise it as a truth about ourselves. Sanvi had been told from an early age that she was an anxious child and she had internalised that as the truth about herself and let it define her. However, when

we started deconstructing she decided to name the anxiety as "static" and was able to separate herself from it and see how it had started taking over her identity and life. We unpacked years of messages she had internalised, "I will mess things up", or "I am only as good as the marks I get". Once she under-

stood the workings of "static", she could unspool its hold on her life.

Question it: Next time your version of static shows up, observe it from all angles. Where does it show up in the body? How would you describe the sensation — hot, cold, heavy, piercing, front, back, left, right? What happens when you gently breathe into it until it feels lighter? Sanvi shared that it really helped her to just focus on the sensation and not see it as anxiety which unclenched its grip on her. Mansi had lived with anorexia and she realised how it recruited anxiety to scare her with ideas like, "If you eat, you will become fat!" She had done enough research to know that anxiety and anorexia had worked together to build neural networks or what she called the "habit loop" in her brain to build fear of food. She declared to me that what she had found helpful was, "Doing the opposite of what habit loop tells me! Every time it tells me to starve myself, I go and eat something". And one step at a time, she was rewiring her brain and standing up to the "habit loop."

Compassionate curiosity: Sanvi told me "Curiosity is a superpower", and I could not agree with her more. After checking for the sensation, if it does not step away, ask some questions to see through some of its tricks — What is it trying to convince me of? What is it pushing me to believe about myself, or the world? How is it comparing me to others? What predictions is it trying to make about the future? The more curious we get, the more we are able to distance ourselves from the anxiety. And then go one step ahead and show compassion towards it. You will find that no matter how the anxiety might be visiting you — as a static, nagging voice, tone of dread, in a warped way it might be trying to serve or protect you or funnily, look out for you. It might tell you, "you are going to mess up the presentation", "they will find out that you are such a fraud" — behind these cutting reprimands there is a concern, though misplaced, that is trying to warn us of our own shortcomings to face what it sees as a dangerous world. So rather than taking an adversarial stance of fighting or getting rid of the anxiety, which will, in turn, make it even more entrenched, it might help if we take a more compassionate position.

Find the counter expansive voice: Sabah explained, "When I am compassionately curious, I can sense the anxiety melting and I can listen to a counter-voice." When I asked her what was that counter voice, she said, "It's a voice full of love, wisdom and courage. If anxiety contracts me, the counter voice expands me." If you could find that counter expansive voice — what would you call it? What are the kind of things you do that invite it in? How does it feel different in your body? What does it make possible for you in your relationships, work and maybe, finding joy in the smallest of things? How does it make your life richer? Young people I have consulted have talked about finding their counter expansive voice through being close to nature, deep conversations on things that they value with people they love, reading, playfulness, meditation, mindfulness, gratitude journaling, dancing, art, cooking, and experiences that bring a sense of awe — like the night sky, sea, mountains.

So now over to you, what would be your "superpower" that you will use to lower the voice of anxiety and reclaim your life?

Shelja Sen is a narrative therapist, writer, co-founder of Children First Institute of Child & Adolescent Mental Health. Her latest book is *Reclaim Your Life*

What our ancestors have taught us

Being elderly doesn't mean being feeble or without hope

SLICE OF LIFE



Suvir Saran

Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

AS WE observe the 16-day period of remembrance of our ancestors in the Hindu calendar, I find myself remembering my own, with great pride and glee. Both sets of grandparents, my parents and their siblings, and the extended family from all four branches has made for a familial fraternity that has taught me through their example, through spoken words and deeds, what it takes to live a life of respectful and respectable mindfulness.

Nani, my maternal grandmother, and Bua and Phupaji, my paternal aunt and uncle, taught me about the rapidity with which to respect multiplies. To earn the respect of oth-

ers, they taught us kids, we have to give it in plentitude. In respecting others, we build the foundations of trust. We can cull from when broken by life in ways that only friendship and family can heal. Through their actions and generosity, Nani, Bua and Phupaji showed us the civilised face of civil society.

My dad, who had diabetes and was taken much too early from us at the age 66, never complained about his lot. Even when his pain was at its height, he would remind us that there was always someone in a worse situation, someone else who needed support and care, who needed a smile. He showed us that when you give respect and compassion to others in need, you gain perspective and are able to come to peace with your own situation.

In the life my father lived and in how Nana, my maternal grandfather, lived his, I saw the power behind active listening. My father was far more involved in the act, and in return got a lot more traction with people, but both Nana and he left indelible impressions in the mind-scape and psyche of all they interacted with. Their genuine concern, their desire to know the other, and their respect for one and all always shone bright and made the most delicate situations easier to handle and richer with the fruits of a successful exchange.

Nana, who died a few months before my father passed, lost the love of his life, my grandmother, while they were living in the US. Theirs was an epic love story, truly a Harlequin romance. Instead of wallowing in his sorrow, Nana packed up, moved back to India, and lived the rest of his days with my parents. He made peace with being single, refusing to give in to despair. He entertained guests, provided for his family and friends, and showed us all through his example that being elderly didn't mean being feeble or without



SUVIR SARAN

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

Shared experiences, interests and values — these connect us humans where religion, race, age, and politics can divide and tear us apart

hope. He lived joyfully and at peace with self and life until his death at age 92.

Dadi, my paternal grandmother, also taught me the importance of being at peace with oneself and with life. Dadi spent the last several years of her life in a wheelchair. One day, her older sister came to visit and said to her, "Come on, it's time for us both to make plans to be with the Lord." Dadi replied, "You go make your plans if you want to. I'm going nowhere. I'm very comfortable."

Dadi had me as her walking stick for all my years of being by her side. This privilege gave me rare access to her and a connection that still shows me paths into my soul, where I find answers for what I am searching for outside of my own world. Dadi wasn't the most patient person, but she always taught me to be considerate towards others and to be generous to a fault. She would tell me that the best among us look past another's faults and put themselves into another's shoes, seeing things from their perspective. She and Papa connected me to the relationship that compassion, kindness, and empathy share with respect and dignity.

When we children would question the behaviour of certain elders around us, they would urge us to appreciate those people in a holistic manner. To show kindness, be empathetic and compassionate toward them. They taught us to appreciate that we are all far from perfect, and so, respecting another means to accept them for who they are and show them kindness and acceptance in the face of their poor behaviour.

My mother, who embodies goodness that words cannot describe but which her actions always show vividly, taught me all of these things and more. In watching her navigate and rise above the challenges posed by the darkly bleak realities of life, I learned the collegiality of respect and suffering. She taught us kids about seeing the world as an echo chamber where we reaped what we sowed. In teaching us to suffer together, she levelled the playing field of life. She validated the other in our lives and, in doing so, showed us that we are all human, none better than the other.

Mom encouraged us to see and feel positive things about all those who touched our lives, and about life, too. She gave us the language and vocabulary that taught us to treat people in a manner that showed them that we cared about how they felt and who they were. She taught us to understand the worth of the other by respecting them as we would want ourselves to be respected. To her, respecting the other is about valuing the other as an individual with complete humanity as important as our own.

In looking for common ground between us as humans, we find joy in diversity and celebration in plurality of thought, action, and deed. We need only make some effort to listen to another, to spend time with them and be interested in genuinely hearing them out, observing their lives and caring for how they feel and what they are going through, and we will find something in common with that person. Shared experiences, hobbies, interests, values — these and more connect us humans where religion, race, age, and politics can divide and tear us apart.

In remembering the elders who have passed me by, whose lives have blessed me with invaluable lessons that make me the man I am today, and in remembering living relatives and the life lessons they have taught me — I realise the many common traits that bind us humans together despite the diversity we live with and around. We all are born to die, and in that arc of life between birth and death, we share the ability to evolve and grow, change and learn, forgive and forget. Once we grasp this common arc between us, it becomes a joyous and fortuitous starting point for relationships where we proudly and happily serve others and enrich our own souls.

The World in its Courtyard

A look back at Visva-Bharati's century-old legacy and how it built a community of scholarship before a radical shift in its functioning in the last few years

Angshuman Kar

TAGORE'S UNIVERSITY: A History of Visva-Bharati, the result of painstaking research by Swati Ganguly, has come out just as the institute completes its centenary celebrations. The book maps the history of Visva-Bharati from its inception to Tagore's birth centenary year to document how, over the years, it built up a cultural community of learning, teaching and scholarship. Ganguly has scripted this history using archives, memoirs, official documents and oral narratives.

The book is written with the objective of correcting some misconceptions about the Visva-Bharati and to resist attempts of appropriating it for parochial purposes. In the Introduction to the book, Ganguly writes, "Indian history shows many instances of nationalist strivings to appropriate Rabindranath, but the larger truth remains that Visva-Bharati was founded against the nationalist currents that swept India during the Gandhian non-cooperation movement."

Misconceptions about its nationalist character partly owes to misreadings of Tagore's lecture "The Centre of Indian Culture" (1919, later published as a monograph) in which he, disapproving a blind imitation of a full-grown European university while setting up an Indian one, said, "The mischief is that as soon as the idea of a University enters our mind, the idea of a Cambridge University, and a host of other European Universities, rushes in at the same time and fills the whole space." Tagore was objecting to "the artificial arrangement" by which "foreign education tends to occupy all the space of our national mind." But he specifically mentioned, "Let me state clearly that I have no distrust of any culture because of its foreign character. On the contrary, I believe that the stock of such forces is necessary for the vitality of our intellectual nature."

Ganguly is right in arguing that Visva-Bharati was conceived of by rejecting xenophobic and insular nationalism; it was truly cosmopolitan in its character and believed in non-hierarchical exchange of knowledge between the East and the West. This, she points out, is best revealed in the motto of Visva-Bharati — "Yatra visvam bhabhavatyekanidam", which means "where the world makes its home in a nest."

Another fallacy that Ganguly tries to correct is the belief that Visva-Bharati was an ideological extension of the Ashram School founded by Tagore in 1901. Supporting historian Sabyasachi Bhattacharya's argument that Tagore's educational thoughts did not have an "undifferentiated continuity" and developed through four different stages, Ganguly places Visva-Bharati in the third phase of this schema. She argues that while the Ashram School was founded as part of Tagore's attempt to build a "swadeshi samaj", Visva-Bharati, from the beginning, had a cosmopolitan character. Tagore invited scholar



SAMISIVA/NTY

from across the world, both European and Asian, such as Sylvain Lévi, Giuseppe Tucci, CF Andrews, William Pearson, Bidhushekar Sastri, Kshitimohan Sen, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Nandalal Bose, Rathindranath Tagore and Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, whom Ganguly refers to as Tagore's "collaborators" in the making of Visva-Bharati.

One important feature of the book is its address of Jadunath Sarkar's critique of Tagore's vision of a university by putting it in the context of recent debates on higher education in India. On May 31, 1922, Sarkar wrote a letter to Tagore stating that Visva-Bharati would fail to produce quality research as it had not considered "exact knowledge" and "intellectual discipline" as the basis of good research. Initially, at least, Tagore's idea of Visva-Bharati was that of a research university (based on a professorial rather than tutorial system) that would not offer undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Sarkar argued for the need for an interdisciplinary approach and an academic grinding in research. His main objection was, of course, the absence of an undergraduate college in Visva-Bharati. Despite Tagore's unhappiness, the college, known as Siksha Bhavana, started growing after the *samsad* (assembly) on July 21, 1925, resolved to allow students having Madhya and Upadhi

THE WORLD MAKES ITS HOME IN A NEST

(Above) An outdoor class in progress at Visva-Bharati University; Tagore in a photo from 1930

certificates to sit for the IA and BA examinations of the University of Calcutta.

It would be wrong, however, to think that the book is more a theoretical enquiry into Tagore's idea of an ideal university than a history of Visva-Bharati. Ganguly chronologically narrates how Visva-Bharati Quarterly, University Press and Publication Unit, Visva-Bharati Society, different *bhavanas* (such as Cheena Bhavana and Hindi Bhavana) came into being. A full chapter has been devoted to Sriniketan, aptly highlighting the role of Leonard Elmhirst in establishing the department of Agriculture there.

Ganguly also documents Tagore's disenchantment with his "life's best treasure" towards the end of his life and how, after Tagore's demise, Visva-Bharati survived through an acute financial crisis until the Visva Bharati Bill was passed in the Parliament in 1951. The societal connection that Tagore thought to be an essential requirement for a university is also highlighted by foregrounding how, despite acute financial crisis, Visva-Bharati continued the relief work during the (in)famous Bengal famine. The book has also critically appreciated the roles of Rathindranath Tagore, Satyendranath Bose and Sudhi Ranjan Das as vice-chancellors. Special mention should be

made of a few rare photographs that the book contains and also the way Ganguly remembers Surendranath Kar (whom she calls "the forgotten architect") — the man whose vision and skill created many of the spectacular houses of Santiniketan.

Ganguly ends the book by mourning over the radical change in Visva-Bharati in the past



AP

few years. One of the anecdotes that she shares could be recounted in this context. Writer Syed Mujtaba Ali completed his studies from Visva-Bharati when it could not offer formal degrees. He got an official job and was posted in Kabul. When the authorities discovered his expertise in German, his salary was hiked. Ali's colleagues protested — unlike them, Ali did not have a formal degree from a university but only a diploma from an 'unrecognised' institution. The then education minister pacified the agitators by pointing out that the diploma in question had been signed by none other than Rabindranath Tagore. The same is true about Visva-Bharati of the present. It might be a shadow of the past but it still carries Tagore's name as its most valuable talisman.

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The Spirits are Willing

With its message of hope, her new novel establishes Avinuo Kire as a unique voice from the Northeast

Jelle JP Wouters

IN THESE sleepy little hill towns, there is a secret path every child knows, a trail every nostalgic adult remembers," so begins Avinuo Kire's riveting novel *Where the Cobbled Path Leads*. This path is trodden by Vime, a young Naga girl beset with grief and melancholy at her mother Apfo's passing and her father's remarriage.

Vime's stepmother Khrielie is a child of war, born out of the Battle of Kohima that halted the Japanese advance in 1944. Khrielie personifies what every war brings but refuses to take back — culturally detached genes. A British soldier courts her mother when the war begins and departs when it ends, never to return. It leaves Khrielie without a genealogy to speak of, without a lineage to seek refuge in, without, that is, a proper place within Naga society; a person society might then call upon to cover up empty spaces, such as the hearth of a widower's house.

Against the odds, Vime and Khrielie come to connect in an intimate embrace of curiosity and care, destiny and destination, faith and family, as they are lured into the "in-between" — a spatiotemporal domain in ancestral Naga cosmology where souls wander along their final journey. Apfo is trapped there by the spiteful spirit Tei.

The cobbled path leads to a charismatic wisdom tree, *Kijilbode*, where the Earth was birthed. It is also the gateway between the human, the "in-between", and the spirit world, which reveals as a continuum of numinous beings — from the recent dead whose loved ones refuse to let go — spirits of animals, plants, and *khari* (village-gates) — to the supreme Creator, Ukenuopfi, in the high sky.

This division of the Naga world in a multidimensional reality wasn't always there. When the Earth was still new, humans and spirits supposedly cohabited. Then, with the birth of greed, jealousy, egotism and other negative human emotions, the spirit collectives began to withdraw into another realm modelled along the human world with villages, forests, and traditions.

In their self-banishment, the spirits realised their own fatal flaw — their inability to grieve, that deepest of emotions born out of love. Now, it

made them envy and hanker after men, who, in turn, dispatched fragments and images — of memories, musings and reminiscences — into the spirit world, continually constructing and regenerating it. This created a Naga cosmology of distinct yet deeply intertwined realms, which neither could escape. Not even the colonial form of Christianity and its ontology of denials (of spirits, the agency of non-humans, the unbeknownst) was able to hermetically close the door between the human and nonhuman worlds. From the late 19th century, missionaries, predominantly from the puritan tradition of the Baptist American South, preached against the possibility of

Naga cosmology and Christianity coming together; a view today shared by the orthodox ranks of the Naga clergy. But this is a view equally alien to the embodied experience and epistemologies of Naga villagers like Vime and Khrielie.

By deliberately keeping the door between these worlds ajar, and by narrating how spirits diffuse themselves throughout the fabric of Naga social existence, Kire expands beyond the dominant copy-paste rationale of Christian conversion as a process of turning difference into similarity, of closing off the agency of nonhumans, of reducing ancestral Naga ways of being into the universal categories of Euro-American traditions. Instead, by thinking about what it means to be distinctly Naga Christian, Kire allows Christianity to emerge as a many-layered conversation rather than as a coercion of colonial Christianity.

Towards the novel's end, as Vime and Khrielie try to find a way out of the spirit world, Kire speaks of the possibility of *chisenu*, a longstanding Naga prophecy, a true Armageddon when everyone will fight, everything is topsy-turvy, hunger is all around, and the dead will again rise. This is human's end-game, when all that made the indigenous spirits escape from them comes full circle with the destruction of the world altogether.

It is still not too late for humans to avert this doom. As Kire relates through the travails of Vime, grief is one such transcendental glory of humanity, which in its pain connects, heals, reflects and reveals. In a society where loss, trauma and grief, caused by decades of agonising violence on account of the India-Naga conflict, is passed down generations, this is a resilient message of hope. The novel establishes Kire as a leading voice in the literary scene of the Northeast, with resonance far beyond.

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Leap of Faith

BERJIS DESAI has earned a reputation for writing wry, short stories about the Parsis, often based on saucy gossip from days gone by. He has now moved on to the next level and penned a novel, recounting the whimsical and weird tale of the Bhamgara clan over 140 years, starting from the sleepy town of Navsari in Gujarat and ending in the hustle and bustle of Mumbai's Colaba. The recurring theme is of the spirit world — of *babas*, Sufi mystics, clairvoyants, cosmic forces, black magic and a long-standing curse.

It would seem that the author has gained inspiration from the magical realism of Latin-American novels. But making a God-fearing, prosaic Parsi family entangled in supernatural spells does not ring quite true. The Zoroastrian faith does not preach reincarnation and sorcery.

Clearly, Desai's story is partly autobiographical. Navsari is the hometown of the parents of the hero, Burjor. His father was an upright journalist in Mumbai, innocent of the ways of the world, who rose nevertheless to be the editor of a Gujarati newspaper, helped by the curmudgeonly chief minister, Morarji Desai, putting in a word. Burjor's struggles against odds and a non-English-speaking background to win a scholarship to Cambridge University is followed by an impressive career in law. The lacuna in the novel is that most of the characters are rather perfunctorily sketched. The author seems more concerned about making pronouncements on their sexuality rather than developing any other dimension of their personalities. The men are generally either lecherous and



TOWERS OF SILENCE BY BERJIS DESAI Zero Degree Publishing 408 pages ₹400

raunchy or impotent. The novel mentions some suspicious paternities and coupling with non-Parsis, surely highly unusual in families with the strict middle-class Parsi mores of those days.

From a cursed necklace which leads to a series of untimely deaths in the Bhamgara family, to a legal battle with a debauched Parsi Panchayat trustee who colludes with a crooked builder to attempt to grab a parcel of land from the 50-odd forested acres of Mumbai's Doongerwadi, where the Parsis dispose of their dead, the storyline is confusing and convoluted.

The Towers of Silence (also the book's title) have always been a source of morbid curiosity for non-Parsis and the author plays on this interest in the Parsi funerary rites, which requires throwing corpses into wells so that the vultures can devour the flesh. Desai uses the opportunity to spill some secrets on this age-old

custom as well as take a few sly digs at the hypocrisy of the Parsi orthodoxy.

What with a secret passageway in the Dakhma garden, mantras, protective lockets, psychic energies, good and bad *babas* and venal villains, Burjor's fight against the forces of evil working against his family and trying to grab Dakhma land, is the most engaging part of the book. Vignettes into the Parsi way of life are woven into the story, from describing the cloistered world of *nass-esaras* or corpse-bearers to the strict regime prescribed to be ordained a priest, rules which the author claims are broken flagrantly. Indeed, he rather delights in exposing what he considers the double standards of some members of his community.

COOMI KAPOOR

Coomi Kapoor is contributing editor, *The Indian Express*

Women Who Stand Alone

Selby Wynn Schwartz's Booker longlisted debut novel is the lyrical story of Sapphists who carved a niche for themselves at the turn of the century

Radhika Oberoi

THE WOMEN who inhabit Selby Wynn Schwartz's *After Sappho* are never at ease. Or never in one place for too long. The concluding years of the 19th century are disconcerting in a variety of ways, and they navigate its vexations only to arrive at a new century fraught with fresh trouble. They change their names, leave a marriage or a child or a country to become who they really are: Sapphists — trousered and booted poets, vehement artists, lovers of travel guides and foreign grammar. This novel is, quite literally, about the women who realise themselves fully after Sappho, the

skins of their lives gloriously knotted as their geographies and destinies alter.

Sappho, the Greek lyric poet of the 6th century, born on the island of Lesbos, is the presiding deity of *After Sappho*. She is invoked frequently by the narrator — the plural first-person "we" suggestive of a female collective or a chorus, still young, eager to become Sappho as they read her fragmented poems at school, and feel the lilt of words like *aithusomenon*: "the way that leaves move when nothing touches them but the afternoon light."

This curious and excitable collective voice draws us into the histories of atypical women, into their methods of transgressing the limitations of their sex, and of their milieu. We wit-

ness Cordula "Lina" Poletti still stuck in 1896, discarding her skirts and climbing a tree in her underthings, to read a Latin primer borrowed from the Biblioteca Classense. We observe Rina Pierangeli Faccio in 1895, giving birth to a child conceived in violence, and swallowing a bottle of laudanum. We note that she survives; we observe her in 1902, when she arrives in Rome, all alone, rents a room with a writing desk, and changes her name to Sibilla, a variation of the Delphic Sibyl. We watch as Pauline Tarn sloughs off "Plain, practical Pauline, and flat yawning Tarn" to become the person who arrives in Paris and reads Sappho in a frock coat and breeches in 1899. "In the lamplight she looked like a sleek, dark line.

She had become Renée Vivien."

After Sappho is about the process of becoming, the difficulties it entails, the voyages it necessitates, the new loves it kindles, the furies it stokes. We are offered biographies as intimate tableaux that shift and move through a jagged timeline. Each disjointed vignette, with its protagonists at sea or on stage or in a besotted haze, is part of the swirl of events that make the turn of the century a hectic age.

Reverberating through the biographical fragments is the politics of the milieu. There is a mention of Giovanni Giolitti, elected prime minister of Italy five times, from 1892 to 1921. In 1912, the men of his parliament vote against women's suffrage. There are other troubling laws: Article 544 of the Italian Penal Code, for instance, recognises the marriage of a woman who has been violated to the man who has violated her. "Whenever



AFTER SAPPHO BY SELBY WYNN SCHWARTZ Picador India 288 pages ₹499

we could leave these marriages, we fled," declares the narrator. And then it is 1914: a radio crackles, shots ring out, men become soldiers. World War I turns Europe into clumps of putrefying flesh. We witness the Irish architect Eileen Gray rush to the front in her ambulance; we hear that "She sent word to us in Paris that there was an urgent need for women with steady hands; anyone who could tie a knot or drive a motor car might have her part in history."

After Sappho is about the women who have their part in reconfiguring history, or in changing its course so it does not forget them. Each chapter contains sections with titles that name a female protagonist, together with the year that is indicative of whether she has yet to become, or is in the throes of her splendid becoming. Sapphic fragments are interwoven into this deliberately discontinuous structure. And there is another

voice, not quite as hypnotic as Sappho's, but insistent and prophetic, that slithers into the narrative: Cassandra, who in Greek mythology is a Trojan priestess who can foresee the future but is cursed by the god Apollo to never be believed. "She was always seeing serpents and flames, birds and blood." The collective narrator is wary of her, but seeks her out, irresistibly, for it is she who scans the past for violence that will recur through the centuries.

In spite of its ambition and the worthiness of its task, *After Sappho*, longlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize, isn't a ponderous novel. Its sentences, peopled with trailblazing women, are not weighed down by them. This is a novel that is enamoured of shifts in light, the many moods of a lover, thin cucumber sandwiches. It ripples often with indelicate mirth — it's impossible not to laugh, when, in 1918, a certain Noel Pemberton Billing denounces the dancer Maud Allan in the papers as "a high priestess of the Cult of the Clitoris." We can only guffaw at the unintended compliment.

Radhika Oberoi is the author of *Stillborn Season*

PERSONAL

MESSI SCORES A BRACE

Lionel Messi scored twice and Argentina dominated Honduras 3-0 on Friday in Miami as the World Cup-bound team continues to fine-tune its game ahead of the upcoming international tournament in Qatar. **REUTERS**

BRIEFLY

Junior men's trap team wins gold

Osijek: India won a sensational gold in the junior men's trap team event at the ISSF Shotgun World Championship, beating Italy 6-4 in the final here on Saturday. This was also India's first medal of the Championship. USA won the bronze. It was no mean feat for the trio of Shapath Bharadwaj, Shardul Vihan and Arya Vansh Tyagi as the Italians are long established powerhouses in the shotgun discipline. Even more so as the Indians were trailing the Italian team of Edoardo Antoniolli, Emanuele Iezzi and Gianmarco Barletta 0-4 before staging a remarkable comeback. Earlier in the day, Shapath, Shardul and Arya Vansh had shot a combined 205 in the qualification stage, where each member shot three rounds of 25 targets each, to finish second behind the Italians who shot 206, thereby making it to the gold medal match. **PTI**

Friendly: India held by Singapore 1-1

Ho Chi Minh City: Captain Sunil Chhetri was not happy with the Indian football team's performance in the 1-1 draw against Singapore in the Hung Thinh friendly tournament here on Saturday, saying his side will need to go back to the drawing board for the next game against Vietnam. India were the dominant side with more shots at Singapore goal, but failed to convert them, except for once. "There are many things that we could have done better. We missed a lot of chances, and maybe we could have defended a little better. I'm sure the coach will have a talk with us about it," Chhetri said after the match. "Without being too harsh on ourselves, there are a few things that we need to work on." **PTI**

Duleep Trophy: South totter at 154 for 6

Coimbatore: West Zone closed in on a memorable come-from-behind victory as they took out the South Zone top and middle-order after setting them an improbable victory target of 529 in the Duleep Trophy final here on Saturday. Reeling at 156 for six at stumps on the fourth and penultimate day, South Zone were staring at a heavy defeat as they trailed by 375 runs. West Zone put up a mammoth 585 for four in their second innings after conceding a 57-run first-innings lead to their opponents. Prolific run-scorer Sarfaraz Khan recorded a fine, unbeaten century (127 off 178 balls) to continue West's charge after overnight double centurion Yashavi Jaiswal was dismissed for 265. **PTI**
BRIEF SCORES: West Zone 270 and 585/4 declared in 128 overs (Yashavi Jaiswal 265, Shreyas Iyer 71, Sarfaraz Khan 127; R Sai Kishore 2/157, K Gowtham 2/235) versus **South Zone** 327 and 154/6 in 40 overs (Rohan Kunnummal 93; Jaydev Unadkat 2/26, Atit Sheth 2/29, Shams Mulani 2/24).

Erigaisi to play Carlsen in rapid final

Coimbatore: Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi got the better of Liem Quang Le (Vietnam) to set up a final clash with world no.1 Magnus Carlsen in the Julius Baer Generation Cup online rapid chess tournament. While the 19-year old Erigaisi had to fight hard to subdue the challenge of his Vietnamese rival, Carlsen won 3-1. In the Erigaisi-Liem Le match, the first game ended in a draw before the Indian won the second to go ahead. A draw followed in the third before the Vietnam player drew level with a 32-move victory. However, in the tie-breaker, it was Erigaisi all the way as he won two straight games. Carlsen was made to work hard for his passage into the final by the Keymer. **PTI**

SPORTLINE: The sport is undergoing a fundamental change, and the Indian reliance on wearing out opponents should be making way for speedier and cleverer technical wrestling. The sobering World Championship results have again highlighted the need to overhaul the outdated approach to coaching and training if the country's grapplers are to stay in touch with the times

SHIVANI NAIK
SEPTEMBER 24

LIKE A wrinkled weatherman that pithily drills in home truths about an incoming storm, letting his sobering bass voice rise just over the constant crackling of a fax machine in a remote observatory, India's wrestling doyen Mahabali Satpal issues a warning: "US mazboot hoke aayaa hai iss World Championship mein [A strong US has come to this World Championship]." The seasoned wrestling coach, an ace schemer, medal-hunter par excellence of the last decade who triggered a wrestling renaissance with Sushil Kumar - still India's only World Champion from a dozen years ago - is referring to USA's 4 gold, 4 silver out of the 10 men's freestyle categories available.

On a roll at the Stark Arena in Belgrade, perhaps aided by Russian absence and Japanese reticence to risk injuries, the Americans were relentless at the Worlds, topping the tally, while also cornering 3 gold and 2 silver in the women's sections.

Satpal's observation wasn't merely the obvious stating of this staggering dominance. Starkly aware of the missing Russians and more importantly of how the chances of a gold will get steeper in the 2023 World Championship edition, he was mulling over the lost opportunity in a quieter year; next year with Paris Games quotas at stake, a title will be doubly harder to nail. His heroically mangled grappling ears were pricked with creeping desperation of what all needs to be done in the next two years. "Paris will be here in no time. We have to start planning now," he said with urgency that's second nature to someone who plotted India's 2008 and 2012 medals.

The Bajrang Punia bronze deserved to be feted and then folded away in service of planning the future. And Ravi Dahiya's no-medal needed a return to the drawing board, plus the younger bunch like Naveen in 74 kg needed fast-tracked propulsion, Satpal noted.

There aren't too many veterans in India who will dare utter it publicly, because foreign coaches are seen as a cultural hoo-ha, and as an affront to India's homegrown wisdoms. But the very practical - and frankly not too revolutionary - idea of getting in American coaching expertise is looming on an inevitable horizon. Russian (and thereabouts) coaches have always been viewed as crafty, and Indians value their technical nous and ability to stay in the background and not hog credit, which crucially costs a fraction of what an American pro would come for.

System reboot

But for that slap-shaping, brutally blunt professionalism - which can ensure two of the finest wrestlers of this decade, Bajrang and Ravi, do not fade away, like they almost did at the Belgrade Worlds - India will need to reboot their system to align with American standards, even if they can't cart in the personnel.

It's not just the medals that the western powerhouse monopolised, it is the entire wrestling ethos that is rapidly undergoing a fundamental change: global freestyle wrestling is thirsting for wins that come from eye-catching technical moves. The Indian reliance on wearing out opponents, outlasting them on stamina, building gas tanks to expend energy by bullying and battering. Globally, that style has made way for speedier, snappier, cleverer technical wrestling.

It's why if you looked past Bajrang's head-line-hogging strapped head and focussed on the other extremity - just how cannily American Yianni Diakomihalis turned the Indian's legs to jelly, three years after thumping him, imposing a tech superiority this time, you would know how far the American program has come along.

And why Indians run the risk of falling back if they don't jolt awake from this Commonwealth Games contentment and junior medals-induced lethargic limbo, while the seniors results at Worlds were frankly a howler.

Yianni has the legend Kyle Drake on his training group, as the juggernaut gets oiled for a Paris run. Bajrang - before rallying to his bronze - himself would be well aware of the American stomp, having trained there.

He noted a few differences in how the

Writing is on the mat



Ravi Dahiya's 10-0 loss to Uzbekistan's Gulomjon Abdullaev should be a wake up call. File/AP

two prepared. "Their training is aligned with competition times. They'll train at 10am if the competition is to start at 10.30. They simulate rest period upto 4pm. Like here, we just train at 6am out of habit. They prepare for smaller rest periods. If the weather is expected to change, or food is going to be different, they train keeping those things in mind. Sparring partners are better and you get to know their style and about how particular players fight. American style is different."

The typical Indian response to Ravi's 10-0 loss in Round 2, will be calls for "aur zyada mehnat." More hard work cooped up at the akhda. When what he might need most guidance in, is how to switch off or relax after the rough Worlds setback, and how to plan an offseason. Professionalism in planning that offseason work, in mapping out the next season and maintaining emotional balance is the sort of fresh thinking foreign coaches, always viewed with suspicion and scorn, can bring into this slightly stilted sport.

American Andrew Cook, a former women's coach, was shunted out with such cold apathy, he remains heartbroken and totally befuddled by why a system would not buy into progressive professional ideas. But Indians tend to set a lot of store by junior results, deceive themselves by overlooking age-fraud that bulges these results, and as a result stay stagnant with Indian coaching methods, refusing to check their reality when near-routs like the senior Worlds (just two bronzes) happen. That a transition to seniors successes at the top-most level is simply not happening, is papered over.

Ravi rattled

There is consensus that Ravi Dahiya had one bad off day when he could not stave off the attack from Gulomjon Abdullaev, conceded a series of 2-pointers, allowed tremendous pressure to build and couldn't get a word in - that is, apply his own offensive technique. There is no clarity, however, on guaranteeing how a similar "bad off day" won't derail him yet again as he looks to qualify for Paris, and then look for a gold there.

Far too talented to be passed over for the next-big-hope, the Tokyo silver medalist does have consistency issues, compounded by weight cut woes in 57kg. Weight cuts can get pretty brutal for the Big man amongst the Smalls.

Former Arjuna awardee and now commentator, Kripashankar Bishnoi, highlights the struggle, saying the 10-0 loss wasn't a narrow pipping of "unneesa over beesa," a 19 nosing ahead of a 20. Though Ravi is far too good a wrestler to not find a way around it. "His training can go up and down, because his style cuts are massive. So peaking for CWG, reducing weight, then going back to build strength and stamina, then again a cut. This can affect

They'll train at 10am if the competition is to start at 10.30. They simulate rest period upto 4pm. Like here, we just train at 6am out of habit. If the weather is expected to change, or food is going to be different, they train keeping those things in mind. Sparring partners are better and you get to know their style and about how particular players fight. American style is different."

BAJRANG PUNIA

ON THE AMERICAN METHOD

I doubt if proper video analysis even happens at elite levels. We have coaches who are excellent wardens, but not the best as coaches. Wrestling is traditional and revered in India. But almost every country traces back the sport in its history, so India's not uniquely special... Which means all top countries are progressing fast and investing in upgrading training. We should too."

KRIPASHANKAR BISHNOI

CWG MEDALIST TURNED COMMENTATOR

Paris will be here in no time. We have to start planning now,"

SATPAL SINGH

DRONACHARYA AWARD-WINNING COACH, ASIAN GAMES & CWG MEDALIST

oxygen supply to the brain on bout days, and hamper speed of the body even if mind is pushing through with a move. Muscles go weak, coordination suffers, major injuries can happen in these extreme weight fluctuations and make you psychologically weak."

A big fan of Ravi's *bagal doob*, Bishnoi reckons weight cuts are cramping his style and ability as muscles go loose with dehydration, and he needs serious coaching and diet interventions to save him from this re-

currence.

There are other aspects his opponents exploit technically. Taller for his weight division, when opponents go really low-slung, his feet-apart stance, while lending stability, can seem too cramped to spring up, and vulnerable to sweeping leg attacks. He makes his longer hand reach count, applying the swinging arms to gut wrenches and other pick and falls. But he was strangely static against the Uzbek, late on his counters as his reaction speed seemed considerably slower when opponents would shoot for his leg.

It's the Uzbek's third win against Ravi in five meetings, and he has hoarded points going for single leg attacks, creating pressure, nullifying Ravi's locks careening towards stalemates, as points pile up in twos with the pressure mounting. In the second period, by the time Ravi's hands responded to the duckunders, his leg had been breached, and was putty in point-chomping hands. A closer compact hand stance, dipping the hips lower, might ward off these attacks that ram into his legs straight. Or there's the half dozen setups. But the Indian has built himself a nice little nemesis since his junior days, who doesn't pass on the repechage benefits either, and is felled himself before the finals.

That Abdullaev posed a problem was well known. That Ravi wouldn't be able to drag it to the death seconds, was a surprise.

Bajrang's method

The bulk of it is to do with the torpedeed knee, but Bajrang's leg defense has been hoisting wincing posers. He always got entangled on ground attacks, but it was a shade of overconfidence that caused his downfall against the American, who he could easily beat three years ago.

On the whole, Bajrang is only amping his aggression, hoping the power barrel keeps firing for all six minutes. He puts in the same amount of hard work now that he did five years ago, and that might not be the smartest call for his body, which needs to conserve speed bursts for a more relaxed 2-1 win, instead of powering on for 11-9s each time. Smarter pacing of bouts will demand better defense, and his leg defense isn't always coping. Against faster, craftier opponents, with better defense, he might not be able to pull off those rallies, which he heroically did at Belgrade for a stunning 4th medal, hinging on brute power along the arc.

Like most Indian wrestlers raised on mud, the migration to mat lugged around a manufacturing defect: because you can wait forever on mud (some dangals go on for 2-3 hours) and take own sweet time to gauge opponents, before applying technique, you lean on the crunching, pummelling powergame much more than speed and agility. No chit & pat. "Mud bouts have a lot of standing grap-

pling, so ground attacks aren't intrinsic and smaller muscles aren't worked enough. Yet, Bajrang always kept opponents at bay, and moreover, countered with speed and strength earlier," Bishnoi explains.

Sushil Kumar was built stocky, short and speedy. He could crouch low like a tiger, and use his strength to cling to the mat flat on his belly, without ceding points on phittle or waist holds. That speed and cleverness to go with the stance made his leg elusive, something that wasn't seen in the week of weak leg defenses.

Americans do a lot of speed workouts, shuttle runs - something an Indian wrestler might be loathe to do, even as wrestling gets more agile by the day, and quick-reflexed.

Coaching stuck

Closely tied in with this inability to buy into scientific training is the casual manner in which support staff like physio and masseuse are not treated as non-negotiable. Even coaching choices come in for a sharp lashing from Bishnoi, who says he's frustrated with the unchanging, crusty old ways.

"I doubt if proper video analysis even happens at elite levels. We still have coaches who are excellent wardens, but not the best as coaches. Wrestling is traditional and revered in India. But almost every country traces back the sport in its history, so India's not uniquely special. Bajrang's bronze is commendable because this is a global sport. Which means all top countries are progressing fast and investing in upgrading training. We should too," he urges.

Bishnoi was particularly pained watching a senior coach hold the washroom door aloft for a senior federation official, and says coaches should be appointed on capabilities, not for kowtowing. While international exposure trips have increased for Indians, the coaching expertise remains warped.

Bajrang and Deepak Punia's earliest coach Virender says the gap is widening. "In India you return with a medal, and spend months playing a hero as the dhols don't stop drumming up. In other top countries, they'll return and start planning for the next big tournament the day after. And we don't use video analysis enough."

Another pressing reason why foreign coaches might be necessary is because Indian coaches are wary of cracking whips on medalling wrestlers, given how the reverence balloons into this unequal equation with the *badaa pehwaan*. Indian coaches haven't warmed up to working alongside foreigners either to learn the latest training methods.

The horror planning which saw CWG, trials and Worlds being stashed into six weeks will continue with no awareness of the science of peak performance. Trials often used arbitrarily to show wrestlers their place, or unleash a junior edgewise against a senior, lack transparency of intent. Wrestlers prefer being individualistic, not trusting the system to play fair, and no cogent team ethos has developed.

Satpal recalls his food and weather recce of Beijing and London and minute planning that brought home the early medals. Having lost his medal chances at Munich and Moscow, felled by food. "*Aaloo ni khaaya jaata tha oil ki vajah se, aur 10kg milk daily ki aadat thi. Wo koun samhaalta?* [I couldn't have potatoes because of the oil, and was used to 10kg milk daily. Who would've taken care of that?]", he ensured Sushil & Co didn't suffer. "We have to be attentive to temperatures outside the hall, and inside. Food has to be comforting," he adds of the detailing.

Stating that Ravi would've been studied thoroughly by now, he stresses on greater need for video analysis. "First we need people who will analyse, and then coaches who can employ those insights," he says, recalling his primitive stab at it, with extensive jottings in his diary back in 2008.

While the Worlds (possibly at Budapest) will be the straightforward target for Indian wrestlers next year serving as qualifying for Paris, the runup to that promises a lot of drama. If the ceremony of trials overshadows the wrestling itself, it could be another World Championship with shocking results like this year. It's too early to panic, but it could get too late to plan, if 2022 is allowed to dawdle into 2023.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 24

JHULAN GOSWAMI'S last game for India will be remembered for more than her grand farewell, when she was hoisted up on her team-mate's shoulders. India Women's win, however, was met with boos. It wasn't for Jhulan, but for what transpired just a moment earlier.

Sent in to bat, India were all out for 169 in the third ODI versus England. Deepti Sharma top-scored for India Women with an unbeaten 68, while opener Smriti Mandhana scored 50. Chasing 170, England were tottering at 119 for 9 but they recovered thanks to Charlotte Dean (47) and the last batter Freya Davies. They reached 153, looking in control, as the game hurtled towards a thrilling finish. But there was a twist. Sharma, the off

spinner, pulled out from finishing her action in the fourth ball of the 44th over as she spotted Charlotte rush out of the crease before she had released the ball.

Calmly, she took off the bails even as the umpire seemingly was signalling a dead ball. India's captain Harmanpreet Kaur joined her from mid-off. It was clear that Indians were staying with the appeal. The umpires went upstairs for the TV umpire to have a look.

TV umpire to director: 'Give the best side-on angle, please'.

A replay was enough. "I have made my decision for the big screen," said the TV umpire. And the big screen flashed Out.

The win gave India a 3-0 sweep of the series. Former England skipper Nasser Hussain was on air and said, "It would be debated for a long time but it's in the law of the games. It states that you can be run out. Remember it's in the laws of the game."

Just last week the ICC had made a few changes to be in effect from October 1st. Running out of the non-striker, was one of them. The new Playing Conditions list the act of a bowler attempting a run out at the non-striker's end under the 'Run Out' section (Law 38). Previously, this was listed under 'Unfair Play' (Law 41).

Referred to as 'Mankading' after the former Indian bowler Vinoo Mankad, who had dismissed Bill Brown twice by removing the bails when he was outside the crease at the non-striker's end during the India tour of Australia, the act has been much maligned in cricket.

Earlier, Law 41.16 in the MCC book of laws pertaining to the "Non-striker leaving his/her ground early," stated: "If the non-striker is out of his/her ground at any time from the moment the ball comes into play until the instant when the bowler would normally

have been expected to release the ball, the non-striker is liable to be run out."

This, however, is the updated version of the code from 2017. The language was changed from the "Bowler attempting to run out non-striker before delivery" to "Non-striker leaving their ground early" in order to put the "onus on the non-striker to remain in their ground."

And as soon as the big screen flashed 'Out', and a teary Charlotte sportingly came over to shake hands and accepted pats on her back from the Indians, Jhulan Goswami was hoisted up on the shoulders of teammates. **BRIEF SCORES: India Women:** 169 all out in 45.4 overs (Deepti Sharma 68, Smriti Mandhana 50; Kate Cross 4/26) **bt England Women:** 153 all out in 43.3 overs (Charlie Dean 47, Amy Jones 28; Jhulan Goswami 2/30, Renuka Singh 4/29, Rajeshwari Gayakwad 2/38).



Jhulan Goswami with the trophy after India Women won the series 3-0. Reuters

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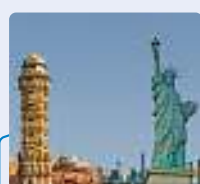
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ASHOK GEHLOT
Chief Minister, Rajasthan

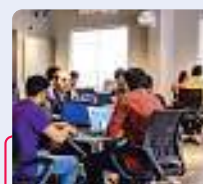
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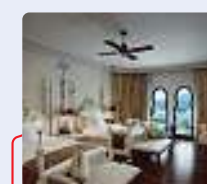
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