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THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Suu Kyi has been in detention since the 2021 military coup

MYANMAR

Supreme Court rejects Suu Kyi's six appeals

Myanmar: The Supreme Court in Myanmar has rejected appeals against six corruption convictions for jailed former leader Aung San Suu Kyi, according to media reports. Suu Kyi, in detention since the military toppled her government in a 2021 coup, faces 27 years in prison. She is appealing dozens of convictions for crimes ranging from treason and bribery to violations of telecommunications law. The court in August rejected five appeals by Suu Kyi on illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, sedition and violating Covid curbs. **REUTERS**

UNITED STATES

Trade dept curbs export with 42 China entities

Washington: The US Commerce Department on Friday added 42 Chinese companies to a government export control list over their support for Moscow's military and defense industrial base - support that includes the supply of US-origin integrated circuits. Another seven entities from Finland, Germany, India, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom were also added to the trade export control list. China called the US action "economic coercion and unilateral bullying". **REUTERS**

AZERBAIJAN

Any new conflict will be France's fault: President

Moscow: Azerbaijan's president scolded the European Union and warned that France's decision to send military aid to Armenia could trigger a new conflict in the South Caucasus after a lightning military operation last month. But Aliyev criticised the EU's approach - and particularly France's position - when European Council, Charles Michel, telephoned him, as per an Azerbaijani statement issued Saturday. President Ilham Aliyev said "that due to the well-known position of France, Azerbaijan did not participate in the meeting in Granada," the statement said. **REUTERS**

HONG KONG

Flights cancelled as storm Koinu draws nearer

Hong Kong: Scores of flights in Hong Kong were canceled Sunday as Tropical Storm Koinu neared the southern Chinese city after leaving one dead and over 300 injured in Taiwan. Koinu was expected to skirt about 70 kilometers from Hong Kong on Sunday, dumping heavy showers, the Hong Kong Observatory said. The storm is forecast to move across the coastal waters of neighboring Guangdong province on Sunday & Monday. Koinu was packing maximum winds of 90 kph and gusts of up to 122 kph according to the observatory. **AP**

DEADLIEST TREMORS TO HIT THE QUAKE-PRONE COUNTRY IN YEARS

Afghanistan quakes: Toll surpasses 2,000

People attempt to dig out dead, injured with their hands; international aid deployed works with crippled support

AGENCIES
KABUL, OCTOBER 8

MORE THAN 2,000 people were killed in earthquakes in Afghanistan and over 9,000 injured, the Taliban administration said on Sunday, in the deadliest tremors to rock the quake-prone mountainous country in years.

Saturday's magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit a far more densely populated area, near Afghanistan's fourth largest city, Herat, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said. It was followed by strong aftershocks.

They were among the world's deadliest quakes in a year when tremors in Turkey and Syria killed an estimated 50,000 in February.

Janan Sayeed, spokesman for the Ministry of Disasters, said 2,053 people were killed, 9,240 injured and 1,320 houses damaged or destroyed. The death toll spiked from 500 reported earlier on Sunday by the Red Crescent.

Ten rescue teams were in the area, which borders Iran, Sayeed told a press conference.

On Sunday, people attempted to dig out the dead and injured with their hands in Herat, clambering over rocks and debris. Survivors and victims were trapped under buildings that had crumbled to the ground, their faces grey with dust.

One video, shared online, shows people freeing a baby girl from a collapsed building after being buried up to her neck in debris. A hand is seen cradling the baby's torso as rescuers ease the child out of the ground.

Rescuers said it was the baby's mother. It is not clear if the mother survived.

The United Nations migration

HUMAN COST OF THE TREMORS

2,053

dead as 6.3 magnitude earthquakes hit

9,240

wounded so far on Sunday, said Taliban

1,320

homes either damaged or destroyed, said Ministry of Disasters

■ The earthquake was among the world's deadliest in a year when tremors in Turkey and Syria killed an estimated 50,000 in February this year.

agency has deployed four ambulances with doctors and psychosocial support counselors to the regional hospital. At least three mobile health teams are on their way to Zenda Jan district, which is one of the worst affected areas.

Doctors Without Borders set up five medical tents at Herat Regional Hospital to accommodate up to 80 patients. Authorities have treated more than 300 patients, according to the agency.

Afghanistan's healthcare system, reliant almost entirely on foreign aid, has faced crippling cuts in the two years since the Taliban took over and much international assistance, which had formed the backbone of the economy, was halted.



People search for victims in Zenda Jan district in Herat province, West Afghanistan, on Sunday. AP

Most fatal tremors in Afghanistan over the years



A man removes debris from a fallen structure. Reuters

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

AFGHANISTAN, HEMMED in by mountains, has a long history of strong earthquakes, many in the rugged Hindu Kush region bordering Pakistan. ss

Death tolls often rise when remote locations are hit, and decades of war have left infrastructure in a shambles, making relief and rescue operations difficult.

Here is a list of Afghan quakes over the past three decades:

Paktika, June 2022

1,036 killed in east province of Paktika, forcing Afghanistan to appeal for international aid.

Hindu Kush, 2015

An earthquake of magnitude 7.5, one of largest in Afghanistan's recorded history, killed 399 people in Afghanistan and neighbours Pakistan and India.

Hindu Kush, 2002

Two earthquakes hit in March 2002 killed 1,100. In 1999, 848 died across Afghanistan, Pakistan and Soviet Union.

Qayen, 1997

1,500 killed in Iran, Afghanistan and destroyed more than 10,000 homes.

Takhar, Feb-May 1998

An earthquake in the remote northeastern province of Takhar killed at least 2,300 people, with some estimates ranging as high as 4,000. Three months later, a quake of magnitude 6.6 in the same region killed 4,700.

Most recently, 13 were killed in Badakhshan in 2023, while eight died as quake jolted Kunar in 2022.

DAY 2: ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT THREATENS TO SPIRAL

Tensions at Lebanon border too: Israel trades fire with Hezbollah

REUTERS
OCTOBER 8

ISRAEL FIRED barrages of artillery into southern Lebanon on Sunday after Hezbollah targeted three Israeli military positions in the disputed Shebaa Farms.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Hezbollah, a powerful armed party backed by Iran, said it had launched guided rockets and artillery onto three posts in the Shebaa Farms "in solidarity" with Palestinian people, after the most serious attack in years by Palestinian gunmen on Israeli towns left 250 Israelis dead, with another 230 Gazans killed in Israel's retaliatory bombardment.

The Israeli military said on Sunday it fired artillery into an area of Lebanon where cross-border mortar fire was launched. "IDF (Israel Defense Forces) artillery is currently striking the area in Lebanon from where a shooting was carried out," it said.

Israel's said one its drones struck a Hezbollah post in the area of Har Dov, an area in Shebaa.

Israel has held Shebaa Farms, a 39-square-km patch of land, since 1967. Both Syria and Lebanon claim Shebaa Farms are Lebanese.

The UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, said it had "detected several rockets fired from southeast Lebanon toward Israeli-occupied territory" as well as artillery fire from Israel into Lebanon in response.

"We are in contact with authorities on both sides of the Blue Line, at all levels, to contain the situation and avoid a more serious escalation," spokesperson said.

Hezbollah, which effectively controls southern Lebanon, said on Saturday it was in "direct contact" with leaders of Palestinian "resistance" groups and that it saw Palestinian attacks on Israel as a "decisive response to Israel's continued occupation and a message to those seeking normalisation with Israel".



Palestinians search through the rubble of a house destroyed in Israeli strikes on Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Sunday; Lebanese army soldiers stand guard in Khiam, near the border with Israel, southern Lebanon on Sunday. Reuters

POPE FOR PEACE



"Let attacks and weapons cease, please, because it must be understood that terrorism & war bring no solutions, but only to death and suffering of many innocent lives. War is a defeat, every war is a defeat. Let's pray for peace in Israel and Palestine"

POPE FRANCIS
(IN HIS WEEKLY ADDRESS)

Policeman in Egypt fatally shoots two Israelis, one local at tourist site

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CAIRO, OCTOBER 8

AN EGYPTIAN policeman opened fire Sunday on Israeli tourists in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, killing at least two Israelis and one Egyptian, Israeli and Egyptian authorities said.

A statement from Egypt's Interior Ministry said that another person was wounded in the attack at the Pompey's Pillar site in Alexandria. It provided no further details. Israel's Foreign Ministry identified the wounded person as an Israeli who suffered moderate injuries.

The ministry said that Israeli authorities were working with the Egyptian government to

Indian nationals in Israel, Gaza safe from clashes

Jerusalem: There have been no untoward incidents involving 18,000 Indians living and working in Israel so far, even as the Indian embassy in Tel Aviv received requests from its citizens, including tourists, to facilitate their safe exit. On Saturday, it issued advisories asking Indians on respective sides to "remain vigilant" and "directly contact the Office" in case of an emergency. **PTI**

US to send multiple military ships, aircraft

Washington: The United States will send multiple military ships and aircraft closer to Israel as a show of support, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said, with Washington believing Hamas' latest attack may have been motivated to disrupt a potential normalizing of Israel-Saudi Arabia ties. Austin also added that the United States will provide munitions to Israel, and that its security assistance will begin moving on Sunday. **REUTERS**

Zelenskyy calls for solidarity with Israel

Kyiv: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on world leaders on Saturday to show solidarity and unity in supporting Israel and condemning the "terrorist attack" by Palestinian Islamist group Hamas. Zelenskyy, whose army has been fighting a war Russia launched against it 19 months ago, said that Israel - just like Ukraine - has "every right" to protect itself. **REUTERS**

Turkey to ramp up diplomacy in conflict: Erdogan

Ankara: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan that Turkey was determined to ramp up diplomatic efforts to achieve calm in the fighting, but added that a two-state solution was the only way to achieve peace. "So long as this problem is not resolved...our region will continue to live in longing of peace," he said. **REUTERS**

Taliban halt Afghan consular services in Vienna and London

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 8

THE TALIBAN are suspending consular services at two Afghan embassies, London and Vienna, over their lack of transparency and cooperation with authorities in Kabul, a foreign ministry spokesman said Sunday.

Most of Afghanistan's embassies and consulates are staffed by people from the former Western-backed administration, with a dozen under Taliban administration's full control.

Some countries retain an active diplomatic mission in Afghanistan, including Pakistan, Turkey, Qatar, and China, but the

international community remains wary of officially recognizing the Taliban as legitimate rulers.

The suspension of consular services at the two embassies is with immediate effect and until further notice, foreign ministry spokesperson Abdul Qahar Balkhi said. The services affected include the issue and extension of passports and visas.

When asked if the ministry was looking at the activities of more embassies, Balkhi said yes as it was a normal ministry procedure. The development comes days after the Afghan embassies in Spain and the Netherlands issued statements emphasizing their coordination and interaction with Taliban authorities in Kabul.

California governor vetoes Bill that banned caste discrimination

KANISHKA SINGH
OCTOBER 8

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR Gavin Newsom on Saturday vetoed a bill passed recently by the state legislature to explicitly ban caste discrimination, which made the bill "unnecessary."

Had Newsom signed the bill, officially called Senate Bill 403 or SB 403, California would have become the first ever US state to explicitly ban caste discrimination.

Newsom's veto is a big setback for activists who had been advocating for legislation. US discrimination laws ban ancestry discrimination though they don't mention casteism.

The bill was introduced and authored by Democratic state Senator Aisha Wahab, an Afghan American, in March. An earlier version of it passed state Senate before undergoing revisions. The revised version, which



Governor Gavin Newsom

listed caste under "ancestry" and not as a separate category, was passed by California's state Assembly in late August and by the state Senate in early September with a near unanimous vote.

The bill defined caste as "an individual's perceived position in a system of social stratification on the basis of inherited status."

"Because discrimination based on caste is already prohibited under these existing categories, this bill is unnecessary," Newsom said on the website of the governor's office.

"For this reason, I cannot sign this bill." **REUTERS**



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Lala Ram Kumawat

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Old Pension Scheme (OPS) has been implemented for the personnel appointed on and after January 1, 2004



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Rajkumari Jain

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Saloni

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Chetna

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Rs 500
For 76 lakh families



Now getting gas cylinder for Rs 500 has proved beneficial. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has started a very good scheme. This has benefitted the poor.

Sarju Devi

Zero Electricity Bill
2000 units per month Free Electricity To Farmers
100 units per month Free Electricity to Domestic Consumers



The State Government is giving 2000 units free electricity per month for farming, as a result the electricity bill has become zero. I thank the State Government for this from the bottom of my heart.

Teja Ram

“I wish the public welfare schemes of Rajasthan are implemented across the country”

Ashok Gehlot
Chief Minister, Rajasthan

**Seva hi Karm
Seva hi Dharm**

Department Of Information And Public Relations , Rajasthan

Food inflation limited to *dal roti*, why govt policy may need changes



HARISH DAMODARAN

WITH CONSUMER food prices 9.9% higher year-on-year in August and overall retail inflation at 6.8% — well above the RBI target of 4% and upper tolerance limit of 6% — the central bank is worried.

That's apparent from its monetary policy committee's statement on Friday: "...the unprecedented food price shocks are impinging on the evolving trajectory of inflation and [the] recurring incidence of such overlapping shocks can impart generalisation and persistence".

Those worries would be shared no less by the Centre, particularly with national elections scheduled six months from now.

Dal-roti inflation

A closer look, however, shows food inflation being increasingly driven by two items: cereals (11.9% in August) and pulses (13%).

While the annual retail price rise in vegetables was at 37.4% in July and 26.1% in August, that figure is likely to moderate significantly — and also reflect in the official inflation data for September to be released later this week. The best indicator is tomato, whose current all-India modal (most-quoted) retail price is only Rs 20 per kg, as against Rs 40 a month ago and Rs 130 two months ago.

If prices of vegetables have already started correcting, it reduces food inflation essentially to *dal* (pulses) and *roti* (cereals). This has implications for the RBI's and the government's strategy of keeping food inflation low at all costs.

Most governments tend to privilege consumers over producers. It makes political sense, as the former outnumber the latter. But there are times when governments have to pay heed to producers too. In the present con-

text, that applies to at least two commodities.

The first is vegetable oils

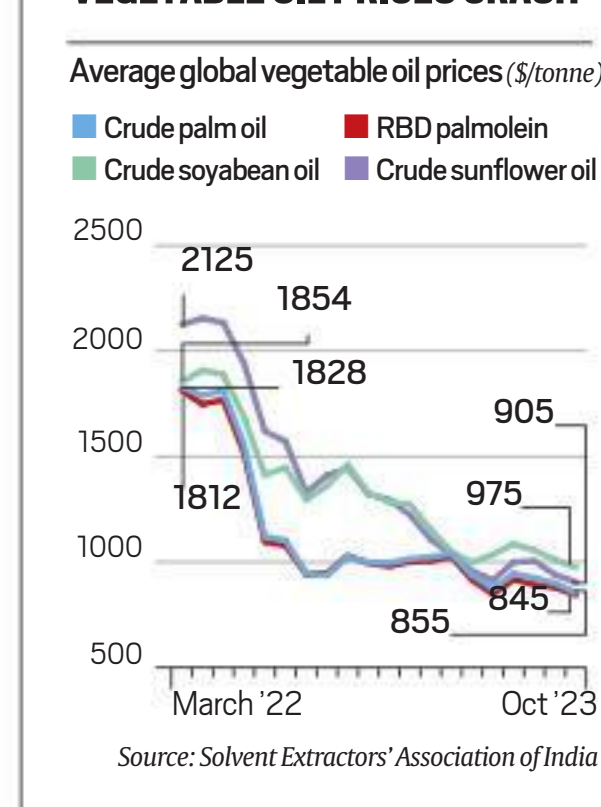
Harvesting and marketing of soyabean has barely started, but the oilseed is already trading below the government's minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 4,600 per quintal.

"The crop is good this year, but not prices. Demand for both oil and meal (the residual de-oiled cake, used as livestock feed ingredient) is weak," said Suresh Mangal, a commission agent at Madhya Pradesh's Dewas mandi, one of India's largest wholesale markets for soyabean.

Bumper crop apart, a major reason for the bearish market sentiment has to do with record imports of edible oil. India's vegetable oil imports are projected to touch an all-time-high of 17 million tonnes (mt) in 2022-23 (Nov-Oct), compared with 14.4 mt in the previous marketing year.

The flood of imports has been enabled by falling international prices (*chart*) and low tariffs. The effective import duty is currently 5.5% on crude soyabean, palm and sunflower

VEGETABLE OIL PRICES CRASH



and 13.75% on refined oils. Farmers planted soyabean on 12.6 million hectares (mh) this kharif season, including

5.3 mh in MP, 5.1 mh in Maharashtra and 1.1 mh in Rajasthan. With MP and Rajasthan due for Assembly polls in November-December, the Modi government may come under pressure to hike the import duty on vegetable oils; it wouldn't want soyabean selling below MSP becoming a political talking point.

The second item: milk

October-March is normally the "flush" season for milk. The drop in temperatures and humidity levels — plus improved fodder, straw and feed availability from the monsoon rain and harvested kharif crop — is conducive for cattle to produce more milk. Last season saw quite the opposite. Low prices received during the Covid-induced economic lockdowns led to the underfeeding of animals, alongside shrinkage of herd sizes. The effects of it — the underfed cattle turned out to be poor milkers — were felt in the 2022-23 "flush".

Milk shortages peaked in February-March 2023. Dairies in Maharashtra then paid up to Rs 38 for a litre of cow milk with 3.5% fat and 8.5% solids-not-fat content.

Those rates have since plummeted to Rs

32-33 levels. The reason: Farmers ramping up production in response to the high milk prices and showers through the pre-monsoon and monsoon months (barring August) boosting fodder supplies.

With the "flush" season taking off, milk is in surplus now. "There isn't much buying of powder, butter or *ghee*. It will be worse once the festival (Dussehra-Diwali) season ends and the animals enter peak production in winter," said Ganesan Palaniappan, a Chennai-based dairy commodities trader.

Compounding the industry's problems is the reported spurt in sales of *ghee* adulterated with vegetable fat. The crash in prices of imported oils, especially palm, has made admixture of cheap fat in butter and *ghee* much more attractive.

Key takeaways

The current sledgehammer approach of bringing down food inflation at all costs can politically backfire in states where farmers are a decisive vote bank. Nor is it probably required when food inflation is now confined largely to *dal-roti*.

THIS WORD MEANS

THE YOM KIPPUR WAR

The attack by Hamas on Israel is being compared to the Yom Kippur war, fought five decades ago

YASHEE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

THE SURPRISE attack by Hamas on Israel Saturday has brought back memories of the Yom Kippur war, which reset equations in West Asia.



The Yom Kippur war was fought from October 6 to 25, 1973. Wikimedia Commons

What was the Yom Kippur war?

The Yom Kippur war was fought between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other, from October 6 to 25, 1973. It is also called the Fourth Arab-Israeli war, coming after three wars in 1949, 1956, and 1967.

After its decisive victory in the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel had acquired an aura of invincibility, and also captured territories from its neighbours, including the Golan Heights from Syria and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. Six years later, the two countries launched a coordinated attack on Israel. While Israel was aware of troops mobilisation, it had not expected an attack in the Holy Islamic month of Ramadan. Caught by surprise, Israel took time to mobilise its own soldiers, many of whom were on leave for Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in Judaism.

Thus, initially, Syria and Egypt made some gains. Israel was able to stem the advance on both Syrian and Egyptian sides after three days and soon launched counterstrikes. Meanwhile, the US and the Soviet Union stepped in to back Israel and Egypt-Syria respectively, and tensions between the superpowers escalated dangerously. The first ceasefire, brokered by the UN on October 22, did not hold. However, by October 25, a lasting ceasefire had been arrived at, with Israel's reputation of invincibility dented.

What is the significance of the war?

If Israel managed to beat back both attackers, why is Yom Kippur still seen as a game changer? This was because its scramble to rally troops initially, and the heavy casualties it suffered, made it clear that Israel could be battered, if not beaten, in battle. In fact, many analysts believe

that Egypt's strategy behind the attack was not necessarily to defeat the militarily superior Israel, but to bruise it enough to bring it to the negotiating table.

After the ceasefire, a peace process was set in motion. Under the 1978 Camp David Accords, Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. The 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was the first instance of an Arab country recognising Israel as a state.

For Syria, however, the war brought no happy consequences. The Israel-Egypt peace deal had nothing for Syria, and Israel ended up occupying even more of the strategically important Golan Heights, which it holds to this day.

Why is the current violence being compared to the Yom Kippur war?

For one, this has been the deadliest attack on Israel since the Yom Kippur war.

The second similarity is the criticism within Israel for the state being found unprepared. The attack on Saturday came as a surprise, despite Israel's advanced intelligence and interception systems.

While the 1973 war came on Yom Kippur, Saturday's attack came when many Israelis were preparing to observe Simchat Torah, which marks the end of the annual cycle of public Torah readings, and the beginning of a new one. The Torah constitutes the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

Arc of India's ties with Israel

While India was one of the last non-Muslim states to recognise Israel, it became the first non-Arab state to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation. However, the balance of ties shifted in the 1990s.

EXPLAINED FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

AS HAMAS, the militant group ruling the Gaza Strip, mounted one of the most audacious attacks on Israel — many have called it the worst inside the Jewish state's territory since its creation in 1948 — Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed shock at what he called "terrorist attacks" and conveyed "solidarity with Israel".

While the Ministry of External Affairs is yet to come out with an official statement, the Prime Minister's words have been seen as siding with Israel. The horrific visuals of civilians being tortured and killed not as "collateral damage" but as "target" have shocked many. New Delhi has never condoned Hamas' actions. But the arc of India's ties with Israel and Palestine has been a roller coaster over the past seven decades.

In the years post Independence

India's political attitude towards Israel was set quite firmly shortly after independence in 1947, when Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi vowed to support the Palestinian cause as they rejected the idea of two nations on the basis of religion. While they had sympathy for the Jews, both were of the view that any State based on religious exclusivity could not sustain on moral and political grounds. This was in sync with their opposition to the partition of India.

India's position with regard to Palestine was also guided by the general consensus in the Arab world, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the United Nations.

When the partition of Palestine plan was put to vote at the UN, India voted against, along with the Arab countries. When Israel applied for admission to the UN, India again voted against. New Delhi, however, recognised Israel on September 17, 1950, after two Muslim-majority countries, Turkey and Iran, did so. In 1953, Israel was allowed to open a consulate in Mumbai, but no diplomatic presence was granted in New Delhi.

In the late 1960s and early 70s, with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) emerging as the representative of the people of Palestine under Yasser Arafat, India developed its engagement with the largest political grouping under PLO, Al Fatah.

On January 10, 1975, India recognised PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and permitted it an independent office at New Delhi.

While India was one of the last non-Muslim states to recognise Israel, it became the first non-Arab state to recognise the PLO.



PM Modi with Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu in New Delhi in 2018. File

Under Indira and Rajiv Gandhi

In 1980, when Indira Gandhi returned to power with a thumping majority, she continued her support to the Palestinian struggle. India upgraded the PLO office to that of an embassy endowed with all diplomatic immunities and privileges.

Arafat became a frequent visitor to Delhi through the early 80s, and the relationship between India and Palestine strengthened. In March 1983, when the NAM summit took place in India, it came up with a strong statement of solidarity for Palestine. In April 1984, PM Indira Gandhi visited Arafat's headquarters in Tunis after a state visit to Libya. When she was assassinated six months later, Arafat attended the funeral and wept in public.

Rajiv Gandhi continued with India's approach towards Palestine, and throughout the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada (uprising) in December 1987 in Gaza and West Bank due to the 'iron fist' policies of Israel, India maintained its steadfast support.

Ground shifts

However, by this time, there were critics of New Delhi's Palestine policy and its outright support to the Arab world within India. The Arab countries' neutral position during the 1962 India-China war and their support to Pakistan during the 1965 and 1971 wars did not go down well with many, including the

BJP. On the other hand, Israel helped India with arms and ammunition in the 1962 and 1965 wars.

Things changed in West Asia when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The PLO lost its political leverage on account of its support to Saddam Hussain. Around that time, the Soviet Union disintegrated, and this prompted India to make drastic changes in its policy towards West Asia.

It established full diplomatic relations with Israel in January 1992, days after the Chinese established diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv.

The end of the Cold War weakened the Non-Aligned Movement and reduced the ideological hostility towards Israel. The emergence of the BJP as a powerful force in Indian politics in early 1990s also removed some hesitations about Israel.

On January 19-20, 1992, Palestinian President Arafat paid an official visit to India. During his meeting with Prime Minister P V Narsimha Rao, he was told that India's establishment of a diplomatic relationship with Israel would be helpful for the Palestinian cause. New Delhi, he was told, could exert influence on Israel only if it had an ambassador in Tel Aviv. Arafat came on board.

After the bilateral conversation with Rao, Arafat in his press conference in New Delhi said, "Exchange of Ambassadors and recognition (of Israel) are acts of sovereignty in which

I cannot interfere...I respect any choice of the Indian government".

Military ties and the Kargil war

The establishing of full diplomatic ties with Israel came in especially handy during the Kargil conflict in 1999. The Indian Air Force desperately needed precision target bombs as Pakistani intruders were hiding in caves and bunkers atop mountains in Kargil. The IAF reached out to their Israeli counterparts, who wasted no time. They are understood to have dug into their emergency stockpiles and shipped the weapons to India, which proved to be decisive in the hour of need.

After this, the Vajpayee government sent Foreign minister Jaswant Singh for the first bilateral visit in 2000. Home minister LK Advani visited Israel in the summer of 2000, followed by more high-profile visits.

After Modi came to power, there has been much more visibility to the relationship. During Modi's visit to Israel in 2017 — the first Prime Ministerial visit — he skipped the customary stop at Palestine, which was the norm with previous ministerial visits.

The Modi government, however, had been quite careful about setting up this visit. South Block made sure that the Prime Minister visited Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, UAE — all regional rivals of Israel — between 2014 and 2017, before the trip to Israel. New Delhi hosted Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in May 2017. In all public pronouncements, South Block officials maintained India's position on its support towards the Palestinian cause.

Modi later visited Palestine in February 2018, but didn't visit Israel — achieving a complete dehyphenation of the ties.

In the past decade

In the last decade or so, ties have deepened in security, defence, and connectivity with Israel, but also with partners in West Asia — Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar and Iran.

The Indian strategic approach to engage with all sides in the complex West Asian region is born out of necessity: the 90 lakh-strong Indian community in the region and connectivity to West Asia and Europe. Crucially, more than 50% of India's energy imports are sourced from West Asia.

The spate of horrifying surprise attacks over the weekend puts India in a diplomatic tight spot. This is because the current hostility tests the Abraham Accords and the efforts towards rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Israel, which held the promise of reshaping age-old fault-lines in the Middle East. India was hoping to reap the dividends of the new-found peace in the region.

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Aditya-L1 corrects trajectory as it moves closer to Sun: why, how this was done

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 8

THE INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Sunday announced that it had carried out a Trajectory Correction Maneuver (TCM) for the Aditya-L1 spacecraft, to ensure it reaches its destination at the Sun Earth Lagrangian point 1.

The Aditya-L1 is to undertake a 110-day journey through space, one of the longest for an Indian spacecraft since the 2013-2014 Mars mission.

ISRO scientists had indicated that a TCM would be necessary for Aditya-L1 soon after the spacecraft began its journey toward the L1 point on September 19, after orbiting the earth for 17 days.

Unlike lunar missions, which take about

three weeks to cover the 384,400 km distance to the Moon, deep space missions to Mars (distance of 225 million km) and the Lagrangian Point 1 (distance of 1.5 million km) take several months (Mars around 11 months and L1 around four months).

The longer distances require the mission to incorporate trajectory correction plans using orbit determination calculations, to ensure the spacecraft remains on the right course towards its destination.

The Mars Orbiter Mission undertaken by ISRO between November 5, 2013 to September 24, 2014 required three TCMs on November 14, 2013, June 11, 2014 and September 22, 2014.

What are Trajectory Correction Maneuvers?

The Aditya-L1 spacecraft is to be injected into an orbit around L1. For this to be

achieved, the spacecraft has to travel on a planned trajectory.

After the Trans Lagrangian Point 1 Insertion manoeuvre on September 19, scientists found that there could be trajectory errors that would need correction.

"There is a provision in the mission for this sort of manoeuvre, which is called a trim manoeuvre. This has been part of the mission plans since Chandrayaan 1 (2008). For every orbit-raising manoeuvre, we look at what was the orbit realised. If there is something to be done, we have to do it at the earliest," said former ISRO scientist M Annadurai, who was closely associated with the Chandrayaan 1 and the Mars Orbiter Mission.

In the case of near destinations like the Moon, the trajectory corrections have to be done in the span of a week, and for longer destinations, as early as possible.

"The Aditya-L1 is making a long journey,



The Aditya-L1 spacecraft was launched on September 2. X/@ISRO

If there is a small deviation at the start, then over a month or three months, there could be implications," the ISRO scientist said.

Smaller corrections involve firing of engines on the spacecraft for shorter durations, which results in conserving of fuel. Bigger corrections need longer firing of the engines.

"We have to assess how much correction is needed. It is a bit like assessing the petrol you want to fill," Annadurai said.

What is the orbit that Aditya-L1 must achieve around the L1 point?

When it reaches the L1 point around the second week of January 2024, Aditya-L1 will carry out a manoeuvre to enable it to orbit around L1, which is a balanced gravitational location between the Earth and the Sun.

The spacecraft will spend its mission life "orbiting around L1 in an irregularly shaped orbit in a plane roughly perpendicular to the line joining the Earth and the Sun," ISRO said.

The L1 orbit is considered a challenge to acquire and maintain, and a few course corrections by firing of the engines may be

needed in the mission life of the spacecraft.

"It is not like an orbit around a planetary body. There are three dimensions to this orbit, while other orbits around a planet are two dimensional, either equator or polar. Both the gravities play a role and there is pulling and pushing," an ISRO scientist said.

When has ISRO performed TCMs in the past?

The manoeuvres are required only in deep space missions.

The Mars Orbiter Mission witnessed three TCMs. The manoeuvres were carried out to ensure that the Mars Orbiters attained the right trajectory to reach a distance of 500 km (plus or minus 60 km) from the Red Planet. If the correction manoeuvres were not carried out, the spacecraft would have reached a distance of 723 km periaapsis, ISRO scientists said at the time.

DEATHS: ISRAEL 600, GAZA 300

Israel to launch tougher military action, toll rises to nearly 1,000

Security Cabinet approves 'significant military steps' in formal war declaration



Israeli security forces near Sderot town on Sunday. Reuters

TIA GOLDENBERG & WAFAA SHURAF
TEL AVIV, OCTOBER 8

THE ISRAELI government formally declared war Sunday and gave the green light for "significant military steps" to retaliate against Hamas for its surprise attack from the Gaza Strip, portending greater fighting ahead as the toll from the conflict passed 900 dead and thousands wounded on both sides.

More than 24 hours after Hamas launched its unprece-

dent ed incursion out of Gaza, Israeli forces were still trying to crush the last groups of militant fighters holed up in several towns of southern Israel. At least 600 people have reportedly been killed in Israel — a staggering toll on a scale the country has not experienced in decades — and more than 300 have been killed in Gaza as Israeli airstrikes pound the territory.

Authorities were still trying to determine how many civilians and soldiers were seized by Hamas fighters during the mayhem and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

'CRISIS LINKED TO EXTERNAL FORCES, NOT ETHNIC STRIFE'

Dialogue top priority, want people to feel secure again: Manipur CM

EXPRESS EXCLUSIVE

RITIKA CHOPRA
IMPHAL, OCTOBER 8

LISTING "dialogue" with Meiteis and Kukis as his top priority, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh told this newspaper that his immediate challenge is to

help Manipuris "feel confident and secure again".

In an exclusive interview to *The Indian Express* five months after the first clashes broke out in the state during a tribal solidarity march on May 3, Singh refrained from describing the current crisis as an ethnic conflict, but attributed the violence to "external forces" affected by his war on drugs and illegal immigration (Full interview to be published on Tuesday, October 10).



Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh. File

He dismissed the Manipur High Court order regarding the Meitei demand to be included in the state's Scheduled Tribes list as the trigger behind the May 3 violence, stating that his government had not acted on the court order, giving no reason for the Kukis to be perturbed.

"My top priority is initiating dialogue with all affected communities, including the Meiteis and Kukis. I have already started

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

India break old Aussie hoodoo in World Cup campaign opener

VENKATA KRISHNA B
CHENNAI, OCTOBER 8

FOR MUCH of the World Cup history, Australia have broken India's hearts. A one-run defeat here in 1987, thrashings in the 2003 final and 2015 semifinal, hammering in the super-six game in 1999, the five-time world champions has been India's biggest stumbling block in the prized tournament. But with a comprehensive exhibition of spin bowling and gritty

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



KL Rahul (97*) plays the winning shot in Chennai, Sunday. PTI

NC-Cong combine sweeps Kargil election

NAVEED IQBAL
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 8

THE NATIONAL Conference-Congress combine on Sunday comfortably won the required number of seats to form the next executive body for the Ladakh

Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil.

While the NC won 12 seats, the Congress bagged 10 seats in the 30-member council. The BJP and Independents won 2 seats each. Four seats in the council have nominated members.

The NC and Congress fought

together as allies in seats where the BJP has significant presence. Both parties improved on their previous tally in 2018, when the NC won 10 seats and Congress 8.

"This result sends a message to all forces and parties that have, undemocratically and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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By UNNY

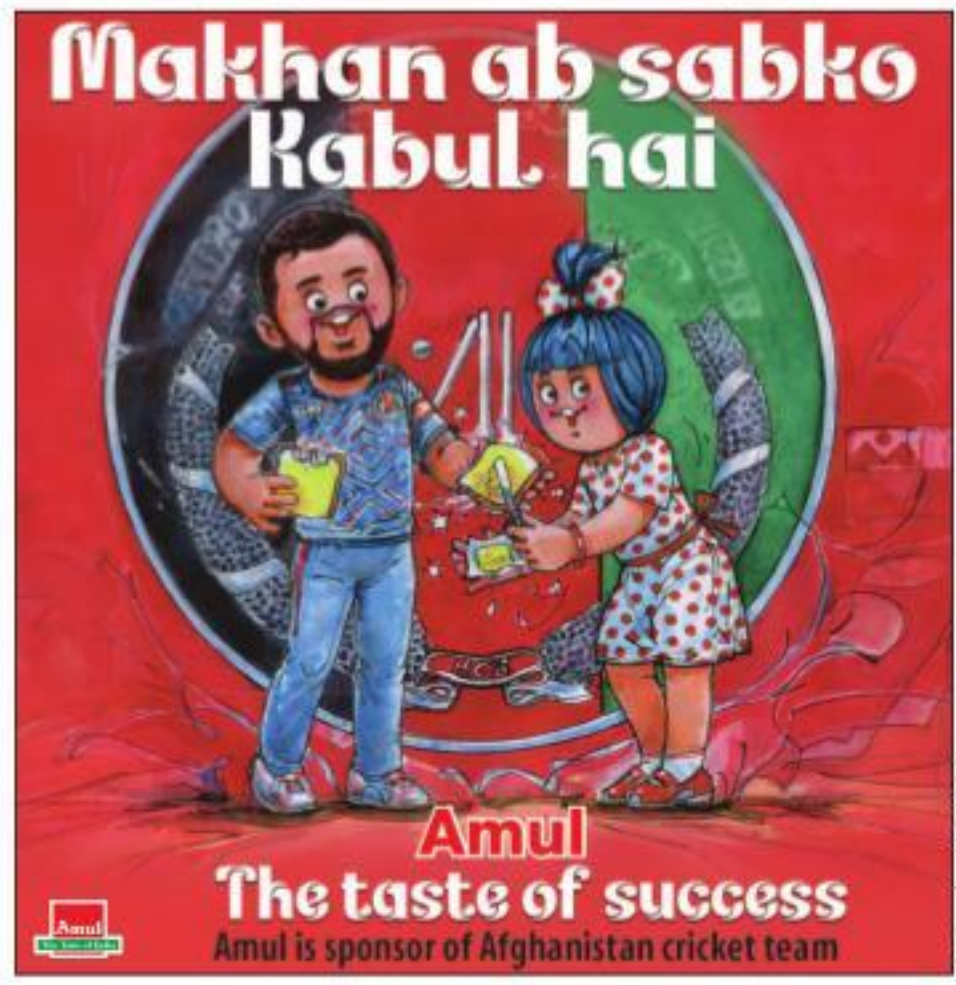


IDEA EXCHANGE

'Caste census has overpowered kamandal politics. This is now a national issue'

RAJIV RANJAN SINGH
NATIONAL PRESIDENT, JD (U)

PAGE 14



TEESTA-V DAMAGED

As Sikkim picks up pieces, Teesta-III reservoir, opening of its gates under lens

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

AS RESCUE and relief gather pace in Sikkim ravaged by a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF), the high storage volume in the Teesta-III dam's reservoir and the failure to open its spillways are two key factors being looked into as probable triggers that exacerbated the GLOF's impact.

Sikkim's Opposition SDF has demanded a "forensic probe" into the dam break by Central agencies after Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang Saturday blamed the "substandard construction"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED Capacity is key

INVESTIGATORS WILL probe if Teesta-III was operating above its capacity on October 3. If it was, the dam's storage was probably full. That would have left no space to absorb the initial impact of the flood. Teesta-III has a live storage capacity of 3.3 million cubic meters.

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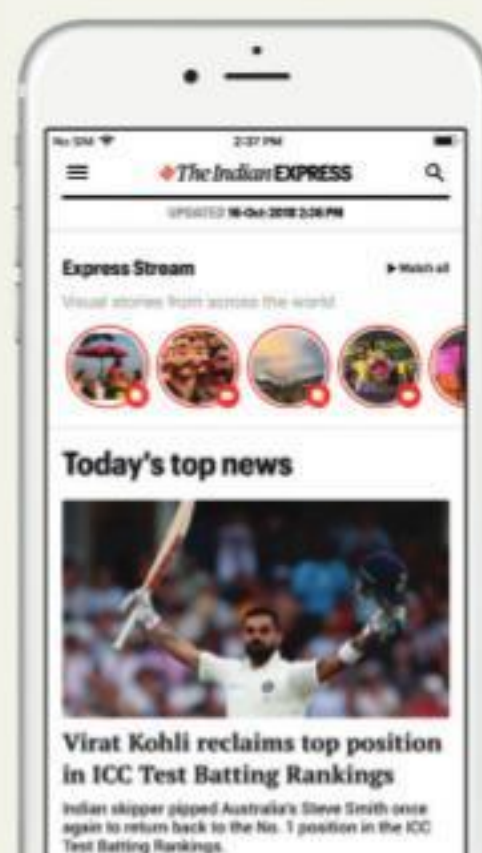
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HOW A PAINTING BY ELIZABETH THOMPSON HONoured THE HEROES OF RORKE'S DRIFT AND BECAME A TIMELESS SYMBOL OF COURAGE

Behind The Art: After the Battle of Rorke's Drift, heroes met Queen Victoria and artist Elizabeth Thompson. Her masterpiece, 'The Defence of Rorke's Drift,' immortalised their valour in the pages of history.

TECHNOLOGY

AFTER CHANDRAYAAN, NOW GAGANYAAN

Here's what ISRO needs to do for its Gaganyaan mission to take off

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EXPRESS AUDIO

How agetech can fill the gap in elder care

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Thane cops book 5 over unregistered partnership firms, transactions worth Rs 16,180 crore

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 8

THE ECONOMIC offences wing (EOW) of Thane City police has begun an investigation into a multi-crore fraud after a case was registered against a group of people allegedly found involved in illegally setting up unregistered partnership firms using forged and bogus documents and defrauding the government.

counts and contract agreements. After close scrutiny of the documents, it was revealed that at one address, five partnership firms were registered in different people's names using forged and bogus documents.

When employees of Riyaal Enterprises were questioned, details of 250 bank accounts and various notarised agreements of partnership firms were found, police said. "When details of these bank accounts were obtained, it was found that transactions worth Rs 16,180 crore were carried out using these bank accounts over a period of time," said an officer of Thane police.

According to Thane police, a few months ago, they initiated an investigation after an unidentified person hacked into the software of payment gateway company Safex payout and carried out a fraud of Rs 25 crore. A case of hacking and cyber fraud was then filed by the legal advisor of the company with the Shrinagar police station. The Thane police cyber cell was probing the case.

During the investigation, it was revealed that Rs 1.39 crore was fraudulently transferred into an account held by Riyaal Enterprises, which has offices in Vashi and Belapur in Navi Mumbai. Police searched these offices recently and found documents for multiple bank ac-

Some of the transactions show that money was also sent abroad, the officer said adding the government was defrauded by opening bank accounts in the names of various unregistered partnership firms using false documents.

Police have suo motu registered a case at Naupada police station against suspects Sanjay Singh, Amol Andhale alias Aman, Kedar alias Sameer Dighe, Jitendra Pandey, Navin, and others in the case by the government.

The accused are booked under sections 420, 409, 467, 468, 120(B), 34 of the Indian Penal Code, and 66(C) and 66(D) of the Information Technology Act. The EOW officials are further investigating the matter, said a DCP ranking officer.

NewsClick FIR: SKM to hold protest against bid to 'tarnish' farmers' agitation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 8

THE SAMYUKT Kisan Morcha (SKM) has decided to hold nationwide protests against what it called a "baseless assault" on the farmers' movement in the FIR against NewsClick.

In a statement Sunday, it condemned the "scurrilous and malafide allegations" leveled against the "deeply patriotic farmers' movement in an FIR lodged by Special Cell of Delhi Police against NewsClick and several journalists. The SKM denied the allegations, calling them "false and politically motivated". It rejected the accusations

that the agitation sought to disrupt vital supplies, damage property, inflict economic losses, or create law and order disturbances through illegal foreign funding. It emphasised that their protest was peaceful, highlighting that farmers caused no disruption or destruction.

The morcha blamed the government for exacerbating law and order issues through actions such as deploying barbed wire fencing, water cannons, and other such measures.

It also questioned the impartiality of the Delhi Police.

The SKM alleged that the FIR was an attempt to tarnish the farmers' agitation and craft an anti-farmer narrative.

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Israel to launch tougher military action, toll rises to nearly 1,000

taken back to Gaza. From videos and witnesses, the captives are known to include women, children, and the elderly.

As many as 1,000 Hamas fighters were involved in the assault, US Secretary of State Andrew Blinken told news channel ABC — a high figure that underscored the extent of planning by the militant group ruling Gaza. The gunmen rampaged for hours, firing on civilians in towns, along highways and at a techno music festival being held in the desert near Gaza.

while, continue to pay a high price. A line of Israelis snaked outside a central Israel police station to supply DNA samples and other means that could help identify missing family members. Israeli TV news aired a stream of accounts from relatives of captive or missing Israelis who wept and begged for assistance and information.

In Gaza, the tiny enclave of 2.3 million people sealed off by an Israeli-Egyptian blockade for 16 years since the Hamas takeover, residents feared an intensified onslaught. "Get out of there now," Netanyahu told Gaza residents, who have no way to leave the overcrowded Mediterranean territory. Israeli strikes flattened a number of Gaza residential buildings. More than 20,000 people who fled their homes crowded into schools run by the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNWRA, the agency said.

Yohanan Plesner, the head of the Israel Democracy Institute, a local think tank. But it "demonstrates that the government thinks we are entering a more lengthy, intense and significant period of war." Israel has carried out major military campaigns over the past four decades in Lebanon and Gaza that it portrayed as wars, but without a formal declaration.

The Security Cabinet also approved "significant military steps." The steps were not defined, but the declaration appears to give the military and Prime Minister Netanyahu a wide mandate.

Speaking on national television Saturday, Netanyahu vowed that Hamas "will pay an unprecedented price."

He further warned: "This war will take time. It will be difficult." Israelis were still reeling from the breadth, ferocity and surprise of the Hamas assault. The group's fighters broke through Israel's security fence surrounding the Gaza Strip early Saturday. Using motorcycles and pickup trucks, even paragliders and speedboats on the coast, they moved into nearby Israeli communities — as many as 22 locations.

The high death toll and slow response to the onslaught pointed to a major intelligence failure.

Hamas said that overnight it continued to send forces and equipment into southern Israel. On Sunday, fighting continued in some parts of the south, and gunmen still held hostages in some locations, Israeli Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari told reporters. The Israeli military said it was evacuating at least five towns close to Gaza.

"We will go through every community until we kill every terrorist that is in Israeli territory," Hagari said. In Gaza, "every terrorist located in a house, all the commanders in houses, will be hit by Israeli fire. That will continue escalating in the coming hours."

Israel struck 426 targets in

Gaza so far, its military said Sunday. Much of the territory's population was thrown into darkness Saturday night as Israel cut off electricity and said it would no longer supply power, fuel or other goods to the territory.

One woman sheltering at an UNWRA school in Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighborhood described a panicked flight from her home in the middle of the night. The Israeli military made announcements on loudspeakers telling people to leave.

"We didn't know where to go," she said. "It was a miracle we arrived at the schools because there was no transport."

The presence of hostages in Gaza complicates Israel's response. Hamas officials have said they will seek the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners, and Israel has a history of making heavily lopsided exchanges to bring captive Israelis home.

Blinken also said that Washington will announce assistance for Israel. Reuters reported, quoting two US officials, that the US will send multiple military ships and aircraft closer to Israel for deterrence and as a show of support. US President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday, CNN reported.

Civilians on both sides, mean-

An exchange of fire in northern Israel with the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah raised fears of a spread of the conflict. Hezbollah fired dozens of rockets and shells Sunday at three Israeli positions in a disputed area along the border, and the Israeli military fired back using armed drones.

A major question was whether Israel will launch a ground assault into Gaza, a move that in the past has brought intensified casualties.

The declaration of war announced by Israel's Security Cabinet was largely symbolic, said

from the flood monitoring station at Lachen. That's enough time to operate the gates through remote control unless the spillways were damaged or stuck for some reason," said an engineer with the Central Water Commission (CWC).

Sunil Saraogi, the executive chairman of Sikkim Urja Limited, confirmed that Teesta-III's spillways were indeed operated electronically. "We have been hearing a lot of things in the last few days but I will be able to verify only when communications are restored," he said.

Investigators are also likely to probe if Teesta-III was operating above its capacity on October 3. "If it was so, the dam's storage was probably full. That would have left no space to absorb the initial impact of the flood but could have made it a lot worse by contributing the additional water," said an SDMA official.

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Saraogi could not confirm the dam's storage status when the GLOF hit. Teesta-III had a gross storage capacity of 5.08 million cubic meters and a live storage capacity of 3.3 million cubic meters.

The combined discharge of storage water and GLOF from Teesta-III hit NHPC's 510 MW Teesta-V — Teesta IV is at the proposal stage — and the under-construction 500 MW Teesta-VI downstream in about an hour, causing extensive damage, and washing all the bridges in its way.

The GLOF overtopped the Teesta-V dam, obliterating the ap-

proach road and the control room for remote operation, knocking down multiple transmission towers and drowning the power station where one casualty was reported. All connecting roads to the project site and parts of the residential colony were severely damaged. The GLOF, subsequently, disrupted ongoing works at Teesta-VI where flood water entered the powerhouse and the transformer cavern, washing out bridges connecting the right and left banks at the barrage as well as the powerhouse.

A former NHPC official familiar with the developments underlined how Teesta-V's concrete dam, with spillways of 12,500 cumec, withstood the overtopping. "In contrast, with spillways of just 70,000 cumec, the concrete-face rock-filled dam of Teesta-III was unlikely to survive the impact of this 8-10,000 cumec GLOF that also carried massive boulders. But opening the gates and emptying the reservoir in time could have reduced the damage downstream," he said.

Himanshu Thakkar, coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, said that the Teesta-III dam was not included in the CWC's National Register of Large Dams (NRLD). "Commissioned in 2017, it is inexplicably missing in the NRLD compiled in 2019. There is no information on the Dam Safety Mechanism of Teesta-III and the last inspection of the dam and its spillway gates," he said.

Want people to feel secure again: Manipur CM

(conversations) through some (informal) channels with those who have suffered... I am committed to comforting those who have suffered." Singh said, adding that a peace committee had started working three months back.

Asked why his state machinery did not anticipate tension in the days leading up to the violence, Singh said that while he had asked his DGP to provide security to all vulnerable districts on the day of the solidarity march, he only found out later that this wasn't done in Churachandpur district which has a majority Kuki population. He said he didn't want to comment on May 3 further given that it's the subject of a judicial inquiry set up by the Centre.

said if the Centre lacked faith in him, they would have already explored "other options".

"The Central government has full confidence in both me and the state government. However, the situation is being viewed as a conflict between two communities, and I, as CM Biren Singh, belong to one of those communities. If continue and I hold the same power then it may be seen as an imbalance. To avoid any perception of imbalance, the Centre may be appointing a security advisor, DG, and others. I hold this perspective because if the Centre did not trust me, then they always have other options," he said.

Singh said the Union Home Minister, in fact, has always given him the confidence to not give up. "Ek mreko confidence diya hai Gih Mantri ji ne ki himmat nahi harna aur himmat se ladna (The Home Minister has given me the confidence to never give up and continue fighting with courage). These words have helped me feel reborn again. Sometimes I was so frustrated, but Gih Mantri ji hamesha vishwas dilate rahe (he always helped me keep faith)."

were ultimately rescued by members of the same community to which the culprits belonged. While I condemn the actions of the eight individuals involved in this unlawful act, I also appreciate those who stepped in to save the victims from the mob, helped them get dressed, and sent them back home. Following the incident, it was not the police that raided the culprits' homes. But it was the Meitei community that mobilised and handed over the culprits to the authorities," he said.

Asked why he hasn't met any of the victim's families yet, he said, "I wanted to go and console the Kuki families, but I was not permitted to do so. By that I mean that at that time, the situation was tense, and I felt that I was being targeted and blamed by the Kukis. I'm not sure why, and I believe that ultimately, it's up to God to determine who was right and wrong. However, because I didn't visit the Kuki families, I also refrained from visiting the families of the Meitei victims. I was concerned that people might perceive it as a biased gesture... ki dekho metei hai isilye metei ke pass jaa raha hai (see he's visiting Meiteis cause he's a Meitei himself). I am facing this dilemma, which is the most challenging part for me. But I have visited relief camps in both communities."

Teesta-III reservoir, opening of its gates under lens

proach road and the control room for remote operation, knocking down multiple transmission towers and drowning the power station where one casualty was reported. All connecting roads to the project site and parts of the residential colony were severely damaged. The GLOF, subsequently, disrupted ongoing works at Teesta-VI where flood water entered the powerhouse and the transformer cavern, washing out bridges connecting the right and left banks at the barrage as well as the powerhouse.

A former NHPC official familiar with the developments underlined how Teesta-V's concrete dam, with spillways of 12,500 cumec, withstood the overtopping. "In contrast, with spillways of just 70,000 cumec, the concrete-face rock-filled dam of Teesta-III was unlikely to survive the impact of this 8-10,000 cumec GLOF that also carried massive boulders. But opening the gates and emptying the reservoir in time could have reduced the damage downstream," he said.

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India break old Aussie hoodoo in their World Cup campaign opener

Kohli showed why he is still India's Man Friday in this format. His biggest strength in the format is how well he adjusts to the situations and takes these calculative risks. With the pressure on India, he took the responsibility to hand it back to Australia. His boundary, where he walked down the pitch and drove Josh Hazlewood, who had accounted for Rohit Sharma and Shreyas Iyer in the second over, was the best of the lot. Once he was offered life, Kohli was totally reborn as those tentative loose drives disappeared and the compactness returned.

The old master of chases was fully back. It was run-scoring at its risky-free best. He will punt the ball down the ground, steer it to the third man, nudge the ball on the leg-side and hoard the runs. It was a show of grit rather than authority. Nothing bothered him, not the heat, the bowlers, or the pres-

sure of winning the first match of the tournament. His advice to Rahul was simple. "Play it like Test cricket," Rahul would later say.

At the other end, Rahul hardly seemed to break a sweat. Among batsmen from both teams, he looked the most comfortable on a surface that was relatively slower. Some balls gripped and turned too, besides movement for seamers with the new ball. Maybe, the hours behind the stumps got him a measure of the surface's nature, especially the pace more than anyone else. Right from start, he batted smoothly, middling most of the balls, showing his adeptness in controlling the game's tempo. He performed the duties of a classical No 5 batsman, lent support to the top-order batsman, Kohli here, let pressure not heap on him, and then guided the team to the shores of safety with a calm head. It is for these gifts that the team

management persisted with him, despite the proneness to injuries.

In the four months he spent recovering from a thigh injury, India have been pinning all their middle-order hopes on him. Although his century against Pakistan in the Asia Cup showed signs of him coming back to form, this unbeaten knock was reassuring in so many ways. In a situation where even one bad shot could have ended up costing India the game, Rahul brought calmness.

But he and Kohli had to thank Ashwin, Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav for restricting Australia to 199. Ashwin unpacked his bag of tricks, Yadav's variations were unfathomable and Jadeja smartly mixed his pace, and spun the ball big and sharp to castle Steve Smith. From that juncture, Australia collapsed beyond recovery. Though India too imploded, to their rescue came Kohli and Rahul.

NC-Cong combine sweeps Kargil election

unconstitutionally, divided the state of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh without the consent of its people," NC vice-president Omar Abdullah said.

Terming the results as a "wake-up call" for the BJP, Omar added, "It is time to cease hiding behind the Raj Bhawan and unelected representatives and, instead, acknowledge the people's rightful desire for a democratically elected government in Jammu and Kashmir. Democracy demands the voices of the people be heard and respected."

Crediting Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra for the Congress's success, Congress general secretary KC Venugopal said, "We have registered a resounding victory in the Ladakh-Kargil Autonomous Hill Council elections after 10 years! Along with our INDIA partner National Conference, we have swept the entire region in its first election after the abrogation of Art. 370."

In this election, Kargil's first after Ladakh took shape as a Union Territory in 2019, the Congress campaigned against "divisive

forces" in the country and urged the voters "to keep the BJP out", while the NC projected itself as the only solution. Its slogan — "Hal hi hal hai" — resonated through its campaign. It was also symbolic since the NC had to approach the Supreme Court after it was denied its poll symbol (plough) by the UT administration of Ladakh.

The BJP projected its development push while also offering to the electorate the example of the party's work in neighbouring J&K and an enhanced budget for the UT. The party had three members in the previous council, of which two were defectors from the PDP.

The BJP fielded 17 candidates this time for the October 4 polls. Its lone winning candidate in the last election, Stanzin Lapka, retained his seat from Cha constituency. In Chiktan area, where the BJP holds some influence, its candidate Padma Dorjey won from Stakchay Khangral, wresting it from the Congress.

According to local residents, the BJP's influence in this election was limited to areas bordering Leh, which votes differently

from Kargil largely because of its demography. While Leh is a Buddhist majority district led by the Ladakh Buddhist Association, Kargil is a Shia Muslim majority area with two religious schools — the Jamiat Ulema Kargil or the Islamia School; and the Imam Khumaini Memorial Trust. These religious bodies have long held sway in polls in the region.

However, Kargil this time witnessed some effort to pull away from the control of the religious schools with young candidates challenging the hold of the "Aghas" in areas such as Saliskut, where Mohammad Sajjad, an Independent.

The LAHDC is the governing body for all of the district's developmental needs and is led by a Chief Executive Councillor and four executive councillors, who supervise functions of government departments alongside secretaries of the UT administration.

It rejected the accusations

India break old Aussie hoodoo in their World Cup campaign opener

batting from K.L. Rahul and Virat Kohli, India got off the blocks in the World Cup, beating Australia by six wickets.

The importance of winning the opening match could not be over-emphasized, more so against record champions Australia, who incidentally had not lost a World Cup opening match this century.

The win was also a vindication of India's tactics and selection policies too — R Ashwin, a late but valuable addition to the team, produced a delightful exhibition of high-class spin bowling. It was a justification of the selectors' faith in Rahul, returning from a thigh injury. In short, India ticked several boxes in this match — the seamers breathed aggression, spinners spat venom and batsmen showed the grit to pull India out of trouble after an early collapse. But for 10 minute of madness, India bossed Australia.

When Rahul walked into the middle to join Kohli, India were three wickets down for two runs. Silence engulfed Chepauk with plenty of anxious faces fearing for the worst. In the dressing room, Ravindra Jadeja later admitted, panic was setting in. The team is known to struggle if the top-order batsmen are dismissed early.

An already uphill task on a slow pitch had now turned into a stiff, uneasy climb. But with a 165-run partnership, Kohli and Rahul shut out the chase.

Rahul had just taken a shower and hoped for a breather, before he had to pad up. What unfolded was a classical recovery act, engineered by two of India's finest batsmen. Kohli made the most of his reprieve, on 13, and composed an innings that presented his best virtues — his nerves of steel, his reading of the situation, his response to his opponents' tactics.

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Woman, two kids found dead at home, police suspect murder-suicide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

A 27-YEAR-OLD woman allegedly killed her two children before dying by suicide inside their home in South Delhi's Munirka Sunday, said police. Police said the woman's husband, a Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) constable, wasn't at home at the time of the incident. He has been called for questioning in connection with the triple deaths.

A PCR call about the deaths was made by neighbours around 10.30 am when they noticed the woman and her children hadn't come out of their house despite several calls. Police said the family lives in a four-storey residential building.

"The neighbours usually meet in the common courtyard every morning around 9-10 am. When they found that their upstairs neighbour wasn't there, they went to see her. They later called us," said an officer.

Police said they reached the home and found the door was locked from inside. Police called the Delhi Fire Services and the

staffers broke the door.

Manoj C, DCP (Southwest), said, "We found three bodies — a woman and her two young children — lying on the mattress. They had sharp injuries on their wrists. Crime teams and forensic science teams were called. Staffers also recovered a blood-stained blade from the spot."

The deceased were identified as Varsha Sharma (27) and her two sons — aged four and two and a half years. Varsha's husband, Jagender Sharma, wasn't at the house at the time of the incident. Police found during the investigation that he left the house on Saturday night to go to his hometown in Moradabad.

"The couple got married in 2017. Initial enquiry revealed the couple had a strained relationship. Family and neighbours alleged Sharma would often go to Moradabad to attend religious events. Even on Saturday, he left home to attend an event. We checked the house and didn't find a suicide note," added the officer.

Police informed the SDM of the area to begin inquest proceedings and take legal action in the matter.

WOMAN DIES AFTER BEING HIT TWICE

Elderly couple, on way to pay bill, hit by bus

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

A ELDERLY couple on their way to pay their gas bills on a scooter were hit by a bus, resulting in the death of the 58-year-old woman after the driver allegedly proceeded to run her over, in Safdarjung Enclave.

The incident took place on Friday. The bus driver, who managed to escape, hasn't been identified or arrested yet.

The deceased, Sharda Devi, a resident of Sadiq Nagar in Safdarjung Enclave, died on the spot after she was hit by the bus twice. Her husband, Chandrabhan Ram (60), a retired officer from the Ministry of Defence, escaped with minor injuries.

According to the police, the couple left home Friday morning and were on their way to the IGL office in RK Puram.



The deceased, Sharda Devi

Their family members said they had to pay their bills, among other chores. As the couple reached Raj Nagar flyover, a speeding bus hit them.

Chandrabhan said after being hit by the bus, which belonged to Rajasthan Roadways, they fell to the ground.

"The bus driver was driving in a zig-zag manner when he hit us. I was trying to get up... My wife was also lying on the road and instead of stopping, the accused drove towards her. He ran her over. Her

legs and hands were crushed. There were commuters who even tried to stop the vehicle but the driver fled from the spot. He didn't stop or try to help," he said. Both Ram and Devi were wearing helmets at the time of the incident, he said.

As other commuters called the police, the couple was taken to the hospital where the woman succumbed to the injuries. Police said she had severe injuries and had lost a lot of blood.

An investigation into the case revealed that the driver was speeding on the flyover and "failed to control the brakes" when he saw the couple on the scooter. CCTVs are being checked from Safdarjung Enclave to Gurugram as police suspect the bus left in that direction. A case under sections of rash driving, causing hurt by endangering life, and causing death by negligence has been registered at the Safdarjung Enclave police station.

Man loots cars, robs people in West Delhi, all with the help of a toy gun

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

DURING THE wee hours of Friday, as a cab driver waited in Janakpuri for a passenger, two men entered his car and pointed pistols at him. Threatening to shoot him dead, they got him to part with his phone, leave his car behind, and run for his life. Later, it was revealed that the weapons pointed at the cab driver were toy guns, which the accused had used earlier too to rob people of cash and belongings.

One of the accused, Sikander Bhan (35), was arrested Sunday while his friend and co-accused Parvesh (27) is on the run.

According to the cab driver, "At first, I thought they were my passengers... However, they later pulled out two pistols. I got scared. I told them I had no cash but they took my phone and asked me to leave my car. I got scared as they threatened to shoot me in the head. It was dark (at 4.15 am) and I had no phone. I

waited hours to get to the police station..."

Police said Bhan would target old and "vulnerable" people in cars and on the streets with his toy gun in West Delhi areas using a fake gun, which looked like a real pistol.

Police said Bhan and Parvesh had robbed two cars within two-three days and were caught with the help of a GPS locator that was installed in the driver's new i10 car. A team led by sub-inspector Deep Chand and head constable Amarjeet started tracing the route with the help of CCTVs while following the live location of the car.

An officer said the accused had taken the car to several places and the location was untraceable after some time, adding the police teams worked for almost two days to reach the exact location.

Vichitra Veer, DCP (West), said, "The location was finally zeroed down to a spot near the Chevra metro station. The teams rushed there and found one of the accused near a house. He was in the process of removing the GPS

locator. He knew the police could trace him... Luckily, we caught him in time and red-handed..."

On the duo's modus operandi, the officer said, "They often targeted cab drivers, old men and women in West Delhi areas. They would step out during the night or early hours of the day. They used to work as drivers earlier but wanted to buy expensive phones and cars and started robbing people in West Delhi for this purpose. They would often flee towards Outer Delhi or Dwarka to sell their robbed items."

Bhan, who was caught with a toy pistol and a mobile phone, told police he lived in Najafgarh. Police said further raids were being conducted to nab his accomplice. Police said it has come to light that the duo had recently robbed another car from Rajouri Garden area.

"Raids are being conducted to arrest the co-accused Parvesh. We have got a few registration plates, a toy gun and robbed phones from the possession of the accused," added DCP.

How monsoon in Delhi affected dragonflies, damselflies numbers

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

EXCESS RAINFALL and then few dry spells in Delhi this monsoon may have affected the city's dragonflies and damselflies.

A recent survey conducted at the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) seven biodiversity parks found that their numbers have increased at some parks and fallen at others compared to last year.

Faiyaz Khudsar, scientist-in-charge of Biodiversity Parks Programme at the Centre for Environment Management of Degraded Ecosystems, Delhi University, pointed how too much and too little water — can affect the life cycle of dragonflies.

The number of species has halved, from 16 last year to eight this year at Kalindi Biodiversity Park, near Okhla. The number of individuals has also fallen from 3,348 last year to 2,563 this year.

"There are a few indications. If you look at the biodiversity parks on the floodplains — the Yamuna and Kalindi biodiversity parks — the high flood earlier this year meant we lost some of the marshes, which affected the breeding of dragonflies and damselflies," Khudsar said.

"In the biodiversity parks in the Aravalli ecosystem, with a few water bodies, there was rain early in the monsoon, but the dry spells meant that some water dried up. At the Neela Hauz biodiversity park, for instance, there are natural depressions where water collects," he further said.

Delhi recorded excess rain in June and July, followed by a deficit in August and September.



Species that were most spotted this year include the Scarlet Skimmer, Black Ground Skimmer (right)

At the Neela Hauz Biodiversity Park in Vasant Kunj, 256 dragonflies were counted this year, down from 323 last year.

Similarly, at the Aravalli Biodiversity Park in Vasant Vihar, the count is down from 555 last year to 344 this year.

Different habitat requirements for different species means that the count of some species has increased, while that of others has decreased, Khudsar explained.

At the Yamuna Biodiversity Park, near Wazirabad, more individuals were counted this year — 647 compared to 357 last year — but the number of species was 21, down from 23 last year.

While the number of species indicates diversity, the number of individuals points to the density of the creatures in the area.

"In general, they need marshes and how much water is required for individual species plays an important role. A few years later, this data will

help us know how climate and extreme weather affect these tiny creatures. They are important as they are biological control for mosquitoes — they feed on mosquito larvae," he said.

These also indicate water quality and the health of aquatic ecosystems, since they lay their eggs in or near water that is required to be clean.

There has been an increase in the number of dragonflies at the Tughlaqabad biodiversity park. The area had only 81 individuals and seven species last year, but this year it increased to 445 individuals and 14 species.

Khudsar attributed this to the cleaning up of the sewage in the area. "A constructed wetland system was used to clean the sewage in the area, and now there are marshes," he added.

Species that were most spotted this year include the Ditch Jewel, Scarlet Skimmer, and Wandering Glider.

PWD: Atishi pulls up officials over poor maintenance of footpaths in West Delhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

FINDING POORLY maintained footpaths in west Delhi, PWD minister Atishi pulled up officials for lack of maintenance on Sunday.

The minister was inspecting roads between Janakpuri East Metro and Tilak Nagar metro station and directed the officials to ensure maintenance, beautification, drainage improvement, and improvement of crossings and to make footpaths safer and more user-friendly.

"During the inspection, the PWD Minister found that the condition of footpaths on the roads was far from ideal, lack-

ing uniformity and requiring repairs. Numerous encroachments were also observed on the footpaths. Pruning of trees, enhancement of drainage systems, and uniformity in horticulture were also identified as immediate concerns," said officials in a statement. She also directed officials to come up with a plan to enhance roads infrastructure in their respective divisions over the next week. PWD officials have also been directed to initiate maintenance of drainage systems, horticulture, roads and footpaths and strictly warned officials against any negligence and directed them to conduct a thorough inspection of the entire road stretch, presenting a comprehensive report with targets and plans.

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Arvind Kejriwal at the inauguration of a construction and demolition waste recycling plant in New Delhi. PTI

Construction & demolition waste recycling plant inaugurated at Jahangirpuri

SAMAN HUSAIN
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated a construction and demolition waste recycling factory at Jahangirpuri on Sunday.

Claiming it to be the largest factory in India, AAP said that the new plant, spread across nearly 7 acres of land, has the capacity to recycle 2,000 tons of C&D trash every day using European technology. "Our goal is to make Delhi beautiful, and for this, the C&D plants are crucial. Waste generated from construction and demolition activities will be brought to C&D plants from all over Delhi, where it will be processed and transformed into usable products. This way, Delhi will get rid of waste from garbage, con-

struction and demolition activities," Kejriwal said, as per the AAP's statement to the press.

Delhi has four C&D waste processing facilities, including the new plant in Jahangir Puri (2000 TPD), Rani Khera (1000 TPD), Shastri Park (1000 TPD), and Bakkarwala (1000 TPD), and city generates 6,500 tonnes of debris every day. The combined recycling capacity of the 4 plants is just 5,000 tonnes, which is insufficient to handle daily debris production of 6,500 tonnes. As per Kejriwal, "We plan to build a new C&D plant at Okhla with a recycling capacity of 1,000 tonnes, capacity of 4 plants will be slightly increased."

Meanwhile, BJP's Raja Iqbal Singh and MCD leader of Opposition said, "Foundation for the Jahangirpuri con waste recycling plant was laid by BJP"

The Indian EXPRESS FILM CLUB


Director: **Girish Kasaravalli**

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Ghatashradha



11
October
2023



07:00 PM



Gulmohar Hall, The India Habitat Centre

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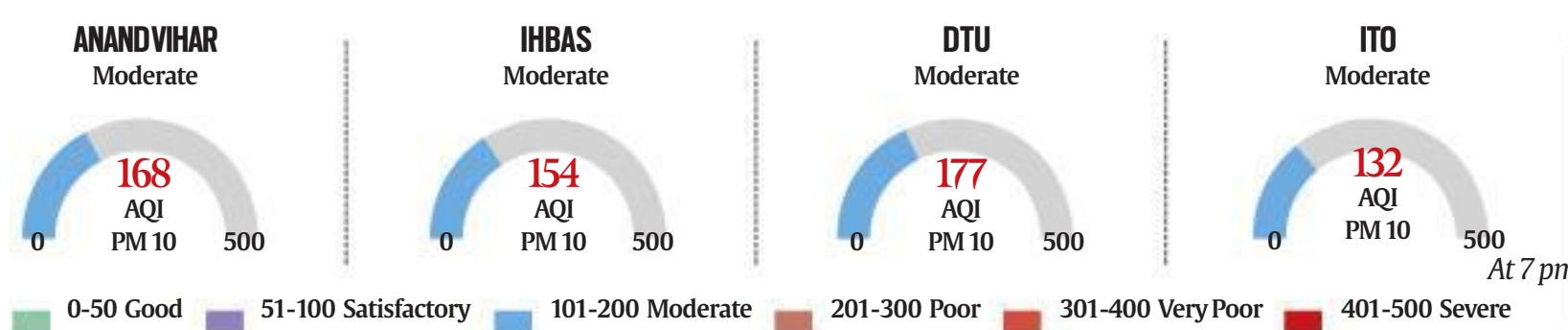
It's a great place for all movie lovers to share their views about films. We get to know so many different interpretations of how the audience perceives a scene. If the Indian Express Film Club is showing a movie, it's a must-watch. I always have a great time here.

Pulkit Gupta, Doctor



The Indian EXPRESS

— JOURNALISM OF COURAGE —



SKY WATCH
FORECAST: October 9
 Partly cloudy sky
MAX: 36 1.8°C above normal
MIN: 24 3.0°C above normal

BRIEFLY

Mayor to leave for Asia Pacific Cities Summit today

New Delhi: Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi will fly to Brisbane on Monday for Asia Pacific Cities Summit where she aims to promote the "Kejriwal Model of Governance" in the areas of education, health, and cleanliness. "Oberoi will present the model of the Kejriwal government to a global audience. This model showcases the work done in Delhi, Punjab, and MCD under the leadership of CM Arvind Kejriwal, enabling people to follow it in their respective cities and States," the Aam Aadmi Party said in a statement to the press. **ENS**

Decomposed body of man found

New Delhi: The decomposed body of a 23-year-old man was recovered from an abandoned structure in west Delhi's Inderpuri area, police said on Sunday. Initial inquiry suggested that a portion of the structure collapsed on the man, who was later identified as Chandan, they said. **PTI**

FLOOD AFTEREFFECTS FURTHER HITTING WORK

What is behind the delay in Barapullah ph 3? 2 acre land

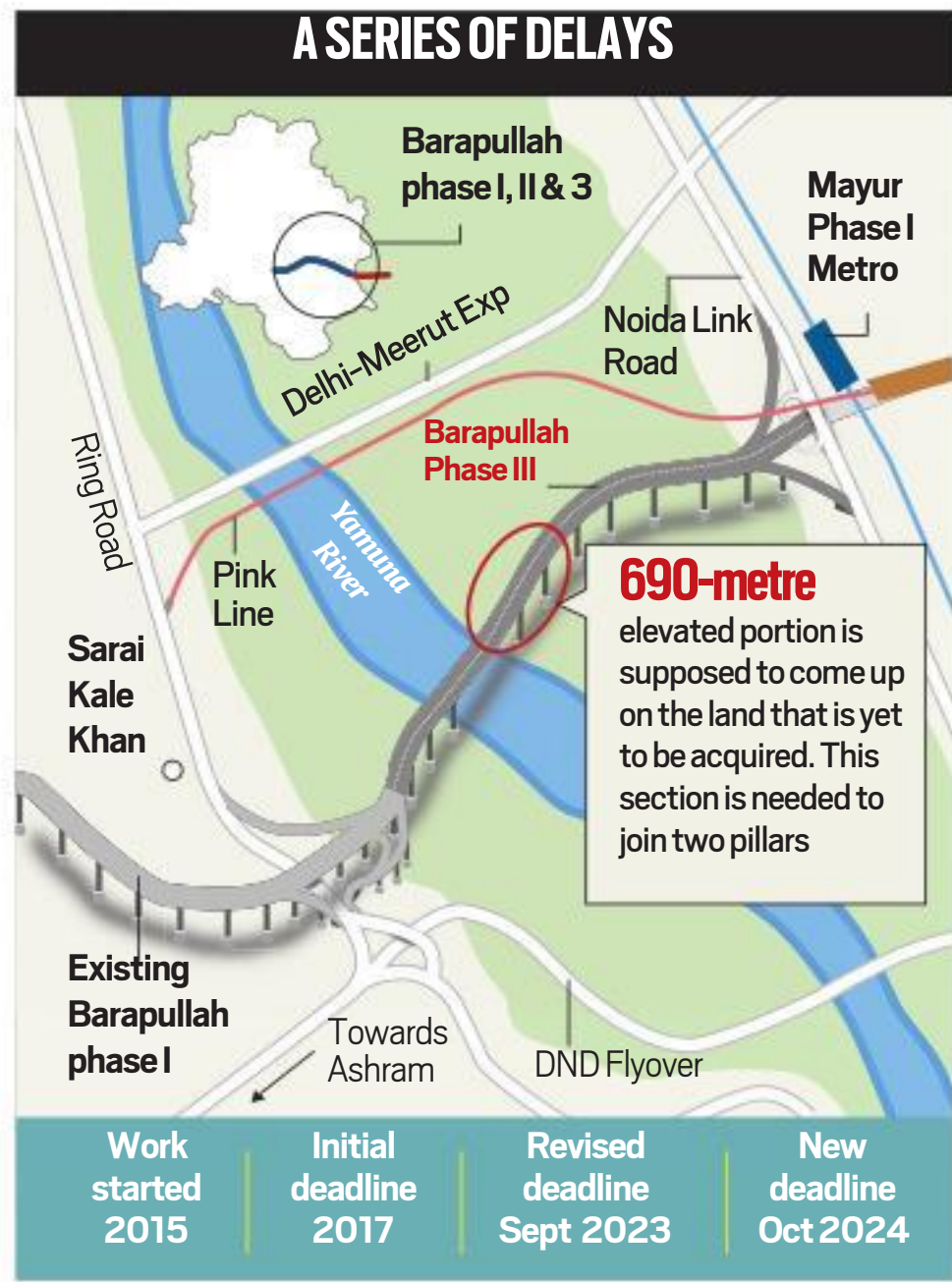
GAYATHRIMANI
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

COMMUTERS in the Capital, especially those living in East Delhi's Mayur Vihar and IP Extension, might have to wait for another approximate 1 to 1.5 years to get a smooth and signal-free connectivity to South Delhi, which notably houses key hospitals such as AIIMS and Safdarjung hospital, as the project seems to have run into a couple of roadblocks.

The construction work on the Barapullah Phase-III elevated stretch has again been delayed as the Public Works Department (PWD), which had finally started the construction after several years of hiccups including land-acquisition problems, has received only 6 out of 8.5 acres land required for the purpose, said PWD officials.

What is not making their jobs any easier is the floods in July which have rendered the soil swampy causing difficulty in construction of pillars.

"After the recent floods and other ongoing issues, we have started the work on the floodplains. But still, we need about 2 acres of land to construct the 690 metres of elevated portion. The work on the mid-section (above the river) is left and to join the pillars, we need that land. If the land acquisition is delayed, it will delay



the work further," said a senior PWD official.

Officials said that the 690 metres portion will bridge two stretches of 400 metres and 290 metres respectively. "This year in January, after intervention of the Lieutenant Governor (L-G), the

department got the land. But, a few private owners are still not allowing (us to acquire it) and have filed court cases. The South East District revenue department is working on getting the remaining land parcels," said an official. Notably, the project had al-

ready been delayed by five years due to land acquisition issues and non-availability of required land parcels.

According to officials, land parcels are required in the Nangli Razapur Village to complete the Phase 3 of the project, which will pass over the Barapullah drain. "The acquisition work is being handled by the DM South East district," said officials. "We have to construct two giant walls and columns on this river bend to support the bridge. We have received only 6 acres of land parcels, the remaining 2-2.5 will be required to bridge the gap," said officials.

The work on this elevated section was delayed also due to the floods in July. Even though the floods have receded, the soil is swampy, said officials, adding that excess ground water gushing is posing a problem in constructing the supporting pillars.

"The construction agency has deployed a system to drain the ground water every 15 minutes which helps in preventing the base of pillars from getting flooded. As we dig deeper, water gushes out, so working on this river plain is tough. If the water is not drained out in time, it hampers the construction work on the concrete pads," said officials. Officials said that the department has built circular concrete pads on top of which pillars will be erected to strengthen the flyover ramp.



A FIX IN TIME

New Delhi Municipal Council officials scrambled to rectify an error on one of its signboards on Sunday when Singapore High Commissioner Simon Wong flagged a 'spelling error' on his official X account. The diplomat, pointing out that Singapore had been misspelt as 'Singapur' on a signboard in Lutyens' Delhi, tagged the MCD and the NDMC and uploaded an image captioned: "It is always good to spell check first." After the NDMC swiftly fixed the issue, Wong posted: "I appreciate the rapid fix. HC Wong @tweetndmc @MCD_Delhi."

Twitter Source: X/@SGIndia

Harassment at college fests leaves students anguished, shaken

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

SHAKEN AND anguished over the recent incident at IIT-Delhi's Rendezvous fest on Friday, where some students from Delhi University's Bharati College alleged that they were secretly filmed by a sweeper while they were changing costumes in the washroom, some women students at DU express how they have been trying to cope with incidents of harassment during college fests.

A second year Psychology honours student from Bharati College, on condition of anonymity, said, "We were invited to participate in a fashion show and were provided green rooms. But we decided to change in the washrooms as we felt it was more comfortable. Three of us were in the washroom...when I heard one of us screaming, pointing towards the window shaft," she said.

Students are traumatised that their video recording might spread on social media. "The incident took place around 3:30 pm on Friday...we went to the student volunteers handling the fest...it took them more than two hours to find the

CCTV footage and spot the guy who was a part of the institute's housekeeping..." said Ashima, a third year B. Com student at Bharati College, who is also the president of the college's fashion society.

Students of Indraprastha College for Women in April this year had organised a protest over alleged security lapses during annual fest's. A third year Political Science and Economics student at the college, shared how the incident has taken a toll over her friend. "My friend who was severely injured, is still traumatised, her mental health has taken a toll and she has gone back home. Her case has been registered with the Delhi Police but she has no hope of getting justice as there has been no promising development," she said.

The student who suffered injuries during the fest, when contacted by *The Indian Express* said "I am improving." Meanwhile, Principal of Bharati College Saloni Gupta and Director of IIT-Delhi Rangan Banerjee highlighted their concerns on the incident on Friday. The Delhi Police on Sunday said, "They have arrested the sweeper and have received the phone. They are questioning students and staffers at IIT-D."

Man shoots himself to 'implicate' brother, uncle over land dispute

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GHAZIABAD, OCTOBER 8

THE GHAZIABAD police Sunday arrested a man for allegedly shooting himself to implicate his brother and uncle, pertaining to a land dispute matter. Officials said that on October 1, Aryan alias Monu filed a complaint at Muradnagar police station, alleging that some unknown person shot him when he was at his uncle's house in Modinagar's Nand Nagri area.

"The police provided treatment to the person and regis-

tered a case under relevant sections and formed teams to uncover the incident. During investigation, Aryan alleged that his brother Ajit had shot him over a land dispute matter. But the call records and CCTV footage showed that Ajit was in Gautam Buddha Nagar when the incident took place. From the statement of other eyewitnesses, it was learned that Aryan had some dispute with his brother Ajit and uncle Ashok for the last one year. About 10 days ago, his father and brother had made a deal of nearly Rs 10 lakh with regards to their ancestral land with a person from

the village. Meanwhile, Aryan wanted that the land should have been purchased by his uncle, so that it remained within the family," said an official.

"Angered by this, Aryan made a plan, wherein he shot himself to implicate his brother and uncle. He gave false information to the police that he had been shot by his brother. But we found that Aryan shot himself, the illegal pistol of .32 bore has also been recovered," the official added.

Officials said that the accused was arrested from outside the Jeevan Hospital, Modinagar where he was treated.

Notified as 15th-century tomb in records, work on at hectic pace at 'temple' in Humayunpur

UPASIKA SINGHAL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

THE FACADE bears a fresh coat of white, embellished with brick-coloured tiles; inside, deities can be seen placed prominently in a niche, flanked by posters of gods and goddesses even as a long brass prayer bell hangs right in the middle of the structure.

According to the local residents as well as the area councillor, the structure in Humayunpur is a temple.

The claims, though, are at odds with what official records state. The structure is notified as a 15th-century tomb or Gumbi, as per the Delhi Gazette from May 2010 and is a notified heritage site under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). It also finds mention in the list of unprotected notified heritage monuments of the Delhi government.

The new look of the structure is a result of "crowdfunding" carried out by residents of the area, according to Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) area councillor Sarita Phogat, adding that the structure has always been a temple.

"There were Radha-Krishna idols in the temple for a long time. I have lived in this area for 36 years and I've seen a temple here since I first moved in," said Phogat.

On the renovation work, she said, "There is no government involvement. The villagers have crowdfunded the project to beautify an old temple. It had been in a decrepit state for a long time."

Humayunpur resident Rajvir Singh echoed Phogat's statements. "My family has lived here for four generations and the temple was always used by the elders

Coronation Park: An address synonymous with rise & wane of British power

UPASIKA SINGHAL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

UPON ENTERING the Coronation Park's gates, the contrast between its interior and the outside world of Burari where it is situated is stark. This is the same place where the coronation of as many as three British monarchs were celebrated many decades ago.

Shortly after the 1857 rebellion, it was decided that the East India Company's rule would be replaced by direct rule by the Crown. The first Durbar was organised in 1877 at the park and while Queen Victoria did not attend it, it was used to announce the crown's takeover of India. Notably, despite the capital of the Raj still being in Calcutta, the Durbar was organ-

ised in Delhi. It was also where Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi, a founding member of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, took the opportunity to politely ask the Queen "to grant to India the same political and social status as is enjoyed by her British subjects".

According to Swapna Liddle, Delhi was seen as the historic capital of India, the seat of the Mughals from where they once ruled over a large part of the sub-continent. In an interview with the Delhi Art Gallery, she shared that Abul Fazl's Akbar Nama claimed that Delhi had been the seat of power since the time of Indraprastha. "The British latched onto this existing narrative, drawing upon this historical association with power," says Liddle.



Coronation of three British monarchs took place here. *Express*

When Edward VII succeeded Victoria, a similar ceremony was held in 1903 in the same spot. Then again in 1911, a grander Durbar was held to celebrate the

coronation of George V where it was announced that the Raj's capital was being shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.

In the middle of the park, ex-

actly where the 1911 Durbar was held, stands a tall stone obelisk commemorating the Durbar held in honour of George V's ascension to the throne. Beside the obelisk is a statue of the King himself standing solemnly, which had earlier stood at the India Gate till the 1960s. The park also houses statues of King Edward VII and Viceroys such as Lord Hardinge and Lord Chelmsford, among others.

Among the three Durbar gatherings held at the park, it is the 1903 event that perhaps most vividly lingers in the collective memory. The two weeks of festivities were overseen with meticulous detail by the then Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon. Again, the King never attended the festivities and sent his brother Duke of

Connaught in his stead.

The Coronation Durbar swiftly earned the moniker of the "Curzonization Durbar," as suspicions arose that Lord Curzon viewed the occasion less as a celebration of the new king's ascension and more as a personal commemoration of his own Viceroyalty.

Satiist and poet Akbar Allahabadi sarcastically recalled in his nazm *Jalwa-e-Darbar-e-Dilli* how the barren river plain was transformed into a sea of tents, how soldiers marched in full regalia, and how suddenly the areas adjoining the Durbar were be-

stowed with water pumps and streetlights.

It would also lead to the downfall of Curzon. Disputes over the escalating expenses, particularly since India was still reeling under the immense aftereffects of a famine, left a lingering bitterness for years to come.

Though, not even the 1911 Durbar could surpass the glitz and glamour of its predecessor. The only events of note that took place during the ceremony were the announcement of the decision to shift the capital to Delhi and the annulment of the 1905 Bengal partition. And, the infamous appearance of the Gaekwad of

Baroda, Maharaja Sayajirao III, conspicuously without his jewels and his show of dissent towards the British monarch by simply bowing and leaving with his back towards the royal couple.

Fourth Durbar was supposed to be held in Coronation Park in 1937 after George VI ascended the throne. However, with India's shifting political reality and the King's ill-health, the Durbar was postponed, and ultimately never held.

The park slowly transformed into a scrapyard for the relics of the Raj, where statues of Kings, Governors, and Viceroys were abandoned to gather mildew. It was renovated in 2011 for the centenary anniversary of the 1911 durbar and opened to the public to be used as a park.



National Conference on India-An Emerging Global Food Hub Role of Sustainable Crop Protection Solutions



Mr. Sunjay Vuppuluri National Head Food & Agribusiness Strategic Advisory and Research, YES BANK	Mr. Srinivasa Karavadi Lead- Commercial Unit Bayer CropScience Ltd.	Ms. Sangeeta Bojappa Chief Farmeress & Founder Farmington.in	Shri Kakani Govardhan Reddy Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture Government of Andhra Pradesh	Dr. K. C. Ravi Chairman CropLife India	Ms. Chhavi Rajawat First MBA Woman Sarpanch	Dr. Siang Hee TAN Executive Director CropLife Asia	Mr. Rajvir Rathi Director - Public Affairs Science & Sustainability Bayer CropScience Ltd.
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Industry Leaders' Interaction
Synergy & Collaboration Towards Global Excellence

Dr. Ashok Dalwai Chairman Empowered Body on Doubling Farmers Income Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare				
Mr. Durgesh Chandra Secretary General CropLife India	Mr. Pradip P. Dave President PMFAI	Dr. K. C. Ravi Chairman CropLife India	Mr. Deepak P Shah Chairman CCFI	Mr. Parikshit Mundhra Chairman ACFI

CropLife India, the association of leading domestic and multinational R&D driven crop science companies; organized a National Conference on the occasion of its 43rd AGM. The conference witnessed the congregation of two Agriculture Ministers from the key States viz. Andhra Pradesh and Haryana, senior Government officials, experts, academia and industry leaders.



Women driving the growth of Indian Agriculture

Shri Jai Parkash Dalal Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture Government of Haryana				
Dr. Anupama Singh JD (Edu.), Dean & Principal Scientist Indian Agricultural Research Institute	Dr. K. C. Ravi Chairman CropLife India	Ms. Chhavi Rajawat First MBA Woman Sarpanch	Ms. Nisha Solanki First Women Drone Pilot Haryana	Ms. Sangeeta Bojappa Chief Farmeress & Founder Farmington.in



Innovations for the New-Age Farmers

Dr. S. N. Sushil Director NBAIR Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India	Dr. P. K. Singh Agriculture Commissioner Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India	Dr. Vishal Choudhary Dy Industry Advisor Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers	Mr. Rajesh Dhawan Head Crop Protection - Regulatory Syngenta India Pvt. Ltd.
Mr. Raju Kapoor Director - Corporate Affairs FMC Corporation	Dr. Ajit Kumar Vice President - Technical & Development SWAL Corporation	Dr. Siang Hee TAN Executive Director CropLife Asia	



Role of Agrochemicals in the growth of Indian Agriculture

Mr. Jagdeesh Yerneni Sales Lead Indofil Industries Ltd.	Mr. Deepak Verma Domain Lead - Agriculture Open Network for Digital Commerce	Dr. S. C. Dubey ADG (Plant Protection) Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Government of India	Mr. Sarjiwan Manhas Chief Sustainability Officer Crystal Crop Protection Ltd.
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CropLife India & YES BANK Knowledge Report Highlights

- ❖ In India, estimates suggest that about **INR 2 lakh crores** worth of crop yield is lost annually due to pests.
- ❖ Indian agriculture is **Feeding a massive 1.43 billion population**
- ❖ Contrary to the myths, the **crop protection usage in India is just at 0.37 kg / hectare** compared to a staggering 11.24 kg/hectare in Japan.
- ❖ The crop protection industry in India is undergoing a **Transformation from a product-centric to a sustainable solution-centric approach**, wherein "beyond-crop protection" offerings are being provided to farmers.
- ❖ **Agtechs (including drone-techs)** are changing the way agri-inputs are delivered to farmers, the way agri-inputs are applied in the farm as well as the way farmers are linked to markets. Usage of drones is a big game changer not only for the way that crop protection solutions are applied on field, but also for providing additional income generating activities in rural areas by promoting entrepreneurship.
- ❖ The State Governments have a big role to play in enabling **Ease of Doing Business** and **Ease of Doing Agriculture**.
- ❖ CropLife India believes that the State Governments will play an imminent role in paving a **"Public-Private Pathway"** for capacity building and awareness creation
- ❖ India now stands as the **2nd largest exporter** of agrochemicals globally, after China, making it a key participant in the global crop protection industry.



www.croplifeindia.org



Mission 2030 - Development @ 10 X

An ambitious vision to make Rajasthan a top state in the country

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's ambitious plan is to make Rajasthan a top state in every sector in the country by the year 2030 and launched 'Rajasthan Mission-2030'. The state government, ensuring participation of each person, to give 10 times the pace to the progress of the state, took their suggestions and to prepare 'Vision-2030 Document'.

Rajasthan has become a 'Model State' in the country in every sector including social security, education, medical and health, information technology, women empowerment, employment, economic development, infrastructure development, solar energy and food grain production and now it is to realise the dreams of the year 2030 of Rajasthan through Vision-2030 document, in which role of every person especially youth is important.

In the last five years, the pace of the progress of Rajasthan has increased by 4 times and this pace has to be taken up to 10 times by 2030. The Chief Minister said that during the period of the corona pandemic, all people including religious gurus, police personnel, medical fraternity, general public, the government and opposition together in Rajasthan did excellent Covid management in the state, similarly, now with the same unity all people will have to give pace to the progress of the state in the Mission-2030. The Vision-2030 Document will become a resolution of the progress of the people of the state.

The state government benefitted the residents of Rajasthan with its public welfare schemes. It gave a pace to the economic development with efficient financial management and now it has to be increased at a faster

pace. Rajasthan is the only state in the country that brought Acts including the Right to Health, the Rajasthan Minimum Guaranteed Income and the Gig Workers Welfare Act. The Chief Minister said that now the top priority of the state government is to make Rajasthan a developed state along with to increase per capita income, happiness index and further increase investments in the state. The Chief Minister also interacted with subject experts, officers, NGOs, youth, women students and the general public. Everybody shared their expectations, ideas and suggestions including making Rajasthan a safe state for women/girl, expand the Udaan scheme, self-reliant economy, promoting e-marketing, to impart career oriented training in schools and colleges, to make attendance compulsory for students in higher education, to issue calendar of RPSC like UPSC, promoting agri-



tourism and agri farming and others.

The suggestions were taken through website, toll free number, video message, contest, essay competition etc from more than 1 crore people of the state including economists, students, women, intellectuals and others. The chief minister also had dialogues with various stakeholders and experts. Programmes were held at division and district level and even a survey was done. The departments first issued the departmental document, which will be followed by the chief minister releasing the vision document.

Rajasthan is a leading state in the country in regard to providing health insurance, in opening maximum number of new medical

sub centres, PHCs, CHCs, Medical Colleges, in opening new colleges, in starting country's first Department of Peace and Non-Violence, restoring the Old Pension Scheme, providing social security, in solar energy, production of coarse grains, oil seeds, pulses and gram, for giving maximum employment in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, best in tourism, in redressing public grievances, bringing the Right to Health Act, Gig Workers Welfare Act, the Udaan scheme, Indira Rasoi scheme, providing domestic gas cylinders for Rs 500 and in other areas.

With the public welfare schemes, policy decisions, laws and efficient financial management the state witnessed growth by 4 times in the last five years, due to which the GDP growth rate of the state reached 11.04%. Rajasthan ranks

first in the northern country and second in the whole country in regard to GDP growth rate. The Mission-2030 was started to multiply the pace of progress of the state by 10 times. The vision document which will be based on the suggestions of the people of the state will become a strong foundation for the development of Rajasthan. With the excellent financial management, the GDP of the state will touch Rs 15 lakh crore in the financial year 2023-24 and the aim is to take the GDP to Rs 30 lakh crore by the year 2030.

A master plan to multiply Rajasthan's progress tenfold, prepared with suggestions from over 3 crore 32 lakh Rajasthanis. Under Mission 2030, the entire people of Rajasthan have woven a tapestry of their dreams, colors, aspirations, thoughts, and suggestions.

Health and Nutrition



- Every family in Rajasthan is provided with a health insurance of ₹25 lakh per year under the Mukhyamantri Chiranjeevi Swasthya Bima Yojana (Chief Minister Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme), along with an additional accidental insurance of ₹10 lakh per year, which is the highest in the country.
- A world-class IPD tower with 1,200 beds is under construction at Sawai Man Singh Medical College. The Rajasthan Cancer Institute has been established in Jaipur.
- The number of ICU beds in government medical colleges and hospitals has increased from 1,092 to 2,868, and the total capacity of ICU beds for children has increased from 645 to 2,110. A Youth De-Addiction Centre has been started in Ajmer Medical College.
- Rajasthan implemented its Silicosis Policy in October 2019, which includes prevention, diagnosis and control of disease along with rehabilitation of patients.
- A total of 1,451 medicines/consumables (including special medicines for cancer treatment) are provided free of cost under the Mukhyamantri Nishulk Dawa Yojana (Chief Minister Free Medicine Scheme), which is more than double the number in the National Essential Drug List (NEDL).

Industry and Business



- Rajasthan is the first state in India to give the Industry status to tourism. The Rajasthan Rural Tourism Scheme has been implemented to promote tourism in rural areas.
- India's most progressive investment policy, the Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme RIPS-2022, has been implemented.
- The MSME sector has provided employment to 2.4 million people in the state.
- The Rajasthan State Mineral Exploration Trust (RSMIEIT) has been set up to strengthen and enhance research and development.
- A Mining University has been established in Baran district.
- Rajasthan ranks first in India in crude oil production and second in natural gas production.
- Unique M-Sand Policy has been formulated to meet the demand for the alternative of river sand for construction.
- Rajasthan MSME Policy and Rajasthan Handicraft Policy 2022 have been released.
- The Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Rajasthan Dalit, Adivasi Udyam Pratsahan Yojana, 2022 (Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Rajasthan Dalit, Adivasi Entrepreneur Promotion Scheme 2022), the Mukhyamantri Laghu Vanijyik Vahan Swarojgar Yojana, 2022 (Chief Minister Small Commercial Vehicle Self-Employment Scheme, 2022) and the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udhyaam Pratsahan Yojana, 2023 (Chief Minister Youth Entrepreneur Promotion Scheme, 2023) have been implemented.

Agriculture and Related Sectors



- A separate agricultural budget has been initiated from the year 2022-23 to take agriculture development on a mission mode.
- Farmers are being provided free agricultural electricity up to 2,000 units per month under the Mukhyamantri Nishulk Bijli Yojana (Chief Minister Free Electricity Scheme).
- The state ranks first in the production of wheat, pearl millet (bajra), barley, moong (green gram), rapeseed-mustard, guar (cluster bean), milk, and wool in the country.
- The Rajasthan State Assembly has passed the "Rajasthan State Farmers' Debt Relief Commission Bill 2023" to address the issues of farmers trapped in the web of debt.
- A "Farmers Welfare Fund" has been established with a corpus of ₹7,500 crores.
- Free insurance of ₹40,000 per animal is provided for two milch cows or buffaloes under the Mukhyamantri Kamdhenu Pashu Bima Yojana (Chief Minister Kamdhenu Livestock Insurance Scheme).
- A subsidy of ₹5 per litre is given to dairy producers under the Mukhyamantri Dugdh Utpadak Sambal Yojana (Chief Minister Milk Producer Support Scheme).

Education



- Setting up 400 new schools, upgrading 2,065 primary schools to upper primary/middle level and 5,916 to senior secondary level.
- 3,713 Mahatma Gandhi Government Schools (English medium) have been opened.
- The state government is providing free education to students from class 9 to 12 under the RTE Act.
- The "Chief Minister Bal Gopal Yojana" provides milk to 68.56 lakh students from pre-primary to class 8 on all days of the week.
- In the past five years, 132 Girls' Colleges and 309 Government Colleges have been established and 81 Government Colleges have been upgraded to Postgraduate Colleges and introduced 92 new faculties in Government colleges at the graduate and postgraduate levels.
- In the government sector, 3,830 MBBS seats have been increased, adding 1,480 additional seats since 2018, which is an increase by 76%.
- The establishment of 19 new nursing colleges has brought the total number of Government Nursing Colleges in the state to 36, with a total of 2,390 B.Sc. Nursing seats.
- A new Marwar Medical University has been set up in Jodhpur.
- The Rajiv Gandhi Scholarship for Academic Excellence scheme has been launched to provide opportunities to meritorious students of the state to study in 150 foreign educational institutions. The number of students has increased to 500 this year, and the scheme prioritizes families with an annual income of less than ₹8 lakh.
- The Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Governance and Social Sciences has been set up in Jaipur.

Energy

- Rajasthan is one of the four states that have achieved the designated goal of establishing renewable energy capacity.
- In December 2019, a new solar, wind, and hybrid energy policy was released.
- In September 2023, a Green Hydrogen and Biomass Waste Management Policy was issued.
- There has been an increase of 3,574 megawatts in the total conventional electricity production capacity, whereas solar capacity (including solar rooftops) increased by 14,001 megawatts, wind capacity by 894 megawatts, and biomass capacity by 8 megawatts.
- Electricity connections have been released to 17.19 Lakh rural and 5.74 Lakh domestic in urban areas. Additionally, 2.14 lakh BPL (Below Poverty Line) connections have been released and 5 lakh smart meters have been installed.
- Free electricity has been provided to all 124 Lakh domestic consumers for up to 100 units of consumption, and farmers are being given free electricity up to 2,000 units per month under the Mukhyamantri Nishul Bijli Yojana (Chief Minister's Free Electricity Scheme).

Social Security

- Rajasthan is the first state in the country to give legal guarantee of minimum income to its citizens.
- An additional 25 days of employment is being provided to families in the state on completing 100 days of work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
- Rajasthan has also provided income and 125 days of employment guarantee to urban residents in the Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme under the Rajasthan Minimum Guaranteed Income Bill.
- Eligible families under the Indira Gandhi Gas Cylinder Subsidy Scheme are provided with gas cylinders for only Rs 500.
- Nearly 92 lakh people are benefiting from the minimum pension of Rs 1,000 per month under the state's social security pension scheme. A provision has been made for an annual 15% increase in the pension amount automatically.
- The "IM Shakti Udan Yojana" provides free sanitary napkins to women and girls aged 10 to 45 years. More than 150 million women and girls are being provided with free sanitary napkins under this scheme.
- Approximately 4 million women beneficiaries are being distributed smartphones with internet connectivity in the first phase of the Indira Gandhi Smartphone Scheme.
- To provide employment opportunities to women at their doorstep, the government has initiated the Chief Minister Work From Home/Job Work Scheme. This has created job opportunities for 26,704 women so far.
- The "Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Worker (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023" has been brought, making Rajasthan the first state in India to guarantee social security for gig workers. Registration of more than 131 million workers has been done on the e-shram portal in the state.

INITIATIVE BY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING



Mission 2030 - Development @ 10 X

Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

- 70 new Panchayat Samitis and 1459 new Gram Panchayats have been created, resulting in a total of 365 Panchayat Samitis and 11,236 Gram Panchayats in the state.
- The state government has ensured the allotment and distribution of 14.25 lakh pattas (lease deeds) including free allotment to 38,472 people in the BPL category through initiatives like special camps and campaigns such as prashashan gaon ke sang, Mahatma Gandhi gramothan camp.



- The Rajiv Gandhi Jal Sanchay Yojana has been launched to promote water conservation, and in the first phase, 1,35,338 works have been completed at a cost of Rs. 1655 crores.

- In the rural areas more than 44 lakh women and their families were benefitted with savings and loan facilities through 3.64 lakh Women's Self-Help Groups for livelihood creation.
- 50,000 women have gained local employment opportunities as Sakhis.
- In rural areas, 1000 Indira Rasois (kitchens) are being established through women's Self-Help Groups, with over 400 Indira Rasois already set up so far.

The Rajasthan Transport Infrastructure Fund has been made to ensure safe, pollution-free, efficient, and systematic urban traffic management in the state.

Approximately 59 Railway Over Bridges of Rs 1710 crore were approved out of which 42 have been completed.

The Jaipur Metro Rail network has been extended to Badi Chaupar. The work of Phase 1C (Transport Nagar to Badi Chaupar)



has been initiated, and approval has been granted for Phase 1D (from Mansarovar to Ajmer Road). To facilitate effective public transportation, the decision to constitute the Rajasthan Urban Transport Corporation has been made and the existing city



transport companies of the cities will be merged in this corporation. Under the AMRUT scheme, 1223 kilometres of sewage lines have been laid in 31 cities of the state, and 35 sewage projects have been approved at a cost of Rs 5342 crore under AMRUT 2.0.

Rajasthan International Centre has been set up in Jaipur to promote conference tourism and host mega events. One such centre has been approved in Jodhpur also.

Interest-free loans of up to Rs 50,000 have been provided to approximately 2.42 lakh street vendors, small entrepreneurs in informal sectors, and other applicants under the Indira Gandhi Urban Credit Card Scheme.

Under the Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme, economically weaker urban families are provided with 125 days of guaranteed employment in a year. 5.67 lakh job cards have been issued, creating 150.03 lakh man-days of employment.

Development of Chambal Riverfront in Kota, Oxyzone City Park, Mansarovar City Park in Jaipur, Silvan Park on Agra Road in Jaipur, and Love Kush Vatika in all cities is in progress.

Continuous Management of Water and Water Resources

- Irrigation capacity has been increased from 2.47 lakh hectares to 39.07 lakh hectares, leading to increased agricultural productivity.
- Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, out of 106.64 lakh rural households in the state, 92.11 lakh households have been provided with access to water supply at their homes, and the remaining 2.79 lakh households are being benefitted through DMFT and externally aided projects.
- A 100% discount on water tax/charges is being provided on water consumption up to 15,000 litres per month for metered domestic connections. Under the scheme, over 26 lakh consumers in urban and rural areas of the state have received a benefit of 177.17 crore rupees in water tax/charges.
- Approximately 1.32 lakh works have been completed at a cost of Rs 1,580 crore in the first phase under the Rajiv Gandhi Jal Sanchayan Yojana (Rajiv Gandhi Water Conservation Scheme).
- The Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) constituted in 2022 will provide a lifeline to 13 districts of the state, including Ajmer, Alwar, Baran, Kota, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, Dholpur, Jhalawar, Bharatpur, Dausa, Jaipur, and Tonk. After the implementation of this project, 38,668 villages in the state that is around 90% of the rural areas will get drinking water supply from surface water sources for a long time. Currently, work of Navnera barrage and Isarda Dam is in progress, on which the state government has spent Rs 1,589.89 crore.



Youth Affairs and Sports

- In 2022, the Rajasthan government organised the Rajiv Gandhi Rural Olympics, in which approximately 30 lakh players registered themselves. Encouraged by people's participation and enthusiasm, the state government organised Rajiv Gandhi Rural and Urban Olympics in 2023, with around 58 lakh players got themselves registered.
- The award amount under the the Maharana Pratap and the Guru Vashishth Awards has been increased to Rs 5 lakh per player from Rs 1 lakh. Announcing to starting the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, an amount of Rs 7.50 lakh was fixed.
- The state players on winning gold medals in the Olympic Games the prize money has been increased to Rs 3 crore from Rs 75 lakhs. Similarly, for silver medals, the prize money increased from Rs 2 crore from Rs 50 lakhs and for bronze medals, it has been increased to Rs 1 crore from Rs 30 lakhs.

Youth Skills and Employment

- Mukhyamantri Yuva Sambal Yojana: In this scheme, from February 1, 2019, to August 2023, unemployment allowances totalling to Rs 2271.58 crore have been distributed to 6,31,841 beneficiaries. Currently, 1,97,065 unemployed youths are being given the allowance and 1,73,718 candidates are undergoing internships in various departments along with receiving skill training through RSLDC.
- Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation (RSLDC) imparting training to a total of 5.57 lakh youths in various training programs has linked 2.51 lakh youths with employment opportunities.
- Organising Skill, Employment, and Entrepreneurship Camps: From December 2018 to March 2023, 1120 skill, employment, and entrepreneurship camps were organised, in which 121,615 candidates were benefitted, of which 99,277 candidates were selected in various industries.
- Mega Job Fairs: So far, 21 mega job fairs have been organised. In these fairs, a total of 5,19,912 candidates got themselves registered online, out of which 1,80,780 candidates attended. In these fairs, 994 companies took part and a total of 70,190 youths were primarily selected.



Tourism Development

- Subsidy up to Rs 2 crore and 50% discount on RTDC/Rajasthan State Hotels Corporation hotels is being provided through the Rajasthan Film Tourism Promotion Policy 2022.
- A 25% increase in remuneration has been made to encourage economically and support the local artists along with the Folk Artist Welfare Fund has been established with Rs 100 crore.

Administrative Reforms and Service Delivery

- All documents in the secretariat and subordinate offices of the departments have been disposed online through e-file system. The Raj ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) is available for the management of all public undertakings in the state.
- More than 600 G2C and B2C services are being provided to citizens through a strong network of 80,000+ E Mitra kiosks in the entire state.
- Transfer of more than Rs 60,000 crores has been made through the DBT mode in 70 schemes, along with 141 crores of transactions.
- Self-approval in 6 schemes and deemed approval in 12 schemes have been implemented.
- Transparent property tax assessment and collection has been ensured by implementing solutions such as Property Tax Information Management System (PTIMS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping. The benefits of farmers under various schemes are well organised with the Raj Kisan Sathi Yojana.
- The Jan Suchna portal was set up to inform people about 688 types of active information of 329 government schemes of 115 departments.
- The State of the Art Digital Infrastructure: Rajasthan's State Data Centre is a leading Tier-4 standard data centre in the country. The number of racks is more than 800 through which all applications are hosted.

- Network connectivity has been provided in the entire state up to the gram panchayat level through the RajNET.
- The human and physical infrastructure has been strengthened to implement law and order by upgrading 476 police check posts to police stations, setting up 117 new police check posts, cybercrime police stations in all districts and setting up 35 offices of the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and 10 offices of the Additional SP.
- Integrated GPS and CCTV-based security solutions, Abhay Command and Control Centers were set up established in 7 divisional headquarters and 26 districts.
- The average time investigation in the cases of sexual harassment has been reduced to 58 days from 274 days in 2017-18 and the average investigation time in POCOS cases has been reduced to 59 days from 232 days in 2018.
- Reception centres have been set up in 846 police stations to provide people with a favourable and positive environment.
- Special investigation units for Crime against Women (SIUAW) and Nirbhaya Squad (Women Police Patrolling Unit) have been constituted in all the districts of the state under an officer of the rank of Additional Superintendent of Police.

- The average time for investigating cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes/Tribes has been reduced to 65 days from 128 days in 2019.
- Mahila Shakti Atmaraksha Kendras (Self-Defence Centres) have been started to create awareness about the crime against women and AWAJ has been started for the awareness about action in crime against women and for justice.

Revenue

- Restructuring of revenue units has been done from village to division with a view to achieve efficiency and development oriented approach from the administration. 17 new districts, 3 new divisions, 13 additional District Collector offices, 1 Assistant Collector office, 35 sub-divisional offices, 85 tehsils, 129 sub-tehsils, 32 land record inspector offices, and 1130 Patwari circles have been made in the state.
- The land records of 388 tehsils have been made online and land settlement and crop assessment have also been made online.
- The Dhara mobile app has been developed for the convenience of farmers and the public. Farmers have been made capable for the self-assessment for crop loss assessment through the Girdawari App.

Environment and Forests

- The Rajasthan Forest Policy 2023 and Rajasthan Eco-Tourism Policy 2021 have been issued.
- The Rajasthan Wetland Authority was constituted in 2019-20.
- Plantation has been carried out on 1,26,684 hectares of land in the state from 2019-20 to 2022-23.
- Continuous air quality monitoring centres have been set up in 33 districts.
- Two Love Kush Vatikas (gardens) will be set up in each district and one botanical garden each in divisional headquarters.
- The Green Rating Scheme has been implemented for industries and mining units.
- The State Disaster Operation Centre was set up in 2021 at the state level for immediate action and monitoring during disasters.
- The districts from December 2018 to August 2023 were allotted approximately Rs 4,678.25 crore for the payment in various cases of natural calamities in the agriculture sector.
- The residents of the state are being alerted in advance regarding excessive rainfall/heavy rainfall/normal rainfall in advance through Sachet App.



Financial Management

- An inflation relief package of more than Rs 19,000 crores has been announced.
- Rajasthan has become the first state to restore the "Old Pension Scheme" for all its employees.
- Rajasthan is one of 8 states in the country that has set up the State Finance Commission (SFC).
- The District Mineral Trust Funds has been set up with which mining royalty income could be used for development works. More than Rs 8,331 crores have been collected in this fund from 2016-17 to July 2023, of which INR 3,850 crores have been spent by selecting projects of Rs 6,439 crore in different sectors.
- Taking advantage of the latest technology IFMS 3.0 has been started through which, various modules such as treasury, paymanager, budget module, registration and printing modules, pension modules, SSP modules are being integrated through SSO Login.
- Centre of Excellence has been set up for Revenue Research Analysis to promote research on data based policies and assessing its impact on revenue.
- The Institute of Public Financial Training Management has been set up for the capacity building of personnel in the financial sector.
- Country's first Social and Performance Audit Authority has been set up for robust accounting management system.



8 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



SPREAD THE WORD

TAKING A leaf out of his colleague's book, Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh on Sunday met YouTubers in his constituency, Begusarai, in Bihar. The minister urged the YouTubers to spread the word about the Central schemes and the development work happening in his constituency. Earlier, Singh's colleague in the Union Cabinet, Piyush Goyal, had also held a meeting with a group of YouTubers.

TRIUMPH CARD?

AS RAHUL Gandhi and the Congress leadership aggressively play the OBC card, seeking a caste census and pushing states ruled by the party to go for one, some of the upper caste party leaders seem at unease. They argue the Congress should not be relying solely on the caste card and position itself as a mirror image of some of the regional parties in the Hindi heartland. These parties, they say, have already walked away with the social justice plank. The party had earlier appointed leaders from upper caste communities as state unit chiefs in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

COURT, SPORT

THE BAR and Bench on Sunday faced each other in court of a different kind during a friendly badminton event for lawyers from across the country. The venue was Thyagaraj stadium in Delhi where Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, too, was present. Supreme Court judge Vikram Nath and Delhi High Court judge Purushendra Kaurav, who regularly play the sport, teamed up and won the friendly contest against lawyers. A team of lawyers from Karnataka, however, took the cup home.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE WAR

Cong balancing act: Condemns 'brutal attack', affirms old stand on Palestine

Party also chooses not to question PM's statement on 'terror attack'

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

A DAY after Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed "solidarity" with Israel and conveyed shock at what he called "terrorist attacks", the Congress did a balancing act reaffirming its traditional support for the Palestine cause while condemning the "brutal attacks" on the people of Israel.

The Congress, at the same time, did not express surprise or appear critical of the tone and framing of the Prime Minister's statement, which was perceived as siding with Israel. While reiterating its past position, the main opposition party appeared cautious and avoided questioning the Government on its stand in relation to the fresh conflict which can have domestic elec-

toral ramifications.

"The Indian National Congress condemns the brutal attacks on the people of Israel. The Indian National Congress has always believed that the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a life of self-respect, equality and dignity must be fulfilled only through a process of dialogue and negotiations while ensuring the legitimate national security interests of the Israeli people. Violence of any type never provides a solution and must stop," Congress communication head Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X.

Historically, the Congress, when in government and in opposition, has always supported the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people even while underlining the need for better ties with Israel. In the recent past,



Congress leader Jairam Ramesh

the party has criticised the BJP Government accusing it of departing from India's time-tested commitment to Palestine and throwing its support entirely behind Israel.

For instance, the Congress had in June 2021 said it was deeply concerned about India's stand on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza. The party had pointed out that while New Delhi's initial statement in the UN Security Council on May 16 noted that the intrusion by Israeli forces into the Holy Al Aqsa mosque during Ramzan prayers ruptured the delicate peace in the region, its statement at the UN General Assembly four days later omit-

ted that mention.

Meanwhile, the Left parties, CPM and CPI, asked the Government to "unequivocally uphold the two-states solution as agreed in the United Nations." The Left in India has always been critical of Israel and a strong supporter of the Palestine cause.

In fact, the 2004 common minimum programme of the UPA Government drafted by Congress and Left leaders stresses the historical commitment of India to the Palestinian cause. "Traditional ties with West Asia will be given a fresh thrust. The UPA government reiterates India's decades-old commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people for a homeland of their own," it said.

Condemning the attacks and counter attacks between Hamas and the Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip which has claimed many lives and is poised to escalate causing more deaths and miseries, the CPM said "this con-

frontation must end."

"The most right-wing Netanyahu government in Israel has been indiscriminately occupying Palestine lands and establishing Jewish settlements in the West Bank. So far this year, prior to this conflict, 248 Palestinian lives have been lost including 40 children. The United Nations must ensure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people for a Home Land, withdrawal of all Israeli illegal settlements and occupations of Palestine lands and ensure the implementation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution for a two-nation solution. Palestine, in accordance with the UN resolution, with East Jerusalem as its capital must be implemented."

The CPI asked "the international community, United Nations and Government of India to make efforts for the establishment of permanent peace by supporting the two-states solution..."

Invisible hand from Delhi is targeting Pawar family, says Sule



NCP leader Supriya Sule in Solapur on Sunday. PTI

MANOJ MORE
PUNE, OCTOBER 8

NCP MP Supriya Sule Sunday said an "invisible power" from Delhi is trying to create bitterness in the Pawar family and is humiliating Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

"The BJP should be called the Bhrasht Jumla Party. First, it makes allegations against leaders, puts them in their washing machine, clears them of all charges and makes them ministers," said Sule in Solapur.

"An invisible power from Delhi is targeting MVA leaders from NCP, Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) and filing false cases against them," said Sule on Sunday.

The same 'invisible power', she claimed, was humiliating Devendra Fadnavis. "Despite leading with 105 MLAs, Fadnavis can't take simple decisions like appointing district guardian ministers. He has to rush to Delhi to seek permission for appointing district guardian ministers. BJP is doing injustice to Fadnavis. The invisible power of Delhi has done this kind of injustice repeatedly on the Maratha manooos (common man)," she said.

Will get respite: Ajit to farmers after tomatoes, onions flung at his convoy



Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar

MANOJ MORE
PUNE, OCTOBER 8

AFTER FARMERS protesting against the 40 per cent export duty on onions and falling tomato prices threw their produce on roads in a bid to block Ajit Pawar's convoy to Nashik on Saturday, the Deputy Chief Minister said the state government is taking steps to bring relief to the farming community and that they should not waste their produce in this manner.

Waving black flags, some farmers threw 30-40 kg tomatoes and onions on the roads taken by Ajit Pawar's convoy as he was going to Dindori in Nashik from Nashik airport in Ozar. Chanting slogans against the government for not meeting their demands, the farmers tried to halt his convoy and hurled tomatoes and onions.

Later, at a farmers' rally, Ajit Pawar urged the farmers not to throw away their produce in this manner. "The Centre will take steps to remove the export duty on onions," he said.

1,851 agriculture and rural development banks to be computerised

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

THE CENTRE has approved an initiative aimed at computerising and empowering the registrars of all 28 states and 8 union territories as well as 1,851 Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (ARDBs) operating across 13 states.

The initiative has been approved by the Ministry of Cooperation. In a statement, the ministry said, "On the lines of computerisation scheme of all Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) in the country, a centrally sponsored scheme has been approved for computerization of 1,851 units of Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (ARDBs) of 13 states through a national unified software and computerization of offices of Registrar of Cooperatives of all States/Union Territories similar to Central Registrar."

"A Central Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) will be established for this scheme, which will work towards the successful implementation of the scheme," it said.

ASAD REHMAN
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 8

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said that if Ram Janmabhoomi can be reclaimed after 500 years, then Sindh province, now in Pakistan, can also be taken back.

Speaking at the two-day National Sindh Convention in Lucknow, the CM said, "Lucknow se Ayodhya ki doori bahut nahi hai. Dedh se do ghanta mein aap Ayodhya pahunch sakte hain. 500 varshon ke bad Bhagwan Ram ke bhavya mandir ka nirman ho raha hai... Kashi Vishwanath Dham Ayodhya se dhai ghante ki doori pe hai. 6 varsh pehle wo kya tha? Vapsi mein Vindhyavasini Dham hote hue, Prayagraj hote hue aap apni aage ki yatra karein toh aapko lagega ki virasat ke prati bhav hamare mann mein bhi hona chahiye. Aur agar Ram Janmabhoomi 500 varshon ke baad vapas li jaa sakti hai, koi kaaran nahi ki hum Sindh vaapas na lein (Ayodhya is not very far from Lucknow. A grand temple of Lord Ram is being constructed in Ayodhya after 500 years... The Kashi Vishwanath Dham is just two-and-a-half hours from there. What was it six years ago?)



UP CM Yogi Adityanath at Kedarnath Temple on Sunday. PTI

Today, under the guidance of Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi, the temple is lit up. If you travel to Vindhyavasini Dham and then Prayagraj, then you will feel you should also have feelings for our heritage. If Ram Janmabhoomi

can be taken back after 500 years, there is no reason why we can't take back Sindh".

More than 225 delegates from 10 countries and 10 states of India participated in the event, said officials.

Will one Scindia make way for another? BJP abuzz after Yashodhara Rajee bids 'goodbye' to Shivpuri

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, OCTOBER 8

MADHYA PRADESH minister Yashodhara Rajee Scindia's announcement that she would not be contesting the forthcoming Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections has triggered speculation if her Shivpuri seat is being vacated for her nephew and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

Addressing a gathering in Shivpuri Thursday, Yashodhara said, "I had resolved earlier that I was not going to contest elections. I want to thank you all. In a way, this is my goodbye. I have always tried to follow the footsteps of my



Jyotiraditya Scindia and Yashodhara Rajee Scindia. File

mother, Rajmata Rajee Scindia. It was with her inspiration that I took this decision. Today I pray to

all of you that you all will support me in this decision." She went on to add that time has passed and

that a new generation should come forward. The move follows a letter she had written in August to the BJP top brass about her decision not to contest the elections due this year-end.

State BJP chief V D Sharma has said that Yashodhara is taking a step back due to health issues.

BJP insiders are, however, trying to figure out the party's plans for the Shivpuri constituency. Speculations have gained ground in the BJP circles especially because of the party's strategy to bring in Union ministers to the MP fray for combating the perceived "anti-incumbency" against the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led government. "There are chances that

Jyotiraditya Scindia may also be fielded from either her (Yashodhara) constituency or a neighbouring constituency. The state leadership is waiting for the next list. The issue will be cleared then. Anything is possible," a senior state BJP leader said.

Jyotiraditya has not contested an Assembly seat so far, having made his political debut in 2002 by winning the Guna Lok Sabha bypoll necessitated due to the death of his father and senior Congress leader Madhavrao Scindia. Jyotiraditya represented Guna as a Congress MP from 2002 to 2019. In 2020, when he made the switch to the BJP, he became a Rajya Sabha member.

Opp flags 'chinks' in Bihar caste survey: 'Enumerators didn't visit our family'

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, OCTOBER 8

BARELY A week after Bihar caste-based survey report was made public, top leaders of Opposition parties have alleged discrepancies and demanded "fresh survey for correction" in the data, complaining that the enumerators didn't reach out to their families.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had on Friday assured that the complaints with regard to the survey will be looked into at the district levels.

Lok Janshakti Party (Ramvilas) chief Chirag Paswan and Rashtriya Lok Janata Dal (RLJD) head Upendra Kushwaha have been insisting on "fresh survey", alleging discrepancies in counting number of families and their respective caste. According to the survey, Dusadh (Paswan) and allied castes accounted for 5.31% of the population, while Kushwahas (Koeris) stood at 4.21%.

Paswan said: "The enumerators did not reach out to our family and several neighbours at our paternal village of Shaharbanui in Khagaria. The caste survey looks like a completely botched up exercise and needs to be rectified... even a fresh survey should be conducted in certain areas where complaints are maximum." His party accused the state government of "inflating the number of several castes because of political reasons". "It looks as if the survey

in some areas was done from a closed room without physical verification," IJP (R) spokesperson Vinit Singh said.

National Lok Janshakti Party chief and Union minister Pashupati Kumar Paras, who otherwise does not agree with his nephew Chirag on most matters, said: "I have also received complaints from my village about enumerators not reaching them."

Kushwaha said he will lead a march to Raj Bhavan in Patna on October 14 to demand a fresh survey. "How can the government arrive at a cumulative number of a particular caste? I also wonder at the urgency of completing the survey. The government should have taken time, said Kushwaha, who used to claim his community is about 6% of the state population.

BJPOBC Morcha national general secretary Nikhil Anand said: "Lalu Prasad and Nitish together have ruled Bihar for 33 years now. They should tell what they have done for the OBCs and EBCs. Caste survey is nothing but a political stunt and tool. The survey is done in a great haste and hence, it has anomalies, which should be corrected immediately."

JD(U) spokesperson and MLC Neeraj Kumar, however, said: "Now that the CM has asked all districts to look into complaints of those left out, no one should play politics over it. The NDA must not forget that it was a united decision to hold the survey."

Decoding Rajasthan CM's caste survey decision: National strategy, local play

DEEPA MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 8

BY ORDERING a caste-based survey, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has cast another die to ensure the state breaks the three-decade-old pattern of voting out the incumbent government and returns him to power.

Rajasthan was quick to follow the footsteps of Bihar, which released its caste survey findings last Monday. The Congress and a majority of other parties in the INDIA alliance have made caste census one of their top agenda, setting the stage for Mandal politics to counter the BJP's

Hindutva plank, or kamandal as the BJP's rivals put it.

On Sunday, Gehlot posted on X, "New chapter for social justice. The Central government, which is opposed to the underprivileged, is continuously shying away from the caste census due to which the concept of social justice is being blocked. Hence, the state government has decided to conduct a caste-based survey using its resources to provide the benefits of their rights to every needy, the data of which will be collected. On this basis, plans can be made as per the needs of different sections."

Following the state Cabinet's decision, the Department of Social

Justice and Empowerment of Rajasthan on Saturday issued an order to conduct the survey in compliance with the decision.

The department order states that the Planning (Economics and Statistics) Department will act as the nodal department while at the district level, the Collector will be the nodal officer. The collector will be able to engage staff of various departments at the level of municipal corporations and councils and villages and panchayats for the exercise, states the order.

While the government maintains that the survey will help select various welfare schemes for all categories and is done with the objective of social and economic



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot

upliftment of all sections, the decision holds immense significance given that the Rajasthan elections are less than two months away.

Rajasthan's political milieu is driven by caste, with most castes having their social pressure

groups demanding greater representation. This election season, all major communities such as Rajputs, Jats, Brahmins, Baniyas, Gujjars, and Malis have held their caste mahapanchayats to voice their demands.

Political leaders and public representatives across the spectrum are often known to even go against their party line to defend caste interests, and these communities vote as a bloc to have an electoral impact. For instance, during the Gujjar reservation agitation of 2008, sitting BJP MLAs from the community went against their own government. The Rajputs who are traditionally voters of the BJP ended up voting

against the party in 2018 because of anger over the encounter of gangster Anandpal Singh and the alleged sidelining of Rajput leaders by then Chief Minister Vasundhara Rajee.

Jats, the traditional voters of the Congress voted en masse for the BJP in the 2003 Assembly elections, just five years after helping the Congress win more than 150 seats in the hope that Jat politician Parasram Maderna would be made the CM. The Jat shift to the BJP happened because they were given OBC status by then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee in October 1999, a move replicated a week later in

November by the Gehlot government in the state.

If the results of Rajasthan's caste survey turn out to be similar to that of Bihar, where the combined backward classes constitute 63% of the population, then it is likely to benefit the Congress and help it regain the upper hand when it comes to Jats — since 2003, both the Congress and the BJP get an equal play when it comes to Jat votes — and win the all-out support of other OBC communities such as Yadavs and Kumawats.

Lately, the Congress has been attempting to regain the OBC sup-

port — which has shrunk since the rise of Narendra Modi — with senior MP Rahul Gandhi attacking the BJP in poll-bound states such as Madhya Pradesh and battling for a larger representation of backward groups.

Each caste in Rajasthan has been claiming that their share in the total population has increased since the last caste Census was conducted in 1931, and has been demanding a proportionate figure when it comes to political and economic representation. For example, both Jats and Rajputs, who are traditionally rivals, claim their population percentage is now more than 10%. Some Jat leaders even put the figure at over 20%.

9 EXPRESS NETWORK

2 students held for 'molestation bid' at UP college

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MEERUT, OCTOBER 8

TWO STUDENTS of a private college in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district were arrested on Saturday for allegedly making an attempt to molest a girl classmate and assaulting the institution's principal and a lecturer when they warned the duo over their behaviour.

The college principal lodged a first information report (FIR) at the local police station on Friday claiming that the two tried to molest the girl student on September 29 and when a lecturer objected, they assaulted him while shouting the slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram' in their classroom.

The two were produced in the court that sent them to police remand.

"The female student had submitted a complaint to me in this connection on September 30 and stopped coming to the college after the alleged incident. We verified her complaint and found it to be true after which the two students were warned to behave on the college campus," said the principal.

He said on October 5 the two students along with over two dozen activists of the Hindu Raksha Dal, a right-wing organisation, stormed the college campus and misbehaved with him and other staff.

Singer Gurdas Maan's Canada tour postponed amid stand-off



Singer Gurdas Maan

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 8

AMID THE ongoing India-Canada diplomatic tensions, Punjabi singer Gurdas Maan's upcoming Canada tour has been postponed for indefinite period. Maan was scheduled to perform in four cities between October 22 and 31.

Gurjit Bal, promoter of the tour, mentioned on social media that registration fees will be refunded and new dates will be announced soon.

Terminating the tour cancellation as the "most responsible and necessary course of action", he added, "In light of the current diplomatic unrest between the two countries and after careful assessment of the unpredictable circumstances, it has been determined that the cancellation of the event is a necessary course of action."

Thanking everyone for their understanding, he further wrote: "...We deeply regret any inconvenience this change may have caused. We will be taking the necessary steps to refund any registration fees or ticket purchases made for the event. Detailed information regarding the refund process will be shared directly via email/web-site/other preferred communication channel. New dates will be Announced soon..."



Army personnel dig along the Teesta as they look for missing people and vehicles in Sikkim's Bardang on Sunday. AP

SIKKIM FLASH FLOODS

32 bodies recovered, 122 still missing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, OCTOBER 8

THE SIKKIM government on Sunday said 32 bodies, including those of nine Army personnel, have been recovered so far from the debris of the flash flood in the Teesta river that has wreaked havoc in the state. According to the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA), over 100 people are still missing. However, sources said over 70 people are feared to be dead.

The flash flood triggered by a cloudburst early on Wednesday, has affected 41,870 people.

So far, 2,563 people have been rescued from different areas, most of which have been cut off from

the rest of the country.

The SSDMA bulletin said that a search was underway for 122 people who are still missing. It said 78 people were missing in Pakyong district, 23 in Gangtok, 15 in Mangan and six in Namchi. Special radars, drones and Army dogs have been deployed for the search operations, it said.

"So far, 21 bodies have been recovered in Pakyong, six in Gangtok, four in Mangan and one in Namchi. National Highway 10, the lifeline of Sikkim, has been rendered unusable due to the damage to the road surface and many bridges across the Teesta river. The opening and widening process of the stretch between Rangpo and Singtam is in progress. Alternative routes to

the state capital Gangtok are open via the East Sikkim district. However, in North Sikkim, roads beyond Mangan are cut off," the bulletin said.

Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang Sunday said the state and centre were working together to restore normalcy. "NDRF teams have been sent to rescue people. Power supply in some places has been restored," he said.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) said 56 people were rescued in North Sikkim's Chungthang, Lachung and Lachen, North Sikkim, said the Army in a statement. Meanwhile, on the second day of his visit to Sikkim, MoS for Ministry of Home Affairs, Ajay Kumar Mishra held a high-level meeting with Tamang. According to an MHA statement, the discussion was focused around coordination of resources, relief assistance, and support to expedite the rescue and recovery work. Mishra reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to collaborate with the state government.

13 bridges.

The Indian Army Corps of Signals has ensured the timely restoration of civil cellular communications as part of continued assistance to stranded tourists at Chungthang, Lachung and Lachen, North Sikkim, said the Army in a statement.

Meanwhile, on the second day of his visit to Sikkim, MoS for Ministry of Home Affairs, Ajay Kumar Mishra held a high-level meeting with Tamang. According to an MHA statement, the discussion was focused around coordination of resources, relief assistance, and support to expedite the rescue and recovery work. Mishra reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to collaborate with the state government.

CIVIC BODIES RECRUITMENT CASE

CBI questions TMC minister, MLA; searches their houses

SWEETY KUMARI KOLKATA, OCTOBER 8

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday searched at least 12 premises in West Bengal, including the residences of senior TMC leader and state minister Firhad Hakim and his party MLA Madan Mitra, in connection with its probe into alleged irregularities in recruitments in civic bodies between 2014 and 2018.

Hakim holds the Urban Development and Municipal Affairs portfolio and is also the Mayor of Kolkata, while Mitra, the TMC MLA from Kamarhati, is a former minister. Both were also questioned for hours by the CBI officers at their respective residences.

While both Hakim and Mitra said the probe agency did not find anything incriminating in its searches, the TMC targeted the BJP and the Centre, accusing them of misusing the probe agency to "divert attention". It said the CBI action was a reaction to the protests held in Delhi by TMC demanding the release of funds to the state under central schemes. The BJP countered the TMC, saying the CBI is only doing its job.

Apart from the search at Hakim's residence in south



Security outside Firhad Hakim's residence in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

Kolkata's Chetla area, which lasted for more than nine hours, the CBI conducted simultaneous searches at Mitra's residences in Bhawanipur as well as in Dakshineswar under Kamarhati municipality.

The CBI also searched properties in Kanchrapara, Barrackpore, Halisahar, Dum Dum, North Dum Dum, Krishnanagar, Taki and Bhawanipur, belonging to public servants among others. They included two former mayors of Halisahar and Kanchrapara municipalities.

"The searches are being conducted in connection with illegal-

municipal recruitment in Group C and Group D posts which is being probed as per the court's order, a CBI officer told The Indian Express.

The Calcutta High Court had directed the CBI to carry out a court-monitored probe into the alleged corruption in the recruitment across West Bengal.

After the CBI team left his residence in the evening, Hakim told reporters: "What is my crime? What is the link between recruitment in civic bodies with Municipal Affairs Minister. No recruitment file comes to the minister. Neither as per the Act nor as per the proceedings. Giving someone a job in exchange of money is the worst thing I think..."

Mitra, who was questioned for more than four hours, told reporters: "Whatever they wanted to know I have told them. I have shared all details."

Both Hakim and Mitra were also arrested by the CBI in 2021 in the Narada sting operation case.

BJP's national vice president Dilip Ghosh said: "Everyone knows about the corruption. The agency is probing the case, so whoever is under suspicion is being probed. They are going everywhere they suspect... Many of them were former mayors. What is there to be so surprised. They should cooperate."

Mamata's top lieutenant again under CBI scanner: Who is Firhad Hakim?

SWEETY KUMARI KOLKATA, OCTOBER 8

FOR SENIOR Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Firhad Hakim, whose home in Kolkata was raided by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday in connection with an alleged municipality recruitment scam, this is not the first time he has had a run-in with the probe agency.

Hakim was accused of accepting bribes in the Narada sting operation case. He was named an accused in the Narada case FIR in 2017 and in May 2021, the CBI arrested him, but was later released on bail. These allegations, according to TMC insiders, are one of the reasons why there's a rift between Hakim, one of West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's trusted lieutenants, and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee. Hakim has been associated with the party since its inception in 1998. He previously held the portfolios of



Bengal Minister Firhad Hakim at a media conference in Kolkata, Sunday. Express

transport and housing in the state Cabinet. After Sovan Chatterjee resigned as mayor of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) in November 2018, the TMC appointed Hakim and named him to the post again in 2021.

The ups and downs

In 2021, differences between Hakim and Abhishek first came to

the public's notice after the latter challenged TMC's old guard over their list of candidates for the civic polls and another set of candidates, who reportedly had his backing, was released. Abhishek suggested relatives of leaders or those with a "tainted" background should not get tickets. But some party veteran leaders challenged Abhishek and ultimately prevailed as Mamata chose to ignore her nephew's suggestion.

In April, Hakim and Abhishek clashed over hiked parking fees under the KMC. Barely a week after the hike was introduced by the Mayor, the party forced him to withdraw it after spokesperson and Abhishek loyalist Kunal Ghosh publicly criticised the move as a "burden on common people". A TMC leader close to Hakim had said at the time that Hakim was not upset due to the parking fee rollback.

Despite these ups and downs, Hakim has continued to remain a part of Mamata's inner circle.

Canada visa freeze clouds Indian tourism sector in peak season

DIVYA A NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

THE UNION government's move to suspend visas for citizens of Canada - a huge source market for India - may affect peak tourism season, with in-bound travel operators bracing for large-scale cancellations and fearing a spillover effect on overall sentiment.

Statistics provided by the Ministry of Tourism show that December is the peak tourist season, while summer is lean. According to 2021 data by the ministry, over 24 per cent of total Canadian tourists who visited India came in December, while less than one per cent travelled here in May.

Rajiv Mehra, president of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), said Canada is a huge source market for India. "We have tourists, people of Indian origin travelling to India to meet their friends and relatives and this was expected to be a normal year after 2019-20. So it has a huge impact." In the wake of

Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's remarks linking India to the murder, diplomatic relations between Canada and India have taken a hit. India also suspended visa services for Canadians last month.

IATO predicts this will lead to a fall of 30-40 per cent from what they were expecting in this financial year. "Those who were planning to travel from December onwards will likely be impacted," says Mehra, adding that all segments in the hospitality sector - be it hotels, event planners, marriage planners (Canadian citizens of origin often solemnise marriages here in India where they spend lavishly), luxury car rental companies will likely take a hit.

Ajay Prakash, Board Member of FAITH said, "The standoff with Canada has come just when the inbound season is starting. No authenticated figures are available at this point but if it continues, it will affect all segments. We hope the sentiment in other important markets will not be affected as that could have a disastrous cascading effect," he said.

Israeli tourist falls ill at Ajmer restaurant, dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA JAIPUR, OCTOBER 8

AN ISRAELI tourist died after his health deteriorated while eating at a restaurant in Pushkar in Rajasthan's Ajmer district on Sunday, police said.

Ajmer Rural Circle Officer Manish Badgurjar said Chen Yezekiel (39) was taken to the Pushkar Government Hospital, from where he was referred to the Jawaharlal Nehru (JLN)

Hospital in Ajmer.

The officer said the Israeli tourist died during treatment at the Ajmer hospital. The body has been kept at the hospital mortuary for post-mortem.

The officer said Yezekiel had come to Ajmer on September 11.

The Israeli embassy has been informed, he said, adding that the post-mortem will be conducted according to the instructions from the embassy. Information about foreign tourists is being collected from the hotel, he said.

Odisha train tragedy: 28 unidentified bodies to be cremated

SUJIT BISOIYI BHUBANESWAR, OCTOBER 8

MORE THAN four months after the triple train accident in Odisha's Balasore, the bodies of 28 unidentified victims are set to be cremated, authorities said.

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the disposal of the bodies following clearance from the CBI, which has been investigating the June 2 mishap that

claimed 296 lives.

"The bodies will be handed over for cremation in the presence of CBI officials, who will reach here soon. The BMC has made arrangements for cremation of the bodies at two crematoriums in the city," BMC mayor Sulochana Das said on Sunday. The cremations will take place in the next two-three days.

The 28 bodies remained unidentified after DNA samples taken from them did not match any of those who had wanted to claim them.



The June 2 mishap in Balasore claimed 296 lives. File

Small device, big deal: Bihar to tackle air pollution with better monitoring

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

AS SMALL device, only "a little bigger than a large-sized cellphone", is tucked somewhere beneath parapets on 510 block development offices across Bihar.

The device, powered by a small solar panel, monitors air pollution in terms of particulate matter levels. With these sensors, Bihar will have more data this winter than it ever did before on its air pollution problem.

And it's no small problem - Darbhanga, a city in the northern part of the state, recorded 27 'severe' air days (AQI from 401 to 500) from November 1 to January 31 last winter, going by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) bulletins. This is more than three times Delhi's 'severe' air day count of eight for the same time period.

the northwest of Darbhanga, saw 25 such 'severe' air days from November 1 to January 31 last winter.

Darbhanga and Bettiah have a single continuous ambient air quality monitoring station each, of the Bihar Pollution Control Board, according to the CPCB's list of continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations.

From January 15 to February 19, data for Darbhanga was not available in the CPCB bulletins.

Bihar, which is 63 times the size of Delhi in square kilometers, has just 35 continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations, less than around 40 in Delhi, going by the CPCB's figures. Now, for a better sense of air pollution in the state, 510 sensors have been added to Bihar's network, in a project that is being implemented by IIT Kanpur in collaboration with the governments of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. A total of 840 sensors



A sensor has been installed at the Baikunthpur block development office in Bihar's Gopalganj district. Express

are slated to be installed in Uttar Pradesh as well.

The deployment in Bihar, except for Patna, was completed around three weeks ago, and the sensors are now being set up in Uttar Pradesh, where 20 have al-

ready been installed, said Sachchida Nand Tripathi, Professor at IIT Kanpur and Steering Committee member, National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

"The idea is to set up one sen-

sor in each block. We have been working in partnership with the State PCB and the Department of Rural Development in Bihar. In UP, it can take another three to five months," he said.

"The data can help in effective air quality management. Take the example of Delhi - in 2013-14, when we had the first of those (pollution) episodes, we had a strength of a few monitors. Now, Delhi has nearly 40," Tripathi said. "If you want to have sustained air quality management, and be on the upswing in terms of improving air quality, you need a good amount of good data. It enables and helps evaluate policy actions, and that is the only way we can correct ourselves and move forward in the right direction."

These sensors, which measure only particulate matter as opposed to the government monitors that also measure gaseous pollutants, are cheaper

than the government ones. But with sensors of lower cost, there is a need to ensure accuracy as well.

For this, Tripathi said that the sensors' performance is assessed in a few ways to keep the errors as low as possible. "We first compare the sensors with the monitors that the government uses as part of the CAQM (Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations). Three test beds have been developed at IIT Kanpur where all sensors are placed next to the government monitors and we see if there are deviations. They should work reasonably well. Then they are shipped out to the districts and the blocks, where our team, the government team and the maintenance agency all deploy it. We have a team of postdocs and research associates who look into the data," he said.

"It certainly won't be as accurate as government monitors;

it's not expected to be. For the cost of one government monitor installed for particulate matter and its maintenance for a year, you can place 25 of these sensors," he said.

"CAAQMS will not suffice to give adequate representation of particulate matter distribution across the country because they are too expensive... one such monitor costs Rs. 1.5 crore... including maintenance for a year. It's all imported. So, we need a hybrid approach of some government monitors, augmented by sensors," Tripathi said.

While PM10 and PM2.5 will also be measured, the team has worked so far on improving the accuracy of measurement of PM2.5. The sensors have been developed by IIT Kanpur and fabricated by start-ups.

Bihar Pollution Control Board Chairman D K Shukla said, "This is the first project of its kind, no state has covered every block.

This can help with predicting pollution levels. It's an important project."

On how the project will help the state in pollution control, he said, "The basic thing is to understand what the pollutants are. If we have data from all blocks, we can analyse in what areas we need more effort."

On the AQI levels last winter, Shukla said, "It's a general problem in the Indo Gangetic Plain. In winter, wind speed is low and pollutants remain confined."

Other states in the Indo Gangetic Plain, where pollution levels see a spike in winter on account of low temperature and wind speed, also have fewer air quality monitoring stations compared to Delhi.

The CPCB list of continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations shows that Punjab has eight such stations, while Haryana has 30 and West Bengal 14.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

A TRAGIC RETURN

After attack by Hamas on Israel, Old Middle East is back, setting back new prospects of a widening constituency for peace

SATURDAY'S TERROR ATTACK on southern Israel by the Palestinian Hamas, which runs the blockaded Gaza Strip, has shredded the rising hopes for a "New Middle East", connected and at peace. The mounting death toll from the attack is a reminder of the intractable nature of the conflicts in the region and the extraordinary difficulty of transcending them. Barely weeks ago, in New York at the United Nations General Assembly, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talked of the new possibilities for normalising ties with the Arab world, especially Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman told the world that Riyadh was getting closer, every day, to a political settlement deal with Tel Aviv. The two leaders were talking about a US-brokered peace process. The US effort involved providing security guarantees to both countries and nudging Israel to make meaningful concessions to the Palestinians that would help consolidate the Saudi and Arab reconciliation with the Jewish state that had acquired renewed momentum in recent years.

Sceptics were pointing to the difficulties of extracting genuine peace offers from Israel, especially the hardline Netanyahu, whose harsh policies of repression and resettlement have been a major source of threat to peace in the region. The Hamas terror over the weekend has only pushed Netanyahu into declaring war, and undermined the peace constituency in Israel. The attack makes it harder for Prince Mohammed to be seen as supping with Netanyahu. Destroying the new prospects for normal ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia is perhaps the immediate motivation. Tehran, a regional rival of Riyadh and a strong supporter of Hamas, described the attack as an act of "self-defence" and called on Muslim countries to support Palestine. Pitting the Arab street against neighbouring Arab regimes and gaining leadership of the Middle East in the name of religion has been a long-standing objective of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran's role in undermining Saudi efforts to normalise ties with Israel reveals the superficial nature of the diplomatic truce arranged earlier this year by China.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was quick and unambiguous with his condemnation of the terror attack and expression of solidarity with Israel. But there is no doubt that the consequences of the Hamas attack and the widening regional conflict will only make it harder for Delhi to pursue its growing strategic ambitions in the Middle East. Reduced violence between Israel and Palestine and reconciliation between regional rivals like Iran and Saudi Arabia promised to provide the room for greater involvement — both geo-economic and geopolitical — in the New Middle East. As the recently unveiled plans for an India-Middle East-Europe Corridor and Delhi's growing security partnerships in the region come under the shadow of renewed regional violence, Delhi will have its task cut out in navigating the unfortunate return of the Old Middle East. It must use the space it has, given its historical engagement with Palestine and strong relationship with every Middle East player, from Iran to Saudi Arabia, to find the way ahead.

GAMES TO REMEMBER

At Asian Games, India did not just defend its traditional strongholds, but also won medals against might of superpowers

BY WINNING 107 medals at the Hangzhou Asian Games, India for the first time entered the elite sporting club with a three-digit tally that has China, Japan and Korea as its regular members. Of course, with 200 golds, China is in a different league but India has made a start by clearing the psychological hurdle. Helping to break the barrier were the hard-fought medals in disciplines where India is traditionally strong — shooting, hockey, wrestling and kabaddi. Shooting's return to reckoning with a catch of 22 medals including 7 golds — the most by any participating nation — was a reassuring sign of regeneration. At the range, India went toe to toe with China, displaying great depth of talent. The discipline was outdone only by athletics, which finished with 29 medals. Javelin star Neeraj Chopra's magical consistency offered the wind beneath their wings and provided a reminder that Olympics podiums were within reach.

Every medal, though, will be viewed from an Olympics lens. Compound archery lorded over the rest with complete domination, but is not yet an Olympics sport and hence sees medal-digging China ignore it. Rowing and boxing contributed five each, though, like wrestling, they have fallen back in nailing down golds and need to pull up their socks ahead of the Paris Games. The churn in wrestling for the greater good of women wrestlers' safety was necessary, and the missing gold medal quality of Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia was a moment to reflect on why the system is making it so difficult for its own athletes. Boxer Nikhat Zareen's missed gold was a wakeup call to not get complacent ahead of Paris. A gold missed — though silvers were secured — was also the tale in golf with Aditi Ashok and the men's team in badminton. However, Satwiksairaj Ranki Reddy and Chirag Shetty's historic first Asiad gold in men's doubles along with HS Prannoy's hard fought bronze saw India strike back a week later.

The most heart-wrenching solo silver belonged to Wushu's Roshibina Devi whose tears asked important questions — about why Manipur continues to burn and why her fellow Wushu players from Arunachal were denied a chance to compete by China's stapled visa policy. Cricket's two golds were a farce, raising questions over the suitability of the sport in multi-sport Games when rains could bring it to a grinding halt. But perhaps the most memorable bronze will be Ahyika and Sutirtha Mukherjee beating China in quarters of table tennis doubles. Defending their strongholds in hockey and kabaddi was important, but the medals in table tennis and badminton in world class fields point to real progress — fearlessly winning medals against the might of Asian superpowers.

FREEZE FRAME

EP UNNY



PRANJUL BHANDARI

The rise of services

Domestic services, exports are fast-evolving, moving up the value chain, crossing over into manufacturing

TWO MAJOR LEAPS are underway in India's services sector that could define the trajectory of the country's growth. One has to do with fast-evolving services exports to the rest of the world. The other is the rapid transformation of domestic services. They are both changing in shape and form as they modernise. And it doesn't end there. We are also seeing signs of these new services rising up the value chain and crossing over into manufacturing. This is where we think it starts to get very exciting.

Let's start with services exports. On a net basis, they are now raking in \$60 billion a year more in revenues than three years ago. The pandemic period was a shot in the arm for IT services. Work from home increased the demand for tech capability across firms. And the exuberance continues, with a broadening out in both the services provided and the service providers. India is no longer the call centre of the 1990s. It's not even the software solution provider of the early 2000s. It has moved up the value chain and is now selling a host of professional services, ranging from accounting, legal, HR, to business development, design, and R&D. And the list is only increasing.

At least four different service providers are dominating the scene. While large IT firms continue to grow, they are not the only engines of growth. Mid-sized IT firms have been gaining market share and consulting firms are growing their services export books. And finally, India can now boast the world's largest share in Global Capability Centres (GCCs).

What are GCCs? GCCs have traditionally provided tech and IT support to their parent MNC companies, but have gradually moved up the ladder to higher-value-added services like legal, audit, design and R&D. In 2022-23, around 1,600 GCCs made up a market of \$46 billion, employing 1.7 million. When looking through India's services export data, it is no surprise that even though professional and consulting services exports are still just a quarter of IT services exports, they have grown the fastest, at a 31 per cent CAGR

(compounded annual growth rate) over the last four years, followed by computer services (16 per cent) and R&D (13 per cent).

Will it last? After a terrific run, it is possible that the pace of increase in India's IT services exports moderates over the next year or two. After all, slowing global growth is likely to squeeze tech budgets. However, we believe that the growth has a structural element to it. Once global growth bottoms out, India's services exports can begin to gather pace again.

There are several reasons for this. One, there is a seemingly permanent change in attitude about getting more work done from "home". Two, India can offer a skills portfolio which is able to produce a gamut of services, ranging from engineering to design. Impressive internet penetration, young and digitally savvy demographics, and improving education attainments have made this possible. Three, India offers cost-competitiveness. For instance, in value terms, Indian IT services exports make up 18 per cent of global trade, but in volume terms, this doubles to 36 per cent. Finally, we believe India is at a tipping point, from which growth trends in services exports will tend to be even stronger. This is important; let us explain.

We take a look at the economies whose share in global services exports is much higher than India's, like the US, the UK, Germany, and Ireland. We find that India is at a point where other countries were able to take off and grow their services exports even more quickly than before. Much of this, we believe, has to do with scale. Once a country's exports in a specific sector reach a certain size, there are both pull and push factors that lead to even higher growth.

This is not where it ends. We find evidence that many multinationals are increasing their footprint in India. Those which started with producing services, for instance via GCCs, are increasing the range of services. And some, especially in sectors such as medical equipment, electronics, and precision manufacturing, are even crossing over into manufacturing. After all, there is much complementarity

between manufacturing and services.

Next, we look at domestic services. India has an impressive digital public infrastructure. Many tech start-ups have plugged into it using a variety of business models. Most are focused on the services sector but over time they could become more ambitious and move into manufacturing and agriculture. In one sense, rather than be confined to growing "new India", they could take on the challenge of lifting "old India" up. What exactly could they do?

Let's start with the manufacturing sector. Digital infrastructure can be used to solve many of the daily problems that small manufacturers face. Start-ups could help small firms gain access to formal credit, cheaper raw materials, bigger final markets, better warehousing and logistics, and enhanced quality checks.

By enabling small manufacturers to gain the advantages larger ones benefit from (that is simulate scale), they are incentivised to expand. Indeed, we are already finding evidence of the "new" domestic services sector companies, for instance in the transport services, procurement support, and ecommerce sectors, making forays into manufacturing. Why is this important? At the heart of India's jobs problem is a sluggish low- and medium-tech manufacturing sector. Too many manufacturing firms remain too small for too long, so they never enjoy economies of scale or create enough jobs. What India needs is a slew of reforms which remove many of the impediments manufacturers face.

While policy action is critical, we believe the rise in modern services can energise manufacturing. It is, therefore, heartening to see examples of multinationals crossing over from producing services to manufactured goods in India. Domestically, it is encouraging to see how the services start-ups are venturing into manufacturing.

This could well be the start of a trend that will drive growth and jobs in the economy. Don't miss it.

The writer is chief India economist, HSBC



POOJA PILLAI

AISHWARYA'S MERRY DEFIANCE

She inspires as she shrugs off ageism, sexism, body shaming that comes her way

WHAT IS NOT to love about the sight of a woman who is, to repurpose the words of a popular meme (while jettisoning its ironic intent), "unbothered, moisturised, happy, in her lane, focused, flourishing"? Yet, the visuals of Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, striding down the runway in a shimmering cape gown at the recently concluded Paris Fashion Week, drew out the ageist, sexist, body-shaming trolls that lurk everywhere on social media. Comments referring to her as "aunty" and advising her to dress her age and lose the "fillers and botox" flew thick and fast, forming the predictable haze that seems to surround almost any appearance of a woman celebrity over the age of 40.

But no haze can dim Rai Bachchan's glow — more than the shimmer of her gown, it was the utter self-confidence with which she blew kisses, laughed and even danced a little jig that shone through, telegraphing how little she's come to care for what people think of her, her body, her clothes and her face. This is, after all, the woman who shrugged off the brutal body shaming that followed the birth of her daughter in 2011, noting in a 2015 interview, "I hope they enjoyed the drama because I was busy leading a very real life with my baby."

Rai Bachchan's attitude is inspiring in a culture that worships at the altar of youth (often using it as a synonym for beauty) and is merciless about physical flaws, especially in women. To be sure, there are the odd mo-

ments, when it seems like a famous woman is just allowed to be her age, making one wonder if popular attitudes have indeed changed. Much is being made right now of the "natural beauty revolution" as actor Jamie Lee Curtis dubbed it, following the appearance of Pamela Anderson at the Paris Fashion Week with no make-up on. Also present at the event Helen Mirren and Andie MacDowell sporting their natural grey curls — all of them applauded as "courageous" women, who have defied the norms of beauty (or, rather, a particular kind of youthful beauty), to revel in their natural, ageing selves.

Or take the recent appearance of a bare-faced Kareena Kapoor Khan in *Jaane Jaan*. Comments about how lovely she looks, even at 43, and what a brave thing it is when a woman in entertainment chooses to look her age seem wonderfully encouraging at first. How perceptive of people to notice that Kareena Kapoor Khan is a human being who ages and how lovely it is that they are not shaming her for it!

One must ask, though: Why comment on this at all? And would we have done it in the case of a male actor? Has anyone, for example, applauded Kapoor Khan's co-star, Jaideep Ahlawat — who happens to be 43 too — for being brave enough to look his age? It reminds one of the wave of commentary that followed the Golden Globes and Oscars earlier this year, which celebrated the "sartorial moment" presented by older women actors,

such as Angela Bassett, Michelle Yeoh and Curtis, which showed that "age is just a number". That qualifier about age was notably absent from the red-carpet coverage of male actors aged 40 and above, many of whom were also included in several "best dressed" lists.

Globally, ageism and sexism are the twin spectres that haunt women in the entertainment industry where their face is their fortune. It has long been so and, based on present evidence, will continue to be so for a while yet. What seems to have changed, however, is the attitude of the targets of this noxious combination, from the utter indifference shown by Rai Bachchan and Kapoor Khan to the more combative stance of others, like Madonna who, after being widely trolled for looking "unrecognisable" after her plastic surgery, hit back saying that she lives in a world "that refuses to celebrate women who pass the age of 45 and feels the need to punish her if she continues to be strong-willed, hard-working and adventurous".

But the most inspiring response to those who are far too bothered about how old women are and what they look like came from Halle Berry who, upon being age-shamed for posting a nude on Instagram earlier this year, cheekily wrote, "Did you guys know the heart of a shrimp is in its head?". Unbothered. Moisturised. Happy. In her lane. Focused. Flourishing.

pooja.pillai@expressindia.com

OCTOBER 9, 1983, FORTY YEARS AGO

OPPOSITION CONCLAVE

THE THREE-DAY OPPOSITION conclave in Srinagar has called upon the people to save the country from disintegration by halting the "dangerous drift," due to the centralisation of power and distortion of the Constitution. The conclave issued a statement seeking a full review of Centre-state relations and changes in the present centralised pattern, of economic and financial administration.

SL ON TAMILS

THE SRI LANKAN government is reported to

be planning a flushing-out operation to evict a large number of stateless Tamils of Indian origin, who, it claims, have been illegally settled on government lands in the Vavuniya district by an organisation called Gandhivam movement. A published report in a Colombo daily, *The Island*, said the operation would be carried out by the newly-set up joint services special operations command.

CONGRESS CMS CHIDED

RAJIV GANDHI, GENERAL secretary of the All India Congress (I) Committee, pulled up the chief ministers of Congress (I) ruled states for

their "bureaucratic" approach of giving fictitious figures of their "bogus" activities. Referring to reports of atrocities on Harijans, Gandhi pleaded for expediting the setting up of special courts.

EYE ON PAKISTAN

THE GOVERNMENT OF India is not taking seriously the Pakistani troop movements on the Rajasthan border. But a close eye is being kept. These exercises are considered to be a diversionary tactic by the Pakistani government. It wants to divert the people's attention from internal disturbances.



11 THE IDEAS PAGE

Israel's moment of reckoning

In wake of Hamas attack, a long campaign, which will not end anytime soon. And a temporary reprieve to Netanyahu, who has been facing opposition over his reform agenda



P R KUMARASWAMY

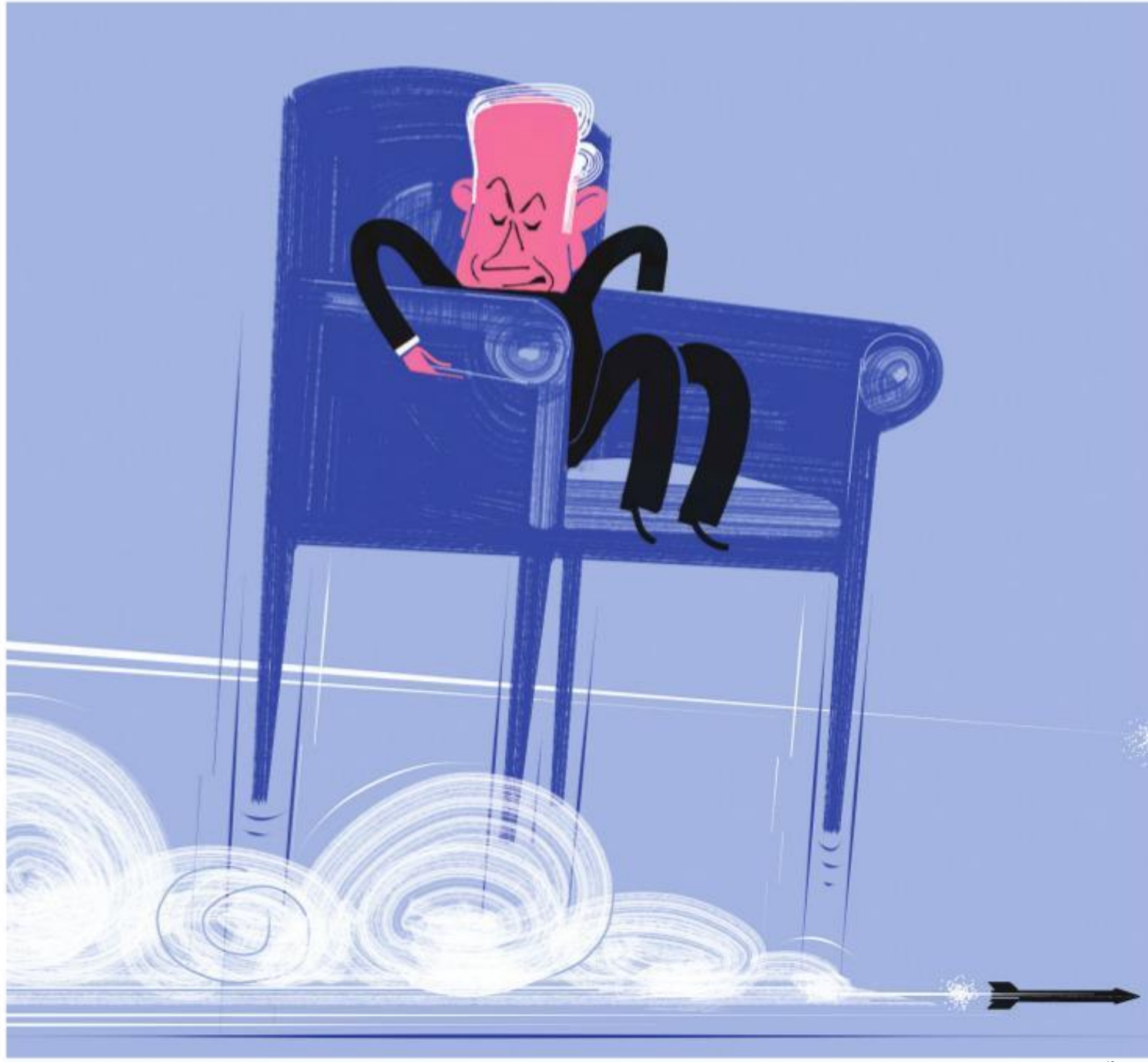
THE NUMBERS ARE astounding. Over 600 deaths and 1,600 injuries, coordinated infiltration in 22 places by about a thousand militants and over 5,000 rockets. In addition, dozens of persons, mostly women and children, kidnapped and taken to the Gaza Strip. Israel has confronted the largest single-day casualties in its history. Even by Middle Eastern standards, the scale, surprise and size of the attacks by Hamas on Israel are unprecedented. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to "avenge this black day". The full mobilisation of the reservists is underway and indicates an Israeli preparation for a ground offensive into the densely populated Gaza Strip, surrounded by Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea.

Traditionally, Middle Eastern militant movements have been comfortable operating closer to civilians. This gives them both immunity from reprisals and ensures popular support in case of collateral damages. Hamas is not an exception. A massive Israeli reprisal would cause enormous human and material destruction in the Gaza Strip. But the dead Israelis will not return. Revenge is sweet for an individual, but is it a good option for nations? Revenge only increases violence; plenty of examples in the Middle East exist. Even if Israel manages to inflict severe human and material damages, it is inconceivable that Hamas could be "destroyed". However, Israel can hope to reduce the militant group's military arsenal, reinforce deterrence and delegitimise its tactics.

What are the realistic possibilities for Netanyahu and Israel?

One, in the immediate run, western countries, especially the US, are coming out from the cold and re-engaging actively with Netanyahu. Beginning with President Joe Biden, they promised unwavering support for Israel's right to self-defence. Pentagon seems to back the American support with emergency military-security supplies and increased intelligence cooperation. This might happen despite two practical hurdles: The US House of Representatives lacks a Speaker, and the Senate is yet to confirm Jack Lew as ambassador to Israel. Biden had in fact waited until last month for a face-to-face meeting with Netanyahu.

Two, Israel will actively pursue the perpetrators of this massive infiltration. It is safe to assume that in the coming weeks and months, Israel will carry out overt and covert operations against the ringleaders of the Palestinian militant group. Israel mainly targeted militant leaders for a long, but since the Al-Aqsa intifada, it also went after political figures. Hence, it should not be surprising that all the senior members of Hamas — political and military — will be on Israel's target list. Such operations will happen not only in the Gaza Strip but also elsewhere. Indeed, external leaders of Hamas, such as Khaled Mashal (against whom Israel carried out an unsuccessful attack in September 1997), suspected to be based in Doha since 2012, may not be safe after yesterday. This will be a long campaign and will not end anytime soon.



CR Sasikumar

Three, the Hamas attacks are a 9/11 moment for Israel and require a more nuanced Israeli campaign. Irrespective of the inept handling of the Bush administration and its ill-fated military campaign against Afghanistan and Iraq, the Al Qaeda attacks delegitimised suicide bombing. Terrorism has lost its legitimacy among the wider international community. Rhetoric such as "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" is no longer acceptable, even in the Global South. Will Israel be able to turn the current Hamas attacks into the latter's delegitimation?

Besides killing a large civilian population, the militants have also kidnapped dozens of Israeli civilians, including women and children. Since they are non-combatants, they can't be described, let alone treated, as prisoners of war. Available knowledge on the treatment of women by militant groups in the Middle East is anything but optimistic. Can "enemy" women expect better treatment than native Muslim women? Can Israeli women be safe under Hamas captivity? This will determine the international legitimacy of Hamas and its supporters.

Four, Israel has been focusing on Iran as the principal benefactor of Hamas. It can no longer ignore the role of Qatar. It is no accident that Doha has been engaging, funding and patronising several Islamist groups — including Hamas. This was one of the reasons for the four-year-old Arab boycott that was hastily ended in January 2021. Qatar has silenced its critics and detractors by effectively using its energy-generated wealth and sportswashing.

Israel has been focusing on Iran as the principal benefactor of Hamas. It can no longer ignore the role of Qatar. It is no accident that Doha has been engaging, funding and patronising several Islamist groups — including Hamas. This was one of the reasons for the four-year-old Arab boycott that was hastily ended in January 2021. Qatar has silenced its critics and detractors by effectively using its energy-generated wealth and sportswashing.

Indeed, the prolongation of the Israel-Hamas conflict in 2014 was partly fuelled by Doha. Now, Israel will have to drop its indifference vis-à-vis Doha's role in strengthening Hamas. This means a greater role for Saudi Arabia on the Palestinian question. Israel must accommodate Saudi suggestions and proposals for shoring up support for Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestine National Authority that controls the West Bank.

Above all, the crisis offers a temporary reprieve to Netanyahu, who has been facing opposition over his reform agenda. Since January, Israelis have been demonstrating against his efforts to minimise the powers and functions of the judiciary. With Israel facing one of the worst crisis in its history, the population will now rally around Netanyahu. There are calls for a unity government. But these will be temporary. In recent weeks, there were fears that Netanyahu has been unable to pay sufficient attention to pressing security challenges in his determination to stay in office. The Hamas offensive vindicated that fear. Israeli citizens have been unforgiving of their leaders and governments if they fail in their fundamental security responsibility. The Yom Kippur War of 1973 eventually ended the monopoly of the Labor Party in Israeli politics. It is safe to assume that the Hamas surprise strike will do what peaceful protests by Israeli citizens could not achieve in 38 weeks: The end of Netanyahu's political career.

The writer teaches contemporary Middle East in Jawaharlal Nehru University

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"If our current crop of political leadership cannot even be persuaded to part company with hardened criminals, to maintain their own self-image if nothing else, it is hard to believe that they will heed people's other concerns."

— THE KATHMANDU POST

The twain don't meet

Why the demand for Khalistan, which continues to raise its head in a section of Sikh diaspora, strikes no echoes in Punjab



PRAMOD KUMAR

THE DIPLOMATIC ROW between India and Canada over the killing of a pro-Khalistan activist brought back a memory. It was the post-Blue Star year of 1989 and I happened to deliver a talk on the genesis of violence in Punjab in Montreal. My argument was that "the invasion of the sacred precincts of the temple complex left a trail of misery, violence and sense of hurt amongst members of the Sikh community, and among secular Punjabi Hindus. It blemished the stature of leaders like Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. If Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale could not become an icon of the Sikh masses, the former prime ministers, held responsible for Operation Blue Star and the 1984 Sikh killings, got marginalised in the secular democratic civilisational matrix".

After the talk, a young Indian-Canadian woman invited me home for dinner the next day. But soon after issuing the invitation, she retracted it, saying that her husband, a Sikh, had refused to dine with a Punjabi Hindu, as the latter, as per his information, never owned the Punjabi language, Punjabi culture and its history. My answer to her was that in Indian Punjab, not many Sikhs held that view as they believed and practised the teachings of the Gurus, which are inclusive. Those who believed the contrarian view were either ignorant or fanatics. This was at a time when terrorism was at its peak in Punjab.

Why do dramatically divergent views continue to exist in a section of diaspora Punjab and Indian Punjab? Metaphorically speaking, there are three Punjabjs — Diaspora Punjab (settled in Canada, US, UK and Europe), Indian Punjab, and Pakistan Punjab. In Diaspora Punjab, the radical groups' political narrative resonates with the Khalistan slogan and divisiveness on communal lines.

They function as an exclusive group. They are not integrated into Canadian society even as, politically, they are well entrenched and hold the balance of power, as in the present regime. The New Democratic Party (NDP) led by Jagmeet Singh is a pro-Khalistan group and is the fourth largest party which occupies a balancing position in the present coalition government.

In Diaspora Punjab, articulations of a distinct religious identity co-exist with assertions for a separate Khalistan. The younger generation of Canadian Sikhs has been socialised into the politics emanating from the tragic events of the 1980s. These events have been used as a source of justification for a politics of vengefulness. Fringe groups are actively engaged in making the brutal legacy go on simmering and regenerating itself.

In Indian Punjab, however, history has moved on. Operation Blue Star became a marker of the need for respecting religious groups instead of becoming a symbol of social divisiveness, the politics of religious dominance or assertion of a theocratic Sikh

state. The hurt felt by the members of the Sikh community after four decades of churning seems to have transcended the boundaries of religion. In fact, there is a wider consensus on ensuring justice for the Sikhs killed in 1984.

Unlike Diaspora Punjab, Indian Punjab has nurtured a secular Punjabi identity which has coexisted with assertions of religiosity. For instance, 83.87 per cent of the Punjabi Hindus, as per the 1991 census, mentioned Punjabi as their mother tongue. The adoption of the Moga declaration by the SAD, emphasising Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabi, was a testimony to the space available for a secular Punjabi identity. Simply put, Hindus in Punjab continue to exhibit dominant traits of Sikhism along with Arya Samajist values and Sanatan Dharma rituals. Both communities organically respond to Punjabi cultural traditions and Punjabi.

On the other hand, articulation of Punjabi identity is yet to take off in Canada, and the diaspora remains either Sikh or non-Sikh. As a result, in Diaspora Punjab, the ruling establishment has provided space to the Sikhs, which has been appropriated by the vocal section of Khalistan separatists who continue to propagate a politics that advocates revenge for the "hurt Sikh psyche". The political alliances are constructed with these elements, which is a death knell for liberal politics.

There is an urgent need to bring closure. But that can only come if it is based on the de-legitimation of violence, reducing incentives for violence and delivering restorative justice.

The political controversy between the Canadian and Indian political establishments over the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, threatens to add new dimensions to the ongoing separatist movement of the fringe. The issue of Khalistan had remained largely specific to Punjab and India in the 1980s. Now, the political narrative is being shaped by Diaspora Punjab, the separatist demand of a minuscule section is being internationalised. This is a matter of serious concern.

The Canadian political establishment rushed to accuse the Indian government without credible evidence even as the Indian establishment, instead of building consensus on the shared values of peace, acted un diplomatically. As a result, both countries took the hasty decision of suspending trade talks, clamping restrictions on human resource exchange and knowledge sharing avenues. This suspension of trade and restricted human resource mobility has serious implications for both the political establishments besides creating hardships for Indo-Canadians and Indians in general.

This politics will not only aggravate the crisis between two nations, but in the absence of market exchange and the leavening effects of secular Punjabi culture, could provide justification to socially divisive tendencies and create tensions among religious groups in Canada. On the contrary, in Indian Punjab, secular Punjabi identity has strong historical roots and co-exists with other identities while communalism is known for its long tongue but no teeth.

The writer is chairperson, Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), Chandigarh

The story of Vasily Arkhipov

He chose restraint over machismo, made an epochal difference



RAJNI BAKSHI

THE UNITED NATIONS International Day of Nonviolence, on October 2, Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, calls for a celebration of courage that defiantly sprouts in the nooks and crannies of a world that glamorises aggression.

It is not enough to honour this day as a hollow formality. Instead, it is far more fruitful to recall a single act of courage and restraint that saved the world — at least in the short term. The story of Vasily Arkhipov, who was not even remotely close to nonviolence activism, is instructive at many levels.

Arkhipov was a Soviet naval officer who is credited with preventing a nuclear war between the US and USSR that could, potentially, have snowballed into a catastrophic World War III.

His story highlights two vital truths. One, that violence and nonviolence are not binary opposites but a spectrum within which most people are in constant motion. Two, that the courage, and clear-sightedness, of a single individual can sometimes make an epochal difference — particularly when that individual is embedded within the state structure.

Arkhipov was commodore of a Soviet flotilla and executive officer of the diesel-powered submarine B-59, which was submerged near Cuba in October 1962. This was the time of the Cuban Missile crisis when both the US and Soviet Union were in a con-

frontation over the Soviet decision to place nuclear missiles in Cuba.

On October 27th US navy destroyers, having detected the presence of Soviet submarines, began dropping signalling depth charges to force the Soviet subs to surface. By then the Soviet submarines had gone for many days without radio contact with Moscow. Some of the Soviet naval officers interpreted the dropping of depth charges as a signal that war had broken out between the US and USSR.

The captain of B-59 insisted that it was time for them to launch a nuclear torpedo. Fortunately, Soviet naval protocol required that three officers on board that ship had to authorise a nuclear launch. Two of the designated officers were in favour of firing the nuclear weapon. It was Arkhipov, as chief of staff of the brigade, who refused to go along.

Arkhipov, who had a reputation for being courageous, finally persuaded the captain of the submarine to surface and await orders from Moscow. With Washington and Moscow both backing down and the missile crisis ending, B-59 peacefully sailed back to the Soviet Union.

On returning home the officers did face the wrath of their superiors for various procedural issues. To what extent the Soviet system acknowledged Arkhipov's contribution on that crucial day is not clear. He did rise to

become a Vice Admiral and retired honourably in the mid-1980s.

In 2002, the then director of the US National Security Archive called Arkhipov "the man who saved the world" and the title has stuck — even if few outside the realm of academia know about him.

The significance of Arkhipov's story is not limited to the danger of nuclear weapons. It is acutely relevant in our times when, in many societies, a large number of people display an enthusiasm for answering violence with stronger violence — both in the everyday life of ordinary folks as well as between nations.

It is difficult to say whether this pro-violence sentiment is based on the delusion that "contained" violence is possible or indifference to the human toll of an all-out violent confrontation — be it a communal holocaust within society or war between countries.

This pro-aggression phenomenon persists despite overwhelming evidence that violence inevitably begets more, even worse, violence — usually leaving the original problem unsolved. One key reason for this is that far too many people fear that an outright rejection of violence will make them weak and vulnerable. This happens largely because nonviolence is defined in absolute terms or caricatured as a self-defeating doctrine which asks you to perpetually turn the other cheek.

In its highest form, nonviolence is the power to transform your opponent through love and compassion. But there is a fertile and much inhabited low-lying ground around this "height" of nonviolence.

The story of Arkhipov highlights an important feature of this more accessible terrain. Namely, the power of self-restraint in a person or group with the means for violent first-action or retaliation. The key challenge here is one of perception. If self-restraint is itself seen as a weakness then we are on a slippery slope that goes straight down to abject suffering.

A naysayer might well ask: "...what if I practised self-restraint in the wrong moment, allowing those who wish to harm me to succeed?"

This is a risk that has to be carefully calibrated. But is this risk really greater than the dark fall-outs of being driven by an aggressive trigger-happy machismo?

There must be countless individuals deep within the innards of formal power, who have faced their own "Arkhipov moment" and chosen self-restraint over machismo. They must be honoured in the annals of our species' onward journey to higher levels of being.

The writer is an author and founder of the YouTube platform Ahimsa Conversations

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WINDS OF CHANGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'What women need' (IE, October 7). With women coming out in large numbers and voting independently during elections, all political parties have started wooing them. With assembly elections around the corner, we find Shivraj Singh Chouhan's government reserving 35 per cent of jobs for women. While there are winds of change and women are pushing the envelope, getting a foothold in the political landscape, both as vote banks and leaders, augurs well for the other half of the Indian population.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

FOR GLOBAL PEACE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Unpredictability of Putin' (IE, October 6). Globalisation from the 1990s on made the world interdependent. This welcome change from the past led to a reduction in conflicts among nations and overall economic growth around the world. The succeeding decade brought back jingoism, populism and exclusivism. The wars of today are the manifestation of these leanings. We urgently need pragmatic, impartial and cosmopolitan global stateswomen who can stop the world from sliding into global chaos.

Manish Mishra, Bhopal

INFLATION PUZZLE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A longer pause' (IE, October 7). The food-price index is likely to rise further because of a sub-normal monsoon. While the RBI's intent to auction bonds to suck out excess liquidity from the market to tame inflation is good, it is difficult to fathom how a pause in policy rates or controlling liquidity could bring down food inflation, which was caused mainly because of supply shortages. If food inflation is not controlled, it will have a cascading effect on the headline inflation affecting the overall growth of the economy.

SS Paul, Nadiya

BJP'S UNFAIR PLAY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The long arm' (IE, October 6). The crackdown by investigative agencies on the Opposition in the past decade is clear. The arbitrary nature of raids and arrests made by the ED against opposition leaders ahead of elections, whether any evidence is discovered or not, fails the test of due process. The BJP's game is undermining democratic ethics and requires stern intervention from the judiciary. The trust deficit in the state's institutions is on the up and up. There must be a check on the overarching powers of these agencies.

Nischai Vats, Sultampur

Maharashtra gives Y+ security cover to Shah Rukh Khan amid 'threats'

VIJAY KUMAR YADAV
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 8



In the Y+ category, the actor will get 11 security personnel.

SECURITY AGENCIES in Maharashtra have scaled up the security cover of actor Shah Rukh Khan to Y+ category in view of recent "imminent and probable" threats to the actor, confirmed police sources in Mumbai, who refused to divulge the nature of the "threat" the actor is facing.

According to the sources, the Maharashtra State Intelligence Department (SID), in an official communication dated October 5, informed all the police commissionerates, district police and special protection units (SPUs) in the state to provide "Y+ with an escort scale of security to Khan with immediate effect".

The decision was taken after a recent high-power committee

The security cover will be on a payment basis and will be there until the next high-level committee recommendation and review committee decision.

Following a row over the song *Besharam Rang* from his film *Pathaan*, which was released early this year, Paramhans Acharya, an Ayodhya-based seer, had allegedly issued death threats to the actor.

In August this year, security was stepped up outside actor's bungalow following protests against celebrities endorsing on-line gaming apps, stressing that such endorsements misguide and corrupt the younger generation.

In 2010 also, his security was increased after he received threats following the release of his film *My Name is Khan*.

Khan's name was also in the news after Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Mumbai zonal

head and IRS officer Sameer Wankhede allegedly revealed his WhatsApp chat conversation with Khan pertaining to the release of his son Aryan Khan.

Aryan was arrested during an NCB raid on the Cordelia cruise ship off the Mumbai coast on October 3, 2021. He was granted bail after 25 days.

On May 27, 2022, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) cleared Aryan, saying he was not part of any larger drug-dealing racket as alleged by Wankhede's investigation.

In October last year, NCB's vigilance bureau closely reviewed the probe into the case and stated that Aryan Khan was targeted.

The security of superstar Salman Khan was also upgraded to Y+ category last year after he allegedly received threats from gangster Lawrence Bishnoi.

Facing heat over SYL, Mann challenges Opp for live debate

Chandigarh: Amid opposition parties' criticism over the issue of Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) canal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Sunday challenged the BJP, Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal for an open debate on issues pertaining to the state on November 1, which is Punjab Day. What followed was leader of opposition Partap Singh Bajwa, SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal and BJP state chief Sunil Jakhar accepting the CM's offer.

If the debate happens, it would be the first time in the history of Punjab that a CM and opposition leaders would be together on stage fighting a war of words.

The CM's challenge to the opposition leaders is being seen as an attempt to bolster the sagging image of the AAP-led government, with disquiet among teachers, police officers and farmers.

Badal also accepted the challenge and threw one of his own. He dared Mann to meet him on November 1, and also asked him to invite Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal to the November 1 debate. **ENS**

Security forces concerned over high weapons recovery in J&K

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

THERE HAS BEEN a massive dip in incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir, but the highest recoveries of arms, ammunition, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and detonators in the last four years has increased concern of security forces.

According to the annual report for 2022-23 from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the on-going militancy in Jammu and Kashmir is linked with the infiltration of terrorists from across the "International Border" as well as the "Line of Control" in the Union Territory of J&K.

The *Indian Express* has accessed year wise data, compiled by security forces from 2018 to May 31 this year. The data shows 131 detonators were recovered in 2018, 31 in 2019, 97 in 2020, 89 in 2021, 154 last year and nine this year. "35 IEDs were recovered in 2018, twelve in 2019, five in 2020, 16 in 2021, 39 IEDs in 2022 and fifteen till May this year," the data stated.

A senior official of the security establishment said Jammu and Kashmir has been affected by terrorist and secessionist violence sponsored and supported from across the border for about three decades. Though they have made huge recoveries, the increasing number is a matter of concern for the state police and other security agencies as there is a possibility of arms and ammunition consignments being successfully delivered for attacks.

An official said they have recovered 275 arms in 2018, 185 in 2019, 453 in 2020, 364 in 2021, 485 in 2022 and 67 this year. "For ammunition, 11,568 were recovered in 2018, 10,497 in 2019, 20,016 in 2020, 10,201 in 2021, 15,808 in the last year and 2,868 this year," the data stated.

From 2018 to this year, 268.4 kgs of explosives and 2,021 grenades were recovered in Jammu and Kashmir. "Five kg explosive was recovered in 2018, 53 kg in 2019, 108 kg in 2020, 72 kg in 2021, 30.4 kg in 2022 and no recovery was made this year. While 254 grenades were recovered in 2018, 287 in 2019, 589 in

2020, 412 in 2021, 390 in 2022 and 89 this year," the data stated.

MHA data showed that 7,217 violent incidents were reported between June 2004 to May 2014 in Jammu and Kashmir. There was a 70 per cent decline from June 2014 to August this year with 2,197 incidents being reported. The number of total deaths of civilian and security forces reported stood at 2,829 between June 2004 to May 2014. There was a 69 per cent decline between June 2014 and August this year with 891 deaths being reported.

"1,769 deaths of civilians reported from June 2004 to May 2014, while 336 reported in the last nine years, which is an 81 per cent decline. 1,060 deaths of security personnel reported from June 2004 to May 2014, while 555 reported till August this year - 48 per cent decline," the data stated.

According to the MHA's report, the security situation in J&K is monitored and reviewed by the Army, Central Armed Police Forces and other agencies. MHA also monitors the security situation in tandem with the J&K and the Ministry of Defence.

91ST AIR FORCE DAY



People watch Air Force Day celebrations at Sangam in Prayagraj on Sunday. *Ritesh Shukla*

Joint planning, combat power essential for future: IAF Chief

AMRITANAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

JOINT PLANNING and integrated application of combat power will be essential for future wars and developing unique tactics, carrying out realistic training, and incorporating relevant lessons learnt will go a long way towards that, Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari said Sunday.

The top Indian Air Force (IAF) officer said this in his address at the Air Force Day parade at Air Force Station, Bamrauli in Prayagraj, on 91st Air Force Day.

He also unveiled the new IAF ensign which, it had earlier said, will reflect the force's values better. Chaudhari said from multi-domain operations to hybrid warfare, the air force needs to recognise that modern warfare transcends traditional boundaries. "We must seamlessly integrate air, space, cyber and ground capabilities to dominate the battlespace," he said.

The IAF chief said refining the IAF's strategy, building robust all-



Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari unveils the new IAF ensign on the sidelines of the Annual Air Force Day Parade, in Prayagraj on Sunday; (right) a performance by the Surya Kiran aerobatic team. *PTI*



round capabilities, and more importantly, developing a flexible mindset to prosecute future wars will prove decisive in the current complex and dynamic strategic environment.

"Our commitment to the defence of our nation remains steadfast and we will continue to protect our territory, deter potential adversaries and ensure the safety and security of our people," he said while touching upon the ma-

major highlights of the IAF in the past one year, such as successful induction of Agniveers, eight exercises across the globe with friendly foreign countries, HADR operations in Türkiye, Sudan and Syria, airlifting critical supplies, rescuing stranded Indian nationals, fighting forest fires and carrying out flood-relief in many states.

He also highlighted that the first time the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft have partici-

pated in an overseas exercise and that the current geopolitical landscape has provided the force an opportunity to reduce dependency on imports by developing indigenous capability.

This was the first Air Force Day parade to be commanded by a woman IAF officer—Group Captain Shaliza Dhama—who is the first woman officer to be commanding a combat unit of the IAF.

Aditya L1 takes route correction; Manipur BJP leaders have doubt too: Is there Art 355 in state?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8



Aditya L1. *ISRO file*

AS INDIA'S first solar mission Aditya L1 continues its 110-day journey towards the L1 point which is 1.5 million kilometres away, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Sunday updated that a Trajectory Correction Manoeuvre (TCM) was performed earlier in the week.

The space agency said this was "originally provisioned" for.

The spacecraft propulsion system was fired for 16 seconds on October 6 to correct its trajectory towards the L1 point. The space agency said that the manoeuvre "was needed" to correct the trajectory of the spacecraft was evaluated after it was inserted in the path towards the L1 point on September 19.

"TCM ensures that the space-

craft is on its intended path towards the Halo orbit insertion around L1. The Spacecraft is healthy and on its way to Sun-Earth L1," ISRO said.

One of the seven instruments on-board—the magnetometer—will be turned on again "within a few days," they said. The instrument is meant to study the inter-planetary magnetic field.

Another instrument called Supra Thermal and Energetic Particle Spectrometer (STEPS), which is meant to measure high temperature, energetic particles in the solar wind, has also been sending data, it said. STEPS comprises six sensors, each observing in different directions.

The spacecraft left the Earth's sphere of influence eight days ago—the second spacecraft by the Indian space agency after Mangalyaan that has left the Earth's sphere of influence.

The L1 point that lies at only 1% of the distance between Earth and the Sun has been selected as it allows for an unobstructed view of the Sun as no celestial body can come in between to cause an eclipse. The point also allows us to study the Sun without interference of the dust found in Earth's atmosphere or the atmosphere and magnetic fields itself that do not allow some of the harmful radiations like UV radiation from the Sun to enter the Earth.

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, OCTOBER 8

WHEN reports started coming in of a mob attempting to storm N Biren Singh's personal residence in Imphal's Heingang area last week, the Chief Minister became the latest public representative targeted by an angry public.

The next day, eight senior Manipur BJP functionaries led by state party president A Sharda Devi—whose own house has been targeted six times in the last few months—wrote to BJP national president J P Nadda. "Public anger and protest is now slowly turning the tide, putting the sole onus of (these) prolonged disturbances (on) the failure of the government," the leaders of the ruling party wrote.

They pressed for the need to regain public confidence that the state government could deal with the situation.

And they addressed an am-

biguity that continues to persist five months after the conflict in the state broke out, saying that "Article 355 if there is anything as such imposed in the state" be revoked, and "full command of the Unified Command" be restored to the CM to earn back the people's trust in the state government.

Article 355 of the Constitution, a step short of Article 356 or President's Rule in a state, says: "It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every state against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every state is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution."

Two days after the outbreak of the violence in the state on May 3, the talk of Article 355 was first sparked off by a statement by then Manipur DGP P Doungel, while speaking to reporters in Imphal. Referring to retired IPS officer and former CRPF DG

Kuldip Singh being sent to Manipur as "security advisor" to the CM, Doungel said: "355 is just that the Centre takes more attention in the affairs of the state, and that is the reason why the advisor has been sent... We will see how it develops. Because if things quieten down fast, the advisor will be going back. But if it continues, it will stay and Centre will be giving us more directions on how to go about things."

Five months later, Kuldip Singh continues to be around as the security advisor as well as heads the Unified Command, set up for better coordination among the different security agencies deployed in the state.

The establishment of the Unified Command had been announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah towards the end of his May visit to Manipur—the only time he has been there since the conflict.

However, the Union govern-

ment has maintained throughout that there is no Article 355 in Manipur. In fact, a day after the then Manipur DGP's statement in this regard, Kuldip Singh himself denied that the Article had been invoked, blaming "certain elements" for creating confusion over the matter.

However, the hard division between the valley in which Imphal is located and the Kuki-Zomi-dominated hill districts, where writ of the state government no longer runs, means that many in Manipur refuse to believe that the Centre is not running things.

Nando Luwang, the president of the valley-based civil society organisation AMUCA (All Manipur United Clubs' Organisation), says Biren Singh government "is just like a silent spectator in this crisis".

The Opposition has also picked up on this. Manipur Congress president K Meghachandra Singh points to the violence after a video sur-

facted recently confirming that two Meitei youths missing since July 6 had been killed.

The demands that Biren Singh be removed have again started gaining force, with members of the popular valley-based collective called Youth of Manipur and a team of Meitei MLAs and ministers raising the same in Delhi recently.

Others such as R K Tharaksena, a leader in the women's wing of the Meitei group COCOMI (Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity), which has had several stand-offs with Central forces, warn against this.

If the CM goes, "then it is likely that there will be President's Rule", Tharaksena says.

While some see this as only a formality given the current Central presence, this will be an official stamp of sorts, and it won't go down well in the Meitei-majority areas. **FULL REPORT ON** www.indianexpress.com

Ken-Betwa river linking: Push helps clear project in time for elections

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

IT TOOK government push over the last few weeks for the Rs 44,605-crore Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP) to secure the final forest clearance, six years after it got the provisional nod, and just in time for the upcoming Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh.

However, the project's wildlife clearance is under examination at the Supreme Court and it may still require a fresh environmental clearance before work can take off. Two key forest clearance conditions require KBLP to realign its canal and shift the proposed powerhouses from diverted forest land.

Facing strong anti-incumbency in OBC-dominated Bundelkhand, where Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge kicked off his pre-election campaign this August promising a caste census, the BJP is hoping to cash in on the mega irrigation project, touted to end the water shortage in the drought-prone region.

What makes the party doubly hopeful, say insiders, is that the Congress cannot claim any "legacy credit" as the project is associated with former prime minister A B Vajpayee, who set it rolling in 1999.

Underlining that KBLP will irrigate 10.6 lakh hectares of land besides providing drinking water to 62 lakh people in Bundelkhand, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said in a video message on Wednesday: "The Congress did nothing for this region... They only stalled the project."

In 2011, the UPA-II government had rejected KBLP for its high environmental cost. But it was revived and granted wildlife, environmental and in-principle forest clearances in 2016-2017, under the Modi government.

Even as it struggled to meet preconditions for the final forest clearance, the Union Cabinet approved the project in December 2021, with an eight-year deadline.

As recently as July 24, records show, KBLP reiterated its plea for partial exemption from meeting

a key condition for the final forest clearance: compensation for the diversion of 60.17 sq km of forest land, by adding an equal extent of revenue or private land to the Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR).

This position has been repeated several times since July 2018, when the Ministry of Jal Shakti told the Environment Ministry that Madhya Pradesh could identify only 42.06 sq km of revenue land, and that it may consider "double of the remaining 18.11 sq km, i.e. 36.22 sq km, of degraded forest land" to meet the 60.17 sq km commitment.

By the end of July, say sources in the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, "a message was conveyed" and a "hard deadline" was set, "given the limited window" available before the state went to polls.

On September 22, noting that "the transfer and mutation of only 3,414,757 ha non-forest land" was done against the requirement of 6017 ha, the Environment Ministry sought clarifications from the state on the remaining 2,792,662 ha.



A view of the Betwa river. *File*

On September 29, the state Forest Department replied that a "total 6,809 ha non-forest land has been identified" with a "cushion of around 792 ha... for future requirement". In addition to 3,414,757 ha, it said, 1,486.513 ha of government non-forest land has been allotted and mutated in favour of PTR on September 28.

Further, the Forest Department said, 1,298 ha of private land in the Chhatarpur and

in his video message.

Conceived to divert water from the Ken basin to the Betwa basin for meeting irrigation needs and providing drinking water, KBLP requires a total 60.17 sq km of forest land, including 41.41 sq km of PTR. The total loss of 105 sq km of wildlife habitat to submergence and fragmentation will particularly impact endangered vultures, gharials and tigers.

H S Mohanta, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Land Management) of Madhya Pradesh, told The Indian Express: "This (selection of villages) was in the works since 2018 but everything came together in the last few weeks. The process of compensating the land owners and transferring the land will be handled by the Revenue Department, along with the project proponent, and should not take too long."

Mohanta said the project work could commence, adding that the forest clearance conditions bar "closure of dam gates and impounding of water" until all the revenue villages are relocated.

KBLP has given an undertaking that "the state government and the user agency shall ensure that the canal should be realigned to minimise the use of forest land for construction", under a forest clearance condition. Stopping short of a similar undertaking on the condition regarding the proposed power plants, KBLP has "agreed" that the powerhouses, "which have the capacity of 78 MW, shall not be constructed in the forest area to be diverted, to avoid constant disturbance in PTR".

The red flags

These changes, experts say, amount to a change of scope of the project and will require a fresh environmental clearance. "A general environment clearance condition requires any major change in the scope of a project to be reported to the ministry and approved afresh," said a former member of one of the Expert Appraisal Committees of the Environment Ministry. "Power is a minor component (of the project) and the powerhouses concerned are not

part of the immediate scope of (project) work. I believe the canal is already aligned in a way that uses minimal forest land, but we will look into it for the best possible option," Bhopal Singh, Director General of the National Water Development Agency under the Jal Shakti Ministry, said, when contacted.

Incidentally, the Supreme Court is yet to decide on its Central Empowered Committee's 2019 report that sought thorough studies on the impact of KBLP, saying it "poses a serious challenge" to the very objective of wildlife and forest laws.

But, a state forest official argues, there is no stay order against the project either.

The Madhya Pradesh government is also supposed to carry out a fresh enumeration of trees to be felled for KBLP because the original estimation of 23 lakh trees excluded those with girth between 10 cm and 20 cm, even though most would grow to above 20-cm diameter class by the time they would be felled in seven-eight years. That recount is pending.

13 ECONOMY

MARKET WATCH 5 OF TOP-10 COS GAIN M-CAP

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of five of the top-10 most valued firms jumped Rs 86,234.73 crore in a holiday-shortened last week, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) emerging as the biggest gainer. **PTI**

UK to start next round of FTA talks with India today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

A 30-member official delegation from the UK will start the next round of negotiations for a free trade agreement with the Indian team here from Monday to close remaining issues so that the two countries conclude the talks soon, an official has said.

Both countries have recently concluded the 13th round of negotiations. A team led by Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal was in London last week to give an impetus to the talks. The UK team dealing with investment-related matters is already here, and the talks for the proposed bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with finance ministry officials are progressing at a faster pace. "The 30-member team will be here tomorrow, and both sides are attempting to close the remaining issues, such as rules of origin. Everything is at the closure level," the official said. The 'rules of origin' provision prescribes that minimal processing should happen in the FTA country so that the final manufactured product may be referred to as goods originating in that country.

CI's business confidence index improves to 67.1 in second qtr of FY24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

CI'S BUSINESS confidence index improved to 67.1 in the July-September quarter of FY24, reflecting robust macro fundamentals of India's economy despite global headwinds, the industry body said on Sunday.

The index showed a reading of 66.1 in the previous quarter (April-June FY24) and 62.2 in the same quarter last year.

"The reading reaffirms the sustained positive momentum seen in host of high frequency indicators such as GST collection, air & rail passenger traffic, PMIs, among others in the second quarter," said the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The buoyancy seen in rural demand in the recent period, too, was mirrored by the results of the survey which established that nearly half of the respondents (52 per cent) anticipate an improvement in rural demand in the first half of the current fiscal, it added. A majority of the respondents (66 per cent) feel that the Indian economy will grow in FY24, broadly in line with the forecast of RBI and other multilateral agencies.

On interest rates, more than half of the respondents (58 per cent) anticipate that RBI will stick with a pause on the repo rate in the second half of the current fiscal to let the lagged impact of the rate hikes effected so far to work through the system.

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, said, "The improvement in CII Business Confidence

COMBINED CAPEX OF 17 BIG STATES ROSE BY 45%

Loans from the Centre keep state govts' capex strong

PRASANTA SAHU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

AIDED BY the front-ending of capex loans by the Centre, the state governments' capital expenditure seem to have grown at a much higher pace than last year in April-August period of the current financial year.

The combined capex of 17 big states, whose finances were reviewed by FE, rose by 45 per cent to around Rs 1.67 trillion in the first five months of the current fiscal, compared with Rs 1.15 trillion in the year-ago period.

Of course, excluding the interest-free capex loans of about Rs 40,000 crore released by the Centre to these states in the period, their capex growth in the period was only 10 per cent.

The improvement in spending by states on fixed asset creation could also be attributed to the Centre's stipulation that 33.3 per cent of Rs 1 trillion untied capex loans would be disbursed to a state only after it met the condition of 45 per cent of annual capex target in the April-



The overall public capex includes the budgetary capital expenditure by the Centre and states. *File*

September period.

However, given that these states have achieved just 23 per cent of their budgeted annual capex of around Rs 7.3 trillion in April-August, many of them may not have met the condition by September-end to avail one-third of their quota from the untied capex loans of the Centre.

Sources said the Centre will likely relax norms to help states utilise the last instalment of Rs 33,000 crore from the Rs 1 trillion untied interest-free capex loan facility if they meet the fiduciary

condition of achieving 45% of their annual capex target by the third quarter instead of the second quarter of FY24.

Notably, these 17 states — Bihar, Gujarat, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand reported a 15 per cent growth in their tax revenues in April-August 2024 at Rs 9.82 trillion, upon the 34 per cent growth recorded in

the previous year.

The borrowings of 17 states rose 47 per cent on year to Rs 2.14 trillion in April-August FY24, largely due to a low base of last year as they had reported a 37 per cent decline in loans and liabilities during the corresponding period. These states' revenue spending rose 10 per cent on year to Rs 12.27 trillion in the first five months of the current fiscal while total expenditure was up 13 per cent on year at Rs 13.94 trillion.

The Centre has raised the capital expenditure target by 37 per cent on year to a whopping Rs 10 trillion (including Rs 1.3 trillion capex loans to states) for FY24 to continue the public investment-led economic recovery post-pandemic. The Centre has achieved around 37.4 per cent of its capex goal in April-August FY24.

The overall public capex includes the budgetary capital expenditure by the Centre and states, and the spending by CPSEs and state PSEs. While the last few years saw a big jump in Centre's capex, the increases in spending by other agencies have been rather subdued. **FE**

Fundraising through QIPs surges

Fundraising through the issuance of shares to qualified institutional investors has increased in the H1 of FY24



FIRST HALF OF FISCAL YEAR (in ₹ crore)

■ QIP issuance was dominated by financial services and power generation companies

■ ₹12,890 crore: They accounted for 70% of the overall amount

■ ₹5,000 crore: Largest QIP was from state-owned Union Bank

■ ₹2,305 crore: There was one QIP of a REIT of Brookfield India Real Estate Trust

■ The robust trend of Qualified Institutional Placements (QIPs) in the first half of the fiscal year 2023-24 is expected to persist throughout the second half of the year too, said Sanjay Moorjani, Research Analyst at SAMCO Securities.

■ QIP is one of the quickest products to raise funds from institutional investors

■ It is designed only for the listed companies, which allows them to mobilise funds quickly from institutional investors

Source: PTI

Telcos may see steady growth in Q2 on back of increased data usage

JATINGROVER
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

TELECOM OPERATORS - Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio, and Vodafone Idea - are expected to see a steady sequential revenue growth in the July-September quarter backed by continuous increase in data consumption and improved subscriber mix, analysts said.

The telecom operators are expected to report a near 3 per cent QoQ increase in the revenue collectively, according to average estimates of three brokerage houses, which is marginally higher than 2.6 per cent growth in the July-September quarter.



The move, aimed at ensuring better co

While Airtel and Jio are expected to report a 3-4 per cent increase in revenue, Vodafone Idea's revenue growth is seen at 2 per cent QoQ owing to increase in entry level feature-phone tariff hike, analysts said.

Besides data consumption, higher 4G subscriber additions and traction in enterprise business will also aid both Airtel and Jio during the quarter. Vodafone Idea, however, will continue to lose subscribers on the back of weak network spends in absence of fundraise.

With regard to the bottom-line, Vodafone Idea will likely see its losses narrowing marginally to Rs 7,810 crore from Rs 7,840 crore in the July-September quarter, according to analysts. Airtel is expected to see around 18 per cent QoQ increase in net profit to Rs 3,400 crore at a consolidated level. Jio Platform's net profit is expected to increase 5 per cent QoQ to Rs 5,350 crore, according to ana-

'Not much of a chance for a livable future without private communication'

PRIVACY IS about power asymmetries, with governments and corporations trying to leverage intimate information they have about people, MEREDITH WHITTAKER, the President of the Signal Foundation — which runs the eponymous messaging app — told SOUMYARENDRA BARIK in an interview. She also spoke about how Signal responds to law enforcement agencies including in India, and the hype around current AI platforms. *Edited excerpts:*



THE EXPRESS
INTERVIEW
WITH
MEREDITH WHITTAKER
PRESIDENT OF THE SIGNAL FOUNDATION

The reality in India is that despite being the biggest democracy online, there are households where one digital device is shared by adults of different genders, and kids. How do you view India as a market for an app that's solely focused on offering private communications?

"I'll need to be careful because I don't have a lot of experience in India and don't want to speak for a heterogeneous culture. But my reflexive reaction is of course privacy isn't an elitist value. We have to ask the question, privacy from whom? Privacy is fundamentally about power asymmetries, it's about those who have power over you by having information about you that they're able to leverage.

We need to actually understand the values that privacy is protecting — it's the values of intimacy, of love, and of dissent. It's about being able to express ourselves honestly to each other, and we can't have a democracy without those.

WhatsApp and Facebook have challenged the traceability requirement here saying it threatens encryption. How has your relationship with the Indian government been? Have you received requests for user data from them?

Signal encrypts all metadata. We don't have direct lines of communication with governments, in part because there's very little we can provide to governments... And it keeps those conversations, if they happen at all, very short because our answers are clear because it's not

that we're refusing to give data to them. We very literally cannot, because we don't have it.

When we get a request, we process that, and any request that we are forced to comply with, we work to unseal it and then we post it on Signal.org/BigBrother. And I would need to go back to that site to confirm my recollection. But I don't believe there's anything from the Indian government there, which doesn't mean we haven't received a request, but I don't have a log of every single request we have received.

WhatsApp is the most popular application in India, and it has also managed to market the fact that it is a secure platform for communications. What would your pitch be for people to join Signal in a similar way?

I want to be careful here because I recognise that if one person shifts to Signal, but their family doesn't, they still can't really use Signal. It takes a village to switch communications apps.

WhatsApp uses the Signal protocol to encrypt the contents of its messages, which is very important. But as James Comey from the FBI has said, metadata will get you 80 per cent of what you need — and WhatsApp collects a lot of metadata... Also, they're also owned by Meta, and we need to be very real that Meta is a surveillance company.

Companies that have built the most popular AI models are today going around the world, calling for a global regulator for the sector. What do you think is the motivation behind that? Is it actually meaningful, or maybe an attempt to stall regulatory conversations, because a global framework could take a long time...

Since around 2015, there has been an emergent regulatory interest in AI. But what happened recently with Microsoft creating ChatGPT as an advertisement for Azure APIs was able to shift the narrative and allow a bunch of these companies to claim that there was a paradigm shift in AI technology... That is being done to effectively erase the last 10 years of policy discussions.

The idea of a global regulator exists in the world of speculation. The idea that you could form a global regulator in less than 15 years, especially as the climate starts to deteriorate, is very unlikely. But what does that give them? That gives them a 15 year runway to entrench a business model that will be very difficult to rip out. **FULL REPORT ON**

www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

FMCG firms see subdued growth in Q2

New Delhi: The FMCG industry expects a subdued low to mid-single-digit volume growth in the July-September quarter as weak macroeconomic conditions amid rising food prices and below-normal rainfall in some regions are impeding the recovery in rural demand. Companies in their quarterly updates said that though there was an improvement in consumption in the second quarter, the recovery has been gradual. Moreover, the festive season has shifted to the third quarter due to which offtake related to festivals is delayed, the companies said. **PTI**

FPIs take over ₹8,000 cr from equities in October so far

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

FOREIGN PORTFOLIO investors (FPIs) have dumped Indian equities worth Rs 8,000 crore in the first week of October on the back of dollar appreciation and the steady rise in the US bond yields.

This came after FPIs turned net sellers in September and pulled out Rs 14,767 crore.

Before the outflow, FPIs were incessantly buying Indian equities in the last six months from March to August and brought in Rs 1.74 lakh crore during the period.

Going ahead, FPIs are unlikely to turn buyers in the market soon in the context of the elevated dollar and US bond yields, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors

(FPIs) sold shares to the tune of Rs 8,000 crore in this month (till October 6).

India continues to be on top of emerging economies in attracting FPI this year, but September witnessed selling and October has begun with the same trend.

"The dominant factor impacting capital flows to markets in recent weeks has been the steadily rising US bond yields. The early days of October witnessed a rout in the US bond market, which took the 30-year bond yield to 5 per cent briefly. The benchmark 10-year yield is consistently over 4.7 per cent forcing the FPIs to sell in emerging markets," Vijayakumar said.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India, attributed the outflow to economic uncertainties in the US and Eurozone regions, as well as growing concerns about global economic growth. This scenario led foreign investors to turn risk-averse.

CHENNAI METRO RAIL LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Tamil Nadu)
METROS, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Chennai - 600 035

Tender Notice

NIT No. CMRL/PHASE-II/SYS/C4-VAC&TVS-12/2023
e-procurement tender
International Competitive bidding
Tender No: C4- VAC&TVS-12

CMRL invites digitally signed tender through e-procurement portal from reputed, experienced, financially sound, eligible applicants, who fulfil the qualification criteria as mentioned in the tender through International Competitive Bidding (ICB) under Single Stage Two Envelope (Technical & Financial) system for the works as detailed below :

"Design verification & validation, Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Supply of spares & special tools, Operations and Maintenance during two (02) years Defect Liability Period (DLP) and five (05) years Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) of Ventilation and Air Conditioning (VAC), Tunnel Ventilation System (TVS), Associated Electrical and integrated SCADA works for eight (08) Underground stations in Corridor-4 (C4) from Lighthouse to Kodambakkam station, including C4 related TVS SCADA works at Thirumayilai station and Integrated Station Management Systems (ISMS) at OCC and BOCC".

For further details, Please refer websites:
1) www.chennaiemrtrorail.org for NIT
2) <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> for tender documents.

Addl. General Manager
(Mechanical Systems & GC Services)

DIPR/ 5450 /TENDER/2023

Ajmer Smart City Ltd., Ajmer
Opposite RRTI, Near High Security Jail, Jaipur Road, Ajmer (Raj.) PIN-305023
E-mail: asclajmercity@gmail.com, Tel: 0145-2970922

No. ASCL / NIT - 99 /2023-24/ 6643-44 Date: 05/10/2023

Notice Inviting Bid

Online Bids for NIT No. 99 for the work of "Providing, Supplying and Installation of Furniture for New Collectorate Building, Ajmer" are invited from interested bidders till 26/10/2023 up to 6:00 PM. Prebid meeting is scheduled on 12/10/2023 at 2:00 PM in the office conference hall of Ajmer Smart City Limited, Opposite RRTI, Near High Security Jail Jaipur Road, Ajmer (Raj.) PIN-305023. The bidders may even send their queries over email: asclajmercity@gmail.com up to 3:30 PM on 12/10/2023. The details of the Prebid, NIT and other particulars are available and downloaded from the procurement portal: www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in & www.ajmer.smartcity.gov.in

UBN No. - ASM2324SL0800014 (Pradeep Kumar Maurya)
Executive Engineer
Ajmer Smart City Limited
Ajmer

DIPR/CI/11072/2023

CHENNAI METRO RAIL LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Tamil Nadu)
METROS, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Chennai - 600035

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER on Rolling Basis

Tender 01:	Tender cum auction for Licensing of Advertisement Rights on Piers & Portals Corridor I & II of Phase 1 - Package Nos (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, X) on rolling basis.
Contract No	BD/P-II/452/2023/06
Documents download from	09.10.2023 to 20.10.2023 (on all working days between 10.00-15.00 hrs)
Pre-Bid Meeting Date	12.10.2023 on 11:30 hrs at CMRL Office- MetroS, Anna salai, Nandanam, Chennai-600 035.
Due Date of Bid Submission	20/10/2023 up to 15.00 hours (IST)
Date of Bid Opening	21/10/2023 at 15.05 hours (IST)

For complete details, please visit e-procurement website: <http://procure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. The tender will continue in rolling basis. Prospective bidders are required to periodically check the e-procurement website to know the currently available inventories. The available inventories will be updated and the process will continue till award of all contracts. Any Corrigendum/Addendum to this publication, if any, would appear only on above mentioned website and will not be published in newspapers.

Tender Inviting Authority:
Chief General Manager (P&B), Chennai Metro Rail Limited, MetroS, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Chennai-600 035.
Phone - 044-2437 8080 / www.chennaiemrtrorail.org, E-mail: krishnan.rm@cmrlln
07.10.2023
Chief General Manager (P&B)
Chennai Metro Rail Limited

DIPR/5475/Tender/2023

Office of Project Director
Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure
Development Project
(A unit of RUDSICO)
AVS Building, Jawahar Circle, JLN Marg, Jaipur - 302017
Tel No.: 0141-2721966, Fax No.: 0141-2721919
Email: mail.ruidp@rajasthan.gov.in; website: www.ruidp.rajasthan.gov.in

Invitation for Bids No: RSTDSP/OCB/NIT/39
Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Sector Project (RSTDSP)-Additional Financing RSTDSP/PSK/CTVBF/01: City Beautification works at Pushkar - Rebid.

- Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure Development Project (RUIDP) invites online bids on e-procurement portal for the contract package named above. Online bidding is invited under Open Competitive Bidding (OCB) - National procedure of ADB which is open to all bidders from eligible source countries of ADB.
- Bid document would be available at e-proc website www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in starting from 03rd October, 2023. Deadline for bid submission is 15:00 hours on 07th November, 2023.
- Pre-bid Meeting will be held at 15:00 hours on 10th October, 2023. All the prospective bidders are advised to participate in the Pre-bid meeting.
- Any addendum, clarification to the bidder's queries and corrigendum etc. will be published on the e-proc web sites and will not be published in Newspapers.
- Bidders may contact Additional Project Director, RUIDP (0141-2548404), Jaipur for any information on bidding process.

Addl. Project Director
RUIDP

DIPR/C/1111/2023

Harikishan Sharma: What were the challenges in conducting a caste-based census in Bihar? How will the state government and the JD (U) make use of these figures in the future?

We wanted the Central government to conduct the 2021 census on the basis of caste in the entire country. This has been Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's vision for a long time. In fact, way back, he had met the then Prime Minister VP Singh and asked him to conduct a caste-based census in the country. He had discussed this idea with the then President, Giani Zail Singh and the then Finance Minister, Madhu Dandavate. Mr Singh had said that his government could not conduct a caste-based census at the time since a census evaluation was already under way. Our party had even raised this issue in Parliament because no caste census has happened since 1931. We can't build a developed nation until we mainstream people who have been left behind.

Two years ago, an all-party delegation from Bihar had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to emphasise the need for a caste census but to no avail. So the Bihar government decided to conduct its own caste census despite opposition from the BJP. In fact, the BJP filed several PILs against this move in the Patna High Court, one of which resulted in a stay on this census. But the High Court allowed it to continue in the next hearing and quashed all PILs. Then the same petitioners appealed to the Supreme Court. But the Bench asked what privacy infringement would happen as a result of the caste census since every community knew about caste at the granular level and there was nothing wrong with the state government documenting it. After the apex court refused to stay the census, the Centre's solicitor-general said that the Government neither opposed nor supported it but insisted that the sole authority of such an exercise should lie with the Centre.

In Bihar, we not only conducted a caste census but also recorded the number of people living in economic depravity, which will be made public in the second phase. Several states want a similar census today, several states are demanding a similar census, which has become the agenda for the 2024 elections. The caste census has overpowered kamandal (BJP's Hindutva) politics.

Harikishan Sharma: Has your party thought about any campaign to make use of these figures?

The Nitish Kumar government has been working on such figures for a long time. In 2006, we enumerated another category of Extremely Backward Classes (EBC), who had no say in governance, and gave them a 20 per cent reservation in panchayati raj and local bodies. Bihar has given 50 per cent reservation to women in panchayati raj institutions. In 2013, Nitish Kumar gave 33 per cent reservation to women in the state's police force. In 2015, he promised to provide 50 per cent reservation to women in all government jobs. In 2016, he gave 35 per cent reservation to women in state government jobs. Bihar is the only state with 29,000 women in the police force. Nitish Kumar started the JEEViKA project so that rural women could create self-help groups (SHGs). Today, 1.3 crore rural women are connected with JEEViKA. Under the Bihar Mukhyamantri Gram Parivahan Yojana and Mukhyamantri Udyami Yojana, EBCs and Scheduled Castes (SC) are given Rs 5 lakh loan and a Rs 5 lakh grant. Every MLA will be given a copy of the caste census report and we will factor in their suggestions.

Harikishan Sharma: When will the recommendations be enforced?

The state government will present the census report in the winter session of the Vidhan Sabha for debate and discussion.

Harikishan Sharma: Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Rajasthan are headed for Assembly elections in a few months. Will your party contest in any of these states on the basis of the caste census figures?

We will have seat-sharing talks with the INDIA alliance and then decide if we need to contest in any of these states. The Congress, which is fighting elections as the primary party in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, has the caste census as its topmost priority. In fact, a few months ago, the Rajasthan government proposed a caste census in the Vidhan Sabha. The Jharkhand government is also planning to do so. The caste census has now become a national issue.

Liz Mathew: Does the JD (U) want Nitish Kumar to be given a leadership position in the INDIA alliance? Is he under pressure from your party to contest in Uttar Pradesh because of the Kurmi vote?

The BJP's objective is to create confusion in society and conduct a false narrative. Nitish Kumar is neither a prime ministerial candidate, nor has he decided to contest from UP. If we decide to do so, our party and the Samajwadi Party (SP) will have a combined election strategy.

Liz Mathew: The BJP, to counter the caste census report, claims that Nitish

RAJIV RANJAN SINGH
NATIONAL PRESIDENT, JANATA DAL (UNITED)

'Caste census has overpowered kamandal politics. This is now a national issue'

Janata Dal (United) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh on the Bihar caste census, the role of Nitish Kumar in the INDIA alliance and setting the Opposition agenda for 2024. The session was moderated by Harikishan Sharma, Senior Assistant Editor

Bihar not only conducted a caste census but also recorded the number of people living in economic depravity, which will be made public in the second phase. Several states want a similar census

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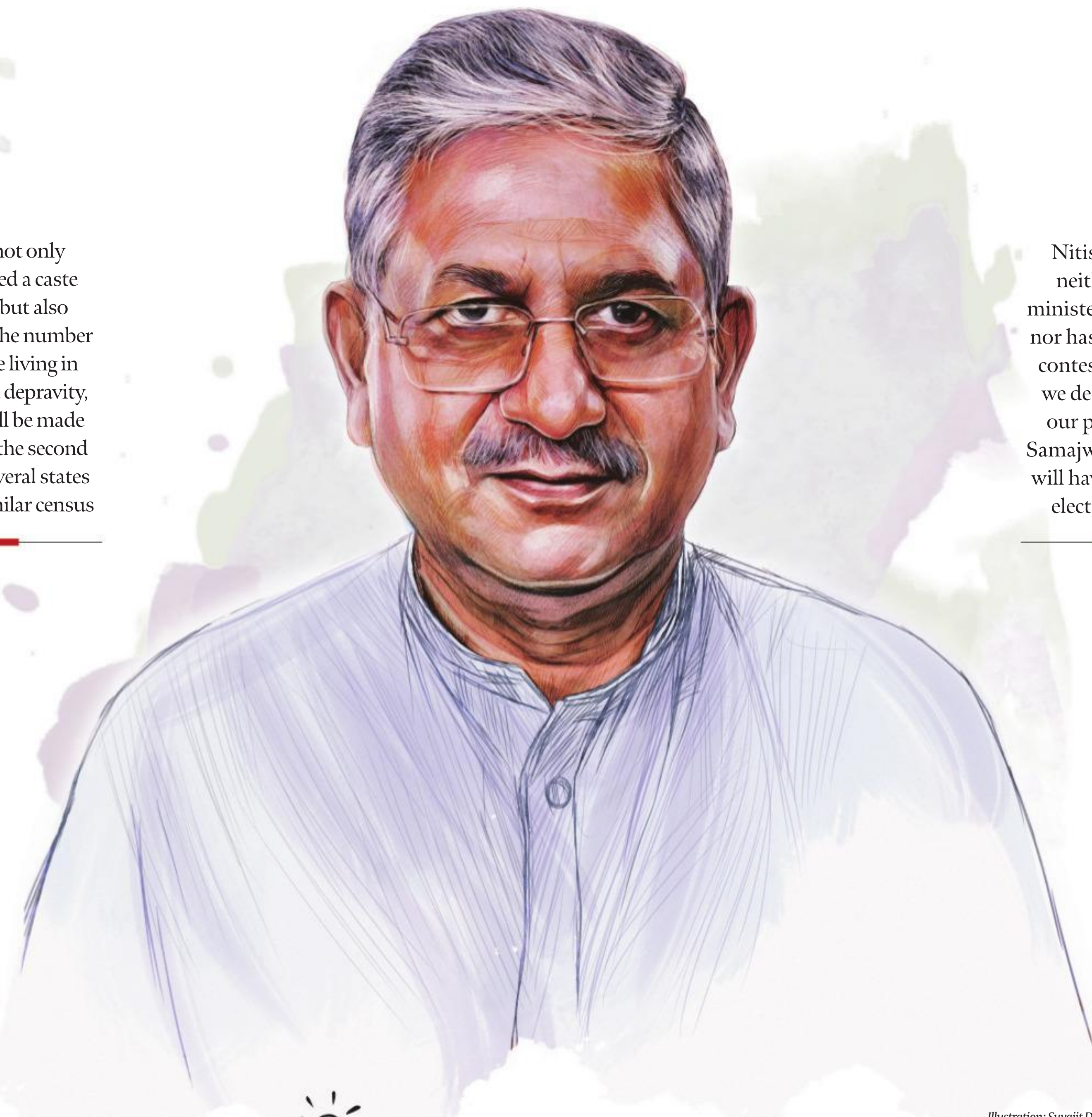


Illustration: Suvajit Dey

IDEA EXCHANGE

WHY **RAJIV RANJAN SINGH**

As national president of the Janata Dal (United), Rajiv Ranjan Singh is a key strategist for his leader and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. He played a crucial role in strengthening the party despite the slump it went through and is believed to have pushed the caste census conducted by the Bihar government. This has not only set the Opposition's agenda for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections but has compelled the BJP to look at its own OBC narrative for the polls.

Ever since he left the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2022, he has worked to unite the opposition.

Deeptiman Tiwary: Does JD (U) think that the 50 per cent ceiling of reservation needs to be relooked? Also, since Muslims are part of EBCs and OBCs (Other Backward Classes) in your census, will you demand reservation for Muslims in 2024?

We think that after a nationwide caste census, the Constitution should be amended to end the cap of 50 per cent reservation and push affirmative action. In his speech in Parliament in 2003-04, Nitish Kumar had argued for including Muslims in the SC category. He has been consistent with that stand, it's nothing

new. We don't work like the BJP, which is communal. We respect all religions.

Vandita Mishra: You earlier hinted that Mandal (caste politics) will overpower Kamandal (Hindutva politics). But BJP is already getting votes from the non-dominant OBCs, who can be called EBCs. In Bihar, the BJP has been conducting EBC gatherings before every election. Can you weaponise Mandal today?

We talk of weapons. We don't use weapons. They use weapons. In 2014, Modi said he was a tea-seller. Do you know the name of the station he used to sell tea at? The Ghanchi caste that Prime Minister Modi belongs to was in no way considered a backward class in Gujarat. It got the OBC

status only in 1999 under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government.

Harikishan Sharma: If you look at the JD (U)'s performance in the previous three Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections, there has been a slide since 2005. As its national president, what are your priorities?

In 2005, we were a big party. The BJP was smaller than us. In 2010, we got 115 seats on our own and could have formed the government if we wanted to. But we were in a coalition with BJP, which got 91 seats. And Nitish Kumar gave it a rightful share. In 2015 too, we got more votes than the BJP in the Assembly elections. In 2020, the BJP stabbed Nitish Kumar in the back, instigated Chirag Paswan's party against the JD (U) and asked BJP workers to root for Paswan.

Harikishan Sharma: On September 14, INDIA alliance partners were to start talks on seat sharing. However, nothing has materialised yet. Are there any problems?

There's no problem. The Congress is busy with candidate selection for Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana. After that, everything will be sorted.

Deeptiman Tiwary: Nitish Kumar was spotted at an event commemorating the birth anniversary of RSS ideologue Deendayal Upadhyaya with deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav. There was speculation about him rejoining the NDA. Is this possible?

This is an imaginary question. The Deendayal Upadhyaya birth anniversary

was a national event. He unveiled the statue of the late Arun Jaitley, which was also a national event. He has been affectionate towards former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was equally fond of him. Nitish Kumar respected Vajpayee, LK Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi. Now the BJP's culture has changed with party functions concentrated in two people. We are committed to the INDIA alliance and dedicated to toppling the Modi government in the 2024 elections.

Vandita Mishra: A caste census is necessary but if we look at everything through a fixed prism of identity, aren't you afraid that in the future only a Kurmi leader can talk about Kurmis and only a Nishad leader can talk about Nishads? Are you not dividing the idea of representation into small parts?

If a family has four children and two are weak, wouldn't you give special attention to them? Only then would they reach the same level as the other two. If you have a 27 per cent reservation under the Mandal Commission, then you also have a creamy layer. There's a creamy layer provision in reservation for economic weaker sections (EWS). You have to produce your income certificate before you receive the benefits of reservation. Otherwise, you will be classified in the general category.

Harikishan Sharma: Your party and the state government have consistently demanded a special status for Bihar in the Assembly. Is this issue still as popular among people?

There is a public demand for a special status. If anyone wants to set up an industrial unit in Bihar, they have to get raw materials from outside. We don't have mines or minerals. Our economy is agriculture-based. If we want to move towards industrialisation, then a special status can help us get tax relief which will be attractive enough to industries to set up their plants in Bihar. Today there are so many ethanol manufacturing plants in Bihar that in the next five years, the state can become an ethanol hub.

Deeptiman Tiwary: Nitish Kumar is known for his development politics. But after his first term, people think that politics has overshadowed governance. What are you doing to change perceptions?

In his first term, Nitish Kumar had brought about infrastructure development by building roads, bridges and pipelines. He made sure that people could reach Patna from any corner of the state in six hours. In 2015, he made seven promises, one of which was to electrify each house in Bihar. By October 2018, he had met his target. Today, rural areas get electricity for 22 hours and towns 24 hours. Isn't this development? Every house has a piped water connection thanks to the efficiency of the panchayats.

Even the Government of India (GoI) adopted Nitish Kumar's initiative of electrifying houses in 2017 when Piyush Goyal was the Minister of State for Coal, Power, New and Renewable Energy. Similarly, the GoI adopted Nitish Kumar's Har Ghar Jal Yojna in 2019. In fact, it wrote to the Bihar government and offered support for the Har Ghar Jal Yojna. But the state government said that it did not need a single rupee from the Centre as the latter would take credit for the entire programme.

Women's reservation and student credit cards came in 2015. Close to three lakh students are now set to join the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPS) and police personnel are also being appointed. Employment drives are happening constantly. In 2014, the BJP promised to provide two crore jobs every year. Where are the 18 crore jobs today? What happened to the black money they recovered from overseas? What about scammers like Vijay Mallya, Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi who fled the country?

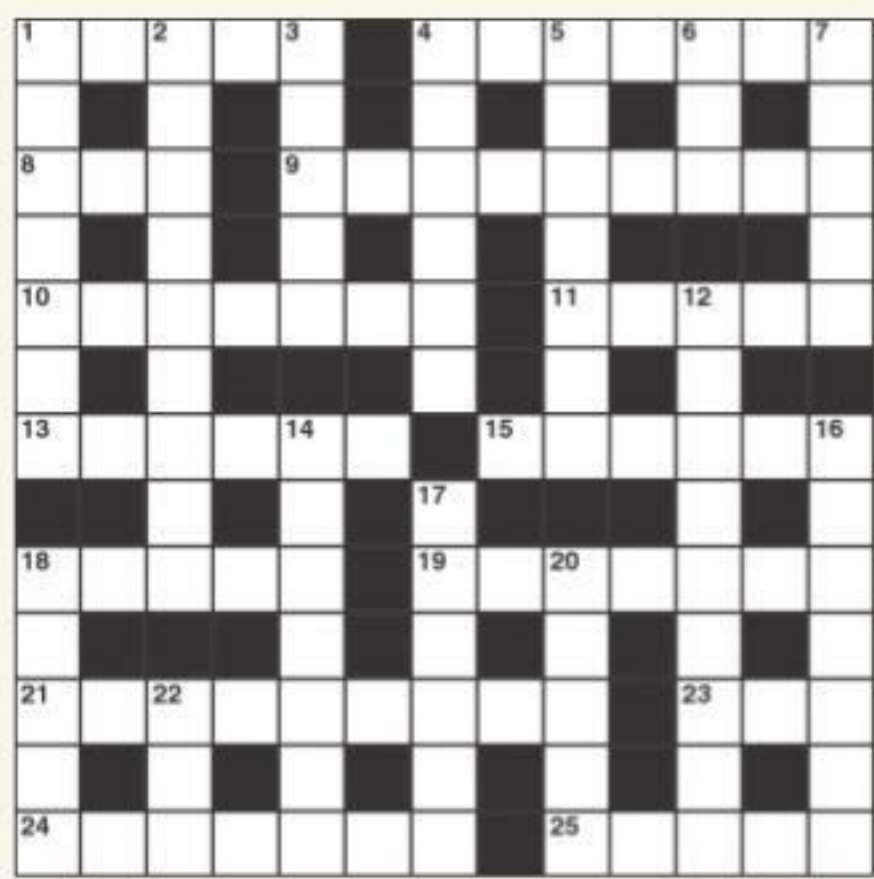
Santosh Singh: During the special session of Parliament, RJD MP Manoj Kumar cited Om Prakash Valmiki's poem Thakur ka Kuan. The JD (U) was not happy, fearing it would incite Rajputs. Do you think this will affect the alliance?

No, nothing will happen. We respect all religions. Ask RJD these questions. Ask us about our work instead.

Deeptiman Tiwary: The INDIA alliance partners are united at the national level but are political rivals at the state level. How will you resolve this enmity considering Nitish Kumar has a huge role to play in the alliance?

There's no need to solve this. With some issues, you just need to accept the truth and move on. In Kerala, the LDF and UDF are separate and we have to accept this. Neither of them is going to go with the BJP. In Bengal, there are the TMC, Left and Congress, where is the BJP? The BJP had predicted that Nitish Kumar would resign and the BJP would come to power. Similar predictions were made during the Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi Municipal Corporation elections. The BJP lost Karnataka, it will lose in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh too.

CROSSWORD 5177



ACROSS

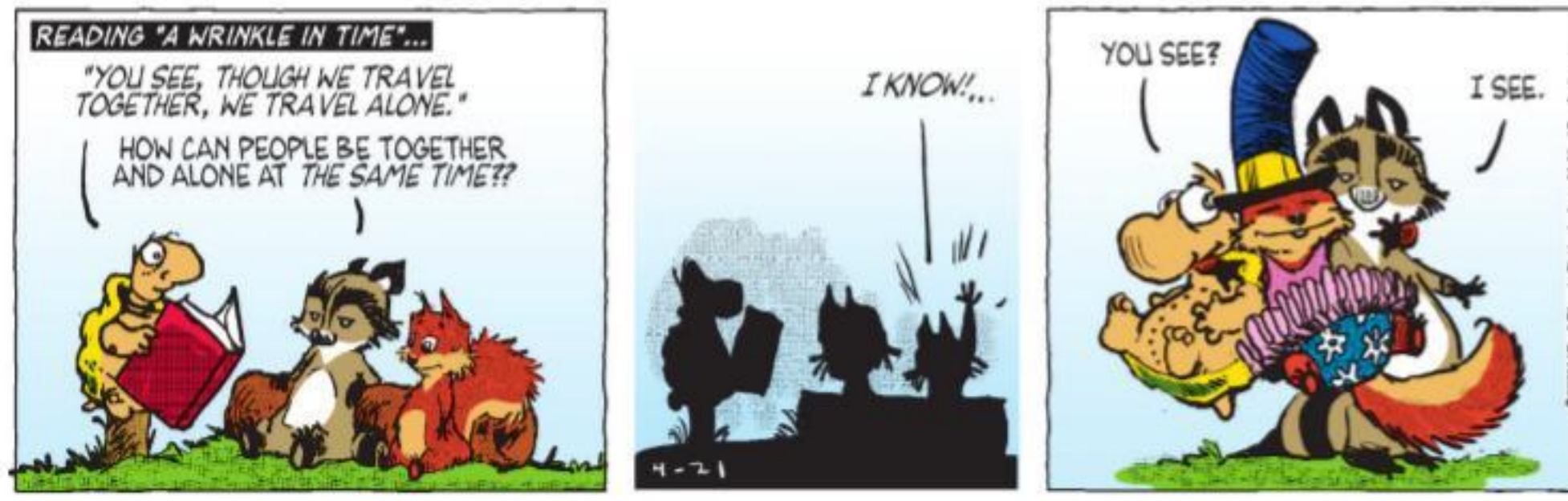
- Stretch of water (5)
- A learner of French taken in by a showy performance (7)
- Man with German backing (3)
- Beneficial though self-contradictory in parts (9)
- Girl on stage gets small part in picture (7)
- Possibly cater for counter-attack (5)
- A flicker of light? (6)
- Suggestions for sunglasses (6)
- A possessive type (5)
- Room for children to play (7)
- Run, we're told, to beat the storm (9)
- A lot of water is found in these areas (3)
- Remedy may be to change gear (7)
- Spot and point to how birds eat corn (5)

DOWN

- Turn to stare about (7)
- Leave to enter a plea of guilt? (9)
- He was ordered to get a place in the bows (5)
- Song AI composed as a means to drum up custom (6)
- Discover a French planet (7)
- For instance nothing here suggests oneself (3)
- Handle with generosity (5)
- One at the receiving end (9)
- Red vehicle goes to one of the pits (7)
- High-flying sport (7)
- Records there's something missing from the yearbooks (6)
- Circle to the right as an alternative (5)
- Dances in films (5)
- May be bent on catching fish (3)

Solutions Crossword 5176 Across: 1 Matchstick, 8 Agree, 9 Creeper, 10 Siltion, 11 Asked, 12 Action, 14 Styrmie, 17 Norse, 19 Pimento, 21 Regatta, 22 Slang, 23 Tapestries
Down: 2 Air lift, 3 Chest, 4 Second, 5 Inexact, 6 Kopek, 7 Cradle song, 8 Abstainers, 13 One-step, 15 Mandate, 16 Speaks, 18 Right, 20 Miser

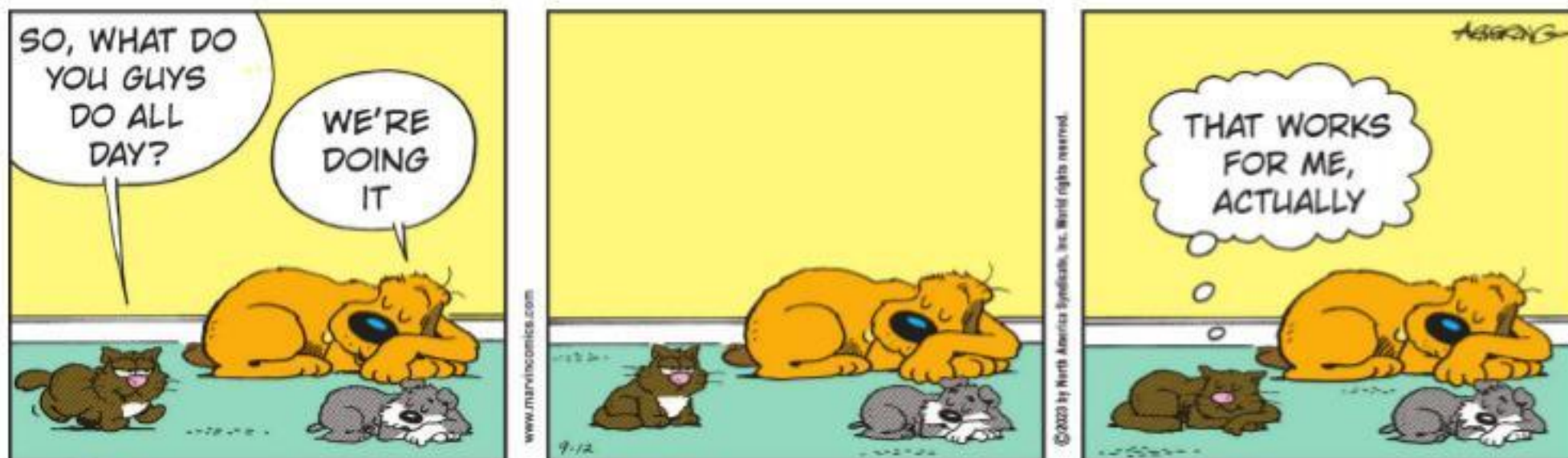
OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



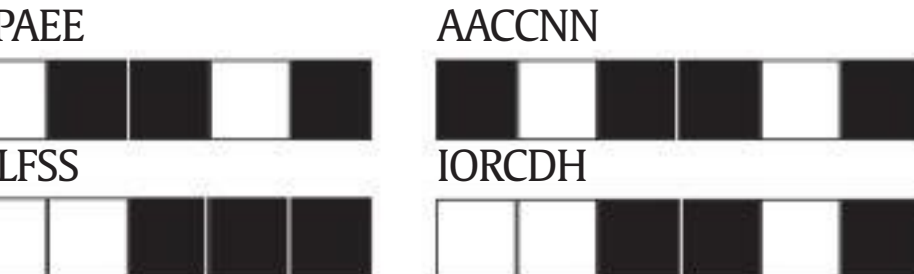
MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

CPAAE **AACCNN**
OLFSS **IORCDH**



SOLUTION: PEACE, FLOSS, CANCANN, ORCHID
 Answer: Temptations, unlike opportunities, will always give you many second chances

Difficulty Level 3s

SUDOKU 5345
 Instructions
 To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

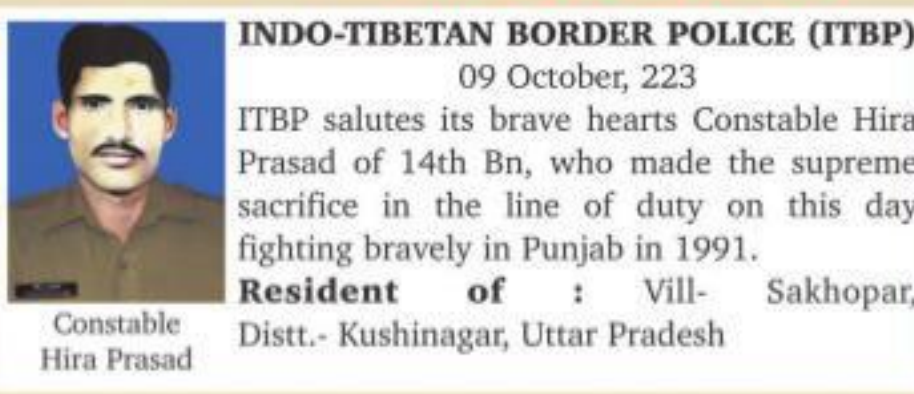


Difficulty Level
 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
 5s = Very Hard;
 6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5344



SALUTE THE SOLDIER



CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar

(Established by Parliament Act 16 of 1970)
Tender Notice
 CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar is inviting Tenders for the purchase of following equipments/items:-

- Purchase of Bioreactor/Fermenter for Solid State Fermentation for the Department of RBEE, COAE&T, CCSHAU, Hisar
- Purchase of Biosafety Cabinet for the Department of RBEE, COAE&T, CCSHAU, Hisar
- Purchase of Refrigerated Incubator Shaker for the Department of RBEE, COAE&T, CCSHAU, Hisar
- Purchase of i) High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) and ii) HPLC Columns for the Department of RBEE, COAE&T, CCSHAU, Hisar
- Purchase of Fast Protein Liquid Chromatography (FPLC) for the Department of RBEE, COAE&T, CCSHAU, Hisar
- Purchase of i) Tangential Flow Filtration System (TFF) System and ii) Variable speed peristaltic pump (two nos.) for the Department of RBEE, COAE&T, CCSHAU, Hisar
- Purchase of Biogas Analyzer, Innovation Centre for Agriwaste Management, CCSHAU, Hisar
- Purchase of SC/ST training material i.e. (Category-A) Garments/Cutting & Tailoring/Soft Toy making: Table mounted foot and motor operated Sewing machine with accessories like Screw driver (small & big), Seam ripper, Scissors (brass handle 10"), Bobbin, Bobbin case, Needle Clamp, Machine oil bottle, Sewing Needles (No. 16), Thread cutter and Lint brush and Measuring tape for Director Extension Education.
- Purchase of SC/ST training material i.e. (Category-B) i) Juicer Mixer Grinder, ii) Pressure Cooker S. Steel, 5 Ltr., iii) Patla Heavy Bottom Base 5 Ltr. (Sandwich Bottom), iv) Kadai Heavy Bottom Base 5 Ltr. (Sandwich Bottom) for Director Extension Education.
- Purchase of SC/ST training material i.e. (Category-C) i) Balli with Lid S. Steel (10 ltrs.) 304 Grade ii) Patla heavy bottom base (Sandwich bottom) 7 Ltr. for Director Extension Education, CCSHAU, Hisar.
- Purchase of SC/ST training material i.e. (Category-D) Nursery Raising i) Lawn Mower etc. for Director Extension Education.
- Purchase of SC/ST training material i.e. (Category-E) OTG Oven 20 Ltr. with accessories for Director Extension Education.
- Purchase of 'B' Twill Bags (50 Kg. Cap.), Jute Canvas Bags of various sizes with printing. The offer must be valid for a period of at least three months from the date of opening of tender O/o director (Stores & Purchases), CCSHAU, Hisar.
- Purchase of Advance Technology Mirror-less Camera for Deptt. of Associate Director (Publication), CCSHAU, Hisar

For detail information and e-tendering schedule, please visit the website <http://etenders.hry.nic.in> and University website <http://hau.ac.in>.

Date of start of bid preparation and submission on 09.10.2023 (9:00 hours) and Closing on 30.10.2023 upto 17:00 hours. Opening of Technical Bid on 31.10.2023 at 11.00 A.M. Opening of Financial Bid on 03.11.2023 at 10:00 AM.

- Note:**
- All updates, amendments, Corrigenda etc. (if any) will be posted only on the CCS HAU Website/Tender website. There will not be any publication of the same through Newspapers or any other media.
 - Interested bidders are advised to deposit bid security/EMD on or before 48:00 hrs of expiring date and time of bid online so as to get the payment verified.

-Sd/- Director (S&P)

Office of Superintending Engineer 6th Circle, Public Works Department, Uttarkashi

E-Mail sepwduki@rediffmail.com Fax No 01374-222127 Tel. No 013742-22127

Letter no 4471/56M-06/2023 Date 07/10/2023

Corrigendum for Short Term E-tender Notice

Through this office's letter no. 4422/56 M-06/2023 dated 06.10.2023, Short term E-tenders were invited for the work of Renewal by PC in km 6.9,10,13 to 22 of Damba-Kandari motor road under the annual maintenance year 2023-24, and by letter no. 4423/56 M-06/2023 dated 06.10.2023. The Widening and Improvement of Garh Ambedkar Light Vehicle Road to Moter Road in Purola assembly constituency of Uttarkashi district under the Honorable Chief Minister announcement no. 629/2015.

Earnest money for the work of Renewal by PC in km 6.9,10,13 to 22 of Damba-Kandari motor road under the annual maintenance year 2023-24 was erroneously recorded as Rs 3.98 lakh. Please read Rs 4.18 lakh instead of Rs 3.98 lakh.

Earnest money for Widening and Improvement of Garh Ambedkar Light Vehicle Road to Moter Road in Purola assembly constituency of Uttarkashi district under the Honorable Chief Minister announcement no. 629/2015 was erroneously recorded as Rs 7.06 lakh. Please read Rs 9.06 lakh instead of Rs 7.06 lakh.

Sd/-

Superintending Engineer
6th Circle, P.W.D Uttarkashi

MAHARASHTRA METRO RAIL CORPORATION LTD.
 (A joint venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Maharashtra)
 Pune Metro Rail Project
 Maha Metro, Block No. A3, Food Grain Godown, Near Civil Court, Next to Kamgar Putala Vashah, Shivaji Nagar, Pune 411005 e-mail: tenders.pmp@mahametro.org
 Website: www.punemetrorail.org Telephone: 020-26051074

E-TENDER NOTICE Dt. 09 Oct 2023
Name of Work: Expression of Interest (EOI) for Development and Operation of Property Structure on Part of land bearing Final Plot No. 499 OF Parvati at Swargate Metro Station of Pune Metro Rail Project on Public Private Partnership (DBFOT) Basis.

Interested bidders may visit Pune Metro Rail website www.punemetrorail.org or download the EOI documents and obtain further details regarding the EOI from our e-tender portal <https://mahametrorail.etenders.in> from 17:00 Hrs. on 09/10/2023 to 17:00 Hrs. of 31/10/2023 from Maha-Metro's e-tender Portal.
 General Manager (TP & Procurement -PD)
 Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited
 Maha Metro, Greenest Metro

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.
 Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Lajwanti Devi, W/o: Durgesh, R/o: Vivek Bhayar Kaloni, Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh - 203131 has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **CC No. 5154/18, U/s 138 NI Act, P.S. : Karol Bagh, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Lajwanti Devi cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Lajwanti Devi has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant).
 Proclamation is hereby made that the said Lajwanti Devi accused of **CC No. 5154/18, U/s 138 NI Act, P.S. : Karol Bagh, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **08.11.2023**.
 By Order
 Sh. Robinjeet Singh
 Metropolitan Magistrate (NI Act)-04
 Room No. 1, Annexe-1, Central, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi
 DP/11338/CD/2023-(Court Matter)

For All Advertisement Booking
Call : 0120-6651214

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Yogvati D/O Malook Chand Sharma, R/o A-77/3, Ground Floor, Dilshad Garden, Jhilmil, East Delhi, Delhi-110095, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Yagyavati Sharma
 0070867385-1

I, Shalu Bhardwaj W/O Hemant Kumar, R/o H No-40, T/F, F/S, Vipin Garden, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi-110059, Declare that name of Mine has been wrongly written as Shalu in my minor Daughter Dimpdy Bhardwaj, aged about 13 Years, in her Birth Certificate. The actual name of Mine is Shalu Bhardwaj, which may be amended accordingly.
 0070867393-1

I, Aakanksha Tyagi D/O Subhash Chand Tyagi W/O Hemant Singh Adhikari, R/o House no-128, Block-D, Pratap Vihar Part-3, Kirari Suleman Nagar, New Delhi-110086. Declare that Name of Mine and My Father has been wrongly written as Aakanksha and Tarun Tyagi in my All educational documents. The actual name of Mine and My Father are Aakanksha Tyagi and Subhash Chand Tyagi, which may be amended accordingly. 0070867390-1

I, Ambiyara Parvin D/o Anarul Miyan R/o H.No.248 Sec 57 Tigr Gurgaon-122003, Permanent Address:-Puranpara(P), Dakshin, Dinajpur, West Bengal-733124, declare that my name and my father's name has been wrongly mentioned as Aambi Ara Parveen and Anarul Mia in my 10th marksheet, my correct name is Ambiyara Parvin and my father's correct name is Anarul Miyan
 0130037118-1

It is informed you that Nirmala Kumari and Nirmala Kumari Singh wife of Raju Kumar Singh, house no -f-16/2, phase 1, Qutub vihar, south west Delhi 110071, both the name belongs to one and the same person i.e. mine. Nirmala Kumari will be name for all future purposes 0070867411-1

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the notary public, New Delhi, dated 6th October, 2023, I, RAVESHA MALHOTRA D/o Rajesh Malhotra, residing at Block F, House No. 2519, 4th floor, opposite to DSOI Club, Palam Vihar, Choma (62), Gurgaon, Haryana-122017, have changed my name from RAVESHA MALHOTRA (old name) to RAVESHA MALHOTRA (new name). Henceforth, I shall be known as RAVESHA MALHOTRA for all future purposes. 0040692685-1

OBITUARY

DEATH/ANNIVERSARY

34th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
 ELIMINATE TERRORISM ERADICATE CORRUPTION PROTEST DAY
 SHRI SURESH NARSINGH DUBE
 D.O.B. : 15-08-1956
 DEATH : 9-10-1989
 Jayprakash Narsingh Dube and Family
 09822404010/09637477417
 09822193213/09503737575
 Office : Dube Estate, Nalasopara (E) Residence : Jaiom Bhavan, Shivshrishti Complex, Medical College Rd, Ahole, Nalasopara (E), Tal.: Vasai, Dist.: Palghar - 401 209

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 0050228248-1

कार्यालय नगरपालिका महवा (दौसा) राज०
 क्रमांक - नपा/2023-24/1052 दिनांक- 6/10/2023
 --: निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना --:
 नगर पालिका महवा द्वारा विभिन्न कार्यों की निविदा आमंत्रित की गई है जिसकी निविदा सूचीयन न (DLB2324WSRC28243) है। निविदा सूचना की शर्त राजस्थान उपान पोटल की वेबसाइट www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in एवं <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।
 हस्ता./- अधिशाषी अधिकारी नगर पालिका महवा
 DIPR/c/11281/2023



TODAY'S MATCHES

New Zealand vs Netherlands, 2pm
Live on Star Sports network

India follow Dhoni playbook

Spinners, led by Jadeja, make the most of turner at Chepauk as India adopt CSK strategy to beat Australia

VENKATA KRISHNA B
CHENNAI, OCTOBER 8

AN HOUR-and-a-half before the toss on Sunday, Ravindra Jadeja stepped out of the dressing room and headed straight to the square where India's support staff were taking a hard look at the pitch. As he walked down from one end to the other, he gleefully exchanged high fives with Hardik Pandya, pointing out the spots in the strip that were already exciting him. For all the talk of this being a home coming for R Ashwin, it was Jadeja who actually felt so. This was the typical MA Chidambaram Stadium track that Jadeja is so accustomed to, where the ball grips and turns so quickly that it doesn't give the incoming batsmen any time to get used to the pace of the pitch.

At one point when R Ashwin and Kuldeep Yadav were getting the ball to rip off the surface and kept beating the batsmen, Jadeja was seen gesturing to Rohit Sharma to hand over the ball to him. Who better than him to know what he can do here on such a track.

For two months a year, when the IPL happens, there is a template masterminded by MS Dhoni that Chennai Super Kings stick with. Having stocked their squad with tweakers, they roll out pitches with plenty of assistance for their three spinners, especially those who bowl in line with the stumps. Barring the recently concluded IPL, where CSK opted for flat decks at the start, it is a template that has worked wonders for them.

It is not as if Australia were blinded by such conditions. Since they landed here last Tuesday, they must have seen this coming. Every time they have come here for a practice session over the past week, they have seen a layer of grass shaved.

They have been preparing for a turner all along, even roughing up the practice pitches, making their batsmen front up to spinners. With no dew around, and the pitch receiving very little water in the three days leading up to the match, pitch played to its character.

All it takes is just one ball for the CSK faithfuls to get excited here. In an IPL game in 2020 when Jadeja got one to spin, Stephen Fleming would perk up in the dugout, telling later, "We were excited when we saw Jadeja turn one". Just one sighting is usually enough. On Sunday night, it came from Ashwin

first, a vicious undercut carrom ball that swerved in before breaking sharply away from Steve Smith. A puff of dust swirled up, and Smith had a goggle-eyed stare at it. Watching it was Jadeja, who waved his arms theatrically; he must have then known that this could be his day.

With three world-class spinners -- Jadeja, Ashwin and Kuldeep Yadav -- in the squad, India chose to borrow the Chennai template for their World Cup opening fixture against Australia. And it was the trio who broke Australia's back as India seemed to have found the ideal formula to go forward in the World Cup.

When the pitches were announced earlier, the tracks chosen for India seemed to hint at such a trend but then India initially buckled under pressure of attempting 'balance' in their squad and didn't pick Ashwin or Yuzvendra Chahal. In the end, they did a U-turn by getting Ashwin back.

The three spinners combined for figures of 30-3-104-6 with Jadeja being the miser one of the lot, giving away only 28 runs in 10 overs and picking up three wickets including that of Steve Smith which triggered a sensational collapse as Australia went



Ravindra Jadeja celebrates with teammates after bowling out Australia's Steve Smith.

Reuters

from 110/2 to 140/7. As chants of "Dhoni, Dhoni" rung around the stands, it seemed a picture perfect.

Close shave

India were staring down the barrel at 2 for 3 after fast bowlers Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc combined to mop up Rohit Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer. It could have been worse when Kohli, batting on 12, was dropped by Mitchell Marsh off the bowling of Hazlewood. India were 20 for 3 at that point but the storm passed. Kohli and KL Rahul hit half centuries and steadied the ship with a 165-run partnership for the fourth wicket. India completed the chase in 41.2 overs with six wickets to spare.

If Australia had scored another 50 to 60 runs, the Indian batsmen would have had to deal with greater scoreboard pressure. But Jadeja and fellow spinners didn't let Australia get away.

"I play for CSK so I know the conditions here," Jadeja said. "When I saw the pitch I thought I should get 2-3 wickets, luckily I got 3 wickets and am very happy. I was looking to bowl into the stumps and there was turn, you never know which one is going straight and which one is turning, the odd ball was turning and I was just mixing the pace," he added.

And it was Jadeja who reaped the rewards for some of the good work done by Jasprit Bumrah, Ashwin and Kuldeep. When David Warner and Smith built a 69-run stand for the second wicket, it was evident that any total beyond 250 would be a challenging one for India to chase under lights. Ashwin and Kuldeep were a bit slow through the air in the initial spell, but very soon began to alter their pace, bowling a bit quicker.

While Kuldeep did give the opening by removing Warner with a wrong 'un, it was

I play for CSK so I know the conditions here. When I saw the pitch I thought I should get 2-3 wickets, luckily I got 3 wickets and am very happy.

RAVINDRA JADEJA
INDIA ALL-ROUNDER

Jadeja who found the most natural length and speed to bowl in these conditions.

You could see this turning out into a 'who blinks first' as dot balls began to pile up. 45 boundary-laden deliveries later, with Smith and Marnus Labuschagne showing no signs of throwing it away, Jadeja took it in his own hands off his fifth over. Having conceded 15 runs of his first four overs, Jadeja was beginning to get more meaner by removing Smith.

Panic room

Having nudged his way to 46 off 71 deliveries, showing the sort of patience to stay on this pitch, in the hope to build a platform where Glenn Maxwell and Cameron Green could get some quick runs later on, Smith's defence was breached by Jadeja in the most stunning manner that seemed to have set off a panic button in Australia's dressing room.

This was a classical Jadeja dismissal, where the ball pitched in the line of middle and leg stump and spun sharply to hit the top of off-stump.

This is the line and length that Jadeja bowls with the red ball, and here on a pitch that had plenty of help, was not going to let go off the chance. Smith was holding his bat in the line of where the ball had landed; not where it was headed. Jadeja then removed Labuschagne and Alex Carey in the space of two deliveries as Australia began to slip.

From there on Kuldeep and Ashwin got back to dismiss Maxwell and Green in successive overs as Australia were staring at being bowled out for a below-par total. From 140/7, their lower order that includes Cummins, Mitchell Starc took them 199 a target that brought the game alive.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA vs AUSTRALIA

MA CHIDAMBARAM, CHENNAI
Toss: Australia chose to bat first

AUSTRALIA		
David Warner	c & b K Yadav	41 (52b, 6x4)
M Marsh	c Kohli b Bumrah	0 (6b)
S Smith	b Jadeja	46 (71b, 5x4)
M Labuschagne	c Rahul b Jadeja	27 (41b, 1x4)
G Maxwell	b K Yadav	15 (25b, 1x4)
A Carey	lbw b Jadeja	0 (2b)
C Green	c Pandya b Ashwin	8 (20b)
P Cummins	lyer b Bumrah	15 (24b, 1x4, 1x6)
M Starc	lyer b M Siraj	28 (35b, 2x4, 2x1)
A Zampa	c Kohli b Pandya	6 (20b)
J Hazlewood	not out	1 (1b)
Extras	(lb 6, w 6)	12
Total	49.3 Ov (RR: 4.02)	199
Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 10-0-35-2, Mohammed Siraj 6.3-1-26-1, Hardik Pandya 3-0-28-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 10-1-34-1, Kuldeep Yadav 10-0-42-2, Ravindra Jadeja 10-2-28-3		

INDIA		
R Sharma (c)	lbw b Hazlewood	0 (6b)
I Kishan	c Green b Starc	0 (1b)
V Kohli	c Labuschagne b Hazlewood	85 (116b, 6x4)
S Iyer	c Warner b Hazlewood	0 (3b)
KL Rahul	not out	97 (115b, 8x4, 2x6)
Hardik Pandya	not out	11 (8b, 1x6)
Extras	(b 1, lb 1, nb 1, w 5)	8
Total	41.2 Ov (RR: 4.86)	201/4
FoW: 1-2 (Ishan Kishan, 0.4 ov), 2-2 (Rohit Sharma, 1.3 ov), 3-2 (Shreyas Iyer, 1.6 ov), 4-167 (Virat Kohli, 37.4 ov)		
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 8-0-31-1, Josh Hazlewood 9-1-38-3, Pat Cummins 6.2-0-33-0, Glenn Maxwell 8-0-33-0, Cameron Green 2-0-11-0, Adam Zampa 8-0-53-0		

NUMBER PLATE

2/3

The lowest score at which a team has lost the third wicket before going on to win the match.

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

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

Forget Bumrah not



Jasprit Bumrah after dismissing Mitchell Marsh.

PTI

In the spin onslaught, Jasprit Bumrah's incisive bowling could be forgotten. But he whipped up incredible speeds, breathed aggression, suffocated the batsmen with stifling lengths and beat both edges repeatedly. On a surface that had negligible assistance for seamers, he extracted seam movement, especially away from the right-handers, in all three spells. The first spell ensured that Australia did not race away, the

second kept the pressure imposed by the spinners intact, and in the third, he terrorised the lower order batsmen. This could be his role too--new-ball aggressor, middle-order enforcer and late-over destroyer. On luckier days he could have purchased more wickets, but Bumrah would not mind because his rhythm was devilishly sumptuous. Apart from the attempted slower ball in the last ball, he hardly put a foot wrong.

Warner in a spin

David Warner's jailbreak shot against Kuldeep Yadav seemed the sweep. Four times he attempted the stroke, and four times he either missed, mistimed or edged.



Surprisingly, he was negotiating his standard tormentor Ravi Ashwin without much fuss. Warner, ever nervous against the off-spinner, jinked down the ground and lofted him inside-out over extra-cover. He also clipped

for a delightful four, expertly dousing the turn and bounce. But Yadav's variations confounded him. He couldn't read him off his hand; he couldn't fathom him off the pitch either. In this confusion, he ended up toe-ending a full ball back to Yadav, in an attempt to power him down the ground.

Deja-vu... almost



Almost 2015 MCG deja-vu from that World Cup semifinal there with Virat Kohli. A shortish ball, and he swivelled into his pull, and skied it. 8 years before, it was the wicketkeeper Brad Haddin who rushed across to take the catch off the bowling of Mitch Johnson. Alex Carey wasn't so swift this time, and Mitch Marsh clangs it. Kohli suggests late the ball sort of skidded on. Not sure what he signalled at SCG but one remembers beer cans and inflatable life-sized toys thrown up in glee in the stands by the Australians. They immediately sensed that the game was over, then.

Play a sensible game

Playing one's natural game is a sporting cliché. But sometimes, it could be just daft. Ishan Kishan, playing his first-ever World Cup game, came out to open because Shubman Gill was not available. With just 200 to chase, there was no need to chase a wide swinging delivery from Mitchell Starc, who specialises in getting wickets with the new ball, with two slips in place. But sometimes, one becomes a victim of one's own reputation and can't hold back. Kishan may have felt obliged to live up to his swashbuckling stardom. Whatever may be the explanation, sometimes discretion is the better part of valour. The folly was compounded when Rohit Sharma and Shreyas Iyer departed in the next over, leaving India tottering at 2/3.



NEW STAR ON THE HORIZON

Tagged for greatness at 15, Rachin starting to level up to namesakes

SANDIP G
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 8

A STORY In Wellington cricket circles goes that one morning, Cricket Wellington's youth development coach Ivan Tissera tagged a 10-year-old boy to the Hutt Recreation Ground in Lower Hutt Wellington for a nets session with the U-15s. The boy, barely four and a half feet, was asked to pad up against Henry Walsh, a nearly six-foot tall left-arm seamer, then touted as the next big thing in Wellington cricket.

Walsh's parents grumbled over their son having to bowl at a nine-year-old. But in barely 20 minutes, they were wondering why their son was being subjected to this humiliation by a boy who was just a little taller than the stumps. He not just batted emphatically but unpacked an array of strokes that left the spectators stunned.

Among the marveled audience were then international cricketers Grant Elliot and Matthew Bell, who wondered whether he was "Sachin" or "Rachin"! The story is unverified, like most myths, but Rachin Ravindra always made a buzz, not only

with his portmanteau name after the two legends of Indian cricket, but with his range of strokes too. So when Sriram Krishnamurthy took over as Wellington Firebirds' batting coach, he wondered why there was a 15-year-old cricketer with them in the extended squad.

"Then I watched him bat and I realised why he was there," he recounts in this paper. "He had more strokes than any 15-year-old and was clearly mature beyond his years. Little wonder that there was always a buzz around him," he says.

But limelight at such a young age could burden him. "He was always this calm and sounded fellow, who knew exactly what he was doing, who never bothered about the spotlight around him. Then I met his parents, Ravi and Deepa and I realised that it was all about his upbringing," he explains. Ravi, a software system architect, was a first-division cricketer in Bangalore before he emigrated to Wellington at the turn of the century.

But he could not shake off his love for the game, and began organising cricket for schoolchildren and started the Hutt Hawks Club, which organised cricket tours



Rachin Ravindra smashed 123 off just 93 deliveries in New Zealand's opener against England.

AP

After stitching together fourth-highest World Cup stand with Devon Conway in New Zealand's opener, Ravindra becomes Kiwis go-to man

to different cricketing outposts of the world. He named his son Rachin, merging the names of his favourite cricketers, Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid, a quirk of first name that has been well-storied.

Ravi wanted his daughter to embrace the sport but the cricket-bug was to bite his son, almost naturally. He was not even three when he would ask his parents to throw tennis balls at him, batting with a plastic bat.

It would soon become a routine, only that the texture of the bat and ball changed. Ravi would carefully nurture him, conscious to not be a pushy father. Every morning, even after his New Zealand debut, the backyard-routine continued. "He often will train early in the morning with his father, then

go off to team training, then go and train again in the afternoon/evening. Most players burn out eventually with this type of routine. But not him," tells Glenn Pocknaill, former head coach of Wellington Stags.

Sriram explains the reason he does not burn out. "He is somebody who enjoys training more than batting in the middle. He derives a lot of fun from it, and is not someone who trains for the sake of it. Every session is detailed and he gets exactly what he wants to get from those sessions. He is a perfectionist," he says.

Such a perfectionist that he would practise with the Dukes' ball in winter when there is no cricket in New Zealand so that he could get used to the swing and seam of the hand-made cherry.

He would pull along his friend Devon Conway for strenuous coaching camps in the winter. He would land in Bangalore and drive four hours to the Anantapur Sports Foundation to acquaint with the turners of the subcontinent before his Test debut in Kanpur. He would go onto save the Test in Kanpur with a 91-ball 18 not out.

Two years later, he would stroke 123 off only 96 balls. "I really enjoyed the way he

was open to being challenged and training new skills out of his comfort zone. Being prepared to test himself to be able to figure out ways to get through or thrive in certain situations," says Pocknaill. "His adaptation of his skillset and when to use it has been impressive," he adds.

His habitat helped. "Being an opening batsman at the Basin Reserve is tough. The ball invariably swings, there is always a bit of extra bounce than most other grounds in the country. So you have to be flexible, technically, tactically and temperamentally," says Sriram.

His playing in age-groups with bigger boys helped too.

"He was 18 when he first played for NZ A and has always played with older players. This helps with maturity. He's always known what he wants and has a clear plan of how he wants to get there. A lot of credit to his parents and family for raising a level-headed young man," says Pocknaill. It's the same level-headedness that a nine-year-old showed at the Hutt Recreation Ground a decade ago. And now the boy named after his father's idols, is becoming an idol himself.

Sleepless athletes, haggling Indians, a city aspiring to be a holiday destination

Beyond the medals, near-misses and sporting theatre: Notes, musings and memories from a fortnight in Hangzhou



EXPRESS AT ASIAN GAMES

MIHIR VASAVDA
HANGZHOU, OCTOBER 8

Where are the people?

Not a lot happens in the clear skies hanging over Hangzhou. Or even on the streets, for that matter.

Day 1 in Hangzhou, a city home to 12 million people in a country where 1.4 billion live. But on the eve of the Games, the city resembles a ghost town.

It's a beautiful city, make no mistake, like every other place anywhere in the world with a water body. Hangzhou has the calm waters of the Qiantang River flowing through the centre, the West Lake where thousands flock daily to take a boat ride and sip the famous Dragon Well tea, and the breathtaking Grand Canal that's of high cultural significance.

The architecture is breathtaking and there's Games branding in whichever direction you look.



Despite Asia coming to Hangzhou, parts of the city were deserted.

But where are the people? There's a strange, eerie silence on the streets. Entire neighbourhoods are deserted, the metros and buses are empty, and thousands of public-sharing bicycles lying unused.

The mind harks back to reports from eight years ago when the city hosted the G20 Summit and the authorities reportedly 'convinced' people to leave the town so that the event could be held peacefully.

The local reporters say everyone is out of town because of the long holidays for the Lunar Festival. Their newspapers and channels, however, claim Hangzhou is emerging as China's top tourist destination because of the Games.

Who's right? We'll never know, perhaps.

Morning runs

To those who think Games like these are a test of a sportsperson's athletic abilities, think again.

It's 6.58 in the morning, cold, and pouring down. A young-ish photographer I met five hours ago is dragging his trolley bag with one hand and holding a camera in another. He's sprinting in the same direction as I am. And on his tired face is an expression questioning his life choices. To be honest, I have a feeling he saw the same thing when he looked at me.

I know it's 6.58 precisely because, in 2 minutes, our bus to a transport mall will

leave. And the driver waits for no one. Miss that, and you are likely to miss the connecting bus to a venue. Miss that one, and you are sure to reach the competition at least an hour late given how far the venues are (on an average day, we travelled at least 150 km – and that's a conversation estimate).

And so, mini sprinting and race-walking Games take place within the larger Games between journalists of different nationalities. The dining hall becomes the start point. The bus at the transport hub, the finish line.

The 150m of dread every morning. Beauty queens, pilots and 'visa counselors'

It's backbreaking but all of it is worth every drop of sweat.

For, there's no bigger place than a multi-discipline Games to stumble upon people from different nationalities and backgrounds daily. Some of it is astonishing; some inspiring and a few heartbreaking.

There's a beauty pageant runner-up in South Korea's women's kabaddi team. A pilot in Hong Kong's rugby side. And a 'visa counselor' in Syria's contingent.

Majd Eddie Ghazal, the high jumper from Damascus, has seen his hometown reduced to ashes following decades of violence. He is forced to travel to neighbouring countries, Lebanon mostly, merely to fly for international competitions. And has to struggle to get a visa because of the colour of his passport.

But he doesn't seek sympathy. "Because of the situation I'm an expert in embassies, where they are, their addresses when they open when they close, what documents you need for a visa. I'm an expert in this subject," he jokes.

Sleep deprivation

It's weird how lack of sleep at Games like these is never spoken about a lot.

Chirag Shetty couldn't sleep because of illness. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy was up all night because of nerves. Even the all-conquering hero, Neeraj Chopra, couldn't catch a wink because of anxiety. The double medal winner Parul Chaudhary was up all night before her 5,000m run because she was 'too tired' from the steeplechase. And Palak Gulia couldn't sleep because she was 'too excited' for her debut.

The volunteers keep smiling and going out of their way to help you despite working for almost 18-19 hours each night. The organisers are up for longer, shuttling between one meeting to another, travelling from venue to venue. And the drivers ferrying all of us sometimes sleep even less.

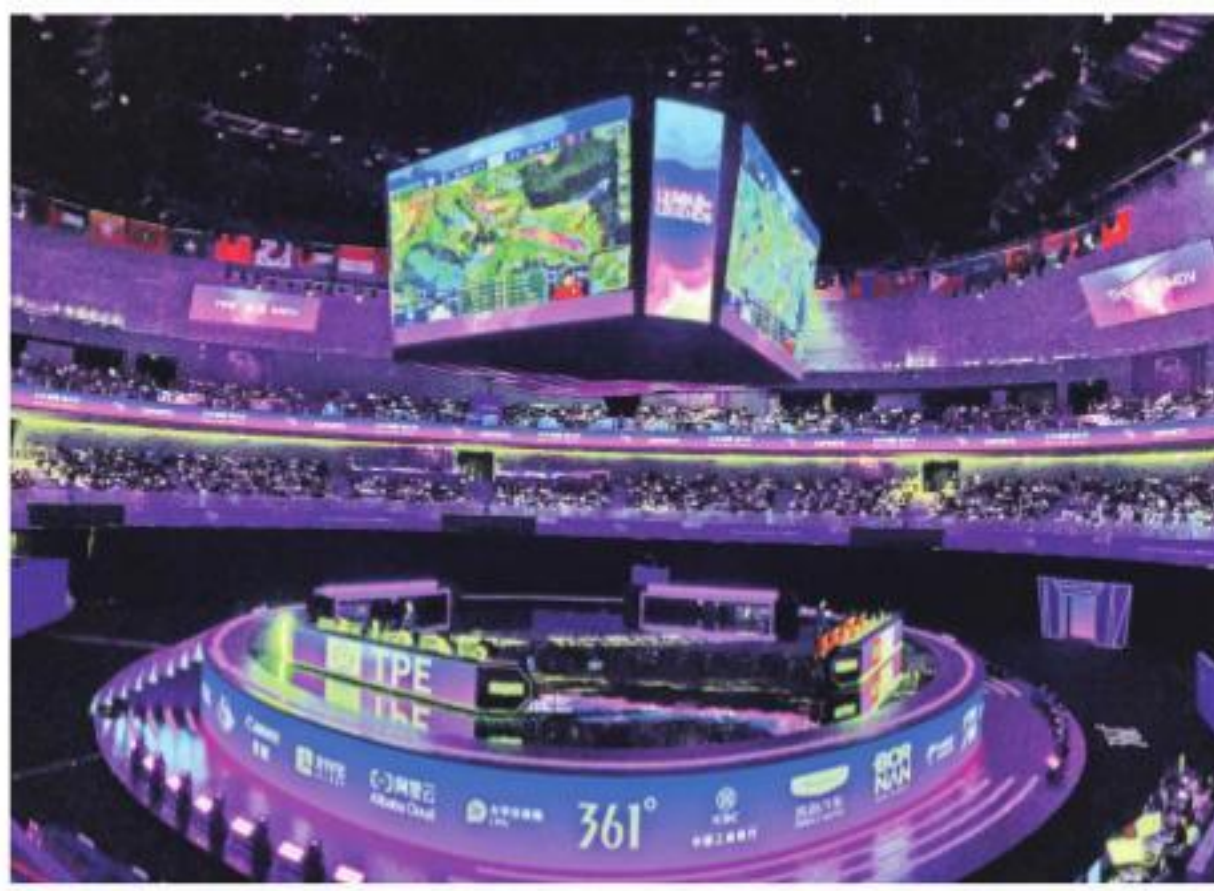
All you see around you are tired, sleepless and anxious faces. But they're all ever smiling. What keeps them going? Gallons of coffee that's brewed each day.

Parallel worlds

The Games are a bubble and within that, we exist in two parallel worlds.

When we are within the Games venues, it's free internet – there's WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Google... all the daily necessities. Venture a foot outside the marked territory, and you enter the censored zone. This isn't restricted only to the virtual world. On the streets near the Village, street signs are both in English and Chinese. But the farther you go from the venues, the fewer English signages become.

And so, it leads to situations where you enter a hospital thinking it is a hotel or get stranded in the middle of nowhere while searching for the Athletes' Village (bless the two technical officials who walked 3km to



(Above) A message of solidarity flashes during the closing ceremony. (Below) Sports, a new event introduced in the programme this year. Reuters/Mihir Vasavda

help me reach my destination).

The daily press briefings hosted by the organisers mirror this anomaly, too. The conferences follow a routine – the local journalists go first, followed by the visiting pack, and so on.

The foreign journalists want to talk about larger issues – about the athletes from Arunachal Pradesh not getting visas, the North Koreans who smash world records without getting dope tested, the farcical refereeing... the locals want to know about the Games slogan, the food, the mascots and the official anthem.

They don't ask follow-ups. And if a foreign journalist does, be prepared to be cold-shouldered out of the conference.

Tourists, attractions

A rare, late morning with few India

medal events. A friend and I head out to explore the city centre and the fabled West Lake.

At the Olympic Sports Centre subway station, the eyes of a child go wide as he sees us; his jaw drops and he stops eating the pastry. Inside the coach, people stare so hard and long that it'd put the elevator eyes in the Delhi metro to shame.

At the destination station, outside a restroom, a girl walks up to my friend and asks for a selfie. Anti-social and introverted that he is, he refuses. Not even worth a second glance at home, we seem to be exotic here.

On the boat at the West Lake, people ignore the beautiful sights around us. Parents line up their children on the upper deck to pose for a photo with us. Nowhere to escape – especially with neither of us knowing how to swim – we have to oblige. Proper wed-

ding reception feels.

In a city aspiring to be a holiday destination, we, the tourists, became attractions.

The 'skilful bargainers'

Indians touched the 100 mark by displaying their skills on the field. And they made an impression with their skills – of a different kind – off the field too.

The athletes spend years training just to prepare for the few hours and minutes of their competition. And when it's done, they know how to let their hair loose. Some have binged on the unlimited buffet at the Village, a few have gone on exploration tours around the city but most have rushed to the nearby clothes market and gone on a shopping spree.

Indians, unsurprisingly, were among the hundreds of athletes who visited the Sijing market. And the China Daily noted that the Indians, who went there on the opening day of the Games itself, were 'bargaining skilfully with a seller'. Not just that, they also played a 'crucial role in attracting other Games participants' to the market.

True ambassadors, on and off the field.

Excess baggage

Not all Indian athletes will worry about returning with excess baggage.

Shooter Esha Singh shows off her four medals. "My back will bend if I wear all of them together," she jokes. "It's a weight I'll willingly carry, though." An emotion each of India's 107 medallists will share.

PS.: A big shoutout to Carol and Jack. The two teenage volunteers who were walking hand-in-hand along the banks of the Qiantang River, spending the rare time off, when this fumbling, lost boomer ruined their date. The biology students walked a kilometre, booked a cab, sorted out the complex payment issue and helped me reach the Closing on time. To them and the hundreds of other volunteers who made our lives easy, Xiexie!



Pigging out

Animal safari

Every meal at the football field-sized hall feels like a safari in the animal kingdom.

There's a braised snake's head and duck's liver; an assortment of beef and a 'beggar's chicken'. But nothing came close to the variety of pork being served – the poor animal's every body part was ripped, roasted and served on a platter.

The humble potato remained the last veggie standing. Boiled, fried and baked; mashed, chopped and scooped, the potato made appearances every night for three weeks in different avatars and fought a brave, lonely battle amidst an animal onslaught. These are the times when having a persistent family that forces you to carry every *Gujju's* SOS food – thepla and khakra – really comes as a blessing. There's a rare night when they serve something that resembles a naan and a curry that tastes a lot like the manchuian gravy we get back home. The next morning, the kingdom hits back. This time, with something unimaginable – a grilled pork's butt. A friend dares. His observation? "It's soft."

CLOSING NOTES

China made a mark, not just on medal tally, but also with robots and AI

MIHIR VASAVDA
HANGZHOU, OCTOBER 8

THE MOST poignant moment of an otherwise joyous closing ceremony came when the digital torchbearer reappeared. The giant human avatar made of a million digital flames extinguished the cauldron and headed towards the exit. She took a couple of steps forward, stopped and looked back longingly at the torch. Took a couple of steps forward again, once again looked back and stopped a little longer, waved goodbye from the roof of the Olympic Stadium before darting off into the night sky.

"We did it," the mesh screen screamed in big, bold words. That, there was never any doubt. China was prepared – over-prepared, actually – for these Games – postponed by a year due to the pandemic – that were eight years in the making and the spending estimated at \$30 billion, according to the *Associated Press*. Images of heart-stopping action from the last fortnight were emblazoned on the big screen. There were portraits, too, of human moments. Of victories and defeats. Of larger-than-life stories and minnows making

their mark.

But it wasn't only about sport. Claims were made of a 'harmonious' Asia from the host nation that's enduring rocky relationships with many neighbouring countries. There was an unabashed show of technology. And there was a not-so-subtle underlying message: that China is not in as bad an economic situation as it's made out to be.

The reality of the situation may be different. Especially after Reuters reported, citing Japanese daily *Mainichi*, that the mayor of the next host city did not travel to Hangzhou, thus breaking from the tradition. The reason, the report added, was because of the comments he made a decade ago 'denying that Japan's army inflicted a wartime massacre on the Chinese city of Nanjing.' 'Harmonious' Asia might be a dream too far but on a night that saw another in-your-face display of hi-tech, in an event that had a lot more razzmatazz than the Opening and reached a crescendo that is usually associated with ceremonies like these, China ensured its gains were counted – on and off the field.

The Closing began the same way most sporting events ended: with the March of the Volunteers blaring out and thousands mutter-



India were led out by hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh in the closing ceremony. PTI

ing the words. Over the last fortnight, China's national anthem was played a record 201 times – each time the country's athletes won a gold medal. China made the most of the home conditions by nearly doubling their medal count from the previous Asiad, with the

powerhouse nation coming good in nearly every sport it participated in – China did not compete in only two sports, cricket and kabaddi.

However, the hosts could not better their record overall tally of 416, a feat China achieved

when the country last hosted the Asian Games in 2010.

Yet, China was way out of everyone else's reach. The second and third-placed teams, Japan and South Korea, had fewer total medals combined than China. Their gold medal count, too, was less than half of China's gold tally.

For India, who were led out by hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh in the closing ceremony, the Games will go down in history. For the first time, the country breached the 100-medal mark, finishing with a total of 107 medals including 28 gold.

If the last fortnight was a test for the Paris Olympics in 10 months, China will continue to push the US for the top-of-the-table battle, Japan will have to outdo itself to build on the Tokyo success. India's athletes, meanwhile, can ill-afford to read too much into the century haul, given that a bunch of their medals came in non-Olympic events or where the Olympic standard is a lot higher. The Hangzhou Asiad, though, will be remembered for a lot more than mere sporting achievements.

Refereeing blunders

The last two weeks were peppered with

refereeing blunders and allegations of bias. But there were also moments when the athletes showed that despite the highly competitive nature of events like these, and regardless of the partisanship shown by the crowd, there is space for spirit.

Chinese hurdler Lin Yuwei appreciating her Indian counterpart Jyothi Yarraji's decision to 'stand for herself' in a heated 100m hurdles final was one such moment of class. The gesture shown by the North and South Korean athletes to shake their hands and bow in front of each other's dugouts after the basketball bronze medal match was another enduring image.

These were also the Games where robots became the 'unknown heroes' – as the local media put it; serving ice creams, playing pinos, delivering goods and transporting athletes. A vehicle to show that China is not just about pandas – the mascot when the country first hosted the Asiad in 1980 – but also about robots and artificial intelligence.

These were the Games that were much more than a mere sporting celebration; they were to showcase China's chest-thumping nationalism, the flag-waving fans and the proud, unconquerable athletes.

Neeraj dons Sachin's cape

Tendulkar was the north star that guided young players around him, a role now taken up by Chopra

SANDEEP DWIVEDI

"MUJHE PATA tha bhaisaab maar hi denge." With that simple reverential quote, India's latest javelin star, Asian Games silver medalist Kishore Kumar Jena summed up the stature of the man one step above him on the podium - Neeraj Chopra.

On the face of it, this was Jena telling the world that he knew that the gold medal wasn't his even when he led briefly on that busy evening at Hangzhou. There was much more to the phrase.

Neeraj is 25 and Jena 28. It is unusual to be called Bhaisaab by someone three years older. The English language fails to do justice to the word Bhaisaab. It translates to brother but it doesn't really mean that.

Brother, bro, bhai, have a ring of casualness. It's an address best suited when in the company of equals. Bhaisaab has gravitas, it's an honorific that isn't just bestowed, it needs to be earned.

Back in the day, during cricket's Fab Four era, the Indian dressing room had many stars, stalwarts and mentors. But there was only one Paaji - Sachin Tendulkar. Made popular by the team's young Punjab boys - Harbhajan Singh and Yuvraj Singh - the endearing title would stick. Regardless of their home state or mother tongue, those around Tendulkar would call him Paaji.

The team's respected elder would have the final word in a team huddle. Tendulkar would consider it his responsibility to take the juniors to some place he had been in the past, introduce them to new cuisines, teach them the ways of the world and make them aware about the complexities of being a successful sportsperson. At this Asian Games, Indian track and field finally got their own Paaji. And as Jena said, he would be called Bhaisaab.

On the way to the Asiad gold, Neeraj showed that his greatness can't just be measured in metres. What he did between throws, and after winning the medal, showed the boy from Haryana was a champion even without the javelin in his hand.

On D-Day, he had the worst possible start. The world knows that Neeraj likes being the early leader. In Tokyo, it was the second throw that got him the gold. Hangzhou seemed to have the same storyline.

Neeraj would give it his all in his first throw, but in a bizarre first for the Games, the officials failed to measure it. Neeraj would argue but give up soon. He would later say, "I didn't want to waste the warm-up of the throwers following me. Their bodies would have cooled down."



Kishore Jena (L) and Neeraj Chopra drape themselves in the national flag after they won the silver and gold medals in the javelin throw event at the Hangzhou Asiad. PTI

Even when his mind was preoccupied, busy weighing the consequences of his botched Plan A, he remained alive to the concerns of his javelin brothers, especially his compatriot. When the officials bungled up again and wrongly fouled a Jena attempt, Neeraj played the Bhaisaab. He directed the Orissa thrower to the judges panel. Neeraj would take time out from his routine and talk to the officials, coax them to check the replays.

However, things changed when Jena took the lead and a question mark hung over Neeraj's gold medal. From a friendly and fair opponent, he would turn into a ruthless pro once wired to win.

Keeping high standards

There was a bit of Roger Federer about the almost theatrical metamorphosis. So many times in his career, when things got tough, Federer would purse his lips, flare his nostrils to get the expression of disapproval on his face. It wasn't to intimidate the opponent but a demonstration of his annoyance over his failure to live up to the fabled FedEx standards. The Swiss legend would grind his teeth, bounce the ball vigorously on the floor and invariably fire an ace.

Neeraj at the top of his run-up, when relegated to the second spot, too had that look. His lips quivered briefly and he seemed to be muttering something under his breath. This

Tendulkar would consider it his responsibility to take the juniors to some place he had been in the past, introduce them to new cuisines, teach them the ways of the world and make them aware about the complexities of being a successful sportsperson.

was not him seething with anger. Champion athletes control their minds like a horse on a leash, they don't allow the pressure to trickle down to their limbs.

On his run-up, his stride wasn't hurried. The switch from being side-on to open-chested was fluid. The body would uncoil perfectly and the javelin would shiver furiously when it left his hand. It would cut the air around it and draw a neat parabola before landing at the 88.88m mark.

It was an effort throw, enough to get him the gold. It was also the signal to take off the game-face mask.

Soon he would share the Tricolour with Jena as they took a victory lap. Neeraj would guide him to the photographers, directing him to give the best frame, making him understand the podium protocol. Broadly, he was playing friend, guide and Bhaisaab to the first-timer. Not just Jena even long jumper Murali Sreeshankar and his old mate decathlete Tejaswin Shankar athletes seek his advice and ask for tips.

Neeraj is a throwback to the time in Indian sports when the country's sporting greats - Tendulkar, Prakash Padukone, Viswanathan Anand and Vijay Amritraj - wore their greatness lightly.

Though largely understated, Neeraj isn't afraid to even take unpopular stands. During the wrestlers' protest at Jantar Mantar, he was among the few who tweeted in their support and also backed his arch rival from Pakistan, Arshad Nadeem, when he was being trolled.

With that delightful Haryanavi accent, toothpaste ad smile and kind eyes, Neeraj can melt hearts and de-escalate conflicts. He can also make the most-repeated post-match clichés uttered by sportspersons sound true.

"It was fun going one-on-one with Jena...Aaj maza aa gaya. So, thanks Jena," Neeraj would say about the opponent who almost snatched his guaranteed gold. How can a high-pressure situation be fun? It can if you, and even your rivals, have the strong belief that "Bhaisaab maar hi denge".

ICC deems Dharamsala outfield 'average'

RAHUL PANDEY
DHARAMSALA, OCTOBER 8

A day after Afghanistan head coach Jonathan Trott said that Mujeeb Ur Rahman was lucky to escape serious injury on a visibly patchy Dharamsala outfield, the International Cricket Council has judged it 'average' but good to go for Tuesday's England-Bangladesh game.

The verdict on the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) Stadium's outfield comes after an inspection by the ICC's independent pitch consultant Andy Atkinson on Sunday.

"The process for assessing the condition of the pitch and outfield lies with the match officials under the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process, and the outfield at Dharamsala was rated as 'average' after the Afghanistan-Bangladesh match. Additionally, the ICC independent pitch consultant has taken a look at the outfield today, and is comfortable with the conditions - as is Javagal Srinath, the Match Referee for the next game," an ICC spokesperson stated.

The patchy outfield at Dharamsala saw little sand explosions throughout Saturday's game and witnessed fielders from both teams slipping in their attempts to run after the ball. The puffs of dust from the impact of the ball on the surface, and the bowlers' footmarks were also visible all over the ground. A couple of Afghanistan players would also slip during regulation fielding drills in the team's first training session on the ground on Thursday, leading to head coach Trott criticising the outfield on offer. "We see in cricket players being encouraged to improve their fielding but if they are afraid to dive, I mean we're lucky Mujeeb (Ur

Rahman) didn't have a serious knee injury towards the end. We saw Devon Conway from New Zealand early on as well (in the tournament opener against England on Thursday). Something for them to look at but I'm definitely not putting any blame on that for our loss today," the former England batsman said.

The outfield was watered after the game on Saturday and again on Sunday, with less than 48 hours to go for the next World Cup game at the venue.

England opener Jonny Bairstow would also weigh in on the issue during his side's first training session ahead of their game against Bangladesh.

"There's been a lot of chat about it. It's just about being smart about it. The last thing you want is guys going off with knee injuries or something. It will be very difficult to hold someone back if they see a ball and they try to stop it - it's a natural reaction to go for it. You might be a bit more clever about how you go about it - it might affect your angles and where you stand," Bairstow said.

The outfield at Dharamsala has been under the scanner owing to heavy rain in the region in the months preceding the World Cup, which had also led to the outfield being infested with fungus a month before the tournament. The organisers had since been in a race against time to provide a suitable outfield for the marquee tournament.

Earlier this year, the third India-Australia Test was also moved to Indore from Dharamsala after the HPCA failed to prepare a playable outfield in time for the game.

The venue is scheduled to host four more games at this World Cup, including the India-New Zealand league stage fixture on October 22.



The patchy outfield in Dharamsala induced sand explosions in the venue's first game and saw fielders from both teams slipping. PTI

UGANDA

61st National Day

MESSAGE

H.E. Prof Joyce Kakuramatsi Kikafunda
High Commissioner of Uganda to India

WARM greetings. I am very happy to inform you that the long-awaited Uganda Airlines direct commercial flight from Entebbe International Airport, Uganda to Mumbai International Airport, India will be officially launched on Uganda's 61st Independence Anniversary - Monday, October 9, 2023. This momentous occasion re-affirms Uganda's commitment and enduring historical and economic connection to India. This direct flight is a huge milestone in Uganda-India Bilateral Relations - a game changer that will boost the volume of Business (trade, investments, imports, and exports), Technology transfer, Tourism for leisure to visit the Pearl of Africa, Medical Tourism, Students and people-to-people connect. The flight is starting with Mumbai but going forward, other big Indian cities like New Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, and others, will be accessed.



I wish to use this chance to sincerely thank His Excellency, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, and his National Resistance Movement Government for the peace and security they have ushered into Uganda to enable such developmental projects to take place in the country. I express my thanks and appreciation to the CEO of Uganda Airlines, Ms. Jennifer Bamuturaki, and her team and DG of Uganda Civil Aviation Authority, Mr. Fred Bamwesigye for working tirelessly to make this flight a reality. The Hon. Minister of Works and Transport, General Edward Katumba Wamala and his team, the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs General Jeje Odongo and his team, Uganda Tourism Board, Uganda Investment Authority, National Planning Authority, and other associated Ugandan MDAs, are gratefully thanked for the positive role they played.

In a special way, I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to our Honorary Consul in Mumbai, Hon. Madhusudan Agrawal for the great role he has played in making this project a success. Our Honorary Consul in Chennai, Hon. Vinod Saroogi, and Amb. Margaret Kyogire, Ms. Sophie Birungi, and all staff of Uganda High Commission, New Delhi - are all acknowledged for their contribution and hard work on this project. Last but very important, I wish to thank the Government and people of India for facilitating Uganda to fly her Airline into their great country. For God and my Country, I thank you all.

Uganda's National carrier, Uganda Airlines launches direct flights between Entebbe and Mumbai

UGANDA Airlines announced the launch of its new direct service, connecting Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and Entebbe International Airport in Uganda, which started on October 7, 2023. This will be the first time in more than 50 years that India and Uganda will be connected by a non-stop air service.

The route is Uganda Airlines' second service outside the African continent and the 12th across its network and joins a rapidly expanding network that offers travellers convenient connections to South, West, Central and Eastern Africa. The direct service will last approximately five and a half hours in each direction, bringing unmatched convenience to people travelling between the two points for business, family or tourism.

"This is a momentous occasion in Uganda-India relations because, for the first time in half a century, our two friendly nations are now connected by a direct air service. We are happy that Uganda Airlines is establishing this air bridge, which will shorten the journey between our friendly nations, strengthen bilateral trade and deepen cultural interaction between our people," said General Edward Katumba Wamala, Uganda's Minister for Works and Transport.

The inbound inaugural flight UR 430 from Uganda departed Entebbe on 7th October 2023 and arrived in Mumbai the same day. The return UR 431 will depart Mumbai today, i.e. 9th October, and arrive in Entebbe the same day.

The flight timings would change from next week on Mondays and Wednesdays, with the inbound flight UR 430 departing Entebbe and arriving in Mumbai every Tuesdays and Thursdays. Meanwhile, the reciprocal flight UR 431 will depart Mumbai and arrive in Entebbe.

The schedule has been designed to fit neatly into our existing network to meet the needs of those passengers who might wish to continue their journeys beyond Uganda.

Uganda Airlines Chief Executive Jenifer Bamuturaki highlighted the convenience the new service brings

for business and leisure travellers.

"We are excited to introduce this, the latest addition to our network, which affirms Uganda Airlines' commitment to expand travel options for our passengers. Besides convenience, we hope this route will add energy to the existing business and commercial relations between India and Uganda that date back more than a century," she said.

Uganda Airlines Board Chair Priscilla Mirembe Serukka said the service to Mumbai was only an initial entry point into India, and other destinations were under consideration.

"We are happy that we have answered the call of the business community, which, since we started operations four years ago, has been asking us to introduce this service. People are asking for more and we are listening. We are open to exploring new opportunities in this market," she said.

Bookings are open and have been made convenient through the Uganda Airlines App, which allows you to make reservations, pay for your ticket, modify your itinerary and print your board pass. We invite you to download the App and can't wait to welcome you aboard.

Uganda Airlines currently operates flights to Dubai, Johannesburg, Bujumbura, Nairobi, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, Juba, Kinshasa and Mogadishu. Flights to Lagos, Nigeria, are scheduled to start shortly.

Uganda Airlines is Uganda's flagship national passenger and cargo carrier that started in 2019. It provides scheduled air transportation services in East Africa and near international markets. Uganda Airlines was awarded the World's Youngest Aircraft Fleet Award by ch-Aviation in 2020, 2021 and 2022.



ADVERTORIAL

EXPLORE UGANDA THE PEARL OF AFRICA

VISIT Uganda and explore the magic and splendour of the pearl of Africa. Uganda is a country of great endowments, gifted by nature and rich cultural heritage.

From the imposing mountain ranges, including the beautiful snow-capped Rwenzori Mountains, to the many lakes like the vast Lake Victoria and the source of the great River Nile, the world's longest river.

Uganda is home to some of the greatest wildlife safaris. Across the nation, parks are home to some of the world's most exotic animals - the big five (lions, leopards, rhinoceros, elephants, and buffaloes) and countless others.

Uganda has more than half of the world's mountain gorilla population in Mgahinga National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The country offers unique adventurous experiences of the wild, nature, culture and the most friendly people.

FACTS ABOUT UGANDA

- Jinja in Uganda is located at the source of the River Nile.
- Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were immersed in River Nile in Jinja.
- About one-quarter of Uganda's surface is made up of lakes and rivers.
- Lake Victoria in Uganda is the largest lake in Africa.
- The second deepest lake in Africa, Lake Bunyonyi, is a body of water in southwestern Uganda near the Rwandan border.
- Uganda is part of the Great Lakes Region of Africa.
- Uganda also has 60 protected areas, which include 10 national parks.
- Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Rwenzori Mountains National Park are UNESCO World Heritage sites.
- The endangered mountain gorilla resides in the Rwenzori Mountains of Uganda.
- Uganda is home to approximately 5,000 chimpanzees - more than any other East African country.
- Over 10% of the world's bird species can be found in Uganda.
- Uganda has 6.8% of the world's butterfly species.
- The national animal of the country is the Grey Crowned Crane. This bird is featured on the country's flag.
- Mt. Elgon has the largest volcano base in the world.
- Approximately one million tourists come to Uganda every single year.
- Uganda produces an estimated 11 million tons of bananas annually and is the second largest producer of bananas in the world.
- The Rwenzori Mountains of the Moon support glaciers and are one source of the River Nile.

