

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



IDEA EXCHANGE
‘Hosting Olympics is not about just two weeks, it’s about a higher level of achievement’
ABHINAV BINDRA
OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST, IOC ATHLETES COMMISSION MEMBER
PAGE 15

Hamas at Kerala rally: BJP calls for probe, Israel envoy wants it in India’s terror list

LIZ MATHEW & SHAJU PHILIP
NEW DELHI, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 29

HAMAS LEADER Khaled Mashal’s address via virtual mode Friday to a pro-Palestine rally, organised by Jamaat-e-Islami’s youth wing Solidarity Youth Movement in Malappuram, has led to an uproar in Kerala with the BJP targeting not just the organisers, but also the Left and Congress and calling for a probe by Central and state agencies.

The Solidarity Youth Movement, which has launched a campaign to “uproot Hindutva and apartheid Zionism”, also announced the participation via virtual mode of Dr Mohammad Makram Balawi, Director General of the League of

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MODI DIALS EL-SISI TO DISCUSS GAZA P7



Mohammed Shami celebrates the wicket of Moeen Ali in Lucknow, Sunday. He took 4/22. PTI

RELATED REPORTS, PAGE 17

Bowlers’ day out: Shami, Bumrah demolish England as India record sixth straight win

DEVENDRA PANDEY
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 29

AS IF treating his daughter, Rohit Sharma wet a handkerchief, gently cupped Mohammad Shami’s chin and proceeded to pluck out the object of irritation from his eye. That was probably the only time the captain looked really anxious as India successfully de-

fended the modest total of 229 against England on Sunday. India’s 100-run triumph, along with their six-game winning streak in this World Cup, is commendable but the way they tigerishly defended was a sight to behold. One by one, almost fortuitously at times, the puzzles are falling in place for a glorious Indian October fest. No other Indian World Cup

team has marched as imperiously as Rohit’s men have belted out in this edition. Not even the World Champion side of 2011. Not even the highly talented 1987 squad, a team packed with all-rounders that ran out of gas in the semi-final. Not even the pioneers of 1983, which was more of a dream run.

It remains to be seen if this Indian team sustain themselves—

Rohit’s major worry was around the length of the tournament – and lift the coveted trophy, but thus far they haven’t just won but entertained the fans and bossed around the opposition.

It was a team at work, the sum more than the parts, carefully plotting small details. Like, who would give the pep-talk ahead of the games. Players were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

9 die in Andhra train collision, officials say driver missed signal

SUJIT BISOIYI
BHUBANESWAR, OCTOBER 29

AT LEAST nine people died and 29 were injured after two passenger trains collided in Andhra Pradesh’s Vizianagaram district around 7 pm on Sunday.

The Visakhapatnam-Rayagada Passenger Special train hit the Visakhapatnam-Palasa Passenger Express from the rear, leading to the derailment of multiple coaches, official sources said. The collision took place between Kankapalle and Alamanda railway stations.

Top Railway Ministry officials said the driver of the train that collided from the rear had missed the signal. “He crossed the red signal... It was a rear-end collision. The local train at the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Rescue workers at the site. AP

EXPLAINED
Second collision in 5 months

ON JUNE 2, the Coromandel Express ran into a stationary freight train at a station in Balasore district. Some coaches also collided with the passing Yeshwantpur Express. The collision, caused by a signalling issue, left 296 dead.



THE WORLD

MATTHEW PERRY, FRIENDS STAR WHO PLAYED CHANDLER, DIES AGED 54
PAGE 12

QATAR DEATH ROW

Not much time left, PM must intervene, says kin of former Navy officer

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

LACK OF transparency in how eight former personnel of the Indian Navy have been tried in Qatar has undermined the faith of their families in the judicial process, Meetu Bhargava (54), sister of Commander Purnendu Tiwari (retired) who is among the eight on death row, told *The Indian Express* Sunday. She sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “personal intervention” to bring all eight Indians back, citing a shortage of time.

After the news of the Qatari court decision broke Thursday, the toughest part for Bhargava was to inform her 85-year-old mother, the only surviving parent, about her brother’s death sentence. “She is very upset. She’s a heart patient,” Bhargava said over the phone.

The families, she said, have met with the Navy Chief since Thursday and are likely to meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar soon.

Bhargava, who lives in Gwalior, was the first relative of the eight Indians who came forward in October last year to seek the Centre’s help for their

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Emmy nominees Vir Das, Shefali Shah and Jim Sarbh at Adda today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

STREAMING PLATFORMS have not only given new stories to audiences, they have also given actors a chance to show their versatility and range.

Three of the most talented performers today — Shefali Shah, Jim Sarbh and Vir Das — have been nominated for the



(Clockwise from above) Vir Das, Shefali Shah, Jim Sarbh. File

International Emmy Awards 2023. The three will be the guests at the Express Adda in Mumbai on Monday and will be in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The

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Year after Morbi, couples turn to IVF, give adopted babies names of children they lost

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SOHINI GHOSH
MORBI, OCTOBER 29

KANTABEN MUCHHADIIYA cannot stop weeping at the memory of her three sons, Chirag, 20, Dharmik, 18, and Chetan, 16, who were among the 135 people killed when the suspension bridge on the Machchu River in Gujarat’s Morbi town collapsed



Mehboob Mira and wife Rashida have adopted a girl and named her after their daughter Nafisa, 20, who died in the bridge collapse on October 30 last year. Sohini Ghosh

on October 30 last year.

At 40 years of age, she and husband Rameshbhai, 42, have become parents again to two-month-old Chirag, born after an IVF cycle and named in memory of his dead brother. The couple used part of the compensation they received after the tragedy to undergo IVF and conceive their fourth child.

The compensation given to families from the Gujarat government and the Centre combined amounted to Rs 10 lakh for

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2 BLASTS AT JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES EVENT

2 killed, 51 wounded in IED blasts at Kerala religious gathering

Estranged group member owns up, says its ideology is ‘anti-national’

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 29

TWO WOMEN were killed and 51 people were wounded, five of them critically, in two low-intensity blasts at a religious convention of Christian group Jehovah’s Witnesses in Kalamassery town, about 10 km from Kochi, Sunday morning.

Hours later, an estranged member of the Jehovah’s Witnesses surrendered at a police station in Thrissur, claiming responsibility for the blasts.

Police said they have collected prima facie evidence to link the suspect, identified as Dominic Martin from Kochi, to the blasts.

Minutes after the blasts in the morning, Dominic, who is in his 50s, uploaded a video on social media, claiming responsibility. In the video, he said the ideology of Jehovah’s Witnesses was “anti-national”, and that he wanted to

WHO ARE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES PAGE 14



After the blasts at the hall in Kerala’s Kalamassery, Sunday. PTI

Eyewitnesses recount horror: ‘Saw a fireball near my sister’s seat’

NARAYANAN S
KOCHI, OCTOBER 29

WAITING OUTSIDE the burns ward at the Government Medical College Hospital in Kalamassery, in Kerala’s Ernakulam district, Rosamma was relieved to know her sister, Gracy, was not seriously injured, and had escaped with minor burn injuries to her right hand and leg.

Sunday was the third day of what had until then been a satisfying prayer meet for Rosamma

and family. She had come from Thodupuzha, in Idukki district, with her husband and sister to Kalamassery, near Kochi, for the Jehovah’s Witnesses event where the blasts took place. They were staying at a hotel near the Kalamassery metro station.

On Sunday morning, they checked out of the hotel, took their bags and went to Zamra International Convention Centre, where they took their seats for morning prayers.

“It was around 9.30 am. I

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TECHNOLOGY

SAMSUNG QLED 4K SMART TV REVIEW: ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT POWERHOUSE

The TV comes with a host of features to make your home truly futuristic. One can customise Alexa and use it to search for videos, songs and all that they usually do on their television. Although the device comes with a 20W built-in speaker, using it with a 5.1 channel sound system or a soundbar really brings out the cinematic experience.

EDUCATION

BTECH STUDENT ON LIFE IN AN IIT

'Club activities balance the demanding schedule at IIT-Mandi'

UPSC SPECIALS

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EXPRESS AUDIO

Should India host the Olympics?

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

This week on Game Time, host Mihir Vasavda and Amit Kamath are joined by The Indian Express' Shivani Naik to discuss India's Olympic hopes and whether it's better to host the party than to attend it.

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

IED blasts at Kerala religious gathering

put an end to it. A spokesperson for Jehovah's Witnesses confirmed that Dominic was a member of the community. Dominic, who surrendered at Kodakara police station in Thrissur, around 40 km from Kalamassery, was brought to Kochi for interrogation. With origins in the US, the Jehovah's Witnesses is not part of the mainstream Christian churches. Members of the Christian denomination are known for conducting door-to-door evangelism. In India, they hit the headlines in 1986 when a family from the community in Kerala won a verdict in the Supreme Court, upholding their right not to sing the national anthem. For members of the community, only Jehovah should be worshipped. Earlier in the day, eyewitnesses said there were at least two back-to-back blasts at the same spot at Zamra International Convention Centre in Kalamassery, where around 2,300 members of Jehovah's Witnesses had gathered on the concluding day of a three-day convention. The gathering included a large number of women and children,

mainly from Emakulam district. The first blast took place around 9.35 am, minutes after the day's session began and the participants started praying, in the middle of the convention hall. This was followed by another blast at the same spot, said eyewitnesses. Screaming and navigating through burning chairs, panic-stricken people rushed out of the hall. Local police and fire and rescue workers, who reached the spot, brought the situation under control after sealing the convention centre, which has a capacity for 3,500 people. While the body of an unidentified woman was recovered from the hall, another woman, identified as Kumari (53), a native of Thodupuzha, died of her injuries at the hospital later in the evening. The condition of five more people, including a 12-year-old boy, was stated to be critical. While 10 of the wounded received treatment for minor injuries, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said 41 people were undergoing treatment at government and private hospitals in Kochi. After the blasts, a high alert

was sounded across the state and police warned against hate campaigns on social media. Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke with the Chief Minister and took stock of the situation. He also directed the National Investigation Agency and NSG to reach the spot and start investigations. The police registered a case invoking Section 16 (1) of UAPA Act, apart from IPC Sections 302 (murder) and 307 (murder attempt). The FIR, registered before Dominic's surrender, did not name anyone. ADGP (law and order) M R Ajith Kumar, who visited the convention centre, said an improvised explosive device (IED) was used for the blasts. The police were looking into all angles, he said. "A person named Dominic Martin has surrendered before police claiming responsibility for the blasts. He is a member of JW and we have collected evidence prima facie substantiating his claim," he said. Police sources said Dominic placed the explosives at the convention centre in the morning and triggered the blast using a remote control from outside the hall. Later, he rode his two-wheeler to

that this idea is dangerous to the country," Dominic said. "Jehovah's Witnesses, your ideology is wrong. You should help others and respect others. During the floods, you cleaned only the houses of your members. This wrong ideology should and should be put to an end... I am convinced that in our society we don't require this organisation." "Secondly, I am going to surrender. Thirdly, you should not reveal how this blast was done. It is dangerous if the method reaches ordinary people. So, no media should telecast its method," Dominic said towards the end. The video was later removed from social media. Jehovah's Witnesses spokesperson Sreekrumar admitted that Dominic was a member of the community but had not been associated with it recently. "In the last two days, the convention was attended by 2,100 people. On Sunday, we think the figure would be between 2,300 and 2,400. The blasts took place soon after the session started. We had not closed the doors as people were still entering the hall. That helped people to rush out of the hall..." he said. Chief Minister Vijayan, who termed the incident as unfortunate, called an all-party meeting in Thiruvananthapuram Monday. -INPUTS FROM ENS, NEW DELHI

● **Nine dead, 29 injured in Andhra train collision**

front was at a very low speed, almost crawling," said the official. A statement issued by the East Coast Railway said: "Rescue operations are underway with DRM/Waltair (Divisional Railway Manager, Waltair division) and his team on the spot. The local administration is also helping in the rescue operation. Accident relief trains and other rescue equipment... have been engaged, and helpline numbers have been issued." In a post on X, the Prime Minister's Office said PM Narendra Modi had spoken to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and took stock of the situation. "Authorities are providing all possible assistance to those affected. The Prime Minister extends condolences to the bereaved families and prays that the injured recover soon," it said. According to a Railways official, the Railways has already started the process of distributing ex gratia amount. "Rs 10 lakh to the families of the deceased and Rs 5 lakh to those injured," the official said.

work together to provide rapid relief measures and ensure that all injured receive immediate medical attention. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also expressed his grief over the death of passengers in the train accident. He directed the Special Relief Commissioner and the Collectors of Rayagada and Koraput to extend immediate help in rescue and relief operations. The Odisha government is also in touch with the Andhra Pradesh government to coordinate the rescue operation. Special Relief Commissioner, Odisha, Satyabrata Sahu said the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force and fire service team deputed at Rayagada would be rushed to the accident site if needed. "The Odisha government has sent two buses from Vizianagaram to the accident site to bring back the stranded Odia passengers," said Sahu. NDRF teams are also likely to reach the accident site to help in the rescue operation. -INPUTS FROM RAHUL V PISHARODY IN HYDERABAD

● **Eyewitnesses recount horror: 'Saw a fireball near my sister's seat'**

think I was seated a few rows behind my sister. Suddenly, we heard a loud thumping noise and everyone rushed to the exits. As I was running out, I saw a fireball near the area where my sister was sitting and I was stunned. For a few minutes, it was not clear what had happened. Then, people assembled and started taking the injured to hospital," she said. The two blasts that took place at the convention centre during the prayer meet left two people

dead and dozens injured. Police said initial investigations pointed to the use of IEDs in the blasts. Reena from Kottayam district's Ponkunnam tuned into the news on TV Sunday morning and was shocked. She knew that her daughter had gone to attend the prayer meet in Kalamassery. As Reena prayed for her safety, she got a call informing that her daughter was injured. She rushed to the Kalamassery hospital, and found her daughter

scampered outside, leaving our bags and mobile phones inside. For some time, we could not see anything because a thick fog engulfed the area. Thankfully, we escaped without any injuries because we were a few rows ahead of where the blast happened," he said. They are yet to get their belongings, including their bags and phones that were kept inside. "It was an intense blast. As soon as we heard the sound, we

and Sundays. "Today is Sunday; we are hopeful we'll be able to speak to him. Whenever we talk to him, we encourage him to stay hopeful... We tell him the Indian government is with us... He's diabetic and has a heart issue," she said, adding Tiwari, immediately after his arrest, was put in solitary confinement but now has a cell partner. Asked if the family was aware of the charges that Tiwari faces, Bhargava said, "There's a complete lack of transparency in the judicial process. This undermines our faith in the legal system there. It's never been clear to us what charges they face. We only know all eight face the same charges."

● **India beat England**

chosen for their affinity to the venue: home state or IPL. Ravindra Jadeja, who plays for Chennai Super Kings, held court in the first game against Australia in Chennai. Virat Kohli spoke in Delhi. Jasprit Bumrah channelled the team in Ahmedabad, Shreyas Iyer gave the talk in Pune, Shubman Gill headed the team-huddle in Dharamsala, and it was Kuldeep Yadav, the home boy, who led the chat in Lucknow against England. Thought was also given to who will shine and dry the ball before handing it to the bowlers. Kohli is the main man for the job, with a towel tucked in his waist. As Lucknow dew seeped in, Kohli, often stationed at slips, worked feverishly to maintain the ball. If the ball runs away to the boundary Rohit would take up the drying of the ball as he would saunter across to the bowlers for a chat. To watch Bumrah, Shami, and Kuldeep Yadav harass the English under the Lucknow skies was one thing, but to see how the entire squad stepped in to help one another was the takeaway. Take your pick from Rohit cleaning out the muck from Shami's eyes or the throw-specialist and team's handyman Raghuvir prowling the boundary to clean the muddy spikes of players. But the one that is sure to be a viral moment of the Lucknow game is of Kohli running passionately towards Rohit, lifting him off the ground after Shami, who was just brought back into the attack, knocked out England's last resistance — Moeen Ali. At the start of the tournament, India seemed unsure of how to fit in Shami, preferring the batting ability of all-rounder Shardul Thakur. Ironically, it was an injury to their seam-allrounder Hardik Pandya that made them drop the 'allrounder' Thakur and send an SoS to Shami. And he has sparked. Before the World Cup, they didn't have R Ashwin, again preferring the option of Axar Patel for

● **Express Adda today**

Indian Express group. Shah, whose performance in the second season of *Delhi Crime* (2022) bagged her the Emmys nomination, began her career with theatre and television. She won critical acclaim for her roles in serials *Hasteerati* (1997), *Kabhie Kabhie* (1997) and *Raahin* (1999) and films such as *Daryia Chhoru* (1999), *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and *Gandhi, My Father* (2007). After creating an impact with her performance in the short film *Juice* (2017) and playing the leading role in *Once Again* (2018), she essayed the role of DCP Vartika Chaturvedi in the Netflix show *Delhi Crime* (2019), which brought her critical acclaim. Sarbh began his film career with antagonistic roles in *Neerja* (2016), *Padmavati* (2018) and *Sanju* (2018). He has also been actively involved in theatre, performing in an adaptation of

● **Hamas at Kerala rally: BJP for probe, Israel envoy says add it to terror list**

Parliamentarians for al-Quds, at another rally in Palakkad. Mashal's address also drew a sharp response from Naor Gilon, Israel's Ambassador to India. In a post on X, Gilon said, "Unbelievable! #HamasTerrorist Khaled Mashal speaks from Qatar in a #Kerala event under the slogan 'Uproot bulldozer Hindutva & Apartheid Zionism'. Mashal calls participants to: 1. Take the streets and show anger. 2. Prepare for jihad (on Israel). 3. Support Hamas financially. 4. Promote Palestinian narrative on social media. It's time to add #HamasISIS also to #India's terror list." Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar slammed what he called "appeasement politics" of the Congress and CPM and said it was "shameless even by Cong/CPM/UPA/INDI alliance standards to invite Terrorist Hamas to spread hate & call for 'jihad' in Kerala".

on our residents. Houses are being demolished. They have destroyed more than half of Gaza. They are destroying churches, temples, universities and even UN institutions. What is meant by this attack is the evacuation of Gaza, and they are retaliating against it. Because the fighters in Gaza have defeated them militarily." Rally organiser Solidarity Youth Movement's state president Suhaib CT said, "In the past also, Hamas leaders had addressed several solidarity conferences in Kerala through video conference. The Palestine cause is being kept alive also because of the unconditional support from the Islamic movements in Kerala." He said when "Hindutva forces are openly standing with Israel" and "making another section (Hamas) terrorists, standing with those so-called terrorists is a fight against Hindutva".

● **Year after Morbi, couples turn to IVF, give adopted babies names of children they lost**

every family member who died in the incident. Kantaben and Rameshbhai find it difficult to talk about their loss. Chirag, the oldest, worked at a ceramic unit and was the breadwinner of the family. Kantaben wept uncontrollably as she remembered her sons. On Chetan, her youngest son to have died in the bridge collapse, Kantaben said: "He had just passed his 10th boards exam. He usually never left home, but that day, he went and never came back." On October 30, 2022, a Sunday outing for many turned fatal after the overcrowded bridge, which was well over a century old, collapsed. As many as 55 of the 135 dead were children. The scale of the tragedy left a town in grief, even as some tried to move on by remarrying or be-

coming parents again. The Miras lost their 20-year-old daughter, Nafisa, that day. They have since adopted a baby and, like the Muchhadiyas, named her after their dead child. On the day of the tragedy, ice cream parlour owner Mehboob Mira, 47, had taken his wife, Rashida, 40, and his parents out to buy silver for their would-be son-in-law. Nafisa was to be engaged 20 days later. However, minutes after they came back home from their shopping trip, the Miras got to know about the bridge collapse. In the early hours of the next day, they identified six members of their family, including Nafisa, among the bodies of those killed in the collapse. On May 14 this year, Mehboob's youngest brother had a daughter, and within six days, Mehboob adopted her.

"My Nafisa was born on May 21, and this Nafisa (his adopted daughter) was born the same month. They look exactly the same. This cannot be a coincidence," said Mehboob. The family, however, is still grieving. "The grief never leaves us, but with the new baby, there are a few moments of respite amid the tears," he said. Recalling the day of the tragedy, he said: "We had guests over on October 30, because a relative of ours was getting engaged that day. After the function was over at 3 pm, 35 people from our family, all women and children, went to the bridge." "Now every time we see the bridge debris, our memories of that day are refreshed. Not a single day goes by when I don't think about my sisters and my daughter. Roshanben was the youngest and was pampered by

we do with it when we have lost all our family?... No amount of money can compensate for the loss of our entire family. We can only consider it to be some justice if the accused are punished so that at least there will not be an incident like this again," the brothers said. Now, they have both remarried, but are reluctant to talk about it. The Jhulto Pul, the bridge that collapsed, was one of the main attractions in Morbi, and was located at the heart of the town. A year on from the incident, the suspension cables of the collapsed bridge remain hanging at the site. Some cables and planks lie dumped on the banks. Rusted locks forbid access to what used to be the entrance to the bridge. A shiny sign saying "Jhulto Pul, operated and maintained by Orevva" remains intact. In-charge chief officer of the Morbi municipality and resident additional collector N K Muchhar said they have no plan to remove the debris until the trial of the case is concluded. "The matter is sub-judice and we are treating the debris as mud-damal (material evidence). So, in case there is any requirement of evidence, it can be provided," he said. There is also no plan in place to erect another bridge across the Machchu River, he said. Jaysukh Patel, the managing director of the Orevva Group, has been named the prime accused in the case and is among the 10 persons arrested for culpable homicide, of which five are in jail. A special investigation team recently also found administrative lapses on the part of the municipality.

NOZZLES, WIRES WENT MISSING AFTER G20 SUMMIT PWD to hire agency to maintain fountains to prevent thefts

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

AFTER SEVERAL incidents of theft occurred around the stretches developed and beautified for the G20 Summit, the Public Works Department is planning to hire an agency exclusively for the maintenance of all the fountains installed around the Pragati Maidan, Delhi Gate and Raj Ghat area.

According to a PWD official, the officials concerned looking after the fountains have moved a proposal to hire an agency for operating and maintaining the fountains. "After the G20 summit, several nozzles and wires worth thousands have been stolen leaving these fountains shut for several days. We have filed complaints with the police, but no action has been taken yet. So, we are planning to hire an agency which will look after the entire maintenance and operate the fountains in the mornings and evenings. Plans to deploy guards with guns will be confirmed only once the proposal is approved,"



After the G20 Summit, nozzles installed inside the fountains, wires and ornamental lights were stolen by thieves. File

said a PWD official.

After the G20 Summit, people were seen stealing flower pots from around footpaths. Nozzles installed inside the fountains, wires, decorative and ornamental lights fell prey to the thieves.

The Indian Express a few weeks ago highlighted how around 100 nozzles, besides large quantities of wire, have been stolen from outside the Bharat Mandapam, the venue of Summit, leaving the water fountains dysfunctional.

The water works and the

have been installed.

The Bharat Mandapam is surrounded by three key roads — Ring Road, Bhairon Marg and Mathura Road. The fountains were installed in the latter two. Besides those of the big ones, nozzles of other smaller fountains outside Bharat Mandapam too have been stolen.

Overall, a total of 90 nozzles have been stolen from the fountains installed around the Bharat Mandapam — 21 between Gate 6 and 7 (main gate), 24 from Gate number 4, and 45 nozzles along with cables from the giant fountain outside Gate number 1 — officials had said earlier.

"Once the proposal is approved and gets financial approval, tenders will be floated calling bids," said officials.

A total of 109 different types of fountains — from giant dome-shaped ones to volcano and jet fountains — were installed with light fittings at several stretches mostly around Pragati Maidan (Bharat Mandapam), Ring Road, Delhi Gate, Raj Ghat, Mathura Road and Airport Road.

bright lights had become an attraction of sorts, drawing many selfie-loving visitors, even after the Summit.

As per the FIRs filed by the PWD, 69 nozzles from three major fountains installed outside Bharat Mandapam Gates 1, 4, and 5, and that falls along the Bhairon Marg were stolen, besides 14 nozzles from the fountains installed outside the Mathura Road.

On this stretch, small-sized volcanic jet fountains and four crown statues with jet fountains

SNATCHES COP'S PISTOL AND FLEES; ARRESTED AFTER GUNFIGHT Delivery man rapes 19-yr-old at Greater Noida high-rise

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NOIDA, OCTOBER 29

A DELIVERY MAN with an e-commerce company allegedly raped and assaulted a 19-year-old woman, when she opened the door to collect an order, inside a high-rise society in Greater Noida Friday.

According to police, the woman had ordered milk and eggs on Blinkit in the morning and was alone at home when the delivery man came.

Police said the accused, Sumit Singh, a resident of a Greater Noida village, was on the run after committing the crime and was arrested after a gunfight on Sunday.

ADCP (Central Noida) Hirdesh Katheriya said, "Five teams were immediately formed to investigate the case and the accused was arrested from Khairpur. On reaching Sector 3, he managed to snatch a pistol from a police officer and ran away. We immediately launched a combing operation in Sector 3 and the surrounding areas with help from SWAT teams. During the operation,



Police said the accused, Sumit Singh, a resident of a Greater Noida village, was on the run after committing the crime and was arrested on Sunday

(we spotted) the accused, but he opened fire on the police party with the intention to kill. Police fired in self-defence and the accused got shot in the leg."

Katheriya said the pistol was recovered from the accused after the gunfight.

"The accused was sent to a hospital for treatment. The elder brother of the accused is a history-sheeter. The accused has been jailed in the past for selling illegal liquor. His criminal history is being ascertained," a police officer said.

An FIR under IPC sections pertaining to rape; voluntarily causing hurt; house-trespass af-

ter preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint; criminal intimidation; and attempting to commit offences punishable with imprisonment for life or other imprisonment was registered at the area police station.

A police officer said, "In her initial complaint, the victim, who is a student, had said that she was sexually harassed by the delivery man. She had also said that the accused was in the house for around 15-17 minutes. After her mother returned, they filed a revised complaint where the victim said she was attacked and raped and the accused was in the flat around an hour. Post this, we added rape charges to the FIR."

When contacted for a comment, a Blinkit spokesperson said, "We are cooperating fully with law enforcement. We can't comment further as it's an ongoing investigation."

However, the company did not respond to questions on the kind of verification process they undertake before allowing someone to become a delivery partner and whether they were aware about the previous cases filed against the accused.

L-G grants sanction to prosecute 10 cops in govt fund fraud

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

DELHI L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena Sunday accorded sanction for prosecution of 10 police officials in an alleged case of embezzlement of government funds to the tune of Rs 2.44 crores, said officials.

According to the L-G House, the approval for prosecution came after an FIR was registered against 10 police personnel by the Delhi Police EOW in 2019 for cheating, criminal conspiracy and criminal breach of trust. Officials said the accused were two Sub-Inspectors, three Head Constables and five Constables, who have been charged with embezzlement of funds meant for salary, arrears, tuition fee, etc. for personal use.

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Southeast Delhi murder: Accused was harrasing woman, alleges family

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

DAYS AFTER a 24-year-old woman was shot multiple times at her Southeast Delhi home, her family members claimed that the accused and his family had been subjecting their daughter to harassment based on "unfounded suspicions".

The Delhi Police arrested 31-year-old Rocky Pradhan in connection with the murder. Pradhan confessed to killing the woman, Pooja Yadav, and said he suspected her of having an affair with his brother, Krishan (37), who is married and has four children.

Pooja's family refuted the allegations and said she was targeted for no reason.

A certified beautician, Pooja worked at Krishan's office in Basantpur. Police said she was hired as an assistant at the property dealership. Her family said she was also taking up different courses and participating in events to work at a high-scale salon soon.

Police said Rocky was following her when she was on her way home. He later shot 3-4 bullets just as she entered her home. He escaped but was arrested from Faridabad later.

Distraught over their loss, the family blamed the Pradhans for misunderstanding their daughter. Manoj, her brother, said, "I was sitting with my mother

Pooja Yadav worked at Krishan Pradhan's office, police said she was hired as an assistant at the property dealership

when I heard gunshots. For a moment, I thought kids were bursting crackers but then I heard my sister's screams. She was there at the door... she collapsed in front of me. There was blood everywhere."

Manoj chased Rocky and tried to stop him but Rocky allegedly fired two bullets at Manoj.

"They are trying to defame my sister after killing her. She was not in a relationship with Krishan. She had quit working at Krishan's office 7-8 months ago after Rocky and other family members targeted her at the office, but Krishan called her back and gave her a hike. He assured her that there would be no trouble. Why would anyone say no to that?" said Manoj.

Meanwhile, police claimed Rocky told them that Pooja was trying to "break Krishan's family". "He wanted to eliminate her as he disapproved of their friendship. We are also questioning Krishan and other family members to ascertain their role in the murder," said a senior police officer.

No printed study material, exams in December, allege protesting SOL students

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

SEVERAL STUDENTS studying at Delhi University's School of Open Learning (SOL) Sunday alleged that they have not been provided printed study material, even as examinations are scheduled for December.

The material provided online, meanwhile, is full of errors, students said.

Kushi Kumari, a second year student of Political Science, took admission in SOL because she couldn't afford to sit for the Common University Entrance Test (CUET).

A large number of students who opt for SOL come from underprivileged or rural backgrounds and don't have regular internet connectivity. "There are no appointments available so that we can go to the centre and collect our study material... My father was the only earning member in my family but lost his job recently. I am trying to support my education by teaching younger students," she said.

Shubra, another student, said, "I tried studying from the material that has been uploaded online, but there are several mistakes... I studied that and wrote the exams last semester... When I approached my teachers,



Students who opt for SOL are from rural backgrounds and don't have regular internet connectivity. Express

they said my answers were wrong," she said.

SOL had constituted a review committee to investigate "minor" errors flagged by DU's Academic Council in August.

Director of SOL, Payal Mago, however, said that corrections have been made. She also said the university is encouraging students to go paperless.

"We want our students to be environment conscious so if they opt for digital study material a small rebate in fee is provided. There is no dearth of printed material but many students confirmed enrolment at the last minute and the number of students increased by more than 30,000... They will have to take appointments in the next couple of days to collect their study material," she added.



Mitti Ko Naman Veeron Ko Vandan

MERI MAATI MERA DESH

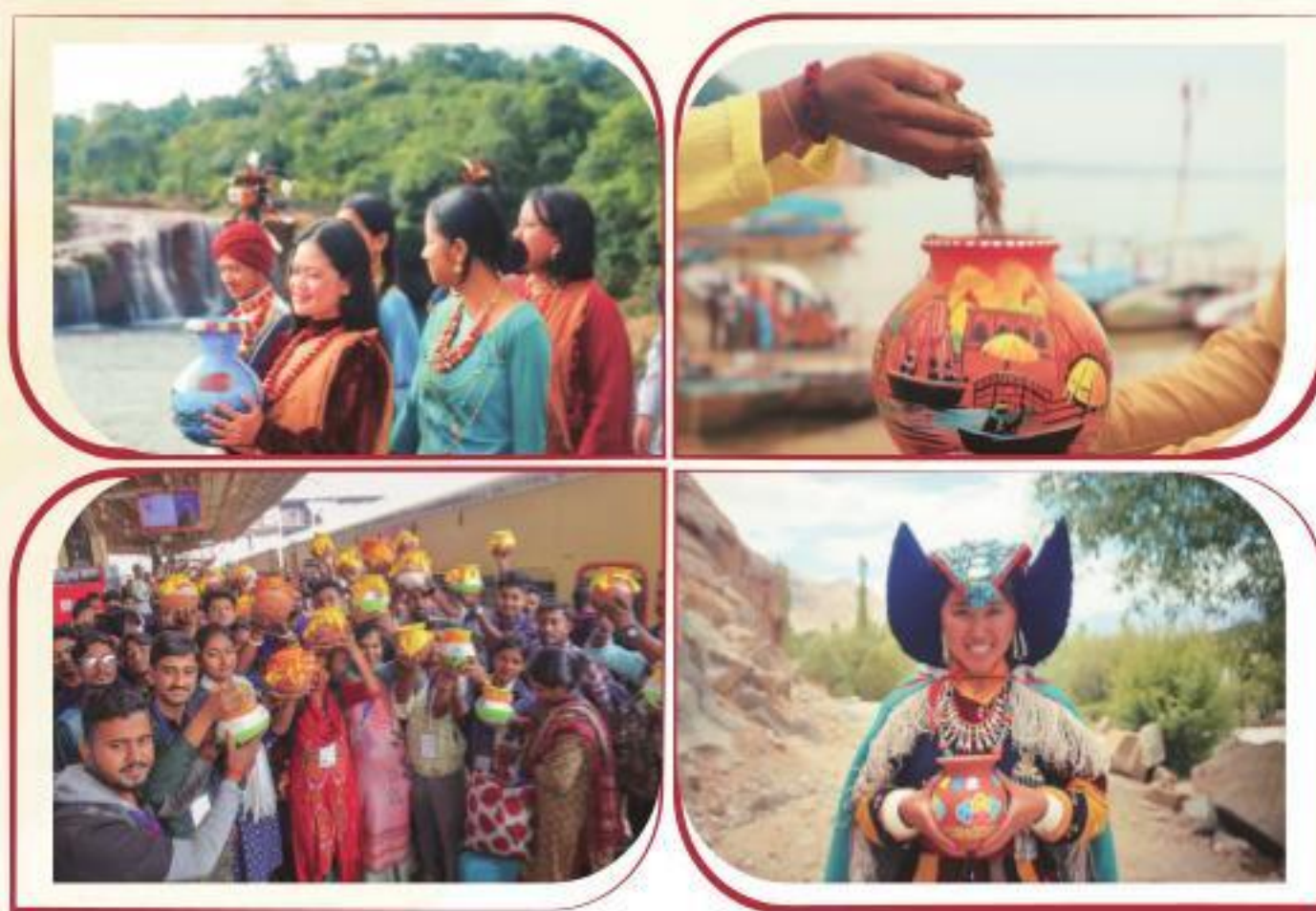
Amrit Kalash Yatra and Amrit Mahotsav Closing Ceremony

30th & 31st October, 2023
Kartavyapath, India Gate, New Delhi



"After collecting soil from every house, it was placed in a Kalash and then Amrit Kalash Yatras were organized. This soil collected from every corner of the country, and these thousands of Amrit Kalash Yatras are now reaching Delhi. Here in Delhi, that soil will be put in an enormous Bharat Kalash, and with this sacred soil, 'Amrit Vatika' will be built in Delhi. It will remain as a grand legacy of the Amrit Mahotsav in the heart of the country's capital."

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister



Meri Maati Mera Desh has become a mass movement

- More than 2 Lakh events organised nationwide
- 4 Crore selfies uploaded on yuva.gov.in
- Participation from more than 7,000 Blocks
- 2 Lakh 33 Thousand Shilaphalakam erected
- 23 Crore 60 Lakh tree plantation drives
- 2 Lakh 63 Thousand Amrit Vatikas created
- Amrit Vatika will be constructed on Kartavyapath with the sacred soil brought in 8500 Amrit Kalash from across the country

Inauguration of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)

31st October 2023 | 4:00 pm | Kartavyapath, India Gate, New Delhi

'Mera Yuva Bharat' is an autonomous body that will serve as an overarching enabling mechanism powered by technology for youth development

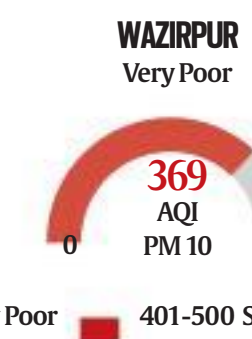
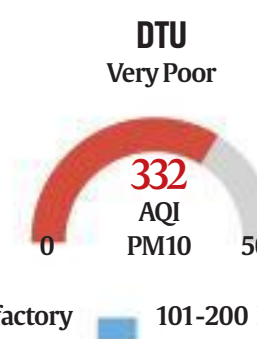
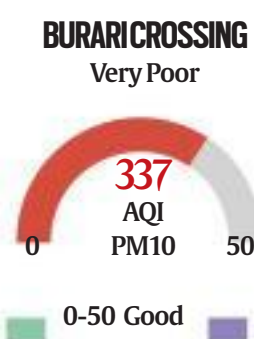
Chief Guest
Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Event highlights

Amrit Mahotsav Memorial creation on Kartavyapath | Creation of Amrit Vatika
Light & Sound Show | Cultural Extravaganza | Amrit Awards Ceremony

All are invited!

Watch the live telecast on DD News



SKY WATCH
FORECAST: October 30
Mainly clear sky.
Mist in the morning.
AQI forecast: Likely to be very poor

MAX: 33
0.2°C above normal

MIN: 16
0.1°C below normal

19-YEAR-OLD HAD JOINED COLLEGE 12 DAYS AGO

Engineering student pulled out of auto in phone snatching bid, dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GHAZIABAD, OCTOBER 29

DAYS AFTER she was pulled out of a moving auto-rickshaw during an alleged snatching attempt, 19-year-old Kirti Singh, an engineering student breathed her last in a Ghaziabad hospital.

The first year B.Tech computer science student at ABES Engineering College in Ghaziabad, was admitted to the Neuro ICU of Yashoda Hospital in Nehru Nagar, where she was on ventilator support after sustaining head injuries, officials said.

The incident took place around 4 pm Friday on NH-9 in Ghaziabad when Kirti was returning home to Hapur along

with a friend when two men tried to snatch her phone.

One of the two accused, Balveer, was arrested on Saturday after a gunfight ensued between him and police officials. The other accused, Jeetu, is absconding.

Police Commissioner, Ghaziabad, Ajay Kumar Mishra, has ordered the removal of the SHO of Masuri Police Station, Ravindran Pant. Officials said that the accused will now be booked for murder along with robbery.

"...sections pertaining to murder will be added in the FIR. One accused was arrested and the other is absconding," said Naresh Kumar Sharma, the new SHO. Kirti's mobile phone, an illegal pistol, and cartridges were recovered from Balveer, police said.

'It was an old phone, how can one kill for such small amounts?'

DHEERAJ MISHRA
GHAZIABAD, OCTOBER 29

"I CANNOT understand why someone would do this to snatch just a phone. It was an old Samsung phone worth around Rs 8,000 - Rs 10,000. How can one kill someone for such a small amount?" This question has been haunting Ankit Singh (30), the brother of 19-year-old Kirti, since Friday.

But he is left with answers, with Kirti succumbing to her injuries in a Ghaziabad hospital on Sunday evening.

Ankit said it was her dream to study computer science engineering from a college with good facilities. The 19-year-old dropped a year to move out of Hapur and take admission in a private college. She was returning home after class on Friday when two men allegedly tried to snatch her phone and when she did not let go, pulled her out of the rickshaw she was travelling in.

"We could have got Kirti admitted to any college in Hapur. But we liked the college in Ghaziabad and my sister always wanted to do engineering. She wanted to pursue M.Tech in future and that's why she took admission here," he said.

The family was elated when



The student Kirti Singh (19); Balveer, the arrested accused.



Kirti got admission in a course of her choice at the engineering college a few months ago. The distance between the college and her home — around 40 kilometres — however, was a matter of concern and Kirti was planning to shift soon.

Kirti was planning to shift closer to the college soon.

"Ever since she took admission here, we were discussing whether she should stay in the hostel or rent a room near her college... She joined college only 12 days ago..." said Ravindra Singh, Kirti's father.

He works as a loco pilot and is posted in Jind.

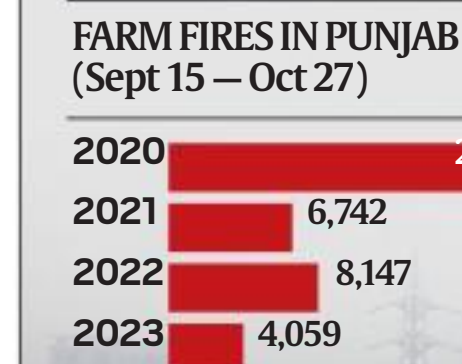
"She used to come to college from home with her friend every day. It took about an hour.

Many times she would catch a bus and if the bus was not available, she would take a rickshaw. I had no idea that such an incident could happen to my daughter," said Singh.

Kirti was first rushed to a hospital in Hapur, minutes after the accident.

"The autorickshaw driver and Kirti's friend took her to a hospital in Pilkhuwa in Hapur. When we reached there, we found her in a critical condition. She had suffered severe head injuries. We shifted her to this hospital... I was in the village when I got a call from the college that my sister had met with an accident. My question is why are police not able to control such crimes," said Ankit.

STUBBLE BURNING DOWN BUT POLLUTION GOES UP

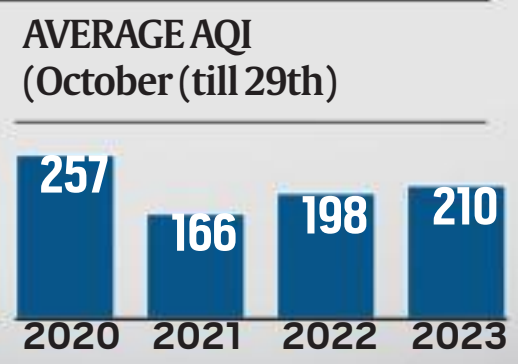


FORECAST

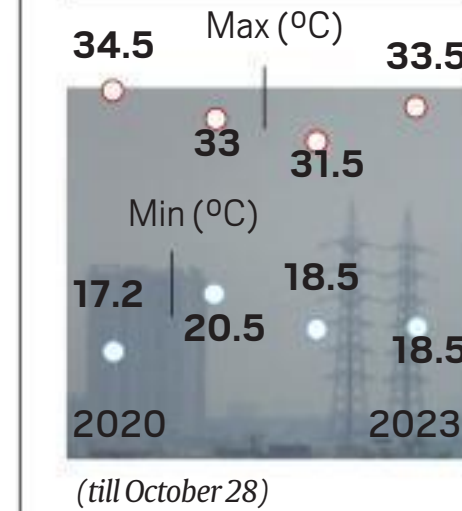
Monday
VERY POOR

Tuesday
VERY POOR

Wednesday
VERY POOR



AVERAGE TEMP IN OCT



Anti-smog guns were deployed in the city as air quality deteriorated. Prem Nath Pandey

Delhi's air most polluted since 2020 even after farm fires in Punjab see sharp dip

Pollutants accumulating due to less rain and calm winds aren't getting dispersed in low temperatures, says official

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

THE NUMBER of farm fires in Punjab may have seen a sharp dip this year, but Delhi's air is the most polluted it has been since 2020.

According to data maintained by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the average AQI in the city stands at 210 between October 1 and October 29, lower only than the 257 recorded in October 2020.

So, if the input of pollutants is lower, why is Delhi breathing in more toxic air? The answer lies in rain.

In October 2022, when the average AQI was 198, the city saw 6 rainy days. In 2021, when Delhi saw its best October air since records have been maintained, with an average AQI of 166, the city saw 7 rainy days.

While the reasons behind Delhi being among the most polluted capital cities in the world are a complex mix of geography, vehicular density, dust and farm fires, weather plays a vital role too.

The primary pollutant in Delhi after monsoon rains is particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10).

These particles can be blown away by strong winds and can be washed away by rains.

This is what happened in 2021 and 2022, with both years seeing over 120 mm of rain in

the month.

In 2020, the city saw only trace rains on a single day. This year, 5.4 mm rains were recorded on October 17, but the skies have been clear since.

The morning temperature has also been dipping over the past few days.

On Sunday, the minimum was recorded as 16.3 degrees Celsius, normal for this time of the year.

It had fallen to 14.3 degrees Celsius, the lowest of the season so far, on Saturday.

The maximum temperature on Sunday was recorded as 33.4 degrees Celsius, two degrees above normal.

"Delhi had a spot of good luck during the

third week after the rains were followed by strong winds, but over the past week, there has been no rain and the winds have been mostly calm. As a result, the pollutants have been accumulating. The problem is compounded by dipping temperatures as the area for dispersion of pollutants decreases further. As of now, there is no chance of rain in the coming week and the concentration of pollutants is expected to go up," said a senior IMD official.

There may be some bad news in store. According to officials in the Punjab Pollution Control Board, the harvest of paddy is not over and the number of fires could go up in the coming two-three days.

"This year, since the festivals are later than usual, the harvest is also a little delayed. This means that there are many farms where the crop is still standing and they may be set on fire in the coming days as the time to sow wheat is nearing," the official said.

Only buses with clean fuel in Delhi

Starting Wednesday, only electric, CNG and BS-VI compliant buses can enter Delhi from other states.

Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Sunday conducted a surprise inspection of Kashmir Gate ISBT.

"At present, pollution generated from vehicles is increasing. All buses in Delhi are running on CNG. More than 800 electric buses are also running in Delhi. However due to BS-III and BS-IV diesel buses running in UP, Haryana, Rajasthan NCR area, pollution is increasing in Delhi. During the inspection at ISBT, it was found that all the buses that have come here from UP and Haryana are BS-III and BS-IV buses. None of the buses that have come from there are electric and CNG. That is why we demand that the Centre implement a complete ban on BS III and BS IV buses operating in NCR areas of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan," Rai said.

From November 1, a campaign will be conducted by the Transport Department at all entry points to check the buses entering the city and action will be taken against any buses that do not follow the rules.

Celebrity photos to famous brands: How gold trading scam duped professor of Rs 42 lakh

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

KAREENA KAPOOR Khan their brand ambassador, two people posed as members of the World Gold Council and set up a fake website that they claimed was owned and promoted by two prominent jewellery brands.

Their plan? Lure victims to invest in gold trading on their site and dupe them.

Among those swindled was a 50-year-old senior professor of a reputed university, who lost over Rs 42 lakh.

The Delhi Police's Cyber Cell said the suspects, who are yet to be identified, used the names Fan Annie and Fan Shaokai and told their victims they were from Singapore and had come to India to work with the Indian government and different jewellers.

They even created a fake website (www.lalithai.in), which has since been taken down.

As per the professor's complaint, he and other victims were "lured" into investing as the accused used photos of the Bollywood actress and other celebrities.

Police said the accused had,

Police said the accused claimed to be members of the World Gold Council and used brand names of Lalitha Jewellers and Malabar Gold to seem legitimate.

in fact, stolen Khan's photos from different ad shoots and jewellery brand sites and pushed their own ads featuring the actress on their website and Telegram groups to "lure" more victims.

The victims believed she was the brand ambassador but that wasn't true, said police.

The FIR lodged on the professor's complaint last week alleged: "I fell victim to a very shrewd plot... she (accused) called me... and introduced herself as a gold analyst from the World Gold Council."

"She told me she was... staying in Hotel Trident, Mumbai, along with her elder brother Fan Shaokai, a senior gold analyst in the Council. She said the Council has deputed them to set up and promote the online gold trading platform, www.lalithai.in, in Mumbai which is owned, as per

their claim, by Lalitha Jewellers, promoted by Malabar Gold, supported by World Gold Council, Government of India and Government of Maharashtra," the FIR read.

Police said the accused used brand names of Lalitha Jewellers and Malabar Gold to appear legitimate.

The professor and other victims were asked to invest lakhs and promised huge profits within days/weeks.

"The victims were first asked to open an account on the fake site and recharge it by depositing Rs 50,000. The accused made it seem like the victims were trading in gold and later pushed them into investing more on the pretext of market rise/fall," said an officer.

The professor continued investing from February to May but later found Khan was not associated with the platform and the website was fake.

"He lost almost Rs 40-42 lakh. The accused threatened him to put in more money else he would lose his account balance," the officer said.

"We've received other complaints on the cybercrime portal and are investigating the matter," added the officer.

Chintels flat-owners ask for 'Ghar Ke Badle Ghar'

UPASIKA SINGHAL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

DEMANDING THAT they be compensated with flats, Chintels Paradiso home owners staged a protest at Jantar Mantar Sunday, asserting that their current predicament is a direct result of the use of sub-standard construction material by the builder.

Demanding their right to "Ghar Ke Badle Ghar (a home in exchange for a home)", the demonstrators asked the administration to direct the builder to undertake reconstruction and provide interim market rentals based on actual rates until possession is granted to all homeowners.

In September 2021, a structural audit for Towers D, E, F, G, and H at Chintels was carried out but no adverse structural issues were



The homeowners have submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office. Express

found. Five months later, a portion of a sixth-floor apartment in Tower D collapsed all the way to the first floor, killing two women, in February 2022. The district administration has since ordered that the five towers be vacated, leaving owners in the lurch.

They cited the recent case of Signature View apartments in Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar, where the Delhi L-G-Ordered reconstruction and provision of transit rent until construction is completed.

Currently, residents said, homeowners are being offered a buy-back, but below the prevailing market rate. "At this rate, we won't be able to buy even a one-room apartment, we have a 3BHK at Chintels," said Vikram Gambhir, a resident.

Sixty homeowners have submitted a signed memorandum to the Centre to intervene in the matter.

PANDEMIC DEALT FINAL BLOW, CLUB NOW SHUT

Once graced by politicians, now dilapidated: The rise and fall of Gurgaon Club

AISWARYA RAJ
GURGAON, OCTOBER 29

AS VEHICLES and people whizz past a rusty gate and a wall covered by moss and jamun stains, it is hard to notice a derelict structure opposite the Sessions Court in Civil Lines. In the largely nondescript place is a board that had 'Gurgaon Club' painted in red which has faded except for a line under it saying 'established since 1930' in blue. What is even sorer is the building itself — once a party to the socialites of Gurgaon before it became an industrial suburb.

Established in 1930 as Akhtar Tennis Club, it was built on District Board land, spanning 3 acres, said former member and secretary R S Chauhan.

He recalled that his father, a

lawyer, was a member of the club that lent grace to the then heart of the city, in company of the District Library located a few feet away.

Membership was initially limited to lawyers and the Deputy Commissioner was the president. Run and manned through an income collected from membership fee and a grant of Rs 10,000 from the DC, the club reached a crossroads when the DC relinquished his position, along with it, his monthly grant.

He said the building was christened as Gurgaon Club in the 1960s. "The club had two tennis courts, a badminton court, and the structure housed a cards room, guests room, and a canteen. After this, the funds crashed, and the membership was open to all income taxpayers, including 3-4 industrialists, which catapulted

the funding. The membership fee was also increased. Soon maintenance posed difficulties and the tennis courts were shut," he said.

In its heyday, the club was open from 3 pm to 10 pm, and hosted Republic Day and Independence Day dinners. Politicians including former state home minister K L Poswal, former MLA Pratap Singh Thakran, second CM Rao Birender Singh and Mewati leader Tayyab Hussain were members of the now-defunct club.

Though the membership fee increased finally to Rs 400, the cash-strapped club could not survive during the pandemic. The ownership of the land changed thrice and the zila parishad ordered vacation as the club had stopped paying lease in 1999.

"In 2015, though they ap-



The club is now being used by Traffic Police for impounding challaned vehicles. Aiswarya Raj

proached the Punjab and Haryana HC, the court maintained that the club should remain. When the pandemic struck, we could not keep it running. Though there were restoration attempts, they were unsuccessful," Chauhan said.

The HC upheld eviction orders, holding that it had become "unauthorised occupant," in 2015, but directed the Haryana government or the Zila Parishad not to change the nature of club activities. Rather, it would set up a club un-

der its control within four months; and the existing members would, as matter of right, be included in the members' list.

The path to the building is strewn by liquor bottles, trash and rotten jamuns signifying how the history of the unkempt compound is at a crossroads.

As one enters the first room with a damp and damaged sofa which was once a bright crimson, the windows are shut save for a couple which let enough light in to show the murky interiors and cobwebbed ceiling. The room leads to a pentagonal room with rain water leaking from the ceiling.

Though there were signs of occupancy, there was no living being except a stray dog, almost like a guard keeping vigil in front of the eerie colonial building. Shirts were hanging from a

clothesline in a room behind and three carts of vendors in another room to its left.

The secretary of the club said that the club has an FD of Rs 2 lakh, but that will not be sufficient for it to be revamped. "When the restoration stopped taking flight, several things at the club were robbed. If authorities decide to open it for temporary banquet halls, we can eke out enough," he says.

Yogesh Chand Bhardwaj, former SDM Rewari, remembers how the club was always bustling in the 1990s. "It is now being used by Traffic Police for impounding challaned vehicles.

The club used to attract hordes of socialites who would play cards," he said.

There is little attempt on the part of the zila parishad to revive the club, said Pawan Kumar Bansal, a senior journalist.

"Currently, Gurgaon lacks a historical and intellectual place for

people to gather, and this club could be the one, except that the zila parishad has shown little will. Three years ago, there were talks of restoration which could not happen due to the pandemic. With its location near the border and proximity to the airport, the club, if restored, could be a big hit," he said.



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Vaidya Pandit Thakur Datta Multani started practice of Ayurveda at Gumti Bazar, Lahore, India* (*Before Independence)



1905

Sowing Seed of Multani Pharmacy by Vaidya Pandit Thakur Datta Multani at Gumti Bazar, Lahore, India* (*Before Independence)



1938-47

The Plant of Multani Pharmacy shifted to New Delhi



1947

Establishment of Ayurvedic Pharma Division in Tekhand, Delhi



1970

Global Expansion of Multani Pharmacy by exporting Multani Kuka Cough Syrup



1995

Establishment of New Manufacturing Unit of Ayurvedic Medicines at Okhla, Delhi



2003

Started Facility for Contract Manufacturing at Multani Pharmaceuticals Delhi Unit



2005

Establishment of Modern full fledged manufacturing unit of MPL at Haridwar, U.K.



2008



(1879-1952)

Vaidya Pt. Thakur Datta Multani



(1927-1982)

Vaidya Jagmohan Datta Multani

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MPL Received the Certificate of Ayush Premium Mark & Ayush Standard Mark



2012

NABL Accreditation of Ayush Drug Testing Lab. MPL, Haridwar, U.K.



2014

MPL, Haridwar, U.K. certified as WHO GMP Company



2018

MPL started super Distributorship at 17+ Depots PAN India



2018-19

MPL awarded with Dept. of Scientific & Indl. Research (DSIR) approved R&D Facility



2019

In house cultivation of organic medicinal herbs, MPL, Haridwar, U.K.



2021

Launched International Cosmetic Brand "YAHVI" Nature to Skin Care Pvt. Ltd.



2021

MPL Established Full fledged Food Testing Laboratory



2022

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6 DECISION 2023

CHHATTISGARH • MADHYA PRADESH • MIZORAM • RAJASTHAN • TELANGANA

ELECTION IN NUMBERS

15,18,992

In 2018, across the five states, there were more than 15 lakh NOTA (none of the above) votes, accounting for 1.4% of the total votes

AAP HAS NAMED 70-ODD CANDIDATES, SP ABOUT 40, JD(U) 10

Will friendly fire damage Cong in MP? In 92 seats, INDIA allies in its way

The Congress won nine of these constituencies by a narrow margin last time while losing six in a close contest

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

WITH SEAT-SHARING plans for next month's state elections having collapsed, the Congress will face its INDIA partners Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Samajwadi Party (SP), and Janata Dal (United) in at least 92 of Madhya Pradesh's 230 Assembly constituencies.

Of the 92 constituencies, 26 are those where the SP and AAP are in the fray. In three, the Congress is facing a challenge from the AAP and JD(U).

The INDIA parties differ on the scope of their alliance and whether it should extend to the state elections. While the Congress insists that seat-sharing is meant to be for the parliamentary elections, the others have conveyed that the larger idea should be to work together to defeat the BJP — be it in state or national polls.

One of the most interesting battles will be in Rajnagar in Chhatarpur district, which will see all four Opposition parties in the fray. At present, the Congress

CONGRESS VS ALLIES IN MADHYA PRADESH

Total number of constituencies where the Congress will face at least one of SP, AAP, or JD(U): **92**

Congress won 9 seats by narrow margins in 2018 where SP, AAP, or JD(U) are in the fray*

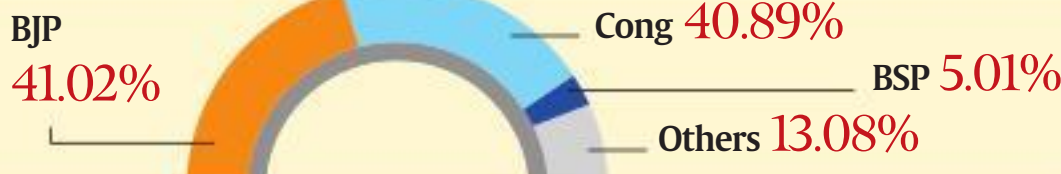
Gwalior South	121
Picchore	2,675
Prithvipur	4,620
Rajnagar	732
Chhattarpur	3,495
Damoh	798
Gunnour	1,984
Jabalpur North	578
Petlawad	5,000

Cong lost 6 seats by narrow margins where SP, AAP, or JD(U) are contesting*

Chandla	1,177
Nagod	1,234
Maihar	2,984
Singarouli	3,726
Indore-5	1,133
Jabera	3,485

*No.s are win/loss margins

VOTE SHARE IN 2018 POLLS



Former Congress chief minister Kamal Nath addressing a rally on Saturday in Betul district. PTI

The candidates so far

The AAP has so far named 70 candidates, the SP has fielded 43 candidates, and the JD(U) 10. More candidates are expected to be named by Monday, the last day for filing nominations. Of the SP's candidates, 19 are contesting from seats that the Congress won five years ago. In 2018, the SP contested 52 seats, winning 1. The AAP contested 208 constituencies, with all its candidates losing their deposits. The AAP's overall vote share was 0.66%. The JD(U) did not contest the last Assembly polls.

Last week, the SP was involved in a public spat with the Congress over the latter's reluctance to give it any seat in Madhya Pradesh. The SP wanted around 12 seats, but with the Congress remaining firm, went ahead with fielding candidates. The Congress's insistence on not parting with any seat led SP president Akhilesh Yadav to accuse it of "cheating" his party and say that had he known that the "alliance is not at the state level", he would not have sent his party's representatives to meet senior Congress leaders Digvijaya Singh and Kamal Nath.

holds the constituency by a very narrow margin of 732 votes. In 2018, the SP had polled 23,783 votes in Rajnagar. The constituency is among the nine that the Congress won narrowly last time and where at least the AAP, SP, or JD(U) are in the fray.

The Congress also won Gwalior South by just 121 votes and has to contend with the AAP this time around. The JD(U) has fielded a candidate from Jabalpur North that the Congress won by just 578 votes last time around.

These parties can similarly damage the Congress's chances in six constituencies that the Congress lost narrowly in 2018. One such seat is Maihar, in the district of the same name, that the Congress lost to the BJP by 2,984 votes. Last time, the SP

polled 11,202 votes and the AAP 1,795 votes. Both are again in the fray. Singarouli is also one such seat. The Congress lost it by 3,726 votes in 2018, with the AAP polling 32,167 votes and the SP 4,680 votes. This time, both those parties are again contesting.

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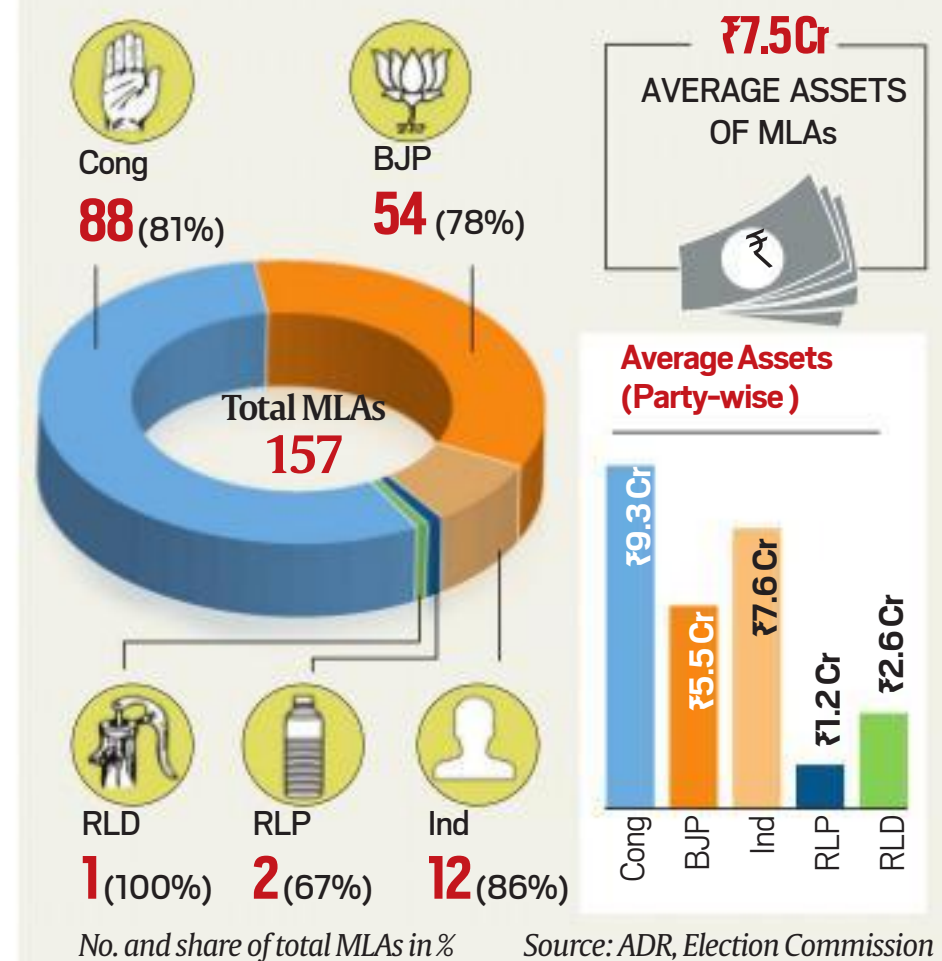
KEY ISSUES

IN CAMPAIGN PUSH, KCR FALLS BACK ON TELANGANA STATEHOOD PITCH

IN RAIPUR BJP FORTRESS, CONGRESS RELIES ON TEMPLE MAHANT IN KEY FIGHT

NUMBER SPEAK

RAJASTHAN: PARTY-WISE CROREPATI MLAs



Beniwal plus Bhim Army: Why the Jat-Dalit math may impact Rajasthan results

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 29

ANNOUNCING HIS tie-up with the Hanuman Beniwal-led Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) leader for the Rajasthan Assembly elections, Chandra Shekhar Azad 'Ravan' of the Bhim Army and Azad Samaj Party (ASP) praised his counterpart for "not seeing caste or religion".

However, caste calculations are very much at the heart of this new union, bringing together the RLP and the fledgling Uttar Pradesh-based ASP.

The RLP has come to be pigeonholed as a Jat party, and the association with the ASP may tarnish its acceptability among other castes, especially the Dalits. The RLP can already claim some hold among the SCs, with two of its three sitting MLAs being Dalit.

For a brief while, around the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the RLP had aligned with the BJP. Beniwal had won an MP thanks to the BJP's support, but fell out with the party over the farm laws.

At the press conference he addressed with Azad, where he announced the tie-up, Beniwal said there was need for a strong alternative to the BJP and Congress, and for "kisan, jawan and Dalits to come together" in the state.

While Jats are about 10% of Rajasthan's population, SCs are close to 18%. As per the Rajasthan Jat Mahasabha, the community dominates at least 40 seats and influences several others.

In the 2018 Assembly elections, around 76 lakh votes of the



Azad launching the ASP manifesto in MP on October 28. PTI

total 3.56 crore cast (or 21.34%) were neither for the ruling Congress nor the BJP, and it is this number that the RLP and ASP say they are primarily targeting.

The RLP, which contested in 58 seats last time, had polled 8.5 lakh votes in all. Its ally Ghanshyam Tiwari's Bharat Vahini Party lost all its 63 seats, losing deposit in 62.

The ASP, which is contesting its first election in Rajasthan, is expected to have limited impact. But while the RLP-ASP ambitions may be overblown, a Jat-Dalit combination could hurt the two main parties — and more the BJP than the Congress.

Beniwal, who announced 10 candidates on Saturday, has announced plans to contest all 200 seats, and said they are open to joining hands with more non-BJP, non-Congress parties.

What the RLP appears to be counting on is the growing restlessness in the Jat community, which has been demanding its

own CM. There are around 30-odd Jat MLAs in the outgoing Assembly. And Jat Mahasabha president Rajaram Meel says they are demanding that the two parties field at least 40 Jats.

As for the 34 reserved seats for SCs in the state, apart from the two with the RLP, 19 are with the Congress, 12 with the BJP, and one with Independent Babulal Nagar. The Congress has fielded Nagar from Dudu this time.

In the bypolls held over the past three-four years, the RLP is seen to have hurt the BJP.

As for Azad, he will be banking on cornering the BSP vote in Rajasthan. The party won six seats in 2018, though all its MLAs later merged with the Congress.

In May last year, Azad had said: "People will recognise us as an alternative."

Of the 10 candidates announced by the RLP, Beniwal, currently the Lok Sabha MP from Nagaur, will contest from Khinvsar in place of his brother.

I HEREBY DECLARE

NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR, 66
The Union minister of Agriculture and the sitting Morena MP is the BJP's candidate from Madhya Pradesh's Dimni

MOVABLE ASSETS (including of spouse)
₹1.34 crore

IMMOVABLE ASSETS
₹1.4 crore including agricultural, commercial and residential properties

LIABILITIES:
Rs 24.97 lakh

SOURCE OF INCOME:
MP salary, rent and interest

EDUCATION:
Graduation in Faculty of Arts, Jivaji University Gwalior

Gig workers in Telangana hold on to a stalled BRS promise, a faint Bharat Jodo Yatra hope

RAHUL V PISHARODY
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 29

THE DEMAND for a social security framework for gig workers in Telangana, who number about 4.2 lakh, is gaining momentum ahead of the November 30 polls, with the Telangana Gig And Platform Workers Union (TGPWU) approaching various political parties on the issue.

The TGPWU has suggested the setting up of a tripartite board with the representation of aggregator companies, worker organisations and the government. It has also sought the introduction of a welfare fee on each transaction, which could be deposited in a fund for gig workers.

Shaik Salauddin, the TGPWU president, said that drivers and delivery partners continue to be exploited and vulnerable. Given



Numbering about 4.2 lakh, they have approached parties. PTI

the Telangana government's focus on IT and e-commerce, the state should "become a pioneer with a board for gig and platform-based workers," he said.

The ruling Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) led by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao or KCR had earlier promised a comprehensive policy against

"the exploitation of gig and platform workers". However, it does not figure in the party manifesto.

Salauddin says he meet Minister for IT, Industries and Commerce KT Rama Rao or KTR recently. "He said work is in progress, but the Model Code of Conduct has come into force. He

assured us that the rest will be done soon after the elections."

The TGPWU recently also met the chairman of the Congress Manifesto Committee, D Sridhar Babu, while in November 2022, Salauddin had met Rahul Gandhi during his Bharat Jodo Yatra, and raised the concerns of gig workers.

Incidentally, the Congress government in Rajasthan has passed the Gig and Platform Workers' Welfare Act, while in Karnataka, the party government has rolled out a health insurance cover for gig workers.

BJP leader Marri Shashidhar Reddy says the issue is being discussed within the party.

The Congress and BJP are yet to release their manifestos.

A 2022 NITI Aayog report said that at 2.35 crore, gig workers would likely form 6.7% of the entire non-agricultural workforce in the country by 2029-30.

Haunted by 2018, Cong banks on spectre of Manipur

SUKRITA BARUAH
AIZAWL, OCTOBER 29

AFTER THE Congress lost power after two terms in 2018, it was seen as the party losing its "last bastion in the Northeast".

Winning just 5 of the state's 40 seats, the Congress had finished third, behind the Mizo National Front (MNF), which bagged 26 seats, and the debutant Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), which won 8 seats.

Steered by a new leader in after five decades, the Congress is now looking to regain lost ground in the November 7 polls. The Congress's key plank in

the Christian-majority state is safeguarding it from the BJP's Hindutva push. Like the ruling MNF, the Congress is also banking on the repercussions of the crisis in BJP-ruled Manipur.

The Congress is trying to frame Manipur as an example of the BJP's "misgovernance" and its bid to call the shots in the region. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Mizoram Congress president and its CM candidate, Lalsawta, 77, says: "When the Manipur crisis happened, it brought home the danger that the BJP poses to the Mizo people."

Mizos share an ethnic bond with the Kuki-Zomi community which is in conflict with the



"People see BJP can destroy NE social fabric," says Cong CM face Lalsawta. Congress

Meiteis in Manipur.

"There are two levels at which the Manipur crisis plays out here. One is that the people

feel the suffering of their brethren. The second is the message that the BJP is capable of destroying the social fabric of a Northeastern state," says a senior central Congress functionary.

The BJP does not have a significant presence in Mizoram so far. But Lalsawta points to the MNF being a part of the NDA.

"The people are apprehensive of the BJP again having a hold in Mizoram as they do now through the MNF. Regional parties are pliable so the ZPM may also go with the BJP," Lalsawta says.

Rahul Gandhi made the same pitch during his campaign in Mizoram earlier this month.

But the space for the

Congress in the state is getting cramped, given the MNF and ZPM's vigorous campaigns.

Earlier, following its 2018 debacle, which also saw its vote share drop to 29.98% from 44.63%, and resulted in other local poll losses, the Congress had effected a change in leadership.

Lalsawta's image as an efficient former finance minister and a clean ex-civil servant is expected to help the Congress.

Its rivals call the Congress a "spent force", but a section of voters are willing to give it a chance. "The BJP is marginal. But the other three parties are very close," says Felix Lalvenhima, a 24-year-old voter from Mamit.

FROM THE GROUND

In MP's 2018 caste violence epicentre, as parties woo Dalits, upper castes simmer

LIZ MATHEW
MORENA/AMBAH (MP),
OCTOBER 29

A HEATED discussion is on in front of a fertiliser shop in Dimni constituency Badokhar Gaon, in Morena. "We have nothing against the BJP, we have always backed it. But it has now brought jaativad in society... Brahmins have voted for the BJP so far, but not this time," says Sunil Dandotiya.

The most articulate among the group, Dandotiya asks why there is not a single Brahmin MLA from the Morena Lok Sabha constituency's six Assembly segments (all were won by the Congress in 2018). "We like the

BJP government, but we want Balbir Dandotiya as our MLA... Who will Brahmins take their joys, sorrows to? There are a lot of atrocities against Brahmins, but not even an FIR is registered."

A former Congress leader, Balbir Dandotiya is a BSP candidate. Even then, says Dandotiya, he is preferable to Morena sitting MP Narendra Singh Tomar, one of the Union ministers whom the BJP has translocated from the centre into the state fray. He is contesting from Dimni.

In 2018, Morena had been at the heart of caste violence that erupted over apprehensions that a Supreme Court order may result in dilution of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, re-

VOTE SHARES IN MORENA DISTRICT'S ASSEMBLY SEATS IN 2018

Seat	BJP	Congress	BSP
Ambah	23.79%	29.89%	17.76%
Dimni	36.16%	49.23%	10.23%
Joura	23.29%	34.45%	25.14%
Morena	31.83%	45.62%	13.99%
Sabalgarh	29.41%	35.60%	29.91%
Sumawali	32.72%	41.07%	19.66%

sulting in seven deaths in Madhya Pradesh. In the 2018 Assembly polls, the BJP paid a heavy price.

The Congress won 26 of the 34 constituencies in the Gwalior-Chambal region to which Morena

belongs. It also won 17 of the 35 overall Scheduled Caste-reserved seats in the state, with the remaining going to the BJP. One of the 17 seats was Morena's Ambah, whose MLA later shifted from the

Congress to the BJP.

This time, the Congress can see some of its votes go to the BSP, SP and the Aam Aadmi Party, with all three in the fray. A few days ago, the Congress changed its candi-

date for the Sumawali seat in Morena, which it had won in 2018, following the possibility of rebellion after earlier lists.

The BJP, meanwhile, has been trying to aggressively woo back the Dalits, who constitute around 16% of the population, through several projects and schemes.

Ahead of the elections, the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government announced a Rs 100-crore Ravidas memorial in Bundelkhand. Ravidas is a revered figure among the Dalits.

The Congress has pitted its national president Mallikarjun Kharge, a Dalit, against this push. Earlier this year, Kharge launched the party's Jan Aakrosh meetings against the Chouhan government.

down in 2020, after just 15 months in power.

In the Ambah (reserved) constituency, neighbouring Dimni, the conversations on caste are subtler. However, the seat's loyalty has been to sitting MLA Kamlesh Jatav, irrespective of the party he contests from, the BSP to Congress to BJP.

For long, given its high Dalit population, Chambal was one of the few regions in the state where the BSP made its presence felt. But, both the BSP leaders who won in 2018 later moved to other parties.

This has eroded the credibility of the BSP. "Why should we vote for the BSP if its candidates will join other parties?" says Surendra, a daily labourer in Ambah.

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

Modi dials Egypt's El-Sisi over Gaza, both agree on early peace

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29



PM Narendra Modi, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi

AS INDIA assesses the Israel-Hamas war and reaches out to major stakeholders in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi have discussed the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation and agreed on the need for early restoration of peace and stability in the region.

Modi and El-Sisi spoke Saturday and shared concern over terrorism, violence and loss of civilian lives. They emphasised on facilitating humanitarian assistance to those in need.

They also deliberated on the implications of the current situation for West Asia and the world, according to an Indian read-out of the phone call.

"Yesterday, spoke with President @Alisiofficial. Exchanged views on the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in West Asia," Modi said in a post on X Sunday.

"We share concerns regarding terrorism, violence and loss of civilian lives. We agree on the need for early restoration of peace and stability and facilitating hu-

manitarian assistance," he said. He had made similar remarks in his phone conversation on October 23 with Jordan's King Abdullah-II. Since October 7, Modi has had phone conversations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President of Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas in view of the war triggered by the deadly Hamas attack on Israel. The Israelis have retaliated with a major offensive in the Gaza Strip ruled by Hamas, carrying out air strikes and raids. The Israeli offensive has led to turmoil in the Arab world and prompted Iran and its proxies in Lebanon and Syria to threaten a wider conflict.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Modi and El-Sisi discussed the situation in West Asia and its implications. "Both leaders expressed their

EXPLAINED **The concern at home**
AN ESTIMATED 90 lakh Indians work in West Asia, and any widening of the ongoing conflict poses a risk to them. India's energy security banks on stability in the region, which meets over 50% of India's energy needs.

shared concern at terrorism, violence and loss of civilian lives. The Prime Minister reiterated India's long-standing and principled position on the Israel-Palestine issue," it said.

"The two leaders agreed on the need for early restoration of peace and stability and facilitating humanitarian assistance," the MEA said in a statement.

There has been mounting global concern over the plight of civilians in Gaza. On October 22, India sent over 38 tonnes of relief material for the people of Palestine via Egypt.

An Egyptian statement said President El-Sisi received a phone call from Prime Minister Modi and the two leaders ex-

changed views on the latest developments in the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip.

Counselor Ahmed Fahmy, spokesman for the Egyptian Presidency, said President El-Sisi confirmed that Egypt is pursuing its endeavours to coordinate regional and international efforts to push towards a ceasefire.

The phone call after India's abstention at the UN General Assembly on a Gaza ceasefire resolution — it had no references to either Hamas or hostages — exemplifies New Delhi's bid to address competing imperatives in the ongoing conflict.

Its position is in tune with its stand in the other ongoing conflict, the Russia-Ukraine war. While the circumstances, politics and conditions of the two wars are different and not comparable, the diplomatic playbook of balancing has been a consistent feature of New Delhi's approach.

The geopolitics of the Middle East is fraught as well as closer home and India will need to mobilise its diplomatic skills and goodwill with the main actors to negotiate the coming weeks and months. The phone calls to Jordan and Egypt's leaders are a part of that engagement.

MANN KI BAAT

PM says youth website to be launched on Patel birth anniversary, pays tribute to Indira Gandhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Sunday said the website for Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), a new autonomous body for youth and youth-led development, would be launched soon and appealed to young Indians to sign up for various programmes through it.

Speaking during his monthly radio address, Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister said the new national organisation would be launched on October 31, the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Recalling the contribution of Patel in integrating princely states, Modi said October 31 was a special day. He said the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations of 75 years of Independence would

culminate on October 31 with soil collected from across the country being placed in "Amrit Vatika" in Delhi.

He also paid tribute to late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated on October 31, 1984.

"My Bharat organisation will provide an opportunity to the youth of India to play an active role in various nation-building events. This is a unique effort of integrating the youth power of India in building a developed India. Mera Yuva Bharat's website My Bharat is also about to be launched. I would urge the youth...register on MyBharat.gov.in and sign up for various programmes. The 31st of October is also the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi Ji. I also pay my heartfelt tribute to her," the PM said.

NEW COURSE

EVER SINCE Amit Shah became the first Cooperation Minister, it has become a governance buzzword. After establishing the Centre for Cooperative and Livelihood at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, the Centre is making the trainee civil servants get first-hand experience of cooperatives' functioning. About 600 trainee civil servants earlier this week visited different parts of Gujarat, including Anand-based Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd that sells its products under the famous brand name Amul.

GROUND REALITY

AFTER THE SP claimed that the Lucknow cricket stadium in Lucknow was constructed when Akhilesh Yadav was CM, the BSP, too, entered the credit war. Citing an *Indian Express* report, BSP national coordinator Akash Anand said the project was conceptualised and land for the stadium was acquired by the Mayawati government in 2012. The foundation was laid during the Akhilesh-led government. But the BJP government in 2017 gave the stadium its final shape and CM Yogi Adityanath inaugurated it a year later.

DOUBLE MISS

TMC Lok Sabha member Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar Friday missed a *puja* at her house in West Bengal to attend the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs meeting that was to adopt reports on the three Bills seeking to replace the IPC, CrP and Evidence Act. With some Congress members unable to attend, TMC was keen on ensuring all its members were present to boost Opposition strength. But in an anti-climax of sorts, panel chair Brij Lal rescheduled the meet for November 6.

Sikhs started Ram Janmabhoomi movement, did much to protect Sanatan Dharma: Rajnath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 29

STATING THAT the Sikh community has done a lot to protect the Sanatan Dharma, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Sunday said it was Sikhs who started the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and their contribution can never be forgotten. He was addressing a gathering at Lucknow's Alambagh Gurudwara on Prakash Utsav of Guru Granth Sahib.

"On Dec 1, 1858, according to an FIR, a group of Sikhs raising slogans of Guru Govind Singh captured the premises and wrote

'Ram Ram' everywhere on the walls. The Ram Janmabhoomi Andolan was started by the Sikhs," he said.

"The Sikh community has done a lot to protect Sanatan Dharma. For the Ram Janmabhoomi movement as well, no Indian can forget their contribution," the BJP leader said.

Singh said that now everyone talks about their rights but not about their duties. "If there is a community whose percentage of those who laid down their lives for the country and their percentage in the Army is greater than their population percentage, that is the Sikh community," he said.



The Defence Minister at a Lucknow gurdwara on Sunday. PTI

Central Railway offers flexible work hours to employees from November

Mumbai: To address the commuting woes of its more than 1,500 employees, the Central Railway has introduced flexible working hours from next month. Employees can choose one of two slots for a month: From 9.30 am to 5.45 pm and 11.30 am to 7.45 pm. Officials said the initiative has been taken to ensure the safety of its employees who have to travel in overcrowded local trains during peak hours. ENS

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on
Understanding & Managing Psoriasis
Welcome & Introduction
Dr. (Prof.) M. Srinivas, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi
Speakers & Panelists
Dr. (Prof.) Kaushal K. Verma, (Dean Academics and HoD Dermatology)
Dr. (Prof.) Sujay Khandpur, Dr. (Prof.) Nand Kumar, Dr. (Prof.) Neetu Bhari

- Psoriasis clinical overview
- Psychological Impact and it's management
- How to manage Psoriasis
- Doctor- patient interaction

Date : 31.10.2023 (Tuesday)
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Venue : J.L. Auditorium, AIIMS, New Delhi

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IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE A RICHER CULTURE, WE MUST WEAVE ONE IN WHICH EACH DIVERSE HUMAN GIFT WILL FIND A FITTING PLACE. — MARGARET MEADE

The Indian EXPRESS

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BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

An uneasy homecoming

Nawaz Sharif has returned to a Pakistan in turmoil. He will need to win an election, army's sustained approval



HUSAIN HAQQANI

NAWAZ SHARIF'S CELEBRATORY return to Pakistan after several years in exile will turn into a political triumph only if the country's military establishment, which had banished him from politics six years ago and now facilitated his recent resurrection, fundamentally changes its behaviour. So far, it seems that the establishment sees Sharif as a much-needed alternative to the dangerous populism of Imran Khan.

Sharif's return makes it easier to hold elections that he might win. But history does not give reason for optimism about him being able to complete his tenure, if elected, and having a free hand in policymaking. He has previously been elected prime minister thrice, only to be removed from office each time without completing his term. In 1993, he was removed from office by a Presidential decree. In 1999, he was toppled in a military coup. And in 2017, he was disqualified from being prime minister by judicial fiat.

He has retained a strong support base, especially in the military's dominant recruiting region of Punjab, throughout the last three decades. But he has not seen eye to eye with successive army chiefs, several of whom were appointed by Sharif. The usual point of contention has been differences over security and foreign policies and over the military leaders' right to determine policies. The question now is, will a fourth Sharif term conclude without a fatal altercation with Pakistan's military leaders.

On the eve of the July 2018 elections that brought Imran Khan to office, I had predicted the return of Sharif in the not-too-distant future. "Even if the military succeeds in installing a selected prime minister into office after the votes are cast," I wrote, "it will not succeed in its core objective of creating a credible, effective, civilian façade. Sharif's imprisonment will not end his (or his daughter's) political careers long after the retirement of the generals and colonels who plotted his downfall."

That is exactly what happened. The generals' choice, Imran Khan, became a greater threat to the almighty establishment than any other politician had ever been. After he was removed from office, the former cricketer went on a rampage that threatened Pakistan's external relations as well as domestic order. Enraged by his arrest, Khan's cult of fans at-

tacked military installations — something even declared enemies of the Pakistani state had not done.

Unlike Sharif, and Benazir Bhutto before him, Imran Khan was not a politician locking horns with the military over civilian supremacy under the constitution. He was trying to prove that his popularity was greater than public approval for Pakistan's military leaders and that he was stronger than the permanent state apparatus. The military responded with a crackdown, supported by most political elites, but given its unwillingness to impose military rule, it also needed a popular political alternative.

Sharif's return, and the fast-track reversal of criminal charges and cases against him, is the result of the establishment's desire to hold an election that Khan does not win. From the establishment's perspective, Sharif would be a safer pair of hands than the narcissistic cricketer-turned-politician, given Sharif's experience in both winning elections and governance. But the establishment's willingness to let Sharif have another turn is a reflection of some difficult ground realities.

At the time Sharif was forced into exile, Pakistani Punjab was divided between Sharif's anti-establishment followers, who believed that fighting the establishment to secure democracy was more important than fighting corruption, and Imran Khan's pro-establishment supporters who repeated what had been the mantra of every Pakistani coup-maker: Pakistan's politicians are a threat to the country; corruption must be eliminated before democracy can function; and generals and judges know what is in the country's interest better than the illiterate peasants, workers, and the unemployed.

Now, Khan's supporters have also turned against the establishment, albeit for different reasons. That necessitates a cooling-off period during which critical policy issues, such as managing the economy and reorienting Pakistan's rather stagnant foreign policy can be tackled through cooperation between traditional politicians and the establishment. Khan and his fans can be wished away no more than Sharif and his supporters could be six years ago. But the Pakistani establishment, and Sharif, both seem to have decided to deal with that matter at a later stage.

Like all Pakistani politicians, Sharif has made compromises in his long career and has sometimes taken contrary public positions for short-term popularity. But he is identified, by and large, with an emphasis on economic progress and peaceful relations with Pakistan's neighbours, including India. His views on economic liberalisation and normalisation with India have also been the major reason for his past conflicts with the establishment.

The timing of Sharif's return is ominous. At a time when its economy is in shambles, Pakistan also confronts multiple external challenges. Relations with India are as strained as ever. Hopes that the Taliban's control of Afghanistan will end threats to Pakistan from its northwestern border have proved futile. Pakistan now faces an increasing threat from local extremists and terrorists.

Moreover, Pakistan is no longer able to obtain military and economic assistance from the United States by highlighting support for America's global objectives; its close partnership with China is yielding fewer economic benefits than Pakistani leaders expected; and Pakistan's traditional friends in the Arab world have expanded their economic ties with India and want Pakistan to also straighten out its economy and end Islamist militancy.

If, as is rumoured, Pakistan's current military leadership itself wants respite from endless conflict to focus on the economy, Sharif might be able to try and re-engage with India. But while focusing on the economy and implementing his vision of "liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation" might be feasible, building a new relationship with India might be more difficult.

Sharif recognised as much by talking in his homecoming speech about both "ending conflict with neighbours" and "seeking an honourable solution to the Kashmir dispute". Still, Sharif has tried before and will probably try again to improve ties with India, this time with the generals' acquiescence. But before that he must win another election.

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CHANGE & CHALLENGE

India's vote on UN resolution marks a new realism in Middle East policy. But Delhi's diplomatic and political work is not yet done

IF YOU LOOK beyond the procedural and technical explanations of India's vote over the weekend at the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the war in Gaza, what stands out is an important change in India's approach to the complex politics of the Middle East. India's abstention on the Arab resolution calling for a humanitarian truce in Gaza, and support for a failed Canadian amendment condemning the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, mark a definitive shift in the evolution of India's regional policy over the last three decades. The shift, contrary to the criticism of it, is not about India abandoning the Palestine cause. It has to do with replacing the traditional diplomatic formalism and a defensive political correctness with a policy rooted in a hard-headed assessment of the shifting regional dynamic, and India's enduring interests, especially in relation to terrorism. In the past, India voted with the Arab resolutions against Israel as a matter of routine; Delhi also ducked the question of terrorism emanating from the Arab world. With its latest vote on the latest UNGA resolution, Delhi has underlined the primacy of its concerns on international terrorism without abandoning its demand for a two-state solution in Palestine.

While the new realism is welcome, the BJP government needs to guard against inviting the charge it used to level against the Congress party's Middle East policy — of playing "vote bank" politics with a region that is of vital interest to India. India's challenge is not with the nature of its UNGA vote that is non-binding and, in any case, ineffective. That nearly 140 nations in the UNGA have demanded that Russia end its Ukraine aggression over the last two years have had little impact on Moscow's policy. In the hyper-realist world of the Middle East, the UN is not where the volatile region's fate will be decided. Delhi's real diplomatic task, therefore, lies outside the UN. It has three dimensions.

First is to step up outreach to the Arab world and explain Delhi's abiding commitment to Palestine's full statehood, publicly press Israel to respect the laws of war, and shore up humanitarian assistance to Gaza. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent telephone calls to moderate leaders of the Arab world, including Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, King Hussein of Jordan, Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, is a welcome first step. Delhi's relations with the Arab leaders have never been as good as they are today, but India needs to complement it with a major diplomatic and political outreach to the Arab Street that is outraged by Israel's brutal repression in Gaza and its current military operations. Second, the government needs to invite Opposition leaders for a full briefing and explain the considerations shaping its regional policy. By all accounts, the Opposition's thinking on the Middle East is frozen in the past and an update is long overdue. And the serial blasts in Kerala on Sunday have underlined that both sides have a stake in insulating domestic politics from the Middle East crisis. Finally, Delhi can ill-afford to send out the impression that it is preventing pro-Palestine protests while encouraging demonstrations in support of Israel by groups on the other side of the ideological fence. Delhi needs to crack down on the extremist groups that are reportedly spreading disinformation in favour of Tel Aviv and participating in cyber attacks against Hamas sites. The BJP government cannot let fringe groups undermine its carefully crafted strategy of interest-based realism in the Middle East.

111 TALES TO INSPIRE

India's para-athletes dazzled with country's best-ever showing at Hangzhou. They have also shown way forward

INDIAN ATHLETES CONTINUE to back the country's Olympic-size dreams. Close on the heels of a record-setting performance at the Asian Games and the strong pitch to host the 2036 Summer Games, India's para-athletes dazzled with the country's best-ever showing at the continental event. In an encore of historical magnitude at Hangzhou, India finished with 111 medals — 29 gold, 31 silver and 51 bronze — at the Asian Para Games. The medal count may be a fraction of China's tally of 521, but the back-to-back hundreds at Hangzhou — India's count at Asian Games was 107 medals — spoke of a sporting ecosystem that wasn't just consistent in producing champion athletes but was inclusive too. The Asian Para rich haul is also a hat-tip to the parents, coaches and administrators who spotted and nurtured the sporting passion in the hearts and minds of children with physical disabilities. Hangzhou gave India 111 inspirational tales.

Take the case of India's first gold medalist, swimmer Suyash Narayan Jadhav, who got electrocuted at his brother's wedding which led to both his hands getting amputated. Or the athlete who won the 100th medal — 400m runner Dilip Mahadu Gavit, whose right arm is amputated below the elbow. Canoeist Prachi Yadav, paralysed from the waist down, rode against the tide and finished on the podium. Javelin thrower Sumit Antil, a world record holder oozing with self-confidence, hopes to give opponents a run for their money. The incredible story of 16-year-old armless archer Sheetal Devi, from Jammu and Kashmir, will inspire generations. Born with phocomelia, a rare congenital disorder that causes under-developed limbs, she is the world's first female archer without arms to compete internationally. In Hangzhou, the athlete who took up the sport just two years ago won two gold medals and a silver. The video clip of Sheetal hitting a bull's eye by pulling the bow with her magically flexible legs and mouth has become viral.

The results of the government's efforts to fund and train special sporting persons are there to see. The sports budget too has seen a three-time spike since 2014. A helping hand is all that those with disabilities need. The next step in giving para-athletes a level-playing field is to provide them easy access to local sports facilities. Every ramp built will add to the pool of talent. That will be the enduring legacy of these medals.

FREEZE FRAME

EP UNNY



KOFFEE WITH A NEW KARAN

New season of talk show is striking for Johar's display of vulnerability



VIDHATRI RAO

THE FIRST EPISODE of season eight of *Koffee with Karan*, filmmaker Karan Johar's chat show, is quiet, reflective, and wholesome. These are three words that have never been associated with the show, which has, over its almost 20-year run, gained a reputation for being fun and frivolous.

Johar, at the centre of Bollywood, with his 25-year career as a director and producer (who among us can call Shah Rukh Khan our closest friend?), could prod his guests about the "conjecture" surrounding their lives and the "equations" with contemporaries in a cut-throat industry. He would ease them in like he was having a conversation with them at a party he was hosting. The fun lay in knowing intimate details about our favourite stars' lives. The tone was always irreverent. There was the occasional question about the failure of an actor's film, but it never dug deeper.

Then came the big thud: The nepotism conversation, which actor Kangana Ranaut sparked off in an episode of the show, questioning Johar, who is known for working with his friends and their kids, on his own show. The debate assumed a new shape following the death by suicide of Sushant Singh Rajput in 2020. It became weaponised to target certain Bollywood celebrities, chief among them Johar, who was also attacked for his sexuality.

A *Koffee* season went by amid all this, in 2022. Many fans would consider it the worst season yet. The actors were too trained in PR-

speak and the 50-year-old Johar a little too invested in the sex lives of his younger colleagues. Many called it creepy. The season was almost universally panned for being dull.

Within a year arrives season eight, the gloss of the set intact, and the sheen of the stars even more so. This is in part because of the re-energised Bollywood landscape following the success of *Pathaan*, Johar's own *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*, *Gadar 2* and *Jawan*. The guests, Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh, starred in some of these films. Johar introduced them as Bollywood "royalty". We wait for the show to take a gossip turn — the "candid" rapid fire, where Johar asks his guests to rank actors based on their acting skills and sex appeal — and the games. It never does.

Instead, we get Johar's self-deprecating take on his fashion, a symptom, he says, of his "mid-life" crisis. For the first time, Padukone and Singh share footage from their 2018 wedding in a stunning villa at Lake Como in Italy. Afterwards, a visibly emotional Johar speaks about being alone: "Every day I wake up and a little part of me feels that vacuum. I felt so happy for you but I felt so alone yet."

Is it this self-reflection that has also, perhaps, helped Johar bring life to the hackneyed tropes of Hindi masala films? In his latest directorial endeavour, *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*, Johar addresses societal expectations of masculinity through a Kathak-teaching father. He gets Singh to dance to 'Dola re dola'

with abandon and also manages to give a lecture about the shame surrounding buying lingerie. All this while keeping the big, brimming, musical soul of Hindi films intact.

He showcased a similar vulnerability in another talk show in which he was the guest. Johar said, "The feminine side that I had, that was coming out so strongly, was only met with laughter... and then when I grew a little older, people got a little more quieter about it. But I could tell that there was a chitter-chatter about the way... I walked or spoke..."

The new *Koffee* episode also devotes a significant chunk of its runtime to discussing mental health, with Johar asking Padukone about her struggle with depression and anxiety. She speaks of her experiences and her initiative, The Live Love Laugh Foundation, to create awareness about mental health. Singh leans in, listens. She says he creates a "safe space" for her. Johar follows with a confidence of his own when he speaks about a panic attack he had earlier this year that got him to seek professional help and get on medication.

As one of the most visible and mainstream Bollywood celebrities, Johar's honesty, his ability to reveal himself with candour and also take a joke, was refreshing. Did we miss the older format of razzle-dazzle? Perhaps, a tad. Would we want to lose the new Johar? Most definitely, not.

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OCTOBER 30, 1983, FORTY YEARS AGO

PUNJAB TANGLE

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi offered to entrust the territorial issue to a tribunal if the earlier central award on Chandigarh was not acceptable to the Akali Dal. The PM reiterated that resolution of the Punjab problem was possible through negotiations. She offered to hold talks with Akali leaders. She said she had taken a decision on Chandigarh, but deferred it as one party showed reluctance.

INDIA'S CRICKET PRIDE

SUNIL GAVASKAR EQUALLED Donald

Bradman's 35-year-old record of 29 Test centuries amidst deafening cheers at the Kotla ground in New Delhi. It was as great a moment for him as for all Indians. Thirty-four-year-old Gavaskar came to terms with himself. He battled aggressively with a refreshing approach.

INDIA-CHINA TALKS

THE SINO-INDIAN TALKS, which were scheduled to end, have been extended by another day, generating considerable speculation among political circles in Delhi that the two sides have entered into serious negotiations on the modalities for resolving the boundary

question. The last three rounds of discussions between the two have been rather unproductive with Both China and India having stuck to their positions.

J&K BLAST

AN EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCE, unofficially described as a medium-intensity bomb, burst in the residential complex of a senior high court judge, Adarsh Sen Anand, damaging a window. Sources close to the judge said that a similar blast was heard by inmates of the house around 10 days ago but they took no notice of it as no damage occurred.



9 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The different perspectives on what is going on in Israel and Gaza are real. But the values of trust and understanding that a diverse society needs, in order to thrive, must not fall by the wayside."
— THE GUARDIAN

Policy to what end, at whose cost

Restricting agri-exports limits gains in global markets, prioritises domestic consumers over farmers



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH
BY ASHOK GULATI

GIVEN THAT A number of state elections are coming up, one can understand the central government's overdrive to tame food inflation. Obviously, it does not want inflation to be an issue in election campaigns. But how we tame food inflation, and at whose cost, is important to analyse for rational policy making.

The classic case is limiting the exports of basmati rice by putting a minimum export price (MEP) of \$1,200/tonne. India has been exporting, on an average, about 4.5 million tonnes (MT) a year over the last five years or so. This is a premium rice consumed by the upper middle class and the rich in India, and is exported to Gulf countries, some European countries and also the US. Punjab and Haryana are the primary producers. The export price normally hovers between \$800 to \$1,000/tonne. By putting an MEP of \$1,200, practically, much of the basmati export is restricted. And if this MEP continues, in all likelihood, India's basmati exports this year will register a sharp fall.

In many mandis of Punjab-Haryana, traders were shy in buying basmati and as a result, prices for farmers have been low compared to what they were when exports were fully open. So, the losers are ultimately the farmers of Punjab and Haryana, while the gainers would be the domestic upper income urban class. Externally, it must be remembered that it takes years to develop export markets, and by putting such a high MEP, India is basically handing over our export markets to Pakistan, who is the only other main competitor of basmati rice. Is this a conscious policy decision? Do our trade policy-makers know what damage they are doing to agri-exports? There is a need to revisit and revise this MEP as soon as possible, preferably fixing it at \$800 to \$850/tonne range.

The restrictive export policies are not just limited to basmati rice. They cover even broken rice, non-basmati white rice, parboiled rice, either through complete export bans or export duties. What is needed is a stable export policy and not knee-jerk reactions. It is well known that India is the largest exporter of rice in the world accounting for about 40 per cent global exports in 2022-23. Much of the non-basmati rice goes to several African countries, who pressed the panic button when India announced ban on exports of non-basmati white rice. That does not give India a good image of a leader of the Global South. The saving grace was the clause in the export policy which mentioned that if some countries write to the Government of India, then it can consider their request on a case-by-case basis. That's surely not a good way to design an export policy.

Our restrictive export policy has expanded to wheat export bans, an export duty of 40 percent on onions, and so on. With such a restrictive export policy, how can one



CR Sasikumar

dream of doubling India's agri-exports, a target set out by the government. It may be noted that in 2013-14, the last year of the UPA government, India's agri-exports touched \$43.27 billion, up from \$8.67 billion in 2004-05 when it took over power at the centre. This is almost a five-fold growth in 10 years. If the same momentum had been maintained during the 10 years of NDA rule, agri-exports should have touched \$200 billion. But in reality, they may not touch even \$50 billion this year (2023-24). A major explanation of this failure lies in restrictive exports to favour domestic consumers at the cost of farmers — a typical urban consumer bias, which inflicts a large "implicit tax" on our farmers. That's surely not the right way to design agri-export policies. Export markets are premium markets and need to be developed and maintained over years.

If domestic consumers need to be helped, it should be through domestic income policy, targeted towards only the vulnerable sections of society. When poverty is hovering around 15 per cent as per multi-dimensional poverty line of NITI, and when more than 800 million people get free wheat/rice (5kg/person/month), one does not understand the logic of putting an MEP of \$1,200/tonne on basmati rice, and handing over years of hard work of Indian rice traders to Pakistan. This is simply perverse.

It must be kept in mind that agriculture exports also reflect how competitive our agriculture is vis-à-vis the rest of the world, and how much surplus it can generate.

There is no dearth of money being spent on agriculture or consumers to have food security. But the manner in which that money is spent is suboptimal. Our policy makers, in competitive populism mode, feel that they can come back to power through such doles, and sometimes they do succeed. But they do a big damage to the sector's health and its competitiveness.

Competitiveness results primarily from increasing productivity and getting more from less. That, in turn, requires massive investments in agriculture R&D, seeds, irrigation, fertilisers, better farming practices including precision agriculture. India's overall investment in agriculture R&D, both of the Centre and of states together, hovers around 0.5 per cent of the agri-GDP. This is too small. It needs to be immediately doubled, if not tripled, if India is to become a powerhouse of agricultural production as well as agri-exports. But unfortunately, populism, which peaks during election times, leads to more subsidies, be it a food subsidy of more than Rs 2 lakh crore for consumers or a fertiliser subsidy of another Rs 2 lakh crore for farmers. On top of this, many states announce loan waivers, free power, and many other "revisis" (doles).

In sum, there is no dearth of money being spent on agriculture or consumers to have food security. But the manner in which that money is spent is suboptimal. You cannot get a bang for your buck with such poor design of policies. Our policy makers, in competitive populism mode, feel that they can come back to power through such doles, and sometimes they do succeed. But they do a big damage to the sector's health and its competitiveness. A nation's power will be reflected in its capacity to innovate, produce and export to the world at competitive prices. Can India rise to this challenge?

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Two wrong prescriptions

Open market operations will tighten financial conditions, may help resist pressure on rupee. Question is whether this should be done now



ISHAN BAKSHI

IN ITS OCTOBER meeting, the monetary policy committee voted unanimously to keep interest rates unchanged. This was widely expected. But what was not was the RBI Governor stating that the central bank would consider open market operations in order to manage liquidity. This announcement drove the 10-year government bond yield up by 12 basis points to 7.34 per cent. The central bank views this policy as being "consistent with the stance of monetary policy". But it raises the question: What was the objective of this de facto tightening? Are the actions of the RBI being driven solely by concerns over inflation? Or, are other considerations beginning to dominate?

The latest data available before the RBI/MPC meeting did, in fact, show that inflation continued to remain well above the upper threshold of the central bank's inflation-targeting framework. Retail inflation had surged in July, and remained elevated in August as food prices, especially of vegetables, soared. While inflation did fall sharply to 5 per cent in September as food prices corrected, the central bank did not have the luxury of this data point before its meeting in October.

However, the inflation forecasts accompanying the MPC meeting do suggest that the RBI had, in fact, anticipated this correction in food prices, as it did not materially alter its assessment of the trajectory of inflation. Similar to its forecast in the August meeting, the central bank continued to project inflation at 5.4 per cent for 2023-24 and at 5.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2024-25. The underlying price pressures in the economy have, in fact, been weakening, as alluded to by the RBI Governor in his comments. Core inflation, which excludes the volatile food and fuel components, had eased by 140 basis points from its peak in January, falling to 4.9 per cent during July-August. The latest data shows that it has dropped further to 4.7 per cent in September. Thus, there is no indication of food inflation spilling over, of core inflation converging to headline inflation.

In such a situation, when a supply side induced food price shock is easing, when the underlying price pressures are weakening, when the RBI has not changed its inflation forecast, and when the MPC has maintained the status quo on rates, open market operations, which involve tightening financial conditions further, do not seem consistent with what the stance of monetary policy ought to be. If anything, it is suggestive of excessive tightening.

This then raises the question: Will open market operations be used more as a tool for addressing concerns over financial stability and defending the currency?

It is no secret that the sharp rise in retail and personal loans has taken many by surprise. More so, as it has occurred during a period of surging interest rates. Whether this credit growth is due to push or pull fac-

tors, whether it reflects pent-up demand or sluggish household income is debatable. Either way, the concerns raised over the expanse and pace of credit growth to this segment, the quality of borrowers availing loans and the build up of stress in this segment do seem to have some basis.

As per a study on unsecured loans by UBS, the share of borrowers with more than five personal loans has risen to 7.7 per cent in March 2023, up from 1 per cent in 2018. The study pegs new personal loan disbursements to borrowers with weaker credit profiles at 22 per cent of disbursements and estimates the risk of defaults (unsecured retail loans) to rise as the share lending to already overdue borrowers (one plus days past due) has risen from 12 per cent in 2018-19 to 23 per cent in 2022-23.

As the RBI Governor has also expressed concerns over the sharp credit growth to this segment, squeezing out liquidity and de facto tightening, raising short and long-term interest rates, could be a way to slow down its growth. After all, one could well make the argument that it is best to constrain this exuberance in order to evade a blow-out down the line.

However, liquidity conditions have been tight for several weeks now. Banks have, in fact, been scrambling for liquidity. As per reports, rates on certificates of deposits have been going up, as have those on commercial papers. Tightening financial conditions further will not only affect consumer credit, but could also impact industrial credit. And this comes at a time when there is uncertainty over the underlying momentum in the economy.

Then there is also the currency angle. The 10-year bond US yield is hovering around 5 per cent for the first time since 2007. The Dollar index has strengthened, notwithstanding daily fluctuations. Currencies of both developed economies and emerging markets have come under pressure. And India is no exception. However, the Rupee has dropped less compared to most other currencies as its fall has been cushioned by the RBI intervening in the currency markets.

Since the middle of July, the RBI's foreign currency assets have fallen by around \$25 billion. While part of the decline could be on account of revaluation of reserves, the balance does provide an indication of the scale of the central bank's intervention in the forex markets. However, as rates in much of the developed world are likely to remain higher for longer, there are limits to drawing down reserves to defend the currency. In such a situation, OMOs serve as a useful tool to increase the spread between the Indian and US bond yields, helping ease the pressure on the rupee.

But, considering that the pressure on the currency is unlikely to abate quickly — it will probably show some signs of easing once flows start trickling in following the inclusion in the government bond index — it must be asked for how long and to what extent can the pressure be resisted? Such a defence of the currency will also make it difficult for the RBI/MPC to respond to the domestic inflation/growth trajectory.

Perhaps, a more appropriate question to ask is whether the pressure on the currency should be resisted at all?

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The shifting meaning of terror

Categorisation of violence as 'terrorism' is a political more than legal act



SHAHEER ALAM

RECENT WEEKS HAVE presented events, locally and internationally, where the moral response to violence appears to hinge only on their arbitrary classification as 'terrorist' forms.

Years ago, in the criminal cases relating to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the Supreme Court had ruled that Nalini and others, acting with the intent to assassinate a former PM, committed an act of murder as per law, and an act of political violence descriptively. It also said that the fact of a violent event was in itself not prima facie evidence of "terrorism" — that threshold would have to be crossed separately.

This meant that it was more difficult to categorise even egregious political violence as an act of "terrorism" without first making a definitive case to show why a particular breach of law should be classified thus.

A fundamental function of law — and politics — is to classify violence: First, into categories of necessary violence, typically performed by the state (detentions, capital punishment, violence inflicted to preserve national security, or the state's right to pre-emptive or retaliatory strikes); or of lesser violence (self-defence, grave provocation, etc), and finally, violence without justification (inflicted by private citizens).

Law (and political discourse) further classify the last category into hierarchies. Law's categorisations are, for the most part, commonsensical. Political categorisations can be more utilitarian, deliberately muddying the distinction between "law and order breaches" and "state security".

A review of the Indian National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Reports between 2004 and 2019 show that the earlier copies have a chapter on "violent crimes", sub-categorised into "violent crimes affecting the body — murder, kidnapping, etc.", "violent crimes affecting public safety — riot, arson", and "violent crimes affecting property". The chapter then mentions "motives behind violent crimes" and identifies "personal vendetta" along with structural reasons like "caste conflicts", "communalism", and "terrorist and other extremist violence" — which referred primarily to violent separatists. Communal, caste and class-motivated violence were grouped together, and, thus, hierarchically the same as "terrorist or extremist" violence. Remarkably though, the scale of the latter was much lower — it accounted for 3.1-3.3 per cent of violent crimes, whereas caste-related violence accounted for up to 35.9 per cent of deaths in some states, and communal and class conflicts for up to 50 per cent violent deaths in others.

In the more recent reports, the section on "violent crimes" has a new nomenclature: "Offences against the human body". The subsection on "violent crimes affecting public safety" is now called "offences against public tranquility". It shifts the focus from the safety of people during a riot to a breach of tranquility, although in effect they refer to similar incidents.

While caste, class and communal violence are now reflected in the section on "murder", "terrorist and extremist" offences have got a

chapter of their own titled "offences against the state". It includes disparate acts ranging from crimes of "sedition" to "imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration" (typically speech acts), to misdemeanours relating to damage to public property, and, finally, crimes under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and the Official Secrets Act. This rearrangement achieves two things: It distinguishes "terrorism" from other violent crimes, without presenting any measure of distinction, and it implies that such acts are those that are solely directed against the state/government, and form a continuum from dissenting speech to physical violence.

In Nalini's case, the state had also argued that the assassination had political fallout. The Court ruled that there was evidence only much lower — it was motivated by hatred in the person of the former prime minister. The person of a leader, and the state, are not the same, as per the SC, and an offence against one may not be an offence against the other.

The NCRB report lays down the norm where only certain forms of violence (on a sliding continuum) are seen as threats to the state's security. Even the courts seem to accept it, at least at the outset, allowing for visible shifts in due process practices.

There is also a new chapter on "crimes by 'anti-national' elements, which enumerates ordinary offences by 'anti-nationals', "North-East insurgents", "Naxalites and left-wing extremists" and "terrorists including jihadi terrorists". It is a curious chapter, reminiscent of the colonial Criminal Tribes Act, which cre-

ates vague, but evocative categories of alleged criminals.

There is much public debate on effective responses to "terrorism", but significantly less discussion on the shifting meanings assigned to it, which is an exercise of power.

International humanitarian law recognises "war crimes" as a legal category. As per the Geneva Convention of 1949, there is a commonly recognised list of acts proscribed in armed conflicts. This applies to both state and non-state actors, and to internal and international conflicts. On the other hand, "terrorism" is not universally defined in customary international law. Violent events being categorised as "terrorist" is more a political than a legal act.

One of those recently raided in Delhi gave a disturbing testimony in the media: "The raiding party said that we have sanction from our superior to use brute force if you don't cooperate in handing over your phones and other devices". In rule of law, a superior's sanction is not sufficient. In situations which are becoming the norm, investigating authorities search, seize and arrest on the threat of brute force.

Similarly in the context of Gaza, the axis of violence has again shifted from the "terrorist" to the state. If the law and the state did not have a monopoly over meanings, there might be multiple legitimate classifications of violence.

The writer is a Supreme Court advocate. She thanks Anjolie Singh for her insights on international humanitarian law

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PRIVACY TIGHTROPE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Remedy worse than malaise' (IE, October 28). As the election draws near, the business of fake news is at its peak. Whatsapp's end-to-end encrypted policy ensures that neither the government nor a company can intrude on our privacy. But on the grounds of threats to the security of the state, public order and sexual offence, the government should have the power to investigate.

Prachi Sengar, Jammu

GRAVE DAMAGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'EC does right' (IE, October 28). It's distressing that the Centre has asked all departments to deploy officers to showcase its achievements across the country. The outreach is only about achievements of the last nine years. The campaign is conveniently timed for the Lok Sabha election which is expected in April-May 2024. The extensive election process in India has largely retained its credibility because of the bureaucratic impartiality demanded by the system. But the BJP's strategy of disregarding norms in pursuit of electoral gains left a trail of damage.

Khokan Das, Kolkata

POLITICS OF RELIGION

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Three Diwalis in MP after Ram Mandir opens: Shah' (IE, October 29). The BJP is sure to use the Ram temple issue to garner votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Given the standard of politics today, the Ram temple alone is not going to bring "Ram Rajya" to the country. If people do vote in the name of the temple, ignoring their pressing needs for education, livelihood and healthcare, they will be opting for a country which will run "Ram bharose".

SS Paul, Nadia

PEACE DOUBLESPEAK

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Terror knows no borders, says India as it abstains on UN resolution on Gaza truce' (IE, October 29). One is shocked over New Delhi's decision to abstain from voting on the UN resolution on Gaza. To refuse to take a stand and watch in silence as food, water, medical supplies, power and communication are cut off in Palestine, goes against everything our country has stood for. India's foreign policy is based on being a subordinate ally of US imperialism. The Modi government is focussed on consolidating the US-Israel-India nexus.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

10 GOVT & POLITICS

Day 5 of fast: Maratha quota stir intensifies

Fadnavis says CM looking into the issue; Patil not to backtrack

MANOJ MORE
PUNE, OCTOBER 29



Devendra Fadnavis

EVEN AS his condition deteriorated further on the fifth day of his fast-unto-death seeking reservation for Maratha community, activist Manoj Jarange Patil on Sunday told the state government to hold discussions with him till he is able to speak. In response, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said efforts to ensure reservation to Maratha community are underway and the Chief Minister himself is looking into the issue.

The Deputy CM said the government has taken the Maratha community's demand for Kunbi as well as Maratha caste certificates into consideration and quota to the community was its 'top priority'. "People from the Kunbi community cannot be denied their status. Even if they have not been Kunbis for four generations, we cannot deny them the status. People from the community have pointed out that in old Nizam-era records, they were all Kunbis. To collect related documents, we set up a five-member committee headed by retired

Chief Justice Sandeep Shinde. After the committee submits the report, the chief minister will take a decision in the matter," he said in an interview to a Marathi news channel on Sunday.

Jarange-Patil, who has been refusing to even drink water, get medical treatment and not in a position to even sit up and speak, tried to address the media in a voice which was barely audible. "We have not received any response from the government or any communication. We will wait till October 30-31. The government does not understand humanity...we will give them a reply," he said, with his hands trembling while holding the mike.

Jarange-Patil said, "The government should come to Antarwali Saraati village to hold discussion. Marathas will not pose any hurdle. Till I am in a condition to speak, the government should come and hold discus-

sion. After that, there will be no use...The government should tell us whether you are going to come for discussion or not, they should avoid idle talk." Maratha quota activist Patil — who began another round of hunger strike on October 25 — has been consistently raising the demand for Kunbi caste certificates for the community. A section of Maratha Kranti Morcha, however, demanded that they be given the Maratha caste certificate in the OBC category and not Kunbi.

The government committee, set up to determine the standard operating procedure, including legal and administrative framework for giving caste certificates to members of the Maratha community, was given a two-month extension till December 24. Fadnavis said, "We want to ensure that we provide reservations that could withstand the court scrutiny. That is why CM Eknath Shinde had set up the committee to collect the related records (Nizam-era documents). We have filed a curative petition before the SC. We are trying for the Maratha reservation... whichever way possible..." he said.

Inaction by Central, state govts caused unrest: Pawar

MUMBAI: Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday alleged the inaction by the Maharashtra and Central governments on the Maratha quota issue has led to unrest in the community.

Speaking at a function here, Pawar said the demand of Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange should be accepted without hurting the interests of other communities. The NCP chief said he had met Jarange when he had observed a fast last month and understood the demands raised by him.

Maharashtra and Central governments didn't take immediate decision on the Maratha quota issue which triggered unrest in the community, he alleged.

"As a party too, our stand is clear. Jarange's demand should be met without hurting the interests of other communities. The need of the hour is to ensure that the quota demand is fulfilled in a proper way," Pawar said. **PTI**

In support, Sena MP writes his resignation

VALLABH OZARKAR
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 29

AMID THE ongoing protests in the state for Maratha reservation, Hemant Patil, a Member of Parliament belonging to the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, on Sunday announced his resignation as MP in support of the community.

Patil, an MP from Hingoli Lok Sabha constituency, wrote his resignation letter at the protest site in Umardh in Yavatmal and said that he will hand it over to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday.

"The issue of Maratha reservation has been pending for years. The CM had given assurance that reservation will be given... I held a meeting regarding this in Delhi recently. I will meet Lok Sabha Speaker and hand over my resignation on Monday to draw their attention to the issue," he said.

The community has been demanding quota in education and government jobs.

Patil was recently in news for allegedly forcing Dr

Shyamrao Wakode, the acting dean of the Dr Shankarrao Chavan Government Medical College and Hospital, to clean a toilet in the hospital where 24 people, including 12 infants, died within 24 hours between September 30 and October 1.

Patil took the decision while visiting Umardh taluka where some protesters met Patil and stopped him from entering the villages and raised the demand to raise the Maratha reservation issue in the Parliament.

According to a Shiv Sena functionary who was with the MP, "Patil was trying to convince the Maratha community members, saying he himself was in support of their cause, when the protesters got aggressive and asked him to resign if he really meant it. Patil then told the protesters that if his resignation can get reservation for the Marathas, he would do so. Patil then wrote his resignation letter and showed it to the protesters."

Another functionary said that Patil had no choice but to announce resignation as the protesters got aggressive.

WEST BENGAL 'RATION SCAM'

Seized 'maroon diary' has details of kickback receipts, payments, says ED

SWEETY KUMARI
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 29

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) is investigating the contents of a "maroon diary" and some registers purportedly containing the details of illegal transactions as part of the alleged ration scam in West Bengal, according to the remand letter submitted by the agency in a Kolkata court on Friday. The central agency had on Friday arrested state Forest Minister Jyoti Priya Mallick (65), who held the food and civil supplies portfolio from 2011 to 2021, on charges of money laundering in the case after interrogating him for nearly 20 hours while conducting searches on properties belonging to him and his associates and secured his 10-day remand from the court.

The ED claimed that the diary mentions the names of "MIC (minister in-charge) Jyoti Priya Mallick, popularly known as Balu da, three shell companies through which the money was laundered, and NPG Rice Mills". The pages of the diary clearly indicate that the money was received by Mallick and it was deposited in the accounts of companies," the agency said in its remand letter.

When contacted, Mallick's lawyer Shyamal Kumar Ghosh refused to comment. TMC MP Santanu Sen said, "The country is already questioning the credibility and neutrality of the BJP government (at the Centre). Ninety-six percent of the politicians the ED is targeting are Opposition leaders." Also, under the ED's scanner are mobile phones of some people close to the minister and his staff, sources said.

The agency has claimed in the remand letter that the diary and the other documents reveal how money believed to be the proceeds of crime was laundered and who the beneficiaries of the monetary transactions were. Several transactions corroborate a close

proximity between minister Mallick and businessman Bakibur Rahaman who was earlier arrested in the case, it added. The diary, which according to sources was seized from the Howrah residence of Mallick's former registered accountant (CA) Abhijit Das who was also questioned by the investigators in the case, has the details of date-wise receipts and payments of cash in large amounts.

The diary and the registers are likely to play a crucial role in the agency's investigation, officials said. "Rice mills delivered 20-40% less wheat flour to the government distributors who got payments in cash for this. As a result, 20-40% of the wheat flour was siphoned off. This wheat flour was then sold in the open market and the sale proceeds were shared between the distributors and millers in the ratio of 80:20," the ED said in the letter.

Some registers have month-wise details of wheat and wheat flour with cash payments made to various distributors, the agency said. "The PDS ration meant for targeted beneficiaries was siphoned off by the flour millers in connivance with distributors and other people in the supply chain. The proceeds of sales from the open market worth crores of rupees were deposited in the bank accounts of three shell firms under the garb of bogus share premiums and commission from foodgrain trading. Subsequently, these companies were liquidated. These firms had no real business as they were incorporated only for laundering the proceeds of crime," the ED's remand letter read. Mallick, who was admitted to a private hospital on Friday after his arrest, is under treatment after he fainted in court.

On Sunday, the minister's daughter Priyadarshini Mallick visited the ED office in Kolkata. Sources said she was asked to furnish details related to the family's income and expenditure.

2016-2023: How Maratha morcha changed its stance, modes of protest

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 29

THE MARATHA Kranti Morcha (MKM) seems to adopt newer modes of protest to get the community's demand for reservation heard and along with its changed stance on the nature of the demand.

Between 2016 and 2023, what began as a socio-economic issue that consolidated Marathas under MKM has channelised into a political movement with the reservation issue becoming a tool for mainstream parties to settle scores against each other.

On Sunday, Maratha activist Manoj Jarange Patil warned the government not to test the com-

munity members' patience and find a solution to the vexed problem. Patil, who began his second hunger strike on October 25 has become a cause of concern because of his failing health.

Several Maratha activists have expressed solidarity with Patil and held candlelight protests in Sangli, Beed, Nanded, Jalna, Indapur, Pandharpur, Kolhapur and Parbhani on Sunday.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis told reporters, "It is my ardent appeal that he (Jarange Patil) should not ignore his health. After all, life is precious. Those who are with him should also ensure his health does not fail."

"CM Eknath Shinde is closely monitoring the Maratha reserva-



The Maratha Sakal Samaj on Sunday started a 10-day chain hunger strike at Kothrud on Paud road. *Pavani Khengre*

tion issue. He has already reassured the government's commitment to reservation. Jarasange Patil should show trust in the CM," he added. The first Maratha reser-

vation protest took place in 1982, led by then Mathadi Kamgar Labour Union leader Annasaheb Patil. He, however, ended his life, disillusioned with then Congress

government's lack of response.

The Maratha reservation issue went to the backburner since then, till 2016. On Sunday, Annasaheb Patil's son and Mathadi Kamgar Labour Union leader Narendra Patil said, "My father sacrificed his life for the rights of poor Marathas. It is my sincere appeal to the government to find a lasting solution."

The turning point in the Maratha agitation was the alleged rape and killing of a teenage girl from the community in Kopardi village by four youths. The outrage over the incident led the community to organise a mega protest rally on August 9, 2016, at Sambhainagar (then Aurangabad). It was a "muk morcha" (silent rally) in which participants wore black clothes and there were no slogans or speeches.

At the end of the rally four persons handed over their charter of demands to the district collector. Under MKM the silent protest was replicated at every district in Maharashtra and 58 rallies were held.

The MKM's demands included immediate action against the perpetrators of Kopardi crime, implementation of Swaminathan Commission report for higher remuneration to farmers, Maratha reservation and loan waiver to farmers. MKM coordinator Rajendra Kondhare says, "We never endorsed any violence. Our objective was to raise our demand and get justice for the community. And this was evident throughout our silent rallies. Even now, it is our endeavor to ensure a solution to Maratha reservation issue."



The new Parliament building was used for the first time in September. *Express File*

New Parliament gets repairs ahead of winter session

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

THE CENTRAL Public Works Department (CPWD) has been tasked to finish all the tweaks and repairs at the new Parliament building ahead of the winter session. These fixes include echo issues in the Lok Sabha chamber to furniture requirements of the members.

The new building was used for the first time during the Special Session of Parliament in September this year. According to sources, an echo was observed during the special session.

Though work of installing acoustic tiles is finished now, some materials are being replaced to address the echo issue. New furniture pieces are also being made available for those who had raised new requirements after moving into the premises. The toilets in the new building are also being completed, they said. These adjustments are based on the feedback from ministers, members of parliament and officials working in the building as per to sources in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Lok Sabha.

According to sources in Lok Sabha, apart from the minor adjustments, there is civil work ongoing in the new building that

still remains sealed off to Parliament staff and visitors. In the past few weeks, the CPWD has issued a Rs 6.64 crore tender for ancillary works, including security barriers, plumbing connections, cupboards and other furniture; and a Rs 5.99 lakh tender for changing damaged sandstone in three court-yards of Parliament House; as well as a Rs 20 crore tender for "landscape and hardscape" work in Parliament Complex.

These, the CPWD said, would be done in time for the winter session, which is yet to be announced but usually is scheduled from November end or early December onwards. After the special session in September, a war of words had broken out between BJP and Congress MPs regarding the new building. "The sheer joy of simply hanging out in Parliament has disappeared. I used to look forward to going to the old building. The new complex is painful and agonising. I am sure many of my colleagues across the party lines feel the same," Congress Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh had said in a post on X on September 23.

BJP president and Rajya Sabha MP J P Nadra had responded by posting, "Even by the lowest standards of the Congress party, this is a pathetic mindset."

TMC usurping resources... soon Cabinet meets will be held in jail: BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 29

BJP STATE chief Sukanta Majumdar said the ruling TMC was "usurping" the resources of West Bengal and "depriving people". Majumdar's remarks come days after the arrest of state forest minister Jyoti Priya Mallick in connection with alleged irregularities in ration distribution in the state. Majumdar was speaking during the 'Amrit Kalash Yatra' organised by the BJP in the city on Sunday.

Addressing party workers, Majumdar said, "The TMC is usurping the resources of the state and depriving the people. After the arrest of state minister Partha Chatterjee last year, now another minister Jyoti Priya Mallick has been arrested for corruption." BJP MP Dilip Ghosh said, "If all such ministers land in jail, then where would they hold the next cabinet meeting? It would be held in jail..."

As Punjab moves SC over pending Bills, Gov says ready to examine them

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 29

THE CONFRONTATION between Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday took a new turn with the government moving the Supreme Court over the issue of Purohit not giving his assent to several Bills. This was followed by the Governor writing to the CM that he would examine the pending Bills and convey to him his decision on those separately.

Mann had announced on October 20 that the state would move the SC against the Governor sitting on important Bills. The government has already filed the case in the SC and sources said it was planning to file an application that the case be heard urgently.

Meanwhile, the Governor has written to the CM stating that he would examine these Bills. "Now,

we do not know whether our petition would be infructuous or it would be heard," said a government functionary.

The Governor, in his letter Sunday, wrote, "Though, serious doubts have been raised about proprietary and constitutional-ity of the summoning of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha as well as the continuation of the session, in violation of the various provisions of Constitution of India as well as the rules of procedure and conduct of business by the Punjab Vidhan Sabha, still I have in consultation with all the concerned and in the larger interest of the welfare of people of Punjab, decided to examine all the bills on merits as well as in terms of various provisions of Constitution of India. I will convey to you my decision on each and every bill separately in the coming days."

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

In Chhattisgarh, Rahul promises more sops for farmers, landless

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU
KAWARDHA, OCTOBER 29

CONGRESS LEADER Rahul Gandhi on Sunday added more promises to the list of assurances already made by the party ahead of the elections in Chhattisgarh — increase in rate for paddy procurement, hike in monetary relief for landless farmers, food processing plant in each district and international airports.

In his public speech in Kabirdham district, Rahul said: "At present you get Rs 2,640 for every quintal of rice. In future, we will procure rice at Rs 3,000 per quintal and this amount will keep increasing. Landless farmers will get Rs 10,000. They get Rs 7,000, which is not enough."

"We will set up a food processing plant in every district. Different types of units will be set up depending on the produce in the district," he said. He also assured two to three international airports in Chhattisgarh if



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, Deputy CM T S Singh Deo with others at a paddy field on Sunday. *PTI*

the Congress wins the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. "Currently the state is known as the country's *dhaan ka katora* (bowl of rice). After the airports come up, Chhattisgarh will be known as the world's *dhaan ka katora*," the Congress leader said. He criticised PM Modi for not fulfilling his promise of giving Rs 15 lakh

to everyone and pointed out that he has kept the three big promises he made to the people of Chhattisgarh related to farmers' loan waiver, paddy procurement, and monetary benefits.

"We waived farmers' loan, but the BJP gave Rs 14 lakh crore loan-waiver to a few industrialists," he said.

India's first dist-level study on hypertension flags disparities in care

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

■ In Karnataka, four districts — Chikmagalur, Shimoga, Udipi and Chitradurga — have a similar prevalence of hypertension, but the proportion of participants diagnosed and treated in Chikmagalur and Udipi was higher.

■ In Meghalaya, the five districts of Garo Hills, the two districts of Jaintia Hills and the three districts of Khasi Hills all have a similar prevalence of hypertension, but the proportion of those diagnosed is much lower in Garo Hills than in Jaintia Hills and Khasi Hills.

These are among the key findings of an exhaustive study that has, for the first time,

mapped and assessed the variation in hypertension care at the district level in India, highlighting the urgent need for a more "targeted" approach to fight the medical condition often referred to as the "silent killer".

According to a recent WHO report, 188.3 million people in India suffer from hypertension but only 37% get diagnosed, only 30% start treatment, and only 15% manage to keep their blood pressure under control. It estimated that at least 4.6 million deaths in India can be prevented by 2040 if half of those with the condition manage to keep their blood pressure under control.

The district-level study, published in JAMA Network, a journal published by the American Medical Association, was conducted by AIIMS Delhi and sci-

entists from Europe and the US who used the hypertension data from NFHS-5, the fifth round report of which was released in May 2022. The researchers have also created a dashboard of district- and state-wise hypertension caseload in India, which they said will help stakeholders identify priorities for reducing burden and tracking progress.

Analysing data of nearly 1.7 million respondents across socio-demographic groups in 707 districts, the study found that one in four adults had hypertension. Of these, only one in three came to know of their condition after being diagnosed with it, less than one in five were treated, and only one in 12 had their blood pressure under control.

More significantly, the study found, there were substantial

variations across districts in blood pressure diagnosis (range: 6.3%-77.5%), treatment (range: 8.7%-97.1%) and control (range: 2.7%-76.6%). Raising a red flag, the researchers said that the national mean values of hypertension "hide considerable" variation at the district level and recommended a critical public health strategy to improve care — "targeted, decentralised solutions" at the district level.

According to Dr Ambuj Roy, Professor of Cardiology at AIIMS and one of the investigators of the study, the district-wise level analysis was important as the many state-level analyses done earlier did not highlight "the heterogeneity" within states, even those considered better-performing states. And with the new dashboard, he said, every

district can now analyse their data according to gender and socio-demographic disparities.

"The NFHS 5 data is available publicly, but we took the variables relevant to hypertension, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and it is the first time that data on hypertension was analysed district-wise. We have also opened the dashboard for academicians and administrators to access it. The dashboard was created as a part of the study and has gender-wise, area-wise educational levels data on hypertension," Dr Roy said.

The findings of the study showed that despite health being a state subject, there was a need for more autonomy at the district level, Dr Roy said. "Chief Medical Officers should know where they are failing in terms of hyperten-

sion management and what measures they could take, rather than having a similar approach for all districts in a state. We need to look at the continuum of care within each district and within each state, however good or bad that state or district may be."

Another key finding of the study was the importance of screening hypertension and diabetes using local healthcare workers, including ASHA workers, said Dr Roy: "So that you can increase and improve the pick-up rates. Instead of people coming to the hospital, you go to them and do hypertension screening in a door-to-door survey, and even the treatment should be provided through the nearest healthcare facility rather than them coming to the tertiary healthcare facility and district hospitals."

EXPRESS NETWORK

Haryana govt school principal suspended over charges of sexual harassment

ENS & PTI
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 29

THE PRINCIPAL of a government girls' school in Haryana's Jind district has been suspended over allegations of sexual harassment of students and a committee has been set up to look into the matter, officials said on Sunday.

A group of female students of the school had also reportedly recently shot off letters to the Prime Minister's Office and National Commission for Women detailing their ordeal, sources said.

The officials said the school principal was suspended by the Haryana government on October 27. Besides, an inquiry committee has been formed to look into the allegations. It would be headed by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of the area where the school falls.

District Education Officer and District Elementary Education officer will also be part of this committee and submit a report after probing the allegations, Jind Deputy Commissioner Mohd Imran Raza said on Sunday.

Asked about the nature of allegations made by the girl students, Raza said they have alleged that the principal used to "indulge in obscene acts" with them.

Jind Additional Deputy Commissioner Harish Kumar Vashisth said, "The accused principal was suspended on Friday after taking cognisance of the complaint of the girl students."

Police officer shot at by militant in Srinagar, in critical condition

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 29

A POLICE INSPECTOR was critically wounded after a militant shot at him in Srinagar's Eidgah on Sunday afternoon.

The police inspector, Masroor Ahmad Wani, was playing cricket when the militant fired three shots at him.

Police sources said Wani was shot at point blank range at the Eidgah ground in downtown Srinagar.

Wani's teammates ran after the militant but he fired in the air and fled through adjoining lanes, officials said.

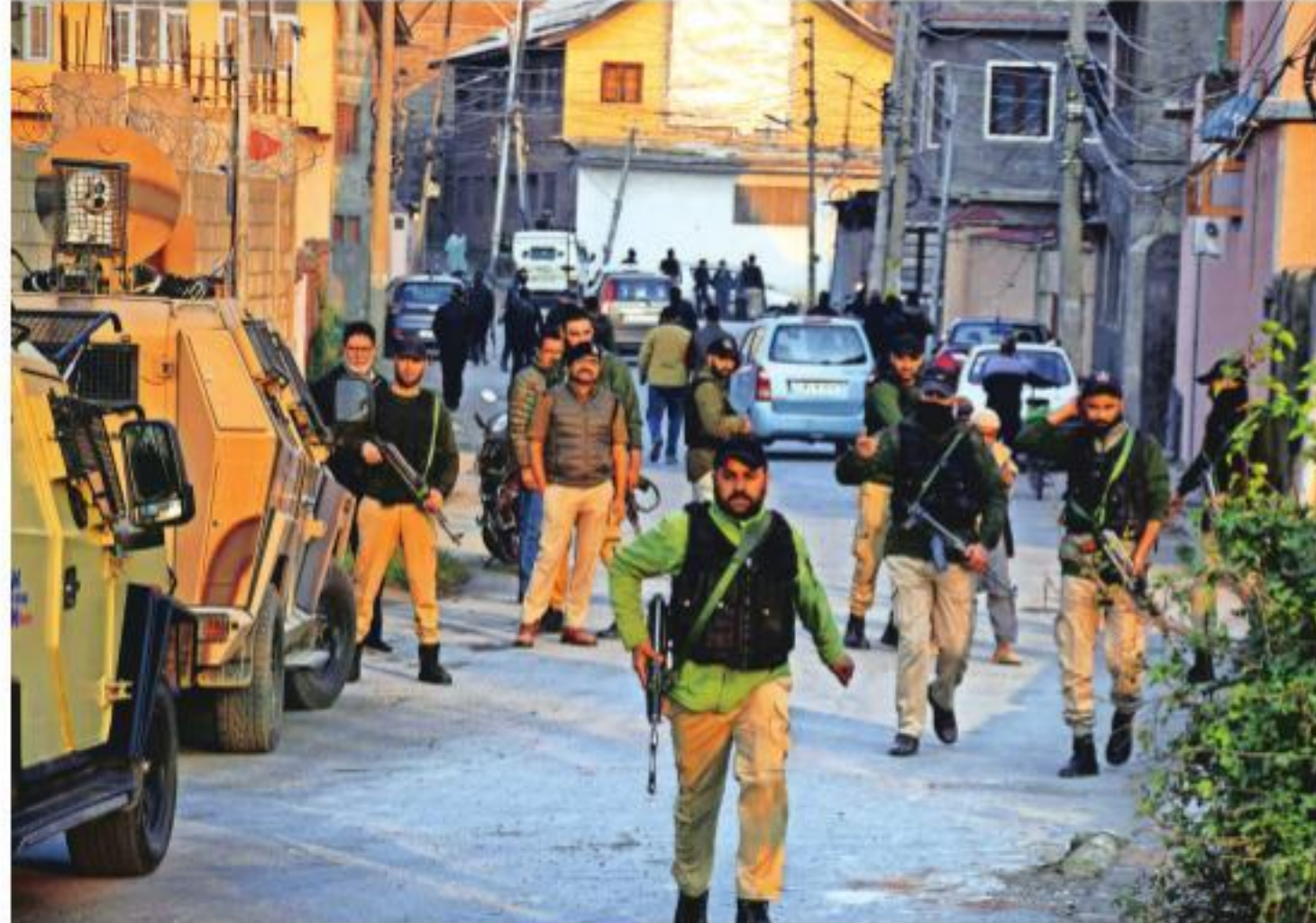
Additional Director General of Police (Kashmir range) Vijay Kumar immediately rushed to the scene and took stock of the situation.

"We have identified the terrorist. His name is Basit Dar and he hails from Kulgam. He has been active for quite some time and working at the behest of his masters across the border," Kumar said, adding that a Turkish revolver was used in carrying out the attack.

He said multiple teams have fanned out and raids are being conducted to nab the militant. "I am sure we will be catching him soon," he said.

Wani was posted at District Police Lines (DPL) in Srinagar.

"Terrorists fired upon and injured Inspector Masroor Ahmad near Eidgah Srinagar. He was im-



Security personnel cordon off the areas at Srinagar's Eidgah where Inspector Masroor Ahmad was shot and critically wounded on Sunday. PTI

mediately shifted to hospital for treatment. Preliminary investigation reveals that a pistol was used in this terror crime. Area cordoned off, case registered," Jammu and Kashmir Police said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

Believed to be in his thirties, Wani was rushed to Shri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) for treatment where doctors immediately operated on him. Hospital sources

said inspector Ahmad was hit in his lungs and head and his condition continued to be critical. Police sources said the inspector had got married a few months ago.

The Resistance Front, a shadow outfit of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

A resident of Yachipora in Srinagar, inspector Ahmad lives

in the vicinity of the Eidgah ground. The ground is frequented by hundreds of players on Sundays. Scores of cricket matches simultaneously take place at the ground, a convergence point for sports lovers of Srinagar.

The attack on inspector Ahmad is the first attack on a security force personnel in Srinagar this year.

(WITH PTI INPUTS)

CONTEST FOR POST OF W.H.O. REGIONAL HEAD

Delhi dilemma: Choosing Hasina daughter or her Nepal challenger

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

DIPLOMATIC BATTLELINES have been drawn in a contest between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's daughter and psychologist Saima Wazed and Nepal's top public health specialist in WHO, Shambhu Prasad Acharya, for the elections of the World Health Organisation's regional director of the New Delhi-based Southeast Asia Regional Office (SEARO).

While Wazed is a school psychologist and has been adviser to WHO chief on mental health and autism, Acharya has been working with the WHO for more than three decades and he is currently Director, Country Strategy and Support, Office of the Director-General, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland, since 2013.

The Regional Committee of WHO South-East Asia Region will vote this week to nominate the next Regional Director in a closed meeting during its 76th session from October 30 to November 2 in New Delhi.

The WHO South-East Asia Region has 11 member countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, North Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste. WHO has country offices in all 11 member countries. One of the six WHO Regions, WHO South-East Asia is home to over a quarter of the world's population.

Now, the winning candidate



Saima Wazed and Shambhu Prasad Acharya. X/@drSaimaWazed, @acharyas1

needs six votes to win the elections to become the head of the WHO South-East Asia Regional office, based in New Delhi. The incumbent is Poonam Khetrapal Singh, a former IAS officer.

Diplomatic campaigning has now peaked between Bangladesh and Nepal governments, which have proposed their candidates. Delhi has to now choose between Wazed and Acharya.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* from Kathmandu, Acharya spelt out his pitch: "As Prime Minister Modi says, those who come from the ground, are the one who know the best what are the needs to really respond to. I grew up in a village and then went to school walking, during those days without having any kind of basic health facilities and water and sanitation. So, I understand what is the situation when people don't have access to these kinds of basic services," he said.

He also cited his experience "as a manager, scientist, a public health officer, and as director in the WHO".

Saima Wazed has been work-

ing in the field of autism for many years now, and ran the Global Autism Public Health Initiative, which later became the Shuchona Foundation.

In her campaign manifesto circulated to all the member country's governments, she has said, "Our diverse regional reality underpins my belief that we must move away from one-size-fits all policies, at both national and sub-national levels. I will champion an approach that focuses on local solutions for local realities. A ground-up approach creates effective and durable solutions when it draws on the expertise of member states' understanding of their own communities."

Both Bangladesh and Nepal's diplomatic establishment have been reaching out to India. While Dhaka is hoping for Delhi's support on account of the strategic and political nature of the candidate as well (she is one of the potential heirs to Bangladesh PM Hasina), Kathmandu is pinning its hopes on the strong credentials and record of their candidate.

While India is one of the votes in the 11-member grouping in the region, its decision has some sort of an impact and influence on others as well, both Dhaka and Kathmandu believe.

After the election, expected to take place Wednesday, the winner's nomination will then be submitted for appointment by the 154th session of the WHO Executive Board, which will take place from January 22 to 27, 2024, in Geneva.

'Finished her career': Court hands life term to man for converting national shooter

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, OCTOBER 29

A MAN WHO lied to a national level shooter about his faith before marrying her, and then forced her to convert to another faith, has been handed life term by a court in Ranchi, which noted that his acts "abruptly finished her career as a player and eventually a possibility of glory for this great nation on many international platforms".

The court of Special Judge Prabhakar Kumar Sharma, earlier this month convicted the man, Ranjit Kohli alias Rakibul Hasan, of raping and assaulting the woman. Kohli's mother was handed a 10-year jail term, and judicial officer Mustaque Ahmed a 15-year jail term.

The prosecution had argued Hasan and Ahmad would frequent Khelgaon, Ranchi, where they met the woman. According to court documents, Hasan introduced himself as a businessman from the Khatri community. He and the woman got married in 2014 as per Hindu customs, but he refused to apply a 'tika', place any idols or take "seven rounds around sacred fire", court documents note. The next day, the woman was made to convert to another faith and solemnise their "nikah". Before passing the order, the judge observed: "I would like to decide the core issue of the dispute... it can be safely held that the accused... was practising Islamic rituals/practices and was also known as a person of that religion or belief by the persons around him..."

He added, "Documents (Aadhaar Card and PAN card) can't prove religious identity of any person. I believe religion or belief is a matter of an individual's conscience. The determination of religious acceptance of a person must not be made on his name or birth. When a person intends to profess any faith or belief, he does all that is required by the practices of that particular faith/religion to which he belongs, and he is accepted as a person of that religion or belief by persons around him.

The prosecution has brought proof in form of documents/material to prove the above accused is known by another name, Rakibul Hassan/Rakibul Khan Saheb, and he used to follow religious practices of Islam."

The court said the defence

failed to explain why a nikah ceremony was organised the day after the wedding. "And if he (Hasan) is a secular or cosmopolitan individual, then why deny the fact of organising nikah ceremony at his residence?" the court asked.

The court said relatives of the woman were not called for the nikah, while all three accused were there. "The circumstances brought by the prosecution indicate motive, preparation and previous and subsequent conduct of accused persons," the court said.

Judge Sharma said the convicts committed an offence of serious nature as they played fraud and committed atrocities on a young girl who was shining as a national-level shooter and was an example of an empowered woman and a national asset.



Outside the Zamra Convention Center in Kalamassery, after the blasts on Sunday. PTI

Landlord of Kerala blast accused: Dominic was not a troublemaker

NARAYANANS
KOCHI, OCTOBER 29

DOMINIC MARTIN, who has claimed responsibility for the Kalamassery blasts, apparently told his wife Saturday night that he was going to meet a friend Sunday morning and left their rented house at Thammanam in Kochi around 5 am.

"He gets up early every morning, his wife told me. Today also, he got up early and went out on his two-wheeler. His wife thought he was going to meet his friend as he had told her the previous night," said Sakir Thammanam, the local councillor who is one of the very few people in the locality who can claim to know Martin, said to be aged 57.

Hours after the blasts at a convention centre that left two

dead, as of now, and several injured, Martin, an estranged member of Jehovah's Witnesses, posted a video on social media taking responsibility for the act.

Martin and his family - wife, son and daughter - have been staying at a 2-bedroom house at Khader Lane for rent for the last five years. Their landlord, Jaleel, was shell-shocked.

"He was not a troublemaker. He did not have many friends but no enemies either. He might have started drinking of late as per our conversations with his wife. Also, he never defaulted on rent. There was nothing suspicious about his activities," said Jaleel.

"I had been following the news of blasts and suddenly in the afternoon, his wife came down and told me about his video in which he took ownership of the crime. She was apologetic that be-

cause of him, there would be so much issues for us and all the people in the locality," added Jaleel.

Martin, who hails from Elamkulam in Kochi, studied only till Class 10, as per Sakir. Dominic left Jehovah's Witnesses five or six years ago and returned to group about two months ago. "He was running a spoken English tutorial in Thammanam a few years ago. When that started to taper off, he went to the Gulf over two years ago. He came back just a couple of months ago and was planning to start some shop," said Sakir.

Since the news of his arrest broke out, his wife and daughter have been shattered.

"They have not eaten anything. We have been constantly keeping in touch with them and trying to give them all the support. It's nothing of their fault that he did this act," said Jaleel.

Pinarayi slams Union minister for his social media posts over blasts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 29

KERALA CHIEF Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday slammed senior BJP leader and Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar for his social media posts criticising him over a blast at a convention centre in Kalamassery, saying it was part of his communal stand.

Without naming Chandrasekhar, he, during a press conference here, sought to know based on what information the Union minister made such remarks against him and how a person holding a responsible position could come out with such statements while the investigation was going on.

"Dirty shameless appeasement politics by a discredited CM (and HM) @pinarayivijayan besieged by corruption charges. Sitting in Delhi and protesting against Israel, when in Kerala open calls by Terrorist Hamas for Jihad are causing attacks and bomb blasts on innocent Christians," the minister posted on social media.

Vijayan alleged the statements were the reflection of an absolute communal outlook.

"A person who holds the post of minister should have shown at least some respect to the investigating agencies. Though the Kerala Police is probing the incident now, we all saw reports that central agencies have also reached the site," the CM said.

Bhagwat Kochi speech captures RSS fading 'aversion' to English

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

"SAJJAN AUR mata, bhagini (Gentlemen, mothers and sisters), I have been asked to speak in English, which is not the language of my practice, nor my study. It is a beautiful language, but I feel it is inadequate in expressing Bharatiya concepts. Still, I will try and (so), please bear with me."

On October 7, addressing a gathering at Kochi in Kerala, these were the words with which Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat began his speech, and then spoke extempore for the next 50 minutes in fluent English.

The event captured the RSS's reservation about the English language and, at the same time, its willingness to engage with it. Once identified by its critics with the slogan "Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan", the Sangh is now seen to be increasingly embracing the language, not only to widen its reach but also to enter the Indian intellectual discourse dominated by English.

Senior Sangh leaders such as RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, who holds an MA degree in the English literature, frequently speaks English in private conversations and even public gatherings. While the Sangh has traditionally published its literature in both Hindi and English, its frequency of publishing English books has increased over the years, say Sangh sources. Many Sangh



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat

schools have switched to English medium in the past half a decade. Sources said these include schools in the Hindi heartland states including Uttar Pradesh. However, a senior RSS leader said this was not being done as a policy sanctioned from top.

"These decisions are taken by the respective school principals based on demands from parents. Also, there are certain requirements of the CBSE curriculum for schools that follow it. The idea is to give Bharatiya values," he said.

According to an RSS source, this is in contrast to the stand the Sangh took in the 70s, when it was opening its schools in the Northeast to counter Christian missionaries. Under KS Sudarshan, it rejected an offer of land and other resources from Arunachal government because it was conditional on English education.

RSS sources conceded that Bhagwat delivering his speech in English was a rare occurrence. "While he does make private conversations in English with people who do not know native languages, he makes it a point to speak in Hindi or Marathi publicly. Even in Tamil Nadu, he has addressed gatherings in Hindi with real-time translation," a senior RSS leader said.

J&K administration reshuffle: 37 IAS, KAS officers transferred

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, OCTOBER 29

IN A major reshuffle in the Jammu and Kashmir administration, over 37 IAS and KAS officers were transferred on Sunday. According to the official order, Doda Deputy Commissioner Vishesh Paul Mahajan has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Reasi, while Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, is the new Deputy Commissioner, Doda.

Reasi Deputy Commissioner Babila Rakwal has been transferred and posted as Mission Director, National Health Mission, J&K, relieving

Bhupinder Kumar Administrative Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department of the additional charge of the post.

Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, Director General, Sericulture, J&K, is transferred and posted as Managing Director, J&K Agro Industries Development Corporation, while Om Prakash, Director, Geology and Mining, J&K, is posted as Managing Director, J&K Financial Corporation. Whereas, Ansuja Jamwal, Joint Director, Hospitality and Protocol, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu.

A year on, unfillable void for kin of Morbi bridge collapse victims

SOHINI GHOSH
AHMEDABAD, OCTOBER 29

NARENDRA PARMAR avoided taking the motorable bridge over the Machchhu river for almost a year since the Jhulto Pul collapse. He did not want to see the broken suspension bridge that took the life of his 10-year-old daughter Dhvani. "I went only recently because our lawyer wanted to see the site of the accident," says Parmar, a member of the Morbi Victims Tragedy Association.

Parmar, who also has an eight-year-old son, is a government school principal in Morbi. A few months after the death of his daughter, he had decided to call all the families of the deceased from

the state government's list of victims to convince them to be part of an association that can be a united stakeholder in the case. The association got registered in June.

In July, it moved the Morbi district court seeking that IPC Section 302 (murder) be added against all the 10 accused, including Oveva Group MD Jaysukh Patel. The demand was primarily on the ground that Oveva Group, which constructed the Jhulto Pul and was to maintain it, was aware that the bridge was in a precarious condition. In fact, the company had, in December 2021, expressed its apprehension of an accident. This, the association submitted, makes the accused liable to be tried for murder. The application



Poonamben Makwana's parents at their home. Sohini Ghosh

will heard November 1. In February, the Gujarat High Court directed Oveva Group to

pay Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of 135 people who were killed and Rs 2 lakh each to the 56 injured

after having clarified that the payment of compensation by the accused or his company would not absolve the company of any liabilities — directly or vicariously.

The kin of the deceased were entitled to a total of Rs 10 lakh ex gratia and the injured to a compensation between Rs 2-3 lakh, depending on the degree of disability suffered, from the state and Central governments.

Additionally, the Morbi Ceramic Association, in collaboration with the in-charge chief officer NK Muchhar, had pledged an annual amount of Rs 16 lakh to provide for monthly rations to 36 families who are among the kin of the deceased.

However, the kin of the victims unanimously emphasise that they

have little use of the money now that their lives have been upended.

On October 9, the state Special Investigation Team pointed out severe technical lapses by Oveva Group. It also highlighted lapses by the municipality, including the MoU with Oveva which was signed without "proper authorisation".

The next of kin emphasise the company's liability. "Oveva says they took the bridge maintenance contract on goodwill and not looking for profit. If that was the case, why was he charging for tickets? If profit was not the aim, why did they allow over 3,000 tickets being sold that day?" asks Khimjibhai Makwana (40) and Vijiyaben (35) who lost their 19-year-old daughter Poonam.

12 THE WORLD

CONFLICT BETWEEN SUDANESE ARMY, RAPID SUPPORT FORCES

SUDAN CEASEFIRE TALKS RECONVENE: US STATE DEPT

The United States, Saudi Arabia and Intergovernmental Authority on Development, with African Union, have relaunched humanitarian, ceasefire talks between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces, US State Department said Sunday. "No acceptable military solution to this conflict," a spokesperson said. **REUTERS**

TOP OF THE WORLD



At a rescue operation following the mine fire, in Karaganda, Kazakhstan. **Reuters**

KAZAKHSTAN

At least 45 killed in ArcelorMittal mine fire

Almaty: The death toll from a fire at a mine owned by ArcelorMittal in Kazakhstan rose to 45 people on Sunday as a search for four miners continued, the Ministry for Emergency Situations said. "The search operation is hampered by the presence of destroyed mining equipment, as well as rubble in some places", the ministry said in a statement. Rescuers are searching two areas, 4 km apart. **REUTERS**

UKRAINE

Hepatitis A outbreak sends many to hospital

Vinnitsya: Schools will move to an online regime starting Monday in Ukraine's central city of Vinnitsya after a Hepatitis A outbreak sent scores of children and adults to the hospital, the country's chief sanitary official said over the weekend. "The main thing now is to establish the centre of the outbreak and the causes in order to stop the spread of the viral Hepatitis A among the population as soon as possible," Chief Sanitary Doctor of Ukraine Ihor Kuzin wrote on Facebook on Saturday. 141 people in the city and the region were in a hospital, he added. **REUTERS**

JAPAN

G7 calls for repeal of bans on Japanese food

Tokyo: The Group of Seven (G7) industrial powers called Sunday for "immediate repeal" of import curbs on Japanese food products, a reference to China's restrictions after Japan began releasing wastewater from Fukushima nuclear plant. The G7 trade ministers, in a statement after a weekend meeting on Osaka, did not mention China but they also denounced what they consider rising economic coercion through trade. China's foreign ministry didn't respond to a request for comment. **REUTERS**

ISRAEL ORDERS GAZA HOSPITAL EVICTION; blast blocks routes leading to Shifa hospital

Thousands loot aid warehouses in Gaza as desperation swells

Break-ins are sign civil order starting to break down: UN aid agency

WAFAA SHURAF A & SAMY MAGDY
DEIR AL-BALAH, GAZA STRIP, OCTOBER 29

THOUSANDS OF people broke into aid warehouses in Gaza to take flour and basic hygiene products, a UN agency said Sunday, in a mark of growing desperation and the breakdown of public order three weeks into the war between Israel and Gaza's militant Hamas rulers.

Tanks and infantry pushed into Gaza over the weekend as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a "second stage" in the war, three weeks after Hamas launched a brutal incursion into Israel. The widening ground offensive came as Israel also pounded the territory from air, land and sea.

Thomas White, Gaza for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, said the warehouse break-ins were "a worrying sign that civil order is starting to break down after three weeks of war and a tight siege on Gaza. People are scared, frustrated and desperate," he said.

Juliette Touma, a spokesperson for the agency, said the crowds broke into four facilities on Saturday. She said the warehouses did not contain any fuel, which has been in critically short supply since Israel cut off all shipments after the start of the war.

Residents living near Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, meanwhile said Israeli airstrikes overnight hit near the hospital complex and blocked many roads leading to it.

Israel accuses Hamas of having a secret command post beneath the hospital, without providing much evidence.

The Palestinian Red Crescent rescue service said another Gaza City hospital received calls from Israeli authorities Sunday order-



Palestinians wait to buy bread in Rafah on Sunday amid the bombardment of the Gaza Strip. **AP**

DEATH, DESTRUCTION

ISRAEL	PALESTINE
TOTAL DEAD	TOTAL DEAD
1400+	8,005
At least 310 Israeli troops killed so far, says Government	Over 3,300 minors and over 2,000 women dead so far.
TOTAL INJURED	TOTAL INJURED
5,400+	19,000+
Airstrikes hit area near Gaza's largest hospital.	Over 110 Palestinians killed in the occupied West Bank.

ing it to evacuate. It said airstrikes have hit as close as 50 meters from the Al-Quds Hospital, where 12,000 people are sheltering. **AP**

Israel wages Gaza ground assault, communications blackout eases

REUTERS
JERUSALEM/GAZA
OCTOBER 29

ISRAELI FORCES are expanding ground operations in Gaza while their fighter jets have struck hundreds more Hamas targets, the Israeli military said on Sunday, in what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called the second phase of a three-week-old war.

Telephone and internet communications were partially restored in Gaza on Sunday after a more than day-long blackout that had badly impacted rescue operations as Israel pounded targets of the militant Hamas group that controls the territory.

Israeli Defence Force (IDF) fighter jets struck over 450 military targets belonging to Hamas in the Gaza Strip, including operational command centres, observation posts, and anti-tank missile launch posts, the military said.



At a damaged site in Khan Younis in the southern part of the Gaza Strip on Sunday. **Reuters**

Israel has a responsibility to protect the lives of innocent people in Gaza, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Sunday amid outcry over Palestinian civilian deaths. France's foreign ministry also said that violence in occupied West Bank, which led to the killing and displacement of Palestinians, needs to stop.

International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan Sunday visited the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt and posted a video on X social media, saying he hopes to visit the Gaza strip and Israel while he is in the region. Pope Francis on Sunday called for a ceasefire in the Gaza war and renewed his call for the release of all hostages.

BRIEFLY

Body of Sri Lanka woman killed in Israel repatriated

THE BODY of Anula Ratnayaka, a Sri Lankan national who lost her life during a recent attack by Hamas in Israel was repatriated to Sri Lanka Sunday, Ratnayaka, 49, was one of the three Sri Lankan nationals reported missing in the early days of the attack. The other two, both males, were later found. **PTI**

UN Security Council plans emergency meeting today

THE UN Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on Israel's ground invasion of Gaza on Monday afternoon at the request of the United Arab Emirates, the Arab representative on the council. Meanwhile, the UN mission in Lebanon says a peacekeeper was wounded after his base in the country's south was hit by a mortar shell. **AP**

Iraqi militia claims hitting US forces base in Syria

AN IRANIAN-BACKED Iraqi militia says it launched drone strikes on a base housing US forces in Syria. Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which has claimed strikes on US forces in Iraq, Syria over past weeks, on Sunday owned up the latest attack. The group has said the attacks are in retaliation for US support for Israel. **AP**

Netanyahu targets intel chiefs, then apologises

REUTERS
JERUSALEM, OCTOBER 29

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday took a jab at his intelligence chiefs on the X platform, saying they never warned him Hamas was planning its attack on October 7, but retracted and apologised.

The remarks, posted on X at 1 am Sunday, caused a political uproar and a rift within the war cabinet of Netanyahu, who has drawn public ire for not taking responsibility over intelligence and operational failures relating to Hamas' rampage through Israel.

Netanyahu's now-deleted post had said:

"At no time and no stage was a warning given to Prime

Minister Netanyahu regarding war intentions of Hamas. On the contrary, all security officials, including the head of army intelligence and the head of the Shin Bet, estimated that Hamas was deterred and interested in an arrangement."

In a second post on X about 10 hours later, Netanyahu wrote: "I was wrong," adding that his remarks "should not have been made and I apologize for that."

Netanyahu's initial comments were promptly rebuked by current and past allies, including Benny Gantz, a former defense minister who is now in Netanyahu's war cabinet.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid, who was formerly PM, said Netanyahu "crossed a red line" with the post. **REUTERS**

PERRY, WHO WAS OPEN ABOUT HIS LONG AND PUBLIC STRUGGLE WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE, DIED OF APPARENT DROWNING AT HIS L.A. HOME

Matthew Perry, 'Friends' star who essayed Chandler Bing, dies aged 54

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LOS ANGELES, OCTOBER 29

"FRIENDS" STAR Matthew Perry, the Emmy-nominated actor whose sarcastic, but lovable Chandler Bing was among television's most famous and quotable characters, has died at 54.

The actor was found dead of an apparent drowning at his Los Angeles home Saturday, according to the Los Angeles Times and celebrity website **TMZ**, which was the first to report the news. Both outlets cited unnamed sources confirming Perry's death. "Matthew was an incredibly gifted actor and an indelible part of the Warner Bros. Television

Group family," the company said in a statement.

"The impact of his comedic genius was felt around the world, and his legacy will live on in the hearts of so many. This is a heartbreaking day, and we send our love to his family, his loved ones, and all of his devoted fans."

Asked to confirm police response to what was listed as Perry's home address, LAPD Officer Drake Madison told the AP that officers had gone to that block "for a death investigation of a male in his 50s."

Perry's 10 seasons on "Friends" made him one of Hollywood's most recognizable actors, starring opposite Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Matt LeBlanc, Lisa



During the show's hijinks, Perry could be counted on to chime in with a line like "Could this BE any more awkward?" **AP file**

Kudrow and David Schwimmer as a friend group in New York.

As Chandler, he played the quick-witted, insecure and neurotic roommate of LeBlanc's Joey and a close friend of Schwimmer's Ross.

During the show's hijinks, he could be counted on to chime in with a line like "Could this BE any more awkward?" or another well-timed quip.

Perry was open about his long and public struggle with addiction, writing at the beginning of his 2022 million-selling memoir: "Hi, my name is Matthew, although you may know me by another name. My friends call me Matty. And I should be dead." "Friends" ran from 1994 until

2004, winning one best comedy series Emmy Award in 2002. The cast notably banded together for later seasons to obtain a salary of \$1 million per episode for each.

By the "Friends" finale, Chandler is married to Cox's Monica and they have a family, reflecting the journey of the core cast from single New Yorkers trying to figure their lives out to several of them married and starting families.

The series was one of television's biggest hits and has taken on a new life — and found surprising popularity with younger fans — in recent years on streaming services.

Perry described reading the "Friends" script for the first time

"As if someone had followed me around for a year, stealing my jokes, copying mannerisms, photocopying my world-weary yet witty view of life...It wasn't that I thought I could 'play' Chandler. I was 'Chandler'."

in his memoir, "Friends, Lovers and the Big Terrible Thing."

"It was as if someone had followed me around for a year,

stealing my jokes, copying my mannerisms, photocopying my world-weary yet witty view of life. One character in particular stood out to me: it wasn't that I thought I could 'play' Chandler. I 'was' Chandler."

Unknown at the time was the struggle Perry had with addiction and an intense desire to please audiences.

He recalled in his memoir that Aniston confronted him about being inebriated while filming.

"I know you're drinking," he remembered her telling him once. "We can smell it," she said, in what Perry called a "kind of weird but loving way, and the plural 'we' hit me like a sledgehammer."

13 ECONOMY

Sikkim project destroyed by flood may receive only a part of insurance claim

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 29

TEESTA STAGE III Hydro power project of Sikkim which was completely washed away by the glacial lake outburst flood earlier this month is unlikely to get the full insurance claim as global reinsurers and state-owned GICRe have said they can only pay up to ₹500 crore as claims.

The 1,200 MW project is run by Sikkim Urja Ltd (formerly Teesta Urja), which is 60 per cent owned by Sikkim Power Investment Corporation Ltd (SPICL). Asian Genco TULPte Ltd owns 30.16 per cent stake in the company.

Iffco-Tokio General Insurance is the lead insurer of the project with a consortium of insurers. The project was insured with a sum assured of Rs 12,000 crore, but reinsurers said the payout will

be restricted to ₹500 crore due to GLOF conditions. "We will go by the rules and the insurance contract that Sikkim Urja has signed with reinsurers. The contract clearly says in case the project is damaged by (GLOF), the claims will be limited to Rs 500 crore. The company has paid their premium accordingly," said an official of a reinsurance company.

According to Sikkim Urja's annual report for FY22, the present outstanding long-term loan (as of August 31, 2022) was ₹8,007.84 crore. "During the last one year ending August 31, 2022 the company prepaid ₹2,043.33 crore out of its surplus cash-flows/internal accruals (including ₹543.33 crore towards RBI COVID-19 regulatory package) over and above the regular repayment dues against long term loan," it said.

The outstanding long-term debt of the company was struc-



The Chungthang dam of the Sikkim Urja Ltd project was washed away on Oct 3. File

tured taken over/refinanced by REC Ltd and Power Finance Corporation Ltd in December 2019. It remains to be seen how the firm will repay the debt with production severely affected.

Reinsurers said they would have paid the entire sum assured

if an earthquake had destroyed the project. The flood that originated in the South Lhonak Lake in North Sikkim on October 3 submerged the hydropower project and washed away the 60m tall Chungthang dam.

Reinsurers are yet to receive a former claim request from the company. "We have been intimated by the primary insurers led by IFFCO Tokio General Insurance about the present state of affairs of Teesta Hydro project, following its total destruction, though details of the claims have not been filed with us yet," said a senior official of a foreign reinsurance company.

Iffco-Tokio and Sikkim Urja did not respond to mails.

GICRe has a total exposure of ₹500 crore for the project and shares the risks with other reinsurers including Swiss Re and Munich Re. GICRe also has further reinsured it and in case of claim outgo,

its balance sheet is protected.

It may not be easy to settle this kind of claim and the entire thing may land up with the regulator IRDAI or in the courts before any claims are settled by the reinsurers. "One has to remember the fact that it is a government of Sikkim project and built on borrowings from the banks. The Sikkim government will not remain silent on technical reasons. The situation is worth watching and set precedents for the future," an observer said.

Earlier this month, insurance regulator IRDAI had asked insurers to speed up the claim settlement process in Sikkim. "We are ready to handle the situation. Let us see how things are unfolding," said a reinsurance official. As the project is majorly reinsured, it will be reinsurers and not primary insurers who suffer much losses.

The project was commissioned in February 2017.

Amid refinery maintenance season, petroleum product exports dip to 6-month low

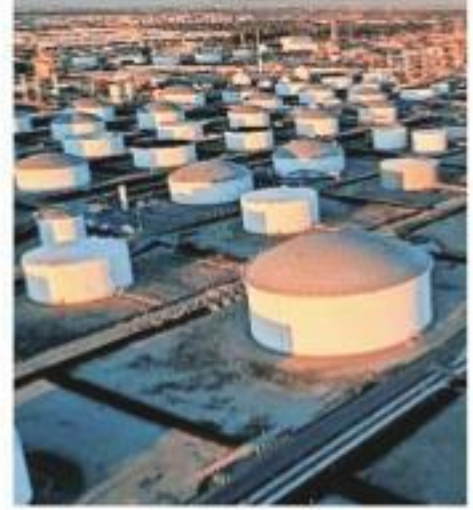
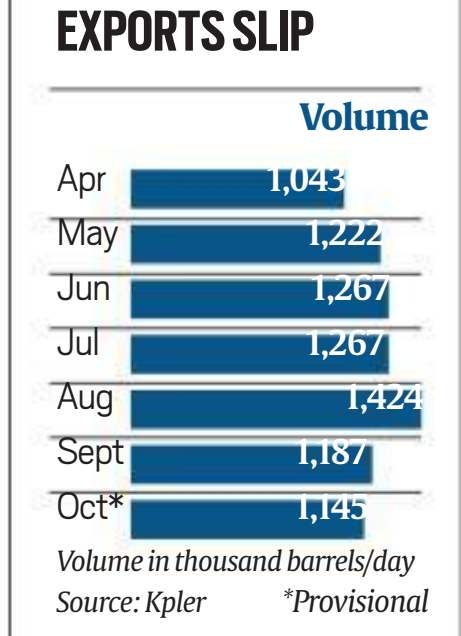
SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

INDIA'S PETROLEUM product exports in October fell to a six-month low as a consequence of maintenance-related dip in production as some of the country's major refineries, particularly Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL's) Jamnagar refinery complex, as per an analysis of provisional export data from commodity market analytics and intelligence firm Kpler. The recovery in domestic fuel and petroleum product demand following the monsoon-related slump is also likely to have impacted exports.

As of October 29, India's petroleum product exports in October stood at 1.15 million barrels per day (million bpd), the lowest since April's 1.04 million bpd, as per Kpler data. October petroleum product exports were down nearly 4 per cent from September levels and around 20 per cent from August volumes.

It is worth noting that October saw partial maintenance shutdowns at RIL's Jamnagar complex, the world's largest single-location refinery complex with a cumulative crude oil processing capacity of around 1.4 million bpd, and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd's (BPCL's) Mumbai refinery. Indian Oil Corporation Ltd's (IOC's) Paradip refinery had a complete shutdown for around 10 days this month.

Private sector giant RIL accounts for a major chunk of India's fuel and petroleum product exports, while public sector players like IOC and BPCL are only



Petroleum product exports are seen rebounding in Nov

marginal exporters with most of their production being consumed within India. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on oil imports to meet over 85 per cent of its domestic demand. However, with its refining capacity of around 254 million tonnes per annum (mtpa), or around 5 million bpd, being lower than its domestic demand, the country is a net exporter of petroleum products.

According to Kpler's estimates, RIL's petroleum product exports in October were less than 800,000 bpd, the lowest in 12 months. Over the past year, RIL's share in India's petroleum product exports has averaged at close to 72 per cent, as per the data. In October, the company's share in the country's petroleum product exports is estimated at around 69 per cent. It is worth noting that an export-oriented refinery accounts for a little more than half of the refining capacity at RIL's Jamnagar complex.

The export volumes of public sector refineries declined to the lowest in four months as domes-

tic demand for fuels and other petroleum products recovered from the annual monsoon-related dip. Over the three to four months that preceded October, exports by domestic market-oriented public sector refineries had seen an uptick as domestic demand was dampened by the southwest monsoon rains. Diverting some of the domestic volumes to the export market allowed Indian refineries to maintain high refinery runs.

With the refinery maintenance season now at its fag end, India's petroleum product exports are seen rebounding in November, according to Kpler's lead crude analyst Viktor Katona. However, high domestic demand during the festival season could cap exports, particularly for public sector refineries and fuel retailers IOC, BPCL, and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL). As per Katona's estimates, the two RIL refineries and IOC's Paradip refinery should be operating at their full capacity in November. BPCL's Mumbai refinery is expected to come to full capacity in first week of November.

In higher-income tax slabs, better compliance and upward mobility

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

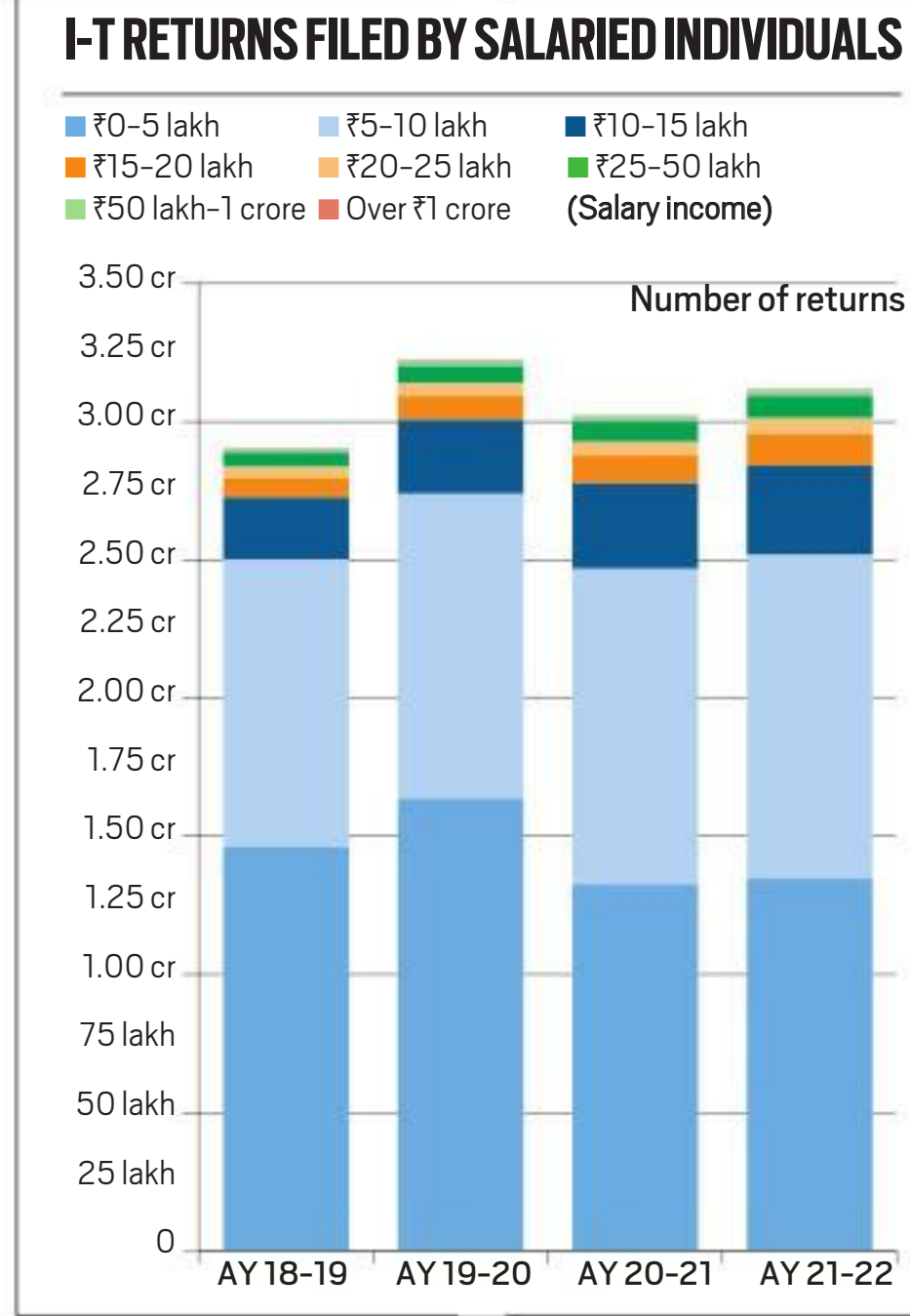
THE LATEST income tax returns statistics for assessment years (AY) 2019-20 to 2021-22 released by the Income Tax Department show wider compliance and a shift in taxpayers towards higher-income slabs from lower-income slabs. But there are still a significant number of taxpayers who have been brought under the tax net but do not file tax returns, a reason for concern among policymakers.

A total of 6.75 crore taxpayers filed income tax returns in assessment year 2021-22 (financial year 2020-21), a rise of 5.6 per cent from 6.39 crore taxpayers in the previous year. Additionally, around 2.1 crore taxpayers paid taxes but did not file returns.

Opposition leaders had pointed out the widening gap between the ultra-rich and the middle class based on ITR data. Subsequently, the tax department issued a detailed statement Thursday stating that returns filed by individual taxpayers increased by 90 per cent over the nine-year period of Assessment Year 2013-14 to AY 2021-22 (FY21). The tax department called it as an indication of the widening of tax base due to measures taken, adding that there is a "robust growth in the gross total income of individuals across different income groups". The detailed income tax statistics based on assessment-year linked return filings comes after a long gap and hence, data for three years (AY2019-20 to AY2021-22) have been released together, even though some data had been made public as part of responses to questions in Parliament earlier.

What does the latest tax returns data show?

The latest income tax returns statistics for AY2019-20 to 2021-22 show wider compliance and a shift in taxpayers towards higher-income slabs from lower-income slabs. But, many taxpayers who have been brought under the tax net still do not file tax returns. Most taxpayers continue to remain in the nil tax category and with 2.1 crore taxpayers paying taxes but not filing returns, it indicates a significant number of taxpayers are still paying taxes primarily through Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) but not filing returns even as the total income tax returns filings



have seen an increase over the years. Some key numbers:

■ A total of 6.75 crore taxpayers including individuals, companies, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) and Association of Persons (AOPs) filed income tax returns in assessment year 2021-22 (FY21), posting a rise of 5.6 per cent from 6.39 crore taxpayers in the previous year.

■ Out of overall 6.75 crore taxpayers, 4.46 crore taxpayers paid nil tax in AY 2021-22. Additionally around 2.1 crore taxpayers paid taxes but did not file returns.

■ Barring AY 2020-21, when the number of taxpayers who paid taxes but did not file returns dipped to 1.59 crore, taxpayers in this segment have broadly remained constant at 2.1 crore during AY 2018-19 to AY 2021-22.

■ Overall number of taxpayers has seen a significant increase over the last few years, rising from 5.87 crore in AY 2018-19 to 6.69 crore in AY 2019-20 to 6.39 crore in AY 2020-21 and 6.75 crore in AY 2021-22.

■ However, among the overall taxpayers, the share of taxpayers paying nil tax has also increased over the years from 40.3 per cent in AY 2018-19 to 43.1 per cent in AY 2019-20 and 67.3 per cent in AY 2020-21, after which it moderated to 66 per cent in AY 2021-22.

■ Individuals who paid nil tax have increased from 2.23 crore in AY 2018-19 to 2.74 crore in AY 2019-20, 4.14 crore in AY 2020-21 and 4.28 crore in AY 2021-22. Companies that paid zero tax have also increased from 3.73 lakh in AY 2018-19 to 3.92 lakh in AY 2019-20, 4.64 lakh in AY 2020-21 and 5.08 lakh in AY 2021-22.

What does the ITR data show for salaried individuals?

Around 6.36 crore individuals filed income tax returns in AY 2021-22, constituting over 94 per cent of the overall 6.75 crore taxpayers in the country. Among salaried individuals, the highest share of taxpayers is in the category of zero salary income (3.25 crore individuals), followed by the salary income bracket of ₹5.5-9.5 lakh (94.52 lakh individuals) and ₹10-15 lakh (32.46 lakh individuals). Other key numbers show:

■ The highest rate of growth for salaried individual taxpayers was seen in the income slabs of ₹15-20 lakh and ₹20-25 lakh in FY21, which posted a year-on-year increase of 13.9 per cent and 12.4 per cent, respectively.

■ In comparison, the lower-income slabs of ₹10-15 lakh and ₹5-10 lakh recorded a growth of 4.9 per cent and 2.6 per cent, respectively. FY21 was the year affected by the pandemic.

■ However, over the last four years from AY2018-19 to 2021-22 or FY18 to FY21, the income bracket of zero-₹5 lakh was showing a decline till the time of pandemic when the numbers again increased. To assess the post-pandemic trend, detailed data for AY 2022-23 (FY22) will be crucial, which has not yet been released by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).

■ Taxpayers in the lower-most income bracket or the ones paying nil income tax stood at 1.35 crore in AY 2021-22, up from 1.32 crore in AY 2020-21. The number of salaried individuals in nil income tax category had significantly reduced to 1.32 crore in AY 2020-21 from 1.63 crore in AY 2019-20 and 1.46 crore in AY 2018-19.

■ Around 67,970 individuals disclosed salary income over ₹1 crore in assessment year 2021-22 (FY21), the year affected by the pandemic, an increase of 3.9 per cent from 65,446 individuals in AY 2020-21.

■ Out of this, 16 individuals had salary between ₹100-500 crore during AY2021-22 (FY21), compared with 8 individuals in the same income bracket during AY 2020-21 (FY20) and 20 individuals during AY 2019-20 (FY19), the latest detailed income tax return statistics for AY 2019-20 to 2021-22 showed.

What is the criticism about income trends reflected in ITRs?

The Congress had questioned the widening gap between the ultra-rich and the middle class. In a October 23 post on X, formerly Twitter, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh had said: "The top 1 per cent of income tax payers made 17 per cent of all income in 2013-14. By 2021-22, the top 1 per cent made 23 per cent of all income. Further, the income growth of the ultra-rich was much faster than for the middle class. The top 1 per cent of income tax payers saw their income grow at 13 per cent year-on-year from 2013-14 to 2021-22 — a massive 60 per cent faster than the income of the lowest 25 per cent of taxpayers."

After adjusting for inflation, the lowest 25 per cent taxpayers took home less real income in 2022, than in 2019. Gross income of the lowest 25 per cent fell by 11 per cent, from ₹3.8 lakh crore in FY19 to ₹3.4 lakh crore in FY22, Ramesh said. The real income of the top 1 per cent jumped 30 per cent from ₹79.1 lakh crore in FY19 to ₹102.2 lakh crore in FY22, he said.

FPIs sell ₹35,000 cr in domestic shares over last 2 months

HITESH VYAS
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 29

CONCERNS OVER higher-for-longer interest rates in the US, surge in US bond yields and geopolitical tensions have triggered a safe-haven appeal among foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), who have sold domestic shares worth over ₹35,000 crore (around \$4.20 billion) on a net basis in the past two months.

While these investors pulled out ₹14,768 crore worth of equities in September, they dumped ₹20,356 crore of Indian stocks in October so far, the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) data showed. On the other hand, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) pumped ₹20,312 crore in September and ₹23,437 crore in October in the stock market.

September was the first month in the current fiscal when FPIs sold domestic shares. From April to August, overseas investors net purchased ₹1.62 lakh crore worth of Indian shares. Heavy selling by the FPIs in September and October resulted in the BSE's Sensex falling by 2.45 per cent and NSE's Nifty declining by 2 per cent during this period.

"FPI selling continues unabated. The primary reason for the sustained selling is the sharp spike in US bond yields which took the 10-year yield to a 17-year high of 5 per cent. The yield has now declined to 4.84 per cent. With such high bond yields, it is rational for FPIs to take out some money," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

On October 23, the yield of the 10-year US Treasury surged to 5.02 per cent — the highest

level since 2007. This rise in US bond yields was an expectation that the US Federal Reserve will keep interest rates higher to check inflation which may rise due to higher crude oil prices.

FPIs have become risk averse and are also pulling out funds from the domestic market on worries over the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. They are opting for safe-haven assets such as the US Treasury, bonds and gold, which are considered to be less risky.

"The Israel-Hamas conflict in West Asia and the uncertainty surrounding the conflict has added to negative sentiments in the market," said Vijayakumar.

Of the ₹20,356 crore of domestic equities sold by FPIs in October so far, 67 per cent, or ₹13,563 crore worth of shares were dumped between October 18 and October 27, which led to over 3 per cent decline in the Sensex and the Nifty during the period.

FPIs were sellers in sectors like financials, power, FMCG and IT. "FPI selling has impacted the financial services and IT segment more than others. The reason is that these two segments account for the major part of FPI's AUM (assets under management). Of the total FPI AUM of around \$652 billion, financial services account for \$213 billion and IT accounts for \$64 billion," said Vijaykumar, adding that the stock prices in these segments are weak due to FPI selling and not due to any fundamental factors.

Analysts said the widening Israel-Hamas conflict continues to remain a worry for FPIs. They will also closely watch the outcome of the US Federal Reserve's meeting scheduled from October 31 to November 1.

2047 GOAL Vision document to make India a \$30-tn economy in final stages, draft by Dec

AGGAM WALIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

A VISION document aimed at making India a developed country is in its final stages and a draft is expected to be ready by December, NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said Sunday. The document will be made public in three months, he said.

Ten sectoral groups of secretaries (SGOs) from ministries created around themes including infrastructure, welfare, commerce and industry, technology, and governance have each prepared a vision document in a process that lasted nearly two years.

NITI Aayog, which was tasked with the consolidation of the ten sectoral thematic visions in July this year, has also forecasted that India's economy will be worth \$30 trillion in 2047, with a per capita GDP of \$17,590.

While Subrahmanyam did not divulge on the content of the draft vision document being consolidated by NITI Aayog, he added that the document states the sectors and technologies in which India should be leading by 2047 and addresses institutional and structural reforms required to get there. He also stated that the final 'Viksit Bharat @ 2047' document will be critical in helping India avoid the middle-income trap, which remains a major concern in policy circles.

Subrahmanyam said the ten SGOs started preparing their respective vision documents in December 2021 based on guidance notes and common economic parameters and projections given by the Ministry of Finance.

Radio Mirchi, Sapphire offer ₹251 cr each to buy Big FM

RAJESH KURUP
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 29

RELIANCE BROADCAST Network (RBNL), which is undergoing bankruptcy proceedings, has received two bids — from Radio Mirchi and Sapphire FM — of ₹251 crore each for its radio channel Big FM.

FM radio network Radio Mirchi, a part of Entertainment Network India (a subsidiary of Bennett, Coleman & Company), has submitted the bid in a con-

sortium with Radio Orange of Nagpur. The other bid for the former Anil Ambani group company is from Haryana-based Sapphire FM, sources close to the development said.

Both the bidders have offered to pay within 30 days. Sources say that the lenders have initiated discussions with the two resolution applicants to revise their bids upwards.

With about ₹60 crore of cash lying in the company's accounts, the lenders expect a total recovery of as high as 55-60% against the to-

The lenders have initiated discussions with the two resolution applicants to revise their bids upwards

tal admitted claims of ₹578 crore.

Big FM is the country's largest radio network with 58 stations, with a reach across 1,200 towns and over 50,000 villages. Earlier in February this year, RBNL was admitted under the Corporate

Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) by the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

The lenders who have raised claims include IndusInd Bank (₹172 crore), HSBC Asset Management (₹238 crore), Franklin Templeton MF (₹103 crore) and Reliance Commercial Finance (₹64 crore).

IDBI Trusteeship Services, on the behalf of L&T Investment Management, had filed an insolvency application after RBNL failed to repay a debt of ₹175 crore.

The bankruptcy court had also appointed Rohit Ramesh Mehra as its resolution professional.

L&T Investment Management had subscribed to non-convertible debentures (NCDs) worth ₹200 crore issued by RBNL in three tranches between 2015 and 2016. IDBI Trustee Services was the trustee for L&T Investment Management Services, while Reliance Capital was the guarantor for RBNL. At the time of redemption of the NCDs in 2020, RBNL failed to make the payment. FE

At WTO, India pitches for clear definition of e-commerce trade in goods & services

New Delhi: India has asked WTO members to work on a clear definition of e-commerce trade in goods and services as it would help provide developing countries a policy space to make decisions on the fast-growing sector, an official said.

At present, there is a difference of understanding about the subject between developed and de-

veloping member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The issue came up during a meeting in Geneva last week.

"India stated that the definition should be clear about digital goods and services because customs duties are there on goods and not on services. The Western world wants no customs duties, and on the other

hand, developing countries want that policy space to impose the duties," the official said.

"Now, goods and services are embedded, then there is a definitional problem. For example, Netflix is showing a film in India. So, the film is a product, but the membership that Netflix is taking to show the film is a service," said the official. PTI

Caution for Israel, flashing warning signs for world economy

ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

THE ISRAELI Defence Forces (IDF) on Sunday said they were "gradually expanding the ground activity and the scope of our forces" in the Gaza Strip.

Assuming Israel succeeds in eliminating Hamas, what remains unclear is how it would handle the "post-conflict phase".

Back in 2005, the Israelis had chosen to leave Gaza in accordance with a disengagement plan proposed by then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Eighteen years later, analysts believe there is virtually no chance that Israel would want to step back into an administrative role in the volatile enclave of 2 million-plus Palestinians that it would have by then all but razed to the ground.

Israel's after-war challenge: cautionary notes from US

General David Petraeus, a former CIA director and the top US general in both Iraq and Afghanistan, told CBS News in an interview

that the US had made mistakes in planning the post-conflict phase in the wake of its post 9/11 "war on terror" — and cautioned Israel against making similar mistakes in its "very challenging mission" in Gaza.

"There needs to be a vision for that (post conflict phase). I think that Prime Minister Netanyahu would be well advised to not only say what they're going to try to do to Hamas, but realistically... also talk about the future of Gaza and a future, even a vision for the Palestinian people post-conflict..." Petraeus, co-author of *Conflict: The Evolution of Warfare from 1945 to Ukraine (2023)*, said.

"We (the US) made mistakes and not sufficiently planned the post conflict phase... But clearly, we got to Baghdad, we toppled the regime, but our plans were not sufficient. And when we then compounded that situation by taking two policy decisions that were very destructive, frankly, that was to fire the Iraqi military without telling them what their future was, and (to remove Iraq's civil servants) without an agreed reconciliation process, which led to thousands of bureaucrats we needed to run Iraq, being sent into

retirement or... being fired," Petraeus said.

"So clearly, it's important to plan what will happen the day after, the so-called post conflict phase... There also should be a vision announced in advance of what it will be like for the Palestinians in Gaza, and also in the West Bank, after the destruction of Hamas and their terrorist partners, the Islamic Jihad".

In separate comments made to *Politico*, Petraeus warned that the IDF's plan of a bombing campaign followed by a major land invasion of the 140 square mile patch "could be Mogadishu on steroids very quickly" — an allusion to the two-day street battle that the US forces fought with the Somali National Alliance (SNA) and armed citizens in Somalia's capital city in October 1993, dramatised in the 2001 film *Black Hawk Down*.

Three scenarios for the global economy: bad, worse, worst

The aftermath of the military engagement could also have serious economic conse-

quences for the region and the world, which continues to struggle to cope with the war in Ukraine and the inflationary aftereffects of the stimulus offered during the pandemic. At a time when central banks around the world are grappling with inflation reduction strategies, a spike in oil prices could upend calculations on growth-inflation dynamics.

While the impact is not expected to be as grave as during the last Arab-Israeli war in 1973 and the subsequent oil embargo — given that the Arab world appears to be split, the US has considerable leverage over key players in the region, and the major global economies are far more closely interconnected — the situation could worsen if the war is prolonged and the Palestinian humanitarian crisis worsens.

As Israel continues its relentless bombardment of Gaza and with the Palestinian death toll already past 8,000, a *Bloomberg* report sketched three likely scenarios going forward: a limited conflict that is confined to the Gaza strip; a slightly more expanded conflict with the involvement of Iran-backed

militants in Lebanon and Syria; and finally, a full-scale war between regional powers Israel and Iran that could suck in the US, with the possible involvement of the Chinese and the Russians.

This last scenario is the least likely at this point. Should it come to pass, however, the consequences for the global economy could be serious. More than 20% of the world's crude supply comes from West Asia — and even though Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which are expected to have excess capacity, likely won't side with Iran, shipments may not be able to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, the 48-km shipping choke point through which nearly a fifth of the total global oil production passes.

According to the *Bloomberg* report, a direct conflict between Iran and Israel — and an Iranian blockade of the Strait of Hormuz — could push crude prices above \$150 per barrel. Global inflation could rise to about 6.7% next year as a consequence, and global growth could slow by almost 2 percentage points.

A worldwide recession would be espe-

cially bad news for countries such as India and the US, where important elections will take place next year.

The second scenario of a regional conflict — with the involvement perhaps of Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon and militias in Iraq and Syria, and also the Houthis in Yemen — oil prices could rise to around the mid-\$90s, higher than the current \$90 per barrel, *Bloomberg* estimates. The consequent higher inflation next year could dent global growth by 0.3 percentage points.

The most likely scenario, according to *Bloomberg*, of the conflict remaining confined to the Gaza Strip, will extract a terrible human toll, but the impact on the global economy will be limited.

However, it is still bad news for a global economy just emerging from multiple shocks, with central banks walking the tightrope between raising interest rates to tackle runaway inflation and ensuring that slowing growth does not result in painful hard landings. Complicating the picture further are variables such as the slowing growth in China and the continuing war in Ukraine.

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

MEET HAMAS' KHALED MASHAL, WHO TOOK PART IN KERALA RALLY VIRTUALLY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

HAMAS LEADER Khaled Mashal virtually addressed a pro-Palestine rally in Kerala's Malappuram on Friday, calling for unity for Gaza. Solidarity Youth Movement, the youth wing of the organisation Jamaat-e-Islami, had organised the rally.

BJP state president K Surendran criticised the rally, objecting to the participation of "Hamas extremists".

Early days

Mashal was born in the West Bank town of Silwad in 1956. His family had to flee their home after the 1967 War between Israel and Arab states.

Mashal then became a member of what would become Hamas, a militant organisation willing to use violence for the cause of Palestine. He headed Hamas's Politburo or its main decision-making body from 1996 to 2017.

In a 2017 interview with *Al Jazeera*, he said, "I am one of the founders of the organisation. I was there since day one. I was part of the founding and launch even before Hamas was officially declared in 1987... Therefore, I was a member of its consultative council and leadership structures since day one." Currently, he heads the group's "external" politburo based in Qatar.

Mashal also lived in Kuwait between 1967 and 1990 and led a Palestinian Islamic movement at Kuwait University. After the start of the Gulf War in 1990, when Iraq's invasion of Kuwait led to a Western alliance fighting a war against it, Mashal moved to Jordan. He has also lived in Syria and Iraq.

Following the latest Hamas-Israel conflict, Mashal spoke about the idea of unity against Israel. "[We must] head to the squares and streets of the Arab and Islamic world on Friday," Mashal said in a recorded statement sent to *Reuters* earlier this month. "Tribes of Jordan, sons of Jordan, brothers and sisters of Jordan... This is a moment of truth and the borders are close to you, you all know your responsibility," he said.



Mashal earlier headed Hamas' Politburo. Wikimedia Commons

Israeli assassination attempt

While living in the Jordanian capital of Amman in 1997, Mashal was the target of an Israeli assassination attempt, ordered by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who was then serving his first term.

According to an account in *Time Magazine*, two agents of the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad waited outside his office. As Mashal approached, one sprayed the painkiller fentanyl into his ear.

As he was rushed to the hospital, Jordanian King Hussein threatened to cut off relations with Israel "by midnight."

US President Bill Clinton was involved in mediating the Jordan-Israel stand-off, given how the two countries had normalised relations just three years prior to the incident.

Netanyahu had to provide an antidote formula to Jordanian doctors for Mashal's recovery. "He also apologised in person to the brother of the King, who refused to see him," *Time*'s report states.

According to negotiators cited in a 1997 *The New York Times* article, Jordan eventually agreed to discuss the release of eight Mossad agents who had come from Israel to carry out the attack, and Israel was eventually forced to in turn release Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, "the founder and spiritual leader of the Hamas movement."

Netanyahu, under American pressure, was also forced to release some other Hamas prisoners.



HARISH DAMODARAN

IN 1954, the Saint Lucian economist William Arthur Lewis wrote about the enormous industrialisation possibilities for underdeveloped countries with unlimited availability of labour at subsistence wages. The marginal productivity of such labour, engaged in sectors such as agriculture, was "negligible, zero, or even negative": their withdrawal from farms would, far from reducing agricultural output, make the existing holdings more viable and amenable to productivity-enhancing mechanisation.

Lewis' influential essay (*Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour*) argued that an expanding manufacturing ("capitalist") sector could absorb much of the surplus labour in agriculture and other "subsistence" sectors. All it had to do was pay wages just high enough to make men leave the family farm. So long as the higher subsistence wage levels matched the value of the additional output produced, the factories would keep hiring workers.

For Lewis — he won the Economics Nobel Prize in 1979 — industrialisation was a virtual inevitability for countries with surplus labour populations; he specifically mentioned India.

How has the model panned out in India?

Not quite the way Lewis envisaged. Agriculture employed about two-thirds of India's workforce till the early nineties. The accompanying chart shows that share falling from 64.6% to 48.9% between 1993-94 and 2011-12. But not much of it was courtesy of manufacturing, whose share in employment rose marginally, from 10.4% to 12.6%, during this period.

The subsequent period has seen the farm sector's share in the country's labour force first drop somewhat slowly, to a low of 42.5% in 2018-19, and then increase to 45.6% and 46.5% in the following two Covid-impacted years. The current 45.8% share, as per the National Sample Survey Office's Periodic Labour Force Survey report for 2022-23 (July-June), is still higher than the pre-pandemic levels.

No less striking is the dip in manufacturing's share, from the 2011-12 high of 12.6% to 11.4% in 2022-23. The declining trend, in fact, preceded the pandemic — so much so that this sector now employs less than even the workforce in construction (13%) and trade, hotels & restaurants (12.1%). Employment in the latter two sectors is pretty much similar

EXPLAINED ECONOMICS

China model India didn't follow

The Lewis model never really came true for India. Now, with manufacturing turning increasingly capital-intensive, India may have to replace the old farm-to-factory with a new farm-as-factory labour model

Sector-wise share of workforce

TABLE 1
TEN MOST AGRICULTURE-DEPENDENT STATES

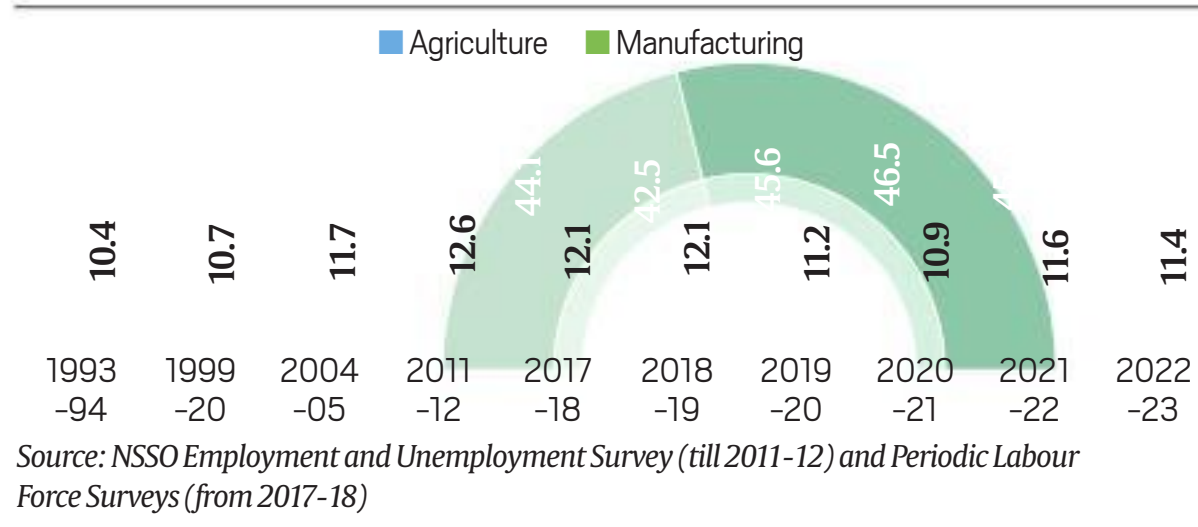
	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Services*
Chhattisgarh	62.61%	7.58%	9.67%	20.14%
Madhya Pradesh	59.78%	6.27%	11.07%	22.88%
Himachal Pradesh	58.37%	6.93%	8.41%	26.29%
Rajasthan	54.79%	10.09%	12.69%	22.43%
Uttar Pradesh	54.31%	9.20%	13.08%	23.41%
Bihar	49.61%	5.71%	18.39%	26.29%
Jharkhand	49.25%	8.91%	17.43%	24.41%

TABLE 2
TEN LEAST AGRICULTURE-DEPENDENT STATES

	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Services*
Punjab	24.64%	17.75%	15.64%	41.97%
Kerala	27.27%	10.91%	15.37%	46.45%
Tamil Nadu	28.87%	16.77%	18.04%	36.32%
Haryana	29.76%	16.09%	12.76%	41.39%
West Bengal	34.17%	18.75%	11.66%	35.42%
Tripura	35.57%	3.12%	20.54%	40.77%
Gujarat	41.82%	23.77%	7.11%	27.30%

*Inclusive of mining and electricity, gas, water and other utilities.
Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey July 2022-June 2023.

AGRICULTURE VS MANUFACTURING (% share of workforce)



Source: NSSO Employment and Unemployment Survey (till 2011-12) and Periodic Labour Force Surveys (from 2017-18)

to agriculture — low marginal productivity (output per worker), informal, and paying just-about subsistence wages.

Simply put, the virtuous structural transformation, entailing a transfer of surplus labour from "subsistence" to "capitalist" sectors that Lewis talked about, hasn't really played out. It has stalled, if not reversed, in recent times. The movement of labour — as economists like Amit Basole at Azim Premji University have demonstrated — has been

largely happening within the "subsistence" sectors. The jobs being generated outside agriculture are not in manufacturing and high-productivity services (think gig workers versus IT professionals).

The picture at state level

Manufacturing's share in employment is below that of construction and services for states with a large workforce engaged in farming. Even for less agriculture-dependent states,

the labour force in services is 2-3 times or more than in manufacturing (tables).

The exception, perhaps, is Gujarat. Nearly 24% of its workforce — more than twice the national average — is employed in manufacturing, which is almost as much as in services. Gujarat is the only state that seems closer to the Lewis model. Yet, the proportion of its workers in agriculture is much higher than for Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu or even West Bengal. Less services sector-dependent would be a more appropriate description for Gujarat.

"The Lewis model was propounded, and had relevance for India, in the fifties. It was a time when industry was synonymous with textile mills employing large numbers of people. Even Mumbai then had mills, with workers drawn from neighbouring rural areas and housed in *chawls* (tenements) in the centre of the city," noted Ramesh Chand, Member of NITI Aayog, the successor to the erstwhile Planning Commission.

Farm as a factory

The Lewis model's exemplar was China. That country, from the late 1970s to the 2000s, leveraged its large pool of surplus rural labour to become "the world's factory".

However, the relevance or replicability of that model is open to question today. India does still have near-unlimited supply of surplus labour suffering what is called "disguised unemployment". It is also experiencing a bulge in the working-age population, like China did till the last decade. But the opportunities for gainful employment through the conventional route aren't as much as before.

"Manufacturing is turning increasingly capital-intensive, with the deployment of both labour-saving and labour-displacing technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence and machine learning. We need to rethink the whole model of labour transition from agriculture to industry," said Chand.

NITI Aayog, he added, is working on a "new" economic development model for India, exploring the scope for remunerative job creation "in and around agriculture". Such jobs needn't be on the farm, but outside it — in the aggregation, grading, packaging, transporting, processing, warehousing and retailing of produce or the supply of inputs and services to farmers.

"The use of grain, sugarcane and oilseeds as bio-fuel is already growing, but so can the crop stubble and residues that farmers are now burning in the fields. There is also rising demand for bio-based products, whether as cosmetics and medicines, building materials, polymers and specialty chemicals, or even as insecticides and fertilisers. All these can be the next big employment avenues outside, and yet linked to, the farm," Chand said.

THIS WORD MEANS

Jehovah's Witnesses, whose Kerala prayer gathering saw bomb blasts

YASHEE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 29

THE MAN who claimed responsibility for the blasts at a prayer convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kerala's Kalamassery was an estranged member of the same religious group.

Dominic Martin, now in police custody, posted a video on social media in which he said, "I have been a member of Jehovah's Witnesses for the last 16 years... I realised that their stand is anti-national... They inject poison into the minds of children... They are asked not to sing the national anthem and join the defence service..."

Who are Jehovah's Witnesses?

Jehovah's Witnesses is a Christian denomination that does not believe in the Holy Trinity (the doctrine that God exists in three equal persons of the Father, the Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit). They worship Jehovah as "the one true and Almighty God, the Creator". They base their beliefs only on the text of the Bible. They don't celebrate Christmas or Easter, because they believe such festivals to be inspired by Pagan traditions.

Jehovah's Witnesses are known for their door-to-door evangelical work. They believe the end of the world is near, and the "Kingdom of God" will "replace human governments and accomplish God's purpose for the earth."

The origins of the group lie in a Bible Student movement started in the 1870s by American pastor Charles Taze Russell. Today, the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses is located in Warwick, New York. The main body to disseminate their doctrines is called the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

Jehovah's Witnesses generally keep away from other religious groups. The website jw.org, dedicated to the denomination, says, "... we remain strictly neutral in political affairs and avoid affiliation with other religions..."

Jehovah's Witnesses in India

According to jw.org, "Jehovah's



People outside the Kalamassery venue where the blasts took place. AP

Witnesses have been present in India since 1905. They established an office in 1926 in Bombay (now Mumbai), and obtained legal registration in 1978." The website also mentions that members in India have at times been accused of trying to convert people due to their evangelical work.

A landmark case involving the group in India was *Bijoe Emmanuel & Ors vs State of Kerala & Ors* of 1986, in which the Supreme Court granted protection to three children who did not join in the singing of the National Anthem at their school. The court held that forcing them to sing the Anthem violated their fundamental right to religion under Article 25 of the Constitution.

The children, siblings Bijoe Emmanuel,

Binu, and Bindu, were expelled from their school on July 26, 1985. Their parents pleaded unsuccessfully before the Kerala High Court that Jehovah's Witnesses worship only Jehovah, and since the Anthem was a prayer, the children could stand up in respect, but could not sing.

The SC ruling had noted, "The Witnesses stand apart from civil society, refusing to vote, run for public office, serve in any armed forces, salute the flag, stand for the National Anthem, or recite the pledge of allegiance. Their religious stands have brought clashes with various governments..."

INPUTS FROM APURVA VISHWANATH LONGER VERSION
indianexpress.com/explained

15 IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

ABHINAV BINDRA

OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST, IOC ATHLETES COMMISSION MEMBER

‘Hosting Olympics is not about just two weeks, it’s about a higher level of achievement’

IOC Athletes Commission member Abhinav Bindra on what hosting the Olympics could mean for India, engaging with the younger demographic, grooming talent through robust organisations and the growing self-belief of Indian athletes. The session was moderated by Senior Assistant Editor Mihir Vasavda



Illustration: Sivajit Dey

Mihir Vasavda: What did India achieve by hosting the International Olympic Committee (IOC) session?

This IOC session was one of the best organised and credit goes to Mrs (Nita) Ambani, chairperson, Reliance Foundation, that it was flawless in every respect. What it has managed to achieve is to showcase our potential not just in sport but the overall development that’s happening in the country. It’s both in the interest of the IOC and our country to engage with the Olympic movement. First, from the IOC’s side, it is an opportunity to engage with the world’s largest and youngest population. It is a market, a country where the IOC has been trying for many years to really make its presence felt in a meaningful way. The wheels are slowly starting to turn there.

Of course, India is starting to embrace Olympic sports at the level it never has in terms of supporting athletes; all credit goes to the government for prioritising sports. We are slowly starting to see results also come through.

Mihir Vasavda: What is spurring the recent surge in terms of results?

It has got to do with the people. Our young demographic is driving demand, not just in terms of watching sport but also playing at a community, club and elite level. When that happens, sport becomes a priority for governments as well because at the end of the day, at a political level, you are trying to appease a young audience. When sport is an important aspect in the life of every young Indian, it’s only natural that there will be more investment going into it.

At the elite level, Indian athletes are very well taken care of. You cannot compare the kind of investment that’s happening in a lot of sports with anywhere else in the world. What we are also starting to see slowly is more investment permeating down to the grassroots level, like the Khelo India and other programmes.

Of course, it’s never going to be perfect from day one and there’s more work to be done to improve grassroots athlete development.

Mihir Vasavda: If you had to choose between spending tens of billions on the Olympics and a fraction of that on training, infrastructure and exposure, what would you choose?

It’s difficult to choose one or the other. While they are similar, they are also different. When you are hosting the Olympic Games, it’s not about those two weeks. What you are trying to achieve at a larger level needs to be considered. How the Olympic Games can act as a catalyst for the development of your country. So you have to see it from that prism.

Development of athletes is a long-term process and it has to happen in tandem. If you are the host, you’d like a strong performance from your athletes. Our performances are certainly improving. When our Asian Games slogan — *Ab ki Baar, 100 Paar* — came out, whoever I spoke to laughed it off. But it happened, right? We won a 100 medals.

Now it will be interesting to see how the performances at the continental level translate at the Olympic level. It’s a completely different story there. A lot of events that are at the Asian Games will not feature at the Olympics. So that sort of a medal tally is not going to happen. But are we going to make an improvement from the seven medals we won last time around and go into double digits?

Shivani Naik: What are your views on the type of sports that should be in the Olympics?

What is very important for sport in the Olympics is to remain relevant to youth. What the Games and IOC have done well is to stay in touch with the times. The five sports chosen in Mumbai are a combined decision of local hosts and there are many considerations that they make. Los Angeles wants to make their Games work and make sure they are financially sustainable. So the inclusion of cricket, with a fan following of 2.5 billion people, was an important consideration. The Games will always remain dynamic and it is a reminder to many traditional sports to keep their game up and ensure they remain relevant to the youth.

Shivani Naik: China ushered in teenage shooting champs, India is on the same path. Is it game over for anyone above 23 or do experience and maturity still matter?

The sport of shooting is becoming younger in nature, at least in certain disciplines. Specifically rifle and pistol sections. A lot of that has perhaps got to do with changes in rules in the recent past. The scores shot in today’s day and age are much higher than when I shot. That’s attributed to the better quality of athletes and also rule changes in the last few years in allowing certain adjustments with the rifle, which have really changed the dynamics of athletes. Decimal scoring was introduced towards the end of my career but now we are seeing a new generation of athletes competing under those sets of rules. It is a much more aggressive form of sport. Besides reaction time has a big impact on decimal scoring. So younger

There were many fantastic medals (at Asian Games). Watching that table tennis medal come by was interesting; watching a lot of our shooters win with world record scores was spectacular

If you look at Western countries, all the developed sports nations have very few athletes who just play sport all day... We have to go in this direction. Basic education for our athletes is important

athletes are really coming up. There are a few elements to be considered. There are certain events where experience would continue to matter, shotgun or outdoor events like 3-Position.

Shivani Naik: As a spectator, what is the sport you like watching the most at these global competitions? And can you pick a favourite medal from the 2023 Asian Games?

It’s difficult to pick a favourite medal. There were a lot of fantastic medals. Watching that table tennis medal come by was interesting; watching a lot of our shooters win with world record scores was spectacular. I enjoy a variety of sports. I’m looking forward to breaking at Paris 2024, I’m a big fan of it. I didn’t think much of it as a sport until I actually saw it at the Youth Olympics in Argentina. I was completely blown away by it. I am looking forward to climbing. I think it’s quite interesting. I love what archery did. It’s a sport that has done pretty well to remain extremely relevant in terms of their broadcast. My sport (shooting) needs to take inspiration from archery.

Nihal Koshie: For a country like India, which is still a developing country, do you think it’s wise to host the Olympics?

It depends on the sort of project that India comes up with. That’s yet to be ascertained. At least I’m not privy to the information needed to make an informed comment. We have a region being talked about to host but we don’t know if it’s final. First, we need to finalise that, if it’s one

IDEA EXCHANGE

WHY **ABHINAV BINDRA**

India’s first individual gold medallist at the Olympic Games, Abhinav Bindra led the way that others followed. He continues to do so even now, 15 years after standing on the top of the podium in Beijing, albeit in different roles. From supporting athletes through his foundation to fighting for their rights, Bindra is India’s face on the international Olympic platform. A key figure when India recently hosted the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) Summit, Bindra’s role will be influential as the country bids to host the Olympics in 2036

region or multiple.

It all depends on the legacy planning that goes around this project. You have to consider there are two costs: one is the operational expenses for hosting the Olympics and the other is the developmental costs that a city undertakes as a legacy of the Games, whether that be building an airport or public transport or other basic infrastructure. These expenses are usually mistaken as operational costs for the Olympics. So you have to consider two different budgets. Let’s give it a chance. Let’s see what the Government and the IOA (Indian Olympic Association) come up with eventually.

Nihal Koshie: A few years back, you had said that India shouldn’t host a mega event like the Olympics unless we are capable of winning 40 medals. 2036 is a few years away but do you think that progression will happen?

If we have to host an Olympics, no one will disagree with what I have said. We want a strong performance from our athletes. Forty medals in 2036 is a fair ask for what we’re doing! We should aim for that. No question about it. It really boils down to how we as a nation are going to embrace sport. Can we embrace sport as a catalyst to build our society into a healthier and more inclusive one? Can we use

sport to educate our young kids? Then of course hosting the Olympics is an interesting thing to do. It can act as a catalyst for so much development. What I would not like to see is us embracing sport from just one prism: winning medals. The role of sport is much larger.

Amit Kamath: Do athletes now need to be more socially, politically aware and should they be open to putting their opinions out there?

There is no one-size-fits-all. We are all unique individuals. We have different personalities and we have different comfort levels. This is something very individualistic and I think I cannot say this way or that way. It depends on one’s comfort level. As athletes, we are in sports and we are driven by certain values and values associated with sport. So what I would like to see is all our athletes remaining true to the values. If athletes themselves are not ambassadors of those values, then it’s a slippery slope. We need to have role models. We need to have athletes who stand for certain values. If you want athletes to be more outspoken or express themselves more, that is very individualistic. You can’t tutor somebody to be a certain way.

Amit Kamath: Your gold medal in 2008 and Neeraj Chopra’s gold medal, could you contrast the impact these gold medals had on the Indian sporting ecosystem?

I would like to imagine my gold medal had an impact on my sport. You’ve definitely seen more participation in shooting and the depth of talent in India that

exists is incredible. Maybe only China has that much depth. Investment in the sport has increased. Awareness about the Olympic movement has increased.

Neeraj’s gold medal had a massive impact on athletics and the perception of Olympic sports in general. What we’re starting to see is the impact it’s having on his own event. The Asian Games are a clear indication of that. Once one person breaks the glass ceiling, you have many more believing it’s possible.

Amit Kamath: Do you see that the mindset of Indian athletes is now changing?

For sure. There are two levels. One is in sport and that I had already started to see even when I was competing. There was much more belief. They were not content with just competing. What we’re also seeing is a societal shift. A person of the current generation just has more belief. They believe that they are going to be the best. That is building a more confident society and we are also seeing with our athletes. They go out on the field of play with a greater degree of self-belief and confidence. So when I was competing, you know, I only had self-doubt, I never had any degree of confidence. Today, it’s a different mindset.

Tushar Bhaduri: Do you think the autonomy of the Indian Olympic Association and other sports bodies is coming under threat with government appointees being at the helm on some pretext or the other?

I don’t know the specifics. But what I would like to say is that the autonomy of sport is something which is very, very important. And that is why it is so important to build robust organisations. What we’ve seen historically in our organisations is that it has been very dependent on individuals; you have a face, you have one person and we’ve not really seen the development of making these organisations structurally robust. And I like to see that development happen because it is absolutely critical for Indian sports to have them governed in the highest quality, having autonomy at the heart and centre.

Tushar Bhaduri: What do you think is the logic behind rewarding Indian athletes who win medals at international competitions, say presenting someone Rs 1 crore for an Asian Games silver medal? Do you think we sometimes lose perspective in these matters?

We will see how things develop. Once we start to win 50 medals at the Olympic Games, maybe there will be a rejig of this policy. Right now, we are giving away all this money because maybe we don’t win so much. I will never say this is illogical. At the end of the day, the medals will not bring food to the table. The athletes also need to be financially independent and need to be financially secure to lead their lives. And in our current system, how sport is structured, the real possibility of income for an athlete is through these awards and rewards.

So I’m not going to say anything against them. What I would like to say, which may be a more meaningful thing to brainstorm here, is as we develop sport in India, as many more young Indians start to play sport at the elite level, we need to focus on dual careers in sport. If you look at all the Western countries, all the developed sports nations have very few athletes who just play sport all day. The majority of them end up having an education, many of them have actual jobs and then they also play sport. We have to slowly start to go in this direction. Basic education for our athletes is very important. Skilling them up for life after sport is very, very important.

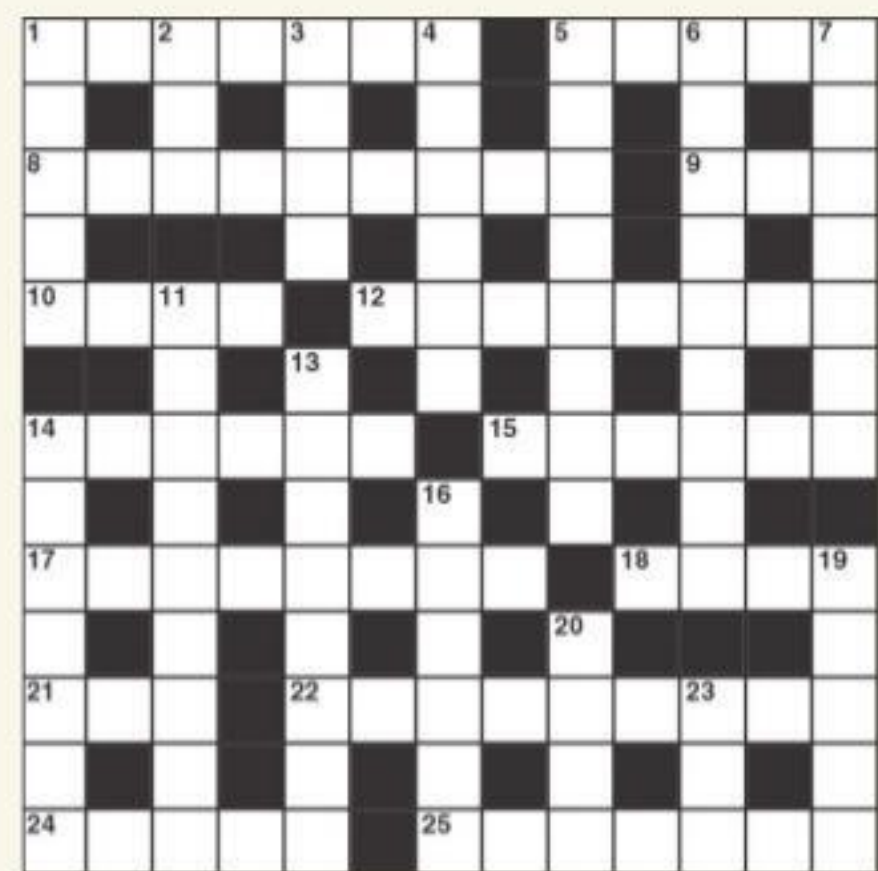
Vinayakk Mohanarangan: You worked with a lot of athletes across age groups post your playing career. What is the most rewarding aspect of working with younger athletes?

The work that I do through my foundation is my primary outreach to sport in India. We are doing work in different fields with young athletes — that’s one element of the work we do. We work a certain amount in interesting projects like providing 100 free surgeries to athletes during the year. These are athletes that you and I wouldn’t even have heard of because they are from the grassroots. Sometimes at that level, they have no access or knowledge to go and get themselves rehabilitated.

So last year we did 70-odd surgeries and helped these athletes come back to sport. We also help them psychologically since injuries aren’t just about the physical aspect. Our scholarship programme is called STEAM (Science Technology Engineer and Analytics in Medicine). We currently give scholarships to 220-odd athletes. Many athletes you may not have heard of now but hopefully you will hear more of them in the future.

And finally, I’m working with the Olympic value education programme and that to me is the most meaningful — Using the power of sport to take it to communities and build characters through the medium of sport.

CROSSWORD 5195



- ACROSS**
- 1 Appreciate consideration (7)
 - 5 Pull together on an ash tree (5)
 - 8 It's puzzling how gin and it came to be ordered (9)
 - 9 Sign of nerves in a politician (3)
 - 10 It's wim to order perhaps (4)
 - 12 Talk with the other side (8)
 - 14 Energetic secret agent takes a nap inside (6)
 - 15 Fancies a doctor has the same disposition (6)
 - 17 It highlights the way East Europeans repair roads (4,4)
 - 18 Slide in flexible disk (4)
 - 21 It belongs to us in due course (3)
 - 22 A choice literary gathering (9)
 - 24 Try for judgment (5)
 - 25 Stop payment, we object during payout (7)
- DOWN**
- 1 Woodwind section standing by the river (5)
 - 2 Go downhill fast (3)
 - 3 The Spanish manuscript may have many leaves (4)
 - 4 Show you do lacework as well (6)
 - 5 A patient is better after it (8)
 - 6 Many papers have been impressed by it (9)
 - 7 The nub is that uncle is out to get us (7)
 - 11 Weapons that don't reach very far? (5,4)
 - 13 A top seat for a renegade (8)
 - 14 Prop used by non-leading actors (7)
 - 16 They involve a shift in one's beliefs (6)
 - 19 Boring commercial for spirit (5)
 - 20 Control knob (4)
 - 23 Lionel loses Lil, now single (3)

Solutions Crossword 5194 Across: 1 Lady Luck, 5 Skip, 9 Slept, 10 Seaside, 11 Round numbers, 13 Astute, 14 Faster, 17 Battleground, 20 Essence, 21 Raise, 22 Keel, 23 Estrange Down: 1 Lip, 2 Dies out, 3 Latent talent, 4 Casino, 6 Knife, 7 Pleasure, 8 Farm labourer, 12 Daybreak, 15 Tension, 16 Agrees, 18 Taste, 19 Here

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.

But _____ is the breathing rose, with sweets in every fold - Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (10)

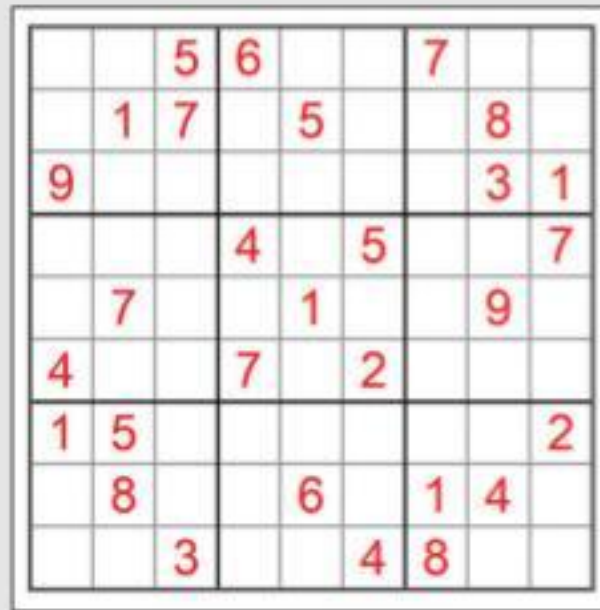
MOEIR **PARRED**

DWINS **EEIRFH**

SOLUTION: MOEIR, PARRED, DWINS, EEIRFH. Answer: But friendship is the breathing rose, with sweets in every fold - Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

Difficulty Level 3s

SUDOKU 5366
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 5365



ONGC
Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited
"ONGC, Mehsana Asset seeks application from eligible retired persons of ONGC for ad-hoc engagement as Junior/Associate consultants for two years period for supervision of round the clock shift operations at work over Rigs. Interested retired ONGC personnel of Production/Drilling discipline (retired at E1 to E6 level) with at least 5 years of experience in Work-over/Drilling operations within age limit of 65 years may apply within 10 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in ongcindia.com / reports.ongc.co.in / bandhan.ongc.co.in to karmakar_somnath@ongc.co.in. Details are available at website ongcindia.com / reports.ongc.co.in / bandhan.ongc.co.in."

SALUTE THE SOLDIER
30 October, 2023
ITBP salutes its braveheart Constable Deepak of 27th Battalion, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty on this day in Chhattisgarh in 2016.
Resident of : Vill- Khatiwasi, Distt.- Jhajjar, Haryana
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www.gnfc.in → Tender → Tender Notice → Marketing Department

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(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
A-11, Sector-24, Noida - 201301
Phone No.: 0120-2412294, 2412445, Fax: 0120 2412218
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Bids are invited for engaging Agency for fulfilling Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) of NFL as per Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 (As amendment from time to time) for FY 2023-24.
The last date of submission of online Bids is 14.11.2023 upto 11:00 hrs. The mode of tendering is GeM (Government e-Market place) portal (GEM Bid No.: GEM/2023/B/4061092) only. For eligibility criteria & other details please visit GeM Portal or our website: www.nationalfertilizers.com
Corrigendum/Addendum, if any shall be published on GeM portal and NFL's website.
Chief General Manager (Tech)
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Prime Ministers Museum and Library
cordially invites you to a Talk
on
Linguistic Cartography and the Construction of Linguistic Identities in Nineteenth-Century Colonial India
by
Dr. Ilyas Husain
Fellow, PMML
Tuesday, 31 October 2023 at 3:00pm
Venue:
Seminar Room, Library Building
Prime Ministers Museum and Library
Teen Murti House, New Delhi
All are Welcome.
Those wishing to have their names added to the email list may please email us at: ccs2nmmml@gmail.com
CBC-09142/12/0043/2324

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
YELAHANKA, BENGALURU - 560 064.
Website: www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in
CORRIGENDUM
NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR GRAPHITE MOULD BLANKS
Ref: Advertisement published on 02.09.2023
The last date for submission of EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR GRAPHITE MOULD BLANKS is extended from 31.10.2023 to 30.11.2023.
PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER
For details, Contact: 91085 01704 - Dy.CM/M/P
Email: dycmm1rwf@gmail.com

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
E-TENDER Notice No. EL-50-DNR-OPEN-50-2023-24
The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C. Railway, Danapur for and on behalf of the President of India is inviting online (E-Tendering) Open from the reputed contractors working in State/Central Govt. having valid Electrical contractor license for the required voltage level issued by State/Central Govt licensing board for the following work fulfilling the Eligibility Criteria and terms conditions mentioned in tender document.
1. Tender No.: EL-50-DNR-OPEN-50-2023-24 Name of work with its location: Provision of rooftop solar plant of 260 kWp capacity at different location of Patliputra Rail Parishad, Digha. Approx. Cost of the work (NIT Value) : ₹ 13542099.09 Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹ 217700.00
Date & time for online submission and closing of all above tenders :- On 21.11.2023 up to 12.00 Hrs. Website particulars, notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where all the above tender form can be seen: CRIS website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> Office of the Sr. DEE(G) / DNR, D.R.M. Building, 1st Floor, East Central Railway, Danapur.
NOTE: All corrigendum will be uploaded on website before 15 days if required.
Divinl. Railway Manager (Elect/G), Danapur PR1509/DNR/EGEN/T/23-24/44

PUBLIC NOTICE
PUBLIC NOTICE
My client ICICI Bank Ltd., Green Park, New Delhi is in the process of advancing a loan to Mrs. Sadhna Chawla for purchase of Fourth Floor of Plot No. L-18/2, adm 264 Sq. Mtrs., DLF City Phase-II, Gurugram, Haryana from Mr. Vivek Jain, who has represented that he is the sole & absolute owner of the said property having purchased the same from Mr. Vikram Srivastava & Mrs. Ambika Srivastava on the basis of Sale Deed dated 26.07.2021 (Reg. No. 2501). If anybody, person, body corporate has any right, lien or claim whatsoever on the said Property or objection to its sale & mortgage, then he/she/it may contact the undersigned with documentary proof of claim within 7 days of publication of this notice, otherwise it shall be deemed that either there are no claims or the same have been waived off. No claim shall be entertained thereafter and my client shall proceed to advance the loan by mortgaging the said property.
Sharuk Narang, Advocate
GNA & Associates
D-28, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi-110014.

indianexpress.com
I arrive at a conclusion not an assumption.
Inform your opinion with detailed analysis.
The Indian Express

DAY TODAY BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
One way or another, you will be expecting other people to make much of you today. In the best of all possible worlds, your pride will be flattered and partners will recognise and admire what you consider to be your finest achievements.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
You know, more than anyone, how your general happiness depends on your environment. Yet, what you may only now be coming to realise, is the extent to which your circumstances are shaped by your general outlook. Then you'll be able to figure out your approach.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
You have accomplished most of your routine tasks. Now you must put your creative and imaginative thoughts into action. By all means follow your usual path and move slowly and cautiously. And, in spite of what anyone says to you, there's no need to panic.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
Partners and colleagues too often misinterpret your discreet manner as unfriendliness or arrogance. You must make a great effort to break down such preconceptions, exposing your better qualities to public scrutiny. The fact is partners have the best ideas.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Taking a look at the week ahead, we can see two top possibilities. The first is a major change of plan at home, the other, a short but unexpected journey. The most important consideration in both is the need for careful consultation with all concerned.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
There's one kind favour you can do for yourself today, and that's go out and spend a little money on enhancing the quality of your life. After all, a little frivolity never hurt anybody. That should balance your tendency to sacrifice your own interests.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Now that the planets have forced you to alter your plans, perhaps dramatically so, be prepared for the next phase: within the next few weeks you will be forced to make an abrupt halt, perhaps to go back over old ground. At work, do yourself a favour and improve relationships with colleagues.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
The ball is in your court today, so it's no use flapping around waiting for someone else to pick up the tab. There could be a trial of wills at home but partners will only come to your assistance if you issue the orders and make it crystal-clear what needs doing.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
You're not afraid to make a song and dance if you think that you're getting a raw deal. However, there are two ways to play events over the next five days. The best option is probably to take partners into your confidence now. That way they can't accuse you of misleading them later.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
You can expect a gradual but insistent build-up of tension until the end of the week, followed by a crisis of sorts and a sudden realisation that problems which have dogged you for years are now in the past. However, if you don't look where you're going, you'll create a series of difficulties.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
You're still feeling the benefit of wonderfully supportive astral influences, and there seems to be nothing to gain from making heavy weather of otherwise fabulous opportunities. It all depends on how you play your cards. And what you have to do is exploit your frustration.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Working Pisceans should push themselves harder than ever this week. You will never know what you are capable of achieving until you stretch yourself to the limit. Accept no compromise. After all, deep inside that frail frame of yours there's a real toughie waiting to be let out.

ONGC
Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Online Open e-tender in single bid system is invited for the Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 02 Nos. Pitless Electronic In-Motion Weigh Bridge of 140 MT capacity including construction of weigh bridge house/console room at CFS-Gardhambam and MMLP-Mihan Terminals of CONCOR on Turnkey Basis including AMC. The brief of tender is as under:
Tender No.: CONIA-III/ETWB/IGDM & PCPK/2023
Name of work: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 02 Nos. Pitless Electronic In-Motion Weigh Bridge of 140 MT capacity including construction of weigh bridge house/console room at CFS-Gardhambam and MMLP-Mihan Terminals of CONCOR on Turnkey Basis including AMC.
Estimated Cost: ₹97.82.200
Period of contract: 06 Years
Earnest Money Deposit: ₹1,95,650.00
Cost of Tender documents: ₹1,120.00 (Inclusive of GST @12% through e-payment (Non-refundable))
Tender Processing Fee: ₹4720.00 (Inclusive of taxes) through e-payment
Date of Sale (Online): From 30.10.2023 after 11:00 hrs. to 29.11.2023 up to 13:00 hrs.
Last Date & Time of submission of tender (Online): 20.11.2023 up to 18:00 hrs.
Date & Time of opening of tender (Online): On 21.11.2023 at 12:00 hrs.
For financial eligibility criteria, experience etc., please refer to detailed tender notice available on website www.concorindia.com, but the complete tender document can be downloaded from website www.tenderwizard.com/CIL only. Further, Corrigendum/Addendum to this Tender, if any, will be published on website www.concorindia.com, www.tenderwizard.com/CIL and Central Procurement Portal (CPP) only. Newspaper press advertisement shall be issued for the same.
Group General Manager/Technical Area-II, Phone No.: 011-41222530

CIDCO
WE MAKE CITIES
NOTICE INVITING BID
Operation & Comprehensive Maintenance of Kharghar Valley Golf Course (KVGC) at Sector - 22, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai. (2nd Call)
CIDCO of Maharashtra Limited through the process of e-tendering invites "ON LINE" item rate percentage Bids from the resourceful and experienced prospective bidders fulfilling the mandatory eligibility criteria, who have completed work of similar nature for the work mentioned below:
1. Name of Work: Operation & Comprehensive Maintenance of Kharghar Valley Golf Course (KVGC) at Sector - 22, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai. (2nd Call)
2. C.A.No.: 02/CIDCO/EE/(GC)/2023-24 3. Cost put to the Bid: ₹20,42,64,022.22 (excluding GST)
4. E.M.D.: ₹20,43,000/- 5. Completion Period: 1095 (One Thousand and Ninety Five) Days i.e. 3 (Three) years (including monsoon) 6. Tender Processing Fee: ₹35,400.00 (including 18% GST (Non-Refundable))
Similar Work Definition: Operation & Maintenance of at least one Golf Course of 9/18 hole including maintenance of Grass Turf, Computerized Irrigation System, Golf Machinery and Golf Carts and other allied amenities, during last 7 (Seven) years, for a period of minimum 12 (Twelve) months as a single work.
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No.	E-Tender ID	Items
1.	213/KMML/61826	For the supply of Steam Condensate Recovery System-T ST
2.	213/KMML/61572	For fabrication & supply of Ticker Condenser (Methanol Chiller)
3.	213/KMML/61332	For the supply of Power Transformer
4.	213/KMML/61549	For the supply of SS Pipe
5.	213/KMML/61577	For the supply of Class I Brick/Acid Resistant for Acid Storage Tanks
6.	213/KMML/61945	For the supply of GRP Pipe-Fittings

Chavara, 27.10.2023 Sr/Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

Classifieds

PERSONAL

It is for general information that I, Ramvir Singh S/O Tara Chand R/o Flat No. D-84, Green Valley Apartment, Rohini, Sector-18, North West Delhi, Delhi-110089, declare that name of my minor son has been wrongly written as Manav in my minor son Manav Nirwal aged 13-years in his School Records. The actual name of my minor son is Manav Nirwal. 0040695901-11

It is for general information that I, Ramvir Singh S/O Tara Chand R/o Flat No. D-84, Green Valley Apartment, Rohini, Sector-18, North West Delhi, Delhi-110089 declare that name of my minor daughter has been wrongly written as Sriшти in my minor daughter Sriшти Nirwal aged 12 years in her School Records. The actual name of my minor daughter is Sriшти Nirwal. 0040695901-12

I, Sushil Sharma S/O Ram Lal Sharma, R/o 538, Pocket-Q Dilshad Garden, Delhi-110095, have changed my name Sushil To Sushil Sharma, for all future purposes. 0040695955-2

I, Poonam D/o Mr. Mohan Lal, R/o B-16, Gali No.5, Rajapuri, Uttam-Nagar, New Delhi-110059. Have changed My name to Poonam Bhalla, W/o Mr. Mudit Bhalla after Marriage, for all purposes. 0040695834-2

I, Vinay S/O Govind Ram, R/O House No.-69, Type-2, Police Colony, Delhi Cant, New Delhi-110010, have Changed my name to Vinay Koli for all purposes. 0040695947-1

I, Mohamad Mujahid S/O Mohammad Shakir R/o 1894 3rd Floor Gali Behram Beg Lal Kuan Delhi-110006 have changed my name to Mohd Mujahid 0040695837-1

I, Jaginder Paul S/O-Raj Mal, Address-G-52a G-Block Kiran Garden Uttam nagar Delhi-110059, Changed My Name To Joginder Pal Sharma. 0040695955-1

I, Jogender Singh S/O Ram Niwasi Saini residing at flat H31, Spaze Privvy, Sector-93, Gurugram, 122505 Haryana have changed my name to Jogender Singh Saini for all future purposes. 0070870807-1

I, Astha Baid D/o Late Rajendra Baid P/o 1775, 3rd Floor, Near Hari Mandir, G.T.B Nagar, North West Delhi, 110009, have changed my name to Astha R Baid 130037598-1

Public Notice
It is hereby informed to public at large that my wife Smt. Swati Singhal and myself i.e. Girish Singhal, both residents of C-39, Rohit Kunj, Pitampura, Delhi-34, intend to jointly buy-back property No. 301-A/1, Apra Plaza, 29, Community Centre, Road No. 44, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 (which is one-fourth part of our original property No. 301-A, Apra Plaza, 29, Community Centre, Road No. 44, Pitampura, Delhi-110034) from Mr. Deepak Goel, S/o Lt. Sh. Shiv Narayan Goyal, R/o H.No 25, UGF, Nishant Kunj, Pitampura, Delhi-34. Any person or entity, except IIFL Home Finance Ltd, having any claim or interest or charge of any sort in the legal title of the above-said part property i.e. 301-A/1, Apra Plaza, 29, Community Centre, Road No. 44, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, must inform the undersigned within 15 days from the publication of this notice. If no information / objection is received from anyone within 15 days from publication of this notice, it will be presumed that no one, except IIFL Home Finance Ltd., has any sort of lien or charge on the above-said part property. Adv Girish Singhal Enr.No.D/8594/2018 Mb.9810206244

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UNDER LIGHTS, BOWLERS DAZZLE

India shining, now in Lucknow

Rohit and Co's winning machine rolls on as bowlers put on an inspired show to defend a modest total, in challenging conditions under floodlights

PRATYUSHRAJ
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 29

IT WAS a ripper from Kuldeep Yadav. It drifted away before it spun in viciously to make Jos Buttler look like a novice. The loop, the dip, and the turn put the 46,000 crowd on their feet. Buttler's wicket in England's innings was a classic example, yet another, that Indian spinners are executing their plans to perfection despite the dew factor, which would potentially impart a major spin in the final half of the tournament.

It was a god-sent chance for Kuldeep, who during the post-match press conference in Ahmedabad, had admitted that he is eager to bowl under the lights. "Mujhe maza aata hai second innings mai bowling karke... meri baat sunte nahi Rohit bhai to mai kya karu (laughs) (I enjoy bowling in second innings but Rohit doesn't listen to me)," Kuldeep had said.

On Sunday, during India's 100-run win over England in Lucknow, Kuldeep walked the talk. Not just Kuldeep, every Indian bowler played their role to perfection, defending a low total. The challenges were unique—they were protecting 230, there was little scoreboard pressure to lean on, the dew was pounding down and England could finally see some light at the end of the tunnel.

But India's bowlers were relentless. From the first to the last over, they breathed hostility, gifting few loose balls, piling the pressure and putting England through a crucible of fire and snuffing out all escape routes. The pacers made the pitch look like it was assisting them, the spinners made it resemble a turning track. It was the illusion India's bowlers created.

The biggest enemy for the bowlers was dew. During innings break, with India being restricted to 229 for 9, the main question was whether the bowlers would defend the total with dew around. At the start, Rohit Sharma, patrolling at the short cover, was wiping the ball every time he got it. Ravindra Jadeja and wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav - would be aiming to pitch their heavily tweaked balls. But would not dew hamper them?

The spinners rose to the challenge. Kuldeep and Jadeja, bowling with a wet ball didn't give away a single freebie. They were immaculate with their lengths and deceptive with their lines. But it was not the spin pair that broke the back of England's batting line-up.

Chief architects

Instead, it was the duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, who put England on the mat. Bumrah set the tone; Shami consolidated on it with a spell of 4-1-5-2. England opener David Malan played a couple of delightful shots against Mohammed Siraj, but struggled against Bumrah. Twice he cut him into half before making him hack one back into the stumps. The next ball, he pinned Joe Root in front.

Siraj was a tad wayward. So Rohit brought Shami. In that particular spell, Shami not only shattered the stumps but had also shattered England's confidence. Ben Stokes, who has been included in the England team to strengthen them, is proving to be the weakest link. Stokes, seemingly in a hurry, tried to muscle every ball. Frustrated, he swung in unscenic fashion to see his stumps shattered. With his next ball, he shattered the stumps of Jonny Bairstow too.

Soon, England capsized. Skipper Jos



Mujhe maza aata hai second innings mai bowling karke... meri baat sunte nahi Rohit bhai to mai kya karu (laughs) (I enjoy bowling in second innings but Rohit doesn't listen to me).

KULDEEP YADAV
-ON BOWLING UNDER THE LIGHTS

SCORECARD	
INDIA vs ENGLAND	
EKANA STADIUM, LUCKNOW	
Toss: England elected to field	
INDIA	
R Sharma c Liam b Rashid	87 (101b, 10x4, 3x6)
S Gill b Woakes	9 (13b, 1x4)
V Kohli c Stokes b Willey	0 (9b)
S Iyer c Wood b Woakes	4 (16b)
KL Rahul c Bairstow b Willey	39 (58b, 3x4)
S Yadav c Woakes b Willey	49 (47b, 4x4, 1x6)
R Jadeja lbw b Rashid	8 (13b)
M Shami c Buttler b Wood	1 (5b)
J Bumrah run out (†Buttler)	16 (25b, 1x4)
K Yadav not out	9 (13b, 1x4)
Extras: (b 4, w 3)	7
Total: 50 Ov (RR: 4.58)	229/9
FoW: 1-26, 2-27, 3-40, 4-131, 5-164, 6-182, 7-183, 8-208, 9-229	
Bowling: David Willey 10-2-45-3, Chris Woakes 9-1-33-2, Adil Rashid 10-0-35-2, Mark Wood 9-1-46-1, Liam Livingstone 4-1-29-0, Moeen Ali 8-0-37-0.	
ENGLAND	
J Bairstow b Shami	14 (23b, 2x4)
D Malan b Bumrah	16 (17b, 2x4, 1x6)
J Root lbw Bumrah	0 (1b)
B Stokes b Shami	0 (10b)
J Buttler b K Yadav	10 (23b, 1x4)
M Ali c Rahul b Shami	15 (31b)
L Livingstone lbw K Yadav	27 (46b, 2x4)
C Woakes st Rahul b Jadeja	10 (20b, 1x4)
D Willey not out	16 (17b, 2x6)
A Rashid b Shami	13 (20b, 2x4)
M Wood b Bumrah	0 (1b)
Extras: (b 2, w 6)	8
Total: 34.5 Ov	129
FoW: 30-1, 30-2, 33-3, 39-4, 52-5, 81-6, 98-7, 98-8, 122-9, 129-10	
Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 6.5-1-32-3, Mohammed Siraj 6-0-33-0, Mohammed Shami 7-2-22-4, Kuldeep Yadav 8-0-24-2, Ravindra Jadeja 7-1-16-1	

Buttler got a peach from Kuldeep. Shami, in his second spell, got rid of Moeen Ali, who looked miserable during his 31-ball stay. Jadeja joined the party as he deceived Chris Woakes.

If Stokes played a bizarre shot to get out, then England think-tank would be scratching their heads after watching Liam Livingstone's wicket. Dinesh Karthik on air, couldn't help himself from commenting: "Livingstone must have played better sweep shots than this, but this right here is abysmal."

England's batsmen imbibed little lessons from their Indian counterparts. India too were reeling at 3 for 40, with Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, and Shreyas Iyer dismissed cheaply.

In the first two overs, it was clear that the pitch didn't have much pace or carry. There was no sign of real pace from David Willey's over. Chris Woakes's first ball kept really low and was collected by the keeper close to his shoe laces.

But Rohit seemed to be batting on some other wicket. Initially circumspect, he kicked on later. Unlike in earlier games, he controlled his stroke-play. But as innings wore on, he expanded his range and looked in ominous touch. His 91-run stand with KL Rahul stabilised India's innings, though Rahul, like Kohli, got out attempting a big stroke.

Enter Suryakumar Yadav, who free-wheeled to an energetic 49 off 47 balls, thus pushing India's total beyond 200. Bumrah too chipped in with valuable runs, as India ticked another box in the campaign by defending a low score under lights.

showed again why he is best suited to such circumstances. Rohit was resplendent on Sunday afternoon during his 87 off 101 balls against England. Unlike the previous games, where he used to bully the bowlers from the first over, he waited.

It took Rohit eight balls to get into his stride. David Willey, who started with a maiden, faced the heat in his second over. Rohit walked down the track and cleared mid-on to get going. It was followed by the trademark Rohit Sharma pull shot over deep mid-wicket. The best was saved for the last ball of the over, when he again danced down the track and hit straight over Willey's head. In all, 18 runs came from Willey's second over, the most expensive of the innings.

Rohit saw Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer and later, KL Rahul throwing their wickets away. Gill and Iyer were undone by their weaknesses, whereas Kohli and Rahul fell to soft dismissals, while giving Willey the



Mohammed Shami took four wickets, including those of Jonny Bairstow and Ben Stokes. PTI

Lillee-Thommo, Anderson-Broad, Wasim-Waqar, Ambrose-Walsh... Bumrah-Shami join the greats

SANDIP G
OCTOBER 29

TWINNING A pair of fast bowlers is cricket's favourite old pastime. Roll up the shutters of memory, and the names rumble down. Thommo and Lillee, Wasim and Waqar, Walsh and Ambrose, Trueman and Statham, Holding and Roberts, Anderson and Broad. Breathed never with their full names, but with just the first one or surnames, or even the nicknames, or the more fashionable portmanteau, somehow, their feats seem collective, their aura blazing like conjoined twins. Even though their individual records are worthy of standalone stature, somehow one feels less complete without the other. One gives the other absolute perfection.

Like it is with Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, a thrilling pair of contrasts and similarities. Both smile readily, both hardly shower expletives, both rarely look forlorn or dejected, neither barely wastes a breath on a futile appeal. Everything is measured, streamlined, geared towards the economy of emotion. Both are antithetical to the mean fast-bowler archetype. In a sense, these are the more dangerous types, the ones that fool you with their smile and gaiety. For, Bumrah and Shami intimidate, as the England batsmen would testify.

First hustled in Bumrah, he of slingshot be-devilment. Fear strikes fast, from eight paces. It spreads to the batsmen's eyes faster than the ball that reaches him. Jonny Bairstow's pupils will enlarge, his feet get cold, as he defangs the ball, gauges its wicked trajectory. Of the pair, he has the mystique and the mystery. He does a lot of things a lot of bowlers cannot. Then, he does what most of them could too. He knows the tricks in the book, and outside it too.

But this has always been a touch unfair on Shami, he of those divine wrists, and equipped



Shami and Bumrah make India's bowling look twice as lethal. PTI

with an enviable array of tricks and tactics himself. Bumrah is a non-rhythm bowler; Shami is a rhythm bowler in every sense of the phrase. The back-spinning release confounds batsmen; the bold upright seam stupefies them.

Watching them bowl in tandem is one of the pleasures of the game. The six overs they bowled together in the Powerplay, overs five to 10, produced an excellent summary of their variegated skills. Bumrah, the experimentalist, the innovator, handed Dawid Malan an elaborate working over that one gets to watch mostly in Tests. He would torment him with those that slanted across him, from over the wicket. The left-handed Malan had several uncertain prods and pokes.

Malan is now waiting for the one that holds the line, the final snare of entrapment. It arrived, but not in the way he had envisioned. After conceding a false assumption of safety, when Malan steered him behind square, he

angled the ball after away, but a trifle shorter and with an ounce more bounce. Malan, buoyed after the four, tried to cut the ball but ended up chopping it onto the stumps. It was more of a cerebral than spectacular dismissal.

Bettering the best

The next ball certainly was, as Bumrah angled the ball into Joe Root's pads before making it straighten a trifle to blast them. This is perhaps even tougher a ball than his standard nip-backer, for the batsman is hooked to the angle, his eyes go legside and suddenly it straightens ever so slightly. It's a trick the great Wasim Akram used to conjure in his prime with a wildly reverse-swinging ball.

The stage was now perfectly set up for Shami, who comes as first change after the arrival of Mohammed Siraj. It does not matter. He immediately began to pound the perfect length. Whereas in the past Shami took time to

EXPLAINED
E India find a new streak of ruthlessness

AUSTRALIA OUTCLASSED first up, Pakistan thrashed, Kiwis' winning run halted, holders humbled: The Indian dominance seems unstoppable after six games, even more so than it has been in some of the previous editions.

In home conditions, with a strong batting order and a bowling line-up that gives one goosebump-inducing moments, they are showing a ruthless side that one rarely saw previously. If wins against Australia, Pakistan and New Zealand weren't enough indication, against England they overcame conditions as well as the opponents.

The team seems to have something extra that was missing in a few previous campaigns. Even in their victorious campaigns in 1983 and 2011, they didn't go through the whole competition unbeaten. Kapil's Devils lost once each to Australia and the legendary West Indies outfit, while Dhoni's brigade 28 years later came second-best to South Africa in Nagpur. However, in 2023, India seems to have all bases covered, so much so that no team seems to be able to get close to them.

settle in, these days, he comes fully grooved, like a robot, but with divine wrists. He hits his most destructive length straightaway, the lines are seldom wayward. Forget boundaries, even singles seemed impossible, as he probed the channel, hitting the hard length, often getting extra bounce and movement either way. England batsmen played him fearfully, like intrepid ghosts upon sighting the cross being hurled at them.

A string of nine dot balls — 15 if one counts Bumrah's maiden between Shami's overs — brought him a wicket that seemed an inevitability. He reduced England's greatest miracle man, Ben Stokes, to a novice. Twice he beat him in the space of four balls with ones that seamed away after angling in, before he hammered his stumps with one that came in. The hideous, futile swipe captured his struggles.

Like Bumrah, he was on a hat-trick too. The first ball of his next over, a nip-backer, brushed the inside edge of Jonny Bairstow's bat onto his stumps. Therefore thus they eliminated all the threats — England's lone century-maker of the tournament, their most destructive batsman, their miracle man and their best batsman of this generation. England batsmen would know — it's what their Test colleagues, Anderson and Broad have been inflicting on visiting batsmen.

Not just this match, but in all the games they have bowled together, Shami and Bumrah make India's bowling look twice as lethal. So much so that teams have to fear Bumrah and Shami, as they do Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma. Irrespective of the target, the nature of the pitch and the conditions, they win matches.

Like all great pairs do, they enhance each other's vast basket of combined skills. Though they are men of their own, their devastating strength has always been as a partnership. Twinning a pair of fast bowlers is not only cricket's favourite old pastime, but also one of its most enriching experiences.

CAPTAIN'S KNOCK

Against England, Rohit steps up once again in familiar, testing conditions

PRATYUSHRAJ
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 29

WATCHING ROHIT Sharma batting on a low and slow surface is like savouring a master at the height of his powers, in familiar conditions. Rohit, on red soil, conducive to spinners, unboxes the range of shots that very few in this Indian team and probably in the world can match. It is like watching Rafael Nadal move around and dominate opponents on clay.

In the World Cup so far, he has taken on every bowler, but conditions and the match situation in Lucknow mandated a change of attitude. Rohit had to display his mental toughness, letting go of the ego, playing the waiting game, and feasting on the mistakes of the opposition.

In front of a packed Ekana Stadium, with wickets tumbling at the other end, Rohit



Rohit Sharma's 87 on red soil shows his prowess and versatility. PTI

charge. In the 14th over of the match, Rohit showed how it is done when he skipped down the track and hit Chris Woakes, who was probably bowling his best ODI spell in India, over mid-on for a boundary.

At home on tough surface

He reached his 50 off 66 balls, his slowest of the tournament. But right after reaching the landmark, Rohit left Mark Wood and England stunned with a pick-up shot over fine leg. On a dodgy surface, Rohit used his feet excellently against the seamers but it was against spinners that he showed his great prowess. Instead of trying to dominate them, he used his dexterity. There was an inside-out shot over cover against Adil Rashid, a reverse-sweep and a late-cut against Liam Livingstone. Probably the best shot of his innings came in the 29th over against the latter when Rohit danced down the track, reached the pitch of the ball, used his wrists and chipped it over mid-

WC GREAT
12
Rohit Sharma has joint-second most fifty-plus scores across all ODI World Cups. Sachin Tendulkar with 21 has the highest number of such scores.

wicket for a boundary. However, in many ways, it was a very uncharacteristic knock from Rohit. He started slowly, hit the fourth gear and with England bowlers not giving an inch, toned down from his Ferrari to a Fiat, but looked totally in control.

Rohit has a century in this World Cup but with this knock, he has again shown how far

SHORT TAKES

India wear black armbands in memory of Bedi

Lucknow: The Indian cricket team on Sunday wore black armbands during their World Cup clash against England in the memory of the legendary spinner and former captain Bishan Singh Bedi, who died on October 23.

"Team India will be wearing Black Armbands today in memory of the legendary Bishan Singh Bedi who passed away on 23rd October, 2023," the BCCI said in a statement shortly after the commencement of the World Cup contest here.

Bedi, who died last Monday following a prolonged period of illness at the age of 77, led India for two years between 1976-1978 in 22 Tests and represented the country in an overall 67 Tests and 10 ODIs from 1967-1979. He also captained India in four one-day internationals in the same time period. PTI

Leede asks ICC for attention to 'bigger nation' status

Kolkata: Two upset wins in the ongoing World Cup under their belt, minnows Netherlands have now called for ICC's attention for "bigger nation" status.

The Dutch, who are the only Associate Nation in the World Cup, first produced the biggest stunner of the global showpiece, defeating South Africa by 38 runs in Dharamsala. On Saturday, they bowled out Bangladesh for 142 for yet another upset result, this time by a handsome 87-run margin.

"Every win we get is going to be big for us and for cricket in the Netherlands" Bas de Leede told reporters in the post-match interaction at Eden Gardens.

"And we also want to try and get the ICC's attention to start looking at us as a potentially bigger nation in the coming years. So definitely every win helps." PTI

Kumara out of World Cup with thigh injury

Pune: Sri Lanka were dealt another injury blow at the World Cup with seamer Lahiru Kumara ruled out of the rest of the tournament due to a left thigh muscle injury sustained during training in Pune, the International Cricket Council said on Sunday.

Kumara, who produced a match-winning display with figures of 3-35 in Sri Lanka's victory over defending champions England in Bengaluru on Thursday, will be replaced by fellow pace bowler Dushmantha Chameera. PTI

STANDINGS

	M	W	L	T	Pts	NRR
Ind	6	6	0	0	12	+1.405
SA	6	5	1	0	10	+2.032
NZ	6	4	2	0	8	+1.232
Aus	6	4	2	0	8	+0.970
SL	5	2	3	0	4	-0.205
Pak	6	2	4	0	4	-0.387
Afg	5	2	3	0	4	-0.969
Ned	6	2	4	0	4	-1.277
Ban	6	1	5	0	2	-1.338
Eng	6	1	5	0	2	-1.652

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

Bumrah's set-up, Rohit's charge and race against dew

Rohit, Sachin and the art of charging down the track to seamers

THE IMPERIOUS rush down the track for a walloped straight six by Rohit Sharma is a reminder of how Sachin Tendulkar would do it. There are subtle differences in how others do it against the pacers. Occasionally, Virat Kohli would walk down the track to the seamers and loft. Shubman Gill too prefers to walk out mostly. Both, when in mood, can run down of course but we are not talking about the exceptions here. Not many other Indians do the run-down-the-pitch move to the seamers. In the 80's, Raman Lamba would dash occasionally to the seamers. That era, we used to see the batsmen move out to the legside, exposing all three sticks, and then biff against the pacers. The yorker-merchants killed that move by the time the 90s arrived. In the 90s, it was Tendulkar, of course, with his signature charge - the left leg going across first and then used as a spring to jump out. In this World Cup, Rohit has taken upon himself to don the aggressor's role and is doing the charges more frequently than before.



Woakes exposes Gill's old technical faults

SHUBMAN GILL just can't sort out his old problem against a particular length and the nip-backer. We have seen Jimmy Anderson and New Zealand's Kyle Jamieson bowl him out; on Sunday, it was Chris Woakes. Most often, just a tad late in shifting his weight forward, and resultantly his balance awry, Gill's problem is exactly the type of the ball that Woakes bowled. It's not a natural length for many seamers going around these days, but when they hit it, they will always push Gill into trouble. It's a problem that stems from his developmental years of playing on cement tracks and being so used to staying tall at the crease and punching. Intelligently, he hasn't altered his game to try and offset that issue as it would then open up holes elsewhere. Though he has made minor tweaks, particularly in Tests where he knows he will be targeted by that length. He would stand there with an exaggerated lean-in of the front shoulder, almost willing himself to get forward. But in white-ball cricket, on flat tracks, he is seldom tested. But this time, Woakes managed to shape the ball back in from that length. Gone!



Jasprit Bumrah celebrates after taking the wicket of Joe Root on Sunday. PTI

How Bumrah knocked over Malan and Root

THE DECISIONS that Jasprit Bumrah makes as a fast bowler are often thrilling to watch. The way he took out Dawid Malan and Joe Root are cases in point. One shall come to Root's dismissal later, but it's Malan's that's more interesting.

For a full over, Bumrah had harassed him with away-shapers. And the angle with which he bowled them was interesting. Couple of times, he landed them outside leg-stump, opening up Malan, and rapping him on the pads. One half-expected Bumrah to bend in the last ball of that over but Bumrah didn't do the regulation; he took that one away as well but played it a tad wider than normal to be really effective.

Surprisingly, he went around the stumps next over. Not many would have probably done it after the previous over of drama, but Bumrah did. Was he trying to cut the angle and the room or going to get the ball to curve in before leaving Malan? The latter looked a more promising approach.

Again, he didn't do the expected stuff. He did try to take them away but not in the dramatic manner as one expected. Suddenly, he sent the fifth ball angling away from back of a length and Malan thought he had the opportunity to cut. Mistake. Inside edge took the ball onto the stumps. Enter England's best: Root, who has the tendency to fall a touch on that front foot as he shuffles, particularly early in his knock. Australia always try that against him in Ashes Tests. In some ways, Bumrah is better placed to target that weakness with his angle of release, and the extent of deviation he can extract.

And that straightener that he possesses, in particular. But there is no time to waste; he has to get it spot on pretty early in the piece else Root would be up and running. Bumrah went for it first ball.

The back-spinning release had the ball land full on a length and though the cameras don't quite capture it properly, it wasn't the nip-backer but the straightener that almost holds its

line. Because of the angle of release, it might look as if he was slanting it in, but he wasn't. Else, it would have slipped down the legside. This just about straightened, ensuring the ball stayed within the line of the stumps.

Root's balance had begun to go awry as he stumbled on that front foot and was pinged right in front of the stumps. Bumrah was so excited that he kept chatting with Root and the umpire even as the DRS process played out. The Hotspot did show a slight snicker as the ball crossed the bat but the umpire wasn't convinced it was bat on ball. On air, Mike Atherton reckoned it was the Root's spikes on ground that made that tiny blip on the screen.

Root wasn't happy when he saw the verdict but full credit to Bumrah for producing that weapon right up front. To visualise and plan is one thing but to nail the execution is another. No wonder, when the DRS showed the ball hitting the stumps, Bumrah raised both his hands in celebration of a successful plan.

Test in One Day

THE FINAL overs of the Indian innings witnessed a Test-match like incident that is rarely seen in white-ball cricket. It also gave a hint about what was in store for the second half of the game. After Suryakumar Yadav completed a run, he was warned by the umpire for running in the danger area of the pitch. The umpire was mindful of Surya's spikes damaging the top layer of the pitch. The big brown roughed up patches on the good-length area would play a role in deciding the result of this game. Interestingly on both ends, there were visible spots that the two left-armers - orthodox Ravindra Jadeja and wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav - aimed to pitch their heavily-tweaked balls later in the evening. Was this the designer pitch that India has a habit of rolling out for home Test matches? India might have struggled to put up a big score but the match wasn't over.

KL self-destructs



KL Rahul was so aghast with his dismissal that he punched the bat and walked cursing himself. The stroke was injudicious in that he and Rohit Sharma were batting smoothly, England bowlers were getting drained, the captain was getting anxious. And just at the moment, Rahul self-destructed, attempting a hideous cross-batted swipe.

Shami on song

Mohammed Shami does it again: 12 dot balls in a row and pressure ends up showing on England. To add to it, Shami bowled two outstanding deliveries that Stokes was lucky enough not to edge. Bowled from the round the wicket, with an upright seam position as mentioned in the manual, they would angle in before moving away. Stokes was waiting to release the pressure but Shami was up to it. He got this one to nip back in and India's seamers were getting the breakthroughs with the new ball.

Race that India won

Even before the start of the second innings, cameras picked up how dew had set in. With just 229 runs on the board, India needed early wickets before the pitch eased out for the batsmen. So there was no room for error with the new ball. And despite Mohammed Siraj not at his best first up, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami did all the damage from which England never recovered. With the conditions loaded against them, they were racing against time as just one big partnership was all that England needed. But India never presented that opportunity by picking wickets at regular intervals, and keeping the defending champions under pressure at all times.

T20 stars turn ODI experts: They are playing like we did in '96, says Murali

SHIVANINAIK
PUNE, OCTOBER 29

THEY MIGHT be viewed as T20 franchise fiends in a freelancing world of fast cricket and faster bucks. But on the eve of the Sri Lanka game in Pune, captain Hashmatullah Shahidi would reiterate how Afghans had always been firmly focussed on the 50-over format as preparation for this World Cup began two years back.

"We played a lot of domestic 50-over cricket, as well as against Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. It was about keeping belief when we weren't doing good. We gave a lot of chances to players through good and bad times," the captain would explain of the meticulous background work that went into ambushing England and stubbing out Pakistan.

Legendary spinner Muthiah Muralitharan, in town as ICC ambassador, was reminded of their own 1996 World Cup winning side, watching Afghanistan. "They play very attacking cricket like our 1996 style. Afghanistan have one of the best bowling attacks in the world because they have four unbelievable spinners who are all different. Even their fast bowlers are skilled," he said. Far from being flash in the pan perform-

ances, the bubbling Afghan broth has been a slow-cook, infusing flavours, simmering gradually. Not for them is the jettisoning or sidelining of the 50-over game while reveling in the gold-rush of T20 riches.

Hashmatullah's assessment of Afghanistan's batting too was framed by 50-over contours, and lasting the distance. The chase against Pakistan was a classic in pacing. Rahmat Shah and Hashmatullah have been critiqued for conservative strike-rates. But Afghanistan were aggressive in their mid overs against India, and went at a run-a-ball against Pakistan. "Sometimes there are back-to-back wickets and there's pressure (to re-build). When the team gives us momentum, we try to take it forward. We'll see the situation in future games and bat accordingly if there are early wickets. The plan is always to play out 50 overs," the captain says, not falling for rushes of blood, getting caught in T20 whirls like a few other sides.

In November 2022, Ibrahim Zadran smacked 162 off 138 as they racked up 313 against the Lankans, though Charith Asalanka helped them chase that down. Earlier in June this year, Afghanistan pursued 268 successfully in the first of their three one-dayers of a bilateral. The captain's own form blipped after India at Delhi. "I struggled against Bangladesh and England so I spoke



The Lankans are on an upsurge after beating Netherlands and England, but now find themselves in a tricky situation of facing an audacious Afghanistan. PTI

to Jonathan Trott, and he gave one or two key words that have been helpful."

Hashmatullah is more bullish about his side's bowling arsenal. "Our bowling is our strength. We'll definitely attack them with our bowlers and put pressure on them," he says, daring to unleash Rashid, Nabi, Mujeeb or Noor.

Not just Rashid but Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Noor Ahmad have been part of the Lankan Premier League and the captain maintains that the entire team is intimately attuned to the Lankan way of cricket as a result. "9 to 10 matches we've played against them in 50 overs. That's enough to know them," he says.

Afghan skipper Hashmatullah is bullish about his side's bowling arsenal. 'Our bowling is our strength. We'll definitely attack them with our bowlers and put pressure on them (Sri Lanka),' he says, daring to unleash Rashid, Nabi, Mujeeb or Noor.

The Lankans are on an upsurge after beating Netherlands and England, and now find themselves in a tricky situation of facing an audacious Afghanistan.

From 1996 to 2015, they've produced a lot of unorthodox bowlers, a product of their flourishing system of 600 schools that encouraged flair and flamboyance. But since Ajantha Mendis, they haven't quite unearthed a genuine mystery bowler, and Maheesh Theekshana is not yet in that league and is tethered to the containing role of bottling one end up. In the same period as their mavericks dried up, Afghanistan found three - Rashid, Mujeeb and Noor, the last one from the sheer speed of his googlies. They went on to fortify them with confidence and back-

ing their non-conformist hand release techniques.

Veteran Angelo Mathews called in to bolster their flagging unit in place of Pathirana - Lahiru Kumara was the latest to be replaced, going down to a quadriceps injury in Pune - says Lankans are aware of the threat awaiting them. "It's gonna be an extremely challenging game for us. They've made some good progress in the last few years. They've got tremendous players, some exciting bowlers, and very experienced guys such as Rashid, Nabi, Gurbaz. All these guys play a lot of leagues around the world and they've played on the biggest stage for such a long time. And then they know exactly how to finish off games. They are never a roll-over for any team," he said.

Lankan assistant coach Naveed Nawaz was quizzed on whether they had any out-of-the-box solutions to tackle the Afghans, but he stressed that they needed to veer nowhere away from the formula. "There will be runs on this ground and we have to ensure we make the fewest mistakes and play a tidy game."

There wasn't a better enunciation of just how straitjacketed Lankan cricket had gotten, shunning all adventure and mystery, which was now the calling card of the Afghans.