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In a complaint filed in the Oakland federal court, 33 states including California and New York noted that research has associated children's use of Meta's platforms with “depression, anxiety, insomnia, interference with education and daily life...” **REUTERS**

MORE THAN 700 KILLED IN 24 HRS, HIGHEST 1-day toll since air strikes began: Gaza officials

ENOUGH... ISRAEL SHOULD NOT BE GRANTED unconditional green light to kill: Qatar Emir

BLINKEN WARNS IRAN ON OPENING NEW fronts, says US will respond if attacked anywhere

‘Bloody night’ in Gaza as Israel steps up attack

Israeli military says 400 Hamas targets hit overnight, dozens of militants dead: ‘Are ready for next stage in war’

AGENCIES & NYT
GAZA, JERUSALEM, OCT 24

THE PALESTINIAN health ministry said on Tuesday that Israeli air strikes had killed more than 700 Palestinians in Hamas-run Gaza overnight, the highest 24-hour death toll in Israel's declared two-week-old total siege of the narrow strip.

The Israeli military said it had hit over 400 Hamas militant targets and killed dozens of its fighters overnight, but that it would take time to destroy Gaza's ruling Islamist group, whose deadly cross-border attack on October 7 shocked Israel.

Gaza's health ministry said at least 5,791 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli bombardments since October 7, including 2,360 children. A total of 704 were killed in the previous 24 hours alone, it said.

Ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qidra said it was the highest 24-hour number of deaths in the two weeks of Israeli bombing. “Gaza Strip experienced a bloody night during the past hours,” said Al-Qidra.

Israeli military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said the military was “ready and determined” for the next stage in the war and was awaiting political instructions. But how soon Israel might launch a full-scale invasion is not clear.

Speaking alongside French President Emmanuel Macron in Jerusalem, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu said that after the conflict no one would live “under Hamas tyranny” but warned the war would take time.

In Qatar, which has tried to mediate between Israel and Hamas, Emir Sheikh Tamim urged the international community to rein in Israel. “We say enough. Israel shouldn't be granted an unconditional green light and unrestricted authorisation to kill,” he told the Gulf state's shura council.

Meanwhile, the foreign min-

EXPLAINED
US rejects calls for ceasefire

Despite the heavy toll in Gaza following the October 7 attack by Hamas inside Israel, there appears to be little prospect of a ceasefire as of now. Even as the EU considers a call for a humanitarian pause, the US has cautioned against any such move, saying it will only give Hamas a chance to refit.

isters of several Arab countries took a united stand at Tuesday's UNSC meeting, calling for an immediate cease-fire and end to the blockade of Gaza.

Saudi foreign minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud said that while his country condemns the killing of civilians, the objective of Arab countries now was establishing a cease-fire and a sustainable channel for aid into Gaza.

John Kirby, a White House spokesman, made clear during a press briefing that the Biden administration does not support calls for a cease-fire. “A cease-fire right now really only benefits Hamas,” he said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on UNSC members to use their influence to prevent Iran from opening other fronts against Israel. He said US does not seek conflict with Iran, but warned it would act swiftly and decisively if Tehran or its proxies attacks US personnel anywhere.

On Tuesday, Lebanon's top Druze political leader Walid Jumblatt, said that he along with PM Najib Mikati and Hezbollah ally Nabih Berri are in agreement that the war shouldn't further expand. “But the matter is not up to Hezbollah alone... Israel could have hostile intentions,” Jumblatt said.



Palestinians rescue a girl after an Israeli strike on a house in Khan Younis, South Gaza, on Tuesday. Ibraheem Abu Mustafa/ Reuters

One of two Israeli hostages freed by Hamas recalls her ordeal: Was beaten up when taken... treated gently later

JANIS LAIZANS
TEL AVIV, OCTOBER 24

AN ELDERLY Israeli hostage who was released by Hamas overnight said she had been beaten by militants when she was abducted and taken to Gaza on October 7, but was then treated well during her two-week captivity in the Palestinian enclave.

Yocheved Lifshitz, 85, was one of two elderly women freed late on Monday, leaving around 220 hostages still in the hands of Hamas, including both of their husbands. “I've been through hell,” Lifshitz told reporters out-

side Tel Aviv hospital where she was taken following her release.

Looking frail, Lifshitz said gunmen had burst into her kibbutz, Nir Oz, taking residents by surprise. “They stormed into our homes. They beat people. They kidnapped others, the old and the young without distinction.”

Lifshitz said she was put on a motorbike and driven into nearby Gaza. “When I was on the bike, my legs were on one side and the rest of my body on the other side. The young men hit me on the way. They didn't break my ribs but it was painful and I had difficulty breathing.”

She said her watch and jew-



Yocheved Lifshitz after her release, in Rafah, Egypt. Reuters

ellery were stolen during the ride. Inside Gaza, a group of hostages were led into what Lifshitz called a “spider's web” of damp tunnels,

built by Hamas beneath the narrow coastal territory, and eventually reached a large hall. “When we got there, first of all they told

us that they believed in the Koran and that they would not harm us,” she recounted.

A group of five people from her kibbutz were held together, each with an individual guard who stayed with them 24 hours a day. Lifshitz said a doctor visited them every other day and brought them the medicines they needed. “They took good care of the wounded,” Lifshitz said.

Video of her release on Monday showed her turning around to shake the hand of a masked captor. Asked why she had done that, she replied: “They treated us gently and met all our needs.” **REUTERS**

As ground assault looms, Israel gets help — US General who fought ISIS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 24

THE PENTAGON has sent military advisers, including a Marine Corps general versed in urban warfare, to Israel to aid in its war planning ahead of an anticipated ground assault into Gaza.

One of the officers leading the assistance is Marine Corps Lieutenant General James Glynn, who previously helped lead special operations forces against the Islamic State and served in Fallujah, Iraq, during some of the most heated urban



Lt. General Glynn led special ops in Iraq. US Marine Corps

combat there, according to a US official who was not authorised to discuss Glynn's role and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Glynn will also be advising on how to mitigate civilian casualties in urban warfare, the official said.

Israel is preparing a large-

scale ground operation in the besieged Gaa Strip in an environment in which Hamas militants have had years to prepare tunnel networks and set traps throughout the dense urban blocks in the northern area.

Glynn and the other military officers who are advising Israel “have experience that is appropriate to the sorts of operations that Israel is conducting,” National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said on Monday.

The advisers will not be engaged in the fighting, the unidentified US official said.

DEATH, DESTRUCTION



After Israeli air strikes in Gaza, Tuesday. AP

TOTAL DEAD	TOTAL INJURED
ISRAEL 1,400+	5,400+
PALESTINE 5,700+	17,000+

Macron meets Bibi: Fight must be without mercy not without rules

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, OCTOBER 24

FRENCH PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron, speaking after meeting Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday, proposed a coalition to fight terror groups in the region “that threaten all of us.”

He compared the proposal to the international coalition fighting the IS group in Iraq and Syria.

Macron, on a two-day visit to the region, met with families of hostages held captive in Gaza by Hamas, and said “we will neglect nothing” to obtain freedom for



Macron and Netanyahu in Jerusalem on Tuesday. AP

French citizens. Nine French citizens are being held or have disappeared. Macron said he would

visit Ramallah later Tuesday and several regional leaders on Wednesday.

Macron stressed Israel's right to defend itself in its war with Hamas. “The fight must be without mercy, but not without rules” because democracies “respect the rules of war,” Macron said, adding that democracies don't target civilians. His statement appeared to be a message to Israel, which has been criticised by some for attacks that have killed Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. He called for access to aid for Gaza and for electricity to be supplied to hospitals — not for making war.

China ousts its defence minister, second leader to leave since July

YEW LUN TIAN
BEIJING, OCTOBER 24

CHINA REMOVED its defence minister on Tuesday, the second ousting of a senior leader in three months, raising questions about the stability of the leadership team around Chinese President Xi Jinping.

General Li Shangfu, who has been absent from public view for two months, was dismissed as defence minister and state councillor, according to state media.

China also announced that Qin Gang, who was removed as foreign minister in July, was stripped of his state councillor position. No replacement for Li was named, leaving the country without a defence minister as it prepares to host foreign defence officials at the Beijing Xiangshan Forum on October 29-31.



General Li Shangfu has been absent from public view. File

Li, 65, was last seen in public on Aug. 29. Reuters reported last month that he was under investigation for suspected corruption. Qin had also served less than a year before he disappeared from public view and was replaced by his predecessor, Wang Yi. No formal explanation has been given but the Wall Street Journal cited sources saying Qin had an extramarital affair while he was ambassador to the US. **REUTERS**

Wang to visit US ahead of likely Biden-Xi meet

Washington, Beijing: China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit Washington on Thursday for high-level talks, the US state department has announced, as the two countries try to “responsibly manage” their fraught relations.

Wang's trip to Washington is seen as paving the way for a potential meeting between President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in San Francisco next month.

The likely meeting would be Xi's first trip to the United States since April 2017. **PTI**

Kremlin laughs off Putin double body rumours: All fine, President is healthy

REUTERS
MOSCOW, OCTOBER 24

THE KREMLIN on Tuesday denied a report that President Vladimir Putin was ill, and laughed off persistent rumours that he used body doubles to cover for him in public appearances.

“Everything is fine with him, this is absolutely another fake,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said when asked about an unsourced report by a Russian Telegram channel, picked up by some Western media, that the president had suffered a serious health episode on Sunday evening.

The spokesman laughed in response to a further question about body doubles, and denied



Putin, 71, visited China last week. File

that Putin had any. “This belongs to the category of absurd information hoaxes that a whole series of media discuss with enviable tenacity. This evokes nothing but a smile,” Peskov said.

Putin, a judo enthusiast who has long cultivated an “action man” image, turned 71 on Oct. 7. He maintains an intensive schedule of meetings and public appearances, many of them televised. His recent programme included a visit to China last week, with stop-offs in two Russian cities on the way back.

Days after return to Pak, Nawaz secures court relief in graft cases

MUNIR AHMED
ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 24

A PAKISTANI court has extended protection from arrest to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in graft cases while another withdrew its arrest warrant against him on Tuesday following his return home after four years of self-imposed exile in London.

Sharif appeared at the Islamabad High Court and the anti-graft tribunal to appeal his 2018 conviction on corruption and clear his name prior to parliamentary elections due in January. The court extended Sharif's bail until Thursday, his lawyer Azam Nazeer Tarar said.

Hundreds of his supporters gathered outside the court complex building, throwing rose petals on his car as he arrived amid tight security.



Former Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif outside the court in Islamabad on Tuesday. AP

Sharif stepped down as prime minister in 2017 over corruption charges. In 2018, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison by the anti-graft tribunal in a corruption case involving purchases of luxury apartments in London.

A year later, he complained of chest pains and was granted per-

mission by his then-successor Imran Khan to travel to London for medical treatment following a court order. He cited medical conditions as not allowing him to travel back to Pakistan. In 2020, an anti-graft court in Islamabad issued a warrant for his arrest after he failed to return.

Currently, Khan — Sharif's successor and main political rival — is imprisoned on corruption charges and serving a three-year sentence. Khan was ousted in a no-confidence vote in April 2022 but he is still Pakistan's leading opposition figure and enjoys a large following, along with his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party.

Sharif has returned to lead the election campaign for his Pakistan Muslim League party ahead of the parliamentary elections. Like Khan, Sharif — at least for the time being — is not eligible to run for elections.

BRIEFLY

Lebanon PM visits troops at Israel border

Beirut: Lebanon's caretaker PM Najib Mikati Tuesday visited troops deployed near the border with Israel and UN peacekeepers, as Hezbollah militants and Israeli troops clashed for a third week. The visit by Mikati to the tense southern province came two days after Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu visited troops along the border on Sunday. Mikati and international governments have been scrambling to prevent the Israel-Hamas war from expanding to Lebanon, where the Hezbollah group warned Israel about a ground incursion into the blockaded Gaza Strip. **AP**

US warns ships in Red Sea after Yemen missile

Jerusalem: The US is issuing a new warning to ships travelling through the Red Sea after a drone and missile attack launched from Yemen during the Israel-Hamas war. The US Maritime Administration warning on Tuesday urged vessels to “exercise caution when transiting this region.” The US Navy says it shot down missiles and drones believed to have been launched by Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in recent days amid widening tensions across the Middle East over the war. **AP**

Israel drops leaflets in Gaza for hostage info

Gaza: Israel's military dropped leaflets in Gaza Tuesday, seeking information about hostages being held by Hamas and offering those who give it protection and a reward. Hamas seized more than 200 people during raids into Israel which killed 1,400 people on October 7. “If your will is to live in peace and to have a better future for your children, do the humanitarian deed immediately and share verified and valuable information about hostages being held in your area,” the military said in the leaflet. The leaflet listed phone numbers to call. **AP**



UNSC MINISTERIAL MEETING

No one above law: UN chief on Gaza bombing; Israel says resign

Terror acts by LeT in Mumbai or Hamas in Kibbutz unjustifiable: US

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, OCTOBER 24

UN CHIEF Antonio Guterres on Tuesday asserted that no party to an armed conflict is above international humanitarian law as he expressed deep alarm over the “relentless bombardment” of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip by Israeli forces and appealed to all to “pull back from the brink” before the violence escalates even further.

The Security Council ministerial meeting, held under the Brazilian President of the Council, was attended by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Israel's Minister for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Hospitals collapsing, no water, electricity, body bags: UN agency in Gaza

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

BORN IN the Gaza Strip, Adnan Abu Hasna, spokesperson of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, survived an air strike in which the UNRWA building in Gaza City was damaged. He has since moved to Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Abu Hasna, in his 50s, said at least 35 UNRWA staff have been killed since October 7.

Edited excerpts:

What's the situation in Gaza right now?



Adnan Abu Hasna, UNRWA spokesperson

It's really difficult. You can see — everything is collapsing, it is lack of everything. First of all, there is no electricity in Gaza. We had electricity outage four days after the escalation. We are suffering, there is no drinkable water... People are drinking directly from the wells, without any water treatment, because there is no fuel.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



DUSSEHRA IN DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends a Dussehra event in New Delhi on Tuesday. *Renuka Puri*

REPORT, PAGE 7

VIJAYADASHAMI ADDRESS IN NAGPUR

RSS chief: Ram temple idol consecration Jan 22, hold events everywhere

In run-up to 2024, cautions against ‘cultural Marxists, woke’

VIKAS PATHAK & SHUBHANGI KHAPRE
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

IN HIS last Vijayadashami address before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat Tuesday called for programmes across the country on January 22 when the idol of Ram Lalla will be consecrated in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple in Ayodhya.

Speaking at the annual RSS event in Nagpur where the chief



RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat in Nagpur. *PTI*

guest this time was singer-composer Shankar Mahadevan, Bhagwat said, “Our Lord Ram, whose picture also adorned the

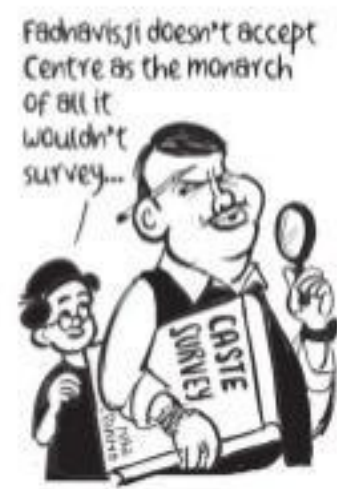
original copy of our Constitution, will enter his temple in Ayodhya on January 22. We won't be able to attend the ceremony because of security reasons. We will go some other time. But in our temples everywhere, we can build an atmosphere of religiosity and oneness in the whole nation. We can do this by organising small programmes... creating an atmosphere of affection, responsibility and goodwill in society.”

Cautioning RSS volunteers that debates will now get polarised since elections are approaching, he said, “Keep a cool

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



CABINET STATUS FOR NAVEEN AIDE DAY AFTER VRS [PAGE 7](#)

In Telangana campaign, one silence: a draconian, ‘callous’ detention law

APURVA VISHWANATH
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 24

AS THE campaign for the November 30 election picks up steam in Telangana, there is one issue on which there's hardly any traction: the manner in which the state applies its stringent preventive detention law to address law and order — and deny bail. So what if the Supreme Court has repeatedly red-flagged it, calling it “a callous exercise of exceptional power” and “a pernicious

What this law can do

ARTICLE 22 of the Constitution prescribes to the state the power to make preventive detention laws. Court rulings on the Telangana law show a pattern that the law is often invoked to circumvent bail — against an accused already in jail, preventing release on bail under ordinary law.

trend... in Telangana...”

The name of the law itself is the first indication: The Telangana Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Dacoits, Drug-Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Land-Grabbers, Spurious Seed Offenders, Insecticide Offenders, Fertiliser Offenders, Food

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EXPLAINED
[PAGE 12](#)

Burning trash, choking air: How Mumbai civic agencies took their eyes off waste mountain



PRATIP ACHARYA
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

NO MARSHALS to monitor garbage dumping, no segregation of waste in slum clusters and non-gated societies, no localised bio-methanation plants, and no penalty for burning garbage — inaction by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on several fronts over the last couple of years has resulted in a sharp dip in air quality in the city this year,

much before the onset of winter. The BMC's Mumbai Air Pollution Mitigation Plan (MAPMP) released in March this year has identified garbage and solid waste burning in the open as one of the top five sources of air pollution. The other four are: dust arising from construction site and construction debris, road dust and its displacement, usage of unclean fuels in restaurants, dhabas, bakeries and roadside eateries, and a range of industries including those using

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THE EDITORIAL PAGE

BREATHLESS IN MUMBAI

BY GUFRAN BEIG
[PAGE 8](#)

EXPLAINED

CLIMATE CHANGE
BEHIND MUMBAI'S POOR AIR
[PAGE 12](#)

**MARUTI SUZUKI**









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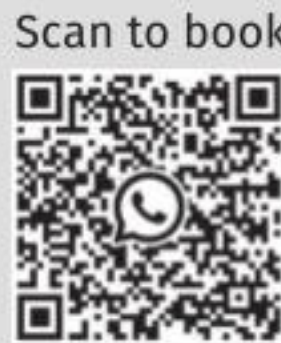
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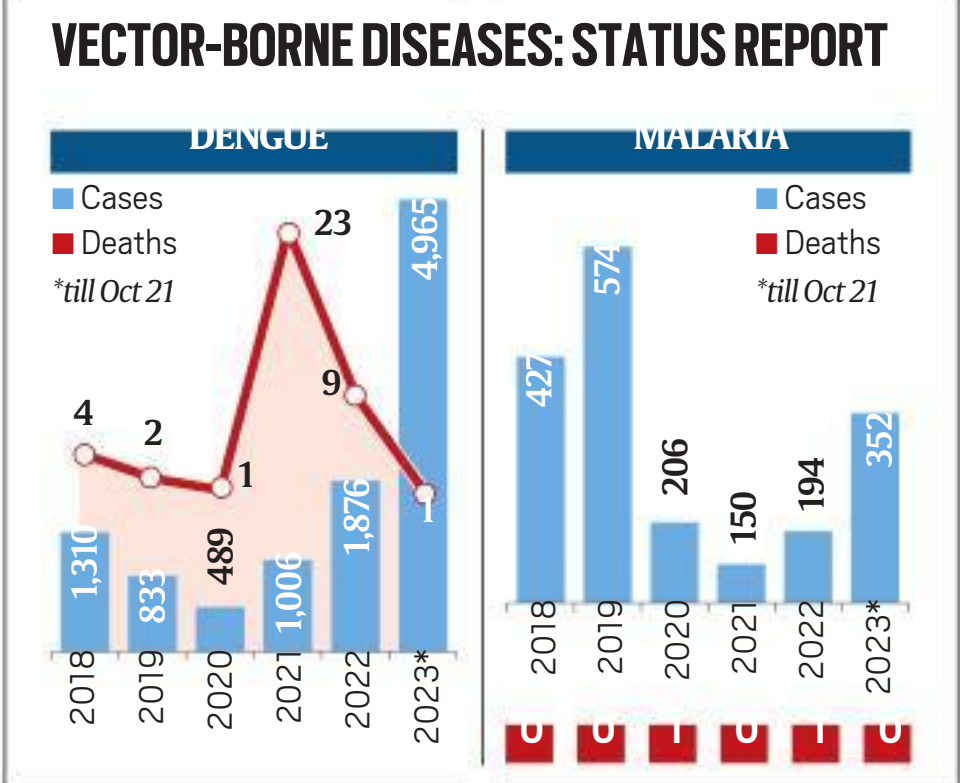
HIGHEST IN AT LEAST FIVE YEARS

Dengue cases touch nearly 5,000 in city

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

DENGUE CASES in Delhi have seen a sharp rise this year, with nearly 5,000 cases (4,965) reported till October 21 — more than double that of cases seen in the same period in 2022 and the highest in the last five years — going by MCD data.

While the corporation has not been releasing weekly dengue reports since August, data accessed by *The Indian Express* revealed that the spike in cases was the highest in the month of September with 2,141 cases. While 1,487 cases were reported in October (till the 21st), August saw 1,094. One dengue death has been reported so far, as per data. On Monday, in a post on X, Delhi L-G Vinay Kumar Saxena said the rise in dengue numbers was worrying and said he had a discussion with the Chief Secretary, NDMC Chairman, MCD Commissioner and Secretary (Health) to ensure proper sanitation and mitigation of mosquito breeding on a war footing. He also asked them to ensure adequate facilities at dispensaries and hospitals.



Even though temperatures have started dipping — the minimum was recorded as 16.1 degrees Celsius on Tuesday — the threat of cases increasing is persistent. The highest number of dengue cases are usually reported in two months — October and November. A sudden dip is usu-

ally seen in December. In 2021 — when the city saw over 9,000 dengue cases — over 6,000 were reported in November alone.

In the last week, the city reported a total of 525 cases out of which 76 remained untraced after investigation — meaning that the details of these patients, including their address and source of infection, remained unknown. The highest number of cases —



A worker sprays medicine outside a school to control mosquito breeding. Archive

57 — were reported from the South district this week. Apart from this, a total of 146 cases reported in Delhi were infections acquired from other states.

Apart from this, a total of 146 cases reported in Delhi were infections acquired from other states. A significant increase has also been observed in malaria cases, with over 300 cases being reported so far. (See box)

When contacted for a comment on the reason behind the surge, Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj and the government spokesperson did not respond.

A senior MCD official said the reason behind the rise in cases is the rainfall this year, which was the highest in the last 60 years, and people not taking adequate steps to ensure no mosquito breeding at their homes.

“Most larvae breeding was found in desert coolers and containers... the second highest breeding was at construction sites,” he said, adding that no new plans are required to tackle the rising cases except generating awareness among people to not store water in coolers and containers.

Meanwhile, doctors also said cases have been high. According to Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, senior consultant, Internal Medicine, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, cases have been reasonably high in the last month but it can't be called a surge. “Dengue cases are still persistent and any one consultant is seeing 4-5 patients every day (we have 17 consultants at the hospital).”

Dr Suresh Kumar, Lok Nayak Medical Director, said 15 dengue patients are currently admitted at the hospital's fever clinic.

Dr Rommel Tickoo, director of internal medicine at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket, also said there has been a rise in cases but the numbers are expected to come down with the dip in temperature.

13,000 police vacancies to be filled by 2024: L-G House

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

OVER 13,000 vacancies in the junior ranks of the Delhi Police will be filled up by July next year, following Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's directions in this regard; over 500 of these will be occupied by female personnel, L-G house officials said.

According to officials, over 3,500 of these vacancies will be filled with permanent recruits by end of this year and the rest by mid-2024. The official said the L-G, “issued directions to fill up the vacant positions... with directions that sufficient number of female candidates be selected”.

Officials said vacancies were advertised and the required tests were conducted. These posts are to be filled in phases between December 2023 and July 2024 and will include over 800 HCs and 1,400 Constable Drivers.

Over 400 technical posts and 800 Multi-Tasking Staff posts will be filled. Of those recruitments made by SSC, 11,214 are in different stages of being filled up and 1,799 vacancies are to be advertised soon, officials said.

Fake medical attendants gain access to homes of senior citizens, flee with valuables

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

POSING AS medical attendants offering in-house services, two men managed to gain access to the homes of senior citizens and rob their jewellery and cash. Police said the duo — Rinku Kumar (33) from Greater Noida, and Pramod Kumar (38) from Bulandshahr — have been arrested.

According to police, the activities of the men came on their radar after a burglary case was registered at Patel Nagar police station.

Police said the complainant in the case, a resident of West Patel Nagar, said on October 9, they hired one Ankit as a medical attendant for their 85-year-old father-in-law. “On October 11, her mother-in-law was shocked to find that Ankit had stolen jewellery and cash and fled. A case was registered at Patel Nagar police station and Ankit's phone was found switched off,” said Special CP (Crime) Ravindra Yadav.

Police managed to find the



The accused, Rinku and Pramod, have been arrested

shop where the suspect got the SIM card, and found he used a fake ID.

While analysing CCTV footage from outside the complainant's house, police found the accused was not operating alone. There were two men, one wearing a mask, seen approaching the complainant's home — while the masked man went in, the second stayed out and kept watch.

“Using the footage, we circulated photographs of the accused to secret informers. With the help of technical analysis and information collected from manual in-

puts, the two men were identified and arrested,” Yadav said.

During questioning, Rinku said he found his targets by scouring JustDial — all he had to do was look for people wanting medical assistance for their old-aged parents or ailing family members. “The accused further disclosed that they had disguised themselves and always wore a mask during their services with these families — they cited medical reasons and safety of patients but the actual reason was to conceal their identity,” Yadav said.

Police said they recovered the stolen jewellery and cash at their instance; Rinku had also deposited some of the stolen cash in his bank account.

Police said Rinku, who studied up to Class VIII, worked as a labourer, laying tiles. He had also worked with a doctor. Later he got in touch with his cousin, after Hemant was arrested, he went solo till Pramod, who used to run a dhaba, joined him.

tru TRUCAP FINANCE LIMITED
(Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd)
Registered Office: 3rd Floor, A Wing, D.J. House, Old Nagardas Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai – 400069, Maharashtra,
GST No: 27AAACD9887012C
Corporate Identity Number: L24231MH1994PLC334457

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the Public that Auction of pledged Gold Ornaments will be conducted by TruCap Finance Limited (Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd) on 27th October 2023 at Ludhiana at 11:00 A.M.

Branch address: TruCap Finance Limited (Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd), B-1461/1, Ram Sharnam Chowk, Hambra Road, Ludhiana, Punjab - 141 001.

The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Loan Accounts of our various Customers who have failed to pay their dues. Our notices of auction have been duly issued to these borrowers.

The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Overdue Loan Accounts of our various Customers mentioned below with branch name.

Bhatinda Branch: GL0000000132161.

Firozpur Branch: GL0000000087044, GL0000000089305, GL0000000090076, GL0000000091655, GL0000000096953, GL0000000097432, GL0000000098728, GL0000000099453, GL0000000102739, GL0000000110682, GL0000000112039, GL0000000123746, GL0000000124905, GL0000000126283, GL0000000126638, GL0000000132200, GL0000000132540.

Hoshiarpur Branch: GL0000000095595, GL0000000095604, GL0000000107932, GL0000000113400.

Jalandhar Branch: GL0000000081944, GL0000000087892, GL0000000099974, GL0000000090940, GL0000000097037, GL0000000105057, GL0000000112283, GL0000000114720, GL0000000125699.

Kurukshetra Branch: GL0000000094009, GL0000000097668, GL0000000099582, GL0000000114934, GL0000000116646.

Ludhiana Branch: GL0000000082678, GL0000000084266, GL0000000094095, GL0000000094581.

Sirhind Branch: GL0000000094758, GL0000000095534, GL0000000097144, GL0000000097834, GL0000000098766, GL0000000099144.

For more details, please contact TruCap Finance Limited (Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd).

Contact Person: Satish Kumar
Contact Number(s): 9560735444

TruCap Finance Limited (Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd) reserves the right to alter the number of accounts to be auctioned &/ postpone / cancel the auction without any prior notice.)

TruCap Finance Limited
(Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd)

संस्कृति मंत्रालय
संस्कृति मंत्रालय

Prime Ministers Museum and Library
cordially invites you to a Talk
on
Heritage Attributes in Context to Nationalism in India
by
Dr. Milisa Srivastava
Junior Fellow, PMML
Thursday, 26 October 2023 at 3:00pm
Venue:
Seminar Room, Library Building
Prime Ministers Museum and Library
All are Welcome.
Those wishing to have their names added to the email list may please email us at:- ccs2nmml@gmail.com
CBC-09142/12/0042/2324

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Corporate Identity Number: L24231MH1994PLC334457

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the Public that Auction of pledged Gold Ornaments will be conducted by TruCap Finance Limited (Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd) on 27th October 2023 at Ambala at 11:00 A.M.

Branch address: TruCap Finance Ltd. (formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd.) 6275/34/1, First Floor Nicalson Road, Ambala Cantt. Haryana Pin No :- 133001.

The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Loan Accounts of our various Customers who have failed to pay their dues. Our notices of auction have been duly issued to these borrowers.

The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Overdue Loan Accounts of our various Customers mentioned below with branch name.

Ambala Branch: GL0000000111795, GL0000000117636, GL0000000128324, GL0000000132023, GL0000000134726.

Panipat Branch: GL0000000111237, GL0000000113130, GL0000000115403.

For more details, please contact TruCap Finance Limited (Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd).

Contact Person: Satish Kumar
Contact Number(s): 9560735444

TruCap Finance Limited (Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd) reserves the right to alter the number of accounts to be auctioned &/ postpone / cancel the auction without any prior notice.)

TruCap Finance Limited
(Formerly known as Dhanvarsha Finvest Ltd)

PUBLIC NOTICE

MPPTPL/1316/TBCB/MP/RO/156
(In compliance to Regulation 1.30 of the MPERC (Procedure of Application for License) Regulations, 2004)

No. MPPTPL/1316/TBCB/MP/RO/156 **Date: 25/10/2023**
Madhya Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission has granted Transmission License to MP Power Transmission Package-I Limited under Section 14, 15 & 86 (1) (d) of the Electricity Act, 2003 read with MPERC (Procedure of Application for License) Regulations, 2004.

The details of the Transmission License are as under:
Transmission License (Project Specific): Licence No. TL/4 dated 09/10/2023
Name of Transmission System Project: The Hon'ble Madhya Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission has granted Transmission License in the name of MP Power Transmission Package I Limited for the following transmission line(s) and Substations:

Sr. No.	Element
1	400/220/132/33kV GIS at Mandideep (District- Raisen)
2	220/132/33kV substation at Bansiikala (District- Hoshangabad)
3	220/132/33kV substation at Khargone (District- Khargone)
4	132/33kV substation at Sodulpur (District- Harda)
5	132/33kV substation at Jawaragi (District- Sehore)
6	132/33kV substation at Pathari (District- Raisen)
7	132/33kV substation at Badi (District- Raisen)
8	132/33kV substation at Semrahat (District- Guna)
9	132/33kV GIS at HOD Bhopal (District- Bhopal)
10	220/33kV substation at Shahpur (District- Betul)
11	132/33kV substation at Chhapinada (District- Rajgarh)
12	132/33kV substation at Bhatpachlana (District- Ujjain)
13	132/33kV substation at Dhodhar (District- Ratlam)
14	132/33kV substation at Pipalgone (District- Khargone)
15	132/33kV substation at Ambhaja (District- Alirajpur)
16	132/33kV substation at Choubhara Dherra (District- Dewas)
17	132/33kV GIS at Pithampur Sector-III (District- Dhar)
18	System Strengthening Works

Transmission License Granted to: MP Power Transmission Package-I Limited
Duration of License: For 25 years from date of Grant of Transmission License extendable as per the terms and conditions of the License.
The Licensee is required to comply with all terms and condition mentioned in the License.
Copy of license and maps is also available for public inspection at all reasonable time at MP Power Transmission Package I Limited, FI 029, 5th Floor, Bansal one, Ranikamlapati Railway Station, Bhopal (M.P.)-462016, Email- info@mpptpl.com. Further, copy of the license to all persons applying for the same will be available for sale at Rs. 100/- (Rs. One Hundred only). For obtaining the copy of license by post, postage fee @ Rs. 100/- (Rs. One Hundred only) will be payable extra. The total amount in such event is to be sent by Demand Draft payable in favour of “MP Power Transmission Package I Limited”

Place: Bhopal **For MP Power Transmission Package-I Limited.**
Date: 25/10/2023 **Sd/-**
Akhaya Kumar Pradhan

TRAFFIC ADVISORY

AUSTRALIA VS NETHERLANDS
25-10-2023

ICC MEN'S CRICKET WORLD CUP
2 PM TO 10:30 PM

LEGENDS

- THOSE NOT HAVING PARKING LABEL TO FOLLOW RED
- THOSE HAVING PARKING LABEL MAY FOLLOW BLUE ARROWS.
- FREE PARK & RIDE (MATA SUNDRI RD., SHANTI VAN & UNDER VELODROME FLYOVER)
- PICK UP POINT SHUTTLE SERVICE
- DROP OFF POINT SHUTTLE SERVICE
- TAXI (DROP OFF / PICK UP LANE)

RIDE METRO FOR HASSLE FREE JOURNEY

Parking : Mata Sundari Parking, Shanti Van Parking, Under Velodrome Road

SECURITY INSTRUCTIONS: Spectators visiting the stadium are requested not to bring the following prohibited items:

- Laptop
- Camera
- Helmet
- Bagpack
- Eatables
- Water Bottles
- Power Bank
- Lighter & Match Box
- Knives & Arms

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ARUN JAITLEY STADIUM, FIROZESHAN KOTLA GROUND, NEW DELHI

DIVERSION / RESTRICTION (AS AND WHEN REQUIRED)

There will diversion of traffic for half and hour after conclusion of the match. No heavy vehicles and buses shall be allowed on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, Delhi Gate to J.L.N. Marg, from Darya Ganj to Bahadurshah Zafar Marg and from Guru Nanak Chowk to Asaf Ali Road, People are requested to avoid following roads from 12:00 PM to 11:30 PM on the match day respectively when the spectators would be coming to the stadium and congestion in expected.

Raj Ghat to JLN Marg.
J.L.N. Marg from R/A Kamla Market to Raj Ghat.
Asaf Ali Road from Turkman Gate to Delhi Gate.
Bahadurshah Zafar Marg from Ram Charan Agarwal Chowk to Delhi Gate.

ENTRY TO THE STADIUM

(I) Gate No. 1, 3 & 6 are located on the southern side of the Stadium & entry to these enclosures are from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg.
(II) Gate No. 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15 are located on the Eastern side of the Stadium on the road and entry is from J.L.N. Marg next to Ambedkar Stadium Bus Terminal.
(III) Gate No. 16, 17 & 18 are located on the Western side of the Stadium & entry is from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg Near Petrol Pump.

PARKING

Labeled Vehicles

Limited parking is available for labeled vehicles in the proximity of the Stadium. Display of car parking label on windscreen is mandatory. Vehicle number must be written on the parking label. Those who do not display parking label with vehicle number will not be allowed in the proximity of the stadium. Car parking label holders are advised to take Ring Road, J.L.N. Marg, Asaf Ali Road or Bahadurshah Zafar Marg 'U' turn at Delhi Gate is allowed. Entry to parking lots P1 P3 & P4 shall be from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg only from near the Petrol pump.

General Vehicles

No vehicle shall be allowed to be parked on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, Jawaharlal Nehru Marg & Ring Road from Rajghat to I.P. Flyover (both the carriageways) on the match day. Vehicles parked on these roads shall be towed away and prosecuted as per law.

PARK & RIDE

For spectators, unlabeled vehicles 'park and ride' facility has been created at the following places:-
• Mata Sundari Parking • Shanti Van Parking • Under Velodrome Road

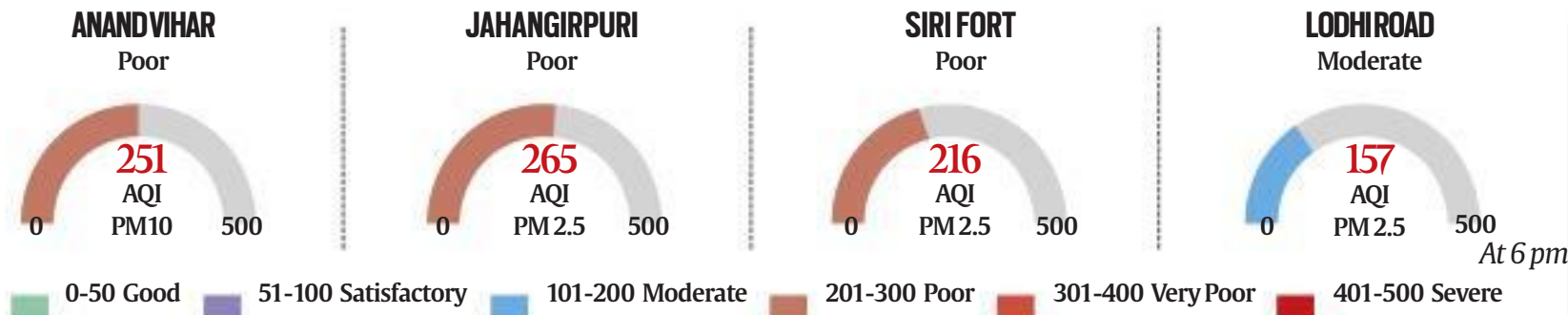
All the spectators coming in their vehicles shall reach these Park & Ride sites, and avail "Park & Ride" facility or walk down to reach stadium.

BUS

All buses will start their service 2 hours before the match and will continue till one hour after the start of match. The bus service from the stadium to their respected destinations will start as soon as the game ends and will continue for one hour after the match ends.

TAXI

Spectators using app based taxi and other taxis should use the service lane on Ring Road between I.P. Flyover & Rajghat crossing for drop & pickup.



S K Y W A T C H

FORECAST: October 25

Clear sky. Mist in the morning. AQI forecast: Likely to be poor

MAX: 31 0.8°C below normal

MIN: 16 1.2°C below normal

BRIEFLY

Home guard dies after pickup van hits police car

New Delhi: A 41-year-old home guard was killed when a pickup van rammed into a police vehicle in Dwarka. On the intervening night of October 22-23, assistant sub-inspector Mahesh Kumar and Home Guard Dharampal were on patrol in the area in a PCR van, they said. On the Najafgarh-Bahadurgarh Road, a pickup van hit their vehicle leaving both of them injured, they said. “The duo was taken to a hospital where Dharampal was declared dead on arrival,” an official said.

HC to hear plea against not allowing prayers at Mughal Mosque on Dec 1

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has advanced the date of hearing to December 1 on a petition against the bar on offering prayers in the Mughal Mosque in Mehrauli area. The managing committee of Mughal Mosque, appointed by the Delhi Waqf Board, had approached the HC last year alleging that officials of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) completely stopped the offering of namaz in the mosque on May 13, 2022 in an “absolutely unlawful, arbitrary and precipitous manner.”PTI

WEATHER, CLEAR SKIES HELPED TOO

Delhi’s AQI improves slightly, all thanks to wind direction change

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

A CHANGE in wind direction has led to an improvement in Delhi’s air quality, albeit marginally, with the Air Quality Index being recorded at 220 on Tuesday.

The AQI, which stood at 263 on Monday, is an average of 24 hours, ending at 4 pm each day. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered ‘good’; 51 and 100 ‘satisfactory’; 101 and 200 ‘moderate’; 201 and 300 ‘poor’; 301 and 400 ‘very poor’; and 401 and 500 ‘severe’.

As per data recorded by Delhi Pollution Control Committee’s AQI monitors and the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the concentration of particulate matter improved significantly during the day and with the wind changing direction from north to northeast. A temperature of 32.1 degrees Celsius, normal for this time of the year, and clear skies also lent a helping hand.

Air quality improved even as the number of farm fires in Punjab rose from 152 on Monday to 360 on Tuesday, and from 29 to 70 in Haryana, according to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) monitoring data.

The predominant direction of winds in Delhi is northwesterly post monsoon. These winds bring dust and smoke to the city when stubble is being burnt in



The capital’s Air Quality Index was recorded at 220 (poor category) on Tuesday. Praveen Khanna

Haryana and Punjab. A change in wind direction means these pollutants are not carried into the city. A dip in temperature also means that pollutants get accumulated in the air easily.

Several monitoring stations in the city saw the concentration of PM 2.5 and PM 10 dip to below acceptable limits for several hours.

At India Gate, for example, the PM 2.5 concentration was 35 microgrammes per cubic metre at 5 pm against acceptable limits of 60 microgrammes per cubic metre. In the evening, however, as Dussehra celebrations started across the city, the AQI started

dipping, with the same location recording a PM 2.5 concentration of 114 microgrammes per cubic metre.

Similar spikes were seen across several parts of the city.

At Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, the PM 2.5 concentration increased from 28 to 66 microgrammes per cubic metre between 5 pm and 8 pm. At Dwarka, the increase was from 35 to 114 microgrammes per cubic metre.

According to the IMD forecast, the wind direction is expected to shift between north and south easterly and northwesterly starting Thursday, which could prove helpful to Delhi.



Accused bought chains 2 days before killing Swiss woman, said he wanted to ‘surprise’ her

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

FIVE DAYS after a 36-year-old Swiss national’s body was recovered from behind an MCD-run school in West Delhi, police took the accused, Gurpreet Singh, to the different areas he had allegedly visited from October 18-20 to recreate the scene.

Singh (33) allegedly killed Nina Berger, tied her limbs with chains, and dumped the body near the school last week.

Meanwhile, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) in Switzerland said in a statement: “The FDFA confirms the death of a Swiss citizen in India. The Swiss Embassy in New Delhi is in contact with local authorities. For reasons of data protection and personal privacy, no further details can be given.”

When asked if local authorities have been able to identify and/or trace Berger’s family, the FDFA replied: “The FDFA supports relatives within the framework of consular protection.”

The accused met Berger on a dating app in 2021 while he was travelling to Zurich, Switzerland, to meet his relatives. However, police said, Singh soon started pressuring Berger into marrying him and proposed to her 5-6 times. She rejected his proposal



Gurpreet Singh (33) allegedly killed Nina Berger, tied her limbs with chains, and dumped the body near an MCD school last week. Express



citing multiple reasons even as they continued dating, said police. Feeling dejected, police said Singh started suspecting Berger of having an affair.

On October 11, Berger came to India and stayed at a hotel in Delhi. On October 18, Singh allegedly killed her inside his car.

Police also conducted a psychoanalysis of the accused after he was giving “unsatisfactory” answers and kept changing his statements.

A police source said the accused bought the chains and locks two days before Berger’s murder.

“He had told her that he was giving her a surprise and tied her hands with a chain. We went to the shop where he purchased the items worth Rs 600. We visited different locations includ-

ing the shops, car garage and his house. We are still trying to ascertain the sequence of events and gather more witnesses,” said the officer.

Police said Singh and his family haven’t been cooperative during questioning. They refused to answer questions about Berger and her visits to India, they said. Police suspect Singh’s involvement in a sex-trafficking racket and are questioning his associates. The investigating team also recovered Rs 2.5 crore from Singh’s Janakpuri residence and several crores from his account.

While the motive behind the murder isn’t clear, police suspect that Singh had invited Berger to India to ask her to marry him. It is suspected that he killed her after she declined his proposal.

From today, Metro to run 40 additional train trips

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

STARTING WEDNESDAY, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) will run 40 additional train trips on weekdays across its network. This is in line with measures under Stage 2 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which kicks in when the air quality dips to ‘very poor’.

“As part of various measures being adopted by the Delhi government to combat pollution under GRAP-II stage, DMRC will run 40 additional train trips on weekdays across its network starting Wednesday. This has been planned to intensify the use of public transport among passengers across Delhi-NCR,” it said in a post on X.

The Metro usually runs 4,300 trips every day. “In emergent situations, we have to pull out our reserves; we have enough standby reserves for such situations,” said Anuj Dayal, Principal Executive Director of DMRC’s Corporate Communications.

Under Stage II, public transport is to be intensified. It recommends Metro and CNG/electric buses be augmented by inducting additional fleet, increasing frequency of service, and enhancing parking fees to discourage use of private transport.



The victim, Swarna Kapoor

arrested within eight hours of the murder.

A senior police officer said, “Kanchan had a troubled relationship with her mother-in-law as the latter used to get irritated by her three grandchildren, all under the age of five years, and the duo often argued over it. Kanchan told us she was also frustrated as she often fought with her husband, who worked at a fast food joint and was the family’s sole breadwinner, over money.”

On September 26 that year, Kanchan was trying to pacify her

Go Mechanic founders, officials booked for ‘cheating, forging docs’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE DELHI Police’s Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has booked Gurgaon-based tech startup Go Mechanic’s co-founders and senior officials for alleged criminal conspiracy, fraud, forging documents, cheating, and falsification of accounts.

Police have named founder-directors Amit Bhasin, Kushal Karwa, Rishabh Karwa and Nitin Rana, along with other senior officials, in the FIR lodged this week. Go Mechanic is a tech-based car service company started in 2016.

The company did not respond to an email seeking a response to the allegations against its founder-employees.

The complaint was lodged on behalf of three venture capitalists who invested more than Rs 211 crore in the company from 2017-21. The investors — SCI investments, Orios, and Chiratae Ventures — alleged falsification of the books of accounts and financial records of the company.

“Between 2017 and 2021, we/the Investors invested in the company. As is typical in such transactions, these investments were made on the basis of a review of the documents that were provided by/under the instructions of the accused founder-directors. The accused founder-directors represented that the company had high growth potential by producing books of accounts and other financial records which showed healthy business activity and revenues,” the FIR read.

Over time, the complainants alleged, a review or audit was conducted at their instance before funding but the accused directors gave “fudged and incorrect” data.

The FIR further states, “We/Investors wish to inform you that we have recently discovered that the accused persons had fabricated and falsified the books of accounts and financial records of the company that were presented to us in order to dishonestly and fraudulently induce us into investing in the company between 2017-2021.”

The complainants alleged they had confessions and recorded admissions of the accused with them and demanded an investigation into their funding.

“A thorough investigation is required to unearth the extent to which such financial records were cooked up and falsified, but the accused persons have admitted and confessed that they had inflated and manipulated ‘revenue figures’ in order to mislead us (the Investors) to induce us into investing... Instead of using our investment of over Rs 200 crore towards the legitimate business activity of the company, the accused have fraudulently abused their authority as directors, agents, and employees of the company to commit criminal breach of trust by diverting and siphoning the capital/funds for personal and ulterior uses.”

The complainants also accused the directors of forging bank records to keep investors in the “dark” about their true financial position.

On January 11, 2023, police said Bhasin and Karwa visited Sequoia Capital India LLP’s office

in New Delhi and allegedly “confessed” to its representatives that there had been “over-reporting of revenues” and “under-reporting of expenses” in the company. Police said they are verifying such allegations.

“The company had outstanding debt obligations of Rs 78.63 crore to financial creditors, out of which other obligations (including statutory dues) amount to Rs 6.91 crore,” read the FIR.

Police said the complainants also provided them with a trail of emails that show the company “fudging” numbers.

“One of the emails contains a ‘portfolio report’ which shows a positive balance of Rs 19,92,09,071 as of 29.07.2022 in the company’s Current A/c No. 8011985842 with Kotak Bank. However, upon verification, it has been found that the actual bank balance in this account as of 28.07.2022 was a negative balance of Rs 9,99,07,817.86 and the next entry is on 31.07.2022 showing a negative balance of Rs 10,08,33,055.86. This is a clear instance of forgery of bank statements by the accused,” read the FIR.

Learning from Lord Ram to ensure Delhi’s progress: CM at Ramlila event



Tashi Tobgyal



(Clockwise from top) An effigy of Ravana set on fire at the Ramlila in Red Fort; CM Kejriwal and L-G Saxena at the Luv Kush Ramlila. (Left) Actress Kangana Ranaut set ablaze Ravana’s effigy at the Luv Kush Ramlila, becoming the first woman to do so in the 50-year history of the event. Anil Sharma

in celebrations. At the Shri Dharmik Leela Committee, the President also performed the ‘Ravan Dahan’. Senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, along with JP Agarwal and other party leaders, attended Dussehra celebrations organised by the Nav Shri Dharmik Leela Committee.

nually at the Red Fort, this is the first time that a woman has set the Ravana effigy on fire,” said Arjun Singh, president of Luv Kush Ramlila Committee of

Delhi. Across the city, senior leaders, from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President Droupadi Murmu, participated

WOMAN HELD FOR KILLING MOTHER-IN-LAW IN 2017

Smell of mustard oil, half-empty jar — how cops cracked woman’s murder

ARNABJIT SUR
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE STRONG odour of mustard oil from a partially burnt body, a half-open and half-empty oil bottle that looked out of place in an otherwise neat kitchen — these were the clues that led police to suspect that a 62-year-old woman’s murder was probably an inside job.

The case dates back to 2017 in East Delhi’s Mandawali. The victim, Swarna Kapoor, was found dead on the ground floor

by her son, Sumit, when he returned home from the office late at night. Officers probing the case at the time told *The Indian Express* that initially, Swarna’s daughter-in-law Kanchan, who lived in the same building on the first floor, speculated that it could be an accidental death or a burglary gone wrong.

Officers, however, were suspicious and didn’t buy Kanchan’s version. Constant questioning finally made her spill the beans — that she killed her mother-in-law. Then DCP (East) Omvir Singh Bishnoi said Kanchan was

partially open in the kitchen... this made police suspect the murder could be an insider’s job as most of the items in the kitchen were neatly arranged and only the mustard oil was kept outside, which would not have been possible if the suspects were outsiders,” said police sources.

Swarna’s wooden walking stick also had a slight crack, which confirmed the police theory that she was first hit on the head with it before being set on fire. “Eventually, Kanchan broke down and confessed,” said police.

crying five-year-old and ended up slapping the child.

“Hearing the noise, Swarna shouted at Kanchan... it eventually snowballed into an argument and they hurled abuses at each other. In a fit of rage, Kanchan snatched the elderly woman’s walking stick and hit her on the head with it... Swarna fell unconscious. Realising that her mother-in-law would tell Sumit what happened, she decided to set Swarna’s body on fire,” said another officer.

Officers said for the next 15

minutes, Kanchan frantically searched the kitchen for petrol or kerosene oil but couldn’t find either. Eventually, she grabbed the bottle of mustard oil and poured it all over Swarna before setting the body on fire.

“Two hours later, Sumit got home and found his mother,

dead, following which he made a PCR call... The body did not burn completely because of the oil used,” said an officer.

Kanchan tried to feign ignorance and claimed she didn’t hear any noise as she was taking care of the children on the first floor.

“However, police smelt mustard oil on the body. On further inspection, they saw a half-empty oil bottle kept



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Cracking the UPSC Code: The Ultimate Aspiration

The journey to become a civil servant, one of the most coveted professions in India, involves multifaceted preparation and dedication. The prospective civil servant must possess not only academic intelligence but also a set of personality traits that enable them to become efficient and conscientious administrators.

This is precisely what the UPSC assesses through its comprehensive Civil Services Examination, consisting of three stages i.e., Prelims, Mains, and the Personality Test.

Knowledge and Skills Needed for Success in UPSC CSE

To stand out in this examination, aspirants must possess a reasonable level of knowledge across a vast array of subjects. From the intricacies of Indian Polity, History, and Geography to concepts of Economy, Environment, Science and Technology, Ethics, and Security Issues, a broad base of current affairs, among others, is essential.

But knowledge is only the half of the story. The UPSC demands that aspirants also possess a unique set of intellectual abilities and problem-solving skills. These skills are assessed through both objective and subjective papers in the Prelims and Mains stages of the examination.

The College Advantage: A Foundation for Excellence

Colleges serve as fertile grounds for fresh ideas, high energy, and a strong motivation to achieve something extraordinary in life.

This dynamic environment nurtures creativity and competitiveness while providing opportunities for the holistic development of individuals. It is here that the goal of joining the Civil Services takes root and begins to flourish.

However, the transformation from potential to achievement requires not just ambition but also a well-thought-out strategy and unrelenting hard work. College students aspiring to achieve something extraordinary take the first step with utmost care and precision.

Success in the UPSC CSE requires multi-stage planning and its execution involving thorough exam analysis, accounting for available time, choosing the right optional subject, identification of

Many of the aspirants who achieved success in their initial attempts started their preparation during their college days. They smartly balanced their academic

Making the Best of College Years

Many of the aspirants who achieved success in their initial attempts started their preparation during their college days. They smartly balanced their academic responsibilities while preparing for the UPSC examination.

It is observed that they have been able to build a foundational to a strong level of command over the UPSC syllabus with the help of standard textbooks, notes, and revision.

At the same time, they have also worked on developing good answer-writing skills and honing their personalities with the help of available opportunities at the campus and outside.

This gives aspiring students a competitive edge and improves their likelihood of achieving success in their very first attempt after graduation.

The First Step: Analyze and Plan

The first crucial step is to undertake a careful analysis of the examination. Understanding the exam pattern, and syllabus, and going through the previous years' questions (PYQs) should be the first tasks on every aspirant's list.

This analysis reveals the precise requirements of the examination and the time and effort needed to meet them. A thorough review of daily academic responsibilities, semester breaks, leaves, and holidays are crucial. This assessment enables aspirants to plan their daily routines,

set realistic weekly, monthly, and yearly goals, and make the most of the available time.

Seeking guidance from knowledgeable friends, peers, Topper's Talks, and personalized mentoring sessions can help one gain valuable insights and plan their preparation.

Identification of Resources

To cover the vast UPSC syllabus and answer questions effectively, it's essential to identify relevant and validated resources. Further, they should be chosen

for their clarity, ease of understanding, and replicability in the examination.

For the static part of the syllabus, NCERTs and standard reference textbooks serve the purpose well.

For current affairs preparation, daily reading of a national-level newspaper is essential.

Choosing the Right Optional Subject

The Mains stage of the examination includes two papers on an Optional subject chosen by the candidate. This choice significantly influences the overall score and rank in the final merit list.

A college student must exercise the choice of optional subject with utmost care as it carries significant weightage (500 marks) in the exam.

The decision to select a subject should be based on the academic background and the aspirant's genuine interest in the subject and whether sufficient resources and support to develop the required knowledge and answer-writing skills are available.

The nature of the UPSC examination calls for an integrated preparation approach. While it's easy to compartmentalize each stage, understanding the

interconnection between the Preliminary, Mains, and Interview stages is key to success.

An Integrated Approach: Bridging the Gaps

Students can begin their journey by delving into fundamental textbooks, such as NCERTs for subjects like Polity, History, Economy, and Geography, to establish a strong foundational understanding of UPSC syllabus topics.

The strong foundation laid with the preparation of fundamental subjects also enables better comprehension and analysis of current events covered in daily newspapers and current affairs magazines.

While reading books, newspapers, or current affairs, key points relevant to both Prelims and Mains exams should be understood and analyzed thoroughly.

This learning phase should be accompanied by solving PYQs and mock tests for Prelims and Mains examinations. This would help fine-tune your preparation strategy, draw your attention to focus areas, develop problem-solving and answer-writing skills, and instill confidence for assured success.

Answer Writing: The Heart and Soul of UPSC CSE

The Mains stage of the examination includes nine papers, with GS Papers I, II, III, and IV, an Essay Paper, two Optional Papers, and two Language Papers.

These Papers involve subjective assessments, which demand good answer-writing skills for conveying your knowledge and ideas effectively.

Therefore, it is recommended to prioritize the development of this skill with a focus on regular revision, practice, performance assessment, and personalized feedback.

Personality Development: The Importance of Well-Roundedness

The college provides abundant opportunities for self-expression and the cultivation of diverse personality traits.

Participation in extracurricular activities can offer varied experiences, broaden thinking, and play a significant role in making informed decisions. This attribute is vital for the Personality Test of the UPSC, where your holistic personality is under scrutiny.

Additionally, inculcating a book-reading habit enhances knowledge, and improves communication, critical thinking, and analytical skills. It also facilitates

cultural sensitivity, empathy, and a deeper understanding of the world around you.

Learn from the Best: Insights from Toppers

Learning from the experiences and strategies of top performers can be highly beneficial for students who are planning to prepare for the Civil Services Examination or in the initial stages of their preparation.

Insights into effective preparation strategies and tips for time management, smart learning, and revision can be derived from Topper's own preparation experiences.



Additionally, the stories of toppers can serve as motivational factors to remain committed to your goals.

Remember Your Goal: A Journey of Purpose

The path to Civil Services is not merely a pursuit of a prestigious career but a commitment to public service. Stay motivated by the potential to make a lasting impact on society. Your consistency in daily study and a positive outlook are your greatest allies.

Approach each day as an opportunity for growth. Your journey toward becoming a civil servant is not just about passing an exam; it's about embracing a life of purpose and leadership. Keep your aspirations high, and let your college days be the foundation of an incredible voyage toward creating a better India.



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BRS CHIEF HAS ANNOUNCED A 41-RALLY PROGRAMME

In his big campaign push, KCR falls back on Telangana statehood pitch

In speeches, he centres on the “suffering” in the region when it was in Andhra

REENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 24

IN AN EFFORT to blunt the Congress, Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) supremo K Chandrashekar Rao is resorting to invoking Telangana sentiments to sway voters.

This is a change of tactic from the last Assembly elections, held in December 2018, when KCR mostly spoke about his government’s welfare schemes and the development under it.

The strategy rethink appears to have been prompted by signs of a Congress revival in Telangana, following its Karnataka win. The BJP, which looked on course to take over as the main opposition after a string of poll victories, has lost steam in contrast.

KCR, the face of the Telangana statehood agitation, has been raising the regional pride issue since he kicked off his campaign drive, involving 41 rallies across the state.

At the first meeting, at Palamuru in Mahbubnagar, the Telangana Chief Minister recalled how during the statehood movement, he had visited every nook and corner of the district to



K Chandrashekar Rao with priests on the occasion of Dussehra in Hyderabad on Monday. ANI

find out for himself the plight of the people. “Today we have changed Palamuru into a gold mine... Telangana will see disaster if the Congress wins,” he said.

Telangana was forged from the sacrifices of many people, KCR said, recalling his own fast-unto-death agitation. He also invoked the late Telangana ideologue K Jayashankar, and said it was on the professor’s suggestion that he had contested from Mahbubnagar.

“The Mahbubnagar district was facing hunger and drought,

and we wept seeing the suffering. Despite the Krishna river flowing in the district, Andhra rulers had played tricks,” he said, going on to talk about his government’s schemes to change the district’s fortunes.

In this meeting and the four others since, the crux of KCR’s message has been that, if the Congress comes to power, Telangana will be “doomed”, with all that was procured via the statehood movement lost.

“You will not get electricity if the Congress comes... Rythu

Bandhu and Dalit Bandhu will be scrapped,” KCR said at a meeting.

At Siddipet, where the CM made a halt at a roadside dhaba to have tea — similar to a stop made by Rahul Gandhi during his recent poll tour — KCR said that if Telangana was a “model state”, Siddipet was “its leader”. The same Siddipet once did not have water, roads or crops, he said. “We knew there would be no justice for this land unless we liberate Telangana.”

KCR recalled that those opposed to Andhra’s division and

BRS HOLD ON TELANGANA

2014 Assembly polls (in united Andhra, figures are estimates)

Party	Seats	Vote share
BRS	63	34.3%
Cong	21	25.2%
BJP	5	7.1%

2018 Assembly polls (Total seats: 119)

Party	Seats	Vote share
BRS	88	46.9%
Cong	19	28.4%
BJP	1	7.0%

2019 Lok Sabha polls (Total seats: 17)

Party	Seats	Vote share
BRS	9	41.7%
Cong	3	29.8%
BJP	4	19.7%

the creation of Telangana “spent crores and crores” to defeat his party. “But, they were sent packing. Siddipet laid the foundation for the success of the Telangana movement. I cannot forget this.”

He called Ramancha village in Siddipet “the inspiration for Dalit Bandhu”. “I bought a bicycle for a newlywed couple. The joy of the couple inspired me to bring many schemes for the poor, including Dalit bandhu.”

At Sircilla, from where his son, political heir and IT Minister KT Rama Rao is contesting, KCR

said he had come calling at least 170 times during the Telangana movement, and since he became a political leader. “Sircilla is the district where I have relationships, friendships and many of my classmates,” he said, adding that the area’s Manair reservoir was destroyed under Andhra Pradesh, while its rice mills shut down. “It gives me great satisfaction that the Upper Manair Reservoir is now full of water.”

KCR added that Sircilla was lucky to have minister KT Rama Rao as MLA. “When I was an MP, one day seven handloom workers here died. The party gave Rs 50 lakh so that no one had to die thus,” the CM said, adding that as Handlooms minister, Rao had brought many positive changes.

At Bhongir, KCR said the district would not have come into existence had Telangana not been formed. “Once drought-affected, Bhongir is now abundant in crops. We fought many battles to get Godavari water to the district,” he said.

At Jangaon, KCR said that nine-and-a-half years after Telangana was formed due to its statehood agitation, “there is no migration, no drought, irrigation facilities, fresh water supply, and 24-hour electricity..The Jangaon district is a growth corridor between Hyderabad and Warangal.”

The BRS chief has been warning people that a Congress government would mean an end to schemes such as Dharani lands portal as well as the provision of 24-hour free electricity. “They say three hours is enough.”

ELECTION IN NUMBERS

679

From 230 seats in Madhya Pradesh to just 40 in Mizoram, there are a total 679 seats up for grabs across the five states

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KEY ISSUES

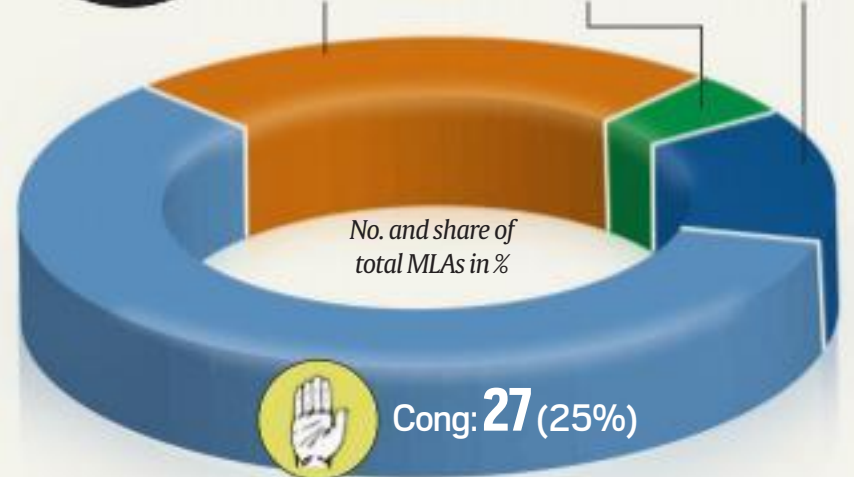
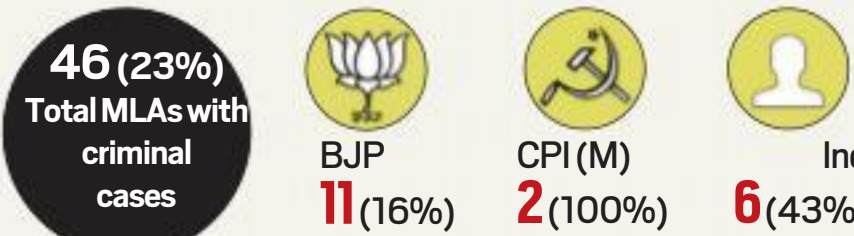
MIZO NATIONALISM VS CORRUPTION CHARGES IN MIZORAM POLLS

A NEW TRIBAL PARTY LOOKS TO UPEND POLL MATH IN SOUTH RAJASTHAN

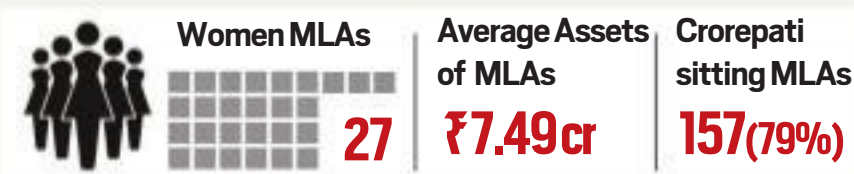
NUMBER SPEAK

RAJASTHAN: PARTY-WISE MLAs WITH CRIMINAL CASE

No. and share (%) of MLAs with criminal cases



MLAs with declared serious criminal cases



Note: Serious cases include offences for which the punishment is five years or more, bribery, assault, murder, kidnapping, rape, and crimes against women, Source: Election Commission, Graphic: IE Design

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RAMANSINGH, 71
The BJP's former three-time Chhattisgarh CM. He is contesting from Rajnandgaon

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₹7.46 CRORE

IMMOVABLE ASSETS
₹7.92 CRORE
including agricultural land, non-agricultural land and residential buildings

LIABILITIES:
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SOURCE OF INCOME:
Social worker, agriculture

EDUCATION:
B.A.M.S, Ayurvedic University Raipur

Flagging Rajasthan ‘hate crimes’, Owaisi fields candidates from 3 seats won by Cong, more to come

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 24

THE Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM is claiming to make inroads into Rajasthan with its first Assembly elections in the state.

The Hyderabad-based party has fielded three candidates so far, and is expected to field more for the November 25 elections, with Owaisi telling voters that the Congress and BJP are “two sides of the same coin”, who do not want the minorities to become “powerful”.

Owaisi has been raising issues such as the “growing hate” in recent years, the “neglect” of minorities by both the BJP and Congress which, he said, had resulted in “impoverished children” and “illiterate adults” in the state, the Nasir-Junaid case, and a hate crime aboard a train.

The AIMIM candidates so far include its state party chief Jameel Khan, who is contesting from the Hawa Mahal seat in Jaipur; Javed Ali Khan (Fatehpur in Sikar), and Imran Nawab (Kaman in Bharatpur).

These seats are currently held by the Congress: Hawa Mahal by



Asaduddin Owaisi, state unit president Jameel Khan campaign in Jaipur. Express

Cabinet minister Mahesh Joshi, Kaman by Minister of State Zahida Khan, and Fatehpur by Hakam Ali Khan.

Muslims account for over 9 per cent of the population in Rajasthan, and play a significant role in 35-40 Assembly seats out of the state’s 200 seats.

In the 2018 polls, Joshi had got over 50% of the votes polled in Hawa Mahal. In Kaman, Zahida had trounced the BJP candidate by a margin of about 21% votes. In Fatehpur, Hakam had scraped through, with 860 votes.

Jameel Khan, an educationist, is the director of “We Can” schools and counts among his

relatives several IAS and RAS officers. Of about 2.5 lakh voters in the Hawa Mahal seat, about 1.35 lakh are said to be Muslims. Neither the Congress nor the BJP has declared candidates here.

Imran Nawab, a social worker, has been associated with the AIMIM for two years. He has also been its in-charge of four districts. The Kaman seat too has about 2.5 lakh voters, of which 1.5 lakh are said to be Muslims. Here too, the Congress and BJP are yet to name candidates.

In Fatehpur, Muslims and Jats are dominant communities, with each accounting for 25-30% voters. The AIMIM’s nominee, Javed Ali Khan, is a lawyer.

The Congress has repeated its sitting MLA Hakam Ali Khan here, while the BJP has fielded Shrawan Choudhary.

Addressing rallies over the weekend in Hawa Mahal and Fatehpur, Owaisi said that the minorities, Dalits and backwards should vote in their political representatives. “Your candidate as MLA will understand their pain. In Indian democracy, you won’t get justice until you successfully elect your representative,” he said.

SUKRITA BARUAH
AIZAWL, OCTOBER 24

MIZORAM HAS seen only two Chief Ministers — Lal Thanhawla from the Congress and Zoramthanga from the Mizo National Front — since 1993. Power has constantly swung between the two parties since the first Assembly elections of 1987.

This time, though, the state has a new CM face in Lalduhoma of the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM). A former IPS officer, he served as security in-charge for then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi before resigning from the service in 1984, joining the Congress, and being elected as a Lok Sabha MP that year.

In 1988, he became the first MP to be disqualified under the anti-defection law after he resigned from the Congress.

With eight MLAs in the outgoing Assembly and victories in local elections since 2018 when the party was formed, the ZPM has found its feet in the state. In an interview to *The Indian Express*, Lalduhoma says he is confident his party will form the next government, and without outside support — as they don’t want “bosses sitting in Delhi”. Excerpts:



The ZPM has presented itself as an alternative. What is the ‘new’ factor it promises?

The ZPM is a fresh commodity. The other two parties have been in power for more than 30 years. They have exhausted their talent... People want change... We offer a new system, a corruption-free government, upliftment, particularly of youth and farmers.

So the ZPM is largely banking on anti-incumbency of the MNF government?

We want to form a government on a positive note... Even the party set-up is quite different. Out of our 40 candidates, 33 are new faces, including celebrities. They are free from fanaticism, have a good reputation.

The contest is being seen as a three-cornered one between



the ZPM, MNF and Congress. Can any one party win?

It’s not actually a three-cornered fight. The Congress is a spent force... It will almost be a straight fight between my party and the MNF.

Are you in talks with anyone in case of a post-poll alliance?

We don’t need that. We expect a comfortable majority.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi recently called the MNF and ZPM ‘entry point for the RSS’ into the state.

That is totally false and unbecoming of a national leader like Rahul Gandhi... As regard the MNF, his statement is true because it is part of the (BJP-led Northeast Democratic Alliance) and (NDA). So they are fighting the elections together and the

state’s lone MP in the Lok Sabha is always supporting the NDA government... even if a Bill is resisted by the people here.

The MNF has lost its identity... My party is a regional party with a national outlook and we are not going to join any group at the national level because we don’t want to have bosses in Delhi who will dictate to us... Our stance towards the Centre, whatever the party, would be issue based.

In the Northeast, a string of regional parties have joined the BJP, helping it grow.

In Mizoram, the ruling party is with them. We don’t have any connection with the BJP.

Will the MNF government’s support to Myanmar, Manipur refugees help it?

The people coming from Myanmar and Manipur are our brothers and sisters... All political parties stand behind them and have given them assistance... But the MNF, being the ruling party, has more resources. That doesn’t mean they have more regard for them... This issue will not be a factor in the election. No single political party will be able to take an advantage out of this... because we have the same stand.

KEY PLAYERS

Reinstated BJP leader T Raja Singh retains base in Hyderabad seat

RAHUL V PISHARODY
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 24

FOR SUPPORTERS of the BJP’s controversial legislator T Raja Singh, Dussehra festivities were particularly joyful this year, after the party Sunday revoked his 14-month-long suspension and named him as a candidate for the Telangana Assembly polls.

In Hyderabad’s Dhoolpet, part of the Goshamahal Assembly constituency represented by Raja two times, many are confident he will win again.

The 46-year-old was suspended from the party in August 2022 after his alleged remarks against Prophet Mohammed led to protests and his arrest. While he secured bail initially, the police

invoked the Preventive Detention Act, citing 101 FIRs against the MLA. The BJP then suspended him, after which he was imprisoned for 76 days until the High Court quashed his detention.

In Dhoolpet, his supporters cite the things Raja has done for the community, such as building a 51-foot-tall Hanuman statue atop a hill, dominating the area.

The statue also dwarfs a neighbourhood called Jhirra, part of the AIMIM-ruled Karwan Assembly constituency.

Locals at the Akashpuri Hanuman temple say Raja’s suspension should have been re-

voked much earlier and that he did nothing wrong. Priest Vishnu Prasad Tiwari Maharaj says, “(Raja) works for Hindus and the party should have supported



T Raja Singh celebrates his reinstatement to the BJP at the party’s Hyderabad office on Sunday. @tigerrajasingh/X

him... Everyone is happy now. There is no doubt he will win a third term with a better majority.”

Having started his political journey as a municipal council-

lor in 2009, Raja was a member of the TDP in undivided Andhra Pradesh before quitting to join the BJP amid a Modi wave in the 2014 general elections. That

same year, Telangana was carved out of Andhra Pradesh. In 2014, he was among the five BJP legislators elected to the Telangana Assembly. In 2018, he was the

only party leader to win as MLA.

To date, Raja remains the only non-AIMIM legislator in Asaduddin Owaisi’s Hyderabad parliamentary constituency. His

return to the BJP will boost the party in Hyderabad, while a win would raise Raja’s stature.

Over the years, he has earned the titles ‘Hindu Sher’ and ‘Hindu Hriday Samrat’ among his supporters, who liken him to Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath. Besides the fact that he hails from the dominant Lodh community, Raja’s association with the Hindu Yuva Vahini and spearheading of the annual Ram Navami procession have garnered him popularity in the area.

Not everyone is a supporter, though. Shankar Singh, a shopkeeper near Gangabowli, says Raja’s two terms have not got anything to the constituency. “He may win again but it is because people have no options... We want him to fight for our

welfare. But he will win as long as people fall for just rhetoric.”

“A strong candidate from the ruling BRS can make all the difference,” a youngster at a mobile phone repair shop says.

Mohammed Yusuf, a shopkeeper selling bangles at Begum Bazar, says: “People vote for his words, not deeds.”

Priest Tiwari says it is unfair to blame Raja for the lack of “change” in the constituency. “He is not part of the government. Only a government can do certain things. Whatever he has done for us is enough,” Tiwari argues.

The BRS, which has announced candidates for 115 of the 119 seats, has not fielded anyone from Goshamahal yet. The Congress has nominated woman leader Sunitha Rao Mogli.

Govt & Politics



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



FROM MOTHER’S KITCHEN

UNION MINISTER for Home and Cooperation Amit Shah, who was in Gujarat on Tuesday to participate in official functions, found time to visit his native village Mansa in Gandhinagar. There he had lunch at 'Kusumba Anna Kshetra', a community kitchen being run in the memory of his late mother Kusum Ben, which provides free food to needy people every day. Shah shared the table with his family and other visitors at the kitchen. He also visited a temple in the village.

GOOD & EVIL

IN KEEPING with the Dussehra theme on Tuesday, My Gov, the government's citizen engagement platform, disseminated information about various schemes and initiatives with a "good over evil" twist. How is India conquering modern day evils — it posted on social media, talking about surgical strikes and the decline in Left Wing extremism as means to defeat the "evil of terrorism and corruption" through direct benefit transfers and the "evil of colonial mindset" through celebration of Indian heritage and nationalism.

Leaders not allowed to hold pro-Palestine rallies, says PDP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

CLAIMING THAT its senior leaders and workers were prevented from holding a pro-Palestine demonstration, the Peoples Democratic Party said here Tuesday that there was a pattern that, whenever the party wants to organise a "peaceful protest" in Jammu and Kashmir, the government thwarts it.

At a press conference at the party headquarters in Srinagar, Iltija Mufti, the daughter of former PDP chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, said the party's leaders and workers have been taken into detention or kept under house arrest, and accused the government of "selectively targeting" the party and launching "a brutal and vicious crackdown" against it. "The people of Kashmir have always stood behind the people of Palestine," Iltija said.

Cabinet status for Naveen aide Pandian day after VRS

SUJIT BISOIY
BHUBANESWAR, OCTOBER 24

A DAY after the Centre cleared his voluntary retirement as IAS officer, the Odisha government on Tuesday appointed Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide V K Pandian in a new role with the rank of a Cabinet minister, indicating that his influence in the administration will remain untouched.

The former bureaucrat has been appointed Chairman of 5T (transformational initiatives), which he headed previously as Secretary, and Nabin Odisha, a programme aimed at pushing rural development.

He will work directly under Patnaik, according to an order by the state general administration department. Although Cabinet rank had been given to many former bureaucrats earlier as well, this is the first time one will be reporting directly to Patnaik.

According to official sources, the new responsibility vests Pandian, who hails from Tamil Nadu, with immense authority to drive the 5T initiative that has its footprint in almost every department of the state government. The Ts stand for transparency, teamwork, technology and time, lead-



Pandian will now report directly to the CM

ing to transformation.

Launched in Patnaik's fifth and current term to overhaul the administrative apparatus, 5T is believed to be the brainchild of Pandian, the Chief Minister's private secretary since 2011. Under it, the state government claims to have transformed over 4,000 high schools, with refurbished classrooms, laboratories and playgrounds.

Some of the top priority infrastructure projects of the BJD government have also been taken up under the 5T initiative under Pandian's direct supervision. These include transformation of Puri into a world-class heritage city, upgradation of SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, redevelopment of major shrines and transformation of colleges.

"These projects are going on in full swing and are nearing completion. Pandian will be directly credited for the success of these projects," said a senior government officer who did not want to be named.

PRIME MINISTER’S DUSSEHRA SPEECH

‘Day to renew pledges’: Modi calls to root out casteism, regionalism

SAMAN HUSAIN

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Tuesday called upon the nation to finish off the forces trying to divide the country on caste and regional lines.

Modi, who was speaking at a Dussehra event organised by the Shri Ramli Society in Delhi's Dwarka area, said that the burning of Ravana should not be confined to an effigy but every evil that threatens the social harmony.

"Humein dhiyaan rakhnna hai ki aaj Ravan ka dahan bas ek putale ka dahan na ho, ye dahan ho har us vikrti ka jiske kaaran samaaj ka aapsi sauhard bigadta hai. Ye dahan ho un shaktiyon ka jo jaativaad aur kshetravaad ke naam par Maa Bharti ko baantne ka prayaas karti hain" (We need to ensure that the burning of Ravana isn't merely the

burning of an effigy. It should be the burning of every evil that destroys peace in society...all those forces that divide society on the basis of caste and region)," he said.

The PM also mentioned the Ayodhya Ram Temple that he said was near-completion after centuries of wait. *"Bhagwan Shri Ram bas aane hi waale hain,"* Modi said.

"The temple being built at the birthplace of Lord Ram is a symbol of victory...patience of Indians who waited for centuries... next Ram Navmi, prayers at the temple will spread happiness in the entire world... imagine the joy when after centuries, the idol of Lord Ram will be installed at the temple," the PM added.

The construction of the temple, Modi said, was happening amid many auspicious developments such as India's successful lunar mission, the inauguration of the new Parliament building, and



PM Narendra Modi asked the gathering to take 10 pledges. *Renuka Puri*

the enactment of the women's reservation law. "India is today emerging as the world's largest democracy as well as the most trusted one," he said.

Vijaydashami, he said, was a festival of victory of justice over injustice, of humility over arrogance, and of patience over anger...a day to renew pledges.

Laying down the idea of an

‘Rath prabharis’: Ex-IAS officer, activist write to President

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

IN AN open letter to President Droupadi Murmu Tuesday, retired IAS officer E A S Sarma and co-founder of Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) Jagdeep Chhokar appealed to her to intervene in stopping the government's plan to use bureaucrats for publicising its achievements through a "yatra". They cited a Department of Personnel instruction that asked all ministries to nominate senior officers as "district rath prabharis" for the "Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra".

JATIN ANAND

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

WITH THE chief secretaries of three UTs — Chandigarh, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir — set to retire between October and November, the MHA, according to sources, is considering an overhaul at senior bureaucratic level in the coming days.

According to sources, around six senior IAS officers and as many IPS officers from the AGMUT cadre (batches 1989-1995) across the country are expected to be part of the reshuffle.

Extensions of tenure, officials said, are likely in at least one case each in both the administrative

and police services.

The overhaul, likely the last of its kind before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, is also expected to impact Goa and Arunachal Pradesh, besides the three UTs, sources said.

Sources said Arunachal Pradesh Chief Secretary Dharmendra from 1989 batch, Goa Chief Secretary Puneet Kumar Goel and New Delhi Municipal Council chairperson Amit Yadav, both from 1991 batch, are among the frontrunners for posting in Delhi and Chandigarh. The tenure of Goel and Yadav, both AGMUT-cadre officers, is also ending, according to the sources.

Prashant Goyal of 1993 batch, posted in J&K, and Sharat Chauhan of 1994 batch, posted in

Rajnath celebrates Dussehra with troops in Tawang, hails them for guarding LAC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

TAWANG/NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh Tuesday performed 'Shastra Puja' in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang and celebrated Dussehra with soldiers in the strategically key region close to the frontier with China.

Singh, accompanied by Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande, also carried out a comprehensive review of India's military preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh and lauded the troops for guarding the border with "unwavering commitment and unparalleled courage". "No amount of appreciation is enough for the way you are guarding the border in difficult circumstances. I want to tell you that the people are proud of you," he told the troops.

In 1962, Tawang town was over-run by Chinese troops on October 24.

During an interaction with soldiers after visiting Bum-La and a number of other forward posts, Singh asserted there is no option but to bolster the country's security apparatus in view of the current global scenario. He said all efforts are being made to strengthen



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh performs 'shastra puja' during his visit to forward posts in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, on Tuesday. *PTI*

the nation's military prowess through indigenous production of defence equipment.

"Earlier, we used to rely on imports to upgrade our military. But today, a number of major weapons and platforms are being manufactured within the country. Foreign companies are being encouraged to share their technology and produce the equipment in India with domestic industry. In 2014, the value of defence exports was about Rs 1,000 crore, but today we are exporting defence equipment worth thousands of crores," he said.

India that functions on the ideals of Lord Ram, Modi asked the gathering to take 10 pledges. These included saving water, motivating others to undertake digital transactions, to ensure cleanliness, to follow the mantra of 'vocal for local', to do quality work and make quality products, to travel through India before travelling to foreign countries, to spread awareness about natural farming among farmers, to include superfood millets in diet, to exercise and prioritise health.

He said India will become a developed nation only when everyone is developed, asking citizens to help raise the social status of at least one poor family, in his 10th pledge.

Referring to the tradition of 'shastra poojan' on this day, he emphasised that in India weapons are not used for annexation but for defence.

Lanka offers free visas to Indians to revive tourism

India largest source of tourists with over 2 lakh arrivals so far this yr: Data

DIVYA A

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE SRI Lankan foreign ministry on Tuesday announced Indians will get free visas to the nation as part of a pilot programme which will extend till March 31, 2024.

The move is aimed at reviving the country's fledgling tourism industry and also extends to citizens from six other countries — Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan.

"Cabinet approves issuing of free visas to India, China, Russia, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand with immediate effect as a pilot project till 31 March," said Sri Lankan foreign minister Ali Sabry on Tuesday. Tourists from these seven countries will be able to obtain visas without any fee to Sri Lanka.

A statement detailing the cabinet's decisions said the move was made to generate a target of five million arrivals by 2026.

India has traditionally been Sri Lanka's top inbound tourism market, followed by China. As per latest data from the Sri Lanka Perimeter Development Authority, India is the largest source for tourists with 2,00,310 arrivals so far this year, followed by Russia with 1,32,300.

In September 2023, India topped with over 30,000 visitors, making up for 26 per cent arrivals, followed by China at around 8,000 arrivals.

Sri Lanka saw its tourism numbers take a dive in the wake of the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings. This was followed by the Covid pandemic in 2020 and a



Pilot project till March 31, says Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry

severe financial crisis last year which saw mass protests and shortages of essentials such as fuel. In June 2022, then Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said in parliament that the economy had collapsed, leaving it unable to pay for essentials.

As a top priority to revive tourism in Sri Lanka and and boost its debt-ridden economy, Wickremesinghe — now the country's President — had recently proposed making the area a "border-less tourism" region — on the lines of Schengen area — to tap the huge potential offered by the seven-member grouping members.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIM-STEC) is a regional grouping that comprises India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan. Prior to the pandemic, tourism was the third-largest source of foreign exchange inflows to Sri Lanka, accounting for about five per cent of the country's GDP.

The industry has seen a turnaround in 2023, with Sri Lanka clocking a million arrivals till September for the first time since 2019.

It also earned \$1.3 billion from tourism in the first eight months of 2023, up from \$833 million during the same period last year.

Pawar’s NCP sets target to reach out to 1 cr households

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

ON DUSSEHRA, the NCP announced 'every home NCP' campaign where the party workers will be visiting one crore houses in Maharashtra and propagating the milestone decisions taken by its veteran leader Sharad Pawar during his political career.

The campaign will run in constituencies where the party is strong, said NCP state chief Jayant Patil, adding it is also meant to connect with new party workers.

The public outreach campaign announced it will have the tagline '*Me Maharashtravadi, Ladha Asmitach Aphyaswabhimanaacha*' (I am from Maharashtra, Fight for pride, our self-respect) below Pawar's photograph, said Patil.

The announcement comes on a day when Pawar will be present at the flagging off of Yuva Sabgharsh Yatra undertaken by NCP MLA and Sharad's grand-nephew Rohit Pawar. Following the split within the NCP, where Ajit Pawar along with his supporters joined hands with BJP and staked claim on the party name as well as symbol, the Pawar-affiliated faction has decided to reach out to masses and connect with the public.

Cash for query: Echoes from 18 years ago when 11 MPs were expelled

Of the 11 MPs first named in a sting operation, and later held guilty by a parliamentary committee, 6 belonged to the BJP; Trial began in 2017

VIDHATRI RAO

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

ACCUSING HER of accepting money to ask questions in Parliament, BJP Lok Sabha MP Nishikant Dubey has hauled TMC parliamentarian Mahua Moitra before the House Ethics Committee, and now approached the Lokpal. Dubey accuses Moitra of taking "bribes" from businessman Darshan Hiranandani to ask questions against the Adani conglomerate, in return for "favours".

In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking a probe, Dubey said the case was reminiscent of the 2005 cash-for-questions scam.

That scam...

One year into the first term of the UPA government led by Manmohan Singh, digital portal Cobrapost unveiled a sting operation—titled Operation Duryodhana — netting MPs who allegedly showed willingness to promote a company and ask questions in the House in exchange for money.

Cobrapost claimed the investigation was spread over eight months, and involved 56 video and 70 audiotapes and 900 phone calls. It said its journalists Aniruddha Bahal and Suhasini Raj had posed as representatives of a "fictitious lobbying organisation called the North Indian Small Manufacturers

Association (NISMA)" and "penetrated the nexus operating between MPs and their middlemen and succeeded in having MPs, across party lines, submit more than 60 questions in the rigorous question balloting system of the Indian Parliament, out of which 25 (at last count) were selected".

Of the MPs the sting named, six were from the BJP— Chhatrapal Singh Lodha (Odisha), Anna Saheb M K Patil (Erandol, Maharashtra), Chandra Pratap Singh (Sidhi, Madhya Pradesh), Pradeep Gandhi (Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh), Suresh Chandel (Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh) and G Mahajan (Jalgaon, Maharashtra). Besides, three MPs be-

longed to the BSP—Narender Kumar Kushwaha (Mirzapur, UP), Lal Chandra Kol (Robertsganj, UP) and Raja Ram Pal (Bilhaur, UP) — and one each to the RJD (Manoj Kumar), and Congress (Ram Sewak Singh). Of them, Lodha was a Rajya Sabha MP.

On December 12, 2005, *Aaj Tak* TV channel aired video footage from the sting, allegedly showing the MPs accepting money. The same day, a parliamentary committee was formed by the Lok Sabha Speaker consisting of MPs Pawan Kumar Bansal (chairman, Congress), Vijay Kumar Malhotra (BJP), Md Salim (CPM), Ram Gopal Yadav (Samajwadi Party) and C

Kuppusamy (Congress). Malhotra gave a dissenting note saying: "I would not like to become a party to the setting of a precedent by which a member can be expelled from the House without the proper procedure being adopted." Malhotra argued that "only a court can decide the legal position of the action recommended".

Based on the findings, the then Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee moved a resolution on December 23, saying the conduct of the 10 Lok Sabha MPs "was unethical and unbecoming of members of Parliament and their continuance as members of Lok Sabha is untenable and resolves that they may be ex-

pelled". The motion was adopted. But protests were seen from the BJP's end — members walked out and then Leader of Opposition L K Advani likened the expulsion to "capital punishment". The Rajya Sabha later expelled Lodha too, following an investigation into the matter by its Ethics Committee, under MP Karan Singh, which said the decision was taken "to uphold the highest levels of probity and dignity" of the House.

Later...

The MPs petitioned the Supreme Court and questioned "the procedure adopted by the two Houses, alleging it suffered from gross illegality". They said the en-

quiries were "unduly hurried", and were "neither fair nor impartial". In 2007, the expulsion was upheld by the Supreme Court, which said in the Raja Ram Pal Ram Pal v/s The Hon'ble Speaker case, that the power of expulsion was part of the privileges and immunities of Parliament.

In 2009, the Delhi Police registered FIRs against the two Cobrapost reporters and probed the role of a middleman in the sting operation. The reporters moved Delhi high court and a year later, the court quashed the charges against them. On August 10, 2017, a special court ordered framing of graft and criminal conspiracy against the 11 MPs named in 2005, putting them on trial.

MAHUA EPISODE: BJP MP DUBEY SHARES VAISHNAW'S LETTER

New Delhi: BJP MP Nishikant Dubey said Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw wrote to him saying the issue flagged by him concerning TMC MP Mahua Moitra is of grave importance and it is being investigated by Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha. "The NIC will promptly respond to any instructions in this matter from the Lok Sabha Secretariat. The NIC will also extend full cooperation to the Committee on Ethics in this matter," the letter Dubey shared on X read. **ENS**

WORDLY WISE
HISTORY IS WHO WE ARE AND WHY
WE ARE THE WAY WE ARE.
— DAVID McCULLOUGH

The IndianEXPRESS
FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA
BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Breathless in Mumbai

Climate change has negated its pollution-cleansing advantage. City needs plans for long-term control



GUFRAN BEIG

SURGE AND FALL

Even as outlook on inflation improves, RBI must continue to remain vigilant

LAST FRIDAY, THE minutes of the monetary policy committee meeting held in October were released. These reaffirm the committee members' focus on bringing down inflation to the central bank's target of 4 per cent. Inflation in India had surged in the months of July and August, staying well above the upper threshold of the Reserve Bank of India's inflation targeting framework. However, in both its August and October meetings, the MPC had chosen to look through this surge, on grounds that it was driven largely by soaring food, especially vegetable prices, which were transitory in nature. The September data, which was released after the MPC's October meeting, showed that food prices have indeed corrected sharply, vindicating the committee's decision to maintain status quo.

In July, the consumer food price index had surged to 11.5 per cent, up from 4.55 per cent the month before, as vegetable prices soared. However, in the weeks and months thereafter, prices, especially of tomatoes, corrected just as sharply as they had risen. Vegetable inflation that had touched 37.3 per cent in July fell to 3.4 per cent in September as fresh supplies entered the market. Vegetables have a weight of 15.5 per cent in the food basket and exercise a disproportionate impact on the trajectory of inflation. As per a recent report by Crisil, vegetable prices have been trending upwards in recent years. Between 2019-20 and 2022-23, vegetable inflation averaged 5.7 per cent, up from 0 per cent between 2015-16 and 2018-19. Alongside, the frequency of the price spikes has also increased. As per the report, in the past 100 months, vegetable inflation was above 7 per cent in 35 months, and above 10 per cent in 30 months. The volatility in vegetable prices is in fact much more than that in overall food prices. The report identifies supply-demand mismatches, ups and downs in production, as triggers for these trends.

After the dry weather in August, the outlook on food prices has improved in recent weeks. The rains revived in September, and the impact of El Nino has been less severe than expected. The September data shows that food inflation now appears to be more concentrated in cereals (10.9 per cent) and pulses (16.4 per cent). The RBI's latest forecast also indicates that the worst is over. Inflation is projected to fall from 6.4 per cent in the second quarter (July-September) to 5.6 per cent in the third quarter (October-December). However, the MPC must continue to remain vigilant. As the RBI Governor noted in his statement, policy must take action to "prevent any spillover from food and fuel price shocks to the underlying inflation trends". The guiding objective of the committee must be to ensure price stability.

OFFICER AND PRABHARI

Of course, officers should monitor schemes and flag success but to frame them as 'rath prabharis' blurs a key line

THE CIRCULAR REPORTEDLY issued by the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, on the nomination of bureaucrats as "rath prabharis", for "showcasing/celebration of achievements of the last nine years of government of India through the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra..." has sparked a political row. Congress has alleged a BJP attempt to politicise the bureaucracy, draft civil servants into government propaganda ahead of elections. Party president Mallikarjun Kharge has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging this circular's withdrawal and drawing attention to a similar order of the Ministry of Defence directing soldiers on annual leave to promote government schemes as "soldier-ambassadors". The BJP has countered Congress outrage with indignation, saying that public service delivery is the government's task and duty, and why should anyone object to public servants reaching out to the grass-roots to ensure schemes' saturation. The to and fro between the parties frames an important issue — the bureaucracy must be neutral and independent, and especially in polarised times when traditional notions of neutrality are increasingly strained, it is important that it must be seen to be so too.

The BJP has a point, the involvement of bureaucrats in ensuring the delivery of schemes is unexceptionable. The problem, however, lies in the framing of the task assigned to those bureaucrats who will be "rath prabharis" — to "showcase" and "celebrate" government "achievements". To ask a bureaucrat to serve as "rath prabhari" — where is this assignment in civil service rules? — is more politics than governance. For, this goes beyond the work of implementation and monitoring and shrinks the vital degrees of separation that must be maintained, at all times, and when elections are due, between the government that makes policy, communicates it and takes credit for it, and the faceless steel frame. Civil servants are politically neutral, they do not become members of parties or work for them. They serve all governments, impart an essential stability to governance.

Surely, the notion of a "committed bureaucracy", that prioritises the interests and agenda of the ruling party, not its job, is not new. Most recently, the controversy surrounding the early retirement of VK Pandian, seen to rise to the unofficial status of Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's most trusted officer, who has been given cabinet rank in the state government the day after, has raised questions. As the party that rules at the Centre, and in several states, the greater responsibility is on the BJP, however, to ensure that important lives are not crossed, and the governing principle of non-political domains is given its due respect. At stake is public trust in the system's functioning in the long term.

HISTORY OF SMALL THINGS

Natalie Zemon Davis expanded the reach of social history by being attentive to seemingly insignificant events

WHAT IS "SOCIAL" in social history? Does the quotidian offer insights into cultures of the past? Can a historian cover gaps in the records and discern voices of the marginalised in documents produced by the elite? Few scholars have answered such questions more imaginatively than the Canadian-American historian Natalie Zemon Davis, who died, aged 94, in Toronto on October 21.

Davis is best known for her classic, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, based on the story of a 16th-century French farmer who, for several years, impersonated another farmer who had abandoned his family. The book was a follow-up to a 1982 film of the same title. Davis, who had worked as an adviser to the project, felt that the film had missed out on the nuances of the Guerre story. Her reconstruction is the work of a historical detective — an account of love and honour among medieval French peasants that sensitises the reader to rural life in feudal France. "What I offer you here is, in part, my invention, held tightly in check by the voices of the past," Davis wrote. In her telling, Bertrande, the missing farmer's wife, is the central character. Earlier accounts had assumed that the imposter had fooled her. But in showing how Bertrande played along with the man who had taken her husband's identity, Davis offers fascinating insights into gender relations of the time.

Her concern for justice extended beyond writings. A pamphlet she wrote as a doctoral scholar at Michigan University, protesting the red hunt in American institutions, led to Davis losing her US passport for eight years. In the early 1970s, she rattled Toronto University's conservative dons by offering a course on gender, and well into her 90s, campaigned for public funding for the social sciences. Her works are a testimony to the possibilities of social history by being attentive to seemingly insignificant events.

AMONG INDIAN METROS, Delhi gets the most attention for its notoriously high pollution levels. But it has been evident for some time now that bad air problems affect large parts of the country. As a series in this newspaper has pointed out, Mumbai has experienced an air quality crisis during the post-monsoon period for the second consecutive year. For most of October so far, the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Maharashtra's capital has registered "moderate" or "poor". The city has not had a single "good" air day this month.

In the first few days of this month, the pollution was much more palpable than what the AQI indicated because a layer of haze blanketed major parts of the Mumbai sky, leading to reduced visibility. However, there is a thin silver lining: The basket of pollutants is dominated by coarser particles which can cause irritation but are less harmful than finer particles like PM2.5. Meteorological conditions play a role in pollution. But it should be clear that the weather or climate cannot generate air pollution. Air quality deteriorates mainly due to anthropogenic sources of emissions, whether local or distant. Meteorological conditions only help to manoeuvre the pollutants in the air.

Mumbai's geography gives it a distinct advantage: The coastal city has a natural cleaning mechanism. Strong surface winds lead to faster dispersal of pollutants, and the strong sea breeze sweeps away these particles from the land. This wind reversal cycle is a feature of the city for most parts of the year. However, the post-monsoon season has been ringing alarm bells for Mumbai, mainly due to the unfavourable meteorological conditions. Things get complicated in the city if the withdrawal of the monsoon is delayed. In recent years, the city has witnessed some strong and longer spells of bad air quality, that defies our basic scientific understanding of a "usual" environment.

The question is why has the air quality been bad in Mumbai of late? The answer lies in the fact that the "usual" is becoming "unusual" and getting triggered by additional anthropogenic factors. Last winter, the city experienced record-breaking particulate pollution, which was largely related to the unusual triple dip La Nina conditions — under-

The festival season this year will reach its peak around mid-November, when winter will set in. It would be a concern if the festivities lead to an increase in emissions. However, that would still be a short-term issue, lasting for two or three days. We need to prioritise long-term mitigation planning based on mapping airsheds — areas where pollutants get trapped — because climate change is leading to extreme and unusual weather events and precipitating changes in the ecosystem. Coastal regions are highly vulnerable and hence, Mumbai needs to be extra-attentive.



SUANSHU KHURANA

AANKHON KO visa nahi lagta, sapno ki sarhad hoti nahi/ Band aankhon se roz sarhad paar chala jata hun milne/ Mehdi Hassan se

(The eyes don't need a visa, dreams don't come with borders/ With closed eyes, every day, I go across the border/ to meet Mehdi Hassan)

Gulzar's tender lines capture what the cold logistics of Partition could not — that the threads that bind India and Pakistan go beyond their traumatic past and fractured present. That the shared heritage also embraces all that could be a salve on their wounds — language and movies, music and food, poetry and sports.

Despite the Line of Control cutting through the hearts of the two nations, no one could ever divide one's affections for Hassan's *Ranjish hi sahi* or not be touched by the clarity of Lata Mangeshkar's voice. The stubborn simplicity of Ghulam Ali's *Hungama hai kyun barpa* demanded quiet surrender while few could resist the emotive sway of Calcutta-born Farida Khanum's *Aaj jaane ki zid na karo*.

In the early 2000s, before the Fawad Khan fever swept through India, one's affections were also for Junoon (the Pakistani band that even performed in Jammu and Kashmir), Ali Haider's 90s farewell favourite *Puraani jeans* and, of course, the fabulous Jal, the pop band from Lahore.

If 26/11 stalled these exchanges, the situation took a turn for the worse in 2015 when Shiv Sena protested against Ghulam Ali's

A PRECIOUS CAMARADERIE

Bombay HC's decision on Pakistan artistes upholds the healing power of culture

tribute concert for ghazal singer Jagjit Singh in Mumbai and forced its cancellation. The misfortune was not his — it was that of music lovers from either side of the border. But after 2016's Uri attack, there was a blanket ban by the Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association and the Federation of Western India Cine Employees on Pakistani artistes working in the Indian film industry. Pulwama attacks in 2019 only reinforced it.

The internet may have shrunk our worlds, making it possible for us to catch a rerun of a Fawad Khan serial or a song by Rahat Fateh Ali Khan. In increasingly polarised times, it could even take the edge off to evoke a sense of respect and awe. But, with political daggers drawn, what it could not do was to create a space for collaboration. And so we waited, the citizens of both countries, occasionally revelling in the glory that was Ali Sethi and Shae Gill's Pasoori, watching the former do Zoom chats with Indian artistes and wondering if Dubai was where one would need to go to listen to collaborations between Indian and Pakistani artistes. But that option was never going to be feasible in the long run.

Last week, the Bombay High Court quashed a plea to ban Indian companies, citizens and associations from working with Pakistani artistes — including actors, singers, musicians, lyricists, and technicians — in India. The plea, filed by Faazil Anwar Qureshi, a cine worker, was rejected because, the

court observed, that "in order to be patriotic one need not be inimical to those from abroad especially, from the neighbouring country" and that art, music, sports, culture, dance "rise above nationalities, cultures and nations and truly bring about peace, tranquillity, unity and harmony in the nation and between nations."

The court's observation was a salaam to the basic tenets of art, its capacity to evoke a sense of community, solidarity and self-awareness, especially when nothing else manages to get through people's hearts. The camaraderie between the Indian and Pakistani cricket teams — both men's and women's — had already given us a sense of it. It's impossible to not have one's heart full after looking at a selfie in which members of the Indian cricket team are trying to be in one frame with Pakistani captain Bismah Maroof's baby or Shaheen Shah Afridi handing a present to Jasprit Bumrah for his newborn son.

These exchanges work as reminders of people's capacity to appreciate not just each other's brilliance but also their ability to rise above differences to find ways to collaborate.

The truth of the reach of arts was once explained by Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, whose village, Kasur, fell in Pakistan but who later decided to stay in India. "If one child in every home had been taught music, India would never have been partitioned."

suanshu.khurana@expressindia.com



OCTOBER 25, 1983, FORTY YEARS AGO

SETHI INVITES AKALIS

AFTER ROUNDS of abortive direct and tripartite talks with Akalis till June, the Centre has decided once again to invite Akali Dal president Harchand Singh Longowal for a fresh round of talks to resolve the Punjab problem. An announcement of the Centre's new initiative was made by Union Home Minister P C Sethi at a meeting of the Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament.

FFI THREAT TO CENTRE

THE FILM FEDERATION of India has threatened to withdraw its support to Filmotsav '84

if the government continued to ignore commercial cinema while appointing directors on the board of National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). FFI chief Ram Bohra pointed out that the government's arbitrary appointments would further alienate NFDC and the exercise of development of cinema would become self-defeating.

SINO-INDIA TALKS BEGIN

INDIAN AND CHINESE officials sat together for another round of talks aimed at working out modalities for resolving the boundary question and steps to improve relations between the two countries. Interestingly, the two

sides are also exchanging views on regional and international situation. The two delegations constituted four groups that will tackle issues concerning the boundary dispute, trade, cultural exchanges and cooperation in science and technology.

BEIRUT ATTACK

THE US DEFENCE department said that at least 191 American servicemen were killed in the bomb attack on a US marine headquarters near the Beirut airport. The new death toll came after President Reagan made clear that he intends to retaliate against the authors of the bomb attack when they can be identified.



9 THE IDEAS PAGE

No walls in the house of art

National Gallery of Modern Art's evolution into a dynamic institution reflects how art transcends boundaries, challenges norms, and connects people



TEMSUNARO JAMIR
TRIPATHI

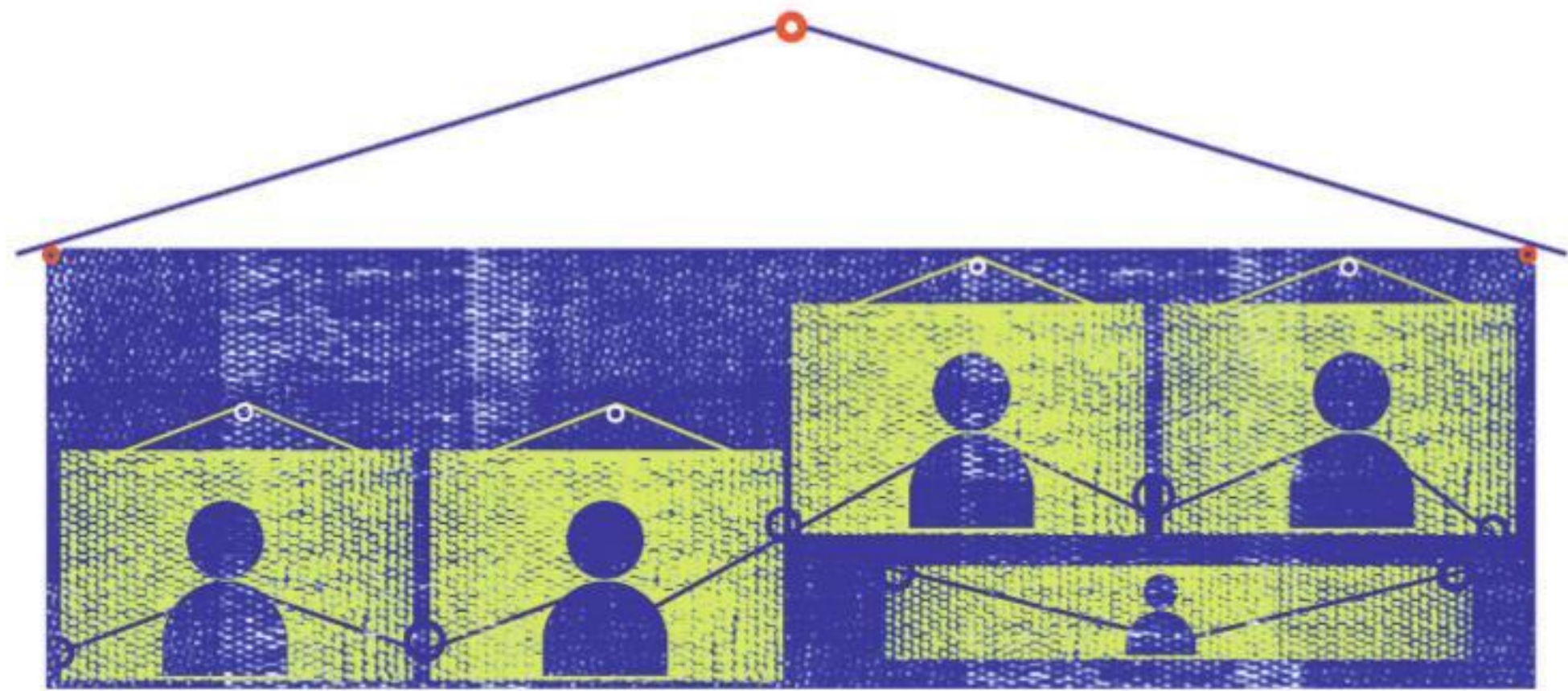
THE JAIPUR HOUSE, nestled on the fringes of the majestic India Gate circle in New Delhi, stands as a beacon of cultural significance and artistic heritage. For over eight decades, it has witnessed an evolution that has transformed it into the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), a custodian of India's artistic journey.

Designed by Charles G Bloomfield and his brother Francis, the Jaipur House embodies a harmonious blend of architectural styles. Its butterfly plan seamlessly integrates European neo-classical elements with intricate Indian and Mughal motifs, including the distinctive *chattris* and *jharokhas*. The interiors, envisioned by Robert Lutyens II, son of the illustrious Sir Edwin Lutyens, add to its grandeur. Since its inauguration by Dr Radhakrishnan on March 29, 1954, the NGMA has evolved from a museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art into a comprehensive institution. It now encompasses a Reserve Collection, a Restoration Lab, a Library, a Permanent Gallery, and an Ephemeral Exhibition Hall.

At the heart of the NGMA's collection are captivating works regarded as the *navaratas* of Indian art. Among them are the scintillating oeuvres of Amrita Sher-Gil, whose iconic pieces like *Three Girls* and *Haldi Grinders* have become synonymous with the esteemed institution. The year 1954 marked a pivotal moment when a sculpture competition attracted master sculptors from across India, with Devi Prasad Roy Choudhury's *Triumph of Labour* — the winning entry — standing prominently on the institution's front lawn, symbolising the unwavering contribution of the working class in nation building. Under the guidance of influential figures like Hermann Goetz and Prodosh Dasgupta, the NGMA expanded its collection to include luminaries such as M F Husain and S Bakre and the works of the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group. The NGMA has also welcomed international luminaries, including Henry Moore and Robert Rauschenberg.

The NGMA, in addition to housing an extensive collection of works by indigenous artists, showcases a comprehensive collection of Oriental artworks. These include pieces by renowned artists such as Thomas and William Daniell, William Hodges as well as works by other significant but lesser-known artists. These artists delved into a wide range of themes, playing a vital role in constructing the idea of the Orient. In the post-colonial era, it is crucial to reassess and recontextualise these artworks, as they were often created under the constraints of the Eurocentric and colonial perspective of the time. To explore the underlying context of artworks, the NGMA actively collaborates with young research scholars who possess a distinct interest in exploring the museum's collection.

One of the standout characteristics of the NGMA is its dedication to commemorating the historical importance of art movements



CR Sasikumar

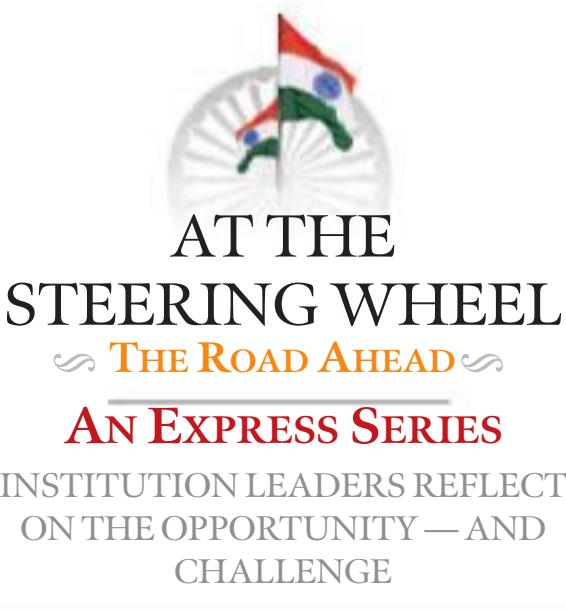
and collectives, ranging from the Calcutta Group to Cholamandalam to the Delhi Shilpi Chakra, as well as the art institutions in Baroda, Mumbai and Shantiniketan. This approach distinguishes the NGMA as a custodian of India's rich artistic heritage, committed to preserving and showcasing the country's artistic legacy.

A feature of the NGMA's ethos is inclusivity. It strives to flatten barriers and make art and museums accessible to all. Throughout the year, NGMA initiates various outreach programmes, which include art workshops, interactive talks, and storytelling sessions, ensuring that art education is not confined to a select few. Recognising the impact of print literature, NGMA's publications division strives to connect with art aficionados who are unable to visit the museum, ensuring they can still engage with the museum's offerings.

The NGMA boasts one of the most proficient teams of conservators in the field who actively participate in renowned international events like the International Council of Museums — Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC) conferences and other prestigious global conservation and museum training and fellowship programmes. Their responsibilities extend beyond the confines of this institution, as they collaborate with fellow Indian museum professionals on diverse conservation projects. This collaborative and outward-looking approach underscores their commitment to preserving and safeguarding India's cultural heritage on both national and international fronts.

The hologram statue of Netaji Subhas Bose, unveiled on his 125th birth anniversary by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, occupies a significant place within the NGMA. What initially began as a commissioned work soon evolved into a heartfelt and enduring connection for the museum. This project not only solidified a strong bond between the NGMA and the contributing artists but also with the statue itself, which now proudly stands across the street, near India Gate.

The NGMA, New Delhi, also hosted a distinctive art workshop, Kala Kumbh, organised as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, aimed at creating enormous scrolls measuring approximately 750 m in length. These scrolls were meticulously painted to portray stories of courage and the valour exhibited by the often-overlooked heroes of India's Independence struggle. These enormous scrolls were exhibited at Rajghat as part of



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the Republic Day celebration in 2022.

The NGMA also stands out as one of the rare premier museums that not only hosts international cultural exchange programmes and exhibitions but also actively engages in these initiatives by lending masterpieces from its extensive collection. This serves to invigorate global dialogue on Indian art.

As a representative member of the ICOM, the NGMA, under the Ministry of Culture, organised two groundbreaking exhibitions on May 18, 2022. One of these exhibitions, 'Hastantaran', dwelled on the artistic and spiritual evolution of Nandalal Bose (1882-1966). On the other hand, 'Kshetragya' celebrated India's national artistic treasures, with a special emphasis on the contributions of luminaries like Benode Behari Mukherjee and Ramkinkar Baij.

In its quest to become a comprehensive cultural space, the NGMA has expanded to include an auditorium, a preview theatre, a library, three restaurants, and an art shop. As a testament to its reputation, NGMA had the privilege of hosting the spouses of G20 world leaders, showcasing the country's rich art and cultural heritage and its commitment to diplomacy through art.

The NGMA also recently hosted the logo launch event of the seminal India Art, Architecture and Design Biennale 2023, an event that signifies the institution's pivotal role in fostering creativity and innovation in the fields of art, architecture and design. The NGMA's grand infrastructure played a crucial role in making these events successful. Its state-of-the-art facilities, spacious galleries and iconic architecture provided a fitting backdrop for such prestigious gatherings. The NGMA's ability to seamlessly blend art, architecture and culture has made it a prominent cultural institution not only in India but also on the global stage.

As the Jaipur House and the NGMA continue their journey from 1936 to 2023, they remain steadfast in their commitment to preserving India's artistic heritage, fostering creativity, and welcoming all who seek to be enriched by the world of art. The NGMA's evolution into a dynamic cultural institution reflects how art transcends boundaries, challenges norms, and connects people from all walks of life. As the institution evolves, it will actively engage in the global artistic dialogue while clinging to its indigenous creative and cultural roots.

The writer is director, National Gallery of Modern Art

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The fact that the majority of manufacturing firms in the country do not have a digital presence in the form of websites speaks volumes about our aversion to change. The question is, how long will we ignore research, innovation, workforce development, and use of advanced technologies?" — THE DAILY STAR

World in flux, where India stands

The future will tell if it is at the centre of global affairs or stuck between two camps



CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT

IN HIS last book, *The India Way*, S Jaishankar wrote, "It is time for us to engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play, draw neighbours in, extend the neighbourhood and expand traditional constituencies of support." This strategy, aimed at maximising India's national interest the realpolitik way is much easier to implement if the world remains multipolar. But will it?

Recent developments, including the BRICS and G20 summits, suggest otherwise. The international scene is becoming more and more bipolar, largely because of the Chinese attitude. The two summits form a sequence which may lead to a new era. In Johannesburg, Beijing could have its way by including six new members into the BRICS grouping. China had already done something similar in the early 2010s when it had lobbied for the addition of South Africa to what was till then the BRIC. By doing so, Beijing made the IBSA, comprising India, Brazil and South Africa, redundant. Why should these three countries, which claimed to represent the three largest democracies of the three largest continents, continue to meet separately now that they were all part of the same grouping? The 2013 IBSA meeting is still due and India and Brazil have lost an instrument that could have helped them to speak in the name of the Global South.

The Global South is precisely what the new "BRICS plus" formula claims to embody. This new grouping may be the crucible of a larger coalition intended to offer alternatives to existing multilateral architectures. The fact that Xi Jinping skipped the G20 summit in New Delhi fits in well in this scenario. Several countries belong to both groupings, but the two most important leaders of the former, Putin and Xi, did not take part in the latter, as if the grouping in which they invested the most was not that one, but one that had been expanded a few weeks before. This sign of a growing bipolarisation of the international scene is naturally strengthened by the rapprochement between Moscow and China.

How far is India's plurilateralism — to use Jaishankar's word — compatible with this new dynamic? In his book, Jaishankar envisaged a "Chindia"-like cooperation ("the ability of India and China to work together could determine the Asian century") and considered that India could be at the centre of international affairs by taking part in China-led as well as US-led groupings: "If India drove the revived Quad arrangement, it also took membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. A longstanding trilateral with Russia and China now coexists with one involving the US and Japan". But is such an equidistant situation tenable if China is not giving due respect to India in minilaterals such as the BRICS and the SCO,

if the PLA continues to exert military pressure on India in the Himalayas, a strategy which culminated in the 2020 attack resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and finds expression the occupation of territories claimed by India, and if Beijing is acquiring unprecedented influence, with potential military implications, in the countries of India's immediate neighbourhood, like Sri Lanka and Nepal?

In this context, India may need to take sides and get closer to the West. This trend has already been obvious for quite some time, as evident from India's role in the Quad, the making of trilaterals like the India/France/UAE and India/France/Australia groupings, as well as many joint manoeuvres between the Indian navy and several western powers. In the margins of the G20 meeting, this rapprochement manifested itself in the announcement of a transport project to link India to Europe via Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, and Israel. This project, which would help boost trade, deliver energy resources and improve digital connectivity, fits in the plan that had already been announced in the 2021 G7 meeting under the name "Build Back Better World". It should also benefit from the EU project known as the Global Gateway. Both are clearly responses to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative that India refused to join. By being part of this new project, Delhi is getting closer to the West.

But how far can India go in this direction? First, in spite of its efforts to diversify, it remains extremely dependent on Russia for energy and weapons. The fact that India failed to develop a proper defence industry is a weakness — this stands in stark contrast with its achievements in space technology. Second, India is increasingly dependent on China in terms of trade. If India exports raw material (including iron ore and raw aluminium) as well as refined oil and fuel in large quantities to China, its imports include manufactured products like electronics and telecommunication products, machine tools, organic chemicals, plastics, fertilisers, medical apparatus and even steel. Given the volume of these imports and their high-added value, India's trade deficit vis-à-vis China has jumped from \$64 billion in 2021 to \$87.5 billion in 2022. While this deficit is a problem in itself, it is also the symptom of a critical dependence. Some key sectors of the Indian economy, including the pharmaceutical sector, would not be in a position to export (generics, for instance) as much as they do today without the Chinese supply chains.

After the 2020 incident, India decided to scrutinise Chinese investments on its soil. But in July, Minister of States for Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that India was "open to all investment, including Chinese".

Is India at the centre of international affairs or stuck in the middle because of its dependence on many players who belong to the two camps which are crystallising? The future will tell.

The writer is a senior research fellow at CERISE Sciences Po/CNRS, Paris, professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at King's India Institute, London

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GAGANYAAN DREAM

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Prelude to flight' (IE, October 24). Ever since ISRO first conceived of the idea of sending a crew mission to space in 2004, it has been making relentless efforts to realise this dream. The recent successful landing of Chandrayaan 3 on the Moon has boosted its morale. Saturday's maiden trial of the Gaganyaan Mission has been successful in providing inputs for safety and emergency measures. ISRO's plan to first send a robot to space is a pragmatic step.

Ravi Mathur, Noida

PARITY QUESTION

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Vienna gives Delhi the right' (IE, October 24). The writer fairly establishes the core legal point that India has the discretion to be able to cut down the size of the Canada mission. However, it is equally crucial to ask if that discretion was fairly exercised. The VCDR guides the exercise of such discretion with regard to the needs of a particular mission. But were the needs of the Canadian mission taken into account here? The recourse to the principle of parity has also been exercised only when relations soured between the two nations. Was this really about "parity"?

Ayush Baheti, Jaipur

BEDI'S SPIN LEGACY

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'The wizard

of spin and the keeper of Indian cricket's conscience' (IE, October 24). Bishan Singh Bedi, a legendary Indian cricketer known for his left-arm spin bowling, was the part of Indian cricket's golden quartet of spinners with Erapalli Prasanna, B S Chandrasekhar and Srinivas Venkataraghavan. His delivery would have ample time to make a decision as to whether to go forward or back, attack or defend. But this sense of indecision and confusion would make him a victim to Bedi's bowling. It was a bloodless coup, achieved through craftiness, deceit and the beauty of his action.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

NOT THE SAME RULES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Diplomacy in crisis' (IE, October 23). The crux of the crisis in the Middle East is that the two sides are playing by two different sets of rules. As a democracy, while Israel is expected to follow internationally accepted norms of convention, Hamas is bound by no such constraints. As of now, the idea of a post-Hamas Gaza appears to be a chimera as the entire Arab world agitated by religion driven ethno-nationalism is supporting this outfit. This problem is further aggravated by aggressive Israeli responses. To wean away the Arab world from these archaic notions is the true challenge for moderate Arab leadership as well as the diplomatic system of the modern world.

Shubhada H, via email



K SATYANARAYANA

Mandal vs Kamandal, again

Bihar caste data puts social justice back on the political agenda

ON OCTOBER 2, the Bihar Government released the report of a caste survey conducted in the state that attracted nationwide public attention. Political parties are busy analysing its implications for the Lok Sabha elections in 2024. I wish to highlight four issues that the survey report brought to the fore.

The report publicly acknowledges caste identities in society. The caste-based census was last conducted in 1931. Demands for a caste-based census have been opposed by certain political parties and civil society groups on the ground that public recognition of caste will revive caste divisions in Indian society. It is ironic that the same political parties consider caste identities and equations while distributing tickets in Assembly and Parliament elections. Both the central and state governments design welfare schemes for specific caste groups. Caste associations mobilise people for welfare and political demands on a routine basis. Caste identities are widely invoked in public life and used to create informal networks. What the caste survey report does is to publicly accept this fact of life. This public announcement of caste identities of social groups in Bihar is historic and it generates public debate on the role of caste in society. It may not automatically lead to social equality but it would certainly lead to a great churning in society.

The report also brings social justice back on the agenda of Indian politics. The Mandal

moment brought the Dalits and OBCs together and consolidated political alliances based on an agenda of social justice. The BSP-SP coalition stalled the electoral rise of BJP for a while in UP. The RJD played an important political role and challenged the BJP and its Hindutva agenda in Bihar. The JDU in Bihar played an important role in forging EBC political identity. The electoral victory of the BJP in 2014 and its consolidation of "Hindu" identity politics undermined the social justice agenda (with its caste criteria). The Kamandal politics constructed a Hindu identity with the upper castes at the core and certain OBCs, SCs and STs in the periphery. The BJP's alliances with smaller parties (often based on caste and regional identities) at the regional level have been used to consolidate the core Hindu identity. The OBC identity of the Prime Minister is routinely invoked and the number of OBC MPs referred to, but the substantial agenda of social justice is ignored.

In this scenario, the caste survey report made visible, to use Satish Deshpande's words, "the most powerful and most pampered minority: the upper caste" who are described as "unreserved" constituting 15.52 per cent of the total population of 13.07 crores. It also made visible the largest social group: EBCs (36 per cent). The OBCs are 27.13 per cent. In fact, the OBC bloc (63.14 per cent) constitutes the largest group. The caste data renews the life of the social justice agenda with its quota within quota and justice for

EBCs among OBCs and a section of Dalits among Dalits. In other words, the BJP's agenda of communal polarisation with religious identities faces a change in the form of proportional representation based on caste numbers and economic backwardness.

The caste survey report throws a challenge to the Supreme Court's cap of 50 per cent limit to the quotas. The OBCs were estimated to be 52 per cent in 1931 and their population increased to 63 per cent in Bihar. Similarly, the Scheduled Castes were allocated 15 per cent of reservation based on their numbers. Now, their population is 19.65 per cent in the caste survey report. The rationale of proportional representation opens a new debate on revising the percentage of reservation as per the population of each caste group in Bihar and elsewhere. The Supreme Court relaxed this 50 per cent rule in the EWS quota judgment and paved the way for this possibility. But the new awakening of caste groups and mobilisation of caste blocs by political parties will lead to unintended consequences.

Lastly, the BJP worked hard to consolidate an upper-caste constituency in the name of Hindu unity. Its worry is expressed clearly when the PM says that the Opposition is dividing the poor, the women and the Hindus. For the poor, the EWS quota was introduced, for the women, Women's Reservation Bill 2023 was passed and for the Hindus, a Ram temple is ready for inauguration. It is not dif-

ficult to explain this strategy. The EWS reservation of 10 per cent for the weaker sections was introduced to mobilise the upper caste poor as a vote bank for the BJP. The policy undermined the caste basis of reservation and freshly introduced economic criteria. It also excludes the poorest of the poor (SCs, STs, and OBCs) from the beneficiaries of the EWS reservation. The Women's Reservation Bill 2023 reserves 33 per cent of the total Lok Sabha and Assembly Seats while excluding the quota within quota for OBCs. Women elected from the 33 per cent general seats would be disproportionately from the upper caste background. The caste survey poses a challenge to the BJP's "Hindu" (read: upper caste) constituency with sections of SC, ST, OBCs under the Hindu identity. The national BJP is on the defensive while the Bihar state unit claims credit for the caste survey.

Will counting caste lead to radical changes? It all depends on how the political parties mobilise these caste communities and how caste blocs respond to this report. The caste data may be useful to forge caste, class, gender and other solidarities to contest the fundamentalist politics. But the BJP may return to its aggressive agenda of communal polarisation to unify the divided Indian society and its votes. We have to wait and see what unfolds.

The writer is Professor, EFL University, Hyderabad

NIT student dies
of suspected drug
overdose, another
held for possession

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HAMIRPUR (HP), OCTOBER 24

A DAY after a first-year M.Tech student of National Institute of Technology at Hamirpur was found dead in his hostel room due to a suspected drug overdose, another NIT student was arrested on Tuesday after charas was seized from his possession, police said.

On Monday, the police had arrested four persons, including three NIT students and another doing BEd, for allegedly distributing chitta - a form of adulterated heroin - on campus.

The police probing the death case on Tuesday arrested a B.Tech third-year student, a resident of Tendua Makhii area of Uttar Pradesh, after 69.38 grams of charas was recovered from his possession. The accused has been booked under Section 20 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) which lays out the punishment for the production, manufacture, sale, purchase, import and inter-state export of cannabis, Superintendent of Police (SP), Hamirpur, Akriti Sharma said.

During checking, police also found 42.96 grams of charas hidden in a bush near the Vindhyachal hostel of the NIT on Tuesday. The SP said police were apprehending more suspects allegedly engaged in drug peddling on the NIT campus and appealed to the people to report to the police if they suspected anyone indulging in such illegal activities.

The four accused were booked under the NDPS Act, 1985. Initial investigations by the police and forensic team from Mandi attributed the death of the student to the consumption of some intoxicant.



DUSSEHRA’S GRAND DISPLAY

A massive crowd witnesses Ravan dahan at Patna’s Gandhi Maidan on Tuesday. PTI

3 killed in stampede at puja pandal in Bihar’s Gopalganj, 10 others injured

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, OCTOBER 24

THREE PERSONS including a 12-year-old boy were killed and about 10 people were injured in a stampede at a Durga Puja pandal in Gopalganj on Monday evening. Three persons have been referred to Gorakhpur hospitals while seven persons were being treated at Gopalganj hospitals.

Local residents said the incident took place around 8.30 pm at a pandal organised by the Raja

Puja Dal samiti on Station Road under Town Police Station when devotees lined up to see a statue of goddess Durga at the pandal, which drew a huge crowd.

The incident occurred when the boy lost his balance and fell. Two women behind him leaned forward to save the boy and both of them fell too.

Given the huge crowd with just one exit, a stampede ensued. While the child died on the spot, the women, who complained of breathlessness, passed away while on their way to Sadar Hospital, Gopalganj.

The deceased have been identified as Ayush Kumar (12), son of one Dilip Ram from Sanah Mathia village under Manjha Police Station, Urmila Devi (55) from Kuchaikot and Shanti Devi from Town Police Station area. Locals have blamed the incident on “poor crowd management”.

Govind Kumar, a Gopalganj resident said, “The place where the stampede took place has about a 20-feet narrow stretch of the Station Road. The pandal had about 25,000 people in its vicinity. Had the lock of an adjoining school not been opened to give

passage to the crowd, the situation could have been worse. Gopalganj town pandals had estimated a crowd of 1.5 lakh on Monday evening.”

Gopalganj District Magistrate Nawal Kishore Choudhary said, “The incident took place because of a sudden increase in the numbers of visitors. Adequate forces were deployed at and around the pandal. Policemen and officials from the local administration were able to save many lives.” The administration restricted people’s movement around puja pandals on Vijayadashami on Tuesday.

AHEAD OF CHHATTISGARH POLLS

Para troops deployed in LWE-hit areas trained to tackle Maoist tactics

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

A ONE WEEK training programme was held for all paramilitary personnel of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) deployed for election duties in Chhattisgarh.

The training programme included showing case studies and an analysis of Maoists’ modes of operation, a detailed presentation on the latest improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used by them as well as past incidents of Left-Wing Extremism (LWEs) affected areas.

Last week, CRPF Director General S L Thaosen told field commanders to ensure that the upcoming assembly elections in five states are held peacefully.

He also discussed changing tactics of Maoists and their use of deadlier IEDs.

Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Mizoram will go to polls be-

tween November 7 and 30, and the counting of votes will be taken up on December 3. Given the perceived threat of Maoist activity in Chhattisgarh, the state will be the only one to hold polls in two phases - on November 7 (20 seats) and 17 (70 seats).

An official told *The Indian Express* that the training programme was held for all paramilitary personnel since many of them will be in LWE areas for the first time and weren’t familiar with Maoist tactics. “The training will only be imparted to personnel deployed in LWE affected areas and not to those being sent to other states,” the official said.

The Indian Express has gained access to the training schedule. Subjects included were familiarisation of LWE areas, overview of the scenario, history of incidents in all areas, the outfit’s movements as well as navigation on different i-net maps and use of navigational apps during the day and night. Other topics were various types of explosives

used and the latest in IEDs employed by Maoists.

“We have also been informing all personnel about the case study, analysis of modus operandi of naxals and how they can use sniffer dogs of their K9 unit,” the official said.

“Troops in Naxal prone areas have always faced challenges of encounters, IED explosions, booby traps, pressure mechanism IEDs, anti-handling IEDs and directional mines. IEDs pose a challenge to troops because they have to deactivate mines in areas as well as be aware of the possibility of encounters,” the official said.

Earlier this month, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said that as a result of the government’s zero tolerance policy to LWE, the lowest levels of violence and deaths in the last four decades were recorded in 2022. “There has been a decline of over 52 per cent in LWE related violence between 2014 and 2023 as compared to the period from 2005 to 2014,” Shah had said.

CJI: Correcting historical wrongs goal of any constitutional system

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

UNDERLINING the role played by affirmative action in correcting “historical wrongs”, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud called for rejecting the arguments of “caste elites” that “just because affirmative action is being provided, structural issues of discrimination don’t exist any more”.

“Even the slightest success of affirmative action is used by the caste elites to dismiss the issues around caste inequalities. Arguments are advanced that just because affirmative action is being provided, structural issues of discrimination don’t exist any more. Such binary narrations

must be rejected,” the CJI said while delivering the keynote address at the sixth international conference on ‘Unfinished Legacy of Dr B R Ambedkar’ at Brandeis University in Massachusetts.

“Throughout history, marginalised groups have been subjected to horrendous wrongs. From the brutal transatlantic slave trade to the Native American displacement, to the caste inequalities in India, to the systemic oppression of women, LGBTQ+ individuals and minority communities, the annals of history are stained with instances of profound injustice,” he said. “Remedying historical wrongs ought to be the goal of any constitutional system,” he said, adding that “representation is only one way of” achieving this.

Infiltration bid foiled, two Myanmar-based militants held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
IMPHAL, OCTOBER 24

SECURITY FORCES foiled an infiltration attempt by Myanmar-based militant outfit to cross over into Manipur along the Indo-Myanmar border in Churachandpur district Monday, and nabbed two cadres of the

Myanmar-based Chin Kuki Liberation Army (CKLA). Huge cache of arms and ammunition were also seized.

Official sources said the two arrested CKLA cadres were cadres of a non-SoO (militant group not under the suspension of agreement with the government) group. Six weapons, including AK47, INSAS rifle, MQAs-

sault rifle, sniper rifle, and M16 assault rifle, were seized. The cadres and seized items were handed over to Sangaikot Police station.

Meanwhile, combined forces, in their effort to recover stolen weapons, conducted a search operation at the general area of Wangoo Laipham and recovered a cache of arms and am-

munition Tuesday.

The team comprised Kakching police commandos, Village Defence Force of Kakching, teams of D-company of 136 BSF and B company of 167 BSF.

The search operation concluded at 7.30 am, the police said.

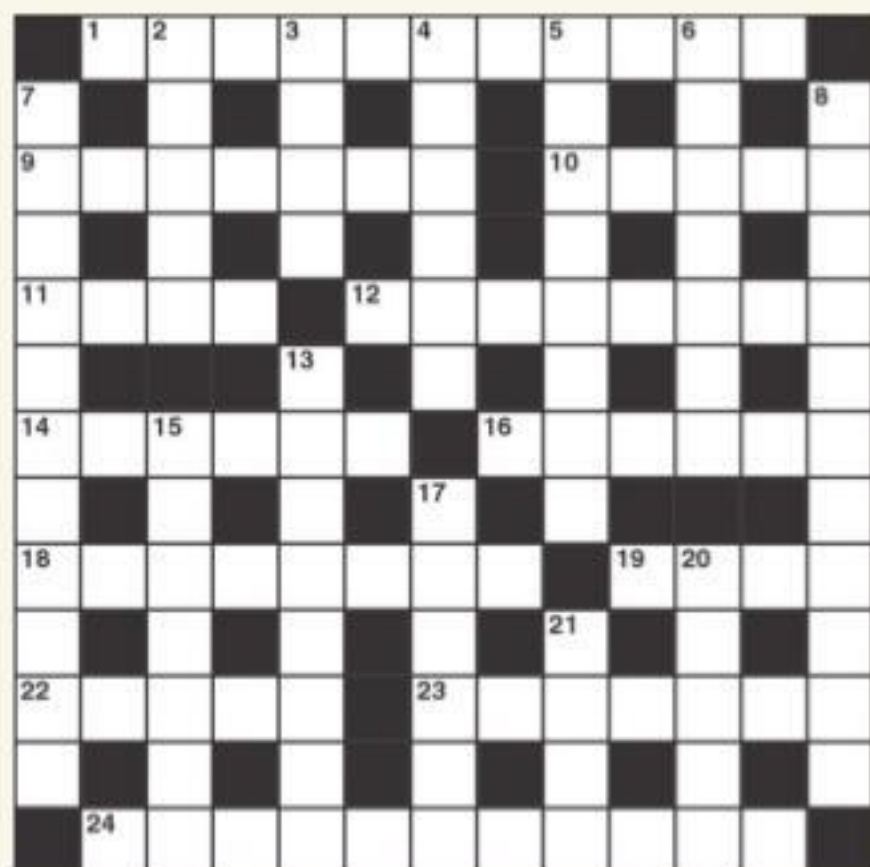
Houses at Wangoo Laipham Chingya were searched and sus-

pected areas of Wangoo Laipham Manya hill range were sanitised, the police said.

Arms and ammunition from the hill range at Wangoo Laipham Mangya near a cemetery were recovered, it said.

The items include 11 high explosive hand grenades, 15 grenade launching tubes, explosives and detonators.

CROSSWORD 5191



ACROSS

- Second prize for Mr Dave Ellis in the medley (6,5)
- Called for as arranged (7)
- To return to her is not the same (5)
- A job is at stake (4)
- A product of good stock (8)
- Kingdoms about to be given charity (6)
- Stones cast in attacks (6)
- It rarely turns out like this in books (8)
- The picture palace features it (4)
- Temporarily secures an obligation we hear (5)
- Bound to be against punishment (7)
- On which games are won by the over-forties (6,5)

DOWN

- Pakistan’s greatest current asset (5)
- Girl getting rave review (4)
- Tree used in sacred fires (3,3)
- Time soon modifies feelings (8)
- Perform successfully (7)
- Sort of writing that may be highly polished (11)
- Detects rare form of confidential process (5,6)
- Give one time for transgression (8)
- What one may write about a recital (7)
- Summary of new prices (6)
- Former churchman? (5)
- Ruin a French party (4)

Solutions Crossword 5190 Across: 1 Titled, 4 Asserted, 9 Leader, 10 Alacrity, 12 Rash, 13 False, 14 Flue, 17 Typist’s error, 20 Drinking song, 23 Gate, 24 Afoot, 25 Yeti, 28 Esurient, 29 Demise, 30 Destroy, 31 Impels Down: 1 Tolerate, 2 Transept, 3 Even, 5 Sole survivor, 6 Each, 7 Trifle, 8 Day bed, 11 Passing fancy, 15 Tsars, 16 Forge, 18 Nosedive, 19 Ugliness, 21 Agreed, 22 Struts, 26 Liar, 27 Seem

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 quip.

Whatever must happen ultimately should happen ____ - Robert F. Kennedy (11)

DRAEE

CLIT

EOYDLM

ALRWMY

SUDOKU 5361

Difficulty Level 5s

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 5360



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Today's stars continue yesterday's most important trends, including a tendency to bury your head in the sand. I doubt if you'll succeed, though. Your advantage is that in any situation you can look beyond the immediate consequences towards the next stage.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

The professional situation is still quite clear, and this is an excellent moment for all ambitious types to both aim for promotion and to encourage very close relatives to do the same. Social prospects veer towards the unusual, by the way, so be prepared.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You should try to discover why colleagues or associates want to opt out of agreements and commitments. It may be that they instinctively know better than you what the real situation is. A financial question should be answered by the end of the week.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

You really should devote a little more attention to sorting out relationships at work. Ideally, you should be operating as part of a team, co-operating with colleagues almost as if they're part of your family. Hopefully you won't argue like you have done with nearest and dearest.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Partners seem to hold the advantage, but that shouldn't be any bar to you enjoying yourself. In fact, the best fun you can have is by following other people's lead and joining in with whatever they suggest. You might actually find that you enjoy something that you'd always avoided.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Do listen carefully to what partners are saying, and if you're at all telepathic, try and work out what they're thinking as well. On the other hand, before you act on what you hear, you'd better make sure you're correct. Keep an eye open for the occasional disagreement later on, when people around you get tired.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Several factors seem to be making it easier for you to make up your mind. One could be increased support from family members. It's probably most useful to ask for moral support, rather than practical assistance. That way, you preserve the freedom to act as you wish.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Cost seems to be the major factor, and romantic plans may be inhibited by what you can and can't afford. This could be a good time to take a gamble, in which case emotional risks are as likely as financial. Remember that old saying, 'never fight a battle you can't win'.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

The financial situation should now have eased, but only temporarily. Use all and any new-found confidence to get yourself on a new and much more profitable path. What's more, you may put your foot down at home.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

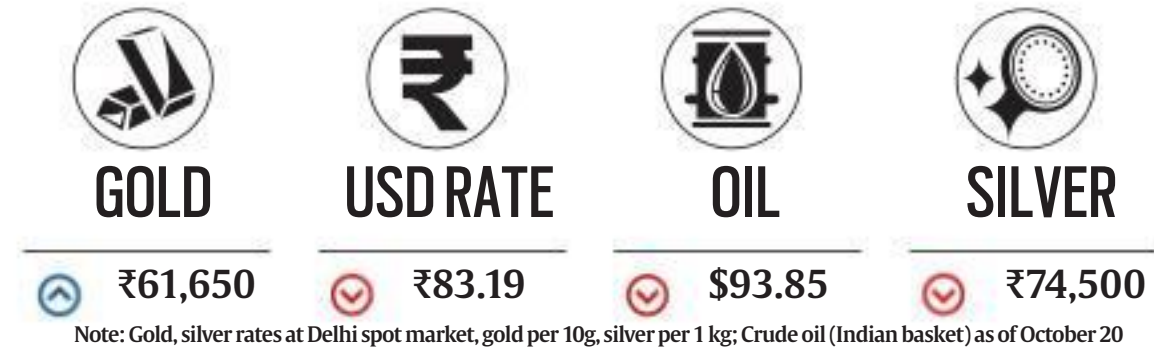
You may keep all significant secrets to yourself for a little while longer, but you should have your story ready just in case someone else spills the beans. Your romantic hopes might just involve you in additional cost, so you should be prepared to shell out.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

There have been delays, but no matter what area of your life has temporarily stalled, you can bring in other people to help out. With the right tone of voice, you can even get them to do your dirty work for you, which is no mean feat. You might have to return the favour, later.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

This is the time to press ahead with supreme confidence. The very last thing you should do now is give other people any excuse to overlook you. Always make sure that you are in the right place at the right time, otherwise a fleeting opportunity might pass you by.



Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of October 20

DGGI SAYS CASES BOOKED USING “DATA ANALYSIS”

GST authorities on an overdrive with notices as firms fend off tax demands

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

CENTRAL and state Goods and Services Tax authorities have shot off a spate of notices to companies over the last few months. This is likely to only increase in the coming months.

Consider these:
■ Summons issued by a state tax authority seeking details about GST payments from a company “based on media reports” of its merger with another company in a different state.
■ A notice issued to a company just by levying a flat 18 per cent GST on the entire turnover raising tax demand of Rs 1,400 crore, without taking into account the tax already paid.

In the first case, revenue department officials argue the jurisdictional powers of the state GST authority arose as the company had taken registration in that particular state even though its key operations and headquarter were located in another.

But tax notices have been issued to companies across sectors from consumer durables and smartphones to insurance and banking to online gaming and service providers. What has left India Inc worried is not just the multiplicity of notices, lack of uniform process, poor coordination between Centre and state tax authorities, and even understanding in the case of certain tax officials of the VAT (Value-Added Tax) era. Concerns around interpretation also exist as such no-

GST NOTICES - A FEW INSTANCES	
NAME OF ENTITY	GST DEMAND/NOTICE
LIC	1. GST + interest + penalty: ₹290.5 crore on September 21
	2. GST + interest + penalty: ₹36,844 on October 9
Delta Corp	1. Deltatech Gaming Ltd: ₹6,236 crore (Jan 2018-Nov 2022) and Rs 147 crore (Jul 2017-Oct 2022) on October 13
	2. Delta Corp (Rs 11,139 crore), Highstreet Cruises and Entertainment (₹3,289 crore), Delta Pleasure Cruise (₹1,765 crore), Delta Corp-Casino Deltin Denzong Sikkim (₹628 crore) on September 22
Dabur India	GST shortfall of ₹320 crore (October 16)
Maruti Suzuki	Demand for interest and penalty, and appropriating tax on Sept 29
Star Health and Allied Insurance	GST demand of ₹38.99 crore on October 6
HDFC Life Insurance	Non-payment of GST of ₹942 crore on June 23

ties mostly pertain to the initial implementation phase of GST, when there were several teething troubles and constant tweaks in policy decisions.

After sector-specific probes, the scope of the notices over the past few months expanded to cover “underpayment” of tax, “incorrect availment of input tax credit” and “reconciliations differences” between returns filed and financials. This picked up pace before the end of three-year limitation period on September 30 for sending show cause notices for FY 2017-18, which was the first year of the GST regime. The limitation period begins after the filing of annual returns for the year to which the demand is related. Deadlines for filing annual returns had been repeatedly extended during the initial GST phase and later during the

COVID-19 pandemic, hence, the limitation period for 2017-18 was also extended till September 30 this year.

Notices have also been sent for subsequent years from FY19 to FY22. Dabur India, LIC, Bajaj Allianz, ICICI Prudential, Star Health and Allied Insurance, Maruti Suzuki, Akzo Nobel, Sheela Foam and ICICI Lombard General Insurance are among companies that have received notices or tax demands.

A key concern flagged by companies and tax experts is the multiplicity of notices being issued and no uniform process or coordination between state and central GST authorities. In some cases, both have issued notices to the same company. “Many of these notices are pre-intimation notices or summons, a step before the issuance of show cause

notices. More information is being sought often with ill-prepared notices asking companies to give details asking for explanations. If in some cases, like it happened in a case where the tax demand was raised based on the turnover, the officer then realises the error, it takes a long time to correct it since the demand has been raised on an official document by them. To withdraw it, a proper explanation from the officer is required to justify the reduction or complete removal of the tax demand, which takes time and makes it cumbersome for the company,” another person aware of the developments said.

In some cases, the notices have been issued by officers who dealt with only value-added tax in the pre-GST regime and not service tax. “There have been some understanding issues as

some of these VAT officers have not dealt with service tax matters, which lies in a mix of jurisdiction between Centre and the states,” the person said. Service sector companies are facing a higher brunt of these GST notices as they are required by law to take multiple registrations in every state wherever they are present, which is different from a manufacturing company, which may have limited operations in a few states only.

Abhishek Jain, Indirect Tax Head & Partner, KPMG said, “With normal period of limitation ending on September 30 for adjudication of issues linked to FY 17-18, multiple notices were issued to taxpayers including substantive interpretative ones like taxation of online gaming, taxation of intra company supplies without a consideration, sector specific issues including rate of GST, credit reversals, etc. Similarly, various notices have been issued on routine reconciliation matters like differences in auto populated inward supplies, qua credit claimed by businesses, inward supplies which were blocked under Section 17(5) but have not been reported as ineligible credit.”

In addition, GST notices have also been issued to many multinational companies seeking details of expats and seconded employees working with them, based on a Supreme Court ruling which had ruled that tax is payable for such deputation/secondment. **FULL REPORT ON** www.indianexpress.com

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

ON MONDAY, the yield on 10-year government bonds in the US, the benchmark for asset prices across the globe, rose to hit 5.02 per cent, its highest level since July 2007. Though the yield came down to 4.85 per cent later in the day, the rise capped a multi-week rout in bond prices as investors bet that the US Federal Reserve would keep interest rates at their current high levels for longer amid concerns over inflation spiking again due to high energy prices.

In India, yield on 10-year government bonds is already at a high of 7.38 per cent, a rise on 24 basis points in the last one month.

Why yields are high?

US 10-year bond yield has now shot up by nearly 400 basis points from 1.01 per cent in 2020. Factors like rising crude oil prices, inflation risks and interest rate signals from the US Federal Reserve have contributed to the hardening of bond yields. A higher government borrowing is also a reason for rise in bond yields. “Increased apprehensions surrounding prolonged elevated interest rates fuelled a continued upward movement in the US 10-year yield,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Further, robust US economic data has hardened expectations that the Federal Reserve is likely to keep rates higher for a longer period. Investors are also concerned about the US government’s huge borrowing plans. Despite the historic rise (500 basis points) in interest rates delivered by the Fed over the past 18 months, stronger than expected US retail sales, labour market and inflation data in recent weeks have helped push yields higher.

According to IFA Global, concerns over inflation spiking again due to higher energy prices seems to be outweighing safe haven demand. The ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict has added to the global uncertainties, especially on the energy prices. If in-



Concerns over inflation spiking again due to higher energy prices seems to be outweighing safe haven demand.

File

flation is likely to rise, investors will demand higher yields on their bond investments.

Meanwhile, US Fed Chair Jerome Powell in his speech last week said that records suggest a period of below trend growth and softening of labour market conditions are needed for inflation to reach 2% target. Any evidence of persistently above trend growth or of tightness in labour market not easing could put further progress on inflation at risk and could warrant further tightening of monetary policy. This in turn will push up bond yields.

What does it mean?

Historically, it was observed the bond yields in other countries, including India, rose when US yields showed any uptrend and vice versa. However, the quantum of increase varies depending on domestic factors. India’s 10-year yield rose by 162 basis points from 5.76 per cent (July 10, 2020) while US yields jumped by 400 bps to 5.02 per cent. The rise indicates that the cost of funds in the financial system is rising and interest rates are on the upswing.

The rising bond yield means the government will have to pay more as yield (or return to the investors), leading to a rise in cost of borrowings. This will have an overall impact on the financial system, putting upwards pressure on the general interest rates in the banking system.

Analysts say that rising yields

hint at expectations of sticky and higher inflation coupled with possibilities of a rate hike or status quo on interest rates. US Fed has hiked interest rates by 500 basis points from 0.25-0.50 per cent to 5.25-5.50 per cent since May 2022. In short, rising yields put severe pressure on an upward movement in interest rates. Rising yields can also trigger a flight of capital from bank fixed deposits to sovereign guaranteed bonds as the differential in yields widen.

What’s the impact on bond investors?

The rise in bond yield means that investors are expecting a rise in interest rates and are therefore selling the bond papers they are holding. Since a rise in interest rates would result in decline in bond price of existing bonds (and thereby capital loss on sale before maturity), investors rush to sell those bonds so as to limit the capital loss.

Debt investors are set to get impacted with this rise in yield. When yields rise and bond prices fall, net asset values of debt funds which hold a sizeable chunk of government securities in their portfolios will also decline, because of the decline in bond price. Further, it will also impact corporate bonds which are priced higher than government bonds.

What’s bond yield?

A bond is a type of loan made by an investor to a borrower – a company or an institution – for a fixed period of time in return for regular interest payments. The yield on bond is the return an investor expects to receive each year over its term to maturity.

For the investor who has purchased the bond, the bond yield is a summary of the overall return that accounts for the remaining interest payments and principal they will receive, relative to the price of the bond. The prices at which investors buy and sell bonds in the secondary market move in the opposite direction to the yields. Rising bond yields could also have a cascading negative impact on equities.

‘India to outpace Japan to become second-largest economy by 2030’

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

INDIA’S GROSS domestic product (GDP) is expected to rise to \$7.3 trillion by 2030 and it will surpass Japan to become the second largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region, S&P Global Market Intelligence said in a recent article.

By 2030, India’s GDP is also forecast to surpass Germany. At the end of 2022, the size of Indian GDP had already become larger than the GDP of the UK and also France, it said. India is now the third-largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region and the fifth-largest in the world.

“India’s nominal GDP measured in USD terms is forecast to rise from \$3.5 trillion in 2022 to \$7.3 trillion by 2030. This rapid pace of economic expansion would result in the size of the Indian GDP exceeding Japanese GDP by 2030, making India the second largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region,” S&P Global Market Intelligence said in an article published on October 20.

India is expected to continue to be one of the world’s fastest growing economies over the next decade, which will make it one of the most important long-term growth markets for multinationals in a wide range of industries, including manufacturing industries such as autos, electronics and chemicals to services industries such as banking, insurance, asset management, health care and information technology, it said.

The article said that after two years of rapid economic growth in 2021 and 2022, the Indian economy has continued to show sustained strong growth during the 2023 calendar year. The country’s GDP growth rate rose to a pace of 7.8 per cent year-on-year in April-June of 2023, compared with growth of 6.1 per cent in the January-March quarter of 2023. The strong growth rate was despite high base year effects after GDP growth of 13.1 per cent y/y in the April-June quarter of 2022.

“The near-term economic outlook is for continued rapid expansion during the remainder of 2023 and for 2024, underpinned

by strong growth in domestic demand,” the article said. The acceleration of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India over the past decade reflects the favourable long-term growth outlook for the Indian economy, helped by a youthful demographic profile and rapidly rising urban household incomes, it said.

The long-term outlook for the Indian economy is supported by a number of key growth drivers, with its large and fast-growing middle class being an important factor which is helping to drive consumer spending, the article said.

It said that the rapidly growing Indian domestic consumer market as well as its large industrial sector have made the country an increasingly important investment destination for a wide range of multinationals in many sectors, including manufacturing, infrastructure and services.

The digital transformation of India that is currently underway is expected to accelerate the growth of e-commerce, changing the retail consumer market landscape over the next decade. This is attracting leading global multinationals in technology and e-commerce to the domestic market.

By 2030, 1.1 billion Indians will have internet access, more than doubling from the estimated 500 million internet users in 2020. The rapid growth of e-commerce and the shift to 4G and 5G smartphone technology will boost home-grown unicorns like online e-commerce platform Mensa Brands, logistics startup Delhivery and the fast-growing online grocer BigBasket, whose e-sales have surged during the pandemic, it said. The large increase in FDI inflows to India that has been evident over the past five years is also continuing with strong momentum evident even during the pandemic years of 2020-2022.

India’s strong FDI inflows have been boosted by large inflows of investments from global technology MNCs such as Google and Facebook that are attracted to India’s large, fast-growing domestic consumer market, as well as a strong upturn in foreign direct investment inflows from manufacturing firms, it said.

Governments race to regulate AI tools

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) are complicating governments’ efforts to agree laws governing the use of the technology



BRITAIN

Planning regulations: The country’s competition authority set out seven principles on September 18 designed to make developers accountable, prevent Big Tech tying up the tech in their walled platforms, and stop anti-competitive conduct like bundling

CHINA

Implemented temporary regulations: The country issued a set of temporary measures in August, requiring service providers to submit security assessments and receive clearance before releasing mass-market AI products

G7

Seeking input on regulations: G7 leaders in May called for the development and adoption of technical standards to keep AI “trustworthy”.

EUROPEAN UNION

Planning regulations: European lawmakers are yet to agree on several issues related to new AI rules.

JAPAN

Investigating possible breaches: Japan expects to introduce regulations by the end of 2023 that are likely closer to the US

UNITED NATIONS

Planning regulations: The UN Security Council in its formal discussion on AI addressed military and non-military applications of AI that “could have very serious consequences”, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

Source: Reuters

KKR, Cube, IRB put in bids for highway assets

MUKESH JAGOTA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE NATIONAL Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has received two bids each for two bundles of highways it plans to monetise through toll operate

transfer (ToT) model in the coming weeks.

The bidders for highways grouped under ToT Bundle 11 have received bids from Cube Highways and Oriental Structural Engineers. For stretches in the ToT Bundle 12 bids have come from global in-

vestment firm KKR’s Highways Infrastructure Trust and IRB Infrastructure.

TOT bundle 11 includes Allahabad bypass of the total length of 87 km and Bundle 12 houses a highway stretch of 316.8 km from Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh to Lakhnador in

AI Express set to induct 350 pilots soon

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

AIR INDIA Express, the low-cost carrier controlled by the Tata group, is all set to induct 350 pilots who are undergoing training currently. These additions will almost double the number of pilots, from 400 currently to almost 800, with the airline.

These additions come at a time when the airline industry is facing one of its worst crisis, in terms of pilot shortage.

This is part of the airline’s plan to more than double the pilot pool of the airline from 400 to 800-900 over the next one year, Alok Singh, managing director, Air India Express, told FE.

The expanded recruitment drive is fuelled by the series of new aircraft scheduled to join its fleet. The Air India group, com-



As of September end, Air India Express only has a 7.1 per cent market of the domestic market share. File

prising four airlines – Air India, Vistara, Air India Express, AirAsia India – is set to take delivery of one new aircraft every six days between now and the end of 2024. This translates into a minimum count of new aircraft inductions to 70. Typically, one aircraft needs 15-16 pilots. Air India Express, which will shortly see

full integration of AirAsia India into itself, is aiming to double its domestic market share to 15 per cent over the next five years. In the short haul international sector, the airline is aiming to hit 20 per cent market share in 5 years as compared to 11 per cent.

“These are not lofty targets but completely doable. These are

fairly robust targets,” Singh added.

Formed to serve short-haul international routes such as the destinations in the Middle East, Air India Express has negligible share in the domestic market. As of September end, Air India Express only has a 7.1 per cent market of the domestic market share, which is entirely of AirAsia India, according to data from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The business expansion by Air India Express comes at a time when the country faces one of its worst pilot shortage crises.

Akasa Air, the low-cost carrier formed little over a year ago, had to cancel flights and stop operations on certain routes after around 40 of its pilots (around 10 per cent of its total pilot pool) quit within three days or without serving their notice period. **FE**

Madhya Pradesh.

Bundle 12 has the biggest block of highways that have been offered for monetisation. Under ToT model the winning bidder gets the right to collect toll on highways built by the NHAI for a specified period in lieu of upfront payment. **FE**

BYJU’s CFO Ajay Goel quits after audit, Nitin Golani gets additional charge of India CFO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

EDTECH COMPANY BYJU’S Chief Financial Officer Ajay Goel has quit the company after completing the audit process for the financial year 2022 and is returning to Vedanta, the company said in a statement on Tuesday.

The edtech major has roped in industry veteran Pradip Kanakia as the senior advisor, and President (Finance) Nitin Golani has been given additional responsibility as India Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to handle the finance function of the company.

“I thank the founders and colleagues at BYJU’S for helping me assemble the FY’22 audit in three months. I appreciate the support received during a short but impactful stint at BYJU’S,” Goel said. He will transition after completing the formalities of the financial year (FY) 2022 audit, the statement said.

The company had planned

a board meeting in the second week of October to adopt the result but it could not be held due to the resignation of Goel in process, according to sources.

While the audit process by Goel is complete, the auditor BDO (MSKA & Associates) will sign off the audit after doing due diligence as the resignation of the CFO has a material impact on the company’s audit process.

The FY 2022 result will be placed before BYJU’s board for adoption after BDO (MSKA & Associates) completes the process, the source said.

Goel has resigned after his six-month stint at the company. BYJU’S announced his appointment in the first week of April as Group CFO but due to internal restructuring he was given charge of handling finance at India level. Within two months of Goel’s joining, BYJU’S auditor Deloitte resigned in June citing a delay in the submission of financial statements for FY 2022.

EXPLAINED

LAW

Telangana law under scanner: how preventive detention works

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

AS TELANGANA gears up for Assembly polls next month, its stringent preventive detention law is under the spotlight. In at least three separate instances, the Supreme Court has red-flagged the Telangana government's use of the law. The latest was in a ruling on September 4, where a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Dipankar Dutta underlined that the “pernicious trend prevalent in the state of Telangana” has not escaped the Court’s attention.

What is preventive detention?

Preventive detention means detention of a person by the state without trial and conviction by court, but merely on suspicion. It could be up to a year unless extended. A pre-trial detention is not the same as preventive detention. While the former is an un-

dertrial accused of a crime, a detainee can be taken into custody just as a preventive measure even if he has not committed a crime.

In countries such as Britain and the US, preventive detention is a wartime measure. In India, the Constitution makes space for preventive detention. Part III of the Constitution, which deals with fundamental rights, also gives the state the power to suspend these rights for preventive detention. Despite its emphasis on individual liberty, Part III, which forms the basic structure of the Constitution that cannot be amended, contains provisions for preventive detention under Article 22.

Under what laws can the state order preventive detention?

Among central legislations, the National Security Act, the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA) are examples of laws under which preventive deten-

tion can be ordered.

As many as 25 states also have preventive detention legislations, like the Telangana law, which is called The Telangana Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Dacoits, Drug-Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Land-Grabbers, Spurious Seed Offenders, Insecticide Offenders, Fertiliser Offenders, Food Adulteration Offenders, Fake Document Offenders, Scheduled Commodities Offenders, Forest Offenders, Gaming Offenders, Sexual Offenders, Explosive Substances Offenders, Arms Offenders, Cyber Crime Offenders and White Collar or Financial Offenders Act, (PD Act), 1986.

Other examples are the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug Offenders, Forest Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Trafficking Offenders and Slum Grabbers Act, 1982; the Gujarat Prevention of Antisocial Activities Act, 1985; the Bihar Control of Crimes Act, 1981, etc.

What are the powers of the state?

Article 22 prescribes protection against arrest and detention but has a major exception. It says in Article 22 (3) (b) that none of those safeguards apply “to any person who is arrested or detained under any law providing for preventive detention.” The remaining clauses — Article 22(4)-(7) — deal with how preventive detention operationalises.

First, the state, which would be the district magistrate, would issue an order to detain a person when it is necessary to maintain “public order.” This could also be done through the police.

If the detention ordered is for more than three months, under Article 22(4), such a detention requires the approval of an Advisory Board. These Boards are set up by states and normally consist of retired judges and bureaucrats. A detainee is generally not allowed legal representation before the Board. If the Board confirms the detention, the detainee can move

Court challenging the detention order.

Article 22(5) of the Constitution mandates that the state is required “as soon as maybe,” to communicate to the detainee the grounds of detention and “shall afford him the earliest opportunity of making a representation against the order.”

A basic set of facts that are the grounds for detention are required to be communicated in one instalment, and the state cannot then add fresh, new or additional grounds to strengthen its original detention order. The grounds have to be read in a language that the detainee understands.

However, even this safeguard is diluted to a certain extent by Article 22(6), which says that nothing in clause 5 shall require the state to “disclose facts that the state considers to be” against the public interest to disclose.”

How do courts assess detention orders?

For preventive detention, there are very

narrow grounds of judicial review because the Constitution emphasises the state’s “subjective satisfaction” when ordering a detention. The touchstone on which the order is examined is this subjective opinion of the state rather than the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. When the Court cannot substitute the subjective satisfaction of the state with its own satisfaction, it essentially means that it cannot check the veracity of the facts mentioned in the grounds of detention.

A judicial review is limited to whether the Advisory Board applied its mind, considered all material facts and whether the state showed obvious malafide in ordering detention. Because judicial review is limited, courts often strike down detention orders on technical grounds, such as delay in the decision of the advisory board, communication of grounds in a timely fashion and in a language that the detainee understands, etc.

EXPLAINED

GLOBAL

‘MOST GENDER-EQUAL’ ICELAND SEES WOMEN’S STRIKE: HERE IS WHY

WOMEN OF Iceland went on a 24-hour strike on Tuesday to protest against gender discrimination, joined by their Prime Minister, Katrin Jakobsdóttir.

For 14 years in a row, Iceland has topped the World Economic Forum’s global gender gap rankings. Why are its women protesting inequality, then?

‘Paradise of equality’

Iceland is a European island nation in the North Atlantic Ocean, with a population of less than 4 lakh. Its women have made great strides in terms of representation in the workforce and legislation backing their right to equality. Many of these benefits came after a nationwide ‘women’s day off’ observed on October 24, 1975.

However, 48 years on, two key areas of concern remain — pay gap and gender-based violence. According to a report in *The Guardian*, in some professions, women still earn 21% less than men, and more than 40% of women have experienced gender-based or sexual violence. “We’re seeking to bring attention to the fact that we’re called an equality paradise, but there are still gender disparities and urgent need for action,” said Freyja Steingrimsdóttir, a strike organiser and the communications director for the Icelandic Federation for Public Workers.

The strike this time

The strike, called ‘*Kallarðu þetta jafnrétti?*’ (“You call this equality?”) being spearheaded by labour unions, is inspired by the 1975 action. Women are saying no to all kinds of work, paid and unpaid, including household chores and looking after children. Sectors like healthcare and education, which are heavily dominated by women, are likely to be the most affected, and many schools are shut or have curtailed hours.

A key aspect of the strike is that non-



Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdóttir has joined the women’s strike. *AP*

binary people have also been asked to participate, as they are seen as fighting the common problem of patriarchy.

The change they want

Activists involved in the strike said women being underpaid and the issue of gender-based violence both stem from the same kind of thinking, which sees women as lesser.

The problem of the gender pay gap persists despite a 2018 law that requires companies and government agencies to prove they are paying men and women equally. Work profiles more dominated by women, such as care work and hospitality, tend to be paid lower. Migrant women, often at the bottom of the workforce ladder, are paid even lesser.

Thus, this strike is aimed more at changing societal mindsets.

The 1975 strike

The 1975 ‘day off’ saw the participation of almost 90% of the island’s working women. A year later, in 1976, Iceland passed a law granting equal rights irrespective of gender.

ENS



AMITABH SINHA

THE WINTER deterioration in air quality in Mumbai is fast becoming an annual talking point, just like it has been in Delhi for the past decade. For long, Mumbai was considered largely immune to the issue of air pollution, and the associated problems of haze and smog, thanks to its coastal location. Strong sea breezes would blow dust and other suspended particles away, keeping the city’s air relatively clean.

But the last two years have shown that this geographical advantage no longer offers reliable protection. Last year saw the longest spell of poor air quality in the city, extending from November to January. On some days, Mumbai’s air was more polluted than Delhi. It happened again last week, as the air quality index (AQI) went beyond 300 in some parts of the city. An AQI of 200 or above is considered ‘poor’ air quality, while 300 and above signifies ‘very poor’ air.

These particularly bad spells have been triggered by several adverse meteorological conditions coming together at the same time, but as scientists point out, Mumbai’s air quality has, even otherwise, been seeing a consistent and steady decline.

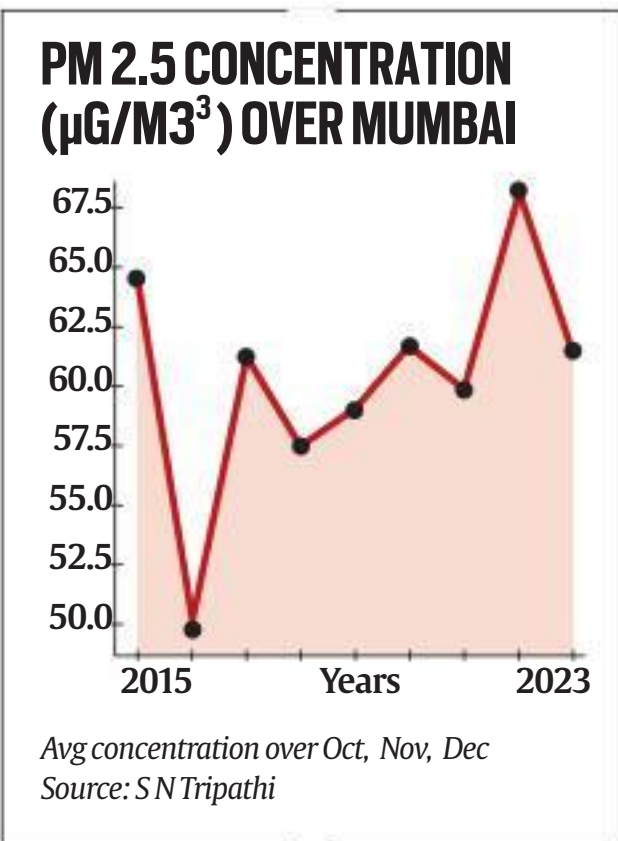
Wind patterns

The direction and strength of winds are often the key factor in determining Mumbai’s air quality. The city does not generate a lesser amount of pollutants than Delhi. The emissions from vehicles, industries and other sources are just as bad as in Delhi and in other major urban centres in the country. But strong winds, characteristic of any coastal location, turn out to be quite beneficial here.

Winds usually alternate between moving from the sea towards the land, and moving from the land towards the sea. This cycle repeats every three to four days during this time of the year. When the wind is directed towards the sea, the dust particles get swept away. This acts as a natural cleansing mechanism. Sometimes, when the cycle gets tem-



Last week, AQI went beyond 300 in some parts of Mumbai. *Amit Chakravarty*



porarily disrupted for some reason, it has an impact on the city’s air quality.

Last year’s unusually bad air quality was attributed to frequent and prolonged disruptions in this normal cycle of wind patterns. Instead of alternating every 3-4 days, the winds were sometimes changing directions after eight or ten days. It was not immediately evident at the time, but the prevailing

La Nina conditions in the eastern Pacific Ocean could have had a role to play in that, according to Gufran Beig, a scientist who has closely monitored air pollution in Mumbai and other parts of the country.

La Nina is a condition in which the sea surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean become cooler than normal. This large-scale phenomenon influences weather events across the world, and has a wide variety of impacts. Last year was part of the longest and strongest La Nina events on record.

Beig, former project director of SAFAR, or System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research, a government-backed initiative to monitor and forecast air quality in select metropolitan cities, is in the process of publishing a paper on the role of La Nina on last year’s winter air quality in Mumbai.

“There were two aberrations last year. The frequency of the cleansing mechanism was disrupted, and the relatively calm wind conditions that Mumbai sees for about a week after the withdrawal of the monsoon prevailed for almost two months. That meant that even when the wind was moving towards the sea, it was not strong enough to blow away the pollutants effectively. Both of these could have been influenced by La Nina,” Beig said.

Different trigger this time

But La Nina is over, and has been replaced by its opposite phenomenon, El Nino. It is not as strong as La Nina was, and its effect is not yet known. Last week’s dip in air quality in Mumbai was triggered by a completely different reason, Beig said.

Last week, winds in Mumbai were relatively calmer as the monsoon retreated from the city. Also, the city’s temperature soared to a four-year high for October. That created a big temperature gradient between the city and the nearby hilly regions in the Sahyadri ranges. As a result, winds from these areas began moving towards Mumbai, picking up dust from the major construction projects being carried out in Navi Mumbai and surrounding areas.

“Such meteorological conditions are not unusual, and keep happening once in a while. These would have gone unnoticed had there been no dust sources in the way. The problem is the increasing number of sources of pollutants, and not the meteorological conditions that make the situation worse. But I think the worst is already over for Mumbai, for the time being. The conditions have changed, and the immediate impact could be an improvement in air quality. This does not ensure that the rest of the season would be clean, but what we saw last week, might be already over,” Beig said.

Overall deterioration

Unfavourable local weather conditions are certainly not the cause of bad air quality in Mumbai. The baseload generation of pollutants is very high and steadily getting over the city’s carrying capacity.

“There is no ambiguity. Long-term trends show a clear decline in Mumbai’s air quality, particularly in the last one decade. The reasons are quite obvious. There is a lot more economic activity, more vehicles, more construction, more consumption and more emissions. And there is no matching effort to mitigate the impacts,” said S N Tripathi, a professor at IIT Kanpur and one of India’s leading experts on air pollution.

“Mumbai is now even experiencing haze-like conditions on some days. This would never happen earlier,” Tripathi said.

Beig pointed out that even during the last week, visibility in some parts of Mumbai was extremely low, very similar to what happens frequently in New Delhi during the winter months.

The story of the Osage Indians’ murders, subject of new Scorsese film

VIDHATRI RAO
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

OVER SEVERAL years in the 1920s, members of Osage Nation, a native American tribe in Oklahoma in the United States, were murdered. The Osage had recently become very rich after oil was found on their land.

The killings — of possibly scores of Osage — led to the structuring of the FBI, then called the Bureau of Investigation. More fundamentally, they revealed the loot of the land and resources of the continent’s native peoples by white settlers.

Martin Scorsese’s *Killers of the Flower Moon* — based on David Grann’s 2017 book of the same name — tells the story of the so-called Reign of Terror of this period. The film opens in India on October 27.

The Osage

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson purchased the territory of the state of Louisiana from the French. This land was dominated by the Osage.

Grann writes that the Osage were compelled to give up their territory, move to Kansas, and eventually allocated a reservation (a land reserved for a tribe under a treaty) in northeastern Oklahoma.

The Osage were able to buy the land in Oklahoma through money received from selling their Kansas land. As part of the negotiations with the government, the Osage tribe leaders said that the oil, gas, coal, or other minerals “covered by the lands” are exclusively reserved for the Osage.

Oklahoma, and oil

This land that they moved to “was sitting above some of the largest oil deposits in the United States,” Grann writes. Each of the members of the Osage community “received a headright or a “a share in the tribe’s mineral trust”. These headrights could only be inherited, through family or marriage. The only way others could get to the oil was by paying the Osage for leases and royalties.

A number of white settlers poured in for the oil and the Osage too began leasing out more and more land.



The oil deposits in Oklahoma ended up propelling the Osage people to a lot of wealth. *Wikimedia Commons*

But the Osage were not entirely in control of the oil or their finances. There was a system of “financial guardians” mandated by law, where many Osage people were assigned a white guardian. In 1921, the Congress implemented even stricter legislation. “Guardians would not only continue to oversee their wards’ finances; under the new law, these Osage Indians with

guardians were also ‘restricted,’ which meant that each of them could withdraw no more than a few thousand dollars annually from his or her trust fund,” Grann writes.

The murders

The book and the film are centred around the family of an Osage woman named Mollie Burkhart. Mollie was married to Ernest

Burkhart (played by Leonardo DiCaprio in the film), a white man. He was the nephew of William K Hale (Robert DeNiro), a rich and influential settler in the reservation. In 1918, Mollie lost her sister Minnie to a “peculiar wasting illness”. Over the years, more and more of her relatives died. Other Osage people were also poisoned, shot, and killed in other ways. Investigations were launched, but went nowhere.

In 1923, the Osage tribe requested the federal government to send investigators who “had no ties to the county or to state officials”. The official death toll in the Osage territory between 1921-’25 was 24. Newspapers described this period as the ‘Osage reign of terror’.

The FBI enters

The Bureau of Investigation was created by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908, but even until the 1920s, it “had only a few hundred agents and only a smattering of field offices,” Grann writes. In December 1924, Herbert Hoover became the director of the bureau (before his presidential tenure) and was responsible for shaping it

into a “monolithic force”.

An agent named Tom White was deployed to the Osage Country in 1925. He eventually found the most important thread in the killings of Mollie’s family members: with each death, headrights of the oil deposits were being directed to her.

The trial

By gathering evidence from multiple sources, White and his team traced the killings to Hale. Ernest, Mollie’s husband, confessed, saying he has been “privy to all the mechanics of Hale’s plots”.

White could not connect all of the 24 murders to Hale, but he did find links to show Hale benefitted from two killings.

Eventually, the Osage were able to get a law passed, which barred anyone who was not at least half Osage from inheriting headrights from a member of the tribe.

Beyond the official count

Grann writes that many scholars and investigators have looked into and believe the “Osage death toll was in the scores, if not the hundreds”.



SCORECARD

SOUTH AFRICA vs BANGLADESH
WANKHEDE STADIUM, MUMBAI
Toss: South Africa, elected to bat

SOUTH AFRICA

Q de Kock † c N Ahmed b H Mahmud **174** (140b, 15x4, 7x6)
R Hendricks b S Islam **12** (19b, 1x4)
R van der Dussen lbw b M Hasan Miraz **1** (7b)
A Markram (c) c L Das b S Al Hasan **60** (69b, 7x4)

H Klaasen c Mahmudullah b H Mahmud **90** (49b, 2x4, 8x6)
D Miller not out **34** (15b, 1x4, 4x6)
M Jansen not out **1** (1b)
■ Extras (lb3 w7) **10**
■ Total (50 overs) **382/5**
■ FoW: 1-33 (Reeza Hendricks, 6.1 ov), 2-36 (Rassie van der Dussen, 7.5 ov), 3-167 (Aiden Markram, 30.4 ov), 4-309 (Quinton de Kock, 45.1 ov), 5-374 (Heinrich Klaasen, 49.2 ov)

■ Bowling: M Rahman 9-0-76-0, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 9-0-44-1, Shoriful Islam 9-0-76-1, Shakib Al Hasan 9-0-69-1, Hasan Mahmud 6-0-67-2, Nasum Ahmed 5-0-27-0, Mahmudullah 3-0-20-0

BANGLADESH

T Hasan c †Klaasen b Jansen **12** (17b, 1x4)
L Das lbw b Rabada **22** (44b, 3x4, 1x6)
NH Shanto c †Klaasen b Jansen **0** (1b)
S Al Hasan (c) c †Klaasen b Williams **1** (4b)
M Rahim † c sub (AL Phehlukwayo) b Coetzee **8** (17b, 1x4)

Mahmudullah c Jansen b Coetzee **111** (111b, 11x4, 4x6)
MIH Miraz c sub (AL Phehlukwayo) b Maharaj **11** (19b, 1x4)

N Ahmed c & b Coetzee **19** (19b, 3x4)
H Mahmud c Coetzee b Rabada **15** (25b, 2x4)
M Rahman c Miller b Williams **11** (21b, 2x4)
S Islam not out **6** (4b, 1x4)

■ Extras (lb2 nb 2 w13) **17**
■ Total (46.4 overs) **233**

■ FoW: 1-30 (Tanzid Hasan, 6.1 ov), 2-30 (Najmul Hossain Shanto, 6.2 ov), 3-31 (Shakib Al Hasan, 7.2 ov), 4-42 (Mushfiquur Rahim, 11.5 ov), 5-58 (Litton Das, 14.6 ov), 6-81 (Mehidy Hasan Miraz, 21.6 ov), 7-122 (Nasum Ahmed, 28.3 ov), 8-159 (Hasan Mahmud, 36.4 ov), 9-227 (Mahmudullah, 45.4 ov), 10-233 (Mustafizur Rahman, 46.4 ov)

■ Bowling: Marco Jansen: 8-0-39-2, Lizaad Williams 8.4-1-56-2, Gerald Coetzee 10-0-62-3, Kagiso Rabada 10-1-42-2, Keshav Maharaj 10-0-32-1

South Africa go XXL again

De Kock (174 in 140), Klaasen (90 in 49), Miller (34 in 15) power Proteas to their third 380-plus total in WC; B'desh fall short by 149

ANIL DIAS

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

Three days after their mammoth victory over England in the sweltering Mumbai heat where their players were on the verge of collapsing, South Africa pulled off another big win — this time against Bangladesh.

South Africa won the toss and elected to bat and what followed was a controlled blitz which helped them score 382 for 5 — the third time in five games they have posted a 380-plus score. When they bat first, they score big and that seemed to be the general plan. Maybe they also wanted to avoid fielding first in the heat and humidity after seeing how England's players struggled the other day.

South Africa didn't get off to a flyer and were 36 for 2 in the eighth over. After the 37th over at the Wankhede Stadium, South Africa were 208-3. Quinton de Kock had just completed his third century of this World Cup and was on 106 while Heinrich Klaasen, who scored a century against England in those tiring conditions, was just getting warmed up at 24.

But by the end of the 50 overs they got close to 399, the total they had posted against England.

On their part, Bangladesh seemed to be doing everything fairly well. They kept their bowling tight, got two early wickets, and had just broken a 100-plus run partnership.

But then South Africa decided it was time to switch gears. With 13 overs to go, they switched to T20 mode. For 10 out of the next 13 overs, they effortlessly scored in double digits to give Bangladesh a mammoth target of 383. In fact, in the last 10 overs, they amassed 144 runs to completely take the game away from Bangladesh.

De Kock stole the show with a 140-ball 174, the highest score at this World Cup but just four runs short of his all-time highest ODI score of 178, Klaasen's 90 and David Miller's late cameo — an unbeaten 15-ball 34 — was at the core of South Africa's batting might.

It's true that South Africa's batting has not been tested much in this tournament — apart from when chasing against the Netherlands. In fact, losing two wickets early to Bangladesh was the most pressure they were put under. But they calmly went about rebuilding their innings, soaking in the early pressure, not accelerating when they didn't need to and content just punishing the loose balls.

With the return of their regular captain Shakib Al Hasan, Bangladesh had a spring in their step. After reducing South Africa to 36-2 in eight overs, they would've thought they had a chance. The only way to topple this South African team with an extremely deep batting line-up was to get wickets at regular intervals. But South Africa knew that against a Bangladesh team with a relatively weak batting line-up, a score of 260-plus might give them a good chance.

Calm before the storm

Stand-in skipper Aiden Markram, leading the side in place of Temba Bavuma, who's suffering from a gastric illness, and de Kock decided that stability was the need of the hour. They knew that if they stuck around, they could manage another skyscraping total. It's not like they didn't whack the ball around the park whenever they got the opportunity though.

The duo targeted Shakib and medium-pacer Hasan Mahmud. An adrenaline-filled six or boundary every couple of overs seemed to calm their nerves. Till the 37th over, they were content making the scoreboard tick.

They accelerated a bit after the 38th over. However, it was only in the 43rd over, when Shakib brought himself on, that they decided to completely switch gears.

De Kock reached his 150 in his 150th ODI with a six, his second of that over. He also hit



South Africa players celebrate the dismissal of Bangladesh opener Liton Das —lbw Kagiso Rabada. Deepak Joshi

GOING BIG

382

South Africa made their third 380-plus score in this World Cup against Bangladesh on Tuesday. They also scored 428 against Sri Lanka and 399 against England. In fact, South Africa have won 8 ODIs this year with a 300-run margin.

two boundaries with Bangladesh conceding 22 runs in that over.

When de Kock was caught at deep backward point in the 46th over, Klaasen and Miller continued with the hitting. Out of nowhere, Klaasen was on 90 but missed out on back-to-back centuries after being wonderfully set up by Hasan Mahmud. The pacer bowled a slow bouncer which Klaasen tried to slog for a six but was caught in the deep by Mahmudullah.

Despite their new ball bowler Lungi Ngidi being out with a minor knee niggle, it didn't look like the Rainbow Nation lacked any firepower in the bowling department.

Bangladesh looked steady at 30 for no loss after six overs but Marco Jansen struck with two wickets in as many balls to turn the tide.

When Ngidi's replacement Lizaad Williams took the third wicket in the next over, you knew that Bangladesh were in dire straits and when Kagiso Rabada took the fifth wicket in the 15th over, Bangladesh were clearly out of the contest.

The lone spark for them was Mahmudullah, whose 111-ball 111 which included 11 boundaries and four sixes disrupted South Africa's plans for an early finish and much-deserved rest.

Quinton: Divisive figure, genius and batting atlas

MIHIR VASAVDA

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

PADDY UPTON, the South African mind master who has untangled the complex worlds inside cricket and hockey dressing rooms, described it the best without having to use his own words.

Explaining the underrated genius of Quinton de Kock, the sports psychologist who has been a part of Gary Kirsten's coaching staff with South Africa and India, dipped into a brief conversation he had with Rahul Dravid. It was the summer of 2016 and Upton had just taken over from Kirsten as the coach of Delhi Daredevils in the IPL. He was over-seeing de Kock's nets session when Dravid, the team's mentor, walked up to him.

"Rahul said to me that what we were witnessing was the act of a genius. He said that we, as South Africans, did not appreciate just how good this guy was," Upton told The Cricket Monthly in an interview. "I had goosebumps when Rahul told me this. It was an incredible moment."

On Tuesday, Bangladesh would have enduring nightmares of de Kock's 'genius'.

There was a stuffed tiger in the stands. Eleven stuffed tigers on the field. And a glum-looking man in tiger's stripes in the lower tier of the Sachin Tendulkar stand with hands on his head. All shell-shocked at another South African carnage.

Indeed, it was Heinrich Klaasen who once again made a professional bowling unit look maiden grade with his imperious hitting. But it was de Kock's nuanced knock of 174, which saw an equal measure of control and aggression, that led South Africa to back-to-back massive wins at Wankhede after a shock de-



Quinton de Kock's 174 was his third century in this World Cup. Deepak Joshi

feat to the Netherlands.

In Mumbai's sapping humidity — not as hot as it was against England but sultry nevertheless — de Kock spent 199 minutes on the field, running tirelessly between the wickets (72 of his runs came in 1s and 2s) and switching to big-hitting, including a reverse-sweep six off Mahmudullah, towards the end. When he was dismissed in the 46th over, de Kock had scored more than half of South Africa's runs (174 out of 309).

The twin victories have bolstered the World Cup's most entertaining side's net run rate and propelled them closer to the semi-finals. And it's strangely poetic that the man adorning the hero's cape for them in this campaign is also the one who, quite often,

has remained inscrutable behind the anti-hero mask he frequently wears.

De Kock — the tournament's highest run-scorer so far (407 runs in 5 matches) and has scored one-sixth of the centuries in this World Cup (3 out of 18 so far) — is making his ODI swansong an affair to remember; going out on a high for someone who has had a conflicted relationship with the team.

On one end of the spectrum, de Kock is celebrated as one of the country's greatest wicket keeper-batsmen and is spoken about in the same breath as the Bouchers, Gilchrist and Dhonis. On the other extreme, he's looked upon as a feisty character whose loyalty has often been put to test.

Once, when — in 2021 — he refused to play in a T20 World Cup match when the players had been asked to take a knee in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. That de Kock informed captain Temba Bavuma that he was willing to skip a match but not take a knee on the way to the stadium in Dubai irks many even now.

In the same year, after he announced his retirement from Tests in the middle of a home series against India — once again, without informing captain Bavuma beforehand — it further stoked sentiments against him.

So you can guess which way the debate would have swung when he decided to walk away from ODIs after the World Cup for T20 money — which he has been candid about.

De Kock has made no secret about him being a 'feisty character' but his reputation has preceded him since his younger days when he reportedly got tangled in many dressing room tiffs, including with his coaches.

In the same interview where he recalled the conversation with Dravid, Upton also

provided great insight into de Kock's character.

"When a guy is as naturally gifted as Quinton there is a risk of blow-ups when things go against them. He's also a naturally shy and quiet guy and so isn't necessarily going to vocalise any frustrations he may be feeling," Upton told the website. "The energy contained within him has the power to be explosive on a cricket field but it can also explode in other ways."

Exploding in the middle

Luckily for South Africa, the left-hander more often than not exploded in the middle.

De Kock, now 30, was 20 when he made his ODI debut. He'll end his career as South Africa's most dominant opener, with a strike rate of close to 100; better than everyone else. He has the fifth-best ODI average among South African batsmen, pointing to the fact that he isn't merely a PowerPlay hitter.

Only four players — Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan and Joe Root — have scored more runs in ODIs since de Kock made his debut in 2013. And with 20 tons, he has the fourth most ODI centuries for his country; behind Hashim Amla (27), AB de Villiers (25) and Herchelle Gibbs (21).

Crucially for South Africa, they have lost just two times in the 20 ODIs in which he has scored a century. No wonder, then, that the South Africans believe that for them to finally go all the way in this World Cup, they'll need de Kock to be at his best.

Whether South Africa go from chokers to champions over the next three weeks remains to be seen. But one thing is sure, when de Kock will hang the iconic green jersey at the end of the campaign, the fans will ask 'why' not 'when'.

TIME FOR BRICKBATS



FAREWELL BISHAN SINGH BEDI



The Indian cricketing fraternity turned up in large numbers to attend the last rites of legendary Indian spinner Bishan Bedi at the capital's Lodhi Road crematorium. Bedi, 77, had passed away on Monday following prolonged illness. Among those in attendance to pay their tributes were former skippers Kapil Dev and Mohammad Azharuddin. Other international stars present were Virender Sehwag, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Murali Karthik, Ajay Jadeja, Maninder Singh, Kirti Azad and Madan Lal. The cricketers who shared a close bond with Bedi were seen interacting with Bedi's wife Anju, son Angad, daughter Neha, daughter-in-law Neha Dhupia and son-in-law Gaurav. *Anil Sharma*

SHORT TAKES

Free popcorn and cold drink to be given to all fans at Wankhede

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) will be providing free popcorn and a cold drink to all fans turning up to watch World Cup games to be played at Wankhede Stadium. The decision was taken by MCA president Amol Kale after the South Africa vs Bangladesh World Cup league game held at Wankhede Stadium on Tuesday.

Mumbai will be hosting the game between India and Sri Lanka on November 2, followed by Australia vs Afghanistan and the semi-finals on November 15. The fans will have to show their tickets at the counter and after getting it stamped they will be provided with free popcorn and a cold drink.

"I had proposed to provide free one time popcorn and cold drink to all fans who turn up to watch World Cup games. It will be for non-hospitality areas. Once their tickets are stamped, free popcorn and coke will be given to each fan. The MCA will bear the cost of it. We will be starting this from India vs Sri Lanka game and it will be done till the semis. The MCA Apex members have agreed to the proposal," Amol Kale said.

Meanwhile, Kale also informed that MCA will be unveiling the Sachin Tendulkar statue on November 1 before India plays Lanka in Mumbai. MCA had decided to honour Tendulkar earlier this year and his life size statue has been prepared by a well known artist from Ahmednagar in Maharashtra.

In March, Tendulkar visited the spot where his statue would be placed. "The committee guided me, and in the area outside the MCA lounge, there will be a roundabout which will be created, and the statue will come up there. The background of it will be the stadium and all our action happened there (inside the ground). It is one spot, a crowd can come and get pictures clicked, and at the same time it is accessible," Tendulkar had said then.

"My journey started from here only, I had come to the stadium to support Shardashram (Vidyamandir) senior team. I left my match and it was then that Achrekar sir reprimanded me, the journey began from there," the former Mumbai batsman had recalled.

"Those children who used to do well in Mumbai cricket, they were kept as ball boys. I was a ball boy here too. I played Mumbai first-class cricket here and all my big moments happened at the venue. For me, the biggest moment in my life came in the 2011 World Cup and it happened on this ground. My retirement also happened here, with this ground, I have an emotional attachment towards it and I can't compare it with anything," he added.

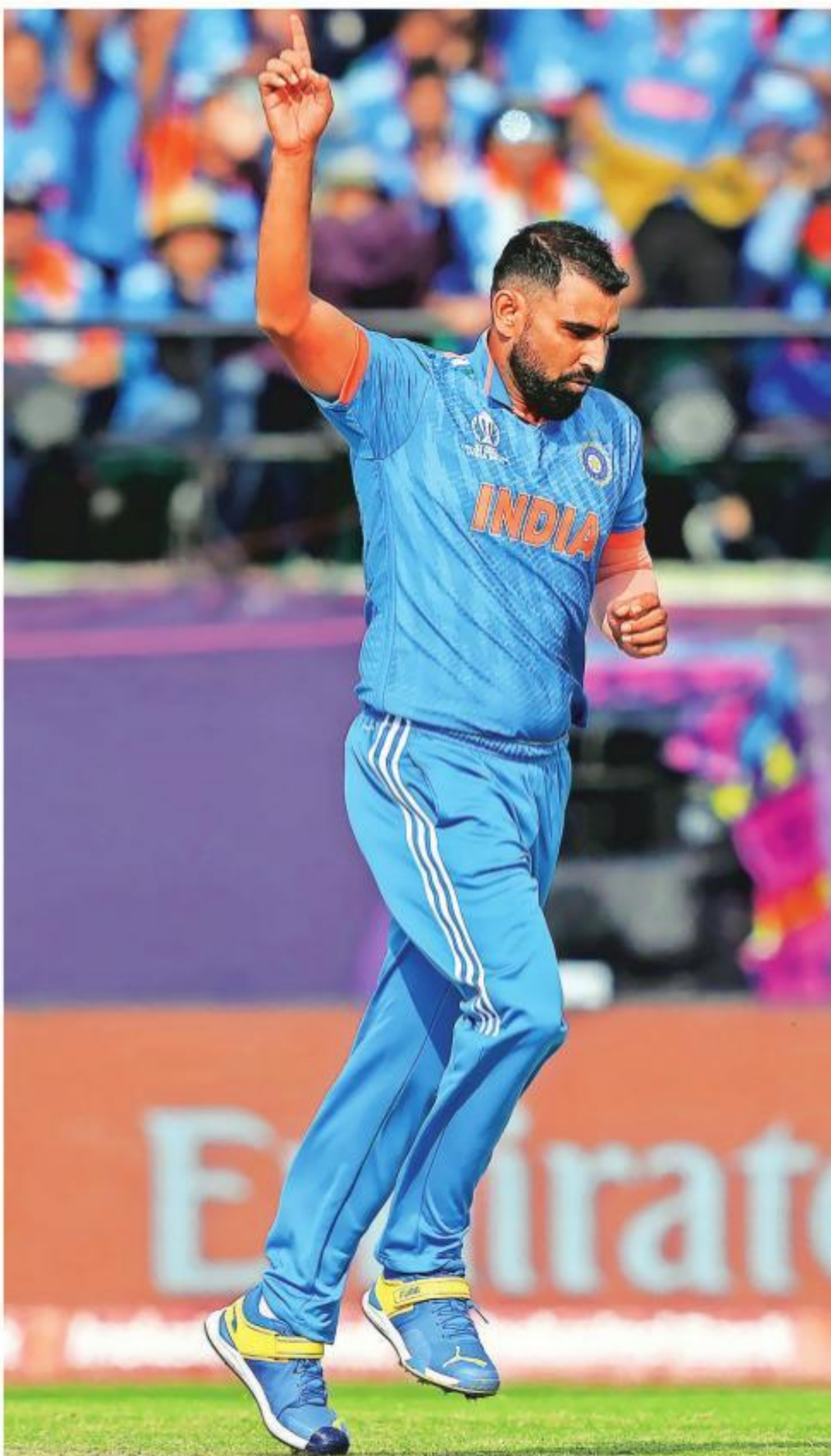
-DEVENDRA PANDEY

STANDINGS

	M	W	L	T	Pts	NRR
Ind	5	5	0	0	10	+1.353
SA	5	4	1	0	8	+2.370
NZ	5	4	1	0	8	+1.481
Aus	4	2	2	0	4	-0.193
Pak	5	2	3	0	4	-0.400
Afg	5	2	3	0	4	-0.969
Ned	4	1	3	0	2	-0.790
SL	4	1	3	0	2	-1.048
Eng	4	1	3	0	2	-1.248
Ban	5	1	4	0	2	-1.253

Balance or risk and reward

Will India stick with Shami instead of Shardul, hence prioritising a strike bowler over a medium-pace all rounder



Mohammed Shami has provided India with a selection dilemma moving forwards after his fifer against New Zealand in Dharmasala. *PTI*

RAHUL PANDEY

DHARAMSALA, OCTOBER 24

IT WAS one of the loudest pops in Dharamsala on Sunday. Fast bowler Mohammed Shami scampered in from over the stumps, producing a length ball with that perfect upright seam. It would come into opener Will Young, who dragged it onto his stumps and pop.

Shami had struck in his first ball of this Cricket World Cup.

For Shami, who was benched for the previous four India games in the tournament, it was business as usual. It raised a pertinent question, Why didn't the Indian management look at him as a first choice bowler from the very first game of the World Cup?

Shardul Thakur has been entrusted in place of the most-experienced new ball bowler in India's World Cup squad to add an extra batting option. While his batting prowess is yet to be put under test at the marquee event, it's the medium pacer's returns with the ball that have been a bigger concern. "In the games that he played, we saw him as someone who certainly has a happy knack of taking wickets and then bowling those middle overs for us," the head coach Rahul Dravid would say.

That knack is yet to be seen with only two wickets from the 17 overs in three outings at this World Cup. The economy rate has subsequently gone up from 5.16 to 6.00 to 6.55.

With Shami's wall-breaking return, India have a big decision to make. Do they persist with their talismanic seamer or opt for their only seam bowling all-rounder in the absence of Hardik Pandya?

Pandya is recovering from an ankle injury. Cut down on the runs or prioritize scoring them? With just a single outing at this World Cup, Shami makes a strong case for the former.

Ironically, it's the absence of Pandya that made India shelve the only seaming all-rounder in Shardul and go for Shami. It would make sense if it had happened the other way. Pandya's absence made them swap out Shami for Shardul to boost the batting, but their thought process has been different.

Against New Zealand, Shami arrived for his first spell following a four-over burst from Jasprit Bumrah, to bowl in tandem with Mohammed Siraj. Together, the troika gave as few as 34 runs in the batting powerplay - third lowest at this World Cup. The reason behind it? Persistently pitching the ball in the 6m-8m mark ahead of the stumps - 85 percent throughout the first 10 overs.

Shami himself, landed 17 off his 24 deliver-

EXPLAINED Seam dilemma: Scrambled vs Straight

Shardul Thakur had recently shared the secret about his scrambled-seam ball. "After pitching what is going to happen... even I don't know. So the batsman is always guessing. I am always guessing," he had said. Thardul, in pursuit of breakthroughs, is also known to vary his length and pace. In comparison, Mohammad Shami is predictable.

But as the Kiwis found out in Dharamsala, tough to handle. Shami's seam is unflinchingly straight and most of his balls are pitched back of length. Be it IPL or ODIs, the senior pros stick to Test match tactics. Shami's biggest strength is the heavy ball that climbs on the batsmen after pitching. The bounce makes it tough for batsmen to score boundaries square to the wicket. He also has a knack of getting wickets. India face a dilemma: A classical pacer with a time-tested wicket-taking method vs a less-speedy bowler who mixes up his weapons.

ies in the good length region. This, on an atypical Dharamsala pitch without the grass covering and the characteristic nippy conditions.

"I bowled a good line and length and took whatever came my way," Shami would put it afterwards. It's been his stubbornness to opt for hard lengths that's rewarded him even in the shortest format of the game. In the IPL this year, more than two-thirds of his 28 wickets had come off in the powerplay, where he's relentless with 'good line and length'.

Diversity in arsenal

However, the diversity in his arsenal was called for in the latter spells as a 159-run stand between Rachin Ravindra and Daryl Mitchell gave new life to a faltering Kiwi innings.

The ball had gotten softer and the pitch, even less of an assist than it was in the opening spell. Ravindra had shown the temerity to play him cross batted in the first spell and got away with it. Taking a hint, Shami would take him out of the equation off another attempt. This time though, shortening the

length and taking the pace off with a cutter. Miscued straight to long off.

Come the death overs, he'd pitch it up to clean the house. Mitchell Santner, who has a particularly high backlift, stood no chance of bringing the bat down in time as Shami angled in a yorker from round the wicket to uproot the off stump. Matt Henry would lose his leg stump off the next one. This one, from the other side. Pitched slightly back - full and in the slot - it skidded before crashing onto the stump. Even Daryl Mitchell, who had batted 126 deliveries before, could only toe end his bat as Shami served him a full ball outside the off stump.

New Zealand, who were 174/2 with 16 overs to be played, could only add 99 more to their total as Shami and Co. switched lengths further up to cramp them of room in the death overs. It was what the Indian bowlers seemed to be missing in Pune. With Hardik Pandya ruled out midway through the innings, Rohit Sharma would be forced to extract more overs from Shardul Thakur than usual. Nine overs that costed India as many as 59 runs. Unlike Shami, Shardul's lengths across both his different spells were far more scattered, making him far more predictable to batters on a flat deck.

Such as when Tanzid Hasan Tamim flicked him off a length ball over deep square leg, Shardul would pitch the next one further back. Something the Bangladesh opener had preempted as he shimmied down the track to slam it over mid-on for another boundary. He'd perhaps seen the next one coming as well. A slower-overpitched delivery he met with the full face of the bat from deep inside his crease for another six. To his credit, altering lengths is what has helped Shardul get that knack of picking wickets against the run of play which Dravid spoke of. However, with just a single spell Shami has offered India an alternative.

Question is, can they drop the 'team balance' for it? It's a keyword that's been thrown around a lot over the past couple of years. It was used when Ravichandran Ashwin was opted for last year's T20 World Cup ahead of Yuzvendra Chahal. Again, when Axar Patel was looked over Ashwin in the first place for a home World Cup. Even before their last game, the head coach had conceded that his side felt less balanced than they did at the beginning of the competition, given the injury of Hardik Pandya. Can they look beyond another seaming all-rounder for a full-time pacer? Given his only game of the tournament, why not?

Coach Andrew McDonald told media on Monday that the team were "optimistic" about his availability for the game on Wednesday, and Marsh echoed the sentiment the next day, revealing he will be happy to play at number three if Head returns.

"Very happy to go back down to (number) three. I have obviously batted there a lot over the last couple of years, so I feel really comfortable there. And if and when Head comes back in, I think that's the best position for me to play for this team," he said at a news conference.

Head's inclusion is likely to push Smith down to number four and remove Labuschagne from the playing XI. The team's balance at the top of the batting order will be aided by Head, but his handy off-spin might reduce the pressure from Glen Maxwell's shoulders, who has been Australia's only spin option outside of Zampa.

With Head back, Australia would return to their first-strength XI. They won't just be seeking a win in Delhi on Wednesday, but also looking to tick boxes that are yet to be ticked, like early wickets from their formidable new-ball seamers, and solid middle-order batting performances, in particular from Smith, whose big-match presence is required as Australia is headed to the business end of the tournament.

If their Tuesday afternoon training session was anything to go by, any hurried urgency or mild panic has been replaced by a certain kind of ease

But complacency could cost the five-time champions. After Afghanistan's wins over England and Pakistan, and the Netherlands' win over South Africa, upsets are not alien to this tournament.

"Teams have gotten better. I think that's great for world cricket," Mitch Marsh told a press conference on Tuesday. "We've said it multiple times now in this tournament, there's absolutely no easy games. And you go into every game having done all the appropriate homework and hopefully you can come out with a win."

Head inclusion possible

While no confirmation was given over the availability of opener Head, his arrival in Delhi, and long training session on Monday, is certainly a boost to Australia's hopes this tournament.



Both Mitchell Marsh and David Warner scored centuries in the game against Pakistan in Bengaluru. *AP*

coming up next - against Ashes foe England and in-form neighbours New Zealand - to keep the momentum going, getting a comfortable win over lower-ranked opposition is key.

With Travis Head return on cards, Aus on turnaround mode

NAMIT KUMAR

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

OCTOBER IN Delhi is a buoyant time. Scorching heat paves the way for an ever-so-slightly pleasant breeze. The upbeat mood around the festivities are almost enough to overpower the stench of the air-pollution. There is, quite literally, a changing of the wind.

The Australian cricket team, making a pit-stop in the national capital midway through an up-and-down World Cup group stage to take on the Netherlands, would be hoping to ride that changing wind.

After they were trounced by both India and South Africa in their opening two matches, their campaign seemed destined to end in crisis, with questions circling their ageing veterans, a curious team selection in picking just one spinner, and fatigue for their all-format players in a tightly-scheduled season.

But after beating Sri Lanka and then making a statement by thumping Pakistan, aided by favourable results elsewhere, they are right back into the contenders' conversation. It's almost as if to say that counting out Australia, the world's premier red-ball team

and five-time champions of this quadrennial 50-over event, after the first two games is not the smartest call.

Balance seems to be returning. Openers David Warner and Mitch Marsh both got the runs flowing with centuries in the previous game. Their only frontline spinner, Adam Zampa, recovered from a slow start to show he can choke opposition with economy and wickets in the middle overs. The pinch-hitting middle-order powers of Marcus Stoinis, and regular opener Travis Head, have both made their way back from injury. The fielding has been sharper, although not perfect. Momentum is on their side.

If their Tuesday afternoon training session was anything to go by, any hurried urgency or mild panic has been replaced by a certain kind of ease. There were only hour-long sessions for their top batsmen. Marnus Labuschagne put in a routine shift. Warner looked in solid touch, when timing the ball with traditional strokes as well as when experimenting a few pinch-hitting techniques. Steve Smith - well overdue a meaningful contribution in this tournament - was the most animated, working on a very specific area of his game, perhaps his recent struggles against seam early in his innings.

With a potentially tricky set of fixtures