



CANADA, GERMANY, JAPAN, UK AMONG 45 WHO ABSTAIN

Terror knows no borders, says India as it abstains on UN resolution on Gaza truce

Jordan-drafted resolution made no mention of Hamas attack

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, OCTOBER 28

TERRORISM IS a "malignancy" and knows no borders, nationality or race and the world should not buy into any justification of terror acts, India told the United Nations General Assembly as it abstained on a resolution on the Israel-Hamas conflict.

The 193-member General Assembly adopted the Jordanian-drafted resolution that called for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities. It did not make any mention of the militant group Hamas.

The resolution, which garnered 121 votes in favour, 44 abstentions and 14 member states voting against it, also demanded the immediate, continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip. (According to AP and Reuters, 120 voted in favour, 14 against, and 45 abstained).

The resolution was titled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations."

India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



An Israeli mobile artillery unit is positioned near the border with Gaza as Israel expanded its ground operation in the besieged enclave on Saturday. AP

SECOND STAGE OF WAR BEGINS: NETANYAHU PAGE 12

UKRAINE, G20, GAZA

Over deep faultlines, New Delhi walks diplomatic tightrope again

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

INDIA'S ABSTENTION at the UN General Assembly on the resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza — it had no references to either Hamas or hostages — exemplifies New Delhi's bid to address competing imperatives in the ongoing conflict.

Here are four broad take-aways:

- First, India joined Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Ukraine and the United Kingdom in the group of 45 countries that abstained on the resolution that called for an "immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities" and unhindered **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Decision is shocking, says Opp; India will not side with terror: BJP

Priyanka: Ashamed, against principles

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

INDIA'S DECISION to abstain from voting on the resolution on the Israel-Hamas conflict at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) triggered a war of words between the BJP and Opposition parties on Saturday.

Criticising the government, the Congress and Left parties said it was "shocking" and "goes against everything the country has stood for".

Hitting back, the BJP said India's position on the Israel-Palestine issue is "steadfast and consistent", and argued that those who choose to "side with terror" should do so at their own peril.

While calling for an immediate and sustained humanitarian truce in the region, the resolution does not mention the Hamas.

Leading the Congress charge **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Manipur: Almost six months after clashes began, only 25% of looted arms found

6.5 lakh rounds of ammunition had gone missing, less than 5% recovered

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

ALMOST SIX months after violence broke out in Manipur, the state government has been able to recover only about a quarter of the arms and less than 5 per cent of the ammunition stolen during the peak of violence in May, *The Indian Express* has learned.

Of the approximately 5,600 arms looted, roughly 1,500 have been recovered, and out of approximately 6.5 lakh rounds of ammunition that went missing,



Nearly 80% of looted arms were from police and state armouries in 3 districts. File

about 20,000 have come back to the police so far, according to sources. This is despite Chief **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Shortage of digital scales weighs down Nandurbar fight against malnutrition

RUPSA CHAKRABORTY
MUMBAI, NANDURBAR, OCT 28

IN ITS battle against malnutrition, Nandurbar is short of a key weapon: digital weighing scales.

An impasse over procurement has meant that for around three years now, anganwadi workers, public health centres (PHCs) and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA workers) — those in the frontlines of this battle — have had their hands tied without the weighing scales that are crucial to assess malnutrition in infants, pregnant women and new mothers.

District Collector Manisha Khatri told *The Indian Express*, "Around 3-4 years ago, after we selected the contractor for supplying weighing scales, one of those who lost the bid filed a **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Antiquities from Met set to return as US hands over 1,414 objects

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

THREE MONTHS after it returned 105 antiquities smuggled from India, the United States is learnt to have offered another batch of 1,414 objects for repatriation.

According to official sources, these objects have already been handed over to the Consulate General of India in New York. As per the procedure, a team from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) — the custodian of all Indian antiquities — is being sent to the US for verification of the objects, after which the repatriation process can be initiated, sources said. The ASI team will also authenticate the objects as "antiquities" or "non-antiquities".

While no specific details regarding their age or region have **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

शस्त्रं धीरमृतिमेघञ्जिबलायुः शुक्रचक्षुषाम् ।
बालवृद्धप्रजाकान्तिचोकुमार्यश्चिदार्थिनाम् ॥
(अथर्ववेद विघ्नहर्त्र - 11.2.5.1)

आयुर्वेद्युतम् ॥
— (मेराचिणी संहिता) —

In Ayurveda Cow's Ghee is equivalent to Amrit

But greedy people are playing with the people's lives by adulterating Ghee with animal fats, vegetable oils, artificial taste and colour etc.

That is why we have made available Patanjali Cow's desi Ghee that conforms to more than 60 parameters of purity.

Beneficial for memory and intelligence • Enhances strength, longevity and youth
Improves eye sight • Gives glowing skin and saves from geriatric impacts

1 L (905 g at 45°C)

GROUND IN A STONE CHAKKI

WHICH GIVES BETTER QUALITY ATTA & DELICIOUS SOFT ROTIS

100% ATTA
0% MAIDA

6 HOURS SOFTNESS

DELICIOUSLY SOFT & PUFFY ROTIS

Parle - G Gold Parle - G Oats & Berries

Parle - G Cookies Parle - G Royale

Also try our other variants

DOWNLOAD APP

- VISUAL STORIES
- DAILY BRIEFING
- PODCASTS
- CUSTOMIZABLE NEWS EXPERIENCE

Indian Express
★★★★ 4.6

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO DOWNLOAD THE APP



PAIN HUSTLERS MOVIE REVIEW: EMILY BLUNT AND CHRIS EVANS ARE TREATED LIKE PRETTY PROPS IN NETFLIX'S SLICK BUT SLEAZY CRIME DRAMA

Directed by Harry Potter veteran David Yates and starring Emily Blunt and Chris Evans in the lead roles, the new Netflix crime drama is a skin-deep effort to slice through serious themes.

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY PROVOST ON STUDYING IN SPAIN

'Would advise Indian students to come with an open mindset'

UPSC SPECIALS

Scan the QR code and get 'the express edge' in your civil services preparation with our UPSC specials

EXPRESS AUDIO

Game Time: Should India host the Olympics?

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

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

India abstains on UN's Gaza resolution

Ambassador Yojna Patel, in Explanation of Vote, said that in a world where differences and disputes should be resolved by dialogue, this august body should be deeply concerned at recourse to violence. "That too, when it happens on a scale and intensity that is an affront to basic human values," Patel said. Patel added that violence as a means to achieve political objectives damages indiscriminately and does not pave the way for any durable solutions.

Describing the terror attacks in Israel on October 7 as shocking, Patel said they deserve condemnation. India's explanation of the vote did not mention Hamas.

"Terrorism is a malignancy and knows no borders, nationality or race. The world should not buy into any justification of terror acts. Let us keep aside differences, unite and adopt a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism," she said.

India expressed hope that the deliberations of the General Assembly will "send a clear message against terror and violence and expand prospects for diplomacy and dialogue while addressing the humanitarian crisis that confronts us."

Patel said India is "deeply concerned" at the deteriorating security situation and astounding loss of civilian lives in the ongoing conflict. "The escalation of hostilities in the region will only

exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. It is necessary for all parties to display the utmost responsibility," she said. India also called for the "immediate and unconditional release" of the hostages.

Earlier, Iraq had abstained on the resolution but later changed its vote to a yes citing "a technical problem" at the time of voting. Countries voting against the resolution included Israel and the US. China, France, and Russia voted in favour of the resolution while Canada, Germany, Japan, Ukraine and the UK abstained.

The resolution called for immediate, full, sustained, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, the International Red Cross and all other humanitarian organisations upholding humanitarian principles and delivering urgent assistance to civilians in the Gaza Strip.

It encourages the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians.

Patel stressed that casualties in the ongoing conflict in Gaza are a telling, serious and continuing concern and it is civilians, especially women and children, who are paying with their lives. "This humanitarian crisis needs to be addressed," Patel said, wel-

coming the international community's de-escalation efforts and delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.

She noted that India, too, has contributed to this effort. India has sent 38 tonnes of humanitarian goods, including medicines and equipment to the people of Palestine.

Patel reiterated that India has always supported a negotiated two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine issue, leading to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine, living within secure and recognised borders, side by side in peace with Israel. "For this, we urge the parties to de-escalate, eschew violence and work towards creating conditions for an early resumption of direct peace negotiations," she said.

Before the General Assembly voted on the resolution, it considered an amendment proposed by Canada and co-sponsored by the US. The amendment proposed by Canada asked for inserting a paragraph in the resolution that would state that the General Assembly "Unequivocally rejects and condemns the terrorist attacks by Hamas that took place in Israel starting on 7 October 2023 and the taking of hostages, demands the safety, well-being and humane treatment of the hostages in compliance with international law, and calls for their immediate and unconditional release." India voted

in favour of the amendment, along with 87 other nations, while 55 member states voted against and 23 abstentions. The draft amendment could not be adopted as it failed to get a 2/3rd majority of members voting.

The adopted resolution called for the rescinding of the order by "Israel, the occupying Power", for Palestinian civilians and UN staff, as well as humanitarian and medical workers, to evacuate all areas in the Gaza Strip north of the Wadi Gaza and relocate to southern Gaza.

It also called for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians who are being held captive, demanding their safety, well-being and humane treatment in compliance with international law. It emphasised the importance of preventing further escalation of violence in the region and called upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint and upon all those with influence on them to work toward this objective.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres voiced deep concern at the humanitarian system in Gaza, saying it is facing a total collapse with unimaginable consequences for more than 2 million civilians. "Given the desperate and dramatic situation, the UN will not be able to continue to deliver inside Gaza without an immediate and fundamental shift in how aid is going in," Guterres said. **PTI**

Over deep faultlines, New Delhi walks diplomatic tightrope again

humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip.

This resolution was drafted by a group of 22 Arab countries and was proposed by Jordan, which has been vocal in its criticism of the Palestinian civilian casualties in the Israeli bombardment. Among the co-sponsors of the resolution were Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan, Russia, and South Africa.

France voted in favour of the resolution with a telling nuance. It said that "nothing can justify the suffering of civilians" and "all victims deserve our compassion, all lives are equal and there is no hierarchy between them."

At the same time, it expressed regret that a "condemnation of the terrorist attack carried out by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel" was missing in the text.

Israel, the United States, five small Pacific island nations, and four Eastern European countries — Austria, Croatia, Czechia, and Hungary — were among the 14 members who voted against the resolution. Jordan said a vote against the resolution would amount to approving a "senseless war" and "senseless killing", while Israel rejected the vote as "infamy".

Second, the amendment proposed by Canada and co-sponsored by the US, sought to fix the responsibility of Hamas in the crisis. It asked for the insertion of a paragraph in the resolution that the General Assembly "unequivocally rejects and condemns the terrorist attacks by Hamas that took place in Israel starting on 7 October 2023 and the taking of hostages, demands the safety, well-being and humane treatment of the

hostages in compliance with international law, and calls for their immediate and unconditional release".

India went with the majority (87) on this vote while 55 member states voted against it, and 23 abstained. The President of the 78th session of the UNGA, Dennis Francis, announced that the draft amendment could not be adopted.

AP reported that Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram drew loud applause when he said the Arab-drafted resolution had deliberately not condemned or mentioned either Israel or any other party.

So, Akram argued, "If Canada was really equitable (with its proposed amendment), it would agree either to name everybody — both sides who are guilty of having committed crimes — or it would not name either as we chose."

Third, unlike resolutions of the UN Security Council, resolutions of the UNGA are not legally binding. Therefore, despite the comprehensive defeat, Israel and the US are not obliged to act on the resolution. However, as the UAE's representative told reporters, the resolution carries "incredible weight and moral authority".

"120 votes in this kind of geopolitical environment is a very, very high signal of the support for international law, for proportionate use of force, and it is a rejection of the status quo that is currently happening on the ground," UAE's Lana Nusseibeh was quoted as saying.

Fourth, India's position is in tune with its stand in the other ongoing — and deeply polarising — conflict, the Russia-Ukraine

war. While the circumstances, politics, and conditions of the two wars are different and not comparable, the diplomatic toolkit of hedging and balancing has been a consistent feature of New Delhi's approach.

This is what carried the day during the consensus-building exercise at the G20 Summit as well. However, the geopolitics of the Middle East is more fraught as well as closer home — and India will need to mobilise its diplomatic skills and goodwill with the main actors to negotiate the coming weeks and months.

Said a source: "Our vote on the Resolution was guided by our steadfast and consistent position on the issue. Our Explanation of Vote reiterates this comprehensively and holistically."

"The Resolution in the UNGA did not include any explicit condemnation of the terrorist attacks of October 7. An amendment was moved to include this aspect, prior to the vote on the main Resolution. We voted in favour of the amendment and it obtained 88 votes in favour (but not the requisite two thirds majority)," the source said.

"In the absence of all elements of our approach not being covered in the final text of the Resolution, we abstained," the source said.

India's Explanation of Vote (EoV) frames the next steps that New Delhi will take as it affirms its support to Israel when it comes to the horrific attacks on its civilians and articulates its concern over the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

It condemned violence, especially the October 7 Hamas at-

tacks, and called for the "immediate and unconditional release" of hostages. Calling terrorism "a malignancy," it asked the world not to "buy into any justification of terror acts". This is in line with New Delhi's stand on terror — and has an added resonance given the 15th anniversary of the Mumbai attacks next month.

It balanced out its support with a statement on the plight of the people in Gaza and by not mentioning Hamas by name. "Casualties in the ongoing conflict in Gaza are a telling, serious and continuing concern. Civilians, especially women and children are paying with their lives. This humanitarian crisis needs to be addressed. We welcome the international community's de-escalation efforts and delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. India too has contributed to this effort," New Delhi's statement said.

India expressed concern at the security situation and urged "all parties" — which would include both Israel and its rival Iran, as well as groups like Hezbollah — to exercise restraint and "utmost responsibility."

New Delhi also reiterated its principled position on the Israel-Palestinian issue by underlining its support for a negotiated "two-state solution leading to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine living within secure and recognised borders, side-by-side in peace with Israel."

It underlined the primacy of diplomacy and dialogue calling on "parties to de-escalate" and create conditions for an "early resumption of direct peace negotiations."

Manipur

Minister Biren Singh repeatedly threatening action against those found with illegal weapons.

In fact, the state government had in September too submitted a status report on the recovery of arms and ammunition stolen from the police and state armouries in the wake of ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki communities since early May.

Almost 80% of the looted arms were from police and state armouries located in three districts — Imphal East, Churachandpur and Bishnupur.

Between these three districts, Imphal East leads with over 3,500 stolen arms (out of the total of roughly 5,600) and almost 4 lakh looted ammunition (out of roughly 6.5 lakh). The campuses of the 7th battalions of Manipur Rifles, the 8th India Reserve Battalion (both in Khabeisoi village) and the Manipur Police Training College (in Pangel village) are located in the Imphal East district.

Approximately 1,000 arms (out of 5,600) were stolen from armouries in Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts.

Given that the majority of the looted weapons are from Imphal East, predictably most of the arms recovered to date, are also from the district of Imphal East (over 650). According to sources, the arms and ammunition loot happened mostly in May when the violence peaked. "With the exception of a few stray incidents, there was no looting after May," said a source.

Since the incidents of looting, the state government has deputed CRPF personnel to guard all armouries. "In armouries situated in critical and tense areas where it wasn't possible to depute CRPF personnel, the weapons have been moved out completely," the source said.

In Manipur, clashes first erupted on May 3 in the area at the border of Churachandpur and Bishnupur districts following a protest called by the All Tribal Students' Union of Manipur after a Manipur HC order directed the state to submit a recommendation to the Union government for the grant of Scheduled Tribe status to the Meitei community.

Antiquities from Met set to return to India

been provided to the ASI at this stage, the US authorities have said the 1,414 objects, from different sources, seem to be of "Indian provenance".

A senior official said the batch includes some antiquities from New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met).

According to an investigation in March by *The Indian Express*, in association with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and the UK-based Finance Uncovered, a treasure trove at the Met was traced to antique dealer Subhash Kapoor who is serving a prison term in Tamil Nadu for smuggling antiquities.

After the publication of the series, the Supreme Court of the State of New York had issued a search warrant against the Met on March 22, giving the authorities 10 days to seize the antiquities. On March 30, the Met had issued a statement saying it would "transfer 15 sculptures for return to the Government of India, after having learned that the works were illegally removed from India". Of the 15 items listed in the search war-

rant, 10 were flagged in *The Indian Express* report.

In July, the Indian government had said the objects from the Met were expected to arrive in the country in the next three-six months. While 105 antiquities were handed over by the US authorities to the Indian Consulate in New York on July 17, and repatriated to India in August this year, the Met's objects were not among them.

ASI officials said the new batch of 1,414 objects is likely to include non-antiquities as well, and will be ranked accordingly, keeping the definition of "antiquity" in mind.

As per the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, an antiquity is defined as "any coin, sculpture, painting, epigraph or other work of art or craftsmanship; any article, object or thing detached from a building or cave; any article, object or thing illustrative of science, art, crafts, literature, religion, customs, morals or politics in bygone ages; any article, object or thing of historical interest" that "has been in existence for not less than 100

years". Non-antiquities are generally decorative objects and idols, or replicas of original art objects used for ornamental purposes.

In the last four years, India has brought back about 400 smuggled/stolen antiquities from the US. Raising the issue during his state visit to the US in July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said: "I am happy that the American government has decided to return more than 100 antiquities that were stolen from us."

The two countries are signing a cultural property agreement to check the smuggling of antiquities in the future. In fact, India is pursuing agreements pertaining to the return of antiquities, through both bilateral and multilateral routes, with various other countries as well.

Meanwhile, officials said a team from ASI has just returned after a three-day visit to Singapore, where 16 metal sculptures stolen from India were discovered recently. These were stolen from various temples in Tamil Nadu, and FIRs had been lodged with the TN Police's idol wing.

Decision is shocking, says Opp; India will not side with terror: BJP

was the party's general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. "I am shocked and ashamed that our country has abstained from voting for a ceasefire in Gaza," she said, quoting Mahatma Gandhi that "an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind".

"Our country was founded on the principles of non-violence and truth, principles for which our freedom fighters laid down their lives, these principles form the basis of the Constitution that defines our nationhood. They represent the moral courage of India that guided its actions as a member of the international community. To refuse to take a stand and watch in silence as every law of humanity is pulverised, food, water, medical supplies, communication and power is cut off to millions of people and thousands of men, women and children in Palestine are being annihilated goes against everything our country

has stood for throughout its life as a nation," she said.

Reacting to her remarks, BJP leader and former Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said "those who are 'ashamed and shocked' must realise that India will never be on the side of terrorism".

"Our position on the Israel-Palestine issue is steadfast and consistent. Those who choose to side with terror do so at their own peril... On a lighter note, Priyanka Ji, you should first educate yourself on things that are put out from your X account. Looks like people who have no idea of Congress's past positions on the situation are advising you. What is worse is that in an attempt to make you look 'better' than Rahul, they are making you look silly," Naqvi tweeted.

The Left parties and AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi also criticised the government. "It is shocking

that India abstained on a resolution overwhelmingly adopted by the UN General Assembly calling for a humanitarian truce, titled 'protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations', in the ongoing Israeli offensive in Gaza," Left leaders Sitaram Yechury and D Raja said in a joint statement.

"India's abstention on a resolution that was overwhelmingly adopted shows the extent to which Indian foreign policy is being shaped by being a subordinate ally of US imperialism and the Modi government's actions for consolidating the US-Israel-India nexus. This negates India's longstanding support to the Palestinian cause," the statement said.

Saying that Israel has stepped up its "genocidal air and ground attacks" in the Gaza Strip, the Left leaders said "respecting the overwhelming mandate of the UNGA, there must be an imme-

diate ceasefire."

The CPI(M) said its top leaders would stage a dharna at its AKG Bhawan headquarters on Sunday in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Owaisi said India's decision to abstain reflected its "inconsistent foreign policy". "Narendra Modi condemned the Hamas attack but couldn't agree to a UN resolution seeking a truce. He spoke to the Jordanian King a few days ago, but abstained on a resolution that was introduced by Jordan. It is an inconsistent foreign policy," he said.

"This is a humanitarian issue, not a political one. In abstaining on the resolution, India stands alone in the Global South, in South Asia & in BRICS. Why did India abstain on an issue concerning civilian life? After sending aid to Gaza, why abstain? What happened to 'one world, one family' & 'vishwaguru'," he said.

Shortage of digital scales weighs down Nandurbar

court case. As a result, we couldn't procure the weighing scales and it led to a major shortage."

With a population of nearly 16 lakh, of which 70 per cent are from tribal communities, Nandurbar ranks the lowest in the state on the Human Development Index — a statistical measure of key dimensions of human development, including life expectancy. The scales are required to weigh infants, children and pregnant women and this data is used by anganwadi and ASHA workers to provide nutritional support in the hilly region.

The issue of lack of weighing scales in the district was highlighted in September by the government-appointed Tribal Project Core Committee, formed in 2018 in response to a public interest litigation (PIL) on malnutrition in the tribal areas of Maharashtra.

Sources in the committee said that as per a conservative estimate, Nandurbar, which has around 2,500 anganwadis, 2,000

ASHA workers and around 100 PHCs and sub-health centres, needs 5,000-7,000 weighing scales. When the committee carried out an inspection in September, visiting around 100 anganwadi centres in the district, it found no functional weighing scales.

Since then, however, the district administration claims to have partially resolved the problem and ordered the scales — both digital weighing scales and suspended ones called 'Salter scales' — with a budget of Rs 5 crore sanctioned for the procurement.

Sawan Kumar, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Nandurbar, told *The Indian Express*, "The court case, which was pending for a long time, has been resolved... Anganwadi centres have already received the Salter scales, and we are currently in the process of acquiring weighing scales for all healthcare centres, including PHCs and sub-centres."

Collector Khatri said, "We recently procured the scales — both Salter and digital scales. There are around 2,500 anganwadi centres and we have procured for most of the centres except for 5-7% of the centres, which, too, will get the supplies soon. In the next phase, we will supply them to ASHA (workers) and PHCs."

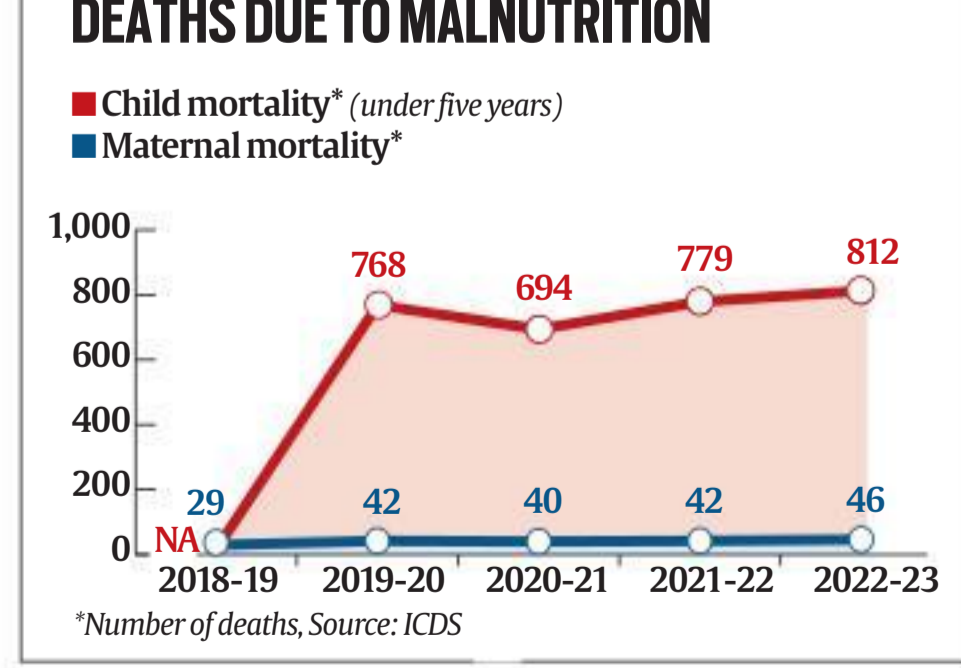
That leaves about 2,000 ASHA workers and 100 health centres still waiting for the scales.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends the use of digital weighing scales for monitoring maternal and infant health.

The last time the district got digital scales — both infant weighing scales and regular ones for adults — was in 2018, but ASHA workers and committee members allege the machines were of "poor quality and most, except for a few in some anganwadis, broke down within a year of use."

Bandu Sane, whose NGO Khoj filed the PIL in the Bombay High Court on malnutrition in tribal ar-

reas, said, "Since the tender goes to the lowest bidder, weighing scales procured this way are usually of subpar quality and tend to malfunction within a year. We have raised this issue multiple times during our core committee meetings with the district authorities." Sane is also a member of the government-appointed Tribal Project Core Committee that first highlighted the shortage of weighing scales.



Left with few options, many anganwadi workers say they have started making bigger homemade slings so that they can weigh children over three.

The sling (attached to the Salter hanging scales) is too small. We have no option but to use our old clothes to stitch new slings that are bigger in size. Also, the Salter hanging scale has to be suspended from a hook, which becomes a problem during home visits. We had asked for digital scales, but got these instead," said Sumita Valvi, an anganwadi worker at Akalkuva taluka.

Tribal Project Core Committee member Sane said the sensitivity of Salter hanging scales to movement makes precise weight measurement a challenge when it comes to infants who are usually restless when placed in these slings. "They (the Salter scales) are not suited for assessing critical weight fluctuations in infants under the age of six months who suffer from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). In fact, the slightest of inaccuracies in weighing undernourished infants —

even if by a few grams — can lead to misdiagnosis," said Sane.

ASHA workers say they have been making do by pooling in resources whenever possible.

ASHA worker Ratika Khandate said, "Most scales (given to us back in 2018) are dysfunctional... I have three useless weighing scales with me. So once a month, we call pregnant and new mothers to the few anganwadi centres where digital scales are still available and take their weight. But for infants, we have no option so far."

According to data obtained by *The Indian Express* from the Integrated Child Development Services, a government programme that provides health and education services to children under the age of six and their mothers, 2,094 (or 1.14%) of the 1,82,318 children screened in Nandurbar in June were found to have SAM and 14,347 (or 7.87%) Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) — both conditions that have serious consequences, including mortality and impaired intellectual development.

L-G nod to file appeal in SC against '84 riots case judgment

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

L-G VK Saxena has given his nod to file an appeal in the Supreme Court against a Delhi High Court judgment that dismissed an appeal against the acquittal of 12 people accused of murdering eight and injuring one during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in West Delhi's Nangloi.

According to L-G House officials, Saxena has approved the Home Department's proposal to file a Special Leave Petition in the Apex Court against the August 9 judgment of the Delhi HC by which the appeal against a trial court verdict acquitting all the accused was dismissed.

The HC had held that there was no explanation for an inordinate delay of 27 years in filing the appeal against the trial court verdict, pronounced on April 29, 1995, and that the grounds taken by the state were not justifiable. "Saxena perused the file concerning the proposal to move the SLP which stated that the HC has not taken into consideration merits of the case and instead dismissed the appeal of the state only on the ground of inordinate delay in filing the appeal," officials said.

The victims were Avtar Singh, Jagir Singh, Darshan Singh, Kulwant Singh, Baldev Singh, Sharvan Singh, Balwinder Singh and Harcharan Singh.

Speed cams on key roads led to dip in fatal accidents: Study

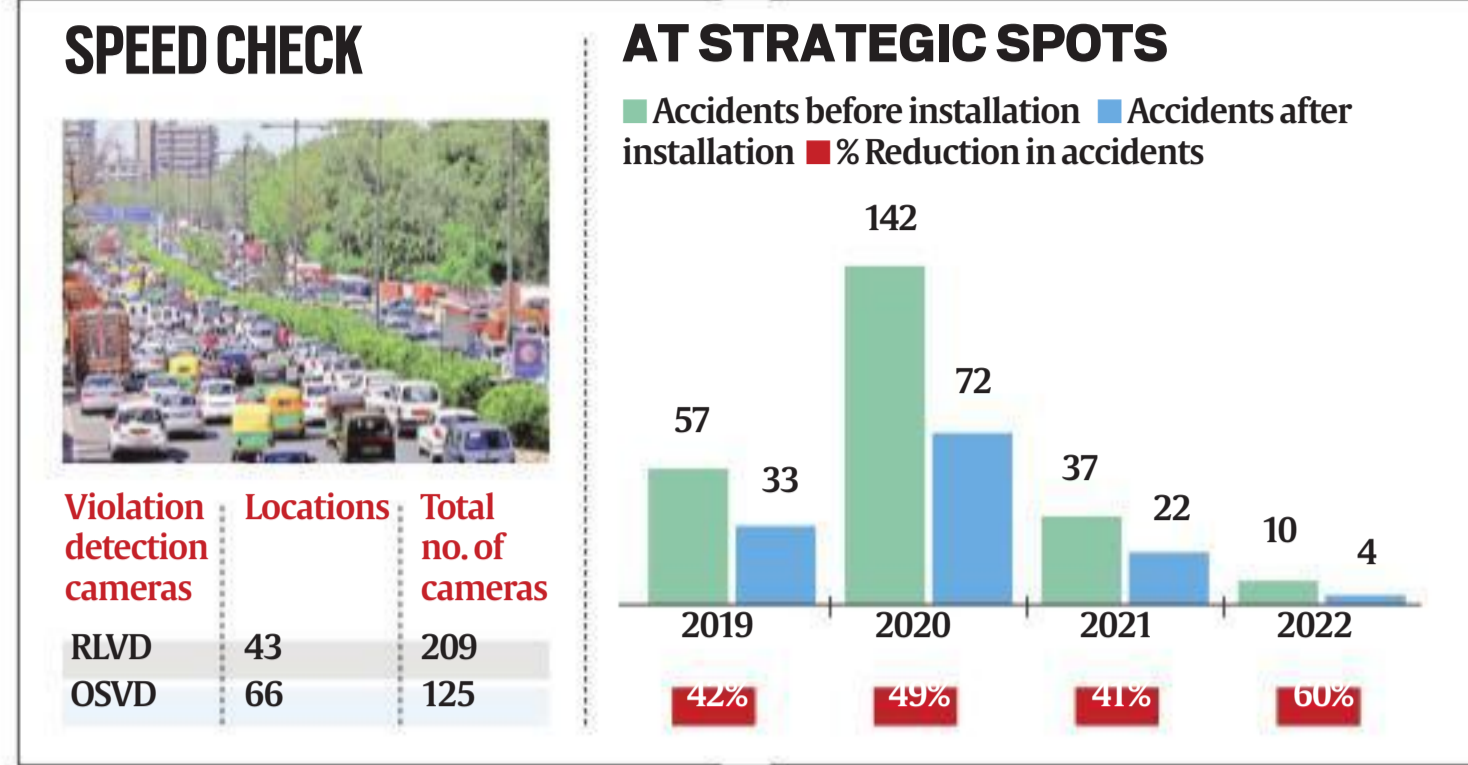
ARNABJIT SUR
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

FROM TRAFFIC cameras to getting engineering faults corrected, the city's streets have become safer due to several interventions made by the Delhi Traffic Police, according to reports compiled by the unit.

An analysis of the impact that the installation of Red Light Violation Detection (RLVD), Over Speed Violation Detection (OSVD) cameras, Violation on Camera App (VOCA) and radar gun or interceptors as part of ensuring traffic discipline on city's roads, has revealed a decreasing trend in accidents — and subsequently fatalities — at key junctions, the traffic police said.

According to the analysis report, the performance of 25 OSVD cameras installed at strategic locations on different Delhi roads as part of Phase 1 and a before and after study of these showed a trend of decline in fatal accidents. "Total number of fatal accidents reduced by 19% and the highest rate of decrease was found on Dev Parkash Shastri Road (60%)," stated the report.

The report of 100 OSVD cameras installed at strategic locations in Phase 2, the unit said, also yielded the same declining trend of accidents. "The total number



of fatal accidents reduced by 16%. The highest number of fatal accidents, 61, was reported on Outer Ring Road between September 1, 2019, and February 29, 2020. There was a 34% reduction during the period of February 1, 2020, to August 31 after installation of OSVDs," said officers.

Currently, there are 209 RLVD cameras at 43 locations and 125 OSVD cameras at 66 locations.

Special CP (Traffic Zone 2) SS Yadav said, "Traffic in Delhi-NCR is basically grappling with issues of disproportionate traffic volume count (TVC), a very high number of Passenger Car Units (PCUs) beyond the capacity of the roads, inappropriate user be-

haviour, road rage and lack of enforcement of traffic laws."

He added that installation of traffic cameras, sensors and GPS devices can help analyse traffic patterns, predict congestion, dynamically regulate traffic flow, and prosecute violators.

In continuation of its efforts to decrease accidents at crucial stretches through engineering interventions and reducing black spots which are most prone to fatal accidents, the Traffic Police also carried out a number of infrastructural additions at such spots.

At Signature Bridge, OSVD cameras, mastic strips and signboards were installed. Said the analysis report, "Median was of

low height; cement railing was first installed on it and later, a high iron grill was installed which prevents crossing over on the road by pedestrians and by two-wheelers and other vehicles."

Several interventions were also made at Anand Vihar ISBT to prevent accidents. Said the report, "Central verge iron grills were repaired... extension of footover bridge inside ISBT... movement of buses and autos was streamlined by jersey barriers and bollards."

These interventions are in continuation of changes made at several black spots, earlier reported by *The Indian Express*, which recorded highest accidents and fatalities last year.



IN SOLIDARITY

In New Delhi and across the globe, 229 balloons were released into the skies, each representing a man, woman, or child held hostage by Hamas. *IsraelinIndia/X*

AQI dips to 'very poor', to last till month end

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

DELHI'S AIR quality deteriorated to the "very poor" category on Saturday, and is predicted to worsen further due to unfavourable meteorological conditions. The city's 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 304, worsening from 261 on Friday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.

The AQI was 286 in neighbouring Ghaziabad, 268 in Faridabad, 248 in Gurgaon, 284 in Noida, and 349 in Greater Noida. According to the Centre's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, the city's air quality deteriorated to the 'very poor' category due to slow wind speed at night and a dip in temperatures.

The minimum temperature was 14.3 degrees Celsius, two degrees below normal and lowest of the season so far. The air quality is expected to remain very poor till the end of the month, CPCB said.

Crucial data that helped the government prepare a strategy to mitigate air pollution is missing. The Ministry of Earth Sciences' System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research, which provided data about contribution of smoke from farm fires to Delhi's air pollution, has not been providing updates. Similarly, data from the Decision Support System, a numerical model-based framework capable of identifying sources of particulate matter pollution in Delhi, isn't accessible to the public anymore.

Woman shot multiple times at Southeast Delhi home, dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

A 25-YEAR-OLD woman was shot dead in her home allegedly by the younger brother of a man she was in a relationship with in Southeast Delhi's Jaitpur Friday.

DCP (Southeast) Rajesh Deo said that on October 27, they received a PCR call from a man saying an unidentified assailant had shot his sister, Pooja, multiple

times. The brother later told police the assailant entered their house and fired at his sister. When he tried to chase the gunman, the latter fired at him too and fled.

Police said the accused, Rocky Yadav, was arrested. "Rocky disapproved of the woman's relationship with his elder brother as the latter is married and has four children," the DCP said.

Police said Rocky managed to procure a firearm and fired five times at the woman.

Autopsy conducted on Swiss woman; cops recover accused's chats with her

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

AFTER GETTING a go-ahead from the Swiss embassy, the autopsy of Swiss national Nina Berger, who was found dead near an MCD school last week, was performed at DDU Hospital on Saturday, said Delhi Police.

DCP (West) Vichitra Veer said, "The Embassy had given the 'go ahead' for the autopsy and

accordingly, a medical board was constituted and it conducted the procedure on Saturday."

He said they have been coordinating with the Embassy through the established channel and are yet to get a "confirmation on the identity of the victim". The autopsy report will be received in the coming days, added the DCP.

Police said the post-mortem was carried out after they received a No-Objection Certificate from the Embassy, which re-

ceived consent from the Berger's kin to carry out the procedure in their absence as they earlier expressed inability to come to India to identify the body.

The accused, Gurpreet Singh, is meanwhile in police custody for five days. "We have recovered his chats with Berger and are trying to ascertain what brought her to India in the first place... Singh used to deal in gemstones and we suspect he was in touch with other women..." said an officer.

RELIGARE Values that bind

Presents

The Indian EXPRESS AQDA

Co-presented by

WHERE NEWSMAKERS DROP IN FOR A CANDID CHAT.

Shefali Shah
Actor

Vir Das
Comedian and Actor

Jim Sarbh
Actor

in conversation with

Anant Goenka
Executive Director
The Indian Express Group

By invitation only

Associate Partners

Experience Partner

Use #ExpressAdda & join the conversation, live and exclusive on:

WORLD DAY STROKE 2023

29th October, 2023

Together we are #GreaterThanStroke

HOW TO PREVENT STROKE

Minimize consumption of salt and sugar/sweet

Do Regular Physical Activity

Avoid use of Tobacco

Avoid Alcohol Intake

Keep your Blood Pressure, Blood Sugar and Weight under Control

Every minute counts when it comes to stroke - BE FAST

B : Loss of Balance
E (Eyes) : Blurred Vision
F (Facial weakness) : Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, especially on one side
A (Arm weakness) : Sudden numbness or weakness in the arm, especially on one side
S (Speech difficulty) : Trouble speaking or slurred speech
T (Time to call) : Call 108 for emergency

In case of any of the above mentioned signs, immediately take the patient to the nearest hospital having CT Scan facility.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT, HARYANA

www.nhnharyana.gov.in

Information, Public Relations, Languages and Culture Department, Haryana

SOUTHERN STAR JEWELLERY

Today's 22 CT Gold Rate

₹57,300*

Per 10gms

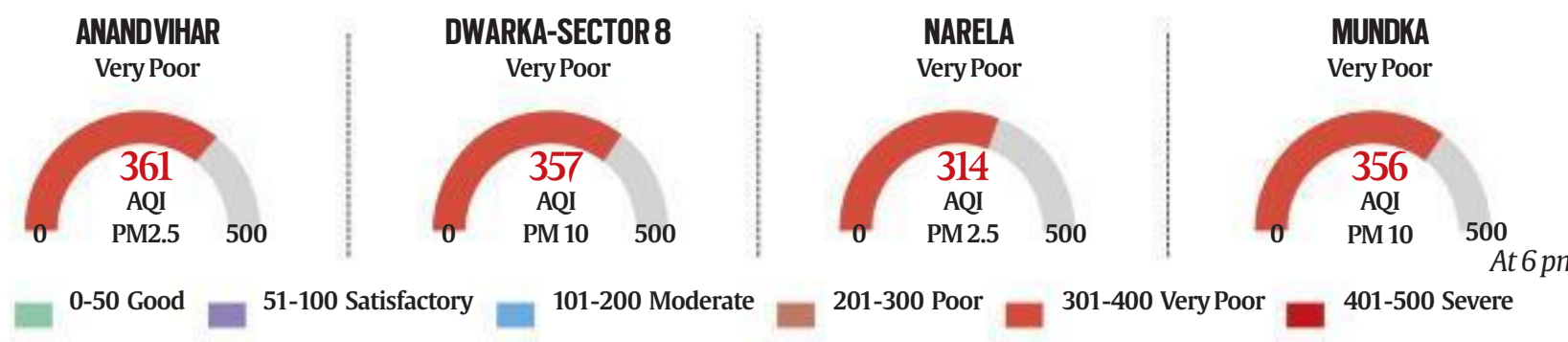
BIS HUID Jewellery

Free Repair & Maintenance of your Old Ornaments of any make

Making Charges - 7.99% on Gold Diamonds - 0% Making Charges

♦ Karol Bagh ♦ Green Park ♦ Pitampura ♦ Dilshad Garden ♦ Janakpuri

8800307899



S K Y W A T C H
FORECAST: October 29
 Mainly clear sky.
 Mist in the morning.
AQI forecast: Likely to be very poor
MAX: 33 | **MIN: 16**
 2°C above normal | 0.1°C below normal

HARDLOOK

Realty Bites

Scores of buyers have been left hanging for years, waiting to get possession of flats they spent lakhs on. Many have also moved the consumer court against the builders. *The Indian Express* analysed over 170 such cases till October this year. Here's what it found:



An under-construction building at Star Rameshwaram in Raj Nagar Extension, Ghaziabad. Photos: Gajendra Yadav

NIRBHAY THAKUR
 NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

IMAGINE THE mental agony you would face if you paid the full price for a product only to be left hanging for years, waiting for its delivery. This is the predicament faced by numerous home buyers in Delhi-NCR, like 40-year-old Saurabh Sharma. The software engineer hasn't received possession of his flat even after 11 years of the stipulated time and has been fighting a case against the builder in the consumer court for seven years now.



"Construction of my tower has been pending for years. I've approached RERA... I'm not alone. Around 250 of us didn't get our flats" —

JITENDRA SHARMA,
 A BUSINESSMAN WHO PURCHASED A FLAT PRICED AT RS 30 LAKH IN GHAZIABAD

In 2011, Saurabh had booked a 1,150 sqft flat in Ghaziabad priced at around Rs 31 lakh. "The project has been hanging fire for years. I had paid over 90% of the amount, and only the last installment was pending. After many years, the builder sent me a demand letter with exorbitant and unexplainable charges. I followed up but was told to pay it, otherwise, I would not get the flat," he said. Saurabh also said the builder was forcing him to take possession of the incomplete flat and on asking for the completion certificate, he misbehaved with him and his father. "In 2016, I approached the state consumer commission and have been waiting for justice ever since. Not just me, my whole family has suffered. My father was the one impacted the most... his health took a turn and he passed away last year, waiting for the flat," he said. To delve deeper into the issue, *The Indian Express* looked at consumer court orders relating to housing.

What the orders say
 A look at over 170 Delhi State

Consumer Commission judgments till October this year relating to housing (where possession was either not handed over to buyers or was delayed despite buyers paying most of the price for the property) threw up some interesting details:

■ In most cases, buyers had paid over 95% of the amount. The total delay caused to buyers who complained in the consumer commission was a staggering 1,268 years and the total compensation granted to them was over Rs 37 crore.

■ In 162 cases where there was delayed possession, *The Indian Express* found that the average delay was 8.62 years — ranging from 2 to 17 years.

■ The average compensation granted by the Commission to buyers was over Rs 25 lakh plus other costs including 6% interest for the delayed possession. The compensation ranged from Rs 2 lakh to over Rs 5 crore.

■ In 51 cases, the compensation (excluding penalties and interest) given was up to Rs 10 lakh. In 47 cases, the compensation was from Rs 10 to 25 lakh. In another 34, it granted ranged from Rs 25 to 50 lakh. In just four cases, compensation granted ranged from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 1 crore. While in a total of 9 cases, compensation granted was over Rs 1 crore and just two cases saw compensation worth Rs 5 crore or more.

■ In 90% of the cases, the Consumer Commission ruled in favour of buyers who purchased houses/plots in Gurgaon, Greater Noida, Bhiwadi, Sonipat, and Gautam Buddha Nagar among other locations. While developers Parsvnath and Taneja Developers and Infrastructure (TDI) topped the list of complaints filed, other developers

Looking at the consumer court orders

WHERE THE FAULT LIES
 In a vast majority of judgments, the Delhi State Consumer Commission has ruled in favour of the buyers. Here are some of the observations it has made:

- Developers failed to prove that buyers purchased houses for a commercial purpose and they relied on merely statements without giving proof
- Failure to give possession is a continuous wrong and as long as possession isn't given to buyers, they can approach the consumer commission
- Deficiency was defined broadly as failure to comply with the obligation to provide the flat within the contractually stipulated time period
- If there is no fixed time period for possession mentioned in the contract, then a maximum of 4 years delay was allowed to the developers
- The compensation provided must be for 'exact losses' suffered by complainants — which must include compensation for causing mental agony to the buyers along with the legal costs incurred by them
- Merely buying multiple properties doesn't make buyers fall outside the definition of a 'consumer'

DIRECT COMPENSATION GRANTED*

51 cases	Up to ₹ 10 lakh	4 cases	₹ 50 lakh - ₹ 1 cr
47 cases	₹ 10 to 25 lakh	9 cases	Over Rs 1 cr
34 cases	₹ 25 to 50 lakh	2 cases	₹ 5 cr ore or more

*In 147 cases



STALLED PROJECTS (IN 169 CASES)

Greater Noida	65
Sonipat	25
Gurgaon	19
Faridabad	21
Ghaziabad	12
Noida	12
Panipat	2
New Delhi	2
Alwar	6
Gautam Buddha Nagar	4
Sohna (in Haryana)	1

Source: Delhi State Consumer Commission judgments till Oct this yr

facing complaints were BPTP, Avalon, Ansal, Ireo, Vatika, DLF, Omaxe and Raheja.

■ Over the year, 65 cases (38%) were from Greater Noida, 25 (15%) from Sonipat, 19 (11%) from Gurgaon, and 21 (12%) from Faridabad. These four regions formed over three-fourths of the cases. Ghaziabad and Noida together had 24 cases (12 each) while Panipat and New Delhi had two cases each. While Alwar had 6 cases and Gautam Buddha Nagar had 4, Sohna (in Haryana) had just one case.

A committee formed by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry in a recent report said 44% of stalled real estate projects in the country are in the National Capital Region (NCR). It further said 4 lakh units of property

worth over Rs 4 lakh crore were stalled and that around 60% of the value was stalled in the NCR. The committee, chaired by Niti Aayog Chairman Amitabh Kant, recommended that all stakeholders — developers, financiers and land authorities — will have to take "haircuts", that is accept less than what is due, to make the housing projects financially viable.

The grievances

Apart from delayed possession, several home buyers *The Indian Express* spoke to raised other grievances — construction which is yet to begin, incomplete construction, biased agreements, changes in agreements, and arbitrary charges levied before handing possession among others.

Jitendra Sharma (41), a businessman who purchased a flat priced at Rs 30 lakh in Ghaziabad told *The Indian Express* that his possession had been delayed for over four years. "I've approached RERA... I'm not alone. Around 250 of us didn't get our flats..." said Jitendra. He said construction of his tower was incomplete and had been pending for many years.

Another buyer, who refused to be named, purchased a flat in Noida and has been awaiting possession for over 12 years. She hasn't approached a consumer court as of now out of fear and hopes the builder will deliver.

A few lawyers *The Indian Express* spoke to, who handle cases pertaining to real estate, said the construction-linked plan

(CLP) — according to which 95% of the payment has to be made to the developer before the final slab is laid and the remaining 5% has to be given on possession — is behind the woes of buyers.

Advocate Pawan Kumar Ray, who helped buyers Nalin and Monika Sood receive the largest compensation (around 5.5 crore) from the Delhi Consumer Commission this year, said, "Most developers prescribe the CLP to buyers... basically most of the payment for the house has to be done by the time the basic structure of the house is ready."

Ray, who claims to have fought over 4,000 real estate cases, showed multiple agreements wherein 40% of the payment of the house was paid by buyers within three months, and another

25% was paid after construction of the raft and the basement. "Basically plastering and main costs which the developers incur only take place after the structure is ready... What these developers do is take the money from buyers and siphon it off to some other project," he claimed.

"Another problem is that the whole structure, and not singular units, is looked at while providing the occupancy certificate. What happens then is that many buyers have their certificates but their society is inhabitable — societies with large structures ready, but not a single house which is habitable," he added.

Advocate Goutam Prasad gave a differing view. He said most cases in consumer courts were related to bookings of flats which happened prior to 2017. He said earlier, builders used to "siphon off money" that they received from one project to start another without finishing construction on the previous project. "All this changed in 2017 when the RERA made it difficult to divert money collected in advance for a project," he said. He was referring to an amendment in the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, which directed developers to deposit 70% of the amount into a separate account which can only be used for construction of the given property.

"You will see all these developers making legal arguments in court to prevent paying compensation... but the truth is they don't have money," said Prasad, adding that most of his clients were waiting to receive their flats for more than 8-10 years.

Developer's defence

In the 170 judgments, *The Indian Express* found in most cases, the legal defence of the developers was that the buyers didn't fall into the category of a 'consumer' — which means they purchased the property either for resale or for large-scale profit-making activities.

The developers also stated that buyers failed to complain within a time period of two years, hence, making their complaints invalid. In some cases, it was also argued that the case at hand in-

volved complex questions of law and that it didn't fall under the jurisdiction of the Consumer Commission. Some developers also said buyers who had multiple properties were using them for commercial purposes and hence ceased to be 'consumers'.

In 8 cases where the commission ruled in favour of developers, it noted that while possession was delayed, the consumers failed to complain within the time period of two years.

In another four, it was noted that since the consumers initially accepted their possession without protest, they had ceased to be 'consumers'. In two cases, the buyers had defaulted on their payments.

In most cases, however, possession wasn't handed over to complainants to date and the commission noted that this was a continuous wrong siding.

The developers, while arguing in court, gave various reasons for the delay. For instance, in properties that were supposed to be handed over by 2013, developers cited Covid and demonetisation as reasons for the delay. Another excuse relied upon was the 2008 financial crisis which also led to a real estate sector crisis — in most of these cases, the delay in handling possession was about 10 years.

Advocate Arvind Kumar Tiwary, representing Fantasy Buildwell which gave the highest compensation till October this year, argued that the complainants were not "consumers" under the Consumer Protection Act 2019, as they had entered into a Builder Buyer Agreement with the intention of reselling the unit, which amounts to a commercial purpose.

Tiwary also argued that the Delhi Consumer Commission does not have territorial jurisdiction to adjudicate this complaint, as the property in question is situated in Gurgaon's Sector 54.

In another case, Parsvnath Developers, which had to pay Rs 40 lakh for a 14-year delay, argued that delay in completing the construction was not wilful and was due to the global economic slowdown experienced by the real estate sector in the country.

ON DISPLAY AT IHC

Through 60 photos, exhibition aims to bring element of humanity to disasters

UDBHAV SETH
 NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

ANSHU GUPTA was standing on top of a small mountain of rubble in Nepal, shortly after the devastating 2015 earthquakes that measured 7.8 on the Richter scale, when he noticed a man on a scooter drive towards him. When he stopped, he got off and, slowly walked towards a three-storey building that had collapsed. Suddenly, he frowned at the sky and limply crossed his

arms. That moment of despair compelled Gupta, who was there to aid in relief work, to raise his camera and record the moment. Later, he would find out that the man was a resident of this building and was seeing it for the first time since the earthquake.

But Gupta, in his many years of social entrepreneurship through the award-winning work of Goonj, a Delhi-based NGO operating in 27 states, is not interested only in documenting distress. In the same earthquake, he photographed a girl pretending to ride a stone lion that had

dislodged from its pillar and fallen on the ground. In the 2008 Bihar floods, he photographed villagers helping each other cross a water-choked stretch of land on stilts. In 2018, he saw cots floating on water outside a Kerala home destroyed by floods — those cots had been brought out by the house's residents — and photographed them to memorialise a "symbol of hope", of the human resolve to move on from disaster.

Such moments, and many more chosen from over two decades of Goonj's efforts to provide relief to disaster-struck ar-



The photos have been chosen from over 2 decades of Goonj's efforts to provide relief to disaster-struck areas. Gajendra Yadav

ms, are now displayed till Tuesday at India Habitat Centre in an exhibition titled 'Witnessing Disasters'.

"It's a matter of regarding the ignored places," he says of how he chooses his subjects: sometimes an individual, a place, or a stray uprooted tree. "It's always a question of how to deal with what has happened, all while holding a 10 kg bag of rice. People often think our role ends at distributing relief material. But it's not just a material solution that's important, there's an emotional part to it as well."

Through over 60 curated

photos, Gupta aims to narrow the distance that people feel from pictures of pain and deprivation.

"Disasters take away a person's dignity," he says. "Society looks at a disaster like an event — we react to, we help, but eventually everyone forgets. Collecting big data and spreading relief material is fine, but we have to remember when a disaster strikes, people lose decades of work, what families have built over generations is gone, kids stop going to school. After a disaster, affected people may only be talked about as refugees. Such photos help as

their stories are not so distant."

Gupta believes that broadcasting explicit or graphic imagery — a practice he finds the media guilty of — isn't the way to generate empathy. "The way the Ukraine-Russia war or the current situation in Gaza has been reported... would you like your kid or parent to see something like that? We need to bring out a human angle to such events, and not just with a camera or picture... This exhibition exists [without dead bodies] to bring you closer to such conflicts and show you how recovery follows."

DAV POST GRADUATE COLLEGE, VARANASI
(Accredited by NAAC with Grade A+)

Advertisement No.: 05/2023/DAVPG/TF

APPLICATIONS are invited from the Indian Citizen on the Prescribed Form for the following post of Assistant Professor. For Prescribed Form, Essential Qualifications and General Conditions, visit our web-site <http://www.davpgcvns.ac.in>

Subject	Post	Category	No. of Vacancies
Sociology	Assistant Professor	UR	01

The duly filled application in the Prescribed Form, along with a MICR Coded demand draft of Rs. 1000/- for General & OBC candidates and Rs. 500/- for SC/ST candidates, drawn in favour of the 'Principal, DAV Post Graduate College, Varanasi', payable at Varanasi, must reach the Office of the Principal, D.A.V. Post Graduate College, Narharpara, Ausanganj, Varanasi-221001, U.P., (India) within 30 days of this advertisement.

Dated : 29-10-2023 Secretary / Manager

राष्ट्रीय कोशिका विज्ञान केन्द्र, पुणे
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR CELL SCIENCE, PUNE
An Autonomous Institution of the Department of Biotechnology Government of India

NCCS-Ph.D. Admission-March 2024

National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS), a premier Research Institute in India, opens its doors to aspiring Ph.D. candidates. Explore the forefront of Biological Research: Cell & Molecular biology, Structural Biology, Bioinformatics, Systems Biology, Neuroscience, Immunology, Infection Biology, Cancer Biology, Microbial Ecology and more! Candidates having strong motivation to pursue research in biology are encouraged to apply.

NCCS is your Path to Pioneering Research! Join to dive into cutting-edge research with state-of-the-art facilities. Join our league of alumni at leading global organizations. NCCS promotes international exposure for students with support for attending global meetings. Unleash your potential at NCCS. Apply Now.

Dean, Academics 

For details Follow QR Code or the link <https://www.nccs.res.in/Career/1>
The last date for application is 08.12.2023.

Press notice for appointment of the Member (Water Resources Engineering) as per Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act, 2016. (MAHARASHTRA ACT NO. VIII OF 2017) :-

GOVERNMENT of Maharashtra (GoM) has enacted Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority Act, 2005 to regulate water resources within the State of Maharashtra, facilitate and ensure judicious, equitable and sustainable management, allocation and utilisation of water resources, fix the rates for use of water for agriculture, industrial, drinking and other purposes, and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Nominations are invited by undersigned on behalf of Selection Committee for the post of Member (Water Resources Engineering) of Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority on or before Friday, 24th November, 2023 up to 17.00 p.m. All the relevant details regarding eligibility criteria, service conditions, details to be furnished alongwith the nomination as per the Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act, 2016 (Maharashtra Act No. VIII of 2017.) are available on following web sites.

<https://maharashtra.gov.in>
<https://wrd.maharashtra.gov.in>
<https://mwrra.org>

Sd/-
(Deepak Kapoor)
Additional Chief Secretary
Water Resources Department,
Government of Maharashtra.

DGIPR-2023-24/4506

ICAR-INDIAN VETERINARY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
IZATNAGAR-243122 (UP)

Walk-in-Interview

Applications for recruitment of **01 Field Investigator and 01 Young Professional II** in ICAR-NIAP project 'Production Systems, Agribusiness and Institutions: Component 1-Impact Assessment of Agricultural Technologies' are invited from eligible candidates. For detailed information regarding project, duration, essential & desired qualifications, age limit, emoluments, etc. candidates may visit the Institute's website www.ivri.nic.in. The applications will be scrutinized and eligible candidates will be intimated by e-mail. Eligible candidates will be required to attend interview at the office of **HOD, LES & IT Division, ICAR-IVRI, Izatnagar, Bareilly** on 08/11/23. The application should be submitted to dwaipayan.bardhan@icar.gov.in by 04/11/23.

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, GORAKHPUR
Kunraghat, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh 273008
(An autonomous organization under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)

S.No. AIIMS/GKP/Admn/2023-24/1895 Date: 28.10.2023

ADVERTISEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT OF VARIOUS NON-FACULTY POSTS ON DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS AT AIIMS GORAKHPUR

Applications are invited by AIIMS, Gorakhpur, an autonomous body

Opening Date of Online Application / **Closing Date of Online Application**
28.10.2023 / 21.11.2023

established by an act of Parliament in prescribed form through online mode for filling up the following non- Faculty posts on direct recruitment basis through Computer Based Test :-

S. No.	Name of Post	Group	Pay Level	No. of Vacancy
1	Tutor/Clinical Instructor	A	Level-10	15
2	Staff Nurse Grade-I	B	Level-8	57
3	Medical Social Worker	B	Level-7	1
4	Assistant (NS)	B	Level-6	1
5	Librarian Grade-II	B	Level-6	1
6	Technical Assistant/Technician	B	Level-6	1
7	Store Keeper	B	Level-6	2
8	Hostel Warden	B	Level-6	2
9	PA to Principal	B	Level-6	1
10	Lab Technician	C	Level-5	8
11	Stenographer	C	Level-4	1
12	Cashier	C	Level-4	2
13	Lab Attendant Grade-II	C	Level-2	8
14	Library Attendant Grade-II	C	Level-3	1
15	LDC (Lower Division Clerk)	C	Level-2	1
16	Hospital Attendant Grade -III (Nursing Orderly)	C	Level-1	40
Total Posts				142

For more details regarding eligibility, reservation, experience etc., Kindly visit to the official website of AIIMS Gorakhpur i.e., <https://aiimsgorakhpur.edu.in/> Candidates are also advised to visit Institute website, for any updates in this regard.

Sd/-
Ref. No. AIIMS/GKP/ADMN/2023-24/1898 Executive Director
Date: 28-10-2023 AIIMS Gorakhpur

Mitti Ko Naman Veeron Ko Vandan

MERI MAATI MERA DESH

Amrit Kalash Yatra and Amrit Mahotsav Closing Ceremony

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



Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

"The Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign is going to further strengthen our sense of unity and integrity. I am confident that under this Amrit Vatika will be created from the soil collected from across the country, which will realise the vision of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat."

Meri Maati Mera Desh has become a mass movement

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

Inauguration of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)

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

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

Chief Guest
Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Event highlights

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

All are invited!

📺 Watch the live telecast on DD News

National Highways Authority of India
(MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS, GOVT OF INDIA)

THE GAZETTE OF INDIA, EXTRAORDINARY PART-II, SECTION 3, SUB SECTION (ii) GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
Notification
New Delhi Dated 1st September, 2023

SO 3869 (E).-Whereas by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highway, **S.O. 4403 dated 21.09.2022** published in Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (ii) issued under sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highway Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government declared its intention to acquire the land specified in the Schedule annexed to the said notification for building (widening / four-laning etc.), maintenance, management and operation of Moradabad -Thakurdwara -Kashipur National Highway - 734 including Kashipur Bypass on the stretch of land from Km. 39+750 to Km. 53+260 in (Special Land Acquisition Officer, Udhm Singh Nagar/Nainital) in the village(s) namely, Hariyawala, Lalpur, Koonda, Baitwala and Bagwara in the District of Udhm Singh Nagar in the State of Uttarakhand.

And whereas the substance of the said notification **S.O. 4403 dated 21.09.2022** has been published in "Amar Ujala" and "Indian Express" both dated **11.10.2022**; under sub-section (3) of section 3A of the said Act;

And whereas objections filed under Section 3-C, considered and settled the same appropriately;

And whereas, in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Competent Authority has submitted its report to the Central Government;

Now, therefore, upon receipt of the said report of the Competent Authority and in exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the land specified in the said Schedule should be acquired for the aforesaid purpose;

And further, in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that on publication of this notification in the official Gazette, the land specified in the said Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government, free from all encumbrances.

SCHEDULE

Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling NH-734 in the stretch of land from Km 39+750to Km 53+260 Kashipur Bypass(Special Land Acquisition Officer, Udhm Singh Nagar/Nainital) in the village(s) namely Hariyawala, Lalpur, Koonda, Baitwala and Bagwara in the District of Udhm Singh Nagar in the State of Uttarakhand.



File Number: 17003/1/2018/PIU-Bry/3D

District: Udhm Singh Nagar
<https://egazette.gov.in>
Publication date: 01.09.2023
<https://egazette.gov.in/WriteReadData/2023/248529.pdf>
https://bhoomirashi.gov.in/auth/revamp/showfile.cshmt?TAB=bGFFVghyZWVEX2ZpbGVz&fk=bn90aWZpY2F0aW9uX2lk&fkid=NTEwZmE=&EncHid=387867445&type_id=1

Building a Nation, Not Just Roads

National Highways Authority of India
(MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS, GOVT OF INDIA)

THE GAZETTE OF INDIA, EXTRAORDINARY PART-II, SECTION 3, SUB SECTION (ii) GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
Notification
New Delhi Dated 18th September, 2023

SO 4106 (E).-Whereas by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highway, **S.O. 4403 dated 21.09.2022** published in Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (ii) issued under sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highway Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government declared its intention to acquire the land specified in the Schedule annexed to the said notification for building (widening / four-laning etc.), maintenance, management and operation of Moradabad -Thakurdwara -Kashipur National Highway - 734 including Kashipur Bypass on the stretch of land from Km. 39+750 to Km. 53+260 in (Special Land Acquisition Officer, Udhm Singh Nagar/Nainital) in the village(s) namely, Laxmipur Lachchi, Bhagwantpur Kashipur, Kharmasi in the District of Udhm Singh Nagar in the State of Uttarakhand.

And whereas the substance of the said notification **S.O. 4403 dated 21.09.2022** has been published in "Amar Ujala" and "Indian Express" both dated **11.10.2022**; under sub-section (3) of section 3A of the said Act;

And whereas objections filed under Section 3-C, considered and settled the same appropriately;

And whereas, in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Competent Authority has submitted its report to the Central Government;

Now, therefore, upon receipt of the said report of the Competent Authority and in exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the land specified in the said Schedule should be acquired for the aforesaid purpose;

And further, in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that on publication of this notification in the official Gazette, the land specified in the said Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government, free from all encumbrances.

SCHEDULE

Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling NH-734 in the stretch of land from Km 39+750to Km 53+260 Kashipur Bypass(Special Land Acquisition Officer, Udhm Singh Nagar/Nainital) in the village(s) namely Laxmipur Lachchi, Bhagwantpur Kashipur, Kharmasi in the District of Udhm Singh Nagar in the State of Uttarakhand.



File Number: 17003/1/2018/PIU-Bry/3D

District: Udhm Singh Nagar
<https://egazette.gov.in>
Publication date: 18.09.2023
<https://egazette.gov.in/WriteReadData/2023/248860.pdf>
https://bhoomirashi.gov.in/auth/revamp/showfile.cshmt?TAB=bGFFVghyZWVEX2ZpbGVz&fk=bn90aWZpY2F0aW9uX2lk&fkid=NTE1NTc=&EncHid=1866965332&type_id=1

Building a Nation, Not Just Roads

6 GOVT & POLITICS

Caste census within 2 hrs of coming to power at Centre, promises Rahul

JAYPRAKASH SNAIDU
RAIPUR, OCTOBER 28

CONGRESS LEADER Rahul Gandhi, at a public rally in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region on Saturday, announced that his party will conduct a caste census within two hours if they win the Lok Sabha elections in 2024. He also promised a similar exercise in Chhattisgarh if the Congress comes back to power in the assembly elections scheduled next month.

He also made a new promise of free education "from KG to PG", that is, from kindergarten up to post-graduation for everyone in Chhattisgarh.

He targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue of the caste census, and for "choosing to help industrialists over poor and backward people". "Any government functions in two ways. One way is by helping the rich, and the second is by helping the poor. We help the poor, labourers, farmers,



Rahul Gandhi in Kanker, Chhattisgarh, Saturday. ANI

unemployed, tribals, Dalits and backward people. Their government makes tall claims and in the end helps Adani ji. As (CM Bhupesh) Baghel ji said, mines, airports, ports are given to Adani. Farm laws were made to help Adani.

The apple business in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir is given to Adani.

Citing thousands of crores spent by the Congress government on welfare schemes, Rahul said, "We know this country cannot stand or progress till we help

the poor and weaker sections. The money given to farmers comes in the market and helps villages and small cities prosper. But money given to industrialists is spent by them in buying properties abroad."

"BJP has started a new thing," he said. "Modi ji says, wherever he goes, that he works for backward people and OBCs. You (Modi) use the word OBC everywhere, then why fear an OBC caste census? Because you know OBC people are poorly represented (in the government). You know this reality and do not want the OBC youth to know this."

Rahul said that out of 90 IAS officers who work as secretaries to the government of India, only three are OBC. "These 90 officials run the government, and not the Members of Parliament from Rajya Sabha or Lok Sabha. They decide the budget. Within them, just three are OBC... So does that mean the OBC population is just 5% in India? I believe the OBC population is 50-55%. But Modi ji does

not want the OBC youth to know this reality. OBC youth need to be aware, you are being robbed."

"Today I promise every OBC youth that a caste census will be done within two hours of our party coming to power in India. If we win in Chhattisgarh, we will do a caste census here," he said.

Rahul then spoke about tribals and how the two parties view them differently. While Congress sees them as Adivasis who have the first right over jal, jungle and zameen (water, forests and land), the BJP sees them as Vanvasi, or someone who lives in the forest and does not have the first right over these things. "Adivasi is the correct word and not Vanvasi," said Rahul.

He also said English-medium schools have been made in the state to ensure the poor and the backward connect with the world, which BJP leaders do not want. This is why, he said, BJP leaders emphasise on teaching Hindi while sending their own children to English-medium schools.

BJP govts for business tycoons, alleges Priyanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DAMOH, OCTOBER 28

CONGRESS GENERAL secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Saturday accused the BJP-led central and state governments of working for the business tycoons rather than for the poor, middle class and farmers.

At an election meeting in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, she alleged that the Centre had given the "country's property" to some big industrialists. She said, "Old Pension Scheme is one of your demands. You want future security... It's your service to the nation. But the leaders and government say they don't have money. Why have the loans of big industrialists like (Gautam) Adani ji been waived? Where did you get this money from?" she said.

Modi's Mizoram visit cancelled, Congress links it to Manipur

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, OCTOBER 28

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will not be visiting poll-bound Mizoram next week as per schedule, leading the Congress to allege this is because he has not visited neighbouring Manipur since violence broke out there nearly six months ago.

Modi, who is the first in the list of star campaigners the BJP has submitted to the Election Commission of India, was scheduled to address a poll rally in Mamit, around 80 km from Aizawl, on October 30.

Mizoram BJP president Vanlalhmuaaka confirmed that this visit is no longer taking place: "From what I have been told, it is because he has other engagements."

Vanlalhmuaaka said that while Home Minister Amit Shah is still expected to visit the state, he has not been informed of when that will be and which part of Mizoram Shah will visit.

"The Prime Minister was sup-



PM Narendra Modi was slated to address a poll rally in Mamit on October 30. PTI



posed to address a public meeting at the GSA playground in Mamit; we are continuing preparations to hold a rally there," he said. Mamit is one of the biggest focus areas for the BJP in the upcoming elections, for which voting will take place on November 7. The BJP does not have a strong presence in Mizoram and has only ever won one seat in state elections - from the Tuichawng constituency. Still struggling to find acceptability among the predominantly Christian Mizos, the party is targeting areas with sizeable mem-

bers of the minority Bru and Chakma communities, such as the three constituencies in Mamit district. The violence in Mizoram since the Mizos and the Kuki-Zomis of Manipur share a common ethnicity and there has been strong support for the latter, both from the Mizo National Front government and the Mizo civil society. "The PM was to address an election rally in Mizoram on October 30. But now there are reports that he has cancelled his visit. Could it be because questions would be raised that he had not found time to visit the deeply troubled neighbouring state that has been on the deep edge for almost 180 days... with what face, would he go to the rally in Mizoram?" said Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, who is currently on a visit to Mizoram. MNF vice-president Lalithengliana said Modi's visit would have hardly helped the BJP. "They hardly have a presence in more than three or four constituencies and even in those it will be hard for them," he said.



Leaders and ex-officials join the BJP in the presence of party's national general secretary Arun Singh and Rajasthan unit chief C P Joshi in Jaipur on Saturday. Rohit Jain Paras

Denied Cong tickets, two Sachin Pilot confidants join BJP

DEEPA MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 28

SEVERAL RAJASTHAN Congress leaders joined the BJP Saturday at the party headquarters in Jaipur. The most prominent among them was former Jaipur mayor Jyoti Khandelwal. Her exit from the Congress came days after that of Pandit Suresh Mishra, who shifted to the BJP last week. Both significantly are supporters of Sachin Pilot.

In November last, Mishra had written a letter to Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge, in blood, decrying the events of September 25, 2022, when MLAs loyal to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot had skipped a legislature party meeting and tendered their resignations. This was ostensibly done to stop the high command from making Pilot the CM in Gehlot's place.

Among the staunchest Pilot supporters, Mishra, who is also the national president of the Sarv Brahmin Mahasabha, has gone the extra mile in the past five years to support Pilot during his tug-of-war with Gehlot.

Mishra joined the BJP after he was not given a ticket by Congress from the Sangner Assembly seat, a constituency he had unsuccessfully contested from in 2008. Mishra told *The Indian Express*: "Koi Sachin Pilot ko pooch nahin raha. Sachin Pilot ek young chap tha, usko toh khatam kar diya inhone (Pilot has no say in the party, he has been finished)... What option did I have?"

Mishra also questioned the

Congress government's recent decision to give compensation of Rs 50 lakh to the family of Iqbal, who was murdered over an argument after a road rage accident. According to him, this was another example of Congress insulating sanatan, and cited that as one of the reasons he quit party.

"I would have won from Sangner if I was given the ticket. The Congress gave the ticket to someone who lost the last elections by over 30,000 votes. If you want to give all tickets to old candidates, what is the use of doing surveys?" Mishra said. At the same time, he said while Pilot's supporters like him had been sidelined, sitting MLAs from the Pilot camp had been fielded.

Khandelwal too falls in Mishra's category, as fielded by Congress in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls from Jaipur, she had lost to BJP's Ram Charan Bohra. On Saturday, Khandelwal said: "The workers on the ground who lead protests are consistently ignored... This is a case of weak leadership. Even in the MP elections, local MLAs didn't work, and opposed me. But there was no action against them."

Asked if she faced any issue because she was a Pilot supporter, Khandelwal said, "Yes, it is possible. In Congress it doesn't matter what you are doing for the party. It is about you are with which leader." Other leaders who joined the BJP included former MLAs CS Vaid, Nandlal Poonia, leaders such as Hari Singh Saharan, Sanwaram Maharia, student leader Ravindra Singh Bhati, former IPS officer Kesar Singh Shekhawat and ex-bureaucrat Bhim Singh Bika.

Three Diwalis in MP after Ram Mandir opens: Shah

First the usual Diwali, second after winning MP polls and third after the temple opens in Ayodhya, says Union Home Minister

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, OCTOBER 28

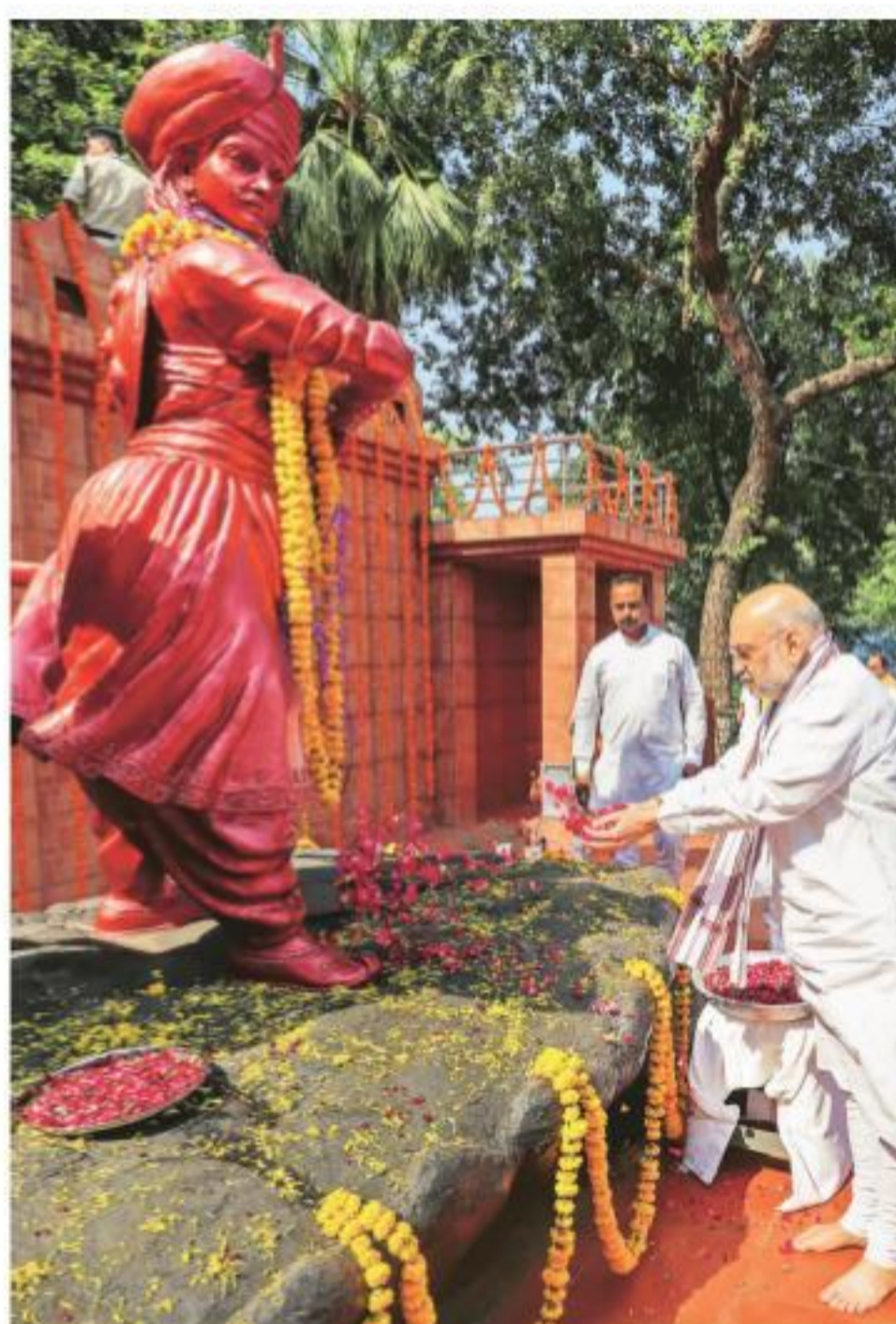
A DAY after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that he was privileged to be invited for the consecration of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 22, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday attacked the Congress, alleging that the party has "hindered the construction of the Ram Temple" since Independence.

Speaking at a rally in Junnardeo in Madhya Pradesh, Shah said, "Every year we celebrate one Diwali. But this year, there will be three Diwalis in Madhya Pradesh. The first is the usual Diwali festivities which happen every year. The second Diwali will be held after BJP wins in Madhya Pradesh. The third will be when (prime minister Narendra) Modiji will consecrate Lord Ram in the Ram Temple in Ayodhya."

Shah reminded the gathering that when the BJP returned with swelled numbers in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Modi had laid the foundation stone for the temple. On January 22, the temple will also be unveiled, he said.

"When I was the BJP president, Rahul (Gandhi) Baba used to mock us with the slogan 'Mandir wahi banayenge par tithi nahi batayenge'. Now we have built the temple and also given the date. Now Rahul Baba should come to the temple and pray," Shah said. Ahead of the elections, BJP and the Congress have been sparring on the contentious issue of the Ram Mandir. Opposition parties alleged that BJP violated the Model Code of Conduct by using religious symbols during poll campaigning by showcasing Ayodhya, while the BJP hit back, calling Congress "anti-Ram".

Earlier in the day, former CM Kamal Nath said, "They are speaking about Ram Mandir like this is BJP's temple. Ram Mandir is our nation's temple. This is a big symbol of our Sanatan Dharma."



Union Home Minister Amit Shah pays tribute to the statue of Maharaja Raghunath Shah in Jabalpur on Saturday. PTI

Hailing the PM for his efforts, Shah said "(PM Modi has) left no stone unturned to enhance the pride of the nation" and cited Ram Temple, abrogation of Article 370, ending Triple Talaq, surgical strike, Chandrayaan-3 success, the new Parliament building and passing of the Women's Quota Bill as some of the highlights of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre and took a jibe at Congress, saying "(they) never see positive developments". "Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi are now asking what happened during the Modi's tenure. Rahul Baba should know only people who have their roots

in India can understand what has happened. People who are anchored in Italy cannot understand this," Shah said.

Taking a dig at the "dynastic" politics in Madhya Pradesh, Shah said, "Only three families call the shots in MP Congress - families of Digvijaya Singh, Kamal Nath and Gandhi. Directions come from the Gandhis and Kamal Nath family. But when there is a failure, Digvijaya is pulled up. In any district, you will find Digvijaya and Kamal Nath lobbies tearing each other's clothes. How can a party which is not united do any welfare for the people?"

Nadda: No one has harmed tribals more than Jharkhand CM

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, OCTOBER 28

BJP NATIONAL president JPNadda on Saturday said that even as Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren sought votes from tribals of the state, no one had harmed the community more than Soren himself. Taking a dig at the Jharkhand CM in Ranchi, Nadda said the Enforcement Directorate was after him.

Nadda was speaking at the culmination of BJP Jharkhand president Babul Marandi's 'Sankalp Yatra' which was held across 81 constituencies of the state since he assumed charge as head of the party in the state.

Nadda said, "Soren's government has started talking about tribals and asking for votes in their name, but no one has harmed the state like Soren's government. I am not saying this for the sake of speaking. (The government has) shut its eyes on religious conversions. This shows that Hemant Soren's vote should not go anywhere even if the culture of tribal communities gets diminished. (He) will do anything for votes."

He thanked BJP's Marandi for carrying out the 'Sankalp Yatra' for which the people gave their blessings to BJP.

Nadda said, "the deceitful Hemant Soren government is neck deep in corruption and it will surely be ousted. I want to tell the Jharkhand voters, when BJP comes to power, it is for the service of the people and in a bid to change the destiny of the state. However, when JMM and the Congress came to power they did it for their own service, they wanted to loot the state." Nadda said Soren had even changed his parents' names to grab parcels of land.

In Raipur saffron fortress, Cong falls back on temple mahant to fight big gun

JAYPRAKASH SNAIDU
RAIPUR, OCTOBER 28

THE CONGRESS has again called up the Dudhadhari temple mahant, Ramsundar Das, to take up the challenge in the Chhattisgarh Assembly election, fielding him this time against BJP heavyweight Brijmohan Agrawal from the Raipur City South constituency.

The seven-time MLA and four-time state minister, Agrawal is seen as the toughest challenge for the incumbent Congress in Raipur. The two-time MLA, Das had been fielded by Congress for the first time in 2003 in the then BSP's bastion Janjgir-Champa, which he won.

Das last made the headlines for protesting against derogatory comments against Mahatma Gandhi that were made during a Dharam Sansad in Raipur in December 2021.

Born in Pihridi village in Sakti district (earlier part of Janjgir-Champa), Das is a first-generation politician. His life changed after he arrived in Dudhadhari Math in Raipur in the 1980s as a student boarder, and decided to become a brahmachari (celibate). He was anointed its mahant in 1995.

Das took political plunge after he met freedom fighter and Congress leader mahant Laxminarain of Jaitusao Math in Raipur. Laxminarain, a staunch Gandhian, was a Rajya Sabha member.

Das was always a Congress supporter, though he never held any party posts, a disciple said. "Ram Sundar ji took inspiration from Laxminarain ji," he added. In 2003, Das was pitted against for-

mer state BSP president Dauram Ratnakar, a three-time MLA from Pamghar. Das won by 6,000 votes.

In 2008, Das was asked by the Congress to contest from the newly-formed Jajaijpur constituency (carved out of Malkharoda seat) adjoining Pamghar. He won the election, beating BJP and BSP nominees. In 2003, when this constituency had not been formed, the Congress had come third in Malkharoda, which was won by the BSP.

In 2013 Das lost the Jajaijpur seat to BSP. Congress did not give him ticket in the 2018 Assembly election. As an MLA, Das is credited with having built bridges over Mahanadi river and other water bodies to connect remote villages, as well as pools to collect rainwater, and a 2-km-long ghat on Mahanadi's banks in Janjgir-Champa district.

Das's BJP rival in this election, Agrawal has been winning the Raipur seat since 1990. He is said to have a strong network among traders and businessmen in the city. Dudhadhari Math houses over 100 students who get free food and shelter. "Through donations, the monastery also runs educational institutions and 18 cow shelters in and around Raipur," said a disciple of Das.

On Thursday, as Das walked out of the Raipur monastery for a rally, his followers touched his feet.

Asked to comment on BJP's allegation that Congress was playing the "communal card" by fielding him, Das said, "That's not true. CM (Bhupesh) Baghel ji had the Kaushalya temple renovated, and the Ram Van Gaman Padh developed."

Spot the difference: At odds with Bhim Army, Mayawati gets friendly Bheem Army

Floated by an ex-aide of Chandrashekhar Azad, Bheem Army-Jay Bheem's volunteers dress the same as Bhim Army; they are helping BSP in 4 poll-bound states

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

IF YOU can't break them, take the support of someone to their utmost likeness. Having been highly critical of Chandrashekhar Azad's Bhim Army over the years, the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is receiving the support of a little-known social organisation called the Bheem Army-Jay Bheem in four of the five states where Assembly elections will be held next month. And not just the names of the organisations, the volunteers of both groups dress similarly - a blue scarf around their neck and the men sporting a moustache. The Bheem Army-Jay Bheem was founded by Dalit leader

Manjeet Singh Notiyal who is a former vice-president of Azad's outfit. On October 12, Notiyal administered an oath at a public meeting in Uttar Pradesh's Fatehpur district about making Mayawati the country's next prime minister. A couple of months ago, the 32-year-old and the leaders of his outfit also shared the stage with BSP national coordinator Akash Anand at a BSP cadre camp in Haryana.

Earlier this week, the 32-year-old Notiyal released a list of star campaigners for Rajasthan where his organisation is working to help the BSP form the government. The outfit has its central office in Delhi and claims to have regional offices in 24 states. Apart from Rajasthan, it has announced star campaigners in



Bheem Army-Jay Bheem leader Manjeet Singh Notiyal with BSP national coordinator and Mayawati's nephew, Akash Anand, at a BSP cadre camp in Haryana in August. Express

Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and has said it will soon deploy volunteers in Telangana too.

Notiyal floated his outfit after exiting the Bhim Army in 2019. Like Azad, he too is from Saharanpur in UP - from the vil-

lage of Behat, which is about 25 km from Azad's home. Notiyal claims to have been jailed for nine months in 2017 in the case that had seen Azad go to jail after being accused of instigating violence between Dalits and Thakurs in Saharanpur's

EXPLAINED
Why BSP opposes Bhim Army

THE BAD blood between Chandrashekhar Azad and Mayawati is not new. In 2019, when Azad joined the protest against CAA-NRC, the BSP chief had tweeted that the Bhim Army chief is "playing to the tunes of the Opposition and is conspiring to affect BSP's vote share in poll-bound states". Cautioning against "selfish organisations", Mayawati said her party "never accepts such elements no matter how hard they try".

Shabbirpur village.

The Dalit leader told *The Indian Express* that he met Mayawati in Lucknow six months ago and received her blessings. "She has given blessings and asked us to strengthen the BSP. Bheem Army-Jay Bheem has taken a pledge to form a government of Bahujans. We are supporting the BSP because we like its ideology and I am sure that it will benefit the public."

He added, "BSP governments in Uttar Pradesh worked for the welfare of Dalit, backwards, minorities, and tribals; gave them respect. Atrocities and injustice against these sections came down during the BSP's rule. Behen ji (Mayawati) has asked us to support her party if we

want to stop incidents of injustice against Dalits and tribals in Rajasthan, MP, and Chhattisgarh. She has assured us she will give us representation in any government the BSP forms."

Asked about Notiyal's group, BSP central coordinator and Rajya Sabha MP Ramji Gautam said, "Bheem Army-Jay Bheem has a following among Dalits and the backwards. They are volunteering their support and it will benefit us in the Assembly elections."

How Azad's party sees it

Azad and his Aazad Samaj Party (Kanshiram) insist they are not worried about Notiyal. "That organisation (Bheem Army-Jay Bheem) has no significance. They and the BSP are in panic over the

growing strength of the ASP (Kanshiram) and hence they are doing propaganda on the directions of the BJP," its spokesperson Satyapal Chaudhary says, adding that the ASP (Kanshiram) would contest 65 seats in Rajasthan in alliance with the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP).

The feud between Azad and Mayawati dates back to 2019, when, amid the rising appeal of the Bhim Army chief, Mayawati spoke critically of "an organisation in Uttar Pradesh running in the name of Bhim", saying that it had nothing to do with B R Ambedkar.

The comments came at a time when the Bhim Army was making headlines over its protests against the gang-rape of a Dalit girl in Alwar, Rajasthan.

JD(U)'s UP unit wants Nitish to contest LS polls from Phulpur; allies back plan

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, OCTOBER 28

THE UTTAR Pradesh unit of Janata Dal (United) on Saturday met at the Patna residence of Bihar Chief Minister and party supremo Nitish Kumar and requested him to contest the Lok Sabha elections next year from Phulpur, a seat represented by the country's first PM Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru thrice from 1952 until his death in 1964. Former prime minister V P Singh had also represented the seat in 1971 polls.

After the party's meeting, JD(U)'s UP unit president Satyen Patel told reporters: "We have a strong and vibrant organisation in UP and can impact polls in several Lok Sabha constituencies, including Phulpur. We have requested Nitish to contest from Phulpur."

Another JD (U) leader said the very idea of the meeting was to impress upon the Bihar CM to consider the Phulpur option. "If Nitish Kumar contests from a seat outside Bihar, it would send a strong signal across the country. Besides, the Phulpur seat has its symbolic value for socialists as their biggest icon Dr Rammanohar Lohia had contested the seat opposite Nehru in 1962. Even though Dr Lohia lost the election, he got good votes in many pockets of the constituency," said the party leader.

The JD(U)'s allies in Bihar enthusiastically reacted to the party's UP unit's offer to Nitish. Phulpur is among the 30-odd Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh which have sizeable Kurmi/Patel population.

RJD leader Shakti Singh Yadav said: "It would be great if Nitish Kumar chooses to contest from Phulpur."

Bihar Congress spokesperson Asit Nath Tiwari said: "We would be very happy if Nitish Kumar contests from Phulpur, often associated with Pandit Nehru."

'What you need to prove is I took cash for this. Tell me, where's the cash?'

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS MP MAHUA MOITRA, who is facing a Lok Sabha Ethics Committee examination over cash for query in Parliament, speaks to **LIZ MATHEW** about the charges against her and her party's reaction to the same, and says she stands by the questions she asked in Parliament. Excerpts:

Why do you say that the stance you have taken against the Adani Group is behind the allegations levelled at you?

It's clear I am being targeted because I am one of the few who stand up against bullies running this government and have been playing an integral role in exposing (Gautam) Adani and the nexus he runs with Mr Modi and this government. It is very clear they are using any means possible to run a media trial to put me down.

It's meant for everyone who criticises the government. In a way, they have been a little late in getting to me. Because, if you see, the AAP, Rahul Gandhi, (TMC's) Abhishek Banerjee, who raised their voices against this government, they also got after them. (Since) They had nothing on me, they had to go in this manner and use a fake, malicious complaint arising out of an acrimonious relationship break-up.

The TMC's silence is being seen as you being isolated within the party. Has it asked you for an explanation?

It's very clear I am a loyal lieutenant of Mamata Banerjee. This is a standard ploy of the BJP to try and create an impression that there is some problem between me and Mamata Banerjee. They have written my obituary in the Trinamool many times before. They float rumours that I am going to the Congress. I am a loyal soldier of the Trinamool and I will remain one till I die. Short of being my birth mother, Mamata

Banerjee is my mother. ... We (the TMC) are running our biggest battle now over MN-REGA dues to West Bengal, which is being illegally deprived of Rs 15,000 crore... Our party is one of the complainants in the coal scam which has been exposed, our party is going to take it forward. Under such circumstances, the BJP has chosen to run this slander campaign against me. Mamata Banerjee has full faith in me. If the party had to take action against (me), they would have. ... Should Mamata Banerjee spare time to feed the media circus about the ownership of my pet dog? Or about how many pairs of shoes I have? I am perfectly capable of handling that.

It has been pointed out that some questions you asked in Parliament in relation to Adani's business benefit the Hiranandani Group.

One side of the issue is that there was a quid pro quo, and the other side is the cash. I have asked 61 questions in the Lok Sabha, whereas the national average for questions by 17th Lok Sabha's MPs is 191. I am not even at one-third. The average of Bengal MPs is 129.

Parliamentary questions have never been my way of getting information, because most information is RTI-able. Apart from policy questions, which this government does not answer in RTIs, you cannot get anything...

Darshan Hiranandani is a close family friend, I never denied it. He has been a friend from long before I became an MP. He is not in the main business with Adani. Adani, in collaboration with this government, is the biggest fraud on the people of India. It is in my interest to get information from any source possible to expose Adani. Darshan Hiranandani does not need to pay me to ask questions; I should be paying Darshan to get information on Adani.



The question here is not cash for question, it is cash to not question. I have asked nine questions on Adani and they are valid questions in national interest. They are all on international news and I am an ex-banker... There is no question of Darshan putting up money to ask such questions.

But the allegation is that you passed on your Parliament login ID to a businessman, who logged in from outside India.

Let's not sensationalise it. The method of asking questions is not just by logging in. I can write a question by hand, sign and give it. If I were asking questions for a businessman, the easiest thing would have been to write it down. No one would know where they came from. I am in a rural constituency, and Darshan is my friend. When I enter Parliament, there are no NIC rules for Parliament. No MP does their own questions - LAMPs (Legislative Assistants to Members of Parliament) or interns do it. The question and answer password does not give you access to the vaults of

the RBI or the Budget document, it is just to upload or update your question. An OTP comes to your mobile, and in 99% of the cases, MPs do not give their phone numbers for the OTP. But in my case, my phone number is given.

Since I represent a remote constituency (Krishnanagar), I asked Darshan to get someone in his office to type down the question and upload it. He is my friend and I do not think there is anything wrong with it... I have given him the password and login for someone in his office to type it down and upload. Since the OTP comes to me, there is no question of Darshan or anyone putting it without my knowledge.

The charge also is that you batted for an industrialist against his rival, took money and favours from Hiranandani, and even threatened him into going against Adani.

Tell me, where is the money? The main thing to prove is the quid pro quo. Darshan is an Indian citizen, he runs some of the biggest IT firms in the country and its biggest client is the GOI (Government of India). So he cannot be 'anti-national'. One of his secretaries typed the questions I framed... Darshan in his affidavit (to the Ethics Committee) says that he is the biggest fan of PM Modi. Where did he attack Adani?

The analysis given in the affidavit (by Jai Anant Dehadrai) of my questions is laughable... Adani has used the government, ED and CBI to shut up competitors. I am fully within my rights to raise questions against Adani... What you need to prove is that I took cash for this. Where is the cash?... What is the secret answer I am getting on Adani that Hiranandani could not get on his own?

The Ethics Committee has taken up the matter.

The Ethics Committee hand-

book says any member or person making the complaint should submit supporting evidence. The complaint cannot be frivolous and it should be made in good faith. In this case, the complainant (Dehadrai) is a person who has a history of a failed acrimonious personal relationship with me... It is ludicrous that the Parliament Ethics Committee is looking into it. He (Dehadrai) has not given the affidavit to the Lok Sabha Speaker, but to CBI. He talks about Rs 2 crore cash, but there is no supporting evidence... When he was asked by the ethics panel to provide documentation, he provided nothing.

We had an affidavit from Hiranandani, but he did not mention any cash. Darshan has given a suo motu affidavit - first time, an affidavit has been given suo motu - under pressure, with no mention of cash. Then there is a mention of X number of gifts, wines or shoes, etc. The only way to prove this is to provide invoices or other proofs. Darshan has to be called before the committee to give details about it...

To the best of my knowledge, Darshan Hiranandani has given me a Hermes scarf on my birthday. Whenever he came from Dubai, I asked him for the Bobbi Brown makeup set. He got me a Mace shadow and bitten peach lipstick. Whenever I am in Mumbai or Dubai, his car picks me up from the airport and drops me.

I am telling you the exact truth, and if Darshan can prove anything more than that... There is no cash or anything else I have ever taken from him. I thrive upon my integrity...

This issue has put your conduct under a microscope.

Yes, I have to plead guilty to that. I have terrible taste when it comes to choosing people in my personal circle. I hope to break this soon... But they picked the wrong person. I will survive and thrive...

Ethics panel tells Moitra to appear before it on Nov 2

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

THE LOK Sabha Ethics Committee, which is probing the allegations of cash-for-query against Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra, on Saturday asked her to appear before it on November 2, sources said.

The development comes a day after the TMC leader expressed her inability to appear before the panel on October 31, saying she will be available only after November 5.

Sources said the committee also asserted that no further extension would be granted to her for any reason whatsoever "keeping in view the seriousness of the matter, having implications on the dignity of Parliament as well as its Members".

In her letter to panel chairman Vinod Kumar Sonkar, Moitra had cited her engagements in her Parliamentary constituency Krishnanagar till November 5 and also urged the panel to call Hiranandani Group CEO Darshan Hiranandani for deposition and allow her to cross-examine him.

The House panel is probing BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's allegations that Moitra accepted bribes and favours for asking questions in the Lok Sabha at the behest of

businessman Hiranandani.

In an affidavit to the Ethics Committee on October 19, Hiranandani claimed that Moitra provided him her Parliament login ID and password so that he could "post questions" directly "on her behalf when required".

The Lok Sabha secretary told Moitra on Saturday, "Chairperson, Committee on Ethics has acceded to your request for extension of date for appearing before the Committee on Ethics, i.e., rescheduling the sitting of the committee. It has, accordingly, been decided to hear you in the above matter; in person, on 2 November..."

The TMC MP on Saturday said the BJP's "cash-for-questions" allegation against her had "failed" as there was no evidence to back it. In a post on X, Moitra said: "First BJP said 'Cash for Questions'. That failed since NO evidence to back fake allegation. Now it's 'National Security'." "Real? Not of Q&A portal that 10 people in each MP team access daily - it is how dodgy FPI owned Adani gets MHA clearance to buy our ports and airports!"

Moitra's post came a day after Dubey said in a post on X that sharing the parliamentary login details with anyone is a violation of the agreement with the government body (NIC) managing the portal and is a security risk.

(WITH PTI INPUTS)

Four-year-old video stirs fresh turbulence in Maharashtra's cockpit

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 28

WHILE EKNATH Shinde appears secure as Maharashtra CM for the moment, the BJP - which is the biggest constituent of the state's ruling NDA - leaves no opportunity to remind him of the sword of Damocles hanging over him. Recent assertions by Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP - both in terms of leadership and governance - indicate the Deputy CM may be down, but not quite out.

The latest flutter was due to the resurfacing of a four-year-old video in which Fadnavis declares, "I'll return again", on the official BJP website on Friday. As it gave the Opposition fresh fuel to attack the ruling coalition, the video was taken off.

The video, a compilation of Fadnavis's speeches, dates back to before the 2019 Assembly polls. At the time, BJP had hailed it as a show of his confidence. However, the BJP had fallen short, and only clawed its way back to power after engineering a split in the Shiv Sena and toppling the Maha Vikas Aghadi government. While first the BJP claimed the old Fadnavis video had been shared again to "inspire cadre", it backtracked after the controversy threatened to unsettle the ruling alliance. Apart from removing the video, the BJP "cautioned" party members that such initiatives would upset allies and create misunderstandings.

On Saturday, state BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule said, "Eknath Shinde will remain the CM. There is no question of replacing him. The 2025 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections will also be fought under his leadership. Why is Fadnavis's four-year-old video being misinterpreted?"

Fadnavis himself dived in, emphatically telling the media on Saturday that Shinde will remain CM for the full term. "I will fully support and stand by him to ensure the development and progress of Maharashtra."

However, it is a known fact that a section within the BJP believes that the objective of enticing the Shinde Sena into the NDA has not been achieved. Whether it is the Maratha reservation agitation or wiping out of the Uddhav Sena at the grassroots, Shinde has found the going tough.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Pawar defends old role as agri minister after Modi criticises him

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 28

REACTING TO criticism from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who at a rally in Shirdi questioned his record as agriculture minister in the UPA government, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday defended himself, saying that it was during his tenure as the Union agriculture minister that the country became self-sufficient in terms of food production.

Addressing a press meet in Mumbai, Pawar read out the list of works he did as the country's agriculture minister, stressing that it was his tenure which made the country self-sufficient in food production. "We doubled the MSP for wheat, rice, cotton and soyabean. Special efforts were taken for horticulture. Rice from Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Odisha was increased to the extent of second green revolution. Special scheme was implemented for vegetables. National Fisheries Development Board was formed in 2006 which all helped the farmers," he said.

The Rajya Sabha MP added that during UPA, India, which was earlier an importer of food-grains, became an exporter. "We extended the farm loan waiver of Rs 62,000 crore to control the increasing number of farmer suicides," he said.

"Prime Minister's post is a Constitutional one. He should



The Rajya Sabha MP read out the list of works he had done as agriculture minister, at a press meet in Mumbai on Saturday. Amit Chakravarty

have been briefed of the facts, but it does not seem to have happened here. Therefore, I would like to present a few facts here," said Pawar.

Modi at a rally in Shirdi had taken a dig at Pawar stating that while the BJP-led government was busy empowering farmers, "some individuals in Maharashtra were engaged in political activities under the guise of representing farmers".

Pawar said that among colleagues of INDIA front, the feeling is that all must stand together for the Lok Sabha elections. "In INDIA front we need to sit together and think about certain issues. Majority of us believe that we should be together for Parliament polls as there are differences when it comes to Assembly polls as interests clash. Sticking together for Parliament elections is easier than doing that for Assembly polls," he said.

MLA disqualification row: SC to hear Uddhav, Pawar faction pleas on Oct 30

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28:

THE SUPREME Court is scheduled to hear on October 30 pleas filed by the Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena and the Sharad Pawar bloc of the NCP, seeking a direction to the Maharashtra assembly speaker to expeditiously decide disqualification petitions against some MLAs.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud is scheduled to take up two separate pleas.

On October 17, the top court granted assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar a final opportunity to give it a realistic time-frame for deciding the cross-petitions filed by the rival factions of the Shiv

Sena seeking disqualification of each other's MLAs following a split in the party.

"The narration of facts indicates that the first batch of petitions is pending since June and July 2022. The judgment of the Constitution Bench was delivered on May 11, 2023. The disqualification petitions have to be adjudicated upon with all expeditions. Otherwise very purpose of the tenth schedule shall stand defeated," the bench had said in its order. Expressing dissatisfaction with the time schedule given by the Speaker, the top court had said, "The time schedule as proposed will not result in a foreseeable conclusion of the disqualification petitions at a reasonably early date."

PM at Rozgar Mela: Govt boosted jobs in traditional, emerging sectors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28:

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi asserted on Saturday that his government has boosted employment opportunities in traditional as well as emerging sectors like renewable energy, defence exports and automation.

Distributing appointment letters at a virtual event to nearly 51,000 people recruited in different government departments as part of 'Rozgar Mela', he said the exercise underscored his government's commitment to the youth in the country.

Modi stressed that the government doesn't only provide employment but also maintains a transparent recruitment process and efforts have been made to restructure and streamline the examination procedure.

He noted that lakhs of youngsters have been given appointment letters so far in the 'Rozgar Mela' being organised since October last year by his government and the states ruled by the BJP and its allies.

"Today, India is equipping its youths with skills and education to harness emerging opportunities. India's trajectory and the



Union Ministers Jitendra Singh and Meenakshi Lekhi hand over appointment letters to candidates at the Rozgar Mela in New Delhi on Saturday. (Right) PM Narendra Modi addressed the event via video link. ANI

pace of its progress are generating new employment prospects across all sectors," he said.

The prime minister said the time taken for recruitment by the Staff Selection Commission has been reduced to almost half.

Exams are now being conducted in 13 different regional languages apart from Hindi and



English to help the language barrier for those affected, he said.

He also spoke about the recent recognition by UN bodies to several Indian places as tourism and heritage sites. Modi said a boost in tourism has added to employment sources and a similar trend was being seen in sports as the sector grows.

Actor-politician Suresh Gopi booked on journalist's complaint

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 28

THE KERALA Police on Saturday booked Malayalam actor and former BJP Rajya Sabha MP Suresh Gopi after a controversy erupted over his interaction with a journalist in Kozhikode on Friday, when he twice put his hand on her shoulder while answering her questions.

Gehlot's OSD seeks ticket, reaches CM House along with supporters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 28

RAJASTHAN CHIEF Minister Ashok Gehlot's OSD Lokesha Sharma on Saturday reached the CM House here along with several of his supporters seeking a ticket for the upcoming Assembly polls in the state. Sharma expressed desire to contest from the Bhilwara Assembly constituency. Earlier,

he had sought a ticket from the Bikaner West constituency but the party decided to renominate sitting MLA and state minister B D Kalla from there. Rajasthan Assembly election will be held on November 23. In a video circulating on social media, Sharma, who is Gehlot's Officer On Special Duty (OSD), and his supporters can be seen gathered outside Gehlot's residence in the Civil Lines area here.

placed his hand on her shoulder, at which point she pushed it away. After the incident sparked a controversy, Gopi issued an apology on Saturday, and said in a Facebook post that he was behaving in "an affectionate manner" towards the journalist. "If she felt bad about my behaviour, her feelings should be respected. I tender an apology towards her if she had felt badly about my behaviour. Sorry..." he said.

The journalist said Gopi's

statement seemed more like an "explanation" than an apology. She said she was distressed by Gopi's behaviour and that she would take legal action. The Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) said Gopi's actions were unacceptable and "an insult to all working women".

Acting on complaints from the journalist and the KUWJ, the Kerala Women's Commission asked police to furnish a probe report within 15 days.

Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design and Manufacturing, Kancheepuram
(An Institute of National Importance established by Govt. of India)
Melakottaiyur, Vandalur - Kelambakkam Road, Chennai - 600 127, Tamil Nadu, India

ADVERTISEMENT : FACULTY RECRUITMENT
AdvT.No. IITDMK/R/2023 dated: 24.10.2023
IITDM Kancheepuram, located at Chennai (25km from airport) invites online applications for various faculty positions (Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors Grade I) under four tier flexible structure for various disciplines.

The applicants must have consistent academic record from reputed institutions with a commitment to teaching, research and product development.

Last date for receiving online applications is **05:00 P.M. on 30th November 2023**. Detailed advertisement and the procedure for applying online are available at Institute website www.iitdm.ac.in.

Registrar

By order of Mr. Manoj Garbalya, First Additional District and Sessions Judge, Dehradun.
Before the court of First Additional District and Sessions Judge, Dehradun
Criminal Revision No. 157 of 2023.
Mrs. Indu Chauhan Daughter of Late Mr. Hari Singh R/o 3rd Floor, Plot No. 31, Street No. 1, Ashwin, Enclave, Dehradun, Uttarakhand Mo. No. 9997002000
...Revisionist

Versus
1- State of Uttarakhand Through DCG Criminal.
2- Mr. Prashant Chauhan R/o Estate Director and CEO, Principal Saloon Pacific Golf Arctic A Block, Club House Ground Floor Sahasradhara Road, Kulhan, Dehra Dun.
3- IDFC FIRST BANK LIMITED, BRANCH OFFICE AT IND FLOOR KRISHNA TOWERS, 69 RAJPUUR ROAD, DEHRA DUN THROUGH ITS MANAGER.
4- SIDDHARTH BANSAL SON OF DEVENDER KUMAR BANSAL WORKING AS SENIOR MANAGER IN IDFC FIRST BANK LIMITED, BRANCH OFFICE AT IND FLOOR KRISHNA TOWERS, 69 RAJPUUR ROAD, DEHRA DUN.
5- MR. GURPREET TANEJA IDFC BANK LTD WORKING AS AUTHORIZED OFFICER OF IDFC FIRST BANK LIMITED, BRANCH OFFICE AT IND FLOOR KRISHNA TOWERS, 69 RAJPUUR ROAD, DEHRA DUN.
6- ANSHU GUPTA IDFC FIRST BANK LIMITED, BRANCH OFFICE AT IND FLOOR KRISHNA TOWERS, 69 RAJPUUR ROAD, DEHRA DUN.
7- PUNEET BHARTI RECOVERY PERSON FOR IDFC FIRST BANK LIMITED, BRANCH OFFICE AT IND FLOOR KRISHNA TOWERS, 69 RAJPUUR ROAD, DEHRA DUN. ...Respondents

The above-named revisionist has filed above numbered criminal revision in the above-named Court and in which the next date for hearing has been fixed on dated 16.11.2023. Therefore, you are hereby informed that if the respondent number 5 and 7 has any objection regarding the said Criminal Revision No. 157 of 2023, then it should be submitted on 16.11.2023 at 10:00 am in the Honourable court. First Additional District and Sessions Court, Dehradun. Present your objection by appearing in person or through your advocate. No objection will be entertained after the said date and failing to do so, the said criminal revision will be heard ex-parte and appropriate order will be passed in the said criminal revision. Issued under my Signature and seal of the court on dated. By order of the court Manoj Garbalya 1st Additional district and sessions Judge, Dehradun

8 EXPRESS NETWORK

COPS SUSPECT MASS SUICIDE

Seven of family found dead at Surat home

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SURAT, OCTOBER 28

A BUSINESSMAN and his six family members, including his wife and three children, were found dead at his flat in Surat on Saturday morning, police said. Police suspect the businessman, Mahesh Solanki, allegedly poisoned his parents, wife, and children and then hanged himself late Friday night at his flat in the Palanpur Patiya area. While a purported suicide note has been recovered, police have also formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe into the incident.

Solanki was said to be facing financial challenges after borrowers failed to pay him back the money he had loaned them. As the festival of Diwali approached, he chased them but they continued to give him excuses, as per officials.

Surat Deputy Commissioner of Police Rakesh Barot told *The Indian Express*, "Solanki ran a furniture business and took contracts at newly developed construction sites. He allegedly gave poison to his family members and later hanged himself. A suicide note, which he purportedly wrote, has been recovered. We are carrying out an investigation to find out more information."

In the purported suicide note, the details of which were shared with *The Indian Express*, Solanki wrote, "I only knew how I was passing my days. I am worried about my wife, children, and my parents as they cannot live without me. The reason behind taking such an extreme step is that there are some people behind it but I don't want to name them. I have not troubled anybody in my life, so why should I give trouble to anybody after my death? People have not returned my

money. I am not here to take revenge on them. It is God who will act against them. I helped many people in my life."

Surat Police Commissioner Ajay Kumar Tomar said, "We have formed a SIT to probe into the incident and the team consists of Deputy Commissioner of Police Rakesh Barot, two assistant commissioners of police of the Surat Crime Branch, and the Adajan Police Inspector. The technical teams of the Surat crime branch will also work jointly."

Officials aware of the details at the Adajan Police Station, under whose jurisdiction the flat falls, said the incident came to light on Saturday morning when neighbours reported that a foul smell was emanating from the flat. It was when nobody responded to the doorbell that the residents informed the Surat Police Control Room.

Police immediately reached the spot, broke open the main door, and found the seven bodies inside the house. The deceased have been identified as Manish Solanki (35), his wife Rita (32), and children Disha (7), Kavya (5), and Khushal (3) whose bodies were found in the bedroom. His parents Kantil Solanki (65) and mother Shobhna (60) were also found dead at the home.

Solanki hailed from Savarkundla in the Amreli district and had been staying with his family in Surat for long. He owned four flats in the same building where he resided, as per the details available with the police. Surat Mayor Daxesh Mawani also visited the spot, met the relatives of the deceased, and paid his condolences. He also assured them that police were carrying out investigations into the case. The postmortem was carried out at New Civil Hospital on Saturday afternoon.

Centre imposes \$800/MT minimum export price on onion to maintain domestic availability

PARTHA SARATHI
BISWAS
PUNE, OCTOBER 28

TRYING TO rein in soaring onion prices, the central government Saturday imposed a steep Minimum Export Price (MEP) of \$800 per metric tonne.

This comes after the 40 per cent export duty imposed in August, and is directed to improve domestic availability of onions in the country. Facing Assembly elections in multiple states and the Lok Sabha polls next year, rising onion prices do not bode well for the central government.

The MEP would be in place till December 30, 2023, read a Press Information Bureau (PIB) statement. "The measure has been taken to maintain sufficient availability of onion for domestic consumers at affordable prices

Mukesh Ambani gets death threat, case registered

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 28

THE MUMBAI Police have registered a case of extortion and criminal intimidation after an unidentified person allegedly sent an email threatening to eliminate Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani.

The police said the email was sent to one of the company's email IDs on Friday evening following which the matter was reported to Gamdevi police station and a case was registered in the wee hours on Saturday.

According to the police, in the email purportedly sent by one Shadab Khan read, "If you don't give us Rs 20 crore, we will kill you, we have the best shooters in India." While the agencies were conducting a probe, the complainant reported that they had received another email on Saturday.



Onion price in Pune's biggest vegetable market, Mahatma Phule Mandai, increased to Rs 80/kg due to lower arrivals caused by crop shortage on Saturday. Pavan Khengre

as the quantity of stored rabi 2023 onions is declining by curbing the quantity of onion exports. The MEP of USD 800 per MT translates into about Rs 67/kg," the release read, adding that the central government

would be procuring an additional 2 lakh tonnes as buffer stock in addition to the 5 lakh tonnes already procured last year.

"Onions from the buffer stock have been disposed continu-

ously from August second week in major consumption centres across the country, and supplied to retail consumers at Rs 25/kg through mobile vans operated by NCCF and NAFED. Till date, about 1.70 lakh metric tonnes of onions have been disposed of from the buffer. The continuous procurement and disposal of onion from the buffer are undertaken to moderate its prices for consumers while ensuring remunerative prices to the onion farmers," the release read.

At present, the wholesale onion price range in most markets in Maharashtra's Nashik district is Rs 3,500-4,000/quintal, while its retail price, especially in northern parts of the country, is around Rs 37-50/kg, signalling a demand supply mismatch.

Lasalgaon's wholesale market traders in Niphad taluk of Nashik attributed the price rise to low stock and late arrival of

the new crop. "Earlier this year, farmers had lost around 60 per cent of their summer crop to untimely hail and rain. The kharif crop, which is transplanted in June-July, was delayed due to the delay in monsoons. The long break in August has also affected the crop," said a trader from Dindori taluk in Nashik district.

The new crop, which normally arrives early October, is delayed and would arrive only mid-November. "Prices will remain on the higher side till the new crop arrives," he said.

Meanwhile, farmers in the onion belt blamed the local representatives for failing to raise their voices when onion prices were low. "Earlier, when onions were sold at throwaway prices, there was no urgency on part of the government to help the farmers," said Bharat Dighole, president of the Onion growers' association.



FOR SONS OF THE SOIL

A delegation carrying urns filled with soil from various parts of the country arrives at New Delhi Railway Station as part of the 'Amrit Kalash Yatra' under the 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' campaign, Saturday. Gajendra Yadav

ED questions Trinamool minister's PA, former aide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 28

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) on Saturday questioned state minister Jyoti Priya Mallick's personal assistant at its CGO complex office in Kolkata, a day after the Trinamool Congress leader was arrested in connection with alleged irregularities in ration distribution in the state. The minister's personal assistant Amit Dey was interrogated on Friday as well. Along with Dey, Mallick's former personal assistant Abhijit Das was also questioned by the ED on Saturday.

On Thursday, the ED had raided Mallick's house and seven other premises which included three flats owned by Dey in Nagerbazar. Officials said the ED teams could not enter the flats as Dey was in Puri on a holiday with his family. The teams were able to enter the premises after Dey returned the next day.

The same day, the agency searched a house owned by Das in Howrah district. According to sources, a maroon diary was allegedly recovered from the house. The ED has alleged that the diary has details of various money transactions conducted on different dates.

Meanwhile, state minister Sujit Bose alleged that the ED was "pressuring" his former personal assistant Nitai Dutta to "reveal his name in connection with the municipalities jobs case". Dutta is presently the vice-chairman of South Dum Dum municipality.

Addressing a public meeting in the Lake Town area of Kolkata on Saturday, Bose said, "Nitai was my assistant. He became a councillor for the first time, now he is the vice-chairman of the municipality. ED searched his house for 12 hours and found nothing. After that, they are now pressuring him to reveal my name in connection with the municipality jobs case."

Focus on tourism, film, hospitality: Uttarakhand signs MoUs worth ₹4k cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, OCTOBER 28

INVESTMENT MEMORANDUMS of Understanding (MoUs) worth Rs 4,600 crore were signed between the Uttarakhand government and 18 companies from different sectors enthusiastic to invest in the state during a road show organised in Bengaluru on Saturday.

After the Bengaluru roadshow, investment MoUs worth Rs 69,300 crore have now been signed so far in UAE, Britain, Delhi and Bengaluru against a total target of investments worth over Rs 2.5 lakh crore during the Investors Summit scheduled in Uttarakhand for December 8 and 9 this year.

This includes MoUs worth Rs 15,475 crore signed in UAE, Rs 12,500 crore in Britain, Rs 26,575 crore in two different programs

organised in Delhi, and MoUs worth Rs 10,150 crore at a Chennai roadshow.

Addressing investors in Bengaluru, Uttarakhand Cabinet Minister Rekha Arya said, "After Uttarakhand's coming into existence as a separate state, there has been global growth in sectors like food processing, beverages, textile and apparels, paper and its products, pharma, electrical, electronics, FMCG, fabricated metal products, plywood, rubber and plastic products, chemical products, packaging etc. And investment has been made by major industrial houses of the country."

She said the state government has identified focus sectors for investment like tourism and hospitality, AYUSH and wellness, film shooting and food processing, automobiles, pharma as well as upcoming segments like renewable energy.

Stuck since 1975, Jamrani Dam project gets nod for construction

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, OCTOBER 28

THE ECONOMIC Affairs Committee of the Union Cabinet has given its approval to the long-awaited Jamrani Dam project in Nainital district.

Informing about the developments during a press conference, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed his gratitude to PM Narendra Modi for the project and said that clearing the way for the construction of this dam project will solve the problem of drinking water and irrigation in Haldwani and surrounding areas. The construction of the project could not start since 1975 due to lack of funding.

The construction of the Jamrani Dam (150.60 m height) is proposed on the Gaula River, 10 km upstream from Kathgodam in Nainital district of Uttarakhand.

In Pawar vs Pawar play-off, grandnephew Rohit's yatra hits Maratha protest wall

MANOJ MORE
PUNE, OCTOBER 28

IN JUST four days, the biggest gambit by Rohit Pawar to emerge as the Sharad Pawar-led NCP's answer to rebel Ajit Pawar has ended. On Dussehra Day, October 24, Rohit launched the Yuva Sangharsh Yatra with much fanfare, announcing he would cover 800 km from Pune to Nagpur on foot. However, with the march running into Maratha quota protests, the 38-year-old declared on Friday evening that he was suspending it, till "things became normal".

Sharad Pawar, whose blessings are seen with Rohit, his grandnephew, was present to flag off the yatra. The NCP patriarch was also meant to join Rohit during the yatra's course through 460 villages, 28 talukas and 12 districts, before it wrapped up by around December 7, coinciding with the Winter Session of the



NCP's Rohit Pawar at his Yuva Sangharsh Yatra launch in Pune.

Maharashtra Assembly.

The yatra was seen as a bid by Rohit to tap into the discontent among the state's youth, reflected in the burgeoning reservation demands as anxiety grows over employment opportunities.

The NCP leader was planning to raise issues such as the controversy over contractual recruitment for government posts, the unfulfilled 2.50 lakh government posts, "unreasonable" exam fees, opportunities for sports aspirants, stricter laws against paper leaks, waiving of interests on ed-

ucational loans, and setting up of a Youth Commission, among other things.

The demand for a caste census, which the Opposition has made the centrepiece of its campaign to ensure proper representation for OBCs, would have also figured in Rohit's speeches.

However, the first-time NCP MLA's plans took a direct hit due to the relaunch of a fast-untodeath by Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil, and his appeal to Maratha community members to not let political

leaders enter their villages.

To end such a fast by Jarange-Patil earlier, the Shiv Sena-BJP government had buckled by promising a Maratha quota, and later a caste survey to balance similar demands by OBC groups.

On Thursday, when Rohit's yatra entered the Talegaon Dhamdhare village in Pune, he had a face-off with local Maratha youths. NCP youth wing president Ravikanth Varpe denied there was any "confrontation". "The youth actually welcomed our yatra and accompanied us till the village threshold," he said.

Then, on Friday morning, when the yatra reached the borders of Pune and Ahmednagar districts, NCP leaders reportedly warned Rohit that villages in districts like Ahmednagar, Beed, Jalna and Parbhani may not let him enter. He was also told that youths were angry and that things could become worse in the coming days.

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com

In Karnataka, a new political cockfight: Tigers vs peacocks

As Cong govt goes after prominent wearers of tiger claw pendants on grounds of anti-poaching, BJP questions use of peacock feathers in mosques

AKRAM M
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 28

ANIMALS ARE now fair game in Karnataka's polarised Congress vs BJP politics, with the two parties locking horns over tiger claw pendants vs peacock feathers.

It started with the arrest of a Bigg Boss Kannada contestant, Varthar Santhosh, on October 22, from the sets of the show after he appeared on it wearing a tiger claw pendant.

Others, including BJP and Congress leaders, next found themselves being dragged into the limelight for similar pendants.

BJP leaders shot back inferring that the minority community was always "spared", and that if tiger pendants showed violation of wildlife laws, the same

reasoning should be applied to the use of peacock feathers in mosques and dargahs to bless devotees.

Santhosh's arrest was followed by a deluge of complaints against many prominent names, including actors-turned-politicians Jaggesh and Nikhil Kumaraswamy, actor Darshan, producer Rockline Venkatesh, with demands for their arrest. The complaints also included some leaders of the ruling Congress.

After "hundreds of such complaints" to the Wildlife Department, the Congress government said that it might consider offering one-time clemency to those who surrender such items.

Jaggesh, a BJP MP, was among the first to respond, surrendering his tiger claw pendant.

Kumaraswamy, JD(S) leader and scion, approached the Forest Department saying that the claw he wore was fake. Searches were carried out on the premises of Darshan and several others.

On Friday, a team of Karnataka forest officials landed up at the residence of Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar after visuals of her son Mrinal wearing an alleged tiger claw pendant went viral. He was also issued a notice.

While Mrinal handed over the pendant to the Forest Department, the minister said that it was made of plastic and was a wedding gift. "It is not possible to get an original tiger claw pendant these days... We are pure vegetarians," she said.

"The pendant will be sent to forensics for tests and an investigation has already been



Big Boss Kannada contestant Varthar Santhosh was arrested from the sets of the show after he was seen wearing a tiger claw pendant

launched," Deputy Conservator of Forests SH Kallollikar said.

Friday also saw the arrest of a deputy range forest officer in Chikkamagaluru district on the

charges of possessing a tiger claw. Santhosh, meanwhile, a social media influencer whose claim to fame is successful rearing of the Hallikar breed of cattle, got out on bail in the evening.

Speaking to reporters Friday, the BJP's Hubli-Dharwad West MLA, Arvind Bellad, said that "all mosques and dargahs in the state" keep peacock feathers. "Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has gone to several dargahs. He saw them using peacock feathers... All maulvis in such dargahs and mosques should have cases registered against them. Only then can we say that you (the government) have real concern for wildlife."

Former Home Minister and BJP leader Araga Jnanendra dragged in former Mysuru ruler Tipu Sultan to accuse the Congress government of unfair

action. If a tiger claw pendant was enough to get one arrested on the charge of encouraging poaching, Jnanendra said, everyone who keeps a replica at home of the famous image of Tipu Sultan slaying a tiger should be picked up too. "What if people get inspired to kill tigers because of that. Is it possible to arrest everyone who keeps images of Tipu?" he said.

Jnanendra then referred to Hanagere, a syncretic town where a temple and mosque share the same premises. The mosque mauvi used peacock feathers, he said. "Peacock is the national bird, and if they can be arrested for possessing its feathers, they should be."

The Karnataka Congress slammed Jnanendra, saying it was unfortunate that a person without basic knowledge of the

law had been the Home Minister for four years. Forest Department officials said that while tigers are protected animals, naturally collecting peacock feathers and selling them was not illegal.

Accusing the BJP of making everything a Hindu-Muslim issue, Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre said: "Is there a religion for Acts too?"

"The emblem of the Hoysalas was a person slaying a tiger. Are you saying that it should be removed too?" the Congress said in a social media post.

Incidentally, forest officials Friday searched the house of Ghouse Mohiddin Shakhadri, hereditary administrator of Guru Dattatreya Baba Budan Swamy Dargah in Chikkamagaluru, and seized skins of wild animals.

Schoolteacher injured in 'firing'; 2 teens detained in UP's Kanpur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 28

THE KANPUR police on Saturday detained two boys - aged 15 and 17 years - for allegedly opening fire on their teacher near their school gate on Friday, police said. The 43-year-old teacher and a female student, who was incidentally standing nearby, suffered injuries. Both the teacher and the girl student were discharged after treatment at a hospital and their conditions stable, police added.

On Friday, two adult relatives of the two teenagers - who are cousins - were arrested for allegedly providing "logistical support" to them, police said.

"One of the accused students told us that his chemistry teacher often embarrasses him by scolding him in front of other students. So, he and his cousin planned an attack to warn him. They contacted two relatives, who allegedly arranged a weapon and vehicle for them," said an officer at the area police station.

During preliminary inquiry, it was revealed that around 7:30 am on Friday, when the teacher reached the school, the two teenagers were waiting near the gate and opened fire at him. Upon spotting people present nearby coming to the spot, the two fled on a motorcycle, police said. A police team soon reached the spot and took the two injured persons to a hospital.

He added that the boys fired from "quite a distance" and the teacher suffered burns on several parts of the body, including his face and legs. "The female student suffered a pellet injury on the leg. Both are out of danger," he added.

"The two relatives of the teenagers will also face action for not informing the police about the planned attack. On Saturday, the teenagers were produced before the Juvenile Justice Board, which sent them to a correction home. Their two relatives were sent to a district jail by a local court," said a police officer.

J&K to UP to Karnataka — protests for Palestine run into police action

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

FROM A 20-year-old detained in Karnataka for his WhatsApp status to a 92-year-old former MP who spent a night in Jammu police custody, many across the country have over the past week faced police action in connection with comments or protests related to the recent escalation in the Palestine-Israel conflict and the ongoing bombardment of Gaza. Several protesters have been booked, some have been detained, and a few arrested:



A pro-Palestine protest in Kolkata earlier this month. PTI

Suhail Ansari and Atif Chowdhary were booked under section dealing with "promoting enmity", and Ansari was arrested.

Karnataka

On October 12, police detained a man identified as Nawaz in Vijayanagar, allegedly for posting a pro-Palestine slogan as his WhatsApp status.

Days later, Bengaluru Police booked 11 people in connection with a protest held in the city on October 16 to show solidarity with Palestinians.

Police also denied permission to Bengaluru for Justice and Peace — a coalition of civil society organisations — to hold a protest on October 28 in solidarity with Palestine. In a letter, Deputy Commissioner (West) S Girish said "permission has been sought to hold protests in matters of international issue" and the "jurisdictional police inspector" has submitted a report against grant-

ing permission for the protest". In an open letter, Bengaluru for Justice and Peace said police "have detained protesters in Bengaluru, Mysuru and Tumkur, and are pursuing criminal action for protesting for the rights of Palestinians and calling for an immediate ceasefire".

Jammu & Kashmir

A 92-year-old former MP from Jammu was among five people who spent a night in police custody last week over their decision to call a meeting to express solidarity with Gaza.

Sheikh Abdul Rehman was taken to a Jammu police station last Friday night, and spent the night there, ahead of the planned solidarity meeting scheduled for the next day at Maharaja Hari Singh Park in Jammu. According to his family, police gave no reason for his detention, and let him go by the next evening after making him sign a bond.

Shahid Saleem, one of the other four detained, said it was to be a meeting to call for an end to hostilities and was not an "anti-Israel protest".

Srinagar's Jama Masjid has also remained shut for three Fridays in a row, with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference linking it to apprehensions by authorities of pro-Palestine protests.

Tamil Nadu

Three people were booked in connection with an agitation organised in support of Palestine in Coimbatore on October 24.

According to officials, protesters gathered in large numbers and raised slogans demanding that countries around the world intervene in the conflict and support Palestine.

Police have registered a case against MSSabeer Ali, district secretary Jamaat-e-Islami Hind; Abu alias Abuthagir of Manithaneya Jananayaga Katchi; and one Rafeek under IPC sections linked to unlawful assembly, public nuisance and others.

Maharashtra

Two activists of the Revolutionary Workers Party of India were arrested by the Mankhurd police recently for allegedly staging a pro-Palestine protest without seeking the required permissions, and for charging at the authorities when they tried to intervene. Police said the incident took place on October 13.

"They did not seek any permission. They started raising slogans and when our team went

and tried to make them understand that they had not taken permission before conducting any protest, they started charging at us due to which two of them were detained," senior police inspector Mahadev Koli said.

The two arrested were identified as Ruchit Lad and Supreeth Ravish. They were subsequently granted bail.

Telangana

Police booked 11 students from the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) in Hyderabad after the Proctor claimed in a complaint that they instigated another 200 students and incited violence after they were denied permission to hold a pro-Palestine event on campus. The charges against the 11 included "giving provocation to cause rioting" and "promoting enmity". The booked students, however, said they were not connected to the pro-Palestine event, and that the protests that rocked the campus last week were linked to a sexual harassment allegation.

Delhi

As many as 207 students from student organisations, including the All India Students' Association (AISA), were detained from near the Israel Embassy on Monday while they were protesting against the country's actions in Gaza.

Police said the students were found flouting security norms and violating Section 144 in the area. No FIRs were registered and the students were later allowed to go.

Maratha quota activist's health worsens, calls on community to follow him in fast-unto-death

MANOJ MORE
PUNE, OCTOBER 28

EVEN AS his health deteriorated, Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange Patil on Saturday further intensified his agitation as he asked the community members to fast unto death in all villages across Maharashtra starting Sunday. He also urged the state government, one last time, to take his agitation seriously and provide reservation. In the same breath, he once again appealed to Maratha youths to shun extreme steps like suicides for the sake of reservation, and told them to keep politicians away from the villages.

"I urge the government to take our agitation seriously, provide reservation to Marathas on top priority. I am telling the government one last time... don't take the agitation lightly... don't be complacent. Otherwise, you will find it difficult to handle what comes next," Jarange Patil said at a press conference in Antarwadi Saraati village of Jalna district where he relaunched his fast-unto-death four days ago.

Exhorting Maratha youths not to end their lives, Jarange Patil said, "Maratha youths should remember that we are going to win the agitation... So, I urge community members to stop our youths from ending their lives."

He added, "Today is October 28. From Sunday, we are launch-



Maratha community members carry out a candlelight march in Pune on Saturday. Pavan Khengre

ing our second phase of the agitation. This will be the biggest ever fast-unto-death in the country wherein a large number of citizens will be participating. From tomorrow, our community members should hold fast-unto-death at the village level across the state. Everyone should drink water and then start fast-unto-death from tomorrow."

"The agitation can be undertaken by those for whom it is possible. Villagers should sit together in one place for the fast-unto-death. We want to see if this has an effect on the government and whether it takes our agitation seriously. If anything happens to those fasting, the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Ministers and the state government will be fully accountable." Directing the Marathas to not

allow political leaders near them, Jarange Patil said, "Don't allow political leaders at our doorstep, and you should not go to their doorstep either."

The activist said the third phase of the agitation will start October 31. "Information about the third phase will be given on October 30," he said.

Jarange Patil has refused treatment and is turning away doctors appointed by the state government to monitor his health. He said, "I have no health issues. I am having some problem as I am not drinking water, but this problem is not bigger than the issue of quota for Marathas. The careers prospects of Maratha youths is being deliberately wrecked. They are being robbed of opportunities that will help them make it big in life."

Uttar Pradesh

Four Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) students were booked on October 9 for taking out a march in support of Palestine. They were booked under IPC sections after they allegedly did not take prior permission for the protest march.

In Bareilly, a day after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath warned on October 12 against "any activity contrary to the views" of the Centre on the Israel-Palestine conflict, a doctor was booked for allegedly making objectionable social media posts about the Muslim community in the context of the conflict. Dr Pramendra Maheshwari was booked under sections dealing with "promoting enmity".

In Hamirpur, two Muslim clerics were booked, and one of them was arrested on October 14, in relation to social media posts they made in support of Palestine.

After visa fraud, Canada to verify 'acceptance letter' of foreign students

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

CANADA HAS announced a new verification process for foreign students after a visa fraud case to light earlier this June that left 700 Indian students facing possible deportation. The new rule will come into effect from December 1 and involves verification of the 'letter of acceptance', a prerequisite to obtain a study permit in the country.

While announcing the new rule, Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Marc Miller on Friday, added that "they are not in favour of imposing a cap on new international student arrivals" but this verification process will ensure that study permits are issued based only on genuine letters of acceptance.

As per the new rules, institutions will be required to confirm every applicant's letter of acceptance directly with IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada). This enhanced verification will protect students from "letter of acceptance" fraud and to help them avoid similar problems that some students had faced earlier this year, Miller said.

More than 700 college students from India are currently facing deportation from Canada after their college acceptance letters — which were used to apply for Canadian study visas almost four years ago — were found to be fake. The issue first came to light in March this year after several students in Canada applied

EXPLAINED Canada's golden goose

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION accounts for more than \$22 billion in economic activity annually in Canada, greater than its exports of auto parts, lumber or aircraft, and supports more than 200,000 jobs in Canada, as per statistics given by IRCC. The temporary drop in international students in 2020 resulted in a loss of more than \$7 billion for Canada's gross domestic product that year, it says.

for permanent residency after completing their studies and the Canadian border agency discovered that their documents were fake. After New Delhi raised the issue with Ottawa, the Canadian government put the deportations of students on hold.

In June, following investigations into fraudulent admissions letters, an IRCC taskforce was formed to work with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to review the cases of affected students and graduates. Consequently, the CBSA charged Indian citizen Brijesh Mishra for immigration-related offences, who was identified by victims as one of the central figures involved in defrauding students. Earlier this month, CBSA reviewed 103 cases, of which only 63 were found to be genuine.



THE LAST RIDE

Mumbai's last Premier Padmini black-and-yellow taxi, registered in October 2003, will run for the final time Monday as the age limit for cabs in the city is 20 years. This brings down the curtains on an emblematic part of Mumbai's landscape for over five decades. PTI

Trying to meet PM: Kin of ex-Navy officer sentenced to death by Qatar

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 28

FAMILY MEMBERS of P Sugunakar, a former Navy officer from Visakhapatnam, said they were shocked and distraught after a court in Qatar on Thursday sentenced him and seven other former Indian Navy personnel to death.

"We are all in distress, and are shattered and devastated by the news. His wife Vyjayanti, and his son and daughter are in shock and worried sick. They are living in fear. They do not know what to do. The worst part is, they don't know what he has done," said K Kalyan Chakravarty, Sugunakar's brother-in-law.

The eight former Navy officers, all employees of Doha-based Dahra Global, were taken into custody last year. The charges against them have not

been made public.

"The family is urging the Centre to take up the issue with Qatar and ensure his and others' safe return," Chakravarty said.

Before his arrest, Sugunakar would call his family daily, Chakravarty said, adding, "All of a sudden, we came to know he has been arrested, and since July 2022 — nearly 15 months now — there has been no contact with him. It is a living hell for his wife and two children not knowing anything about him."

"We are trying to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to seek information on what is going on," he said.

Another former Navy officer and friend of Sugunakar's said he is "well known and highly respected" among defence personnel in Visakhapatnam. Sugunakar "crossed the equator twice aboard the INS Tarangini sail ship", the friend said.

The son of two teachers, Sugunakar joined the Navy soon after he turned 18, and worked in the Naval Engineering Corps, his family said. He earned his BTech (Mechanical) from the Naval College of Engineering, and also did an MSc in Defence and Strategic Studies from Defence Services College, Wellington. He retired in November 2013 and worked for Hindustan Shipyard Limited for a few months before joining Doha-based AI Dahra Global Technologies, according to his family.

In their effort to bring him home, the family also met BJP MP CVL Narasimha Rao at Visakhapatnam on Friday. "I am in touch with the family and giving updates. I have also spoken with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and the Indian Ambassador to Qatar. The government of India will provide all the support to the family," he said.

Ajit Pawar cancels event in Baramati amid quota protests

PARTHA SARATHI BISWAS
PUNE, OCTOBER 28

AMID PROTESTS by Maratha Kranti Morcha activists against Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's scheduled public event at Malegaon Co-operative Sugar Mill in Baramati on Saturday afternoon, the leader has cancelled the event.

Since morning, scores of protesters had gathered outside the mill vowing to protests if Pawar turned up for the event.

As part of the ongoing Maratha quota agitation headed by Manoj Jarange Patil, protesters have announced plans to prohibit entry of political leaders of all hues entry in villages and stop them from holding public events.

On Saturday, Rajendra Dhavan Patil, director of the Mill said that they were told that Pawar was not well.

"We got the news from this office that he would not be able to come for the program because of health reasons," he said.

The deputy chief minister was to preside over the formal starting of the mill.

Located in Baramati taluka of Pune district, the Malegaon Co-operative Sugar Mill was won by Pawar's group in the last election. Balasaheb Patil Taware is the chairman of the mill. Most mills carry out the formal puja of the



Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar

fist bundle of cane and put it ceremonially in the cane pan which is symbolic of the start of the season. Real-time crushing would start post-November 1, the date declared by the state government.

While Dhavan Patil said they were told of Pawar's ill health, speculations are rife that he had cancelled his appearance to avoid facing agitating Maratha youths.

Jarange Patil has started his fast to seek reservation for the community after the state government failed to adhere to his time limit.

State ministers and BJP leaders are being greeted with black flags in places they visit. On Saturday, Dr Bhagawan Karad, Union Minister For State For Finance, was greeted with black flags during his visit to Nanded. Many villages have banned the entry of politicians till the demand for Maratha reservation is met.

Pawar, who also hails from Baramati, had wrestled the control of the Malegaon mill from the previous panel. Malegaon mill is known to pay good prices in the state. While Ajit Pawar was invited to the programme, Sharad Pawar and his daughter and MP Supriya Sule were not invited.

Latur man dies, family claims 'suicide note' blamed 'lack of Maratha quota'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, OCTOBER 28

A 65-YEAR-OLD man from Latur district died by suicide by jumping into Indrayaji river in Alandi. Police have identified the deceased as Vyankat Narsinh Dhopare, native of Latur district, Maharashtra. He was currently living with his son Sandip in Narhe Ambegaon in Pune.

Fire brigade teams fished out his body from the river at Indrayani Nagar in Alandi around 1.30 pm on Saturday. A case of accidental death was lodged at Alandi police station and a probe has been initiated into the incident, said DCP Sandip Doifode.

As per the probe, Dhopare left his home in Narhe Ambegaon on Friday evening. The family said they had handed over to the police a copy of the suicide note said to be written by him.

Police said as per the note, the deceased was upset over Maratha's failure to get reservation. The note mentioned that he too had demanded Maratha quota when he was the village sarpanch in 2021 but got no response. The note also mentions, police said, that he was unsuccessful in getting a government job for his son on 'compassionate grounds' in the name of the son's grandparent who died while in government employment.

UP Dalit man attempts to immolate self

Lucknow: A 35-year-old Dalit man in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur allegedly attempted to immolate himself outside an under-construction police station at Dhubha village on October 24. A committee formed by the Balrampur district administration has said that the incident was the fallout of a land dispute, police said Saturday.

Police said the man, Ram Bujharath, suffered 40 per cent burns and is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Lucknow, where doctors said he is stable. Balrampur SP Keshav Kumar has suspended Gaidas Buzurg police station officer Prashant Kumar on the charge of negligence. ENS

Goa jail inmates burn Ravan effigy with firecrackers, four officials suspended

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
PANAJI, OCTOBER 28

FOUR OFFICIALS of the Central Jail in Goa, including an assistant jail superintendent, were suspended after purported videos surfaced on social media of jail inmates burning an effigy of Ravana on jail premises as part of Dussehra festivities.

Sources said the Prisons Department has sought an explanation from the Superintendent of Central Jail at Colvale for the "serious security lapse" and allowing explosive substances to be taken into jail



A video grab of the effigy

premises.

Four officials have been placed under suspension for al-

leged dereliction of duty and a departmental enquiry has been initiated against the jail staff.

A senior official said the incident is suspected to have taken place on the day of Dussehra. "It is a serious lapse. Prima facie, it appears that the jail staffers acted in connivance with some inmates. Inflammable material including explosives and banned substances were allowed inside jail. A huge effigy, around 20 feet high, was built by the inmates and then set alight...not even a match-stick should have made it onto the jail premises," the official said.

The suspension orders were issued by Inspector General of

Prisons after a purported video of some inmates burning an effigy of Ravana and bursting crackers surfaced on social media on Friday. The list of items brought to the jail for the effigy and celebration included 3 kg of bending wire, 20 pieces of glue gun sticks, 10 pieces of big bamboo, six boxes of fire crackers, a box of rocket crackers, two scissors, 50 kgs of sweets, 20 packets of glitter, five pieces of big tape and 2 kg of thread.

According to sources, on October 19, the Superintendent of Central Jail, Colvale granted permission for a list of items to be allowed for "use of inmates..."

ED arrests promoters of pharma firm, searches Ashoka University

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, CHANDIGARH,
OCTOBER 28

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) on Saturday arrested two promoters of a Chandigarh-based pharma company, who are also the co-founders of the Sonapat-based Ashoka University, and a chartered accountant in a money-laundering probe linked to an alleged bank fraud.

Official sources said the central agency also continued with its searches against the group for the second day, including at the Ashoka University's corporate and registered offices in Delhi and campus in Sonapat.

Parabolic Drugs promoters Vineet Gupta (54) and Pranav Gupta (56), who are also the co-founders of Ashoka University, and CA Surjeet Kumar Bansal (74) were taken into custody under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), following a long session of questioning at the agency's office in



Parabolic Drugs promoters Vineet and Pranav Gupta are co-founders of Ashoka University. File

Chandigarh.

A special PMLA court in Chandigarh sent them to the ED's custody for five days.

A total of 17 premises in Delhi, Mumbai, Chandigarh and Panchkula were covered by the ED after the raids were launched on Friday.

The Guptas had stepped down from their posts at the Ashoka University in 2022 after the Central Bureau of

Investigation (CBI) registered a case against them and the company in 2021. The ED filed a money-laundering case against them in January last year.

The agency told the court that the two arrested directors of the company were "actively involved in defrauding banks by availing loans or financial facilities based upon forged and fabricated documents".

It alleged that the two "intentionally changed the colour of the loan funds from liabilities to assets and layered, diverted and siphoned off the said funds by way of circuitous transactions using platforms of their group companies that were under their control".

The agency said the two avoided services of "shell companies" and "illegally inflated the value of primary security against which drawings were allowed by banks".

"Under their command and control, Parabolic Drugs Limited raised fake and unrelated goods invoices and illegally received entries from shell companies," the agency alleged.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Suman W/o Devender Maan, R/o-C/33, 1st Floor, Balaji Mandir, Road, Deepvihar, Pansali, Delhi-110042, have changed my name to Suman Devi

I, Naseem Bano, W/O Wasi Ahmed, R/O-B-127 Street No.11, Kanti Nagar, Krishna Nagar, Delhi-110051, have changed my name Nasim Bano To Naseem Bano. For All Purposes. 0040695901-10

I, Kamlesh S/o Dhirender Lal Karn R/O 37/1, Gali-6, Ajaynagar, Ismailpur Ext, Amarnagar Faridabad(HR) have changed my name to Kamlesh Kumar Karn for all purposes. 0040695853-1

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that Shri. KRISHAN DAYAL AGGARWAL (P.O. AGGARWAL) S/O Sh. LACHHMAN SHARMA...

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Uttam Saini S/O Ram Sanjog R/O H.no. Jhuggi E-12/20, Sahabad Dairy, Delhi, have committed...

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice
Tender No. R/22/1/222223/2023-24/SB/PHC/MYVA.

Office of the Nagar Panchayat Chhatarpur E-Procurement Notice
NIT No:- NPC-NIT-16/2023-24
Name of Work: Construction & Commissioning of Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant of Capacity 10 KLD at Chhatarpur town (Jharkhand) followed by Operation and Maintenance including desludging operations for 5 years.

North Central Railway G20
EOI Notice No. JHS/H/S-2/LP/Med/Store/2023-24 Dated : 18.10.2023
E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE
Chief Medical Superintendent, North Central Railway/Jhansi, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites applications from eligible firms for empanment/registration for retail supply of Medicines, Surgical items & Consumables for day to day local purchase for Divisional Railway Hospital Jhansi...

DIRECTORATE OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING & AGRICULTURE FOREIGN TRADE, UTTAR PRADESH.
NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
Directorate of Agricultural Marketing & Agriculture Foreign Trade (DAM&AFT), Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow invites sealed Expression of Interest (EOI) in two bid system (Part-I Technical Bid & Part-II Financial Bid) from experienced prospective bidders of UNIVERSITY/ KVK/ AGENCY/ INSTITUTE/ NGO/ SOCIETY/ COMPANY fulfilling the pre-requisites criteria to work as 'Geographical Indication (GI) Technical Facilitator' for GI registration of important Agri and Processed Agri Products of Uttar Pradesh under IPR.

North Western Railway
E-Tender Notice
For and on behalf of President of Republic of India, Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/ Construction-1) North Western Railway, Jaipur invites E-Tender for the following works upto 15.00 Hrs. on the mentioned date.

North Western Railway
E-Tender Notice
Dy.Chief Engineer (Construction)-1, North-Western Railway, Jodhpur through for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders (Open Tender-Tender packet system), for the following works:-

RECRUITMENT

SITUATION VACANT

MATRIMONIAL

VACANCY IN AIR FORCE SCHOOL FARIDABAD

''IMPORTANT''

''IMPORTANT''

''IMPORTANT''

''IMPORTANT''

''IMPORTANT''

Across THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM
Website: pchidambaram.in
Twitter: @Pchidambaram_IN

SEVERAL MILLENNIA since the origin of the human species, and despite multiple claims that Homo sapiens are the most advanced and intelligent living species on this planet, I am afraid we are no different from the original Neanderthals. They fought battles without rules and we fight wars without rules.

Were there rules of war at any time in human history? A poem composed by Nettimayyar (circa 200 AD) laid down the basic rules of war among Tamil kings. The warrior-king who intends to wage war will issue a forewarning:
Aavum, aaniyar parppana maakkalum, pendirum, piniyudaiyeerum, peni thenpulum vazhnarkku arungadan irukkum ponpor pudalvar peraatheerum, em ambu kadividuthum, nun aran semin

Roughly translated, the poem is:
Cows, gentle religious priests, women, the sick, those who have no children to do the last rites, our arrows will be aimed fast, hasten to your safe places

Battles were fought between soldiers on battlegrounds from sunrise to sunset. The battle resumed the next day at sunrise. According to Kamban, the great poet who wrote *Ramayana* in Tamil, Ram is believed to have told a weary and defeated Ravan, "today, you may go, and return to battle tomorrow".

WANTON KILLING OVER LAND

If wars may be called civilised, ancient wars were indeed civilised and fought according to some rules. Not in the modern age. The two wars that are being fought today between Russia and Ukraine and between Israel and the Hamas are particularly brutal wars... We wish there is an international tribunal for disputes over land. Absent such a tribunal, wars — and deaths and destruction — are inevitable

Wars that have no rules

If wars may be called civilised, ancient wars were indeed civilised and fought according to some rules. Not in the modern age. The two wars that are being fought today between Russia and Ukraine and between Israel and the Hamas are particularly brutal wars. There has been indiscriminate bombing. Whole cities and towns have been reduced to rubble in Ukraine and in Gaza. Hospitals and schools have been completely destroyed. Several thousand, including children, women, the elderly and patients have been killed. Internally displaced people have been lodged in camps without basic facilities. Thousands of homeless people have been forced to migrate to neighbouring countries. Water supply and electricity have been cut. Food supply has been severely interrupted. Medicines are scarce. Trucks carrying aid supplies have been stopped.

What is the war for? In the Russia-Ukraine war, the issue is dominance. Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union between 1922 and 1991. Thousands of ethnic Russians settled in parts of Ukraine and became the dominant group. After independence, Ukraine was a buffer between NATO countries and Russia. Russia fears that if Ukraine joined NATO, it will bring NATO forces up to its border. So, Russia wants Ukraine as a 'neutral' state and also wants to annex those parts of Ukraine where ethnic Russians had settled. The war is over land — to annex part of the land and to neutralise the rest.

In the Israel-Hamas war too, the conflict is over land. All Palestinians — some of whom are represented by the Hamas — believe that the Jewish people have usurped their land. The land was called Palestine and was occupied by Arabs, Jews and Christians. The state of Israel was created under the mandate of the United Nations and the Jewish people were settled, since 1948, on the land. Modern Israel has become a strong state that has the capacity to defend itself against hostile neighbours. It is the only nuclear power in the region. History may be on the side of the Palestinians but the reality is that the state of Israel cannot be wiped off the face of earth.

UN POWERLESS

The United Nations is an impotent body. It cannot enforce the UN Charter that starts with lofty goals: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and...to ensure...that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest..."

The United Nations has spectacularly failed in its goals of saving generations from the scourge of war and of ensuring that armed force is not used. Besides, the nature of war has changed. Man no longer fights man, hand to hand combat is history. Machines fight machines. Drones fight missiles. Missiles fight anti-missiles.

If the world cannot find a mechanism to resolve land disputes, wars are inevitable. The dispute between Pakistan and India is over land. Right-wing extremists find it convenient to portray the conflict as one between Hindu India and Islamic Pakistan. It is a mischievous theory. Both countries accepted Partition and the two Independence Acts. The dispute is over land that Pakistan covets. The dispute between China and India is also over land, but it is a bit more complicated because large parts of the border were undemarcated and there are rival claims. The way forward is negotiation, not war. As the prime minister said, "this is not an era of war."

ABSENT A TRIBUNAL

Pope Francis has made frequent appeals for peace to Russia and Ukraine and to Israel and the Hamas, but nobody will listen to him. One of his predecessors made a fervent appeal "No more war, never again war". It fell on deaf ears and many wars have blighted this planet.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) has been ratified by over 150 countries. Several disputes have been resolved by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, including one involving India and Italy concerning two marines aboard the tanker *Enrica Lexie*. We wish there is an international tribunal for disputes over land. Absent such a tribunal, wars — and deaths and destruction — are inevitable.

Fifth COLUMN
TAVLEEN SINGH
Twitter: @tavleen_singh

Freedom vs unfreedom

YET ANOTHER election season begins and yet another round of political leaders offering voters the moon and the stars in exchange for their votes. Freebies galore are promised by every political party, with the BJP's campaign differing slightly to remind voters that their lives have improved because of the 'visionary leadership' of Narendra Modi. Personally, I find this campaign so boring that I am having a hard time paying any attention. Whenever this has happened, I have cheered myself up by remembering that being steadfastly democratic has been India's finest achievement in the past seventy-five years. If this means enduring endless tedious speeches by tired politicians, then it is torment that is worthwhile for the sake of democracy.

Preserving democracy has become vitally important today not just in India but in the world because long shadows loom over democratic countries like Israel and Ukraine. They are manifest in evil forces like Hamas. It is hard to believe anyone would stand by terrorists who nurture in their ranks a man like the one who rang his father to declare proudly that he had "killed ten Jews". His father blessed him for this instead of being horrified that he talked of human beings like they were goats slaughtered for a feast. Extraordinarily, this wicked terrorist organisation has the backing of Iran, Russia, China, and sundry Islamist countries. What brings us back to democracy is remembering that those who back Hamas believe in neither democracy nor freedom.

In India these are values we have cherished and celebrated for years and so it is right that we should be on the side of those countries who share these values. It was heartening that our Prime Minister denounced the barbarism of October 7 immediately after the world came to know of it. Since then, there has been a mysterious silence from those who have charge of our international relations. The statements that have come out from them, and from most of our political leaders, have been ambiguous. Of course, what Hamas did was wrong, they say, but the bombing of Gaza is horrendous and a crime against humanity.

This is a view I share. There is nothing sadder than the sight of dead children, nothing more painful than the cries of babies who cannot understand their injuries or why their safe little lives have been torn apart by bombs. But, for this, I blame Hamas. Why are they still holding Israeli hostages? On social media this question has been asked over and over and those who support Hamas say that they will be released if Israel releases the 6,000 Palestinians it has in its jails. Mystifyingly they seem not to have noticed that the Israeli hostages are civilians and most of the Palestinian hostages are terrorists. One of those released in an earlier hostage exchange is allegedly responsible for planning and executing the October 7 savagery.

To return to the subject of democracy and freedom. As someone who has grown up in an India in which these things have been cherished, except for those eighteen months under Indira Gandhi, I pay close attention to any infringements of freedom and democracy. It saddens me to admit that in recent times the Modi government has done many things that amount to trampling over our democratic rights. The media has been curbed in a variety of ways. Writers, historians, and other critics have been reminded, sometimes brutally, that they better watch their words. And, last week, we heard opposition politicians complain that every time election season comes around, so does the Enforcement Directorate.

In a moment when the biggest battle in the world is developing so clearly into a battle between the forces of democracy and freedom on one side and dictators and unfreedom on the other, India needs to protect and preserve her democratic credentials. Last week, the leader of the RSS made his annual Dussehra speech in which he raged against what he called 'cultural Marxism', 'exploitative capitalism' and George Soros. From the vantage point of Nagpur, it might seem as if all of India's enemies are external, but it could be time for the Prime Minister's alma mater to notice that our real enemies are those who try to weaken democracy. These enemies are all within the country.

Democracy does not just mean holding regular elections. It means making sure that every Indian feels free to demand that the fundamental rights guaranteed to him in our Constitution are respected. These rights include the right to criticise our political leaders and the right to speak out when injustice is done. Elon Musk described these rights with clarity recently when he said that freedom of speech means allowing someone you do not like to say something you do not like. There is much that Narendra Modi has achieved in the past nine years, so he has nothing to fear from his critics or his political opponents. The only people who can harm his image are those who in their eagerness to please him wander about stamping on the rights that guarantee the survival of democracy and freedom. It is these officials he needs to put on a short leash because they have done immeasurable harm not just to his image but to the image of India that he likes to boast is the 'Mother of Democracy'. More than ever before India needs to cherish her democracy.

Caste in Pakistan: A lived reality

Dalitality

RIMSHA SHAHID & PURKHO ESSIRBHEEL



COMPREHENDING CASTE in Pakistan requires an understanding of the demography of caste, the intricacies of which are undeniably complex. While it may not be one of Pakistan's most visible social aspects, it underlies many of the country's historical and contemporary challenges.

The Hindu population in Pakistan is a small minority, making up around 1.2 per cent of the total population. A significant proportion of Hindus in Pakistan belong to the Scheduled Castes. Approximately 40 distinct castes exist in Pakistan, with 32 of them formally designated as Scheduled Castes under the November 1957 Presidential ordinance. Scheduled Castes are mainly associated with Hindu communities, reflecting the influence of the supremacy of upper-caste Hindus. The challenges of discrimination against Dalits are primarily prevalent in rural areas, where a significant portion of the population lacks literacy and awareness about human rights. These discriminatory practices are primarily carried out by local feudal lords and sections of the upper-class Hindu population residing in rural areas.

The legacy of caste-based exclusion in Pakistan has deep historical roots that existed in the sub-continent centuries before the country came into being. While the Constitution and legal frameworks were established to protect the rights of religious minorities and marginalised communities, discrimination persists.

The story of Basanti Meghwar's family is heart-wrenching. For more than two decades, they have been trapped in brick-making to pay off the debt incurred when they borrowed money from a kiln owner to cover a hospital bill. Due to the absence of clear documentation, they are vulnerable to exploitation through such practices of modern-day slavery.

However, civil society has been trying to help and influence government decision-making. Pannu Fair, a bonded labourer since the age of eight, was freed and his debt cleared through a court order. The intervention of SPARC, a local NGO, helped him to find a way to freedom. Dalits are disproportionately affected

by bonded labour, primarily due to factors such as poverty, their caste status, and being non-Muslim, which further contribute to the challenging socio-economic conditions faced by the very segment. The discrimination they face lead to their curtailed participation in political processes, including discouragement from contesting elections or freely exercising their voting rights.

Despite ongoing challenges and systemic exclusions from mainstream society, some determined individuals of the Dalit community have managed to rise high and make an impact on society. Sono Khangarani, with over three decades of experience in microfinance and development, has made a significant impact on society by leading and developing organisations that work with diverse groups. His commitment towards transformative change has created opportunities for marginalised individuals in the community.

Additionally, Krishna Kohli's journey from being a bonded labourer to becoming the first Hindu Dalit woman to be elected to the Senate, from Nagarparkar in Sindh province, is a remarkable story of resilience. Growing up in a deprived village, she faced poverty, hunger, and was subjected to forced child labour. However, her determination enabled her to break free from this cycle and be an inspiration for others. These success stories highlight that individuals from Dalit communities have resilience and potential for growth and if given equal chances, they can rise to higher positions, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.

To tackle the bias against Dalits, the Sindh government has undertaken a range of laws and programmes to address the difficulties experienced by minority communities. Despite the presence of legislation aimed at protecting minority groups, efforts are needed to effectively implement these laws.

Shahid is Senior Research Analyst, South Asia Research Institute for Minorities (SARIM) and Bheel is Research Associate, SARIM (Suraj Yengde, author of Caste Matters, curates Dalitality, and is currently at Oxford University)

history

HEADLINE

ARUP K CHATTERJEE



THE INAUGURATION of the ferry route between Nagapattinam (India) and Kankesanthurai (Sri Lanka) demands to be understood as much more than a nostalgic throwback to the memory of the Boat Mail, an express train that once used to connect Madras and Colombo (originally via Tuticorin or Thoothukoodi and later via Dhanushkodi).

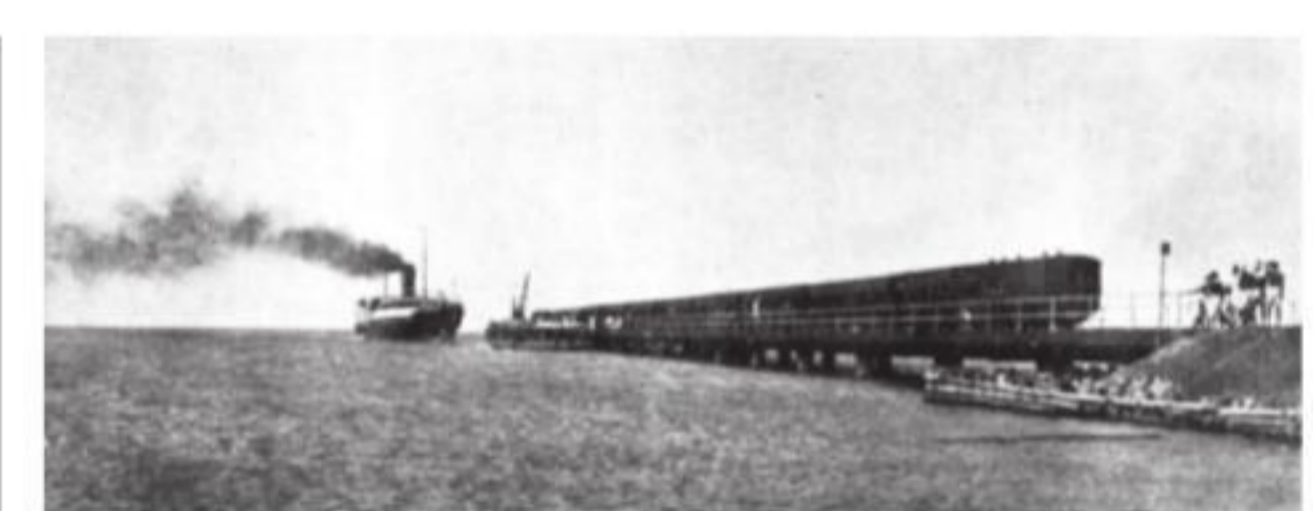
The latest infrastructural move, on the back of the high-speed craft, unassumingly named 'HSC Cheryapani', does not merely signal the renormalisation of bilateral trade-and-traffic ties. It also represents a mutually favourable ongoing cultural reconciliation between the neighbours while shadows of global geopolitical unpredictability loom large in the Indian Ocean region.

The Boat Mail belonged to times when Indian and Sinhalese legacies enjoyed pluralistic harmony. In the 1880s — when the combined exports of Indian and Ceylonese teas eclipsed Chinese tea exports to Britain, before tea companies such as Lipton's began buying Ceylonese plantations and hiring Indian Tamil labour — the South Indian Railway and the Ceylon Government Railway were eager to develop railway linkages between the two administrations.

On January 1, 1880, a new train was inaugurated between Madras and Tuticorin (a journey of less than 22 hours) — on the route of the present-day Pearl City Express — with a day-long steamer connection to Colombo. In February 1914, the Pamban Bridge, designed by American engineer William Scherzer, was inaugurated. Following this, a new train route was started from Madras to Dhanushkodi, with a 22-mile ferry route connecting Dhanushkodi with Thalaimannar, thus leading to the birth of the Ceylon India Boat Mail Express. According to *The Boston Evening Transcript*, it put an end to the "misery and sea-sickness of the long sea journey between Colombo and Tuticorin". Named after three British Viceroy's (Curzon, Elgin, and Harding), and inaugurated by the Governor of Madras, Lord Petland, in April 1914, the Boat Mail was to be the precursor to the colonial railway bridge across Adam's Bridge that the British regime kept planning but could never execute.

Nevertheless, until 1964, the Boat Mail continued to be a prominent reminder of shared Indo-Lankan heritage and Hindu-Buddhist unity. Its tickets used Tamil, Sinhalese, and English scripts, and the train used to have special carriages re-

Once upon a time, a train that linked India, Lanka



The Boat Mail at Dhanushkodi. Source: The Setu and Rameswaram by Vanamalai Pillai

served for monks, making sacred sites such as Bodhi Gaya, Samath, Rameswaram, and Jaffna closer to pilgrims from both nations and religious denominations.

Although the Boat Mail still plies between Chennai and Rameswaram, its pluricultural legacy was halted first by the 1964 Rameswaram-Dhanushkodi cyclone (which destroyed the Pamban Bridge and Dhanushkodi, including its railway station) and then the outbreak of the Lankan civil war against the LTTE in 1983.

The Boat Mail had a much greater expanse than the 64-nautical-miles-long ferry route (74 miles) between Tamil Nadu's Nagapattinam and Jaffna's Kankesanthurai. Nevertheless, besides recalling the former's glory to mind, the latter entails great nautical and political advantages.

For one, the Cheryapani ferry service is a cut above the Scotia Prince Larkury cruise that was started in 2011 between Thoothukoodi and Colombo before it was indefinitely suspended due to the absence of takers. At less than \$95 (around Rs 7,600) for a one-way ticket, the Nagapattinam-Kankesanthurai ferry journey saves about 740 miles and over 40 hours between the two ports — given that the existing maritime route meant practically circling Sri Lanka, via the ports of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Galle, Colombo, and then via the inland town of Dambulla and Anuradhapura. Populating the shallow littoral territory between Tamil Nadu and Jaffna — also known as Palk Strait with its adjoining Sethusamudram region — with Indo-Lankan traffic can somewhat satisfy the demands of the Tamil Nadu government for greater connectivity for Tamils on both sides of the strait. If administered well, its tourism potential could diversify employment opportunities for the overstressed Tamil fishing communities.

The route also promises to be a sustainable prospect for Catholic and Muslim pilgrimages given the presence of the Velankkani Minor Basilica (close to Nagapattinam) and Nagapattinam's Nagore Dargah.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the ferry route may be the keystone of incremental littoral collaborations between the two neighbours that could substitute the political Tamil dream of an otherwise unsustainable Sethusamudram Shipping Canal across the shallow waters of the Adam's Bridge.

Since 2011, Indian and Sri Lankan actors have toyed with plying ferry services while the administrations engaged in bilateral dialogues over maritime trade, environmental diplomacy, and economic ties — not to mention India's unconditional monetary aid in times of Lankan distress. It would be an exaggeration to decode the Cheryapani ferry service as the escalation of Indo-Lankan seabed critical infrastructure. However, given the resurgence of the importance of seabed infrastructure in recent conflicts (Ukraine versus Russia, for instance), Indo-Lankan stakeholders will be obliged to acknowledge the Sethusamudram region as a ground of natural critical seabed asset legacies for both nations.

As Lankan historian Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam remarked in *Ancient Jaffna (1926)*, "in remote antiquity, the coasting trade from one half of Asia to the other half must have passed by the deep passages across the Adam's Bridge or by the Straits of Mannar, and consequently, a great port must have risen on the North-west coast of Ceylon". Whether or not Cheryapani marks a historic event will be seen.

The writer teaches at OP Jindal Global University and is the author of The Great Indian Railways (2018), Indians in London (2021), and Adam's Bridge (2024)

On the LOOSE

LEHER KALA
leherkala@gmail.com



THE ALLAHABAD High Court recently made the somewhat alarming observation that "live-in relationships are timepass, temporary and fragile," while rejecting a plea for protection by an interfaith couple who were being threatened by their families. "At the tender age of 20-22 years, it is more about infatuation without any sincerity," observed the judges, clearly sceptical about this youthful dalliance going by their next (cynical) reflection on the matter. "Life is not a bed of roses. Unless and until the couple decides to marry and give the relationship a name, the court shuns and avoids expressing an opinion," the Bench added, as quoted

Live-in is in no sin

on www.barandbench.com.

While this cannot be considered a judgment (or endorsement) of the couple's love journey, it's broadly indicative that romantic partnerships outside of marriage continue to carry a negative perception across Indian society. (Though, various Supreme Court judgments over the years have ruled that live-in relationships are valid under Article 21 of the Constitution.)

Indeed, making life decisions or marrying at the ripe old age of 22 is a fraught prospect, and in these fast-paced times, doomed to fail. However, if two consenting adults want the freedom to test the waters without the stress a permanent arrangement brings — in India, specifically, family interference is a huge cause of break ups — time together before marriage can only help in making an informed

choice. It is worth noting that in the West, among people with college degrees, pre-marital cohabitation is associated with a lower rate of divorce. In India, unfortunately, those willing to transgress prevalent social norms to cohabit are more likely to be viewed as wildly frivolous, rather than a thoughtful precursor to taking a really big step. In fact, in many Mumbai housing societies, live-ins have a hard time finding apartments to rent.

In our heads, we dreamily imagine love as that mysterious and all-consuming force that drives our most important decisions. The contradictions at the centre of love, that depressingly enough emerge instantly when combined with marriage, are distasteful to acknowledge. Perhaps, that's why 90 per cent of romance films determinedly favour the happy ending and the cultural

expectation is forever-after (despite much evidence to the contrary). The thinking goes, is a love story a love story, if a couple isn't willing to go all in with a wedding, after plodding through the many challenges of courtship? It's not very inspiring, rather, it's downright deflating if they warily chose an alternative route because they're unsure of their ability to endure a lifetime. Or, scared to make the honorable declaration of "till death do us part". Alas, mainstream conventions play a part in our imaginations, luring us into believing in some final and lasting happiness. The result being, the discourse around love and marriage tends to be out of touch with reality.

The total number of petitions filed for divorce by mutual consent have been rising steadily across Indian metros. The data suggests most of these separations occur

within three years of marriage. Clearly, the sequence of love-dating-marriage is very much the default mode, except in the modern world, commutes, work and daily tensions do their bit to sideline intimacy. Domesticity requires frustrating levels of compromise, so far better then for people to gingerly try out coupled life before pledging themselves for eternity. If this approach lacks the mad passion we associate with undying love, it's important to remember all those sociology studies that say when it comes to mate selection, we automatically gravitate towards people with similar interests, economic background and education, anyway. Whether we know it or not, rationality is inbuilt in romance; after that, all we can do is hope for the best.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films

12 THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Ex-US Vice President Mike Pence. Reuters

USA

Pence suspends presidential campaign

Las Vegas: Former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said on Saturday that he was suspending his campaign for the Republican party nomination. "To the American people I say: This is not my time," Pence, whose campaign never took off, told attendees at the Republican Jewish Coalition's conference in Las Vegas. **REUTERS**

MEXICO

Hurricane Otis: Death toll rises to 39, over 2 lakh homes affected

Mexico City: The death toll from Hurricane Otis, a Category 5 storm which unleashed devastation in the Mexican Pacific resort city of Acapulco earlier this week, has risen to 39, according to the latest government figures on Saturday. Otis pounded Acapulco with winds of 165 miles per hour (266 km per hour) early on Wednesday, flooding the city, tearing roofs from homes, stores and hotels, and submerging vehicles. Looting has ravaged Acapulco since the record-breaking storm left thousands of residents struggling to get food and water. It said more than 220,000 homes have been affected, and over 5 lakh people lost power. **REUTERS**

USA

US shooter who killed 18 in Maine found dead

Maine: Maine's governor Janet Mills says the suspect wanted for killing 18 people at a bowling alley and bar has been found dead in Lisbon, Maine. The man wanted in the mass shooting at a bowling alley and bar that killed 18 people and wounded 13 was found dead Friday, bringing an end to a search that put the entire state of Maine on edge for the last two days. Robert Card, who was wanted in connection with the shootings at Schemengees Bar and Grille and at Just-In-Time Recreation bowling alley in Lewiston, is believed to have died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, a law enforcement official said. **AP**

BANGLADESH

Opp supporters clash with police ahead of polls

Dhaka: Police in Bangladesh's capital fired tear gas to disperse supporters of the main opposition party who threw stones at security forces during a massive rally demanding the resignation of PM Sheikh Hasina and the transfer of power to a non-partisan caretaker government to oversee general elections next year. At least one policeman died and dozens of others were injured, alongside scores of opposition supporters, police and witnesses said. **AP**

GAZA UNDER BLACKOUT AS BOMBARDMENT intensifies amid ground operations

Israel launches '2nd stage' of Gaza war; it will be long and difficult: Bibi

Israeli PM says objectives are clear: To destroy Hamas, bring hostages home

ISABEL DEBRE, JULIA FRANKEL & SAMY MAGDY JERUSALEM, OCTOBER 28

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the nation Saturday night that the military has opened a "second stage" in the war against Hamas by sending ground forces into Gaza and expanding attacks from the ground, air and sea. He said it will only increase ahead of a broad ground invasion into the territory. "It will be long and difficult," he said. "We are ready."

The bombardment, described by Gaza residents as the most intense of the war, knocked out most communications in Gaza. This largely cut off the besieged enclave's 2.3 million people from the world, while enabling the Israeli military to control the narrative in the new stage of fighting.

The military released grainy images Saturday showing tank columns moving slowly in open areas of Gaza, many apparently near the border, and said warplanes bombed dozens of Hamas tunnels and underground bunkers. The underground sites are a key target in Israel's campaign to crush the territory's ruling group after its bloody incursion into Israel three weeks ago.

The escalation brought more domestic pressure on Israel's government to bring about the release of dozens of hostages seized in the October 7 Hamas attack, amid concerns they were being held underground.

Desperate family members met with Netanyahu Saturday and expressed support for an exchange for Palestinian prisoners held in Israel, a swap floated by a Hamas spokesman.

Spokesman of the Hamas military wing, Abu Obeida, on Saturday offered a comprehensive swap of hostages for the thousands of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Netanyahu told the nationally televised news conference that Israel is determined to bring back all the hostages, and maintained that the expanding ground operation "will help us in this mission." "This is the second stage of the war, whose objectives are clear: To destroy the



Gaza residents described Saturday's bombardment as the most intense since the war began on October 7. AP

DEATH, DESTRUCTION

ISRAEL	PALESTINE
TOTAL DEAD	TOTAL DEAD
1400+	7,700+
At least 311 soldiers were killed, according to the military	377 since late Friday, mostly women, minors.
TOTAL INJURED	TOTAL INJURED
5,400+	19,000+
229 hostages were taken into Gaza, four were released	More than 1.4 million people have fled their homes

Will declare Israel war criminal, says Erdogan; Tel Aviv recalls envoys

REUTERS ISTANBUL, JERUSALEM, OCTOBER 28

PRESIDENT TAYYIP Erdogan addressed hundreds of thousands of supporters at one of the largest pro-Palestinian rallies since the Israel-Hamas war began, a day ahead of the centenary of Turkey's secular republic.

"We will tell the whole world that Israel is a war criminal. We are making preparations for this. We will declare Israel a war criminal," he told the crowd in Istanbul, who waved Palestinian flags.

"Israel has been openly committing war crimes for 22 days, but the Western leaders cannot even call on Israel for a ceasefire, let alone react to it," Erdogan said.

In retaliation, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said on Saturday that Israel had recalled some of its diplomatic envoys to Turkey because of "grave statements" made by Ankara.

BRIEFLY

Gaza hospital struggles to run neonatal units

Gaza: The neonatal unit of Gaza's largest hospital, which, like the rest of the besieged Palestinian territory, is running out of fuel, food, water and electricity. "We had to perform a premature delivery of the fetus from the mother's womb while she's dying," head of the NICU at al-Shifa Hospital said. **AP**

Israel stops missile from Lebanon, Beirut takes airport precautions

Jerusalem, Beirut: Israel's military said on Saturday it had stopped a surface-to-air missile fired from Lebanon at one of its drones and the Lebanese authorities issued precautionary guidance in case they have to evacuate Beirut airport, as border tensions rise. **REUTERS**

Musk to provide connectivity in Gaza through aid organizations

Pune: Elon Musk said on Saturday that SpaceX's Starlink will support communication links in Gaza through aid organizations. In a tweet, he said that he does not know that "no terminal has requested a connection in that area". **REUTERS**

From UK to US, protesters seek ceasefire

AGENCIES OCTOBER 28

POLICE ENCIRCLED hundreds of people who defied a ban on a pro-Palestinian demonstration Saturday in central Paris. The officers tried to contain the protest but fired tear gas when tensions rose as a breakaway group tried to march.

Demonstrations also took place Saturday in London, Indonesia, Pakistan, Italy, Norway

and Switzerland, and a crowd of protesters filled New York City's Grand Central Station Friday night, many wearing black T-shirts saying "Jews say ceasefire now" and "Not in our name."

In Paris, the protest collective known as Urgence Palestine called for a cease-fire in the increasingly intense war between Israel and Hamas. At least 80 people were given citations, according to French media. Other pro-Palestinian demonstrations were held in Marseille and



A pro-Palestine rally in Berlin on Saturday. AP

Strasbourg in the east. French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin's order to ban

pro-Palestinian demonstrations in France was trimmed back by the nation's highest administrative authority. The Council of State ruled any protests in favor of either side in the war are to be authorized on a case-by-case basis after assessing risks to public order.

In the UK, thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched in central London to demand the British government call for a ceasefire after Israel's military widened its attacks.

GOVT INVESTIGATION FAILS TO EXPLAIN WHY DESPERATE CALLS TO THE POLICE WERE IGNORED

A year after Seoul crush: Survivors, kin haunted by guilt, vilified online

CHOE SANG-HUN SEOUL, OCTOBER 28

OVER HALLOWEEN weekend last year, nearly 160 young people died in a crowd crush in Itaewon, a popular nightlife district in Seoul. For those who survived or lost loved ones, the past year has been a time of deep frustration and trauma.

A government probe failed to explain why desperate calls to the police were ignored for hours. Senior officials refused to take responsibility. Many wrote online that the young victims and survivors should blame themselves. The survivors said

they felt revictimised.

In December, Lee Jae-hyeon, 16, a survivor who had lost two of his best friends in the crowd crush, took his own life after battling online detractors of the victims. In a video message, he asked his parents not to blame themselves for his death.

As the first anniversary of the disaster approached, survivors and victims' family members struggled with unanswered questions, dismay at the government's response.

Seo Byong-woo, 31, survivor

Seo and his fiancée, Lee Joo-young, 28, became trapped in the

crowd when they went for a stroll through Itaewon after visiting a wedding-dress shop. Walls of people pressed in from all sides, Seo said, leaving no wriggling or breathing space.

Seo passed out while standing. When he came to, he found Lee standing next to him unconscious, but there was nothing he could do to revive her. "The most difficult part is the sense of guilt," Seo said. "I came out alive, but I could not save her although she was standing right next to me."

Lee Jeong-min, 61, victim's father

The father of Lee, Seo's fiancée, has been campaigning



A memorial to the victims of the crowd crush in the alley in Itaewon, Seoul. NYT

with other victims' families to persuade the country that official negligence was to blame for the disaster. But he has found the government of President Yoon

Suk Yeol unwilling to acknowledge responsibility.

Park Geun-hye, the last president affiliated with Yoon's governing People Power Party, saw her political fortunes crash after the sinking of the Sewol ferry in 2014. That disaster killed more than 300 people, most of them high school students. "Yoon Suk Yeol feared he would become a second Park Geun-hye," Lee said.

Kim Cho-rong, 33, survivor

Kim, an author, suffered mem-



A CCTV screen grab shows the teen girl being pulled from the Metro in Tehran on October 1. File

Iran teen in coma after 'assault over headscarf' dies

ASSOCIATED PRESS DUBAI, OCTOBER 28

AN IRANIAN teenage girl injured weeks ago in a mysterious incident on Tehran's Metro while not wearing a headscarf has died, state media reported Saturday. The death of Armita Geravand comes after her being in a coma for weeks in Tehran and after the one-year anniversary of the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini which sparked nationwide protests at the time.

Geravand's October 1 injury and now her death threaten to reignite that popular anger, particularly as women in Tehran and elsewhere still defy Iran's mandatory headscarf, or hijab, law as a sign of their discontent with Iran's theocracy.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported Geravand's death, without noting the wider unrest surrounding the headscarf law. Geravand suffered her injury at the Meydan-E-Shohada, or Martyrs' Square, Metro station in southern Tehran.

"Unfortunately, the brain damage to the victim caused her

to spend some time in a coma and she died a few minutes ago," the IRNA report read.

"According to the official theory of... doctors, after a sudden drop in blood pressure, she suffered a fall, a brain injury, followed by continuous convulsions, decreased cerebral oxygenation and a cerebral edema."

What happened in the few seconds after Armita Geravand entered the train on October 1 remains in question. The footage aired from outside of the car was blocked by a bystander. Just seconds later, her limp body is carried off. Iranian state TV's report, however, did not include any footage from inside the train itself and offered no explanation on why it hadn't been released.

Activists abroad have alleged Geravand may have been pushed or attacked for not wearing hijab. They also demanded a probe by the UN's fact-finding mission on Iran, citing the state's use of pressure on victims' families and state TV's history of airing coerced confessions.

The AP has not been able to confirm the exact circumstances behind Geravand's injuries.

Biden, Xi to meet on APEC summit sidelines in Nov

ASSOCIATED PRESS WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 28

PRESIDENT JOE Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping have agreed to meet on the sidelines of next month's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco, according to a U.S. official familiar with the planning.

The two sides worked out an agreement in principle to hold a meeting during the summit as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Friday with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan, according to the official, who was not authorized to comment and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The official added that the two sides have still not worked out details on the exact day of the meeting, venue and other logistics. The White House said in a statement following Friday's meetings that the two sides were "working toward" a Biden-Xi face-to-face on the sidelines of APEC, a forum of 21 Pacific countries. Earlier Friday, Biden met with Wang, holding an hourlong talk with the senior



Joe Biden; Xi Jinping. AP

Chinese official in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Biden viewed his meeting with Wang as "a positive development, a good opportunity to keep the conversation going." Biden had been widely expected to talk with Wang, a reciprocal action after Xi met with Blinken in June. Beijing has yet to confirm if Xi will attend the APEC summit at San Francisco, running from Nov 11 to 17.

Wang is in the midst of a three-day visit to Washington, where he's been meeting with top U.S. officials. Thursday, after their initial meeting, the Chinese side said "the two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on China-U.S. relations and issues of common concern in a constructive atmosphere."

families, time remains frozen on the day their relatives died.

"I miss my daughter the most when I lie in my bed," said Lee Hyo-suk, whose daughter Jeong Ju-hee, 30, died in Itaewon. "When she came home, she used to lie next to me and talk."

Lee said there was nothing she could do about her grief except visiting Jeong's grave and banding together with other victims' families. They console one another and fight to ensure that a similar tragedy will not happen again. Supported by opposition lawmakers, the families are pushing for a special law to start a new investigation independent of government influence. **NYT**

Lee Hyo-suk, 63, victim's mother

Much of the country has moved on. But for the bereaved

13 ECONOMY

Tata-Wistron deal will build on contract mfg base built by Dixon, VVDN, Optiemus

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

WITH THE deal between the Tatas and Wistron awaiting regulatory clearance — a formality at this stage — the salt-to-software conglomerate is set to become the first domestic company to assemble Apple iPhones, marking a significant moment in the beginning of the rise of India's contract manufacturing.

There are a few key factors that have given an impetus to contract manufacturing in India, propelling a number of other domestic companies aside from the Tatas to kickstart domestic production. These include the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for smartphone production, a worsening relationship between the US and China which has forced companies to diversify and Beijing's tough Covid-19 curbs.

While India touts itself as the world's second biggest smartphone manufacturer, it has a long way to go. It is still early days for India's contract manufacturing journey, with the country having a small stake in the electronics components supply chains.

Contract manufacturing is when a company outsources production to a third-party. The industry has been the bedrock of



SMARTPHONE MANUFACTURING IN INDIA

■ iPhone exports from India surged four times to over \$5 billion in FY23 as the company ramped up local production.

■ From a 78% import-dependent sector in 2014,

India has become an export oriented market for smartphones with ₹90,000 crore of exports by March.

■ 99.2% of phones sold in India are being made in India.

China's economic success over the last two-three decades.

Taking iPhones as an example, a Bloomberg study from last year estimated that it would take about eight years to move just 10 per cent of Apple's production capacity out of China, where more than 90 per cent of the company's iPhones are made.

But even then, from a nearly dormant manufacturing sector up until a few years ago, there has been a surge in other Indian companies assembling phones and other electronics for global giants. These include Haryana-

based VVDN Technologies which recently bagged a contract to manufacture high-end servers for Hewlett Packard Enterprise, and Noida-based Dixon Technologies which announced it will manufacture smartphones for Xiaomi, marking its entry into large-scale mass manufacturing of mobile phones. In the last six months, Dixon's stock price has increased by over 84 per cent.

Contract manufacturing in ancillary industries too is taking shape. Display glass maker Corning recently said it will be-

gin display glass finishing in India by next year with an initial capacity of 30 million pieces as part of a joint venture with Optiemus Infracom. The company already makes phones for LG, Blackberry, HTC, Oppo, and OnePlus. Both Dixon and Optiemus are beneficiaries under the smartphone PLI scheme.

Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar told *The Indian Express* that while building iPhones and other gadgets in India is important, the real value is created by the contract manufacturers who produce those devices. "They set up the plant, employ people, contribute to the economy and will ultimately help us in achieving the scale which will attract other suppliers to India as well," he said.

"As the contract manufacturers scale up for volumes, the components that go into those products will naturally start attracting suppliers to India, who could set up ancillary factories in the country," Chandrasekhar said.

Amid US-China tensions, India is potentially the only country which provides a big internal market and a massive, educated labour force to produce devices for export. But, experts say there are a few concerns that investors, and especially supply chain entities could have about entering India.

First, India has among the world's highest import tariffs on some electronics components — something a number of domestic firms had lobbied for to discourage Chinese imports. But with more Indian companies now setting up manufacturing facilities, they will face the heat of the high tariff rates. According to a recent study by industry body India Cellular & Electronics Association, India's MFN tariff average for a number of electronic components is 9.7 per cent, compared to an average of 3.2 per cent in China.

The IT Ministry has recommended to the Finance Ministry to lower input costs on some components, but a formal decision is yet to be taken.

Then, there is India's complicated relationship with China. Because of India's actions against Chinese firms, experts say there is little hope Chinese suppliers will come to India easily, making the journey to set up a domestic supplier base much longer, since technology is neither easy to build nor cheap.

"Take Tatas' example. They have opted to buy an operational plant put together by Wistron, since building a facility from scratch would have been a tall order for the conglomerate which has very little experience of participating in global supply chains," an industry executive said.

SAMEER RANJAN BAKSHI
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 28

A MAJOR public sector bank recently said it is gearing up to be a major IT-driven powerhouse. A few days before that, Dabur became India's first FMCG firm to complete cloud migration. Early this year, Boeing declared it would open its new and second-largest campus outside its global headquarters in Virginia, at Aerospace Park in Bengaluru.

Most companies in India today, in whichever sphere they operate, are beefing up their IT capabilities. Banks have been compelled to do so as customers prefer transactions on the app or online.

All of this is creating abundant work opportunities for software professionals especially at a time when the IT service sector is facing an uncertain global environment. Unlike in the past, the majority of tech-related openings, posted across job sites today, are from non-tech companies.

Prasadh M S, Head-workforce research, Xpheno, told FE there are currently a little under 90,000 active tech job openings across the country across tech and non-tech sectors. "About two-thirds of this is from the non-tech sector," Prasadh observed.

Varun Sachdeva, SVP and APAC Head, NLB Services observed his firm was now onboarding about 55 to 60% of professionals on the non-tech side. "Earlier we used to see 75-80% tech hiring for IT firms, Sachdeva said adding there has been a distinct shift in the last nine months. NLB on-boards about 1,000-1,200 professionals a month of which about 50% are for non-tech sectors. Demand for tech talent in non-tech firms is expected to grow by 9-10% in FY24 estimates Gaurav Vasu, founder, UearthInsight.

MORE WORK OPPORTUNITIES

■ The majority of tech-related openings, posted across job sites today, are from non-tech companies

■ UearthInsight estimates that the demand for tech talent in non-tech companies will grow to one million by FY25-26 from its current level of about 8.4 lakh

■ Opportunities with non-IT companies are available in Tier 2-3 towns, not just Tier 1

"Salaries are growing by 12-14% in these firms. IT companies are likely to wage hikes and external hiring slow down to 6-7% & 10-15% respectively," Vasu told FE.

UearthInsight estimates the demand for tech talent in non-tech companies will grow to one million by FY25-26 from its current level of about 8.4 lakh. Vasu believes BFSI, telecom, media and PSUs, would continue to drive demand for professionals familiar with java full stack, cyber-security and data science as also other skills. Sachdeva feels there will be good demand from the telecom sector, at least for the next five years, given the 5G rollout.

Munira Loliwala, AVP strategy and growth, TeamLease Digital, points out the lower levels of the pyramid are receiving more attention these days for roles such as team-leaders. Non-tech companies are supplementing such recruitment with that of entry-level employees which accounts for about 21-25% of the total hiring.

BPCL returns to profitability after marketing margin boost

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

STATE-OWNED BHARAT Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) reported returning to profitability in the September quarter after a boost in marketing margin improved earnings. Consolidated net profit in July-September was at Rs 8,243.55 crore compared to a loss of Rs 338.49 crore in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement.

The profit was aided by a boost in marketing margins as a freeze on petrol and diesel price revision despite a fall in input crude oil prices helped recover losses incurred when rates were

high last year.

Pre-tax earnings from the downstream oil refining and marketing business came at Rs 11,283.29 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal as compared to a loss of Rs 123.17 crore in the same period last year.

Last year, state-owned fuel retailers BPCL, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCCL) froze prices despite a spike in global oil prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This was with a view to insulate consumers from price volatility.

The price freeze led to the three firms incurring losses in the first half of 2022-23 fiscal year (April 2022 to March 2023).

Ministry seeks classification of coal under infra sector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

THE COAL Ministry Saturday said it has requested the Department of Financial Services (DFS) to consider classifying coal under infrastructure sector, a move which will ensure financing of commercial coal mines.

This reclassification would allow banks and financial institutions to formulate policies

more effectively to meet the increasing requirements of the coal sector in a time-bound manner, the ministry said while noting that coal is likely to remain a primary source of energy in the foreseeable future.

"Banks have expressed their willingness to finance coal mines, provided project viability and equity infusion visibility were demonstrated through detailed business plans," the ministry said in a statement.

UltraTech to invest ₹13k cr to ramp up production capacity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

CEMENT MAKER UltraTech on Saturday announced a fresh investment of Rs 13,000 crore to add production capacity by 21.9 million tonnes per annum as part of the third phase of growth, taking its total capacity to 182 MTPA after completion.

This investment would be financed through "internal accruals" and will cater to future growth of the company, said UltraTech Cement.

The board of the Aditya Birla Group flagship firm on Saturday approved the 3rd phase of growth with an investment of Rs 13,000 crore towards increasing the capacity by another 21.9 MTPA with a mix of brownfield and greenfield projects," said a statement from the company.

The company has an existing capacity of 132.45 MTPA of domestic grey cement and had a capacity utilisation of 75 per cent during the September quarter.

According to UltraTech: "Post commissioning of the 3rd phase of expansion, approved by the board today, UltraTech will be strongly placed across the country with 35.5 MTPA in south; 40.4 MTPA in east; 36.2 MTPA in north; 35.7 MTPA in central and 33.8 MTPA in the west." This will be achieved by setting up 4 greenfield and 4 brownfield plants along with 4 greenfield bulk terminals.

"Commercial production from these new capacities is expected to go on stream in a phased manner from FY26 onwards and will catapult the company's cement capacity to 187 MTPA globally," it said.

India, UK trade ministers review progress of talks on proposed FTA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

INDIA AND THE UK Saturday reviewed the progress of negotiations of the proposed free trade agreement (FTA), talks for which have reached the final stage.

The progress was reviewed by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Kemi Badenoch in Osaka, Japan.

Both ministers are in Japan for the Group of Seven (G7) trade ministers meeting in Osaka.

"Discussed the progress of India-UK free trade agreement negotiations with UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Kemi Badenoch," Goyal said on social media platform X.

Negotiations between senior officials of India and the UK are on to bridge differences on issues such as rules of origin and services sector, with an aim to conclude the talks for the proposed FTA at the earliest.

India and Britain launched the talks for a trade agreement in January 2022, with an aim to conclude them by Diwali last year (October 24, 2022), but the deadline was missed due to political developments in the UK.

There are 26 chapters in the agreement, which include goods, services, investments and intellectual property rights. An investment treaty is also being negotiated as a separate agreement between India and the UK.

These investment treaties help in promoting and protecting investments in each other's country. The main point of contention in this pact is the mechanism for settlement of disputes.

The Indian industry is demanding greater access for its



Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal with UK Secretary for Business and Trade Kemi Badenoch on the sidelines of the G7 trade ministers' meeting in Japan on Saturday. ANI

skilled professionals from sectors like IT, and healthcare in the UK market, besides market access for several goods at nil customs duty.

On the other hand, the UK is seeking a significant cut in import duties on goods such as scotch whiskey, automobiles, lamb meat, chocolates and certain confectionary items. Britain is also looking for more opportunities for UK services in Indian markets in segments like telecommunications, legal and financial services (banking and insurance).

The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 20.36 billion in 2022-23, from USD 17.5 billion in 2021-22.

Goyal also held bilateral meetings with US Trade Representative Katherine Tai; World Trade Organization Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Nishimura Yasutoshi.

Govts need to collaborate to facilitate cross-border trade: Goyal at G7 meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

COMMERCE AND Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday urged the countries participating in the G7 trade ministers meeting to enhance collaboration on a regulatory framework to facilitate cross border trade.

The Group of Seven trade ministers meeting was held in Osaka, Japan. Under its G7 presidency this year, Japan has invited India, along with a few other invitee countries (Australia, Chile, Indonesia, and Kenya) to partici-

pate in the outreach programme held on October 28.

In the meeting, Goyal "urged the governments to collaborate on a regulatory framework to ease the movement of supply chains and facilitate cross border trade," an official statement said.

He said the pandemic and geopolitical events have highlighted the vulnerabilities of the existing supply chains leading to increase in commodity prices and global inflation. The Russia-Ukraine war, conflict between Israel and Hamas and global economic uncertainties are impacting flow of goods across the world.

US auto workers union, Stellantis reach tentative agreement to end strike

REUTERS
OCTOBER 28

UNITED AUTO Workers reached a tentative agreement with Stellantis on Saturday, a deal that is pending approval from the union's top leaders and includes reopening the automaker's Illinois plant, sources said.

The proposed accord is likely to follow a template set just days ago by the UAW and Ford, including a 25% wage hike over the 4-1/2-year contract, starting with an initial increase of 11%.

Strikes have entered week seven. Stellantis shuttered its assembly plant in Belvidere, Illinois, early this year, leaving 1,300 workers without jobs.

UAW President Shawn Fain vowed to reverse the decision. The Biden administration and the state of Illinois have offered subsidies that could help re-tool the factory. Illinois acquired 170 acres of land adjacent to the assembly plant. Fain and other union leaders are expected to have a video conference with local UAW officials who will explain the contract terms to workers.

Google to invest up to \$2 bn in OpenAI rival

REUTERS
OCTOBER 28

ALPHABET'S GOOGLE has agreed to invest up to \$2 billion in the artificial intelligence company Anthropic, a spokesperson for the startup said on Friday.

The company has invested \$500 million upfront into the OpenAI rival and agreed to add \$1.5 billion more over time, the spokesperson said.

Google is already an investor in Anthropic, and the fresh investment would underscore a ramp-up in its efforts to better compete with Microsoft, a major backer of ChatGPT creator OpenAI, as Big Tech companies race to infuse AI into their appli-

BETTING ON ANTHROPIC IN A.I. RACE

■ Google is already an investor in Anthropic, which was founded by former OpenAI executives Dario and Daniela Amodei

■ The fresh investment shows its intent to compete with Microsoft backed OpenAI



■ Amazon.com also said last month it would invest up to \$4 billion in Anthropic

cations.

Amazon.com also said last month it would invest up to \$4 billion in Anthropic to compete with growing cloud rivals on AI. In Amazon's quarterly report to the U.S. Securities and

Exchange Commission this week, the online retailer detailed it had invested in a \$1.25 billion note from Anthropic that can convert to equity, while its ability to invest up to \$2.75 billion in a second note expires in the first

quarter of 2024.

Google declined to comment, and Amazon did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

The Wall Street Journal earlier reported the news of Google's latest agreement with Anthropic.

The rising number of investments shows ongoing maneuvering by cloud companies to secure ties with the AI startups that are reshaping their industry.

Anthropic, which was co-founded by former OpenAI executives and siblings Dario and Daniela Amodei, has shown efforts to secure the resources and deep-pocketed backers needed to compete with OpenAI and be leaders in the technology sector.

India Inc turns IT centric, hires more tech workers

India's IT industry today employs close to 5.5 million employees. As per a recent report from talent solutions provider Careem, the emerging EV sector is set to create 5 million direct jobs and 30 million indirect jobs, for technology professionals, by 2030.

Experts note that the increased hiring of tech professionals by non-IT companies has democratised job opportunities. Earlier, graduates from the mechanical, electrical engineering and civil engineering paces were the most popular catchment streams for non-tech companies. Today, there is a greater demand for electrical and electronics engineers. A post-graduate degree in IT or mathematics can be useful for the roles of data scientists, who are in big demand these days.

Given how non-IT companies are geographically spread across the country and not located in Tier-1 cities alone, opportunities are available in Tier 2-3 towns.

Sachdeva confirmed the demand for IT professionals from hotel chains had jumped by 40% over last year. "Businesses like MakeMyTrip or Ibis or other technology-based enterprises are also looking for IT talent," he explained. Loliwala added that today a home products company uses AR/VR technology to offer virtual try-ons that allow customers to explore a variety of consumable products.

FMCG companies are leveraging AI and data to create unique customer experiences, forecast sales trends, automate inventory management and predict the risks of losing customers. With virtual showrooms and virtual test drives, automotive companies are building immersive experiences that allow customers to interact with their products, especially features and capabilities that save time, money, and multiple physical test drives, added Loliwala. FE

NTPC Q2 profit up 38% to ₹4,726 cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

STATE-OWNED power giant NTPC on Saturday posted over 38 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 4,726.40 crore for September quarter 2023-24 mainly on the back of higher revenues. Its net profit in the year-ago period stood at Rs 3,417.67 crore, a BSE filing said.

Total income rose to Rs 45,384.64 crore in the quarter from Rs 44,681.50 crore in the same period a year ago.

The board in its meeting held on Saturday also approved the first interim dividend of this fiscal at the rate of 22.5 per cent (Rs 2.25 per share) on the face value of paid-up equity shares of Rs 10 each. The date of payment/dispatch of dividend shall be November 23, 2023.

The average tariff of the company was Rs 4.61 per unit during April-September this fiscal year compared to Rs 4.77 per unit in the same period a year ago.

Gross electricity generation of NTPC increased to 90.30 billion units (BU) during the second quarter from 85.48 BU in the same period a year ago. Coal output increased to 5.59 MMT in the quarter from 4.32 MMT a year ago. Production also increased during April-September.

BSNL plans to launch 4G service in Dec; pan-India rollout by June next year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCT 28

STATE-OWNED telecom firm BSNL is planning to launch 4G service in December at a small scale and then roll it out across the country by June next year, Chairman and Managing Director P K Purwar said on Saturday.

Speaking to PTI at the India Mobile Congress, Purwar said that the company plans to upgrade 4G service to 5G after June. "BSNL 4G service is ready for launch in Punjab in December.

We have already done the hardening required for a network with 200 sites. We are in the process of installing 3,000 sites in Punjab," Purwar said.

He said that BSNL will gradually increase network deployment to 6,000 and then to 9,000, 12,000 and 15,000 sites per month. "Our target is to complete 4G roll-out by June 2024. Post June 2024, we will be moving to 5G services," Purwar said. IT company TCS and government-owned ITI have bagged orders worth about Rs 19,000 crore from BSNL for deploying 4G network which is upgradable to 5G.

BRIDGE

Dealer: South Vulnerable: East/West

NORTH
 ♠ J109
 ♥ K765
 ♦ A1095
 ♣ AK

SOUTH
 ♠ AQ3
 ♥ J2
 ♦ QJ7
 ♣ J5432

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

Pass Pass pass 2D

pass pass pass

West led the six of spades. East playing five on dummy's jack. Where is South getting nine tricks?

The West hand: S-K87642H-AQ-D-K642C-8
 The East hand: S-5 H-109843D-83C-Q10976

The first question is to ask where the high card points are. Look at the bidding and judge who has what.

Did you count the high card points in your hand and in dummy? If you did you will be aware that your side has twenty-six points and they have fourteen. West opened and East passed. It is a virtual certainty that West has the three high cards I asked about, the king of spades, the ace of hearts, and the king of diamonds. How do you play?

You wish to lead toward the king of hearts and you wish to finesse for the king of diamonds. Doing this requires two entries to the South hand. The way to get them is to take the first spade with the queen. Do not be lazy and leave the lead in dummy.

Next lead a heart, not a diamond. Whatever West does, you score the king of hearts. Win any return and come to your hand with the ace of spades. Because you are blessed with the ten and nine of diamonds in dummy, you can get four sure tricks as long as West has the king, which is pretty much a given.

Dealer: East Vulnerable: Both

NORTH
 ♠ AKJB
 ♥ Q754
 ♦ 92
 ♣ A73

SOUTH
 ♠ 53
 ♥ K863
 ♦ 104
 ♣ KQJ62

West North East South

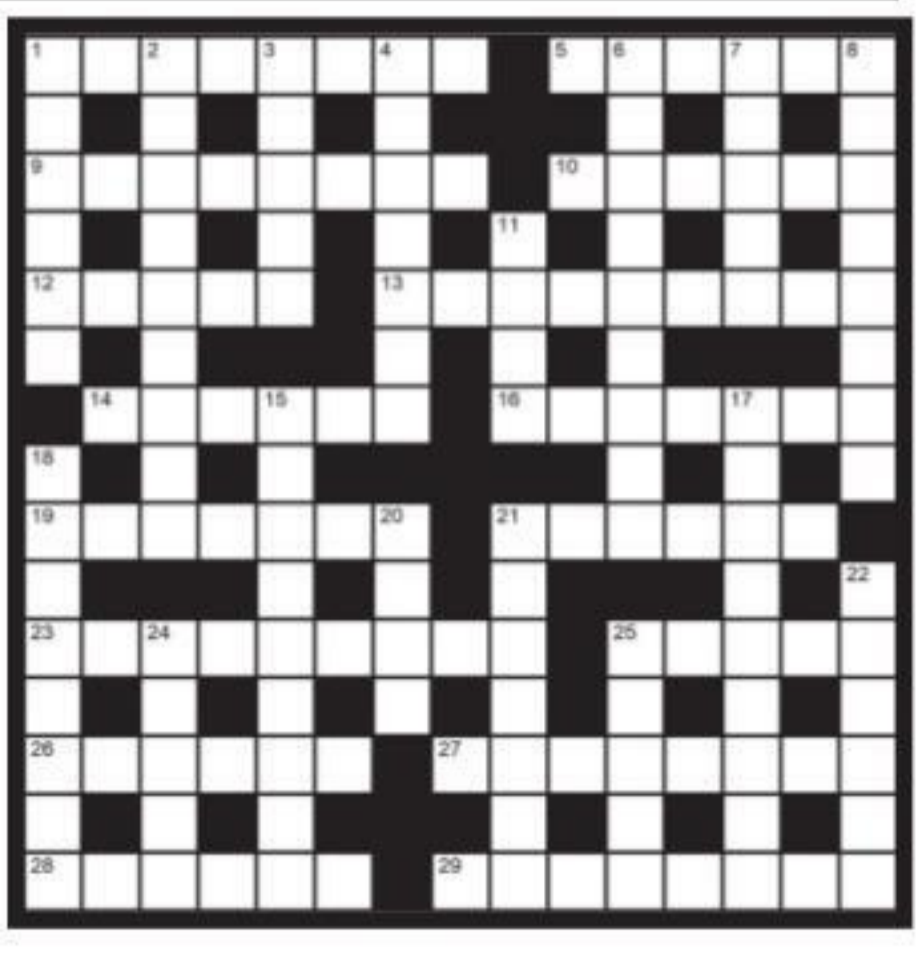
2D dbl pass 3H

pass 4H pass pass

West starts with the ace of diamonds and leads a diamond to East's jack. Normally leading aces is not a good idea, but West got a little lucky in this case. East came through with the king, something their auction did not promise. In any event, East wins trick two and returns the ten of clubs. How good is this contract?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2449

- QUICK CLUES ACROSS**
- Handicapped (8)
 - Egyptian sacred beetle (6)
 - Shook (8)
 - Father of the Nation, Mahatma (6)
 - Gurkha's home (5)
 - Removed wrinkles; smoothened (6,3)
 - Totting up? (6)
 - Intend (7)
 - Uncovers (7)
 - Hit with a blunt weapon (6)
 - Time of day (9)
 - Made a mistake (5)
 - Ten per cent taxes of the days gone by? (6)
 - Alcoholic journey (3-5)
 - Far away (6)
 - Beaten (8)
- DOWN**
- Going out with (6)
 - Accelerated (7,2)
 - Din (5)
 - The period between afternoon and dusk? (7)
 - Duennas, for example (9)
 - Signal receiver (5)
 - Stiff hairs (8)
 - Climb (2,2)
 - Rebel (9)
 - Become emotional (9)
 - Wine flask (8)
 - Stuggish (4)
 - Do magic tricks (7)
 - Confused (6)
 - Tribal emblem (5)
 - A master of ceremonies (5)



- CRYPTIC CLUES ACROSS**
- Brazen opposition from French husband-to-be (8)
 - A turning point (6)
 - Take action against someone? (8)
 - Spots sixth sense that is initially suspect (6)
 - Lady heartening Her Majesty in Surrey (5)
 - Global system copes with unusual occurrence here? (3-6)
 - Trimming benefits can generate responsibilities (6)
 - Favourably skew Australian article on philosopher (7)
 - Reactionary woman listened to English advancing (3-4)
 - With "You're out of the will", put an end to the conversation (3,3)
 - Unlikely character perhaps had some substance, outwardly (3,6)

- Direction to provide assistance for a young lion (5)
- Removes all traces of time before some points are reached (6)
- Abused dole, given employment, then subjected to nit-picking (8)
- Make certain criticism doesn't start (6)
- Items of clothing used by violinists (1-7)
- round (4,4)
- A pattern belonging to Dorothy (4)
- Free kicks in dangerous positions (7)
- Suit provided for digging the garden (6)
- What one does with one's feet when unwilling to work? (5)
- He wants a hand (5)

Solutions to 2448

- QUICK CLUES ACROSS:** 1 Scholarship, 7 IAC, 9 Acad, 10 Contrails, 11 Lucrative, 12 Tanks, 13 Parsons, 15 Sunk, 18 Iffy, 20 Piccolo, 23 Haven, 24 Resembled, 26 Manganese, 27 Trail, 28 Yas, 29 Historians, 31 Scallops, 2 Hardcore, 3 Lydia, 4 Recoils, 5 Hinders, 6 Puritanic, 7 Lysand, 8 Choose, 14 Offenbach, 16 Kohlrahi, 17 Gondolas, 19 Yorkers, 20 Pasteur, 21 Shimmy, 22 Evenso, 25 Motto
- CRYPTIC CLUES ACROSS:** Economic aid, 7 Gob, 9 H-bomb, 10 Jack-Sprat, 11 Brawburst, 12 RELes, 13 Totland, 15 Chit, 18 litch, 20 Panier, 23 Mixer, 24 Unlearned, 26 Scantling, 27 Ladies, 28 Not, 29 Coincidence Down, 1 Exhibits, 2 Odorous, 3 Oxbow, 4 Injured, 5 Ascectic, 6 Desertion, 7 Gargle, 8 Bather, 14 Antarcctic, 16 Lion's den, 17 Indesce, 19 Hourdini, 20 Pelagic, 21 A mason, 22 Extant, 25 Allied

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 together to form the answer for the given clue.

We must build dikes of ___ to hold back the flood of ___ - Martin Luther King, Jr. (7...4)

CPAEE **DJNCOU**

FIARR **ADLYFG**

SOLUTION: PEACE, FEAR, COURAGE, GADFLY

Difficulty Level 2s 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

SUDOKU 5364

5	4		6	2				
2	8			9	7			
		3						
	1	2	7	3				
	2	8		5	4			
	6	4	8	7				
			6					
9	6				5	1		
	3	5		2	7			

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5364

2	4	7	8	3	1	9	6	5
9	6	1	7	4	5	3	2	8
5	3	8	9	6	2	4	1	7
1	8	2	5	7	9	6	3	4
4	9	3	1	8	6	5	7	2
6	7	5	3	2	4	8	9	1
3	1	6	2	5	8	7	4	9
7	5	9	4	1	3	2	8	6
8	2	4	6	9	7	1	5	3

MORE FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2023

In order to clear extra rush of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Deepawali / Chhath Puja Festival Special Express Trains as per details given below:-

02252/02251 New Delhi - Patna Jn. - New Delhi Reserved Vande Bharat Express Special Train				06 Trips		
Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.
02252	---	07:25	New Delhi	02251	19:00	---
19:00	---	---	Patna Jn.	---	---	07:30

DATE OF RUN: 02252 from New Delhi on 11, 14 & 16.11.2023 & 02251 from Patna Jn. on 12, 15 & 17.11.2023.

STOPPAGE: Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar & Ara Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC Executive Chaircar & AC Chaircar.

09075/09076 Mumbai Central - Kathgodam - Mumbai Central Superfast Express Special Train				08 Trips		
Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.
09075	---	11:00	Mumbai Central	09076	20:55	---
14:30	---	---	Kathgodam	---	---	17:30

DATE OF RUN: 09075 from Mumbai Central on Wednesday 08, 15, 22 & 29.11.2023 & 09076 from Kathgodam on Thursday 09, 16, 23 & 30.11.2023.

STOPPAGE: Borivali, Vapi, Valsad, Surat, Vadodara, Ratlam, Kota, Gangapur City, Hindaun City, Bharatpur, Achhnera, Mathura, Hathras City, Kasganj, Badaun, Bareilly Jn., Bareilly City, Izzatnagar Jn., Baheri, Kichha, Lalkuan Jn. & Haldwani Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, AC-2 Tier, AC-3 Tier, Sleeper & General.

09097/09098 Bandra Terminus - Jammu Tawi - Bandra Terminus AC Superfast Express Special Train				06 Trips		
Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.
09097	---	21:50	Bandra Terminus	09098	10:10	---
08:35	---	---	Jammu Tawi	---	---	23:20

DATE OF RUN: 09097 from Bandra Terminus on Sunday 12, 19 & 26.11.2023 & 09098 from Jammu Tawi on Tuesday 14, 21 & 28.11.2023.

STOPPAGE: Borivali, Vapi, Valsad, Surat, Vadodara, Ratlam, Kota, Sawaimadhopur, Gangapur City, Bharatpur, Mathura, Delhi Sadarjangan, Ambala, Ludhiana, Jalandhar Cantt. & Pathankot Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC-3 Tier & AC Chaircar.

09523/09524 Okha - Delhi Sarai Rohilla - Okha Superfast Express Special Train (Weekly)				10 Trips		
Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.
09523	---	10:00	Okha	09524	13:50	---
10:10	---	---	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	---	---	13:20

DATE OF RUN: 09523 from Okha on Tuesday 31.10.2023, 07, 14, 21 & 28.11.2023 & 09524 from Delhi Sarai Rohilla on Wednesday 01, 08, 15, 22 & 29.11.2023.

STOPPAGE: Dwaraka, Khambhaliya, Jamnagar, Hapa, Rajkot Jn., Surendranagar, Viramgam Jn., Mahesana Jn., Unjha, Siddhpur, Palanpur Jn., Abu Road, Falna, Marwar Jn., Beawar, Ajmer, Kishangarh, Jaipur Jn., Gandhinagar Jaipur, Dausa, Bandikui, Alwar & Rewari Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC-2 Tier, AC-3 Tier, Sleeper & General.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTEs App.

Visit RailMadad Website - www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
 Your Convenience - Our Concern
 Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

BIHAR SCHOOL EXAMINATION BOARD

CANCELLATION OF e-TENDER NOTICE NO.- PR 291/2023

The e-Tender Notice No. - PR 291/2023 published in daily newspapers on 04th September, 2023 for "Supply of Packing Materials i.e., Envelope, Corrugated Box, Printed Plastic Bag with RFID Tag & Variable Printed Adhesive Stickers and Poly Bag (LDPE) for Intermediate/Matric (Annual & Compartmental) Examination, 2024 and Other Examinations," hereby stands cancelled due to unavoidable reasons.

Secretary

BIHAR SCHOOL EXAMINATION BOARD

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Where as complaint has been made before me that one accused Vikram Pal S/o Satish Pal, R/o H. No.1-44, Hari Nagar Extension, Part-II, Jaitpur, New Delhi have Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 348/19 u/s 27/61/85 NDPS Act has been registered at P.S. Kalindi Kunj, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Vikram Pal cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Vikram Pal has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Vikram Pal of FIR No. 348/19 u/s 27/61/85 NDPS Act has been registered at P.S. Kalindi Kunj, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 14.12.2023.

By Order
 Sh. Himanshu Tanwar
 Metropolitan Magistrate-10,
 Room No.307, 3rd Floor, South-East, District,
 DP/12274/SE/2023 (Court Matter) Saket Courts, New Delhi

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

The Divisional Railway Manager (Engg./I) E.C.Railway/Samastipur for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open Tender from experienced and financially capable tenderers for the following works in E-Tendering mode of IREPS web portal of Indian Railways :-

Sl. No. 1, Tender Notice No. TC-167-2023-SPJ, Name of work : At Sakri - Construction of drain in station approach road. Tender Value (In ₹) : 6285725.92, Earnest Money (In ₹) : 125700.00, Completion period of the work: 12 Months.

Sl. No. 2, Tender Notice No. TC-168-2023-SPJ, Name of work : Provision of two nos. of stabilising line at Ravauli. Tender Value (In ₹) : 41119792.66 Earnest Money (In ₹) : 355600.00, Completion period of the work: 12 Months.

Sl. No. 3, Tender Notice No. TC-169-2023-SPJ, Name of work : Dismantling of dilapidated washable apron of PF No 1 & 2 at NKE and PF No 1 & 2 at RXL and converting the track into ballasted deck. Tender Value (In ₹) : 10429656.20, Earnest Money (In ₹) : 202200.00, Completion period of the work: 12 Months.

1. Last Date & time for receiving of Tender in e-tender mode on IREPS web portal :- 22/11/2023 upto 12:00 hours.
 2. Opening Date & time for E-Tender : 22/11/2023 after 12:00 hours.
 3. Website particulars where complete details of tender & tender document can be seen on Website : www.ireps.gov.in
 Amendments/modifications if any shall not be published in the newspapers but the same shall be uploaded in the website.
 Sr. Divisional Engineer/III/Samastipur PR/1504/SPJ/Engg./T/23-24/48

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr. P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Sajid @ Firoz S/o Saleem R/o Kasim Vihar, Loni, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 9334/17 U/s 379/411/482 IPC registered at P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued stating that the said Sajid @ Firoz could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the accused Sajid @ Firoz has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Sajid @ Firoz is required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before 30.11.2023.

By Order
 Ms. Shipra Dhankar,
 Metropolitan Magistrate(Central Distt)
 Room No. 180, First Floor,
 Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

BIHAR SCHOOL EXAMINATION BOARD

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

(Through e-procurement mode only over <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>)

Tender Notice No.-PR 386 / 2023

Bihar School Examination Board, Patna invites e-tenders under two bid systems for selection of Firms/Companies/Agencies/Societies for "Supply of Packing Materials i.e. Envelope, Corrugated Box with Variable Printed Adhesive Stickers, Printed Plastic Bag and Poly Bag (LDPE) for Intermediate/ Matric (Annual & Compartmental) Examination, 2024 and Other Examinations."

Scope of work	Cost of Tender Document (Inclusive of GST @18.00% to be paid through e-payment mode (i.e., NEFT/RTGS/Credit Card/Debit card) (Non-Refundable)	Tender Processing Fee (Rupees Three Thousand Five Hundred Only)	Earnest Money (Refundable) (Rupees One Lakh Only)
Supply of Packing Materials i.e. Envelope, Corrugated Box with Variable Printed Adhesive Stickers, Printed Plastic Bag and Poly Bag (LDPE) for Intermediate / Matric (Annual & Compartmental) Examination, 2024 and Other Examinations	₹5,900/-	₹3,540/-	₹1,00,000/-

Tender Schedule / Programme:

Particulars	Date/Time: Duration
Online Sale/Download date of Tender documents	From: 30/10/2023 (11:00 Hrs) to 21/11/2023 (13:00 Hrs) (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
Pre-Bid Meeting	06/11/2023 at 12:30 Hrs. (Bihar School Examination Board, Sinha Library Road, Patna-800017)
Last Date/ Time for submission of Bid	21/11/2023 up to 13:00 Hrs. (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
Submission of EMD (in case of BG) in Hard copy/ Original	21/11/2023 up to 14:00 Hrs. (Bihar School Examination Board, Sinha Library Road, Patna-800017)
Technical Bid Opening Date & Time	21/11/2023 at 14:30 Hrs (Bihar School Examination Board, Sinha Library Road, Patna-800017)
Financial Bid Opening Date and Time	Date to be announced later by Competent Authority.

Contact Details: Sh. Vinod Kumar Singh, Nodal officer - +91 62999 23095, E-Mail ID - eproc-bseb-bih@gov.in / eproc.bseb@gmail.com

Note:- Bihar School Examination Board reserves the right to Accept/ Cancel/ Reschedule tenders without assigning any reasons.

"IMPORTANT"

Whilst care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.



FLAMING ORANGE

New giant-killers beat old giant-hunters as Dutch stun Bangladesh

SAYAK DUTTA
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 28

BAS DE Leede stood still at deep midwicket after pouncing the catch that sealed a famous win for the Netherlands, an 87-run victory over Bangladesh. His teammates on-rushed, among them the beaming Paul van Meekeren, the four-wicket hero, and it was soon a pile of orange shirts celebrating madly in the vast stadium, near deserted, as the distraught Bangladesh fans had long filed out of the stadium.

They had turned up in numbers, waving their puffed tiger dolls and wearing their passion on their sleeve. With an overwhelming majority of the crowd behind them, it was as though Bangladesh were playing in Mirpur of Chattogram.

A typically energetic crowd of 15,000 roared every wicket they took and every boundary they scored, in their pursuit of 230 runs. But

they watched in utter horror the Dutch scythe through their batting. They did to Bangladesh what Bangladesh used to in the past, when they scalped big teams. No longer though.

In the first place, Bangladesh let the Dutch soar to 229 after they were teetering on 107 for 5. But Scott Edwards put in another remarkable batting effort to power them to a competitive total on a surface that aided spinners as the day wore on. Still, Bangladesh fans nursed no fears of an upset and were cheerful in the stands.

But drowning out the noise, Netherlands struck early to have them reeling at 15 for three. The thrifty Aryan Dutt consumed the under-firing Litton Das before Logan van Beek nailed Tanzid Hasan. The familiar van Meekeren struck the two vital blows, those of Najmul Hossain Shanto and Shakib Al Hasan. The former was lured into a wild waft outside the off-stump while the effort bowl that generated extra bounce accounted to Hasan.



Netherlands players celebrate after beating Bangladesh. Partha Paul

His attempt to play that was lazy too.

From 63 for 4, Bangladesh were in genuine strife. It only got worse from here, as Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Mushfiqur too perished in no time. Suddenly, Bangladesh were reeling at 70/6. The Dutch were now begin-

ning to sense hope and increased their intensity on the field, piling dot balls and ratcheting up the pressure. Mahedi Hasan and Mahmudullah, though, somehow took them past 100 before a direct throw from de Leede ended Hasan's outings. And when de Leede nailed Mahmudullah, with the score 113 for 8, Bangladesh could feel the ground beneath them crack. Though they lower-order hung around, it was a matter of time before the defeat was confirmed.

Homegrown hero

Van Meekeren is one of the few homegrown players in the Dutch team. But sustaining his passion in the game was not easy. The pandemic time was tough. He should have been playing the T20 World Cup for Netherlands in November, 2020. Instead, he was delivering UberEats to pay his bills. He was released by Somerset too. Initially he was not part of Netherlands' squad for the

ODI World Cup Qualifiers due to his county commitments but was later released by his current club Gloucester. Tonight, that decision paid rich dividends.

Another familiar figure was their batting hero, Edwards. After electing to bat, Netherlands were reeling at 4-2, courtesy of Taskin Ahmed, who was returning from an injury layoff, when he drew first blood for Bangladesh in the second over when he snapped up Vikramjit Singh (3). The partner Max O Dowd (0) would also follow him shortly after nicking off Shoriful Islam in the next over. The Dutch's nightmare start in the powerplay continued. Skipper Scott Edwards had said before the match that they would look to rectify the mistakes when it came to their top order. Unfortunately, as of Saturday, the issue still persisted.

Wesley Barresi, the 37-year-old South Africa-born batsman—better remembered for a comment on Virat Kohli that “we’ll never

see or hear from you again”, when the Indian was dismissed in the 2011 World Cup—steered the Dutch ship clear of relative danger before being dismissed for 41. In the space of adding 44 runs, they lost three more wickets. But enter the man for crisis, Edwards. Making full use to two reprieves, he led the rebuild, before Logan van Beek's late charge took them to a competitive total, that would prove more than handy in the end.

An ecstatic Edwards would later say: “We feel like we are putting the work in and we are getting some of those rewards. We spoke at the start of the tournament about giving us a chance at the semis and that looks tricky but that’ll remain our goal.” Whether they reach the last four or not, they have already made a splash this tournament.

BRIEF SCORES: Netherlands 229 (Edwards 68, Barresi 41; Mustafizur 2/36, Mahedi 2/40) beat Bangladesh 142 (Mehidy 35; van Meekeren 4/23, de Leede 2/25) by 87 runs

Aus win mountain-of-runs match

771 runs — most in an ODI WC match — scored in a game that came down to NZ needing 7 from 2 balls but former champs prevail

RAHUL PANDEY
DHARAMSALA, OCTOBER 28

JIMMY NEESHAM was flat on his stomach by the striker's end. The Dharamsala crowd that was chanting his name seconds ago, as if he wore blue and not black, was stunned to pin drop silence. A record-highest World Cup chase in the best-ever scoring game in the tournament's history had seemed possible a delivery ago. But not anymore, and Neesham knew it. There was no need for a third umpire, the all-rounder was aware he'd fallen short of his crease before the wicketkeeper Josh Inglis leapt forward and rattled his stumps.

Just as he got up and started his long walk back to the pavilion, the first thought that crossed his mind was that his frame alongside the Aussie keeper was going to look similar to Martin Gupthill and Jos Buttler's at the end of the 2019 World Cup final. “That [2019 final] was the first thing I thought of when I was coming off, that it's going to look very, very similar. You want to be desperate, I suppose, in those situations and you'd much rather get run out on your stomach than on your feet,” he'd concede after New Zealand fell short by five runs against Australia in a game that saw 771 runs.

With 388 runs in their kitty, the five-time world champions looked favorites to win their fourth straight match at this World Cup and continue their rise to the top of the table, having lied at the bottom of it a couple weeks ago. But New Zealand, as they so often have, had kept something up their sleeves.

Openers Devon Conway and Will Young had notched early boundaries, but perished by the end of the powerplay. Mr. Consistent Daryl Mitchell, who'd scored a century here less than a week back, added another 54 before falling to the temptation of scoring another maximum. A couple more wickets fell at the other end. But Rachin Ravindra felt near-invincible against a bowling attack he touted as the “very best in the world” — scoring only his second World Cup hundred in a sixth outing.

Perhaps he had manifested it, just like his first from earlier this month. Standing by the HPCA Stadium boundary on Friday, Rachin would tell this newspaper that he had pictured himself scoring a hundred in the tournament opener. It was an innings that put the 23-year-old under the spotlight and at the receiving end of an outpour of emotion from the home fans given Rachin's roots to India. It was audible as a jam-packed crowd chanted his portmanteau name, rhyming with the most famous one in the country. A couple of the southpaw's strokes justified all the hype. The straight drive he met off a Josh Hazlewood length ball just outside the off stump was one. Also slowly becoming a part of his game is the tracking-back-cut-shot. He'd used it to perfection off Kuldeep Yadav in the last game and this time, it was Adam Zampa, who got sliced behind backward point for four.

Alongside his poise and perfection while playing textbook shots, it is Rachin's ability to strike the ball hard that upped New Zealand's chances in a chase where they couldn't afford to hang back and absorb the pressure. Nothing highlighted it better than the shot he hit at 94. Getting down on one knee and pointing Zampa a mile over the deep mid wicket fence. Out came the helmet, and the “Rachin! Rachin!” chants.

For Jimmy Neesham though — who had to take over as Rachin holed a slower one from Cummins to wide long off at 116 — the “noise” was a distraction he couldn't afford. With a lit-



Jimmy Neesham's run out on the penultimate ball, with New Zealand needing 7 runs from 2 balls, swung the match decisively in Australia's favour. PTT

tle under 100 runs yet to chased from the final 10 overs, the southpaw had to assess the differing game plans of the Aussie bowlers.

“For me at that stage it was just about playing each bowler individually. I think the right armers were looking to hit the wickets and go across me. So I was trying not to be too square to them. And then Starc with his left arm angle was tailing it in a little bit opposite,” he said.

And he had to do it all as New Zealand's last batter in the middle, also having to “calm the tailenders down a little bit. There were a few beans flowing.” It was a plan he almost nailed to perfection. Cummins and Hazlewood's length and short balls were picked neat for a total of three boundaries from outside the off stump. Starc was as expensive working the angle into the southpaw. His attempts to nail incoming yorkers resulted in slot balls that were dispatched for two maximums.

The equation had come down to seven off two and with the heaps of runs that had already been scored, it didn't seem much. But for all his clean hitting all night, it was a full toss from Starc that brought an end to Neesham's innings. A direct-hit from Marnus Labuschagne that saw Neesham dive in desperation, only to be run out by Josh Inglis. It was 2019 all over again. Unsurprisingly, it was the first thing that crossed his mind as he walked back on a World Cup night that saw the Kiwis fall agonizingly short again.

For Oz, faith in opening combination pays off

RAHUL PANDEY
DHARAMSALA, OCTOBER 28

ON SOME days, the number of fours and sixes bludgeoned with modern day bats can be mind numbing. Numbers can help re-assess the impact a boundary-fest has had on an innings.

Australia's openers David Warner and Travis Head were so murderous when facing the new ball that New Zealand had to wait till the 14th over for a boundary not to be hit by either one of them. By the end of the 10th over, the opening partnership of this marauding pair of southpaws was 118. At that point, by the end of the first Powerplay, when just two fielders are allowed outside the circle, Warner and Head were toying with the bowlers. Fifty six of Warner's 65 came via boundaries, Head made 48 of 50 through hits to or over the fence. Head finished with an impactful century and Warner made 81. Till both of them were in the middle, the World record score of 498, in England's name, looked like it was under threat.

Australia had put faith in the Warner-Head combination. Mitch Marsh was asked to bat at number 3 and Steve Smith a spot down to accommodate Head, who returned from injury to make his World Cup debut. A 175-run opening stand in just 19.1 overs justified the tinkering around with the batting line-up.

This was a pair skipper Pat Cummins had deemed as essential and exciting. Only a day ago, he'd spoken of the “best way to set up the team”. Bring in Head to open alongside Warner. His explanation for the same, “Travis has been amazing over the last four months. David Warner, obviously the superstar. It's a lineup that's got us very excited.”

An in-form Warner — two hundreds and a fifty — and a confident and powerful striker Head to get things started off will bode well for the Australians who started off the campaign with two losses.

A brutal collection of 15 fours and 11 sixes forced the New Zealanders to chop and



David Warner and Travis Head shared a 175-run opening partnership against New Zealand. PTT

change their A-plan with the ball early in the day. Australia, the five-time world champions, looked like they had well and truly arrived at the 2023 World Cup. One may argue it was the game against the Dutch where they flicked the switch after consecutive defeats to India and South Africa and only a five-wicket win against an underfiring Sri Lankan side. But this was different. An all-out assault against one of the more balanced bowling attacks of the tournament — in the Trans-Tasman derby. And, it was a southpaw opening combination for Australia causing the damage and giving a sense of deja vu.

Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden had done so over two World Cups — both of which Australia won — in the eight years and 114 games they opened together. It was their attack-first approach against the new ball bowlers that had been the foundation of Australia scoring big totals consistently and bossing the ODI format in the aughts. 10 overs of field restrictions would seem like a lifetime when the two were batting. As it did

This was a pair skipper Pat Cummins had deemed as essential and exciting... His explanation for the same, “Travis has been amazing over the last four months. David Warner, obviously the superstar. It's a lineup that's got us very excited.”

for New Zealand, courtesy of Australia's latest southpaw pair at the World Cup. And there was a lot of Gilchrist and Hayden in the way they operated. Like the former, Australia's contemporary openers went about scoring boundaries from both ends.

On the first sighting of outside from Matt Henry, Warner would reach outside the off stump to cut one hard beyond the reach of backward point. How often had Matthew Hayden got the scoreboard going with that similar crunch shot? Just a stretch of the front foot to carve out an opening to his left.

Later in the over as Henry switched to a shorter length, Warner pocketed four more runs flashing the pull shot — another stroke that was dear to Hayden. Elaborating on what makes for a perfect pull, the former Aussie opener had once elaborated, “It's the backfoot. The front leg up in the air gives you the counter balance to be able to rotate your bat. Pull shot is really all about getting into a stable position. A controlled position.”

David Warner had weight pressed against his backfoot, with the bottom hand waist high to flick the ball over the fielder at square leg. With two boundaries in the first over he'd set the tone as he often had in this competition for Australia. Over to his partner at the other end.

The parallels between Head and Gilchrist had been drawn only this summer by none other than Ricky Ponting himself. “He probably is (similar to Gilchrist) His confidence is

growing by the game, his strike-rate keeps going up, he hits boundaries early on in his innings which puts pressure back on the bowlers,” the former Aussie skipper said on commentary during the WTCC Final against India.

Battling through pain

He'd scored a hundred then. On Saturday, playing his first World Cup game, Head got another. It was scarcely believable though. Nursing a thumb fracture, he'd been out of action for nearly six weeks. A nasty blow off a quick bouncer from South Africa's Gerald Coetzee had seemed like the end of his World Cup dreams. Here he was, scoring a 59-ballton. The team management had exercised extra caution in his recovery. Even though Head had sweated hard in the Delhi nets earlier this week, his return only came in Dharamsala. But when it did, he lived up to the fearless persona of the batsman Ponting had compared him to.

Matt Henry wouldn't shy away from serving him a short one as early as the third over. Only to be clubbed over deep mid wicket. He'd nail him for a couple more in that arc to deep square leg — forcing him out of the attack after just three overs.

The introduction of spin from the Kiwis changed little as the Aussie openers went from scoring 50 off five overs to 100 off nine to 175 in less than 20. “We tried to put as much pressure as we can, we were able to get away today, take our chances and then also go on and make a really big partnership,” Head would say afterwards. Part-timer Glenn Phillips removed both in quick succession. But by the time he'd done so, a solid foundation had been laid for the rest of the batsmen.

Despite the middle order failing to capitalize on the head start, comes from the likes of Glenn Maxwell, Josh Inglis and Pat Cummins were enough to push the total to 388. The heavy lifting had already been done by the two openers, who brought with them some Australian-style hitting heritage to the top of the order.

SCORECARD

AUSTRALIA vs NEW ZEALAND

HPCA STADIUM, DHARAMSALA

Toss: New Zealand, elected to field

AUSTRALIA

D Warner c & b Phillips 81 (65b, 5x4, 6x6)
T Head b Phillips 109 (67b, 10x4, 7x6)
M Marsh b Santner 36 (51b, 2x4)
S Smith c Boult b Phillips 18 (17b, 2x4)
M Labuschagne c Ravindra b Santner 18 (26b, 2x4)
G Maxwell c Boult b Neesham 41 (24b, 5x4, 2x6)
J Inglis c Phillips b Boult 38 (28b, 4x4, 1x6)
P Cummins lbw b Boult 37 (14b, 2x4, 4x6)
M Starc c Neesham b Henry 1 (3b)
A Zampa b Boult 0 (3)
J Hazlewood not out 0 (0b)
Extras (b 1, nb 2, w 6) 9
Total 49.2 Ov (RR: 7.86) 388
FoW: 1-175, 2-200, 3-228, 4-264, 5-274, 6-325, 7-387, 8-388, 9-388, 10-388

Bowling: Matt Henry 6.2-0-67-1, Trent Boult 10-0-77-3, Lockie Ferguson 3-0-38-0, Mitchell Santner 10-0-80-2, Glenn Phillips 10-0-37-3, Rachin Ravindra 8-0-56-0, James Neesham 2-0-32-1

NEW ZEALAND

D Conway c Starc b Hazlewood 28 (17b, 6x4)
W Young c Starc b Hazlewood 32 (37b, 4x4, 1x6)
R Ravindra c Labuschagne b Cummins 116 (89b, 9x4, 5x6)
D Mitchell c Starc b Zampa 54 (51b, 6x4, 1x6)
T Latham c Hazlewood b Zampa 21 (22b, 2x4)
G Phillips c Labuschagne b Maxwell 12 (16b, 1x4)
J Neesham run out (L'chagne) 58 (39b, 3x4, 3x6)
M Santner c Maxwell b Zampa 17 (12b, 1x4, 1x6)
M Henry c Hazlewood b Cummins 9 (8b, 1x4)
T Boult not out 10 (8b, 1x6)
L Ferguson not out 0 (1b)
Extras (lb 4, w 22) 26
Total 50 Ov (RR: 7.66) 383/9
FoW: 1-61, 2-72, 3-168, 4-222, 5-265, 6-293, 7-320, 8-346, 9-383

Bowling: Mitchell Starc 9-0-89-0, Josh Hazlewood 9-0-70-2, Pat Cummins 10-0-66-2, Glenn Maxwell 10-0-62-1, Adam Zampa 10-0-74-3, Mitchell Marsh 2-0-18-0

NZ CHASE: MOMENTS THAT COULD'VE TURNED THE TIDE

36.2 129 runs needed off 83 balls

● A mistimed chip from Rachin Ravindra — on 101 — but Glenn Maxwell drops him off his bowling.

48.1 32 runs needed off 12 balls

● Labuschagne has caught Trent Boult at long on but he steps on the boundary rope

50th over: Mitchell Starc had to bowl with four fielders outside the circle instead of five because of team's slow overate

49.4 Nine runs needed off three balls

Neesham heaves it in front of square on the leg side. Labuschagne makes a superb dive to save two runs.

49.5 Seven runs needed off two balls

Neesham's flick to deep mid wicket is intercepted by Labuschagne. Keeper Inglis dives to run out Neesham.

'THICK-SKINNED'

KL sought mental health coach to shun outside noise

PRATYUSH RAJ
LUCKNOW

KL Rahul says he has become more "thick-skinned" since he has started taking professional help to shun the "outside noise," and reveals taking a leaf out of the skipper Rohit Sharma's book by not using "social media" much for the past few months. "I have put a lot of effort into this. I tried to address it. Outside noise for a long time, I thought it won't affect me, but in the last year or so it started affecting me," Rahul told reporters in Lucknow. "I tried to work on that side. Mentally you need to get a lot stronger, a lot more thick-skinned. So yeah, that really helped me being away from the game. There are specialists, batting specialists, bowling specialists, there are specialist mental coaches that you can really use and can work with if you feel that it will help. So, I tried a bit of everything," he added. Rahul, who captains Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in the IPL, admitted that returning to Lucknow ahead of India's fixture against England has been bittersweet since it was the same ground where he went down injured and then hobbled off the field. "Mai bhoolna chahta hoon magar log bhoolne nahi dete (I want to forget about it but people keep reminding me about it)," said Rahul. "Yesterday when I came to the ground, my last memory of this ground is that - falling down and injuring myself. Hopefully, I can put that aside and I can make some better and happier memories to forget all of that."



"The injury that I had, it kept me out of the game for four or five months. That was a tough time. Whoever has an injury, if you ask anyone - they undergo surgery and to come back, it takes a lot of hard work, a lot of patience and you have to go through that which is not very easy," he said. During the Asia Cup, Rahul in his interview with BCCI.Tv had opened about his thigh injury. "I got injured while trying to chase a ball and my tendon snapped. I had a full-fledged tear, my tendon ripped apart from my quadriceps."

STANDINGS

	M	W	L	T	Pts	NRR
SA	6	5	1	0	10	2.032
Ind	5	5	0	0	10	1.353
NZ	6	4	2	0	8	1.232
Aus	6	4	2	0	8	0.970
SL	5	2	3	0	4	-0.205
Pak	6	2	4	0	4	-0.387
Afg	5	2	3	0	4	-0.969
Ned	6	2	4	0	4	-1.277
Ban	6	1	5	0	2	-1.338
Eng	5	1	4	0	2	-1.634

PRATYUSH RAJ
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 28

IN A week's time, on November 5, Virat Kohli would turn 35. Even as he recovered from poor form, mental-health issues, and the brouhaha over his captaincy, one aspect remained fascinating to track: will he run as hard as before or would he rely more on boundaries? He just doesn't run; he tears down the pitch, a furious blur of emotions, adrenaline, eye-popping intensity, and desire. MS Dhoni will remain the best Indian runner between the wickets and his dash had that composure and self-control. His was a run of a man in control. Kohli's is a liberating run. A manic dash of a man who seems to let go of all controls. What's impressive is that while Dhoni has always run like this from the start of his career, Kohli's a part of an evolution consciously and deliberately achieved by an ambitious man. But will age catch up with him in that aspect?

In this World Cup, Virat has scored three fifties and one hundred in five innings, all while chasing. The only match he missed out was against Pakistan in Ahmedabad. How has he paced out his knocks this world cup? Out of 354 runs, Virat has run 164 singles in this tournament.

India vs Australia (Chennai)
85 OFF 116 BALLS, 47 SINGLES

The knock at Chennai was probably his scrappiest ODI knock. He was dropped on 12, was rattled on the helmet by Starc; an inside edge off Cummins almost kissed the leg stump, but like a pro boxer, who was trailing in the first couple of rounds, he fought his way back and won the match for India on a tricky Chepauk surface.

In the game against NZ, in Ravindra Jadeja, Kohli found another brilliant partner. The duo ran 37 singles, with Jadeja taking 19

Kohli walked out with India reeling at 2 for 3. He along with KL Rahul, dug their heels and by the end of the powerplay, India were 27 for 3. In the first fifty deliveries he faced, Kohli hit only two boundaries. But with Rahul on the other end, the pressure never got into him. Rahul took on Zampa, hitting three boundaries in the 18th over. Kohli reached his fifty in 75 balls and by the time he got out, his 165-run stand with KL had almost steered India home.

During the partnership, the duo ran 85 singles and nine twos. Out of those, Kohli ran 47 singles and seven twos. Rahul matched him with 38 singles. This just shows how the rotating of the strike has helped Kohli and Rahul to deflect the initial pressure build by the Australian seamers

India vs Afghanistan (New Delhi)
55 NOT OUT OFF 56 BALLS, 23 SINGLES

It was Rohit Sharma's show in Virat Kohli's backyard. Virat forged a 49-run second-wicket stand with Rohit Sharma. They ran 17 singles, out of which 10 were Virat's, who played the second fiddle and scored 18 runs in that stand.

Virat put on an unbeaten 68-run stand for the third wicket with Shreyas Iyer. Virat and Iyer ran 28 singles and four two's. Kohli again pipped his partner, running 15 ones and three twos.

India vs Bangladesh (Pune)
103 NOT OUT OFF 97 BALLS, 45 SINGLES

Exactly like Delhi, when Kohli walked out to bat in Pune, Rohit set the stage on fire, and the 88-run opening wicket stand with Shubman Gill gave Kohli a perfect platform to launch his chase.

Kohli and Gill put together 44 runs for the second wicket. During the partnership, the present of Indian cricket outscored the fu-

PUTTING IN THE HARD YARDS

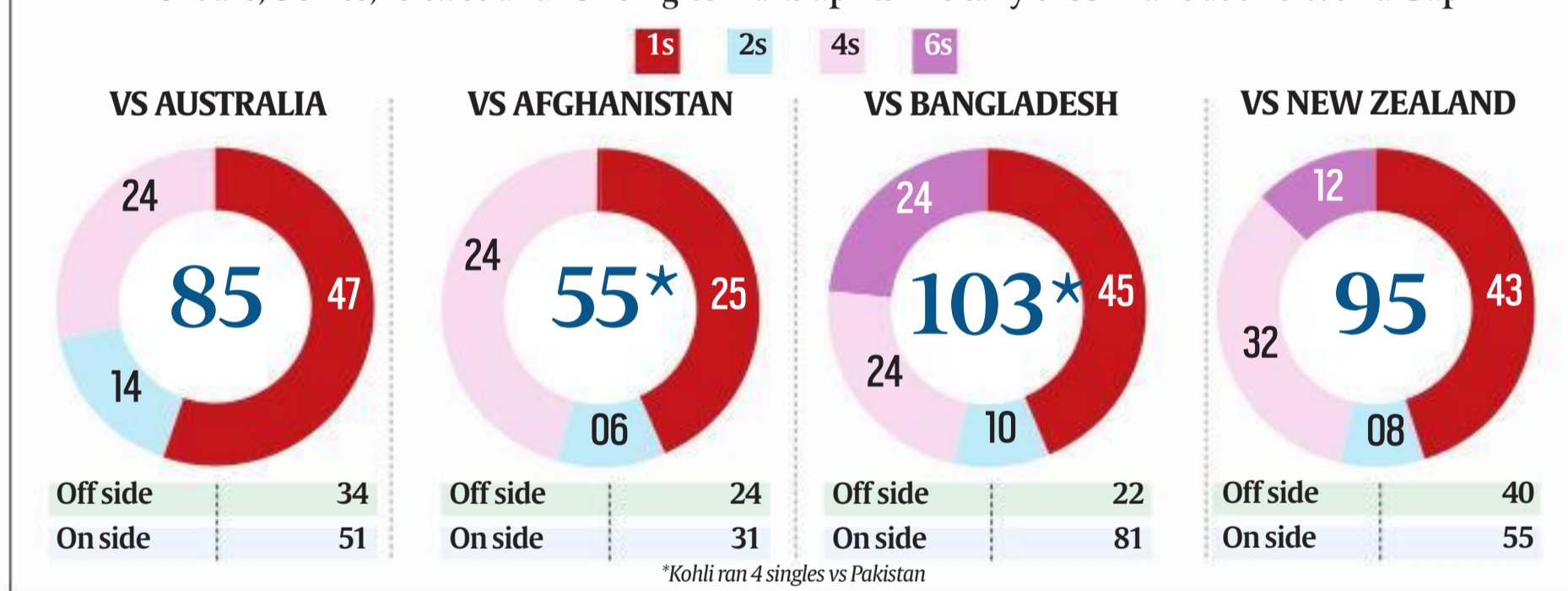
RUNNING SUCCESSFULLY ALL OVER INDIA

It might not have the manic intensity feel to it as before, but in this World Cup, Kohli has run 164 singles of the 354 runs he has piled up thus far



BREAK-UP OF KOHLI'S RUNS

26 fours, 6 sixes, 19 twos and 164 singles make up Kohli's tally of 354 runs at this World Cup



ture. Kohli scored 29 runs and set the tone right from ball one. The first four balls, Kohli faced he scored 13 runs, including a six off Hasan Mahmud.

Next in, Shreyas also failed to match Kohli's fluency. Iyer managed only 19 in their 46-run stand. Kohli reached 50 in 48 balls and without changing any gear, the next fifty came in 49 balls as he reached his 48th century in ODI cricket.

With KL Rahul, Kohli formed another great partnership. The unbeaten 83 of 70 balls helped India to cruise to another victory. Just like in Chennai, the partnership was built on singles. They ran 35, with Virat and Rahul sharing 19 and 16, respectively.

Kohli took 45 singles during his unbeaten knock, and showed the power game he has added in his armoury recently by hitting four sixes. Out of 103 runs, Kohli scored an astonishing 81 on the leg side.

Kohli finished the match with a six, completed his 48th ODI century, and apologised to Ravindra Jadeja in the post-match for stealing the player of the match award.

India vs New Zealand (Dharamsala)
95 OFF 104 BALLS, 43 SINGLES

Another sparkling start by Rohit, another clutch performance by Virat, and almost levelled Sachin Tendulkar's 49th ODI hundred but in trying to achieve the great feat, Kohli was caught at the boundary.

If in Pune, he dominated the on side, Bangladesh bowlers also helped with their poor length. But in Dharamsala, the Kiwis seamers tested Virat's resilience and he showed a different game. In Dharamsala, Kohli scored 40 runs on the offside and 55 on the on.

Against B'desh Kohli took 45 singles and also showed the power game he has added in his armoury recently by hitting four sixes

In a tricky chase, Kohli put three fifty-plus partnerships. A quick 47-ball 52 with Shreyas put India on the driver's seat. He played a perfect ally to Shreyas, who, before the fog interruption, smoked five boundaries.

Following Iyer's departure, Kohli put on another excellent stand with KL Rahul, their third in this tournament. The significant feature of Kohli and Rahul's partnership has been their running between the wickets. Rahul has matched Virat's tempo in almost every game. They ran 24 singles in their partnership, with Rahul outrunning Kohli with 13.

Following a hara-kiri with Suryakumar Yadav, Kohli's 78-run partnership with Ravindra Jadeja was a perfect tribute to the 2011 World Cup quarter-final, where Yuvraj Singh and Suresh Raina had stitched unbeaten 74 runs for the sixth wicket against Australia.

In Jadeja, Kohli found another brilliant partner. The duo ran 37 singles, with Jadeja taking 19. With pressure mounting, it was Jadeja who played the role of aggressor. After playing seven dots, he teed off with two boundaries, and then the six against Rachin Ravindra put India in control. From there onwards, it was all on Kohli, whether he will be able to sneak in another century. A six and four off Boult put Kohli into the 90s. He requested Jadeja to defend the last ball of the 47th over. With India needing seven runs to make it five in a row, Kohli also needed the exact same number to equal Sachin Tendulkar's record. But he missed it by five runs.

Since the start of the year, in 21 matches, Kohli has amassed 966 runs, with an average of 69 and a strike rate of 103.53, including four hundreds and five fifties. Kohli is fourth in the leading run-getter list of 2023, only three runs behind his skipper Rohit Sharma and 19 behind Sri Lanka's Pathum Nissanka. Shubman Gill is leading the chart with 1325 runs. Virat Kohli is still powering his way across the 22 yards for the hard-run singles for himself and his partners.

Asian Para: India's best tally ever

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN
OCTOBER 28

INDIA'S BEST-ever campaign at the 4th edition Asian Para Games ended with a total of 111 medals on Saturday, marking an end to a historic few weeks in Hangzhou. Earlier at the 19th Asian Games, India had finished with a total of 107 medals, also the country's best-ever tally.

India's final count at the Para Asiad was 29 gold, 31 silver, 51 bronze and they finished fifth behind China, Iran, Japan and Korea. India had won 14 medals at the 2010 edition, 33 in 2014 and 72 in 2018. In Guangzhou at the inaugural edition, India had won 1 gold while that number went up to 15 in Indonesia. In Jakarta, India finished 9th overall in the medals tally.

Over the six days of medal events, India's track & field contingent accounted for 55 out of the 111 medals. The next best contribution came from para badminton with 21 medals, that included four gold medals. Chess saw Indians win 8 medals, archery contributed 7 medals, while 6 came from shooting.

One of the stars of the Games was Sheetal Devi, the armless archer from Jammu & Kashmir, who won three medals and two of those were gold. After her silver in women's doubles compound, Sheetal added two gold medals from the mixed doubles and women's individual too. She was born with Phocomelia, a rare congenital disorder that causes underdeveloped limbs. Another standout performer was Sumit Antil, the Tokyo Paralympics javelin



Sumit Antil's 73.29m is now the farthest anyone has ever thrown the javelin in para athletics, across all the categories.

gold medallist, who threw 73.29m to win gold in Men's Javelin Throw Throw-F64. It is now the farthest anyone has ever thrown the javelin in para athletics, across all the categories.

Sheetal Devi and Raksh Kumar won three medals each in archery. Neeraj Yadav, Ankur Dhama (in para athletics) and Darpan Inani (in chess) won two gold medals. A total of 26 Indians featured in the list of multi-medallists from the event.

According to SAI, Indian athletes created 6 World Records, 13 Asian Records and 15 Asian Para Games Records during the event.

The last day of action belong to the chess contingent led by Darpan Inani who won the individual and team gold. A total of 7 medals

NUMBER PLATE

111

India's medal tally at the Para Asian Games. At the 2018 event, they had won 72 medals. Indian athletes created 6 World Records, 13 Asian Records and 15 Asian Para Games Records during the event

came from the board event. Dilip Mahadu Gavit and Neeraj Yadav won gold in their para athletics events.

On the final day, another slice of history was made as India won their first Para Asiad medal in rowing, thanks to a bronze for Anita & Konganapalle Narayana in PR3 Mixed Double Sculls - PR3 Mix2x. Para Taekwondo and Para Canoeing also saw India clinch their first medals. Indian athletes had a podium clean sweep in Club Throw F51, Javelin Throw F46, Rapid Chess & Discus Throw F54/55/56 event. There were 2 medals in one event across 19 categories (10 in Athletics, 7 in Badminton, 1 each in Powerlifting and Shooting).

The first medal at the Games for India was a silver won by Prachi Yadav, who would go on to win a gold as well later. In para badminton, the familiar names delivered as Pramod Bhagat, Suhas Yathiraj, Thulasimathi Murugesan, and Nitesh Kumar & Tarun won the gold medals.

In India's win vs Malaysia, a special goal

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN
RANCHI, OCTOBER 28

A HOCKEY Jharkhand official informed a few reporters before the pushback between India and Malaysia at the Women's Asian Champions Trophy that a lot of kids from the district of Simdega are at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh AstroTurf Hockey Stadium in Ranchi. His rough count is 150 but perhaps there are even more.

That section of the stands is the most vibrant as a capacity crowd set up a raucous atmosphere. And they had a superb view as India scored their third goal of the night... one made entirely in Simdega.

India defeated Malaysia 5-0 on Saturday to make it two wins in two matches. Vandana Katariya (7', 21'), Sangita Kumari (28'), Lalremsiami (28'), and Jyoti (38').

Perhaps the best goal of the night but definitely the most significant goal of the night was scored by Sangita to put India 3-0 up. Picking up the ball from the right byline, Salima Tete showed the speed that once saw former coach Sjoerd Marjine describe her as a 'Ferrari' during commentary. Salima moved at pace with the ball stuck to her stick, dropping the shoulder and beating a couple of defenders then passing the ball through a crowd.

At the receiving end inside the circle was Sangita Kumari, who received the ball and turned instantly goalward, leaving a couple of defenders behind too and made space to get the shot away. And when the ball hit the back



Sangita Kumari's goal put India 3-0 up. HI

of the net, the Simdega faithful were in unison with the rest of the crowd as loud cheers went up. "We have a lot of good combinations in our team, but Sangita aur mera ek alag connection hai. What I'll do she knows, and she clears space for me when I am dribbling. The two of us always combine very well. And to see our junior girls from Simdega here for this moment was very special," Salima Tete said after the match. That goal also was a vindication for coach Janneke Schopman

"The moment we start moving the ball well, then you see there are extremely good individual skills that come into play. An amazing goal," the former Dutch star said.

Impressive on the night was also Vandana, closing in on 300 international caps, who got on the scoresheet twice. The opening goal, much like on Friday, came from a Penalty Corner that didn't go to plan. The trapping has not been easy on the newly-laid astro turf for most teams and it has made

scoring drag flicks or direct hits difficult. But what India did well this time was to recycle the ball well and it set Vandana up for a smart finish to put her side up.

India thought they had received a penalty stroke a few minutes later after a rare spell of Malaysian attack resulted in them getting exposed on the counter. Navneet Kaur, once again involved in most of India's good attacking play, released Deepika who was awarded a stroke but that was later rescinded.

The opening quarter also saw India miss a couple of other PCs which went to Deep Grace Ekka for drag flicks. While they didn't result in goals, they were the best-executed routines till then. But India perhaps realised that the direct efforts weren't quite working and brought a brilliant variation to score their second.

The injection saw Sonika trap the ball well and it was Navneet who was shaping to take the hit, and just then, Sonika pushed the ball between the latter's legs for a dummy. The pass went to Udit Duhan who then took a shot at goal for Vandana to finish from close range.

Lalremsiami got on the scoresheet just after Sangita's goal as India went into the half time 4-0 up. The second half made Schopman a little bit frustrated as the goals didn't come but overall there was good control on display. The solitary goal of the last 30 minutes came from Jyoti with Vandana turning provider this time with a smart assist.

After a rest day, India face China in a match where they would be hoping to give a better account of themselves than they did in Hangzhou in the semifinal.

eye



POINT OF VIEW, PAGE 2

Childhood is Political

Shelja Sen on how we are all indoctrinated into this dominant idea of a 'normal child' and pushed to promote it



SPOTLIGHT, PAGE 3

The Way Back Home

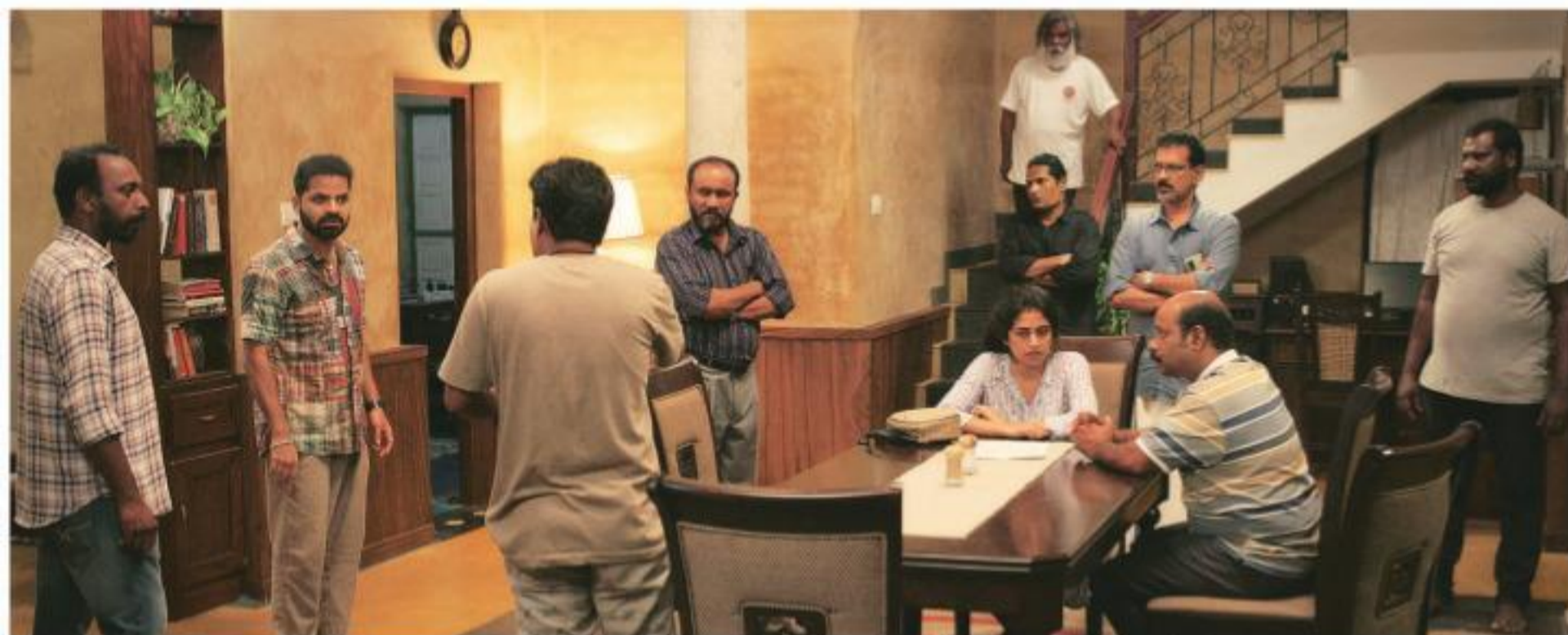
NSD's new director Chittaranjan Tripathy on his most challenging role, creating a space for musicals and using humour as a tool for life

Stories from the Neighbourhood

Returning after a gap of four years, the Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival 2023 is showcasing over 200 films from across the world with the spotlight on South Asian movies and masters. Three filmmakers tell us their story. By ALAKA SAHANI

'Writing a progressive story is easier than being truly progressive in life'

'My task is to seek the truth about society as well as myself'



Debutant writer-director Anand Ekarshi on the making of his Malayalam film *Aattam*, working with theatre actors and seeking audience participation



Sri Lankan writer-director Prasanna Vithanage on the challenges of making films in his home country and why he is lucky to have Indian collaborators

DEBUTANT WRITER-DIRECTOR Anand Ekarshi is basking in the accolades *Aattam* (The Play) is receiving ahead of the film's Asia premiere at MAMI after winning the top award at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles. The film takes a nuanced look at the gender dynamics that surface in a close-knit theatre group after Anjali (Zarin Shihab), the only woman member of the group, faces sexual abuse. Edited excerpts from an interview:



PLAY WITHIN A PLAY

Anand Ekarshi; (top) a scene from *Aattam*

Since you have been part of Lokadharmi, a Kochi-based theatre group, for nearly 20 years, did your experience come handy while writing *Aattam*'s script?

I have been doing theatre from the age of 10. That, of course, makes me aware of nuances as well as details on what happens before and after the staging of a play. All the actors in the film, barring Zarin Shihab and Kalabhavan Shajohn, are part of the same theatre group. Since I have known them for the last 15 years, it was easier for me to make a film with them.

How did the idea of the film develop?
The idea of doing a film together came up during a one-day trip we took. It was actor Vinay Forrt who suggested we do a film in which all these wonderful theatre actors can feature. We came up with the idea: 'Is justice a pursuit of an individual or a group?' I wanted to explore how justice derails when personal stakes come in.

At the centre of *Aattam* is a sexual harassment incident and the reaction to it.

Since the group had 12 men, the individual seeking justice had to be a woman. I wondered what topic would be relevant to

the present times. I wanted to talk about it in a realistic way without being preachy. The idea was also to show how people are grey in real life.

The film opens with scenes from *Hayavadana*, a play about a woman's desire. What made you pick it?

We wanted the movie to start with a play. What happens during the play has some relevance to the rest of the story. We wanted to show a classical play. One of the actors suggested *Hayavadana*. We decided to take some elements of the play and write our own version of a scene from the play using these elements.

The movie is designed as a chamber drama. Was it easy to handle a big cast in a compact setting?

No, it was difficult since almost every scene had 12 actors. Prior to the shoot we did nearly 35 days of rehearsal. We needed to choreograph everything since it's a dialogue-driven movie. My producer supported all that despite most of us being debutants. Nine members of the cast were

facing the camera for the first time.

What were the challenges of having so many characters?

While writing, I had to constantly check who said which line and if everyone was participating in the discussion. I had a board where everyone's character details were written and I used to keep referring to that. My main intention was that the audience should be swayed by the characters. I wanted constant participation from viewers. That's something you can never be sure of until the audience watches it.

Recent Malayalam movies have been effective in presenting a woman's perspective.

There is a general air of progressiveness in Kerala. If I have managed to present the woman's perspective correctly in *Aattam*, then I will give the credit to my parents and women friends. Writing a progressive story is actually easier compared to being progressive in life. Still, it might take a while for these to impact people's thoughts.

FESTIVAL GUIDE

- The ongoing edition of the Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival will screen over 200 movies at eight venues across Mumbai
- The World Cinema section features several big-ticket films including *Anatomy of a Fall* by Justine Triet; *The Daughters of Fire* by Pedro Costa; *Strange Way of Life* by Pedro Almodóvar; *Maestro* by Bradley Cooper
- The festival will host masterclasses with David Michôd, Mani Ratnam, Luca Guadagnino and Mira Nair
- The 'Recap' section will screen 36 films that were selected by the festival in the years 2020, 2021, 2022
- Curated by Jongsuk Thomas Nam, After Dark section will showcase the best of genre movies including *Amillam*, *Dead Enders*, *Innermost*, *The Invisible Fight* and *Triggered*
- The Restored Classics section will feature movies including *Archangel*, *Bugis Street*, *The Burmese Harp*

PARADISE, THE latest film by Prasanna Vithanage, one of Sri Lanka's leading filmmakers, revolves around an Indian couple — Amritha (Darshana Rajendran), a blogger, and her film producer husband Kesav (Roshan Mathew) — who travel to the island country to celebrate their fifth anniversary when it's in the midst of an economic crisis and protests.

In a video interview, the 1962-born filmmaker, who recently received the Kim Jiseok Award at Busan Film Festival, talks about making his first Indian-language movie with a largely Indian cast and crew. Edited excerpts:

Paradise touches upon several themes, including the economic crisis in Sri Lanka, systematic injustice against minorities and gender perceptions. What was the process of scripting?

Usually, I devote a lot of time to developing the script, then I approach the actors and producers. I believe that if it's not on the paper, it's not going to be on the screen. Protests after the economic catastrophe erupted in March 2002



TRUTH BE TOLD

Prasanna Vithanage; (top) a still from his film *Paradise*

and I started working on the script around July. I wanted to say something about the prevailing anarchy. The movie is not about the calamity of a society alone, it is also about how it affects an Indian couple and their relationship.

In your career spanning three decades, what have been the challenges?

The absence of infrastructure in Sri Lanka has been a major challenge. All funding has dried up. I have been lucky to have Indian collaborators since 2008. Sri Lanka is polarised on ethnic and religious lines. People judge you on the basis of your stand on the war.

My films *Death on a Full Moon Day* (1997), *August Sun* (2003) and *With You, Without You* (2012) faced a lot of animosity. *Death on a Full Moon Day* was even banned by the government. After a year-long legal battle, the Supreme Court ordered its release. So far, I have managed to survive. But there will be challenges in future too.

Do you see yourself as an artist, activist

or storyteller?

Activists have a clear idea or agenda. As a filmmaker, my task is to seek the truth about society as well as myself.

Do you have to use restraint while telling stories inspired by true incidents?

By hiding, you try to play safe. I believe the impact will be more when you use restraint and be objective while figuring out the characters' journey.

Weaving the Ramayana trail into the story has helped you to explore gender dynamics as well as comment on the prevailing situation in the country.

Yes, that also helped me in character development, especially Amritha's. We know that the stories of Ramayana are not confined to Sri Lanka or India alone. Thailand and Cambodia have their own versions of Ramayana.

AK Ramanujan in his essay (*Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation*) says there are over 300 versions of the epic. But touching upon the trail, I got an opportunity to deconstruct it for the film's dramatics and dramaturgy.

Tell us about your Indian collaborations.

I first came to India in the '90s because we didn't have a good colour laboratory in Sri Lanka. I was blessed to have availed the laboratory service of Gemini and Prasad. Then came the friendship with A Sreekar Prasad.

In 1997, we worked on *Death on a Full Moon Day* and since then all my films have been edited by him. Now, I spend as much time in India as I do in Sri Lanka.

'Women I met in Bangladesh are pivotal to my journey. This is their story'

Set in the '90s, British-Bangladeshi director Leesa Gazi's debut feature, *A House Named Shahana*, traces the life of a small-town woman who lives life on her own terms

ON THE question of how she developed her debut feature *Barir Naam Shahana* (*A House Named Shahana*) in spite of not having much experience in filmmaking, Leesa Gazi recounts a conversation between the film's protagonist Dipa and her neighbour Sukhomoy. The latter, while complimenting Dipa for following her heart, says, "You dive into the ocean even without knowing how to swim. Yet, you never drown. Somehow, you manage to stay afloat and reach the shore." This, perhaps, best answers the question.

Set in the early '90s, the 137-minute-long intimate drama in Bengali, which had its world premiere in the South Asia Competition section on Saturday, is about Shahrin Munsif Dipa (Aanon Siddiqua), who is married off to a widower in England over a trunk-call wedding ceremony. In the UK,

she suffers marital rape and refuses to settle into a claustrophobic life. Instead, she escapes to her family home in Bangladesh with the resolve that she will study medicine. As *A House Named Shahana* follows Dipa's journey, Gazi creates a fierce and funny protagonist who defies social norms to live life on her own terms.

The film is an adaptation of a short story that Gazi had written in 2011. When she interviewed poet Abul Hasan in Dhaka in 2009, what stayed with her was the name of his one-storeyed home, 'Shahana'. Though this house had no connection with her story, she mentions it in the title. This became the name of Dipa's parental home. Though deeply connected to the house, Dipa often wanted to escape her life there. Before they started shooting, Gazi was "desperate" to find the right house.



The writer-director had imagined the interiors, courtyard and backyard of that house in a certain way. When the film's lo-

cation manager sent the photos of a house in Kushtia, located nearly 200 km away from Dhaka, it perfectly matched how Gazi had



OUTSIDE THE FOUR WALLS

(Above) Leesa Gazi; a still from her debut feature, *A House Named Shahana*

visualised it. "The house has a certain warmth as well as coldness," she says. At the heart of the film is the amazing col-

laboration between Siddiqua and Gazi, who have known each other for over a decade. "So many characters and ideas evolved during the writing process," she says.

Many moments in the film are borrowed from real life. "I have known these women all my life. Several women I have met in Bangladesh are pivotal to my journey. I like to tell their story from their perspective," says Gazi, who ran away from the US to escape her marriage. She returned to Bangladesh but has been living in the UK for nearly two decades now after getting married again.

Co-founder of Komola Collective, an arts organisation, Gazi had directed the documentary *Rising Silence* (2019), which looks at the lives of wartime rape survivors of the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Next, she is likely to direct an adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's *Shasti*.

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND

RANJIT LAL Author, environmentalist and bird watcher



NOSING AROUND
While sniffing around, a dog is doing the equivalent of you checking your messages or surfing the net

Beyond a Sixth Sense

We often misunderstand animals by interpreting their world through our senses instead of theirs

ONE MAJOR reason why we get into misunderstandings with animals is that we do not take into account the way they see or interpret the world — which may be hugely different to the way that we do. How many times have you rolled your eyes and dragged your dog away from a tree or post, which he or she has insisted on sniffing, when really there is nothing to be seen there? Exasperating, isn't it? Not for the dog. While our primary sense working is vision, for the dog it is smell. For him or her, scent works better than sight. So he or she, while sniffing around, is doing the equivalent of you checking your messages and e-mail and social media and surfing the net. It will know which other dog has been around, who is going out with whom, what they last ate, which dog is wearing which heavenly perfume, and if there's a new pup on the block... When the dog is done with sniffing, it will leave its own message on the spot, as a reply: 'Welcome! You smell divine, when can we meet?' or 'Get lost loser, this neighbourhood

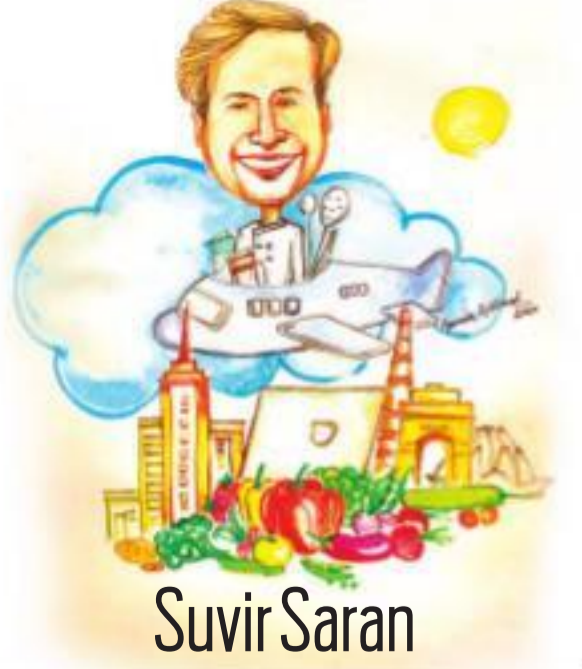
Even while exhaling, a dog's nose is still vacuuming in a stream of scent molecules non-stop

ain't big enough for the two of us!' And by pulling him or her away from the spot, you're doing the equivalent of snatching someone's smartphone away from them or having your smartphone snatched away by someone, while you were in the midst of scrolling or messaging or taking a selfie or being made to shut down your laptop without having pressed Ctrl S. We have five senses, though scientists are now saying we have more than that. There is, for example, proprioception — the awareness of our own body, which is not the same as the sense of touch, and equilibrioception, the sense of balance involving touch and vision. And each living creature is blessed with all or some of them — but not all of them work as efficiently as each other. In the animal kingdom, those sets of senses that are vital to the survival of the creature are the ones that develop the most, often, at the cost of others. A rattlesnake can sense the heat from its potential victim but this

The Cost of Being Vulnerable

Every day I remind myself of my childhood fears so that I can be gracious with those who are defenceless

SLICE OF LIFE



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

WHEN MY family moved to Nagpur, a small town in Maharashtra where my father was teaching at the National Academy of Direct Taxes, I was only five years old. I sorely missed

the comforting routine that was all I had known up to that time. At my Dad's home in Delhi, where I was born and had lived until then, my paternal grandmother had created a rhythm and structure that was as centred to my being and sensibilities as was possible. The structure of life at home had made me in sync with that pattern that dogs must employ as they come out of sleep, beg for food and stand guard at a window, waiting for their person to return home. My five-year-old self was mourning that which gave me no special agency or dispensation but that was a familiar routine in which I could live without any mindful attention. By the time we settled into our second home in Nagpur — we lived in three in a span of three years — I found myself seeing both comfort and fear in a new way. I had gotten over the melancholy caused by losing the pattern of Dad's life and home, but now my internal questioning was getting the best of me. Questions I had no answers to and worries that were beyond my grasp. My vocabulary was minuscule and even smaller and simpler were my thoughts and actions. My place as a six-year-old in life should have been one of lighthearted living and carefree abandon, yet I still have chills as I recollect my three years

Childhood is political, not innocent

We buy into this dominant idea of a 'normal child' and push to promote it

IMAGINE

SHELJASEN
Shelja Sen is a narrative and family therapist, writer, co-founder of Children First. In this column she curates the know-how of the children and youth she has the honour of working with. Email her at shelja.sen@childrenfirstindia.com



I AM WEIRD and socially inept." "I do not fit in no matter how hard I try." "People think I am a freak." Behind these poignant words from children and young people, I have sensed a pain, a longing, a resignation. These are gentle, creative, loving human beings and yet grappling with a sense of living at the periphery and not really participating in the game of life. Our society has fixed ideas on who belongs — grooves are prepared and some children fit in marvellously, some have to be pushed and poked and there are some who just do not as they do not act like others, talk like others, perform like others — series of nots keep multiplying as they try to navigate the rigid normative pathways set out for them. These are children who are neurodivergent (Autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, etc.), diverse in terms of their gender, sexuality, body shape or living with a disability. The marginalisation magnifies further when they stand at the intersection of discrimination in terms of caste, religion and class. *Childhood is not innocent, it is political.*

The tragedy is that children are recruited into using society's faulty lens for self-surveillance which might go something like this: **Internalising the problem** — "I am the problem."

Invisibilising the issues of social injustice — "I am to blame."

Isolating themselves — "I am unworthy, unlikeable, and I do not belong."

Children are not passive recipients of these injustices — they are constantly responding, trying to protect themselves. But sometimes these responses can come at a huge cost for them as they direct all their energies to survive in an unsafe world.

Masking: This is a term from the neurodivergence lexicon which can be best explained as efforts or attempts to camouflage or hide struggles. Soha described to me how she had learned to mask her autism in school by closely watching her peers, "I closely observe how they dress, laugh, walk, talk just like David Attenborough would do in the wild. And then I copy them so that I do not look different." It might seem like a very helpful adaptive strategy but it comes at a cost for the person, "exhaustion, people pleasing and pressure to be and act like someone I am not so I can fit in." Imagine living in a different culture where we do not understand the customs or language but we pretend to do so just to get a sense of belonging. How depleted and confused would we be at the end of each day? What would it do to our sense of worth and agency?

Safeguarding: Children's behaviour always makes sense. Sajid had found anger and hitting out as a way to protect himself against ridicule and abuse directed at him for being gay. It has earned him the label of "bad behaviour" in school and constant reprimands that had fuelled the anger further. "Bad behaviour" is not a call for judgment but an opportunity for us to see what is implicit in the pain. Anger might hide the pain of not being seen, frustration as a testimony to seeking meaningful friendships, and hitting out as a way to safeguard themselves.



ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

Hiding: Rahil explained, "Being autistic is like being in a play and everyone knows their lines but I am walking around with no script. So, I do whatever I can to hide." And how did Rahil do that? By not speaking in class, not maintaining eye contact, and finding quiet corners in school to stay away from others until people started looking through him and barely remembering that he existed. And let's not blame the autism for his struggles because it is not the autism that is causing him to invisibilise, but our rejection of people who do not fit our idea of "normal."

We have to stand up to the dominant narratives around children which can cause so much pressure for them to conform as they are extremely dangerous. So rather than jumping to conclusions let's stay curious. When we meet a child who is struggling let's stay curious and ask, "What might he be masking?" "What might she be safeguarding?" "What might they be hiding from?"

I would like to clarify that this political drama has no villains so that we do not end up blaming parents or schools for this burden children have to carry. We are all indoctrinated into this dominant idea of a "normal child" and pushed to promote it. Even psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists can be recruited into this dangerous manufacturing of "good behaviour" and fixing children. Requests and referrals for "needs to act normal," "get better grades," flood our systems and unwittingly, we can become the teeth and claws of this dangerous beast.

Every October 10, owing to World Mental Health Day, there is a lot of hoo-ha about building awareness, training more psychiatrists and psychologists to bridge the "treatment gap" and I always wonder how we are missing forests for the trees. Depression, anxiety, addiction, etc. are just a way for children to respond to the world that does not find them palatable.

Step out to step in: A young man I met recently shared with me, "I have abandoned the idea of being like everyone else. I am Shiv and I am neurodivergent. I am learning how to play the game — when to mask and when not to mask. Masking robs me of my conviction in myself and makes me think I am a fraud. I am learning to let it go. I choose to be happy, less ashamed of being a weirdo, I accept it and I own it. I choose to be more active and surround myself with people who love me the way I am." I could not think of a more powerful manifesto for self-advocacy than this. But it would be deeply unfair if we let advocacy be an individual responsibility.

It is our collective obligation to build a world that respects diversity rather than reject or pathologises it. We need to ask ourselves how can we step out of practices that promote society's normative judgements and instead acknowledge and support acts of resistance? How can we receive young people's stories of suffering and yet engage them in ways that not only address their individual struggles but also invite their agency to stand up for social justice and take social action?

And most of all, how can we step in to be allies in the young people's journey so that through this solidarity we can create a more just world?



MEMORY BANK
Strength gave me the courage to show my true self to the people around me

in Nagpur. Endless days of challenging the place in life that was mine and that my parents made as comfortable for me as they could. My siblings must have had their own challenges, and as I write this column, I wonder how they dealt with theirs. Coping with my fears drove me inside myself, disconnecting me from the world at large. I remember nothing about the school I attended during our time in Nagpur. Not even the building comes with tangible memories. Rather, the food and conversations at the family table, the kind elders, the few empathetic and loving students my father had, my siblings, my parents — they are the comfortable memories I can go back to. The fact that school gave me no memories to be able to reflect upon tells me how little a role it played in my early years. I don't remember the names of my classmates or schoolteachers; I have no recollection of the classroom interiors. For better or worse, I closed myself off, instinctively turning my back on vulnerability, and choosing isolation over the risk of being physically or emotionally wounded. Of course, this also meant I turned my back on the breadth and depth of my own emotions, on feeling loved, and on giving or receiving empathy. The most vivid memory I have of Nagpur is the study in sleep that I can reflect upon. A

fake sleep, where I closed my eyes to embrace fear and the visceral rattling of my very existence that it unleashed upon me while trying to be still in bed and give Mum the comfort of thinking I was asleep even as I was weeping and scared about making it alive into the morning hours.

I do have memories of Nagpur that bring me to a comforting geography, where I have links to my past that go beyond fear-ridden nightmares. These are memories attached to our last home, where we lived barely a month or so. My night terrors ceased there, and for a fleeting moment in this small Indian town, I lived what I think would be the childhood of a normal kid.

As a 50-year-old who doesn't wish for life to have dealt me cards different from those given me, I do wish that I could have spent more time in this home, where I was able to become one with flora and fauna in ways no other city ever afforded me. I often happily share the story of stealing a young goat one day on my way home from school. I carried it home, brought it into my room, and kept it happily fed and at rest there until a farmer came knocking at our door late that night, accusing me of the theft. It was only then that my parents realised what their shepherd son had done.

Cobras in bathrooms, hilly roads, high ceilings, stealing a goat, people who were kind, parents who were more than generous, and siblings who were young and protective — these are the good and tangible memories I have of our three years there.

Then my paternal grandmother's home in Delhi became our home again, where I rolled into my teen years until I left for college. My nightmares faded, and I came to realise that what I had been afraid of during those miserable childhood nights was my sexuality. The

knowledge came with its own share of challenges and thrills, smiles and tears, fears and apprehension, laughs and worries, but it made me sleep better and also had me plotting a future for myself.

In having found the cause of my sleepless, dreary nights, and despite having to deal with bullying and hate and learning to cope with this issue for which I didn't even have vocabulary, I was able to make peace with myself and who I was. In doing so, I found strength. Strength that gave me the courage to show my true self to the people around me. Strength to enter the world bold and proud with no need to cry through the night in wordless, baffling terror. Such is the strength that choosing to be vulnerable brings. But it is also a strength with which I battle daily to use in positive ways and not negative ones.

Gay men and women, as well as other minorities, can be tough on others from their fold as a way of fitting into those majority groups, narratives and behaviours that have segregated them into being the other. Every day I remind myself of my childhood fears so that I can be gracious and generous in my dealings with those who are also striving to be vulnerable. I have been at the receiving end of grueling work schedules, tough standards to keep up with, onerous tasks asked of me — all because my superior was also gay or Indian and thought they had to take advantage of my vulnerability to show their strength.

It is easy to be tough on our own kind and to challenge those who are close to our type, but in the end, the strength we find from the willingness to be vulnerable comes with the responsibility to give grace and aid to those who are behind us on the journey. After all, it is better to let our youth have the sleepless nights and make our adulthood stronger and more comforting for self and others.

The Way Back Home

National School of Drama's new director Chittaranjan Tripathy on his most challenging role, creating a space for musicals and using humour as a tool for life

Dipanita Nath

WHEN CHITTARANJAN Tripathy graduated from the National School of Drama (NSD) in Delhi in 1996, he had Rs 70 in his pocket and knew that he could not get money from his father because of their modest financial condition. But, NSD had made him brave. "When you go through so much reading, see so many protagonists take shape over three years as a student and spend all your time with artistes who are sensitive, you learn a lot about life," he says. On October 6, Tripathy was appointed as the director of NSD, one of the most difficult jobs in Indian theatre at present.

The school, a dream destination for young theatre artistes from across India who want to follow in the footsteps of Om Puri, Naseeruddin Shah, Pankaj Tripathi and Raghuraj Yadav, among others, has lost its sheen in recent years. The director's post itself was vacant for half a decade, during which there were multiple candidates, selection processes and a lawsuit in the Delhi High Court. Tripathy comes with a body of work that spans theatre, television, cinema and OTT. "NSD has a great legacy. We have to take it to a different level," he says.

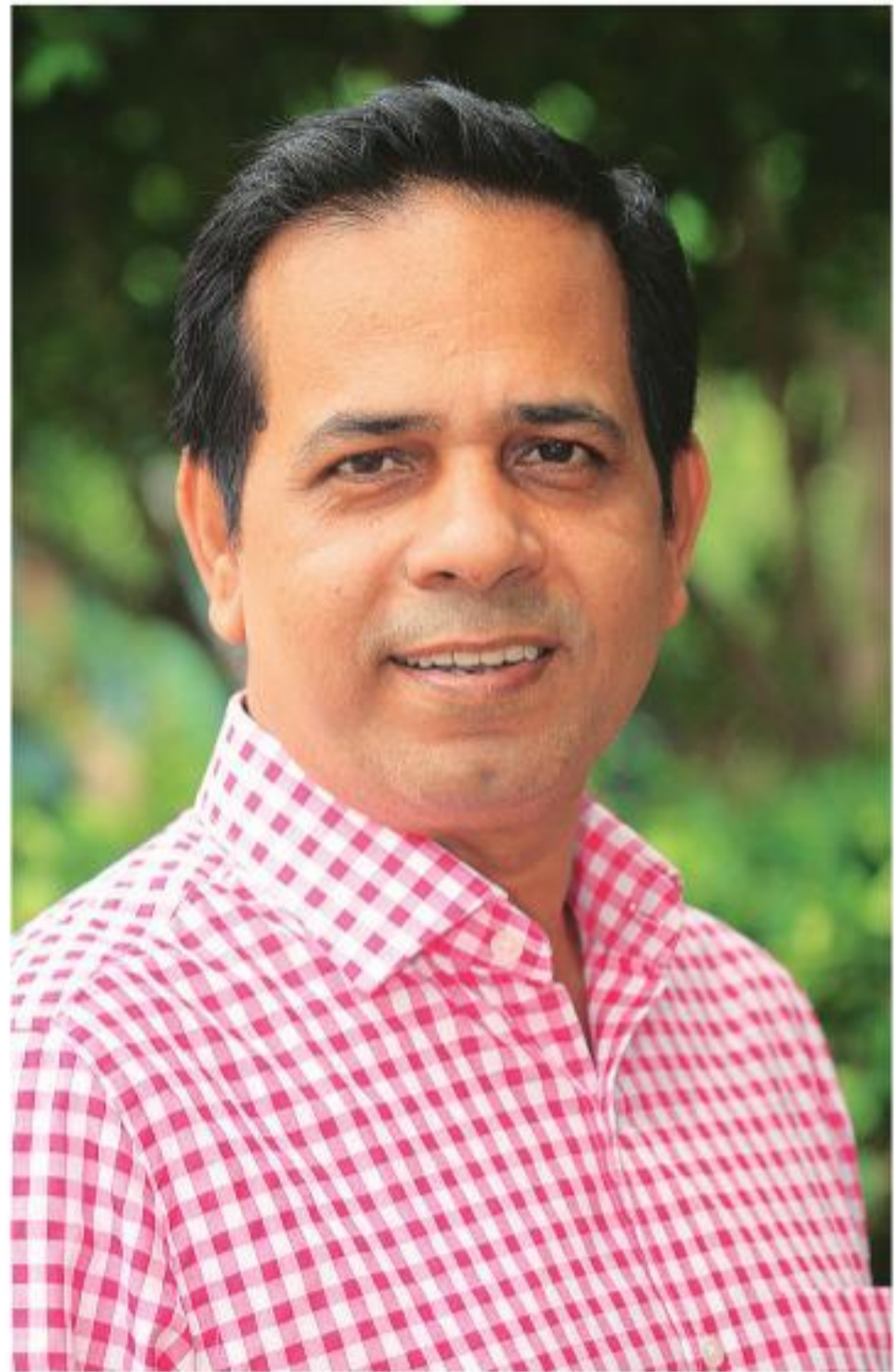
Theatre veteran and Tripathy's teacher Ram Gopal Bajaj calls him an all-rounder who has worked with diverse directors, actors and mediums. "He also has an unusual combination of traits — he is very firm, yet polite and humble; he is a modern man and yet a *bhakta* (devotee). I am hopeful about his tenure as director," says Bajaj.

Tripathy was born in Chandbali, a small historic city in Odisha. His mother passed away when he was two years old and, being the youngest, he would always be with his father, Vishwanath Tripathy. A folk singer or *pala gayak*, Vishwanath would take him to the cinema and other forms of performing arts, like *jatras*. Tripathy's ideas of becoming an actor were born during these performances.

"My father says that when I was around three, I used to pick up songs from the radio and sing along," he says. His father began to train him in music, before enrolling him with a guru, the late Bhaskar Chandra Das. Today, Tripathy is also a Sangeet Visharad in Odissi vocal from Pracheen Kala Kendra, Chandigarh.

When he was five years old, however, Tripathy was getting into trouble for mimicking people. "Once, I imitated a policeman and he got very angry. He came to my father, who gave me a few slaps and apologised to him," he says.

The family had a humble background. There was limited money and it was a big struggle on Vishwanath's part to bring up



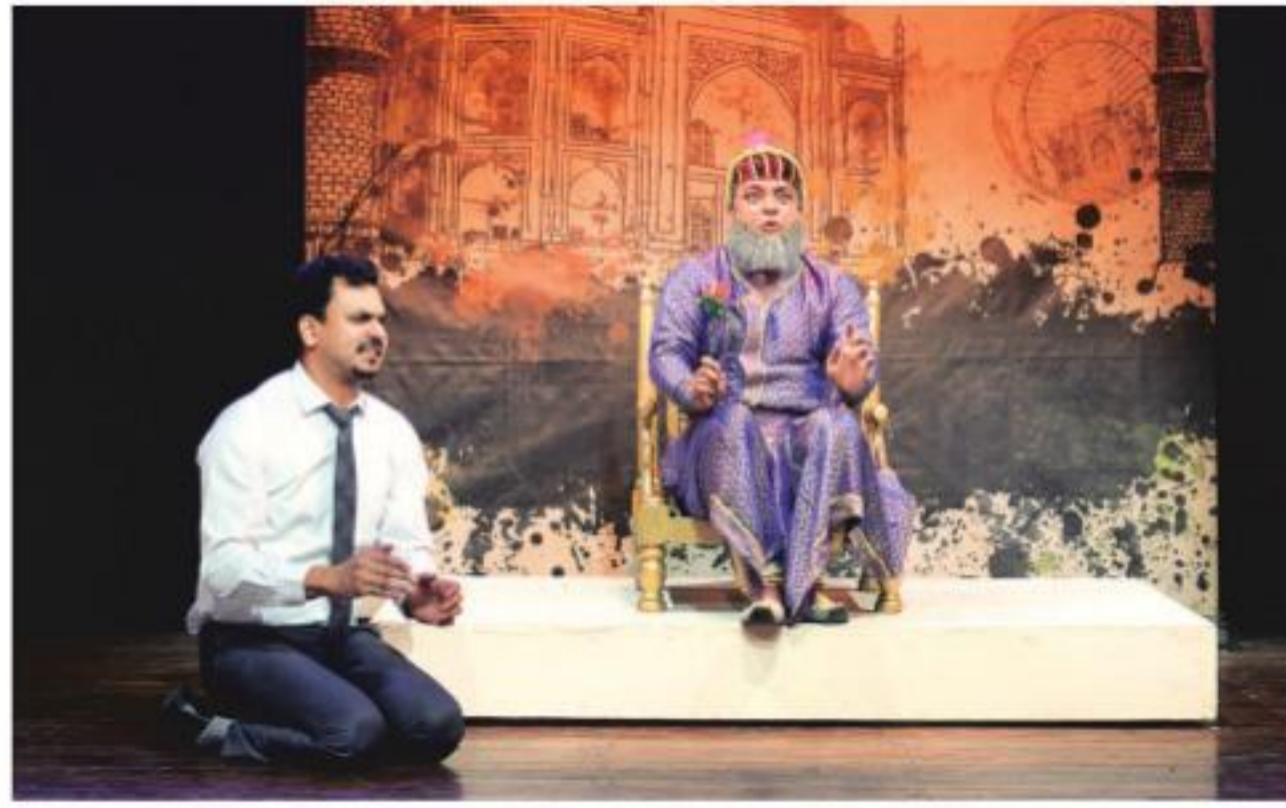
two sons and a daughter after the death of his wife. "Because of hardships, my father chose to be aligned with humour. Every day, he would make us laugh many times. He must have been a sad man inside because he had lost his wife but he faced the situation bravely. My sense of humour comes from him," says Tripathy.

He studied Political Science at Ravenshaw College in Cuttack, where he was elected as a dramatics secretary and won several awards for singing and acting. At the University of Hyderabad, where he completed his post-graduation in Sociology, Tripathy was elected as the cultural secre-

Nowadays, humour can become a problem... If you have humour in your DNA, it is easier to bear with your troubles

Chittaranjan Tripathy

Actor-Director



PLUM ROLE

(Clockwise from far left) Chittaranjan Tripathy; scenes from *Taj Mahal Ka Tender*; *Raat Baki* — plays that Tripathy directed

tary. "I started writing my own plays in Odia and would stage these with my Odia friends," he says. The recurrent theme of his writing was poverty, especially the social humiliation faced by impoverished characters. After completing his masters, Tripathy thought that he would join the drama department of the university. "I met Prof Bhaskar Sewalkar, who specialises in Theatre Education and Creative Drama, about this and he suggested that I apply to NSD instead. I had heard that NSD was very tough but, surprisingly, I got accepted," he says.

Tripathy's class included Jhilmil Hazarika, Swanand Kirkire, Geetanjali Kulkarni and Nawazuddin Siddiqui. Kirti Jain was the director at NSD (1988-95) when Tripathy joined, followed by Ram Gopal Bajaj in Tripathy's third year. The first play Tripathy directed was *Holi*, a political work on Marathi playwright Mahesh Elkunchwar about a group of students in conflict with the administration. He was working as an actor at the NSD Repertory at this time.

Another play, which he wrote and directed, was *Gunno Bai*, about a failed IAS aspirant from an impoverished family who creates a radical new identity for himself. When

Bajaj saw the plays, he offered Tripathy a chance to direct for the NSD Repertory. The latter took up *Taj Mahal Ka Tender*, a satire on red-tape and corruption, which has been running full house for the past 25 years.

Taj Mahal Ka Tender also sealed Tripathy's reputation for handling humour. "Nowadays, humour can become a problem. A lot of people do not take a joke in a very positive manner. We are all sailing through life and, if you have humour in your DNA, you will find it easier to bear the troubles," he says.

Tripathy has announced that his tenure at NSD will be dedicated to preparing theatre for a future, where technology, especially AI, is determining entertainment. "In cinema, everybody is worried about AI. Theatre is a live medium. We can move ahead with new technology to attract a new audience," he says. Other areas of focus will be to explore the gamut of Indian literature and make NSD a centre of musical theatre. "Musicals are a big industry worldwide, but, in India, we do not have a discipline of musical theatre. I think NSD can work on this because India has a rich musical tradition. This is a golden time for NSD and for live art. There is a lot of potential," says Tripathy.



PAGES OF HISTORY

(Top) The Bookworm; the interiors of The Blue Bird's Nest in Hanoi

Bookstore Hopping in Hanoi

Though culture and languages differ in different countries, one thing remains the same — spaces that are home to books

Arunima Mazumdar

ON A mildly nippy Christmas afternoon, I find myself in the company of Truong, owner of The Bookworm in Hanoi, Vietnam, who explains how in 2006, he, the third owner of the bookstore, came to acquire it from two Australian writers and researchers — Pam Scott and Mary Ryan — respectively.

The capital of Vietnam is a bustling one, with two-wheelers buzzing like bees and cars wheeling past you at all times. I have navigated the vehicular and human crowds of a busy Monday by foot to reach the Pham Hong Thai Street where the quaint, two-storeyed The Bookworm rests. "In Vietnam, only a few bookstores have the permission to import foreign books and currently, we're the biggest of them all that keeps foreign titles in addition to books in Vietnamese language. Earlier, the store only kept second-hand books but after I took over, we expanded and started keeping new titles," says Truong, as we take a tour of the aisles and shelves dedicated to Nobel, Pulitzer and Booker Prize-winning authors.

For the longest time, The Bookworm, Hanoi was the only English-language bookstore in the city. Over the years, other bookshops have started keeping English books in addition to Vietnamese titles. But even then, The Bookworm boasts of an inventory of English bestsellers like no other. The store proudly houses as many as 20,000 books, some donated by travellers and visiting customers.

The bookstore also gives space to old, dusty editions of classics. I stumble upon a ragged publication of O Henry's *Selected Stories* (from 1977) but what catches my eye is a hand-written explanatory note by an anonymous reader peeking from inside a book containing works of Hector Hugh Munro (Saki). The reader, in his note, calls our writer unreliable and remarks on the "anarchical teenage malice" in his writing. A message from one reader to another, left inside a randomly picked book, inside a bookshop in a country far away from home — could it get better than this? I think not.

"We sell most of our second-hand books at half-price or less. With the reading culture growing steadily in Vietnam among the youth, more and more readers are reading English-language books," Truong chips in, as I make my way out of his store and set out for my next stop, The Blue Bird's Nest on Dang Dung Street.

For a nano second, I'm worried Google Maps has led to me a rather dark alley with a dead end, but I decide to follow the light, quite literally, to reach the dimly-lit outside of The Blue Bird's Nest. Here is where the cats greet me first, almost blocking the way to the entrance. Inside, it is all wood and books. A space where you can simply take off your shoes, pick up a book, sit and read. It is a welcome change from the noisy personality that Hanoi is.

With shelves brimming with classics, both in English and Vietnamese, the café-cum-reading space is immersive and inspiring. There are translated editions (Japanese, German and French) of other classics as well. I pull out a strikingly old edition of Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf* (1927) and ask the owner if it is for sale. She says it's not, adding that the idea of these collectibles is what makes the space special. I smile, reluctantly return the book and grab some freshly-brewed coffee on my way out.

Night has fallen and I have one more stop to make. On the face of it, Tranquil Books & Coffee doesn't appear to be either a bookstore or a café but I believe in the old saying of not judging a book by its cover. An exceptionally plain, almost barren, entrance takes you up a flight of rather dull-looking stairs to the second floor, which suddenly opens up to a haven of tranquility. Primarily a coffee shop, with its large French windows overlooking the street and vintage wooden décor, it serves up an ambience ideal for first drafts. I look around and see groups of people, couples and singles. I peer onto the shelves dominated by Vietnamese titles; among them are some stunning graphic novels and well-produced coffee-table books, all in a language so alien. But the familiarity of the space is something I decide to take back. As I make my way out, I decide to return, hopefully for a longer time, and with a bit of luck, ready to write my own first draft.

Mazumdar is a Delhi-based art and culture writer

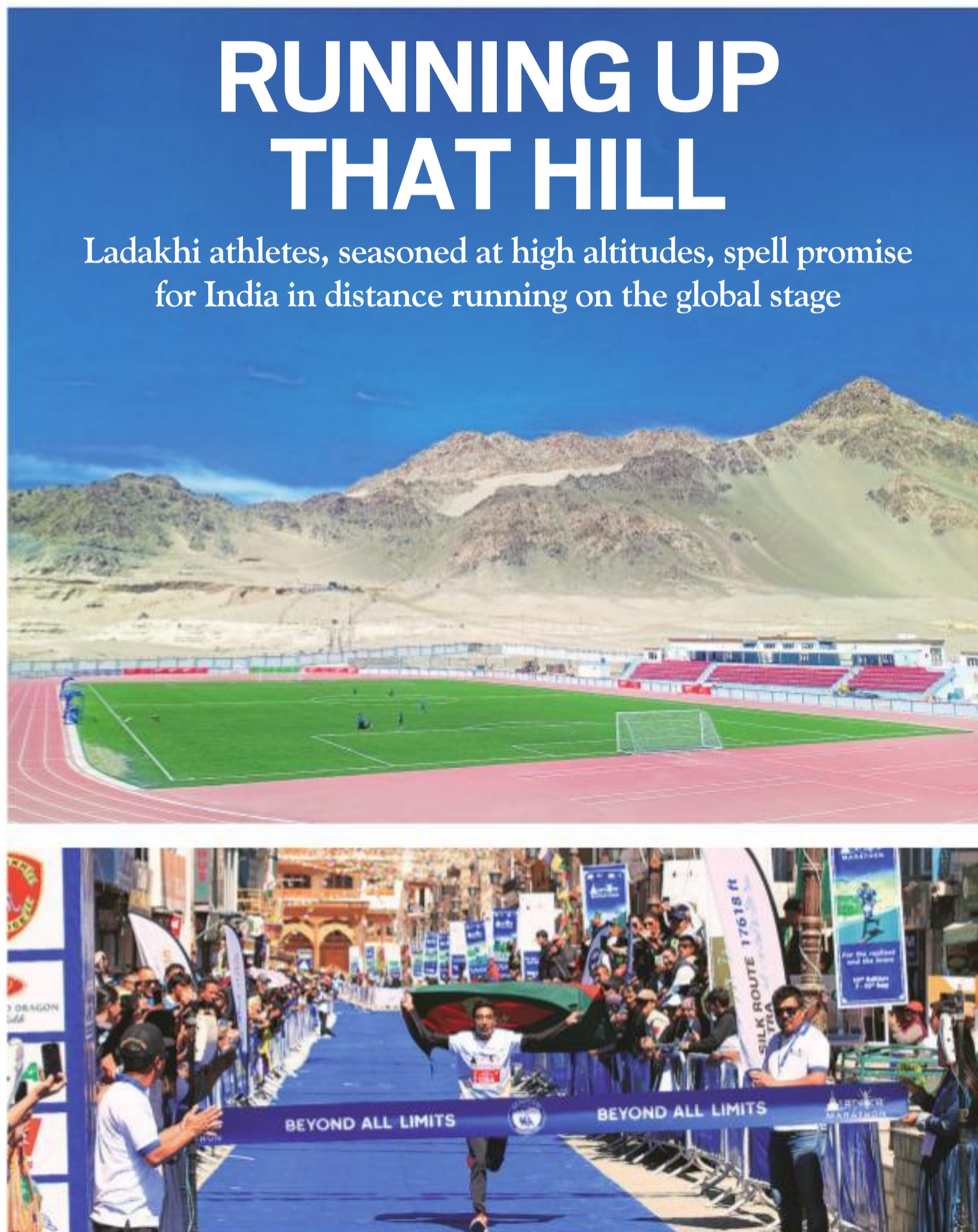
Sidharth Singh

THE NIGHT is pitch dark — only the jagged edges of the Karakoram mountains are faintly visible. The rhythmic sound of footsteps crunching gravel. The distant glow of a headlamp illuminates the bend as a runner approaches — his breathing heavy and a countenance of grit. This is not a scene from a noir thriller but a glimpse into one of the most gruelling footraces on earth. Starting from an altitude of 10,700 ft at Kyagar in Nubra Valley, the 122-km Silk Route Ultra goes past the Khardungla Pass at 17,618 ft, all the way down to Leh at 11,562 ft. Its sister race, the Khardungla Challenge, takes off from Khardung village at 13,090 ft and traverses the eponymous pass on its 72-km course to Leh. Both these ultra-marathons are held under the umbrella event of the Ladakh Marathon, which takes place in the city of Leh, and together, these are the highest altitude distance races on earth, certified by the Association of International Marathons (AIMS).

Chewang, Motup Goba, the founder of the Ladakh Marathon, always believed in the sporting potential of Ladakhis. "Most of our youth are not exposed to good education and cannot compete with people from other parts of the country. But being born at this altitude, with our god-gifted big lungs and hearts, we have a natural potential to be good at endurance sports." With this belief, Motup started the Ladakh Marathon in 2012 to provide a platform for Ladakhi athletes.

Though the Ladakh Marathon is high on every runner's bucket list, running at high altitudes is not for the faint of heart. The brain doesn't get enough blood and one can get disoriented and nauseous. Hypoxia can set in rapidly. Acclimatisation, therefore, is the biggest concern for the organisers, as many participants, coming in from hectic schedules in the cities, can't spare enough time to acclimatise (recommended 7-10 days), and put themselves at grave risk.

Altitude, however, is no problem for Ladakhi athletes, who have dominated all categories of the event since its inception. Most male ultra-marathon winners have come from the Ladakh Scouts, a highly decorated infantry regiment of the Indian Army. Naik Shabbir Hussain of the Ladakh Scouts has turned into a local celebrity, winning the Khardungla Challenge thrice. This year, he won the Silk Route Ultra with a time of 15:27:53. With 47 athletes, the gruelling race had runners from Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Darjeeling, Jharkhand and Assam, all eager to test their mettle against the brutal Trans-Himalayan terrain. The



RUNNING UP THAT HILL

Ladakhi athletes, seasoned at high altitudes, spell promise for India in distance running on the global stage



Khardungla Challenge, now in its 10th edition, saw a record 261 participants, most of them Indians. All the race categories included, the event saw the participation of runners from 19 countries and 29 states in India.

Maik Becker from Switzerland has been participating in the Ladakh Marathon since 2016. This year, he ran the Silk Route Ultra and brought along two friends — Igor Kirsic from Croatia and Marco Max Kuehrt from

ON A HIGH

(Top) The Spituk stadium in Leh; Naik Shabbir Hussain, who won the Silk Route Ultra in record time

Germany — to run the Khardungla Challenge. Disillusioned with the European fixation on timings and personal bests, these runners seek a more holistic and culturally enriching experience that Ladakh provides.

The impact of the Ladakh Marathon is largely seen on tourism. With 6,000 registered runners arriving a week in advance along with their families, the event provides a shot in the arm for the local economy towards the end of

its short tourist season, which runs from June to September. But given Ladakh's fragile ecology, tourism comes at a heavy price. The city of Leh, with about 40,000 permanent residents, expands to a floating population of four lakh people during the tourist season, putting immense pressure on the civic administration of the newly formed Union Territory.

On July 22, a cloudburst in Nubra Valley resulted in the destruction of a reservoir, known as a Zing, in Kyagar. The Zing was built in the 19th century to collect glacial water for irrigation in the village. The cloud burst triggered a flash flood that carried glacial sediment and choked the reservoir, making it defunct. As part of the Ladakh Marathon's commitment to the local community, the water partner of the event, a leading mineral water brand, donated the money to restore the Zing, bringing much-needed relief to the farmers of Kyagar.

Motup feels strongly about sustainability. One of the first changes he made was to go bottle-free in 2019 — replacing plastic bottles with biodegradable glasses made from sugarcane waste. From 2024, he plans to introduce reusable glasses. This year, the event took its first steps towards charity, supporting the People's Action Group for Inclusion and Rights (PAGIR), an NGO that works for a just and inclusive society for people with disabilities, and Riglam School, which educates underprivileged children from remote regions of Ladakh.

The event receives the bulk of its registrations for the 42-km full marathon and its affiliate races — the 5k, 11.2k and 21k. Once again, the full marathon this year was dominated by Ladakhis, the star among them being Jigmet Dolma, who has more than 30 podium finishes in marathons across the country. In just over a decade of distance running, Dolma has stacked career earnings upwards of Rs 15 lakh, a respectable amount for the daughter of a subsistence farmer from Igoo. She now works on contract with the Ladakh Police.

In January this year, Ladakh got its first open synthetic track and football turf at Spituk stadium, under the Khelo India Programme. Though the facility has certainly benefitted the athletes, there's still a lack of good coaching. "We have reached the present level purely on talent but we can perform even better with the necessary support," says Dolma. With the Ladakh Marathon firmly established as a world-class event and the growing infrastructure push from the government, all that remains is a professional coaching programme to produce quality athletes from Ladakh, who could take Indian distance running to the global stage.

Sidharth Singh is a Mumbai-based writer, filmmaker and live sports producer

CAPSULES

[0-13 YEARS]

mRNA Covid vaccine saved newborns

INFANTS OF pregnant women, who received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy, had lower risks of severe health outcomes, neonatal death and neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) admission, according to a new study by the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) and the University of Toronto. It included more than 140,000 infants in Ontario and showed that newborn and six-month readmissions to the NICU did not increase in infants of mothers vaccinated during pregnancy. The results were consistent across doses women received during pregnancy, the trimester in which they were vaccinated and the vaccine product they received.

[13-18 YEARS]

Monitor how teens watch Gaza videos

WHETHER OR not you have loved ones in the Middle East, the horrors of the violence and suffering in Israel and Gaza are heart-wrenching and difficult to bear. Dr Gary Small, chair of psychiatry at Hackensack University Medical Center, New Jersey, US recommends a balance between being updated and doing calming activities. These might include watching a television show, spending time with loved ones or reading a book. Teens can understand the horrific consequences of war, so ask them about what they've seen on social media and how they feel about it. Consider watching or reading coverage of the war with your teen to help discuss what's reliable.

[18-50 YEARS]

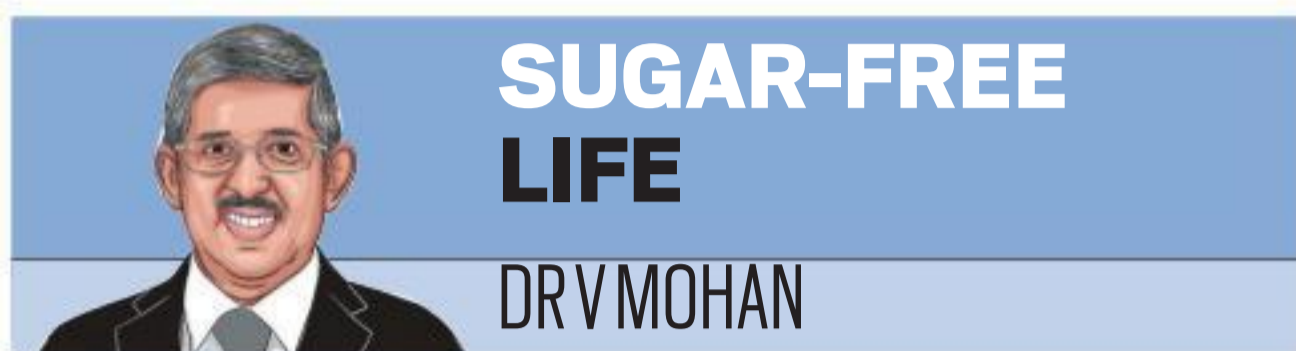
How lack of sleep aggravates pain

PEOPLE OFTEN experience headaches and body pain after a lack of sleep but the mechanisms behind this phenomenon are unclear. A new study by Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) now reveals that a certain chemical messenger, or neurotransmitter, plays a major role. The level of N-arachidonoyl dopamine (NADA), a type of neurotransmitter called an endocannabinoid, decreased in the brain as a result of sleep deprivation. "We provide a mechanism as to how sleep disruption leads to exaggerated pain, suggesting that harnessing the endocannabinoid system might break the vicious cycle between pain and sleep loss," say researchers.

[50+ YEARS]

DASH diet can reduce memory loss

WOMEN WHO started following the diet known as DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) to lower their blood pressure were about 17 per cent less likely to report memory loss and other signs of mental decline decades later, a new study reveals. The DASH diet emphasises plant-based foods that are rich in potassium, calcium and magnesium. It limits saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium and sugar. "Subjective complaints about daily cognitive performance are early predictors of more serious neurocognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's," said senior author Yu Chen, a professor of population health at NYU Grossman School of Medicine.



SUGAR-FREE LIFE

DR V MOHAN

Is late night shift work triggering diabetes?

Long hours affect circadian rhythm, cause metabolic disturbances and lead to insulin resistance

THIRTY YEARS ago, diabetes was considered a disease of the elderly or the middle ages. But now it is affecting younger adults at a much faster rate, particularly IT professionals on long shifts, and is accompanied by obesity. Why is this so? That's because long working hours inevitably push you to a more sedentary life and compel you to cut back on exercise. This results in you gaining weight, which over time can nudge you into prediabetes, where your body has higher than normal blood sugar levels but not high enough to be considered Type 2 diabetes yet. Without intervention, the prediabetes may quickly progress to Type 2 diabetes. A 2018 study in the journal *Diabetes Care* had found that those who do more night shifts have a greater risk of having diabetes (regardless of whether a person is genetically at risk for diabetes). So what are ways to keep your job and fight insulin resistance?

Workarounds for long hours and shifts: Long working hours, particularly stretched shifts in the night, affect chronobiology or circadian rhythms. This results in metabolic disturbances which precipitate insulin resistance. This in turn leads to obesity, diabetes and heart problems. So what should young IT professionals working long hours do? When there's an occupational hazard, then they should let their body adapt to the new schedule and compensate by getting adequate sleep during the day. Their chronobiology may change slowly and then the body gets adjusted to working at night. The problem gets compounded in those who have to do shifting schedules of night and day. In such a rapidly changing scenario, the body has no time to adjust to any rhythm. Only uninterrupted sleep of six to eight hours can provide some relief to the body.

Don't sit continuously, take hourly breaks: Take hourly breaks, walk about for two to five minutes in between. Wearable devices help you count the

number of steps you take in a day, so you can keep to recommended levels of activity. This breaks the monotony at work, makes the sitting routine less harmful and also helps you exercise. You can even do some stretches while sitting and give your neck, shoulders and joints some movement.

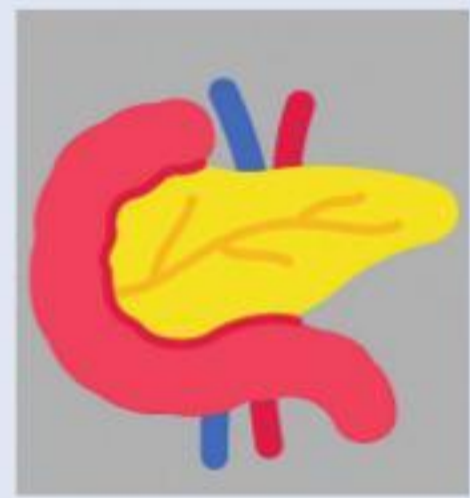
Drink enough water: Avoid alcohol and sugary or sweetened beverages that are high calorie and can raise blood sugar levels quickly. It's best to stick to simple water which is zero calorie. Drink two to three litres of water every day. Even mild dehydration can cause a significant increase in blood sugar of 50-110 mg/dL or higher, damaging the body over time.

Eat healthy, have fruits and vegetables everyday: One or two fruits can be consumed. Half of your meal should feature non-starchy green leafy vegetables. Only a quarter should be carbs and the remaining quarter should be lean proteins like fish, chicken and eggs or Bengal gram, green gram, milk, kidney beans and mushrooms. Watch portion size relative to your medication and insulin. If you eat too little and then take your insulin, it could result in dangerously low blood sugar levels. Learn how to count calories.

Manage your stress: Stress hormones raise blood sugar, high levels of which lead to insulin resistance in the long run. If stressed over a long time, our insulin levels fall, glucagon and epinephrine (adrenaline) levels go up and more glucose is released from the liver. A spike in your blood sugar levels is one of the fallouts of this process.

Develop a positive attitude: At the workplace, most of us face negative situations and attitudes and feel demotivated. Don't just work hard, work smart. Apart from pranayama, meditation and yoga, take up a hobby like a sport or music. Don't be a loner, social bonds have been proven to reduce stress.

Dr Mohan is Chairman, Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre, Chennai



NEED TO KNOW

Only uninterrupted sleep of six to eight hours can provide some relief to the body

'Cancer was a chapter in my life that turned me into a sportsman'

Sahil Bacche, 16, won the gold medal in rifle shooting at the World Children Winner's Games after sports training as part of extended therapy at Tata Memorial, Mumbai

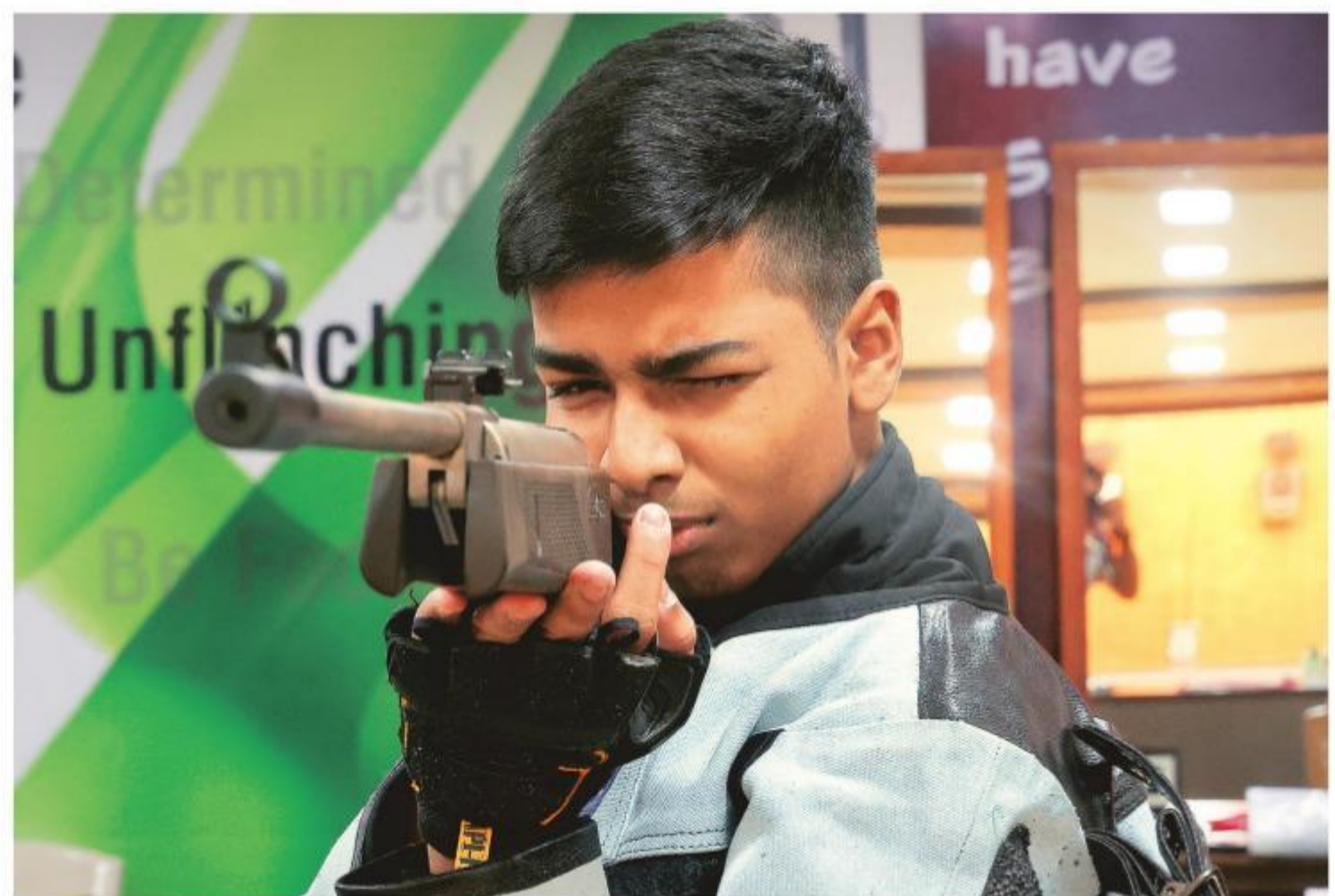
Rupsa Chakraborty

IN THE world of sports, victory comes in various forms. Some athletes are born with an innate talent while others have to fight tooth and nail to achieve their dreams. But the most inspiring stories often belong to those who overcome incredible adversity. That's why Sahil Bacche, a 16-year-old from Mumbai, who battled cancer to win a gold medal in rifle shooting at a global competition of child survivors, is nothing short of extraordinary. As he aims to clinch the gold again at mainstream competitions back home, he says, "Cancer, I realised, was just a chapter in my life's story." And one that turned him into an ace marksman.

Sahil actually turned his cancer rehabilitation into a training ground and the positive attitude and focus he developed helped in faster healing and recovery. Sports, as encouraged by his doctors, give convalescent children a happy goal to chase that works wonders for their therapy too. Today, he leads a busier and fuller life than most kids in his neighbourhood. Starting his day at 7 am, he heads for training at 8 am, attends school, completes his evening tuition before returning home for dinner. And no matter how crowded his routine looks, he is a disciplinarian, eating home-cooked meals on time, snacking on dry fruits only and never missing out on his follow-ups at Tata Memorial, India's largest cancer hospital. He even shares his experiences with children in recovery, helping them look at the big picture.

Sahil may be a role model to other cancer survivors but back in 2012, he didn't have a chance. At the tender age of five, he was thrust into a battle he never chose. He was diagnosed with B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (B-ALL), a cancer that originates in the bone marrow's B lymphocytes. "There was an incorrect diagnosis at first and by the time we retested, 86 per cent of his bone marrow cells were affected. His CBC count was critical, as low as three points, necessitating immediate hospitalisation," recalls his mother Usha Bacche.

Subsequently, he was admitted to Tata Memorial Hospital for a prolonged and aggressive chemotherapy to kill the last cancer cell. That meant discontinuing his education for a year and missing his school friends. He never knew what childhood was like as the next three years were about gruelling therapy sessions and countering side effects, with normalcy more an exception than the rule. The battle against cancer had not only sapped his physical strength, leaving him fragile but also made him emotionally vulnerable. He lived in perpetual dread of a relapse, haunted by the fear of revisiting the



AMIT CHAKRAVARTY

same painful experiences.

But amid the darkness, a ray of light emerged. Tata Memorial Hospital, in collaboration with the World Children's Winners Games, had been training paediatric cancer survivors since 2014, allowing them to participate in an international sports programme in Moscow. The Improving Paediatric Cancer Care and Treatment (ImPaCCT) Foundation has had more than 60 children venturing into various sports, with a select few taking their newfound passion seriously. Sahil found solace in the world of rifle shooting.

After years of battling fatigue, barely having the energy to eat or rest, he was determined to reclaim the lost moments of his childhood. He'd envision the target, steady his breath and calm his racing heart during his training days at the shooting range. This reoriented his mind to a more goal-focused approach and look at his therapy sessions positively. After three months of intensive training for the Games, he clinched a gold medal in rifle-shooting. As Sahil stood on the podium in Moscow, clutching his first gold medal, it wasn't just a symbol of victory but a testament to his resilience and unwavering spirit. "The cheering crowd and the fluttering flags will forever be etched in my memory as the validation I needed. The journey from a cancer survivor to a gold medalist had

been arduous, but in that moment, it all felt worth it. It taught me to believe in myself," he says.

Finally, Sahil became cancer-free in 2015. Now, he aspires to make rifle shooting his career. Setting his sights on the national championships, he's a beacon of hope for those aspiring to overcome life's challenges and is only too willing to share his experiences with them. "We use Sahil as an example of recovery and involvement in physical activities that are often deemed impossible after surviving cancer," says Shalini Jaitia, who heads the ImPaCCT Foundation.

Sports, she says, instills a sense of equality and bolsters the confidence of children fighting cancer. "Even after recovery, these children have a long way to go to heal their mental scars and shed stigma. Reintegrating these children into mainstream society is vital. Sports help them build that confidence," she adds.

In September, Sahil won a gold medal in an inter-school rifle shooting competition and is now preparing for a district-level competition next week. "Today, I share with other children how facing cancer with resolute determination can transform the most challenging struggles into the most glorious triumphs," he says, preparing for his next session at the range.

LIFE POSITIVE



FACT OF THE MATTER

Even after recovery, children cannot heal their mental scars and shed stigma. Sports help them build that confidence

AI-guided heart transplant

Technology gives a real-time analysis of how the blood is reacting in the body prior, during and post-surgery. So you don't need blood transfusion

Sohini Ghosh

A 52-YEAR-old man from Jodhpur, a foodie suffering from hypertension and stress over the years and who had two heart attacks in rapid succession in 2012 and 2015, had reached a stage of heart failure. But now with AI-assisted technology, he has had a heart transplant that cut down the need for blood transfusion and hence the chances of infection and unnecessary bleeding.

He has now become the first Asian to undergo a heart transplant without a blood transfusion, claims Marengo CIMS Hospital, a private hospital in Ahmedabad. A key component which made this surgery possible was a point-of-care analysis technology that analyses the blood coagulation factors every 10 minutes, giving an almost real-time picture of how the blood is reacting in the body

prior, during and post-surgery. The technology is relatively recent and world over, a few centres have adopted it. In April, the Massachusetts General Hospital in the US completed a similar heart transplant for a Jehovah's Witnesses patient. Religious consideration for this Christian sect means its members cannot accept donor blood.

How is a transplant possible without blood transfusion?

The first step involves a detailed and minute evaluation of blood coagulation factors prior to the transplant surgery in the pre-operative stage. This is critical, according to Dr Dhiren Shah, Director of the Heart Transplant Programme at Marengo CIMS Hospital. He was part of the team that conducted the transplant surgery. "Any patient of heart failure will have liver and kidney dysfunction. Since a majority of the blood coag-



PATIENT-FRIENDLY PROCESS

While a usual heart transplant patient would require 14-15 days to recover, with this method they could be discharged faster and recover better

ulation factors are synthesised in the liver, it is crucial to check for deficiencies or any issues in these factors," he explains. There are 10 such factors like fibrinogen and thromboplastin that work together. So if one factor gets activated, it has a cascading effect on the other factors for blood clotting function to be normal. The idea is to rectify deficiencies in the blood coagulation factors, if any, prior to the surgery. "Aiding the surgeons in this blood analysis is an artificial intelligence-aided technology," says Dr Shah.

During the surgery, blood thinners such as heparin are given and the AI-aided tech-

In conventional surgery, the patient undergoes two transplants — one of the organ and second of the blood — both having chances of being rejected and causing complications

nology monitors the blood coagulation effect every 10 minutes and flags in case any course correction is required. This too is essential as not monitoring the same can lead to severe bleeding or blood clotting.

This particular patient fortunately had a "fairly good liver function." The surgical team also modified their techniques on the table and ensured that once the donor heart reached the operation theatre, it was transplanted and the sutures on the recipient were closed within an hour.

Is a transplant without blood transfusion

better than conventional surgery?

Yes, says Dr Shah. A usual heart transplant surgery can require up to four to five units of blood and this transfusion is a transplant in itself with donor blood cells entering the body of the patient. So the patient essentially undergoes two transplants — one of the organ and second of the blood — both having chances of being rejected and/or causing further complications.

Elaborating on the benefits of going for a transplant surgery without blood transfusion, Dr Shah says, "Any surgery with massive blood transfusion means the chances of morbidity and mortality become as high as 25-35 per cent because this can have an effect on the lungs and kidneys where they can sequester and end up causing inflammation." Blood transfusion can also result in transmission of infections which may not be detected during usual medical investigation. Besides, the recovery period is faster, reducing the length of stay in hospital and associated costs.

While a usual heart transplant patient would require 14-15 days, the AI-assisted surgery patient could be discharged on the ninth day with a smoother recovery. However, it is possible that despite the point-of-care analyses, blood transfusion may be required in case of surgical bleeding.



Scan the code to read more health special stories