



Outrage over MP Bidhuri's communal slurs in House, BJP serves show-cause

BSP MP Danish Ali writes to Speaker about 'foul invectives' against his faith

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

RAJYA SABHA's unanimous endorsement of the women's reservation Bill ended the special session of Parliament on a high note Thursday night, but Lok Sabha proceedings plunged to a new low the same night when BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri hurled communal slurs at BSP MP Danish Ali on the floor of the House.

Bidhuri's offensive remarks were expunged from Lok Sabha records and Speaker Om Birla issued him a warning, but outrage mounted Friday after clips of the remarks did the rounds of social media.

Ali, BSP MP from Amroha in Uttar Pradesh, said he would consider resigning from Lok Sabha if action was not taken against Bidhuri, BJP MP from South Delhi. He said people had not elected him to listen to "hate speeches".

In a letter to the Speaker, Ali said, "I write to you with deep anguish regarding the speech given in the Lok Sabha by an MP of the BJP, Mr Ramesh Bidhuri, during the discussion on Chandrayaan success... he directed the most foul, abusive invectives against me... Among the words he directed against me were 'Bhadwa' (pimp), 'Katwa' (circumcised one), 'Mullah ugravadi' (Muslim terrorist), 'Atankvadi' (terrorist) etc... This is most unfortunate and the fact that it has happened in a new



BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri in Lok Sabha on Thursday. PTI

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

QUOTE UNQUOTE BIDHURI

MP's hateful speech stains a historic session in the new House. The Speaker must speak [PAGE 14](#)

Parliament building under your leadership as Speaker is truly heartbreaking for me as a minority member of this great nation and an elected Member of Parliament as well."

Ali requested the Speaker to take "cognisance of this foul conduct on the floor of the House and take appropriate action" against Bidhuri.

With the Opposing calling it "the blackest day in the history of Parliament" and backing Ali's demand for action — he wants

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

SC NOTICE TO UDHAYANIDHI OVER SANATAN DHARMA REMARKS [PAGE 8](#)

GOVT UNDERLINES: ARUNACHAL INTEGRAL PART OF INDIA

China targets athletes from Arunachal, Thakur cancels trip

Beijing denies regular visas to wushu players, MEA slams move as premeditated



MIHIR VASAVDA
HANGZHOU, SEPTEMBER 22

UNION SPORTS Minister Anurag Thakur called off his trip to China Friday on the eve of the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games in protest after three athletes — all wushu martial arts players — from Arunachal Pradesh were denied accreditation cards and instead offered stapled visas.

Accreditation cards have the dual purpose of being an ID card for the Asian Games as well as a visa.

Indian citizens from Arunachal Pradesh are not allowed to travel to other countries with stapled visas and the wushu players could not board the flight from New Delhi.

The Asian Games opening ceremony will be held Saturday in the presence of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

In a strongly-worded statement, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the Chinese authorities "discriminated" in a "targeted and premeditated manner" and that a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



India's chef-de-mission for the Asian Games Bhupendra Singh Bajwa with Indian athletes at the Games Village in Hangzhou, China, on Friday. PTI

Beijing has a long record of singling out people from Arunachal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

WHEN INDIAN wushu players from Arunachal Pradesh were denied accreditation and offered stapled visas for the Asian Games, it wasn't the first time that China was being discriminatory towards athletes from the North-Eastern state.

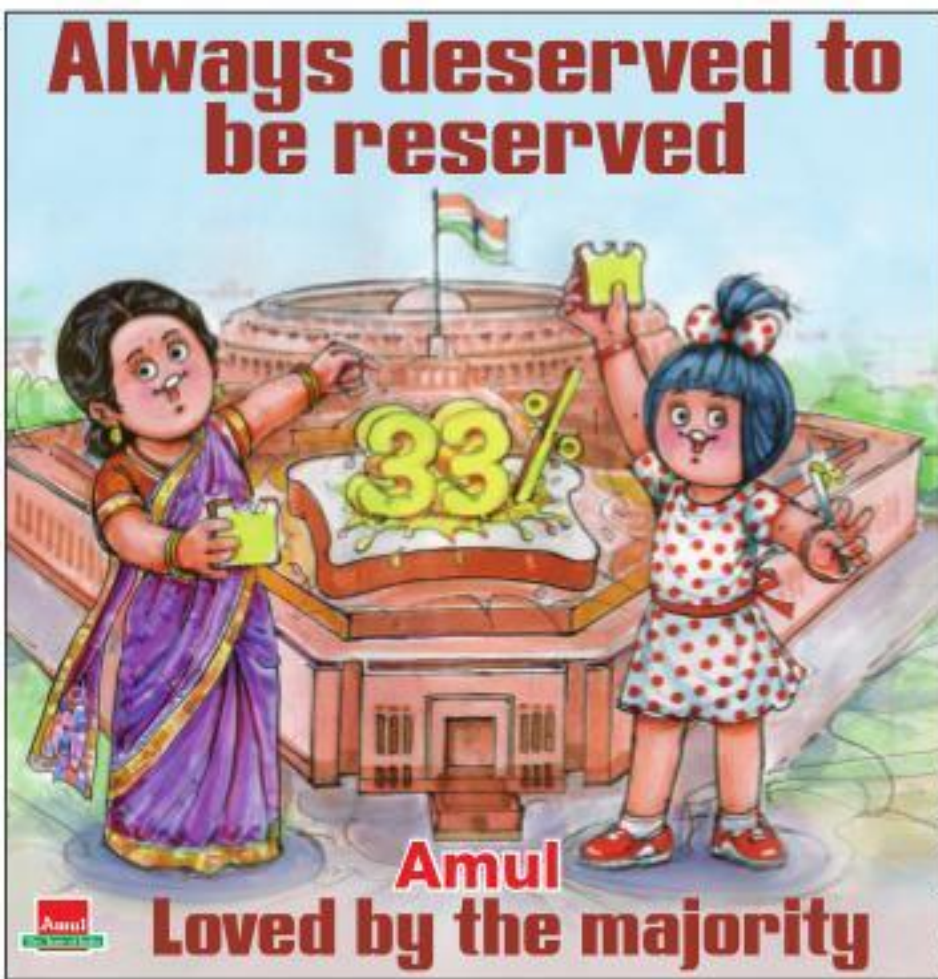
In 2016, Bamang Tago, who was a manager for the Indian badminton team, was denied a

Chinese visa. Tago had been appointed manager of the Indian team for the Thai Open badminton championship held at Fuzhou that year.

All 12 players received their visas, except the team manager, who was also secretary of Arunachal Pradesh Badminton Association, despite submitting documents to the embassy days in advance.

Earlier in July this year, three wushu players, Nyeman Wangsu, Onilu Tega and Mepung Lamgu, were first delayed and then given stapled visas before travelling to Chengdu for the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Canada NSA met Doval before, during Trudeau trip to Delhi; US says in touch with both govts

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

BEFORE CANADIAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's explosive allegation about a potential Indian government link to the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the country's National Security and Intelligence Advisor Jody Thomas made two trips to India over the last month or so, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

Thomas came in August and met NSA Ajit Doval — a meeting also attended by the top brass of the intelligence establishment.

She also accompanied Trudeau to the G20 Summit in New Delhi this month, and had a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY



It's official: JD(S) entering NDA, will join hands with BJP for LS elections

JOHNSONT A
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 22

THE JD(S) is joining the BJP-led NDA to fight future polls in alliance, including the coming Lok Sabha elections, the leaders of the two parties officially confirmed on Friday.

The announcement followed the first round of formal talks between former JD(S) chief minister H D Kumaraswamy and BJP leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and party president J P Nadda, and comes months after the Assembly polls in which the JD(S) posted its worst performance since its formation.

Following the meeting at Shah's residence in New Delhi, where Goa CM Pramod Sawant was also present, Kumaraswamy said the next rounds of talks will be held with Karnataka BJP leaders.

Announcing the tie-up on social media, Nadda said: "I am happy that the JD(S) has decided to be part of the National Democratic Alliance... This will further strengthen the NDA and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

India to be part of JP Morgan global bond index, could get \$25bn inflows

HITESH VYAS
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 22

JP MORGAN Chase & Co has announced it will include Indian government bonds to its emerging markets bond index from June 2024, a much-anticipated move which could attract more foreign flows into the domestic government securities market. The move can potentially attract about \$25 billion into the country, as per analyst estimates.

India, which will be included

in the GBI-EM Global index suite starting June 28, 2024, is expected to reach the maximum weight of 10 per cent in the GBI-EM Global Diversified Index (GBI-EM GD), JP Morgan said. Currently, 23 Indian government bonds with a combined notional value of \$330 billion are index eligible. Inclusion of the bonds will be staggered over 10 months through March 31, 2025 (i.e., inclusion of 1 per cent weight per month), it said.

"... this could prompt overall ~\$26 billion of passive inflows as

a one-off stock adjustment over the scale-in period, while actual flows may be higher, depending on market dynamics," said Madhavi Arora, Lead Economist, Emkay Global Financial Services. A Goldman Sachs report said the move could prompt passive inflows of around \$30 billion (comprising emerging market local dedicated funds, as well as blended funds) over the scale-in period as a one-off stock adjustment.

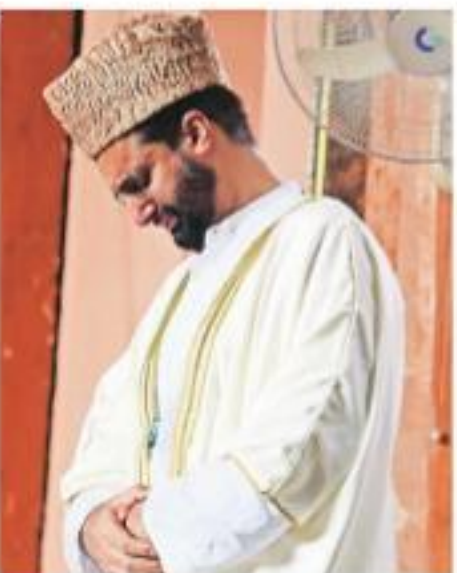
However, given India's

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Out after 4 yrs, Mirwaiz backs PM on 'not an era of war', seeks Pandit return

NAVEED IQBAL
SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 22

DRESSED IN his white and gold ceremonial robes, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq returned to Srinagar's Jamia Masjid for the first time since August 2019, having spent more than four years in detention at home. Breaking down as he climbed the pulpit of the mosque to begin his sermon, the Hurriyat chairman said he would continue to seek "a peaceful resolution" of people's issues, despite paying the price for it.



The Mirwaiz on Friday in Srinagar. Shuaib Masoodi

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, the Mirwaiz added that he agreed with the PM that this was not an era of war.

Umar Farooq was received by an emotional crowd of hundreds as he returned to lead prayers after 212 weeks, at Jamia Masjid, Nowhatta, with chants of "Marhaba, Mirwaiz". People had started trooping in as news of the Mirwaiz's release from detention spread, with scores of security officials keeping a watch.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Delhi gets its first clinic for trans people: 'This small step takes away a giant stigma'

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

IN A black and white striped dress and two-inch heels, she wove her way through a corridor full of women in sarees and salwar kameez at the OPD block of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. The 26-year-old was headed to the consultation room of Delhi's first transgender clinic for a laser hair removal procedure that is



The transgender OPD registration counter at RML Hospital on Friday. There were around 30 registrations on Day 1

part of her feminisation process and body transition. "Not only is this a safe place to discuss therapies, there is acknowledgement for my kind and services that I can afford. This small step takes away a giant stigma," she said.

She rushed to the clinic, located in the extreme left side of the government-run hospital's OPD block, on its opening day on Friday for the procedure. However, she was disappointed to find out that the machine for the procedure was awaiting installation. But she was happy to know that she could get the right

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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THE CONTINENTAL REVIEW: JOHN WICK SPINOFF SERIES ATTEMPTS TO UN-CANCEL MEL GIBSON, AND THAT'S NOT EVEN THE WORST THING ABOUT IT

From the World of John Wick review: With minimal action and negligible world-building, the three-episode spinoff is a let-down for fans of the John Wick series

EDUCATION



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'How I prepared for NEET UG without joining any coaching classes'



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EXPRESS AUDIO

India stops new visa for Canadians, WHO on hypertension, and a 'food animal'

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In 3 Things, we discuss the implications of India stopping its visa services in Canada, WHO on the hypertension, and Northeast's Mithun gets 'food animal' tag

CLARIFICATION

CLARIFICATION OF news report published in our newspaper on 27th July 2013 concerning 'Diaries of Mining Barons say Madhya Pradesh Ministers were bribed-IT Department'. The newspaper is sorry for any embarrassment or harm to Mr. Rajendra Shukla's reputation as that was not intended. We are further informed from reliable sources that Mr. Rajendra Shukla has nothing to do with that diary. Mr. Rajendra Shukla has also clarified that he has absolutely no concern with the said article.

● JD(S) says it's joining NDA

the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for 'New India, Strong India'."

Earlier on Friday, former PM and JD(S) supremo H D Deve Gowda, whose personal friendship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seen as the cornerstone of the JD(S)-BJP alliance, indicated that alliance talks were on and being led by his son Kumaraswamy. A Rajya Sabha MP, Deve Gowda participated in the recent Parliament session, during which the Bill to provide 33% reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, first envisaged by a government led by him in 1996, was passed.

Earlier this month, former BJP Karnataka CM and a member of the party national executive, B S Yediyurappa, had said that a BJP-JD(S) alliance for the 2024 polls was set to be forged. "Amit Shah has agreed to give four Lok Sabha seats (to the JD-S). This will strengthen us in a big way. It will facilitate victory in 25 to 26 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka," Yediyurappa had said.

Kumaraswamy said at the time that alliance talks with the BJP were in the preliminary stages and that no agreement had been reached on seat-sharing, while adding that whatever they decide, would be "from the perspective of the state and the bad governance by the current government". "It is not about give and take, but it is

about trust and respect," he said.

The JD(S) has been a partner of both the Congress and BJP in Karnataka in government. On Friday, the Congress questioned the JD(S) move, saying it had rushed into the arms of the BJP after suffering a big defeat in the state polls in May. "The JD(S) would vent its anger against me when I said they were the B-team of the BJP. They also claim to have a secular ideology, they are called the Janata Dal (Secular). But now they have joined hands with communal forces," Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah said.

However, for both the JD(S) and BJP, the alliance is good realpolitik, with the two coming to accept the reality of their fractured support bases in Karnataka in the aftermath of the 2023 Assembly polls, which the Congress won.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP had won 25 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, of them eight of 11 in south Karnataka, the JD(S)'s base. 'Modi magic' along with the JD(S)'s caste arithmetic in the region might help the BJP make up for the lack of leaders and the loss of political ground in Karnataka since 2019. The JD(S) still has a base in the 11 South Karnataka Lok Sabha seats, where the Vokkaligas dominate, while the BJP is stronger in the 17 seats in north, central and coastal Karnataka, on the back of the support for Modi and Lingayats.

FROM PAGE ONE China targets athletes from Arunachal

"strong protest has been lodged in New Delhi and Beijing against China's deliberate and selective obstruction of some of our sports persons".

"Further, as a mark of our protest against the Chinese action, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting and Youth Affairs and Sports of India has cancelled his scheduled visit to China for the Games. The Government of India reserves the right to take suitable measures to safeguard our interests," it stated.

India's riposte and Thakur's decision to cancel his tour came a day after the wushu players were not allowed to board the flight from New Delhi.

The athletes — Nyeman

Wangsu, Onulu Tega and Mepung Lamgu — were scheduled to take part in the opening ceremony on Saturday evening and compete in their event the following morning.

Lifetime Vice-President of the Olympic Council of Asia, Wei Jizhong of China, said the host country has not violated any rule and it is China's prerogative as to which type of visa should be issued. Jizhong, former secretary general of the Chinese Olympic Committee, said at a media briefing: "I should clarify that these Indian athletes got a visa to enter China. China didn't refuse any visa but the problem is, according to the Chinese government regulations, we have the right to give

them a different kind of visa. We have an arrival visa, paper visa, and visa in passport. This is the host country's government regulation. So, I make it very clear that the Chinese government gave them a visa. They can enter China. Unfortunately, these athletes didn't accept the visa."

In July, the same wushu athletes — Wangsu, Tega and Lamgu — were denied valid visas by China, which made them miss the World University Games.

For the Asiad, one player was given an incomplete accreditation card — which was valid only till Hong Kong — two others could not register and download their electronic accreditation cards while they were trying to check-in for

their flight late Wednesday night.

A team official said that when the issue was taken up with the Chinese authorities, they offered them stapled visas instead.

"In line with our long-standing and consistent position, India firmly rejects differential treatment of Indian citizens on the basis of domicile or ethnicity. Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will remain an integral and inalienable part of India," the MEA spokesperson said in the statement.

"China's action violates both the spirit of the Asian Games and the rules governing their conduct, which explicitly prohibits discrimination against competitors from member states," the statement said.

● Mirwaiz backs PM on 'not an era of war', seeks return of Pandits

"We have been called separatist, anti-national and peace disruptors. However, we have no personal benefits to gain from this. I did not have any personal ambition here. We only represent the interests and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. We seek a peaceful resolution of their issues, but on their (the people's) terms," he said.

He added: "We have always believed and participated in efforts seeking resolution through an alternative to violent means, which is dialogue and reconciliation, and we have personally suffered for pursuing this route."

The Mirwaiz also called for the return of "our Pandit brothers" to Kashmir. "We believe in peaceful coexistence between communities and nations; between the strong and the weak, between the majority and the minority. We have always advocated the return

of Kashmiri Pandits and disapproval of making this human issue a political one."

For some, it may be a territorial issue, "but for us, it has always been a human issue", Umar Farooq said, noting that one part of (undivided) J&K is in India, another in Pakistan and the third in China. "All these make Jammu and Kashmir. It is a reality that the issue needs to be resolved, which the international community also endorses."

The Mirwaiz also called for a rethink on a "stern approach" to issues. "It leads to human rights violations. Dozens of our leaders — men and women — are languishing in jails for years, thousands of young men and boys, journalists and human rights activists and lawyers are suffering in incarceration. They need to be released as soon as possible. Their health and families are suffering."

He said that after the assassination of his father, the last few years had been the most difficult period for him. "I am aware that the time after August 5, 2019, has not been easy. Articles 370 and 35A were abrogated, J&K was stripped of statehood and split into Union territories. Ladakh was separated from J&K and, in opposition to people's wishes and through a series of unilateral decisions, the people of J&K were left weak and powerless," the Mirwaiz said.

Political parties in Kashmir welcomed Umar Farooq's release from house detention, and hoped that he would be allowed to remain free.

"He should not have been detained for so long. Most of us who were released from detention had to seek the intervention of courts. This time as well, after Mirwaiz sahab went to the High Court seek-

ing his release, the government was forced to release him," National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah said, adding that he hoped the Mirwaiz is allowed "to move freely, interact with people and resume his social/religious responsibilities".

Last month, after the completion of four years since he was put in house detention ahead of the abrogation of Article 370, Umar Farooq had sent a legal notice to the government, seeking his release and warned of challenging it in the court if it failed to come up with a positive response. On September 15, the court sought a response from the J&K administration on the status of the detention.

On his release after four years, the Mirwaiz told *The Indian Express*: "It was indeed a feeling of relief and joy leaving the house. Personal freedom is a blessing."

● Delhi gets clinic for trans people: 'This small step takes away a giant stigma'

guidance on hormone replacement therapies.

"There are no dedicated clinics for transgender people in private hospitals, let alone government ones. Wherever we go, we have to queue up with everyone else and attract attention. It can get very uncomfortable. This clinic means the world to people like us who are forging our identity amid challenges," she said.

The clinic has three doctors sharing a consultation room, where they will counsel transitioning patients and advise them on procedures. The hospital intends to offer cosmetic procedures such as laser hair removal, gender reassignment surgeries, breast reductions and hysterectomy. For the time being, these

will be done at existing speciality clinics. Apart from these, doctors will also treat common medical conditions like backache that some patients came in with on the opening day.

"The idea is to help them open up and give them proper medical care. To us every person is a human body that deserves to be taken care of. And transgender people can do that here without fear of being scorned," said one of the doctors, adding that the clinic saw around 30 registrations on the first day.

For 34-year-old Keshav, the clinic at RML is "a gift from God". Born a woman, he will finally be able to get the surgery to remove his uterus for which he has been saving up for years. "I got my

breast removed a couple of years ago. The private hospital initially asked for Rs 1.5 lakh that I couldn't afford. They finally agreed to do it for Rs 60,000. I had to draw on my savings and take a loan," said Keshav, who is hoping transition will change the way people judge his life with his girlfriend.

The social scrutiny was one of the reasons the couple moved to a flat in West Delhi, far away from the prying eyes of their family in Gurgaon. "I earn Rs 18,000 a month. I have to pay the EMI and spend Rs 3,400-3,600 for the 10 hormone injections I take every month. And, the cost just keeps going up. How can I save up for the hysterectomy then? I hope I will be able to get the hormone injections and the surgery at a mini-

mum cost. At least the government has thought about our community when we are used to getting ignored by everyone," he said.

The promise of an affordable gender reassignment surgery has given hope to the likes of Muskan Nazz, who works in human resource at an IT firm, and has been delaying her physical transformation. "While I am blessed to have a good education and a decent job that can pay for the hormone replacement therapy, even I cannot afford the nearly Rs 7 to 6 lakh needed for a sex reassignment surgery. And sometimes you need to do it in phases, with the cumulative bill mounting," she said. Once she transitions, she plans to come out to her parents, who live in Bihar.

● Canada NSA met Doval twice

bilateral meeting with Doval on the sidelines.

She is learnt to have discussed the issue of Canadian security agencies actively pursuing "credible allegations" of a potential link of agents of the Indian government to the killing of Nijjar and seeking possible cooperation from Indian agencies.

During his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Trudeau had raised the potential link issue as well, which was rejected.

In his statement to the Canadian Parliament, Trudeau said, "Over the past number of weeks, Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen,

Hardeep Singh Nijjar."

India has rejected the allegations, calling these "absurd" and "motivated". It has accused Ottawa of not acting against the Khalistan separatists in Canada, and not sharing any specific information on the killing of Nijjar.

But at the same time, it has opened a window for cooperation, saying if any specific information is provided, New Delhi will be willing to look into it.

The US, meanwhile, has said it supports Canada's efforts to investigate allegations of India's involvement in the killing of Nijjar, observing that no country can get any "special exemption" for such activities. Jake Sullivan, the US NSA, said Thursday that his country is in touch with both Canada and India over Ottawa's allegations.

● India to be part of JP Morgan global bond index, could get \$25bn inflows

hot-money flows. So these are all the advantages that we all know about," he said.

The CEA, however, noted that there will be challenges in terms of the rise in sensitivity of domestic policy to external spillovers. For which, he said, fiscal and monetary priorities will need to be cognisant of global perceptions and "macro-prudential policies will become critical down the road".

"We need to keep an eye on what foreign investors would be thinking, what will happen to bond yields, currency, etc. and sometimes, during globally uncertain times, unrelated to Indian macro-fundamentals, there could be volatility in the Indian bond market or in the currency because of the inclusion or holding of Indian G-secs by foreigners. That is something we need to be prepared for and prepare ourselves and also think about accordingly. Therefore fiscal and monetary policies need to be cognisant of the global perceptions," Nageswaran said.

The RBI has been engaging with other index providers, including FTSE Russell and Bloomberg-Barclays, for the inclusion of IGBs in global bond indices. Post the inclusion into JP Morgan EM Bond Index, India's chances of inclusion into Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index also rises, IDFC First Bank said in a note. "In case India is included in the Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index, it could result in inflows of \$15 billion to \$20 billion with India's weight ranging from 0.6 per cent to 0.8 per cent," it said.

The news of inclusion helped the yield on the 10-year government bond — 7.26 per cent — 2033, ease. It opened at 7.08 per cent but ended at 7.18 per cent on profit booking and in anticipation that the RBI will not purchase government bonds through open market operations (OMOs) given the higher flow of funds. The rupee also closed 16 paise down at 82.94 on Friday, compared to previous closing of 83.09.



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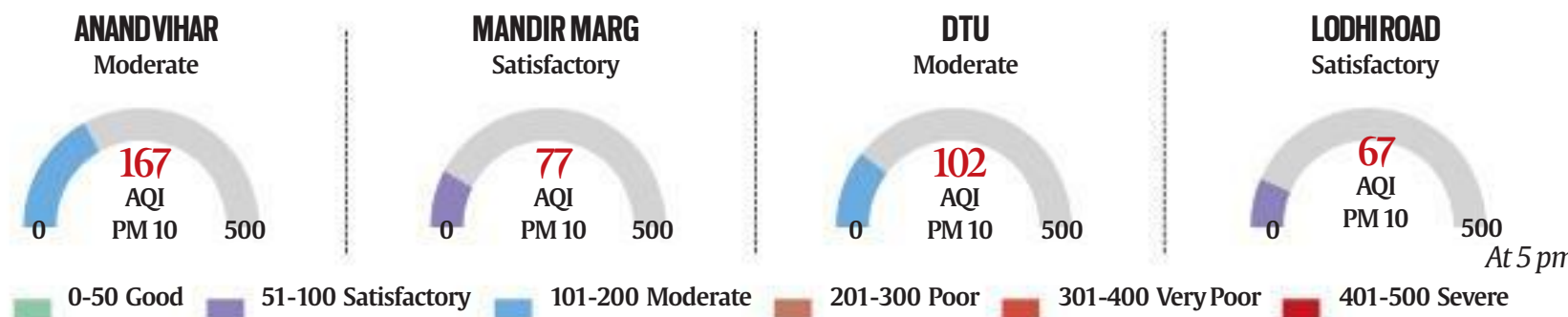
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- Online Tender Ref. No. T-498/Bubble C-PAP/QC/2023 Dated : 22.09.2023 Uploaded on Portal & Website.
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MIN: 27
2.1° C above normal

AMID DIPLOMATIC STANDOFF

Students to visitors, passengers heading to Canada carry on

SAMAN HUSAIN
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

PUTTING THEIR trust in assurances from relatives and hoping they won't face any issues, passengers scheduled to board their respective flights amid the ongoing diplomatic Indo-Canadian stand-off carried on as usual on Friday.

After India stopped issuing visas to Canadian citizens and released a travel advisory for Indian students, professionals, and tourists traveling to the country, tensions between the two countries continue to simmer diplomatically; this, however, did not deter passengers bound to the country from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport.

Pratap Singh, on his first visit to meet his wife, a Canadian national, said his visa situation was "uncomplicated" and said he didn't have reason to worry.

"My wife owns a paper manufacturing company in Toronto. I am going to Canada to live with her for three years," he said.

Asked if the current unrest had made him reconsider his travel plans, Singh said, "Canada

is a peaceful country to stay in, and there are many Indians who live there, so there shouldn't be any reason to worry."

Sukhdev Singh (76), on his first overseas journey to meet his daughter, said he was reassured by her. "She is a permanent resident of Canada... since I have a 10-year visa, she believes there shouldn't be any issues."

Tourists enroute Canada for vacation said they were concerned — but only briefly so. "I'm leaving for a two-month vacation in Canada... I already have a travellers visa... When I heard yesterday's news about the tense diplomatic relations, I was concerned briefly, but my sister who lives there reassured me that I need not be alarmed," said 21-year-old Sukhman Preet.

University of York student Nancy Gambhir, who was in Delhi for her brother's wedding, said she hadn't faced any issues due to the prevailing travel restrictions in place. "I have many Indian classmates... traveling back shouldn't be an issue... I have a degree to finish, so at this time, there is also no choice but to head back," said Gambhir, who has a student's visa.

Delhi excise dept issues checklist for fresh hotel, club, restaurant licences

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

HAVING SIMPLIFIED the application process for Hotels, Clubs and Restaurants (HCR) licences as part of ease of doing business initiatives, the excise department has released a checklist of documents and details that need to be submitted by businesses in lieu of issuance of fresh licences.

In August, the department simplified the process of applying for HCR licences, reducing the four-step application process to a two-step one.

According to the checklist approved by the Commissioner (Excise), businesses will have to submit affidavits and documents online such as application in a prescribed format, proof of lawful possession of the proposed premises, a copy of the site, seating plan of the premises authenticated by a registered architect, and fire safety NOC.

Apart from this, hotels and bars will also have to submit the health and trade licence issued

by civic agencies concerned, certificate from Delhi Police, FSSAI licence, copy of fire insurance, proof of Indian nationality, details of excise nominee along with ID proof and others.

The individuals will also have to submit an affidavit regarding seating capacity and number of rooms under Section 13 of Delhi Excise Act, 2009, and Rule 23 of Delhi Excise Act 2010.

In July, the department had asked all licensees to submit a character certificate issued by police stating that they don't have a criminal background. Licensees were also directed to install cameras on their premises, ensure they are functional, and provide footage when asked by the Excise department, failing which their licence will be cancelled.

Currently, liquor vends and HCR licensees are serving alcohol as per the old excise regime implemented on September 1, 2022. The current policy is expiring on September 30. "The decision to extend the policy for another few months is under consideration," said a government official.

BRIEFLY

Mom-in-law held in acid attack case

New Delhi: A day she allegedly poured acid on her daughter-in-law as she was angry with her for not fulfilling dowry demands, a 49-year-old woman was arrested in Northeast Delhi's New Usmanpur. DCP (North-east) Joy Tirkey said the accused is identified as Anjali. The victim is being treated for burns. An FIR under IPC section 326(A), pertaining to acid attack, has been filed against the accused.

CM launches WhatsApp channel

New Delhi: With Lok Sabha and Assembly elections scheduled over the next two years, CM Arvind started his unofficial campaign by visiting assemblies to inaugurate colony roads, sewer lines, and launching his personal WhatsApp channel. "Excited to connect with you all through my WhatsApp channel. Let's work together to make India shine as the number 1 country in the world," he said in a post on X along with a link to his channel. **ENS**

DU STUDENTS' UNION POLLS: OVERALL TURNOUT 42%

Infra, hostels, women's safety — and family ideology: What students voted for



VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA & ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

EXTENSIVE CAMPAIGNING across Delhi University over the past week appears to have had an impact as several colleges saw long queues Friday as students turned up to vote for their next students' union. The polls are taking place after a hiatus of three years due to the pandemic-induced lockdown.

Voting across North and South campuses began around 8.30 am for morning colleges and at 3 pm for their evening counterparts amid heavy barricading and police deployment. Like most years, this year also appears to be a straight contest between the ABVP and NSUI.

Chief Election Officer, Professor Chander Shekhar, said, "Voting happened peacefully, without any disruptions. We have not received any reports of any glitches in EVMs from any colleges so far (till 6 pm)."

For several students, this was their first experience in voting.

Said 18-year-old Sania, a first-year BSc Physical Science student at Ramjas College, who hails from Jharkhand, "I voted for people who reached out to me personally, not those who just threw pamphlets. For me, student welfare, infrastructure not being up to the mark, and unavailability of hostels are main issues. Besides, the agenda my family supports also had an influence on my vote."

"DU gave me the opportunity to vote for the first time. Although I wasn't familiar with the process, people at the booth gave us clear instructions on how to use the EVM and paper



ballot system," she added.

Anurag Yadav, a first-year student at Ramjas, too was exercising his right to vote for the first time. "For me, water was the most important issue. We don't have proper RO facilities in college."

Yadav also said the National Education Policy, under which the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme is being implemented in his batch, is confusing: "We are not familiar with this system..."

According to Ramjas College principal Manoj Khanna, "Voting was smooth. We had three booths for paper ballots for the college elections and four others for the union. Student strength of the college is about 5,800 and there were approximately 800 students voting at a single booth. The polling percentage until now (around 12-1 pm) was between 30-40% of the total strength."

At Miranda House, students raised issues about security and menstrual leaves. Mansi (19), a second-year Philosophy (Hons)



student from Sarita Vihar and an NCC cadet, said, "Women's safety is the biggest problem; there have been several incidents where students of our college were threatened... several people even barged into our campus on the pretext of campaigning. Hence, I voted for the candidate who promises a safer environment for women."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Nandini Dutta, election committee in charge and college bursar, said, "Voter turnout was 30% as of now (around 1 pm) in the morning batch. We had four polling booths, the college was also given five EVMs out of which one was on standby."

At Kironi Mal College, Principal Dinesh Khattar said voter turnout was 42.3%. At Hindu College, principal Anju Srivastava said their voter turnout was 52%.

Meanwhile, at South Campus colleges, students raised a range of issues that they factored into their voting decision.

Divya, a first-year student from Rohtak at Aryabhata

Scenes from campus, Friday; (below) Mansi from Ramjas College and Divya and Diya from Aryabhata College.

Abhinav Saha

College, said dirty girls' washrooms and adequate functioning fans in buildings are issues that she is looking forward to being addressed by a union. Diya, in her second year at the same college, added that clean washrooms are a long-standing issue.

Aditya, a first-year BCom (Hons) student at PGDAV, said decorum and safety on campus are important issues to consider while voting. "Since I will be spending three years in this college, it's important to vote. There's a lot of fighting in college here and that gets highlighted. Decorum, safety in college are important issues. I also vote on the basis of which national party the student organisation is affiliated with. The expectation is that important issues are focussed on."

Second- and third-year students who have not voted before with the elections not being held in the past few years, had mixed responses to the entire process. "Since we didn't have elections last year, the campaigning was fun this time, but also a little aggressive," Diya said.

Atharv Gambhir, a first-year English (Hons) student of Ram Lal Anand College, who is from Ambala, said the party his family has been supporting all along at the national level has also been important in deciding who he voted for in the DUSU election. "Issues include ensuring a good canteen, and improving the college atmosphere... there's a lot of fighting..."

For ragpickers, fallen pamphlets, posters a lifeline

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

THE RESUMPTION of Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections after a three-year hiatus has been met with cheers by not just students but also ragpickers in the areas near the campus.

The reason: The pamphlets and posters, a mainstay of the polls, have spelled for them an opportunity to make an extra buck.

As students thronged the campus for polling day on Friday, a group of women ragpickers were seen seated right behind the barricade on the stretch leading to Arts Faculty. Each had a pile of plastic bags filled with pamphlets and small cards which the candidates have been circulating across the campus during the campaigning week.

"When the election did not happen for the past three years, we missed out on this opportunity to collect posters and pamphlets. Over the last week, every day, I have collected pamphlets worth at least Rs 100 to Rs 200 from the streets. We are very happy that elections have made a comeback at DU and we are able to make money to sustain for a week," said Jageeta, 30, who has been engaged in ragpicking in Delhi for seven years now.

Sharing her routine during the campaigning period, she said, "Over the past 10 days, we have been coming to the campus everyday around 10 am and spending the entire day trying to collect pamphlets, plastic water bottles etc from the streets. We have not been hired (by the university), we do this for a living."

Jageeta hails from Rajasthan and lives in a basti near GTB Nagar.

"From tomorrow, we will get back to picking up plastic and bottles near the market area as the election season has finally ended today," said Jageeta, a



Suman (top) and Jageeta live in a basti near GTB Nagar. Each had a pile of plastic bags filled with pamphlets and small cards which the candidates have been circulating across the campus during the campaigning week

mother of four.

Jageeta is part of a group of around 10 women collecting banners and pamphlets across the North Campus. In the evening, they carry their bags full of paper and plastic to a scrap shop and sell them.

Suman, 29, who also lives in the same basti as Jageeta, said, "I was able to make about Rs 200-300 a day which helped me support my family."

Suman, a resident of Rewari in Haryana, said she will now go back to selling plastic toys in the colonies of Jahangirpuri, Azadpur and Khajuri Khas.

Though pleased by her earnings, Suman said she was not able to make the kind of money she did last time selling pamphlets due to the restrictions on entry on the campus.

"The police patrolling has become tighter," she added.

Baansera gets a musical fountain

UPASIKA SINGHAL
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

L-G VK Saxena inaugurated a musical fountain at Baansera, a public amusement facility situated along the banks of the Yamuna Friday.

In his address, the L-G emphasised the need for more entertainment and leisure destinations in Delhi. Praising Baansera as one of them, he highlighted numerous upcoming projects such as a convention centre that will be able to host "summit-level meetings". The L-G also mentioned that a restaurant will be opened within the park soon.

Initially, there will be two musical



It was inaugurated by L-G VK Saxena, Friday. Express

fountain shows every week from Tuesday to Sunday at 6.30 pm and 7.30 pm, with a nominal fee for entry. Children up to the age of 10 will be able to avail free entry. The fountain, funded and

established by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation through its CSR programme, has digitally controlled LED lights with a 90-metre grid, offering various water effects and shapes through action jets.

Two gang members arrested after Rajouri Garden shootout

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

DELHI POLICE Crime Branch has arrested two members of the Salman Tyagi-Naresh Sethi-Lawrence Bishnoi gang, wanted in two cases of extortion in West Delhi's Rajouri Garden, officers said Friday.

Police said on the intervening night of September 19-20, two consecutive incidents of gunfire took place in Rajouri Garden. In the first case, accused Deepanshu alias Monu and Moinuddin alias Salman came to Zalka Restaurant

in Subhash Nagar on a scooter and shot at the flex board of the restaurant twice. "Five minutes later, they reached Gulati Handloom and shot thrice in front of the shop and fled... it has now come to light that the firing was carried out to enforce an extortion demand of Rs 50 lakh each from the owners of the two establishments," said Special CP (Crime) Ravindra Yadav.

After scanning more than 200 CCTVs and following a tip-off, police laid a trap and arrested the duo near Pacific Mall in Subhash Nagar, said cops.

Special CP Yadav said during

interrogation, Deepanshu disclosed that he is a close associate of notorious gangster Tyagi, lodged in Mandoli jail. "Deepanshu keeps meeting Tyagi in jail and during one of the visits last week, the latter instructed him to make the extortion demand from the businessmen," said Yadav.

Police said Tyagi is a hardcore criminal, operating mainly in West Delhi.

Earlier a close associate of Neeraj Bawania, Tyagi had recently joined hands with Naresh Sethi-Kala Jathedi-Lawrence Bishnoi gang.

For artisans from across UP, a common stage at trade fair

DHEERAJ MISHRA
NOIDA, SEPTEMBER 22

FROM GULABI Meenakari craftsmen to terracotta manufacturers, artisans from across Uttar Pradesh and their work, part of the 'One District One Product (ODOP)' initiative, are among the many highlights of the international trade show in Greater Noida. The event is being held at India Expo Mart and Centre and will be on till September 25.

According to Kunjibihari Singh, a Gulabi Meenakari craftsman and National Award winner, the art form came to India through Persia (Iran) in the 17th Century. "Meenakari is done in

different ways in different cities. But it was in Benaras where 'Gulabi' Meenakari was invented. Its colors are formed by metal oxides such as blue from cobalt, white from titanium, green from copper, brown due to magnesium and pink due to gold," he said.

Explaining the process, Singh, who is from Varanasi, said: "The first step is (creating the) design, then we put a layer of pure silver on it. The third step is engraving and the fourth is Meenakari, where we heat the object at 850 degrees Celsius. Then we paint on it... I had made a chess set, which PM Narendra Modi gifted to US Vice-President Kamala Harris."

Singh said a total of 25 families are associated with him and



Kunjibihari Singh, a Gulabi Meenakari craftsman and (right) annelal Prajapati (37), a terracotta manufacturer



he is training around 500 artisans. For carpet weaver and Jaunpur resident Mohd. Jamaal

(32), the specialty of their Bhadohi carpet is that it can last up to a hundred years or more. "It

is unique as it is completely hand woven... Our carpets are pieced between Rs 5,000 to Rs 5 lakh... It is believed that carpet manufacturing started in Madho Singh village of Bhadohi... my forefathers were the first to start it," he said.

Jamaal said he has a team of around 80 people who are involved in carpet work. He added, "Now that the government has included our product under ODOP, we get a lot of opportunities to showcase our work..."

Similarly, Pannelal Prajapati (37), a terracotta manufacturer from Gorakhpur, said it is the color that makes their product unique. "The red color that you see on a terracotta product is formed by a mixture of caustic

soda, soil, and mango tree bark. Then it is heated, further dried and turned into a solution. When we paint the object with the solution, it turns red... Terracotta is made from special soil found in only three places in Gorakhpur, one of them is my village, Aurangabad village," he said.

"I am the fifth generation in my family to do this. Due to ODOP, there's an increase in sales. We get orders and provide the product accordingly," he added.

Buyers from other countries too were present. Abdulkadir Nura from Nigeria said, "I'm looking for a product related to solar energy. It's also a place of learning for me as I got to know of innovations India is doing in this sector..."

CAQM: Plan in place, Haryana may see fewer cases of stubble burning this yr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

Haryana is expected to witness a drastic decline in paddy stubble burning cases this year as there is a state action plan in place, said the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM).

As per a communication from the apex pollution monitoring body, the Haryana government is set to provide Pusa bio-decomposer kits to farmers for free to manage a paddy area of 5 lakh acres.

The bio-decomposer is meant to help decompose stubble before the rabi crop is sown and prevent stubble burning in the process. The total area under paddy cultivation in Haryana is estimated to be around 14.82 lakh hectares and non-basmati paddy straw generation is likely to be over 7.3 million tonnes.

In addition to the use of bio-decomposer, preventing stubble burning also includes clearing fields with the help of machinery and use of straw as fodder. With over 80,000 crop residue management machines in the state, effective utilisation of these machines is to be ensured at the district level.

In addition to the state-level action plan, district action plans will also be in place this year.



8 Govt & Politics

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



The gathering at Bharat Mandapam on Friday. ANI

BACK TO FRONT

USUALLY AT a government event, VIPs like ministers and top officials sit in the front rows, near the podium. However, the scene was different during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with ground-level functionaries of the G20 Summit at Bharat Mandapam on Friday. All the workers and support staff were sitting in the front rows, while senior ministers, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, were occupying the back seats. "The entire Council of Ministers is here, all the secretaries are here and the structure of this programme is such that you [workers] all are ahead, they [ministers and officers] all are behind... This is what I enjoy. Because when I see you down here, it means my foundation is strong. There is no problem even if the top moves a little," the Prime Minister quipped.

OFFICE YOGA

IN ORDER to help officials deal with stress, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has been organising "desk yoga and well-being" sessions for its different departments. The sessions include tips on posture correction, stretching exercises while seated on chairs, breathing techniques and meditation. The hour-long sessions started in continuation of International Yoga Day on June 21 and are being held in batches now, said a source.

MILLET MYSTERY

OFFICIALS AT the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare are trying to find out how millet seeds sent to Bihar got stolen. The ministry, as part of its efforts to promote millets, had sent minikits of finger millet seeds to the Bihar government in June-July. However, a few days later, the state government informed the ministry that 40 kg seeds of the variety VL-Mandua 379 of finger millet got stolen from Muzaffarpur district. Now, the ministry officials have written to the Bihar government to examine the "serious matter" and have sought an action-taken report from the state.

Amid chill in India-Canada ties, agencies working to tackle nexus of separatists, gangsters and terrorists

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

BANNED KHALISTANI outfits are set to come up for discussion next month as heads of intelligence agencies and state counter-terror squads meet at a two-day conference organised by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). This comes against the backdrop of a chill in relations between Canada and India, with the topic of providing safe haven to Khalistanis emerging as a sore point.

According to officials in the know, central intelligence agencies want to drive home two key points at the conference — the need to go after properties of those with Khalistani links, and better coordination with state police forces so leads can be pursued at the international stage.

"Currently, the NIA is probing around 10 cases registered in

connection with the nexus between gangsters, terror operatives and banned Khalistan outfits. In most of these cases, the accused in India are already lodged in jails, but their associates or handlers are in Canada, Pakistan, etc. We are coordinating with the Ministry of External Affairs as well as the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) to catch them," said an official.

The NIA is also set to discuss and share specific case studies with state counter-terrorism squads on how they are dismantling this nexus. "We have started attaching properties of a number of gangsters, their associates as well as criminals operating from abroad. We want to use the intelligence network of different state police forces to get more information regarding their properties. There's a need for better coordination on the ground to execute our plan, like we had done against the Popular

Front of India," the official said.

The meeting will be attended by R&AW Chief Ravi Sinha, head of the Intelligence Bureau Tapan Kumar Deka, and chairman of the National Technical Research Organisation Arun Sinha.

Officials also said the NIA is also looking at links between gangsters and singers, kabaddi players as well as advocates, on the lines of the pre-1993 Mumbai blasts era when extensive links between the underworld and members of the film industry had surfaced.

On why better coordination is required, an official cited the example of Canada-based designated terrorist Arshdeep Singh Gill of the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF).

"The Punjab police are also working against him, and the NIA is also probing cases. Ideally, both investigation teams should coordinate and pursue the case together," the official said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Friday. Prem Nath Pandey

G20 meet showed India strength, CWG brought disrepute, says PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

COMPARING THE organisation and execution of the G20 Summit with the Commonwealth Games hosted during UPA government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the games were an opportunity to showcase the nation's potential but unfortunately the event got mired in issues that brought disrepute to the country). "Modi said.

He said the Commonwealth Games "brought a sense of despondency" in the governing system. On the other hand, the cumulative effect of G20 has been that of success in showcasing the nation's strength to the world, he said.

The Prime Minister underlined the accolades bestowed to the country for a successful hosting of the G20, and gave credit to

Delhi, what is the image formed in their minds? Those who are senior among you will remember the incident."

"In fact, it was an opportunity where our country could have created its own brand, its identity, showcased the potential of the country and its people, but unfortunately the event got mired in issues that brought disrepute to the country)," Modi said.

He said the Commonwealth Games "brought a sense of despondency" in the governing system. On the other hand, the cumulative effect of G20 has been that of success in showcasing the nation's strength to the world, he said.

The Prime Minister underlined the accolades bestowed to the country for a successful hosting of the G20, and gave credit to

the ground-level functionaries for its success. The PM asked the functionaries to document their experiences and lessons. A document, thus prepared, can help prepare useful guidelines for future events, he said. On the occasion, Modi interacted with Team G20 at Bharat Mandapam, wherein he asked the functionaries to sit informally and share experiences in their respective departments.

"I am not concerned with praises in editorials. For me, the real happiness lies in the fact that my country is now confident about hosting any such event in the best possible way," he said.

He mentioned India's contribution in rescue operations during calamities at a global level, such as after the earthquake in Nepal and cyclone in Fiji.

PM: Passage of women's Bill shows majority govt required for development

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi on Friday said the passage of the women's reservation Bill in Parliament proved that a majority government was required for taking the country forward. He was addressing women at the BJP central office.

Congratulating the women, Modi highlighted the measures taken by his government for women's empowerment. When the audience started chanting "*Modi hai to mumkin* (with Modi, it is possible)", the PM said he wanted to correct them: "All this was done not by Modi but by you. Our country elected a majority government. The vote you gave us helped us to complete important unfinished business." **ENS**

them in panchayats and municipal bodies. (The legislation for the same was envisaged by Rajiv Gandhi and passed by P V Narasimha Rao in 1992-93).

Meanwhile, as the OBC-dominant SP and RJD have changed their stance, the Congress is now backing an "OBC quota within the larger women's quota". All, though, voted for the Bill.

A lot of water has gone down the Ganga since 2010. Parties realise that women are fast emerging as a vote bank. Nitish Kumar, for instance, might not have won last time but for the support of women. Women have been an important vote bank of Modi as well, a constituency he is clear about consolidating. That is why, despite reservations about the Bill's timing and the "OBC factor", it was passed painlessly and unanimously, barring 2 MPs of the AIMIM.

Coming now to the demand for an OBC quota within women's quota that the parties in the Opposition INDIA alliance are demanding. The just-approved Bill provides for a quota for women within the SC-ST quota. But then, there is a provision for SC-ST quota in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, and no such provision for OBCs. The

quota for OBCs is only 27% reservation in government jobs (after the adoption of the Mandal Commission's report in 1990) and in educational institutions (brought in during Manmohan Singh's premiership).

If a quota is brought in for OBC women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies, what is to stop OBC men from demanding that they — indeed the backward classes — get reservation too, as provided for the SCs and STs? This could open Pandora's box.

Greater OBC representation, which is desirable, is anyway happening in a democracy that is devolving. It may be a good election slogan. But an OBC quota "within the quota", and its implications, need greater thought and more discussion.

What is becoming increasingly clear is this, and the women's reservation Bill has further underlined it: with both the government and the Opposition jostling to get their support, the OBCs are going to be the flavour of the 2024 polls.

Neeraja Chowdhury, Contributing Editor, The Indian Express, has covered the last 10 Lok Sabha elections. She is the author of the recently published How Prime Ministers Decide



Hardeep Singh Nijjar

Delhi and Ottawa, had entered Canada on a forged passport.

According to his dossier, prepared by the central intelligence agencies, Nijjar was associated with KCF militants in the 1980s and 1990s, and since 2012 he was closely associated with KTF chief Jagtar Singh Tara. "He escaped to Canada on a forged passport in 1996 after his name cropped up in terrorism cases. After reaching there, he started working as a truck driver and he later came in touch with

Pakistan-based Tara," source said.

"In April 2012, posing as a Baisakhi jatha member, Nijjar also visited Pakistan where he attended arms and explosives training for a fortnight. After returning to Canada, he started arranging funds for terror activities through his associates engaged in drugs and arms smuggling in Canada," the source said.

After reaching Canada, Nijjar planned with Tara a terror attack in India and raised a gang in Canada. They were imparted arms training in British Columbia. "In 2014, Nijjar planned to execute a terror attack on Dera Sacha Sauda headquarters in Haryana's Sirsa, but he could not reach India as he was denied visa," the source said.

Sanatan row: Udhayanidhi gets SC notice

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

THE SUPREME Court on Friday issued notice to Tamil Nadu minister and DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin and others over their remarks against Sanatan Dharma.

A Bench of Justices Aniruddha Bose and Bela M Trivedi, which was hearing a plea by Chennai-based lawyer B Jagannath, however, declined to tag it with similar pleas against hate speech pending before another Bench presided by Justice Sanjiv Khanna.

The Bench was initially inclined to ask the petitioner to approach the Madras HC. Advocate R Balaji, appearing for the petitioner, said there are already matters pending before the Supreme Court and that interim directions had been issued in the same.

Balaji drew the attention of the court to the Supreme Court order of April 28, 2023, which asked DGPs of all states to take suo motu action in cases of hate speech even if there is no complaint. The counsel pointed out that his petition was also on the "same subject of hate speech".

"When I go and complain, the state does not take action and on the other hand, arrests everybody who says it is wrong... Such rabble rousing speeches by constitutional authorities is impermissible," the counsel said.

Justice Bose sought to know about the speech that led to the April 28 order. The counsel ex-



Tamil Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin. File

plained that in that case people were accused of speaking ill against another religion.

The plea stated that on September 2, 2023, "a conference was held... in Chennai, with the heading 'Sanatana Dharma Eradication Conference' by an organisation called Tamil Nadu Murpoku Ezuthalar Sangam" and pointed out it was attended, besides Udhayanidhi, by TN Minister P K Sekar Babu, president of Dravida Kazhagam K Veeramani, TN Minorities Commission chief Peter Alphonse, VCK Member of Parliament Thol Thirumavalavan, DMK MP A Raja and CPI(M) MP Su Venkatesan.

The plea sought "order of injunction... restraining and forbearing Udhayanidhi Stalin, Peter Alphonse, A Raja and Thol Thirumavalavan and their followers" from making any further hate speech against Sanatan Dharma/Hinduism..."

Meanwhile, a court in Jammu ordered city SSP to probe contents of a complaint seeking registration of FIR against Udhayanidhi Stalin. The complaint was filed by Atul Raina, Pankaj Sharma and Nikhil Narayan who are members of the Ekam Sanatan Bharat Dal's Advocate Council.

(WITH ENS, JAMMU)

100% regret UPA did not bring quota within women's quota: Rahul

MANOJ CG

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

A DAY AFTER Parliament cleared the landmark legislation by the Modi government reserving 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies for women, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi expressed "regret" that the UPA government of the time had failed to include OBC sub-quota in its women's reservation Bill. The legislation, passed by the Rajya Sabha, had consequently failed to clear the Lok Sabha.

On Friday, Rahul was asked at a press conference whether he regretted the fact that reservation for women could have become a reality in 2010 had the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government brought in sub-quota for OBCs, as demanded by several parties at the time. He said: "100 per cent regret. We should have done it back then and we will get it done now."

Asked what had changed from 2010 to 2023, Rahul said: "We have not shifted our stand...



Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Friday. Anil Sharma

We are the party that did the caste census. We didn't release that at the time, there was internal discussion. We should have released that at the time and it should be released now, there is no change in our view on this."

Rahul's remarks on Friday were described by party leaders as "off the cuff". At the same time, they are being seen as part of the Congress's attempt to embrace social justice politics now, and correct the party's lasting mistake of ignoring the sizeable and influential OBC vote bank.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com



THE NEERJA CHOWDHURY COLUMN

Weekly insight into what's changing in national politics — and why

WITH THE passage of the women's reservation Bill in both its Houses, Parliament has made a commitment — and this is historic — to provide one-third reservation in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies to India's women.

The Bill links the reservation for women to the next Census and to the delimitation exercise which will follow it. So when do 181 seats for women (one-third of the current Lok Sabha strength of 543) become a political reality? That is the question which hangs unanswered. In 2029, the earliest it could happen? Or 2034, which is more likely? Or will it happen after that? The Bill sets no timeline, it only makes a promise, even if the promise is endorsed by Parliament.

When the Union Cabinet cleared the proposal earlier this week, there was a flurry of excitement over what was finally to be-

come possible after 27 years of prevarication and opposition to the legislation.

As the cold logic of the Bill's fine print began to sink in, it became clear that though Parliament had lent its approval to reservation for women, it could still be a long haul.

Why then did the Modi government go in for the Bill now? Given the challenges it is facing, was this another arrow pulled out of its quiver — to tell women that only Narendra Modi could bring about the long-awaited reservation for women, not the Congress that had failed to do so in the past? The BJP may have calculated that in sum, it had more to gain, and less to lose.

The Bill has seen a rocky ride, opposed during the tenure of several PMs. The day it was first introduced in the Lok Sabha in 1996, when H D Deve Gowda was PM, I was standing near the entrance of Parliament and heard a senior Congress leader tell his party MPs to go back home. If they went into the Lok Sabha where the Bill was going to be tabled, he said: "I will make sure you don't get a ticket next time." The leader did not want the quorum in the House to be completed.

Officially, many parties sup-

ported the Bill. But groups within these too opposed the legislation. Not because the MPs were anti-women; after all, many pro-women legislation had been cleared by Parliament. But they were worried about where the sword (of reservation for women) would fall, and whose seat would be covered by the quota. It was this uncertainty about their own seats which fuelled the opposition of many. This, then, has been the kernel of the problem and the real reason why the Bill did not see the light of day till now.

The Modi government has said it would let the Delimitation Commission earmark the seats to be reserved for women. Could the Delimitation Commission, when it redraws seats on the basis of Census data, create an additional number of constituencies so that seats could be more easily reserved for women? This was one of the suggestions that several committees went into over the years. A suggestion was also made for double-member constituencies.)

Extra seats are now also possible at a more practical level, given that the new Parliament accounts for a substantial expansion in the strength of the Houses.

EXPRESS NETWORK

Borlaug award winner’s fieldwork: How to close the tech gap and help farmers

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

“THERE ARE about 1,500 rice varieties that have been released or developed in India, but only 350-400 are indented by seed producers/suppliers. Even out of those, the demand is for hardly 50 varieties, with the rest just on paper and never hitting farmers’ fields,” says Swati Nayak, winner of this year’s Norman E Borlaug Award for Field Research and Application.

The 39-year-old recipient of the prestigious award of the World Food Prize Foundation is upfront about not being a plant breeder or geneticist. She completed a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University, Hyderabad in 2007, “but had no interest in taking up a masters or PhD and decided only to do something that was application-based”. Nayak’s work – as South Asia head for Seed System and Product Management at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) – has been on



Swati Nayak is credited with the successful dissemination and adoption of over 20 climate-resilient rice varieties

“technology scaling” or closing the gap between scientific knowledge and its practical application among farmers.

The varieties developed by public sector agricultural research institutions/universities are maintained as genetically pure “nucleus” or “breeder seeds”. The breeder seeds are multiplied in about 1:80 ratio into “foundation seeds” by the

National Seeds Corporation, State Farms Corporation of India and various state seed companies. The foundation seeds are further multiplied in a similar ratio, mostly on the farms of progressive growers, into “certified seeds”. It is the last that is commercially sown and saved from harvested grain by farmers.

“The early-generation (nucleus and breeder) seeds of any

new variety need to be available in sufficient quantity and on time to enable faster multiplication. This has to be accompanied by showcasing of the variety and evaluation under farmer-managed conditions, while involving all stakeholders (farmers, seed producers, dealers and extension workers). And we need to do these on scale for good varieties to reach farmers’ fields,” Nayak points out.

Currently, breeders and farm extension wings of the government “work in silos” and it is necessary to “integrate the two verticals,” she says.

Nayak – she did a masters from the Institute of Rural Management Anand and worked with the Integrated Tribal Development Agency at Seethampeta in Andhra Pradesh’s Srikakulam district, before joining IRRI in 2013 – is credited with the successful dissemination and adoption of more than 20 climate-resilient and bio-fortified rice varieties.

Among these are ‘Sahbhagi Dhan’, a drought-tolerant variety suitable for hilly uplands, and

‘BINA Dhan-11’, which is flood-tolerant. Nayak and her team formulated a strategy for introducing ‘Sahbhagi Dhan’ in the tribal belt of Odisha’s Mayurbhanj district, encompassing setting up demonstration plots, on-farm evaluation and seed production by women farmers. The cascading effect was borne out by ‘Sahbhagi Dhan’ becoming a much in-demand variety throughout Odisha.

‘BINA-Dhan-11’, which contains a submergence-tolerant Sub1 gene identified from an indigenous land race of Odisha, was a similar success story of adoption in Nayak’s home state as well as Assam. The Sub1 gene has been incorporated into many existing popular high-yielding varieties such as ‘Samba Mahsuri’, ‘Swarna’ and ‘Ranjit’. There are, likewise, other drought-tolerant varieties such as ‘DRR Dhan 42’ and ‘DRR Dhan 44’.

Taking all these varieties from lab to land – in a swift and equitable manner – is a challenge that Nayak has sought to address that few breeders have.



MAIDEN IAF AIRSHOW IN JAMMU

IAF personnel show their skills during an airshow held to mark Jammu Air Force Station’s diamond jubilee on Friday. *PTI*

■ The Indian Air Force in its maiden airshow on Friday enthralled spectators at the high security IAF station in Jammu. L-G Manoj Sinha was the chief guest at the event.

■ The event was organised jointly by the IAF and the UT administration to mark 76 years of accession of J&K into the Indian Union, and the diamond jubilee of the IAF Station.

■ The IAF base had come under attack on June 27, 2021, from terrorists who used drones to drop two IEDs. While one caused minor damage to a building, the other exploded in the open.

Badaun SDM removed for ‘slapping’ cement dealer during routine check

AMIT SHARMA
MEERUT, SEPTEMBER 22

THE BADAUN district administration in Uttar Pradesh has removed the Bilsi sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) for allegedly slapping a cement dealer during a routine check Wednesday night, officials said Friday.

The alleged incident was recorded in a CCTV camera and the video purportedly showing the officer, Jeet Singh Rai, slapping the 38-year-old cement dealer, Mohit Varshney, surfaced on social media.

Additional District Magistrate

(ADM) (Finance) Vijay Kumar Singh said, “We went through the video doing rounds on social media and after confirming the veracity of the incident, Rai has been removed and attached to the Badaun district headquarters without any charge. An inquiry by the ADM (administration) has also been ordered.”

SDM Rai, however, said the cement dealer “might have got slapped in utter confusion amid the chaos” at his shop.

After the incident, Varshney lodged a written complaint against the SDM at Bilsi police station Thursday evening and also on the UP Chief Minister’s

portal, attaching a video clip of the alleged incident.

Bilsi police station in-charge Praveen Singh told *The Indian Express* on the phone, “We have received the complaint and are investigating the charges the complainant has made against the officer. An FIR will be registered after the completion of our investigation.”

The incident took place nearly a week after the Bareilly district administration removed a SDM at Meerganj tehsil for allegedly making a 42-year-old man, who had approached his office with a complaint, squat in his office on September 15.

Weeks after UP woman cop attacked on train, ‘prime suspect’ killed in encounter

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, SEPTEMBER 22

IN A PURPORTED encounter in Ayodhya district, the Uttar Pradesh Police’s Special Task Force (STF) on Thursday night killed a 28-year-old man who they claimed was the prime suspect in a brutal attack on a policewoman aboard the Saryu Express train on August 29 and arrested his two associates after they were injured.

The woman head constable (40), who was found unconscious in a compartment of the train at the Ayodhya junction the next morning with injuries on her face, was travelling to join duty in Ayodhya.

The deceased has been identified as Anis Khan (28), a resident of Haiderganj in Ayodhya district, while those arrested are Vishambhar Dayal Dubey (45) of Sultanpur and Azad (30) of Haiderganj. Both Azad and Vishambhar are being treated at a hospital for bullet injuries.

The police said the three suspects have had a criminal past with charges of attempt to murder, robbery, and theft against them. They also face cases under the Cow Slaughter Act, Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, and the UP

Gangsters Act, it is learnt.

While Anis faced six cases, Azad has 12 and Vishambhar three, they added.

Special DGP (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said the three attacked and injured the constable after finding her alone in the compartment.

A senior STF official said, “During questioning, Azad said they shifted to another compartment at the Mankapur railway station and found the woman sleeping on a bench. They tried to snatch her bag but she woke up and slapped one of them. On this, they got infuriated and attacked her with blades they were carrying. They also smashed her head against a window of the train several times, rendering her unconscious.”

A joint team of the STF and the local police traced the assailants with the help of technical and human surveillance, he added. The probe team collected some photographs of the alleged assailants and showed it to the victim who identified them.

Ayodhya Superintendent of Police (SP) Raj Karan Nayyar said the accused opened fire when a team went to arrest them in the Inayat Nagar area of Ayodhya district. “The police fired in retaliation, leaving Azad and Dubey injured, while Anish managed to

escape. After a brief chase, the police traced him to the Pura Kalandar locality where he fired at them. But he was killed in the retaliatory firing,” the SP said.

A policeman also suffered a minor bullet injury in the cross-firing, he added.

The FIR in the case was registered under Sections 307 (attempt to murder) and 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to a public servant) of the Indian Penal Code. The police have added Sections 354-B (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe) and 394 (voluntarily causing hurt in committing robbery) against the accused.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the matter, the Allahabad High Court on September 3 served notices on the Centre and the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and ordered a thorough probe in the case.

The police had, at the time, claimed that medico-legal and forensic reports had not confirmed that the victim was sexually assaulted.

The STF had announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh for providing information about the people involved in the attack. The victim is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Lucknow and her condition is stated to be stable.

Calcutta HC relief to TMC MP: ED restrained from coercive action

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 22

IN A RELIEF to Trinamool Congress (TMC) second-in-command Abhishek Banerjee, the Calcutta High Court on Thursday directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to not initiate any “coercive action” against West Bengal’s ruling party MP in connection with the school jobs scam case. The single-judge bench of Justice Tirthankar Ghosh had earlier reserved the orders on Banerjee’s petition against the ongoing proceedings against him in the case being investigated by the CBI and the ED under the High Court supervision.

Last month, the ED conducted a raid at Leaps & Bounds, a company where Banerjee is



Abhishek Banerjee

chief executive officer (CEO), claiming the entity has links with the school jobs scam.

The bench, however, did not quash the enforcement case information report (ECIR), the equivalent of an FIR, filed by the ED against Banerjee. It also said that the probe against Banerjee into alleged irregularities in the recruitment of teachers in government and government-sponsored schools will continue. The evidence produced by the central agency is not sufficient to warrant the arrest of Banerjee, the court said. — **WITH PTI INPUTS**

SUSPICION OF LINKS TO MAOISTS ‘Accusation shocking’: 25 activist bodies write to Jharkhand DGP

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, SEPTEMBER 22

EXPRESSING ‘SHOCK and sadness’ upon hearing that Jharkhand Police would conduct an inquiry into 64 organisations, including theirs, on suspicion of links to CPI (Maoist), more than 25 civil rights bodies in Jharkhand submitted a letter to the state’s Director General of Police, Thursday. The letter questioned the ‘intention’ of the police and the factual basis upon which such a list was being prepared.

Some organisations which

were signatories, include Jharkhand Janadikhikar Mahasabha, which has development economist Jean Dreze as its member, NREGA Watch, Adivasi Women’s Network and People’s Union for Civil Liberties.

“We all signatories, who are part of the list, are shocked by the news. The organisations have been continuously fighting for constitutional rights of tribals, Dalits, backward classes, minorities and deprived people of the state...” the letter said, and in this context, the accusations are equivalent to questioning the very concept of their rights.

UP hospital licence cancellation arbitrary, reconsider, Varun Gandhi writes to Deputy CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, SEPTEMBER 22

DAYS AFTER the UP Health Department suspended the licence of the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Amethi following the death of a 22-year-old woman in a case of alleged medical negligence, BJP MP from Pilibhit Varun Gandhi on Friday expressed concern over the development and termed the action as “arbitrary”.

He also requested the state government to reconsider its decision, initiate an “impartial” inquiry and ensure that the hospital can continue functioning to provide critical healthcare services to the people of the state.

In a letter to Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, who also holds portfolio of Medical Health, Gandhi wrote, “While acknowledging the gravity of the recent incident involving alleged medical negligence, it is essential to approach this matter with a sense of proportionality and fairness. Tragic events can unfold in any healthcare facility, regardless of ownership. Suspending the hospital’s licence without allowing for comprehensive, impartial investigation appears to be a rushed and potentially unjust action.”

“You cannot cancel the licence of a hospital which is more used than a district hospital in that particular area simply because of the negligent action of one doctor,” Gandhi said.

House panel wants monuments list pruned: Some not important

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 22

CENTRALLY PROTECTED monuments should be categorised on the basis of their national significance and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) should be split into two wings for a more effective functioning, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture has said.

The views of the panel, chaired by YSR Congress MP V Vijayasai Reddy, are in alignment with that of the Government, which, as reported by *The Indian Express* earlier, plans to reintroduce a Bill seeking to “redefine monuments and rationalise the use of area around the protected monuments”.

According to sources, by

bringing the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) (Amendment) Bill, the Government aims to effect a change in the current benchmark of a structure having to be at least 100 years old to be listed as a monument. The Government, the sources added, believes that most of the current monuments are from the British-era despite India having a vast wealth of more ancient structures. The relook on the monuments is in line with the Government’s aim to rid India of its ‘colonial past’, as announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at various events to mark Amrit Kaal or 75 years of Independence.

The Standing Committee’s report – Three Hundred Fifty Ninth Report on Functioning of Archaeological Survey of India –

EXPLAINED

Showcasing rich heritage

THE HOUSE panel recommendations on monuments are in consonance the view of the Government, which is making efforts to showcase India’s rich past and believes the country has more than British-era structure to show.

was presented in the Rajya Sabha and laid on the table of the Lok Sabha Thursday.

Highlighting “problems” with the list of centrally protected monuments, the report observed that it includes a large

number of “minor monuments” and recommended it be “rationalised and categorised” on the basis of the national significance, unique architectural and heritage value.

The graves in Kumta are of public works department engineer John Albert Cope (died in 1880) and Henry Gassen (died 1877), an employee of a cotton ginning company. “It is estimated that this applies to at least a quarter of the current list of 3,691 monuments. The list, for instance, includes 75 graves of colonial-era soldiers or officials of no notable importance,” the report said.

Citing a lack of clarity in the guidelines for preservation and a delay in classification, the report also noted that, till date, 531 monuments, or 14.4 per cent of ASI’s total 3,691 centrally protected monuments, have been

encroached. And since 2015, it said, only nine of these monuments were cleared of encroachment. “The committee recommends that ASI should conduct a comprehensive survey of encroachments around all monuments under its jurisdiction and document the nature, extent and impact of encroachments on each site to create a database for informed decision-making in this regard,” the report said.

On the functioning of ASI, the panel advised that the organisation be divided into two wings – Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the India Heritage Development Corporation (IHDC) – to make it effective. While the new ASI, it said, can look after the core mandate, i.e. exploration, excavation and conservation aspects, the IHDC can deal with the ASI’s entire revenue.



At present, structures at least 100 years old are listed as monuments. *Archive*