



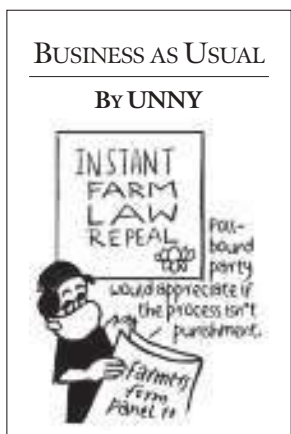
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SHAH TO GEHLOT: WHO IS TOPPLING YOUR GOVT **P7**

ANGUISHED OVER UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT, SAYS HOME MINISTER SHAH

Nagaland: 14 civilians killed by forces; soldier dies of injuries as violence erupts

Govt names SIT; mistaken identity probable cause: officials

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, DECEMBER 5

SIX CIVILIANS, said to be workers in a coal mine, were killed in an ambush by security forces in an area between Tiru and Oting village in Nagaland's Mon district while returning home in a vehicle Saturday evening. The incident triggered violence in the area Saturday night and late Sunday afternoon, in which eight more civilians (seven on Saturday, and one Sunday) were killed after security forces allegedly opened fire.

A soldier succumbed to injuries in the violence Saturday night, and several others were severely injured, said the Army's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Bodies of the 14 who were killed, in Mon district Sunday. Six of them were coal mine workers. **PTI**

MORE REPORTS P7

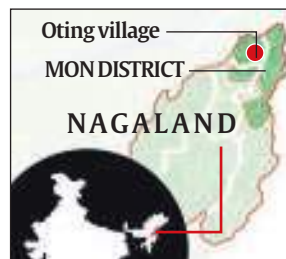
Deep regret, says Army, announces court of inquiry and action

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

THE KILLING of six civilians travelling in a vehicle in Nagaland's Mon district Saturday is being investigated "at the highest level", the Army said, while expressing deep regret and ordering a Court of Inquiry into the incident.

Officials in the security establishment said the incident was the result of an Army operation in which the victims may have been mistaken for insurgents

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

TRAGEDY AND TRUST
Action based on fair probe is the way to earn trust — and keep peace. **PAGE 12**

Ahead of polls, new idea on the table: bad bank for farm loans

SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

TO IMPROVE recovery of bad loans in the agriculture sector, leading banks have made a pitch for setting up an Asset Reconstruction Company specifically to deal with collections and recovery of farm loans.

At present, there is neither a unified mechanism to tackle Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in the farm sector nor a single law that deals with enforcement of mortgages created on agricultural land. Agriculture being a state subject, the recovery laws — wherever

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED

ARC better than waiver?

GIVEN HOW farm loan waivers have become a political tool to alleviate farmer distress, bankers are now pushing for an Asset Reconstruction Company instead to deal with bad loans in the agriculture sector.

In hockey's conveyor belt of talent, World Cup to bring a whole new city

MIHIR VASAVDA
ROURKELA, DECEMBER 5

"NEVER, NEVER even in my imagination."

It's been two years since Rourkela was announced as the co-host of the 2023 Hockey World Cup but 2000 Olympian Lazarus Barla still

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Work on the 21,000-seat stadium. **Mihir Vasavda**



"Intimacy between the two countries such... whatever India will ask will be positively looked at"

NAOR GILON
ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO INDIA

PAGE 11

Michel signed 'sham contracts' to hide trail of Agusta kickbacks: ED

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

SEVERAL "SERVICE contracts" signed between British middleman Christian Michel and his main client AgustaWestland were "sham contracts" to camouflage alleged kickbacks from the Rs 3,600-crore helicopter deal in India, according to docu-

MIDDLEMAN SPEAKS
AN EXPRESS SERIES
PART - 3

ments submitted in court by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

In its prosecution complaint, the agency said that these were meant to "create a legal facade and to route the kickbacks" under these agreements. And "create a smokescreen" between these contracts and the chopper

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Was offered money, cabinet berth to join BJP, says Bhagwant Mann

MANAMAN SINGH CHHINA
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 5

AAP MLA and Punjab President of the party Bhagwant Mann on Sunday alleged that he was offered money and a Union cabinet berth by a very senior BJP leader as enticement to join the party.

Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, Mann also alleged that the BJP was trying to poach MLAs of AAP in Punjab and that similar allurement have been made to them too.

"I was approached by a very senior BJP leader who asked me what amount of money I would take to join BJP. He also said that since I was the lone MP of AAP, my joining BJP will not attract anti-defection law and I will be offered a cabinet berth of my choice at the Centre," Mann said.

The two-time Lok Sabha MP from Sangrur in Punjab added that he declined the offer saying



During a press conference on Sunday. **Express**

that he was "on a mission and not commission". He said he had brought up AAP in Punjab through blood and sweat and that he will not abandon the party.

"BJP has no stature in Punjab. Its leaders are not allowed to even enter the villages due to the three farm laws that it enacted

and which resulted in the death of more than 700 farmers. No one who has the future of Punjab on his mind will join a party which caused the death of so many people in Lakhimpur Kheri," he said.

Mann added that further revelations will be made later. "Our

MLAs and office bearers have also been approached by BJP. The press conference will reveal more facts," he said.

When asked to name the BJP leader who made him the offer to join the party, Mann said that he will do so in due course of time. "BJP has been doing this in other states such as MP, Karnataka, Goa and Meghalaya. They think they can do this in Punjab too. They claim to have broken up Congress also. These are very bad signs in a democracy if parties are sought to be broken through money power," he said.

Meanwhile, Jivan Gupta, state general secretary of BJP dismissed Mann's allegations as a figment of his imagination. "These allegations are just an attempt by Bhagwant Mann to increase his own importance in AAP. Lately, he has been sidelined in AAP and therefore he has resorted to such wild allegations against BJP," said Gupta.

In MP, experts meet today on surge in human-elephant conflict

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

IRAM SIDDIQUE
BHOPAL, DECEMBER 5

JUST 11 years after the first elephant sighting was recorded in Madhya Pradesh, a seven-member committee of wildlife experts will hold a two-day meeting in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve starting Monday to look for ways to address what officials say is a growing problem of man-elephant conflict. The state recorded a new high of nearly 110 elephants this year.

After Chhattisgarh was carved out over two decades ago, Madhya Pradesh had only seven elephants in 2017, according to official estimates. In 2018, the state became home to a herd of 40 elephants that settled in the tiger reserve — the herd's count today is 42. This year, another herd of 40 elephants was sighted



Madhya Pradesh recorded nearly 110 elephants this year, and a rise in human-elephant conflicts. **Express**

in Anuppur, apart from 14 elephants in Mandla and 12 in Sidhi.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Alok Kumar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), said: "In Madhya Pradesh, records of the first sighting of elephants began in 2010. Back then, hardly one or two elephants were spotted. But over the years, especially since

2017, their numbers have gone up significantly."

According to Kumar, the rise in elephant numbers has led to the need to find ways to avoid human-elephant conflict, leading to the formation of the committee. Known as a tiger state, the increasing number of elephants has also led to the first census of the animal being con-

ducted in the state. India is home to nearly 60 per cent of the world's population of 50,000 Asian elephants.

Apart from Alok Kumar, Madhya Pradesh's committee of experts include D Sukumar, an elephant management expert from Bangalore; BS Annigeri, the field director of Bandhavgarh reserve; Abhilash Khandekar from the state wildlife board, and representatives of Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM).

The committee was set up on a recommendation from Khandekar after several instances of forest fires were reported in the tiger reserve last year. Forest officials suspect that some of these fires were sparked by villagers to ward off animals, including elephants.

"Elephants are tracing their genetic memory and looking for a safe habitat through their old corridors. In situations when their habitat is threatened, they

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under BASERA Scheme in Mission Mode**

(12,428 P-Cards approved. 9,704 P-Cards already distributed.
More than 80000 families to benefit in a year)

OTHER PATH BREAKING DECISIONS

**Future electricity bills of water-supply schemes for
Urban Areas to be paid by the Government**

**Arrears of Water Supply and Sewerage user charges for domestic connections including
interest and penalty pending upto October 2021 in Urban Areas are waived off
(More than 25 Lac families given a relief of approx. Rs.700 Cr)**

**Monthly Water-Supply Charges for Urban water-supply connections
reduced to Rs.50 from existing Rs.105-140**

All urban Households with piped water supply to benefit

**Monthly Water-Service Charges for water-supply connections in PUDA
areas reduced to Rs.50**

**Reduced rate of interest on enhancement amount of allottees of
improvement trusts from 15% p.a. to 7.5% p.a.**

**OTS for settlement of non-compoundable violations in
buildings constructed in Municipal Areas**

CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY 2021

UT Admin issues C&D waste draft rules

Any illegal dumping can now be fined at Rs 5,500 per vehicle, dumping the unprocessed waste

HINA ROHTAKI
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 5

THE CHANDIGARH administration on Sunday issued the draft policy of construction and demolition (C&D) waste management, wherein it was specified that any illegal dumping of C&D waste can now be fined at Rs 5500 per vehicle dumping the unprocessed waste.

The new policy, termed Chandigarh Construction and Demolition Waste Management Policy 2021, also states that the rate of fine will be increased by Rs 500 annually on April 1, with the SDE/JE of the road wing/enforcement inspectors of the Chandigarh civic body being the authority to issue such challans.

The new policy defines a waste generator as any person or association of persons or institution, residential and commercial establishments — including Indian Railways, airport, defence establishments — who undertake the construction of or demolition of any civil structure which generate construction and demolition waste.

The policy defines bulk waste generators as people or groups or institutions, residential and commercial establishments who undertake the construction of or demolition of any civil structure which generate construction and demolition waste of more than 20 tonnes in a day or 300 tonnes or more per project in a month.

The policy defines construction and demolition waste as "waste generated from building material, debris and rubble resulting from construction, remodeling, repair, and demolition of any structure".

The policy also mentioned that all government departments — such as Chandigarh civic body, UT engineering department, Chandigarh Housing Board, and

UT Adviser Dharam Pal during a visit at the C&D plant in August. *File*

other boards/corporations/undertakings in the city — were to ensure that all contractors and maintenance staff use processed material as well as its byproducts made from recycled aggregates, such as kerbs, channels, pavement tile/paver for their works allotted to contractors by including the requisite conditions in tender documents.

However, in the case of the non-availability of processed materials at a C&D plant, a non-availability certificate is to be obtained before purchasing material from the open market.

AIM OF POLICY

The aim of the new policy, officials said, was to ensure implementation of the C&D Waste Management Rules, 2016, issued by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and levy fines to enforce laws, penalties etc. for reuse of recycled/processed waste to save mining and environment.

DUTIES OF WASTE GENERATORS

The policy states that every waste generator (bulk and non-bulk) shall prima-facie be responsible for the collection, segregation (into four streams — concrete, steel, wood

and plastics, and bricks & mortar) and storage of construction and demolition waste generated. Also, every waste generator shall segregate construction and demolition waste up to the size of 1ft without reinforcement.

Waste generators will also ensure silt content is not more than 10% in the C&D waste. In case silt content increases beyond 10%, then the quantity of allowable processed material that a generator/producer can take will be reduced to 30% instead of 50% of the charges paid.

It was also mentioned that every waste generator will dump the C&D waste only at the waste processing plant presently located at Industrial Area Phase-I, Chandigarh or any other location specified in future, either by their own conveyance or by requesting machinery from Municipal Corporation Chandigarh by paying the requisite charges. All demolition contractors/agencies and C&D carriage contractors have to self register themselves online with the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation to be eligible for carrying out demolition and/or transporting of C&D waste.

The policy states that no hazardous waste coming out of the demolition/ construction site is

to be mixed with C&D waste and such waste shall be segregated and disposed by producer/generator as per guidelines of the Municipal Corporation Chandigarh Solid Waste Management Bylaws, 2018.

DUTIES BY CHANDIGARH MC

The duties of Chandigarh civic body, too, have been defined in the new policy.

The Municipal Corporation Chandigarh has already developed a major site for storage/stacking and processing of construction & demolition waste at Industrial Area Phase-I, wherein screening of such waste, crushing of coarse material into different types of aggregates and their separation by screening and washing will be carried out to produce recycled materials and its byproducts. The recycled materials and their by-products will be issued/sold to public/government organisations at reasonable rates so that mining requirements can be reduced by the civic body by use of recycled material. The rates will be specified from time to time by Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh.

LEVY OF PROCESSING CHARGES

According to the new policy,

transportation should be done by every waste generator/producer by sending the generated waste to the designated site at the Industrial Area of Phase-I at their own cost. Or they may call on the toll-free number for requesting machinery from Chandigarh Municipal Corporation for collection of segregated C&D waste after paying specified charges. There will be fixed charges for the first 5km of linear road distance (as per Google Maps) from collection point to C&D waste processing plant, with additional charges per km for distance beyond 5 Kms to be specified by the civic body.

WHAT IS HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous waste has been defined by the policy as waste which by reason of any of its physical, chemical, reactive, toxic, flammable, explosive, or corrosive characteristics causes danger or is likely to cause danger to health or environment, whether alone or when in contact with other wastes or substances.

CHARGES LEVIED BY PRODUCER FOR CONSTRUCTION WORK

Residents/commercial establishments/private institutions who are going to re-construct their houses/buildings shall be charged a C&D waste processing costs/charges of Rs 170 per square metre of total covered area of all floors to be demolished.

For new construction, the charges have been set at Rs 20 per square metre of the total proposed covered area of all floors to be constructed at the time of approval of Building Plan from Estate Office UT Chandigarh/Municipal Corporation Building Branch. Rates shall be increased by 10% annually on base rate on April 1 every year.

MAN BOOKED FOR ASSAULTING, SEXUALLY HARASSING WOMAN IN KHARAR

Mohali: Kharar police booked a Bassi Pathana resident for allegedly beating two women with stones and sexually harassing them.

The accused has not yet been arrested. The complainant told the police that Nandan Sharma, a resident of Bassi Pathana had on November 24 attacked her and her two friends with stones.

She further said that she and her friends were injured in the process. Kharar (city) police have registered a case against Nandan Sharma under section 354 (sexual harassment), 323 (assault) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Police officials said that the accused had first abused the complainant following which the brawl had taken place.

The official added that the accused assaulted her two friends, when they tried to intervene. **ENS**

Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Mansukh Mandaviya (third from right), along with Cabinet Minister Anurag Thakur (with shawl) at PGI, Chandigarh. Mandaviya assured quick redressal of administrative bottlenecks at PGI. *Express*

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

BJP wants local faces for Mohali contest

JAGDEEP SINGH DEEP
MOHALI, DECEMBER 5

WITH THE BJP deciding to contest elections from all the Assembly seats this time, it has started looking for candidates in Mohali. This is the first time that the BJP will contest the elections alone in the constituency.

After the repeal of three controversial farm laws, the local leaders of the party have heaved a sigh of relief. Now the party is looking for a local candidate to reach out to the local population.

According to sources, the party could consider the names of former District Planning Committee chairperson and former Union minister Balwant Singh Ramoowali's daughter Amanjot Kaur Ramoowalia who had joined the party three months ago.

"She is local and has already worked in the constituency when she was the chairperson. Her name could be considered for the

candidature from Mohali. It is too early to say anything as the top party leadership is discussing the seat-sharing arrangements with other people. But yes there are some candidates, likely local, who could be fielded," a source said.

City-based businessman Sanjeev Vashisht has already started meeting people and attending local functions to present himself as a potential candidate.

Sources said that if the seat goes in the BJP's kitty, a party's senior leader could also be fielded but the party's former municipal councillors have demanded fielding a local candidate.

"Congress always had an edge over its rivals as it always fielded a local candidate. SAD and AAP failed to do that. It is one of the reasons that the Congress managed to win the seat twice. Our party does not want to repeat the same mistake," said a party insider.

The BJP and SAD were in alliance in the state and the SAD used to contest from Mohali.

Shashi Shankar Tiwari extends support to BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 5

PRESIDENT OF Purvanchal Vikas Mahasangh and former general secretary of Chandigarh Congress, Shashi Shankar Tiwari extended his support to the BJP here on Sunday.

Tiwari accused the Congress of betraying him. Other rebels present with him also attacked the local Congress president Subhash Chawla and vice president DD Jindal and strongly condemned them "for promoting nepotism and dynasty."

Tiwari said that he worked diligently for the party and was active in resolving the problems of the people on behalf of the party but Congress rejected all his contributions.

Shashi Shankar Tiwari accused the Congress of betraying him

Harsh winter can increase heart-related complications: Experts warn in new study

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 5

A RECENT study has shown that death rates from cardiovascular diseases increase dramatically as cold weather sets in.

In a health advisory, Dr Arun Kochar, senior consultant of the cardiology department of Fortis Hospital, Mohali, said, "During winters, our heart makes minor adjustments so that normal physiological body processes may continue without hindrance. However, this is also a time when cold weather may cause catastrophic health events, such as stroke or heart attacks. Every one-degree Celsius drop in temperature is associated with a 0.49% increase in deaths, particularly from circulatory causes."

WINTER AND HEART DISEASE

The reason for the higher incidence of heart attacks is poorly understood, doctors said. It may be due to cold-induced narrowing of heart blood vessels leading to less supply to the heart muscle. It has also been shown that blood pressure has an inverse relation to environmental temperature. During winters, the blood pressure increases, thereby making the heart work harder to pump the same amount of blood. Any unaccustomed exercise can put a strain on the heart, triggering a heart attack.

THE CLOT THICKENS

Generally, people believe that during winters, there is a surge in cases of common cold and flu. However, winter mornings are also notorious for the unusually high occurrence of heart attacks as well. Deaths from heart disease, including sudden deaths, tend to increase

rapidly at the onset of winters and peak around New Year's Day. The risk of having a heart attack during the winter months is twice as high as during the summers, studies have shown. Furthermore, a heart attack in winter is also more likely to be fatal than a heart attack during any other time of the year. Studies have shown that heart attacks and complications related to heart disease occur more frequently in the morning hours during the winter months. Research suggests that the early-morning rise in blood pressure or 'morning surge' that occurs in most people may dramatically increase the risk of having a heart attack. Additionally, there is sympathetic hormonal imbalance during the morning hours leading to the enhanced predisposition for heart attacks. Many times enhanced consumption of high-calorie food and alcohol binges also trigger such events.

Finally, it is believed that there is an augmentation in respiratory infections during the winters, which are now being increasingly associated with heart attacks. All these pathological changes can lead to the formation of a dense clot blocking the arteries of the heart and brain.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

It is advisable to withhold strenuous exercise during winter mornings. One should wear warm clothing to protect oneself from the many hazards of a cold wave. More layers of clothing during the winter trap the air and forms a protective insulation. Wearing a protective head and ear gears are beneficial as much of the body's heat is lost from here, making the body vulnerable to cold injury. People who have multiple risk factors for heart disease should first consult their cardiologist for optimisation of treatment.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MOHALI, DECEMBER 5

THE DISTRICT administration has decided to issue the challans to those not wearing face masks, Monday onwards. The decision was taken apprehending the increase in the number of Covid-19 cases.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Isha Kalra said that she had instructed the health department and the district police to strictly enforce the Covid-19 guidelines.

A senior police officer said that in the past few months they did not issue the challans for not wearing the masks. But from Monday onwards, the police teams will issue challans in case people were found without masks.

The district remained a hotspot of Covid-19 infection in the last two waves of the pandemic and the administration this time did not want to take any

In the past few months, Mohali police have not not issued challans for people not wearing the masks. *File*

chance. "The district is bordering other states like Haryana and Himachal Pradesh (HP), it is important to impose the restrictions strictly," the officer added.

Mohali was a hotspot of infection in the last two waves of the pandemic

Jeanneret – the man behind Chandigarh chair and buildings that educate

Making of CHANDIGARH

DR. SANGEETA BAGGA

CHANDIGARH WITH its elements, buildings, signage and elements resonates today the principles of simplicity, eye for detail and modest ingenious solutions that Pierre Jeanneret devised to complex problems.

"L'architecture Corbu à Chandigarh ne serait peut-être pas sans Pierre". (Without Pierre, Corbu's architecture in Chandigarh might never have been). There can't be a better tribute to Pierre Jeanneret, the Chief Architect of the Panjab Capital Project from 1951-1965, by none other than Le Corbusier himself. Having learnt precision from his father, a surgeon and having served in a baking company himself, the Swiss born Pierre was a simple, unpretentious humane



Pierre Jenneret at his office at Panjab University; and (right) PGIMER's construction began in 1960s commissioned by Pratap Singh Kairon and Jawahar Lal Nehru.

being who was also the first Principal of the Chandigarh College of Architecture.

Established in 1961, the CCA served as a laboratory to train architects who would carry forward the legacy of modern city planning not only in Chandigarh but new townships in the country. December 4, marks his 54th death anniversary, and the city with its

elements, buildings, signage and elements resonates today the principles of simplicity, eye for detail and modest ingenious solutions that Pierre Jeanneret devised to complex problems.

As an educator, he led by practice, using his mornings to develop the city fabric alongside the architect couple Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry assisted by a host of



Indian architects. In the late afternoons, he would engage in site work and decision making at the Panjab University for the Administration building, the library, and the Gandhi Bhawan which was closest to his heart. He spoke to the contractors, engineers and others through drawings, woodcut and metal models, which led to the development of a strong work ethic in the architecture department that is seen in the form of large-scale wall models of

the city in most public buildings, libraries, and institution foyers etc. even today.

As the Chief Architect, he oversaw the construction of housing, elementary and high schools, colleges, libraries, healthcare and markets for 15 years.

Pierre embraced the culture of undivided Punjab, the mother state of Chandigarh's citizens. Where work stopped and leisure began is difficult to ascertain, for Pierre spent his free time building

boats at the boat club, weaving durries, crafting utilitarian furniture, patio lights, hammocks and lampshades in his garden along with Bansi, his cook-cum-helper and close confidante. His weekend trips to Nangal, Talwara and the Bhakra dam site were as if to seek inspiration from the hinterland. And a close examination of the motifs in the city's architecture show that he took cues from these.

The Pierre Jeanneret archive housed at the Canadian Centre for Architecture also known as the CCA Montreal, Canada consists of a repository of over 700 drawings, photographs, personal letters, sketches donated by his niece Jacqueline Jeanneret from Geneva where Pierre returned in 1965 after leaving Chandigarh. This author was invited to review the archive as a native of Chandigarh and develop a critical essay on selections from the archive. While working at the CCA subterranean vaults on the Pierre archival documents, the amazing collection re-

vealed among other facts that Pierre possessed more than seven cameras at a time and alongside SD Sharma and Jit Malhotra, who were young apprentices working on the city, he would create the Camera Lucida—a series of frames to view the buildings from outside, inside and vice versa.

I was awestruck by Pierre's eye for detail, revealed in the subjects that he chose to photograph, be it the Gandhi Bhawan, or the Government Museum and Art Gallery. I came across 6-7 images of the same building or scene with slight variation in angles, light quality and distance of the clicks, and then the same from the interior viewing the outside. All of this were achieved through primitive, hand held and manually focussed black and white cameras that heightened the quality of the photographs even more.

This showed how the 'inside to outside to inside' experience was important and contributed to the creation of Chandigarh's buildings.



His concern for the minutest detail is revealed by the innumerable models made for the Gandhi Bhawan—the jewel in the crown for Panjab University. The pin-wheel shaped tripartite structure is the only white pebble panel clad building rising from a water pool and contrasts against the red sandstone buildings around it.

The writer is the principal of Chandigarh College of Architecture. This article is part of the fortnightly series by faculty and students of the Chandigarh College of Architecture on 'The Making of Chandigarh' in collaboration with the Le Corbusier Pierre Jeanneret Forum.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Chandigarh



Jamnalal Bajaj
(1889 - 1942)

As a young man, he renounced his claim to the family wealth. He was among the very few businessmen who incurred British wrath for supporting the freedom movement; the only one who renounced the titles of 'Honorary Magistrate' and 'Rai Bahadur'; the social reformer who walked his talk - abolishing the purdah system in his own home, opening the doors of his family-owned temple to 'Dalits' - the first temple in India to be so opened; the freedom fighter who suffered protracted jail terms, the 'Merchant Prince' who lived a lower middle class life, the humble spirit who gave himself completely to the freedom movement - mind, body and soul. He was adopted by Gandhiji as his 'fifth son'.



Jankidevi Bajaj
(1893 - 1979)

She followed her husband Jamnalalji's footsteps. She discarded orthodox customs like 'purdah' and untouchability and worked all her life for promoting Gandhian values. She participated in the freedom movement and suffered imprisonment. She actively participated in the Bhoodan Movement and enunciated the 'Koopdan'. Government of India honoured her with Padma Vibhushan in 1956. Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation instituted, in 1980, a special award in her memory for women workers for Outstanding Contribution to the Development & Welfare of Women and Children.

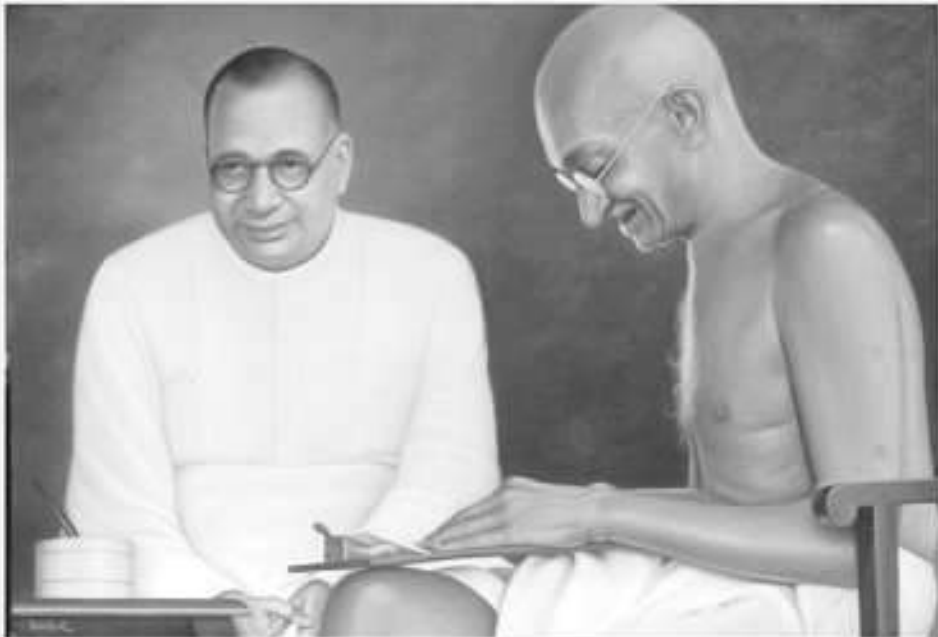


Rahul Bajaj
Chairman, Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation

Capitalism has its flaws, Communism is virtually discredited and democracy is yielding inadequate outcomes. We can see a decline in civility and the rise of crass behaviour, a self-centred "me-myself" society. Minds, as much as economies, seem to be closing. At such times, I derive hope and strength from three quarters. First, from the sagacity of our civilisation. We have many ideas, especially "dharma" that can guide us. Second, the spirit of ordinary people. Their aspiration and drive to improve their lot. Third, from exemplars who pursue the common good, "sarvodaya". Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation is essentially looking for such exemplars, and it is very heartening to find so many of them.



JAMNALAL BAJAJ FOUNDATION Honours the Gandhian 'Warriors'



"Whenever I wrote of wealthy men becoming trustees of their wealth for the common good, I always had this merchant prince principally in mind."

- Mahatma Gandhi in Harijan, 14-3-1942



Inauguration of the Foundation (4 November, 1977):
(l-r) Justice M. Hidayatullah, Ramkrishna Bajaj, Moraji Desai,
Acharya Kripalani & Dr. Srinannarayan

CHIEF GUEST



Nobel Peace Laureate
Shri Kailash Satyarthi
Founder, Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation

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Rajiv Gandhi, Swami Ranganathananda, Dr. Herbert
Schambeck, C. Subramaniam, K. R. Narayanan, Pandurang
Shastri Athavale, HH Dalai Lama, H. D. Deve Gowda,
Manohar Joshi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Dr. P. C. Alexander,
Krishan Kant, Dr. Manmohan Singh, Bhairon Singh
Shekhawat, Viren J. Shah, Dr. L. M. Singhvi, Prof. Amartya Sen,
N. R. Narayana Murthy, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Hamid Ansari,
Swami Baba Ramdev, Pratibha Patil, Morari Bapu, Dr. Justice C.
S. Dharmadhikari, Pranab Mukherjee, Kailash Satyarthi,
Rajmohan Gandhi, Arun Jaitley, M. Venkaiah Naidu and
Sadhguru

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Constructive
Work



Shri Dharampal Saini
Chhattisgarh
Founder of Mata Rukhmani Sewa Sansthan through life skills training and education spreads the teachings of Gandhiji and Vinobha Bhave. His selfless contribution to transform the lives of the courageous girls of Bastar is exemplary.



Award for
Application of
Science and
Technology for
Rural Development



Dr. Lal Singh
Himachal Pradesh
Set up Himalayan Research Group to strengthen the livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, and overall development of rural mountain communities with application of need based technology models in different parts of the North Western Indian Himalayan Region.



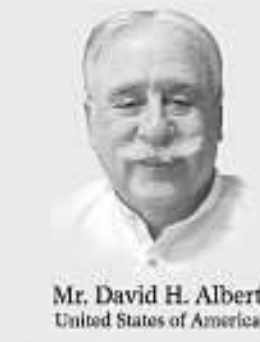
Award for
Development
and Welfare of
Women and
Children



Sister Lucy Kurien
Maharashtra
Set up Maher in 1997, to provide safe haven for destitute women, abandoned children, men and the old and aged people. Since inception has provided care and shelter to more than 5000 children and 5900 women.



Award for
Promoting
Gandhian
Values Outside
India



Mr. David H. Albert
United States of America
David Albert co-founded Friendly Water for the World to propagate social technology, making it conceivable for communities in sub-Saharan Africa to revive themselves through asset-based community development, community engagement, and longer-term empowerment.



Kamalnayan Bajaj
(1915 - 1972)

Jamnalalji's elder son. A man who was brought up by three great souls - father Jamnalal Bajaj, mentor Mahatma Gandhi and kulguru Vinoba Bhave. He endeavoured to fulfil his father's wish to put into practice Gandhiji's theory of trusteeship. He founded Jamnalal Bajaj Sewa Trust and extended help to many causes like education, medical care and famine and flood relief. He was an original thinker and a maverick; a capitalist with a social outlook and a politician with a conscience. He fueled the industrialisation of a free India and the spirit behind her quest for self reliance.



Ramkrishna Bajaj
(1923 - 1994)

Jamnalalji's second son who continued to keep alive the memory of Jamnalalji as a social worker par excellence. He was among the founders of the Council for Fair Business Practices. He set up, on behalf of the family, Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation to fulfil the ideals for which Jamnalalji had dedicated his life and promote the kind of constructive activities in which he himself was deeply involved during his life time.



Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, FRS
Chairman, Council of Advisors

Our awards carry a great prestige, great value, not just the monetary one, but the value that is associated with the very name of Jamnalal Bajaj. The Gandhian values are even more important today. We celebrate all our illustrious 2021 awardees. We salute not only their inspiring life and work but also the way, with amazing perseverance and passion, they have pursued a noble purpose, creating a better world for all with timeless Gandhian values.

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EXPRESS NETWORK

Nagaland killing puts question mark on peace talks

Insurgent groups condemn action, call it 'black day' for Nagas

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

THE INCIDENT at Oting village in Nagaland's Mon district may have an impact on the Naga peace talks, with sources saying that the groups negotiating with the Centre may be under pressure to hold back to reflect public anger over the killing.

"This is not a Nagaland Police operation, where the state government elected by the people can be held responsible and where local police personnel would be involved. This is an Indian Army operation gone horribly wrong. It will give credence to the longstanding narrative of India versus Naga people. It goes on to strengthen the hands of insurgent groups, even if temporarily. It will require rather deft handling from the Centre, beginning with quick and visible action against those responsible," a senior security establishment officer told *The Indian Express*.

While the Centre has been wooing various factions of the NSCN for long, over the past couple of years the government has managed to bring quite a few groups opposed to talks to the negotiating table. These include groups led by Khango Konyak and Niki Sumi, which were both once part of the anti-talks faction of NSCN, the NSCN-K. Sumi was in fact the military commander of NSCN-K, which is said to have considerable influence in the districts of Nagaland bordering Myanmar.

Sources said the incident will



A black flag being hoisted at the venue of Hornbill festival on Sunday in solidarity with civilians killed in Mon district. PPT

force even pro-India groups to articulate public sentiments over the issue. "Until now, only the NSCN-IM has been the stumbling block to the Naga Peace Accord from being finalised. All other Naga groups, part of Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) or otherwise, want the deal to happen as quickly as possible. However, the incident now not only gives NSCN-IM a handle to push back against India in the negotiations but also puts pressure on other groups to raise their voice," a source from the Nagaland administration said.

A central government source said, "If deftly handled, it won't have much of an impact. In conflict zones, such violence, even though it has not happened for many years in Nagaland, is not a matter of great shock. Yes, some noises will be made. But most groups know what they want and negotiations will happen on that."

To add, sources said, the incident is likely to be a reminder of times people have tried to forget.

In a statement, the NSCN-IM called it a "black day" for all Nagas and termed the incident "unprecedented in recent history".

"The Indian security forces will never be able to wash its hands off... Notwithstanding the ongoing Indo-Naga political dialogue that has seen much fruition during the period... the violence against the Nagas continues unabated," it said.

In a strong statement, the NNPG, which comprises seven Nagaland-based insurgent groups who has so far supported the peace talks process, rescinding many of its earlier demands such as separate flag, blamed the continued implementation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1956 for such incidents.

"The Indo-Naga peace talks are over. Now the Indian government needs to push through the peace process... If the peace process was in place, the Centre would have to replace AFSPA from Nagaland..." said NNPG working committee member G Zhimomi.

leader Rahul Gandhi said.

Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said Home Minister Amit Shah "can't get away by just expressing anguish". "Under Modi Government's rule, the North-East has witnessed an increase in turmoil. Government must ensure the victims get justice," he said.

Calling for an honest and open inquiry, Congress deputy leader in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma said the government must make a statement in Parliament.

"It is most tragic and deeply regrettable. It should have never happened. It is unacceptable in a rule governed democracy. With much difficulty we have had peace restored in the region. I hope the high-level probe as assured by the Army brings the truth out and ensures accountability," Sharma told

The Indian Express.

Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the government must "ensure a thorough probe into the incident and ensure that all victims get justice". Strongly condemning the cold blooded killing of 13 civilians, the CPI(M) demanded compensation and justice for the victims. The CPI said Home Minister Amit Shah owes an answer to the nation.

"It is very painful to see that our civilians are being killed. One security personnel was also killed. What is the intelligence agencies doing? What was the intelligence input? Nobody knows. The Home Minister doesn't speak on such issues. And Home Minister Amit Shah makes tall claims about security," CPI general secretary D Raja said.

went to collect the cash to deposit it in the bank and noticed Rs 50 lakh missing. "Lagarpuria asked six of his gang members to execute the theft. On August 4 night, they stole the cash from the location and on the same night, allegedly handed over Rs 10 lakh to ASI Gulia in Delhi. The police official kept Rs 1 lakh for himself and sent Rs 9 lakh to an associate of Lagarpuria, who would ferry it to him abroad," a police officer had said.

Satheesh Balan, DIG STF, said, "We are not trying to save anyone. STF arrested the two accused doctors, and the disclosure statements of one mentioned the name of a senior police officer. It is an admission in police custody, which is not admissible in the court of law. We are collecting corroborative evidence to verify the claims and allegations. A notice was served to Dheeraj Setia. He was not available at the time. Another notice has been issued and he will join the investigation in the coming days. We are acting as per law. One accused, who is a Delhi Police officer and who had close links with gangster Lagarpuria, got bail from the court. We will soon move an application

for cancellation of his bail."

An IPS officer, Setia is currently posted as Commandant, 3rd Battalion of IRB, Sunaria, Rohtak.

A senior officer of the STF said: "Our investigation suggests a theft of at least Rs 14-15 crore had taken place. We have recovered Indian currency, US dollars, and gold bricks. Total value of the recovery stands at Rs 3.9 crore. As many as 11 persons have been arrested so far." In his order on December 2, Gurgaon Additional Sessions Judge Jasbir Singh said: "From the... disclosure statement of accused Dr Suchender Kumar Nawal, it is clear he has given illegal gratification to DCP Dheeraj Setia for hushing up the matter. He (Nawal) also disclosed to have delivered huge amount in the form of gold, dollars etc., to DCP for the said purpose. From the perusal of police file, I have not found any concrete step taken for taking the investigation to its logical conclusion on the basis of disclosures made by accused Dr Nawal. As such, the investigating agency has failed to perform its statutory duty with utmost case and caution, especially when the

Shah to Gehlot: Who is toppling your govt, BJP will get majority in 2023

HAMZAKHAN
JAIPUR, DECEMBER 5

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah on Sunday attacked the Ashok Gehlot-led Rajasthan government as "nikammi and bhrash-tachari (useless and corrupt)" and said that the BJP will never try to topple the Congress government but form a government with two-thirds majority in 2023.

"He has a constant fear that his government will fall. Who is toppling your government? No one is toppling your government... BJP will never topple your government. BJP will come back to power with a majority mandate in 2023 by going to the people," Shah said at a convention of BJP's public representatives and leaders in Jaipur.

During the political crisis in mid-2020, following a rebellion of 19 Congress MLAs led by the then Deputy CM Sachin Pilot, Gehlot had accused BJP of trying to topple his government.

"You are busy in an internal rift and have changed the definition of law and order in Rajasthan... If you claim that your government is running well, conduct elections alongside UP elections and you'll

National security is in safe hands, says Uttarakhand Governor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JALANDHAR DECEMBER 5

UTTARAKHAND Governor Lt General (Retd) Gurmeet Singh on Sunday said that National security is in safe hands. The Governor is an alumni of Sainik School Kapurthala and he was here on Sunday to attend the old boys meet.

When asked about the security threats from China in the border state of Uttarakhand, he said that the nation is in safe hands and armed forces could face any external challenge adding that one family member of the Uttarakhand state has joined the armed forces to defend the country. Singh, who recently took over as Governor of Uttarakhand, paid tribute to the supreme sacrifice of commanding officer Col Santosh who martyred in the Galwan valley last year while fighting Chinese intruders. Col Santosh was Sainik School Kapurthala alumni.

Governor said he feels proud of a change in Indian politics for keeping the nation, national security and national feelings first by taking hard decisions for the security of the nation. Replying to another question regarding the poor condition of sainik school in Kapurthala, Singh said he would take up the issue with concerned authorities to restore the old glory of sainik school building.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with former Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje during the 'Jan Pratinidhi Sankalp Mahasammelan', in Jaipur on Sunday. Rohit Jain Paras

immediately know what the people of Rajasthan want. But we want you to complete your term till 2023, but also work for the people of Rajasthan," Shah said.

Former CM Vasundhara Raje too attacked Gehlot and termed his government as "invisible." She said that the Gehlot government is busy with only one thing: "how to save the (CM) chair; there is nervousness about what will happen if these four people go there, what will happen if five people go there. There was a cabinet reshuffle keeping in mind how to prevent

someone from heading to the other side. Only this work is being done." Shah exhorted party workers and leaders to "uproot the useless and corrupt Ashok Gehlot government and throw it out."

He said that Prime Minister "Modi ji reduced the tax on petrol and diesel but Rajasthan is one state where the treasury is dear to the Chief Minister, but not the problems of the public." He then "requested" Gehlot to reduce the VAT.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Yogi slams Akhilesh: Entire UP is my family, you only care for yours

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 5

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday responded to SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's jibe that those without family do not care for people, by saying that the 25 crore people of Uttar Pradesh were his family.

Addressing a public meeting in Chandauli district after launching various projects, Adityanath said, "The 25 crore population of the state is my family, and I will do whatever needs to be done keeping them in mind. But you [Akhilesh] have a narrow mindset, so you care about your family only and not the state. That resulted in riots, anarchy was at its peak and his ministers jeopardised the dignity of women." The CM hit out at alliances be-



Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath during the launch of 5,000 new health sub-centres, 15 BSL-2 laboratories and Mother Newborn Tracking App (Mantra), in Lucknow, Sunday. PPT

tween Opposition parties in the past, such as the SP-Congress tie-up in the 2017 Assembly elections and the SP-BSP alliance in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

"What did the *bhai-behen* duo [Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of the Congress] do? What did the *do ladkon ki jodi* [Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi] do, and what did *babua aur bua* ki jodi [Mayawati and

Akhilesh] do? They never did development because they lacked thought for that. They developed themselves only and for them, only their own families were the entire state," said Adityanath.

He said the Opposition had no issues to raise against the government, and accused the Akhilesh-led SP government of misusing money meant for development.

"The money that was unnecessarily spent on the extravagance of leaders of the ruling party between 2012 to 2017, the same money is now being spent on the restoration and beautification of places of mythological and historical significance," he said at the Sakaldiha Assembly constituency in Chandauli that was won by the SP in 2017. The BJP won the other three seats in the district.

AIIMS-Bilaspur to be ready in 6 months: BJP president Nadda

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, DECEMBER 5

NATIONAL PRESIDENT of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), JP Nadda, on Sunday announced that the AIIMS-Bilaspur facility will be made fully functional within the next six months and the people of the state will soon be able to avail highly specialised medical facilities without having to travel outside.

Nadda, who was in Bilaspur on Sunday to felicitate Covid vaccination workers on the occasion of achieving 100% vaccination of targeted eligible population, said many more new AIIMS were coming up across the country. "Setting up of AIIMS campuses outside Delhi was a vision of PM Narendra Modi. The first AIIMS was established in Delhi way back in 1960. At present, as many as 22 AIIMS were coming up in the entire country," Nadda said.

Nadda said that the foundation stone of this institution was laid about three years ago by the Prime Minister himself, and work was supposed to have been completed a year ago. However, construction slowed down after the Covid pandemic. He added that Himachal Pradesh has already got a Rs 500 crore satellite centre of PCI Chandigarh at Una.

The national BJP president added that even the most advanced nations, like the US, had failed to tackle the pandemic the way India did. India, a nation of 130 crore people led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has today succeeded to check this pandemic by launching the biggest vaccination campaign of the world.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

THE OPPOSITION on Sunday hit out at the central government after 13 civilians and a soldier were killed in a botched Army operation in Nagaland's Mon district near the India-Myanmar border. It asked the government to ensure "an honest and open" probe into the incident to bring out the truth and ensure accountability.

With Parliament in session, the Opposition asked the government to make a statement in the House on what went wrong.

"This is heart wrenching. GOI must give a real reply. What exactly is the home ministry doing when neither civilians nor security personnel are safe in our own land?" senior Congress

MULTI-CRORE THEFT

Court wants allegations against ex-Gurgaon DCP investigated

SUKHBIR SIWACH & PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
CHANDIGARH, GURGAON, DECEMBER 5

REFERRING to the disclosure statement of an accused to the Haryana Special Task Force (STF) in a multi-crore theft case, a Gurgaon court has observed that it makes it clear "he has given illegal gratification to (the then Gurgaon) DCP Dheeraj Setia for hushing up the matter". Setia was not available for comment.

Stating that it will monitor the probe, the court further said that "the investigating agency has failed to perform its statutory duty with utmost case and caution, especially when the involvement of a senior police officer has come on record".

The case is related to a multi-crore theft from the office of a company in Sector 82 in August. Two Gurgaon-based doctors and Delhi Police ASI Vilas Gulia were earlier arrested in connection with the case. Police suspect gangster Vikas Lagarpuria planned the theft.

The theft was reported to police on August 21, after the complainant

WORLD SOIL DAY

'Need to increase organic matter in our soil which can enhance productivity level manifold'

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR DECEMBER 5

ON THE World Soil Day, when a campaign, 'Halt soil salinisation, boost soil productivity' has already been launched worldwide to raise awareness about the importance of maintaining healthy soil and human well-being, a block-wise analysis of Punjab's soil can perhaps help arrest further degradation of soil in the interest of farmers particularly and society in general. The only challenge here is how to keep every farmer updated with such things.

As per this analysis, around 40% of the soil in Punjab already has high levels of phosphorus and it can help farmers reduce consumption of Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertiliser thereby reducing the cost of inputs while maintaining good soil health.

Soil analysis was conducted by a soil expert and retired Deputy Director of Agriculture Soil Testing Karnal (Haryana), Madan Lal Khurana, and he had also submitted his analysis to the Punjab Agriculture Department.

This analysis was conducted blockwise in the past couple of years. The soil of 127 blocks of 22 districts was mapped (as Malerkotla was the part of Sangrur district then). According to this analysis in 51 blocks over half the area has high phosphorus presence in the Hajipur block's 88% soil which witnesses high phosphorus. And 47 blocks

have medium presence of the phosphorus. with Dhuri block with 87.36% of its soil having the highest area where medium phosphorus is available and in 29 blocks the phosphorus presence is low with Nihal Singh Wala block in Moga district having high deficiency of it where 50.23% of its land observing low phosphorus.

Apart from this, the other blocks with high phosphorus presences included Barnala block in district Barnala where 86% of its soil is categorised under high phosphorus. Sehna block in Barnala is having 80% soil with high phosphorus), Tarsika and Verka blocks in Amritsar have 76%, and 70% soil with high phosphorus, respectively. Mamdot of Ferozepur district has 70% soil with high phosphorus, Bhunga Hajipurone, and Tanda blocks in Hoshiarpur district have 74%, 77%, and 70% soil with high phosphorus, respectively.

Phagwara in Kapurthala, Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib, Khadoor Sahib and Patti in Tarntaran observed 71%, 70.7%, 80.95 %, 77.96% soil with high phosphorus, respectively.

Makhu block Ferozepur, Morinda block and Chamkaur Sahib in Ropar Patran block in Patiala, Bamial in Pathankot, Mukatsar block in Mukatsar Sahib, Rajpura in Patiala and Tarn Taran block in Tarn Taran district have shown 78%, 84.02%, 76.02%, 72.2%, 73.19%, 73.62%, 81.94%, 72.01%, soil, respectively falls un-

der medium presence of phosphorus.

In most of the block, only 1 to 10% soil comes under low phosphorus barring some where presence of phosphorus is quite low. The Guru Harsahai block in Ferozepur Naushera in Tarn Taran Mehal Kalan in Barnala district has 35%, 26.23% and 23% land, respectively, with low phosphorus. According to experts, the soil which shows high presence of Phosphorus means the usage of Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) should be very limited or its other easily available alternatives can be used in limited quantities as per the directions of agricultural experts of the area.

The soil with less than 5 kg phosphorus per acre comes under low category, 5 to 10 kg per acre in medium and 10 to 20 kg per acre in high and above this comes under excessive category.

Dr Amrik Singh, Agriculture Officer Pathankot, said that the recommended dose of DAP for medium category soil is 55 KG per acre and if soil comes under low category, then we recommend to put 65 KG DAP per acre and in high category we recommend 40 to 45 KG and in excess there is no use of putting DAP.

He said that even usage of nitrogen is also recommended in the similar manner wherein low category the usage is 25% more than the recommended and in high it is 25% less than the recommended. For medium soil the recommended urea dose is 90 kg.



Chandigarh

Farming a miracle

In Himachal Pradesh’s Una district, medicinal farming gets a big push with innovative use of MGNREGS

RAJESH CHANDER SHARMA
UNA, DECEMBER 5

“LISTEN, REMEMBER to bring *Chamatkar* when you come home.”

Ram Singh gives these instructions to the caller and disconnects the phone. Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he starts thinking about his potentially plentiful potato crop for which he needs this *Chamatkar*, a chemical fertiliser.

Little does the 59-year-old know *chamatkar* (miracle) has already reached his home. It can be seen, felt and smelt right where he is standing on his six-kanal land at Girgir village under Behar Jaswan Panchayat in Una district, Himachal Pradesh.

This barren patch of land, close to the fields of his potatoes, was levelled and made fit for cultivation in June this year. Now Ashwagandha and Moringa plants are growing here. He didn’t spend a single penny on the levelling of the land, labour charges, procurement of seeds and plantation. Everything has been taken care of under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) as an initiative by the district administration to promote medicinal farming.

Therein lies the uniqueness. “Medicinal farming is being done under MGNREGS at two places in Himachal: one under Behar Jaswan Panchayat in Una district and the other in Kangra district. This is happening for the first time in the country. Earlier, cultivation of aromatic plants was done under MGNREGS in Sundargarh district of Odisha,” says Dr Arun Chandan, regional director (north), National Medicinal Plants Board.

There is more to Singh’s story of miracle. While wild animals damaged his Moringa plants twice or thrice, they did not destroy Ashwagandha plants at all. All the plants are chemical-free as he used *kenchua khaad*, a desi fertiliser. Less irrigation and less hard work -- this is another benefit. He irrigates his potatoes after five days and the medicinal plants after 15 days if it is hot, or once a month if the weather is fine. He admits he did not have to bother much about other tending work required for the plants.

If it is a win-win situation for Singh, why isn’t he so excited? Because he is doing medicinal farming for the first time and is worried about the outcome. “NREGA labour lagi thi. Maine aur meri gharwali ne bhi kaam kiya. Paise nahin lage aur kaam bhi ho gaya. Par aage pata nahin kya hoga (NREGA labour was employed. My wife and I worked too. I didn’t spend money and my task has been accomplished as well. But I don’t know what will happen in future),” says Singh.

There are 20 other farmers who share Singh’s concerns. They too are doing medicinal farming. One of them is Yashbir Sahota, who is growing Ashwagandha and Moringa plants near his house. This two-kanal land used to be barren and is adjacent to the graveyard meant for children. He planted the saplings in June-end and watered them only till the rainy season started. After the rains, the plants have been on their own. “*Hamare yahan paani ki samasya hai. Maine paudhon ko paani barsat ke baad nahin diya. Phir bhi yeh achchhe se lag gaye hain* (We have water problem here. I didn’t give water to the plants after the rainy season. Despite this, they have attained a good growth),” says the 28-year-old.

Surender Paul, a resident of Behar Bithal village under Behar Jaswan Panchayat, went a step further. He not only watered the saplings soon after planting them but also kept on giving them water between spells of showers in the rainy season till they took root. After that, he did not irrigate them at all. These



In a field under Behar Jaswan Panchayat. A total of 21 farmers grow medicinal plants in this area. Express

plants are growing on four kanals which used to be “my waste land”.

Dr Chandan brings in more clarity: “The soil here has more content of sand; it’s sandy loam. Water availability is a perennial problem. In such a situation, medicinal plants are a good option because they can bloom even in rainfed conditions. Moreover, they can survive the menace of monkeys and wild animals.”

Paul, who is a panch as well, proudly shows a lush green Moringa tree that was planted on his land by Deputy Commissioner Raghav Sharma, and talks about the time when these tiny trees were just saplings and innovative ideas were just seeds. “I was told by the district administration to convince a couple of farmers to do medicinal farming. I prepared a total of 18 farmers but 17 of them withdrew at the last moment. Then I spoke to another set of farmers who agreed and came forward for medicinal farming. Later, a few of those who had withdrawn earlier came back too,” says the 45-year-old.

Dr Amit Sharma, Additional Deputy Commissioner, recalls the initial phase. “We held workshops, spoke to farmers individually and convinced them to go in for diversification of crops. We also or-

ganised their interaction with experts and their visit to a nursery. The Covid period did its bit to highlight the importance of medicinal plants. That is how this whole thing took off. Now even I am experimenting with a few plants at my Dharamshala home,” he says.

What is going on in a cluster of villages here has a Kangra connection. “Earlier, I was posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner in Kangra. I got a proposal on medicinal farming and I got involved with that project. When I was transferred to Una, I thought of doing something similar here,” says DC Sharma.

When everything fell into place, the 21 farmers started with inter-cropping of Ashwagandha and Moringa. Sanjeev Thakur, deputy director-cum-project officer, District Rural Development Agency, says they were distributed a total of 77,400 saplings -- 62,950 of Ashwagandha and 14,450 of Moringa - under the Sanjeevani project of the district administration running at two villages of Behar Jaswan Panchayat. Each farmer was entitled to an aid of Rs 1 lakh -- 60% for labour and 40% for material -- under MGNREGS. The amount varied from farmer to farmer depending on the size of the land chosen for

cultivation. A total expenditure of Rs 14,33,365 has been incurred so far.

“Usually, focus under MGNREGS is to generate wage employment. But our effort has been to generate future source of income,” says Thakur.

Thakur has more interesting statistics to share: Due to this project, Behar Jaswan Panchayat has generated 104 per cent more persondays than last year. DC Sharma has comparative figures ready: “There is an AYUSH scheme which gives subsidy on medicinal plantation but it is for only six notified plants in Una district, whereas we cover plantation material, land development cost, wages to farmers, and all medicinal plants under MGNREGS.”

Unlike Singh, Sharma is not worried about the outcome. Rather, he is hopeful. “We have made a buyback arrangement for the farmers. We won’t leave them in the lurch. Next financial year too, they can avail themselves of the same benefits according to their eligibility,” says DC Sharma.

According to Thakur, they are moving into the direction of value addition and will do “handholding of the farmer”. “We will bring them under National Rural Livelihood Mission and provide them more financial benefits,” he says.



Dragon fruits from the farms of (below) Reeva Sood. Express

The ‘dragon’ woman of Behar Jaswan

RAJESH CHANDER SHARMA
UNA, DECEMBER 5

THE GROUND under Behar Jaswan Panchayat was actually prepared for medicinal plants by Reeva Sood, who loves to be called a woman agro entrepreneur. In her heart she carries love for medicinal farming and Himachal Pradesh -- based in Delhi, she came all the way to do medicinal farming in the hilly state -- and in her eyes she carries a dream of turning this area into a dragon valley. Dragon is an exotic fruit. She has planted 3,000 saplings of this fruit here.

“I could have bought land on the outskirts of Delhi and done farming there. But I decided to come here because Himachal is a good place and Himachalis are good people. As for dragon, it holds a bright future for the farmer,” she says.

Her efforts have already borne fruit. “Even though it is the mandate of the horticulture department, my departments will provide every possible help to local farmers to go in for cultivation of dragon fruit. It is a pilot project which will run in Una district. The project will be promoted with convergence of funds, mainly of MGNREGS,” says Rural Development and Agriculture Minister Virender Kanwar.

Before the dream, there was a nightmare. Sood’s husband, a renowned urologist, was diagnosed with cancer in 2014. A battle between life and death ensued. Ultimately, life won, he won. It is then that they thought of doing something for society, and that something had to be chemical-free as chemical causes cancer. So they decided to do farming. For that, they needed land.

Sood’s sasural is in Kangra district and her inlaws’ property is yet to be divided. That is why they zeroed in on land at Behar Jaswan Panchayat in 2018. But what they were shown they weren’t sold. “When we went to take possession, people dug up the land. We soon realised we have been taken for a ride. But I didn’t run away,” she says.

She stayed back and ploughed a lonely furrow on rock-solid soil for three years, putting up seven polyhouses in the process and producing *chamatkar*. “As a blessing in dis-



guise, I got land which was virgin and chemical-free,” she says.

It is only this year that Sood has been able to take her message of medicinal farming to the common farmer with the help of the district administration. While DC Sharma calls her “the driving force of the medicinal plant project”, Dr Chandan acknowledges her contribution in reviving an endangered species called Sarpgandha. “Due to her efforts, we have been able to bring 50 acres in Himachal, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh under Sarpgandha cultivation,” says Dr Chandan.

Apart from Sarpgandha, she also cultivates Ashwagandha, Moringa, Kalmegh, Shatavari, lemon grass, vetiver grass and stevia. She has grown black wheat and the summer variety of apple as well. All this is chemical-free as she uses desi fertiliser made with the help of cow products. She has kept abandoned cows. Earlier, there were four. Now there are only two as the other two have passed away.

Mention green revolution, and her face goes red. “The green revolution brought into our life chemicals, which destroyed our health, our fields and our environment. It is high time we went back to our old ways of farming,” she says.

Sood had contracted Covid last year. Soon after recovering, she landed in Himachal in June to see her plants, her “progeny”. “They were drying up. So I had to rush back. They reciprocate emotions. They care for me, I care for them. When I am in Delhi, I spend four hours daily on video calls to monitor my plants here,” says the 63-year-old.

Punjab sees 37.5 % rise in area under mustard, rapeseeds

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, DECEMBER 5

CULTIVATION OF mustard/rapeseed oil is still on but the state has already witnessed a considerable increase in its area this year. But still for Punjab it is not a reason to celebrate as the area under this crop is nowhere close to what it was four decades ago.

The total area under mustard/rapeseed mustard has increased from 32,000 hectares last season to 44,000 hectares this year which is witan increase of around 37.5 per cent. The area may increase further as still some farmers are sowing it, said the state Agriculture Department.

In 1974-75, the crop had 1.80 lakh hectares under it which came down to 1.58 lakh hectares in 1987-88 and 1.01 lakh hectares in 1995-96. In the year 2000-01, this area further decreased to 55,000 hectares and since then it has been dropping.

Experts said that this time there was huge demand for the seeds of this crop this year, but it was not sufficiently available either with the department or with the Punjab Agriculture University (PAU), Ludhiana.

Varinder Sardana, principal agronomist and in-charge, oilseeds section, department of plant breeding and genetics, Punjab Agriculture University (PAU), said: “We have grown the seed as per the average demand annually in the state, but this time a larger

number of farmers have demanded canola sarson seed from us and our entire seed was sold quickly and several farmers could not even get it and then they had to purchase it from the private certify companies.”

He said that there is huge scope for the crop and farmers must be supported as just 1 kg seed is required in one acre and at PAU it was available at Rs 160 per kg only.

PAU will multiply it more for the next season, he said.

Experts said that this increase is not sufficient and Punjab needs to give at least 6-7 lakh hectares under varieties like ‘Canola Sarson’ which would help the state to embark upon the much needed diversification path by breaking the wheat-paddy crop cy-

cle. It has a huge market and the government can easily help the farmers to sell it at a quite remunerative price, said an expert of Punjab Agriculture Department.

General Secretary, BKU (Dakunda) , Jagmohan Singh, said that the major reason for drastic decrease of the area under oilseed was poor government policy.

“India has a huge market for this but our government is importing it from other countries by spending huge amounts instead motivating its farmers to grow these by providing them good prices and doing away with wheat and paddy,” he added.

“We need to have a perfect model of crops and their marketing system so that both farmers and government can be ben-

efit from that but our government is not thinking in that direction,” he said, adding that if you provide fair and assured price and market to the farmer’s crop, the country’s agriculture scenario will see a great positive change.

Experts said that Punjab is consuming oil worth around Rs 13,000 to Rs 14,000 crores every year and out of which the state is producing oil worth Rs 49 to 50 lakh only and there is a huge scope to tap this market locally in the state only by setting up the processing and packing units.

Newly appointed Director State Agriculture Department Dr Gurvinder Singh said that the department is planning to promote the oilseed crops and that is why this

time area under mustard oilseed crops has increased to some extent and even now PAU has been developing Canola oil varieties, which are considered very good for health.

Meanwhile this year, the area under other oilseeds has also increased to some extent. In the Kharif season, groundnut area increased from 2,000 hectares in 2020-21 to 2,500 hectares this year, Sesamum area increased from 2,500 hectares in 2020-21 to 3,000 this year. Under sunflower also the area was recorded at 5,000 hectares against 2,400 hectares last year.

The state used to have an area under sesamum, groundnut and sunflower at 26,000 hectares (1974-75), 1.22 lakh hectares (1967-68) and 1.03 lakh hectares (1995-96).



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E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
22.12.2021
11:00 Hrs. to 13:00 Hrs.

STATE BANK OF INDIA

STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH,
3rd FLOOR ADMIN OFFICE BUILDING
CIVIL LINES, FOUNTAIN CHOWK, LUDHIANA

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
22.12.2021
11:00 Hrs. to 13:00 Hrs.

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Movable/Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6(2) and 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described movable/immovable properties hypothecated/pledged/charged/mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical (whichever is applicable) possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of State Bank of India Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" AND "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS" ON 22.12.2021 for recovery of amounts and interest mentioned below against the Property) due to the State Bank of India (Secured Creditor) from below mentioned Borrowers/Guarantors each Account. The reserve price, earnest money deposit and incremental deposit will be as mentioned each Property as mentioned against each account. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, are mentioned below refer to websites: (a) https://sbi.co.in (b) https://www.mstcecommerce.com (c) https://ibapi.in

LAST DATE AND TIME OF SUBMISSION OF EMD AND DOCUMENTS ON OR BEFORE
21.12.2021 UPTO 14:00 Hrs. BY BIDDERS OWN WALLET REGISTERED WITH M/S MSTC LTD. ON ITS E-AUCTION SITE:
https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp BY MEANS OF RTGS/NEFT
DESCRIPTION OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantors	Details of Properties	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price	Date & Time of inspection of property	Date/Time of E-Auction	Authorized Officer & Contact no.
			Possession Date	EMD Bid Increment Amount			
1.	Distt.- Zira M/s Shree Ganesh Fertilizers, SCF 60, Grain Market Talwandi Road, Zira, Prop. Prem Kumar, Guarantor Smt. Kusum Nanda	Property ID SBIN0527100161 Commercial property 1/2 share of SCF No. 60 situated in Grain Market near Water Works, Talwandi Road, Zira measuring 4 Marlas, 5 Sarsah 10'x125' vide sale deed no. 2936 dated 25.10.2010 in the Name of Smt. Shakuntala Devi alias Kusum Nandawli Sh. Devinder Kumar.	Rs. 39,35,754.00 as on dated 09.05.2021, Possession on date 20.02.2018	Rs. 17,23,000.00 Rs. 1,72,900.00 Rs. 10,000.00	10.12.2021 12.00 Hrs. to 15.00 Hrs.	22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs.	NARESH KUMAR 9779284402
2.	Distt.- Ferozpur M/s Manocha Radio, Prop. Smt. Parveen Rani w/o Sh. Ashok Kumar, Bazar Durgas Dass, Ferozpur City-152002	Property ID SBIN0527100164: Residential house measuring 4.33 marla regd in the name of Smt. Parveen Rani w/o Sh. Ashok Kumar vide Waska no. 3542 dated 12.10.1999 situated at Gali Gulistan Wall, Ferozpur city	Rs. 35,00,000.00 as on dt. 30.11.2021+ future intt possession dt.	Rs. 26,60,000.00 Rs. 2,66,000.00 Rs. 20,000.00	16.12.2021 12.00 Hrs to 15.00 Hrs.	22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs.	NARESH KUMAR 9779284402
3.	Distt.- Fazilka M/S G S Bricks Co. VII, Chak Room Wala, Bahmani Road, Teh. & Distt. Fazilka, Prop. Smt. Gurdip Singh & Sh. Asa Singh	Property ID SBIN0527100163 Brick Kin Land Building measuring 18 Kanals, 04 Marlas situated at Bahmani Road, VII, Chak Room Wala, Tehsil & Distt. Fazilka In the Name of M/S G S Bricks Co. Vide Sale deed no. 2719 dated 16.09.2013.	140.00 Lac. as on 24.08.2021 + future intt. Possession date 02.02.2018	Rs. 57,43,000.00 Rs. 5,74,300.00 Rs. 25,000.00	13.12.2021 12.00 Hrs to 15.00 Hrs.	22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs.	NARESH KUMAR 9779284402
4.	Distt.- Ferozpur M/S Ashok Kumar & Sons, CS 38/1, Kucha Harnam Dass, Inside Delhi Gate, Ferozpur Prop. Davinder Kumar, Guarantor Jatinder Kumar & Smt. Parveen Rani.	Property ID SBIN0527100167 Shops (without Terrace Rights) bearing no. C S 38/1 situated at Kucha Harnam Dass, near Main Bazar inside Delhi Gate, Ferozpur city in the Name of Smt. Parveen Rani registered vide waska no. 4852 dated 13.12.1993.	56.00 Lac as on 31.08.2021 + future intt. Possession date 19.12.2019	Rs. 9,91,000.00 Rs. 99,100.00 Rs. 10,000.00	14.12.2021 12.00 Hrs to 15.00 Hrs.	22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs.	NARESH KUMAR 9779284402
5.	Distt.- Fazilka M/s M S Agro Foods, #Shop No 31, Grain Market, Jalalabad (W), District-Fazilka, Punjab-152024 Proprietor: Smt. Sukhwinder Singh S/o Sh. Resham Singh, R/o Village-Kathgarh, Tehsil-Jalalabad (W), District-Fazilka, Punjab-152024 M/s Arun Agro, #Shop No 31, Grain Market, Jalalabad (W), District-Fazilka, Punjab-152024 Partners: Smt. Sukhwinder Singh S/o Sh. Resham Singh, R/o Village-Kathgarh, Tehsil-Jalalabad (W), District-Fazilka, Punjab-152024 Guarantors: Smt. Manjit Kaur wife of Sh. Gurdip Singh resident of Village Alam Khe, PO Baghe Khe Uttar, Tehsil-Jalalabad West, District-Fazilka, Punjab-152024. Smt. Amandeep Kaur wife of Sh. Makht Singh resident of Village Kathgarh Tehsil-Jalalabad West, District-Fazilka, Punjab-152024. Smt. Shilpa Rani wife of Sh. Resham Singh resident of Village Kathgarh Tehsil-Jalalabad West, District-Fazilka, Punjab-152024.	Property ID SBIN0527100187 Land measuring 8 Kanals i.e. 160'x719 share of 235 Kanals 19 Marlas Khewat No. 323 Murabba No. 54, Kila No. 1(8-0), 2(7-4), 9(8-0), 10(8-0), 12(8-0) near Baba Bhuman Shah Colony, Kathne Wala Road, Jalalabad (W) in the name of Smt. Amandeep Kaur W/o Sh. Makht Singh, Shilpa Rani D/o Resham Singh and Smt. Manjit Kaur W/o Sh. Gurdip Singh vide sale deed no. 5030 dated 30.12.2011. Note: This property is cross collateral with M/s Arun Agro.	Rs. 23,20,899.54 as on 20.02.2017, Possession dated 16.10.2019	Rs. 57,68,000 Rs. 5,76,800 Rs. 25,000.00	16.12.2021 11.00 Hrs to 14.00 Hrs.	22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs.	NARESH KUMAR 9779284402
6.	Distt.- Ludhiana M/S Prachi Embroidery Nuthan Parshad Gupta vide waska no. 11416 dated 13.11.2013.	Property ID SBIN0527100139 Property measuring 213 Sq Yards comprised in Kharsa No.39/13, Khata No.148/153, as per Jamabandi for the year of 2007-08 situated at Priya Colony, Bajra Road, Meharban Thana, Rahon Road, Wazira Village Bajra, Ludhiana, standing in the name of Sh. Sunil Kumar Gupta S/o Sh.	Rs. 30,99,566.73/- as on 18.08.2016, Possession dated 23.03.2021.	Rs. 20,40,000 Rs. 2,04,000 Rs. 20,000.00	20.12.2021 11.00 Hrs. to 15.00 Hrs.	22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs.	ANIL KUMAR GUPTA 9804074391
7.	Distt.- Moga Sh. Rajpal Singh S/o Sh. Sat Pal Singh H.no. 241 C, Vpo Daudhar Garbi Tehsil Distt. Moga Pin: 142053 Smt. Amanvir Kaushal W/o Sh. Raj Pal Singh Vpo Daudhar Garbi Teh. and Distt. Moga Pin: 142053	Property ID: SBIN0527100184 E.M of House property built at plot measuring 0K-4 1/8 M being share out of 17K-09M, bearing Khata No. 1333/1393, Kharsa No. 6672(17-9) as entered Jamabandi for the year 2014-15, Hadbast No. 126, located at Street No 15-B, Dhilon Colony, Near Royal City, Dr Hari Singh Road, Aggar Gujran-L Jagraon, Distt Ludhiana, standing in the name of Sh. Rajpal Singh & Smt. Amanvir Kaushal, regd vide sale deed No. 1005, dated 24.05.2013, regd with Sub Registrar Jagraon.	Rs. 31,80,037/- as on 18.01.2018, of agreed rate and further interest from 19.01.2018, costs thereon. Physical possession of the Property was taken on 20.11.2019.	Rs. 20,65,000 Rs. 2,06,500 Rs. 10,000.00	15.12.2021 11.00 Hrs to 13.00 Hrs.	22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs.	SURINDER PAL 9775855533
8.	Distt.- Ludhiana M/s. Balaji Mega Mart (P) Ltd, through its Directors - 1. Mrs. Monica Malhotra (Director) Legal heirs of Sh. Baldev Raj Malhotra (Director since expired) a) Sh. Bir Prakash Malhotra, S/o Sh. Baldev Raj Malhotra, B-19-504, Dasandha Singh Road, Civil Lines Ludhiana 141001 b) Smt Asha Rani W/o Sh. Vinod K Mahindroo , HNo 131, Mahaveer Nagar, Ferozpur Road, Ludhiana 141001 c) Smt Chanchal Rani W/o Sh. Yash Pal Gambhir Hno 598/12, Khan Chand Mandi, Near Railway Station, Shahbad Markanda, Distt Kurukshetra 136135 d) Smt Sudesh Rani W/o Sh. Pawan Kumar bareja resident of D-235, Sector 61, Noida (UP) 201301. e) Neelam Rani Alias Priya Khanna W/o Sh. Bimal Khanna , 16, Atam Nagar, Ludhiana 141001	LOT-1 Property ID: SBIN0527100066 Equitable Mortgage of Property near Focal Point Rajpura measuring 0-13-2/30 Marlas (392 sq-yards) being the 392/6745' share of 11 Kanals 03 Marla comprised in Khewat / Khata no 733/1278 Kharsa no. 48/5(0-18), 49/1(1-12), 478/1(1-04), 479/2(14-02), 480/2(1-09), 481/2(1-18) registered vide sale deed No.9947 dated 01.03.2007 in the name of Sh. Bir Prakash Malhotra s/o Sh. Baldev Raj Malhotra. LOT-2 Property ID: SBIN0527100065 b) Equitable Mortgage of property at Uppahen Tehsil Rajpura Distt. Patiala, measuring 9 Biswas comprised in Khewat/Khata No.111/110 Kharsa No.716/1(0-09) registered vide sale deed no. 9378 dated 30.01.07 and land measuring 1 Bigha 03 Biswas comprised in Khewat/Khata No.36/63, Kharsa No.717/1(1-03) registered vide sale deed No.9309 dated 25.01.07 in the name of Sh. Baldev Raj Malhotra S/o Sh. Saudagar Mal Malhotra (Total Area 1600 sq yds)	Demand Notice u/s 13(2) 05.12.2008 for Rs. 33523417.00 plus further interest & other charges accrued there upon (w.e.f.01.10.2008) Symbolic Possession date 30.10.2009	Rs. 64,36,000 Rs. 6,43,600 Rs. 25,000.00 Rs. 24,80,000 Rs. 2,48,000 Rs. 20,000.00	15.12.2021 11.00 Hrs to 13.00 Hrs. 15.12.2021 11.00 Hrs to 13.00 Hrs.	22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs. 22.12.2021 11.00Hrs.to 13.00 Hrs.	SURINDER PAL 9775855533 SURINDER PAL 9775855533

THIS PUBLICATION IS ALSO 15 DAYS NOTICE UNDER RULE 6(2) & 8(6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002 TO THE ABOVE BORROWERS & GUARANTORS

Terms and Conditions of the E-auction are as under - (1) E-auction is being held on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" and will be conducted "On Line". The auction will be conducted through the Bank's approved service provider M/S MSTC at the Web Portal (https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp) E-auction Tender document containing online e-auction bid form, declaration, General Terms & Conditions of Online auction sale are available in websites: (a) https://sbi.co.in (b) https://www.mstcecommerce.com (c) https://ibapi.in (2) To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorised Officer, there is no encumbrance on the properties. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims / rights / dues / affecting the properties, prior to submitting their bid. The e-auction advertisement does not constitute and will be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the bank. The properties are being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the bank. The Authorised Officer / Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims / rights / dues. (3) The intending purchasers / bidders are required to deposit EMD amount on or before 15.12.2021 upto 02.00 pm by own wallet Registered with M/s MSTC Ltd. on its e-auction site https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp by means of RTGS/NEFT. (4) In case of sole bid, he/she has to increase minimum 1 Bid from Reserve Price. (5) The intending bidders should submit the evidence for EMD deposit like UTR number along with Request Letter for participation in the E-auction, self attested copies of (a) Proof of Identification (KYC) vid. Voter ID Card / Driving License / Passport etc. (b) Current Address Proof for communication, (c) PAN card of the bidder (d) Valid e-mail id (e) contact number (Mobile / Landline) of the bidders etc. to the Authorised Officer of above mentioned Branch of State Bank of India. (6) Names of the Eligible Bidders, will be identified by the State Bank of India above mentioned Branches to participate in online e-auction on the portal https://www.mstcecommerce.com M/S MSTC will provide User ID and Password after due verification of PAN of the Eligible Bidders. (7) It shall be the responsibility of the interested bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the properties before submission of the bid. (8) The e-auction / bidding of above properties would be conducted exactly on the scheduled Date and Time as mentioned above by way of inter-se bidding amongst the bidders. The bidders shall improve their offer in multiple of the amount mentioned under the column "Bid Increment Amount" against each property. In case bid is placed in the last 10 minutes of the closing time of the e-auction, the closing time will automatically get extended for 10 minutes. The bidders who submit the highest bid amount (not below the Reserve Price) on closure of e-auction process shall be declared as Successful Bidder and a Communication to that effect will be issued through electronic mode which shall be subject to approval by the Authorised Officer / Secured Creditor (9) The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of the successful bidder shall be retained towards part sale consideration and the EMD of unsuccessful bidders shall be refunded. The Earnest Money Deposit shall not bear any interest. The successful bidders shall have to deposit 25% of the sale price including EMD already paid, immediately on acceptance of bid price by the Authorised Officer & the balance of the sale price on or before 15th day of sale. The auction sale is subject to confirmation by the Bank. Default in deposit of amount by the successful bidders would entail forfeiture of the whole money, already deposited and property shall be put to re-auction and the defaulting bidders shall have no claim / right in respect of property / amount. (10) The prospective qualified bidders may avail online training on E-auction from M/S MSTC prior to the date of e-auction. Neither the Authorised Officer / Bank nor M/S MSTC, will be held responsible for any Internet Network Problem / Power failure / any other technical lapses / failure etc. In order to ward-off such contingent situation the interested bidders are requested to ensure that they are technically well equipped with adequate power backup etc. for successfully participating in the E-auction event. (11) The purchaser shall bear the applicable stamps duties / registration fee / other charges, etc. and also all the statutory / non-statutory dues, taxes, assessment charges, etc. owing to anybody. (12) The Authorised Officers / Bank is not bound to accept the highest offer and has the absolute right to accept or reject any or all offer(s) or adjourn / postpone / cancel the e-auction or withdraw any property or portion thereof from the auction proceedings at any stage without assigning any reason there for. (13) The Sale Certificate will be issued in the name of the purchasers / applicants only and will not be issued in any other names. (14) The sale shall be subject to rules / conditions prescribed under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. For further details/ enquires if any on the terms and conditions of sale can be obtained from Authorised Officer / State Bank of India of above mentioned Branches or Bank's website (a) https://sbi.co.in (b) https://www.mstcecommerce.com (c) https://ibapi.in (15) For further details regarding the above properties / inspection of properties, the intending buyers may contact above mentioned Branches of State Bank of India, for Sr. No 1 Authorised Officer Contact Person: For Sr. No. 1-5 Naresh Kumar, 9779284402, For Sr. No. 6 Anil Kumar Gupta, 9804074391, For Sr. No. 7-8 Surinder Pal 9775855533 Tel: 0161-5204320, 0161-5204331, 0161-5204332 E-mail: sbi.05271@sbi.co.in. All the intending purchasers are also advised to visit https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp. For any information on procedure of e-auction (16) The Authorised Officer or Bank shall not be responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrances or any other dues to the Government or anyone else in respect of immovable properties e-auctioned. (17) The Bidders should get themselves registered on https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp by providing requisite KYC documents and registration fee as per the practice followed by M/s. MSTC Ltd. well before the auction date. The registration process takes minimum of two working days. (Registration process is detailed on the above website). (18) The Intending bidder should transfer his EMD amount by means of challan generated on his bidder account maintained with MSTC Ltd. at https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp. by means of NEFT/ RTGS transfer from his bank account. (19) The Intending bidder should take care that the EMD is transferred at least one day before the date of auction and confirm that his wallet maintained with M/s MSTC Ltd is reflecting the EMD amount without which the system will not allow the bidder to participate in the e-auction. (20) The EMD of the unsuccessful bidder will be refunded to their respective wallet maintained with M/s MSTC Ltd. The Bidder has to place a request with MSTC Ltd. for refund of the same back to his bank account. The bidders will not be entitled to claim any interest, costs, expenses and any other charges (if any).

Date : 06.12.2021Place : Ludhiana

Authorised Officer

Chandigarh



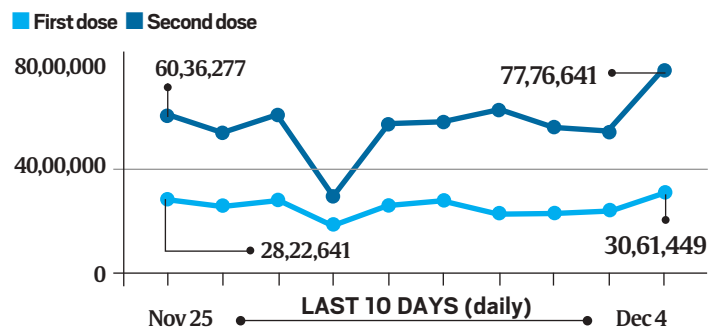
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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

INDIA TOTAL DOSES 127,61,83,065
(1st DOSE: 79,90,71,752; 2nd: 47,71,11,313)



DOSES ON DECEMBER 4 1,08,38,090

DEC 3: 78,39,461 (1st DOSE: 23,70,010; 2nd: 54,69,451)

DOSES ON DECEMBER 4, BY STATE

TOP 5

Bihar	15,81,194
Tamil Nadu	15,71,643
Rajasthan	11,30,826
Uttar Pradesh	11,26,080
Maharashtra	10,21,093

BOTTOM 5*

Punjab	1,11,389
Jharkhand	1,36,740
Haryana	1,39,395
Delhi	1,65,311
Odisha	1,70,205

*Excluding states smaller than Delhi by population (2011)

ACTIVE CASES

99,155

819
from Dec 3

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare; Dec 4 figures updated on Dec 5

Antarctica's 2 minutes of darkness, and why that's unusual in summer



PEOPLE WATCH SATURDAY'S total solar eclipse from the Polar Union Glacier Camp in Antarctica.

FOR 2 MINUTES, the eclipse brought darkness to Antarctica — something that otherwise never happens in Antarctica during the summer. Antarctica has six months of continuous daylight in the summer (the current season in the southern hemisphere) and six months of continuous darkness in the winter. **THIS IS BECAUSE** of Antarctica's location on the South Pole, and the

way the tilt of the Earth (the alignment of its axis in relation to its orbit around the Sun) places the continent during these two phases. It is the tilt that gives us the seasons, which are different in the two hemispheres.

DURING THE WINTER, Antarctica is on the side of Earth tilted away from the sun. This causes six months of darkness. During the summer, it is on the side tilted towards the sun. This gives it constant sunlight — Saturday's two-minute break was an exception.

Photograph: Felipe Trueba, Imagen Chile via AP

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State of Pakistan's economy

Tweeting from a Pakistan embassy handle, a hacker recently flagged rising inflation in the country. A look at Pakistan's current and impending economic crises, and what it has been doing to tide them over.

AANCHAL MAGAZINE & ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

A HACKER on Friday posted a tweet from the official handle of the Pakistani embassy in Belgrade, claiming government officials had not been paid for three months amid galloping inflation, and mockingly asked Prime Minister Imran Khan if this was "Naya Pakistan" he had promised. The Foreign Office in Islamabad said the claim in the tweet was "baseless and unfactual".

Pakistan's GDP growth is projected to touch a 4-year high of 5% in the fiscal year ending June 2022 — at the same time, heightened inflationary risks and an imminent balance-of-payments crisis has the country teetering on the brink, dependent on external debt bailouts in order to stay afloat.

Forex and currency crises

Pakistan has repeatedly run into macro-economic crises: runaway inflation, current account and trade deficits, depleting foreign reserves, and currency devaluations. It is faced with a combination of these problems again.

The two immediate threats to the country's \$263-billion economy come from the build-up of inflationary pressures, and a payments crisis that stems from a combination of global and domestic factors — problems that the pandemic has exacerbated. The situation is similar to, and worse than, the crisis of 2018, when Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves plummeted to multi-year low.

As of November 19, Pakistan's entire liquid foreign reserves stood at \$22.773 billion, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the country's central bank. Of this, \$16.254 billion was held by the SBP; the remainder was with commercial banks. The SBP's reserves declined by \$691 million during the week ended November 19, primarily on account of external debt repayments, Geo News reported.

Pakistan's annual economic growth in calendar year 2018 was 5.8%, but fell to 0.9% a year later, and further to 0.53% in 2020, according to the World Bank. This has led to a building-up of deficit on the current account — which captures the difference between a country's import and export of goods and services, and includes net transfers such as foreign aid, over a designated period.

A persistently high deficit can potentially lead to an excess supply of a country's currency in its foreign exchange market, which eventually negatively impacts the value of the currency — this is a reason why the Pakistani rupee has been in a tailspin.

KHUSHBOO NARAYAN
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 5

PROMINENT BUSINESS families that run empires such as the Reliance Industries Group and the Shriram Group have been in the news recently for their plans to set up trusts to ensure smooth transition of assets and control of the business to their heirs. This is primarily to avoid the messy legal battles and litigation seen among business groups in the past. According to the Knight Frank Attitudes Survey 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced 84% of ultra-wealthy Indians to reassess their attitude toward succession planning.

What is succession planning in family businesses, and how has it changed over the years?

Succession planning for a large or small family business entails transition of the man-

INFLATION IN DEVELOPING ASIA (% PER YEAR)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
Developing Asia	2.5	2.9	2.8	2.2	2.7
South Asia	3.7	5.0	6.5	5.8	5.1
Afghanistan	0.6	2.3	5.6	5.0	4.0
Bangladesh	5.8	5.5	5.7	5.6	5.8
Bhutan	3.6	2.8	3.0	8.2	6.2
India	3.4	4.8	6.2	5.5	4.8
Maldives	-0.1	0.2	-1.4	2.5	2.0
Nepal	4.2	4.6	6.2	3.6	5.2
Pakistan	4.7	6.8	10.7	8.9	7.5
Sri Lanka	4.3	4.3	4.6	5.1	5.3

Source: Asian Development Outlook, ADB

*Projected

The IMF bailout

As growth fell and debt services obligations mounted, the country, like several times in the past, has been faced with a potential balance-of-payments crisis. A BoP crisis is triggered when a country is unable to finance its import bills or service its external debt. Pakistan imports most items of domestic consumption, making it more vulnerable to these pressures; the increasing debt servicing obligations have added to the pressure.

In 2019, Pakistan sought a rescue lifeline from the IMF, like it has 13 times over the last four decades. In exchange for a \$6 billion funding package, Pakistan had to commit to structural reforms and reducing public debt. But the funding plan stalled earlier this year over issues related to reform commitments, and an agreement could be reached only on November 22.

"The Pakistani authorities and IMF staff have reached a staff-level agreement on policies and reforms needed to complete the sixth review," the IMF said in a statement that day. Once the review is complete, 750 million in IMF special drawing rights (around \$1 billion) will be available to Pakistan, taking total disbursements to about \$3 billion.

That same day, Shaukat Tarin, who is equivalent to Pakistan's finance minister, pledged to undertake four other actions: withdrawal of tax exemptions and subsidies, an increase in levy on petro products, higher power tariffs, and an audit of some \$1.4 billion in "extra funds" lent to Pakistan in April 2020 in view of the pandemic.

Pakistan's government bonds reacted the day the deal was finalised, jumping between 1.3 and 2.8 cents on the US\$, their best day in over a year, according to Reuters data.

Big business families and succession via trusts

agement, the ownership and control of the business to the next generation of leaders, most often from within the family. Over the years, this process has changed from writing a will to setting up a management trust to manage the assets of the business and to ensure systematic decision-making and execution, helping the business become a wealth creator even after the demise of its founders.

A trust is a fiduciary relationship in which one party, called a trustor, transfers an asset/property, to another party, called a trustee. The trustee then manages this asset for the benefit of a third party, called a beneficiary.

Why are big family businesses opting for the trust route for succession planning?

According to experts, most successful family businesses want a succession plan that maintains the integrity of the business and also meets the aspirations of each fam-

ily member, especially when the family has more than one child, differently abled members, ancestral properties, and international assets.

Traditionally, what the general law provides is the will system. However, a will is not a permanent instrument. Even if it is registered when the person is living, it can be changed until the last minute. Apart from this, a will cannot be functional while the person is alive.

"A will takes effect only after the demise of someone. The will has no value till the time the person is alive, so the person who has created the asset has little way of seeing what is happening after the ownership changes. This is one of the key reasons why people look for succession planning using a trust structure. A trust structure can be given effect while you are living and you have a control over how circumstances pan out," said Vishwas Panjari, Partner at Nangia Anderson LLP.

marked a return to double digits.

According to the Chairperson of the Consumer Association of Pakistan, Kaukab Iqbal: "The rising prices of food items, particularly fresh fruits, milk, and chicken are having a major impact on the livelihoods and nutrition levels of all families. But much of the burden of this falls on the poor as higher prices put protein and vitamin-rich foods out of their reach."

While inflation is also driven by global commodity prices, regressive domestic policies have not helped matters either, with Islamabad having "systematically penalised the production of high-value products by focusing support on wheat and sugarcane", according to the World Bank paper authored by Daud Khan, Namash Nazar and Willem Janssen. As a result, Pakistan remains an importer of horticultural products, dairy products despite having a massive number of animals producing below potential, and cotton to feed the domestic textile industry, the authors noted.

As far as balance of payments is concerned, Pakistan's current account deficits in September and October have been way larger than anticipated, reflecting both rising oil and commodity prices and improving domestic demand. The burden of adjusting to these external pressures, as the SBP's Monetary Policy Statement in November noted, has largely fallen on the rupee. The balance of risks has shifted away from growth and towards inflation and the current account faster than expected.

Looking ahead

Pakistan is expected to grow about 5% in fiscal year 2021-22 (July-June annual cycle), SPB governor told CNBC Reza Baqir on November 24. "This is a four-year high and this growth is reflected in robust and brisk demand of even non-energy imports in Pakistan," he said.

In September, Fitch Solutions had projected growth of 4.2% in the year ending July 22, much lower than Baqir's estimate. His assertions are also more optimistic than the government's target of 4.8%.

On November 24, the SBP raised its policy rate by 150 basis points to 8.75%, stating that "risks related to inflation and the balance of payments have increased while the outlook for growth continued to improve". The bank also lifted the cash reserve requirement for commercial banks by one percentage point, the first such move in over a decade.

But Baqir has asserted the government has to do more to bring down inflation, including actions to ensure "there's no hoarding or price speculation for basic commodities".

Also, unlike a will, which is frequently challenged in courts, trusts are effective tools to avoid legal battles between heirs and beneficiaries, say experts. Trusts can also be used to initiate the heirs into the family business as they can be used to control the timing and proportion of assets distribution. Moreover, once a trust is created, the trustor has little to no direct control over its assets. As a result of this, the assets are protected from any action taken by creditors or banks in the event of a default by the business.

What are the tax implications?

Trusts are tax-efficient. "While the reason for estate planning is not to reduce tax but obviously the structure has to be efficient. Very broadly, the transfer of assets to a trust in which your family members are the beneficiaries are not taxable at either end. It means neither the transferor nor the beneficiary will be taxed," said Panjari of Nangia Anderson.

A wrong conviction, the exoneration, and Alice Sebold's pulled memoir

PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

FOUR DECADES ago, a miscarriage had landed a Black man in jail for a crime he hadn't committed. This came to light last week when Sebold's publishers announced they were pulling her 1999 memoir *Lucky* from the shelves.

Anthony Broadwater, who had been convicted of raping and assaulting American writer Alice Sebold in 1981, was exonerated in November by a New York Supreme Court justice for grave lapses in the conviction procedure.

Crime and conviction

Sebold, now 58, became a household name after the publication of her memoir, *Lucky*, in 1999. In it, she revisits a traumatic episode from her life — on May 8, 1981, when Sebold, then a freshman at Syracuse University, was walking home through a tunnel to an amphitheatre near campus, she was assaulted and raped.

Even though she reported the crime afterwards, her assailant could not be traced. The title of the memoir, which went on to sell over a million copies, draws from her conversation with a police officer, who told her she was "lucky" to be alive, unlike another woman who had been raped and murdered at the same location. Sebold suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder after the assault, taking refuge to alcohol and drugs, before eventually getting her life back on track.

Five months later, Sebold came across a Black man near the campus, who she believed was her assailant. The man, Broadwater, was arrested in 1982 and served 16 years in prison. Broadwater, who maintained his innocence throughout, was denied parole several times and put on New York's sex offender registry after his release in 1999.

The exoneration

The possibility of a film adaptation led to a reinvestigation and eventual exoneration of Broadwater. In 2019, when producer



(From left) Anthony Broadwater reacts after his exoneration; Sebold, who has apologised to him; and her memoir, now being pulled. Broadwater & Sebold photos: AP



Timothy Mucciante came on board for a screen adaptation of *Lucky* by director Karen Moncrieff, he noticed discrepancies about the trial that struck him as irregular. In a recent interview to the BBC's Today programme, Mucciante said, "Certain things leapt out at me as being unusual in the American criminal justice system — specifically, the line-up procedure, where

Alice picked the wrong person as her assailant... but they tried him anyway."

Mucciante left the project soon after, but his concerns led him to hire a private investigator to reassess the evidence.

In November, a New York Supreme Court justice officially exonerated Broadwater, pointing out serious lapses in the original conviction procedure, includ-

ing overwhelming reliance on an untrustworthy forensic technique and on Sebold's testimony. Broadwater, now 61, broke down after the verdict was delivered.

Over a week after Broadwater's exoneration, Sebold tendered an apology in a post on Medium. "First, I want to say that I am truly sorry to Anthony Broadwater and I deeply regret what you have been through. I am sorry most of all for the fact that the life you could have led was unjustly robbed from you, and I know that no apology can change what happened to you and never will... I am grateful that Mr Broadwater has finally been vindicated, but the fact remains that 40 years ago, he became another young Black man brutalised by our flawed legal system. I will forever be sorry for what was done to him."

Publishers' move

In a statement, Sebold's publisher Scribner announced that it would be pulling *Lucky* from the shelves. "Following the recent exoneration of Anthony

Broadwater, and in consultation with the author, Scribner and Simon & Schuster will cease distribution... while Sebold and Scribner together consider how the work might be revised," it said. Pan Macmillan, Sebold's UK publisher, too, will follow suit.

According to reports, the film adaptation, too, stands cancelled after it lost funding.

Sebold's other works

In 2002, Sebold's best-known work till date, *The Lovely Bones*, was published — the story of a young girl who was raped and murdered at 14. The book went on to sell over 10 million copies globally. It was later adapted into a film by director Peter Jackson, featuring Saoirse Ronan, Susan Sarandon, Stanley Tucci, Mark Wahlberg, and Rachel Weisz in 2009. The film was nominated for the Oscars.

In 2007, Sebold's second novel, *The Almost Moon*, was released to mixed reviews. The story of a dysfunctional family, it explores the murder of a woman by her daughter, a model for art-classes.

IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

We are not against anyone; we are for ourselves and for our people. We are not saying that we are against Iran, China, Pakistan or anyone. At the end of the day, we are trying to stabilise West Asia to build prosperity

Shubhajit Roy: This year, we mark 13 years of 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. What changed in the relationship between Israel and India post 26/11?

I wasn't here to witness the changes but since the attack, the cooperation between the nations on the issue of counter-terrorism has been intimate. Be it the methods of work or technology, the two countries are working closely.

Shubhajit Roy: What if today a similar attack happened, do you think an Israeli operation is possible here?

The intimacy between the two countries is such that whatever India will ask will be seriously and positively looked at. We also worked together during the COVID pandemic. When most of the world stopped the export of shielding equipment for medical staff and people, India decided to export to Israel at a very sensitive time. When the second wave hit here (India), Israel also sent oxygen and other things. We look at each other as very close friends and help in whatever way we can.

Shubhajit Roy: Israel suffered the pandemic early on but it was also one of the fastest movers when it came to vaccination. What lessons did you learn?

Israel was one of the first countries to close the country because, initially, we didn't know what was happening. Because of a lack of information, you're nervous. Once Pfizer had the vaccines, Israel was able to convince them that we can be a real test bed because Israel is a very small country — 9 million people. We have been living in a sense of emergency from Day 1, so we are well-organised in executing things. We told Pfizer that every Israeli is under one of four health service providers. All of them are non-profit organisations. We are also very digitised, we have a good database. Therefore, we told Pfizer that if you allow vaccination in Israel, we'll be able to provide microdata on side-effects, problems and age groups. Most of the initial information that was released by Pfizer was based on Israeli database. We were the first to vaccinate. One of the problems was that we are a young country. Thirty per cent of our population is under 16 (years of age). The most we could do was vaccinate 70 per cent of the population, and we vaccinated 90 per cent of this 70 per cent. We also have a lot of anti-vaxxers. We went for the first and second vaccination and we were the first ones, unfortunately, to realise that the second dose's effect faded after six months. So we went for the booster dose before it was approved by the FDA (Food Drug Administration), because we had the experience. We started vaccinating children from the age of five last week.

Shubhajit Roy: Agriculture is one of the areas of cooperation which has emerged between the two countries. There are 29 centres of excellence in 12 states across the country. Tell us a little about this area of cooperation.

We started our cooperation with India 25 years ago. For these centres of excellence, Israel brought the technology, India brought the land, manpower and the initial investment. Israelis came in, with out-sourced companies, and they put up their greenhouses. I went to two places in Haryana — one was for horticulture and one for bees. We also did water management, which is a strong part of Israel. Haryana is well-organised and they took all this technology and did it in layers. All the jobs are done by Indians, Israelis come from time to time to see if the technology is up-to-date or to fix something. Now, to take it to the next level, there's an agreement between our two governments to increase the centres of excellence to about 50, and, in three years, have 1,500 villages of excellence.

Shubhajit Roy: To take you back to the region... especially the Abraham Accords and last month when foreign minister S Jaishankar visited there was this new Quad of West Asia — the UAE, Israel and India and the US taking place. You said earlier that you are in a very hostile region. So, what are these shifts?

There's a very significant shift in the Middle East. Many Gulf and Arab countries for years used Israel as the reason to explain to their public why they were underprivileged; you always need an enemy. For years, they have been poisoning their own population with the Palestinian issue. But many of them, out of fear of Iran and the changes in the Middle East, were cooperating with Israel for years. Because of the Abraham accords, their coopera-

WHY NAOR GILON

An Israeli diplomat who has been foreign affairs advisor to three Israeli Prime Ministers, Naor Gilon took charge as his country's ambassador to India two months ago. He has served in the US and was ambassador in Italy and The Netherlands, before he came to Delhi. As strategic partners, the relationship between the two

countries has grown in the past few years in areas as diverse as defence and agriculture, counter-terrorism and sophisticated technology. As the two countries celebrate 30 years of diplomatic ties in 2022, Ambassador Gilon's role in elevating the strategic partnership to the next level will be key in the coming years



NSO is a private Israeli company, which developed a tool for countering terrorism and probably saved lives. Understanding the gravity of the tool, Israel put export control measures on the tool

'Intimacy between the two countries such... whatever India will ask will be positively looked at'

Naor Gilon talks about India and Israel coming closer post 26/11, Israel's vaccination drive and lessons it learnt from the pandemic, the Pegasus spyware and loss of privacy. This session was moderated by Shubhajit Roy, Deputy Chief of National Bureau



Shubhajit Roy, Deputy Chief of National Bureau, *The Indian Express*, with Israeli ambassador Naor Gilon. *Gajendra Yadav*

tion with Israel went from under the table to above it. The UAE is the strongest advocate of this line. Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan are there. Some countries are reluctant to take it to the open but they are still there. This is a huge shift. For they did what leaderships should do; they put the interests of their citizens first. And India did it before them, this de-hyphenation. When Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar visited Israel, we went to this fighter-jet training Blue Flag in the south of Israel. It was for the first time that Indian jets joined this training. We are working together in many fields. This group of four is not intended for military things. It's a group of like-minded countries from different regions. The world is divided between pragmatists and extremists. The pragmatists are coming forward and saying that we are trying to make the lives of our people better. Israel and India belong to this group.

Kaunain Sherif M: There's evidence that we need to vaccinate the entire world so that we don't have a new variant. What is the global strategy on vaccination because till now, only 50 per cent of the globe has received just the first dose?

This argument is not new, and, yes, the world is a global village. The manufacturing power of vaccines is becoming sufficient for the world today but I'm not sure if all the governments are able to vaccinate efficiently their population. Israel was quick on its feet and reached an agreement (with Pfizer). Maybe some will see it as selfishness but we also did it for the world, so that we can share the data with the world. Europe, now, will start the booster dose earlier than expected because of Israeli results. Many countries are lagging behind in vaccination and I don't think it's about money; vaccines are getting cheaper and the manufacturing capacity is increasing. So, the more global we go (with the vaccinations), the better it will be for all of us.

Monojit Majumdar: The new variant (Omicron) is in your country...

We will, unfortunately, have to take measures again but we are now more relaxed and understanding. It's bad but it's doable; we can live with it; we can find an equilibrium that will enable us to minimise the harm.

Shubhajit Roy: NSO, the Israeli technology company, created Pegasus for security reasons. It also has been used on civil society — politicians, journalists and activists. Two of our

colleagues were on the list of potential targets. As a fellow democracy, you feel concerned that a technology as potent as this has been used against its own citizens?

NSO is a private Israeli company, which developed a tool for countering terrorism and probably saved lives. Understanding the gravity of the tool, Israel put export control measures on the tool. So, they are limited in their export to only government players and only certain government players. About all the rumours or claims around it, I have no knowledge about it. When it comes to India, it's an internal political fight. I am a diplomat and the new ambassador, I am not allowed to go into internal debates here. I will leave it at that.

Shubhajit Roy: Does the Israeli government have information that NSO has supplied or exported the technology to other governments?

As I said, export of NSO, a private company, is under supervision. They are not allowed to export, they don't have a licence to export.

Shubhajit Roy: The Israeli government will have access to names of countries, agencies and actors to whom NSO might have provided the spyware?

They get an export licence.

Shubhajit Roy: Would you be comfortable sharing that information to some court if it asked?

If it's hypothetical, I will not go into it.

Raj Kamal Jha: So, the Israeli government would know if the NSO sold the software to the

Indian government?

Every export of this private company's technology has to go under licence. I hope they stand by the commitment because it's a legal issue here.

Raj Kamal Jha: Would the government have a view on how the software has been used or does it keep an arm's length?

When you sell a tool to someone, you don't know how they will use it in general. You sell someone something but you're not controlling what they do with it.

Shubhajit Roy: There's no end-user verification?

There is end-user verification. Why not? Export licence is to an end user.

Raj Kamal Jha: How seriously do you take NSO being put on the US Commerce Department entities list?

I will not go into anything beyond that. I cannot. I can tell you the same thing in seven different ways but it will still be the same thing.

Ritika Chopra: You said you are not sure whether the software was misused or not because the government maintains an arm's length. But the fact is, that whether Israel is not sure about the end use of that product, there is another democratic country and one of Israel's strongest allies, which has imposed sanctions. So, when the US accuses the NSO group of acting against its own national interest, does that, by way of association, not worry Israel at all?

I said what I wanted to say. I think I have answered the same question in a different way.

I think that we are part of this technology revolution and we are losing our privacy. It's already a dead game. Now the question is who is listening to us? How much is this into us?



Raj Kamal Jha: Is there a lesson from the controversy... the need for stronger regulation, firewalls?

I think we are part of the technology revolution and we are losing our privacy. It's already a dead game. Now the question is, who is listening to us? The question is, do we want only the bad guys from having it? Because you cannot restrict the bad guys. So, the question is whether you also want to stop the good guys from having it. This is a good question that I don't have an answer to. I don't know if Israel is limiting or not limiting. But I think the world is feeling that point of no return. People feel that they are already overexposed, I feel that I'm overexposed as a human being. But that's life.

I'm speaking beyond the issue of Pegasus, in a wider context. Yes, I think we should regulate in general — like we tolerate many things in life, like drugs and crimes to a certain level, and, from that level on, it is unacceptable. But it's not going to be bulletproof because we are already there. It's really terrifying to understand how much information can be gathered on us without even meeting us or seeing us or knowing anything about us. We have to limit it like we have to limit everything that has a bad influence.

Rakesh Sinha: How do you view India's de-hyphenation of relations with Iran and Israel?

Every country has its own interests, its own fears, its own concerns. I'm not sure that I like everything India does and I don't think that India likes everything we do. But it's a friendship, it's like a married couple. Coming back to Iran, I don't think that the difference is so big between India. For us, Iran is a concern and I'll tell you why. Because if you look at the Middle East, all the places where you see problems, you see an Iranian footprint.

Rakesh Sinha: This cooperation between Israel, the UAE, the US and India, do you see it as a counter pact, which we now see after the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan, where you have China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey?

This pact is not against anyone; it's for the moderates and the pragmatics who want to make their lives better. I think we are coming together to do good for our people and for the region, to stabilise, to do business, to build infrastructure.

Aakash Joshi: There was this report in *The Wall Street Journal* about the Khalifa port. The Chinese have built a surreptitious base. How do you see the

Chinese expansion in the Middle East because there is a commercial interest that many countries will have dealings with China?

We are not against anyone; we are for ourselves and for our peoples. We are not saying that we are against Iran, China, Pakistan or anyone. At the end of the day, we are trying to stabilise West Asia to build prosperity... We don't see China as a military threat to Israel. On the contrary, we are cooperating with China economically; we're doing things together. You are neighbours, you have your own issues with China. We don't see China as a direct threat to Israel in any way — not military, not otherwise.

Shubhajit Roy: What about the defence relationship between China and Israel? Is it as robust as India's relationship with Israel?

Israel's relationship with India on the defence side is much more robust than that with China. Lot of our technology is American and we need to get American permission to export them. As you know, the Americans are restricting export to China and hardly restricting export to India.

Aashish Aryan: Many companies such as WhatsApp, Apple are suing the NSO. What does it reflect on other startups in Israel?

Israelis companies have been most traded on Nasdaq. So, things (NSO being sued) are not connected in anyway. Do you think if one Indian company does something, it will influence other Indian companies around the world?

Sandeep Singh: Israel recognised cryptocurrencies as actual currencies in 2018. What has the experience been so far because there have been a lot of concerns of cryptocurrencies being used for terror-funding, drug trafficking?

I don't know. I'm not an expert on this. I don't think Israel is a leader when it comes to regulating cryptocurrencies. I really don't have enough knowledge about it.

Krishn Kaushik: Do you think the ATHOS artillery deal has been sacrificed for India's indigenisation push?

We are trying to adjust ourselves, like everyone else, to the rules of Make In India. I don't know what will happen with this specific deal. We are ready to share the cost of development and the experience we have.



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YOU CAN'T HAVE OCCUPATION AND
HUMAN RIGHTS.
— CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

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TRAGEDY AND TRUST

Nagaland killings aren't a mere 'blunder'. Exemplary action based on fair probe is the way to earn people's trust — and keep peace

MORE THAN A dozen people, including a jawan, all innocent, were killed in Mon district in Nagaland Saturday in what security forces say was a botched-up counter insurgency operation. The Assam Rifles, which undertook the operation, has officially expressed regret and has ordered an inquiry. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has announced that a special investigation team will probe. A free and fair investigation should be held to get to the bottom of the matter and identify where and how the operation went wrong. Understandably, there is sadness and anger across Nagaland — and elsewhere in the country — at this wanton act of killing. Reports of violence as a response are disturbing and all groups, political parties and community leaders, and the security forces, too, must get together to calm tempers. The government's immediate task is to reach out to the families of the bereaved and act fast to address the breach of trust between the local population and state agencies.

The Mon incident comes close on the heels of the killing of a commanding officer of Assam Rifles, along with six others, in Manipur last month. The tenuous peace in the region, where multiple insurgent groups have been operating for years, can snap at any time if the political leadership, security forces and the civil society cease to be vigilant. The 1997 ceasefire agreement between the NSCN-IM and security forces has held up despite ups and downs only because all actors have invested in peace. Talks with the NSCN-IM for a settlement to end the seven-decade-old Naga insurgency is at an advanced stage — a framework agreement was signed in 2015; this incident could derail the process. The unrest in neighbouring Myanmar has reportedly influenced the priorities of Naga and Manipur insurgent groups that have a base in that country. It may spill over to border districts of Nagaland and Manipur. All these demand extreme vigil and caution from security forces — the Assam Rifles has stated that Saturday's action was “based on credible intelligence of likely movement of insurgents” — which are entrusted with the task of defeating insurgency. They need to be extra cautious and sensitive to local communities while doing their job under extreme pressure.

The Northeast, with its patchwork of identities and a complex history of nation-building, has always been fraught, its geography, history and political economy conducive for insurgent groups to operate. State-building here has to be an extremely cautious exercise and negotiated with multiple stakeholders, who often privilege linguistic, regional, ethnic and clan identity. Over-securitisation of the political discourse or mixing up religion with nationalism can have dire consequences in the region where multiple fault lines have endured for decades. The immediate task is to quell the violence, hold to account those responsible for this tragedy — avoid any move to brush it away as a mere blunder — and keep the peace.

A CODE IN PROGRESS

ART Bill plugs longstanding regulatory deficit. Ways must be found to make it more inclusive

LAST WEEK, THE Lok Sabha passed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Regulation Bill that sets standards and codes of conduct for fertility clinics and sperm banks in the country. The piece of legislation caters to a longstanding need. In the past 20 years, the increase in the number of ART clinics in India has been amongst the highest in the world. They cater to a burgeoning medical tourism industry and significantly, to a growing section of the country's population that is turning to ARTs such as gamete donation, intrauterine dissemination, in-vitro fertilisation and intracytoplasmic sperm injection to have children. Because of declining fertility rates, a substantial section of Indians marrying later than the generation before them, and the increasing provenance of single parenthood, the use of such technologies is bound to grow. At the same time, more than 80 per cent of clinics in the country offering ART facilities are reportedly unregistered. The ethical as well as safety-related issues germane to this regulatory deficit have been a part of conversation for two decades. The ICMR did lay down guidelines for ART clinics in 2005. But these protocols did not have any legislative backing. If the ART Bill becomes a law, it would be incumbent on clinics to ensure that commissioning couples, women and gamete donors are tested according to the established protocols. It also provides for a database of ART clinics in the country. In spite of the broad scope of the Bill it would be, however, pertinent to see legislation in the area as a work in progress — it will demand more sensitivity from lawmakers in dealing with changing social, demographic and medical trends.

The Bill does tick several right boxes in stipulating that the clinics provide counselling about the chances of success, costs, side-effects and risks, including that of multiple pregnancies. Importantly, it talks of informed consent of donors and legalises ART procedures for live-in couples and single women. However, as several members pointed out in the debate in the Lok Sabha, the bill discriminates against LGBTQ and single male parents. It goes against the spirit of the Supreme Court's landmark verdict in Navtej Johar v Union of India and assumes a formalistic position on the rights of same-sex couples to raise a family.

It seems that the heteronormative line of thinking of the Surrogacy Bill passed by the Lok Sabha in 2019 — the Rajya Sabha referred it to a select committee — has driven the ART Bill when it should have been the other way around given that the ART sector is more expansive than the surrogacy sector. The Upper House must take the conversation further and make sure that the law keeps up with the inclusive potential of reproductive technologies.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



ASHOK GULATI

WHEN I WAS born into this world, I thought I had a right to breathe fresh air, as that was provided free by nature. But being born and brought up in Delhi, I now feel that fresh air has become a luxury, which I can avail only for a few days in a year. For the rest, I have to gasp for fresh air. My lifespan has already been cut short by almost three years by the polluted air, as per experts, and if business as usual continues, millions in the National Capital Region (NCR) will be choking in the “gas chamber” that Delhi has become.

Supreme Court (SC) judges have rightly pulled up the Delhi and central governments for not doing enough to correct this dire situation. They also remarked on what message we are sending to the world. If one looks at the capitals of G20 countries, Delhi's air quality index (AQI) during November 1-15, is by far the worst at 312, as per World Air Quality Index Project. Compare this with Beijing (China) at 91, Buenos Aires (Argentina) at 26, Canberra (Australia) at 20, Sao Paulo (in place of Brasilia) at 18, Ottawa (Canada) at 25, and so on with most of them falling below 50, and some between 50 and 100. India is obviously a clear outlier. But India's distinction goes beyond Delhi. As per the World Air Quality Report of 2020, prepared by IQAir (a Swiss organisation), of the 30 most polluted cities in the world, 22 are in India. So, the problem is much deeper, raising doubts about the quality of our urbanisation.

Before a cure comes the right diagnosis. As per the report of the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, energy generation (largely coal-based thermal power) is the biggest culprit with a share of 44 per cent in greenhouse gas emissions, followed by manufacturing and construction (18 per cent), agriculture (14 per cent), transport (13 per cent) industrial processes and product use (8 per cent) and waste burning (3 per cent). To replace coal in energy generation, so-

Centre and states need to incentivise farmers to reduce rice cultivation to tackle pollution



On a particular day, say November 7, stubble burning contributed 48 per cent of Delhi's air pollution, which fell to just 2 per cent on November 18. The fact is that even for a day, when the AQI is above 350, when Delhiites are already gasping for breath, this stubble burning can be the last proverbial straw on the camel's back. The Centre needs to sit down with neighbouring states and come up with a plan to reduce the rice area in this belt, which is already depleting the water table, creating methane and nitrous oxide, to incentivise farmers to switch to other crops through better returns than in rice cultivation.

lar and wind is the way to go at the all-India level. In this regard, the Prime Minister has done a commendable job in Glasgow to commit that 50 per cent of India's energy will be from renewable sources by 2030. But the current model in solar energy is heavily tilted towards companies. They are setting up large solar farms on degraded or less fertile lands. But that land is gone for the next 25 years only for solar energy. Nothing else can be grown on those corporate solar farms. It is good from an efficiency standpoint to minimise the cost of energy generation, which luckily is now even cheaper than the cost of thermal energy. I have no problem with this model. However, what if we supplement that model by developing solar farms on farmers' fields? This would require solar panels to be fixed at a 10 feet height with due spacing to let enough sunlight come to the plants for photosynthesis. These “solar trees” can then become the “third crop” for the farmers, earning them regular income throughout the year, provided the law allows them to sell this power to the national grid. The Delhi government's pilot in Ujwa KVK land on these lines showed that farmers can earn up to Rs 1 lakh per acre per year from this “solar farming”. This is on top of the two crops they can keep growing under those solar trees. This will double farmers' income within a year. The investment of “solar trees” in farmers' fields is still done by companies. The only thing that farmers have to sign on is a sort of bond that they will not uproot these solar trees for 25 years, as that is the life cycle of such solar projects. Doubling farmers' income by 2022-23 is a dream that Prime Minister Modi has aspired to, and here is a chance to turn that dream into a reality.

But let me come back to Delhi's pollution as Delhiites are gasping for breath right now. As per the System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), the reasons for poor AQI differ day to day. For example, between November 9 and 13, 30 per cent of Delhi's pollution was due to stubble burning, an-

other 22 per cent from transport, 18 per cent from external (other than stubble burning), 12 per cent from industries, 4 per cent from bio-fuels, dust 8 per cent and the rest-local (6 per cent). But this contribution of stubble burning drops to just 8 per cent if the period considered is from October 30 to November 3. On a particular day, say November 7, stubble burning contributed 48 per cent of Delhi's air pollution, which fell to just 2 per cent on November 18. The fact is that even for a day, when the AQI is above 350, when Delhiites are already gasping for breath, this stubble burning can be the last proverbial straw on the camel's back. The Centre needs to sit down with neighbouring states and come up with a plan to reduce the rice area in this belt, which is already depleting the water table, creating methane and nitrous oxide, to incentivise farmers to switch to other crops through better returns than in rice cultivation.

To tackle vehicular pollution, we need a massive drive towards electric vehicles (EVs), and later towards green hydrogen when it becomes competitive with fossil fuels. Scaling up EVs quickly demands creating charging stations on a war footing, much like we developed vaccines for Covid-19 and scaled up hospital beds during the second wave of the pandemic. Parking lots in offices, housing societies, hotels, hospitals, shopping malls, petrol pumps, etc, need to have fast charging points. This is a business opportunity, but lawmakers can expedite it by changing the rules of the game and providing up-front subsidies on EVs, if need be, equal to the taxes on diesel/petrol vehicles. The hesitancy to buy EVs due to lack of charging stations must go.

Delhi also needs a good carbon sink. Rejuvenating the Ridge area with dense forests and developing thick forests on both sides of the Yamuna may help.

Gulati is Infosys Chair Professor for Agriculture at ICRIER

TEHRAN'S WHITE FLAG

Iran wants the Vienna talks to succeed, end sanctions against it



DEEPIKA SARASWAT

IRAN'S NEW DELEGATION joined the seventh round of talks in Vienna on the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In sharp contrast to the apprehension that having delayed the talks for four months since the inauguration of the new administration, the hardliner team will lead to a deadlock in negotiations, Deputy Foreign minister and lead negotiator Ali Bagheri told reporters at the end of the first day of talks, that all the issues remaining from the previous six rounds could be negotiated.

The new team, however, brings the political sensibilities of the incumbent conservative administration into its approach to negotiations. Bagheri has maintained that negotiations should not be called nuclear negotiations, as the key objective is the lifting of sanctions. In line with this goal, the Iranian delegation is composed of legal and banking/financial officials, with most of them having served as representatives to international organisations, including IAEA. Upon Iran's insistence, a meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission's working group on lifting sanctions was held on November 29, the working group on nuclear commitments met the next day.

During the four-month hiatus, Iran expanded its stockpile of 60 per cent enriched uranium and denied IAEA monitoring access to the Karaj centrifuge manufacturing workshop after it came under a sabotage attack in June 2021, for which Tehran blames Israel. As the European Union coordinator of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA reached out to Tehran, raising “urgency” to resume talks, the new administration de-

clared that “Iran's actions will be commensurate with the level of actions of the other parties”. Analysts argue that by enriching nearly weapon-grade uranium, Iran is demonstrating its capability to swiftly retaliate if Washington was to do another volte-face on the agreement. Further, unlike the previous administration, the Raisi administration is delinking Iran's economy from JCPOA negotiations, prioritising economic diplomacy with Asia so that any reneging on a deal by Washington in future does not cause a shock to Iranian economy. In a nutshell, Iran's approach is to build leverage and not compromise on key issues of lifting all sanctions, including those imposed after 2018, and guarantee against future violations of the agreement.

Another indication that Iran is serious about the revival of JCPOA is the continuation of intensive diplomatic outreach with its Gulf neighbours under the Raisi administration, raising hopes that the agreement reached in Vienna will have acceptance from Iran's neighbours who were critical of the JCPOA. Tehran has traditionally refused to link the nuclear talks to discussions on Iran's regional policy and ballistic missiles programme by maintaining they are separate issues and regional issues will be discussed with regional states alone. In October, when Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Abdollahian called on the US president to re-enter JCPOA through an executive order, he also sought to reassure Iran's Gulf neighbours that the nuclear deal “will not be against the region or our neighbours” and that Iranian “negotiators should appraise neighbours and key regional players of nuclear talks.”

Abdollahian has called his UAE counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan twice in November and emphasised the need for “continuous consultations” between the two countries. Just a few days before the resumption of negotiations, Tehran's chief negotiator Bagheri travelled to Dubai and met senior officials, including Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the UAE President. Similarly, Raisi administration's willingness to have a fourth round of talks with Riyadh in Baghdad this year bodes well for restoring peace and stability in the region and Riyadh's support for the agreement reached in Vienna. The Biden administration, on its part, has been engaging its regional allies and partners from the beginning of the negotiations, and is supporting its allies' engagement with Iran. Robert Malley, US Special Envoy for Iran, argued in the recently organised Manama Dialogue that many of the region's dysfunctions have roots in Iran's exclusion in the region's security architecture.

Notwithstanding Iran's seriousness towards negotiations, the role of another regional player, Israel, will also influence future progress in Vienna. For now, Tel Aviv is pressing its allies, the US and the UK, for a headline approach to get a “longer and stronger” agreement. But if the negotiations prolong and Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium grows, any sabotage attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities will likely sabotage the talks at Vienna.

The writer is associate fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis

DECEMBER 6, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

QUTUB TRAGEDY

WHAT HAPPENED AT the Qutub on December 4 beggars description. The tragic deaths, of children in particular, have been mourned by the nation. Forty-five people, most of them children, had been killed in a stampede of panic stricken people when a power failure turned the historic monument into a tower of fear. Even as a one-man committee visited Qutub Minar on December 5, an element of mystery was added to the tragedy with the Delhi Municipal Corporation claiming that there was no power breakdown in the area during the time of the tragedy. A municipal corporation press release did admit that a truck col-

lided with an electric pole leading to a power breakdown in the Katvaria Sarai area. But it said this happened two hours before the tragedy. Some of the visitors did say that the lights had been deliberately switched off by hoodlums.

GRIEF IN PALI

THERE WAS NOT a single smiling face in Pali village in Haryana's Faridabad district. The women sat crying in sympathy with those who were in bereavement. The men sat in stony silence. The streets were deserted. At the village crematorium there were 26 tiny smouldering heaps — of children who had

been taken by their school for an excursion to Delhi. A visit to the Qutub Minar, Birla Mandir and the zoo. It turned out to be a death trap.

WHEAT IMPORTS

INDIA IS IMPORTING one million tonnes of wheat from Australia in addition to the 1.5 million tonnes from the US. The consignment of wheat from the US has already begun to arrive. The decision to import wheat from the two countries was taken simultaneously. But no quantity was fixed because the government wanted to verify the quantity of wheat reserves in the country.

Resetting Putin’s red carpet

Great power politics — conflicts between Russia, China and the West — puts limits on the bilateral relationship. But Delhi and Moscow have no reason to be satisfied with the poor state of their commercial ties



By C Raja Mohan

AS PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi and the visiting Russian president, Vladimir Putin, try to reset their relationship today amidst a series of recent differences ranging from Af-Pak to the Indo-Pacific, two factors will continue to limit the possibilities for the bilateral partnership. One is the continuing conflict between the Kremlin and the West. The other is the absence of a thriving commercial relationship between India and Russia.

The recent story of India-Russia relations is about keeping an old romance alive as Delhi and Moscow align with more attractive partners. If Delhi’s love affair with Washington has never been as intense as it is today, Moscow’s embrace of Beijing is tighter than ever. That the US and China are now at each other’s throats makes the great power dynamic a lot more complicated for India and Russia.

This would not have mattered if Russia had a sensible relationship with America and India’s ties with China were peaceful and stable. That Delhi and Moscow have problems with the best friend of the other would have been more manageable if business ties between India and Russia were solid. Intensifying the strategic side of the relationship — as Modi and Putin are expected to do this week — is not enough to lift the bilateral relationship out of the stasis it finds itself in.

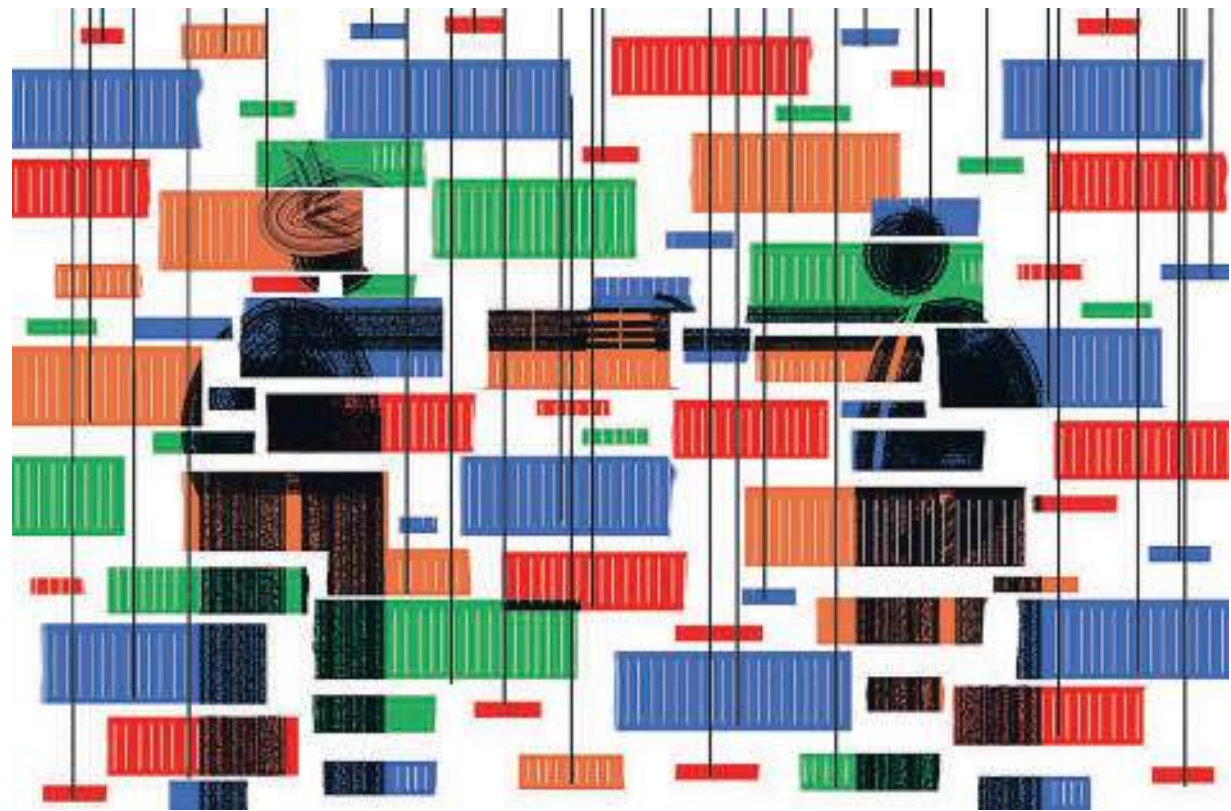
Monday’s summit will see the institution of a new “two plus two” mechanism that brings the foreign and defence ministers from both sides into a single forum. There is speculation about a new 10-year defence pact between the two countries. The two leaders are also expected to preside over the signing of an agreement on mutual logistical support for each other’s armed forces. India has such agreements only with a select few partners like the US and France.

Russia is pleased that the S-400 missile sale has gone through despite strong US opposition. For it signals Delhi’s commitment not to let Washington roll back India’s longstanding defence ties with Russia.

For now, Delhi has certainly dodged the US sanctions on the purchase of S-400 missiles. But India’s deepening defence ties with Russia will continue to raise political eyebrows in Washington and Beijing. Delhi remains wary of the growing military partnership between Russia and China and their shared opposition to the Indo-Pacific framework.

The structural constraints posed by the great power dynamic and vastly different appreciation of the regional security environment could be reduced if matters improve between Washington and Moscow. But few international observers of US-Russia relations are willing to bet on that prospect. But against the grain of conventional wisdom, Washington and Moscow are looking to ease some of these tensions and find the basis for a sustainable engagement.

In Washington, the Biden administration recognises the importance of ending this permanent crisis in US-Russian relations. Presidents George W Bush and Barack Obama made repeated attempts at resetting bilateral relations only to see them getting



CR Sasikumar

worse. President Donald Trump sought to break the paradigm of the Russia relationship, but found himself confronting the entire political and security establishment. Given the Democratic Party’s conviction that Russia stole the election from Hillary Clinton to install Trump in the White House, there was little chance of a reset.

President Biden, however, has begun a new effort to improve ties with Russia. He opted for an early meeting with Putin — at the end of his trip to Europe in June. After four years of intense hostility from the Democratic Party, Biden offered respect for Russia, and signalled his willingness to treat it as a great power. His Democratic predecessor, Obama, used to dismiss Russia as a declining power.

The Biden administration, which is focused on winning the intensifying strategic competition with China, values a stable relationship with Russia. For all its denunciation of the US, Moscow has always been eager for political accommodation with Washington. Nothing pleases Moscow more than the image of being Washington’s equal on the global stage. For Moscow, the American problem was never about an ideological principle, but the terms of accommodation.

If the Geneva summit between Biden and Putin laid out a broad framework for engagement on a range of issues, the two leaders are expected to have a virtual summit on Tuesday to review bilateral ties and prevent the escalation of the current military crisis on Russia’s border with Ukraine.

A less conflictual relationship between Washington and Moscow will be a huge relief for India; but Delhi can’t nudge them closer to each other. Moscow too would love to see better relations between Delhi and Beijing but is in no position to engineer that outcome.

Where India and Russia have greater freedom is in the economic domain, but their failure to boost the commercial relationship has been stark. During the last 20 summits with Putin, the two sides have repeatedly affirmed the importance of enhancing trade and investment ties; but progress has been hard to come by.

Russia is acutely conscious of the huge imbalance in its great power relations. Persistent conflict with the US, Europe, and Japan have moved Moscow ever closer to Beijing. But Moscow knows the dangers of relying solely on a neighbour which has risen to greatness — the Chinese economy at nearly \$15 trillion today is nearly 10 times larger than that of Russia. While resetting Russia’s relations with the West is hard, sustaining the traditional partnership with Delhi is of some political value to Moscow. Delhi hopes that Washington appreciates its assessment that Russian neutrality, if not support, is critical in balancing China in the east.

India-Russia annual trade in goods is stuck at about \$10 billion. In contrast, Moscow’s annual commerce with China is a little more than \$100 billion. India’s goods trade with the US and China is at the level of \$100 billion.

Despite political tensions, India’s China trade continues to grow, while Delhi’s commercial ties with Moscow are stagnant despite good political relations. The problem clearly can’t be fixed at the level of governments. The Russian business elites gravitate to Europe and China. The Indian corporations are focused on America and China.

Russia is acutely conscious of the huge imbalance in its great power relations. Persistent conflict with the US, Europe, and Japan have moved Moscow ever closer to Beijing. But Moscow knows the dangers of relying solely on a neighbour which has risen to greatness — the Chinese economy at nearly \$15 trillion today is nearly 10 times larger than that of Russia. While resetting Russia’s relations with the West is hard, sustaining the traditional partnership with Delhi is of some political value to Moscow. Delhi hopes that Washington appreciates its assessment that Russian neutrality, if not support, is critical in balancing China in the east.

Russia knows India’s strategic cooperation with the US has acquired an unstoppable momentum; and Delhi knows it has no veto over the Sino-Russian strategic partnership. Moscow and Delhi are learning to live with this uncomfortable unreality and stabilising their political ties within that context.

But Delhi and Moscow have no reason to be satisfied with the poor state of their commercial ties. The success of Monday’s summit lies not in squeezing more out of bilateral defence ties, but in laying a clear path for expansive economic cooperation, and generating a better understanding of each other’s imperatives on Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific.

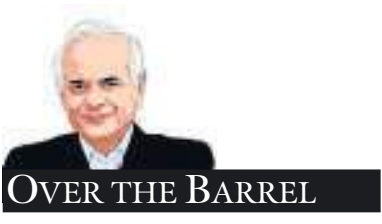
The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“It may or may not have been done to appease the world powers — which have yet to accept the new Afghan government — but it is a welcome move on the part of the Taliban to take a notable step concerning the rights of Afghan women.”
— EXPRESS TRIBUNE, PAKISTAN

Leaders for COP27

Scale of global warming challenge requires leaders unshackled by incrementalism. Next COP should be led by collective experts



Over the Barrel
By Vikram Singh Mehta

IDID NOT intend to write about COP26. Much has already been written about the subject and I am no climate change expert. But I changed my mind after reading Ashlee Vance’s biography of Elon Musk. The book triggered the reflection that the current gap between the ambitious rhetoric of climate change summitry (“blah blah” in Greta Thunberg’s words) and action can only be bridged by shifting the loci of responsibility and authority for climate change governance from those fixated on the short-term and, in the larger scheme of matters, inconsequential details like the next elections, to those who have a track record of bringing about radical change in the face of adversity. I know this reflection goes against the structure of the present international order and I will be critiqued for engaging in an academic parlour game. But I believe, on occasion, there is merit in arguing the counterfactual. That is why I share my thoughts.

After 26 meetings, it is clear COP summitry can make incremental progress. The world has, however, run out of time. It must accelerate the implementation of the action plan towards net zero. For that, it must redesign the nature of climate change governance.

COP26 was not all “blah blah”. Ninety per cent of the world committed to a net carbon zero target; 23 countries agreed to stop financing fossil fuels by the end of 2022; 100 countries committed to end deforestation; the accounting systems for calculating carbon emissions were finalised and notably, the phase down of coal and inefficient fuel subsidies was accepted. On the substantive issue of climate finance, however, it was still “blah blah”. The earlier pledge by the developed world to channel \$100 billion to the less developed was not met; they committed a lowly \$346 million to the climate adaptation fund. PM Modi’s call that \$1 trillion be raised for climate mitigation and adaptation was not taken up seriously.

The NGO, Climate Action Tracker, has analysed the consequences of COP incrementalism. They calculate that were there no climate change policy, global temperatures would rise by between 4.1 and 4.8 degrees C above pre-industrial levels. This would be existentially catastrophic. Were, however, every country to implement their non-binding nationally determined commitments for 2030, the temperature rise would be 2.4 degrees C and, if over and above that, they met their binding commitments including net zero targets, the increase would range between 1.8 and 2.1 degrees C. Their message is: The increase can be kept within a “sustainable” range but further prevarication in the implementation of the action plan towards net zero carbon will push the increase above an acceptable threshold with devastating consequences.

There is broad consensus on what must

be done to get to net zero. Many people have written on the subject but John Doerr’s recently published book, *Speed and Scale — A Global Action Plan for Solving our Climate Crisis Now* provides a particularly compelling account. Doerr lays out a six-point action plan for bringing carbon emissions down from the current annual amount of 59 GT to zero by 2050. I summarise the plan below. (The number/comment within brackets is the carbon reduction from the action/the key factors for success).

Electrification of transport (6 GT; battery technology); decarbonisation of the grid (21 GT; 50 per cent of electricity from solar and wind; no new oil and gas plants after 2021; retirement of thermal power); fix food (7 GT; no nitrogen-based fertilisers; contain methane/nitrous oxide emissions from rice farming); protect nature (7 GT; net zero deforestation and elimination of deep sea trawling); clean up industry (8 GT; reduce carbon intensity in cement/steel/aluminum); remove carbon (10 GT; nature-based and engineering solutions).

Doerr is not breaking new ground. Most countries have already commenced the journey. But no one country can singly address the systemic challenge of global warming. It requires collective action. And, therein lies the rub. The current institutions of governance have created a forum for collaborative effort but the rules of engagement reinforce separateness. This is the reason institutions need to be redesigned. This is why I am engaging in this “Muskian” parlour game. Why Musk? He is hardly a likeable character. Certainly his biographer does not sketch him out to be so. But the answer is this game is not about Musk. It is about the qualities required to break with incrementalism. It is about the imperative of making things happen.

Musk is today amongst the richest persons in the world. His wealth comes from three companies renowned for their engineering, technical, operational and human resource excellence. Musk created these companies in the face of extreme odds. There were many who thought his vision was between “daff” and “bat s**t crazy”. This is not surprising. How can one take seriously someone whose life mission is to create an alternative habitable colony on Mars because our planet is at risk? But Musk was not deterred and he proved his critics wrong. The reasons for his success are manifold but in my view the most important are his uncompromising commitment to his vision, his “all or nothing” approach and his determination to achieve the “impossible upon the impossible”. (One example: He had his people build a space avionics system for \$10,000 when the cheapest external quote was \$10 million).

Musk’s career story and qualities are the pegs on which I hang my larger point that climate change governance needs leadership that can pull teeth from stone. There must be many like Musk. They need to come together. The leadership of COP27 should be handed over to such people: A collective of technocrats, environmentalists, financiers, sectoral experts unshackled by sovereignty and politics and capable of driving technological change, catalysing green investment and forging global collaboration.

The writer is chairman and distinguished fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress



Shreekant Sambrani

HASMUKH SHAH (1934-2021) was many things: He held many official positions under various administrations, but was not a bureaucrat; he was a senior public sector manager, but was not a professional manager; he held politically sensitive appointments and was a confidant of many politicians and industrialists, but was himself neither; he sponsored numerous artists and writers, but he was neither. So, I fall back on the title of Robert Bolt’s play about Sir Thomas More, much used, but seldom rightly, to describe this great friend and mentor who passed away on December 3.

Hasmukhbhai, as he was universally called, grew up in a small princely state in Saurashtra and Ahmedabad, enjoying an unhurried education. He thought he might pursue a PhD in anthropology, because people in the Northeast fascinated him (this interest in faraway places and people stayed with him), but joined the editorial team of Gandhiji’s collected works, which took him to Delhi in the early 1960s.

Vadilal Dagli, the renowned Gujarati business journalist, suggested that he might see Morarji Desai, who was looking for a personal secretary. He stayed in that position until Desai’s sacking as deputy prime minister in 1969. He came back to serve in the Desai secretariat when the former became prime minister in 1977 and remained until Indira Gandhi’s second term. Sensing the discomfiture of the new political set-up with him, he returned to Indian Petrochemical Corporation (IPCL), which he

A man for all seasons

Hasmukh Shah left a mark on policy and finance, as well as arts, heritage, ecology

had joined in the early 1970s. He eventually became its chairman and successfully managed its privatisation into the Reliance fold. In his own very modest words, in his Gujarati memoirs *Dithu Mai* (As I see it), “I first became a teacher, researcher and editor. Thereafter, I so-journeyed through politics and public life. I later became a link in financial and policy realms.”

His years with Desai were a walk on eggshells. The ever-principled Desai, seen as being cantankerous, needed Hasmukhbhai’s tact and manifest people skills to get most things done. He describes most sensitively Desai’s troubled elevation as prime minister and his even more troubled eventual departure in brief chapters of his memoirs. I tried to persuade him to write a full-length book on his years with the ramrod-straight disciplinarian. He followed the idea briefly but then abandoned it because he could not do a tell-all book.

His narration of his years with IPCL is equally self-effacing. His lasting contribution was not just in profitably expanding the public sector giant, but also imbuing it with a sense of what we now call corporate social responsibility. Some examples: He was to procure land for expansion at Dahej, then a backwaters barren area adjoining the Gulf of Khambhat, some 70 km south of Vadodara. The salinity-affected land fetched as little as Rs 6,000 an acre. Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation thought it could get 2,000 acres at Rs 18,000 an acre.

Hasmukhbhai held a meeting with landowners, keeping the brokers out. The farmers’ anger was palpable. He encouraged them to ask for a higher price, but they went no further than Rs 50,000 an acre. He finally settled the deal at Rs 56,000 an acre for 2,000 acres and created great goodwill among farmers. He said that even at this price, land accounted for less than 2 per cent of the project cost, while it made a huge difference to the farmers, whose total capital it was.

Later, during the Manmohan Singh government, there was considerable thought about land acquisition and pricing. He wrote offering to share his thoughts and experiences. That letter was not even acknowledged.

Hasmukhbhai organised artists’ camps on the sprawling IPCL grounds every winter. This was perhaps the first instance of a public sector company turning a patron of the arts. Vadodara already had a considerable reputation as an arts centre. IPCL’s initiative helped cement it further.

His successful effort at privatising IPCL attracted the attention of Narendra Modi, then the chief minister of Gujarat. Modi tasked Hasmukhbhai with working out plans for disinvestment in four leading state public sector enterprises. Hasmukhbhai went at the assignment with his usual zeal, only to meet a solid wall of resistance from administrative service members who normally were the chief executives of such companies. Modi abandoned

the plan, but not before counting Hasmukhbhai among his closest advisors.

He and his wife Nila were inveterate travellers. Every winter, they went to far corners of the world. They were easily the most travelled people I have ever known. He had planned on writing someday about these lands and their people, thus partly fulfilling his ambition of college days.

He was the moving spirit behind countless cultural, artistic, ecological and heritage initiatives, especially Darshak Itihas Nidhi, in Vadodara, which has perhaps far more such bodies than any other city of its size. His name often sufficed as a fund-raiser. His last public appearance six weeks ago was at the release of a book on the ecology of coastal Gujarat under the aegis of Gujarat Ecology Society. Hasmukhbhai had told me two years ago that he considered this work to be the capstone of all his efforts.

Sitanshu Yashaschandra, the well-known Gujarati litterateur, says in his afterword to *Dithu Mai*, “I am afraid that [the trend of such engrossing books] may end with this book.” That fear is now applicable to all the various activities this multifaceted man took on as an active participant, generous mentor and benevolent patron.

The writer taught at IIM, Ahmedabad and was the founder-director of the Institute of Rural Management, Anand

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CENSORING HISTORY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Bad education’ (IE, December 3). The Central Board of Secondary Education’s (CBSE) decision to take strict action against those responsible for asking which political party was in power in Gujarat during the 2002 anti-Muslim violence in the state in a question paper is an attempt to push into oblivion one of the worst massacres witnessed in post-Independence India. The CBSE’s terming the question as “inappropriate” is beyond comprehension as its own sociology textbook for Class 12 mentions the anti-Muslim violence. Thus, by the CBSE’s logic, the textbook becomes inappropriate, to begin with. One wonders how asking a question about this violent episode harms the sentiments of people. If it does, the CBSE is more concerned about the sentiments of those who butchered Muslims in Gujarat in 2002 than those who were at the receiving end of the violence. The editorial correctly asks if someone in the CBSE felt its political masters may not be pleased with the question. Those who seek to permanently erase the 2002 anti-Muslim violence from public memory do not shy away from highlighting the 1984 anti-Sikh violence for their narrow political gains. Both hate-driven carnages targeted against minorities are a part of our history and must be taught.

Samiul Hassan Quadri, Bikaner

MSP VIABILITY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Fertile

ground’ (IE, December 3). Celebrations by farmer unions’ over the acceptance of their demand by the NDA government for the repeal of the three farm laws are natural. But now they should avoid insisting on the approval of a Minimum Support Price, that too with a legal guarantee, for practically every crop. This is because the government will find it neither fiscally possible to grant MSP for sundry crops, nor is it physically possible to store such huge stocks.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

IMPRACTICAL COURT

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘SC warns Delhi govt on pollution: Will appoint someone to administer’ (IE, December 3). The recurrent annual administrative, political and judicial interventions to address the protracted problem of air pollution in Delhi during the winter months has become a ritual theatre of the absurd. In November 2019, the anguished Supreme Court while admonishing the Centre, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh for air pollution in Delhi-NCR had lamented, “This has been going on since long. Is this not worse than internal war? Why are people in this gas chamber?” In 2021, the SC is rather upset with the Centre and Delhi government again. However, giving only 24 hours for a concrete action plan to set right the systemic failure is high on righteousness but lacking in practicality. A systemic problem can only be solved through a systemic approach and not through emergency diktats.

L R Murmu, Delhi

TOP OF THE WORLD



Bob Dole was a former leader of the Senate

USA

Longtime GOP leader Bob Dole dies at 98

BOB DOLE, who overcame disabling war wounds to become a sharp-tongued Senate leader from Kansas, a Republican presidential candidate and then a symbol and celebrant of his dwindling generation of World War II veterans, has died. He was 98. His wife, Elizabeth Dole, posted the announcement Sunday on Twitter. Dole announced in February 2021 that he'd been diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. During his 36-year career on Capitol Hill, Dole became one of the most influential legislators and party leaders in the Senate, combining a talent for compromise with a caustic wit, which he often turned on himself but didn't hesitate to turn on others, too. **AP**

RUSSIA

Airliner had to lose height to avoid NATO spy plane: Moscow

A RUSSIAN Aeroflot airliner flying from Tel Aviv to Moscow was forced to change altitude over the Black Sea because a NATO CL-600 reconnaissance plane crossed its designated flight path, Russia's state aviation authority said on Saturday. The state airline said flight SU501 carrying 142 passengers had had to drop 2,000 feet on Friday after air traffic control told it that another aircraft had crossed its path. The aviation authority said an increase in flights by NATO aircraft in the region was creating risks for civilian planes and that Moscow planned to lodge a diplomatic complaint over them. **REUTERS**

AUSTRIA

Avalanche kills 3 skiers, injures 2

THREE SKIERS have been killed and two injured in an avalanche in central Austria, authorities said Sunday. The victims were part of a group of 11 skiers, eight of whom were hit by a roughly 655-foot wide slab of snow as they ascended a slope during a ski tour on Saturday in the Tweng area, in Salzburg province. Three of the skiers were buried by the avalanche, while another two were partly buried and able to free themselves, regional police said. **AP**



INDONESIA VOLCANO TOLL RISES TO 14

Trucks and buildings covered by volcanic ash in Sumber Wuluh Village, East Java province, Indonesia, on Sunday. The eruption of Indonesia's Semeru volcano has killed at least 14 people and injured dozens, the disaster mitigation agency said on Sunday, as search teams looked for victims in a landscape covered in deep layers of ash. Semeru, the tallest mountain on Java island, threw up towers of ash and hot clouds on Saturday that blanketed nearby villages in East Java province and sent people fleeing in panic. **Reuters**

Five dead after Myanmar security forces ram car into Yangon protesters: report

REUTERS
DECEMBER 5

FIVE PEOPLE were killed and at least 15 arrested after Myanmar security forces in a car rammed into an anti-coup protest on Sunday morning in Yangon, local news portal Myanmar Now reported.

Witnesses on the scene told Reuters dozens had been injured. Photos and videos on social media show a vehicle that crashed through the protesters and bodies lying on the road.

Another protest was held in Yangon in the afternoon despite the morning violence.

Anti-military protests are

Protesters change tactics

THE DAYS after the Feb 1 coup in Myanmar saw massive protests for which tens of thousands turned out. The military cracked down heavily on the protests, and an estimated 1,300 people have been killed during demonstrations, according to reports. Protest leaders were arrested, and the mass protests died down. But they

EXPLAINED

have now been replaced by flash mob protests that seem to spontaneously break out in different parts of the country. These protests are carried out by hundreds of people, instead of thousands, and had, until Sunday, not faced the worst of the military's violent crack down that earlier protests were subjected to.

continuing despite the killing of more than 1,300 people since the February 1 coup.

The opposition's shadow government said it was heartbroken to see peaceful protest-

ers crashed and shot to death.

"We will strongly respond to the terrorist military who brutally, inhumanly killed the unarmed peaceful protesters," the National Unity Government's defence ministry said in a statement on social media after Sunday's attack.

In the incident, a "flash mob" protest in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city, was rammed minutes after it started, witnesses said.

"I got hit and fell down in front of a truck. A soldier beat me with his rifle but I defended and pushed him back. Then he immediately shot at me as I ran away in a zig-zag pattern. Fortunately, I escaped," a protester who asked not to be identified, said by phone.

LYNCHING OF SRI LANKAN MAN IN PAKISTAN

Pak PM dials Lanka President, assures justice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, DECEMBER 5

PAKISTAN PRIME Minister Imran Khan has assured Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa that the mob that lynched Sri Lankan national Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana over allegations of blasphemy will face justice, the President's office here said on Sunday.

Khan telephoned Rajapaksa and said that 113 people were arrested so far, it said.

"All the videos and information



Imran Khan and Gotabaya Rajapaksa

related to the incident have been obtained by the Pakistani security forces," a statement from the Sri Lankan President's office said. Khan informed Rajapaksa



of the hardline Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) attacked a garment factory and lynched its general manager Diyawadana, who was in his 40s, before setting his body on fire over allegations of blasphemy.

As pressure mounted on the Pakistani government to bring the guilty to justice, over 800 people have been booked under terrorism charges while 13 prime suspects are among 118 arrested so far in the horrific lynching of the Sri Lankan national in Punjab province.

that Diyawadana, who had served in Pakistan for a long time, had shown a high level of professionalism as a manager. On Friday, angry supporters

CNN fires Chris Cuomo for role in brother's scandal

DAVID BAUDER & MICHELLE L. PRICE
NEW YORK, DECEMBER 5

CNN FIRED anchor Chris Cuomo on Saturday less than a week after new information emerged about how he assisted his brother, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, as the politician faced sexual harassment allega-



Chris Cuomo

tions earlier this year.

The network had suspended its prime-time host on Tuesday to investigate his conduct, after New York's attorney general released details showing he was more in-

volved than previously known in helping to strategize and reach out to other journalists as his brother fought to keep his job.

CNN hired a law firm for that review, which it would not identify. The lawyers recommended Chris Cuomo's termination and CNN chief Jeff Zucker informed the anchor of the decision on Saturday.

"It goes without saying that these decisions are not easy, and

there are a lot of complex factors involved," Zucker said in an email to CNN staff on Saturday.

The network said that "while in the process of that review, additional information has come to light." CNN would not discuss that information, or characterise whether it had anything to do with his brother. Cuomo issued a statement calling the decision disappointing. **AP**

GREECE

POPE MEETS MIGRANTS ON LESBOS ISLAND

Pope Francis returned Sunday to the Greek island of Lesbos to offer comfort to migrants at a refugee camp and blast what he said was the indifference and self-interest shown by Europe "that condemns to death those on the fringes". "Please, let us stop this shipwreck of civilisation!" Francis said at the Mavrovouni camp, a cluster of white UN containers on the edge of the sea lined by barbed wire fencing and draped with laundry hanging from lines.



More Omicron cases found in US as hospitals strain under Delta surge

AP & NYT
DECEMBER 5

NEW YORK announced three more cases of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus Saturday, bringing the number of state cases linked to the new variant to eight.

"The Omicron variant is here, and as anticipated we are seeing the beginning of community spread," state Health Commissioner Mary Bassett said in a news release.

The number of US states finding the variant is growing as well, with Massachusetts, Connecticut and Washington state announcing their first cases Saturday, a day after New Jersey, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Maryland reported their first confirmed cases. Missouri reported its first presumed case Friday. The variant also has been detected in Nebraska, Minnesota, California, Hawaii, Colorado and Utah.

In New York, seven of the cases have been found in New York City, once a global epicenter of the pandemic, and the other in Suffolk County.

The arrival of Omicron comes as hospitals in several states continue to strain under a surge in coronavirus cases, most traced to the Delta variant, along with staffing shortages.

The number of people testing positive each day for the virus has doubled in the last 30 days.

One of the known Omicron cases in New York involved a man from Minnesota who was among 50,000 people who attended a three-day anime festival in New York in November. Authorities have urged anyone who attended the conference to get tested for Covid-19. The man, identified as Peter McGinn, tested positive for the virus on November 23, a day before reports about the new variant became public. This has raised fears that Omicron may have already been spreading in the US.



ANTI-LOCKDOWN PROTEST IN VIENNA: Protesters in Vienna, Austria, on Saturday. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Vienna over the Austrian government's decision to impose a tough new lockdown and plan a sweeping nationwide vaccine mandate in the fight against a sharp surge in coronavirus cases and rising deaths. **Reuters**

UK Omicron cases rise to 246; curbs tightened

NYT & REUTERS
DECEMBER 5

THE NUMBER of confirmed cases of the Omicron coronavirus variant rose to 246 in Britain, after authorities reported 86 new cases on Sunday. On Saturday, the British government announced further tightening of travel restrictions to combat the spread of the variant.

Beginning Tuesday, travellers will be required to take a coronavirus test within 48 hours of travelling to Britain regardless of their vaccination status. Britain will also impose restrictions on travellers from Nigeria, the country's health secretary said in a statement. Nigeria announced on Wednesday that it had detected the variant in three travelers who arrived from South Africa in November, according to Dr Ifeanyi Adetifa, the director general of the

Nigeria Centre for Disease Control.

The two additional measures being imposed by Britain are the latest to come after a week of heightened concern led to the introduction of a number of restrictions intended to slow the incursion of the Omicron variant.

At the moment, travellers are required to self-isolate and take a coronavirus test on the second day after arriving. If that test is negative, they can end their isolation. If not, they are expected to remain in self-isolation until they do get a negative result.

Britain is considered a leader in genomic sequencing and testing, with a well-run national programme to track coronavirus mutations, so it has an advantage in tracking the variant's spread.

Sajid Javid, the country's health secretary, said on Saturday that the British public should continue with life as usual while adhering to coronavirus guidelines.

Pro-monarchy party chief who lost bid to retain post says will no longer back Nepal king's return

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, DECEMBER 5

AFTER HIS defeat in the race for the post of Rastriya Janata Party chief following an uninterrupted 15 years at the helm, former Nepal deputy prime minister Kamal Thapa on Sunday accused 'Nirmal Niwas' — the residence of former king Gyanendra Shah — of conspiring against him. Thapa announced that he would no longer back the return of the monarchy in Nepal.

Thapa was defeated by Rajendra Lingden, the only member of Parliament of the party.

Groomed by the palace right from his days in student politics in the early 1970s, Thapa has held key ministerial berths. He had remained committed to constitutional monarchy even after Nepal became a secular republic after 2006. **NYT**

POWERFUL ASSOCIATES OF PRESIDENT BASHAR AL-ASSAD ARE MAKING AND SELLING CAPTAGON, AN ILLEGAL AMPHETAMINE

World's newest narcostate: On Syria's ruins, a drug empire flourishes

BEN HUBBARD & HWAIDA SAAD
BEIRUT, DECEMBER 5

BUILT ON the ashes of 10 years of war in Syria, an illegal drug industry run by powerful associates and relatives of President Bashar al-Assad has grown into a multi-billion-dollar operation, eclipsing Syria's legal exports and turning the country into the world's newest narcostate.

Its flagship product is captagon, an illegal, addictive amphetamine popular in Saudi Arabia and other Arab states. Its operations stretch across Syria, including workshops that manufacture

the pills, packing plants where they are concealed for export, and smuggling networks to spirit them to markets abroad.

An investigation by *The New York Times* found that much of the production and distribution is overseen by the Fourth Armored Division of the Syrian army, an elite unit commanded by Maher al-Assad, the president's younger brother and one of Syria's most powerful men.

Major players also include businessmen with close ties to the government, the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, and other members of the president's extended family, whose last name ensures protection for illegal ac-

tivities, according to *The Times* investigation, which is based on information from law enforcement officials in 10 countries and dozens of interviews with international and regional drug experts, Syrians with knowledge of the drug trade and current and former United States officials.

The drug trade emerged in the ruins of a decade of war, which shattered Syria's economy, reduced most of its people to poverty and left members of Syria's military, political and business elite looking for new ways to earn hard currency and circumvent American economic sanctions.

Illicit speed is now the coun-

A destroyed shopping mall in Homs, Syria, in 2014. **NYT**

try's most valuable export, far surpassing its legal products, according to a database compiled by *The Times* of global captagon busts.

In recent years, the authorities in Greece, Italy, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere have seized hundreds of millions of pills, most of

them originating from one government-controlled port in Syria, some in hauls whose street value could exceed \$1 billion, according to law enforcement officials.

Officials in Italy found 84 million pills hidden in huge rolls of paper and metal gears last year. Malaysian officials discovered more than 94 million pills sealed inside rubber trolley wheels in March.

These seizures likely represent only a fraction of the drugs shipped, drug experts say. But they provide a window into the scope of the trade, suggesting that the industry has exploded in recent years.

More than 250 million cap-

tagon pills have been seized across the globe so far this year, more than 18 times the amount captured just four years ago.

Even more concerning to governments in the region, the Syrian network built to smuggle captagon has begun to move more dangerous drugs, like crystal meth, regional security officials say.

The biggest obstacle in combating the trade, officials said, is that it has the backing of a state that has little reason to help shut it down.

"The idea of going to the Syrian government to ask about cooperation is just absurd," said Joel Rayburn, the US special envoy for Syria during the Trump

administration. "It is literally the Syrian government that is exporting the drugs. It is not like they are looking the other way while drug cartels do their thing. They are the drug cartel."

Captagon was originally manufactured by a German pharmaceutical company as a stimulant to treat attention deficit disorder and narcolepsy. In the 1980s, users in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states started taking it recreationally to get an energy boost, banish fear and stay awake to study for exams, work, party or drive long distances. Its white pills were stamped with two crescents, giving it the Arabic nickname "abu hilaalain," or "the one with two moons". **NYT**

15 ECONOMY

MPC SET TO UNVEIL BIMONTHLY POLICY ON WEDNESDAY

RBI likely to stick to gradual exit from ultra-accommodative stance: Experts

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 5

DESPITE THE threat posed by the new Covid variant — Omicron — the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to continue with its plan on gradual exit from the ultra-accommodative monetary policy settings, experts said.

The near-term retail inflation is likely to remain within the MPC target band of 4 to 6 per cent. This, in turn, should give the Monetary Policy Committee time to assess the medium-term implications of Omicron by continuing to maintain an accommodative pause in policy rates in December. The MPC is scheduled to unveil the bi-monthly policy on December 8.

“While on-track recovery and

above-target inflation make a case for policy normalisation, authorities are likely to be watchful of the new risk on the horizon — the Omicron variant. Notwithstanding the caution, we still expect a gradual exit from the ultra-accommodative policy settings to continue,” said Radhika Rao, senior economist, DBS group.

“We believe the talks of a reverse repo rate hike in the MPC meeting may be premature as the RBI has been largely able to narrow the corridor without the noise of rate hikes and ensuing market cacophony,” said Soumya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic adviser, State Bank of India.

“We expect the RBI to continue normalizing high banking system liquidity by further adjusting quantum and tenor of existing

EXPLAINED Eye on Omicron

THE NEAR-TERM retail inflation is likely to remain within the MPC target band of 4 to 6 per cent. This, in turn, should give the Monetary Policy Committee time to assess the medium-term implications of Omicron by continuing to maintain an accommodative pause in policy rates in December.

VRRR operations. Interest rate markets have re-aligned to this new reality and expected to re-

main range bound around current levels in the absence of a policy surprise,” said Churchill Bhatt, EVP debt investments, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company.

Indications of the US Fed removing policy support at a faster pace, to keep inflation under check, are visible. This is aimed at completing the taper at an earlier date with a possible rise in interest rates sooner. This can impact future strategies of central banks. Covid is also making a comeback in Europe and the new variant from South Africa does not portend well for the world economy with possibilities of lockdowns, thus again forcing a reversal of policies.

On the growth front, while most economic indicators have surpassed pre-Covid levels, there is still a lot of slack in the economy.

Hence, RBI may decide to wait and watch till the next MPC meeting in February 2022. The RBI will be concerned about inflationary pressure building in the economy. Currently the upward pressure on inflation is because of high commodity prices and supply bottlenecks. “However, with economic growth gathering momentum, there is threat of further demand side pressure on inflation. We can expect the RBI to start hiking rates from 2022. The RBI will also narrow the corridor between repo and reverse repo rate, with sharper hike in reverse repo rate. The quantum of rate hike will be dependent on how the Covid scenario pans out and its subsequent impact on economic growth in 2022,” said Rajani Sinha, chief economist and national director-research, Knight Frank India.

MARKET WATCH

M-CAP OF 7 MOST VALUED COS JUMPS

New Delhi: Seven of the top 10 valued companies together added Rs 1,29,047.61 crore in market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the biggest gainer. During the last week, the BSE benchmark gained 589.31 points or 1.03 per cent. **PTI**

INTERVIEW WITH CHAIRMAN, EDELWEISS GROUP

‘For startup IPOs, must look beyond valuations, focus on tangible change to ecosystem’



Rashesh Shah

RASHESH SHAH, chairman of Edelweiss group, says the stock markets are in the midst of a structural growth story and IPO market is witnessing a new era of value creation through evolved technologies. Shah spoke to GEORGE MATHEW on various issues relating to the markets and financial sector. Edited excerpts:

Do you think Indian stock markets were overvalued? Do you expect more correction in the near future?

At any given time, stock markets are priced in for the future rather than the status quo. The current valuation of the Indian market is a reflection of the strong belief in the growth in India over the next decade or so. While there may be areas which are overvalued today, there are also many parts which are undervalued and provide good investment opportunities for long term. We are in the midst of a structural growth story and any near-term corrections should be seen as opportunities for the long term.

What's your view on the valuations of unicorns entering the IPO market? Are they overvalued considering the fact that most of them are loss making?

Like most other markets, the startup market also goes through up cycles and down cycles. We are currently in what is clearly an up cycle. However, we must look beyond valuations and focus on the real and tangible change that these startups are bringing about to the ecosystem, not just in India but globally. Clearly, many of these business models are re-defining and transforming the way we do business and they must be looked at and evaluated in that context. We are certainly seeing a new era of value creation through evolved technologies and while valuations may become overheated at any point of time, their overall impact in our lives cannot be underscored.

The US Fed is likely to tighten the monetary policy soon to check inflation. Do you think FPIs will pull out more funds from India?

There are two big factors playing out in the market today — one is the tsunami of domestic investment we have seen over the last year or so. Even though FPI investments in the last few months have been subdued, domestic investments have more than made up for this shortfall. This is a trend

which will continue going forward as a larger segment of the country gets acquainted with the long-term benefits of having equity exposure in their portfolio. Secondly, the structural growth story playing out in India has been a natural attraction for FPIs, especially with the challenges in other growth economies. Hence, a tightening in the monetary policy might lead to some short-term knee-jerk reaction but the overall trend will continue to be favourable.

Do you expect interest rates to rise in India soon? When do you expect the RBI to normalise the policy?

We are some distance away from the rise in interest rates. As the economy continues to see strong recovery, it would be good to let the animal spirits expand wide before thinking about a rate cut. There are still pockets of industries which are yet to see tangible recovery to pre-covid levels and it would be prudent to consider rate cuts only some way down the line.

Bad loans of NBFCs are expected to rise following the recent changes in NPA norms by the RBI. How is the sector taking the regulatory changes?

While there will be some near-term impact, I think many NBFCs will be proactively working towards adhering to the new guidelines while maintaining asset quality. Hence, the monitoring and follow-ups would become more intense and get initiated well in advance. However, this might create short-lived challenges for the end consumer in the short term. However, as the industry evolves to a new norm, new regulations should become par for the course.

What's your assessment on the economic recovery? Will the emergence of new Covid variants delay the recovery?

India has been on an unprecedented vaccination spree. It has been a humongous exercise but one executed with relentless and unerring focus. The economic recovery has come on the back of this drive and is well and truly underway. While it is difficult to comment on new variants, initial estimates seem to indicate that the new variants seem to be less harmful, even if they could be more viral. Hopefully, this will lead to faster immunity and coupled with the vaccination drive, prevent any outbreak similar to Wave 2.

Corporate earnings are looking healthy. Do you think the slowdown of profits is behind us?

We saw what would be the bottoming out of corporate profits last year and we are now at the beginning of a decadal growth cycle. We are definitely looking at improving corporate profitability in both short term and long term. For Edelweiss, the profit improvement is not only driven by the return of profitability in credit but also strong growth in our asset management and wealth management businesses. Our mutual fund and alternatives business have seen breakout quarters and both our insurance businesses have done consistently well, being the fastest growing in their respective sectors. Despite the uncertainty due to Covid, we have added around 2 million customers in the last one year itself and currently we serve 5 million customers across our businesses. This is also the beginning of another long-term journey for us, and we are only at the cusp of it.

What's your plan/strategy going forward as fintech companies are changing the way the financial sector is functioning?

We see the fintech wave evolving two-folds. One, there will be opportunities for partnerships between banks and NBFCs on one side and the fintechs on the other. Many of our businesses are today working closely with these fintech companies to enable these partnerships, be it our retail credit businesses, our insurance businesses or our MF businesses. Secondly, there is also an opportunity for us to learn from these fintech businesses, which is what we are also focused on, as we evolve into tech-enabled plays in some businesses like retail credit while being fintech players ourselves in some of our businesses like general insurance.

‘Salesmen threaten supply disruptions in protest against RIL’

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

HOUSEHOLD GOODS salesmen have threatened to disrupt supplies to mom-and-pop stores if consumer companies provide products at lower prices to Reliance Industries, according to a letter seen by Reuters.

Reuters reported last month Indian salesmen representing companies such as Reckitt Benckiser, Unilever and Colgate-Palmolive said their sales had dropped 20-25 per cent in the last year as mom-and-pop stores were increasingly partnering Reliance. Citing the story, the All India Consumer Products Distributors Federation, which has 4,00,000 members, has written to consumer companies demanding a level playing field, saying they must get products at same prices like other big corporate distributors such as Reliance. If the pricing-parity demand is not met, the group said in its letter, its salesmen will stop distribution of products to mom-and-pop stores, and will also not supply newly launched consumer goods if such partnerships continue beyond January 1.

The group's president, Dhairiyashil Patil, said the letter was sent to Reckitt, Hindustan Unilever, Colgate and 20 other consumer goods companies. None of the 3 companies, as well as Reliance, responded to requests for comment.

TAXATION WATCH INCOME TAX

Over 3 cr ITRs filed so far on new portal: almost half of total from last fiscal year

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

OVER 3 crore income tax returns have been filed so far on the new e-filing portal for assessment year 2021-22 (financial year 2020-21). The Income Tax Department in a statement issued on Sunday urged taxpayers who are yet to file their income tax returns for AY 2021-22 at the earliest.

To put the numbers in perspective, the total number of income tax returns filed in financial year 2020-21 were 7.38 crore, as per government data. In 2019-20, 6.78 crore income tax returns were filed including revised returns, while in 2018-19, 6.74 crore ITRs were filed.

As of December 3, ITR filing has increased to 3.03 crore ITRs for AY 2021-22. Over 52% of these ITRs are filed using the online ITR form on the portal, the tax department said.

As many as 2.69 crore returns have been e-verified, of which more than 2.28 crore are through Aadhaar based OTP. In November, 48 per cent of the verified ITRs 1, 2 and 4 have been processed on the same day. Of the verified ITRs more than 2.11 crore ITRs have been processed and over 82.80 lakh refunds for AY22 have been issued.

The Income Tax Department has urged all taxpayers to view their Form 26AS and Annual Information Statement (AIS) through the e-filing portal to verify the accuracy of the TDS and tax payments. “It is important for taxpayers to cross check the data in the AIS statement with their Bank passbook, interest certificate, Form 16 and Capital gains

As of December 3, ITR filing has increased to 3.03 crore ITRs for AY 2021-22. Over 52% of these ITRs are filed using the online ITR form on the portal, the tax department said

statement from brokerages in case of purchase and sale of equity/Mutual funds etc,” it said.

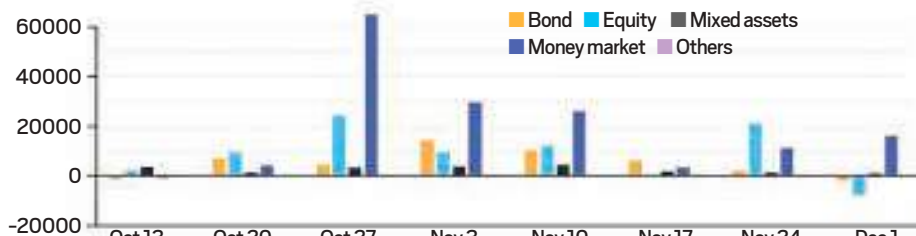
The government has extended the due date for filing ITRs for 2020-21 fiscal twice. The due date for ITRs for individuals whose accounts are not to be audited was extended to December 31 from September 30, while that for companies was extended to February 15, 2022 from the earlier extended deadline of November 30.

The new income tax portal, www.incometax.gov.in, which was launched on June 7, has faced glitches since its launch. The Finance Ministry had on August 23 “summoned” Infosys CEO Salil Parekh to explain the issues resulting in disruption of the portal developed by the software major. In the meeting with Parekh on August 23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had expressed “deep disappointment” over persisting glitches for more than two months after portal launch and was given a deadline of September 15 to Infosys to resolve the issues. In October, the income tax department had stated that a number of technical issues in the new income tax portal have been resolved and the performance of the portal has substantially stabilised.

‘Global equity funds see biggest outflow in over 7 months’

Global equity funds faced outflows in the week ended December 1 on worries about the Omicron variant, while the Fed's hawkish tilt on unwinding added to investor concerns

FUND FLOWS INTO GLOBAL EQUITIES, BONDS AND MONEY MARKETS (IN \$ MN)



Source: Refinitiv Lipper data/Reuters

LIC improves asset quality ahead of IPO, lowers net NPA to 0.05%

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

AHEAD OF its proposed initial public offering (IPO), LIC has improved its asset quality for the financial year ended March 2021.

The non-performing assets (NPAs) as of March 31, 2021, are Rs 35,129.89 crore out of a total portfolio of Rs 4,51,303.30 crore, according to the latest Annual Report of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

The sub-standard assets are Rs

254.37 crore whereas the doubtful assets are Rs 20,369.17 crore and loss assets are Rs 14,506.35 crore. An amount of Rs 34,934.97 crore is provided as per IRDAI guidelines in the books of accounts towards non-performing assets, it said. The percentage of gross NPA is 7.78 per cent while the net NPA is 0.05 per cent at the end of March 2021. This is lower than gross NPA of 8.17 per cent (as a percentage of its debt portfolio) and net NPA of 0.79 per cent in the previous year.

In absolute terms, the NPA

was Rs 36,694.20 crore out of a total debt of Rs 4,49,364.87 crore in 2019-20. Stress threshold for banks is different from that for insurers. LIC usually makes full provisions for all NPA in the debt book.

The corporation has made provisions to the tune of Rs 37,341.6 crore, of which Rs 34,934.97 crore is towards doubtful, sub-standard, and loss assets.

The government earlier this year amended the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, to facilitate the listing of LIC. **WITH PTI**

Maruti: Long wait period due to chip shortage can negatively impact demand

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

LONGER WAITING periods with semiconductor shortage affecting production can have a negative impact on car demand, although the supply constraints of chips have gradually improved over the last few months, according to a senior official of car market leader Maruti Suzuki India.

The company currently has a pending order of around 2.5

lakh units with demand in the market continuing to be buoyant, while its production was over 80 per cent of normal in November.

“The bookings show that the demand continues to be quite robust, both in terms of inquiries and the bookings, but now availability is an issue and waiting periods have gone up,” Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava. **WITH PTI**

‘Create robust, digital platform for easy credit availability to small biz’

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 5

IT MINISTER Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday exhorted the banking industry to create an innovative digital platform — as powerful, seamless and robust as UPI — for providing quick and easy credit to MSME, small businesses, and those at the bottom of pyramid.

The building blocks required to create such a platform are already available, given the strong ecosystem of Aadhaar, mobile phones, UPI (Unified Payments Interface)



ASHWINI VAISHNAW
IT Minister

platform and digilocker, he said asking the banking industry to come up with innovative idea and

solutions in three months. Vaishnaw was speaking at ‘Digital payment Utsav’ which was part of a weeklong showcase of India's achievements in digital space titled ‘Azadi Ka Digital Mahotsav’ in the capital.

Throwing a “challenge” at the bankers present in the audience, the Minister said: “Can we create a platform as powerful, seamless, good, as digital as UPI platform for providing very quick and easy credit to the MSME, small industries, small businessmen...people really at bottom of pyramid.” **WITH PTI**

BRIEFLY SBI NPA sale

New Delhi: SBI has invited bids from asset reconstruction companies, and other financial institutions to sell an NPA account KSK Mahanadi Power Company, with outstanding against the company over Rs 4,100 crore. **PTI**

Bahrain currency

Dubai: The Central Bank of Bahrain plans to offer a digital dinar through a digital payments platform. Sky News Arabia reported Sunday. The central bank aims to raise the share of financing for small- and medium-sized enterprises to 20 per cent of financial portfolios of local banks by the end of 2025. **REUTERS**

Amid Evergrande crisis, more Chinese developers to issue ABS

REUTERS
BEIJING, DECEMBER 5

SOME OF China's major property developers are planning to issue asset-backed securities in the near term, a further sign that regulators are marginally broadening financial channels for developers amid Evergrande's debt crisis.

China Evergrande, wrestling with debts of more than \$300 billion, said on Friday that there was “no guarantee” it would have enough funds to meet debt repayments, prompting the country's top financial regulators to calm the market.

The regulators said any fallout was controllable, and that developers' normal funding needs would be met, but the sector is facing another year of tight funding conditions and refinancing risks,

Moody's said in a note last week.

Country Garden, the country's top property developer, said on Sunday that the company is considering applying for the issuance of supply chain asset-based securities (ABS) in the near term.

“As an innovative financing tool, supply chain ABS products can support upstream suppliers' financing and ease financing difficulties for small and medium firms,” the company said in a statement on its official WeChat account.

It also pledged to control company's risks via prudent operations, according to the statement.

Four other developers, including Huafa Industrial and Greentown China, have received regulatory feedback on their plans to issue ABS totalling nearly



Evergrande project in Beijing. Reuters file

16 billion yuan (\$2.51 billion), the Shanghai Stock Exchange disclosed on December 3.

The Securities Times reported that China Vanke is also planning to issue supply chain ABS worth

777 million yuan in the near run.

“Restrictions on domestic real estate bond financing have eased, and the amount of bond issuance in November is about 3 times that of October,” analysts with CICC wrote in a note, adding that bond financing is recovering in an orderly manner.

China's property market, which accounts for a quarter of gross domestic product by some metrics, has been cooling sharply since May with sentiment shaken by intensifying liquidity stress that has engulfed some of the country's most indebted developers.

Analysts do not believe Beijing will ease up much on its campaign to rein in developers with high leverage levels, but they do expect some policy tweaks to ensure home prices and sales don't fall too quickly.

Regulators said they will support private firms, especially those affected by recent debt issues, to raise money “properly”, Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday, citing an official from the securities regulator.

The China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission (CBIRC) said the Evergrande issue would not affect the industry's normal operations and it would increase support for guaranteed rental housing.

It added that it believed domestic and overseas regulators would deal with Evergrande-related issues fairly, while the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) said any fallout for the capital market was “controllable” and it would maintain support for property developers' funding needs.

Rangnick starts Man Utd term with 1-0 win

REUTERS/ENS
MANCHESTER, DECEMBER 5

Chandigarh

17 SPORT

DJOKOVIC STILL COY ABOUT OZ OPEN

World No. 1 Novak Djokovic isn't ready to say whether he will defend his Australian Open title next month in Melbourne. The issue: Tournament participants are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19, and Djokovic has refused to say whether he has been. He previously has stated his opposition to vaccination mandates for players.

REUTERS

BRIEFLY

Five cities to host 16-team Davis Cup Finals next year

Madrid: Buoyed by the success of the multi-city format of this year's Davis Cup Finals, the 2022 edition of the men's team competition will be held across five cities, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) said on Sunday. This year's 18-nation competition was staged across three cities -- Madrid, Turin and Innsbruck -- and the Russian Tennis Federation and Croatia will meet in the final in the Spanish capital later on Sunday. The 2022 Finals will see 16 nations competing in four groups across four cities with the top eight teams advancing to the knock-out stages in a neutral fifth host city, the ITF and event owners Kosmos Tennis said. "For the group stages we envision all four of those being teams that are competing in the competition," ITF chief David Haggerty told Reuters, adding that the governing body expects to make a decision on the host cities in March. **REUTERS**

Rain plays spoilsport in Pak vs Bangla Test

Dhaka: The majority of play on day two of the second cricket test between Bangladesh and Pakistan was washed out due to persistent rain on Sunday. Just 6.2 overs from a possible 98 were possible as Pakistan resumed the day on 161-2 and reached 188-2 before the umpires called it a day. Skipper Babar Azam was batting on 71 with Azhar Ali on 52 at stumps. Rain and bad light also interrupted the game on day one, allowing just two sessions. As the game started after the lunch session on Sunday, Babar resumed with a boundary through fine leg off pacer Khaled Ahmed, showing his intention to score quick runs. Azhar also hit a boundary in the second ball he faced off pacer Ebadot Hossain. He then struck two consecutive fours in Ebadot's next over to reach his 34th test fifty off 126 balls just before rain forced the postponement. Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who didn't bowl on day two, remains Bangladesh's biggest threat with match figures of 2-49. **AP**

BRIEF SCORES: Stumps Pakistan 188 for 2 (Babar 71*, Azhar 52, Taijul 2-49) vs Bangladesh

Germany bow out with 'dead rubber' win

Madrid: Germany bowed out of the Davis Cup with a win in the doubles rubber of their semi-final in Madrid against Russia. Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz fought back to beat Aslan Karatsev and Karen Khachanov 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, but it was scant consolation as singles victories for Andrey Rublev and Daniil Medvedev had earlier given Russia an unassailable 2-0 lead in the best-of-three tie. Croatia await Russia in Sunday's showpiece after they eliminated Novak Djokovic's Serbia on Friday. Both finalists will be aiming for a third Davis Cup title. The Russian team is officially being called RTF (Russian Tennis Federation) in the competition because of the ongoing doping suspension in international sport. **AP**

ABHISHEK PUROHIT MUMBAI, DECEMBER 5

For more than an hour on Sunday afternoon at the Wankhede Stadium, New Zealand did not lose a single wicket, courtesy a 73-run fourth-wicket partnership between Daryl Mitchell and Henry Nicholls. Considering that their entire first innings had folded for 62 in about two hours on Saturday, it was a massive improvement already, albeit from the lowest of bases.

The lull in the wicket procession was enough for the vocal upper tier of the Dilip Vengsarkar Stand, the erstwhile North Stand, to start chanting. 'Monday office jaana hai, out karo, out karo, [We have to go to work on Monday, so get them out!]

It was a sample of the monstrous expectation India face at home, where a Test match win -- and even a win with days to spare -- is taken for granted. But it wasn't as easy as it had been on Day Two, when New Zealand had lasted a mere 28.1 overs.

The bite and zip that had delivered the historic perfect ten for Ajaz Patel, and then produced the lowest total ever against India in a blink-and-miss New Zealand reply, had gradually dissipated. It was miles away from the slow and low Kanpur track of course; it was more of slow turn and un-slow bounce. The moisture from all the rain in the lead-up to the match had diminished by the third morning, and batters were no longer getting rushed.

"Two days back, due to the underlying moisture, the ball had fast turn and as time is progressing, the track is slowing down a bit. So today, even when there was turn, the batter had enough time to go on the back foot and negotiate it," said Axar Patel.

They had to make mistakes. "Only if the batter is making mistakes, then it is a bit difficult for him. We have been in umpteen situations like these and we know what needs to be done in these circumstances. It won't always be the case that batters will get out quickly so one needs to have patience."

Patience game

Patience was what India had to work with. Mitchell, especially, was batting with controlled aggression, having seen Mayank Agarwal take the attack to the New Zealand spinners in both his knocks.

Mitchell batted on the leg stump, trying to stay leg side of the ball and play straighter towards the off-side. He was also using his feet constantly to get to the pitch of the ball and work it around. He charged the spinners often and lofted them cleanly to the straight boundary. "Set the template from Mayank's batting, the way he put pressure on our spinners. It's just about trying to put pressure back on the bowlers," Mitchell later said.

"That's the beauty of Test cricket. They (bowlers) are constantly throwing things at you and you're trying to counter that. You have to keep trying to win the small battles." It remains essentially a one-ball game for batters though, and Mitchell would succumb in a mini-battle against



Daryl Mitchell scored a fighting knock of 60 from 92 balls. **AP**

Axar on 60. He'd just stepped out to hit his ninth boundary, a straight six to the left-arm spinner. Axar gave the next ball some air too, but this one was a touch wider and the length had been pulled back a tad. Mitchell found himself nowhere near the pitch, still went through with his big swing, and mishit to the lone man sweeping on the off-side rope.

Two overs later, Tom Blundell pushed Axar straight to mid-off and set off for a non-existent single only to be run out for a duck. After that brief revival from 55/3, New Zealand had slipped to 129/5.

Mohammed Siraj could not produce a wicket burst with the new ball like he had on Day Two. But R Ashwin spun out the openers Tom Latham and Will Young as well as Ross Taylor with the new SG in the first hour.

The veteran Taylor's horror tour ended with 11, 2, 1 and 6. He'd tried defending without success; in most likely his final Test innings in India, he tried hitting out, and top-edged a slog to depart off his eighth delivery.

It was after India had batted for 49 overs to pile up a gargantuan lead of 539. The top four of Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli made 62, 47, 47 and 36, none of them going on to convert their starts. All of them fell to varying kinds of soft dismissals, before Axar heralded the declaration on 276/7 in 70 overs with an un-slow bounce. The moisture from all the rain in the lead-up to the match had diminished by the third morning, and batters were no longer getting rushed.

beaten 41 off 26. Ten-for man Ajaz registered match figures of 14/225, the best ever haul against India.

Axar was asked why India had batted for so long despite their lead having already grown so much. He said the plan had been to bat as if they were chasing a target on a turner.

"I won't call it a delay as there is so much time left in the game. The idea was to bat as long as possible in this kind of a situation, you don't get every day, so the plan was to make the most of it," Axar said. "We were trying to explore options and check out what if we have to chase on this kind of a track on the last day, trying to express ourselves in a different situation." That India were treating their second innings as a simulation chase tells you everything about how much they have bossed this match so far. Another home series win is a matter of five strikes on Day Four, with New Zealand technically needing another 400 runs.

SCOREBOARD

India 1st innings: 325

New Zealand 1st innings: 62

India 2nd innings: 276/7 (Decl)

New Zealand 2nd Innings:

Tom Latham lbw b Ashwin 6
Will Young c (SK Yadav) sub b Ashwin 20
Daryl Mitchell c J Yadav b Patel 60
Ross Taylor c Pujara b Ashwin 6
Henry Nicholls batting 36
Tom Blundell run out 0
Rachin Ravindra batting 2
Extras: (B-8 LB-1 NB-1) 10
Total: (For 5 wickets in 45 overs) 140

Fall of wickets: 1/13 2/45 3/55 4/128 5/129
Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 5-2-13-0, Ravichandran Ashwin 17-7-27-3, Axar Patel 10-2-42-1, Jayant Yadav 8-2-30-0, Umesh Yadav 5-1-19-0.



France players celebrate a goal against India on Sunday. **HI**

that the defending champions never turned up for the game.

Timothee Clement -- remember the name -- scored a hat-trick from penalty corners, taking his tally to 14 in the tournament, four behind the top-scorer Miles Bukkens of the Netherlands. A lot of France's pain revolves around getting Clement into the game by rushing forward and winning penalty corners. And when they earned them -- more than a dozen on Sunday -- Clement is always threatening with his power and placement.

France's third-place finish also points at the depth in European hockey. While the usual



R Ashwin spun out openers Tom Latham and Will Young as well as Ross Taylor in the first hour. **PTI**

Neutral venues could get IPL games

DEVENDRA PANDEY MUMBAI, DECEMBER 5

IN THE backdrop of some associations stating that they have built infrastructure but not getting international games, which can help them to maintain their stadium, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) is exploring the possibility of two IPL games per team to be played on neutral venues from next season onwards. The suggestion was made by a few state associations during the board's Annual General Meeting in Kolkata on Saturday, and the associations want the board to request IPL teams to play at least two games each on different venues.

The topic came to the fore after the BCCI told the state associations to develop infrastructure, for which the board would help them financially. Some associations, then, pointed out that they have the requisite infrastructure but are not getting games. Presently, each association gets to host at least one international game in a span of three years, as part of the board's rotation policy. But given the large number of international stadiums in the country, 24 in the latest count, many venues get matches few and far between.

Often smaller associations bear the brunt. "A smaller association hosts interna-

The topic came to the fore after the BCCI told the state associations to develop infrastructure, for which the board would help them.

tional games every three or sometimes four years," pointed out a BCCI official, in terms of anonymity.

"The BCCI wants each association to build their own stadium and infrastructure. A few state associations argued that they have built stadiums and are not getting any competitive games. It will be better if the BCCI decides to have IPL games in these smaller venues too so that they can get some revenue at the same time generate interest [among the locals]," he said.

Past incidents

In the past, some IPL franchises had allocated games to smaller venues. Punjab Kings used to play their games in Dharamshala and Indore. Delhi Capitals have played in Raipur and Chennai Super Kings shifted games to Ranchi, hometown of their talisman, MS Dhoni.

With two new IPL teams to play in the IPL from next season, some associations feel that the BCCI should make it mandatory for

IPL teams to play in neutral venues. "There will be 10 IPL teams from next season. If these ten teams decide to play two games each then 20 matches can be played in a neutral venue. It will help states to generate revenue and at the same time, help state associations too. The Indian board has informed us that they will look into it and speak to the IPL franchise," a state association member said.

Retired judge committee head

The board has approached a retired Chief Justice to look into CVC Capital Partners' acquisition of the Ahmedabad franchise, one of the two new teams from the next edition, a couple of weeks ago.

CVC Capital allegedly has links with a betting company, which the board came to know only after the team had acquired the franchise. CVC Capital Partners' has, apparently, ties with Tipico, a sports betting and online gaming company, and Sisal, a betting gaming and payments, consumer/retail company.

The board hasn't given a letter of intent to CVC and the franchise's fate hangs in the hands of the retired judge. The Indian board had issued a tender process, inviting bids for its two new franchises. While Sanjiv Goenka's company won the Lucknow one, CVC won the bid for Ahmedabad.

Junior World Cup: Second loss against France exposes India's deficiencies

MIHIR VASAVDA

BHUBANESWAR, DECEMBER 5

INDIA'S JUNIOR World Cup campaign ended just the way it began: heads in their hands, on their knees and jubilant French players dancing and celebrating around them.

When France defeated India in the opening group-stage match, it was seen as the biggest upset of the competition. But after they won the third-place playoff on Sunday 3-1, it seemed like the most obvious result. What wasn't so obvious was the outcome of the final. It was stunning, the manner in which Argentina outwitted six-time Junior World Cup winners Germany 4-2 in a final for the ages. Both results hold a lot of significance going forward, giving a glimpse into the teams that could challenge those on the top of the pile.

After their senior side won the Rio Olympics gold medal, Argentine hockey seemed to have lost its way a little in the last few years. But the current bunch of players -- coached by Lucas Rey, their Rio Olympics hero who is now becoming their messiah -- have sparked hopes of a revival, the way the 2016 junior title became a springboard for India going forward.

Compared to the final, the consolation third-place match at World Cups is much-maligned, often considered a second-class event. At times, however, it can also define tourna-

ments. And Sunday's game between India and France felt like that.

Colt from Les Bleus

France symbolise all things that are going right in international hockey, which at the moment seems so competitive that any of the top-eight sides can beat the other on their day -- and the Junior World Cup has shown that it will remain that way for a foreseeable time.

In 2013, when Les Bleus -- to borrow the moniker associated with their football team, finished as the runners-up behind Germany, it heralded a new era for them. A lot of those players went onto form the core of the senior team, which made waves at the 2018 World Cup. The money pumped into French hockey, in lieu of the Paris Olympics, meant that their performance three years ago wasn't a one-off. France have continued to punch above their weight in Europe and recently secured qualification for the 2023 World Cup, making it rare back-to-back appearances for them in what is the biggest event on the hockey calendar after the Olympics.

The performance of their under-21 side will give them hope that their rise will continue unabated.

France were easily the more dominant of the two teams in the third-place match. They bossed the midfield, sliced through the Indian defence with utmost ease and cleverness, and showed a lot of energy right from the time the anthems were played. It helped their cause

ning gold at the Rio Olympics.

One of the reasons for that, according to their former senior captain and U-21 team coach Lucas Rey, was the internal problems at a federation level. It led to a constant chopping and changing of coaches, and some of their key players, including star drag-flicker Gonzalo Peillat, fell out of favour. This showed in their performances, with the team finishing a poor seventh at both, the 2018 World Cup and 2020 Olympics.

Rey, an Argentine legend, has taken it upon himself to revitalise their hockey. Under him, the team was surprisingly good, playing with an equal measure of creativity and cunningness. Argentina will try to ensure a smooth transition of these players into the senior fold, with the hope to make them a force once again.

Argentina's presence at the top will be crucial for world hockey, given that Australia and India are the only two countries apart from them to constantly challenge the European dominance on the field.

Ominous signs for Asia

This brings us to Asia, where the teams are falling behind the rest of the hockey world at an alarming rate.

One thing that the Junior World Cup proved -- if any further proof was needed -- was the downfall of South Korea and Pakistan, once a continental force but now a pale shadow of their past. While Pakistan, who still showed

some skills but lacked severely in fitness, will pin their hopes on the new foreign coach, Siegfried Aikman, things look ominous for South Korea, where hockey has been rapidly declining in the priority list.

Malaysia continue to punch above their weight, as they showed with a spirited draw against Belgium in the group stage. But the gap between India and the rest of Asia, even at a junior level, seems widening. This, despite the fact that this was one of the most under-prepared Indian teams of recent times. India's inexperience showed throughout the competition, starting and ending with the games against France. On Sunday, the players were guilty of making some basic blunders, including missed trapping, the inability to grasp the five-yard rule for aerial balls and going for solo efforts instead of playing smart hockey, especially inside France's 'D'.

In all their knockout matches -- against Belgium in the quarterfinals, Germany in the semis and France in the playoff -- India could not take advantage of their biggest asset, penalty corners. Figure this: in these three games, India could earn only five penalty corners from 58 circle penetrations while their opponents got 21 corners from 76 entries inside the 'D'.

Penalty corners -- both, defensive and offensive -- were their undoing eventually on Sunday, just like it was in the opening match. India's campaign ended the same way it began.



Baring School, Batala History and Objectives



BARING COLLEGIATE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL 2004



BARING UNION CHRISTIAN COLLEGE 1944

REVEREND Francis Henry Baring, a missionary, established Baring Boys boarding school on behalf of the Church Mission Society in April 1878. Baring High School was opened in the 1930s. Baring Union Christian College was established in June 1944.

The present Baring Educational Complex had its beginning in the Baring High School which was founded on 1st April, 1878 by The Reverend Francis Henry Baring, a missionary representing the Church Missionary Society of England, and with the efforts of the Indian Christian Community. Its purpose was to impart education to those who badly needed it but could not afford it, thereby contributing to the upward mobility of the surrounding community. In 1884, Miss Charlotte Maria Tucker with her personal resources established a co-educational school. In honour of Miss Tucker, the School was called "The Plough" and later came to be popularly known as "ALOE" (A Lady of England) School. In 1934, the latter merged with the Baring High School. The Baring High School was then raised to the status of a College in 1944 as Baring Union Christian College. The Baring School was re-established by Dr. Ram Singh, Principal BUCC, and is permanently affiliated to the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination, New Delhi since 1973. The School imparts quality education in English to children from the Nursery to Class XII, preparing them as award winning scholars for quality education at College level, and for consideration specially by the Baring Union Christian College in the future. On completing, the ISC (Plus 2) students are accepted on a preferential basis in University programmes of Medicine, Engineering, Sciences, Humanities and commerce.

Baring School again took a leap in 2016 by crossing the borders of Batala and established a branch at Jandiala Guru (Amritsar) by overtaking closed Primary girls Mission School.

Baring School was established and administered by the Baring Union Christian College Association, a charitable non-profit educational society, registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, with its headquarters at Batala, Punjab.

BARING SCHOOL, JANDIALA GURU

Baring School Jandiala Guru is an Annex of Baring Senior Secondary School, Batala. The campus has already rendered educational services through Girls' Mission Primary School, till 2012. The school was closed due to insufficient teaching faculty and student strength. In the year 2016, under the leadership of the The Most Rev. Dr. P.K. Samantary, (Bishop- Diocese of Amritsar, Church of North India) who is also the Chairman of Baring School, Jandiala Guru.



BARING SCHOOL, JANDIALA GURU



BARING INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY 2021

The school started its journey with an overwhelming response from the local public. With 124 admission (Grade Nur - 1st) in the year 2016 to 860 students (Grades Nursery to VII) in the present year, Baring School, Jandiala Guru has marked itself as one of the best educational institutions in providing realistic and quality education.

Our academic practices make us an outstanding educational role model.

- Tailored /structured curriculum is followed from the very beginning... solid foundation.
- For pre primary classes ... Methods of teaching are mostly based on the concept Known to Unknown....
- Basic Foundation: The curriculum involves interactive, play way methods of teaching...
- Special assembly: on spot language reading, civic sense programs, thought provoking questions and activities....

■ Academics- Learning by Doing is our school academic style....with a hands-on approach to subject learning.....We focus on integrating interdisciplinary early education....

■ Special Theme Days to boost subject temper...and make known the importance of each subject.

■ NO BAG SATURDAYS: A pioneering initiative....students spend a Saturday on "Learning Based Activities", improving hand writing, surprise tests.

■ Professional/subject orientations for teachers to upgrade them to current teaching-learning methods. Every term starts with micro training of all teachers....

■ Reasoning Aptitude and Mental Ability: 2-3 periods per week are given to enhance student aptitude....to make them more competent, capable of quick and easy observation....

* Verbal aptitude: Analogy, Series, Sequencing, Ranking, Breaking the code, Classification.

* Non Verbal Aptitude: Patterns, figure matrix, number operations, analytical reasoning....

■ POCSO ... Pocso awareness is integrated in student class schedule....special textbook, awareness programs for students and training sessions, webinars for teachers....

■ Back on Track- Zero Period.... A special period after assembly to instil confidence, life skills, personality traits and awareness

■ Realistic, Practical and applicatory Holiday Homework for students and teachers.

Family virtues, naturalist

affinity, empathy, reading skills, etc
■ Assessment: along with pen paper test....teachers are trained to use tools that assess
■ Multiple Intelligence
■ Personality traits
■ HOTS Higher Order Thinking Skills
■ Life Skills

BATALA MISSION (BIT'S)

In the nineteenth century, beside the British regime, the European missionaries arrived in the Punjab. Unlike the British regime, the missionaries did not come with guns and arms to subjugate the local people, instead the missionaries came with the view to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and share the love of Christ among the people. The objectives of the missionaries was to open schools in different parts of Punjab. The coming of missionaries to India and specifically in the area of Batala brought the social transformation in the society. They used education as a tool to spread the love of Christ and bring social change in the lives of the people.

The Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (CEZMC) selected Batala as its mission station, and opened five schools for the development of the education and the emancipation of women of the Batala area. Rev. Francis Henry Baring opened a school in the palace of Sher Singh, the son of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, commonly known as Anarkali, in the outskirts of Batala on 1st April, 1878. He started the school with fifteen students and three staff members. The purpose of the school was to create a well-defined and articulate leadership responsive to the social and spiritual needs of the society at large. Rev. F. H. Baring, Miss Charlotte Maria Tucker, and Babu Ishan Chander Singha worked as a team to promote education and the Gospel of Christ among the people of the Batala area. Eventually, the school was raised to intermediate level then to a degree college. Thereby Baring Union Christian College was established in 1944. The foundation stone of the city chapel in Batala, was laid by Sir Charles Aitchison Lt. Governor of Punjab in November 1883, presently situated in the college campus. The Christian Institute for Religious Studies (CIRS) was established in 1966 to promote peaceful existence of all religions. In present days CIRS is working in the area of interfaith activities through seminars and conferences.

BARING INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY

With a view to enable the Christian youth, interested in serving the church and humanity, with theological degrees, the Diocese of Amritsar (DoA), Church of North India (CNI), dedicated the newly opened Baring Institute of Theology (BIT), Batala, run by the Diocese of Amritsar and the Management of Baring Union Christian College Association (BUCCA) on 2nd July, 2021.

Under the leadership of the Most Revd. Dr. P. K. Samantary, Bishop, DoA, CNI and Chairman, BUCCA, Baring Institute of Theology was being dedicated to provide courses approved by the Senate of Serampore College (University) and offers theological courses including Diploma and Bachelors in Christian Studies through external studies. There was a growing demand for a Christian theological institute in Punjab considering the fact that a number of renowned theological institutes are situated in other states of India and are, therefore, out of the reach of people of North India. The BIT aims at imparting religious and Christian theological education to students of theology in the North-West Frontier region. The BIT seeks to go a long way in preparing the Christian youth in the region for the service of the Church and humanity, which is the need of the hour.



THE Most Revd. (Dr.) Pradeep Kumar Samantary has been serving as the Bishop of the Diocese of Amritsar since 1999. He served as Deputy Moderator of the Church of North India from 2011-2014, and as Moderator from 2014-2017. Bishop Samantary has completed his Bachelor in Science, Bachelor in Divinity and Masters in Theology, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity (Honoris Causa) for the outstanding contribution to the Church and the Society. His native state is Odisha which is located in eastern India. He is passionate about peace building, community empowerment and youth leadership, and often combines them with his love for photography. He leads Motor-Cycle Rallies for Peace to share biblical message of peace among the school children, congregations and people of different faith communities.

Bishop Samantary is married to Rev. Lily Samantary, who is the Administrator in the Diocese and an Associate Presbyter at St. Paul's Church, Amritsar. They have two daughters.

Heads of institutions under BUCCA



Prof. Dr. Edward Masih, Principal, Baring Union Christian College, Batala.



Prof. Dr. Edward Masih, Principal, Baring Union Christian College, Batala.



Rev. Dr. Pulak Samantary, Principal, Baring Institute of Theology, Batala.



Dr. Rajan Chaudhary, Principal, Baring Collegiate Senior Secondary School, Batala.



Ajay Vir Singh, Principal, Baring School, Batala.



Hebronica Das, Principal, Baring School, Jandiala Guru.

Vision of the church's Educational Institutions and their mission in the Modern context is taken from the Book of Isaiah 57: 14&15: 'And it will be said: "Build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacle out of the way of my people". For this is what the high and lofty one says, he who lives forever whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the contrite."

This is the main theme of the vision of Christian Educational Institutions; God's eternal word also makes it clear that these institutions have to maintain the expectations and standard of our Headmasters, the One who is Holy. We not only have to abide by God's holy standards but also have a heart that is lowly, contrite and humble in His sight. These attributes outline the attitude with which we must approach and accept our duties.

From the very founding of the Christian educational Institutions, these corridors of learning have nurtured young minds with knowledge. The sacrifices of the founders, in an alien land, amidst new culture etc. have enable generations to build strong character, will and purpose in their lives. The curriculum laid much emphasis on intellectual learning as on development of the soul, tolerance and appreciation for others, appreciation of nature, love of sports and spirit of healthy competition. We have been blessed with the Constitutional Rights of Minorities to establish and run educational institutions and we are grateful for the same.

In Punjab and almost in all parts of India, the present system of Education was started by the overseas Missionaries. They have taken up Education as the "White Man's Burden" In the eye of missionaries, people in India, were Barbarians uncivilised and under developed. Because of caste system and other social evils, many uncivilised activities in society were being carried on.

The European thought that Education is the best device to bring reforms in Indian society. Therefore, they started schools, technical centres and colleges and also introduced the study of English Language as a medium of Institutions. It is observed that these schools/institutions maintained high standards and were eventually well received by the natives. The missionaries thought that teaching is noble aim.

The aim and objectives of these Institutions encompass a wide spectrum of religions, spiritual, moral national, secular and academic concerned, including the integrated development of the person. More stress was given on character formation and women development. Emphasis was also given on spirit for service and openness to the people of all faiths.

So, this education system was taken up as God's work and an instrument of social change. These institutions were also radiating the Love of Lord and people of other faiths saw themselves what it means to be a Christian follower of Christ. With the passage of time an awareness also took place in the mind of People. It mobilised them against social evils like "Sati" killing of girls and many more.

This is also a fact the benefits of these Educational Institutions were largely enjoyed by the upper caste people.

They were received in to the fold of institutions both as students and teachers.

The Western Education system imparted through these Educational Centres, produce and educated leadership in the church but also in the society and government.

It is also a hard fact; these institutions have served the cause of Education in Indian and Punjab.

The Method they used, the values they cherished the commitments they made, the convictions, they maintained the humiliations and hardship they willingly suffered and above all their love and passion for the people remain a source of inspirations even to-day. In general, these institutions were started with vision. In order to achieve and implement the vision missionaries had made sacrifices and devoted their life for the transformation of society.

Dr. Mani Jacob (General Secretary, AIACHE) has written that the church related institutions existing and operating, to-day are the inheritors, preservers and developers of great historic traditions of learning.

In short missionaries were the pioneers in introducing the modern education system. The super structure of this system was constructed on strong foundations by the Christian missionaries by using Indigenous resources like humans' intellectual material and financial with support and cooperation of people of different faiths living together in the pluralistic environment.

To-day we are living in multi-religious and multi ethnic society. We have about 83% Hindus, 12% Muslims, 2.5% Christians, 1% Sikhs and rest are the Buddhist, Jains and Parses etc. In spite of this diversity, people have mutual love and respect for each other for their faiths and believes. In such environment we can say that History of Christianity in India is a history of tolerance, accommodation and self service to humanity.

We have established Six Educational Institutions in Batala since 1878:

- Baring School established in year 1878 by Revd. Francis Henry Baring
- Baring Union Christian College: The Baring School was up graded to a degree college in year 1944.
- The Baring School was re-established in 1973 by Dr. Ram Singh the then Principal of Baring Union Christian College.
- Christian Institute for Religious Studies was established to start an Interfaith dialogue with others religious group.
- Baring Collegiate Senior Secondary School was established in year 2004.
- Baring School Jandiala Guru was established in year 2016.
- Baring Institute of Theology was established in year 2021.

We are living in 21st century, where world has become a global village. If we have to survive, it is necessary for us to plan ourselves in such a way, where people can respect us and we must also respect and honour other.

Let us be an instruments in the hands of our Lord and work for the spread of education. The Road that lies before us is long and full of responsibility; there we need to move together with a vision and determination.

ISC (+2) Result- August 2020

No. of students appeared:	118
Pass Percentage:	100%
Highest Percentage:	Harsimran Kaur (Medical) : 89.90%
No of Distinctions:	33
No. Of First class:	21
No. Of Second class:	27
No. Of Third class:	39
PCNA	NIL

ICSE Result- August 2020

No. of students appeared:	143
Pass Percentage:	100%
Highest Percentage:	Manreet Kaur: 96. %
No of Distinctions:	54
No. Of First class:	136
No. Of Second class:	07
No. Of Third class:	0
PCNA	0

Home Examination Result- March 2020 to February 2021

- Students appeared : 2027
- Pass Percentage : Result 100%
- No. of Christian Teachers: 26
- No. of Christian Students: 206