









# 3 UTTAR PRADESH

## KANPUR REALTOR DEATH

## Reward for leads on six wanted cops raised to Rs 1 lakh

**MANISH SAHU**  
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 9

THE KANPUR Police on Saturday increased the reward to Rs 1 lakh each from Rs 25,000 for leads on six policemen, including a station house officer, wanted in the Kanpur realtor death case. The policemen, who have been suspended, were posted at the Ramgarhtal police station in Gorakhpur.

The police said the reward was increased since the accused were untraceable. They raided the houses of the policemen and detained a few persons for questioning.

The six accused are SHO Jagat Narain Singh from Amethi, sub-inspectors Akshay Kumar Mishra from Ballia, Vijay Yadav from Jaunpur and Raul Dubey from Mirzapur, and constables Kamlesh Singh Yadav and Prashant Kumar (both from Ghazipur), said a police officer. They are accused of assaulting realtor Manish Gupta during a hotel raid in Gorakhpur on September 28. Gupta later succumbed to his injuries.

The Gorakhpur Police is, meanwhile, examining footage of CCTV cameras at the hotel and the hospital where Gupta was taken. Two days ago, a video surfaced online and purportedly shows Gupta lying unconscious on the floor and later being taken away by a few policemen. Police said the video appeared to be of the incident.

A special investigation team, which is probing the case, has found that the police had taken a



**Manish Gupta was allegedly assaulted by policemen during a hotel raid in Gorakhpur on Sept 28.**

**The Gorakhpur Police is, meanwhile, examining footage of CCTV cameras at the hotel and the hospital where Manish Gupta was taken.**

lot of time in transferring Gupta from a private hospital to a government one.

The SIT has released the photographs of the accused.

The Kanpur Police declared that the informer's name would be kept secret and her security would be their responsibility. People can provide leads to police on two new cellphone numbers.

The police have recorded the statement of Manish Gupta's wife Meenakshi and his two friends Harveer Singh and Pradeep Kumar from Gurgaon, who were with him in Gorakhpur. The hotel staff has also been questioned.

## Upset over 'delay' in rape FIR, woman kills self at Azamgarh 'police station'

SHO of local police station suspended

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 9

UPSET OVER delay in a FIR following her rape complaint, a 55-year-old woman on Saturday killed herself by consuming poison at a "police station" in Azamgarh. However, no suicide note had so far been found, police said.

Reacting to it, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav demanded strictest action against the culprits and said the incident was a slap on the face of the BJP government in the state.

The woman had accused a 53-year-old man and another unidentified person of rape and physical assault on October 5. Police claimed that a case was registered before the woman died by suicide.

Azamgarh SP Sudhir Kumar Singh suspended the station house officer of the police station concerned for dereliction of duty.

The SP, however, denied that the woman consumed poison on the police station premises. Speaking to reporters, he said the victim had filed a rape complaint and an inquiry was underway. Police said the accused would

**Azamgarh SP Sudhir Kumar Singh, however, denied that the woman consumed poison on the police station premises**

also be booked for abetment.

Her husband claimed that she had identified one of the accused but police failed to take any action, PTI news agency quoted SP Singh as saying.

According to PTI, her husband claimed that she committed suicide at the police station.

The victim's family alleged that they had appealed to police

many times for justice, but in vain, according to PTI.

The woman was found lying unconscious at the gates of the police station on Saturday afternoon, the police said, adding that she was alone. On being rushed to a nearby community health centre, doctors referred her to the district hospital where she was declared dead, police said.

According to police, the woman had arrived at the police station on a scooter on Saturday and collapsed at the gates. She was taken to the health centre where it came to light that she had consumed poison.

Another senior police officer said action was taken against the SHO for the delay in filing the FIR.



## ALMOST READY

An artist readies Durga idols for Puja celebrations in Varanasi on Saturday. *Anand Singh*

## MINISTRY ASKS POWER PLANTS TO WORK TO FULL CAPACITY

## Kejriwal rings alarm bells on power availability, writes to PM

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

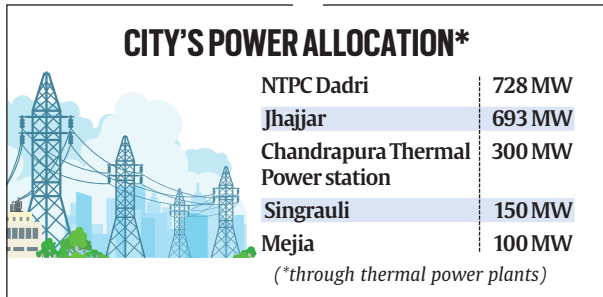
CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal said Delhi could soon face a power shortage with the coal crisis across the country affecting supply at power plants that supply electricity to the capital as well. He wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday seeking intervention to make adequate arrangements for coal at power plants and gas to generation plants.

"Delhi could face a power crisis. I am personally keeping a close watch over the situation. We are trying our best to avoid it. In the meanwhile, I wrote a letter to the honourable PM seeking his personal intervention," Kejriwal tweeted.

Later in the day, Delhi Power Minister Satyendar Jain said that if the situation does not improve, Delhi could face a black-out after two days.

The Power Ministry, meanwhile, said that NTPC had been directed to increase coal stocks equal to the national average for Dadri II and Jhajjar stations (which provide a bulk of Delhi's power).

On October 6, the Dadri plant had one day of coal stock



against the national average of four days.

The power ministry also said that "all required quantity of gas will be supplied to Bawana and Pragati stations".

It also advised Delhi discoms to schedule power from Dadri I plant, which they have not been doing for some time.

Jain, meanwhile, called a high-level meeting with officials of the power department and energy companies on Saturday. A bulk of Delhi's power allocation is met by the NTPC plant at Dadri and the thermal power plant at Jhajjar. There are no thermal power plants in Delhi anymore as three have been shut over the past 12 years.

In his letter to Modi, Kejriwal noted that the city was facing a coal shortage since August.

Asking that adequate coal be

supplied from other plants to Dadri and Jhajjar power plants, and APM gas be supplied to Bawana, Pragati-I and GTPS plants, Kejriwal wrote that this was necessary to maintain uninterrupted power in Delhi which caters to installations of national and strategic importance, alongside cold chains for vaccines.

Jain said since the power demand is much lower than the peak demand seen in June and July, thermal power plants are not functioning at full capacity and, as a result, Delhi was getting only about half of the power it has been allocated from these plants.

"All power plants that supply electricity to Delhi are supposed to keep a 30-day reserve stock. But at present, they have only a day's stock



CM Kejriwal

left. The demand for electricity in the country is not at peak, yet the power plants are not able to produce the required amount of electricity," Jain said.

The central government also released guidelines asking thermal power plants to generate power to their full capacity and allowing power generators to sell any power on exchanges that has not been requisitioned by the procurer within 24 hours of the day of delivery. Kejriwal has requested the PM to cap the rate of power sold on the exchange to prevent profiteering. The maximum Day Ahead Market Prices for power on the India Energy Exchange were Rs 20 per unit on October 9, the average market clearing price was Rs 13.3.

## AFTER PRIYANKA-YOGI FACEOFF

## Congress workers clean Dalit settlements, Valmiki temples

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 9

CONGRESS LEADERS and workers on Saturday cleaned Dalit settlements and Valmiki temples across Uttar Pradesh against an alleged "casteist remark" by CM Yogi Adityanath.

In a reply to a query over Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's act of sweeping the floor during her detention in Sitapur recently, Adityanath on Thursday had said people want them to be fit only for this and they reduce them to it (janata unko usi layak banana chahti, aur usi layak bana diya).

In response to the chief minister's remark, Gandhi had de-

scended on a Dalit colony and cleaned the premises of a Maharshi Valmiki temple.

Accusing the CM of making a "casteist remark", she said he insulted the Dalits and announced that all district committees of the party will clean Valmiki temples on Saturday.

A party release said taking exception to the chief minister's indecent remark, the party decided to register its protest and on Saturday, Congressmen across the state took part in a "satyagraha" by cleaning Dalit settlements and Valmiki temples, where they also offered prayers.

The party said Adityanath's statement is anti-Dalit and anti-women.



Congress leaders clean the Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi on Friday. *PTI*

## Tiger carcass found floating in Bahraich canal

*Bahraich:* The carcass of a male tiger was found floating in a canal in the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary here on Saturday evening, forest officials said. No external injury marks were found on the carcass, they said.

The carcass, which was floating under the Chaudhary Charan Singh Barrage built on a canal connected to the Ghaghra river, was spotted by locals, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Akashdeep Badhawan told PTI.

The locals immediately informed the forest and irrigation departments. A Forest Department team was rushed to the spot to bring the carcass to the Katarniaghat forest range office, he said.

Prima facie, the tiger was 3-4 years old. No external injury marks were found on the carcass. **PTI**

## Culprits given bouquets: Akhilesh on Lakhimpur Kheri violence probe

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 9

LASHING OUT at the Uttar Pradesh government over the handling of the probe into the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday alleged it was giving "bouquets" to culprits instead of bringing them to book.

The former chief minister's remarks came a few hours after Union Minister of State Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra appeared before the special investigation team (SIT) formed in connection with the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case.

Ashish Mishra was supposed to appear before the police on



**Summons is 'samman': SP chief in Lucknow on Saturday. *PTI***

Friday. The Uttar Pradesh Police then issued a fresh notice asking him to appear before it by 11am on Saturday.

Speaking to reporters here, Akhilesh said, "Now preparations are afoot to crush the laws in the same way as the farmers were. This government has pulverised the Constitution. You have seen how a vehicle ran over farmers who were fighting for their rights. The guilty persons are yet to be caught. Instead of is-

suing summons, bouquets of flowers are being presented to them. The summons is only in name, for, in reality, 'samman' (honour) is given." The SP chief said that officials must have had information that such an incident could occur. Despite this, the farmers died, he added.

He reiterated his demand for the resignation of Ajay Mishra from the Union Council of Ministers. "The MoS had said that he had been an MP, MLA, but he had also been something else and was threatening the farmers. The government claims that it is a 'damdaar sarkaar'. Is the government only for the powerful and not for the farmers?" Akhilesh said.

## REACHING OUT

## Bahraich admin writes to Sikhs in Gurmukhi script

**PRESSTRUST OF INDIA**  
BAHRAICH, OCTOBER 9

THE DISTRICT administration here reached out to Sikhs through a letter in Gurmukhi script, thanking them for maintaining restraint after the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, which claimed eight lives, including four members from the community.

Two Sikh farmers from the district and two from Lakhimpur Kheri were killed in the violence and the initiative by the administration is being seen as an attempt to placate members of the community.

District Magistrate Dinesh Chandra Singh claimed that the initiative may not have reduced the sorrow of the victims' families but they felt affinity towards the administration.

Apart from the community members living in Bahraich, the letter is also being sent digitally to Sikhs residing in other districts.

The letter reads, "The October 3 incident, which took place in Lakhimpur Kheri, has been condemned by all—the government and the citizens. The government, police and administration are making efforts to give justice."

"Public representatives and common people of the district and those coming from outside, should exercise restraint while offering condolences," it read.

## Centre stops Delhi govt's ration scheme once again

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

THE CENTRE has denied the Delhi government permission to deliver ration to people's doorsteps yet again, saying it does not fulfil norms set by the National Food Security Act (NFSA) under which food grain is provided to states by the Centre for distribution.

AAP Saturday accused BJP for using the Central government machinery to block its doorstep delivery of ration scheme, while the Union Food Ministry denied the charge saying the Centre had only asked the Delhi government to follow "provisions of NFSA passed by the Parliament". The prom-

ise of delivering ration at the doorstep has been among the primary ones made to residents for many years now. However, the scheme has been opposed by the Centre since the beginning.

AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said in a statement Saturday, "The BJP has used the Centre as its own machinery and blocked the Kejriwal government's doorstep delivery of ration scheme. The BJP-led Centre has done this despite the High Court's nod..., where the court had noted there was no practical reason to block the scheme... The scheme will stop ration theft and arbitrary and stubborn attitude of ration dealers who treat the poor like

their stooges."

Members of the Delhi Sarkari Ration Dealers' Sangh had moved court saying that the Delhi government's decision to divert ration from fair price shops (FPS) to people's homes was illegal. In September, the High Court ruled that supplies to FPS could be diverted for home delivery. The government had told the court that people who opt for doorstep delivery can opt out any time if they want. After the HC order, Kejriwal had sent the doorstep delivery file back to the L-G for approval. The Centre wrote back to the government on October 8.

Officials at the Centre's Food Ministry, meanwhile, said their stand had not changed.

**Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design and Manufacturing (IIITDM), Kancheepuram**  
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**Advt.No. IIITDMK/R/1/2021 dated: 26.07.2021**

IIITDM Kancheepuram, located at Chennai (25km from airport) invites online applications for various faculty positions (Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors Grade I & II) under four tier flexible structure for various disciplines.

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<https://olympiads.hbcese.tifr.res.in/>  
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Dates of enrollment: **September 25 to October 31, 2021**



THE INDIAN EXPRESS, OCTOBER 10, 2021

# EXPRESS NETWORK

## First batch of stranded Afghans return to Kabul on Iran flight

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

EVEN AS many Afghan nationals are waiting to get out of the Taliban-ruled country, a total of 106 Afghans stranded in India since August 15 returned to their country in a special flight over the weekend – the first batch of Afghan citizens in India who have gone back on their free will.

These Afghan nationals were mainly people who had come to India for business or medical treatment before August 15 – when Kabul fell to the Taliban – and were desperate to go home.

“These Afghan nationals were in a very difficult situation as their finances had run out, and did not even have enough money to pay for their fooding and lodging,” an Afghan diplomat told *The Sunday Express*. Many of them were also worried about their family members who were in Afghanistan, and are facing hardship back home after the Taliban captured power.

“They were stuck between a rock and a hard place,” the Afghan diplomat said, referring to their dire financial situation in India and

the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan where the food and medicine crisis is looming large.

As they approached the Afghan embassy over the last few weeks and wanted to go home, the embassy had reached out to India to allow them to go back on a flight. But that was taking time.

The Afghan embassy also reached out to the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi for visas so that they return via Pakistan's land route. Finally, the Afghan embassy turned to Iran's embassy who facilitated their travel in the Mahan Air flight, an Iranian airline.

“The Afghan nationals had to pay for the flight, but they went back via Tehran,” the diplomat said. “There are about 1,000 people estimated to be in India who may want to return to Afghanistan. We are trying to facilitate as much as possible.” Several hundred Afghan nationals, who had come to India for a variety of reasons, are waiting to return. This comes a month after the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority had written to DGCA seeking resumption of flights operated by Kam Air and Ariana Afghan Airline to and from Delhi.

EXPLAINED

### Take-off not in immediate sight

BEFORE THE Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, national carrier Air India and low-cost airline SpiceJet operated flights between Delhi and Kabul. While Air India operated its last scheduled flight to Kabul on August 15, SpiceJet had suspended flights last year during the pandemic. These flights mainly flew medical tourists, students and traders as passengers, while carrying spices and dry fruits as cargo. Any potential resumption of flights depends on India officially recognising the Taliban administration in the country racked by conflict.

## Chhattisgarh violence: FIR registered against Raman Singh's son, BJP MP, other leaders

GARGI VERMA  
RAIPUR, OCTOBER 9

AN FIR has been registered against several BJP leaders, including the son of former Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh, over a march taken out on Tuesday by Hindu organisations defying a curfew at Kawardha town in Kabirdham district, leading to violence. Kawardha has been under curfew since Monday, with a brief relaxation given on Saturday.

The march had included around 3,000 people, seen carrying swords and lathis, through Kawardha (the district name was recently changed to Kabirdham).

The FIR filed on Friday, under sections of rioting, promoting enmity between communities and vandalism, names Raman Singh's

son Abhishek, BJP Rajnandgaon MP Santosh Pandey, former MLA Motiram Chandravanshi, and 10 other BJP leaders, along with VHP district head Nandlal Chandrakar. Raman Singh has represented the Kawardha Assembly seat several times. More than 90 people have been detained or arrested, on both sides, since Tuesday's violence.

According to locals, the issue started last Sunday, October 3, with an altercation between two groups over some green- and saffron-coloured flags. A history-sheeter was allegedly beaten up by some Muslim men. After a fresh row over flags, there was stone-pelting at a local temple.

Even as the town was put under curfew, BJP leaders, including Abhishek, Pandey and the others, took out the rally on Tuesday. The FIR says that the mob went on a



A rally was taken out in Kawardha on Tuesday despite a curfew being in place.

Twitter/@santoshpandey44

rampage, pelting stones at police, causing extensive damage to property, and raising communally charged slogans. More than a dozen civilians and police person-

nel were injured.

MP Pandey told *The Sunday Express* tempers flared up due to the “anti-Hindu” bias of the administration. “Police are free to arrest me. However, we are watching how police are acting only against the Hindu groups... While we don't condone violent actions, it is difficult to control emotions when anger is high. We are against the usage of unparliamentary language as well, but under emotions, these things happen.”

While Mahant Kashyap, a local, said they hadn't seen such communal tension in decades, Shoaib Akhtar, the ‘hafiz’ of a mosque, said police “were unable to do much”. “I was pulled off my vehicle and beaten. Police were just waving their batons and trying to shoo away the armed men.” While the BJP has accused the

Congress government of not being able to maintain law and order in their state, Congress leaders have charged the BJP with polarising the situation.

Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik said BJP leaders were being targeted. “Abhishek Singh and Santosh Pandey were trying to calm the situation (at the rally) and helping police. But police instead of finding out the real culprits booked public figures.”

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said, “Investigation is under process in Kawardha. If the BJP has any information, the Leader of the Opposition is free to share it with police and action will be taken.”

On Saturday, police released the names of those detained under six FIRs, including people from both communities.

## 70 sarpanches, panches resign in J&K district

ARUN SHARMA  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 9

AT LEAST 70 sarpanches and

panches have resigned en masse in three blocks of Jammu & Kashmir, upset over allegedly being sidelined by the administration. They submitted their resignation to their respective Block Development Council (BDC) chairpersons Friday.

Official sources said over half a dozen sarpanches and 30-35 panches in Ramsu block, and nearly 17 sarpanches and panches in Banihal block have resigned. Likewise, over a dozen sarpanches and panches have resigned in Ukhral block, said Ramsu Block

Development Council chairperson Shafiq Ahmed Katoch.

Sources said the panches had been resenting the alleged interference of the administration in their functioning for a while. Minister of State for Rural Development Niranjani Jyoti's visit to Ramsu block's Krawa panchayat as a part of the Centre's public outreach programme was the last straw as the district administration invited neither the local sarpanch nor those of nearly half a dozen neighbouring panchayats. Many panchayat heads and members held a demonstra-

tion close to the venue.

On Friday, they were joined by more sarpanches and panches and they all resigned from their posts.

Alleging undue interference by the administration, they also demanded that development works up to Rs three lakh be done through panchayats only. For nearly a year now, the administration has been involved in the tender process, they added. Sarpanch Ghulam Rasool Mattoo alleged that they are not allowed to take part in the tendering process for projects.

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**Last Date-29.10.2021** **GM (Comm.), CWC, New Delhi**

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, RNT MEDICAL COLLEGE & CONTROLLER ASSOCIATED GROUP OF HOSPITALS, UDAIPUR (RAJ.)**  
No. RNT/Pur-4/F.16/ (e-Tendering Proc J/2021-22/911) Dated:- 27.09.2021

**Notice Inviting Bid No.16/2021-22(e-Tender)**

Bids for Medical Equipments are invited from interested bidders upto Date:- 28.10.2021 Time:- 10.30 AM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state.

MCU2122GLOB00088, MCU2122GLOB00089, MCU2122GLOB00090, MCU2122GLOB00091, MCU2122GLOB00092, MCU2122GLOB00093, MCU2122GLOB00094, MCU2122GLOB00095, MCU2122GLOB00096, MCU2122GLOB00097, MCU2122GLOB00098, MCU2122GLOB00099, MCU2122GLOB00100

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Tender No.	Category of Items	Qty.	Approx. Value	Due date of Opening
PT/OT/03/AZ	Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Computer Aided Design Software (CAD) along with accessories (On Turnkey Basis)	01 Set	Rs. 26 Lakhs + GST	03.11.2021

Interested Tenderers may download the tender document from ALIMCO website [www.alimco.in](http://www.alimco.in) (for reference only) and CPPP website: <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Tender Fee of Rs 600/- to be submitted only through online payment gateway available at [www.alimco.in](http://www.alimco.in). Submit scan copy of the e-receipt of the same along with the TC bid. All SSI / MSE's Vendor are exempted from Tender Cost after producing/submitting Valid Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum/Udyam Registration Certificate (URC) only.

Tenderers are requested to submit their Offers/Bids through **E-Tendering Process** only on <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. The Technical Bid will be opened at 15:30 hrs. on the **due date as indicated above**. ALIMCO reserves the right to reject any or all requests/Others without assigning any reason.

**Note:** For any Corrigendum in the tender, Tenderers may please visit CPPP website and ALIMCO website.

For ALIMCO - DGM (SP & C)

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(A Govt. of India Undertaking)  
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**Sale notice for sale of immovable properties [See proviso Rule 8 (5)]**

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso Rule 8 (5) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrowers and Guarantors that the below described immovable property mortgaged charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of **Indian Bank (Allahabad Branch)**, Zonal Office: 15/287, Civil Lines, MG Road, Bada Chauraha, Kanpur as Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whichever there is" on 29.10.2021. For recovery of Bank's dues from Borrowers and Guarantors to the Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower & Branch Name	Name of Guarantors	Name of Property owner/Mortgagor	Bank's Dues	Details of Property/ID No.	Reserve Price	Earnest Money	Details of the encumbrance known to the Bank
1.	Smt. Hemlata Tiwari	Smt. Hemlata Tiwari W/o Sri Anandesh Kumar Tiwari	Smt. Hemlata Tiwari W/o Sri Anandesh Kumar Tiwari	Rs. 18,99,143.00 (as on 04.10.2021) + interest and other expenses	Land & Building Consisting of House No. E-154 Block-S/S. Gurjan Vinay, Kanpur Area: 36.76 Sq. Mtr. Boundaries: East: House No. 169 West: 4.50 Meter Road North: House No. 155 South: House No. 159 ID No. -IDIB4485-01	Rs. 21.29 Lacs	Rs. 2.13 Lacs	—
3.	Sri Ravi Gupta	Sri Ravi Gupta S/o Late Sri Ram Gupta	Sri Ravi Gupta S/o Late Sri Ram Gupta	Rs. 25,28,068.90 (as on 04.10.2021) + interest and other expenses	Land & Building consisting of property at House No. 4C/337, EWS, Awas Vikas Scheme-2, Hanspuram, Naubasta, Kanpur Area: 40.06 Sq. Mtr. (Covered Area: 25.00 Sq. mtr). Boundaries: East: House No. 4C-335 West: House No. 4C-352 North: House No. 4C-338 and 4.00 mt Road South: House No. 4C-355, 356, 357, 355-ID No. -IDIB 318-21	Rs. 23.18 Lacs	Rs. 2.31 Lacs	—

**Date & Time of submission of process Compliance form & EMD - 28.10.2021 upto 4 P.M. at and Date & Time of e-auction 29.10.2021 from 11.00 AM - 2.00 P.M. with unlimited extension, with Bid incremental Amount: Rs. 10000/-**

For further details and Terms & Conditions Contact concerning Branches

For downloading further details and Terms & Conditions, Please Visit:  
1. [www.indianbank.co.in](http://www.indianbank.co.in)  
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Bidders are advised to visit the website [www.msccommerce.com](http://www.msccommerce.com) of our e-auction service provider MSTC Ltd. to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance Please call: MSTC HELPDISK No. 033-22501004 and other help line numbers available in service providers help desk. For Registration status with MSTC Ltd. please contact [ibapi@mscommerce.com](mailto:ibapi@mscommerce.com) and for EMD status please contact [ibapi@mscommerce.com](mailto:ibapi@mscommerce.com).

For property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and condition please visit: <https://ibapi.in> and for clarification related to this portal, please contact help line number "18001025025" and "011-41108151. Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number mentioned above while searching for the property in the website with <https://ibapi.in> and [www.msccommerce.com](http://www.msccommerce.com)

**Corporate Office: Avvai Shanmugam Salai Royapettah, Chennai-600014**

**Date: 08.10.2021** **Place: Kanpur** **Authorized Officer, Indian Bank**

**TSRTC**  
TENDER NOTICE No. AME(Comp.)/VT/PS(1)/2020-IT, dt. 07.10.2021  
Tenders are invited from interested bidders for implementation of Vehicle Tracking & Passenger Information System for 4,170 special type buses of TSRTC. Sealed bids should be submitted in the tender box in Mini-Conference Hall, TSRTC, Bus Bhavan, 1st floor "B" block, Mushirabad, Hyderabad from 10:30 hrs. to 14:00 hrs. on 29.10.2021. RFP with full details can be downloaded from <https://tsrtc.telangana.gov.in>

Sd/-  
DIPR, R.O. No.: 2215-PP/LC-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22 CHIEF ENGINEER (IT & IE)

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL S.M.S. MEDICAL COLLEGE & CONTROLLER OF THE ATTACHED HOSPITALS, JAIPUR**  
No. F/MC/Store/2021-22/9024-27 Dated:- 5.10.2021

**Notice Inviting Bid**

Bid for supply of Various Items at SMS Medical College, Jaipur are invited from interested bidders as per schedule in NIT Notice. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>), <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> of the state; and SMS Medical College, Jaipur. Department website.

**UBN No.:- SMS2122GSOB00314 To SMS2122GSOB00334**

Sd/-  
DIPRC/10336/2021 PRINCIPAL & CONTROLLER

**KARNATAKA URBAN WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD**  
#927, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 6<sup>th</sup> main road, New Kantharaj urs road, Saraswathipuram, Mysuru – 570 009.  
Ph no: 0821-2545894, Email: [kwbcemys2014@gmail.com](mailto:kwbcemys2014@gmail.com)

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
(Through E-Procurement Portal only)

Tender for the work of “Providing UGD system to Hunsur city including 5 years of operation and maintenance as per Hon'ble National Green Tribunal guidelines” amounting to Rs.18.75 Crores has been invited vide indent No: KUWSDB/2021-22/WS/WORK. INDENT2986/CALL-4 through E-procurement Portal website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. Tender document maybe downloaded from the e-procurement portal paying requisite tender processing fee from 08.10.2021 after 11.00 hours. Pre-bid meeting will be held on 13.10.2021 at 11.00 hours. The last for submission of tenders is on 18.10.2021 upto 17.30 hours. Technical bid will be opened on 22.10.2021 at 11.00 hours. For further details, the Office of the Chief Engineer, KUWS & D Board, Mysuru, may please be contacted or website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>.

**Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER, K.U.W.S. & D BOARD, Mysuru.**  
DIPR/DDMY/MCA/57/1/2021-22

**Rajasthan State Mines & Minerals Limited**  
(A Government of Rajasthan Enterprise)  
4, Meera Marg, Udaipur – 313001  
Phone: (0294)2427177 / 2428763&67, Fax (0294)2428768, 2428739  
Email:- [contractscs.rsmml@rajasthan.gov.in](mailto:contractscs.rsmml@rajasthan.gov.in)

**Notice Inviting e-Tender** Date: 08.10.2021

NIT No. & Date	Description of Work
e-Tender no. Cont-11/2021-22 dated 07.10.2021 UBN No. MM12122WLB000110	Operation and Maintenance of Departmental HGO Crushing Plant (Rated Capacity 130 TPH), for the production of (i) 12 mm Rock Phosphate Phos. with Manpower, all Type of Spares/Consumables Including Feeding of Ore into Hopper by Combination of Loaders & Dumpers and other Miscellaneous work at Jharmakotra Rock Phosphate Mine, Udaipur (Rajasthan). Contract value Rs. 1538.00 Lakh, EMD 30.76 Lac, Tender Fees Rs. 4720/-
e-Tender no. Cont-12/2021-22 dated 07.10.2021 UBN No. MM12122WLB000111	Loading of different types of ore from different ore Stacks located around HGO Crushing Plant (by using front end loaders) into the truck/ trippers; transportation of loaded truck/ trippers to an average level (to & fro) of approximately 0.50 Km and unloading into the hopper of HGO Crushing Plant including all preparatory & allied work pertaining there to and/or relating to this work. Contract value Rs. 150.00 Lakh, EMD 3.00 Lac, Tender Fees Rs. 4720/-

Other terms & conditions have been given in detailed tender for which please visit our website [www.rsmml.com](http://www.rsmml.com) or [www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in) or [eproc.rajasthan.gov.in](http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in) or contact GGM(Contract) on above address.

Raj.samwad/C/21/7114 DGM (Admin.)

**Moradabad Municipal Corporation**  
Pili Kothi, Badaul Compound, Moradabad- 244001 (U.P.)

**E-Procurement Tender Notice**  
Ref. No:02 / Ex. Eng./ Fin. Eng/NN/2021-22 Date: 08-10-2021

Name of Work/Description of Item	Consultancy services for Transaction Advisory and Third Party inspection for Proposed improvement and strengthening of sanitation and sewerability projects at Moradabad.
RFP	INR 1000 00(Ten Thousand Only)
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	1.0 Lacs (One Lacs) form of DD in the form of FDR/TDR of a Nationalised Scheduled bank of India in favour of the "Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Moradabad payable at Moradabad."

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Uttar Pradesh e-Procurement Portal <https://tendersup.nic.in> from 11-10-2021 at 11:00 Hours (IST) onwards. Online bids are invited for the following works upto 19/10/2021 at 17:00 hours.

For more details on the tender and bidding process you may please visit the above mentioned portal.

MMC - Moradabad Municipal Corporation  
Address : Pili Kothi, Moradabad-244001 (U.P.) Mobile: 9089008529  
Email: [moradabadnagar@gmail.com](mailto:moradabadnagar@gmail.com), [ccmm22@gmail.com](mailto:ccmm22@gmail.com)  
Note: 1 - All eligible interested consultants are mandated to get enrolled on e-Procurement portal (<https://tendersup.nic.in>)  
2. Contractor can contact Help Desk for any clarification of their doubts regarding the process of Electronic Procurement System.

(Rajeev Kumar Rath) D. Eng. Environment Engineer Nagar Nigam Moradabad

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY** Notification No.: 233/2021  
**Important Notice for the Rail Passengers**

It is notified for information of general public that following trains will run as under:-

Train No. 08187/08188 Hatia-Gorakhpur-Hatia Weekly Special Train					
• Train No. 08187 Ex. Hatia, Every Friday, Dt.08-10-2021 to 05-11-2021 = 5 Trips • Train No. 08188 Ex. Gorakhpur Every Saturday, Dt.09-10-2021 to 09-10-2021 = 5 Trips					
08187 Hatia-Gorakhpur		Station		08188 Gorakhpur-Hatia	
Arr.	Dep.	Arr.	Dep.	Arr.	Dep.
—	23:45	Hatia	11:50	—	—
00:05	00:15	Ranchi	11:20	11:30	—
01:20	01:22	Muri	09:38	09:40	—
02:50	03:00	Barkakana	08:30	08:35	—
06:05	06:07	Doltonganj	05:12	05:14	—
07:20	07:25	Garhwa Road	04:38	04:43	—
08:06	08:08	Dehri On Sone	03:40	03:42	—
08:28	08:30	Sasaram	03:20	03:22	—
08:55	08:57	Bhabua Road	02:56	02:58	—
10:20	10:30	Pt. Dindayal Updhy.	02:10	02:20	—
11:55	12:25	Varanasi Jn.	00:20	00:50	—
13:35	13:25	Mau	21:40	21:45	—
14:10	14:12	Belthara Road	21:08	21:10	—
15:15	15:20	Deoria Sadar	20:30	20:35	—
17:20	—	Gorakhpur	—	19:30	—

**Rake Composition:-** Generator Cum Luggage Coach-02, AC Third Class-10 = Total 12 Coaches.

**Please Note:-** (1) These trains will run with full reserved accommodation. (2) It is Mandatory for the passengers to follow the guidelines issued for prevention and safety from Covid-19.

CPRO/T-129 Chief Pass. Trans. Managar, Gorakhpur

About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794849555

**Never travel on roof and foot boards.**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform General Public that Shri Riyaz Ahmed s/o Mohd. Islam r/o 525 K/190 Purana Mahanagar, Lucknow have lost the Original registered Sale Deed 08.06.1995 duly registered in the office of Sub-Registrar-III, Lucknow vide Book No.1, zild no. 973 on pages 205/226 as serial no. 3223. The Sale Deed belongs to the House Built on Part of Plot no. 35 over khasra no. 153, 159, 171, 238, 239, 248, 249, 260, 272, 220, 223, 161, 163, 164, 230, 231 & 232 situated at Mohalla- Ram Nagar, Ward-Gadpeer Khan, Tehsil & Dist.- Lucknow. This Property is Presently owned exclusively by my client. If any Person have any kind of Right, title, interest, claim, etc then Please Communicate the same within 7 days to CK Legal Associates, Lucknow on 0522-4077776 or IDFC First Bank Ltd., Lucknow otherwise the same will be considered void.

**Classifieds**  
NAME CHANGE

I, Meenu Kumari Shrivastava D/o Sri Nirmal Kumar Shrivastava R/o 5/314, Viram Khand 5, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, have changed my name to Meenu Srivastava W/o Rakesh Srivastava.

0040587523-1

**LOST & FOUND**

The marksheet and pass certificate (Unique ID : 6640478 ) of Syed Mohd. Abbas Rizvi, S/O Mr. Syed Mohammad Ali, a student of SKD Academy, Rajajipuram, Lucknow. Passing year : 2021 has been lost, if found please contact 0522-2414722 0060084620-1

**BUSINESS OFFERS**

**kode Core**  
IT Projects Proposal With Low Investment  
Min. Monthly Billing 1500 USD  
Projects Available  
• Hardbook Scanning  
• PDF To DOC Conversion  
• HTML Tagging  
[kodecore.com](http://kodecore.com)  
8100177548, 6289641022

**NOTICE**

Be it known to all that, as per information provided by the owner, sale deed dated - 16/01/1964, registered on 16/01/1964 vide Book 1, Zild-1806, page 296-297 in the office of chief Sub Registrar, Lucknow relating to House No. 352/78 Talkatora Road, Lucknow has been lost/stolen. The said house is owned by Syed Mohammed Arif Rizvi S/o Mohd. Askar. Persons having information / objection, inform within 7 days.

Jagesh Bajpai, Advocate E4052-4054, Rajajipuram, Lucknow Mobile - 8354005690

"Searches were conducted in Chennai, Coimbatore, Vijaywada at premises of accused/suspects involved in import of semi processed talc stones with contraband. During searches, various incriminating documents, articles and other items have been seized," NIA said in a statement.

The case is related to the seizure of 2,988.21 kg of heroin at the Mundra Port by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on September 16. The case was transferred to NIA on October 6.

The heroin was found in two containers declared as containing "semi-processed talc stones" that landed from Afghanistan via Iran's Bandar Abbas Port, in the name of Aashi Trading Company of Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.

The NIA registered a case where besides sections of IPC and NDPS Act, Section 17 and Section 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act were also invoked.

**E matrimonials**

**Bride wanted**

**MALYALEE KERALITE**

Nair 67 Divorcee Air Force pensioner graduate seeks life partner from +2 or > educated Malayali widow/divorcee >50 without bindings. Direct Contact 6238356432.

0050185053-1

**Groom wanted**

**CHRISTIAN**



# EXPRESS NETWORK

## TRACKING THE SECOND SURGE

**587** DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN

**NEW CASES: 17,414**

**ACTIVE CASES: 2,31,568**

**TOTAL VACCINATION: 93,99,15,323**

**DAILY DEATHS 211** | **TOTAL DEATHS 4,50,586** | **WEEKLY CFR 0.86%** | **OVERALL CFR 1.34%**



**TESTS TODAY: 13,38,799** | **TOTAL TESTS: 58,26,51,280**

**WEEKLY POSITIVITY: 1.48%** | **OVERALL POSITIVITY: 5.83%**

### STATES REPORTING MOST CASES

STATE	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	WEEKLY POSITIVITY	TOTAL VACCINATION
■ Kerala	9,470	1,13,646	11.93%	3,65,52,552
■ Maharashtra	2,486	33,006	1.93%	8,64,30,209
■ Tamil Nadu	1,344	16,252	0.97%	5,00,32,799
■ Mizoram	950	14,700	15.24%	11,70,085
■ West Bengal	776	7,634	2.06%	6,28,36,150

### STATES REPORTING MOST DEATHS

STATE	TODAY'S DEATHS	TOTAL DEATHS	WEEKLY CFR	OVERALL CFR
■ Kerala	101	26,252	0.70%	0.57%
■ Maharashtra	45	1,43,108	1.59%	2.19%
■ Tamil Nadu	14	35,768	1.19%	1.35%
■ West Bengal	12	18,894	1.71%	1.21%
■ Karnataka	9	37,875	1.16%	1.27%

Note: Data as on Oct 9, vaccination numbers as of Oct 8. Deaths include those from previous days.

## Centre appoints CJs to 8 HCs; transfers 5 others

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

THE CENTRE on Saturday appointed Chief Justices (CJ) to eight High Courts and approved the transfer of five other Chief Justices.

The Supreme Court Collegium had recommended the transfer of the five Chief Justices on September 16.

Justice Akil Kureshi has been appointed as the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court after transfer from the Tripura High Court where he is currently the CJ. Justice Indrajit Mahanty, who was the CJ of Rajasthan HC has been appointed CJ of Tripura High Court.

Justice Mohammad Rafiq will be the new Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh HC. He is currently serving as the CJ of Madhya Pradesh HC.

Justice Biswanath Somadder, who is now the CJ of Meghalaya HC, has been appointed as the Chief Justice of Sikkim HC while Justice AK Goswami, who is the CJ of Andhra Pradesh HC, has been appointed CJ of Chhattisgarh High Court.

The Centre has also appointed Justices Rajesh Bindal as CJ of Allahabad HC, Ranjit V More as CJ of Meghalaya HC, Satish Chandra Sharma as CJ of Telangana High Court, Prakash Srivastava has been appointed CJ of Calcutta High Court, R V Malimath as CJ of Madhya Pradesh HC, Ritu Raj Awasthi as CJ of Karnataka High Court, Aravind Kumar as CJ of Gujarat HC, and Prashant Kumar Mishra as CJ of Andhra Pradesh HC.

## Two days before prelims, UPSC aspirant found hanging: Police

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

A 25-YEAR-OLD UPSC aspirant was found hanging at her rented accommodation in Central Delhi's Rajender Nagar on Friday night. Police said the woman, Akanksha Mishra from Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district, was going to appear for the preliminary exam on Sunday in Delhi. No suicide note was found.

According to police, they received a call at 11.50 pm regarding the incident. DCP (Central) Shweta Chauhan said, "We found that Akanksha was a UPSC aspirant. She was found hanging inside her room from a fan. Prima facie, there were no other external injuries other than the ligature marks on the neck. The door in her room was locked from inside." Police suspect no foul play in the incident.

The woman's family was

called to the city on Saturday and the body was sent to RML hospital for a autopsy. A report is awaited.

According to the family's statement, Akanksha had come to Delhi in June to prepare for the UPSC exam and other competitive entrance tests. She had moved to Old Rajinder Nagar last Saturday. Her family said she was under a lot of 'exam pressure' and suspect it to be the reason behind her death. They haven't raised allegations against anyone yet.

During enquiry, police found that Akanksha was last seen at 11 am on Friday by her flat mate before she left for work. When Akanksha didn't open the door later that night, the flat mate called the landlord and police. A crime team was called to the spot for inspection.

Police said they have initiated inquest proceedings in the matter under CrPC section 174.

## Rancour in Kerala BJP after organisational shuffle

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 9

RESENTMENT SEEMS to be brewing in Kerala BJP over nomination of office-bearers to the party's state and national organisations, a move that has shown the clout of party's state unit president K Surendran and Union Minister of State V Muraliedharan in party organisational affairs.

On Saturday, senior party leader Sobha Surendran, who has been dropped from the national executive, posted on social me-

dia, "I haven't gone after any positions. I strongly believe I had accomplished all missions the party had entrusted me with in the last three decades. We have examples of several great leaders in India as well as in Kerala who have proved that positions are not required to work among people."

On Friday, senior leader A K Nazir, BJP's most visible Muslim face in the state, was suspended from the party after he said that elections are only a means of raising funds for BJP in Kerala. "The party is collapsing under the present leadership. Several senior leaders, such as C K Padmanabhan, have been side-

## NCP minister says BJP leader's kin let off during raid; BJP says Malik defending accused

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 9

NCP MINISTER Nawab Malik on Saturday alleged that the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) had detained Rishabh Sachdev, brother-in-law of BJP leader Mohit Kamboj (Bhartiya), from the cruise ship it raided last week and that he was let off within hours.

Malik alleged that the Sachdeva was released following calls from BJP leaders in Delhi and Maharashtra to the NCB. He added that he would write to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray seeking an inquiry into this serious matter.

Mohit Kamboj is the former president of Mumbai BJP Yuva Morcha.

Reacting to Malik's allegations, the BJP said the NCP minister "seems to be playing the role of an advocate, defending the accused".



**Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik.** *Express*

"Malik is deliberately and unfairly dragging BJP's name in the matter," BJP spokesperson Keshav Upadhye said. "He is trying to build pressure, hoping it would help in freeing the culprits."

Malik claimed that NCB had detained 11 people during the October 2 raid on the cruise ship but let off three people – Sachdeva, Pratik Gaba and Amir Furniturewala.

"NCB Director Samir Wankhede had given a vague

statement about the detention of 8-10 people during the raid. In all, 11 people were detained during the raid. The Mumbai Police also had the same information till the morning (of October 3) but then the number came down to eight as three people were let off," Malik told mediapersons.

The minister showed videos and photos in support of his claim of the detention and release of the three persons.

"Sachdeva was released after two hours. His father and uncle came to the NCB office at the time of his release. All three (Sachdeva, Gaba and Furniturewala) were released at the same time. The names of Gaba and Furniturewala have been reflected in the arguments made during the hearing in court. It was on the invitation of Gaba and Furniturewala that Aryan Khan (Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan's son who has been arrested following the raid)

went there," he added.

"Our question to NCB is that you raided a cruise with 1,300 people on it and detained only 11 people who were brought to the NCB office for inquiry. The NCB must clarify on whose instructions these three persons were released. Our information is that the BJP leaders from Maharashtra and Delhi made phone calls to release them."

### SRK driver summoned

Meanwhile, the NCB on Saturday summoned the driver of actor Shah Rukh Khan and recorded his statement in connection with the cruise ship drug bust case. Sources said the driver had driven the actor's son Aryan Khan and his friend Arbaaz Merchant, who have been arrested in the case, to the cruise liner from Mannat, Khan's Bandra residence.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
**www.indianexpress.com**

## Dalit man beaten to death in Rajasthan; main accused held

**DEEP MUKHERJEE**  
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 9

A 29-YEAR-OLD man from the Scheduled Caste (SC) community was allegedly beaten to death in Rajasthan's Hanumangarh district over what the police believe was an affair with wife of one of the accused.

The main accused in the case has been arrested and four other accused rounded up, Hanumangarh police tweeted on Saturday night. According to police, preliminary investigation suggests the accused had video-graphed the assault on the victim, Jagdish Meghwal, 29, which is being circulated widely on social media.

The FIR, registered on the complaint of Meghwal's father Banwari Lal, stated that the accused had dumped the body outside the family's home, in Hanumangarh's Prempura village, on Thursday. The FIR names 11 people, including the woman with whom the police believe he allegedly had an affair, as accused in the case.

On Thursday, the FIR stated, the accused followed Meghwal to Suratgarh, in neighbouring Ganganagar district, where he had gone on an errand, and ab-

**The main accused in the case has been arrested and four other accused rounded up, police tweeted on Saturday. Preliminary investigation suggests the accused had video-graphed the assault on the victim.**

ducted him on his way back. They allegedly beat him to death, according to the complaint.

Inder Kumar, SHO, Pilibanga police station in Hanumangarh, said: "Prima facie, the motive appears to be an affair between Meghwal and the wife of one of the accused.... On October 7, the accused, including relatives of the husband, spotted Meghwal, and after assaulting him left him near his home."

The accused are from Odh Rajput community, who come under the OBC category, the SHO said. "Meghwal's family has named the woman as one of the accused. Her husband, Mukesh, and other relatives are accused in the case. We have detained three people and investigation is

under way," he said. Both families live in Prempura village, police said.

Banwari Lal said, "The accused had threatened my son a few days ago." The FIR has been registered under IPC Sections 302 (murder), 365 (kidnapping or abducting with intent to confine person), 147 (punishment for rioting), 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object), 120-B (punishment of criminal conspiracy), along with Sections of SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. As the news emerged, opposition BJP slammed the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress state government.

Criticising Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who have in the past visited BJP-ruled states to meet victims of atrocities against people from SC communities, BJP state president Satish Poonia tweeted: "The state has now come into the category of top states in terms of atrocities on Dalits. The incident in Pilibanga's Prempura is reflective of this. Ashok Gehlot ji, stop this drama of being protectors of Dalits in other states. Priyanka Gandhi ji, Rahul Gandhi ji, do come here sometimes as well to wipe the tears of Dalits."

## India, Denmark to expand ties in health, agri, climate sectors

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi and his visiting Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen on Saturday held "fruitful" talks with a focus on expanding cooperation in a range of key areas such as health, agriculture, water management, climate change and renewable energy.

In his media statement after the talks, Modi said both sides reviewed the progress made under the India-Denmark Green Strategic Partnership and deliberated on further expansion of overall cooperation in multiple sectors.

The two sides also inked four agreements that will provide for

deepening of cooperation in science and technology, climate change and skill development.

"A year ago today, we took the historic decision to establish a Green Strategic Partnership between India and Denmark in our virtual summit. This is a sign of far-reaching thinking and respect for the environment by both our countries," he said.

In her remarks, the Danish PM complimented Modi for his focus on green technologies and described him as an "inspiration for the rest of the world".

"I am also proud that Danish solutions play a key role when it comes to your very ambitious targets... You have set some very ambitious targets when it comes to clean water for over one million households and for renew-

able energy including off-shore wind," she said.

Modi said both sides decided to cooperate in areas like efficient supply chain, smart water resources management and technologies relating to the farm sector to increase agricultural productivity in India.

In her media statement, Frederiksen said the cooperation between India and Denmark is a great example of how green growth and green transition go hand-in-hand. She said both sides decided to boost cooperation, particularly in the health and agriculture sectors.

Ahead of the talks between the two prime ministers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar called on Frederiksen.

regain the forgotten moral consciousness for those basking in the comfort of power."

Sources in state BJP said district presidents, without allegiance to any group, were removed and Surendran-Muraliedharan duo filled the slots with their loyalists. Several senior state BJP leaders, who are not close to them, have been sidelined in the reconstitution of the party organisation, insiders said.

"Now all district chiefs, except one, are their nominees," a source said. "In the state committee also, those close to these two leaders have been made of-

## Gujarat elections: Rajasthan minister gets Congress charge

**HAMZA KHAN**  
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 9

FOUR YEARS since Ashok Gehlot gave the BJP a scare in Gujarat as party in-charge for the state, his Health Minister Raghu Sharma has been handed over the same task as Gujarat heads to polls in 2022.

Several factors came into play for Sharma to be chosen. Unlike in 2017, Gehlot is now the Chief Minister. Party sources said that Gehlot will

play an important role from "back end" through Sharma, who is not entirely known for his political acumen.

He is a Brahmin and with the saffron party playing identity politics, this assumes significance since Congress needs to get the optics right. After arriving in Gujarat on Saturday for his three-day visit, among the first things Sharma did was to pray at Bhadrakali temple in Ahmedabad.

He has been active in poli-

tics since his youth and is known to be assertive when needed. "This will help him connect with youth leaders such as Hardik Patel and Jignesh Mevani," a party leader said.

On being handed the responsibility in the home state of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Home Minister, Sharma said that "the challenge should be tough. And if you find a way through that challenge, that is with your hard work."

## BJP retains key House panel posts, Cong's Tharoor IT

**LIZ MATHEW & MANOJ CG**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

DESPITE PRESSURE from some BJP members to replace him, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor will continue as chairman of the Parliamentary panel on Information Technology.

Senior BJP leader and former Bihar deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi was appointed chairman of the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, as the committees were reconstituted over three weeks after their tenure ended.

All other existing chairpersons were retained.

The BJP retains chairmanship of key committees, except Home Affairs, which will continue to be headed by Congress leader Anand Sharma.

Rajiv Ranjan Singh, newly elected chairman of JD(U), will be the new chairman of the Standing Committee on Energy. Although there was some speculation that there could be major changes in the panels, both Rajya Sabha

Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla more or less retained the their composition.

Newly elected Rajya Sabha MPs have been nominated to the reconstituted committees. However, their composition changed, as some of the members had been inducted into the Union Council of Ministers in the July 7 Cabinet expansion.

Ravi Shankar Prasad, who was dropped from the Cabinet, has been accommodated in the House panel on Finance, headed by Jayant Sinha, while Prakash Javadekar and Harsh Vardhan, also dropped from the Cabinet, are in External Affairs panel, headed by P P Choudhary.

The IT committee was caught in controversy several times in its last tenure, with BJP MPs objecting to the panel's decisions to summon Facebook for allegations against the social media giant on ignoring hate speeches by some BJP leaders. During the Monsoon Session, Dubey had moved a privilege notice against Tharoor after the IT panel tried to take up the

controversial Pegasus spyware issue.

Tharoor had also given a notice for breach of privilege against Dubey, alleging that the latter made "disparaging remarks" on social media over his decision to summon a panel meeting to discuss alleged "misconduct" of Facebook.

Congress's Jairam Ramesh will head the panel on Science and Technology and Environment, and Forests and Climate Change.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi remains in the Defence committee, which is headed by BJP leader Jugal Oram. Ramesh Bidhuri, BJP MP from South Delhi, will head the panel on Petroleum and Natural Gas, Jagadambika Pal continues to be chairman of Urban Development panel. BJP Rajya Sabha member Vinay Sahasrabudhe retains chairmanship of the panel on Education; Radha Mohan Singh of Railways committee, and Sanjay Jaiswal of the panel on Water Resources.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
**www.indianexpress.com**

## Uddhav, Rane face-off at airport inauguration — both claim credit for project

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 9

ARCHRIVALS CHIEF Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Union Minister Narayan Rane took potshots at each other from the same dais Saturday as they participated in the inauguration of Chipli airport in Sindhudurg, a project which both claimed credit for.

While Rane accused a few Sena leaders of corruption and tactical stalling of development projects, Thackeray said after being held up for years, it was after the MVA came to power in the state that the airport had become a reality.

Sindhudurg is in the Sena's Konkarn stronghold, and was former Sainik Rane's bastion.

The inauguration of Chipli airport was held in a hybrid mode with Thackeray flagging off the first flight to Mumbai. Union Civil Aviation Minister



**Thackeray flagged off the first flight from Sindhudurg airport on Saturday.** *Twitter*

Jyotiraditya Scindia, from New Delhi, virtually flagged off the flight.

At the airport, Thackeray and Rane, who were on the dais together for the first time in recent memory, did not greet each other. In August, Maharashtra Police had arrested the Union minister for saying that he wanted to slap the CM.



# 6 SUNDAY STORY

## THE SUNDAY PROFILE MEET THE MISHRAS

ON MARCH 15, BJP Lashmipur Kheri MP Ajay Kumar Mishra shared an unstarred question with the Congress's Tiruchirappalli MP, Su. Thirunavukkarasar. The question, marked to then Minister of Culture Prahlad Singh Patel, read: "Whether it is a fact that heavy damage has been caused by [farmer] protesters and many priceless antiquities and precious items... have been damaged and missing during the attack on the Red Fort on 26th January, 2021."

Days later, on March 24, Mishra asked another unstarred question, this time of the Electronics & Information Technology Minister: "Whether the Government is contemplating to make any stringent law against the persons who were spreading propaganda on social media against the country and inciting violence in the name of farmers agitation...."

The two Parliament questions, along with a recent video of Mishra, now the Minister of State for Home in the Narendra Modi-led Cabinet, where he is seen threatening farmer protesters, offer early clues to the tension that had been steadily building up — until it blew up on October 3, when a convoy of cars, including one owned by Mishra, ploughed into a group of farmer protesters, killing four of them. In the violence that followed, the minister's driver and two BJP workers were killed. A journalist was also among those who died.

The spiralling chain of events since then — the nationwide outrage over the killings, the Congress hitting the ground to take on the BJP over the killings, the filing of an FIR against Mishra's son Ashish alias Monu, and the Supreme Court taking suo motu cognizance — have put the spotlight on Lakhimpur Kheri and its two-time MP, Ajay Kumar Mishra.

### 'Teni Maharaj' to two-time MP

Mishra, 61, who started his political career in the Lakhimpur Kheri Zila Parishad in 2010 before becoming a BJP office-bearer and later district general secretary, was elected MLA in 2012. In 2014, he was elected to the Lok Sabha and re-elected in 2019.

Nicknamed "Teni Maharaj" — the 'maharaj' a nod to his upper-caste status — Mishra had a political mentor in Patel Ramkumar Verma, a BJP Kurmi leader and former Nighasan MLA, who, in 2012, briefly moved to the BSP. With Verma away in the BSP, Mishra contested that year's election on a BJP ticket from Nighasan — and won.

"That was the moment he became a star for the BJP as Nighasan was the only seat the BJP won in 2012 from among Lakhimpur Keri's nine Vidhan Sabha seats," says a senior Samajwadi Party leader, adding that this win later paved the way for a Lok Sabha seat for Mishra.

"Because he was the only BJP MLA in the district, he was given a ticket for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. And such was the Modi wave that election that even if the BJP had fielded a statue, it would have won. There are many such MPs here — they are not known beyond their districts or even beyond their villages," says a senior Congress leader in Lakhimpur Kheri.

Mishra's win broke an established tradition of Lakhimpur Kheri sending Kurmi candidates to Parliament. He was the first Brahmin to win from the seat — since 1962, the seat has had at least nine MPs from the OBC community.

Despite being a two-time MP, Mishra was never on the party's national scene un-

With the Lakhimpur Kheri case turning into a political hot button issue ahead of the UP elections next year, the spotlight is on Ajay Kumar Mishra, the Union MoS whose son now faces a murder case. ASAD REHMAN traces Mishra's journey — from the 'Teni Maharaj' who settled village disputes to the two-time MP who found a spot in the Union Cabinet as the sole Brahmin face from UP

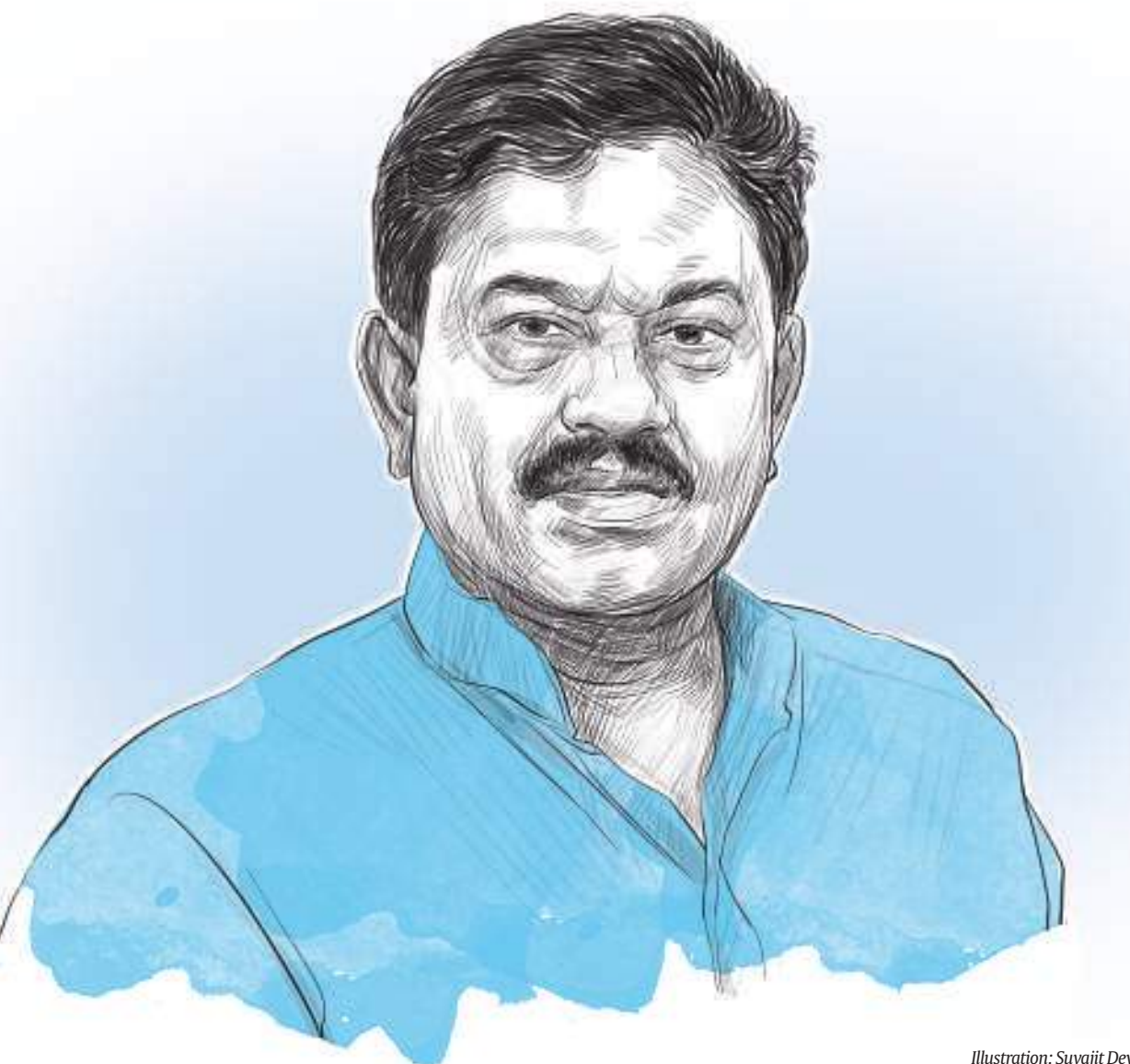


Illustration: Suvajit Dey

til his surprise selection to the Union Cabinet in July. BJP leaders in the state admit that he wasn't too active in state politics either, confining himself largely to Lakhimpur Kheri, having consolidated his hold over the region through the cooperative sector. Mishra was vice-chairman of the District Cooperative Bank Ltd in Lakhimpur Kheri from 1999-2002.

An enduring question about Mishra's political career is how this largely local Kheri

**An enduring question about Mishra's career is how this largely local politician, who had never been a minister even in UP, was catapulted to the Union Cabinet ahead of more known Brahmin leaders. "Kisi ko nahi pata kaise hua," says a BJP leader**

politician, who had never been a minister even in UP, was catapulted straightaway to the Union Cabinet. In the Modi government's July Cabinet expansion, Mishra surprised many when he was picked as the sole Brahmin face from UP, ahead of other known heavyweights from the community.

"Kisi ko nahi pata kaise hua (No one knows how it happened)," says a Lakhimpur Kheri BJP leader on Mishra's induction into the Union Cabinet.

### Popular in his village

In Nighasan block and Banveerpur, Mishra's ancestral village that is around 100 km from the district headquarters, the slogans are everywhere: "Nighasan janta ki pukaar, Monu bhaiyya ab ki baar."

The slogans are an unabashed claim for an election ticket for Ashish, Mishra's younger son who now faces a murder FIR in the October 3 case. But the events of the past few days have only served to strengthen the kinship the villagers share with Mishra and his family.

"Teniji (Mishra) has always been around in times of crisis. He intervenes in land disputes and settles them," says pradhan Akash Mittal, 32, who won the recent panchayat polls as an Independent candidate.

Villagers say Mishra's father Ambika Prasad settled in the village after migrating from Kanpur in the 1950s. Both Prasad, who died around 15 years ago, and Mishra's elder brother Umesh have been pradhans in the past.

Mishra, who holds BSc and LLB degrees from Christ Church College and DAV College in Kanpur, is married to Pushpa Mishra. Besides Ashish, a BSc graduate, the couple have two other children — Abhimanyu, 37, a doctor who runs a clinic in Lakhimpur Kheri, and daughter Rashmi, who works as a clerk at the Lakhimpur Kheri Urban Cooperative Bank.

According to his election affidavit filed for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Mishra's movable assets, excluding his wife's, are worth 1.93 crore and immovable assets are worth Rs 1.20 crore. The family owns two homes and a rice mill in Banveerpur village, a two-storey bungalow in Lakhimpur Kheri, and two petrol pumps. Mishra is the third of four brothers, with the eldest, Umesh Mishra, and the youngest, Vijay, in the business of food-grain supplies.

Over the last few days, there have been accusations, including by BKU leader Rakesh Tikait, of how Mishra allegedly made his early money by dealing in illegal business activity in Nepal — his village in Lakhimpur Kheri is merely 15 km from the border.

Mishra, however, dismisses these as "false allegations" being spread by his detractors because of the "social work" he does in the region.

According to Mishra's affidavit filed for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, a criminal appeal is pending before the Allahabad High Court in a murder case filed against him in 2000, when he was accused of killing Prabhat Gupta, a Samajwadi Party youth worker. In February 2018, the HC had reserved the judgment in the criminal appeal.

The village of 9,000 people, mostly of Rana community members (who fall in the general category but are seeking SC status), also has a few Sikh homes on the periphery. Villagers insist that the MP shares a cordial relationship with the community. "Around one year ago, houses of some Sikh families were marked as forest land by the Forest Department. They came to Teniji, and he told them to go home, not worry. And the issue was sorted," says Paikarma Prasad, a farmer.

Baljinder Singh, who is working on his farm in the neighbouring village, says, "There has never been any issue with the MP. We have invited him to all Sikh weddings... He is a popular figure here." Singh refuses to talk any further.

INPUTS BY HARIKISHAN SHARMA

## == TAKE 5 == BETTER 'MULAQAT'

SANTOSH UPADHAYAY  
DG (PRISONS), ODISHA



"Prisoners suffer because of the delay in trials, release etc"

## 'Seeing family, advocates... helps prisoners feel better, healthy'

In Odisha, inmates in two central jails can now see and speak to their visitors during mulaqat hours as they speak over an intercom, separated by two glass barriers. The facility was inaugurated on October 2

AISHWARYA MOHANTY

### 1 What prompted this initiative?

Around 20-30 jails in Odisha are from the pre-Independence era. At that point, prisoners were deliberately separated from relatives to avoid eye contact. But the new manual, enforced last year, prescribes toughened glass or two iron grille meshes so that there is visibility of up to 80%... We have 15 intercoms in Bhubaneswar jail and 15 in Berhampur for this facility.

### 2 Did you seek inputs from other states which have implemented this?

No, but there is an all-India DG Prisons conference soon, where we will discuss the best practices of jails across the country.

### 3 How do you think this initiative helps prisoners?

Prisoners often suffer mentally and psychologically because of the delay in trials, release etc. These problems were aggravated during the pandemic, but we started an E-mulaqat. These physical meetings, where they can see their family members, advocates etc will help them feel better, mentally and emotionally, and will also help their overall health.

### 4 How has the response been?

It has been phenomenal. It gives a sense of satisfaction to the prisoners as well as family members... There is a feel-good factor.

### 5 Are there extra security arrangements?

No extra security arrangements have been made. There will be the usual security staff to keep a watch. Also, we will ensure that only three people at a time are allowed to meet a prisoner.

## = india 75 = NUMBER PLATE

14

The strength of India's first Council of Ministers, which took oath on August 15, 1947, led by PM Nehru. Sardar Patel, the Deputy PM, held the most ministries (Home, I&B, and States). There was no MoS.

78

The strength of the current Council of Ministers, headed by PM Narendra Modi. It includes 30 Cabinet ministers, two Ministers of State (Independent Charge), and 45 MoS.

15%

The cap on the number of Union ministers, as share of strength of the Lok Sabha. The A B Vajpayee government had brought in this limit. Incidentally, the largest Council, of 81, so far was also under Vajpayee, in 2003.

32 years

According to the publication 'Council of Ministers 1947-2015', by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, this is how long Jagjivan Ram served as Cabinet minister — between 1947 and 1979, barring 1 month and 26 days — the longest.

5 days

The time for which Justice (retd) H R Khanna served as minister in 1979, under PM Charan Singh — the briefest. During Emergency, Justice Khanna had dissented to uphold fundamental rights.

HARIKISHAN SHARMA

# In the heart of malaria country

Come monsoon, Chhattisgarh's Bastar lives in dread of the fever that leaves them battling death. With hard-to-reach villages and sparse medical centres, a vaccine lights hope

GARGI VERMA  
EDESMETTA (BIJAPUR)

SILKATA TATI, 31, contracts malaria every year, at least once, sometimes more often. The resident of Khadiapara, in hard-to-reach Edesmetta — a village nestled in the hills, with the closest motorable road 15 km away — Tati says she gets high fever and shivers through the night for at least three days, each time. Of the 25 families in her para, or locality, every house has a similar malaria story, and each has devised "own ways" to deal with it. Medical intervention, still sparse, only started reaching the village after the start of the 'Malaria Mukht Bastar' campaign in 2020.

Malaria is one of the biggest killers in Chhattisgarh, with some of the blocks of Bastar district the worst-hit in the country. Even security forces battling Naxals are vulnerable to the disease. In India, it is at places like Edesmetta where the first-ever vaccine for malaria, now a possibility after the WHO nod, can prove a game-changer.

Once the monsoon starts, hardly any week goes by without malaria striking, say villagers. In September 2019, twins born to Soma Punem died a month after their birth following high fever. "They were sick for a



few hours before they died. We couldn't even take them to the health centre," Punem says. While the infants were never tested, their symptoms were too familiar for Punem to be in any doubt.

With the Gangaloor Health Centre 15 km and two hills away, very few villagers make it there. Tati says they have devised alterna-



Villagers at Edesmetta, where almost everyone has had malaria at least once. "Who likes feeling sick?" says one of them. Gargi Verma

tive "healing" methods such as drinking hot indigenous liquor, getting bitten by a local red ant known as Chapra, and consuming barks of specific trees from the jungle around. "Only when things get serious do we trek to the health centre," says her husband Budhru. Those who can't walk or have passed out are taken on a cot or a basket.

The Malaria Mukht Bastar campaign has already made some difference. In Bijapur, between the first and second phase of the programme, there was a decline of 71.3 per cent in cases.

National Health Mission Director Priyanka Shukla says the Annual Parasite Incidence (malaria cases per 1,000 per an-

num) fell from 5.21 in 2015 to 1.17 in 2020 — under an eradication programme that pushes not just preventive measures like distribution of mosquito nets but also ensures testing of asymptomatic carriers along with hotspots and active cases. "We call it passive testing, to root out the parasite from an area and reduce the recurrence of the disease. Our ground teams go in periodically and conduct mass testing," she says.

But the challenges are many, Shukla admits, starting from ensuring that tribal families make sleeping under mosquito nets a habit. "We saw that villagers would not use the nets if these were given packed, so our ground staff is now directed to give the nets after opening them, and to conduct regular checks to see the villagers are using them."

In Edesmetta too, every house has a mosquito net, but few use it. Villagers say while anganwadi workers seldom visit, doctors have been coming sporadically for the past two years. "They come in the months of August and September and give us tablets. Sometimes, they conduct blood tests and give us mosquito nets," Budhru says, adding, "They always say they will come every week but they don't. So after their visit, if someone falls ill, we have to trek to the Gangaloor Health Centre."

Tati's eyes light up hearing there could

soon be a vaccine for malaria, thus ending her yearly bouts with it. Camps for other vaccines are regularly held at the marketplace in Gangaloor.

Tati is ready to even volunteer for the vaccine. "The disease breaks my body and I am left feeling weak for days even after the fever has subsided. Who likes getting sick every week?" she says.

However, there are many hurdles along the way. Approved by the WHO only last week, with the India timeline unclear, the vaccine is essentially meant for children. To be effective, four doses must be administered starting at the age of five months, which could pose logistical problems in far-flung regions like Edesmetta, where even the completion of the course of chloroquine to treat malaria is a complex task for the medical team.

Admits a health worker at the Gangaloor centre, "We tell the villagers to complete the course, but the minute their fever drops, they stop taking the medicines, leading to complications and severe recurrence of the disease."

Shukla says she can't comment on the strategy yet as they know little about the vaccine modus or efficiency. But, in the fight against malaria, she says, "a vaccine will definitely help".



Across  
THE AISLE

PCHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in  
Twitter @Pchidambaram\_IN

The concept of law and order has a different meaning in Uttar Pradesh whose chief minister is Mr Adityanath.

There is a law — it is Mr Adityanath's law, not Indian law. There is order, in fact, multiple orders — they are Mr Adityanath's orders, not lawful orders. The police maintain law and order — Mr Adityanath's law and Mr Adityanath's orders

THE WORDS ring loud and clear, lofty, almost dramatic: **We, The People of India..... Give to Ourselves This Constitution.** And we gave to ourselves the Constitution in order to secure to all, among other objectives, **Liberty and Fraternity.**

The Preamble to the Constitution of India must be made compulsory reading for every Officer, Minister, Chief Minister and Prime Minister. Each one took an oath under the Constitution. His/her first obligation must be to secure Liberty and promote Fraternity. To enable them to do so, we created a Parliament (for India) and a Legislature (for each state). We tasked the state Legislature to make laws on 'public order' and 'police' and tasked both Parliament and the Legislature to make laws on 'criminal law', 'criminal procedure' and 'preventive detention'.

THE PEOPLE'S  
COMMANDS

We created an Executive to implement the laws. We put a check on the Executive's powers by incorporating the 'fundamental rights' of citizens and cautioned them that

*"No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."*

We commanded the Executive to observe that

*"No person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed, as soon as may be, of the grounds for such*

*arrest nor shall he be denied the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice."*

We further commanded the Executive to observe that

*"Every person who is arrested and detained in custody shall be produced before the nearest magistrate within a period of twenty-four hours of such arrest.....and no such person shall be detained in custody beyond the said period without the authority of a magistrate."*

The exhortations were like Robert Burns's "the best laid schemes of mice and men". Our fault was we did not take into account the state of Uttar Pradesh!

FIRST TRAGEDY, THEN  
COMEDY

The tragic incident in Lakhimpur Kheri left eight people dead — four farmers run over by an SUV and four others in the violence that followed the death of the farmers. It is natural that political leaders will attempt to go to the village and meet the families of the victims. They have every right to do so because that is what we understand by Liberty. Fraternity is empathising with the grieving families.

Ms Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, a general secretary of the Congress, was traveling to Lakhimpur Kheri when she was stopped near Sitapur. Some facts concerning the interdiction are not disputed: It was at 4.30 am on Monday, October 4.

## Whose law, whose order?

She was told that she was being arrested under Sec 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). She was hustled into a police vehicle by male police officers. She was detained at the PAC guest house until the evening of Wednesday, October 6. In the intervening 60 hours,

■ Ms Vadra was not informed of the grounds of arrest;

■ she was not served with a memorandum of arrest and her signature was not taken on it;

■ she was not produced before a judicial magistrate;

■ she was not given a copy of the FIR, if any;

■ she was not allowed to meet her legal counsel who was at the gate for hours; and

■ she was told on Tuesday, October 5, that she had been charged under Section 151 of the CrPC and Sections 107 and 116 of the Indian Penal Code.

I have lost count of the number of provisions of law that were violated. If you have the intellectual curiosity, please get hold of copies of the Constitution, the CrPC and the IPC and look at Articles 19, 21 and 22; Sections 41B, 41D, 46, 50, 50A, 56, 57, 60A, 151, particularly sub-section (2), and 167 of the CrPC; and Sections 107, 116 of the IPC.

IGNORANCE OR  
IMPUNITY?

It seems to me the concept of law and order has a different meaning in Uttar

Pradesh whose chief minister is Mr Adityanath. There is a law — it is Mr Adityanath's law, not Indian law. There is order, in fact, multiple orders — they are Mr Adityanath's orders, not lawful orders. The police maintain law and order — Mr Adityanath's law and Mr Adityanath's orders.

Let's take the last pearl of police wisdom — the charges. There is no offence contained in Section 151 of the CrPC and hence no one can be 'charged' under that section. Sections 107 and 116 of the IPC relate to abetment. They cannot be stand-alone charges. The charge of abetment has meaning only if the police name the person who was abetted or the crime that was abetted. No one in the police seems to have noticed this crucial lapse. The charge, as it stands, is ludicrous.

The only explanation can be that either the UP Police does not know the Constitution or the laws (meaning, **ignorance**) or the UP Police does not care a damn about the Constitution and the laws (meaning, **impunity**). Either explanation casts a dark shadow on the UP Police that has several officers of DGP rank. From high-ranking police officers to humble constables, they deserve a better reputation. More than anything, the 23.5 crore population of UP deserves a better police force.

Freedom is not swept away by a *tsunami*. It is eroded by the waves that relentlessly pound on its edges. Umbha (Sonbhadra), Unnao-1, Shahjahanpur, Unnao-2, NRC/CAA, Hathras and now Lakhimpur Kheri, can you see the waves?

Fifth  
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter @tavleen\_singh

Mr PM, a  
critic speaks

THE PRIME Minister recently revealed, in one of his rare interviews, that he missed critics. 'But, unfortunately, the number of critics is very few,' he said. 'Mostly, people only level allegations, the people who play games about perception are more in number.' It is with these words in mind that I make clear before going any further that I consider myself an honest critic. But, what I want to begin with is neither an allegation or criticism but a simple statement of facts. On a narrow, dirt road in Lakhimpur Kheri last week, a cavalcade of SUVs, one of them at least belonging to the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Ajay Kumar Mishra, drove at high speed into a group of protesting farmers, and when they were mowed down, proceeded to drive over their bodies.

Hours later, the Prime Minister arrived in Lucknow, not far from where the killings happened, and made a speech about urbanisation and the strides he was helping India take in this direction. Beside him stood the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh who also behaved as if he had no idea that eight people died in a crime committed with such sickening callousness that the videos were hard to watch. After four men were crushed to death, enraged farmers took the law into their own hands and killed three people who were travelling in the cars that were in the minister's convoy. A young journalist was also killed and his family claims that his body had wheel marks on it although the BJP's propaganda machine has tried to spread the word that he was beaten to death by farmers. These are the bare facts.

Now comes an allegation. I find it shocking that, after so horrific an incident, there has not been a single word of condemnation from the Prime Minister, who likes to remind us, from time to time, that he is really the *Pradhan Sevak* (prime servant) of the people of India. If he truly believes this, then does he not feel the pain of what happened? Does he not feel the need to say something? Or does he agree with the view expressed by the man whose car mowed the farmers down that they needed to be taught a lesson? Unfortunately, he made a speech saying this, days before his cavalcade became a killing machine. Unfortunately, the BJP chief minister of Haryana made a similarly threatening speech just before this awful incident, so the Prime Minister's silence gives the impression that these speeches were made with his assent. That is an allegation.

Let me return now to my role as critic. The Prime Minister is not a man of long silences. Almost every day he can be heard tweeting or speaking. Sometimes he tweets many times a day. When something horrible happens in some distant country, he nearly always offers commiseration and condolences. Why is it so hard for him to tweet when something horrible happens in India?

Last week was a truly awful one. The horror of Lakhimpur Kheri had just begun to sink in when came a spate of killings in Srinagar. A much-loved Hindu chemist was killed in his shop. Two teachers were asked their religion and when they were found to not be Muslim, they were killed by the jihadi monsters who came hunting for Hindus and Sikhs to kill. In their killing spree they managed also to kill a couple of Muslims, but the pattern was so reminiscent of that time 20 years ago when Hindus were ethnically cleansed from the Kashmir Valley that it is hard not to believe that this is not a similar exercise. Why does the Prime Minister not feel the need to speak or at the very least tweet?

In the past week he has tweeted his greetings to our 'air warriors' on Air Force Day. He has sent Navratri greetings. He has thanked those who wished him to mark the twentieth anniversary of his career as a public servant. He has tweeted about the 'honour of inaugurating Oxygen plants across India'. And, there have been many more tweets of similar banality. Could he not find a few minutes to express his horror at the killings in Lakhimpur Kheri and Kashmir? That is criticism veiled in a question.

Now here comes some open criticism. Prime Minister, it is my considered and ever humble opinion that you have surrounded yourself with such a large collection of sycophants and timeservers that you have begun to treat your critics as enemies. This is easy to do when the delusion that India, because of you, has become a land of endless good times (*achche din*) is backed up by an army of aggressive trolls who see all criticism as 'anti-national' and who charge anyone who dares say anything against you with high treason. In such an atmosphere, it is easy to mistake genuine critics for foes, easy to get fooled into believing that sycophants are your only real friends. They are not.

They have done you harm as sycophants always do. You say in that same interview that you 'attach big importance to criticism' and that you 'respect critics a lot'. It is time that you began to show that you do, because your political instincts, that have always been remarkably sharp, appear to have dulled. Or you would have expressed outrage at the killings last week.

inside  
TRACK

COOMI KAPOOR



## PANDORA'S BOX

THE NEW Parliament House is to have a Lok Sabha chamber which can seat 772. It is intriguing how this precise figure was arrived at considering that the present Lok Sabha can barely accommodate all 543 MPs. The government's calculation, on the basis of which the figure has been provided, is on the assumption that the numbers of parliamentary constituencies will increase dramatically once the freeze on inter-state delimitation of seats is lifted in 2026.

The concept of equal number of voters for each parliamentary constituency has long been contentious. States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu argue that they get penalised due to their successful family planning programmes while high-population states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan increase their political clout (as their population translates to a higher number of seats). Since 1971, parliamentary constituencies have been frozen regardless of huge disparities in population. If delimitation takes place in 2026 on the basis of the 2021 Census, it will open a Pandora's box. Especially since BJP-ruled states in the north will be the ones getting a greater say in who rules the country.

## MISSION INCOMPLETE

After his humiliating ouster as Punjab chief minister, Amarinder Singh visited Delhi to meet Home Minister Amit Shah. The speculation was that Singh might join the BJP or working out an alliance. Actually Singh met Shah not to discuss politics but to convey allegations against Congress state chief Navjot Singh Sidhu, which he felt the Central government should pay heed to. Shah referred Singh to National Security Adviser Ajit Doval. The latter, however, was hesitant to act on the basis of the information provided. A maverick Sidhu would incite more controversy and trouble, he felt.

## NATH IN RUNNING?

Rahul Gandhi is reluctant to hold an election for party president though he resigned after the Congress's 2019 general election defeat. Gandhi does not want to take charge at this low point in the party's fortunes. Also, the present Congress president's term ends in December 2022. Gandhi contemplated installing one of his lightweight favourites to take temporary

charge. But with the G-23 group determined to field a rival candidate, this option has become untenable. The high command is now reportedly considering appointing Kamal Nath as a stopgap president. Nath, who had gone to the US for medical consultation, met the Gandhis on his return. He fits the bill in many ways. He is an experienced old hand and a loyalist, who, at 74, is unlikely to pose a challenge to the Gandhis' suzerainty. If not Nath, then the party may opt to simply brazen it out with an interim president.

## CHAIN REACTION

When Jyotiraditya Scindia was sworn in as a Cabinet minister in the Modi government reshuffle in July, he hoped to reclaim 27, Safdarjung Road, the bungalow in Lutyens Delhi where he spent most of his life. The Type 8 ministerial bungalow was first allotted to his father, Madhavrao Scindia, during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure in the 1980s and remained with the family till 2019, when Jyotiraditya was defeated from the Guna seat. Since Ramesh Pokhriyal, who occupied the house subsequently, lost his ministership in the recent reshuffle, Scindia assumed it would be easy for him to move back. But three months later, Scindia is still waiting because some ex-ministers refuse to shift to 'lower-status' bungalows.

The CPWD plan was that Pokhriyal would move to a Type 7 bungalow currently occupied by former minister of state Jayant Sinha, who was expected to move to a Type 6. However, Sinha's wife refused to budge, citing the example of Rajyavardhan Rathore, also a former MoS, who still occupies a Type 7 bungalow. The Urban Development Ministry's explanation that Rathore had a superior claim since he had been an MoS with Independent charge, unlike Sinha, fell on deaf ears.

## RATIONALIST YOGI

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from the US, finally gave the go-ahead to Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath to expand his Cabinet, Adityanath immediately did so, though it was the period of *pitru paksha*, when Hindus pay homage to the dead and traditionally no new work is started. But Adityanath is not constrained by the taboos that many of his predecessors followed unquestioningly. Whether it was the so-called jinx on UP CMs visiting Noida, staying overnight at the circuit house in Agra, or being served food during a lunar eclipse in Varanasi, Adityanath has ignored the doomsday predictions. UP residents attribute his rationalist streak to the fact that he is the head of the Gorakhnath math, whose rituals are different from traditional Hindu customs.

She  
SAID

SHALINI LANGER

shalini.langer@expressindia.com



IT WAS a bus full of irrepressible teenagers, exhausted by the demands of high school, overfed on much-shared Mills & Boons, tired of the tedium of a small town — one of those "*chhote, chhote sheher*", with their "*khaali, bore dopeher*" that Gulzar would describe years later. That morning though, simple eloquence such as this would have been lost on us. Rushing to our school bus stops, tumbling onto the bus, crowding at the back, chattering incessantly, squealing at intervals, unmindful of a formidable teacher occupying the front row, we were still swooning from a very, very uns subtle bit of cheesy charm we had witnessed the previous evening.

On our TV sets with their patchy reception, three episodes into his television appearance as an Army Commando-in-making, in the very earnestly made *Fauji*, Shah Rukh Khan had just swept a generation of girls off their feet. All he had done was do a countdown hoping that the woman he was wooing would saunter in before he hit 10. She stepped in when he was at "*paune das* (9.45)". Never before, and never since, has 1 to 10 been packed with so much promise or such longing.

As we grew up, SRK grew with us. In that period of the heady early 1990s, when on our TVs, in our cars, in our houses, and in our pockets, we thought we would live like the rest of the "developed" world did, SRK spoke to us in ways that no one had before. He was not the angry young man like Bachchan, or a pointedly earnest one like Aamir, nor the lover boy who grew muscles and temper like Salman, or the whatever-works star Akshay Kumar. He was the flawed, reachable hero, who spent film after film trying to accomplish largely the same things — mostly women. He often didn't get them, he made small compromises to get what he wanted, he didn't seem particularly bothered about it, he constantly laughed at himself, and his women were mostly their own person.

He was what most of us were in our own lives, without the charm, the dim-

The Baadshah and I;  
the father and us all

As parents, we know as well as SRK that there are no fingers to point, no stones to be cast. Any one of ours can be the next Aryan, without the searing spotlight

ples, the hair that kissed the forehead — strugglers, trying to find our own paths, navigating love, discovering the map change every day as technology kept increasing its footprint, and learning to live with compromises.

SRK endeared us even more when he married his college sweetheart, moved from Delhi to Mumbai, had two kids, and now was a family, like we were. The fact that he still soared, and soared — the Badshah of the country, then its snooty extension of NRIs — thrilled our hearts, held a promise. He did many, many silly films, but we knew he knew that. And he did some great films, wading into the troubled history of the Northeast (if only for love) in that under-

appreciated *Dil Se...*, turned up in a greying stubble in *Chak De!*, tried to improve the world in *Swades*, wore his faith on his sleeve in *Raees*, and let his hair down in that silly little delight called *Chennai Express*. He still laughed at himself and could make others do so, he remained incredulous about his success, he could express himself as sharply as ever, and he could in his

40s do a cartwheel on the cricket ground, where he was once a sportsperson with promise and which he now owned as part of that ultimate show, IPL.

In recent years though, we had been left in despair. As we aged, as the world that we thought had changed and that we would change more, slid speedily back, SRK seemed caught in a time warp. How long could he keep playing that same old, same young guy. There were new stories to be told, new ones being told, and SRK did not feature in them. Even Bachchan seemed to have left SRK — the man with his finger on the *zeitgeist* — behind.

It's at this juncture that SRK has crossed paths with ours again with the arrest of his son Aryan on drug charges. The star who has always spoken of his children as his world is just a parent right now. And, as parents ourselves, trying to steer a new generation in a world that is again changing, we know as well as SRK that there are no easy answers, no fingers to point, no stones to be cast. We are all as fallible as the next person in a system rigged to trip you, to hit you at your lowest, to catch you at your littlest. Any one of ours can be the next Aryan, without the searing spotlight.

And, if it is any consolation, SRK, you are that again — one of ours.

National Editor Shalini Langer curates the 'She Said' column

history  
HEADLINE

DILIP TIRKEY



MY INTRODUCTION to Jaipal Singh Munda sir was via a book.

I was very young and still learning to play the sport when a hockey writer published a list of all the players who had captained India at the Olympic Games. Jaipal sir's name was on top of the pile. I did not immediately realise how big a deal it was to be a team's captain. It was only later, when I started playing seriously, that I understood the respect and honour associated with the role.

But to say that Jaipal sir was the flag-bearer of tribal hockey would be too simplistic. Indeed, he was the first Adivasi player to represent India. He captained the team

## 'Jaipal sir' paved way — on hockey field, off it

that won India's first hockey gold, at the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam. In that sense, he opened the door for a lot of us from the tribal belt. However, he left behind a great legacy beyond the hockey field as well.

Hence, the Jharkhand government's decision to award six tribal students a scholarship in his name, sending them to the United Kingdom for higher education, is a fitting tribute to a great man.

These are good times for Indian hockey. In Odisha, under Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, we are working hard to bring back the golden days by providing the best of facilities to the players and hosting major international tournaments, including the World Cup, in tribal areas like Rourkela. At the same time, it is important to make sure we do not forget the contributions made by heroes from past generations.

The decision to help youngsters from the tribal belt attain education from reputed universities would have made Jaipal sir very proud, given the kind of importance he gave to education. At a very early age, the principal of his school in Ranchi took him under his wings and sent Jaipal sir to Oxford University for higher education.

Jaipal sir played hockey for the Oxford University team and his career flourished. He played as a deep defender and was known to have been very good — a clean tackler, calm-headed, with an unparalleled ability to read the game and with powerful hits. These are some of the qualities that define players from the tribal belt even today — from the legendary Michael Kindo to

players like Birendra Lakra, Amit Rohidas and Deep Grace Ekka, who were part of the men's and women's hockey teams at the

Tokyo Olympics recently.

Jaipal sir made a significant contribution off the field as well. After he returned to India in 1937, he championed the cause of the tribals and worked tirelessly for their empowerment. He joined politics, formed the Adivasi Mahasabha in 1938 and used it as a platform to demand the creation of a separate Jharkhand state. Then, as a representative of the tribal community at the Constituent Assembly, which was responsible for drafting the Indian Constitution, he made sure the voice of his people were heard.

For these reasons, we call him Marang Gomke, roughly translated as 'great leader', around these parts. In and around Chota Nagpur and the Adivasi belt, we remember him fondly even today for being a great player, a highly-rated intellectual

and a visionary leader.

On the hockey field, there was a huge void after Jaipal sir stopped playing. For almost four decades, we had little-to-no representation at the national level. It's a mystery to me why there was such a long gap, but the long drought ended when Michael Kindo, who went on to play in three World Cups (1971, 1973 and 1975), the 1972 Munich Olympics and the 1974 Tehran Asian Games, was selected for India. For my generation, which saw him live, Michael remains a big inspiration as well.

But sometimes, you wonder if any of us would have made it this far had Jaipal sir not taken the first step.

The author is former captain of the Indian hockey team



## 8 THE WORLD

## TOP OF THE WORLD



Abolhassan Banisadr

## IRAN

## Ex-president Bani-Sadr dies in Paris

ABOLHASSAN BANISADR, Iran's first president after the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution who fled Tehran after being impeached for challenging the growing power of clerics as the nation became a theocracy, died Saturday. He was 88. Among a sea of black-robed Shia clerics, Banisadr stood out for his suits and a background so French that it was in philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre that he confided his belief he'd be Iran's first president some 15 years before it happened. Banisadr would never consolidate his grip on the government he led as events beyond his control added to the tumult after the revolution. True power was wielded by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, whom Banisadr worked with in exile in France and followed back to Tehran amid the revolution. **AP**

## CHINA

## Man held after criticising film sponsored by govt

LUO CHANGPING built a reputation as a muckraking journalist in China, until he was forced out of the industry in 2014. Now a businessman, he has run afoul of the authorities again. The police detained Luo, 40, on Thursday, two days after he posted commentary on social media questioning China's role in the Korean War, the subject of a new film, *The Battle at Lake Changjin*. The film, sponsored by the government, depicts an against-all-odds American defeat in a battle. Luo's crime was to question the legal justification of China's intervention when North Korea's troops were on the verge of defeat after invading the South. **NYT**

## RUSSIA

## Alcohol poisoning leaves 26 dead

RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES said on Saturday that 26 people had died from alcohol poisoning this week after consuming locally-produced spirits in the Orenburg region bordering Kazakhstan. Another 28 people are suffering alcohol poisoning symptoms, officials said. The regional branch of the Investigative Committee of Russia has opened a probe to determine whether alcohol products sold in the region, some 1,500 km southeast of Moscow, meet safety standards. **REUTERS**

## US: WHO-approved Covid vaccines will be accepted for international visitors

DAVID SHEPARDSON  
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 9

THE UNITED States will accept the use by international visitors of Covid-19 vaccines authorised by US regulators or the World Health Organisation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said late on Friday.

On Sept. 20, the White House announced the United States in November would lift travel restrictions on air travellers from 33 countries including China, India, Brazil and most of Europe who are fully vaccinated against Covid-19. It did not specify then which vaccines would be accepted.

A CDC spokeswoman told Reuters Friday, "Six vaccines that are FDA authorised/approved or listed for emergency use by WHO will meet the criteria for travel to the US."

Late on Friday, the CDC said that "earlier this week, to help them prepare their systems we informed airlines" of the vaccines that would be accepted and added "CDC will release additional guidance and information as the travel requirements are finalised".

Airlines for America, a trade group representing American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines and others, said it was "pleased by the CDC's decision to approve a list of authorised vaccinations for travellers entering the US. We look forward to working with the administration to implement this new global vaccine and testing framework by early November 2021."

Some countries had pressed the Biden administration to accept WHO-approved vaccines,

**The US will admit fully vaccinated air travellers from the 26 so-called Schengen countries in Europe as well as Britain, Ireland, China, India, South Africa, Iran and Brazil**

since the US Food and Drug Administration authorised vaccines are not widely used in all countries.

The US will admit fully vaccinated air travellers from the 26 so-called Schengen countries in Europe as well as Britain, Ireland, China, India, South Africa, Iran and Brazil. The unprecedented US restrictions have barred most non-US citizens who were in those countries within the past 14 days.

The new Covid-19 vaccine requirements will now apply to nearly all foreign nationals flying to the United States — including those not subject to the prior restrictions.

The CDC must still finalise and publish new contract tracing rules for international visitors, which it sent to the White House for review on Sept. 15.

The CDC must also detail rules for exceptions, which include children not yet eligible for shots, as well as for visitors from countries where vaccines are not widely available. The administration must also decide whether to admit visitors part of Covid-19 clinical trials or have recently contracted Covid-19 and are not yet eligible for vaccination. **REUTERS**

Taliban fighters sit on a ride at an amusement park at Kabul's Qargha reservoir, on Friday. *Reuters*

## US, Taliban hold 1st talks since Afghan withdrawal

Taliban say won't work with US to contain Islamic State

KATHY GANNON & ELLEN KNICKMEYER  
ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 9

SENIOR TALIBAN officials and US representatives are to hold talks Saturday and Sunday about containing extremist groups in Afghanistan and easing the evacuation of foreign citizens and Afghans from the country, officials from both sides said.

It's the first such meeting since US forces withdrew from Afghanistan in late August, ending a 20-year military presence there, and the Taliban's rise to power in the nation. The talks are to take place in Doha, the capital of the Persian Gulf state of Qatar.

Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen, who is based in Doha, told The Associated Press on Saturday that the talks will also revisit the peace agreement the Taliban signed with Washington in 2020. The agreement had paved the way for the final US withdrawal.

EXPLAINED  
Recognition still remains far off

THE US has made it clear that the talks with the Taliban will not be a precursor for the recognition of the group's government in Afghanistan. Instead, the talks are expected to focus on rising incidents of terrorism in the country, including by an increasingly active IS-affiliate, as well as on the humanitarian crisis facing the Afghan people since the Taliban takeover. The talks will also address the issue of foreign nationals and Afghans who still want to leave the country.

"Yes there is a meeting... about bilateral relations and implementation of the Doha agreement," said Shaheen. "It covers various topics."

## POLAND

## CHOPIN PORTRAIT FROM FLEA MARKET IS FROM 1800S

A peeling portrait of Frederic Chopin purchased at a flea market in Poland hung modestly in a private house for almost three decades before an expert dated the painting to the 19th century, when the Polish piano composer lived. Now restored and in a gilded frame, the small painting resides in a bank vault somewhere in eastern Poland while its owners negotiate their next steps, including a public exhibit.

## China's Xi vows 'reunification' with Taiwan, but holds off threatening force

CARLOS GARCIA & YEW LUN TIAN  
BEIJING, OCTOBER 9

CHINESE PRESIDENT Xi Jinping vowed on Saturday to realise peaceful "reunification" with Taiwan, though did not directly mention the use of force after a week of tensions with the Chinese-claimed island that sparked international concern.

Taiwan responded shortly after by calling on Beijing to abandon its coercion, reiterating that only Taiwan's people could decide their future.

Democratically ruled Taiwan has come under increased military and political pressure from Beijing to accept its sovereignty, but Taipei has pledged to defend their freedom.

Speaking at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Xi said the Chinese people have a "glorious tradition" of opposing separatism.

"Taiwan independence separatism is the biggest obstacle to achieving the reunification of the motherland, and the most serious hidden danger to national rejuvenation," he said on the anniversary of the revolution that overthrew the last imperial dynasty in 1911.

Peaceful "reunification" best meets the overall interests of the Taiwanese people, but China will protect its sovereignty and unity, he added.

"No one should underestimate the Chinese people's staunch determination, firm will, and strong ability to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity," Xi said. "The historical task of the complete reunification of the motherland must be fulfilled, and will definitely be fulfilled."



**No one should underestimate the Chinese people's staunch determination... to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The historical task of the complete reunification of the motherland must be fulfilled, and will definitely be fulfilled.**

XI JINPING, CHINA'S PRESIDENT

He struck a slightly softer than in July, his last major speech mentioning Taiwan, in which he vowed to "smash" any attempts at formal independence. In 2019, he directly threatened to use force to bring the island under Beijing's control.

Still, the speech was poorly received in Taiwan.

The presidential office said they were a sovereign independent country, not part of the People's Republic of China, and had clearly rejected China's offer of "one country, two systems" to rule the island. "The nation's future rests in the hands of Taiwan's people," the office said.

In a separate statement, Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council called on Beijing to "abandon its provocative steps of intrusion, harassment and destruction" and return to talks. **REUTERS**

## Biden wants to address delays in Green Card processing: White House

LALIT K JHA  
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 9

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden wants to address the inordinate delays in the processing system of the Green Card, the White House has said, a move that will benefit many Indians working in America on the H-1B visa.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently in the US.

Indian IT professionals, most of whom are highly skilled and come to the US mainly on the H-1B work visas, are the worst sufferers of the current immigration system which imposes a seven per cent per country quota on allotment of the coveted Green Card or permanent legal residency.

"The president absolutely wants to address the delays in the Green Card processing system as well," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference on Friday.

She was responding to a question on the wastage of some 80,000 unused employment-based Green Card numbers, which



US President Joe Biden

is officially lled Legal Permanent Residency on October 1, as the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is unable to allocate them to several million people waiting in line for a Green Card.

The inordinate delay in the Green Card process of hundreds and thousands of talented Indian technology professionals, at times running into several decades, is one of the major issues of concern among the Indian-Americans and their dependent children living here.

The H-1B visa, the most sought after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. **PTI**

## Bangladesh signs UN deal to help refugees on island

RUMA PAUL  
DHAKA, OCTOBER 9

UN OFFICIALS signed a deal with Bangladesh on Saturday to help provide basic services to thousands of Rohingya Muslim refugees who have been moved to camps on a remote island in the Bay of Bengal.

The Bangladeshi government has moved nearly 19,000 Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char island from border camps despite protests by some refugees and opposition from rights groups, who say the low-lying island is vulnerable to flooding and storms.

Authorities in the densely

Rohingya refugees being taken to Bangladesh's Bhasan Char island last Dec. *Reuters*

populated South Asian country eventually want the island to accommodate about 10% of the 1 million Rohingya refugees who currently live in ramshackle bor-

der camps after fleeing violence in neighbouring Myanmar.

UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, said the agreement signed on Saturday allowed for close co-operation with the government on providing services for the island's growing refugee population.

"These cover key areas of protection, education, skills-training, livelihoods and health, which will help support the refugees to lead decent lives on the island and better prepare them for sustainable return to Myanmar in the future," a UN-HCR statement said.

About 81,000 Rohingya should be living on the island

within three months, Mohammad Mohsin, a senior official at the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, told reporters after singing the accord.

Refugees in Bhasan Char, some of whom have protested against living conditions on the island, welcomed UNHCR's involvement.

"Now we'll get enough of the assistance that we need," Mohammed Arman, a Rohingya refugee said.

Residents of the island's camps said they face movement restrictions, no opportunities to earn a livelihood and inadequate health-care and education. **REUTERS**

## US appeals court lets Texas resume ban on abortions

PAUL J. WEBER  
AUSTIN, OCTOBER 9

A FEDERAL appeals court Friday night quickly allowed Texas to resume banning most abortions, just one day after clinics began racing to serve patients again for the first time since early September.

A one-page order by the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals reinstated the nation's strictest abortion law, which bans abortions once cardiac activity is detected, usually around six weeks. It makes no exceptions in cases of rape or incest.

"Patients are being thrown back into a state of chaos and fear,"

At a women's march in Austin, Texas, last week. *AP*

said Nancy Northup, president of the Centre for Reproductive Rights, which represents several Texas clinics that had briefly resumed normal abortion services.

She called on the US Supreme Court to "step in and stop this madness."

Clinics had braced for the New Orleans-based appeals court to act fast after US District Judge Robert Pitman, an appointee of President Barack Obama, on Wednesday suspended the Texas law that he called an "offensive deprivation" of the constitutional right to an abortion. Knowing that order might not stand long, a handful of Texas clinics immediately started performing abortions again beyond six weeks, and booked new appointments for this weekend.

But barely 48 hours passed before the appeals court ac-

cepted Texas' request to set aside Pitman's ruling — at least for now — pending further arguments. It gave the Biden administration, which had brought the lawsuit, until Tuesday to respond.

"Great news tonight," Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton tweeted. "I will fight federal overreach at every turn."

Texas had roughly two dozen abortion clinics before the law took effect Sept. 1. During the brief period the law was on hold, many Texas physicians remained unwilling to perform abortions, fearful that doing so could still leave them in legal jeopardy. **AP**

## RAPPLER, CO-FOUNDED BY NOBEL LAUREATE MARIA RESSA, DARES TO CRITICISE DUTERTE. HE MAY YET SEE IT SHUT SOWN

## Philippines' Nobel Prize newsroom overjoyed but under siege

SUI-LEE WEE  
OCTOBER 9

THE YOUNG editors and reporters of the Philippine news site Rappler were already busy on Friday. It was the last day candidates could file to run in next year's elections, and the journalists were watching to see who would try to replace Rodrigo Duterte, the president who for years has attacked Rappler and threatened its staff members.

Then Maria Ressa, one of the news outlet's founders, heard she and a Russian journalist, Dmitri A Muratov, had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their "courageous fight for freedom of expres-

sion." She immediately texted her co-founders: "I won." Word got out, and a slew of "OMGs" flooded the company's Slack channel.

For several hours, the staff said, they were energised by Ressa's award. But they know tough times lie ahead. The news website could still be shut down. There are seven active court cases pending against Ressa and Rappler. The site's journalists face immense pressure from online trolls, who have been emboldened by Duterte's suggestion that reporters should be treated as "spies" who are "not exempted from assassination."

"We need to fight and soldier on," said Gemma Mendoza, who leads Rappler's efforts to address

Rappler staff in their office in Manila in 2018. *NYT*

disinformation in digital media. "You feel when you're in this situation, that it is bigger than yourself. And having that feeling fuels you and you keep going."

At stake is the future of one

of the few independent journalistic institutions in the Philippines. With coverage about abuses by the police in Duterte's war on drugs and stories about corrupt deals involv-

ing local businessmen, Rappler has come to symbolise fearless journalism in a region where the press is consistently hobbled.

Reporters for Rappler acknowledge these are trying times. Access is an issue because of Duterte's attacks on them. The psychological burden of being trolled, especially in a newsroom where the median age is only 23, is draining.

They know all too well that defying Duterte comes at a high price. In January 2018, the Philippines' Securities and Exchange Commission announced that it would revoke Rappler's operating licence, saying the site had violated laws on foreign ownership. The action was widely seen by rights ac-

tivists and other journalists as retaliation for Rappler's coverage of Duterte's brutal drug war.

During a staff meeting shortly after, Ressa and her co-founders, Lilibeth Frondoso, Glenda Gloria and Chay Hoflana, stressed that the company was not going to be intimidated. Together, the founders are referred to in the newsroom as "manangs" — a Filipino term of endearment for an older sister.

Founded in 2012, the news organisation exposed how some of the people killed by the police had not fought back, as the authorities had said, but instead were summarily executed.

Duterte responded by sin-

gling out Rappler in his 2017 State of the Nation address, saying it was "fully owned by Americans".

In February 2019, the authorities arrested Ressa in a libel case involving an article that was published four months before the law they invoked was enacted. In June 2020, Ressa was convicted of that charge, which she is appealing.

The onslaught has made Ressa more determined than ever. "When you come under attack, all of the friction of a news organisation, they die away, especially with the mission of journalism, if you know what you're supposed to do," she said. "I think that's been incredibly empowering and it gives us energy." **NYT**

He struck a slightly softer than in July, his last major speech mentioning Taiwan, in which he vowed to "smash" any attempts at formal independence. In 2019, he directly threatened to use force to bring the island under Beijing's control.

Still, the speech was poorly received in Taiwan.

The presidential office said they were a sovereign independent country, not part of the People's Republic of China, and had clearly rejected China's offer of "one country, two systems" to rule the island. "The nation's future rests in the hands of Taiwan's people," the office said.

In a separate statement, Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council called on Beijing to "abandon its provocative steps of intrusion, harassment and destruction" and return to talks. **REUTERS**



Lucknow





# 9 ECONOMY

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR TATA GROUP POST TAKEOVER

# Sans govt support, high costs & staff management of Air India to test Tata

**PRANAV MUKUL & SANDEEP SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

FOR THE Tata Group, which successfully runs businesses ranging from retail and software to steel and automobiles, extending its track record to Air India as well may take more than just financial investment into the loss-making airline. While experts analysing Tata Group's acquisition of 100 per cent of Air India from the government indicate the need for an equity infusion of over \$1 billion in the airline over the next few years, they also underscore a call to transform the airline's culture.

On Friday, the government announced that the Tata Group was the highest bidder in the airline's disinvestment process, having placed a bid of Rs 18,000 crore, of which Rs 2,700 crore will be paid to the Centre in cash and the remaining will be absorbed as debt from the airline.

Even as the airline comes with a set of valuable assets including prime slots, landing rights and a huge fleet, it also brings with itself a set of pitfalls that the Tata Group may look to address. These include higher than industry standard aircraft lease rentals, burden-

some maintenance contracts, and far better than industry average of crew salaries.

"Historically, at least since the merger of Air India and Indian Airlines, there has been a culture within the airline that the government will continue to fund its losses. So there was hardly ever a focus on running an efficient airline. Compare this with other state-funded carriers like Emirates or Qatar Airways, where optimal utilisation of resources has resulted in airlines that are among the best in the world. Things changed in the last four to five years, but there's still a long way to go," a retired Air India official told *The Sunday Express*.

One of the most significant points to be resolved over the years is the size of Air India's payroll when compared to its fleet.

In 2012, the airline had an employee per aircraft ratio of 221 with 27,000 employees over 122 aircraft in its fleet. This includes the numbers for its low-cost arm Air India Express.

As per data furnished by the government on Friday, Air India and Air India Express had 13,500 employees and a fleet of 141 aircraft, and the resultant employee-per-aircraft ratio has fallen by more than half to 95.

### PAYROLL SIZE TO BE A MAJOR POINT

■ One of the most significant points to be resolved over the years is the size of Air India's payroll when compared to its fleet. In 2012, the airline had an employee per aircraft ratio of 221 with 27,000 employees over 122 aircraft in its fleet. This includes the numbers for its low-cost arm Air India Express

"What Air India really suffers from is too frequent changes in the chief executives, when compared with private airlines. When you don't have a leadership with a vision and a sense of commitment, you naturally lose out, and this results in the morale of the company suffering. In the service industry, morale is very important," former Air India executive director Jitender Bhargava said, adding that rationalisation of manpower is imminent after the takeover.

The government has mandated that the Tata Group retain the airline's employees for a period of one year from the close of transaction and any retrenchment after that be done by the way of a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS). This will be one of the added burdens on the Tata Group, particularly given the unionised nature of Air India's workforce.

In addition to dealing with manpower, experts have pointed out the need for qualitative changes in the airline — something that was effectively put on the back burner by the Central government once it made up its mind to sell the airline.

This includes upgrades to the airline's fleet to derive higher fuel savings, changes to aircraft interiors, particularly on Air India's 49 wide-bodied planes.

"Tata is a global brand and I have a feeling that the Air India brand will get revived. Half the battle has been won with the financial re-engineering and it itself could lead to savings on interest payments of around Rs 4,500 crore in a year. Tatas could bring in operational efficiency synergy by combining the back-end operations of their existing airlines and also in buying and leasing of airplanes. Not only can they use the group's strength on automation, engineering, technology for im-

proving Air India, the misuse and leakages will also reduce," said Rakesh Shah, chairman and CEO, Edelweiss Group.

The CEO of a leading mutual fund also said that while Tata's bid to acquire Air India is a big emotional decision, the fact that they had entered the aviation business through Vistara, Air India provides them the best option to scale and thus it is a big opportunity for both Air India and the Tata Group.

"While there are challenges to the deal and lot of money will have to be infused, only Tata Group could revive it and in that sense it is good for Air India," said the mutual fund CEO.

He further pointed that sale of Air India is a big burden off the government's expenditure list. "A timely sale of Air India (when it had a higher market share and lesser debt) could have provided government with a better realisation and also saved money over the years that could have been diverted for better use. While the government has infused Rs 1.1 lakh crore in Air India over the last 10-11 years, it also has a huge opportunity cost. If the sale could have concluded 10 years back, this money could have been utilised in education and healthcare infrastructure."

## 'Job market up 57% in Sept ahead of festive season'

The Indian job market continued its record-breaking run for the third straight month, clocking 57% on-year growth in September, as per a Naukri JobSpeak report



**MOST SECTORS WITNESSED SIGNIFICANT ANNUAL GROWTH** year-on-year, led by information technology (138%)

**RECENT WAVE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION** among organisations continues to generate demand for tech professionals

*Survey details: The Naukri JobSpeak index calculates and records hiring activity based on job listings on Naukri.com month-wise. Its objective is to measure hiring activity in various industries, cities, and experience levels*

**SECTORS LIKE HOSPITALITY (82%) AND RETAIL (+70%),** which were most hit by the pandemic, too saw significant y-o-y growth in September with several hotels and physical store outlets across the country gradually reopening

**METROS RECORDED 88% ANNUAL GROWTH** in September, surpassing Tier 2 cities that grew by 30%

**MONTH-ON-MONTH** job postings rose 3% compared with 2,673 during August

**HIRING ACTIVITY** also grew last month in education (53%), banking/financial services (43%) and telecom/ISP (+37%) sectors against September 2020

Source: Naukri.com/PTI

## FB faces second outage in a week

**REUTERS**  
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 9

FACEBOOK INC apologized to users for a two-hour disruption to its services on Friday and blamed another faulty configuration change for its second global outage this week. The company confirmed its social media platform, Instagram, Messenger and Workplace were hit by the latest outage.

"Sincere apologies to anyone who wasn't able to access our

products in the last couple of hours," the company said. "We fixed the issue, and everything should be back to normal now." During the latest outage, some users were unable to load their Instagram feeds, while others were not able to send messages on Facebook Messenger.

People swiftly took to Twitter to share memes and jokes about the second service disruption this week. "Looks like Facebook went to a 3-day work week. Monday and Friday shutdowns?" a Twitter

user said. Instagram thanked users for their patience and "for all the memes this week".

On Monday, Facebook blamed a "faulty configuration change" for a nearly six-hour outage that prevented the company's 3.5 billion users from accessing its social media and messaging services such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Messenger. Monday's outage was the largest that web monitoring group Downdetector had ever seen and blocked access to the apps for billions of users.

### CRUDE WATCH

## OIL POSTS 4% WEEKLY RISE

*New York:* Oil rose on Friday, gaining about 4% on the week as a global energy crunch boosted US prices to their highest in about seven years. On Friday, Brent rose 44 cents, or 0.5%, over the previous day to hit \$82.39, while WTI crude rose \$1.05, or 1.3%, to \$79.35. **REUTERS**

## 'IN PUBLIC INTEREST', WHERE THERE IS REQUIREMENT: GUIDELINES

# Amid coal supply shortfall, Ministry clears generators to sell unrequisitioned power

**KARUNJIT SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

THE CENTRE has notified guidelines allowing thermal power plants with idle capacity to sell unrequisitioned power in the spot market.

The country's thermal power plants are currently facing a severe coal shortage, with a majority of the thermal stations having an average of four days of coal stock against a normative requirement to hold 15-30 days of coal stock based on the distance of the plant from the source of coal.

This also comes in the wake of several states, including Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat raising concerns about possible blackouts.

"Where the procurer decides not to schedule power for any period, either full or part capacity, from the generating station with which he has signed the PPA (power purchase agreement)... the generator shall be free to sell the un-requisitioned power... in the power exchange," the government noted in guidelines released on Friday.

Distribution companies have in many cases not scheduled power under certain legacy PPAs, as power sourced under these PPAs has become unviable. The norms free them up to sell on exchanges.

The Centre noted that any unrequisitioned power needs to be despatched "in public interest" where there is a requirement in the grid by other users

### COAL STOCK FALLS TO AVERAGE OF FOUR DAYS

■ The Centre has notified guidelines allowing thermal power plants with idle capacity to sell unrequisitioned power in the spot market

■ It comes in the wake of states such as Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat raising concerns about possible blackouts

■ The country's thermal power plants are currently facing a severe coal shortage, with a majority of the thermal stations having an average of four days of coal stock against a normative requirement to hold 15-30 days of coal stock based on the distance of the plant from the source of coal

or consumers.

The key challenge for thermal power plants has been diminishing levels of coal stock as they supply a greater share of India's power demand.

A sharp increase in demand for power as the economy recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic and heavy rains in coal mine areas in September have led to a shortfall of coal supply, which Power Minister RK Singh had said was going to be uncomfortable for up to six months.

Total power demand in India hit 124 billion units this August, up from 106 billion units in August 2019.

Inadequate procurement of coal by thermal plants during April-June too has played a key role in the current coal shortage.

On October 7, 16 thermal power plants with power generation capacity of 16,680 MW (megawatt) had zero days of coal stock, according to official government data. An additional 48 thermal power plants with gen-

eration capacity of 60,795 MW had coal stock only sufficient for up to two days of production.

Coal fired thermal power plants account for 208.8 GW, or 54 per cent, of the country's total 388 GW installed generation capacity, and have seen an increase in their share in the country's power mix to 66.4 per cent from 61.9 per cent in 2019.

The government has noted that increasing coal supply from state-owned Coal India Ltd, the key supplier of coal to thermal power plants, was set to help in a gradual build up of coal stocks in the near future.

A government release said that total dispatches of coal reached 1.5 MT (million tonnes) on October 7, helping reduce the gap between consumption and actual supply.

It said that the Coal Ministry and CIL were "making best efforts" to increase dispatches to 16 MT in the next three days and reach 1.7 MT of dispatches per day thereafter.

## Srei group cos enter moratorium as NCLT admits insolvency pleas

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

NEARLY A week after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) superseded the boards of Srei Infra and Srei Equipment Finance, the Kolkata bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Friday admitted the two insolvency pleas moved by the banking regulator against the two companies.

A two-member bench of the NCLT also appointed Rajneesh Sharma the administrator to run the companies, while admitting two separate petitions filed by RBI for initiation of corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) against the two companies.

The insolvency tribunal imposed a moratorium on both the companies and directed its officials to provide all the documents to the administrator during the interim functioning.

"The Petition bearing filed by the Reserve Bank of India, the Appropriate Regulator, under section 227 of the Code read with rule 5 of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy (Insolvency and Liquidation Proceedings of Financial Service Providers and Application to Adjudicating Authority) Rules, 2019 for

**A two-member bench of the National Company Law Tribunal appointed Rajneesh Sharma as administrator to run Srei Infra and Srei Equipment Finance**

initiating Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process against Srei Equipment Finance Ltd, is hereby admitted," the NCLT order said.

It also observed that the RBI, through its notification dated October 4, 2021, superseded the boards of both the companies. "The RBI has proposed the name of Rajneesh Sharma as the Administrator of the Corporate Debtor. He has also filed his written consent to act as such Administrator, which has been placed on record..." it added.

Srei Infra and Srei Equipment Finance together owe more than Rs 30,000 crore to banks and financial institutions. On October 4, the RBI superseded the boards of the two firms after governance concerns were raised and the companies defaulted in meeting their payment obligations.

## Diesel crosses ₹100 per litre in Mumbai as auto fuel prices rise again

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

MUMBAI ON Saturday became the first metro city in the country to see diesel prices cross the Rs 100 per litre mark after fuel prices were hiked again.

Petrol price was hiked by 30 paise per litre and diesel by 35 paise a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. The fifth straight day of price hike pushed fuel rates to a new record high.

In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 100.29 a litre; while in Delhi, it costs Rs 92.47. The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 103.84 a litre and Rs 109.83 per litre in Mumbai, the notification showed. Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes.

Shedding the modest price change policy, state-owned fuel retailers have since Wednesday started passing on the larger incidence of cost to consumers. For four days in a row, the price of petrol has been hiked by 30 paise a litre and diesel by 35 paise, the biggest rally in rates.

## Georgieva's future unclear post marathon IMF meeting



IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva *Reuters file*

*Washington:* The International Monetary Fund's executive board ended a five-hour meeting about the future of Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva without a decision on Friday, saying it would seek more information about claims she pressured World Bank staff to alter data to benefit China in her previous role. **REUTERS**

## SECTOR WATCH FOREIGN EXCHANGE

# Over \$1-billion slide in currency assets pulls down reserves

AT \$637.4 BILLION		
	Sept 24 2021	Oct 1 2021
Foreign currency assets	576,731	575,451
Gold	37,430	37,558
SDRs	19,379	19,240
Reserve tranche position	5,106	5,228
Total	638,646	637,477

*in million US dollars; source: Reserve Bank of India/Reuters*

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

THE FOREX reserves slid by \$1.169 billion to reach \$637.477 billion during the week ended October 1, led by a fall in currency assets. In the week ended September 24, the foreign exchange — or forex — reserves had decreased by \$997 million to \$638.646 billion.

During the reporting week ended October 1, the fall in the forex kitty corresponded to a fall in the foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves. FCAs declined by \$1.28 billion to \$575.451 billion, according to weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released

Friday. Gold reserves were up by \$128 million to \$37.558 billion in the reporting week, the data showed. The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) fell by \$138 million to \$19.24 billion. The nation's reserve position with the IMF rose by \$122 million to \$5.228 billion.

Falling forex reserves may cause issues for the government and the RBI in managing the nation's external and internal financial issues.

Higher reserves are a big cushion in the event of any crisis on the economic front and enough to cover the import bill. Higher reserves also help the rupee strengthen against the dollar. **WITHPTI**

## BRIEFLY Evergrande

*Beijing:* Six executives of heavily indebted China Evergrande Group have returned funds from early redemptions of the company's investment products, the property group said on Saturday.

### China, US talks

*Beijing:* China said Saturday it pressed the United States to eliminate tariffs in talks between the countries' top trade officials that Washington saw as a test of bilateral engagement between the two major economies. **REUTERS**

### Grundfos project

*New Delhi:* Grundfos unveiled an innovative drinking water and dispensing solution in Delhi, consisting of intelligent pumps. **ENS**

## Exports on track for FY22, aim \$450-500 bn next year: Goyal

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

THE NATION'S exports are growing at a healthy rate and exporters can now aim for outbound shipments worth \$450-500 billion in the upcoming financial year, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

In April-September this fiscal, exports touched \$197 billion, he added. Goyal said that with 48 per cent of the targeted volumes having been achieved, exports are on the right track to meet this year's target of \$400 billion.

"Our exporters have made all of us Indians proud today... we can aim to scale \$450-500 billion exports next year," Goyal said, while chairing the mid-term review of exports with different export promotion councils.

He also said that India is negotiating free trade agreements



Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal at the mid-term review of exports, Saturday. *via Twitter @PiyushGoyal*

(FTAs) with various countries and blocs, including the United Kingdom, Oman, Australia, Canada, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, the European Union, and the Southern African Customs Union comprising Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland. Goyal said engineering goods

EXPLAINED

Free trade pacts to be in focus

WITH EXPORTS for the ongoing fiscal having achieved nearly half its target, the focus for the government now may be negotiating free trade agreements (FTAs) with several nations as well as trade blocs.

have much more potential and textile exports should aim for \$100 billion.

On the issue of high global prices of polymers and uniform application of environment laws, he assured that the Commerce and Industry Ministry will take up the issue with the Environment Ministry. **WITHPTI**

## Festive fireworks unlikely for auto sector amid chip shortage

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

CONSUMERS WHO generally wait for Diwali to purchase new vehicles at attractive discounts and other freebies may be in for disappointment this year.

With shortage of semiconductors, almost all major passenger vehicle manufacturers have resorted to production cuts, which has led to long waiting for popular models. As a result, manufacturers and dealers are in no position to offer attractive discounts this Diwali. Sales around Diwali, generally referred to as festival season sales, are big for automakers as around 30 per cent of their annual sales happen around this period.

However, supply side constraints are going to play spoilsport now. Auto dealers had last month stated that retail sales during the festival season are going to

**Around 30% of automakers' annual sales happen around Diwali. However, supply side constraints are going to play spoilsport now**

be lacklustre because of chip shortage, which has slowed down the supply of popular models. They had said the inventory of variants that are in demand, such as Baleno, Ertiga, Brezza, Creta, etc, is continuing to dip. In fact, the inventory is the lowest this time as against other years. Normally, dealers stock huge inventories of more than a month in the run-up to the festival months.

Dealers said, "With manufacturers drastically cutting down productions due to unavailability

of semiconductors and ABS chips, shortage of containers and high metal prices, customers for the first time may not get a vehicle of their choice and lucrative schemes during this festive season."

Manufacturers and dealers said whatever little discounts will be on offer would be on some entry-level models, where the offers are anyway not very attractive since the prices are comparatively low. Basic entry-level models do not have many electronic components so chip shortage has not affected their output in a major way.

The wholesale despatches of passenger vehicles by Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai Motor and Mahindra and Mahindra were severely hit in September due to the shortage of semiconductors.

The month of August also saw similar shortages and indications are that trend of subdued sales will continue, at least till December. **FE**



# THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

# eye



## SPOTLIGHT

### Beyond Borders

Kim Jiseok Award-nominated director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki on making *No Land's Man* and the Bangladeshi New Wave



## BOOKS

- Review of Martyn Rix's *Indian Botanical Art: An Illustrated History*
- Review of Romila Thapar's *Gazing Eastwards*
- Review of Harish Damodaran's *Broke to Breakthrough*

Benita Fernando

WORKING FROM home since March 2020, transactional lawyer Debarita Roy (name changed), 26, found a new work routine. In the time spent waiting for a reply from a colleague or a client on an email, Roy can make a batch of cookies if she wants to. "I think I am living my best life now," she says. Before the pandemic hit about 20 months ago, she would spend three hours commuting back and forth from her home in Delhi to her workplace, a corporate law firm in Gurugram. It meant taking a Metro, or a cab when she could afford it, only to end up arguing with drivers. Worse, she developed spondylosis and gut issues due to her workplace's high-pressure environment. Bottomless cups of aerated drinks and coffee kept her running through the day.

Now, instead of caffeine shots, she naps. Her work hours are similar to what they used to be — video conferencing with Indian and international clients was the norm even back then, with an irregular sleep schedule in sync with her meetings — but Roy feels she has greater control over how her day is spent. "I can feel the physiological changes to my body working from home. I feel more relaxed now," she says.

Roy's workplace hasn't established a definitive policy yet for employees to return to office, but she is unlikely to go back to how things used to be. She is among the many who have rethought their work lifestyles in the year gone by. It may be hard to accept, but in a twisted way, a deadly pandemic has provided a huge opportunity for restructuring workplaces. With more offices readying themselves to usher back employees, there is a growing need to accommodate these new expectations. Companies and start-ups are experimenting with shorter workweeks for reduced salaries, and hybrid work models — a mix of work-from-home and work-from-office — are gaining traction.

According to a report from McKinsey Global Institute published in February, the greatest disruptions to work before COVID-19 involved new technologies and growing trade. Now, it is the physical dimension of work. Among eight countries that were studied, including India, the report observed that the most obvious impact of the pandemic on the labour force is the dramatic increase in employees working remotely, a trend that may continue less intensely than at the pandemic's peak. Early on this year, some companies planned to shift to flexible workspaces and bring fewer workers into offices, having seen the positive experiences of remote work during the pandemic.

It has most certainly been the experience with Nagarro, a global provider of IT services and consulting, which is known to not have a headquarters. Remote working, in the sense that employees frequently communicated with each other across continents without needing to meet in person, had always been the culture at Nagarro but the pandemic allowed them to hire more people without being restricted by geography. They opened or are opening smaller offices in Dehradun, Indore and Chandigarh, for instance — something they couldn't have necessarily executed efficiently pre-pandemic.

Manas Fuloria, co-founder and CEO of Nagarro, says, "In order to go against the reflexive idea that the people we are working with have to be sitting next to us, we tried out all kinds of experiments. Even if some of us were coming into our offices, we began to assign them floors or buildings randomly. Teams were split across buildings." Now, as more staff are permitted into offices according to pandemic guidelines, Nagarro is putting a limit on the number of days they can be in office — twice a week — and managers are forbidden from calling colleagues to the office for meetings. "We believe that the world has changed forever. We will try to provide our colleagues with as much choice as possible in terms of working from home or working from another location," says Fuloria, 49.

What seems to be key to Nagarro's policy for its Indian employees, and others like them, is the emphasis on choice. In several work environments across India, it is routine to experience a partial or absolute loss of control over one's day, what with the demands of managers, the pressure of deadlines and piles of emails. These dictate the terms of the day, and possibly the employee's life, and may eventually erode their sense of agency. By offering flexibility, there



ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

## The Future is Flexible

Remote working, hybrid models and easy hours — with the pandemic transforming the way we work, returning to office will never be the same again

is a chance for employees to feel that certain aspects of the job, if not the profession in its entirety, are of their choosing.

In fact, the pandemic has made companies realise that all you need might be a laptop and a stable Wi-Fi connection. It's a double-edged sword certainly but some could find it beneficial to work out of hill stations or beaches. A sunrise hike or a sunset beach stroll aside of working hours is perfectly manageable, and, perhaps, even invigorating. It is a major attitude shift, especially in India, where employees are expected to "show your face" at the office as a way of establishing their productivity and gaining the employer's trust.



Several surveys published this year point to how the hybrid work model may be the best and possibly the only way forward. The future of work is hybrid, is one conclusion. Bengaluru-based fintech company Slice, for instance, is offering new hires a three-day workweek with 80 per cent salaries at the market rate. It's aimed at increasing work-life balance, according to reports, and the company's founder, Rajan Bajaj, has stated, "A three-day work week allows us to recruit a certain calibre of talent because it's a perk big-tech companies like Google and Amazon don't offer."

This hybrid future is a prospect that might interest many because work-from-home is not always the ideal scenario. Chennai-based Rosalin John, 36, who works in HR consulting with a leading IT company, says, "The pandemic has made things exponentially difficult for parents, especially mothers. Before the pandemic, I juggled school with office, but I never felt the burn

as much as I do now." The upside to working from home was time saved on commuting and more movie nights with her husband and two sons, aged 11 and 6, says John.

The troublesome parts lie in the complete collapse between the professional and the personal. Earlier, she could tell a caller to ring back after 10 am because she was commuting, but that's no longer the case. Her younger son has to be trained in writing from home, and many mothers like her have chosen to take it easy. She also notes that lunchtime is tough because it means feeding young children as well within that hour.

Her employer has been cognizant of these changes, she says. The company advised employees to be patient and accommodating of children who unintentionally feature in their parents' work-video-calls, whether it's because they are in need of a well-deserved snack or a much-needed cuddle. "I see several children come on work calls and I have got to know them more during this pandemic than I did before. Most colleagues are accepting of these changes but we still have some way to go. We need to understand that this is us invading home spaces and not children who are invading work spaces," says John.

The one thing her family tries to do is to have evening tea together, no matter how hectic the day is or what calls need to be attended. Tea is had on the roof terrace — a

privilege, John says. Yet, a coffee at the cafeteria, during the evening break or when she needed to step away from the screen for a bit, is something that she misses sorely. It meant a timeout but now it means washing dishes, fixing a coffee and a variety of hot beverages for the rest of the family. With return to office being pushed to the next quarter at her company, John believes she will welcome a hybrid work format, but only if schools reopen and safety measures are taken for children. In the absence of safe support systems for children, working mothers like John are likely to continue working from home, even if the hybrid model is rolled out.

Much like policies on disabilities and inclusion, it will be imperative for employers to note that cookie-cutter solutions won't fix the unique problems of different groups of people. In India, those who are a part of the informal sector and in blue-collar jobs have been back to the "workplaces" for a while, though. For domestic workers, construction labourers, vegetable vendors, security personnel and others, showing up means everything. In a report on the future of work published by Capgemini Research Institute in December 2020, nearly 70 per cent of organisations believed the productivity gains of remote working are sustainable beyond the pandemic. The report, noted however, that most organisations have announced remote working policies

The workplace will be henceforth a space where colleagues get together to connect, skill-up and relax, over free beers when possible



only for corporate employees. Companies would need to be careful not to create a rift between knowledge workers, who can transition to remote work easily, and the shop floor or factory workers, whose jobs are more tied to organisational premises, the report added. It quoted Sunil Ranjhan, senior vice-president, HR, at automobile company Maruti Suzuki India, who stated, "Currently, the pandemic is on so you could have very differentiated ways of working. But comparisons between blue-collar and white-collar employees are bound to come up. Going forward, I see that could be one of the issues."



McKinsey Global Institute's report also pointed out that some work that technically can be done remotely is best done in person. These include negotiations, critical business decisions, brainstorming sessions, providing sensitive feedback, and onboarding new employees. The same can be said of certain jobs where there is the need to interact face-to-face with people, such as for the staff at Max Foundation, a global health non-profit that helps cancer patients with access to treatments and medicines.

Viji Venkatesh, the region head of Max Foundation in India and South Asia, calls the pandemic "an unwelcome catalyst". While her colleagues have been able to transition to remote working, it wasn't without challenges. Working from home meant sharing desk space with family members or setting up special study chairs — all of which employers need to look into, says Venkatesh, 70. Many of the employees are women, who had to cope with homeschooling, the demands of the family, and perhaps, the belief

that a man's work is more important than a woman's. Many of their cancer patients are also located in places where access to a smartphone is difficult.

Venkatesh was back in office in September last year, long before India had started its vaccine roll-out. This month onward, the staff, now fully vaccinated, will be back in office on a rotational basis. "I don't think we want a new normal. We want an old normal," says Venkatesh, who believes that apart from these pandemic protocols, they hope to work in a manner nearly similar to how things used to be. As much as she loved her apartment and the time she got to spend with her husband, she prefers things to be in "neat, controlled compartments". Some of her determination, she says, is owed to her age. "I've had a great life but this pandemic kind of made me feel there's so much more to be done. And my team is very young. I have this feeling I should lead by example being so much older than them," she says.



Fuloria says that when Nagarro decided to reopen their offices, there was a great divide between how work from home was seen by most people and how managers saw it. In a survey conducted across their India offices, with 5,302 respondents, 95 per cent wanted three days or fewer in office. Managers had a different story, however. "They had concerns about how their workloads had increased or how their days were spent mostly in videoconferences. There were other challenges. How do we train people on culture? How do you get creative ideas if you are not in the same place? Can we get people to stick with the company if it's just a virtual bond?" Fuloria says. It, however, wasn't insurmountable. Nagarro has now flipped the purpose of the office space. Henceforth, the workplace will be a space where colleagues get together to connect, skill-up and relax, over free beers when possible.

The question still remains why it took a pandemic to make employers reassess, or at least re-orient, the purpose of workplaces. Fuloria believes that one reason has been the inability to factor in the great technological leaps made in the last decade. "All through our lives we lived with the assumption of a five-day workweek or an eight-hour workday, but there are no real reasons for them. The availability of inexpensive videoconferencing tools and bandwidth are a critical part of this reorientation," he says.



For several companies, the return to offices will also mean that employees are able to see tangible ways by which the pandemic is addressed, such as special paid leave for recovery from COVID-19, support for long-COVID, and access to therapy as part of their healthcare package. It would mean accepting that for young employees, their first job starts off being remote and that they might have a difficult time transitioning to a five-day week in office. It may also mean understanding that we live in an ableist world, where the needs of several employees are disregarded.

Fiona Thomas (name changed), 26, a media manager who works in the education sector, left Mumbai when the pandemic hit and shifted home to Kerala. The organisation that she works for paid for the employees' vaccinations and is planning to reopen in a controlled manner eventually. But Thomas doubts if she will want to go back to office. Thomas, who manages an immunocompromised health condition — which means no partying, no alcohol, no spicy food — finds that having a support system at home actually helps with her productivity. "Living in Mumbai alone, I was responsible for my own self, which was a lot for someone with my condition," Thomas says. Like nearly everyone in Mumbai, Thomas did a long commute by public transport to work, only to get back home and finish the chores of the day. The education sector didn't really allow her the financial package to hire a domestic worker either. At home, her dietary needs are taken care of without any hitch and she helps her parents around the house. Evenings are spent relaxing in the company of family and friends, all of this while being as productive as she always was. "It is why I find it fundamentally confusing that in the last 19 months, we have been incredibly productive and we have been able to succeed in everything we picked up. So, why report in to office when it's not needed?" she asks.





# DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

## A Day for the Unsung Heroes

A shout-out to healing maggots, gregarious gibbons and clever crows

WE HAVE allocated special days to ourselves — from Mother’s Day to Father’s Day and Valentine’s Day and so on. Now, several animals and the environment, too, have celebratory days, even weeks and months dedicated to them. There’s World Environment Day, Big Butterfly Month, and National Dog Day! But several worthies have been left out. Here’s a list of some contenders who should be celebrated with days and even weeks dedicated to them:

**National Dung Beetle Day:** Now that dung is being regarded as something akin to the food and facials of the gods, the humble dung beetle needs to be celebrated for its place in the patty. Dung beetles process all kinds of dung into rich, fragrant soil and without them we would be living in a fetid, fly-infested environment ripe with viruses which would embarrass even COVID-19.

**World Cockroach Week:** For triggering revulsion, they’re unparalleled. But they’re supposed to be the inheritors of the planet in case of a nuclear holocaust, and for this, they must be celebrated.

**International Lizard Day:** Geckos are the only creatures that can drop their tails and flee when things get hot; the Komodo has saliva that can kill you in slow motion and the lounge lizard a tongue smooth as oil on glass!

**World Serpent Week:** Shafted in the so-called Garden of Eden, snakes have got a bad rap. Add to that their venomous concoctions (which are being investigated for cancer medication) and their unblinking stares and “forked” tongues. Yet, they are marvels of biochemical engineering, they get rid of rats, which eat 20 per cent of our food grain stocks, and spread Black Death.

**International Rat Day:** Rats are nothing but squirrels with scaly tails. Luckily, little boys around the world have for long recognised this and have kept them (and their cousins, mice), safely in their pockets. Rats have sacrificed a great deal in assisting us in our more bizarre and macabre medical experiments. And then we have *Ratatouille*, Mickey Mouse, Water Rat, et al!

**International Maggot and Leech Month:** Maggots saved thousands of badly wounded soldiers in the great wars, by clearing up gangrenous tissues from their



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

### EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

The Komodo dragon’s saliva can kill you in slow motion

wounds in the battlefield before Florence Nightingale arrived. They’re still being used for this purpose in hospitals — they go for just dead tissue, preventing infection. Leeches take care of excessive bleeding during surgery, enabling surgeons to see better what they’re operating on.

**Naked Mole Rat Day:** Hideously fair and unlovely (pink), the naked mole rat is highly social, suffers no pain on account of poor body image or otherwise. Can live in a low-oxygen atmosphere and has a very long life. Scientists wonder what the heck is going on!

**National Buffelow Day:** The poor buffelow (aka buffalo) doesn’t seem loaded with grey matter, but can toss you head over heels — or skewer you like a seekh kebab — with one swipe of its head! They deserve some respect, at least for a day!

**International Toad Day:** In spite of being fat, squat, clumsy and pockmarked with warts, toads always seem to have a smug smile on their faces. And Australia’s famous cane toads have shown the world how to do to colonialists what they did to us.

**International Crow Day:** Crows are acknowledged to be the Einsteins of the avian world. They can be taught to pick locks, solve puzzles. Stealing comes naturally to them as does gang violence (lynching) which is now so much the rage. And all done with a wicked twinkle and glitter in those beady eyes!

**National Indie Day:** Ever since the PM put in a word for them, they must certainly have a day dedicated to them. Tough, resilient, canny and impervious to global climate change, these dogs are gaining popularity and social status.

**Pedigree Pooch Day:** As we are a democracy, we must also have a day dedicated to these: The pooches — if bred properly — are top-notch specialists, yes, they may be fussy, have expensive demands and habits — but hey, you shouldn’t get a Rolls-Royce if you can’t maintain it. Unfortunately, rampant puppy-milling goes on with pedigrees, and has devastated them.

**International Larvae Day:** To celebrate the larvae of millions of species of insects, which eat virtually everything and transform into creatures of ethereal beauty or total revulsion: a miracle every time! And for giving “survivors” like British adventurer Bear Grylls something to disgust viewers with, even though they provide “high-protein nourishment”. Sacrifices should not go in vain.

**National Ape Day:** Chimps, gorillas, orangutans and gibbons have given us so much, and are still giving: wisdom, humour, cunning, violence, medical knowledge and the ability to sing, whoop and dance exuberantly.

# ‘My films are like my diaries’

Director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki on Bangladeshi New Wave, working with Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and being nominated for Kim Jiseok Award at the 26th Busan International Film Festival

Tanushree Ghosh

IT TAKES ingenuity, and frustrations, to make a social satire like *Television* (2012). Its orthodox village head, the protagonist Chairman Amin, won’t let anybody in his waterlocked village watch the *haram* (forbidden) TV. In the end, the very “idiot box” allows the pious man to attend *hajj* at Mecca. The caricature is empathetic. Amin was modelled on director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki’s conservative father, who threw out the “*shoitaneer baksho*” (devil’s box), and out flew cartoons and football telecast from Farooki’s life. Years later, television would become his site of rebellion and he’d begin his 22-year career with telefilms showing a society in transition, dabbling in themes such as tradition versus modernity, middle-class angst, guilt, redemption, human frailty and weaving the fantastical and real.

Farooki, the best-known face of Bangladeshi cinema internationally, has had polarising reception — flak from the conservatives, love from the young, and audiences overseas. “Their support has given me the leverage to make stories the way I want to,” says the filmmaker whose three films (*Third Person Singular Number*, 2009, *Television*, and the late Irrfan Khan-starrer *Doob*, 2017) were Bangladesh’s official entries to the Oscars.

His humour, like that of his best films, is wry. “I’m 18 till I die, a relentlessly curious kid,” says the 48-year-old. His latest, the Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer, AR Rahman-scored satire *No Land’s Man*, premiered this week in ‘A Window on Asian Cinema’ segment at the 26th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF). Farooki is nominated for the Kim Jiseok Award, alongside important filmmakers such as Apama Sen (*The Rapist*), Brillante Ma Mendoza (Philippines), Ogigami Naoko (Japan), Royston Tan (Singapore), etc. It was at Busan where his *Third Person Singular Number* premiered, *Television* closed the 2012 edition, where he’s been a jury, and where the idea for his latest came to him in sleep, “11 years later, *No Land’s Man* is that film”. In 2014, the film was launched at BIFF’s Asian Project Market, won the NFDC Development Award at Film Bazaar’s co-production market, and the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund.

Farooqi first wanted “Rahman *bhai*’s music in *Television*” but destiny had other plans. Life threw a surprise when Rahman boarded the Siddiqui co-production as also an executive producer. Set majorly in the US, and the rest in India and Australia, the film is a “global story” about an individual’s quest for identity in a tech-connected but prejudiced world. Edited excerpts:

**This is the second in an identity trilogy — the first was *Shonibar Bikel* (Saturday Afternoon, 2019) on the 2016 Dhaka bakery blast. Is this your most political work yet?**

So far, it’s the most political, but more than that it’s my most human, warm, and sad story. It’s part of a trilogy, but the stories aren’t connected, the ideas; the two films are tonally very different. This one’s about identity. The internet and social media have exposed our stupidity. The 21st century will be remembered as a century of technological advancement but also as a century of stupidity. After all that the Renaissance Man went through, we’ve created a world now where we love or hate someone based on who they are. Those in power, the real identity brokers, sell us a certain idea of identity (political, religious, social) which we buy into. Naveen, with no last name, is a powerless guy, his suffering and loss tragic. As an artiste, I’m powerless too, and satire is the best way out.



KAUSHIK IQBAL



**Irrfan spoke Bangla in *Doob* (No Bed of Roses), but Nawaz speaks English. No Land’s Man is an English film, as will be your next film *A Burning Question*. Tell us about the linguistic and contextual shift from your roots. Do you see yourself as a global storyteller now?**

We’re increasingly living in a global world. My dad never travelled beyond Manikpur in Noakhali district, and Dhaka, he never met a foreigner except some Middle-Eastern folks, while I travel 10 times a year. Every day, I communicate with people across races, religions, geographies, via the internet. We are impacted by what’s happening in the US and elsewhere. Because our lives, our stories have changed, we’ll see a lot more films with a global context in the coming days. Obviously, I’m not doing it to become global, I’m doing it because this is the life we are living. And I’ll continue making more Bangladeshi films and OTT series (#MeToo story *Ladies and Gentlemen on Zee5*).

**Why cast Nawaz and Irrfan in particular?**

The characters I create, they drive the visual style of my film. *Television*’s visual style, tonality was impacted by its eccentric, colourful, highly-emotional characters. *Doob*’s visual style is silent, poetic. The characters don’t communicate with each other, they are like islands, they don’t vent out their pains, they keep their fires buried within, like Mount Fuji. For me, external preparation isn’t as important. What at-

### CLOSE-UP

(Clockwise from top) Mostofa Sarwar Farooki; a still from *Television* (2012); a still from the Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer *No Land’s Man*



tracted me to them was their poetic mind, the ability to transform themselves into a character and transform the character into themselves. Nawaz is like (footballer) Lionel Messi. When Messi dribbles, it seems effortless, easy. If craft shows, it’s as obnoxious as putting an undergarment over a pant, only Superman can do it.

**You and your avante-garde production house Chabial champion Bangladeshi New Wave. Tell us more.**

I don’t know what’s new wave. If there’s a wave, it’s still too narrow. I probably did something new, then a lot of young filmmakers started writing to me, wanting to learn filmmaking by assisting me. I pushed them to make their own stories. That’s how people started calling this group Chabial’s Bhai-Brother. But Chabial is not the only one. Since we started earlier, it may have left some impact, but every new filmmaker, who doesn’t work with me, is also coming up with fresh ideas.

**It’s a good year for Bangladeshi films at global festivals. Three are showing at Busan, including *Rehana Maryam Noor*, the first Bangladeshi film to be nominated at Cannes’ Un Certain Regard.**

I haven’t seen *Rehana* yet (before it, the late Tareque Masud’s *Matir Moina/The Clay Bird*, 2002, was the only Bangladeshi film screened at Cannes). When I first started (*Bachelor*, 2004), the prevalent acting was theatrical, stylistic. The

intellectuals hated me for making actors act naturally, they said I was killing acting. The younger filmmakers now can get the most natural acting out of their actors, and this is what is making Bangladeshi New Wave, if you may call it, interesting, because the performance and the stories are taken from life around us.

**Did directors like Tareque Masud pave the way for filmmakers like you to emerge?**

To talk of the Bangladeshi legacy, we have to mention Zahir Raihan and Alamgir Kabir as well. But Tareque Masud has impacted my career, my life in a big way. I used to express myself through poetry which I never published because of my middle-class shyness. I’d watch films at film societies. That’s when I was introduced to Tareque *bhai*. When I started making TV productions, I was instantly declared a *persona non grata* by the Bangladeshi intellectuals, for ‘ruining Bangla language and the gravity of cinema’. The strange thing in our cinema is that in a rural story, it’s fine to use Bangladeshi dialects, but in an urban story, the characters speak like Kolkata people. The obsession with Satyajit Ray, Uttam Kumar-Suchitra (Sen) was recreated on our television. But our way of expressing is completely different. In my telefilms, when I made my characters speak the way Bangladeshis do, the youth instantly connected with it but the middle-class intellectuals bashed me. Tareque *bhai* risked his position as the darling of Bangladeshi intellectuals to defend me in *Prothom Alo* (national daily), he wrote, ‘what Farooki is doing, if you think that he’s wrong, then world cinema is wrong.’ He’d even say I could ‘make a banana tree act’ (*laughs*).

**As a Bangladeshi, how do you react to CAA, NRC, and the politics of the two countries?**

I used to comment a lot earlier on social media, but the comments made my life hell. I think a filmmaker is a highly political animal, impacted by the politics of time, history, religion, sex, climate change, etc. My films are like my diaries. I’m writing and leaving a statement, a comment on the time and space I’m living in.

# Maybe You Should Talk to Someone

The only way to take away the stigma associated with mental-health care is to make it accessible and routine

Chandrakant Lahariya

IN MY adult life so far, I have sought formal medical consultations only twice. Once, with a psychiatrist and the second time, with a general physician. It is not that I don’t fall sick — I do occasionally — but being a doctor, mostly I prescribe for myself or in rare cases, call a doctor friend.

The visit to the physician was a few years ago. I had returned from a five-day-three-city hectic work trip and had fatigue and was feverish. Then and even today, I think all that I needed was good rest. However, my wife forced me to sit in the car and stopped only when we reached a doctor’s clinic. The visit to the psychiatrist was long ago, when I was in the third year of medical school, and completely on my volition. College years can be very distressing — familial pressure, personal issues, studies and much more — things on two extremes that you either you wish to recall often or systematically eliminate from your memory. On that visit, all that the “good shrink” did was to sort of counsel and reassure; no medication was prescribed. It is an old saying that a good doctor is one whom you don’t have to visit again, at least for the same episode of illness. I never needed to visit him again. Years later, I met him at a social function, and thanked him. In hindsight, to consult a psychiatrist was one of the best decisions of my life.

In India, people do not routinely seek mental-health services due to a multitude of reasons which are linked to both demand and supply aspects. One, that “mental illnesses cannot be treated” is an age-old and widely prevalent myth, both in rural populations and urban settings, that urgently needs to be busted. Some mental-health issues are not completely curable, the way all physical illnesses are not curable. However, a majority of physical and mental illnesses can be treated. All we need to do is start seeking care.

Second, in India, when it comes to mental-health issues, the fatalistic belief that “time is the biggest healer” is deep-rooted. Nothing heals with time and each one of us must proactively seek remedies. Though memories may fade over time, there is no conclusive proof that time has healed even a single person in history. Getting expert advice and guidance have worked for most. If we do not pay attention to stress, anxiety or depression in real time, these could precipitate as more serious health issues.

Third, we often hear that there is a major shortage of trained psychiatrists and mental-health facilities in the country. It is true that India needs more mental-health workforce. However, while developing approaches to increase workforce, Indian states also need to utilise the available workforce, efficiently. Every mental-health issue does not need a psychiatrist. Six out of every seven people with mental-health needs can ini-



GETTY IMAGES

### DOC ON CALL

If we don’t pay attention to stress, anxiety or depression in real time, these could precipitate as more serious health issues

tially be attended by trained non-specialist doctors and mental-health counsellors. Only some would need a referral to a specialist.

The need for mental-health care has become more relevant than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families have lost loved ones; the treatment of the sick has made many poorer; people have either lost their sources of income or had their earnings drastically reduced. Many who have recovered from the infection continue to have post- and long-COVID symptoms. The children have been deprived of education and playgrounds and excessively exposed to computer screens. The levels of stress and the need for mental-health services for many individuals and families have significantly increased. The old approach of not seeking care for mental

health issues can be very damaging, both in short and long term.

October 10 is globally commemorated as World Mental Health Day. In India, every year, the Union and state governments customarily commemorate this and other similar days. We, as a nation, seem to have mastered the art of festivals, celebrations and commemoration at the most superficial level. On Dussehra, the dominating thought for most remains where the biggest effigy in the city is. The thoughts about victory of good over evil comes, fleetingly, if at all. Many who go to Rajghat every October 2 may not have practised even one teaching of Gandhi.

This World Mental Health Day has to be different. While governments need to do more for improved mental-health services for every citizen, let’s put more faith in actions at an individual and citizen level. We can commit to start seeing mental illness just like any other physical illness and start a conversation to reduce the stigma around these conditions. We need to start seeking expert advice when needed and early; to encourage and support others to seek care. While the rich and middle class can still manage, for the poor, strengthening government mental healthcare services is the only solution.

In the middle of the pandemic, I advised one of my patients to consult a psychiatrist at the nearby government hospital. He was reluctant as he thought that if his peers learnt about it, that would be a blow to his reputation. Then suddenly he said, “*Ameer logon ke liye toh iss desh mein sab kuch aasaan hai, video call par. Aap sarkar se kahiyee, dimag ki bimariyon ke doctor online kar dein* (For the rich in this country everything is easy and available on video call. Please tell the government that doctors for mental health illnesses should be available online).” How naïve I was to forget that time had stood still for the poor for centuries.

The writer is a Delhi-based physician and public-health specialist





## Lucknow



## Newcastle takeover: EPL clubs demand meeting

REUTERS  
LONDON, OCTOBER 9

PREMIER LEAGUE clubs have reached out to the league with complaints about Newcastle United's takeover by a Saudi Arabia-led consortium and are pushing for an emergency meeting next week, the *Guardian* newspaper reported.

The Premier League announced on Thursday that Newcastle had been sold to a group consisting of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, PCP Capital Partners, and RB Sports & Media.

The investment group had previously made public a GBP 305 million (USD 415 million) bid to buy the club in April 2020. That deal collapsed three months later amid scrutiny from the league, which came under pressure to stop the sale due to concerns over alleged broadcast piracy in Saudi Arabia.

The piracy dispute involved Qatari-owned beIN Sports, the league's broadcast rights holder across the Middle East, which had been barred from operating in Saudi Arabia. That ban was lifted on Wednesday, clearing a major hurdle to the takeover.

The *Guardian* said the 19 Premier League clubs are understood to be united in opposition to a Saudi-led consortium being allowed to buy out former owner Mike Ashley.

The clubs have also raised concerns that the league's brand "could be damaged" by Saudi Arabia's PIF - chaired by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman - taking an 80 percent stake in Newcastle, the report added.

On Thursday, Amnesty International urged the Premier League to change its owners' and directors' test to address human rights issues.

Human rights groups have condemned Saudi Arabia's efforts to "sportswash" its human rights record but the kingdom's government denies allegations of human rights abuses and says it is protecting national security from extremists and external actors.

**The clubs have also raised concerns that the league's brand "could be damaged" by Saudi Arabia's PIF — chaired by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman — taking an 80 percent stake in Newcastle, the report added.**

## BRIDGE

Dealer: East Vulnerable: North/South

NORTH		WEST		NORTH		EAST		SOUTH	
♠ 75432				1H		1S			
♥ 754				2H		3D		4S	
♦ KQJ		Pass		Pass		Pass			
♣ A8		Pass							
SOUTH (you)									
♠ A98									
♥ 83									
♦ 7653									
♣ J1093									

Sitting West, you listen to your partner bidding hearts and diamonds and then giving up when the opponents reach game in spades. You lead the eight of hearts and the play starts nicely enough. East takes the first two heart tricks with the king and ace, dropping South's queen, and continues with the jack of hearts. South ruffs with the king. What do you do?

The South Hand: S-KQJ106H-Q6D-10C-KQ742  
The East Hand: S-H-A-KJ1092D-A9842C-65

A rule I have touched on a few times lately is that if you can overuff with a worthless trump, it is OK to do so in general. If you have to overuff with a winning trump, it is often best not to do so. If you do not overuff South leads the queen of spades, which you win. East discards the nine of diamonds. He did bid diamonds so this is not unexpected. You lead a diamond to East's ace and he does a good thing. He leads another heart. Do you like this defense? It gives South a sluff and a ruff. Is this a good thing? How good is your memory? What did South start with in spades? What does he have left now?

South has all five missing spades, which were the KQJ106. He ruffed the third round of hearts with the king, leaving himself with the QJ106. He led the queen to your ace, leaving himself with the J106. When you put East in with a diamond, East led another heart. You have, at this point, the 98 behind declarer's J106. If he ruffs high you get a later trump trick. If he ruffs low, you get a trump trick right now. What happened was that East led hearts through South twice and South's spades were only good enough to withstand one round of hearts from East. South was upper-out.

The defense set declarer two tricks, not just one. The point here is that when you see a small set, there is no reason not to look for a bigger set as long as you know you are safe to do so.

NOTE: The importance of not overuffing the king. If West took his ace early, South would draw trump and get out for down one.

Dealer: West Vulnerable: None

NORTH		SOUTH	
♠ 964		♠ J52	
♥ J1064		♥ AQ9832	
♦ AQ97		♦ 4	
♣ A6		♣ K105	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1S	Pass	Pass	2H
Pass	3H	Pass	4H
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South played in 4H after an opening 1S bid by West and a pass by East. West leads the queen of clubs. How can you make 4H, and what is your reasoning?

## JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

\_\_\_ have a longer life than \_\_\_ - Pindar (4,5)

DOEER	DANDER
DOEER	DANDER

BYOSS	OOSYDW
BYOSS	OOSYDW

SOLUTION: Words have a longer life than deers - Pindar  
Answer: Words have a longer life than deers - Pindar

# Order of merit for Jadeja?

Seen as a finisher, the CSK all-rounder has been underutilised and should bat ahead of Dhoni in Qualifier 1

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 9

RAVINDRA JADEJA and Mahendra Singh Dhoni have had a contrasting IPL season. While Jadeja towers the Chennai Super Kings batting charts with a 145.51 strike-rate, Dhoni with 95.04 pales in comparison. In the 14 league games, Jadeja has scored 227 runs and his captain 96 runs. So why is Dhoni batting ahead of Jadeja?

While the left-arm spin-all-rounder is seen as a finisher, he has been under-utilised. In the 14 games, he faced 156 balls. Batting higher up the order and facing more deliveries might have yielded even bigger returns.

It would be interesting to see the CSK team management's thought process, going into the Qualifier 1 against Delhi Capitals in Dubai on Sunday, on the heels of three defeats on the spin.

### Dhoni off colour

Go back to the CSK versus DC group league fixture in Dubai played only five days ago. Batting first, CSK posted 136/5, with Dhoni making 18 off 27 balls. His fans would like to forget how DC fast bowler Anrich Nortje hurried him in his shots. Once the great finisher, the 40-year-old has struggled to force the pace throughout this IPL. Devoid of regular cricket, he has looked woefully undercooked.

Jadeja coming at No. 7 and facing just two deliveries was a travesty. DC won the game by three wickets, with two balls remaining. CSK missed a trick by not promoting Jadeja up the order. And along with K Gowtham's dropped catch of Shimron Hetmyer, it was a reason for their defeat.

It was a similar scene during Chennai's last match against Punjab Kings. Dhoni again came to bat ahead of Jadeja, consuming 15 balls for 12 runs. The left-hander, as a consequence, wasn't given the luxury of pacing his innings on a pitch that demanded some time for a new batsman to settle in.

There's a school of thought that Dhoni needed batting time in the middle before the Playoffs. That, at the expense of Jadeja's promotion up the order however, didn't look a smart choice.

CSK's batting this term has been mainly carried by their openers Ruturaj Gaikwad and Faf du Plessis - with 533 and 546 runs respectively. In the first half of the tournament in India, Moeen Ali made his presence felt at No. 3. But in the second phase in UAE, especially towards the back-end of the group stage, the southpaw's form regressed. Ali hasn't reached a 30-plus score in his last four innings.



Ravindra Jadeja towers the Chennai Super Kings batting charts with a 145.51 strike-rate, while MS Dhoni with 95.04 pales in comparison. In the 14 league games, Jadeja scored 227 runs and his captain 96 runs.

### Jadeja's batting improvement

During the Test series in England, India captain Virat Kohli was proactive enough to promote Jadeja in the batting order ahead of an out-of-form Ajinkya Rahane. Jadeja's batting record over the last two seasons in international cricket merited the promotion. With Suresh Raina, too, no longer the force he used to be - 160 runs in 12 matches - CSK apparently have failed to fully capitalise on Jadeja's prime form.

The 32-year-old has grown enough as a batsman to at times singlehandedly change the course of a match and CSK's fixture against Kolkata Knight Riders in Abu Dhabi was a case in point. The three-time IPL champions looked to have surrendered the initiative by losing two wickets - Raina and Dhoni - in an over, while the asking rate jumped to 13. With 26 required off 12 balls, Jadeja flattened Prasad Krishna with a 22-run over.

The losers of Qualifier 1 would get a second bite at the cherry, but winning it and reaching the final is obviously the preferred route. Eyes will be fixed on CSK's use of Jadeja as a batsman.

**During the Test series in England, India captain Virat Kohli was proactive enough to promote Jadeja in the batting order ahead of an out-of-form Ajinkya Rahane. Jadeja's batting record over the last two seasons in international cricket merited the promotion.**

### Capitals' evolution

DC's evolution as a team over the last two seasons under head coach Ricky Ponting has been one of the positive stories of the IPL. Be it Shreyas Iyer or Rishabh Pant, a young captain working under the guidance of a high-profile coach has worked spectacularly for the Delhi-based franchise. This is the opposite of how CSK's system works, but the Capitals have benefited from the policy.

They reached the final last year and fin-

## Umran Malik to stay back as net bowler

Dubai: Jammu and Kashmir pacer Umran Malik has been asked to stay back in the UAE as a net bowler for the Indian team for T20 World Cup after making an impressive IPL debut with Sunrisers Hyderabad.

With just two senior level domestic matches under his belt before the start of IPL, the 21-year-old has impressed skipper Virat Kohli so much that he has been summoned as a net bowler with Indian team.

Umran impressed many with his raw pace while playing for SRH this season and consistently bowled around the 150kmph mark. He also bowled the fastest ball of the IPL at 153 kmph. Umran's father is a fruit shop owner.

"Yes, Umran is staying back as he will join Team India bubble as a net bowler," a source close to SRH franchise told PTI on the condition of anonymity. In his debut IPL season, the pacer took two wickets in three games.

PTI

ished at the top of the group stage with 20 points from 14 matches.

In terms of balance, DC are better placed than their Qualifier 1 opponents, having all bases covered - top-order, middle-order, pace and spin.

The right evolution of a team is marked by its consistency. For a young team, this is also the biggest challenge, as success usually doesn't follow a linear direction. DC have become wonderfully consistent - they have lost just four games this term - by embracing stability. Even in the inconsequential last group game, they didn't rotate much. And although DC lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore, Prithvi Shaw's sweet striking of the ball inspired confidence.

T20 matches though, ooze the unpredictability of football's penalty shoot-outs and sometimes just two-three deliveries can make the difference.

DC boasting Nortje's pace, Kagiso Rabada's craft and Avesh Khan's purple patch would like to dismiss the CSK openers early and target an iffy middle-order. But Jadeja, should the CSK think-tank reach the decision, coming to bat at No 5 could be the antidote.

**LIVE: Qualifier 1** Delhi Capitals vs Chennai Super Kings 7:30pm on Star Sports/Hotstar

## If it's your Birthday

### Sunday October 10

You're itching to see the world. This is such a perfect moment to travel that it's difficult to see what's keeping you at home. A family member from will arrive on your doorstep.

### Monday October 11

Team up with like-minded people. You can expect a boost in three or four months. Make practical preparations now to reap the rewards.

### Tuesday October 12

You are making steady progress. Today is a time to consolidate all that you have achieved. Morning may bring delays but as the day progresses you will see how much you can gain from co-operation.

### Wednesday October 13

Your emotional desires are operating in harmony with your practical, business sense. Give a partner the benefit of the doubt, though, it's the least they deserve.

### Thursday October 14

You'll be free to press ahead with personal goals once you have shifted an emotional logjam. You have much to thank other people for, especially a partner who has been guiding from behind the scenes.

### Friday October 15

Don't cling to outmoded ideas. You could explore and experiment in safe areas and look for some short-cuts to achieving current ambitions.

### Saturday October 16

Feelings of uncertainty will soon be cleared up. But, over the next year, pursue your goals to the utmost.

## YOUR WEEK AHEAD

### ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Mars, your personal ruling planet, is currently in a nicely supportive region, commanding that you should keep your head and concentrate on the practical side of things, making sure that all arrangements go according to plan. You don't want a last-minute problem.

### TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Partners or close associates are likely to use every trick in the book to get you to bend to their will or alter your position. However, in view of the fact that creative, romantic and leisure activities are due to benefit, there should be plenty to distract you from more pressing matters.

### GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You have waited too long to be denied your just deserts. This is why you should now think twice before settling for second best or allowing yourself to be prevented from living up to your potential. Life is looking positive in general, though, and there could soon be a rapid development in long-range objectives.

### CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

You are now entering a phase of unprecedented reward for past efforts. Remember, though, that in astrology there is no such thing as a free lunch and every scrap of apparent good luck is in fact extremely hard-earned. Also, please do be aware of your tendency to squander your advantages.

### LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

The consequences of recent developments have been felt in your financial affairs, probably in an enhanced sense of prosperity. It is natural that such a phase should now be brought to an end, or perhaps transformed. Money will be at the centre of your thoughts for some time to come.

### VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

In general, the planets favour your interests. However, it will become increasingly clear that a financial question and an emotional issue are now deeply enmeshed. It may yet prove to be in your best interests to follow someone else's advice, even to team up in some sort of joint venture.

### LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Please be aware that Venus, the star of romance, has moved from a supportive position to a sympathetic one. In other words, it moves from a good location to a pleasant one. Emotional secrets will become public knowledge, so you had better be prepared to make an open and honest declaration of the facts.

### SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Loved ones and colleagues have, in their own way, come to rely on your emotional support. It may be that you will be compelled to give a person a final choice, and that this could be to everyone's benefit. Always be kind and generous to vulnerable people.

### SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)

Being a Sagittarian, it is necessary for you to put as many of your own ideas forward as you can, engaging friends and colleagues in discussion wherever possible and looking afresh at the way you organise your time. Emphasise public and material concerns rather than inward-looking emotional complications.

### CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

In spite of all that other people say or do, you still have the upper hand in all personal contacts and relationships, if only because of the sheer power vested in you by powerful planets. You may come to value partners' generosity and will finally realise just how much you have to gain from their co-operation.

### AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

You still need some firm guidance over finances if you are to make the most of helpful planetary influences. Most Aquarians see in money a deeper meaning, realising that it is only useful for what it can do. It is therefore essential that you pay the utmost attention to getting the details right.

### PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You may be subject to unfair criticism from partners, but then you yourself will be in a highly-sensitive frame of mind, liable to take offence even when none is intended. While professional matters seem relatively straightforward, your work routine will intrude more and more into your life.



NEW BOXING COACH

The Boxing Federation of India has decided to replace men's chief coach C A Kuttappa with Army Sports Institute's Narender Rana ahead of this month's world championship, which is also set to mark the end of High Performance Director Santiago Nieva's tenure. **PTI**

BRIEFLY

Hamilton promises to go all out from 10th-place on grid

*Istanbul:*Formula One championship leader Lewis Hamilton promised "maximum attack" in Sunday's Turkish Grand Prix and would not rule out winning from 11th on the grid. The Mercedes driver was quickest in qualifying at Istanbul Park but a 10-place penalty for exceeding his season's engine allocation, a strategic move, left the Briton with plenty of overtaking to do in the race. "I was third already at turn one last year so that made a bit of a difference," said Hamilton, now chasing a record eighth title. "It's a much different weekend, a much different track grip, so we're faced with different circumstances this weekend," he added. "My eyes are still solely set on winning the race. It's going to be very hard, from 11th, but not impossible ... so just staying on my toes and making sure that we deliver maximum attack tomorrow." **REUTERS**

Afghanistan get Flower on board

*London:* Former Zimbabwe captain and England coach Andy Flower has been named the Afghanistan team's consultant for the Twenty20 World Cup, the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said. Flower played 63 Tests and 213 one-day international matches for Zimbabwe from 1992 to 2003, then coached England from 2009 to 2014, helping them win the T20 World Cup in 2010. He has also coached in T20 leagues across the world, including the Indian Premier League and the Pakistan Super League. "Andy has worked with a number of our players in various franchise completions and his vast experience will be very beneficial and useful to help the team in the World Cup," said Azizullah Fazli, the ACB's new chairman. The T20 World Cup will be held in the United Arab Emirates and Oman from Oct. 17. Afghanistan are in Group 2 alongside India, Pakistan, New Zealand and two qualifiers. **REUTERS**

Shooters win 30 medals at jr. worlds

*Lima:* Indian shooters Anish Bhamwala, Adarsh Singh and Vijayveer Sidhu combined to win the gold medal in the men's 25m rapid fire pistol team event as the country ended the ISSF Junior World Championship on top of the standings here. The Indian trio shot a total of 10 to finish ahead of their German counterparts Fabian Otto, Felix Luca Hollfoth and Tobias Gsoell (2) in the gold medal contest on Friday. India's Manvi Soni (105) bagged the junior double trap gold medal ahead of compatriot Yeshaya Hafiz Contractor (90). The bronze was won by Hitasha (76) in an event that only featured Indians. Vinay Pratap Singh Chandrawat claimed the gold medal men's double trap event with a score of 120, while the silver went to Sehajpreet Singh (114) and the bronze to Mayank Shokeen (/111). Earlier on Friday, Ayushi Podder and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar won the silver in the 50m rifle 3 positions mixed team event to continue India's dominance in the tournament. Ayushi and Aishwary shot 17 in the gold medal match to finish second to the 31 shot by the German pair of Max Braun and Anna Janssen. **PTI**

WBC CHAMPIONSHIP

No love lost between Fury and Wilder ahead of their third showdown

GAURAV BHATT  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

A GENUINE grudge match will play out Sunday morning when Tyson Fury (30-0-1) and Deontay Wilder (42-1-1) square up at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. The hotly-anticipated trilogy fight between two of the heavyweight division's best will be for the WBC championship and a whole lot more. The first fight in 2018 was perhaps the most exciting draw in heavyweight boxing. The second last February saw Fury win via technical knockout, giving Wilder his first loss. The third fight between the heavyweights — in the truest sense of the word; both Fury and Wilder have posted their career-heaviest weights at 277 and 238 pounds, respectively five and seven pounds more than the second fight — is expected to be tense and thrilling. Much like the story so far.

Tyson's wilder

The 33-year-old Brit, nicknamed 'The Gypsy King', used his awkward style, jarring feints, long range and accurate punching from unconventional angles and openings

to free up the heavyweight division in 2015, ending Wladimir Klitschko's tactical 11-year-hold. Then, wilderness called. Fury was busted for cocaine and stripped of his belts. What followed was a three-year-long downward spiral, which pushed Fury to the brink of driving his speeding Ferrari off the bridge. "There's 500 calories in a pint of beer. And I'd have 18 of those. Followed by whiskey, vodka. Then I'd stop off on the way home and have pizza, kebabs. I was 400-pounds, a drug addict, alcoholic, cocaine was the usual one," Fury shared on MMA announcer Joe Rogan's podcast. "Just as I was heading to the bridge, if I hit it the car would have crushed like a Coke can by the way, I heard a voice say, 'No, don't do this Tyson. Think about your kids.' After losing more than 100 pounds, and securing two lowly wins, Fury took the ring against Wilder in 2018.

Deontay's fury

Fury's lineal title was the most obvious, but Wilder had other reasons to face Fury. The American was in line to fight Fury before the latter's hiatus. But more importantly, the champion was still looking to make a name.



Deontay Wilder at the weigh in before the heavyweight division WBC championship fight against Tyson Fury in Las Vegas.

**"There's 500 calories in a pint of beer. And I'd have 18 of those. Followed by whiskey, vodka. Then I'd stop off on the way home and have pizza, kebabs. I was 400-pounds, a drug addict, alcoholic, cocaine was the usual one."**

TYSON FURY

ON THE TIME AFTER BEING STRIPPED OF HIS BELTS FOR COCAINE USAGE

The articulate, well-dressed showboater and consummate family man would still finish third in a popularity poll against his rivals Fury and Anthony Joshua. His one-trick technique (39 of his 40 wins had come via devastating knockouts) too prompted many to question his boxing pedigree and the five-year-long title reign.

The two fights

The first fight, however, underlined what



we had known going into the fight; Fury was the superior boxer. He slipped, slid, bobbed, weaved and won most of the rounds, making his windmilling opponent often look like a pedestrian, uni-dimensional boxer. Wilder had one, very good trick. He brutally dropped Fury twice, enough to secure a draw. The rematch was inevitable. Wilder passed the time earning two more knockout wins. Fury too collected two victories, three if you count his fling with the WWE. But Fury came into the second fight wanting to knock Deontay Wilder out, and a taste of the American's blood. Outrageously enough, he got the second wish. After beating up Wilder and exhausting him by making him carry his weight for five rounds, Fury pushed him against the ropes and licked the blood off his neck. The defending champion's corner threw in the towel before Fury could get the KO. But he got the only belt missing from his resume and became the first boxer to end two 10+ title defence reigns.

Excuses and bureaucracy

Wilder found refuge in a plethora of excuses. He accused the referee Kenny Bayless

of favouring Fury. He came into the fight with an injured bicep. The elaborate 40-pound costume for his ring walk was "too heavy" and he "didn't have no legs from the beginning of the fight". His trainer betrayed him and was part of a conspiracy by throwing in the towel as he was "influenced" by Fury's camp. His water was spiked, "as if I took a muscle relaxer". And lastly, that Fury's gloves were loaded. The pandemic and the many failed negotiations with Wilder's camp delayed the third fight. Fury's team, meanwhile, began working towards the all-important, title unification fight against Joshua — the then WBA (Super), IBF, WBO, IBO, WBC, The Ring and lineal champion. In March, the two-fight deal to crown the undisputed champion was signed. But after his rival's "massive announcement" video on Twitter, the 35-year-old sprang to action. Wilder's camp argued that their fighter had a contractual right to a third fight, taking the matter to an independent arbitrator, who ruled in May that Fury had to fight Wilder by September 15. The fight was then moved to July, before Fury and his team members tested positive for the coronavirus. **LIVE ON: Voot Select: 9 am**

SPORTSLINE

Golden girl from Pink City

Avani Lekhara, the first Indian woman to become Paralympic champ, reaps rewards for pursuing perfection



Avani Lekhara, the 10m air-rifle winner, became the first-ever Indian woman to win a gold in the Paralympics. (Below right) A young Avani getting a prize for a dancing competition before the accident. *instagram/agencies*



or lose, get a medal or not, our relationship wouldn't change. She would still be by my side and would still be there to help when I needed it. All she asked of me was to perform my best so that I wouldn't have any regrets," Lekhara told *The Indian Express*.

Bad start

Despite the words of assurances from Shirur, Lekhara's qualification was a disaster. She remembers asking herself, 'Why is this happening today of all days?' It was almost as

if all the nerves that she had been enduring until came out to the fore.

At the end of the qualification, she was seventh in the standings. All she had was 45 minutes to prepare for the finals and the encouraging words of Shirur and her own mother constantly in her ear at the shooting range. "The truth is nothing was going right at that time," said Lekhara. At that point, she had only two technical aspects of shooting to bank on. She decided to focus on her pre-aiming and follow-through.

SHASHANK NAIR  
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 9

MORE THAN a month has passed since the curtain came down on the Tokyo Paralympics. At her home in Jagatpura, Jaipur, away from the hustle and bustle of the state capital, Avani Lekhara's life has drastically changed in some ways and in some ways not so much. A 10m Air Rifle SH1 gold medal and a 50m Prone event bronze medal adorn her bed, signifying that she is the first Indian woman to win a Paralympics gold and the first from the country since Joginder Singh Bedi in 1984 to win two medals at the Paralympics. And yet, every day as Lekhara looks up to her medals, there is a tinge of wistfulness that follows.

"Everybody was cheering and whistling and shouting. But I felt sad. For everyone, I had won gold and equalled the world record but for me, I missed out on the record being solely my own by 0.1. My final shot was a 9.9. I always want to make sure my last shot is a good one. My emotions over that moment are mixed," Lekhara says.

Lekhara, 19, is in the midst of giving her fourth-semester exams while completing her Bachelors in Law from Rajasthan University. But her mind often drifts to that last shot in the 10m Air Rifle final. The nit-picking over her momentous achievement is a far cry from the start of the Olympics, when it was a different kind of emotion for Lekhara, paralysed from the waist below after an accident at the age of 12.

On August 23, the largest Indian team to have ever qualified for the Paralympics landed in Tokyo. Within a few hours of reaching the Games Village, Lekhara felt butterflies in her stomach. The enormity of the challenge made her nauseous and nerves hit like a tidal wave.

Lekhara, in her specially-designed wheelchair and with a pair of airpods in her ears, decided to take a stroll around the Games Village. It was there that her personal coach Suma Shirur joined her.

After a few minutes, Lekhara's apprehensions about her first match finally bubbled over and a question was posed to her coach: 'What if I don't win a medal?'

Lekhara had reason to be apprehensive. Since the time she started shooting, from succeeding at the nationals to the para-shooting championship in AI Ain in 2017, a fear of sorts had developed. Silver and bronze medals fell into her lap in abundance but the young shooter simply wasn't able to touch gold. "Suma ma'am told me that whether I win

US Open champ Raducanu's streak snapped

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
INDIAN WELLS, OCTOBER 9

EMMA RADUCANU came down to earth in her first tournament since her surprising US Open victory, losing in straight sets to Aliaksandra Sasnovich at the BNP Paribas Open on Friday night. Raducanu lost 6-2, 6-4 in the second round, ending her 10-match winning streak that began in New York. She received a wild-card into the combined ATP and WTA tournament in the Southern California desert.

It was Raducanu's fifth Tour-level event since making her WTA Tour debut in June.

"I'm kind of glad that what happened today happened so I can learn and take it as a lesson so going forward I'll just have more experience banked," she said.

Former world No. 1 Andy Murray beat Adrian Mannarino 6-3, 6-2 in his first match as a wild-card. Murray fired five aces and connected on 82% of his first serves against the French lefty-hander. Murray converted three of six break points; Mannarino failed in his lone chance to break.

Leyla Fernandez, who lost to Raducanu in the U.S. Open final, defeated Alize Cornet 6-2, 6-3. Fernandez converted 5 of 9 break points and hit 71% of her second serves.

Sasnovich, a 27-year-old from Belarus ranked 100th in the world, reached the doubles semifinals last month at the U.S. Open while Raducanu was completing a stunning run from qualifier to champion at age 18. "Emma just won the U.S. Open and I lost there in the first round," Sasnovich said, "so it was a little bit different."

Sasnovich got service breaks to take leads

of 3-1 and 5-2 and close out the set in 30 minutes without ever losing her serve.

Raducanu rallied in the second set, taking a 4-2 lead. But Sasnovich broke for a fifth time and led 5-4 before serving out the match. Sasnovich won 53% of her second serves to just 29% for Raducanu.

"I'm still so new to everything," Raducanu said. "The experiences that I'm going through right now, even though I might not feel 100 percent amazing right now, I know they're for the greater good."

Sasnovich advanced to play No. 11 seed Simona Halep in the third round. Halep beat Marta Kostyuk 7-6 (2), 6-1. Iga Swiatek needed just 71 minutes to dispatch Petra Martic 6-1, 6-3. The last time the tournament was played in 2019, Swiatek lost in qualifying. Now, she's the No. 2 seed and the 2020 French Open champion.

Swiatek won nine of the first 10 games against Martic before the Polish star got broken twice and fell behind 0-3 in the second set. Swiatek rallied to win the next six games and close out the match. "In 2019, I wasn't playing that confident, but I'm really happy that times have changed now," Swiatek said. "In the second set, I lost focus for one game and she broke me pretty fast, so I knew I just had to keep going and not stop for a second time."

No. 4 seed Elina Svitolina beat Tereza Martineova 6-2, 7-5. No. 7 Petra Kvitova beat Arantxa Rus 6-2, 6-2. Ninth-seeded Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova topped American Madison Keys 6-3, 6-1.

Victoria Azarenka advanced via walkover when Magda Linette quit trailing 7-5, 3-0. Shelby Rogers routed Kristina Kucova 6-2, 6-2. No. 19 Jessica Pegula beat Sloane Stephens 6-2, 6-3.



Raducanu lost 6-2, 6-4 in the second round, ending her 10-match winning streak that began in New York